

# National Tourism in Developing Countries: The Confrontation Between Informal Development and Urbanization, the Case of the Coastal Region of Beni-Ksila (Bejaia, Algeria)

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**Abstract:** The article focuses on domestic tourism in developing countries by focusing attention on confrontation between its developments, often informally, and urbanization. As case study, the coastal region of Beni-Ksila on the west coast of Béjaia (Algeria). The wish through this article is to put, once again, in evidence my persuasions on the advent of the tourist practice in developing societies and the importance of its effects space. This situation, in the face of the stagnation of certain decision-makers and specialists in the field, at least until recent years, has never ceased to worry a number of other observers. Thus, a glimmer of awareness, more and more collective, emerges and supports the highlighting of the reality of the phenomenon. Globally, if in the past, some tourism authors and organizations underestimated domestic tourism in developing countries, let alone its spatial effects; today many authors, even even those who were reluctant in the past speak of the reality of phenomenon and its corollary spatial effects. In the case of Algeria, taking awareness of public authorities, in recent years faced with this reality, admittedly displayed in a timid manner, where actions are slow to come; but this already highlights the importance of the phenomenon.

**Keywords:** Developing Societies, Domestic Tourism, Seaside Resort, Urban Planning, Urbanization

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## 1. Introduction

In the international image, Algerian coastal regions are the most coveted space for tourist populations, especially national tourists. Combined with other activities directly or indirectly related to tourism, the coastal area is increasingly confronted with very complex dynamics that require careful consideration and thoughtful strategies. The aim is to avoid chaotic situations that some of our coastal regions, which, according to many observers, are already in a worrying state, may experience. Thus, the investigations through this research focus on the confrontation between tourism and urbanization in coastal areas, and more particularly on the informal development of domestic tourism in developing countries and urbanization in coastal regions. It must be said that tourism in general is described by many authors as the main cause of the

degradation of certain tourist regions, as mentioned Duhamel and Violier: "tourism seems to be more a victim than a culprit in this respect" [1]. Likewise, urbanization has always been singled out as the only cause of the desolate image of our cities. The expected clarifications, through this work, are to show that it is all about policies and strategies in the actions to be undertaken. This means that tourism and urbanization are not the only culprits of the degradation situations that our living spaces are currently experiencing.

The purpose of this article is to provide useful clarifications for understanding the real problems of our coastal areas in the face of the confrontation between their urbanization and tourism in general, and more particularly domestic tourism in developing countries. Thus, take fair and profitable actions for a safe and sustainable future for our coastal areas, especially tourist coastlines.

## 2. Methodology

Understanding all the information that could shed light on the process of confrontation between tourism and urbanization today in the coastal region of Beni-Ksila, particularly when it is a series of facts carried out informally, combined with little, if any, documentation and mapping, is therefore a matter of much more research work in the field and empirically, - photo editing, observations, surveys and interviews- [15-16]. And, in order to better interpret and make judicious use of this first field work, and thus to highlight the existence of tourism practice in developing societies and the capacity of the power of tourism in spatial transformation and more particularly in built and developed space, a bibliographic and documentary research work on domestic tourism in general and in the case of developing countries in particular, focusing attention on the spatial implications of the tourism phenomenon, is required.

### 2.1. Bibliographical Research

If at the heart of the history of tourism, the practice of tourism was identified only with developed societies, particularly Western ones. Today, with the improvement of living conditions - income enrichment, the democratization of leisure,... -, and by extension the evolution of lifestyles and behaviors in emerging countries, we can add the populations of these countries in search of leisure activities whose numbers are constantly increasing, especially during the summer period.

Although not much, the abundance of literature on this theme, this reality, still underestimated by some, does exist, and even goes back a long way in history in some parts of the world. Indeed, unlike some authors who only realized with reservation the reality of domestic tourism practice in developing societies, a few decades ago; today a good number of authors (researchers, academics, experts and tourism organizations) have been able to explain a set of signs about the real existence of tourism practice in developing societies [8-10]. UNWTO (2015) argues that the number of national tourists is much higher than that of international tourism. He reported that the flows of domestic tourism, all countries combined, are nearly ten times higher than those of international tourism. Mohammed BERRIANE, who, according to his research work on tourism in Morocco, since 1985, has been constantly pointing out the reality of the existence of tourism for nationals. In his article published in 1993, the author explicitly mentioned the real and even remarkable existence of tourism in Moroccan society [2]. Brahim MOUDOUD and Abdelkrim EZAIDI, in their article published in 2005, explained the existence and importance of tourism in Moroccan society, as they mentioned, "*long considered as the poor relation of Moroccan tourism, national tourism only makes people talk about it in times of international tourism crisis.*" *Domestic tourism represents, in our opinion, a demand with secure potential, and whatever the internal conditions of the country, because it (domestic tourism) is very little affected by cyclical moments of security risks. It can also be used as an alternative in the event of a*

*decline in international tourist numbers or as a compensatory tool for international tourism in low season,"* [21]. In the case of Algeria, Youcef ICHEBOUBENE in his thesis work on national tourism and spatial effects, it was mentioned that Algerian families are increasingly demanding in terms of spatial comfort in accommodation for their holiday stays. Many tourist families opt for renting villas from private individuals while demanding more comfort. Still others are building their own holiday homes [15]. According to estimates, by the Algerian Ministry of Tourism for the year 2015, Algeria's destination should welcome 3 million tourists, including 2 million national tourists [12]. Also highlighted this phenomenon; *although it is not always visible at the international level, there is a significant and growing national tourism (in China, India, Brazil, Mexico, Morocco, etc.). As the standard of living in these countries improves, tourist travel increases...*" The World Travel and Tourism Council (Travel and Tourism Economic Impact 2016. London, WTTC.) has identified domestic tourism as a source of strong economic benefits. By 2015, these benefits amounted to USD 3420 billion, which is just over two and a half times the amount of international tourism revenues. He pointed out the importance of domestic tourism in developed countries, - 77% on average of tourism consumption in OECD 15 countries -. But it is well mentioned that domestic tourism also occupies such a significant place in many developing countries. According to statistics, it represents more than 90% of tourism spending in China. Many other authors agree on the same theme, some point out that the history of tourism practice in developing societies goes back a long way. As explained, in the case of Brazil, where tourism by nationals already appeared in the 1960s and 1970s, and in a rapid manner [19]. who believe that domestic tourism has probably laid its foundations before international tourism [13, 7, 23].

Still others, some of whom note that the time spent at tourist sites is longer for domestic tourists, in the case of Peru in Cuzco [27]. And others that explain the advent of tourism in developing societies, such as, which reported, "*in Latin America, Asia, part of Africa and the Middle East, the improvement of incomes, urbanization and the rise in employment associated with the gradual implementation of labour legislation and holidays in a number of countries, have enabled a growing number of individuals to enjoy leisure time, travel and leisure, and also to discover in a space and time outside their daily lives other ways of practicing places and exercising their sociability*" [31]. Then, still others abound to highlight that the requirements of the national tourist of developing societies in his travels are equivalent to those of the national or international tourist of developed countries., for Morocco where many of its regions, intended for international tourism, are now frequented by nationals. According to the author, in the case of Morocco, national tourists are similar to those of international tourism, as he mentioned on page 12 of his article published in 2007, *the flow of Moroccan national holidaymakers is similar to those of international tourism that can be identified in*

*classified hotel establishments (classified hotels, tourist residences and holiday villages), where nationals consume up to 20% of total overnight stays over the years"* [2-4]. In the case of Algeria, Youcef ICHEBOUBENE mentioned, *"it is worth noting that in tourism practices throughout the coastal region of Azeffoun (Algeria), forms of imitation of Western models are combined with the invented forms inherent in local cultures"* [15].

A few decades ago, a number of political decision-makers and tourism professionals underestimated, or even ignored, the existence and importance of domestic tourism. As Mohammed BERRIANE explained in his article published in 1989, in which he stressed that domestic tourism in developing societies, although demand is real, and although its spatial effects are significant, remains very little, if not never considered by tourism stakeholders - researchers, academics, professionals in the sector and political decision-makers - unlike international tourism, which is considered as a provider of State funds in foreign currency. According to the author, some authors' awareness of the importance of domestic tourism in developing countries only became apparent in the early 1990s with the crisis in the international tourism sector due to the Gulf War. Today, the number of authors who have become aware of the real existence of domestic tourism in developing countries is constantly increasing. And the effects, both economic, social, cultural and even strengthening the resilience of the tourism sector, particularly in tourism countries, are so significant [5]. As many authors have explained. (Travel and Tourism Economic Impact 2016. London, WTTC. Op. Cit.) in developing countries in general. In the case of Algeria, where the tourist complexes built in the 1970s mainly for foreign customers, and which at one point with the decline or even absence of foreign customers, would become desert areas, if not national tourists who were there to their rescue [15]. In the case of Morocco, where, following the decrease (36.5%) in tourist visits by foreign tourists following the effects of the 1990-1991 Gulf War, domestic tourism contributed 28.4% of tourist nights [4, 21]. In the case of Tunisia, where domestic and regional tourism (Maghreb) has also been able to compensate for the drop in tourist numbers by international tourists, the majority of whom are European, after the upheavals the country has experienced in recent years [22]. And, this has raised the awareness of many political decision-makers of the importance of highlighting the tourist demand of nationals. It is true, the practice is slow to come, but it is discussed, as many authors (researchers, professionals and political decision-makers) have pointed out. In the case of Morocco, pointed out, *"hoteliers have indeed used this internal market to compensate for the loss of income suffered as a result of the massive cancellations of foreign tour operators due to the conflict"* [5]. Mohammed BOUSSAÏD Moroccan Minister of Tourism (2007-2010) *"domestic tourism can play an important role in preventing any possible decline in activity linked to the decline in overnight stays recorded by the flow of foreign tourists to Morocco. Domestic demand accounts for 20% of the overnight stays*

*recorded by classified accommodation establishments."* As he pointed out that the tourist demand of nationals is not only appreciated from an economic point of view, but also for Moroccans, too, to appropriate the services of this sector and benefit from all the tourist potential that their country offers. He identified the tourist demand of nationals, therefore, as one of the essential components of tourism development policy in Morocco. Thus, he asked that the tourist facilities be accessible to Moroccans. The case of Algeria, where the President of the Republic AbdelazizBouteflika in his message to the national and international conferences on tourism, dated 12 February 2008, considers that domestic tourism demand is strong and expanding. She asks to be satisfied. He pointed out that eleven million Algerians are expected to engage in tourism in 2025, due to the expected increase in their GNP/per capita... As He identifies seaside and Saharan tourism as the first steps in the development of tourism in Algeria. The case of Tunisia, where the use of national and Maghreb tourism is a possibility to revive and fuel the resilience of its now declining tourism sector [22]. This indicates the importance of domestic tourism, i.e. that tourism practice in developing societies does exist and, the contribution of domestic tourism to economic growth is significant. While some authors were reluctant, at one time in history, about the existence of tourism in developing societies, today it is impossible to deny a reality that does exist in developing societies.

Admittedly, the seaside resort receives the largest number of tourists, in the case of Morocco [3]. And, in the case of Algeria [15]. But this is also the case in developed societies, the case of France where the coast remains the leading tourist destination in terms of overnight stays: the coast accounts for 40% of French tourist beds. The coastline has always welcomed the largest number of tourists. It is worth recalling that at the beginning of tourism, human societies set their sights on the coast. For many experts, this is explained, in addition to enjoying the benefits of the sea, by the fact that during the summer period, children's school holidays coincide with parents' holidays.

In the opinion of many authors, national tourism, generated by the development of leisure activities, is today of particular importance in view of the investments it requires, the populations it mobilizes, the economic, social, cultural and spatial consequences it can have, especially since the evolution and democratization of leisure time. Mohammed Berriane as mentioned *"tourism does not fail to mark the space with its projections and developments. Above all, it has very significant effects on the national economy," "It is above all endowed with a strong capacity to shape space and society. "Tourism has become one of the main elements of spatial organisation and a determining factor in changing the balance and local economies. »* [5]. Or, *"the image of a modern city that responds to their quest for existential comfort"* [30]. The development of public policies and the implementation of land use planning programmes have thus created the conditions for the birth and spread of tourism in Haiti.

Studies on coastal urbanization in regions that began

tourism at an early stage have shown that it is mainly on the shores that the growth of buildings is spectacular and the rise of tourism is generally the main cause of changes in the built landscape in these areas, [3, 6, 11, 15, 17, 18, 24, 25, 28, 29]. It must be said that coastal regions have always been the most coveted areas for the development of both purely tourist and other economic activities [20]. They have always been the subject of severe conflicts in terms of land use [14, 26]. According to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), 75% of the world's population (6.4 billion people) will live within 60 km of the coast in 2030. And according to geobunnik in The Mediterranean (2013), of the 427 million inhabitants of the Mediterranean basin, nearly 127 million live on the coast, it will represent 524 million by 2025. And more than 60% are urban.

Although it is generally developed informally, the practice of domestic tourism in developing countries having been highlighted, it is now necessary to examine the spatial effects on the production and organization of buildings.

## 2.2. Presentation of the Case Study: The Beni-Ksila Coastal Region on the West Coast of Bejaia (Algeria) (See Figure 1)

The region is located on the coast of Western Kabylia (Algeria). About fifty kilometres from the city of Béjaia, its capital of the wilaya (administrative region), about a hundred kilometres from the city of Tizi-Ouzou (political capital of Kabylia) and about two hundred kilometres from Algiers (capital of the country).

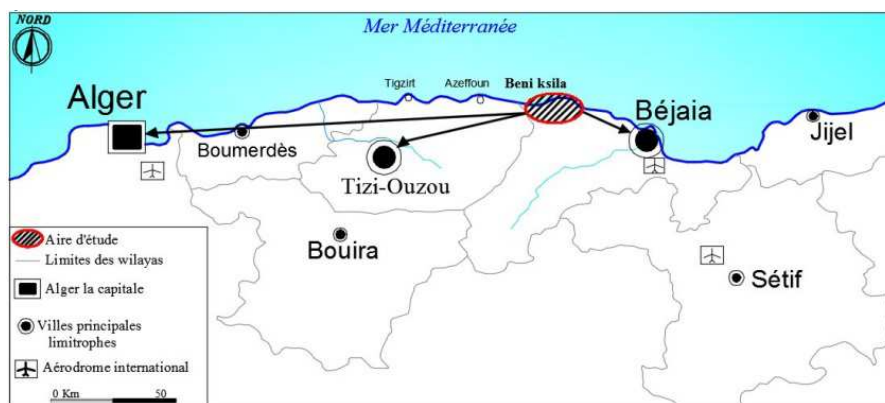


Figure 1. Location map. (Source: Y. Icheboubene, 2018).

The region, which for a long time remained on the fringes of development, if not in stagnation, has become, since the first tourist visits, a very coveted destination. The number of tourists continues to increase year on year (Icheboubene, 2015), particularly with the opening of the national road n°24 (RN 24) linking the region with Algiers in the west and Bejaia in the east; the electrification of the region;... According to figures provided by the Directorate of Civil Protection of the wilaya of Bejaia, the number of summer visitors attracted to the Bejaia coast, including the Beni-Ksila coastal region, reached 4,194,000 during the month of July. The coastal region of Azeffoune, bordering the coastal region

of Beni-Ksila, attracted 1.243 million holidaymakers (summer 2017), according to the Tizi-Ouzou wilaya tourism and handicrafts department, which provided the figure (see Figure 2). The cessation of emigration of local populations and the mass return of emigrant populations from the region, - it should be noted that the coastal region of Kabylia has already experienced an exodus to urban centres, particularly to Greater Algiers and France, which goes back a long way in history. An exodus that increased in the aftermath of the country's independence. And finally, the populations who are not native to the region and are attracted by the new situation to invest in it.



Figure 2. The flow of national holidaymakers on the beaches of the region (Source: Y. Icheboubene, 2017).



The images, taken by the author, show the rush of summer visitors who come to visit the beaches of the region: on the beach "Le Petit-Paradis" located on the east coast of Azeffoun, bordering the coastal region of Beni-Ksila, the image informs us about the tourist practice of the nationals where we see the imitation forms of Western models combined with the invented forms inherent to local cultures.

Thus, in this new dynamic, where forms of imitation of urban, contemporary and modern models are combined, the region's landscape, which was, in the recent past, typically rural, composed of a swarm of small traditional Kabyle

villages perched on the ridges overlooking the sea, is now on the way to becoming an urban landscape par excellence. The traditional village structure of yesteryear has given way to a typically urban structure, composed of small groups of new buildings typical of urban areas, along the coastal plain (See Figures 3 and 4). Many of the traditional Kabyle villages are abandoned by their populations who preferred to come and live on the plain. Villages that have been able to retain their populations have seen their former nuclei abandoned, their populations have preferred to build their new houses on the outskirts of the villages on large plots that are easily accessible.



**Figure 3.** Rhythm of urbanization along the Beni-Ksila coastal region on the coast (Source: Author, 2018).

The images, taken by the author, explain the speed of urbanization along the Beni-Ksila coastal region. In a few years the rural landscape that characterized the region in the recent past is now on the way to becoming a typically urban landscape.



**Figure 4.** Views of the new, typically urban built landscape (Source: Author, 2018).

The images, taken by the author (2018), show the new contemporary and typically urban built landscape. Figure 1 shows an urban medium gauge construction group located in the village of Beni-Ksila. Image 02 shows a typical urban and contemporary group of collective housing, located in the village of Beni-Ksila. And, the last two images show us

tourist reception structures located in the eastern part of the region as well as these structures are of a contemporary modern type.

The actions carried out through this urbanization in the region are to a greater extent the work of private actors. First, local populations, in order to make more profits, embark on

the maintenance and improvement of the brand image of their region, and through the gain generated by the tourist rental formula for local residents, highly prized by Algerian tourist families, they embark, some in the development of parts of their houses for rental and, others in the construction of houses intended exclusively for tourist rental, or in the construction of tourist reception structures (hotels, tourist residences and all the accompanying equipment: restaurants, shops, etc.). Then, the many tourist populations who end up building their own holiday homes, and even carrying out other investments in the region, linked directly or indirectly with tourism. Migrant populations from the region, who, attracted by the new situation in the region today, decide to return to their region with the hope of finding new employment and/or investment opportunities. First, to make it their home, some are restoring, rehabilitating and/or expanding the old heritage house and others are building new ones. Then, we see many of these populations starting to build tourist reception structures and support facilities (shops and services). People outside the region, who are also attracted by the opportunities of new wealth in the region, are investing, especially in tourism, some in partnership with local populations, others with favours,... And finally, the public authorities through the development and implementation of structuring projects - opening and rehabilitation of roads, the construction of port infrastructures (fishing and leisure ports) located in the village of Beni-Ksila, which is becoming a real urban centre. Development of housing estates and collective housing complexes, electrification of the region to small remote corners, water and gas supply,....

New forms of spatial appropriation are now emerging throughout this coastal region of Beni-Ksila. Through the behaviour, lifestyle and quality of life of the new predominantly urban populations, combined with the strategy of local populations to maintain and improve their brand image, the new forms of appropriation of space are typically contemporary urban.

It is worth noting that these actions are generally carried out spontaneously and informally with the knowledge of local authorities, who remain immobile without worrying about the adverse effects in the future throughout this coastal region. Many observers ask themselves a lot of questions. Why do many actors often act informally? What does this silence of local authorities in the face of these actions mean? According to the opinions gathered in the field, many stakeholders say that this is the only way to build your house and/or carry out your project. Because going through the regulatory route, i. e. the building permit application, is still not sure whether it will be approved and the notified ground for refusal is often random, it is often not convincing. Regarding the silence of the public authorities, some observers believe that this is a *fait accompli*, many have taken advantage of the black decade marked by the events of the Arushes that marked Kabylia in the 2000s and the terrorism that the country has experienced since 1992 to erect buildings intended for housing and equipment. This explains

the procedure for regularizing illegal construction, adopted by the State from 2008 onwards. This procedure has been extended continuously (in 2016, then in 2017) since then, probably due to shortcomings in the existing regulations. It should be noted that some owners, by virtue of their status or political position in the hierarchy, have been able to regularize their situations. And local authorities, when they are not in collusion, find it difficult to take the necessary decisions. Others believe that this is the State's intention, with the new strategy for balanced spatial planning. This is to enable these regions to bring back their populations who fled poverty in the past to seek a better life elsewhere, particularly in urban centres, a policy of relieving congestion in many cities that are now overcrowded.

### 3. Discussion

The signs of tourism and urban development in this new occupation of space today throughout the coastal region of Beni-Ksila can be seen on many levels. Firstly, by building a significant number of tourist infrastructures - hotels, restaurants, tourist residences, tourist rental houses, second homes -, the choice of installation sites and occupied plots where preference is given to construction on large plots, easily accessible by road, not far from the seaside and offering splendid views, and if possible on the sea. Secondly, from an architectural point of view, the image that characterizes the region today is very reminiscent of that of tourist areas in coastal areas and of the contemporary urban landscape. New buildings, whether for permanent or tourist accommodation, or for other functions, are distinguished by: the geometry of the façades, where we see a play of discrepancies in the volume with large terraces and balconies with large bays, all often oriented so as to offer splendid views of the exterior, mainly of the sea. The use of new construction materials, particularly those used for ornaments (carved stone, glass, tiles, wood, etc.). Generalization of large terraces, balconies, loggias and tiled roofs. Then again, on a functional level, we can see the specialization of interior spaces (kitchen bar, living room, bathroom, etc.) in residential houses. Finally, the outdoor areas of buildings where gardens, mini-playgrounds and swimming pools are generally located.

Today, the image of the region, which was in a recent rural past, suddenly takes on the appearance of a typically contemporary urban landscape. Of course, it is beautiful, and that the local world (inhabitants, associations, elected officials and public authorities) has accepted, without any hesitation, the development of tourism and its consequent spatial effects in the region, at least in its early stages; but some observable signs are worrying about the future of the region. Indeed, this tourism and these spatial effects developed informally throughout this coastal region of Beni-Ksila, have contributed to the beginning of a state of desolation, -some sites supposed to be protected are, in some places, encroached upon with the knowledge and sight of the authorities; the region, which continues to fill up in the

summer period, empties itself the rest of the year to give an image of a ghost space in some respects. This seems worrying and therefore deserves the attention of professionals in tourism, urban planning and land use planning.

## 4. Conclusion

This presentation, although brief, shows the spatial effects of the development of tourism in the environment where it is practiced, where certain spaces are constantly changing and their morphology is undergoing significant transformations, even in the architecture of buildings called upon to fulfil new functions in order to meet new tourist requirements.

It must be said that by strengthening the economic and human weight, as in the case of the industrial revolution, tourism has, in many countries, significant effects on the development and urban planning of the regions where it is practised. Certainly, in some countries tourism in general (national and international), in its development, has been more beneficial than perverse - the local world is satisfied with the economic benefits and the effects on the social, cultural and spatial planning levels -. Unlike other countries where it has rather generated effects that have often been criticized, where certain developments which, in addition to their perverse effects, - encroachments on sites supposed to be protected, conflicts between the local world, tourists and the promoters of the sector - have become desert spaces, even ghosts, in certain periods (times of crisis, low seasons,...) and more particularly in the case of complex and vulnerable coastal areas and, that the most developed form of tourism is generally the seaside resort, a very seasonal tourism. The reasons for this, where it has been successful in some countries and not in others, lie in the sector's development policies and strategies, which needed to be thought through and conducted more judiciously.

In the case of developing countries, following the example of Algeria, the situation is more worrying given that domestic tourism is not given much consideration by decision-making authorities and professionals in the sector, and even less so when it comes to its spatial implications in the environment in which it is practised. However, the results are there and clearly show the reality of the existence of tourism in Algerian society, more particularly the seaside resort, and its spatial effects are worrying for the future of our coast. So, it is now or never that we must think carefully about the real tourism development policy in our country. As many tourism experts agree, tourism is not always the only culprit in the desolate situations criticized in certain tourist environments, everything is about the policies that underpin its development [11]. And that is why it is not appropriate to develop it at any price, otherwise situations of desolation will appear in the local world. Yes, it is true that tourism is not an easily exploitable resource.

Finally, I would say that the interaction between tourism and spatial effects observed today throughout the world provides material for a lesson in tourism, urban planning and

architecture. A valuable lesson if we want to frame the development of our tourist coastal areas for a safe and harmonious future.

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