

## Management of archives institutions in Algeria: Is it a choice or an obligation?

إدارة أرشيف المؤسسات في الجزائر: خيار أم ضرورة؟

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### Abstract:

Promoting the company's archives is one of the functions' contemporary archive; it concerns archival documents throughout their life cycle in the company. In this article, the question that is proposed; what is the link between the information that considered the company producer and the archive in their qualities of documentary support, and how and for what use can they be integrated into the company's information system? To answer this question, we will focused on the approach that is based on the analysis of the legal, economic and cultural functions' company archive. These constitute, first of all, the material trace (the proof) of the company's existence, as well the archive is considered as the memory of the company, as they can be a strategic tool allowing intelligent planning for the future by based on the previous experiences.

**Keywords:** management; decision support; company archives; history; communication; archival valorization; memory

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Very empirically at the start, companies archives were only kept because of their legal or administrative value, that is to say they were limited to a role of secrecy and having little affinity with the field of knowledge and awareness, it was not until the industrial revolution that we felt the need to organize documents from firms or businesses. The association of the term archive with institutions directs us towards a new conception, which allows us to have a better perception of the future. The industrial and commercial company produces documents that are important for the company itself as well as scientific research. Given their specificities they can only be considered unique because it tells us about the company itself the profile of its employees which will be an economic and managerial profile; that's why it constitutes an important documentary source. The company's archive serves as any source of information to determine the management method and the functioning of the company. Placed side by side, the archive of different public or private companies informs us about the economic option of a country at a given moment in its history. The archive of public companies is part of the larger set of world of work Archive. The latter can be categorized as follows: Regional, interregional or national economic archives. The archives of economic associations, chambers of commerce and trade union organizations; Private fonds deposited in public archives; company archives.

- Regional, interregional or national economic archives: They centralize and secure all economic information from many regions of a country. They are most of the time financed by state organizations and donations. They can have the status of association or foundation. They function as advisors to P.M.E and they can often even receive and manage their funds. The first archives of this type are the Swiss Economic Archives. In France, they correspond to public and associative centers, the best known of it which is the Center des Archives du

Monde du Travail (C.A.M.T) in Roubaix. Unfortunately we do not have its equivalent in Algeria.

- The archives of economic associations, chambers of commerce and trade union organizations : we can cite the archives of the association of the "Chambre syndicale des agents de change" near the Montpellier exhibition (Archives d'associations,2019).

- Private funds deposited in public archives: The Public Archives can receive company archives or association archives. In certain countries, they even have a right of pre-emption in the event of company bankruptcies.

- Company archives: This category includes archives managed by their producer. The archives of Nestlé, Credit Suisse, and Roche are the best-known examples. They include documents of historical interest which are no longer of immediate utility or direct use for the running of the company's business. They generally correspond to definitive archives, as opposed to current and intermediate archives. These are managed according to parameters specific to them. In Algeria no current assessment has been drawn up for the historical archives of public companies. In this work, the question addressed is that of the archives of public companies, in other words those which fall within the domain of the State. The question asked is how can we integrate archives management into the information system of the Algerian public enterprise? We can ask other questions: How can we define the archives of public companies in Algeria? Can archives help in decision making? or can it be a communication tool? Or do the company's archives contribute to the constitution of its memory?

The starting hypothesis is simple. The same goes for company archives as for those of central administrations and local authorities; they have a problem of status, a problem of identity, even a problem of perspective taken care of by the decision-making center.

The management of archives of the world of work in Algeria must be posed in specific terms, if only because they are not of the same nature as the archives of Local Authorities or

the Central Administration. It is appropriate to change your point of view and enter into the logic of the company. In other words: making the notions of archiving and conservation more compatible with the terms of investment and profitability. The archives of public companies can be organized to accommodate internal or external users.

The whole ambition of this modest work is precisely to show that the company's archive documents can be a management tool in the service of the company and not a burden that it must endure. Although archives do not have a monopoly on information, decision-makers must nevertheless become aware of the richness and diversity of economic archives.

Company archives are not simply documents that are stored in repositories somewhere. They reflect the reality of the company and they must constantly be valued. In other words, reflect the evolution of economic and legal realities in companies; secondly, take into account the progress made in the field of information. As a source of information, enterprise archives must constantly meet user.

## **2. Definition of public companies archives in Algeria**

To have a network analysis - likely to help us approach to the definition of Algerian public company archives, we based on the definition of archives given by law 88/09 of January 26, 1988 relating to the national archives of Algeria. In particular, the constituent elements of the concept of archives are discussed, and the article by Michel Duchein about the respect for archive funds. This law defines archives in its articles 2,3 and 4. By continuing the reflection on the definition of archives given by law 88/09 relating in the national archives of 01.26.1988, we can distinguish five characteristic elements: Set of documents which implies the notion of archives, the notion of the producer, the date, the form and finally the support.

### **2.1 The archive fund**

The concept of respect for the basic archival unit, the archive fund, arises from the

application of the principle of respect for the funds. For Duchein, the reasons which justify this principle are diverse and multiple, he considers that to appreciate an archival document, it is essential to know which person produced this collection? Under what circumstances was it produced? Why and in the context what procedure? For what purposes and how it was received? However, these questions cannot be resolved, since, as Duchein points out, there exist theoretical problems and some practical difficulties when we want to define an archive. We need to know the definition of the delimitation and hierarchy of archival funds among themselves, the changes in skills between the producers of the funds and the influences of these variations on the determination of their provenance, on the classification into open or closed funds and respect for the internal order of these. (Duchein ,1977,p25) Duchein analyzed each of these difficulties and confronted them with theory by proposing solutions.

### **2.1.1 The fund and the hierarchy**

The need to define the archive fund has been felt for nearly a century and a half. (Couture,1999,p225) The scope of the notion of fund has undergone major changes given the cultural characteristics of each country, documentary inflation and the dizzying evolution of information and communication technologies as well as the diversity of organizations producing archive funds. Consequently, they can present simple cases and complex cases:

- Simple case: this is the case for organizations where the number of staff is limited. In this case, staff tasks are not distributed between several divisions or sectors and their attributions are precise. For example, the archives of local authorities. This type of institutions rarely changes their activities. Therefore, there is a certain continuity in the production and preservation of archives. Thus, the archives will always be under the supervision of the same organization.
- Complex cases: this is particularly the case for organizations where the number of staff is large and their responsibilities are multiple. Unlike organizations with a simple structure, staff tasks are divided into divisions or sub-directors, etc., each of which

exercises part of the responsibilities. If we take the example of the Naftal archives, we notice that after forty years of existence, we cannot bring together all the archives of this company in a single place. However, Naftal, like other Algerian companies, has experienced structural changes in its organization and in its management method. Furthermore, it has evolved in the context of a highly disjointed developing economy. Naftal is a company resulting from the restructuring of the sector of energy having led to the redeployment of goods and services. Naftal inherited a multitude of information, data, studies and other stored at the premises. Faced with the question of archives and the problems linked to companies with a complex structure, two proposals can be considered. The first consists of constituting the archive fund at the highest level of the hierarchy, the top of the pyramid of administration. This concept, called unicist, wants the fund to be the sole fund of archives of State. Some international banks practice this design. The Rothschild bank is the most perfect example. In the second proposal, it is considered to reduce the archive fund to the smallest cell. In other words, the conservation of archives is done at the level of each subsidiary or unit of the enterprise. Some authors have proposed other definitions for the archive fund. For H. Jenkinson the fund is the whole resulting from the work of an administration whatever the size of the latter, constituting a whole complete by itself, capable of dealing independently without the intervention of a higher authority, all aspects of affairs which are under its competence. For J. Buck the record group is an archival unit established arbitrarily according to the origin of the documents and the need to arrive at a set of a suitable size to facilitate the classification work. (Duchain,1977,p16)

In Jenkinson's definition, it is clear that the producer of archive funds has all the powers over a file. Of course, it always remains the product of an administrative process which affects several levels of skills and decisions. This formula is ideal but in reality no public or business administration has the power to regulate its affairs without superior or

external intervention. For example, each department of the Sonatrach company, for example, certainly produces archives which are at the production stage, distinct from those of the other departments, but they are closely interdependent on the latter and cannot be considered autonomous. But in Buck's definition, we have the impression that by limiting the archival unit, the archive funds risk losing all meaning (the notion of funds). Duchein goes even further in his definition. The producer of archive funds or the company must have a name and a legal existence, have attributions defined by a legal text, as it is necessary to have a well-defined position in the administrative hierarchy. The existence of a manager and a decision-maker is essential. Without forgetting that the organization which produces the archive funds, it must have a legal existence and a level of competence. Finally, we must work with a new concept: the hierarchy of funds. This must agree with the hierarchy of producers to be able to determine the skills of the organizations over the archives funds. (Duchein,1977,p22)

### **2.1.2 Changement of competences**

It is difficult to say with accuracy, if this organization has really ceased to exist, theoretically, a company which disappears loses its legal existence or the fund of archives will not disappear for all that. The question that is asked, this fund will depend on which organization: the abolished organization, or the created organization? There are two situations the deleted organism can be replaced by another organism For example. ONALAIT theoretically transferred its assets to L'O.R.O.LAIT then to GIPLAIT. In this case, there is a certain continuity and the archives are not in danger. In the second case, the created organism takes over only part of the deleted organism. If we take the case of privatized public economic enterprises, we must ask ourselves: will the privatized enterprise replace the dissolved enterprise in all its functions? Or will it simply take one of these prerogatives, so this new company will have the right to inherit the documents (what remains?) of the public company. It should not be forgotten that the company which succeeded the dissolved

company will probably need certain archives such as documents relating to the land registry for example. These documents are common to the dissolved company and the created company. There is therefore conservation and transmission of the fund. Furthermore, with the opening of capital, the question will arise as to what level to set the limit of the public sector? Law 88-09 of 01/26/1998 relating to national archives stipulates in its art. 22 that the organizations cited in art.5 are required to keep in good condition and order the archives that they hold in addition to each company with its particularities. In fact, when the company's archives change name or place in the administrative system, this will not affect the content of the archives, but when there is a transfer of documents between the deleted organization and the organization created, it is the date of the transfer which determines the competence over the fund. As it is essential to know the origin of the archives.

### **2.1.3 Concept of provenance**

Determining the provenance of an archive fund is simple when the producing organization keeps the fund in its entirety and itself ensures the payment of this fund. But, in the case where an organization other than the producer of the fund pays the latter, how can the source of the fund be determined? This is why we need to know whether this fund has retained its identity and individuality or not. Consequently, the fund must be considered as coming from the producing organization even if it was collected by other organizations "The notion of provenance is linked to that of the producer. When the fund has undergone additions or decreases, it is considered to come from the organization it collected. The notion of provenance is linked to that of payment."( Duchein,1977,p22) Still, we need to know when we can talk about open funds and closed funds?

### **2.1.4 Open fund and closed fund**

A fund is said to be open when the organism which produces it is alive or still in activity. On the other hand, the fund is said to be closed, when the organization producing the fund has no longer exist. We can apply this notion (closed funds) "to the archives of the



Middle Ages from the period before the revolutions of the 19th century, thus for Europe, the various institutions of the feudal age, and for America, that of the 'colonial era'

When it comes to contemporary archives, things are more complex. The removal of an organism can take many forms. The example of the Algerian company illustrates these remarks. The company from the colonial era (before 1962) continued its activity, but its status changed. The question that is asked, is whether the company's archives from the colonial period are considered closed funds or open funds? We take the example of the national rail transport company (SNTF) to be able to answer the following questions. The first hypothesis is that the Algerian SNTF (organization B) is independent of the French SNTF (organization A)? In this case, there is a break between organization (A) and organization (B) so the archives of organization (A) are closed. The second hypothesis is that the Algerian S.N.T.F replaced the S.N.T.F. French in all its prerogatives? In this case the organism (B) succeeds the organism (A). This is simply a change of name: the archive fund will follow a certain continuity and the fund (AB) remains open. The third hypothesis is that the Algerian S.N.T.F took only part of the prerogatives of the French S.N.T.F? Under these conditions can we consider the fund of the organization (A) as a closed fund or an open fund? If the organization (A) was abolished and transferred its skills to the organization (B), then the fund of the organization (A) is closed and the fund of the organization (B) is different from the fund of the organism (A). However, a fund remains open as long as the organism that produces it is alive. In some cases this can last several centuries, for example the British Department fund. In this case the archivists will not wait until the collection is closed to process it. They apply dynamic processing which preserves the archive background unit while splitting it in such a way as to allow its use. This prompts us to ask ourselves, how can we apply respect for funds while respecting the original internal classification?

### **2.1.5 Respect for funds and respect for the original internal classification:**

The difficulties raised by the application of respect for funds are multiple. One of these difficulties: Should the archivist preserve the documents according to the classification given by their producers? Muller, Feith and Fran have a theory on this subject: the system of internal classification of funds must be based on the primitive organization of the archive fund which corresponds in its broad outlines with the organization of the administration of which it is from. (Duchein,1977,p. 22) This statement is under the risk of being optimistic. These Dutch authors also add that it is imperative to re-establish as much as possible the original order first, but only later will it be possible to judge to what extent it will be possible to deviate from this order. It is obvious that the classification given to documents by their organizations: producers of the archives, is never a methodological classification based on the rules of archival classification. The primitive or original classification is designed to meet purely functional needs and of course it is modeled on the organization of offices. However, archival classification must meet the needs of scientific research. Other difficulties remain when there is a mixture of documents from various sources. It should also be added that producing organizations do not practice continuous and rigorous classification. In certain cases, the classification adopted may harm the previous classification with retroactive effect sometimes covering several years. Therefore, it is fictitious and risky to take the original classification of documents as the basis for archival classification. If the archivist decides to adopt the classification given by the producing organization, he must ensure that:

- the classification given by the producing organization has actually been carried out, continued and preserved;
- the classification is spread over a fairly long period;
- the classification given is compatible with the principle of respect for funds;
- and it includes all the documents making up the archive fund.

Finally, the archive collection, that is to say all the archives having a common provenance, ordinarily reflects the structure of the institution from which it results or the

activities of the person to whom it belongs. It is therefore necessary to know the different workings of an institution and its historical evolution if we want to easily find our way through its archives, but a careful examination of the structure of the fund allows us to do so. The one which analyzes the organization that gave birth to it. We can say that the application of the principle of respect for archive funds is required, but in reality the archivist will always be forced on the one hand to respect the nature of the archive fund which is an organic product of the functioning of the archive. the organization that created it, and on the other hand to satisfy the needs of researchers. This dilemma can be resolved if the archivist manages to reconcile, due to the research instruments, the maintenance of the sequences of documents that are broken in the classification of the funds, as a result of variations in the structure and competence of the organizations which produced or received the archival documents.

## **2.2 Products or receipts**

During its activities, an organization produces or receives documents. The archives consist of all of these documents. These are proof of this activity. However, the documents created or produced by the administration or company are not intended to be archival documents there is neither author, nor recipient nor reason to write or save. This statement can be contested, but the fact remains that the recipient is the author himself, who wishes to find himself beyond the present time. Archival documents are produced or received for the management needs of an organization.

## **2.3. The date and medium of the document:**

The notion of archives is not linked to the medium. A photograph, a film or a floppy disk or web page can be archives in the same way as the paper document. A document is considered an archive from the moment it is created. We cannot limit the date, medium or form of the archives. The date of the document does not matter. We cannot separate the needs of management from those of research, especially when it comes to contemporary

archives. A journalist or a decision-maker can use the same archive document. Documents produced or received by a company are now archives as soon as they are created in the offices. According to the theory of T. Schellenberg (Schellenberg,1956,p58) , we distinguish three stages or ages of archives:

1st stage called: current or living or active archives. In this stage the documents have frequent and immediate use. The conservation period varies between a few months to 4 years.

2nd stage called intermediate or semi-active archives: documents generally having more than five years of existence. Their use is less frequent by the administration and the documents are kept in the repositories or pre-service services. -archiving.

3rd stage called: historical archives: the age of these documents is 30 years or more. In the majority of cases, these documents are of no interest to the administration except in certain situations.

## **2.4 The form of documents**

The appearance of new techniques in the work of administrations has led to the creation of new forms of documents. The evolution of these techniques is extraordinarily rapid. Now, no longer the paper document, archives can take other forms: photographic, iconographic, audiovisual or even electronic or digital. A handwritten, typed report, a cassette or a letter can be considered in turn as a document and as an archive. In the first case, the word document emphasizes the content of a message expressed by an author or several authors, or that he has delegated to a machine the task of recording sounds, images or other phenomena. In the second case we broaden the source of information that the archive constitutes by taking into account the why of this archive, its direct or indirect cause, its recipient. This approach also brings together the tacit knowledge of the actors of the archive at the time of its creation, that is to say the elements of the personal environment or of the corporate culture which have not been expressed clearly but which allow us to better

understand the reason for the document. It should be emphasized that in both cases, the preservation of the medium is a prerequisite for the existence of the archive. The preservation of these documents poses little problem. On the other hand, the incompatibility of hardware poses some technical problems when reading certain electronic or digital documents. Thus, whatever the scope of production of the company's archive, it is limited by six elements of unequal or variable force but present globally, namely a support, an expressed message, an author, a recipient, a motive or motive for creation and a context of creation that is partly unspoken or tacit. In fact, whatever the definition that we give to company archives, they are inevitably a source of information. This source must be integrated into the company's information system.

### **3. Integration of archives into the company's information system**

It is obvious that archive documents in a company should be kept for a specific period of time. It should be noted that the rules applicable to the conservation of archives are complex. Limitation periods vary depending on the types of obligations: civil, commercial, accounting, social, tax obligations, etc., and the supporting documents must therefore be kept for the specific periods to each of them. Different limitation periods may apply to certain documents. For security reasons, it is then appropriate to apply to such documents the retention period corresponding to the longest limitation period. According to the doctrine of Henri Fayol (Fayol, 1999, p25) we can distinguish six functions:

- The technical function: produce, manufacture, transform;
- The commercial function: buy, sell, exchange;
- The financial function: finding and managing capital;
- The security function: protecting property and people;
- The accounting function: establishing inventories, balance sheets, production costs and statistics;

- The administrative function which accompanies the other functions.

This revolutionary distinction reflects the mentality and concerns of the time: Fayol does not provide for a Personal function or "human resources management", however this doctrine interests the archivists of the company, since it presents an educational interest, as it can be evolving and adapting to new and particular conditions of evolution of the economy and society. It is possible to redefine a global framework of major functions and to break down these major functions into particular sub-functions by relying on the work of its successors in this area, and nothing prevents a sub-function to become a function and itself to be broken down into sub-functions, if its importance requires it. This framework allows us to have access to the key to recognize sets of documents during collection, understand them, establish a typology taking into account all the documents produced whatever their medium, and identify the functions specific to each company. This framework can be used to train staff who are responsible for evaluating archives and classifying them. (Desplanques ,1995,p36)

### **3.1 The company's archives as a legal trace**

To assert its rights and justify its actions, the company will use archival documents which are its traces. The company's archive documents were and will remain above all of an essentially legal significance due to a particular probative force and the immense possibilities of control which they allow their users. To guarantee accuracy and authenticity in the description of the company's situation, the Algerian legislator imposed certain provisions in the Algerian commercial code (Code Commercial, 2016), he prescribed the keeping of two books: the inventory and the balance sheet, for any natural or legal person having the status of trader:

- A) The journal records chronologically all the operations of the company and allows monthly summaries to be made (article 9). The same article provides for the conservation of documents justifying these operations on a day-to-day basis.

- B) The inventory book in which the assets and liabilities of the company must be recorded (article 10).

These two accounting books are accepted by the judge as evidence between traders (article 13); this is why they obey very strict rules:

- be coded and initialed by a judge in court; (article 11) be kept in chronological order without blanks or alterations (article 11);
- be kept for 10 years (article 12).

The rules for keeping books in the Commercial Code arise from the interest in the probative value of accounting documents in the company. This interest also stems from a concern to grant the authenticity necessary to create a climate of confidence in the business world on the one hand, as well as the authenticity of the information essential to the State to impose the tax on the other hand. Consequently, the rules imposed by the Algerian commercial code mean that the company's general accounting cannot be organized according to its financial information needs alone. They can form homogeneous and durable series and can give us precise and authentic indications on its well-being or the economic discomfort of a company and on its capacity for development. These documents provide knowledge of a certain number of parameters relating to receivables and debts, payment or reimbursement deadlines, and the weight of foreign suppliers. In developing countries like Algeria, determining the weight of foreign suppliers has valuable informative content. We can detect the links of dependencies which arise from this fact and compromise the autonomy of companies in developing countries. One might wonder after the expiration of the ten-year period; what will be the fate of these documents? How will the cultural value of these documents be managed? The archives have always had as their major concern the guarantee and security essential to the proper functioning.

To resolve existing disputes between the company and its partners or employees, the archives can be the legal basis on which it can rely to resolve these disputes. The company's

archives also serve as proof without their necessarily being any disputes, but rather in a preventive manner, this is the case for all subsidy files requested by a cultural or sports association, for example the case of a football sports club which is subsidized by a company. These documents testify to the identity of the applicant, the nature of the request, the reality of these steps and their commitment to respect the procedures; are all documents whose content is not original since it is sometimes made up of copies but contribute to a file which is unique to it. We use the company's archive documents to establish the existence of a right or an obligation, but the retention period of the documents is linked to the limitation periods. Indeed, once the statute of limitations has expired, it is no longer possible to challenge an established situation in court, and the evidence relating to this situation no longer legally needs to be preserved.

## **2.2 Company archives as decision support**

Today the economic context has changed, instability and uncertainty have become variants of the current environment. Managing a business means making quick and efficient decisions. These are increasingly complex tasks; it has often been believed that the technological solution could solve the company's management problems.

However, the manager who desires to set up the information, decision and action chain for his organization must be able to count on tools allowing him to achieve this administrative efficiency. He must access the information sought in due time and within reasonable deadlines. This information will be accessible at the lowest cost from the creation and receipt of the documents. To adapt to the new economic order, companies must thoroughly review their structures by setting up a document management program that meets their needs and takes into account the legal and cultural context of the State. Information should be organized and treated as a resource as important as financial, material or human resources.



For a decision maker, it is necessary for him to know that he or another decision maker has dealt with a similar situation in the past. We can classify the information available for each company into two types:

- information that comes from the control system or the company's services or even from customers, partners and suppliers as Leska confirms "information on the environment the company without collected by numerous sensors, specialized in delimited areas (marketing, supplies, research, development, competition, etc.) they are then stored in numerous folders scattered throughout the different departments of the company business ; (Gervais,2003,p273)
- Information from outside such as databases or information collected during seminars. For the decision-maker, the problem is the following: how to locate and extract the information from the archives that he needs for decision-making? Information management opens new avenues, particularly with new information and communication technologies. To help decision-makers when collecting information or even the skills management technique in the company. To answer the question who holds the knowledge in the company, new professions are emerging such as knowledge managers to assist users during the collection of information. Still in the same context Taylor identifies IT services, the archive service, the library and the "knowledge centers" as being at the center of the management of information resources. These "knowledge centers" are the main providers of evaluated information to managers. (Bergeron,2014). Thus the archivist must have specific skills which are added to basic training. In reality each decision maker has their own expectations and their own objectives, these are not universal. Each decision-maker has their own management method based on their experience and skills. Each piece of information will be perceived differently. To be effective, company archives must adapt to the objectives pursued and the concerns of the

decision-makers concerned. Company archives must above all inform those who request them.

### **3-3 Company archives: communication tools**

The ideal in the company is to provide information for the departments and at all useful levels of the hierarchy, without errors and as quickly as possible. However, to communicate, you must have access to reliable sources of information available within the company. Within the company there are many communication problems, they can be linked to ineffective decisions or time wasted retrieving a document. Also facing the company's customers, when the worker could not be assured of the confidentiality of information concerning him or when he could not have access to information to which he is entitled.

The reason for having archive documents in a company is that they help their users in communication. As G. Naud confirms, "the archival document does not have its purpose in itself: the primary reason for its existence was to communicate from one person to another the information necessary for their collaboration with a view to achieving something: a bridge, a road, a budget, a new legal status, a new state of relations...etc"(Naud,2012)

Thus, archival information is only of interest if it allows action. Therefore, information from archives must be treated, classified, accessible and integrated into the company's information system. As it is imperative to develop a communication tool based on a reference system (archive documents), it is capable of integrating all users in the company and satisfying information needs. The weakness of planning is linked to the lack, in quality and quantity, of information whereas a planned system is based on the mastery of economic information and solid statistical means. (Melbouci,2008,p.75) These results are due to Archives in Algerian companies which do not fulfill their roles or do not have the means to fully play this role.

Finally, the problem of Archives and communication in the company are more complex. The communication system must take into account information from the archives because they constitute the company's memory.

### 3-4 The company's archives: memory source

The archives play a vital role in the organization of the company's memory Michel Estienne pointed out that the archives of the municipalities arouse more care than the organization of the memory business associations, while the latter are often more important today in the lives of citizens, because the men and women who participated in the life of a company legitimately consider themselves co-owners of its memory; (Chabin,1999,p45). It is a question of sensitivity for example, we must understand that for an employee who has spent his career at Sonatrach, his belonging to the municipality that the company represents can have more weight, be more meaningful for him and his family than his belonging to the city where he lived, without participating in municipal or neighborhood activities. The company has multiple advantages to draw from a good knowledge of its archival documents and its past. Instead of observing the company from the outside and considering it as a compact body, a system: the company's archives can make it possible to understand the situation from the inside, at the subsystem level. To properly measure the nature of the services they can provide, it is useful to note that archives are only the fruit of the evolution of the company, therefore they can be a mean of describing, valorizing and discovering the company. Rightly so in terms of managing relations with foreign partners in Algerian public companies, accounting documents allow knowledge of a certain number of parameters relating to receivables and debts: payment or reimbursement amounts, the weight of suppliers foreigners...etc. For developing countries like Algeria, determining the weight of foreign suppliers has valuable informative content. We can detect the links of dependence which arise from this fact and compromise the autonomy of companies in developing countries. However, this is insufficient, the company's archives and more particularly the accounting documents remain primarily focused on the needs of internal users and are very marked by legal considerations. The question that arises is this: how do we manage to create links between internal users and external users of the company's archives.

### 3-5 company archives and the writing of History

The economic history of a country cannot be reconstructed without company archives. "Business history" is currently developing around the world. In Australia, France, Great Britain...etc. These countries are aware that economic archives are the basis of historical research. The company's archives are a promising area for research, but so far - less explored than they deserve, at least in Algeria. So it is appropriate to ask ourselves: what has been done to reconstruct the history of public companies, their products, the techniques used and especially the financial and commercial strategies? Generally, company archives are of historical interest but they are essential for the social and political history of a country. In this case we can ask ourselves what is the social history research that interest to both businesses and historical research? The answer to this question lies both in chronological limits and the nature of the company chosen as a field of observation. Maurice Hamon determines that: the studies carried out at Saint-Gobain have highlighted the interest of two main themes birth of an industrial population and the study of elite phenomena across the entire hierarchy (Hamon,1987,p9): - Birth of industrial populations: the study of the archives of the Saint-Gobain factory showed how a region which was devoted exclusively to logging became an industrial zone. This resulted in the progressive rationalization of industrial work, as well as the increasingly frequent call on unskilled labor. This situation accelerated the osmosis between the factory and the village already initiated by individual alliances and marriages. This study also showed how the power of the factory and the authority over the populations were confused.

The study of elites: this phenomenon has been fashionable for some time, it is also an axis of history social economic. The Saint-Gobain archive documents show the transformation from so-called secret elite to hierarchically and technically competent elite. This movement led to the transition of manufacturing from the artisanal stage to the industrial stage. The Saint-Gobain archives offer researchers in economic and social history

the possibility of exploring the internal hierarchies of the factory, habits and standards of living, and worker genealogies over several decades. Also the archives of this factory made it possible to realize the phenomenon of transformation of the traditional social texture of the Industry. The company archives used for this type of research are the handwritten memoirs of the director of the Saint Gobin factory, the staff payment statements since 1683, the nominative lists of the workers in this factory: indicating employment or function, individual correspondence from directors; the procedures and actions of the administration...etc.

This experience revealed that the research difficulty lay in the incomplete nature of the company's archives as well as the qualitative modification of the contents of the archives for recent periods. The history of a company contributes to the knowledge of its identity by its staff and customers. On a daily basis, History is a useful aid to decision-making in company activity. We must know how to take advantage of the potential that archives provide. As an example in Algeria, the company documents enlighten us on its form (limited liability company, SARL, or SPA joint stock company, general partnership SNC., or single-member limited liability company EURL), also this information are essential to know how it is organized, the rights and obligations of the partners, the evolution of its capital, this is valuable content which informs us about its economic and financial comfort or discomfort, its duration, its head office, its initial activity and its evolution over time, as we can have information on the modifications it has exposed. Also the act of a company: of mergers or separation with one or many companies. This type of documents is very useful if we want to write the history of the company and, it is due to these documents that the historian can already have a reflection on the adaptation skills of its managers to the evolution of the economy, their behavior and their desires: what are, for example, the personal, economic and fiscal requirements that push a company to change its form or corporate name or simply to cease to exist as is the case for several companies in Algeria? Heritage documents can also contribute to write the history of company.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The definition given to archives may appear broad. Law 88-09 encourages archive producers to get involved in the future of their documents. But this law also introduced a new notion, which the information marks the evolution of contemporary archival doctrine.

The heart of the legal definition of archives remains the organic character of the constitution of the archives: They are secreted chronologically and in a linear manner as an administrative, commercial activity progresses. The archives are constituted by all the documents which correspond to the different branches of the activity of their producer. This is exactly the meaning of the word "Archive fonds". An archive item has no interest in itself, its interest lies in its belonging to the entire collection of which it is a part. Based on the principle that the past contributes largely to the explanation of the present and the preparation of the future; it seems inevitable that the use of archives for different reasons proves to be necessary from day to day.

The lessons that can be drawn are the highlighting of three functions of company archives: legal, economic and cultural. Appearing first, the legal function of company archives remains a primary concern. This focuses on the relationships between the company and its environment (tax administration, creditors, commercial partners, etc.). On the other hand, the economic function of company archives is more recent. The complexity of the practical problems to be resolved in the company requires more and more particular and detailed information on its production tools, its internal management, that is to say its entire management. It is precisely this function that will allow company archivists to rise to the same rank as their colleagues within the company. Finally, the cultural function of the company's archives will cease to be exclusively focused on the past, and its approach will become increasingly on the future. Such a development can be considerable. Managing archives within the company was considered by managers to be a minimal task. This reality could have been true until recent decades, but the development of management, the documentary inflation in administrations and the use of modern analytical instruments such as statistics have shown the importance to be given to memory of the company.

The small projection on the users of the company archives allowed us to see the diversity of interests at stake and the needs to be satisfied in the future due to the company

archives. Necessarily, this supposes rational management of archives so that they can accomplish their mission not only for the State but also concerning society. In other words, being able to respond to the various requests from users whose list is constantly growing. However, the archives produced since the independence to the present day by public companies can contribute in a positive way to the writing of social, economic, technical history, etc. from Algeria. The study of the relevance of the information from archive documents allowed us to see that the combination of legal, economic and cultural functions is essential in the company. Company archives form one of the most promising sources of economic and social history.

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