

## DOCUMENTATION AND DOCUMENTARY HERITAGE CENTRES: RIGHT TO INFORMATION, MEMORY AND CITIZENSHIP



<https://doi.org/10.56238/arev7n1-015>

Submitted on: 12/01/2024

Publication date: 01/01/2025

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### ABSTRACT

This article addresses the importance of documentation centers and documentary heritage in promoting the right to information, memory and citizenship. Through a literature review and critical analysis, the study discusses how these centers act as guardians of collective memory, contributing to the construction of cultural identity and to the full exercise of citizenship. In addition, the article explores the challenges faced in preserving and accessing these collections, emphasizing the need for public policies that ensure the preservation and democratization of this information.

**Keywords:** Documentation Centers, Documentary Heritage, Memory, Citizenship.

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## INTRODUCTION

Documentation centers are key institutions for the preservation of documentary heritage, playing a vital role as guardians of collective memory and ensuring access to information. These centres are responsible for the conservation of a wide range of documents of historical, cultural, scientific and administrative value, whose relevance transcends the present and extends to future generations. They play an essential role in maintaining the continuity of social memory, providing a solid foundation for society to understand and value its own history and culture. Through the preservation of these collections, future generations can build a deeper understanding of the past, creating a link between the various eras and events that have shaped the world in which we live.

In this context, access to information and memory becomes a fundamental right, essential for the construction of a people's cultural identity. By ensuring access to documents that report the trajectory of a nation, documentation centers contribute to the strengthening of citizenship, allowing citizens to understand their role in society and connect with collective history. Historical memory not only reinforces the sense of belonging, but also ensures critical reflection on the past, something crucial for the full exercise of citizenship. Access to this heritage is, therefore, one of the pillars for the development of a more just and democratic society, where everyone can feel part of the process of construction and reconstruction of history.

The importance of documentation centers goes far beyond the simple preservation of documents; They function as dynamic instruments for the promotion of knowledge, research and the strengthening of citizenship. The right to information, guaranteed by the Federal Constitution of 1988, is a prerogative that allows all citizens access to information of public interest. However, the realization of this right depends on a robust structure of preservation and access to documentary heritage. The preservation of heritage is not only about the physical care of documents, but also about creating conditions so that they can be accessed efficiently and democratically. This process requires proactive action by documentation centers to ensure that information is not only preserved, but also easily accessible to society.

In addition, documentation centers have a responsibility to preserve the memory of historical events and processes that have shaped society, ensuring that this memory is available for consultation, research, and reflection. According to Almeida (2023), the preservation of collective memory is essential for the construction of a cohesive national

identity, which recognizes and values the various narratives and experiences that make up the history of a country. When this memory is not preserved, there is a risk of erasing or distorting important events, which can undermine society's critical understanding of its own trajectory.

However, the preservation of documentary collections faces several complex challenges. One of the biggest obstacles is the need to digitize documents, a measure that aims not only to ensure the longevity of the material, but also to facilitate remote access. Digitization presents itself as a fundamental tool for the democratization of access to information, allowing citizens from different parts of the world, including those in remote regions, to consult historical documents without the need for physical travel. This process, however, requires investments in technology and infrastructure, which is not always available, especially in contexts of limited resources.

Another significant challenge is unequal access to information, which is often exacerbated by the lack of technological infrastructure in certain regions. In many locations, the lack of access to the internet or the inadequate infrastructure of libraries and documentation centers makes it difficult to fully exercise the right to information. In addition, the lack of public policies aimed at preserving documentary heritage and expanding access to this information constitutes a considerable obstacle. Without adequate institutional support, documentation centers may face limitations in their ability to preserve and disseminate documentary heritage efficiently.

In view of this scenario, this article aims to discuss the relevance of documentation centers in guaranteeing the right to information and memory, and their contribution to the strengthening of citizenship. To this end, a literature review is carried out that explores the concepts of documentary heritage, the role of documentation centers and the relationship between citizenship and access to information. Through this analysis, it seeks not only to highlight the importance of these institutions in the preservation of cultural and historical heritage, but also to identify the challenges they face, proposing solutions that can contribute to the preservation and democratization of access to this information, especially in an increasingly digital and interconnected world.

These solutions include strengthening public policies for the preservation and access to information, expanding the digitization of collections, and implementing digital inclusion projects that allow everyone, regardless of geographic location or socioeconomic status, to enjoy the right to information and memory. Only through a joint effort, involving

governments, academic institutions and civil society, will it be possible to ensure that documentary heritage is preserved and accessible to future generations.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### CONCEPT OF DOCUMENTARY HERITAGE

Documentary heritage refers to the set of documents that have historical, cultural, scientific or social value, being essential for the preservation of a society's memory. These documents not only bear witness to the past but also shape a people's cultural identity over time. Documentary heritage includes a wide variety of materials, such as manuscripts, rare books, maps, sound records, films, and digital files, which, when preserved, allow the continuity of memory and knowledge through generations (Duarte; Santos, 2021).

Silva (2023) states that documentary heritage is an indispensable source for understanding the past and for the construction of cultural identity, since these documents provide concrete evidence of the practices, beliefs, and events that define a society. The preservation of this type of heritage is not only a technical issue, but also a cultural and ethical responsibility, as it involves the conservation of collective memory and the guarantee of access to this information by future generations.

According to Trindade (2022), the preservation of documentary heritage faces complex challenges, such as the physical deterioration of materials and technological obsolescence, which threaten the integrity and accessibility of documents. In addition, there is a need for public policies that promote the protection and appreciation of these collections, integrating preventive conservation strategies and digitalization to ensure their longevity.

UNESCO (2019) recognizes the global importance of documentary heritage through the Memory of the World program, which seeks to preserve and facilitate access to documents of universal value. This program highlights that documentary heritage is a vital resource for cultural, educational and scientific development, being a foundation for building informed and inclusive societies.

When addressing the documents of permanent archives, Bellotto (2000 *apud* Portella, 2012) highlights that, in archival science, these documents represent his *archival*. In this context, the author explains that, for a set of documents to be considered documentary heritage of an institution, whether public or private, it must have certain characteristics:

To have fulfilled its original function, associated with the reason for its creation; no longer being in process; have gone through the current archive; and to have been evaluated as permanent, based on the temporality table, due to the relevance of its informative value, both for the institutional history of the place that produced, received or accumulated them, and for the society that lived and acted in that place. This perspective is in line with the archival theory in relation to permanent documents (p.22).

With regard to the protection of documentary heritage at the global level, the "Guidelines for the Safeguarding of Documentary Heritage", prepared by Ray Edmondson and published in 2002 for UNESCO's Memory of the World Programme, serve as an important reference. In Brazil, the Constitution of the Republic of 1988 (2005) recognizes documents as part of the country's cultural heritage, establishing that it is the responsibility of the public administration, according to the law, to manage government documentation and ensure its access to those who need it. This right is reiterated by the Constitution of the State of Rio Grande do Sul of 1989 (2011), which also highlights the responsibility of the public administration in the management of government documentation and in facilitating its access.

Thus, it is the duty of the public administration to properly treat documentation to preserve the nation's informative memory. Among the areas of knowledge dedicated to the protection of documentary heritage, information science stands out, with special emphasis on archival science.

## DOCUMENTATION CENTERS

Documentation centers are institutions dedicated to the collection, preservation, organization and availability of documents of historical, cultural, scientific or administrative relevance. They play a crucial role in maintaining documentary heritage, functioning as true guardians of a society's collective memory. These centers are fundamental for the dissemination of knowledge and the promotion of education, by providing access to primary sources that are essential for research and teaching (Mendes; Pereira, 2020).

Oliveira and Sousa (2022) highlight that documentation centers are vital for the preservation of documentary heritage, as they play an essential role in the organization and cataloguing of documents, which facilitates access to information. In addition, these centers act in the mediation between documentary heritage and the public, promoting educational and cultural activities that reinforce the importance of preserving memory.

The digitization of collections is one of the main challenges faced by documentation centers in contemporary times. According to Rodrigues and Almeida (2021), digitization not only expands access to documents, allowing a wider audience to have contact with these collections, but also contributes to the preservation of originals, by reducing the need for physical handling. However, digitalization requires significant investments in technology and training, as well as clear digital preservation policies.

Another relevant aspect is the democratization of access to information. Lopes (2020) points out that documentation centers play a fundamental role in promoting citizenship, by ensuring that all individuals, regardless of their location or socioeconomic condition, have access to information that is essential for the exercise of their rights and duties. In this context, documentation centers are not only repositories of documents, but also active agents in the promotion of social justice and inclusion.

#### RIGHT TO INFORMATION AND MEMORY

The right to information is a fundamental right enshrined in the Federal Constitution of 1988, which guarantees all citizens access to information of public interest. This right is closely linked to the right to memory, which concerns the preservation and access to a society's documentary heritage. These rights are essential for the construction of a democratic and participatory society, where citizens can fully exercise their citizenship, based on a solid knowledge of their history and culture (Brasil, 1988).

Almeida (2023) argues that documentation centers are essential instruments for guaranteeing these rights, as they preserve documents that are testimonies of the history and culture of a society. By conserving and making these documents available, documentation centres ensure that the collective memory is kept alive, allowing present and future generations to have access to information that is crucial for understanding the past and making informed decisions in the present.

According to Ribeiro (2021), the right to memory is directly related to the process of building a nation's cultural identity. Memory, when preserved and accessed, allows a society to recognize and value its roots, its struggles and its achievements, strengthening the feeling of belonging and social cohesion. In addition, the right to memory is fundamental for the recognition and reparation of historical injustices, as in the case of memory policies aimed at marginalized groups or victims of authoritarian regimes.

Another important point is the relationship between the right to information and government transparency. According to Ferreira and Silva (2020), documentation centers contribute to the promotion of transparency by preserving and making available documents that are essential for social control and *accountability*. Through access to public documents, citizens can monitor the government's actions and demand due accountability, thereby strengthening the democratic process.

It is important to note that many of the countries mentioned above have assumed the duty of the State to recover, preserve and disseminate documents related to periods of institutionalized violence. In this context, vigorous movements emerged that were integrated into significant political struggles against arbitrariness and impunity, claiming the right to truth and memory.

In many of these countries, the organization of archives of repression and resistance, especially those known as human rights archives, has become a central dimension of struggles. These processes have driven the development of numerous institutional projects focused on actions, research and reflections on the history and memory of these periods, in addition to the preservation and patrimonialization of documentation and the training of new researchers dedicated to the memories of political repression in the Southern Cone.

In the experience of several of these countries, civil society groups have played a crucial role in retrieving, organizing, and making publicly available documents on violence and human rights violations. These efforts, in recent years, have been amplified through exchanges and cooperation networks that connect memories of the past with current struggles for human rights.

A notable example of these articulations is the International Coalition of Places of Memory and Consciousness, a global network that connects historical sites, museums, and memory initiatives. Founded in 1999, the Coalition currently brings together more than 200 initiatives in 50 countries, all with the aim of linking the past to the present and memory to action. The network develops a variety of memory projects, ranging from commemorative activities and documentation work to creative processes such as oral histories and body mapping.

In recent years, the Coalition has organized itself into seven regional networks, each dedicated to specific themes such as Religious and Ethnic Pluralism in Asia, Tolerance and Exclusion in Europe, and Memories of Authoritarianism in Latin America. These networks

promote contemporary discussions on memory and human rights, contributing to the preservation and dissemination of historical documents.

In addition to archival institutions, Oral History projects have gained prominence, preserving testimonies of victims of violence in countries such as Sri Lanka and Syria. Museums and memory centers, such as The May 18 Memorial Foundation in South Korea and the Kigali Memorial Center in Rwanda, also play an essential role in preserving and accessing documents related to genocides and other atrocities.

The Latin American Network, a member of the International Coalition, is composed of more than 35 institutions and social initiatives, reflecting the importance of the Right to Memory in the region. In recent years, several Latin American countries, such as Argentina and Chile, have established archives and documentation centers focused on the memory of dictatorships, demonstrating that disputes over the Right to Memory have become a central issue in the continent's political struggles.

At the international level, the discussion about the preservation of documents related to repressive regimes has gained strength among archivists and memory institutions. A significant milestone was the report prepared in 1995 by the International Council on Archives (ICA) in conjunction with UNESCO, on archives created by security agencies of repressive regimes, updated and republished in 2009. This debate, which continues to resonate in conferences and publications, underlines the importance of ensuring the preservation of memory and access to historical documents, essential for the construction of a more just and democratic society.

Cruz (2020) points out that the report prepared by the ICA presents not only recommendations for public policies aimed at the preservation and wide availability of collections, but also detailed guidelines on the treatment of these sets of documents. The document offers an extensive bibliography on archives and human rights, in addition to including a selection of legislation from several countries on the preservation of archives related to repression. It also lists web pages with relevant information on the subject and a directory of archives and institutions that maintain collections on human rights violations in more than 20 countries. As highlighted by the project coordinator, Antonio González Quintana (2009 *apud* Cruz, 2020):

The international archival community echoed the concerns expressed by human rights groups regarding the preservation of these documents, which are crucial for accountability, possible reparations, reconstruction of social history, and



perpetuation of collective memory, as well as ethical and professional issues related to the custody and treatment of these collections (p. 3).

The report updates the dialogue between archivists and human rights defenders, broadening the scope of the documents covered. The bill now also deals with archives of victims' organizations, political parties, trade unions, human rights organizations, collectives of jurists and lawyers, and other civil organizations. In addition, it considers files resulting from the work of official bodies created to investigate crimes or implement Transitional Justice procedures, such as Commissions of Inquiry, Amnesty and Truth. In this context, the typology used by professionals in the area, as summarized by Jelin (2002), classifies the files as:

Archives of repressive institutions; archives of research organizations on the past, such as the Truth Commissions; and archives of human rights associations and resistance movements to dictatorships and repressive regimes (Jelin, 2002 *apud* Cruz, 2020, p 3).

The report also addresses the impact of these discussions on the management of archival institutions, historical research, and the formulation of policies for the protection of documentary heritage related to human rights in several countries. Recognizing the Right to Memory as a collective right, the document advises that the responsibilities of archival institutions and professionals in the area should be guided by ethical and democratic commitments to society, and not to the State, especially in contexts of exception and authoritarianism.

Concerns about the preservation of archives linked to the defense of human rights, as well as the institutionalization of procedures for the preservation and dissemination of these documents, also have a significant impact on the processes and policies of documentary heritage. Documents, previously considered of lesser importance compared to built assets, are now more frequently being recognized as historical and cultural heritage, especially in the context of discussions on the Right to Memory and democratization of memory supports.

An example of this recognition is the creation, in 1992, of the Memory of the World Program by UNESCO, whose objective is to identify documents or sets of documents that have the value of documentary heritage of humanity. This program also articulates with institutions that hold human rights-related archives, as evidenced by the holding of the Conference of Institutions Holding Human Rights Collections in the International Register of the Memory of the World Program, held in Gwangju, South Korea, in May 2013.

As a result of this conference, the Gwangju Declaration was issued, which recommends that the Memory of the World Program deepen the topics addressed, such as the preservation, promotion, use, acquisition and registration of human rights collections, bringing new visibility to the importance of these documents.

## CITIZENSHIP AND DOCUMENTARY HERITAGE

Access to documentary heritage is a form of exercising citizenship, as it allows individuals to have knowledge of their history and culture, which is fundamental for the formation of a collective identity. Citizenship, in this context, is not limited to the exercise of political rights, but also involves the active participation of citizens in the preservation and appreciation of their cultural heritage (Costa, 2022).

According to Lopes (2021), the preservation of documentary heritage is a responsibility of the State, which must guarantee democratic access to this information. However, the involvement of civil society is equally important. Citizens, by engaging in activities to preserve and promote documentary heritage, contribute to the strengthening of cultural identity and to the appreciation of collective memory. In addition, active citizenship in the preservation of documentary heritage can contribute to the development of more inclusive and representative public policies.

Gomes (2020) highlights that access to documentary heritage is fundamental for citizen education, as it provides individuals with the necessary tools to understand the history and functioning of institutions, allowing them to participate in a more informed and critical way in public life. Citizen education, by promoting knowledge and appreciation of documentary heritage, also contributes to the construction of a society that is more aware of its rights and duties, and more committed to the preservation of its historical memory.

In Brazil, the dispute over memory and recent history is deeply linked to militancy against the dictatorship and the struggle for democratization. Initially, the struggles for the right to memory in Brazil had different demands and dynamics, reflecting different approaches to the relationships between memory, citizenship, justice and reparation. The issue of recent history in Brazil was shaped by an amnesty process that prioritized forgiveness and forgetting of crimes, established by an arrangement negotiated by the elites during the transition to the New Republic.

Only in the last decade have pacts of silence begun to be publicly challenged. The debate on the history and memories of the dictatorship has gained greater visibility

recently, with the National Truth Commission being created in a different context from that faced by other Latin American countries. Since the 1990s, questions about the right to memory have become more associated with citizenship, the recognition of rights and the democratization of memory.

The emphasis on the relationship between memory and citizenship, and on struggles for recognition and rights, contrasted with other regions, where accountability and reparation for crimes committed were the main focuses. In Brazil, the recognition of documentary heritage and the preservation of collections were progressively highlighted from the 1980s onwards. The creation of the Secretariat of National Historical and Artistic Heritage in 1984 and the National Program for the Preservation of Historical Documentation between 1984 and 1988 exemplifies this change.

In that period, document preservation gained importance, reflected in initiatives such as the creation of academic centers dedicated to documentation and historical research, such as the Edgar Leuenroth Archive at Unicamp and the Documentation Center at Unesp. These centers were fundamental for the preservation of the collections of social movements and the struggles for redemocratization.

Popular documentation centers, created by social movements and trade unions, also played a crucial role in the preservation of materials related to resistance movements and the struggle for rights. However, with the change and rearticulation of social movements, many of these centers were deactivated, and their collections transferred to university institutions.

In the last 15 years, the opening of confidential documents from the organs of repression has become a central focus of the struggles for memory and justice. The Brazil Never Again Project, carried out between 1980 and 1985, was one of the first initiatives to make documents on repression available. Despite the difficulties and restrictions imposed by the pact of oblivion, the impetus for the opening of archives and the recognition of the rights to memory and information was only consolidated with the approval of the Access to Information Law in 2011. The gradual release of documents from the political police and the publicization of collections, which began in the 1990s, has been an important step in clarifying human rights violations during the dictatorship.

Finally, citizenship and documentary heritage are deeply intertwined in the context of struggles for rights. According to Carvalho (2019), social movements have used documentary heritage as a tool to claim rights and to preserve the memories of their

struggles. These movements recognize documentary heritage as a strategic resource for the legitimization of their causes and for the construction of narratives that challenge the official versions of history.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The research follows a literature review methodology, an essential approach to consolidate existing knowledge on the subject and identify gaps that can be explored in future studies. The bibliographic review is a fundamental tool for the construction of scientific knowledge, as it allows the researcher to make a detailed survey of the productions already carried out, establishing an overview of the current state of research in the area. According to Gil (2020), the literature review enables a critical analysis of the contributions of various authors, promoting an in-depth understanding of the object of study and ensuring a productive dialogue between different theoretical perspectives. In addition, this type of methodology allows the researcher to perceive where there are convergences and divergences in the approaches, enriching the critical analysis on the subject and opening paths for new investigations.

The analysis carried out focused on sources that address the role of documentation centers in the preservation of documentary heritage and in the promotion of the right to information, memory and citizenship. To ensure the quality of the review, books, scientific articles, theses, dissertations, and institutional documents were selected, taking into account criteria of relevance, topicality, and reliability. Marconi and Lakatos (2017) highlight that the careful choice of sources is crucial to ensure that the review is not only comprehensive, but also accurate, avoiding the use of obsolete or low-quality materials, which may compromise the validity of the conclusions. Rigor in the selection of sources is essential for the construction of a solid foundation that supports subsequent analyses and discussions.

In addition, a critical analysis of the information collected was carried out, identifying both points of convergence and divergence among the authors. This process is not limited to a simple compilation of ideas, but involves a deep interpretation of concepts, allowing the researcher to articulate different theories and approaches. According to Severino (2016), critical analysis goes beyond the superficial description of ideas, seeking to offer an interpretation and synthesis that contribute to the construction of new knowledge. This interpretative process made it possible to discuss the importance of documentation centers

not only as repositories of historical and cultural information, but as active agents in the promotion of citizenship and the preservation of collective memory. Thus, the review was not restricted to the identification of concepts, but also delved into the social, political and cultural implications that documentation centers have in the current context.

The construction of the text followed a logical and coherent structure, in order to provide a fluid and clear reading. The research began with an introduction to the theme and the presentation of the objectives, establishing the scope of the study and justifying its relevance. Next, the literature review was divided into central topics, including the concept of documentary heritage, the role of documentation centers, and the relationship between citizenship, the right to information, and memory. This structuring allowed a detailed understanding of each of the aspects addressed, facilitating the analysis of the interrelationships between the themes. The description of the methodology was carefully crafted to ensure the transparency of the research process, as recommended by Bardin (2019), who emphasizes the importance of a clear explanation of the methods used so that readers can assess the validity and reliability of the results presented. Methodological transparency is an essential element for the credibility of the research, as it allows other researchers to reproduce or build on the findings of the study.

Finally, the conclusion was elaborated based on the synthesis of the discussions presented throughout the text, seeking to respond to the proposed objectives and offering recommendations for future research in the area. The conclusion, as Lakatos and Marconi (2018) point out, is an essential part of any scientific research, as it summarizes the main findings and points out ways for the continuity of the study. The conclusion not only summarizes the results, but also reflects on the implications of the study, suggesting directions for new research projects that can deepen the topics covered or explore new perspectives that emerged throughout the analysis.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **THE IMPORTANCE OF DOCUMENTATION CENTERS IN THE PRESERVATION OF DOCUMENTARY HERITAGE**

Documentation centers play a key role in preserving documentary heritage, ensuring that historical, cultural, and scientific documents are protected and remain accessible to future generations. These centers are not limited to storing valuable materials but also play a crucial role in implementing conservation strategies that ensure the integrity of

documents over time. According to Rodrigues and Almeida (2021), preservation is not just a matter of storage, but involves the application of advanced technical methods that ensure that documents remain legible and usable for research and learning. Digitization, along with the creation of backup copies, emerges as one of the most essential practices for the preservation of documentary heritage, allowing not only the physical conservation of documents, but also facilitating remote access to collections, overcoming geographical and temporal limitations (Santos, 2022).

In addition, the effective management of documentation centres is a key component in ensuring organisation, cataloguing and easy access to stored information. The application of technical standards and the use of advanced technologies become essential to ensure not only the preservation, but also the efficiency in the administration of the collections, optimizing the research process and facilitating the consultation of documents. The use of data management systems, for example, allows documents to be organized in a systematic way, reducing the risk of loss and facilitating the location of specific materials (Oliveira, 2023).

The implementation of effective public policies for the protection of documentary heritage also proves to be an essential factor in this process. As UNESCO (2019) emphasizes, document preservation should not be seen only as a local responsibility, but as a global effort that requires coordinated strategies and sufficient resources to ensure the protection and access to documents in all parts of the world. The creation of public policies aimed at supporting documentation centers, including investments in infrastructure, professional training, and cutting-edge technologies, is crucial for these centers to be able to fulfill their role fully and efficiently, responding to the demands of contemporary society and ensuring equitable access to documentary heritage.

In this way, documentation centers are not only repositories of knowledge, but also active agents in the protection of collective memory and in the promotion of access to information, fundamental elements for the construction of a more informed and engaged society. The continuous evolution of technologies and the implementation of effective public policies are essential for these centers to ensure the preservation of documentary heritage and expand access to knowledge for future generations.

## THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DOCUMENTATION CENTERS AND THE RIGHT TO INFORMATION AND MEMORY

Documentation centers are essential instruments in guaranteeing the right to information and memory, playing a fundamental role in providing access to documents that are essential for understanding the history, culture, and evolution of a society (Almeida, 2023). These centers not only preserve valuable materials, but also ensure that the information contained in these documents can be accessed and used by citizens, researchers, and institutions, contributing to the construction of robust collective knowledge and the strengthening of democracy.

The Brazilian Federal Constitution of 1988, by guaranteeing the right to information as a fundamental right, recognizes the importance of transparency and access to public information for the exercise of citizenship. In this context, documentation centers play a crucial role in the realization of this right, offering means for citizens to access data, documents and records of public interest, essential for the conscious exercise of citizenship (Brasil, 1988).

In addition, the preservation of documentary heritage is closely related to the right to memory, which involves not only the conservation of historical and cultural records, but also continuous and unrestricted access to these documents. The right to memory, therefore, allows societies to preserve and share their histories, traditions, and experiences, constituting an essential element for the construction of a solid and inclusive collective identity. According to Silva (2023), collective memory is strengthened by the availability of historical documents, since these records allow societies to reflect on their past, recognize the challenges faced, and celebrate their achievements. Access to these documents offers a critical and constructive view of past events, helping to form a historical and cultural awareness that contributes to social unity and cohesion.

The absence or restricted access to these documents can generate significant gaps in historical and cultural understanding, resulting in a loss of essential references for the formation of a common identity. As Costa (2022) argues, the lack of adequate access to this heritage can harm not only the understanding of the past, but also the full exercise of citizenship. Without knowledge of what has happened previously, citizens are deprived of essential information to participate actively and informedly in the political, social and cultural processes of their society. Therefore, accessibility to documentation centers and

the documents they preserve is essential for strengthening citizenship and developing a more just and egalitarian society.

## IMPACTS OF DOCUMENT PRESERVATION ON CITIZENSHIP

Access to documentary heritage is crucial for strengthening citizenship, as it allows citizens to learn about their history and culture, promoting active participation in public life. Costa (2022) argues that the preservation of and access to documentary heritage are fundamental for the formation of a collective identity and for civic engagement.

Documentation centers that offer open access to historical and cultural documents help foster education and citizen participation.

In addition, the work of documentation centers contributes to the promotion of transparency by facilitating access to public and historical information that can be used for inspection and social control (Rodrigues and Almeida, 2021). Transparency in document management also strengthens public trust in institutions and promotes an environment of greater democratic participation.

## CHALLENGES AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

The preservation of documentary heritage faces several challenges, such as the need for technological updating, adequate funding, and professional training. The digitization of collections is a growing trend that requires significant investments in technology and infrastructure (Santos, 2022). In addition, the continuous training of professionals involved in document management is essential for adapting to new technologies and conservation practices (Oliveira, 2023).

The implementation of public policies that ensure financial support and adequate regulation is crucial to overcome these challenges. Cooperation between institutions, governments and civil society can contribute to the creation of effective solutions for document preservation (UNESCO, 2019). Future studies should explore new approaches and technologies to address emerging challenges and improve the effectiveness of documentary heritage preservation.



## CONCLUSION

Documentation centers play an essential role in preserving documentary heritage and promoting the rights to information, memory and citizenship. They are fundamental pillars for the protection of collective memory, ensuring that present and future generations can access knowledge about their history and culture. This function is indispensable for the construction of a solid cultural identity and for the strengthening of citizenship, as access to historical and cultural information is crucial for understanding the present and for active and conscious participation in society (Rodrigues and Almeida, 2021; Silva, 2023).

However, the preservation of documentary heritage faces considerable challenges. The digitization of collections, although a promising solution to ensure long-term conservation and facilitate remote access, requires substantial investments and adequate management to preserve both the integrity of data and physical documents (Santos, 2022). In addition, unequal access to information persists as a significant obstacle, with disparities between different regions and institutions, which limits the ability of many people to access information essential for their development and social participation (Oliveira, 2023).

The creation and implementation of effective public policies are essential to address these challenges. Such policies should prioritize digitization, ensure the physical conservation of collections, and ensure equity in access to information. Cooperation between governmental, educational and cultural institutions is crucial for the development and implementation of these policies, ensuring that documentary heritage is preserved and accessible in a fair and efficient manner (UNESCO, 2019).

Therefore, the preservation of documentary heritage is a central element in the construction of a society that is more informed and aware of its history. The protection of and access to historical and cultural documents not only favor the preservation of collective memory, but are also fundamental for the full exercise of citizenship, allowing individuals to understand their past and actively participate in the formation of the future. Strengthening documentation centers and overcoming challenges related to preservation and access are essential steps to ensure that these centers continue to play their vital role in the development of a more just and egalitarian society (Costa, 2022; Almeida, 2023).

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