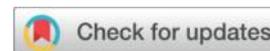


The Manuscript as an Archival Document Preserving National Identity and Memory, and Contributing to Local and National Historiography through Museum Institutions: – The Mujahid Museum of Sidi Bel Abbès, in Algeria, as a Case Study –



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Abstract:

The archive represents the official reference for preserving memory and valuing the achievements and past of nations. As a cultural and civilization heritage, it constitutes the vital link that sustains social identity and guides nations toward building a future grounded in a profound understanding of their history. Public archives serve as a "dual memory" both cultural and official testifying to the nation's history and identity.

Undoubtedly, prioritizing this public archival heritage transforms it into a primary information source and a fundamental tool for academic research. Accessing these records enables researchers to pursue historical truths and contribute to the construction of knowledge.

To safeguard this documentary heritage, its physical and intellectual integrity must be ensured, mitigating risks associated with poor organization or management. This necessitates the adoption of effective preservation methods, specifically the scientific and technical processing of public archives, which remains the most successful approach to protection. The ultimate goal is to facilitate accessibility for beneficiaries. Accordingly, this study examines archival and manuscript intellectual resources preserved in museums and their role in preserving national identity, memory, and the documentation of national history. Taking the Mujahid Museum of Sidi Bel Abbès Province as a case study, this paper aims to highlight the museum's contribution to constructing national memory and writing national history.

Keywords: Archival Document, Preserving, Manuscripts, National Identity, Historiography, Museum Institutions, Mujahid Museum, Sidi Bel Abbès.

Introduction

Culture is one of the most vital pillars upon which the modern state is built, as it is the product of accumulated civilizations passed down through generations. Museums, as cultural institutions, house historical evidence of various civilizations. Historically, they were known as academic hubs where scholars sought the knowledge contained within their libraries, books, and manuscripts.

Today, there is an urgent need to restructure museums as they stand as historical witnesses to the social and cultural developments of our country. They are educational and cultural institutions that preserve significant collections of artworks, artifacts, and historical acquisitions, forming an essential part of a nation's heritage and national memory. Museums serve as the historical and cultural links connecting past and present generations, contributing to the construction of identity and the transmission of cultural heritage to future generations. This process enhances belonging and awareness; these exhibits are not merely static objects but windows into historical teachings that allow us to understand our trajectory as individuals and societies.

Furthermore, museums play a major role in building national memory, which is a fundamental basis for shaping national identity and strengthening loyalty to the homeland. To protect this memory from loss, damage, or oblivion, the "Nation's Memory" project was launched. This project aims to collect archival funds, museum materials, documents, and manuscripts to ensure their long-term protection all for the purpose of constructing national memory and contributing to the documentation of the history of the Algerian Revolution.

Problem Statement

Based on the aforementioned introduction, we pose the following questions:

How is archival museum heritage utilized to enhance national memory and document national history and the Algerian Revolution at the Mujahid Museum of Sidi Bel Abbès? What role do the archival documents and manuscripts preserved in the museum play in safeguarding identity and national memory, and in the formal recording of national history?

Section I: Museums – Concept and Functions –

1. The Origins of Museums

The concept of establishing museums is an ancient one, dating back to the Pharaonic eras. It is fundamentally linked to the human instinct for collecting, preserving, and displaying objects. The word "Museum" is of Greek origin, closely associated with the "Lady of the Mountain." The term *Mouseion* was used by ancient Greeks to describe a temple dedicated to the nine sister Muses, the daughters of Zeus. According to Greek

mythology, these goddesses were the patrons of wisdom, art, music, poetry, and science¹.

Art collections formed the primary nucleus for the emergence of archaeological museums, such as those in Florence, the Uffizi Gallery, and the Pitti Palace. Historically, the focus was not merely on displaying artifacts for their aesthetic value or documentary importance, but rather for educational purposes and the cultivation of artistic expertise. Rome emerged as a "Museum City," boasting the vast collections of the Popes. Among the private collections that formed the historical core of museums was that of Federico, Duke of Urbino, whose palace collection included 28 portraits of philosophers and scholars from ancient, medieval, and contemporary times².

In reality, the idea of museums is as old as humanity itself, representing one of the oldest human instincts. Consequently, archaeological museums are among the oldest types of museums worldwide, displaying vital antiquities. Such museums are found in ancient civilization hubs like Iraq, Jordan, Syria, Palestine, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Greece, Italy, Turkey, Spain, and most countries that prioritize archaeology and heritage³.

2. Definition of a Museum

Linguistically: The term "Museum" (*Mut-haf* in Arabic) refers to a place for artistic and archaeological masterpieces (*Tuhaf*). The root of the word suggests gifting something precious or exquisite. A "masterpiece" refers to something luxurious, valuable, or a gesture of kindness and refinement. It is also said that the origin of the term implies "closeness" or "approach"⁴.

Idiomatically: A museum is a place where artworks and ancient antiquities of material and moral value are preserved and displayed⁵. Thus, it is an independent institution aimed primarily at preserving its contents and ensuring proper management through

1- Hassan, Somaya Ibrahim. The Art of Museums. Cairo, Egypt: Dar Al-Maaref, 1990, p. 5.

2- Zuhdi, Bashir. Museums. Damascus: Publications of the Ministry of Culture, 1988, p. 28.

3- Al-Tarawneh, Faris Khalaf. Museums of Antiquities and Heritage. Amman: Dar Dijla for Publishing and Distribution, 2014, p. 16.

4- Mayata, Al-Tijani. Organic Archaeological Acquisitions in the Museums of Eastern Algeria: A Field Study of Conservation Environments. 2016, p. 20.

5- Moussa, Mohamed Refaat. Introduction to the Art of Museums. Al-Dar Al-Masriyah Al-Lubnaniyah, Cairo, 2002, p. 16.

specialized staff who classify, display, and enrich the collection over time. It provides visitors with an educational atmosphere and a comfortable cultural environment¹.

The **International Council of Museums (ICOM)** defines a museum in Article 2, Paragraph 1 of its Statutes as: "A non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment"².

There has been an evolution in the concept of the museum to keep pace with the rapid changes in modern society. It is no longer just a repository for acquisitions but has become a venue for various activities, such as cinematic screenings, banquets, receptions, and diverse cultural events³.

3. Objectives of Museums

Museums pursue several noble goals, striving to fulfill their educational, cultural, and humanitarian missions. They work to instill noble values, activate a sense of belonging, and raise public awareness regarding history and heritage. Key objectives include:

- Introducing citizens to pivotal historical experiences that led to great cultural and artistic achievements.
- Securing the cultural and historical needs of the public and promoting equality among individuals worldwide.
- Safeguarding antiquities and heritage as a primary mission.
- Creating a continuous link between the people and the museum, utilizing holidays and events to encourage visits through guided educational tools.
- Cultivating a sense of historical nostalgia, collecting documents, and preserving them.
- Increasing awareness of the museum's role in social progress and stimulating development efforts⁴.

4. Museum Functions

Museums fulfill three primary functions:

1- Kadous, Hamed & Zaki, Ezzat. *Archaeological Excavation and the Art of Museums*. Alexandria: Al-Hadari Press, Cairo, 2005, p. 287.

2- International Council of Museums (ICOM). *Code of Professional Ethics*. Translated by the Algerian National Committee of ICOM, National Agency for Archaeology and Protection of Historical Monuments and Sites, Algeria, 1991, p. 06.

3- Mehabel, Vito. "Towards a New Vision for the Museum." Translated by Hanem Bahjat Fatima. *Museum International Journal*, no. 3, UNESCO Publications Center, Cairo, 2000, pp. 55–56.

4- Al-Hanfawi, Amr Abdel Wareth Qutb. *Interior Design of Scientific Museums: A Field Study of Medical Museums*. Alexandria, 1994, p. 22.

- **Preservation and Conservation:** Archaeological and artistic acquisitions are the first elements a visitor encounters. Without them, the museum loses its true purpose. Thus, protecting these objects is essential to prolonging their lifespan so they may fulfill their civilization mission. Researchers focus on practical methods to mitigate risks from environmental, human, and biological factors¹.

- **Cultural Function:** The museum's task is not only to preserve artifacts but to utilize them to create and disseminate "Museum Culture" through educational work, permanent exhibitions, and activities aligned with defined educational goals. These efforts are supported by modern media and technology. Museums also employ methods such as seminars, lectures, and programmed visits in coordination with partner institutions².

- **Research:** This function varies based on the museum's specialization. It is most active in field-oriented museums, such as archaeological, ethnographic, and natural science museums. While some museums focus primarily on display, they fulfill their research role by placing physical documents and evidence at the disposal of specialists a characteristic prevalent in Algerian museums³.

5. The Role of the Museum

- **Preservation and Display:** The museum acts as a mechanism for safeguarding artworks. Architects emphasize that the museum's core dual function is to protect collections from damage or extinction while presenting them in the best possible manner.

- **Cultural and Educational Roles:** The museum serves an informative role, facilitating dialogue and bridging cultures. Educationally, it fosters artistic development, particularly through children's museums that strengthen their connection to fine arts and technical knowledge, while encouraging scientific inquiry and research.

6. Types of Museums

- **Art Museums:** Classified by subject (Art, History, Environment, or Humanity).

- **National Art Museums:** Large institutions, often in capitals, preserving a nation's artistic memory.

1- Mayata, Al-Tijani. Op. Cit., p. 28.

2- Ibid., p. 28.

3- Ibid., p. 29.

- **Contemporary Art Museums:** Focus on modern and contemporary works of a specific region or people.

- **Fine Arts Museums:** Feature paintings, sculptures, ceramics, and prints.

- **History Museums.**

-**Museum Archives:** Consisting of:

1. Institutional documents regarding internal operations.

2. Working files (Acquisition or collection files).

3. Documents that are inherently part of the collections ¹.

7. Legislative and Legal Frameworks for Museums

Museums are among the fastest-growing institutions globally. In 1932, the American Association of Museums noted that a new museum was established every week in the US and Canada. By 1970, the number reached nearly 5,000 in both countries. Today, there are over 22,000 museums worldwide. This rapid growth necessitated international and local oversight through:²

- **Theoretical Aspect:** Informing specialists and the public about preserved acquisitions.

- **Applied Aspect:** Supervising the maintenance and conservation of artifacts.

Key International Organizations:

- **UNESCO:** Founded in 1945 to promote education, culture, and science. As of 2003, it includes 191 member states.

- **International Council of Museums (ICOM):** Established in 1946 to provide advice to museums worldwide and revive their cultural mission.

- **Arab Organization of Museums:** An affiliate of ICOM involving over 15 Arab countries. It supports museum data, issues professional guidelines, and coordinates projects with ICOM.

Algerian Legislation:

In Algeria, the state has enacted a robust legal framework specifically designed to protect cultural heritage. This is reflected in the legislation governing museum activities, notably **Executive Decree No. 11-352** of October 5, 2011, which established the "Model Statute for Museums" and focused on museums and interpretive centers. Museum activities in 2012 were further distinguished by the **Ministerial Decree** of

1- Archives, vol. 27. Québec: Association des archivistes du Québec, 1996, p. 58.

2- Mayata, Al-Tijani. Organic Archaeological Acquisitions in the Museums of Eastern Algeria: A Field Study of Conservation Environments., p. 22.

March 6, 2012, which determined the entrance fees for public museums and museum-style interpretive centers¹.

For the first time, this text provides unified definitions for all public museums across Algeria. This pricing system aims to increase museum revenues (enhancing self-financing capabilities) while simultaneously striving to increase the number of visitors. Furthermore, the state, through the Ministry of Culture, enacted **Law No. 98-04** relating to the protection of cultural heritage. This law contains explicit legal articles for the protection of museum cultural property, which includes:

- Results of archaeological explorations and research, both terrestrial and underwater.
- Antiquities such as tools, ceramics, inscriptions, coins, seals, jewelry, traditional clothing, weapons, and funerary remains.
- Elements resulting from the fragmentation of historical monuments.
- Anthropological and ethnological materials.
- Cultural property related to religion, the history of science and technology, and the history of social, economic, and political development.
- Paintings and drawings executed entirely by hand on any support and made of any material.
- **Manuscripts, incunabula (early printed books), and documents and publications of special importance.**
- Numismatic collections (coins) or postage stamps.

Section II: Archival Documents and Their Types

1. Archival Documents Classified by Medium (Carrier):

The methods and tools used by humans to preserve information and record ideas have undergone significant developments throughout history starting from clay tablets and papyrus scrolls to the subsequent invention of paper. Perhaps the most pivotal development was the invention of printing, which led to a massive accumulation of intellectual and cultural production.

With the onset of the second half of the twentieth century, marked by the industrial and technological renaissance, various discoveries and inventions contributed to the emergence of more effective media and formats for storage, processing, and information retrieval. The most prominent of these forms include:

1.1. Manuscripts:

Linguistically, the word "Manuscript" (in Arabic: *Makhtout*) is derived from the verb "to draw a line" or "to write," referring to the act of depicting words using alphabetic

1- Kassab, Ammar. The Role of Cultural Legislation and Regulation in Algeria. n.p., 2012, pp. 10–12.

letters¹. It is a book written by hand to distinguish it from a speech or a loose leaf, and specifically refers to those books written before the invention of the printing press². A manuscript is any handwritten work in any field of literature, whether recorded on paper or other materials such as parchment (leather), ancient clay tablets, stones, or others³.

Manuscripts represent the type of books written by hand due to the absence of printing at the time of their authorship. They constitute primary, documented sources of information. Researchers rely either wholly or partially on the information contained within these manuscripts for various subject studies⁴.

1.1.1 The Origin of Manuscripts

Muslims showed immense concern for manuscripts as they were the sole means of preserving the intellectual output of Arab and Islamic thought, including treatises on the Holy Quran, Prophetic Hadiths, and related sciences. They transformed these works into exquisite artistic masterpieces. The sheer volume of this Islamic heritage is evident in global libraries and museums; Istanbul alone houses over 124,000 rare manuscripts, many of which remain unstudied. This is in addition to the vast collections found in Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, India, Iran, and various public museums worldwide⁵.

1.1.2. General Characteristics of Arab-Islamic Manuscripts:

The physical and structural features of Arab manuscripts can be summarized as follows:

- **Title Page:** For a long period, Arab-Islamic manuscripts existed without a dedicated title page.
- **The Incipit (Opening):** Usually begins with the *Basmala*, *Hamdala*, and prayers upon the Prophet (PBUH), followed by the objective of the work and its table of contents.
- **Chapters and Subheadings:** These were often integrated into the text rather than placed on independent lines, sometimes without distinction in font size or color.

1- Al-Shami, Mohamed. Encyclopedic Dictionary of Library and Information Science Terms. Riyadh: Dar Al-Marikh, p. 704.

2- Qandilji, Ibrahim Amer. Information Sources from the Era of Manuscripts to the Era of the Internet. Amman: Al-Fikr, 2000, p. 44.

3- Omar, Ahmed. Basics of Library and Information Science. Amman: Dar Al-Shorouk, 1997, p. 74.

4- Al-Shuwayfat, Mohamed. Global Arabic Encyclopedia. Riyadh: Encyclopedia Works Foundation, vol. 22, 1999, p. 2002.

5- The Arabic Manuscript Book and Codicology. Cairo: Al-Dar al-Misriyyah al-Lubnaniyyah, 1997. 2 volumes. Dictionary of the Arabic Manuscript. Cairo: Ayman Sayyid Fu'ad.

- **Margins:** Scribes were meticulous in leaving four equal margins and maintaining consistent spacing between lines.
- **Page Layout (Line Count):** The number of lines varied but averaged 25–30 in large manuscripts, 20–25 in medium-sized ones, and 12–15 in small ones. Pages were typically not ruled before writing began.
- **Punctuation:** Early Arabs used a circle with a dot in the center as a full stop. Later, commas and colons appeared.
- **Abbreviations:** Ancient manuscripts featured shorthand for certain words (e.g., *Thana* instead of *Haddathana*). However, abbreviating prayers upon the Prophet was generally discouraged.
- **Corrections and Additions:** Scribes would cross out errors and write the correction above or after it. Omitted words were placed in the margin parallel to the line.
- **Colophon (Ending):** Manuscripts concluded with a phrase or verse indicating the end of the text, along with the scribe's name, location, and the Hijri date.
- **Ownership Marks and Certificates:** These include *Tamlikat* (ownership notes), *Ijazat* (authorizations), and *Sama'at* (audition certificates), reflecting the traditional oral transmission of knowledge¹.
- **Sizes:** Manuscript dimensions were not standardized; common sizes included 18 × 12 cm and 25 × 18 cm.

1.1.3. Materials Used for Early Manuscripts:

- **Clay Tablets:** Used in Mesopotamian civilizations.
- **Papyrus:** Used primarily in the Nile Valley.
- **Parchment (Leather):** Common in the Middle East and Europe since the 2nd century BC.
- **Paper:** Invented by the Chinese and eventually spread globally².

1.1.4. Importance of Manuscripts

Manuscripts are a vital pillar of Arab-Islamic heritage. The art of manuscript production reached an advanced stage in calligraphy, illumination, and illustration. Beyond their specialized content, they reflect the sophistication of Islamic civilization.

1- Khalifa, Shaban Abdul Aziz. *Encyclopedia of Descriptive Cataloging for Libraries and Information Centers*. Riyadh: Dar Al-Marikh, 1991. 538 pp.

2- Mezlah, Rachid. *Automated Systems and Their Role in Organizing Manuscripts at the Prince Abdul Qadir University of Islamic Sciences Library*. Master's Thesis in Library Science. Constantine, 2006. p. 35.

Consequently, libraries and research centers prioritize acquiring them in their original form or via modern media like microfilm and digital formats (CDs)¹.

During the modern era, the high scientific value of these manuscripts led colonial powers to transfer large quantities to foreign libraries. Today, major collections reside in France, England, Italy, Spain, Russia, the USA, and Turkey. While many Orientalists contributed to the removal of this heritage, others played a significant role in its preservation, editing (*Tahqiq*), and publication.

1.1.5. Scientific and Historical Value of Manuscripts

Manuscript treasures serve as the best evidence of the intellectual greatness of ancestors. They represent the "distilled thought" of Arab-Muslim scholars across the East and West. Their value lies in:

- Reflecting historical aspects of the nation and unveiling forgotten events and facts.
- Identifying regional scholars and their reformist efforts through the ages.
- Providing a comprehensive view of the religious, social, cultural, and political conditions of past societies.
- Serving as **primary sources** essential for studying any specific subject, science, or time period.
- Acting as a mirror of the nation's ethics and a vast repository of its sciences and literature².

1.1.6. Factors Leading to the Loss and Damage of Manuscripts

- Natural Factors

A. Physical Damage: Damage resulting from climatic variations, including:

Humidity: Manuscripts and books are made of organic materials (plant or animal origin) such as paper, papyrus, cloth, and sometimes wood. These materials are hygroscopic. When relative humidity rises, the organic matter absorbs water, leading to acidity, yellow spots (foxing), and the growth of insects, fungi, and bacteria, causing structural deformities³.

Light: Exposure to various radiations, including Ultraviolet (UV) rays, short-wave visible white light, and Infrared (IR) rays, has thermal effects. This causes papers to fade and yellow, erodes light-sensitive inks and pigments, and breaks down the molecular structure of organic fibers in paper and leather.

1- Al-Halwaji, Abd al-Sattar. *The Arabic Manuscript*. 2nd ed. Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: Maktabat al-Sabah, 1989.

2- Hamshari, Omar Ahmed. *Modern Management of Libraries and Information Centers*. Amman: Dar al-Ru'a, 2001. p. 50

3- Al-Naqshbandi, O. N. Maintenance, Storage, and Fumigation of Manuscripts. *Al-Mawrid Journal*, Vol. 5, No. 1. (1989), p. 162.

Temperature: High temperatures, especially in continental climates or from proximity to sunlight and lamps, lead to the drying of adhesives in bindings. It also accelerates acidity due to atmospheric pollution from acidic gases.

B. Chemical Damage: Manuscripts are highly sensitive to airborne chemicals. Atmospheric pollution, acidity, dust, and metallic particles carried by the wind pose a fatal threat, leading to acid-induced degradation of the fibers.

C. Biological Damage: As organic entities, manuscripts are prone to decomposition by microorganisms. Under favorable climatic conditions, these organisms attack and destroy documents. This includes termites (white ants) with biting mouthparts, larvae that feed on leather, and rodents that devour the edges of manuscripts, leaving behind destructive waste.

1.1.7. Storage and Preservation Environments

Proper preservation requires specific storage conditions to protect documents from external threats:

Site Location: Buildings should be far from industrial areas, furnaces, and laboratories to avoid chemical gases and smoke. They should also be away from riverbanks to avoid high humidity.

Storage Methods: Use locked metal cabinets with ventilation holes at the top. Silica gel packets should be placed inside to absorb excess moisture.

Climate Control: Maintaining a constant environment is crucial. The ideal temperature range is 20-25°C, with consistent relative humidity and appropriate lighting levels.

2) Maps

Humans utilized drawings and engravings thousands of years before the advent of writing, depicting ideas on cave walls. Following the invention of writing, these were inscribed on clay tablets, parchment, and papyrus. Maps have evolved significantly, employing high-precision techniques that have made them primary sources for scientific and historical research.

- **Educational Value:** Maps assist in solving problems and interpreting phenomena, containing clearer data than most other educational tools.

- **Social Competency:** They are fundamental in teaching social sciences and geography, serving as a core competency for understanding human and physical environments¹.

3) Printed Documents

These refer to documents produced via various printing methods or computers, such as administrative records. Over time, they have become essential historical sources for researchers.

1- Al-Shuwayfat, Mohamed. Global Arabic Encyclopedia. Riyadh: Encyclopedia Works Foundation, vol. 22, 1999, p. 2002.

- **Function:** They help achieve educational goals that other sources cannot.
- **Categorization:**
- **Official Documents:** Include laws, decrees, and administrative records related to governance.
- **Private Documents:** Include contracts, letters, and personal records. Their value lies in providing an unvarnished reflection of societal relationships and the link between the public and authority¹.

4) Audiovisual Documents

These are non-traditional information carriers that record sound, moving images, or both using modern technology. They appear in formats such as tapes, discs, and cylinders.

- **Visual Documents:** Rely solely on sight (e.g., films).
- **Audiovisual:** Rely on both hearing and sight. To distinguish them from traditional paper records, they are often termed the "**New Archive**"².

5) Microforms (Microfilms)

Microforms are a modern technical approach for recording vast amounts of information on very small film strips.

- **Etymology:** Derived from the Latin for "small forms."
- **Utility:** They allow for the reproduction of original documents in a highly condensed format that requires special readers to return them to their original size or print them on paper.

6) Electronic Documents

The structure of an electronic document differs radically from a paper one. Traditional documents use alphabetic or pictorial symbols readable by the human eye. In contrast, electronic documents are recorded in **binary code** and require a technical mediator (hardware and software) for access³.

7. Archival Classification by Lifecycle (The Three Ages Theory):

- **First Age (Administrative/Current Archive):** Documents produced daily by institutions for current operations. They remain in the generating offices due to frequent use.

1- Association des Archivistes Français. Manual of Archival Science. Paris: Direction des Archives de France, 1970, p. 555.

2- "Geographical Maps and the Importance of Their Use in Teaching." [Online]. Accessed February 6, 2026. Available at: <http://magAlimnalén.net/mps.html>.

3- Al-Darhoubi, Mohamed El-Hadi. "The Comprehensive School Library and Information Technology." [Online]. Accessed February 6, 2026. Available at: <http://www.cybrarians.info/journal/no7/school.lib.htm>.

- **Characteristics:** High administrative value, continuous use, and "open files" (subject to additions)¹.
- **Second Age (Intermediate Archive):** Documents generally older than five years that are no longer needed for daily business but must be kept for legal or administrative reasons.
- **Characteristics:** "Closed files," infrequent use, and stored in temporary preservation centers for 10–15 years.
- **Third Age (Historical Archive):** Documents that have outlived their administrative value but possess permanent historical significance. These are preserved indefinitely in national or specialized archives².

7.1. Classification by Ownership:

7.1.1. Public Archive:

The Public Archive consists of documents owned by the State or its administrative bodies. It refers to records generated by official authorities and can be defined as the body of documents produced and preserved by public entities. This type of archive is governed by several legal principles:

- **Inalienability:** It cannot be privately owned through prescription (lapse of time) and cannot be bought or sold³.
- **Immunity from Seizure:** It is not subject to judicial seizure or attachment.
- **Imprescriptibility:** As public property, its status and the State's right to it do not expire over time.
- **Composition:** It is comprised of historical documents produced or received by state bodies and other public institutions.

7.2. Importance of Public Archives:

- **Public Access:** These documents serve as vital references for historical and social research.
- **Appraisal and Selection:** They allow for the systematic classification of documents that possess enduring archival value.

1- Hamshari, Omar & Allyan, Ahmed. *Microforms in the Basics of Library, Documentation, and Information Science*. Amman: Dar Al-Ru'a Al-Asriya, 1996, p. 144.

2- Bazin, René-Paul. *The New Archives*. Paris: [s.l.], 1998, p. 9.

3- Dalhoum, Entisar. "Archive Management in Public Administrative Institutions: A Field Study in Souk Ahras Province." Master's Thesis, Library Science, Constantine, 2006, p. 70.

- **Protection of Heritage:** They provide a framework to support and protect historical documents, even those that might remain in private hands but are deemed of public interest.

- **Access Rights:** The owner or lawful custodian of the archive (in specific cases) has the right to obtain copies of the documents free of charge¹.

8. Definition of Memory

Memory is defined as a collection of diverse and often conflicting recollections. Despite their competing nature, these memories possess the ability to act as a common denominator on a symbolic level. This allows them to transcend actual social and political differences and forge a desired virtual community².

8.1. Definition of National Memory

National memory is not limited to a single individual; rather, it pertains to the various groups within a society who belong to one homeland. Consequently, differences in recollections emerge; however, despite their contradictions, they take shape and evolve in response to social, political, and cultural changes.

Cognitive Perspective (Mohamed Jamal, 2001)

Mohamed Jamal (2001) posits that memory is a system for storing information that a person needs to reference when necessary. Meanwhile, the process of remembering is the ability to retrieve information that an individual has previously learned and retained up until the moment of recall³.

Anwar Al-Sharqawi (1992) adds that memory is a cognitive process of perceiving past events, including the various situations that play a significant role in an individual's life. It is also the capacity to retrieve these situations and the past events associated with them.

8.2. The Importance of National Memory

National memory holds a significant position in all countries worldwide, despite the variance in its roots and its fluctuations from one social group to another. Most peoples, nationalities, and ethnicities attempt to reshape their relationship with the past amidst a massive wave of interest in memories and past events a phenomenon

1- Dalhoum, Entisar. Op. Cit., pp. 72–73.

2- Berrial, A., & Khaoua, A. (2022). The Role of El-Oued Local Radio in Preserving National Memory: A Study on a Sample of the Population of El-Oued Province [Master's Thesis, Faculty of Social and Human Sciences]. University of Echahid Hamma Lakhdar - El Oued. p. 27.

3- Yousef, S. A. W. (2013). Learning Disabilities. Egyptian Journal of Psychological Studies, Vol. 24, p. 45.

deeply explored by the French historian Pierre Nora, who examined the motives behind this trend and sought to explain its causes and manifestations¹.

National memory is of paramount importance in the lives of nations, as it contributes to:

Strengthening National Unity: It fosters a harmonious sense of belonging among members of the nation, transcending sectarian, denominational, or regional biases, and standing against injustice and tyranny in pursuit of social justice.

Preserving National Identity and Cultural Heritage: It safeguards the nation's cultural heritage by narrating pivotal life events and the circumstances of martyrdom or severe oppression to future generations. These narratives serve as lessons and an eternal flame illuminating the path of struggle, inspiring future generations to continue the journey started by their honorable ancestors.

National memory comprehensively represents the history, culture, and identity of a people. It encompasses the memories of all social strata and segments, regardless of their political or social standings. While this memory reflects the collective experiences, sufferings, and triumphs that shaped the nation and should respect the diversity of opinions there is a risk of reducing it to a significant but one-dimensional perspective.

It is essential to reflect a national memory that contains both the positive and the negative. Therefore, national memory must be treated as a dynamic process rather than a static event or a fixed entity, as it is heavily influenced by the nature of prevailing memory policies.

8.2. Reasons for the Interest in National Memory

Memory has undergone a radical transformation since the Renaissance due to the expansion of knowledge and the adoption of new technologies. During the 19th century, National Memory was further reinforced by the rise of nationalist ideologies in Europe and the emergence of the Nation-State. This era saw the establishment of museums, libraries, and national archives. States encouraged national celebrations and revived the "glories of the nation" to instill pride in the past and ancestors.

Following World War II, electronic discoveries expanded and developed memory, leading to the creation of Data Banks that revolutionized documentary memory. Thanks to the Information Revolution, social and human sciences turned toward renewing studies on Collective Memory. The latter has become a major stake in contemporary societies, viewed as the Symbolic Capital essential for daily life.

1- Al-Oudi, O. (February 6 2026). National Memory [Article]. Cratar. <https://www.cratar.net/archives/310486>

Furthermore, states and social forces seek to employ national memory as a means of exerting influence and as a tool to grant political legitimacy to authority.

History is written through the lens of memory; the more active the memory, the more accurate and objective the historical narrative becomes. This adds credibility to history as it recounts events and describes situations still present in the witness's mind.

Pierre Nora's Perspective

French historian **Pierre Nora** believes there is a link between the growing interest in national memory and two modern historical phenomena:

- **The Acceleration of History:** A hallmark of globalization, where humanity is swept away by the dominance of technology. The shift from human and moral values to the logic of profit has altered our perception of the present. In this context, interest in memory increases as a way to shape **identity** and give meaning to life.

- **The Social Dimensions of Memory Revival:** This relates to the democratic nature of global societies and the expansion of liberation movements. Various social groups that suffered oppression in the past now seek to reconstruct the image of their past as a form of **restoring a suppressed identity**¹.

9. The Concept of Identity

There is no ready-made definition of "Identity" (*Huwiya*) in ancient Arabic linguistic lexicons; however, we can find roots that bring us closer to its meaning. In *Lisan al-Arab*, Ibn Manzur notes: "If you camp, avoid the *Huwiya*," which is the plural of *Huwa* (a pit or a depressed area of land). From this, it can be said that identity linguistically signifies that which a person inhabits and finds tranquility in, providing a sense of security, stability, and distinction from others. It implies something that belongs solely to the individual, meaning identity requires a thing to be "itself" (*Huwa-Huwa*), indicating the permanence of identity².

Etymologically, the word "Identity" traces back to Latin roots referring to "sameness" or "likeness," while opposing what is different or diverse. Thus, "otherness" is an epistemological condition for conceiving and realizing identity³. This aligns with the meanings found in Western dictionaries for the terms "**Identité**" and "**Identity**"⁴

1- Al-Sarayrah, K. The Comprehensive Guide to Library and Information Science Concepts: Arabic-English. Dar Kunouz Al-Ma'rafa for Publishing and Distribution. (2010) . p. 174.

2- Al-Ani, Khalil Nouri Musayhir.. Islamic Identity in the Era of Globalization, 1st ed. Baghdad: Diwan al-Waqf al-Sunni, 2009. p. 93

3- Al-Triki, Fathi.. Identity and its Stakes, 1st ed. Beirut - Tunis: Mediterranean Publishing House, 2010. p. 36

4- Hanafi, Hassan. Identity. Cairo: The Supreme Council of Culture, 2012. p. 17

The concept of identity overlaps with that of "Essence" (*Mahiyya*). In language, identity means a thing is itself and not something else, based on the principle of consistency or identity in logic. "Essence" is formed by adding the connecting particle "Ma" to the pronoun "Huwa" (What is it?), yet the meaning remains one. Some consider essence deeper than identity. In foreign languages, "Essence" derives from the Latin *Esse* (to be), while "Identité" stems from the pronoun *Id* (it/him).¹ Generally, the linguistic meaning of identity revolves around stability, constancy, and adherence to one's origins, as opposed to change or transformation.

9.1. Definitions across Disciplines:

Scholars have defined identity according to their diverse specializations:

- **Psychology:** Defined as a thing being itself or its likeness in every aspect, characterized by continuity, stability, and lack of change².
- **Theology (*Ilm al-Kalam*):** It signifies the absolute truth that encompasses all specific truths, much like a seed encompasses a tree³.
- **Philosophy:** The reality of a thing or person that distinguishes them from others; it is also the "ID card" that proves a person's name, nationality, birth, and profession.
- **Sociology:** The process by which an individual distinguishes themselves from others, defining their personal status⁴.

9.2. Conclusion on Identity:

It is clear that these definitions converge on the concepts of **particularity, distinction, and difference** from the "Other." Mohammad Amara eloquently expressed this: "The identity of a thing consists of its constants that do not renew or change... it is like a fingerprint for a human, distinguishing them from all others"⁵. This distinction occurs at both the individual and collective levels, allowing us to differentiate between two types:

- **Individual Identity:** Based primarily on the physical characteristics that distinguish every human being, most notably fingerprints.

1- Hanafi, Hassan,. Op. Cit., p. 10.

2- Aqil, Fakher. Dictionary of Psychology, 1st ed. Beirut: Dar El Ilm Lilmalayin, . 1985. p. 55

3- Academy of the Arabic Language. The Philosophical Dictionary. Cairo: General Organization for Government Printing Offices, 1983. p. 21

4- Badawi, Ahmed Zaki. A Dictionary of the Social Sciences. Beirut, Lebanon: Librairie du Liban, 1977. p. 185.

5- Imarah, Muhammad. The Dangers of Globalization to Cultural Identity. Cairo: Nahdet Misr, 1999. p. 6

- **National or Ethnic Identity:** Relating to the homeland or the nation to which a people belong, distinguished by specific cultural characteristics¹.

10. The Concept of Cultural Identity

The concepts of cultural identity are numerous and diverse. Among the most prominent definitions is the one adopted by **UNESCO**, which states that:

"Cultural identity means, first and foremost, that we are individuals belonging to a linguistic, local, regional, or national group, possessing its own distinguishing moral and aesthetic values. This also includes the way we assimilate the group's history, traditions, customs, and lifestyle, as well as our sense of belonging to and participating in a shared destiny. It is the way we manifest ourselves as a collective entity, and for each individual, it represents a fundamental equation that determines how we relate to our community and the world at large".²

This definition aligns with **social psychology**, which views cultural identity as a tool for understanding the articulation between an individual's psychological and social dimensions. It is the product of various interactions between the individual and their social environment. An individual's social identity is defined by their multiple affiliations within the social system. However, social identity is not just for individuals; every group has an identity that functions through **inclusion and exclusion** defining the group while distinguishing it from others based on its culture³.

Thus, cultural identity serves as:

- The **living core** of both individual and collective personality.
- The determinant of behavior, original decisions, and actions.
- The **motivating element** that allows a nation to pursue development and creativity while maintaining its specific cultural components, historical characteristics, national language, shared psychology, and future aspirations⁴.

10.1. Culture as a Living Construct:

It is clear that identity is intrinsically linked to culture, which by its nature implies diversity and difference. There is no single global culture; rather, there are multiple

1- Bin Naaman, Ahmed. (n.d.). National Identity: Facts and Fallacies. Algeria: Dar El-Ouma Company for Printing, Publishing, and Advertising. p. 11.

2- Hamdi Hassan Abdel-Hamid Al-Mahrouqi. The Role of Education in Facing the Repercussions of Globalization, Issue 7. Cairo: Center for University Education Development, Ain Shams University, 2004. p. 146

3- Denys Cuhe. The Concept of Culture in Social Sciences, Translated by Mounir Saidani, 1st Edition. Beirut, Lebanon: Arab Organization for Translation, 2007. pp. 148–149.

4- Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO). (n.d.). The Comprehensive Plan for Arab Culture, 2nd Edition. Tunis: Department of Culture. p. 21

cultures, each with fixed particularities. Cultural identity can be defined as a set of fundamental, stable cultural features and frameworks that reveal the historical uniqueness of a group or nation, expressing a total sum of cultural accumulations.

Culture is an **acquired practical knowledge** rather than innate; humans obtain it through various means of acquisition, such as:

- Imitating parents, teachers, and peers.
- Formal and informal education.
- The local and global social environment¹

Essentially, culture is the form of human life as designed by those who live it, encompassing their beliefs and modes of thought within a specific time and place²

10.2. Evolution and Preservation:

Because a single "world culture" does not and cannot exist, every culture strives to preserve its identity. This identity is not a static, "ready-made" entity but a **living organism** capable of evolution. It may move toward brilliance and expansion or toward fading and extinction, depending on its ability to assert itself and maintain its core foundations and reference frameworks.

Section III: The Role of the Mujahid Museum of Sidi Bel Abbès in Recording the History of the Algerian Revolution

1. Definition of the Mujahid Museum Annex – Sidi Bel Abbès:

The Mujahid Museum Annex of Sidi Bel Abbès was established under **Executive Decree No. 08-170**, which governs the creation, organization, and operation of regional Mujahid museums. Its internal structure is defined by the Joint Ministerial Decree regulating regional museums and their associated annexes.

2. Location:

The museum is located at: **Ferhat Abbas Street (La Rocade), Sidi Bel Abbès Province.**

3. Primary Missions of the Museum:

- **Acquisition and Preservation:** Recovering documents and museum artifacts, followed by their restoration, exhibition, and conservation.
- **Oral History:** Recording live testimonies related to the National Movement and the Liberation Revolution, then classifying, preserving, and making them available for research.

1- Azmi Taha El-Sayed. Islamic Culture, 4th Edition. Amman, Jordan: Al-Quds Open University, 2008. p. 17.

2- Ahmed Hamshari. Socialization of the Child, 2nd Edition. Amman: Dar Safaa for Publishing and Distribution, 2013. pp. 187–188.

- **Scientific Research:** Implementing research programs in Museology and collaborating with academic researchers.
- **Knowledge Exchange:** Collecting references and exchanging scientific and technical information with specialized national and foreign institutions.
- **Publication:** Producing books, magazines, periodicals, guides, and audiovisual support materials.
- **Commemoration:** Contributing to the celebration of national holidays and significant historical occasions.
- **Events:** Organizing seminars, conferences, study days, and hosting both permanent and mobile exhibitions.

4. Calendar of Major Historical Activities throughout the Year:

Occasion	Historical Date	Commemoration Period
The Eight-Day Strike	Jan 28, 1957	Jan 28 – Feb 11
National Martyr's Day	Feb 18	Feb 18
Martyrdom of Larbi Ben M'hidi	March 3-4	March 3-4
International Women's Day	March 8	March 8
Victory Day (Evian Accords)	March 19, 1962	March 19
The Martyrs of March	March 27	March 27
Martyrdom of "Si Abdelkrim"	April 26	April 26
National Science Day	April 16	April 16
May 8, 1945 Massacres	May 8	May 8
Martyrdom of Mwalid Bekhlife (El-Tahar)	May 12, 1964	May 12
National Student Day	May 19, 1956	May 19
North Constantine Offensive	Aug 20, 1955	Aug 20
Soummam Conference	Aug 20, 1956	Aug 20

5. Cultural and Educational Outreach:

- **Media and Animation:** The museum has produced **10 brochures** and **7 newsletters** to date.
- **Exhibition Management:**
 - **Permanent:** The museum features **9 permanent galleries**.
 - **Temporary:** **11 temporary exhibitions** have been organized within the museum halls, rotating according to historical anniversaries.

- **Mobile:** Over **20 mobile exhibitions** have been launched for universities, youth centers, vocational training institutes, schools, and cultural associations.
- **Academic Events:** Hosting seminars and organizing specialized study days.
- **Cultural Activities:** Implementing diverse activities to promote historical awareness.
- **Publications:** Issuing specialized periodicals focused on regional and national history.

Conclusion

This study has explored the vital intersection between archival heritage, cultural identity, and the practical role of museum institutions in preserving national memory. Through the analysis of the Mujahid Museum Annex in Sidi Bel Abbès, several key conclusions can be drawn:

1. Archives as the Bedrock of Identity: Manuscripts and documents are not merely historical relics; they are the "living core" of cultural identity. As demonstrated, these records provide the essential evidence required to distinguish a nation's particularity and ensure the continuity of its collective memory across generations.

2. The Lifecycle of Memory: By applying the "Three Ages Theory" of archives, we see that the transition of documents from administrative use to historical preservation is a crucial process for national documentation. This transition ensures that the sacrifices and milestones of the Algerian Revolution are elevated from institutional records to eternal symbols of national sovereignty.

3. Institutional Safeguarding of Heritage: The Mujahid Museum of Sidi Bel Abbès serves as a functional model for historical preservation. Through its multifaceted missions—ranging from recording oral testimonies of veterans (*Mujahideen*) to organizing mobile exhibitions—the museum successfully bridges the gap between academic research and public consciousness.

4. Countering Erasure: Cultural identity is a dynamic construct that requires constant assertion. The museum's active schedule of commemorations (such as Martyr's Day and the Soummam Conference anniversary) acts as a defensive shield against the fading of historical facts, ensuring that the "National Identity" remains rooted in its authentic historical struggle.

Recommendations: Finally, the study recommends the digital transformation of these archival treasures to ensure their global reach and protection against physical decay. It also emphasizes the importance of integrating museum-based oral histories into the national educational curriculum to foster a robust sense of identity among the youth.

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