

# A New Trend in Tourism Industry

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**Abstract:** The aim of this paper is to share a research result. When writing a thesis about the Tuaregs of the Algerian Sahara and the Navajo of the American Sahara, a geographical remarkable commonness imposed itself as an eminent visionary idea. Five photos of Monument Valley were shown to thirty Algerian people. They were asked to name the places which the photos represented. The result of the survey was quite interesting since they all asserted they were photos of the Hoggar region in the Algerian Sahara. This result is an essence for dealing with similar touristic places that exist in the world. Documentary film makers and fashion designers can contribute in emancipating this new trend of tourism. They can take people, within a short period of time, to both places.

**Keywords:** Documentary Film Makers, Fashion Designers, Hoggar, Monument Valley

## I. INTRODUCTION

Myriad scholars have pointed to the fact that tribal people partake affinities, arguing their observation with evidence. But since the reasons behind this likeness have not been answered exhaustively, they are still subject to ongoing research. Leo Weiner pointed to the resemblance between tribal Native Americans and Saharans of Africa. He wrote a book titled *Africa and the Discovery of America* in which he presented a study from an anthropological point of view. Barry Fell<sup>1</sup> wrote the book *Saga America* in which he drew parallels between West African people and Native Americans in the southwest, including cultural and linguistic similarities. The South West of America inspired Jacques Soustelle.<sup>2</sup> He wrote the book *Aimée et Souffrante Algérie* in which he said he found similarities between Central American Indians and Algerian tribes of the Saharan desert. His book was severely criticized. It was claimed that by comparing the two societies, he meant that the massacre of the Native Americans could serve as a good experience to exterminate the Algerians (Farhat 2014:50).

The book focuses much on the Algerian war events and their interpretation. It points to the parallels between the Native Americans and the Algerian tribes of the Sahara but without giving explicit details or concrete examples. It is quite clear that it is a mere impression or observation the writer made. The mentioned criticism, the stereotype clichés attributed to both Native Americans and the Tuaregs, and the scarcity of the documents were a real challenge for the pursuit of the research.

Limiting the research paper to the affinities which the Native Americans of the Navajo and the Tuaregs of the Ahaggar in the Algerian Sahara share could enhance some reasons and illustrate some examples that explain this likeness. At first glance, visible traits prevail themselves as parallels between the two peoples such as their simple costumes, tattoo, life under tents, handmade jewels and crafts. This visible commonness is noticed more on women than men, for the reader would see no resemblance between a veiled Targui and a Native American with a feather's headdress.

To answer the raised question of the topic: what makes Tuaregs and Native Americans share affinities, it was important to go through some steps so as to find or deduce an answer. Having recourse to libraries, whether abroad or in Algeria, did not prove sufficient. Besides, very few books written by Native Americans and Tuaregs were found. Nearly all of the books are written by neither. If it were not the case, it would probably enrich the research with solid data.

In addition to videos, online data bases provided more facilities. The Algerian Ministry of higher education provides the researchers a free access to academic and international journals through SNDL (Système National de Documentation en Ligne). Talking to people from the Ahaggar on the mobile, the landline, or via Face book, was of a great help. Libraries' agents' advice and guidance was not of lesser importance. An interview that was made with some Algerian people resulted in a survey that supports this research. It has to be admitted that it is still an 'armchair' work which necessitates a field study as it is urged by Haddon.<sup>3</sup>

Because of the absence of any contact with the Native Americans, it was necessary to surf the Internet and get in touch with them to get some authentic information. It was not easy since the very few who responded to my several messages were quite reserved. They said they disliked being treated as a specific population that was different from the other inhabitants of the world. They revealed nothing that concerned their ancestral beliefs and traditions for they thought their ancestral cultural heritage would be subject to theft and misunderstanding. The same response was witnessed among the Tuaregs when they were asked to tell about their traditions and ancestral beliefs.

## II. THE TUAREGS/ KEL TEGLMUST/ KEL TAMASHAQ

The Tuaregs, are also known as Tawarek. The word means Arabic plural of tarek; the one who knocks on the door. This name might imply that these people try out the desert in search for better places. The Tuaregs<sup>4</sup> refer to themselves as people of

<sup>3</sup>The British anthropologist Alfred Haddon.

<sup>4</sup>Richard L. Smith, *What Happened to the Ancient Libyans? Chasing Sources across the Sahara from Herodotus to Ibn Khaldun*, Vol. 14, No. 4, (University of Hawai Press, 2003), « Four portals appear over the past four thousand years, each a look at the peoples of North Africa from the outside. The first comes from the Egyptians of the third and

<sup>1</sup> An Australian archeologist and an emeritus professor at Harvard University.

<sup>2</sup> The colonial governor of Algeria who advocated for the idea of French Algeria in 1956.

the veil or Kel Tagelmust. The males have the habit of wearing a veil after a certain age, while the women go unveiled (Daphn 1992:77). Their women are generally known with the high position they enjoy in their society. Besides calling them the 'Blue Men', some historians refer to the Tuaregs as the 'Red Skins of the Sahara.' (Dane Morel 2013: 253) Hopefully enough, such a claim, though pejorative and holding a racist connotation, supports the topic of this research since it assumes that Tuaregs and Native Americans meet many points, among others, bravery, courage, and as noted, the red color.

Besides calling themselves Kel Tamasheq, which means speakers of Tamasheq language, the Tuaregs call themselves the Imoshag or Imajughen, (Kohl 2009: 14) the free or the noble people. When France invaded Algeria in 1830, its army faced fierce rebuke on the part of the Tuaregs. Given this resistance, it was not until 1902 that it was in capacity to impose its rule. Due to their ability to cope with the harsh conditions that characterize the desert, the historians have come to call them 'Lords of Desert.'

Further to an interview with an inhabitant from Janet about the social structure of the Tuaregs, explanation was given regarding a hierarchical structure in form of a pyramid. At the top stands a woman as chief. This is, in itself, evidence for the Tuaregs matrilineal society. The Tuaregs consist of clans, which are made up of many family groups. Each clan is led by a chief who is called the amghar.<sup>5</sup> The Tuaregs relate their self-identification to their specific Kel, which means "those of", like the Kel Dinnig, and the Kel Ataram.

Manifold foreigners seem familiar with The Tuaregs. For proof they evoke the veil that the Targui males wear once a discussion is started; they all want to know why the Tuaregs veil their faces. They also evoke their traditional clothes; silver jewels; their beautiful melodies, and their distinctive music. The Tuaregs' Tindi music seems well appreciated though presently they tend to play it using modern musical instruments instead of their traditional Imzad. Tindi may gain fame throughout the world due to its specific rhythm and sounds as well as its use in different languages.

The peculiarity of the Tuaregs' cultural traits is not limited only to the veil of men but expands to their art and handicrafts. Much of the Tuaregs art consists of an impressive world of traditional and beautiful objects of leather, wood, clay and

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*second millennium B.C.E., who made artistic representations ..... the Libu and the Meshwesh.....A second portal opened at the time of the Greeks and the Romans, beginning with Herodotus...Herodotus Lybians have been replaced by Sanhaja and Znata by Ibn Khaldoun in the fourteenth century. A final portal opens in the second half of the millennium with the work of Leo Africanus....The Sanhaja and their kin have become Tuaregs.*" p. 460.<sup>4</sup> Amghar, a local chief who officiates as the president of the council of his community, called "djm'aat"<sup>4</sup>Fertuni, Mulud. *Al Ghina2 wa Al Mousik8a I3nda Etawareg*, www.aswat-elchamal.com, (retrieved on December 2013).

<sup>4</sup> The term 'Takoba' means a sword in the Tuareg language.

<sup>4</sup> Takoba, une dance Targui, youtube, 2008.

<sup>4</sup> A Video, *Tin Hinen Maliket Atawareg Al Ostoriy*, <http://www.medmem.eu/ar/notice/EPT00012>

<sup>5</sup> Amghar, a local chief who officiates as the president of the council of his community, called "djm'aat

finely crafted swords. They diffuse all their knowledge and skills on the craft they make

The rich environment of the landscape of Ahaggar influences and combines with the colorful and lovingly decorated handmade crafts. When one considers the depth and the beauty of the geographic landscape of Ahaggar and the diverse Saharan environment, one can grasp the richness and diversity of the local people's crafts. The culture of the Ahaggar area was influenced by different civilizations and traditions, but it managed to protect vigilantly its true character.

During their wedding feast, emphasis is put on colors and textures which glow in the dark and show up from afar (Rasmussen 1998:25). When chanting the Tindi, women play with the Imzad. This bowed musical instrument consists of a single string that is made from horse hair. Women play the imzad to accompany songs and to encourage men to go further in any mission they intend to have. The imzad is regarded as the best musical instrument given its strong emotional impact on the listener.

Besides music, the Tuaregs are known for their love for poems and dance. When young, they are taught to sing stanzas known as Isouthass, and when grown up they learn to dance Eljagmi, which consists of two kinds: Adghandagh, a quick dance, and Takarkass. The latter is a sort of dance that resembles the one performed by Native Americans during which they try to step on earth just with one foot as if not to hurt it.<sup>6</sup> Regrettably, the number of studies about these dances is scant. A few Al Jazeera documentaries just point swiftly to those dances without giving explicit details that might give hints of resemblance between the two peoples' culture.

Another famous dance among the Tuaregs is the Takoba.<sup>7</sup> The latter refers to the sword used in the dance, during which two ranks of men face each other holding swords ready to defend their tribes. They do so to symbolize the legendary and brave successes in wars to save their honor. When hearing the first melodies in a Takoba dance,<sup>8</sup> the men quicken the movement of their feet, jump, and shout. After a while, they point a warrior from each tribe and ask him to fight his opponent to protect his tribe. Later, women arrive and start dancing to end the battle.

Another traditional trait is that when a Targui baby is born it is given the name of an animal passing by, or of the distinct natural circumstance of that day. The names which the legendary ancestress of Tuaregs Tin Hinen gave to her daughters are listed as examples. Tin Hinen had three daughters of her marriage. The first one was called Tinghat meaning elk who was the ancestress of Enafyeen tribe. The second one was named Taknantut meaning gazelle. She was the ancestress of Tinghana tribe. The third daughter was named Tamarwata, meaning rabbit; she used to be the ancestress of Iboglat tribe (Hawad 1993: 126).<sup>9</sup>

### III. THE NAVAJOS /DINÉES

When dealing with Native American topic, their beliefs and traditions are evoked. This conception, though acquired from

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<sup>6</sup>Fertuni, Mulud. *Al Ghina2 wa Al Mousik8a I3nda Etawareg*, www.aswat-elchamal.com, (retrieved on December 2013).

<sup>7</sup> The term 'Takoba' means a sword in the Tuareg language.

<sup>8</sup> Takoba, une dance Targui, youtube, 2008.

<sup>9</sup> A Video, *Tin Hinen Maliket Atawareg Al Ostoriy*, <http://www.medmem.eu/ar/notice/EPT00012>

stereo type clichés seen on mass media, stimulates us to know more about this population. The beliefs and traditions reflect the distinctiveness of each culture and each people. This distinctiveness contributes in boosting cultural interactions. If all people were the same, they would not feel the necessity of interacting with one another. The cultural distinctiveness attract people to each other and paves the way to contact and exchange.

The Native Americans are supposed to be the first inhabitants of America. This implies that their ancestral motherland is America. However, historical books reveal the contrary. The Native Americans are said to have arrived from Asia. The latter was linked with America by the Bering Land Bridge through which the ancient migration is supposed to have happened.

When surfing the Net to find out some evidence about their origin, a conversation between Native Americans urged to be read thoroughly. According to the commentators, their roots are deeply rooted in the American soil; they did not walk there but originated from there. One of them argues that the Native Americans share creation and not migration stories because if they migrated, their elders would tell them so. To support their saying they mention *Neshnabek* means original people, and *Neshnabe* means original Man. They do not seem to deny any ancient contact of their ancestors with other ancient people from other parts of the world, but they deny completely to have arrived from another place. They insist on the fact they originate from America. They argue if the natives were of Asian origin, the Chinese, the Japanese, and the Koreans would be of the same DNA.

The Native Americans hold the belief in a creator of the entire universe. They think He cannot be felt by the five senses. They believe the main task of man is to adore and worship Him. The duty of prayer and the recognition of the Unseen and the Eternal were inevitable and practiced daily among the Native Americans.<sup>10</sup> The contact between the person and the supernatural being was deeply rooted in their beliefs. The Holly Qur'an (Surat Fatir: 24) tells clearly that no nation was exempted from a Warner who reminded people of the Creator and his obedience. A Quranic reference<sup>11</sup> is witnessed in a Native American legend. It states clearly that people were once one nation and spoke one language, and then divided and received messengers.

The stereotype that features the physical appearance of the Native Americans is the feathers bonnet. They are also pictured with the horned bonnet. The latter might serve as evidence for the passage of Zul Quarnayn – the one with two horns- to America in ancient times. The head gear made of birds' feathers, mainly the eagle's, is specific to them. It is linked to their beliefs and convictions. The Native Americans value the eagle because it is a sky bird that can overview Earth below.<sup>12</sup> They believe that eagles have a certain connection with the heavens since they fly so close to the sky. Its feathers mean a lot to Native American Tribes. It symbolizes long life, trust, honor, strength, wisdom,

power, freedom and many more things. To be given one eagle's feather is like getting a gift from a high official.<sup>13</sup>

The people of Hopi tribe, which is among the Navajo nation, are known as skilled handicraftsmen and artists (Deogaonkar 2002: 91). They were known for jewelry, pottery, painting, sculpture and basketry. Their jewelry contained mostly silver ornaments. To add emphasis to the craft, they often used precious stones like Jet, Coral or Turquoise (Deogaonkar 2002: 91); a common trait witnessed among the Navajos too.

Like the Navajo women, the Targui ones are fond of wearing silver jewels and weaving clothes and baskets. One of their prominent silver ornaments which have attracted the attention of many writers is the silver cross they wear. This cross has been a subject of a long debate, since some French writers tried to assert that it was of a Christian origin. This kind of cross is deeply rooted in ancient times. During the Neolithic era, there existed some symbols- like the cross swastika- which were special to the Great Mother. The same symbols were witnessed in India, among the Native Americans, and later during the era of Jesus and his mother Mary (Assawah 1985: 45).

Unfortunately, no comparisons have dealt with Tuaregs and Native American jewels, and the common features that they might share. On the other hand, the connection of the Tuaregs jewels to the Indian ones is mentioned by some historians. The two ornaments of *talhahakim* and the silver agades Red Cross are said to have originated from India. The Tuaregs are supposed to have purchased them from Indians at Mecca,<sup>14</sup> and started imitating and producing similar ornaments, which women continue to wear.

Similar to the Tuaregs, Native Americans used to name the new born child after an animal passing or a natural event which marked that birth, like: Hache-He, Arapaho= Wolf, Garakonthie, Iroquois= Moving Sun, etc (Neithammer 1995).

Dances have always been significant in the life of the Native Americans as a solemn duty and a common amusement. Some of the dances are held to guarantee the success of harvest, hunts and giving thanks while others play a vital role in religious rituals and ceremonies. Sometimes a specific individual like a war leader or a medicine man is chosen to lead the dance. A Medicine man, for instance, is chosen because he is recognized to be the one who performs his function of bridging between the natural world and the spiritual one for the benefit of the community. A war leader is chosen because he represents the victory of his tribe and transmits his glory to the youth. The two populations under study seem to be in common culturally and even linguistically.

The term Tindi used by the Tuaregs, to celebrate the marriage of a couple, is prevailed among the Native Americans. The Lipan Apache Band of Texas call themselves 'Tindi', which means people of the mountains.<sup>15</sup> The origin of the term, Lipan Apache, can be traced back to the time when it received its Spanish

<sup>10</sup> Native American Culture-Religion, Beliefs, Rituals and Ceremonies, <https://www.warpaths2peacepipes.com/native-american-culture/>, (accessed on September, 2014).

<sup>11</sup> Qur'an, Al Baqara Surah, Aya 123.

<sup>12</sup> Discover the Symbolism behind Native American Feathers, [www.indians.org/articles/feathers.html](http://www.indians.org/articles/feathers.html), (accessed on February 2014).

<sup>13</sup> Arlene B., Hirschfelder, Yvonne Bearmer, Yvonne Wakim Dennis, *Native Americans Today: Resources and Activities for Educators, Grades 4-8*, (U.S.A., Teachers Ideas Press, 2000), p.71.

<sup>14</sup> A.J. Arkell, *Some Tuareg Ornaments and their Connection with India*, Vol. 65, p. 3.

<sup>15</sup> Lipan Apache (Tindi), [www.indians.org/welker/lipanap.htm](http://www.indians.org/welker/lipanap.htm), (retrieved on June, 2015).

surname. In this light, the Lipan Apache was a given surname which replaced the true and original name of this Texan people. The 'Tindi people' or the Lipan-Apache were important subgroups of Apaches living in Texas. They ranged the farthest eastward and had the most contact with the early Texas settlements. Besides, some Native Americans use 'Tindi' as the cardinal number 'two'.

According to Ibrahim Alkon, a Lybian Targui writer, many Native American words are of Targui origin, among which is *talisman*. *Talis* means a fort or a castle, and *man* means soul. So, *talisman* means the the fort protecting the soul.<sup>16</sup> This Targui word is used by the Native Americans, keeping the meaning for which, it has always been used in its original language.

Similarly, the term Hinen used by the Tuaregs is used by the Arapaho meaning 'a man'<sup>17</sup>. It is also found in many other languages. This term is said to have its origin in the Japanese language, which means 'taking refuge', or 'finding shelter'. According to the oral stories of the Tuaregs, Tin Hinen, the founder of their tribes came from afar. She stayed in the Hoggar region of the Algerian Sahara, seeking shelter and refuge for herself and her companions. Given that these words are used in three different continents, Africa, America and Asia, one wonders if it is a mere coincidence, or a result of a possible contact.<sup>18</sup> Can these linguistic items help shed light and support the theory that asserts the common ancestry of people who might have spoken one language?

#### IV. RESULT OF THE RESEARCH

Besides some linguistic evidence, like Tinde, Hinen, Talisman, both Tuaregs and Navajo share common myths; one of them is the following. According to a Navajo legend, Changing Woman *Asdz nadleehé* never dies though she changes continuously. She represents the power of life, fertility, and changing seasons.<sup>19</sup> Similarly, the Tuaregs' queen *Taménokalt*, the seasons woman "La Femme Saisons", is venerated. She had the exceptional quality of changing in accordance to the changing seasons (El Mahdi 2014:124-125). In the course of this research, a geographic resemblance prevails as worthy of interest.

The crying cow in Tassili rock painting might be a head figurine of a cheetah known as *Amayas* in Tamashaqlanguage<sup>20</sup>. This animal has always existed in this region contrary to the cow. A Native American rock painting states that a cheetah wears the tearstains on its face as a reminder of the lazy hunter who broke the traditions of his tribe. He stole its three kids while she was

<sup>16</sup>Ibrahim Al Koni, *Malhamet Al Mafahim, Lughz Al Tawarikh Yakshufu Lughzay Al Farainah Wa Sumer, Bayan Fi Lughat Al Lahut*, (Beirut, Muassassa Al A3rabiya li Adirasset wa Ennachr wa Atawzi3, 2004).

<sup>17</sup> Native languages of the Americas: Preserving and promoting American Indian languages, www.native-languages.org, (retrieved on June, 2014).

<sup>18</sup> Miguel, Vilar, *Genographic Project DNA Results Reveal Details of Puerto Rican History*, (National Geography, July 25, 2014).

<sup>19</sup>Heidi J. Todacheene, *She Saves us from Monsters: The Navajo Creation Story and Modern Tribal Justice*, p. 34, [http://lawschool.unm.edu/tlj/volumes/vol15/TLJ\\_15-2\\_Todacheene.pdf](http://lawschool.unm.edu/tlj/volumes/vol15/TLJ_15-2_Todacheene.pdf), (accessed on July 2015).

<sup>20</sup>Tim Wachter, Koen De Smet, Farid Belbachir, Amel Belbachir-Bazi, Amina Fellous, Mohamed Belghoul, Laurie Marker, *SAHELO-SAHARAN INTEREST GROUP WILDLIFE SURVEYS*, Part 4: Ahaggar Mountains, Algeria(March 2005), p. 17.

absent searching herbs to feed them.<sup>21</sup> Another world known myth is the devil and the blacksmith. The Tuaregs believe Allah created fire for the humans to prepare food but the devil stole it and gave it to the blacksmith to make swords.<sup>22</sup> The association between metal and magic is widespread. Sara de Garcia da Siva and Jamshid Tehrani published an article about this myth in the Royal Society Open Science in 2016. They contend the tale is as old as time. They trace the populations migrations and linguistic commonalities. Attempts to find out any mentioned legend or folktale about blacksmith in ancient America proved unavailable. However, ancient Native Americans have always been pictured with iron axes, knives, etc. the resemblance between the two people's trait extends to a geographical one too.

The resemblance of the Monument Valley in the American Sahara with the Hoggar region in the Algerian Sahara is so striking that one barely distinguishes between them. Five panoramic views of the Monument Valley mountains were shown to thirty Algerian people who were asked to name the place. They all agreed that they were photos of the Ahaggar region in the Algerian Sahara. The photos of the Ahaggar and the ones of Monument Valley look alike.

Similar to the Monument Valley, the Hoggar Mountain range is chiefly volcanic rock where rainfall is rare, the weather is very hot in summer, and very cold in winter. A population of the endangered Painted Hunting Dog used to exist till the twentieth century. These elusive and very rare carnivores are also said to have existed in the Monument Valley. The panoramic resemblance attracted previous writers 'attention like Douchan Gersi<sup>23</sup> who wrote "Then comes the red and brown of the Hoggar dry Rocky Mountains and peaks much like those of America' Monument Valley, but more massive and higher" (Gersi 1991: 223). Gautier was so impressed by the visible commonness that he wrote "I think the American desert and the Algerian Sahara are, among the planetary deserts, the ones which necessitate a study.... the accustomed eye to the Algerian Sahara, finds in the American desert familiar impressions. Whether in the Gila Valley and in its affluents of Arizona, .... in Utah, .... Green River, ....in Algeria, with a small effort of imagination, we could believe we have not left Africa." (Gautier 1925: 147).

#### CONCLUSION

The peculiarity of these findings could be better outspread through documentary film making for they reach a wide range of population in a short period of time, and mark their memory for long. They could make them try out visits to places that are similar in the world, holding at the same time the specificity and the originality of each. They could help people rethink their universal relations, morals and common origin. Fashion designers could also contribute in emancipating this new trend of tourism. They could rely on this natural phenomenon as a source of inspiration. Under this head, a quote explains: "Today's Fashion that has always been a multi-dimensional universal impact, is not just a change, a trend but the spirit of the times,

<sup>21</sup> Cheetah Kids (2007-2015). <http://www.cheetahkids.com/aboutcheetahs/stories.html>. (accessed on November 2018).

<sup>22</sup> Ostourat Ennar wa Al Arwah Echerrira, googleweblight.com, (accessed on October 28, 2018)

<sup>23</sup> Douchan Gersi (1947-2015), Slovak born, grown in Africa, dead in Bali. He was an actor, a writer and a documentary film maker.

the succession and combination of styles. It is not just a relation among classes. Fashion is the most complete expression of a post-modern industrial culture that finds its way to be in the design process".<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup>Introduction on Fashion Trend and its Impact on Society, <https://www.textilemates.com/fashion-trends-impact-society-case-study-apparel-trends-indian/> (accessed on November, 2018).