

Development of borders areas in Algeria: Place-based approach Twinning between El Oued and Tozuer

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Summary: Algeria seeks to develop its border regions in a way that realizes the local and sustainable development of the local population as well as the residents of the other side of the border. Where, the development of border areas is among the most important mechanisms that help the state to impose full control of its borders. The state realized that converting the border areas into development areas cost it less than guarding these areas through the army especially that most of the illegal cross-border activities are caused by the poverty experienced by the residents of those areas.

As an experiment in international cooperation for the development of border areas, Algeria signed an agreement with Tunisia regarding twinning between El Oued and Tozeur. The twinning project included several joint development programs aimed to raising the level of local development in the two states. Through this paper, we will study what Algeria and Tunisia have done to achieve the twinning project, by studying the content of the project and the goals that were set for it in the end.

Keywords: development; borders areas; El Oued; Tozeur; Twinning.

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I-Introduction:

Borders are a symbol of the states sovereignty; source of diplomacy and identity tensions, the border is as much a place of passage and exchange, control and filtering, as an object of cooperation and a place of transgression. Historically, borders have been an attribute of the state, managed by the central government via, among others, customs or army: public policies, except foreign policy, apply to national territory, never beyond. Today, borders are at the crossroads of cooperation and exchange. They therefore refer to local, regional and global governance processes in which international and regional organizations, national laws and local regulations are articulated.

Contemporary borders are thus the subject of a multitude of actions and strategies whose objective is not always to separate and dissociate, but also to reunite territories or to facilitate their crossing. In this regard, Algeria seeks to develop its border regions in a way that realizes the local and sustainable development of the local population as well as the residents of the other side of the border. Where, the development of border areas is among the most important mechanisms that help the state to impose full control of its borders. The state realized that converting the border areas into development areas cost it less than guarding these areas through the army especially that most of the illegal cross-border activities are caused by the poverty experienced by the residents of those areas.

Algeria established the national program for territory Development for the horizons of 2030, this program includes all strategies and actions aimed at ensuring an appropriate distribution of the population, economic activities and infrastructure, taking into account the characteristics of the regions and ensuring that balance, equity and gravity are guaranteed across all spaces of national territory, within the framework of sustainable development.

Therefore, the wager of this program is not to accompany the more dynamic regions by structuring their mobility, but especially, in ensuring the integration of remote spaces that suffer from delays in the field of development. From this standpoint, the public authorities attach the highest importance to these regions, by setting up special programs for social and economic development aimed at improving the living conditions of their residents and their active participation in the national economic movement and enabling them to open up to cross-border exchanges.

As an experiment in international cooperation for the development of border areas, Algeria signed an agreement with Tunisia regarding twinning between the Algerian state (wilaya) of El Ouade and the Tunisian state (wilaya) of Tozeur. The twinning project included several joint development programs aimed to raising the level of local development in the two states. However, neither the implementation of this cooperation nor even its placing on the political agenda is self-evident. Conflicts, historical legacies, national folds and strategic issues also limit political perspectives to the national space; internal public or private interests and differences prevent mutual understanding. On the contrary of the local cultural proximity of the populations living on both sides of the border, certain States slow down any development of cross-border areas.

Through this paper, we will study what Algeria and Tunisia have done to achieve the twinning project, by studying the content of the project and the goals that were set for it in the end.

The literature review of this article is a study of: Slusarciuc, Marcela. (2018). DEVELOPMENT OF CROSS-BORDER AREAS. STUDY CASES REVIEW. The paper aims to review study cases found in the scientific literature concerning the development of cross-border areas in European Union and its neighborhood. The introductory part of the paper is drawing few considerations about the cross-border areas. Further we identified in the specific literature relevant study cases that provide lessons learned, tools and models that can contribute to the development of the cross-border areas. The last part of the paper is focusing on an inquiry about how this lessons, learned, tools and models may be adapted in case of cross-border areas along the Romanian border with the EU Eastern Neighborhoods. Where we tried to draw lessons from the experiences of European

countries mentioned in this study, in addition to how to apply them by Romania. And the extents to which it is possible to benefit from this experience that is based on the internal interest of the state in its dealings with its neighbors, and does this apply to Algeria?

II– Methods and Materials:

In order to analyze the results achieved by the cooperationdevelopment Program in Algeria we relied on a policy analysis model.

Public policy model, which is a model that makes judgment on any public policy program based on the following five criteria:

1- Program allocations: focuses on the quantity and quality of programmed inputs, including information on individuals, funds and other resources spent on the program, which was represented in the construction of a border crossing worth 872million dinars.

2- Performance: is focused on the programmed outputs that clarify the patterns of changes in the environment, and have an impact on the group concerned with the general policy. The project was completed in record time, and is ready to work by the year 2019 on the basis of contributing to the development movement in the region. However, the reality says that it is just a border crossing like the rest of the other crossings, meaning that the economic feasibility of this project has not been realized.

3 - Adequacy: it is the relationship between program allocations and performance with the level of need for the program in the community. Whereas, the local community of the state of El-oued did not need much of a border crossing of that size and cost, which was expressed by the local population, especially with regard to the obstacles they face to export their agricultural products, and the fact that the phenomenon of smuggling remains at the same levels, which has a negative impact on their economic activity.

4- Efficiency: It refers to the relationship between provision, performance and adequacy and is measured by examining strategies to reduce effort and at the same time maximize performance and the adequacy of the program. As the project was not able to achieve the required efficiency due to the different view of the subject on the part of the Tunisian side, which came to see the project as a threat to its tourism interests and to the partnership it established with Qatar in the region in the field of tourism.

5- Process: focuses on implementing processes related to translating cost into results. That is, to what extent are the results consistent with the implementation of the policy program with the cost allocated to it. Where we record at this point the absence of measurement indicators, as we were not able to obtain the size of the financial mass circulating in economic activities on both sides of the border, which greatly impedes the possibility of measuring the real economic feasibility of the project. Neither the Directorate of Agriculture, nor Trade nor Industry provided actual figures for the volume of commercial exchanges across the border crossing, nor was the same thing on the side opposite the border.

We'll apply these five pointers on the “place-Based” Theory Developed in the early 20th century by the German sociologist “Werner Sombart”, this theory essentially stipulates that the development of territories depends on two mechanisms: their ability to capture income from outside their "borders" (this is called the Base or basic incomes) and the one to redistribute these basic incomes in their local economy under the form of consumer spending. Building on this conceptual framework, Laurent Davezies has developed what he calls an approach by the “drivers of development” and built a new development reading grid territorial in which the notion of residential economy has a central place. He set out to assess the weight of competitive productive mechanisms (Productive Base) and "Extra-productive" (public, social and residential bases) which allow the territories to capture income as follow:

Productive base: income linked to the presence of workers who live on the territory and work in competitive industries, that is to say exporters.

Public basis: income linked to the presence of civil servants.

Social base: all social transfer income (excluding retirement pensions) from which benefit residents (unemployment benefits, various social benefits, etc.).

Residential base: retirement pensions, market and non-market tourism expenditure and income related to the presence of active people who live on the territory but work outside.

Here, we will try to find out the size of the financial mass that enters the wilaya of El-Oued, based on the extent to which the Twining project contributes to bringing in income from outside the region, that is, from the neighboring states inside Algeria and the corresponding wilaya on the other side of the border. And to know whether the project contributed to moving the driver of development in this region or not.

Each Base, or "development driver", has a specific function and characteristics. We will focus on the Public Base has the double characteristic of being particularly little studied at territorial level and depend (more or less) on the localization dynamics of population. It is in this sense that its level and its dynamics in no way depend on the productive capacity of the territories. Because of its insensitivity to economic shocks and its relative stability, it can play a vital damping role for the territories in times of economic crisis.¹

III–Border areas development project: place-based approach

The project seems to be great, but we know that it's not too easy. Especially when we think about the system of local government in Algeria, which is based on central management and subordination of the local administration to the central administration, while modern local development depends on the approach to the place. Local Economic Development (LED) has emerged globally as a vibrant 'place-based' planning approach to local and regional economic development.² The German international development agency considers LED is 'an ongoing process by which key stakeholders and institutions from all spheres of society, the public and private sector as well as civil society, work jointly to create a unique advantage for the locality and its firms, tackle market failures, remove bureaucratic obstacles for local businesses and strengthen the competitiveness of local firms'.³

The national program for developing border areas falls within the new institutional context of the country, which is characterized by the approval of public authorities on the national plan to prepare the region for the prospects for 2030 that is approved by the law N° 10-02.⁴ Which affirms that every part of the national territory, including the border areas are an element of our heritage, and we must recognize each of them the right to develop and prosper within the framework of a comprehensive and controlled strategy. The Law 10-02 includes three articles: The first relates to the approval of the national plan to prepare the region attached to this law for a period of 20 years, with the need to undergo periodic evaluation and updating every five years, and the second obligates all ministerial sectors as well as regional groups and national and local institutions to respect the controls and rules of the national plan to prepare the region and work with it in preparing all of its projects and plans, and the third relates to its publication.

This strategy was reinforced by the importance attached to these spaces through law N° 16-01.⁵ which includes the constitutional amendment, which states that "it is absolutely not permitted to relinquish or abandon any part of the national territory." On the one hand, as well as through the government's work plan for the month of September 2017, which proposes to intensify development efforts with regard to the border areas, especially with regard to creating jobs and generating income. By correcting the shortcomings and working to stabilize the population and by improving the citizen's living framework (housing, education, training, health, employment, energy,

and supply of drinking water, purification, roads ...), as well as, to revitalize the development movement and push it and upgrade the attractiveness of these regions.

By comparing the content of the national program for the development of border areas with the theoretical definition that we provided for local development, we note that they do not differ much. The goal is to achieve local development in the first place, taking into account the privacy of border areas. So place-based approach explicitly target geographic areas for some form of special treatment, be it tax subsidies, public investments, or special rules and regulations.⁶ But by looking at the size of the geographical area concerned with the national program for the development of border areas, we wonder about the state's ability to implement the program?

The program includes 09 border areas divided as follows: East Coast, East Hill, Western Hill, The High Plateau – East, The High Plateau – West, South-East, The Big South - East, Great South, South-West. The border areas include the following: 12 states (wilaya), 03 Mandated states (wilaya), 57 municipalities, 07 neighboring countries. Which represents an area of 1,323,395 km², or 42% of the total area of the country, and 62 892 people, or 3% of the total population of the country. A border line of 6,343 km, distributed as follows: 1601 km with Morocco, 1376 km with Mali, 982 km with Libya, 965 km with Tunisia, 956 km with Niger, 463 km with Mauritania, 42 km with the Western Desert Republic.⁷

It appears through the project presented by the Ministry of Interior on the development of border areas that it came as more of an idea than a project. This is because the project did not carry inside it the implementation mechanisms on the ground, and through searching the documents of the Ministry of Interior on this project, we found no evidence of a specific plan or public policy for the development of border areas. This raises the question about the seriousness of the project from its foundation, because such a project requires a tight public policy and a huge budget to achieve it, while we know that Algeria is suffering from a major financial crisis due to the collapse of oil prices.

From the above, we conclude that the Algerian government approved that project without even knowing the different dimensions of the word "region" or place, and what works for each region while respecting its multiple peculiarities. Without naming, identification, or representation by ordinary people, a place is not a place. Places are doubly constructed: most are built or in some way physically carved out. They are also interpreted, narrated, perceived, felt, understood, and imagined. A spot in the universe, with a gathering of physical stuff there, becomes a place only when it ensconces history or utopia, danger or security, identity or memory. In spite of its relatively enduring and imposing materiality, the meaning or value of the same place is labile - flexible in the hands of different people or cultures, malleable over time, and inevitably contested.⁸

In addition, it must be clarified why the government focused on the border areas and not others, as the interior and desert areas. Any public policy requires that the problem to be addressed be accurately identified in order to provide the necessary resources to address it. If the problem with the border areas is development, then all other regions suffer from lack of development and even its absence in some areas. New institutional economics is one of the most prominent burgeoning fields of development scholarship in economics and political science. According to these scholars, all economic activity is enacted through systems of social and legal norms, or institutions. Perhaps the most prominent example, conclude that economic development requires inclusive political institutions that protect individual rights, secure property, and encourage entrepreneurship, thus promoting growth. They contrast inclusive states with those historically governed by extractive institutions, which concentrate power in the hands of a few.⁹

The failure to justify a development program for the border areas, although they are not different from other regions in the levels of development, makes us not optimistic about the success of this project, because it was simply not built on economic and social foundations that take into account the peculiarities of the border areas, because what drives countries to focus on the border areas is to protect them from various security threats, especially: terrorism, smuggling, and illegal

immigration. This is what we did not hear in the official speech of the Algerian government. In other words, not linking the development of border areas with the threats they face.

The Algerian strategy for the development of border areas is not clear, and the government has not specified the approach it will take, and will it depend on the money approach to support growth or the human capital approach? Economists have long agreed that economic growth can be achieved by the addition of more capital, more labor, and more technology, but this type of growth always has diminishing returns. New growth theorists argue that smarter growth requires investments in the ideas, innovations, and abilities of the workers - their human capital - to most efficiently increase formal economic output. Moreover, these investments in individuals' abilities allow them to complement formal wages with other innovative forms of subsistence production. Because institutions are the main determinants of innovation and accumulation of human capital.¹⁰

This is what requires the state to take into consideration the following four elements which have a direct relationship with the place:

- Mobilization of generic, segmented and agglomerated resources;
- A process to support specialized economic development;
- An innovative dynamic that accompanies technological innovations;
- Participation in the construction of transversal socio-economic development.¹¹

This requires the state to achieve what is called "creativity" in local public action.¹² Without it, the border areas development program cannot succeed. As the specificity that characterizes each region over the other, requires the state to move towards decentralization in implementing this program, and decentralization means giving more powers to local actors. As the border areas differ between the north and the south, their development needs differ too, so it is logical that the border areas development program be national in dimension, but it must be local in implementation.

In order, for Algeria, to succeed in implementing the border areas development program, it must develop the way the state deals with local collectivities, because what is important in this program is the subnational level. Because the subnational level is the territorial scale at which processes of growth, development, and change operate, the pressures imposed by an increasingly competitive, global economy are more and more frequently incurred at this subnational scale with the effect of "increasing the importance of regional processes and the role of local actors in shaping development trajectories".¹³ This requires taking into consideration the local privacy of each border region and the resources it needs to promote local development.

The empowerment of subnational governments represents an opportunity for localities to assume greater control over their development. More specifically, it affords them latitude to tailor expenditures, policies, and strategies to both the opportunities that arise from, and the challenges imposed by local socioeconomic and institutional conditions and realities; local policies may differ substantially from the top-down policies that have dominated until recently. The global trend toward devolution has, in effect, opened the door for place-based territorial approaches to development.¹⁴

And in order not to bear the full responsibility of the state in relation to the embodiment of the border areas development program, local collectivities must bear part of that responsibility, especially with regard to the ability of the local elected to manage. Because the place-based approach to development needs:

1. Capacity building to ensure that localities and communities are technically capable of shouldering the responsibilities associated with greater powers and developing territorially oriented approaches and interventions.
2. The promotion of multilevel governance to enhance vertical and horizontal coordination with a view to ensure, first, a sufficient degree of coherence between the resources allocated to and responsibilities assumed by local authorities and, second, minimal overlap between the actions taken by various tiers of government.¹⁵

The development of border areas and other areas does not take place through a law issued in the Official journal, nor by centralized policies that do not attach importance to the nature of the areas intended by that policy. This is what we will see in the second part of this article on the experience of twinning between the Algerian state (wilaya) El Ouade and Tunisian state (wilaya) Tozeur. And was this project able to overcome the administrative obstacles related to centralization in the two countries?

IV–The project of twinning between states (wilayas) of El Ouade and Tozeur:

A partnership and cooperation agreement was signed between the states (wilayas) of El Oued (Algeria) and Tozeur (Tunisia) in 2018, setting the general framework for the expected partnership and cooperation between the two Border States. The domains and limits of cooperation and partnership available between the two states were identified through the recommendations of four workshops:

- The first was devoted to agriculture, environment and irrigation, where they emphasized the mandatory of cooperation visits between the two countries to exchange technical expertise in the field of agriculture, through the organization of joint specialized training courses and the establishment of a plant and animal health observatory.
- The second was devoted to discuss the files of industry, trade, investment and public works, it focused on the importance of joint organization of exhibitions of local products for the two countries in addition to field visits to economic dealers from owners of productive institutions to see the pace of industrial production and local industry experiences and explain the advantages and opportunities of investment for the two states.
- The third was about culture, youth, sports, tourism and traditional industries, indicates the positive outcome of the exchange of delegations in cultural festivals, in addition to the folkloric activities that allow to highlight the common social heritage and the organization of joint sports courses and the organization of meetings and seminars for scientific, intellectual and academic creativity with the preparation of flyers for activities.
- The fourth was about health and social affairs, to exchange preventive information through social media as well as participate in medical scientific meetings, whether in the public or private sector and organize a twinning between medical institutions, in addition to exchanging experiences in the field of institutional and collective sponsorship.¹⁶

Those who are careful about the content of the twinning project will note that it is a comprehensive project, and it covers most domains of local development, and it also takes into account the agricultural specificity that characterizes the two states (wilayas). This is very positive for the development of the two border regions and making them a model for the rest of the border regions, whether with Tunisia or the rest of the countries surrounding Algeria. This is on the theoretical level, but on the ground there are many obstacles that prevent the realization of the project. The first obstacle to embodying this project is the failure to set the public policy adopted by the state, as it emphasizes the project centrally and that the budget allocated to it will be distributed to almost all border regions equally. Whereas, the Minister of Interior asked the concerned governors (walis) to submit their projects. The minister noted that "nothing prevents governors (walis) and local collectivities from presenting investment projects".¹⁷

Despite all the problems, the twinning and decentralized partnership agreements concluded between the two countries have given impetus to the project to build a border post to put it into operation and support the dynamic of bilateral cooperation in the wake of bilateral agreements. The new border gate "Taleb-Larbi" (84 km east of El-Oued), entered on service in June 2019, is considered to be the most important in the Maghreb region, aims to be an economic and tourist showcase and cultural heritage of the country and as such displays great perspectives.¹⁸ Built on an area of 12 hectares, at a cost of 872 million dinars, Algeria has put the first stone in the cooperation

building, but it remains a stone provided by the state and not by the governorate (wilaya), which prompts us to ask the question about the power of governors (walis) to realize and manage their own projects in their states (wilayas). What this means, is that the project is in fact a project between two states and not two governorates.

On the other hand, we did not see any Tunisian project equivalent to the size of the Algerian project on the border. On the contrary, quite the opposite, Tunisia went to partnering with Qatar to complete a huge touristic project in the governorate of Tozeur. The project director said that this tourist megaproject includes a luxury 5-star hotel that will be marked by the architectural specificities of the Tozeur region. Added to this, a craft village which, according to him, will be dedicated to the exhibition and promotion of the cultural and craft heritage of the region. It also has several tourist attractions. Namely luxury residential villas, restaurants, cafes, shopping centers, as well as areas reserved for children. This megaproject will cover 60 hectares of area.¹⁹

By noting the nature of the projects carried out on both sides of the border, we conclude that the Tunisian side was very pragmatic in its thinking, as it went to the partnership that returns directly money, and did not pay much attention to the partnership with Algeria, which has a local development dimension. The Tunisian side is looking for private interests through developing the tourism sector in a mainly non-tourist area. This suggests that Tunisia only wants millions of tourists from Algeria who visit it every year especially that these tourists are a great source of income for Tunisia. While most joint projects between Algerians and Tunisians do not go beyond private partnerships between local investors. This raises the question about the economic feasibility of the new border gate that Algeria built at great cost. All indications are that the main beneficiary of that project is Tunisia.

Those who follow the cooperative policy pursued by Tunisia in its relationship with neighboring countries will find that it is based on bringing aid to Tunisia, not the other way around. For example, we mention the cooperative project between Tunisia and the Italian Agency for Cooperation and Development signed in 2018 (It is the same year as the signing of the twinning agreement with Algeria) to develop the border area in Tozeur. The project will be carried out over three years thanks to a donation from Italian cooperation of 5 million euro. The objective is to improve the living conditions of the population of border areas in the South of the Country through the development of knowledge and skills of local institutions and civil society that can increase agricultural production and the diversification of sources income of rural families.²⁰

This example prompts us to say that the commitment of the two countries to the twinning project is completely different. While Algeria seeks to advance development on both sides of the border, Tunisia suffices to search for its own interest by concluding multiple partnerships with multiple parties, that it is a pragmatic work that Tunisia has the right to do, but Algeria has not the right to spend money so that the other side of the border can benefit from it. That is why Algeria must embrace pragmatic thinking in its dealings with neighboring countries, and think about its own interest above all, and that bilateral cooperation projects with Tunisia or with others should not be a financial burden for Algeria.

The economic and security conditions of the countries surrounding Algeria require that projects to develop border areas have specific objectives which are; Development of border areas in order to protect them from penetration, or in order to prevent the residents of those areas from carrying out illegal activities such as smuggling, or to make illegal immigrants not exceed the border areas because of the economic potential of these areas. These objectives are not clear in the Algerian public policy of the development of border areas, which will negatively affect the future and success of the development project.

For example, El Oued has become Algeria's main supplier of potato products. It was more appropriate for the public authorities to build factories to transformate this product, not to build a transit center worth 872 million DZD, from which Tunisia would benefit more than Algeria. Merkhovi Yusef, head of the potato division in El Oued, believes that “the peasant of El Oued

made a great effort in planting potatoes where he managed in recent years to double production and this is accompanied by the Ministry of Agriculture, where the production rate reached 200 kantars per hectare, but the marketing problem remains".²¹ The state of (wilaya) El Oued has become today a registered mark in the potatoes division, but it is in urgent need of transformative institutions and exporters at the level to maintain its first rank in planting potatoes.

This requires the state to focus all its development efforts to the state (wilaya) without thinking about the other side of the border. Because Tunisians see the development of tourism in El Oued as direct competition for them in this sector, they have built more than 10 new hotels during the past five years, in addition to the giant tourist city that the Qataris sought in Tozeur, and the aim is to acquire tourists who want desert tourism, given that the tourism sector in Tunisia is more developed than Algeria. This indicates that Tunisia is not looking to deal with Algeria from the standpoint of brotherhood or solidarity, but rather in terms of the economic interest of its people in the first place.

Through our discussion of the method adopted by Algeria to develop the border areas, we came up with a very important result, which is that Algeria did not rely on any development or even economic model to implement the program to develop the border areas, but rather ideas that the government published in 2018 for political and social reasons rather than economic ones. This is what made the project, like other developmental projects, achieve little results, and the experience that El Oued has carried out is an evidence of that. It did not take into account the nature of the region and the nature of the population. And it relied only on the state's funds for the completion of some projects, especially the border gate with Tunisia, in which huge money was spent without having significant economic returns compared to what was expected of it. We conclude that the Algerian government focus on the Public Base as a driver of development because it has the double characteristic of being particularly little studied at territorial level and depend (more or less) on the localization dynamics of population.

Consequently, Algeria must change the driver of development in the border areas by moving to the driver who relies on Productive base that its income is linked to the presence of workers who live on the territory and work in competitive industries or industrial agriculture, that is to say the existence of exporters in the borders regions. Because the success of any economic project is mainly related to the feasibility study that is prepared in advance and which must take into account the four dimensions of the place-based (residential) economy that we mentioned in the materials and methods. In other words, giving up political and administrative management of economic projects.

V-Conclusion:

Through this study, we have noted that Algeria does not have a specific development model, but rather sets development programs that are often not subject to any prior study. So setting a program for the development of border areas required the adoption of a specific public policy in which the development model is determined on the basis of the simple formula on which any public policy is based: cost - time - the achieved result - the beneficiary populations - the expected results, through which a pre-evaluation of the project can be made, then an evaluation during implementation and finally a post-evaluation. This is to determine the success of the project, whether it should be continued, modified, or arrested

It is time for Algeria to reconsider its development policies in general, and the development of border areas in particular, because setting policies without a clear strategy that includes the medium and long term will not lead to any positive result. And the most affected by this policy will be the state treasury and the citizen. The regions must be developed not because they are border, inland or coastal, but rather because they need development according to a well thought-out plan that takes

into account the local peculiarities of each region and focuses on the ingredients in it for its development and not starting from scratch. This confirms that the state should not establish standard development policies that are valid for all regions.

Also, Algeria should review the partnership agreements and projects that it signed with some of the neighboring countries because it has many lost rights for Algeria and the border areas in particular. Because the way that Algeria deals with neighboring countries, except for Morocco, is almost naive, as it is dominated by a solidarity, social and “brotherly” character, which conflicts with the economic interests of the country and the population. If we compare the economic returns of the border gate of El Oued with Tozeur, with the border gate between Algeria and Niger, we will notice that the Niger gateway has more economic benefit for Algeria because it has become a gateway for the export of Algerian products to Niger and sub-Saharan countries.

This is what requires Algeria to reconsider its economic and development policy towards neighboring countries. Where the markets in sub-Saharan countries are more attractive to Algerian products, and more in need than other neighboring countries. Algeria must focus on developing economic relations with Mali, Niger, Mauritania and Libya because it will be more beneficial to the Algerian economy and will contribute to the development of southern regions in general, and will also help to control the phenomenon of illegal immigration by creating jobs in the border areas, which contributes to Immigrants settle on the other side of the border as long as their economic needs are there, because what drives them to migrate is basically the search for a better life.

Recommendations:

- _ Reviewing the public policy for developing border areas in terms of Possibilities, goals and needs of each region.
- _ Preparation of programs and implementation plans for each border region, with identification of the parties responsible for completion, follow-up and evaluation.
- _ Giving local collectivities more independence and freedom to choose projects that suit the needs of their residents, and thus the projects will be closer to achieving local development.
- _ Developing the leading sectors in each region, similar to the agriculture sector in El Oued, especially the Potato Division, as El Oued is the first national producer of this product. With the prospect of exporting to neighboring countries.
- _ Revising the way that Algeria deals with neighboring countries, so that the neighborhood cooperation policies should be based on the internal interest of Algeria. (Adopt a pragmatic policy)
- _ The establishment of free trade areas on the southern borders with neighboring countries, because their interest on the Algerian producers will be very large.
- _ The development of bilateral economic activities on both sides of the border, especially those related to local trade and investment.
- _ Closing the borders in the face of smuggling, which incurs huge public funds every year, especially that the smuggled products are mostly backed by the state and are intended for the Algerian citizen only.

Finally, Algeria must not sign the twinning agreements between the cities before making sure of their economic returns on Algeria and the residents of the city concerned. Because the

experience of twinning between El Oued and Tozeur no longer has any benefit for Algeria, on the contrary, the Tunisian side has come to view the El Oued as a competitor in the field of tourism, and it seeks in every way to block the road to El Oued through allocating huge tourism projects in Tozeur that was not concerned it out before. For that, Algeria should consider twinning agreements or partnerships based on a winner-winner base and “obligate” Tunisia to import the agricultural products produced by El Oued in exchange for the large number of Algerian tourists who cross the border between the two countries.

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