INSTITUTIONAL MEMORY MANAGEMENT AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION: STRENGTHENING TRANSPARENCY IN PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

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ABSTRACT
This study explores the management of institutional memory, highlighting its relationship with the fundamental right of access to information and the strengthening of transparency in public institutions. Institutional memory is defined as a set of practices that not only organizes and preserves documents and traditions, but also strengthens the identity and legitimacy of organizations. The objective of this article is to discuss how the implementation of memory management policies can contribute to consolidating a culture of social responsibility and optimizing access to public information. The methodology is based on bibliographic research, which reviews concepts of institutional memory, document management and the legal and theoretical bases of access to information in Brazil. The results indicate that institutional memory, when integrated with the guidelines for data opening and document management, offers a promising basis for the consolidation of transparency and accountability, strengthening the link between public institutions and society. It is concluded that a strategic approach to institutional memory management is an instrument to promote a more open and participatory public management.

Keywords: Institutional memory management, Access to information, Institutional memory, Institutional identity, Accountability.

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INTRODUCTION

Institutional Memory Management can be understood as a set of administrative policies and practices aimed at consolidating the identity and legitimacy of institutions, in addition to contributing to strategic decision-making (Matos, 2004). This process is dedicated to selecting, preserving, organizing, and disseminating the records, traditions, and knowledge that constitute the historical basis of the institution, reflecting the advances, challenges, and changes (Thiesen, 2013).

The fundamental right of access to information, guaranteed by the Federal Constitution of 1988, ensures that citizens can obtain transparent data produced or maintained by public agencies (Brasil, 1988). Therefore, it is up to the Government to adopt specific procedures to produce, process, use, evaluate and archive documents, in accordance with legal norms (Brasil, 1991). From this perspective, practices of preservation and dissemination of institutional memory converge with these guidelines and reinforce the bond of trust between institutions and society (Paulino; Silva; Mendes, 2016).

This study aims to examine the management of institutional memory as a strategic resource to increase transparency and optimize the right of access to information in public organizations. It is questioned how the implementation of memory policies contributes to the preservation of the history and identity of institutions, promoting a culture of social responsibility. To this end, the article revisits and organizes concepts such as institutional memory, document management and access to information, relating them to management practices in the various spheres of public institutions.

As for the adopted design, it is a bibliographic research, with the purpose of identifying and relating the existing theoretical and practical production on the subject, mapping relevant contributions and debates. Academic, institutional and normative sources were consulted, in which theoretical conceptions regarding the concepts of social memory and institutional memory are explored, in addition to the regulatory frameworks that support the right of access to public information in the Brazilian context.

The results point to the need for policies that go beyond document preservation, adopting an integrated approach that strengthens institutional identity and expands access to public information. The management of institutional memory can act as a strategic resource by organizing and making content available in a systematic way, promoting transparency and *accountability*. This practice allows institutions to connect more effectively with society and reaffirm their values.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical foundation of this research is based on a multidisciplinary conceptual framework that examines the dimensions of memory and the relationship between institutional memory management and the right to access public information. First, social and collective memory is addressed, based on Halbwachs (2024) and Le Goff (2013), who explore how individual and collective memories shape social and historical contexts.

The study incorporates discussions about the relationship between memory and power, showing how institutional memories are influenced by the dynamics of dispute and control. Le Goff (2013) contributes by analyzing collective memory as an instrument of influence and the impact of the transition from oral to written memory. Paul Ricouer (2018) highlights memory as resistance to forgetting, while Michael Pollak (1989) explores the function of collective memory.

From Gondar and Dodebei (2005), the contributions that demonstrate how memory, in addition to being inserted in a field of struggles and power relations, in which there is a continuous clash between memory and oblivion, constitutes a complex and unfinished concept, being, therefore, in a permanent process of construction. Gondar (2005) also presents four propositions on social memory, with the aim of expanding the concept and highlighting its main aspects.

Document management, according to the Archives Law (Law No. 8,159/1991), complements this perspective, defining guidelines for the organization, preservation and access to public documents, thus reinforcing institutional memory and the right to information (Jardim, 2013). The author discusses the role of public archival services in the application of these guidelines, highlighting document management as a key element to ensure the transparency and accessibility of government information.

The research focuses on institutional memory, addressed by Costa (1992; 1997) and Thiesen (2013). According to the author, institutional memory brings together accumulated knowledge, practices, stories and documents, which form the identity and shape the culture and values of the institution, being "the reflection of this trajectory, not as mimesis, but a crystal with its multiple and infinite facets" (2013, p. 146). It includes formal records, such as minutes and reports, and informal knowledge, such as experiences, traditions, and routines shared among the institution's members.

Another concept addressed is that of institutional identity, seen as a dynamic process, shaped by the internal interactions of the organization and by its social, political,

economic and historical contexts (Oliveira, 2008). In this context, identity is expressed by the institution's memory, which is maintained and continuously renewed through internal and external events.

For the formulation of *accountability*, the approach of Afonso (2012) was adopted, which proposes a "democratically advanced" configuration, incorporating evaluation, accountability and accountability. This configuration involves open and improvable relationships, based on essential values such as critical citizenship, participation, *empowerment*, the right to information, transparency and justice (Afonso, 2012).

Regarding the Management of Institutional Memory, the classical perspective of management was used, which encompasses planning, organization, leadership, coordination and control (Pagliuso; Cardoso; Spiegel, 2010). Then, a contemporary vision of management was incorporated, according to Lacombe and Heilborn (2015), which requires adaptation to environmental changes and social demands for transparency and access to information, connecting traditional practices with innovation and flexibility.

Martins and Reis (2014, p. 161) define public information as "that produced or accumulated by public bodies and entities; produced or maintained by an individual or private person resulting from a link with public bodies and entities." They also include information on the activities of these entities, such as policies, organization, use of resources, bids and administrative contracts, as well as data on public policies, audits and accountability.

In summary, the conceptual framework adopted provided the necessary subsidies to achieve the objectives of the research. The discussions on memory, document management and access to information allowed the construction of the theoretical bases for the concept presented: the Management of Institutional Memory. This emerging concept integrates document preservation practices and policies of access to information, configuring itself as a strategic instrument to strengthen institutional identity and legitimize its performance in society.

METHODOLOGY

This study is characterized by a theoretical approach, of a qualitative nature, seeking to understand the management of institutional memory in public institutions as a strategic practice for strengthening transparency and access to information. As Gil (2023) points out, qualitative research is adequate to deepen knowledge about complex phenomena through

the analysis of documentary and theoretical materials, dispensing with the collection of empirical data and enabling a critical analysis of existing practices.

The methodology used was based on bibliographic research, which is based on the selection and analysis of theoretical and normative sources, including academic productions, scientific articles, books and legislation. This selection allowed us to explore the main approaches to institutional memory and document management, as well as legal aspects related to access to public information in Brazil, especially the Access to Information Law (LAI). The references were collected in academic databases and institutional sources, prioritizing recent publications to ensure the timeliness of the concepts.

In consulting the Brazilian Digital Library of Theses and Dissertations, using the keywords "institutional memory management" AND "access to information", no production was found that combined these terms exactly. However, two relevant results were identified with the expression "institutional memory management": a dissertation entitled "Institutional memory and environmental management: emphasis on environmental actions through a study of the library of the School of Engineering of UFRGS in the period from 2011 to 2015" and a thesis entitled "Institutional memory and university management in Brazil: the case of the Federal University of Bahia".

In a complementary search on the CAPES Journal Portal, with the same terms, 12 (twelve) results were obtained, concentrating on the areas of Applied Social Sciences, Human Sciences and Information Science. Even so, none of the studies addresses the management of institutional memory and access to information in an integrated way. An article from the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul discusses institutional memory in knowledge management, while another from the National School of Public Administration focuses on document preservation in the Executive Branch for informational accessibility, but without connecting these concepts to public transparency.

From the methodology employed, the analysis points to a lack of studies that connect the management of institutional memory to access to information in an integrated way within the scope of public administration. The consultations carried out in the databases showed dispersed approaches to these themes, without direct articulation in the context of memory policies. These results indicate the opportunity for further investigations that deepen this intersection, considering institutional memory as a resource aimed at practices of transparency and responsibility in the public service.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

It is widely recognized that, among the fundamental rights, essential and inalienable for the dignity and freedom of individuals, is the right to information, which even has a constitutional seat in the Brazilian legal system. In fact, the Federal Constitution of 1988 (CF/88), in its Article 5, XXXIII, establishes as a fundamental right of the human person to receive from public bodies information of his private interest, or of collective or general interest (Brasil, 1988).

The constitutional text only safeguards access to information essential for the security of the State and society. Providing penalties for non-compliance in the provision of public information, the 1988 Constitution seeks to break with non-transparent administrative practices. According to the principle of publicity, "all administrative activity must be transparent, allowing any citizen to have access to it and understand it" (Salgado, 2017). However, access to information becomes restricted when acts and facts are forgotten or not recorded.

Ricouer (2018) argues that the search for remembrance proves one of the main purposes of the act of memory: to fight against forgetting. The author suggests that this effort entails tearing fragments of memory from the clutches of time and oblivion. The relationship between memory and forgetting would be characterized by an intense and unsettling effort, as it involves the constant struggle against daily forgetting and the continuous need to remember.

Dialoguing with this perspective, Gondar (2005) reinforces that memory not only seeks to preserve history and identity, but also faces the constant fear of losing what was remembered. This process is complex, not only because of the difficulty of recovering memories, but also because of the fragility of these memories over time. For both authors, memory represents a continuous clash between remembering and forgetting, maintaining a delicate balance between what is preserved and what is lost.

Although institutions do not forget like humans, failures can occur in the recording, preservation or access to past information. The management of memory allows the rescue of what has been forgotten, conferring durability, continuity and stability (Pollak, 1989). Thus, there is a relationship between the right to access information and the management of institutional memory, as the deletion or silencing compromises transparency and availability of data. Memory management facilitates this rescue by making accessible information that has been forgotten or erased (Ricouer, 2018).

MEMORY AS A PROCESS: SPACES, MEANINGS AND PRESERVATION

The concept of collective memory was developed by Maurice Halbwachs, a French sociologist, in the twentieth century (Gondar; Dodebei, 2005). Halbwachs argues that collective memory would be the way social groups remember and share past experiences. It involves individual memories, but is not to be confused with them, evolving according to its own laws: "To evoke his own past, a man often needs to resort to the memories of others" (Halbwachs, 2024, p. 36).

Other people's memories would serve to strengthen, weaken, or even complete what is known about a particular event. Halbwachs (2024) observes that when the individual's impression is based not only on his own memory, but also on that of others, a sense of confidence arises in what was remembered, as if the same experience were relived not by a single person, but by several.

The French sociologist argues that collective memory also develops in a spatial context, as the group relates to the place as part of its environment. It is the proximity in a specific space that creates bonds between the members: "Space is a lasting reality: our impressions follow one another, nothing remains in our mind, and we would not understand how we could recover the past if it were not in fact preserved by the material environment that surrounds us" (Halbwachs, 2024, p. 128).

Thus, the appeal to collective memories is not only temporal, but also spatial. He points out that "each society cuts out space in its own way [...] to constitute a fixed structure where she encapsulates and recovers her memories" (Halbwachs, 2024, p. 145). In addition, he states: "We are not in an indeterminate space, but in regions that we know [...] because they are always part of the material environment in which we are today" (Halbwachs, 2024, p. 145).

Gondar (2005), in turn, presents four propositions about social memory. The first is its transdisciplinary and polysemic character, explored by various areas of knowledge and encompassing different signs – symbolic, iconic or indicative – that give memory varied meanings, depending on the social or disciplinary context in which it is inserted (Gondar, 2005). She observes that "the privilege conferred on each of these systems of signs by a society or by a discipline is capable of bringing to mind a different meaning" (p. 12). The second proposition understands social memory as an ethical and political concept, marked by affections and expectations, which implies choices about what deserves to be remembered, rather than a neutral reconstruction of the past.

The third proposition defines memory as a processual construction, characterized by the constant tension between remembering and forgetting. And finally, the author states that memory goes beyond representation; By reducing it to this field, one loses the notion that it is a "game of forces", where various influences and powers interact to shape the content and form of what is remembered (p. 22).

Le Goff's (2013) construction, while recognizing the importance of collective memory, emphasizes the need for a critical approach to understand how memory is used to shape identities and legitimize powers. He warns of the political use of memory, where certain events are emphasized or forgotten to serve specific goals.

Memory would be conceptualized as the property of preserving certain information, enabling human beings to update impressions or information of facts that happened at a certain moment in the past, or that a certain person or group represents or understands as the past. This process of updating would not occur mechanically, since it is possible to reread what is intended to be remembered (Le Goff, 2013).

In this way, the historian points out that "No document is innocent. It must be analyzed. Every document is a monument that must be destructured, dismantled" (Le Goff, 2013, p. 108). This means that the documents, when treated as sources of memory, carry within themselves intentionalities, omissions, and constructed narratives that need to be carefully examined. Access to this documentation, through a management practice, would facilitate this critical analysis.

In this context, the Access to Information Law plays an important role, by defining information as any data, processed or not, that can be used for the production and transmission of knowledge, regardless of the medium or format. The LAI also brings the concept of document: it corresponds to the unit of registration of this information, covering any support or format used to fix the data (Brasil, 2011).

But, as Le Goff warns, the documents carry with them the intentions, perspectives and contexts of those who produced them. Moreover, documents are not just passive records of events, but reflect conscious choices about what to include, omit, or emphasize, and these choices are influenced by political, social, and cultural contexts. Therefore, it is necessary to destructure and dismantle these documents in order to understand the layers of meaning and underlying interests that shaped their creation.

Dodebei (2005) goes further, arguing that the traces or traces left by human beings in a place are only potential memory shelters. To be considered documents, it is necessary

that these traces are updated. This process requires, first, the preservation of objects (fragments, evidences or proofs), which will allow a future reevaluation of the actions of the present.

THE COMPOSITION OF MEMORY IN INSTITUTIONS

The theoretical and methodological development of the concept of institutional memory in Brazil gains notoriety from the studies of Icléia Thiesen (1997; 2013). She describes it as a complex and multidisciplinary field of study that involves the retention and management of information and experiences accumulated by an institution over time (Costa, 1997). This process aims, among other things, to ensure historical continuity, identity formation and the legitimacy of institutions, allowing future generations to understand and learn from the past.

Historicity is, therefore, a fundamental element of institutions, which throughout their existences accumulate information and knowledge produced by people who, at some point, were part of their social body. The preservation of these documents is conditioned to the "greater or lesser desire to keep" (Costa, 1997, p. 96). According to the author, this desire to preserve is intrinsically linked to a selection process conducted by those in charge of institutional management.

Thus, Law No. 12. 527/2011, which regulates access to public information, provided for in several constitutional articles (Art. 5, XXXIII; Art. 37, II, § 3; and Art. 216, § 2), imposes the observance of publicity as a general precept and secrecy as an exception (Art. 3); in turn, Law No. 8,159, of January 8, 1991, which provides for the national policy on public and private archives, establishes that it is the duty of the Government to manage documents and provide special protection to archival documents, as an instrument to support administration, culture, scientific development and as evidence and information.

It is noted that preservation and conservation should be the standard administrative practice. Discarding or the decision to preserve, in the expression of Costa (1997), is not within the domain of the manager's discretion. On the contrary, safeguarding must be an institutional obligation, a systematic and intentional practice, based on clear and specific guidelines that transcend the mere will or individual judgment of those who administer.

While Law No. 8,159/1991, on the national policy of public archives, has an instrumental character aimed at administrative support, the Access to Information Law constitutes a democratic achievement. This law not only supports the administration, but

also ensures citizens the right to transparent access to public information, strengthening democracy and encouraging the active participation of the population in governance.

However, simple access to data composed of documents and public archives does not allow silences to disappear; it is necessary to replace "un-memory" (Paveau, 2013, p. 141) and erasure with a set of activities that preserve the history of the Institution through a set of actions (museum, lectures, exhibitions, monuments, archives) that also allow a reflection on the processes experienced by it. According to Ricouer (2018, p. 48), "[...] Much of the search for the past fits into the task of not forgetting."

Costa (1997), in his thesis, questions how institutions deal with time and states that they remember and forget selectively. In order for certain events to be remembered, others need to be forgotten, a process that requires human intervention and intentional selection. The institution retains what it considers relevant and discards what it deems useless or unnecessary. According to the author,

> In the context of institutional memory, remembering and forgetting are two moments of one and the same movement. For certain memories to emerge, it is necessary that others remain dormant, contained, silenced or even forgotten. Memory is selective. The institution, to the extent that it retains what interests its reproduction, also works by selection (Costa, 1997, p. 39).

Therefore, institutional memory is not a neutral repository, but a selective mechanism that preserves some information and discards others. This process is shaped by the needs and goals of the institution, which retains data that is essential to its identity and continuity, while less relevant or harmful information may be forgotten.

It is important to highlight Costa (1997) argues that organization and institution have different purposes: the organization focuses on operational effectiveness, while the institution seeks legitimacy. The institution is carried out through organization, being constituted by practices, norms and rules that serve specific objectives. For the author, it is through the relations of power that the institutional plan is formed, and this plan, in turn, guides and shapes the structure of the organization.

The notion of institution emerges here as a collective construction, rooted in the social and cultural fabric, establishing itself as a fundamental structure in social relations. It evolves historically, incorporating mechanisms that govern behaviors and norms. "Behavior and practice are what make institutions and define the path of the institutionalization process. Institutional practice is a virtual one being updated in organizations" (Costa, 1997, p. 5).

Santos and Valentim (2021) argue that institutional memory is linked to the social value of the group, encompassing moral and ethical aspects, beliefs, and power relations, reflecting the historical and social trajectory of the institution. In contrast, organizational memory is pragmatic and efficiency-oriented, with a focus on productivity and managerial processes. Both are cyclical and socially constructed phenomena, but each responds to different objectives and needs within the institutional and organizational context.

However, it is necessary to understand that the preservation of institutional memory goes beyond the action of rescuing the past. It involves understanding the differences and recognizing the limits of each historical period. "It is discovering values and renewing bonds. It is to reflect on history, not only as someone who remembers, but exercising a true praxis, in which reflection and practice go hand in hand" (Fundacentro, 2020).

Alongside this dimension of self-evaluation, there remains a task or function of an unequivocal operational nature: to mitigate the possibility of losing the documents produced and the knowledge built throughout their trajectory. To this end, the institution must create or establish a culture of data and knowledge management, without losing sight of the fact that the selection between what should be remembered and what is forgotten is subject to internal and external influences and interests.

Likewise, when emphasizing the need to systematize information in a logical way, making it usable by the community that depends on it, the author highlights the importance of information representation as an essential tool to achieve this purpose. That is, the institution must structure, organize, and manage its data effectively, in order to facilitate or allow access by users.

> [...] whatever the definitions of information or even of Information Science, it seems that the greatest challenge of this emerging knowledge (due to its young age) remains access to the information contained in the most different inscription surfaces. It is primarily about organizing knowledge with a view to transferring information to user communities. This would lead us from the outset to the representation of information (Costa, 1997, p. 10).

In the case of institutional memory, the representation of information also becomes essential, as it is through it that history and identity are transmitted in a clear, objective way. Memory is, therefore, a central element in the functioning of institutions. It is through it that institutions perpetuate themselves in the heart of society, preserving only the information pertinent to their functioning.

This selection process is developed according to established rules and varies from institution to institution. Costa (1997, p. 145) argues that, "given that institutions work in a network in the social field, the limit of one institution is another institution. And the relevant information for the recovery of institutional memory must therefore be sought not only in internal materials and sources, but outside institutional walls". This interdependence underlines the importance of an ongoing effort to collect and organize information from diverse sources.

Institutional memory is under constant construction, linked to the temporal flow and the continuous progression of events. This dynamic requires the recognition of its ever-evolving and adapting nature. Its management requires a careful approach, which goes beyond simple data retention, ensuring the accessibility and relevance of information. With this, the institutions not only preserve his legacy, but also promote transparency and greater social participation.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION, *ACCOUNTABILITY* AND SOCIAL CONTROL

As seen, The clash between remembering and forgetting affects both individuals and institutions, which must ensure the preservation and access to information of their activities. "In order to protect the public interest and human rights, freedom of information must provide for access to documents produced by the State and companies that receive public funding or provide essential services" (Paulino; Silva; Mendes, 2016, p. 91). In this scenario, the Access to Information Law (LAI) stands out as a central element in promoting transparency, government accountability and strengthening democracy.

This rule defines the mechanisms, deadlines and procedures for the delivery of information requested to the public administration by citizens. Moreover, by establishing that information of public interest must be made available in an active and accessible manner, the LAI strengthens administrative practices and encourages a culture of accountability. According to Paulino, Silva and Mendes (2016, p.92), "Legislation is fundamental to provide the guarantee of the right to information and the promotion of concrete devices to access public documents".

In regimes in which civil liberties, popular participation and political rights are severely limited, state secrecy becomes the rule, making it impossible or even limiting citizens to know and control the actions of their rulers. Generally, in the processes of

transition from authoritarian to democratic regimes, the right of access to public information becomes relevant in political and social struggles (Silva, 2014, p. 85).

In Brazil, after the military dictatorship that began in 1964, the first significant advance for the right of access to information occurred with the inclusion of provisions on the subject in the 1988 Constitution (Silva, 2014). Thirty-five years later, on November 18, 2011, Law 12.527, or the Access to Information Law (LAI), was enacted: "The guiding argument [...] is that Law No. 12,527 [...] must be understood in the broader context of the country's political history, particularly as a result of the political process since 1964" (Rodrigues, 2016, p. 77).

This law regulates access to information as provided for in the Federal Constitution. Article 5, item XXXIII, ensures the right to obtain information of private, collective or general interest to public bodies, except when secrecy is essential to the security of the State and society. Article 37, § 3, item II, establishes that the legislation must regulate the participation of users in the public administration, including access to administrative records and government information. Article 216, § 2, on the other hand, attributes to the public administration the management of government documentation and the right of consultation to all interested parties (Brasil, 1988).

The Access to Information Law (LAI) represents more than a constitutional regulation; it inserts Brazil in a new legal regime of the right to public information, aligned with a global movement for transparency and social control. After nine years of processing, the LAI symbolizes an adherence to the "legal regime of the right to public information [...] with a restructuring force of the Brazilian social and political order" (Lima; Lamb; Gomes, 2014, p. 61). This new scenario seeks to reverse the opacity of the military regime and consolidate a culture of transparency, promoting a more open relationship between the State and society.

In the absolute State, the production and custody of works were controlled by the Church or by the sovereign, who restricted access to administrative documents to exercise dominion over subjects and faithful. This control aimed to maintain state secrecy or religious surveillance, consolidating power. As Burke notes, "the monopoly of information [...] it was a means of achieving a monopoly of power." It was only with the French Revolution that the principle of public access to archives was proclaimed, although its practice took time to materialize (Lima; Lamb; Gomes, 2014, p. 53).

Such control allowed not only to manipulate the historical and administrative narrative, by restricting access to public information, but also to monitor and repress dissent from power. In contrast, in the democratic state, the production and custody of data are shared responsibilities among various institutions, aiming at transparency and social control. Access to information is facilitated, with publicity as the rule and secrecy as the exception, encouraging the active participation of citizens.

By requiring that information of public interest be made available in an active and accessible way, the LAI strengthens public administration, encouraging more open and efficient practices. This access facilitates social control, allowing citizens to monitor the actions of public agencies and promote a culture of *accountability* (Ferreira; Saints; Machado, 2012). The Universal Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, of 1789, already stated in its article 15 that "society has the right to demand an account from every public agent for his administration" (Lima; Lamb; Gomes, 2014, p. 54).

Thus, alongside the instrumental aspect (a tool for rationalizing public spending), access to information is essential to the construction of a democratic country, as it represents a kind of "State surveillance by citizens" (Lima; Lamb; Gomes, 2014, p. 49). Through continuous attention, it is possible to identify and correct administrative failures, prevent abuses of power, and ensure that public resources are used efficiently and fairly.

> According to this more restricted perspective, an information regime would refer to the set of formal legal rules that embody the relationship between citizens and the State in the search for information, and that, [....] imposes a proactive role on the State as a necessary generator of sufficient informational infrastructures to guarantee the citizen the right to be informed (Lima; Lamb; Gomes, 2014, p. 50).

In this context, the State is seen as the main agent responsible for creating and maintaining an adequate information infrastructure, ensuring that the right of citizens to be informed is effectively guaranteed. This approach reflects a more advanced view of the role of the State in democratic societies, where transparency and access to information are fundamental pillars for the exercise of social control.

By adopting a proactive attitude, the State does not limit itself to waiting for citizens to request information, but anticipates it, creating and maintaining systems that facilitate access to public data. This initiative in making public content available sustains government responsibility, as it ensures that administrative actions are transparent and subject to community verification.

The need to institute objective procedures for access to information is justified by the fact that the availability of this data allows citizens to demand actions and improvements from the State. This promotes a fairer and more transparent society, strengthening citizen participation and social control over public policies. In this sense,

> The need to establish comprehensible and broad procedures for access to information is justified because this right is the basis for other basic rights and allows processes for which citizens can sue the State. For example, from public data and documents, it is possible to demand improvements in education, health and housing. It is also possible to establish a relationship of social control of the actions of public officials, activating accountability devices . (Paulino; Silva; Mendes, 2016, p. 90).

Establishing a relationship of social control and activating *accountability* devices also allow public officials to be held accountable for their actions, preventing abuses of power and corruption, and strengthening the population's trust in government institutions. In addition, such mechanisms enable greater civic engagement, allowing citizens to actively participate in the democratic process and exert influence on public policies.

Afonso (2012) argues that *accountability* should go beyond traditional neoliberal approaches, which are limited to hierarchical-bureaucratic and technocratic accountability, associated with sanctions. It proposes a democratic and inclusive model, based on mutual trust and autonomy, using multiple evaluation instruments to promote social justice and address structural injustices.

Regarding the accessibility of information, a study on the profile of LAI applicants reveals a predominance of public servants, students, professors and researchers, most of whom are men with complete higher education. This profile suggests that familiarity with administrative processes and level of education influence the use of the law, highlighting the need to expand the reach of the LAI and foster a more inclusive culture of transparency (Alcantara, 2023).

> the Access to Information Law was an advance for national legislation, for conforming to the international community, but the norm alone is not enough to generate real access to information. It is necessary that there are actions from the public authorities to educate citizens regarding the right to know what happens in the public sphere (Alcantara, 2023, p. 15-16).

Obviously, the mere existence of the rule does not guarantee, by itself, effective access to information. For the right to be fully exercised, it is essential that the public authorities adopt concrete actions that educate and enable citizens to understand their rights and to use the available mechanisms to access information about the public sphere.

Therefore, it is necessary to go beyond regulation and promote a culture of transparency and citizen education.

Finally, the relationship between institutional memory and access to information is central to the construction of a representative and legitimized identity inside and outside public institutions. Revisiting concepts such as those of Halbwachs (2024), Le Goff (2013), Gondar (2005) and Dodebei (2005) reveals that memory is not static, but rather a process in constant reconstruction, reflecting power dynamics and social contexts. In this sense, the management of institutional memory, when linked to policies of access to information, allows society to appropriate the historical and strategic legacies of institutions, promoting greater *accountability* and social engagement.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This study sought to answer the question of how the management of institutional memory can act as a strategic tool to improve transparency and enforce the right to access information in public institutions. The analysis developed throughout the article allowed us to understand that institutional memory, when organized and integrated with document management practices, goes beyond the role of a mere historical repository, consolidating itself as a resource that strengthens the culture of accountability and social responsibility in public organizations.

The research presents a contribution to the field of public administration, especially by expanding the understanding of the relevance of innovation policies and practices aimed at the integration of memory with the promotion of transparency and *accountability*. This perspective proposes a more dynamic and proactive view of public administration, where institutional memory is configured as a link between the past and the future of organizations, helping managers to base decisions on previous experiences and, at the same time, to strengthen a transparent and reliable institutional image.

In addition, it shows that the management of institutional memory can contribute to administrative efficiency by promoting the organization of historical data and information in a systematized and accessible way. This facilitates both internal access, for planning and decision-making purposes, and external access, ensuring that society has information about the activities, challenges faced, and progress made by the institution.

One of the limitations of this study is the absence of an empirical analysis, which could enrich the understanding of memory management practices in public institutions and

their impact on public perception. The literature search provided an initial theoretical basis, but case studies or practical data that validate the arguments in real contexts are lacking. It is recommended that future research carry out empirical investigations in different public institutions to assess how memory management policies are applied and their impacts on transparency and relationship with the public.

It would also be pertinent to explore more deeply the variables that influence the effectiveness of institutional memory, such as the engagement of civil servants and the allocation of specific resources for memory policies. Focusing future research on these aspects can contribute to the development of more detailed and applicable models of memory management, serving as a reference for other institutions interested in promoting a more transparent, accountable and connected public administration with society.

Institutional memory, as the guardian of the documents and knowledge produced, is deeply intertwined with the contributions and collective experiences of the individuals who make up the organization. In this sense, the management of institutional memory becomes a tool to democratize access to information. Documents that were previously relegated and forgotten events gain visibility with the implementation of this practice.

 By preserving and organizing files, data and documents, often generated in a remote time, memory management enables this information to be retrieved and made available to society, working as a true catalyst for the effectiveness of the Access to Information Law. **In this way, it contributes not only to public transparency, but also to the construction of a solid base of institutional knowledge, essential for decision-making and future policies.**

That said, the interconnection between document preservation, knowledge management, and democratization of access to information reflects the commitment of public institutions to the principles of transparency and accountability. In summary, institutional memory, by being directly linked to policies of access to information, consolidates itself as a pillar for the construction of effective and democratic public management.

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