



The State Of Sociology In Algerian Universities: Challenges And Prospects

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Abstract ;

This study analyzes the state of sociology in Algerian universities through an approach combining theoretical grounding and critical analysis. It outlines key concepts, traces the discipline's development across its major stages, and examines academic programs before and after university reform, with particular attention to training and research orientations.

The findings highlight major challenges, notably the dominance of theoretical approaches and the weak linkage between research, training, and social reality, despite the complexity of Algerian societal issues. The study therefore proposes strengthening applied training, aligning research with real needs, and fostering institutional partnerships to enhance the discipline's effectiveness and societal relevance.

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1. Introduction :

Sociology is widely regarded as a central discipline within the human sciences, concerned with the study of social phenomena and the analysis of relationships among individuals and groups within human societies, including Algerian society. In this context, the discipline has gained increasing prominence within Algerian universities, emerging as a field of study that attracts a growing number of students in response to the profound social transformations experienced by the country.

However, this quantitative expansion does not necessarily correspond to an improvement in the quality of academic training or the effectiveness of scientific research. This discrepancy is largely attributable to the predominance of theoretical approaches within academic programs, often at the expense of fieldwork and applied research. Consequently, graduates' capacity to contribute meaningfully to the understanding and resolution of social issues remains limited.

Accordingly, this paper offers a critical analytical examination of the current state of sociology, highlighting the principal challenges it faces while also exploring potential avenues for its development, with the aim of strengthening its academic and societal role.

2. General Concepts Of Sociology And The Algerian University

2.1. The Concept Of Sociology:

Sociologists have long differed in their views regarding the subject matter of sociology, and these perspectives can be broadly classified into three main orientations. The first considers sociology

as the study of social relations and is commonly referred to as the "school of social relations." Proponents of this approach define sociology as the science of social relations, examining them from a formal standpoint that emphasizes their intrinsic nature, while largely disregarding their substantive content, diverse manifestations, and structural forms. This orientation is notably associated with the German thinker Georg Simmel, alongside Max Weber and Alfred Vierkandt. The second orientation, often described as the "social school," advocates for the establishment of specialized social sciences alongside sociology. According to this perspective, sociology should focus on formulating general principles and foundational frameworks upon which the various social sciences are constructed. It aims to clarify their nature and specificity, establish methodological foundations for research, and synthesize the general findings produced by these disciplines, which are viewed as branches of a common intellectual origin. Within this framework, the sociologist's role encompasses two primary functions: first, conducting specialized and in-depth studies of particular aspects of social life in order to uncover the laws governing social phenomena; and second, undertaking a broader analytical task that involves examining the fundamental components of social life, the bases ensuring the unity of social structure, and the general characteristics and regulatory laws of social relations. This orientation is associated with scholars such as Émile Durkheim, Hermann Hesse, and Lester Ward. This approach is often considered

more empirically grounded than the first, as it better reflects the nature of sociology and the complexity of the issues it addresses. Sociology cannot be reduced to abstract propositions or purely formal constructs detached from empirical reality and social experience (Dardish, 2017, p. 78).

The third orientation encompasses a range of distinct perspectives rather than a unified theoretical school. Some scholars argue that sociology should be treated as a branch of general biology, an approach associated with Herbert Spencer and his followers. Others conceptualize sociology as the science of social systems, as proposed by Georges Gurvitch. Another perspective, linked to R. M. MacIver, emphasizes the study of the principles that ensure social cohesion and drive processes of development and change, as well as their effects on social organization, relationships, and functions. Meanwhile, some scholars define sociology as the study of social heritage—including customs, traditions, norms, and folklore—a view associated with Albion Small and William Graham Sumner (Dardish, 2017, p. 79).

Despite these differences, most general orientations agree that the subject of sociology is the scientific, descriptive, and analytical study of society its structures, systems, and phenomena with the aim of identifying the laws governing these phenomena. Accordingly, sociology can be defined as the science that studies human life in its social context, the relationships that arise among individuals, and the systems and rules that regulate these relationships. This includes the study of social heritage and its components, beliefs, arts, cultural manifestations, moral standards, modes of work, as well as

patterns of backwardness, change, progress, and social organization (Bouyala & Chergui, 2012, p. 2).

In the *Dictionary of Social Science Terms*, sociology is succinctly defined as a descriptive, interpretive, and comparative study of human societies as they exist across time and space, with the aim of identifying the laws of development governing their progress and transformation (Baghrish, 2015, p. 5).

2.2. Definition of Algerian Society (Revised and Refined Translation) :

From a historical perspective, the Algerian people acquired the characteristics of a society in a period deeply rooted in antiquity that cannot be precisely determined, due to their continuous dynamism and responsiveness to the challenges they encountered. Some of its historical phases can be partially traced, though it cannot be definitively asserted that they date back to the era of the Carthaginians (814–146 BCE), who succeeded in creating a civilizational milieu with which the Berbers of North Africa interacted. They contributed to its glory, engaged in wars both alongside and against it, and adopted from it various skills in agriculture, industry, trade, and navigation. Professor Mubarak al-Mili explains how the challenge faced by the Berbers—represented in the turbulent international conditions between Rome and Carthage at the time—was a key factor in the unification of Numidia. He states: “*The Berbers of Algeria lived, as God willed, in comfort, free from the burden of kings, and maintained their dignity by resisting submission to the desires and tyranny of rulers, until the wars between Carthage and Rome forced them to endure the*

hardships of the international order. These wars awakened them to the reality that some nations harbor ambitions to dominate others; thus, they strengthened their kingdom and unified their authority in order to protect their homeland from the aggressions of those driven by ambitions of supremacy and destructive sovereignty” (Qamoumia, 2021, p. 82).

The achievements of Masinissa (d. 148 BCE) clearly reflect the emergence of a new society striving to generate the conditions for its transformation toward a common purpose. He initiated a qualitative shift in the formation of social ties, laying the foundations of what may be considered an early social network. Masinissa unified Numidia (both eastern and western regions) and organized it according to the Carthaginian model. He encouraged the population to settle on the land, abandon nomadic life, and engage in agriculture. They benefited from Carthaginian expertise in land reclamation and cultivation, eventually producing surplus grain for export to Rome. He also established a naval fleet, organized a structured army, relied on a taxation system to finance the treasury, and developed commercial relations with Carthage, Rome, Spain, and Greece. This transformation enabled the inhabitants of Algeria to acquire the status of a society in its historical sense, as it expanded the network of relationships from the narrow confines of tribe and faction to a broader social and political unity. It marked the beginning of an integration between human beings, land, and time in a dynamic manner that generated the conditions for change and fostered societal development in accordance with its own objectives.

Algerian society has undergone a prolonged series of internal and external challenges that have continuously shaped its structure and the configuration of its social relations. The objective here is not to provide a detailed historical account of these transformations, but rather to offer a general overview of the defining features of Algerian society at its point of origin and in its current state. What gives contemporary Algerian society its overall character and civilizational identity is its response to the process of the Islamic conquest and its integration into the sphere of the Islamic world. Through this transformation, its network of relationships became unified around new values those of Islam and its principles and expanded to include a broader relational framework rooted in religion, embodied in the bonds of Islamic brotherhood (Qamoumia, 2021, p. 83).

2.3 Definition of the Algerian University :

The term *university* is derived from the Latin word *universitas*, which originally referred to a union or association that brought together the most influential families in the political sphere of the city for purposes of authority. Over time, the term “university” came to denote a gathering of professors and students from different countries and peoples. The Oxford English Dictionary defines it as an educational institution that provides instruction and conducts research across various fields of knowledge, while granting academic degrees.

Some scholars have also described the university as a formal social organization within which social interaction takes place among its various components, shaped by relationships and prevailing values among

the actors involved in the academic educational process (Bouyala & Chergui, 2012, p. 4).

It is further defined as a group of individuals united by a specific system and structure, employing various means and coordinating different functions in order to attain higher knowledge (Kaddour & Graz, 2021, p. 172).

As for the (LMD) system Licence, Master, Doctorate it is a higher education framework composed of three levels: the Bachelor's degree (Licence), the Master's degree, and the Doctorate. It is an Anglo-Saxon system that proved effective and was subsequently adopted across Europe in more than 27 countries. Algeria began implementing this system starting from the 2004–2005 academic year.

University education, in general, represents the stage that crowns prior levels of education (primary and secondary). Some perspectives, however, distinguish between higher education and university education, noting that higher education encompasses a broader range of institutions, including specialized institutes affiliated with the Ministry of Higher Education (Kaddour & Graz, 2021, p. 173).

3. Sociology In The Algerian University

3.1. Stages In The Development Of Sociology In The Algerian University And Its Relationship To Social Reality

Sociology in Algeria can be said to have its roots in the socio-anthropological production of scholars such as Jacques Berque, Pierre Bourdieu, Abdelmalek Sayad, as well as other researchers such as Valensi and Gallissot, whose work spanned the periods before and immediately after independence.

During the 1970s in particular, a group of Algerian academics—such as Nadir Marouf and others including Chouli, El-Kenz, El-Yabes, and Jaghouli emerged and sought to approach Algerian society from its various dimensions, including social, cultural, and industrial institutions. With the implementation of higher education reform in 1971, sociology had already experienced more than thirty years of presence in Algerian universities as a field concerned with both the transmission and production of knowledge. Its development can be divided into three main stages (Bouyala & Chergui, 2012, p. 4):

- **First Stage (1971–1980):** This period was marked by the integration of sociology and sociologists under the banner of dominant popular ideology, with an emphasis on liberation from colonial ties and backwardness. Sociology was viewed as both an agent and a driver of social change.
- **Second Stage (1980s):** This phase coincided with the second decade, during which the importance and status of sociology were reduced. It became instrumentalized by state authority within political, economic, and social institutions.
- **Third Stage (1990s–Present):** Beginning in the 1990s and continuing to the present, Algeria experienced major upheavals affecting its social and political structures, leading to rapid and successive transformations at multiple levels. During this period, sociology—despite the analytical texts and discourse produced by sociologists—struggled to adequately understand and interpret these events. It became evident that society was

evolving independently of sociological analysis.

This situation leads to the conclusion that, despite individual or even institutional efforts, these have not yet produced a coherent sociological discourse capable of providing an adequate reading of the successive events experienced by Algerian society. Sociology has thus become subject to, or dependent upon, politics and ideology. Consequently, sociologists have often found themselves with limited options: either to produce discourse aligned with official positions and state perspectives, or to withdraw into isolation, sometimes culminating in migration (Bouyala & Chergui, 2012, p. 4).

3.2. Universities (Before and After Reform):

Sociology is considered a scientific discipline that contributes to development, which necessitates a close alignment between its teaching content and the fundamental problems of society—not merely through slogans or purely theoretical approaches, but through concrete applications rooted in social reality. This is essential for producing a form of sociological knowledge suited to developing countries, including Algerian society, one that reflects its concerns and aspirations. In this sense, mastering sociology represents a political dimension of intellectual independence, aimed at achieving comprehensive social adaptation.

However, the image through which developing societies perceive themselves is not always an authentic expression of their own cultural reality. Rather, it is often a transferred and, at times, rejected construct that reflects forms of past or present

external domination. In many cases, it constitutes a mere transposition of the problems and outcomes of developed societies aspiring toward further progress. This situation underscores the necessity for the sociologist to possess a deep understanding of the specificities of their own society and to remain closely engaged with its internal dynamics, while distancing themselves from dominant ideological frameworks. Only then can sociology serve as a true driver of research in the social sciences. Otherwise, if it remains confined to a purely theoretical dimension, it loses its ability to engage with social reality and becomes merely a descriptive recounting of historical events and phenomena—thus reduced to a form of general culture rather than an active scientific discipline.

In this regard, Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron argue that intellectuals are essentially products of the educational system and are tasked with maintaining its continuity. Accordingly, the university professor becomes a transmitter of programs without creativity or intervention in their reform, turning into a mere functionary or “*state intellectual*,” acting as an agent of the state—or what may be described as an agent of development. Therefore, it is incumbent upon the educator to highlight the fields of sociology and define its objectives in terms of addressing the problems of social institutions, organizing and studying social reality, engaging with ideological and cultural practices, and contributing to development through solving everyday problems and participating in the formulation of social and economic development plans (Bouyala & Chergui, 2012, p. 5).

First: Content of the Program Before Reform

In this phase, the curriculum was characterized by a clear disconnection between the university and the social conditions and concerns of Algerian society. This weakened the practical value of academic degrees and deprived them of tangible societal relevance, as the programs relied primarily on theoretical content detached from real social issues.

Ideally, *“educational programs designed for the dissemination of knowledge should be inspired by the social reality they seek to represent.”* This situation necessitated an objective reform aimed at liberating the university from serving colonial interests and reinforcing its cultural and ideological dominance, as educational orientations were previously framed within a colonial perspective and methodologies. The reform thus sought to transform both the content of programs and teaching methods by redefining research topics and approaches in a more effective and productive manner. It was not merely about transmitting concepts, but about equipping students with fieldwork techniques capable of transforming social reality (Massak, 2009, pp. 109–110).

Second: Content of the Program After Reform

The author identifies the main scientific features of the sociological orientation in this phase as follows:

- ✓ Explaining social phenomena in their totality and comprehensiveness.
- ✓ Emphasis on experimentation.
- ✓ The psychological approach (concerned with the relationship between the individual and the group).

- ✓ The relationship between urban and rural areas (with the aim of achieving balance and equal opportunities).
- ✓ Productive relations within industrial institutions (industrial sociology).
- ✓ Structural functionalism (which assumes that every society creates structures capable of fulfilling essential functions necessary for its reproduction; it also examines whether existing structures correspond to the functions intended by the social system).

According to Mohamed Bachir, one of the main observations regarding the program is the excessive fragmentation of modules, which undermines its coherence and makes it difficult to identify its orientations due to the overlap between its components. As a result, the program appears ambiguous and unclear, even for instructors at times. He suggests that the comprehensive nature of the curriculum—encompassing multiple disciplines such as economics, psychology, history, and statistics—may aim at providing an integrated education that contributes to the training of technically skilled and applied sociologists. However, he also highlights the pressure faced by instructors, who often find themselves implementing programs beyond their control, thereby limiting their ability to fulfill their role effectively. Furthermore, the dominant approaches to teaching within this program have been criticized for adopting a fragmented, overly theoretical orientation that reduces its effectiveness in engaging with social reality. Consequently, sociology risks becoming merely a descriptive account of historical events and phenomena, thus reduced to a form of general knowledge

rather than an active and applied scientific discipline.

In this context, the argument of Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron is reinforced: intellectuals are viewed as ready-made products of the educational system, tasked with maintaining its continuity. This is evident in the case of the professor who merely executes a predefined curriculum without any intervention or innovation, thereby losing their role as a creative educator and becoming, in effect, a “functionary intellectual”—that is, an agent of the state or what may be termed an agent of development (Massak, 2009, pp. 110–111).

3.3. Academic Sociology and the Social Specificity of Algerian Society

“Societies and cultures possess an ever-changing existence; they are in constant flux, forming a continuum of borrowed and assimilated phenomena. They are perpetually deconstructed and reorganized in forms different from what they once were.” This highlights once again that cultures differ in terms of their structures and historical trajectories, and that individuals must understand the specific characteristics of their own culture within its social context in order to comprehend various social models. From this perspective, comparison between these models becomes necessary to identify those that are most appropriate. Many Algerian thinkers have addressed this issue, emphasizing the error of neglecting the specificity of Algerian society and the negative consequences this entails at various levels consequences that are reflected, in turn, in the performance of the university institution in general and in the discipline of sociology in particular.

Among them, Abdelghani Maghrebi asserts that *“the social sciences taught in Algeria do not correspond to the realities of its social structures, nor do they respond to its fundamental needs, due to the mismatch between the conceptual apparatus employed and the nature of the country’s social phenomena. Furthermore, the overall selection of subjects and the orientation of education reveal a misalignment in priorities that should have been accorded to certain disciplines.”* This situation is attributed to what is referred to as *“imported social sciences,”* resulting from the strong influence of Western culture on many students, which distances them from the realities of their own society and leads them to engage with an imagined world that they perceive as embodied in sociological teachings (Massak, 2009, p. 112).

It is further argued that the first generation of sociologists established sociology as a discipline based on purely formal and academic rules characterized by an artificial nature. They failed to develop qualitative methodological foundations that take into account the specific characteristics of Arab societies, including Algeria, which belongs to this broader cultural and geographical context.

Thus, academic sociology remains largely dependent on foreign ideologies. At a time when scientific transformations and new discoveries impose the need to acquire updated knowledge through rapid change reshaping conditions and methods of action—sociology appears to be in a deeper crisis than any other discipline or cultural profession. This is reflected in the prevailing impression that everything in this field has already been addressed, and

that any new intervention merely reiterates what has previously been said. Accordingly, an evaluation of current sociological practices in our society reveals their dependence on Western sociology. This dependency manifests itself in forms of repetition and imitation, leading to the displacement of Western issues and problematics into the cultural and social structures of our own context. These forms of dependency vary according to the colonial history experienced by the country, its present policies, and the development and coherence of its university institutions (Massak, 2009, p. 113).

This dependency encompasses both content and methodology. In this regard, Ali El Kenz notes that our positive reception of Western sociological theories has enabled us to master their teaching; however, it has not provided us with the necessary tools to address the specific issues of our own reality, which differs in its composition and is often more complex than that of Western societies. As a result, much of the research produced remains superficial, often limited—at best—to the collection of empirical data that are later reconstructed within artificial problem frameworks that do not correspond to lived reality. This situation highlights the absence of recognition of our society's historical specificity and its related characteristics at various levels. It therefore becomes necessary to reassess our cultural foundations and heritage through an objective evaluation—without disregarding Western sociological knowledge, but rather complementing it with elements derived from our own context—in order to better diagnose our

reality and develop an indigenous theoretical framework.

The issue of quantity versus quality also arises here. While there is a noticeable increase in the number of publications and scholars in sociology, this does not necessarily indicate that the field has achieved its full potential. Indeed, universities today rarely make substantial contributions to the knowledge society in general, and to Algerian social reality in particular. This is despite the fact that their role should be to design meaningful academic programs and guide education in alignment with societal needs. Instead, much of what is taught in sociology continues to fall within the framework of imported concepts. To overcome this dependency, academic programs must be planned rationally in accordance with the temporal and cultural specificities of society. In this context, Mohamed Nabil El Samalouti, in his book *Sociology of Development*, outlines principles for constructing a local action plan model within an organized framework—principles that can also be applied to curriculum planning in order to produce effective knowledge. These principles include: realism, comprehensiveness, flexibility, and continuity. Such a model should emerge from reality, remain objective in setting priorities, encompass all aspects of social relations and functional interactions, adapt to unforeseen circumstances, and ensure continuity, whereby each stage of the program prepares the ground for subsequent stages within an organized process (Massak, 2009, p. 114).

In the same context, in order to achieve realistic planning, higher education

planning must not be isolated; rather, it should be integrated within the broader framework of educational planning as a whole, given that education constitutes a central function in guiding overall societal development. Education should therefore be conceived as a continuous process encompassing the entire lifespan of individuals.

Even within the university itself, “planning must be integrated into the structure of university administration, as it represents the capacity for consistent decision-making. For university planning to be effective and precise, it must contribute to the overall development of society, ensure academic freedom in both research and management, and adopt principles of lifelong education and guidance. Such principles enable the creation of appropriate institutional mechanisms, as well as the reform of curricula and examination systems.”

Accordingly, planning should be relied upon to introduce a new educational program at the undergraduate (Licence) level in sociology within our universities. Sociology, as a discipline, provides the analytical foundation for understanding the overall balances sought within society whether among productive sectors or between these and other sectors since it serves as a key analytical tool for identifying societal needs in relation to patterns of consumption. Moreover, through its problematics and methodologies, it offers one of the most widely applicable knowledge frameworks for addressing the cultural dimension of development.

Returning to the contributions of Safir Naji, he emphasizes the necessity of

reforming the undergraduate (Licence) program in sociology. He argues that teaching at this level should be oriented toward training professionals closely connected to social problems, with the aim of establishing fundamental frameworks and essential tools for analyzing contemporary Algerian society, as well as its structure across various transformations.

He proposes a set of principles that universities should adopt in this regard (Massak, 2009, p. 116):

- ***Algerianization (Localization):*** This should begin with the educational structure itself, including researchers, university administration, and research centers.
- ***Training of Operational Professionals:*** This raises the issue of aligning trained graduates with the requirements of the labor market, which often expresses dissatisfaction with their qualifications. Hence, there is a need to reconsider the undergraduate curriculum and the teaching of sociology in Algerian universities by establishing an organic link between teaching units, research, and various sectors of national activity.
- ***Specialized Scientific Publishing in Sociology:*** Alongside revitalizing policies related to social research.
- ***Establishing a Specialized Scientific Association:*** As well as organizing continuous meetings between sociologists and representatives of various national sectors.
- ***Openness to Other Sectors of National Activity:*** This represents the most important dimension for the effective implementation of the

previous principles. The relationship between the university and national sectors should not be random or superficial; rather, it must be structured and directed toward productive sectors as well as economic, social, and cultural domains.

Thus, the necessity of linking theoretical instruction with practical applications across different fields is once again affirmed, alongside the importance of strengthening social research as a fundamental pillar of sociological practice.

4. Critique Of The State Of Sociology In The Algerian University

4.1. Challenges Facing Sociology In Algerian Universities (Revised And Fully Refined)

Sociology in Algeria today, under the convergence of multiple conditions, appears to be struggling with an inability to reclaim its scientific, intellectual, and historical legacy, despite the richness of this heritage. It has become less capable of generating its own knowledge and creative frameworks in what it studies, analyzes, and produces. Teaching practices are often limited to classroom-based applied sessions, where reliance is primarily placed on books and references published in Arabic within Arab countries. As a result, students remain largely disconnected from the vast and continuously expanding global body of sociological publications across diverse sources and languages. While the adoption of Arabic as the language of instruction in sociology may be understood as part of the Algerian state's policy choices—reflecting broader political orientations—this does not imply the exclusion of foreign languages. Rather, it should be viewed as an effort to promote

Arabic as a language of academic instruction alongside other international languages (Ayyadi, 2019, p. 278).

In this context, sociology in Algerian universities faces a number of challenges and weaknesses that call for critical evaluation, among which the most prominent are:

- The predominance of theoretical teaching at the expense of empirical and field-based research.
- Limited engagement with international scientific production due to linguistic and academic barriers.
- Weak integration between university training and the actual needs of Algerian society.
- Dependence on imported theoretical frameworks that are not always adapted to local realities.
- Insufficient encouragement of innovation and independent critical thinking among students.
- Institutional and structural constraints that hinder the development of sociological research.

These challenges highlight the urgent need to reassess both the content and methods of teaching sociology, as well as its broader academic and social functions within the Algerian university system.

4.1.1. Curricula and Academic Programs:

- ***Intellectual Dependency:*** There is a strong reliance on Western theories and concepts, with limited efforts to develop local theoretical frameworks that reflect the specificities of Algerian society.
- ***Superficial Theoretical Treatment:*** Sociological theories are often taught in a descriptive and imitative manner, without fostering critical

understanding or applying them to the local context.

- **Absence of Key Specializations:** There is a noticeable lack—or near absence—of essential subfields such as economic sociology, social and cultural anthropology, and social psychology.
- **Lack of Alignment with Developments:** Some programs fail to keep pace with recent advancements across various domains of sociology.
- **Weak Connection to Reality:** Academic programs are often disconnected from Algeria's social, economic, and cultural realities, thereby limiting the relevance of applied research.

4.1.2. Teaching and Academic Supervision:

- **Weak Language Proficiency:** There is a noticeable in the use of Arabic among some instructors and students, which negatively affects the quality of teaching and research.
- **Issue of Adjunct Teaching:** The presence of temporary or part-time instructors who may lack adequate qualifications or specialization in sociology, often motivated primarily by financial considerations.
- **Arbitrary Imposition of Specializations:** In some cases, new specializations are introduced based on the influence of certain faculty members rather than genuine scientific or societal needs.
- **Lack of Clear Recruitment Criteria:** The absence of transparent

and objective standards in the hiring of sociology faculty.

4.1.3. Scientific Research:

- **Weak Qualitative Output:** Sociological research suffers from both quantitative and qualitative limitations, with a scarcity of in-depth studies addressing Algerian social issues.
- **Lack of Support and Guidance:** Researchers often face difficulties in obtaining adequate financial and institutional support, as well as proper academic supervision.
- **Difficulties in Publication:** Scholars encounter challenges in publishing their work in peer-reviewed and reputable academic journals.
- **Underutilization of Research Findings:** Research outcomes often remain unused and are not effectively integrated into the resolution of social problems.

4.1.4. Relationship with Society and Authority:

- **Negative Perception:** Sociology is sometimes perceived by both authorities and society as a secondary or non-essential discipline.
- **Marginalization of Its Role:** Official institutions frequently overlook the significant role sociology can play in understanding and addressing social transformations.
- **Fear of Criticism:** Authorities may be apprehensive about the critical insights that sociological studies can generate.
- **Lack of Public Trust:** Some members of society may view social

researchers with suspicion or distrust.

4.1.5. *Institutional Structure and Resources:*

- **Weak Libraries and References:** Some sociology departments suffer from limited access to updated academic resources and library facilities.
- **Lack of Workshops and Conferences:** There is a shortage of specialized academic events that facilitate knowledge exchange and the advancement of research.

4.2. *Students' Attitudes Toward the Sociology Major in Algerian Universities*

The wide range of academic specializations offered in universities makes it difficult for students who have obtained the baccalaureate to choose a specific field. They are presented with multiple study options that qualify them for future employment after graduation. Among these fields is sociology; however, it is rarely chosen by students—if not almost entirely avoided. Many are directed toward it in a spontaneous or imposed manner, without consideration of their interests or personal inclinations. This reluctance can be attributed to several factors (Dardish, 2017, pp. 94–95):

- **Lack of Awareness at the Secondary Level:** High school students are generally unfamiliar with sociology as a field of study in Algerian universities. It is relatively recent—except in the case of the University of Algiers—compared to other disciplines such as law, economics, and other branches of the social sciences.

- **Limited Societal Awareness:** Society at large lacks awareness of the importance of sociology. Consequently, parents of newly successful baccalaureate holders often do not encourage their children to pursue this specialization.
- **Lack of Employment Opportunities:** There is a shortage of job opportunities in the private sector that correspond to sociology specializations, despite the importance of this sector in absorbing unemployment.
- **Marginalization by the State:** The state—or more precisely, those responsible for public policy—does not grant sufficient importance to the humanities and social sciences, particularly sociology. This is reflected in the relatively low admission thresholds for the discipline, which often attract students with average academic performance, unlike in Western countries and the United States.
- **Low Social Prestige:** Sociology does not enjoy a high social status, either within the family or in society at large. It lacks the recognized standing associated with professions such as medicine, law, engineering, or pharmacy.
- **Mismatch with the Labor Market:** Sociology encompasses various subfields—such as cultural, religious, political, rural, and urban sociology—that often do not align with labor market demands. These specializations are sometimes introduced in an arbitrary manner by

administrators and faculty, particularly in recent years, often driven by narrow personal considerations.

- **High Unemployment Among Graduates:** Many holders of a Bachelor's degree in sociology face unemployment. Even when employment is secured, it is often delayed or temporary, frequently within pre-employment contractual schemes. This reality discourages new baccalaureate holders from choosing the discipline.
- **Limited Access to Liberal Professions:** Graduates in sociology, regardless of specialization, generally cannot practice independent professions such as those available to lawyers, psychologists, architects, veterinarians, accountants, translators, or pharmacists.
- **Limited Recruitment in the Education Sector:** Sociology graduates are rarely recruited into the education sector, which is typically one of the largest employers of university graduates.

In addition to these factors, the situation of sociology in Algerian universities is further aggravated by the profile of students entering the field. Many of them have relatively low academic achievement and choose sociology as a last resort, as their grades do not allow them access to other disciplines. This is compounded by the phenomenon of student transfers, where university administrations often accept transfer requests without strict criteria in order to maintain enrollment numbers—sometimes at the expense of

quality. Many of these students come from other fields such as law, economics, or French studies, where they were unsuccessful. This practice is often justified by low enrollment rates in certain departments, a problem observed in universities such as Blida, Médéa, and Chlef.

4.3. Proposals for Development :

Overcoming the challenges facing sociology in Algerian universities requires joint efforts from professors, researchers, students, and policymakers in the higher education sector, along with a clear recognition of the importance of sociology in understanding, analyzing, and addressing the issues of contemporary Algerian society. The following are key proposals aimed at developing the discipline and improving its status among students (ChatGPT, 2025):

- **Developing Modern Curricula:** Updating academic programs in sociology and the broader social and human sciences, and introducing new specializations that respond to societal needs and labor market demands.
- **Strengthening Scientific Research:** Providing both material and moral support to researchers and encouraging field studies that address local issues.
- **Activating the Role of Sociology in Society:** Building bridges between universities, government institutions, and civil society organizations to ensure the practical use of research findings.
- **Training Qualified Faculty:** Enhancing the training and qualification of specialized

professors across various branches of sociology.

- **Providing Necessary Resources:** Equipping sociology departments with modern libraries and essential academic resources.
- **Encouraging Scientific Publication:** Supporting the publication of research in peer-reviewed journals and organizing conferences and workshops.
- **Changing Stereotypical Perceptions:** Working to improve the negative image of sociology within both society and state institutions.

5. Conclusion:

In conclusion, sociology in Algerian universities remains a rich field for study, analysis, and the understanding of social reality. It stands at the intersection of existing academic potential and structural challenges that hinder its development. This situation calls for the intervention of relevant authorities to design strategies that effectively link theoretical knowledge with practical application, thereby enhancing the role of sociological research in understanding society and contributing to sustainable development.

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