The Role of Individual Memories in the Construction of Collective Memory: a Case Study in Portugal

Objectives

Analyze the role of individual memories as archival documents contributing to the collective memory that archives embody, with a case study on the Archive of Diaries Project, a non-profit association dedicated to the preservation of autobiographical memories fixed in diaries, letters or any other support that allows recognizing the life stories of men and women.

Method

Qualitative study divided into two moments:
- a review of the literature on the role of both individual memories and personal archives in the construction of the collective memory in archives;
- a case study of the Portuguese Project Arquivo dos Diários.

Conclusions

As stated by Pereira, “appraising archives and making decisions about the destination of documents considered important for collective memory is likely to be one of the biggest challenges in the future for individuals, families, memory institutions, and particularly for archivists and other curators” (2019, p. 160).

The balance between individual memories and collective memories must therefore be assumed as an imperative in the archives, not leaving behind voices that, otherwise, do not resist the passage of time.

Thus, projects such as the Arquivo dos Diários emerge as preservers of these experiences, giving visibility to this type of documents.