Memory and Identity in North Africa
(MINA)

Call For Papers

December 22-24, 2022
Agadir - Morocco
Memory Studies is a multifaceted academic discipline that is situated at the juncture of history, society and culture. From its early beginning as a mnemonic technics to psychology and psychoanalysis, memory has opened wider applications through its applications as a social phenomenon. Particularly, popular interest in memory in such varied disciplines as literature, sociology, archive science, historiography. The rise in interest in commemorative practices after WWI and WWII has brought attention to genealogies, biographies, diaries, museums, and monuments, giving more presence to questions of memory and history. Nietzsche has famously asserted that ‘cultural memory’ holds a potential for humans to maintain their consistent nature through generations in the sense that it represents a “collective concept for all knowledge that directs behavior and experience in the interactive framework of a society” (Assmann & Czaplicka 1995, 126). This movement toward the social has led to the development of the notion of ‘collective memory,’ which Olick and Robbins (1998) claim, became the core of scholarly exploration in early 20th century.

As a result of its collective importance, memory has become the glue that cements groups and communities, endowing them with the ability to build shared ethos and identities. Ironically, Pierre Nora has written that “we speak so much of memory because there is so little of it left” (1984) or rather because memories occupy such a pivotal place in shaping national identities that there is not enough of it. Sites of memory, commemorative practices, museums, historiographical projects, autobiographies, rituals, pilgrimages, and annual celebrations of victories are all deeply immersed in memory, which shapes the present in light of the past. However, the difference is between memory practices in the Global North and their counterparts in the Global South. The North suffers a glut of memory where the Global South has yet to fully account for seminal historical events that has far-reaching memory resonances for nations and societies. Specifically, memory in North Africa, which is a vast region with an incredible cultural diversity, has been mostly driven by stadal actors who focus on official aspects of the past; and because of stigmatization, the place (memories) of various religious minorities has been subject to disregard (Boum 2013, 1-2).

North Africa’s complex ethnic, cultural and linguistic makeup has been undergirded by memories of identities that refuse to vanish. Imazighen, Arabs, sub-Saharan, and Jews have served as substrates of a connection to a past that is constantly read and reactualized in light of the needs of these communities in the present. However, the public sphere has not been amply flexible for the diverse cultural identities of the region, affecting the way renditions of the past are reenacted in the present. Official memory has occluded those that are deemed marginal or insignificant because of an approach that instead of appreciating the coalition of memories approaches them as a space of competition (El Guabli 2019). The overpowering presence of official unifying approach to memory counters the very essential trait of memories as being diverse, in-flux, and shifting.

This conference aims to reflect on a vast treasury of performance rituals, celebrations, festivals, objects, things, places, and moments in light of Memory Studies methodologies. We seek to engage with the different theorizations of memory to reflect on the pressing issues of identity, history, historiography, commemoration, remembrance, and changing conceptions of the self and the collective in North Africa. Thus, we ask how much memory is present in the North African spheres? How have memories of the past in North Africa been promoted and appropriated for the sake of a more flexible and ductile sphere? Who are the memory stakeholders? How do they mobilize memory? What place do minority memories occupy in the grand narratives of different states? Can ‘subaltern’ memories exist and be performed in public? We invite scholars in all disciplines who have engaged scholarly inquiries about memory to submit their research for the conference. By hosting an interdisciplinary conference, we hope to cover multiple aspects of memory and memorialization in North Africa and spur an ongoing dialogue between different regimens of scholarship.
The theme of papers may include, but are not restricted to, these topics:

- (Post)Colonial Memories in North Africa
- Memory dynamics and the Public Sphere in the Maghreb
- Representations of cultural memory in literature in North Africa
- Competitive/comparative models of cultural memory in North African states
- Memories and Trauma transformation
- Cultural memory in institutional discourse
- Amazigh memories/identities in North Africa
- Narratives of Jewish memories/identities in North Africa
- Migrants’ Memories across borders
- Cultural memory in Film and Music
- ‘Vernacular’ and ‘Subaltern’ Memories
- Cultural Memory in individual Diaries, Memoirs, and (Auto)biographies
- Memories and Identities in History Textbooks
- Museums, Monuments, and Photographs
- Digital Memories and Modes of Transmission

**Confirmed Keynotes Speakers:**

**Dr. Brahim El Guabli**  
*Williams College, Massachusetts*

**Dr. Aomar Boum**  
*University of California Los-Angeles, CA*

Please submit a 400-word abstract as well as a short bio to the organizing committee (minaconference2022@gmail.com) by June 30, 2022. Abstracts should contextualize the topic and explain the argument in order to allow the organizing committee to put papers in conversation.

**Important dates to consider:**

- **Abstract submission Deadline:** June 30th, 2022
- **Notification of Acceptance:** July 15th, 2022
- **Full paper submission deadline:** November 20th, 2022
- **Conference Days:** December 22-24, 2022

**Conference Coordinators:**

Hassane Oudadene  
Lahoussine Hamdoune

**Conference Venue:**

Faculty of Languages, Arts, and Humanities, Ait Melloul  
Ibn Zohr University – Morocco
Agadir, ⵝⴰⴳⴰⴷⵉⵔ, is one of the best coastal cities in the South of Morocco. It lies on the shores of the Atlantic Ocean, and constitutes the capital of the Sous-Massa Region. The climate is always moderate with an annual average temperature between 14 °C and 24 °C. Most of the population speak Tashelhit, which is one variety of Amazigh language. There are a few interesting historic sites to visit. For more information check this link: https://goo.gl/maps/VuRPUk8Z84PDa4AR6.