

Hypothesis

Territory, Memory and Archives: Toward a Theory of Implicit Territoriality

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Abstract

Archive studies have traditionally conceptualized archives as documentary repositories and memory institutions, whereas territorial studies have examined territorialities as processes through which social groups produce, signify, and contest space. Although both fields address the social production of meaning, the constitutive relationship through which archives participate in the political–cultural production of territoriality remains insufficiently theorized. This article advances the hypothesis that every archive possesses an Implicit Territoriality as a constitutive property and, by virtue of this condition, contributes to the political–cultural production of territory. To develop this hypothesis, it proposes a theoretical framework in which Implicit Territoriality constitutes the central analytical category. As a constitutive property of every archive, Implicit Territoriality becomes analytically observable through three interdependent constitutive dimensions: the Mode of Differential Documentation (collections), the Territorial System of Site (spatial infrastructures and locations), and the Condensed Informational Potential (contents). The interaction among these dimensions gives rise to the deployment of Implicit Territoriality through two complementary processes—Territorialized Subjectivity and the Regime of Expansibility—which explain how territorial meanings become socially embodied and projected across different spatial and social scales. Its empirical recognition is achieved through a system of Inference Devices, understood as analytical operators that establish the relationship between empirical evidence and its implicit territorial dimension. Together, these components provide an integrated explanatory framework for understanding how archives actively participate in the political–cultural production of territory. Beyond preserving documents, archives implicitly contribute to the production of territories. They organize, stabilize, circulate, legitimize, and project memories and territorial meanings across different social and spatial scales. By conceptualizing Implicit Territoriality as a constitutive property of every archive, this article situates archives within the dynamics of territorialization and provides a coherent framework for analyzing their territorial dimension.



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1. Introduction

“...the present concern is fundamentally one of space, much more than of time. Time probably appears only as one of the possible distributive operations among the elements that are arranged in space” [1].

Although this article is presented as a theoretical reflection, its purpose is to contribute to the understanding of cultural processes that constitute central areas of inquiry within contemporary studies of heritage, identity, memory, and territory. It proceeds from the premise that cultural practices, heritage policies, identity formation, and the transmission of collective memory rely upon documentary infrastructures whose territorial dimension has received insufficient scholarly attention. In this sense, the conceptual framework developed here is not intended to replace empirical research but rather to provide analytical tools for its interpretation.

The argument developed in this article requires an initial conceptual clarification. Although its analytical field is constituted by archives, its primary contribution is not intended as a new theory of archives themselves. Rather, the article develops a theoretical framework for understanding what is here conceptualized as Implicit Territoriality: a constitutive property through which documentary configurations organize, stabilize, and project territorial senses. Archives provide the principal analytical field through which this property can be examined because they represent one of its most systematic and historically developed expressions. Accordingly, the archive is approached not as the theoretical endpoint of the argument but as the privileged analytical domain through which the dynamics of Implicit Territoriality become observable. This distinction defines the scope of the present contribution while explaining why the proposed framework seeks to contribute simultaneously to archive studies, territorial studies, memory studies, and the anthropology of memory.

The notion of Implicit Territoriality makes it possible to approach archives as cultural institutions that actively participate in the production of collective meanings, the consolidation of senses of belonging, and the configuration of shared historical narratives. From this perspective, archives may be understood as fundamental components of processes of heritagization, memory politics, the cultural construction of local and regional communities, and contemporary forms of global circulation of documentary heritage. The framework is particularly relevant to the study of historical communities, ethnic groups, culturally differentiated territories, and transnational networks dedicated to the preservation and accessibility of memory.

The theoretical character of this article responds to the need for an interpretive framework capable of bringing into dialogue phenomena that are often examined separately—archive, identity, memory, and territory—and of providing analytical categories applicable to comparative research and case studies across diverse cultural contexts. Consequently, the article seeks to strengthen interdisciplinary dialogue among cultural studies, anthropology, archive studies, human geography, heritage studies, and territorial studies by offering a conceptual foundation for future empirical research on the relationships between memory, documentation, and territoriality.

1.1. Construction of the Concept

This work is the result of a cumulative process of research grounded in ethnological experience, community-based work, and interdisciplinary theoretical reflection. Its origins can be traced to the author's participation in a project of the Organization of American States (OAS) on workshops with Indigenous communities, in which the close relationship between memory, forms of knowledge transmission, and territorial construction became evident, and from which a publication resulted.

These observations were subsequently deepened through various research processes and collaborative work with communities, making it possible to identify recurrent patterns in the ways documentary practices participate in the configuration of identities and territorialities. The engagement with the notion of the implicit developed by Dematteis

and Zambrano provided a conceptual reference for understanding that these relationships frequently operate as non-explicit yet territorially effective structures [2,3].

On this empirical basis, a conceptual reconstruction was undertaken drawing upon contributions from archive studies, human geography, anthropology, and memory studies. Through a comparative analysis of these traditions, three recurrent dimensions—documentary organization, territorial inscription, and the potential for the production of meaning—were identified and subsequently synthesized into the analytical categories of Mode of Differential Documentation, Territorial System of Site, and Condensed Informational Potential. The articulation of these dimensions subsequently led to the formulation of the notions of Territorialized Subjectivity, Regime of Expansibility, and Inference Devices, which together constitute the analytical model proposed in this article. These categories account for the formation of the territorialized subject, the development of territorial meaning from a vestige, and the analytical inference of Implicit Territoriality.

1.2. Conceptual Architecture of the Proposal

The central hypothesis advanced in this article is that every archive necessarily possesses Implicit Territoriality as a constitutive property. This property becomes analytically observable through the interaction of three constitutive dimensions—Mode of Differential Documentation, Territorial System of Site, and Condensed Informational Potential—whose reciprocal interaction generates Territorialized Subjectivities and unfolds socially through the Regime of Expansibility. Its empirical recognition is made possible through a set of Inference Devices, understood as analytical operators that make Implicit Territoriality recognizable where it is not directly observable. Together, these analytical categories constitute a coherent system for explaining how archives participate in the political-cultural production of territory.

The article asks whether it is possible to identify an Implicit Territoriality that is constitutive of, and common to, the different archive manifestations and forms of archiving. The answer appears to be affirmative insofar as these properties can be grounded in the notion of Social Relations of Site [1], understood as relations produced and endowed with meaning by local or native inhabitants. Indeed, archives and, more broadly, archival manifestations contribute to the political-cultural production of territory by organizing, stabilizing, and projecting territorial memories and meanings. The concept of Implicit Territoriality provides a framework for understanding this contribution while preserving the Derridean impulse of selection and exclusion that characterizes every form of identity [4]. Consequently, any form of archiving—including archives, libraries, photograph collections, film archives, sound archives, newspaper libraries, museums, and digital repositories, among others—together with the materialities it preserves, the communities that produce and use it, and the symbolic universes it configures, constitutes an expression of the political-cultural production of territory.

The conceptual architecture developed in this section is synthesized in Table 1, which organizes the proposed framework into three complementary analytical levels—Constitutive Dimensions, Deployment of Implicit Territoriality, and Inference Devices—and summarizes the conceptual characterization and analytical function of each component within the proposed model.

Table 1. Conceptual Architecture of the Implicit Territoriality Framework.

Analytical Component	Conceptual Characterization	Function Within the Analytical Framework
Implicit Territoriality	Constitutive archival property.	Central analytical concept.
Constitutive Dimensions	Conditions constituting Implicit Territoriality.	Constitute the phenomenon.
Mode of Differential Documentation	Documentary selection and organization.	Constitutes archival collections.
Territorial System of Site	Spatial and institutional inscription.	Anchors archival territoriality.
Condensed Informational Potential	Capacity to condense territorial meanings.	Activates territorial meaning.
Deployment of Implicit Territoriality	Social expression and projection of Implicit Territoriality	Explains territorial effects.
Territorialized Subjectivity	Territorial formation of subjectivity.	Explains social appropriation.
Regime of Expansibility	Projection across social and spatial scales.	Explains territorial projection.
Inference Devices	Analytical operators.	Enable empirical recognition.
Context	Territorial contextualization.	Establishes territorial context.
Evidence	Documentary traces and indicators.	Identifies empirical manifestations.
Method	Interpretative analytical procedures.	Modes for reconstructing Implicit Territoriality.

1.3. Applicability

The application of the present framework begins with the Inference Devices, since Implicit Territoriality does not constitute a directly observable attribute but rather a condition that must be analytically reconstructed from situated evidence [5]. Consequently, the researcher's epistemological trajectory proceeds in the opposite direction from the ontological development of the phenomenon. Whereas Implicit Territoriality is constituted through the interaction of its constitutive dimensions, the researcher gains access to it only through its empirical manifestations.

Accordingly, the analysis begins by identifying a vestige, record, trait, or trace of interaction present in an archaeological site, an archive, a community, or a habitat. Through interpretive procedures—such as stratigraphy, paleography, ethnography, or geography, depending on the nature of the evidence—the relationship between that empirical manifestation and the territorial context that renders it intelligible is established.

Once the existence of Implicit Territoriality has been inferred, its operationalization consists in making it analytically observable through the systematic reconstruction of the relationships that constitute it. Rather than prescribing a fixed analytical sequence, the proposed analytical model provides the conceptual and methodological means through which Implicit Territoriality can be identified, interpreted, and reconstructed as an intrinsic property of archival manifestations. The overall analytical structure of the proposal is synthesized in Table 1, its relational dynamics are schematically represented in Figure 1, and the operational role of the Inference Devices is presented in Table 2.

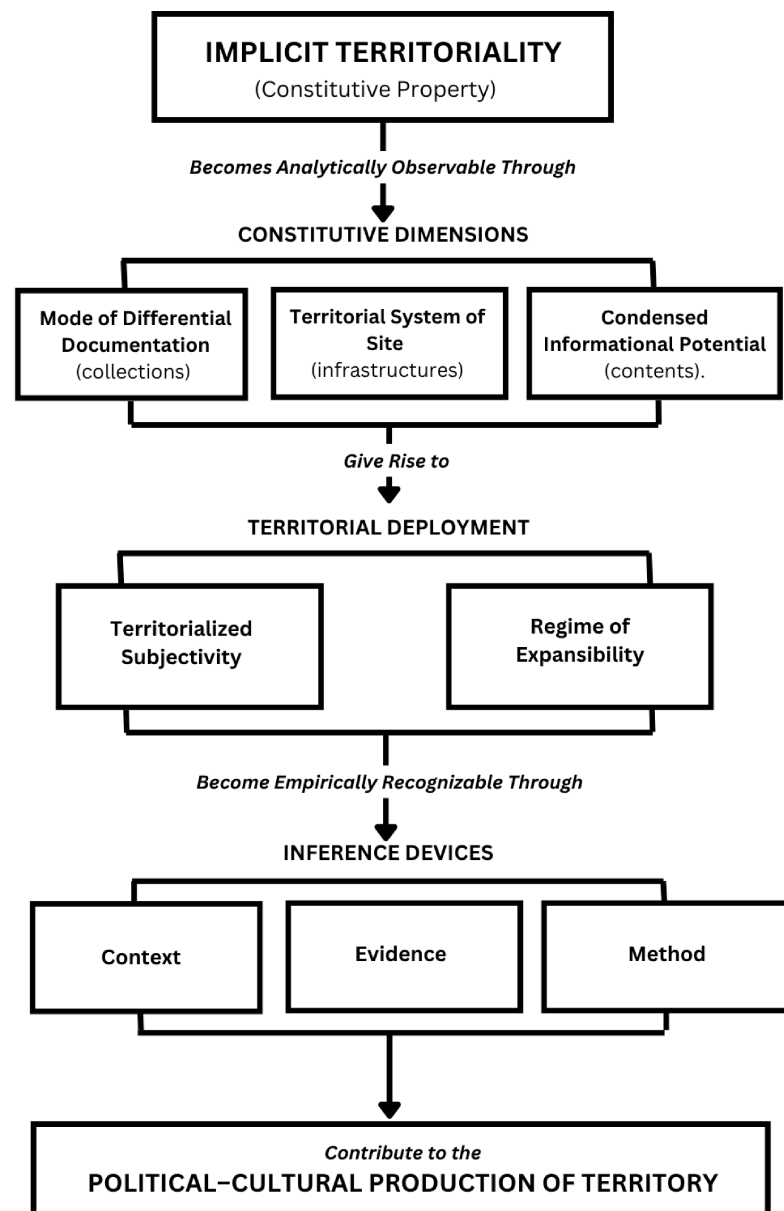


Figure 1. Conceptual Architecture of Implicit Territoriality.

Table 2. Inference Devices, according to Context, Evidence, and Method.

Context	Evidence	Method
Place	Trace	Stratigraphy
Archive	Record	Paleography
Community	Trait	Ethnography
Habitat	Footprint	Geography

In research practice, this operationalization begins with the interpretive examination of archival manifestations as the empirical point of departure for inferring Implicit Territoriality. Although archival manifestations differ in their material, institutional, historical, and cultural characteristics, the proposed analytical model enables the reconstruction of the corresponding forms of Implicit Territoriality that underlie each of them. By systematically relating documentary practices, territorial contexts, and their social effects, this analytical process enables the reconstruction of Implicit Territoriality as an intrinsic property of

archival manifestations, thereby contributing to the understanding of archives as active participants in the political–cultural production of territory.

1.4. Article Organization

Finally, the article is organized into seven sections. Following this introduction, which presents the concept, conceptual architecture, and applicability of the proposed framework, Section 2 examines archive practices, archiving, and the archive, establishing the background for the relationship between space and documentary organization. Section 3 further develops the problematization of the relationship between territory, memory, and the archive, and justifies the usefulness of Implicit Territoriality as an analytical category for interpreting the territorial dimension of archives. Section 4 develops the theory of Implicit Territoriality, defining its properties, dimensions, scope, and explanatory projection through the concepts of Territorialized Subjectivity, the Regime of Expansibility (Deployment of Implicit Territoriality), and Inference Devices. Section 5 demonstrates that how different forms of archiving, together with the documents, objects, and vestiges they preserve, the communities that produce, organize, and use them, and the symbolic universes they articulate, collectively contribute to the political–cultural production of territory. Section 6 presents the conclusions, and the seventh section contains the references.

2. Background

Taking archives in their immense cultural diversity as its point of departure, this article seeks to examine the evolution of Implicit Territorialities, insofar as they reflect a useful form of territorial unfolding. It approaches territoriality through the archive in much the same way that community workshops have been conceived; namely, as apparatuses through which communities articulate their memory and their historical projects [2,3,6,7]. Wherever memory is organized, territory is simultaneously produced; therefore, a process of territorialization is always underway.

Archive Practices

Archiving is the process through which objects, documents, and traces are incorporated into a space of waiting, meaning, and projection, where they acquire the dual condition of being both pending and preserved [8–10]. It is not merely a technical act but a symbolic operation through which documents are inscribed within an order that postpones, condenses, orients, and reconfigures territorial meaning [10,11].

Filing cabinets are pieces of furniture in which documents are deposited once they have been used, deferred, or left pending further action. The archive, in turn, may be understood as the assemblage of projects yet to be realized: personal papers, manuscripts, newspaper clippings, field notebooks, photographs, one's own publications and those of others, treasured transcriptions, sketches, personal documents, diplomas, letters, official correspondence, and countless other materials invested with hope and expectation [12]. Within archiving operates the unbounded desire to encompass everything—a metonymy of the unfinished and persistent condition of the human being. Folders are contained within drawers like neurons awaiting synapses, silent repositories poised for future connections.

The document is a milestone along the path—whether file, trace, vestige, feature, or practice. It connotes territoriality, sites memory, produces archival landscapes, constructs buildings, erects monuments, composes narratives, generates museums and interpretation centers, and, in doing so, orients the meaning of identity. It makes territorial movement possible, fixes collective imprints, and establishes the foundations of communal conduct. This logic constitutes, in a certain sense, the Territorial Substrate: the marker post that

indicates routes and distances, points toward directions of travel, and delineates the boundaries of territory [5,9,11].

Archives may be understood as entities intrinsically linked to the relationship between territory and culture. This proposition is grounded in the objective presence, within archive practices, of political–cultural elements through which territoriality is continuously produced. These elements emerge from collective practices of cohesion that can be understood from the perspective of the communities that generate them. Consequently, Implicit Territoriality, like any form of territoriality, is nourished not only by the documentary contents that archive practices preserve, transmit, and reinterpret, but also by social life in all its complexities [12,13].

3. Problematization

Archives have traditionally been understood as documentary repositories and memory institutions, while territorial studies have examined territorialities as processes through which social groups produce, organize, and contest space. Although both fields increasingly converge around the social production of meaning, the constitutive relationship through which archives participate in the political–cultural production of territoriality remains insufficiently theorized. Existing scholarship demonstrates that archives organize memories, mediate relations of belonging, and contribute to the production of spatial meanings; yet it has not conceptualized territoriality itself as an inherent property of archive organization.

This article addresses that theoretical gap by advancing the hypothesis that every archive possesses Implicit Territoriality as a constitutive property. Rather than representing an external consequence of archive practices, Implicit Territoriality is understood here as the condition through which archives organize memories, meanings, and territorial relations, thereby contributing to the political–cultural production of territory. The following sections reconstruct the conceptual foundations of this hypothesis and develop the analytical framework through which Implicit Territoriality can be theoretically understood and rendered analytically observable.

3.1. *Territory, Memory, and Archive*

Contemporary scholarship has increasingly deepened the study of the relationships between territories, archives, and memories through convergent analytical perspectives. Christen's studies of Indigenous and reparative archives demonstrate that documentary processes are inseparable from relations of belonging, reciprocity, and territorial repair [12]. Complementing this view, Hunt shows how colonial archives actively participate in the production of geographies of sovereignty, dispossession, and legitimacy [13], while Shepard demonstrates that postcolonial archival disputes are simultaneously disputes over memory, authority, and territorial control [14]. From another perspective, Richards argues that archives can operate as devices of political imagination capable of projecting spatial and social orders, highlighting the anticipatory and projective dimension inherent in every practice of archiving [15].

Research on cultural memory, heritage, and the living archive further expands this horizon; that is, it emphasizes the capacity of archives to continuously update the contents they preserve, reactivating memories and projecting them onto new communities, contexts, and generations. Consequently, the archive ceases to be understood exclusively as a structure of preservation and becomes, instead, a mechanism for the cultural expansion of memory [16,17]. At the same time, other works demonstrate that transformed landscapes, reclaimed territories, and intervened habitats preserve material records accumulated over time that can be interpreted as long-term archives [18–20]. In turn, they show how heritage infrastructures contribute to the territorial organization of collective memory through

networks of places, monuments, and cultural facilities [21]. Taken together, these studies extend archival reasoning beyond conventional documentary institutions toward landscapes, habitats, heritage infrastructures, and territorial networks of memory: the territorial life of documents [5,7].

Considered as a whole, this body of literature allows for the reconstruction of a conceptual sequence that is particularly relevant to the purposes of the present study. Nora explains where memory is anchored by asserting that “memory takes root in the concrete, in spaces, gestures, images, and objects” [22] (p. 9); Casey explains why memory remains emplaced by arguing—in paraphrase—that places constitute active conditions for its preservation and renewal [23,24]; Tuan shows how spaces become meaningful places when “what begins as undifferentiated space becomes place as we get to know it better and endow it with value” [25] (p. 6); Ricoeur helps explain how traces are transformed into history through processes of documentary interpretation [26]; Assmann demonstrates how such traces acquire continuity through cultural infrastructures of transmission [27]; Derrida reminds us that “there is no political power without control of the archive” [4] (p. 4), while Agamben defines the archive as “the archive is the system of relations between the unsaid and the said” [28] (p. 145), revealing the conditions of intelligibility that structure memory; Jelin [5,29,30] explains why memories become objects of dispute; and Raffestin helps us understand how these relations ultimately take shape as territorialities [31].

3.2. *The Emergence of the Implicit*

This sequence remains incomplete so long as territoriality is understood solely as a condition of belonging or spatial appropriation. At this point, it becomes particularly important to recover Zambrano’s early anthropological reflections on culture, legitimacy, and historical projects. In paraphrasing his arguments, communities generate forms of collective recognition through culturally legitimized projects that orient social practices, shared aspirations, and modes of territorial organization [3]. Territories thus appear not merely as inhabited spaces but as historical realizations of collective projects that articulate memory, identity, and action [3].

Three decades later, Dematteis offers a convergent formulation from the perspective of human geography through his notion of the Implicit Project. Territories cease to be understood exclusively as inherited spatial configurations and are instead conceived as processes oriented toward desired futures [2]. Territoriality is not merely a consequence of existing social relations; it also operates as an organizing force capable of mobilizing resources, coordinating actors, and projecting collective meanings onto space.

Although they emerge from different disciplinary traditions, both authors converge on a fundamental intuition: territories are historical productions oriented by shared horizons of action. In this sense, Dematteis’ proposal may be read as a conceptual reinforcement of Zambrano’s earlier concern with cultural projects and the forms of legitimacy that sustain collective action. Whereas Zambrano identifies communities as producers of historical projects, Dematteis shows how those projects acquire territorial expression through processes of spatial organization, network articulation, and the construction of territorialities [2,3].

This convergence is especially relevant to the purposes of the present study because it allows memory, archives, and territory to be understood not only in relation to the preservation of the past but also to the production of socially imagined futures. Archives participate in this dynamic by organizing traces, testimonies, and documents that simultaneously serve to remember, interpret, and project. From this perspective, archives do not merely preserve evidence of previous historical projects; they also provide symbolic resources for the elaboration of new territorially situated projects.

This understanding provides the foundation for the analytical framework proposed in this article.

3.3. Global Premises

Contemporary archives face profound technological transformations associated with digital information management and the growing international recognition of their value as documentary heritage [32–37]. Although these developments deserve a more extensive treatment than the present article can provide, they reinforce the need for analytical frameworks capable of explaining how archive practices continue to organize documentary experience across increasingly complex physical and digital environments [38,39]. This recognition also responds to the human need to preserve collective memory in the face of an uncertain future, a phenomenon that some authors have described as the archive impulse [6,40,41]. As a result, the preservation of documentary evidence has become part of a broader global policy of archiving [8,35,42].

The unprecedented capacity to produce, duplicate, preserve, and disseminate information evokes Borges's *On Exactitude in Science* [43] (p. 325). As documentary production expands exponentially, archives increasingly extend across digital infrastructures, multiplying the possibilities for preserving, organizing, and reinterpreting the traces of human experience. Every discovery, birth, event, and interpretation enlarges the documentary universe, generating increasingly complex archival environments and new possibilities for the territorial organization of documentary knowledge [36,37,42,44].

Archives thus become infrastructures of civilization's symbolic continuity. They preserve, duplicate, digitize, stabilize, and circulate documentary information, a task intensified by climatic, technological, and political uncertainty. In this context, archive practices assume an increasingly significant role in sustaining collective memory and in organizing the documentary conditions through which societies understand both their past and their future and territorialize them [1,2,4,24,37–45].

4. Development

This section develops the proposed analytical framework in two complementary stages. The first defines Implicit Territoriality as the central phenomenon to be explained and examines the constitutive dimensions through which it is produced. The second introduces the Inference Devices, understood as the analytical resources through which Implicit Territoriality can be identified, interpreted, and analyzed across different archive manifestations. Whereas the constitutive dimensions explain how territorial meanings are generated, stabilized, and projected through archive practices, the inference devices provide the analytical means for recognizing those processes through context, evidence, and method. Together, these components constitute an integrated explanatory system for understanding how archives participate in the political-cultural production of territory across historical, cultural, institutional, and technological contexts.

4.1. Implicit Territoriality

Regarding territoriality, authors from different disciplinary traditions [46–54] agree that it is a quality encompassing the territorial, whether understood as identity—the ways in which a territory is experienced, controlled, and made meaningful—or as politics, that is, as a mechanism for the delimitation, control, and legitimation of space. Its implicit character lies in the existence of inherent territorial elements that are not directly perceptible [51], such as intentions of territorial transformation [3–6].

Implicit Territoriality makes visible the otherwise hidden territorial substrate of archives: Social Relations of Site, practices of spatial control, narratives of power, and

collective forms of belonging [1–3,9,11,46,47,51]. This substrate gives the archive meaning and guides its political, cultural, and territorial projection across the places and populations it encompasses [5,9,16,22,55]. It therefore operates across multiple scales—from regions and nations to homes and neighborhoods—revealing the intentions of control and power relations embedded in documentary practices [56–59]. As a complex and continually reinterpreted quality, it can reinforce identity and strengthen communities' sense of belonging to particular territories [2,22,46,58].

Accordingly, Implicit Territoriality should not be understood as an observable attribute of archives but as the underlying condition through which their territorial meanings are generated and projected. Rather than residing in documents, institutions, or places considered separately, it emerges from the relationships that organize archival practice. It is therefore the central phenomenon that this article seeks to explain.

4.2. Constitutive Dimensions

The constitutive dimensions examined below account for the archival conditions through which Implicit Territoriality emerges as a constitutive property. Although analytically distinguishable, they operate simultaneously and should be understood as complementary components of a single constitutive process. Together, they explain how documentary practices organize territorial meanings, become territorially situated, and acquire the capacity to preserve and activate those meanings across archival manifestations.

- (a) The Mode of Differential Documentation corresponds to the constitutive dimension through which documentary materials are selected, organized, and constituted as archival collections. It refers to the organizational principles through which archives produce and structure documentary knowledge, thereby differentiating one archival configuration from another.

An archive is the coupling of a threefold undertaking: the formation of collections comprising information, data, documents, records, letters, and related materials; the creation of the space through which these collections are organized; and the investigation of the hermeneutic community. The first corresponds to the Mode of Differential Documentation, the second to the Territorial System of Site, and the third to Territorialized Subjectivity. Archives may be personal (such as custodians of community memory), institutional (for example, judicial archives), communal (the neighborhood, village, or community itself), natural (a habitat or ecological niche), or object-based (libraries, newspaper archives, oral archives, sound archives, and similar repositories). This formulation highlights the archive's ontological breadth and its deep roots in diverse territorial and cultural configurations [55,59–62].

The operational dimension refers to the organization, arrangement, functioning, and specialization that make possible the activation of Differential Documentation Regimes. Documentary collections are therefore not neutral accumulations of records, but organized configurations governed by procedures that regulate their constitution and operation. Likewise, archival policies concerning acquisition, preservation, and disposal constitute a functional and selective territoriality, frequently shaped by political criteria. Although such decisions do not determine absolutely which histories are remembered or forgotten—since this ultimately depends upon the interpretive activation of the Condensed Informational Potential—they establish the documentary conditions through which documentary materials are selected, preserved, organized, and made available for subsequent interpretation [55,57,58,60–62].

Consequently, the Mode of Differential Documentation constitutes the documentary foundation of Implicit Territoriality. It explains how archives organize documentary experience before territorial meanings become situated, interpreted, and projected through the

remaining constitutive dimensions. The territorial conditions within which this documentary practices operate are examined through the Territorial System of Site.

- (b) The Territorial System of Site is the constitutive dimension through which archive practices acquire their spatial, institutional, and organizational configuration [12]. It refers to the territorial framework within which documentary practices are situated, organized, and made operative, thereby connecting archives with particular places, communities, and forms of governance [47,55,63–65].

Consequently, the archive cannot be reduced to a physical location [37]. Rather, it is defined as a complex interrelationship among authority [10,14], culture [9,27,39], documentation [8,38,39,66], space [5,12,47,67], identity [4,15], memory [5,22,26,63], power [1,6,68], and politics [3,40,62]. It is precisely in the convergence of these elements that its Territorial Substrate resides.

Territoriality is simultaneously archival infrastructure and function. In its physical dimension, the archive delimits a space—whether a shelf, room, cave, building, ritual site, hiding place, refrigerator, or digital server—from which practices of use, control, classification, and document management may be inferred [12]. The spatial organization of documents, restricted-access areas, consultation protocols, and, more generally, the architecture of the archive itself generates territorial hierarchies that determine who may access particular forms of information and under what conditions [1,33,53,55,65,67]. This same logic is reproduced in the digital sphere through access platforms, security systems, and copyright regimes that regulate information flows, users' capacities for selection, and the appropriation of materials [38,69,70].

The functional dimension, together with the modes of access to and use of collections, distinguishes the substantive, adjectival, and operational dimensions of the archive's territorial character as a particular Territorial System of Site [13,19–21]. These dimensions are linked to each archive individually and therefore constitute dimensions of singularity, particularity, and specificity characteristic of the diversity of spaces, places, and settlements. Accordingly, archives both denote and connote territorial diversity in its unique and individual expression, thereby giving rise to multiple archival manifestations [41,42,51].

The hiatus between the Territorial System of Site and the Mode of Differential Documentation—despite their close interrelationship, each retains a distinct identity—allows for the deployment of a territorial substrate that varies according to cultural and spatial contexts. This hiatus reveals the intimate relationship between the archive, places of settlement, and the ways in which senses of communal belonging are organized; that is, between territoriality and its expansion. The Territorial System of Site therefore provides the spatial and institutional conditions through which documentary practices become territorially organized and acquire their territorial coherence.

- (c) The Condensed Informational Potential concerns the informational capacity inherent in documentary content through which archival materials generate knowledge, memory, and territorial meanings. Its significance emerges through interpretation rather than through the quantity or material nature of the documents themselves [7,8,11,60,62,65].

The substantive dimension consists of the Condensed Informational Potential contained within documents. This potential emerges through the intervention of diverse perspectives and research interests—Hermeneutic Capacity—which makes it possible to identify, characterize, and project archival materials. Such potential does not depend upon documentary volume but upon the analytical quality mobilized by researchers. It is inherent to each archive and resides within its documentary corpus, whereas the products

derived from it result primarily from the division of archival labor rather than from the nature of the archive itself [43].

Documents —photographs, maps, artifacts, instruments, and related materials—contain a Condensed Informational Potential fundamental to the construction of collective memory, whose collateral effects are incalculable, ranging from academic and scientific developments to the formation of identity meanings. These documents function simultaneously as support for the legitimacy of territorial narratives and as vehicles for advancing knowledge of the past. By extension, they also affect the present by updating and situating data, references, and markers of identity. Within this framework, the historical narrative constructed from archival documents may be either inclusive or exclusionary, depending upon the archive's policies of selection and management. In this way, it both reflects and decisively shapes territorial identities and the ways in which communities recognize themselves within the historical project of their own territory [12,64].

Within this framework, the archive is transformed from a passive repository of documents into a site endowed with Condensed Informational Potential. When activated through appropriate Hermeneutic Capacity, this potential contributes to the formation and deepening of territorial attachment by generating emotional, social, and cultural bonds with specific places. Such bonds operate as fundamental reference points in the configuration of both individual and collective identities [4].

Accordingly, the Condensed Informational Potential explains how documentary contents become capable of generating meanings that transcend their immediate informational value. Activated through Hermeneutic Capacity, these meanings contribute to the formation of territorial identities, providing the conditions through which Implicit Territoriality becomes socially deployed.

4.3. *Deployment of Implicit Territoriality*

The constitutive dimensions discussed in the preceding section account for the archival conditions through which Implicit Territoriality emerges as a constitutive property. Their interaction, however, does not exhaust its analytical implications. Rather, it gives rise to a second analytical level, referred to here as the Deployment of Implicit Territoriality, through which the territorial effects generated by archival practices acquire social expression beyond documentary organization. This analytical level comprises two complementary processes—Territorialized Subjectivity and the Regime of Expansibility—which explain the social appropriation of these territorial effects by individuals and communities, as well as their territorial projection across different institutional and spatial scales.

- (a) The Territorialized Subjectivity corresponds to the constitutive dimension through which archive practices contribute to the formation of collective identities, memories, and senses of belonging. It refers to the processes through which documentary experience is socially appropriated, allowing individuals and communities to recognize themselves through shared territorial references, collective memory, and political-cultural action [2–4,11,29,33].

The interdependent relationships between archive and place contribute to shaping diverse territorial manifestations and representations. A territory is a place of places that must be governed, and territoriality, insofar as it constitutes a form of identity, functions simultaneously as a frame of reference and as a principle of action within each of them, thereby contributing to their governability.

No archive is autarkic; its collections contain memories of different places woven together through multiple events and interrelationships in which disagreements and agreements converge, as do the altruistic and self-interested exchanges characteristic of each. It may therefore be argued that, through an archivistic study of facilities, it is possible to ob-

serve how an archive contains a territoriality of its own—internal and implicit—emerging from both its site and its contents, which may in turn influence the configuration of the external territory. From this perspective, the Political–Cultural Projection of the Site can be characterized.

Following Dematteis, territoriality is both a source and a component of territorial politics because it seeks to govern networks; that is, to order the emergent territorialities of each place in the world [2] (pp. 44 ff.). This perspective further reinforces a territorial reading of the archive as a site. The genuinely political dimension of territory—territoriality itself—is situated both near to and distant from the archive’s physical space. Its narratives, performatively, site even as they are sited, enunciating the territorial as identity, subjectivity, or legitimacy.

Interrogating this capacity—Territorialized Subjectivity—its deployment and modes of operation make it possible to articulate the geo-socio-historical with political–cultural action. In practice, this articulation constitutes the driving force of the historical projects underpinning territorial struggles, both as stimulus and as outcome. Territoriality is both source and component of the process insofar as it constitutes a relation of forces implicit within a project [4–6].

Territories may be understood as the corollary of forms of Territorialized Subjectivity; that is, as expressions of Implicit Territoriality manifested in practices, memories, and social relations even prior to their spatial materialization. Archives exemplify this process through their capacity to organize traces, order narratives, and project collective memories, thereby expressing the Implicit Territoriality that precedes and guides the configuration of territories. Jelin and Da Silva [5,29,30], from the perspective of geographies of memory, and Dematteis [5], from that of cultural assets, examine the role of contradictory collective aspirations in the production of territories, particularly when ordinary practices are oriented toward shared projects through coexistence and collective well-being [4].

- (b) The Regime of Expansibility corresponds to the constitutive dimension through which the territorial meanings generated within archives are projected, extended, and reproduced across different spatial, temporal, and social contexts. Rather than describing physical expansion, it designates the capacity of archive practices to organize and circulate territorially situated meanings beyond their immediate documentary and institutional settings [70–72].

The Regime of Expansibility of Implicit Territoriality is understood as the set of norms, procedures, relationships, and operations through which an archive projects, extends, and reproduces the territorial meanings embedded in its relational configuration. Since a regime is defined by the logic that organizes a given phenomenon, expansibility is conceived not as spatial enlargement but as the capacity to project territorial meanings across multiple scales, thereby connecting archive practices with broader processes of territorialization and territorial governance.

This capacity emerges from the articulation of the Mode of Differential Documentation, the Territorial System of Site, the Condensed Informational Potential, and Territorialized Subjectivity. Together, these dimensions enable documentary traces to transcend their immediate archival context and acquire the capacity to generate memories, identities, and spatial and temporal representations. The archive therefore operates not only as a repository of documents but also as a mechanism through which territorially situated meanings are organized, circulated, and expanded, contributing to broader processes of territorial construction and collective sense-making.

The capacities and capabilities of the Regime of Expansibility integrate three complementary domains. It is gnoseological because it begins with knowledge of the archive and archival practice [8,10,38]; epistemological because it concerns the interaction among

forms of knowledge involved in the territorial, memorial, and projective production of the archive [73,74]; and anthropological because it approaches archive practices through the recognition of political-cultural diversity [67]. Since anthropology is fundamentally a place-based craft [75] (p. 195), the archive is understood as a situated phenomenon, embedded within specific places and communities [12,15], whether LAM (Libraries, Archives, and Museums), GLAM (Galleries, Libraries, Archives, and Museums), LAMMS (Libraries, Archives, Museums, Monuments, and Sites) [67,69], or other archival configurations.

The distinction between the Territorial System of Site and the Mode of Differential Documentation, despite their close interrelationship, reveals that territorial organization and documentary organization remain analytically distinct while operating jointly in the production of Implicit Territoriality. Expansibility thus constitutes a regime of territoriality rather than a metaphorical or accessory property of archives. It is a constitutive dimension through which territorial meanings are reproduced beyond their original context while remaining anchored in documentary practices.

4.4. Inference Devices

Inference Devices are the analytical resources through which Implicit Territoriality can be inferred from observable evidence and relationships. Rather than describing the phenomenon itself, they provide the analytical criteria for identifying and interpreting it across different archival configurations. The following sections present the three Inference Devices that structure this analytical framework and are organized around contexts, evidence, and methods.

- (a) Sites, Archives, Communities, and Habitats: The first Inference Device is based on the analytical comparison of four territorial configurations: archaeological sites, archives, communities, and habitats. Their selection does not respond to institutional affinity but to their shared capacity to preserve, organize, and render intelligible territorially situated traces. Although materially, socially, and functionally distinct, they constitute empirical configurations through which Implicit Territoriality may be inferred.

Anthropological research has long approached these domains as situated sources of material, documentary, social, and ecological information. While conceptually distinct, they converge as territorial repositories preserving evidence of ways of life, memory, practices, and socio-environmental relations. This convergence neither enlarges the institutional definition of the archive nor diminishes its specificity; rather, it reveals comparable territorial configurations whose relational organization can be examined through a common analytical perspective [42].

Their inferential capacity lies in organizing and preserving meaningful traces that make it possible to infer Implicit Territoriality: written documents, archaeological remains, ecological evidence, oral narratives, social memories, and everyday practices. What these configurations share is not an institutional identity but the capacity to activate situated information through different Modes of Differential Documentation, always in relation to the territory in which they are embedded.

Accordingly, the analogy functions as an Inference Device rather than as an ontological equivalence. It demonstrates that heterogeneous territorial configurations may exhibit the same Symbolic-Territorial Structure while preserving their historical, cultural, material, and ecological specificity. As Geertz observed, “the shapes of knowledge are always ineluctably local” [75]. Each configuration possesses a particular Territorial System of Site, concentrates a distinctive Condensed Informational Potential, and remains open to new interpretations.

- (b) Vestiges, Records, Traits, and Traces of Interaction: The second Inference Device is based on the analytical comparison of four forms through which meaningful traces become empirically observable: vestiges, records, traits, and traces of interaction.

Although they belong to different domains—archaeological, archival, social, and ecological—they all preserve evidence of territorially situated relationships that are susceptible to interpretation. Their importance lies not only in their documentary character but also in their capacity to make Implicit Territoriality inferable.

Vestiges, records, traits, and traces constitute empirical manifestations endowed with Condensed Informational Potential. Whether they appear as material remains, documents, cultural practices, or ecological indicators, they all contain information whose significance remains latent until it is interpreted. Their territoriality begins to be activated at the very moment of discovery, since every piece of evidence is initially ascribed to the territory from which it emerges. This first territorial presentification is immediate and precedes any scientific interpretation.

A second form of presentification, one that confers legitimacy, subsequently emerges through the study, interpretation, and integration of the evidence into a historical, cultural, or scientific framework. It is at this stage that vestiges cease to be mere discoveries and become socially recognized facts capable of projecting themselves across broader territorial scales through their publication, circulation, and incorporation into collective memory. An illustrative example is provided by the paleontological finding of the Forensic Anthropology Laboratory at the National University of Colombia, whose interpretation progressively linked the recovered skeletal remains to the histories of Boyacá, Colombia, and Latin America, thereby endowing them with an explicit and expanded territoriality [76].

The inferential strength of this device lies not in the similarity of the elements compared but precisely in their heterogeneity. Vestiges, records, traits, and traces differ in their materiality, origin, function, and temporal depth; nevertheless, they all acquire meaning through the articulation of evidence, territorial context, and interpretation. The comparison therefore does not establish equivalence among objects but makes it possible to recognize the same Symbolic-Territorial Structure across different empirical manifestations.

Consequently, the operation of Implicit Territoriality is never passive. Traces acquire analytical relevance only when they are interpreted within the territorial relationships that confer meaning upon them. Without the interaction between evidence, context, and researcher, there are no vestiges in the analytical sense, but only objects or events devoid of territorial intelligibility. It is precisely meaning that confers upon them the capacity to intervene in memory, identity, and the political-cultural projection of territories. Their analytical value therefore lies not in the vestiges themselves but in the territorial relationships that their interpretation makes visible.

- (c) Stratigraphies, Paleographies, Ethnographies, and Geographies: The third Inference Device is based on the analytical comparison of four modes of reading traces: stratigraphies, paleographies, ethnographies, and geographies. Rather than producing Implicit Territoriality, these approaches provide the interpretive procedures through which its relational structure may be recognized across different empirical configurations. Their value lies not in the objects they examine but in their shared capacity to reveal territorially situated relationships through distinct yet complementary forms of inquiry.

This set constitutes the analogy that designates the modes of reading traces through which Implicit Territoriality may be revealed. The four elements are planes of technical interpretation operating within the Symbolic-Territorial Structure; each provides a distinct pathway through which facts, histories, and relationships become inscribed within territory.

Stratigraphies inscribe the territoriality of time, revealing its depth, depositional conditions, and sedimentary relationships. Paleographies territorialize memory through writing, drawing attention to the types, forms, styles, origins, and uses of inscriptions. Ethnogra-

phies identify territorially situated practices, habits, and customs through the observation and interpretation of the political–cultural configurations that produce them. Geographies, in turn, territorially label both physical and symbolic spaces, their locations, distributive patterns, and ecosystemic relationships. Together, these four approaches make it possible to understand each archival document as a territorialized—or territorializable—node, and each vestige as a situated symbolic artifact.

This analogy also constitutes a plurimethodological matrix that contributes to making Implicit Territoriality visible through the technical reading of traces. Historical, archaeological, anthropological, or ecological readings of existing explicit and primary information are transformed, through stratigraphic, paleographic, ethnographic, or geographical practices, into territorially meaningful knowledge generated within scientific, administrative, personal, or literary domains. Furthermore, by articulating themselves with the territorial location of the vestige, these interpretive practices reproduce the identification of Implicit Territoriality that precedes analysis and guides subsequent interpretations.

The inferential strength of this device lies not in the similarity of the interpretive methods but precisely in their plurality. Stratigraphic, paleographic, ethnographic, and geographical readings operate upon different materials, scales, and epistemological traditions; nevertheless, all reveal the same Symbolic-Territorial Structure through distinct analytical procedures. Their convergence demonstrates that the recognition of Implicit Territoriality does not depend upon a particular disciplinary perspective but upon a relational architecture that remains stable across heterogeneous forms of interpretation.

The archive fully embodies the Symbolic-Territorial Structure. Its documents may be read paleographically, stratigraphically, ethnographically, or geographically. Analogously, an archaeological site, a community, or a habitat may be understood as an archive in which material, social, and ecological vestiges are organized through strata, practices, biological records, or narratives containing information that can be recorded and compared under a corresponding Mode of Differential Documentation. Paleogenetic analyses of remote ecosystems, for example, illustrate how such ecological records generate indispensable information for reconstructing deep and ancient territorial memories governance.

5. Illustrative Examples

The three illustrative examples correspond to distinct territorial conditions: (a) the nocturnal songs of the Nukak-Makú heard in the forests of Guaviare; (b) the chroniclers of Mexico City; and (c) the Universal Declaration on Archives (UDA). They do not constitute empirical demonstrations or comparative case studies but rather analytical illustrations through which the interaction of Implicit Territoriality becomes visible under different historical, cultural, and territorial conditions.

- (a) One thing is the territorial organization of the Nukak, and quite another is the reinforcement of their territoriality through what their songs recount. If the analogy may be allowed, these songs constitute something akin to the historical documents of the Nukak archive. The singer recounted the group's memories while the other members of the community listened or completed the day's final tasks. Gathered around the fire, the narration constituted a collective moment of transmission, preservation, and renewal of memory. The territoriality of the archive is not immediately apparent because it remains implicit; it becomes analytically perceptible only through a progressive engagement with archival collections, as events and relationships gradually unfold—the Social Life of Documents [7].

Viewed from the perspective proposed here, this illustration shows how the constitutive dimensions interact to organize and project territorial meanings. Oral transmission selectively preserves collective knowledge; the forest and communal spaces provide the

territorial setting in which memory is enacted; and the songs themselves condense ecological knowledge, territorial itineraries, kinship relations, and historical memory into forms that remain permanently open to reinterpretation. Consequently, the songs do not merely evoke territory; they actively organize territorial meanings and reproduce forms of belonging that exemplify the operation of Implicit Territoriality beyond conventional archival institutions [61,65].

- (b) Mexico City maintained the position of Official Chronicler until 2007, when this responsibility was assumed by the Council of the Chronicle of Mexico City, an institution that recognizes the plurality of chroniclers, their territorial distribution, and the collective, cultural, and territorial purpose of their work: “we chroniclers did not wish to submit ourselves to a detested duty, for we do not wish to produce an official chronicle, but rather one committed” to the city [77].

This example illustrates how documentary authority itself may become territorially organized. Historical narratives are produced through distributed documentary practices that record urban experiences; the city provides the territorial setting within which those narratives acquire meaning; and their continuous accumulation preserves an interpretive potential through which the historical identity of Mexico City is repeatedly renewed. In this way, documentary records, places, and their social context interact to organize territorial meanings, showing how Implicit Territoriality operates through decentralized archive practices that reinforce the relationship between urban memory and territorial identity.

- (c) The recognition of archives as part of the common heritage of humanity constitutes a milestone in the anthropological understanding of archives through the relationship between culture and territory. It transcends the traditionally nationalist conception of archives [38,39,70] by establishing a global responsibility for their preservation and accessibility [62,66]. This perspective, promoted through the Universal Declaration on Archives (UDA), not only redefines archival practice but also raises fundamental questions concerning the nature of the archive in the digital age and its role in the construction of collective memory on a global scale. In doing so, it incorporates the global dimension of Implicit Territoriality [33–35,42,67].

By foregrounding the global territoriality of archives, the UDA contributes to the emergence of a planetary identity. Archival territoriality thus transcends traditional geographical boundaries and contributes to the configuration of a global archival space, described by some authors as the Archive Era [38]. Within this global context, documentary principles, places of preservation, and international archival networks interact to project territorial meanings beyond individual repositories, making visible the relationship among documentary evidence, territorial location, and the contexts in which archives acquire collective significance. This implicit global territoriality is constituted through political processes, international archival networks, a territorial system of web-based sites, and the regime of digital documentation established by the UDA, whose scope and influence are both extensive and significant [10,39,46,60,67]. The UDA may therefore be understood as the global archival-territorial event par excellence, serving simultaneously as both the source and a component of the construction of its own cultural and global objectivity.

Analytical Scope

Taken together, the three territorial analogies establish the analytical scope of the present proposal. Although they correspond to profoundly different historical, cultural, and institutional contexts, they all demonstrate that Implicit Territoriality is not a property exclusive to institutional archives but rather a condition that emerges wherever documentary practices organize, preserve, interpret, and project territorially situated meanings.

The first implication is that the territorial and cultural expression of every archive—whether personal, familial, local, regional, national, or global—reflects the operation of Implicit Territoriality and participates in processes of territorialization. This dimension is not immediately visible but becomes progressively intelligible through the interaction among documentary contents, archive practices, and the social contexts in which both acquire meaning.

The second implication is that this condition does not depend on any particular archive form. Not all people possess spaces devoted exclusively to archives, at least not in the contemporary sense of the term. Nevertheless, all possess time, practices, forms of knowledge, and individuals responsible for preserving, transmitting, and renewing collective memory. The diversity of archival forms is therefore not an exception to the argument but an expression of the multiple ways in which memory participates in the production of territoriality.

Consequently, archival territoriality transcends purely metaphorical uses of territory by revealing a condition inherent not only to archives but also to the broader constellation of GLAM institutions [29,71]. From this perspective, archives produce territoriality because they constitute concrete expressions of territorially constituted identity formations. It is therefore no coincidence that some authors have described the archive as “the place of all places” [30], including Indigenous places [31], even when doing so requires the “(un)disciplining” of research [32].

Finally, the illustrative examples demonstrate that archival territoriality can no longer be understood exclusively through local or national scales. The recognition of archives as part of the common heritage of humanity, as expressed in the Universal Declaration on Archives (UDA) [45,49], shows that international cooperation, shared preservation, and universal access project archival territoriality onto a global spatiality. In this sense, the UDA does not create archival territoriality; rather, it makes an already existing dimension explicit and extends its scope through new forms of documentary governance.

6. Conclusions

This article demonstrated that the relationship between archives and territorialities is neither incidental nor merely contextual. Rather, territoriality constitutes a condition internal to the archive itself, emerging through the interaction among Modes of Differential Documentation, Territorial Systems of Site, and Condensed Informational Potential. Through this configuration, archives participate actively in the organization, circulation, stabilization, and projection of meanings that contribute to the construction of territories, identities, memories, and historical horizons of action.

The principal contribution of this study lies in proposing a theoretical displacement of the archive from its conventional understanding as a documentary repository toward a broader conception of the archive as a territorially situated configuration of meaning. From this perspective, archives are not passive containers of records but cultural infrastructures through which traces are selected, organized, rendered intelligible, and continuously updated within the political-cultural processes that give them significance. Territoriality therefore appears not as an external attribute of archives but as an emergent property of their own modes of organization and operation. For example, processes of documentary heritage-making, together with their study and management across both material and intangible dimensions, illustrate how archives operate as territorially situated cultural infrastructures, through which documentary traces acquire meaning within the social, institutional, and spatial contexts in which they are preserved, interpreted, and mobilized [41,42,72,78–81].

The identification of Implicit Territoriality has required confronting the disembodied rhetorics through which concepts, categories, and documentary realities are often

treated as if they existed independently of the territorial and cultural conditions that make them possible. The framework proposed here argues for the theoretical and methodological necessity of restoring those conditions to analytical visibility. In this sense, Implicit Territoriality makes it possible to recognize the territorial dimensions embedded within archives, even when they remain unrecognized or unarticulated, while revealing the influence of place, memory, identity, and political–cultural action in the production of documentary realities.

The analogical framework developed throughout this article further demonstrates that the archive cannot be reduced to a single institutional form. Sites, archives, communities, habitats, and other documentary assemblages differ substantially in their material constitution and historical trajectories; nevertheless, they may share relational properties that allow them to function as territorially situated configurations for the organization, preservation, and activation of meaningful traces. These analogies are not intended to establish epistemological equivalence but to illuminate a broader diversity of localized archival forms. Taken together, they demonstrate that archives emerge through particular cultural and territorial contexts, revealing the fundamentally local character of archive knowledge, memory, and practice [81,82].

The growing global recognition of archives, exemplified by the UDA, may be understood as a contemporary expression of the same processes described throughout this study. The emergence of a global archival consciousness does not eliminate the singularity of places or the specificity of local memories; rather, it reveals the coexistence of localization and expansibility through which archives continually extend their scales of influence and significance while remaining rooted in situated forms of meaning. The global archival space that emerges from this process constitutes not the negation of territorial diversity but one of its most recent historical expressions.

Territories do not merely produce archives. Archives also produce territories. They do so by organizing traces, stabilizing meanings, articulating memories, legitimizing narratives, generating territorial objectivities, and projecting horizons of collective belonging. Understanding this reciprocal relationship makes it possible to situate archives at the center of the political–cultural processes through which societies remember, interpret, dispute, and continually reconstruct the worlds they inhabit.

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