

INCLUSION PROPOSAL OF SANTA CLARA COMMUNITY IN THE INFORMATION SOCIETY

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ABSTRACT

It presents a research work proposal, in development in the Masters Program in Information Science at the *Universidade Federal da Paraíba (UFPB)*, which aims to intervene in the process of informational exclusion experienced by Santa Clara Community in the João Pessoa city, Paraíba state. This intervention will occur through field research for registration, organization and dissemination of “information sources”, constituted by people from the community. For that it will be produced a website where it will be deposited, to free access in the internet, the “knowledge treasure”¹ of people who form the social memory and knowledge of Santa Clara Community, that will be available for the next generations, which may facilitate the production of new knowledge by other social actors.

Keywords: Social Inclusion; Social Responsibility; Information Society; Digital Inclusion.

INTRODUCTION

The information may take over the status of merchandise and become an important input to the economical and social development in the contemporary societies, but if information is relevant to the production in the Information Society, it may also be an excluding factor, intensifying the inequality among classes and to deep even more the social distance. To Bordieu (1996), the social space is constituted in a way that the agents or groups are then distributed due to their position in the statistics distributions according to two principles of differentiation

which, in more developed societies, such as the United States, Japan or France, are, with no doubt, the most efficient – the economical and the cultural capital.

In order to diminish this social distance, the Information Science, as it is pointed by Wersig and Neveling (1975), recognize as its main foundation the social responsibility to transmit the knowledge to the ones who need it. It is from this concept that we propose the work of inclusion of Santa Clara Community a popular urban community located in the João Pessoa city, in the Information Society, the one which has as the most representative characteristic the production and dissemination of digital technologies of information and communication (TICs).

To create, in a participative way, a website to give visibility to the Community Santa Clara and to make it possible for the future generations access to the *knowledge treasure* of the people who form the social and knowledge memory from that place is our goal with the current proposal, in development in the Information Science Master Program from the *Universidade Federal da Paraíba*.

2 POST-MODERN ASPECTS OF INFORMATION SCIENCE

The discussions among some historians and thinkers, in the Century XXI around the duration and predominance of modern science or of the arising of post-modern science has resulted in many scientific productions, what provides for some researchers moments of reflection and stimulus to the research, even through comparisons among these two slopes. In our research we will follow the post-modern science steps, which values the knowledge derived from common sense, as our object of study derives from the knowledge of the information resources from a popular urban community.

Even communing with facts, theories and methods of the post-modern science we will talk, through view Boaventura Santos (1988), about the main difference among these two “paradigms”. The modern science was constructed against the common sense, when labeling it superficial, illusive and false. On it he knowledge advances through the specialization and it is more rigorous as more restricted it is the object about which it focuses. According to Santos (1998), on this resides, moreover, what we recognize today as the basic dilemma of modern

science: a rigor increased in the direct proportion of arbitrary with what fragments the real.

On the other side the post-modern science tries, according to Santos (1988), to rehabilitate the common sense, for recognizing in this form of knowledge some potentialities to enrich our relation with the world. It does not follow, in the author words, a unidimensional style easily identifiable: its style is a configuration of styles constructed according to the criteria and the personal imagination of the scientist.

The post-modern science, when sensocommunicates itself, does not despise the knowledge which produces technology, but understands that, as well as the knowledge should be translated into auto-knowledge, the technological development should be translated into wisdom of life. That is it which marks the milestones of prudence to our scientific adventure (SANTOS, 1988, p.70-71).

The post-modern science tries to establish a dialog with other ways of knowledge and permits itself to be penetrated by them. This characteristic which was recognized by Boaventura Santos (1988) is also accepted, according to Biehl (2005), by Gernog Wersig in relation to the Information Science, who understands the Information Science before everything as a post-modern science. In the reading made by Biehl (2005) about the Wersig view, in relation to the Information Science this author attributes great importance to the preservation of the scientific aspect, what means, the arguments have to be logically comprehensible, the results should be inter-subjective and should serve as base of empiric studies (researches).

To Wersig, the post-modern aspect is founded in the concept that the Information Science represents a subject (specialty), which cannot be classified among other subjects. On the contrary, the Information Science pervades other disciplines and contains parts of them and influences them through their objects of study and knowledge. It is like that the Information Science, essentially, is different from the ones named modern sciences, which originated, in most part, through the fragmentation of other disciplines (BIEHL, 2005, p.4).

In the perspective of the author, from the view of Wersig, the Information Science, as a post-modern subject, tries to meet the tendency of the *Spezialistentum*ⁱⁱ in order to each time more fill the social function of the science. We agree on this role of the Information Science, mainly, because we believe in the information as a social phenomenon which may help us in the contact with our

fellows and to bring the excluded ones inside the named Information Society when promoting the development of the individual and his group.

In a time so interconnected we see the distance minimized by the technology, but when analyzing a community such as Santa Clara we realize that the distances and the local differences are deep. More distant worlds seem to be connected, but groups which are, maybe, some meters from our houses may be out of all the informational process. In this context, we understand that the Science, currently named “Big Science”, has a role of fundamental importance to try to change this reality. We believe that it “[...] also has to trust in the public acceptance because it has to become a social institution, on its operation, and not only in the communication area”, as Joskett points (1980, p.19):

[...] the science, as “public knowledge”, should be the description of a reality which exists out of us, because if the idealist philosophers were right and there was not such reality, there could not be the possibility of trying to communicate the sense we have about it to the others. We can just communicate our own knowledge, it is right, but we hope that, by the exchange of knowledge with others, we may get continuously to more clear pictures of the truth about the world. Through the publishing we make it possible the process of results which may be conferred, as well as correction of mistakes. Our conception of reality, however, does not stay only in what we create.

The social function of the Information Science, recognized by Wersig and pointed by Biehl (2005), is directly connected to what Joskett (1980) treats when talking about Science, because when intending to interact directly with the society, when drinking from the knowledge coming from the common sense, she did not need to forget the scientific knowledge, the research, methods, theories, ultimately, its characteristic traces, on the contrary, as points Brookes (1980), any social activity becomes a science if it has theory and practice, it starts with rationalizations of common sense of phenomenon easily observable which attracts the interest. Gradually and with persistence, it forms theories structures, which by means of discussions get a degree of consensus among those who contribute to the discussion. The theoretical structure of a science is never complete or closed each aspect is always opened, and offers new problems (BROOKES, 1980, p.125). And for us, we could state that it also offers new solutions.

After bringing the Information Science to the context of the post-modern science inside our project of research, we feel the need to concern ourselves in demonstrating by means of some glances, how the Information Science emerged, evolved, what is its object of study and how it acts.

3 ARISING AND DEVELOPMENT OF INFORMATION SCIENCE

Before entering in the facts and dates of the Information Science arising, it is necessary to consider that before the invention of the printing technologies, the knowledge was, in a certain way, personal and organized in the oral traditional way. In this dimension, Wersig (1993) observes that, although the invention of systems of written knowledge could be stored at any moment, its dissemination depended on in some part of the skill of people to read and transfer the knowledge orally to another person. To Wersig (2003), the biggest invention of Gutenberg was not the printing, but a technology which permitted more people to write their individual knowledge and present them to others.

In this sense, Freire (2006) observes the creation of the printing technology as relevant event in the development of productive forces in the society, when facilitating the circulation of the same information with a range unprecedented. "It begins then a process of scientific communication, as the production of knowledge generates, on its turn, the need of new knowledge" (FREIRE, 2006, p.8). At this period began, according to the author, the bases of our current society, which started to be constructed when the scientific associations were created and the first scientific journals were published, giving beginning to the formalization of the process of scientific communication. As natural effect of this process came the growing of the scientific production and the multiplication of the scientific journals.

It is considered, with base in the reflections of Freire (2006) that the official registration of the name Information Science dates from the beginning of the 1960 Decade, from events promoted by *Georgia Institute of Technology*, in the United States.

It is Fosket who reminds us, however, that the activities connected to the production and management of scientific and technological

information already had a long tradition in the former Soviet Union and in the countries of Central Europe, where national centers of information, such as the VINITI, served as model (including to the USA) in the organization of information. He also reminds that in 1967, the director of VINITI, professor Mikhailov, had circulated a memo among researchers and workers of information with glances to the production of a document which would deal with the theoretical research about information and would be presented in the Conference of FID programmed to be accomplished in 1968 in Moscow, but that did not happen. Inaugurating the series of publications of the Committee of Studies FID/Research Information, the work sent to the conference was reunited and published by the VINITI, in partnership with FID, in 1969, in the document FID 435 (FREIRE, 2006, p.11).

Nevertheless, Pinheiro and Loureiro (1995) clarify that in the second half of the Decade of 40, *Cybernetics or control and communication in the animal and the machine*, by Wiener, and in the following year, *The mathematical theory of communication*, by Shannon and Weaver, already foreshadow the advent of the Information Science. However the authors clarify that, like some other interdisciplinary scientific areas, the Information Science has the embryonic roots in this historic period, but the first concepts and definitions were prepared in the decade of 60, where it was initiated the debate about the origins and the theoretical fundamentals in the new area, period in which Pinheiro and Loureiro (1995) identify turnabouts, in the effort to better demarcate it, as well as to establish interdisciplinary relations with other fields of knowledge and to glimpse the performance of the also new professionals. These authors still bring some data to strength the previous placements. They mention, in their article, that Heilprin believes in the creation of the term Information Science around 1960, starting from the study of production, processing and use of information as activity predominantly human.

In this manner, through the reflections of Burke (2007) we can give jump from the Information Science to the most current decades, where we find supporting facts about the growing of our area with hundreds of historic work published in the last decade (1994-2004). In the author's view, several events signaled the middle of the 90 decade as a time of turnabouts to the historic study of the diversified set of activities and institutions in the Unites States and Europe. The great events in the first five years were: the arising of special historic questions *Journal of Documentation*, *Information Processing & Management*, *Journal of American Society*

for *Information Science (JASIS)*, the *Documentaliste* and, next the publication of a volume of historic articles by the *American Society for Information Science, Historical Studies in Information Science* Rauzier (1993), Vickery (1994), Rayward (1996) and Hahn and Buckland (1998).

We consider the meaning of “Information Science” renowned by Borko (1968) as pertinent to be pointed out. To the author, the Information Science is seen as a discipline researcher of the properties and the information behavior, the governing forces of its flow, and the means to process it, of acceptance and usability, which relates with the creation, collection, organization, storing, recovery, interpretation, transformation and use of information.

It is an interdisciplinary science related in the fields of mathematic, logic, linguistic, psychology, computers technology, operation researches, the graphic arts, communications, librarianship science, management and similar fields. It has not only a component of pure science, which investigates and submits itself to its application, but also a component of applied science, which develop services and products (BORKO, 1968, p.3).

The Information Science is a field also dedicated to the scientific questions and to the professional practices turned to the problems of effective communication of knowledge and its registrations among the human beings, in the social, institutional, individual context of use and needs of information. In the treatment of these questions they are considered of private interest the advantages of the modern informational technologies (SARACEVIC, 1990 *apud* SARACEVIC, 1996, p.47). The Information Science is, according to the author, along with other disciplines, an active participant and deliberated in the evolution of the Information Society, because it had and has an important role to perform due to its strong social and human dimension, which surpasses the technology. It is in this sense that we propose ourselves to develop a research in Santa Clara Community, in a way to contribute for the knowledge of the population does not disappear together their cycle of life, without registration which turns it possible the permanence in the memory of the location, as information for relatives, friends and, even, for the whole society.

4 A RELEVANT QUESTION: SOCIAL INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION

In the Information Society, the man uses the technologies to information appropriate, and this turns to be the base of all changes, as on its way of life as in the society which it makes part. This society seems to bring in its essence, besides information, the ideologies of new times, with economical and social politics egalitarians, and the right of access to information guaranteed to all without distinction. Opposite to this thought also grows, in the same proportion, a social abyss, with higher discrepancies among the nations, and inside them, among the peoples of different social classes (IANNI, 1999 *apud* NASCIMENTO, 2009).

There are several concepts of information we contextualize theoretically our research based in the concepts of Barreto (1996) and Araújo (1999), once the residents of Santa Clara Community will be presented as “information agents”. The information constitutes itself for Barreto (1996) as meaningful structures with the competence of generating knowledge in the individual, in his group, or in the society.

The structures which Barreto (1994) refers to are stored in information stocks, needed of consented communication actions, as they only reunite, select, encode, reduce and classify information which can or not, be changed into knowledge. As the author explains, “when adequately assimilated, [the information] produces knowledge, modifies the mental stock of information of the individual and bring benefits to his development and to the development of the society where he lives (BARRETO, 1994, p.3).

The information, for Beer (2005), is not an object, content simply calculated by somebody, as many state. It may not be limited to a location. It establishes connections, and keeps itself among the means of communication of the disciplines. On the other side for Araújo (1994 *apud* FREIRE, 2001, p.106) the information is

[...] the most powerful power of changing of the man [O] the information power, allied to the modern means of mass communication, unlimited capacity of changing the men culturally, the society and the own humankind as a whole [...].

This “changing” to which Araújo refers to (1994), is confirmed by Castells (1999, p.51) when he says that the “[...] new social structure is associated to the arising of a new way of development, the informationalism [...]”. Still according to Castells (1999) the revolution of the information technology and the restructuration of the capitalism introduced a new model of society, the network society, which has as

important aspects to be considered “[...] promoting of a digital culture and the valuing of the local identity [...]” (GUERREIRO, 2006, p.175). In Rondelli’s view (2003) there is the possibility of formal and informal processes of access to the knowledge and of learning to be confused each time more as the digital medias become as natural as the electricity of our houses. And the digital inclusion will mean the expansion of a collective intelligence in which producers and consumers of knowledge interact each time more through them and, with this, the learning and the work transfer themselves mainly to the interior of this digital universe whose dynamism we started to glimpse. Today, independent of physical distance, of the language spoken, or the economy organization, many histories may be rewritten with the help of digital technologies available for use in the network.

5 SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY OF THE INFORMATION SCIENTIST

The work around the object of study in this project is guided by the social responsibility of the information professionals in the contemporary society, who act to contribute to expand the worldwide network of the information, to reduce the “info-exclusion” and increase the possibilities of free access to the stocks constituted by public information and dissemination of digital technologies (and intellectual) of information and communication (FREIRE, 2001). To Wersig and Neveling (1975) the area of activity of the emerging Information Science defines itself starting from the responsibility to facilitate the communication of messages among a human sender and receptor, what means to say that its object of study should belong to the universe of the social communication phenomenon, mainly to the communication of information with the purpose to promote changes in the “knowledge structures” of a message receptor. The receptor in this case is the object of study, Santa Clara Community, future beneficiary of the Information Science in a work along with the information communication.

As Freire explains (2001), the role of the Information Science professional in relation to the communities which experiment several kinds of exclusion, and pointed out, those who need several kinds of information, is to disseminate the information when delineating a way to the inclusion in the Information Society. If, as Castells

says (1999), the society is nowadays more articulated in network, the information became the own warp of the social, economical and political fabric, and in this context, the professional of the Information Science has in front of him the social responsibility, because the aurora of the new globalized times created ethnical inevitable situations. But if the information is relevant to the production of the contemporary society, it may also become another excluding factor, and creates to the information scientists the need to clarify to themselves and to the others, mainly the excluded ones, the consequences of such exclusion.

For this reason the access to the information, as Quéau explains (2001, p.179) becomes a key-factor in the struggle against the poverty, the ignorance and the social exclusion,

[...] we cannot leave only in the hands of the market force the concern to regulate the access to the contents of the “network information”, because they are these contents which will become the fundamental challenge of the human development in the scope of the Information Society. The cyberspace should permit everybody the access to the information and necessary knowledge to the education and to the development of all men.

If these technologies do not represent a magic solution to the complex problem of inequality, with no doubt “[...] they constitute [currently] one of the fundamental conditions of the integration in the social life” (SORJ, 2003, p.15). And, as Freire points out (2004), in this sense, the actions of social inclusion should be considered relevant in the set of public politics of social inclusion, because the communication of information represents not only the circulation of messages which contain knowledge with determined value to the production of goods and services, but also the objectification of the rationalization ideas and dominant efficiency in the modern society, this because if the information acquired extreme relevance to the social production, its organization and socialization also acquired greater importance and social value.

The central idea of what happens now with the Information Society is put by Freire (2004) in a way to call attention to all the professionals of the area, when saying this is the historic moment to scientists and information professionals work in the sense of thinking and develop ways and means to digital inclusion of social and economically need populations, at the same pace with actions for the citizenship and

social inclusion. In this context, our research may motivate new researches in this thematic in the everyday life of other communities. Our purpose is to try a format of registration, in a way to change this knowledge into information available in the virtual space, where the future generations may have access to the knowledge that these people/sources produced and to facilitate the production of new knowledge by other social actors.

6 RESEARCH FIELD

The popular Santa Clara Community is the geographic space, economical, social, political and cultural chosen as research field – our empiric reference board. On it they inhabit the people who keep the treasure of knowledge of the community, their most valuable source of information to be registered in the perspective of information.

Santa Clara is located nearby the *Universidade Federal da Paraíba* and suffers of several ways of exclusion. The Community is placed in the South of the João Pessoa city, to the side of the Road BR-230, between the residential buildings Castelo Branco I and II and the Jaguaribe River. The Santa Clara Community was born before the construction of the building Castelo Branco I, in 1967. For being a slope area, with barriers and stretches of streams, it was considered an inadequate place for living then it was placed by residents from neighbor farms with plantations of subsistence and also domestic raisings. This area was known as “Paul Molhado” and “Beira Molhada”. Formed in an area of big depression and of difficult access, the community does not offer a good physical structure to the ones who live there (NASCIMENTO, 2009, p.69)ⁱⁱⁱ. In order to have access to the Community there are two options formed by slopes without steps or any kind of support, constituting a danger for the residents, mainly for the elderly and children. According to the directory of the Residents Association, currently there is in Santa Clara Community about four hundred housings and one thousand eight hundred inhabitants.

In the physic space of the Community there is a chapel, a square, a grocery store, a building which holds the Residents Association and actions of the Program to eradicate the child labor (PETI). They lack schools, medical place, library, circulation

of public transportation to the commute of the residents to their work. In order to meet the need of these services, the residents look for the neighborhoods Castelo Branco, I, II, and III and also use the libraries and sports area of the *Universidade Federal da Paraíba*.

In the big urban centers we saw the popular urban community emerged also named slum, formed in great part by migrations from the rural area, from people uprooted from the countryside who take ownership of spaces to inhabit. According to Pereira (1978, p.18) “[...] the invasions of land to inhabit reveal the presence of attitudes and new aspirations among the underprivileged sectors of the population”. When reflecting about the reality of Santa Clara Community, which had disorderly growing with a population formed by people coming from cities of Paraíba countryside and from neighbor states, it is clear for us that what he author names aspirations is the need that the person has to be again included in the productive process.

7 SOCIAL NETWORK IDENTIFICATION

During the field research in the Community, besides the search for people “information resources”, it will be identified the social network of Santa Clara, this will help in the discovery of how the component actors of this network receive and disseminate the information and in what way there is interaction in the social, because the “[...] social network refer themselves to a group of people (or organizations or other social entities) connected through social relationships, motivated by friendship and by work relations or information sharing and, through these connections, they go on constructing and reconstructing the social structure” (MARTELETO, 2006, p.75).

The notion of social networks is born, according to Acioli (2007), in the Social Anthropology. The first approximation refers to Claude Lévi-Strauss on his ethnographic analysis of the elementary structure of kinship (40 Decade). In 1940, Radcliffe-Brown uses the term “networks”. Barnes (1972) worried about the heterogeneity of the uses of the networks notion, when alerting that the idea of “networks” could be one more fashion word, with no clear definition, neither specific

use. Barnes (1972) and Mitchell (1969) refer to the need to distinguish the metaphoric use of the analytic in what it is referred to the networks. The permeable idea of the network metaphor is, according to Barnes (1972) the one of individuals in society, connected by social ties, the ones which may be reinforced or enter in conflict among themselves. The expression total social network used by Radcliffe-Brown in the Decade of 50, intends to characterize the social structure while a network of relations institutionally controlled or defined. To Barnes (1972), it would have been Elizabeth Bott (1971) one of the first anthropologists to use the idea of network as a tool of analysis of the relationships among people, their personal links and among the organizations of the context in which they are inserted in (ACIOLI, 2007, p.3).

The human networks have an order and different laws of those ones planned and wished by the individuals who compose them. For the fact that the human beings are not so attached to biological determinations, like other animals, is that the entanglement of their activities gives rise to these laws and structures of a special type. For this reason, the networks have automated mechanisms of change and historic transformations which do not depend on the will of their components taken individually, but these ones are not so chaotic, but social, as Marteleto and Silva (2004) clarify.

In the environment of the networks, the information and knowledge sharing among people is constant, because the people frequently search to share what they know:

[...] the willing about sharing and the efficient sharing of information among the actors of a network, ensure gains, because each participant improves, taking advantage of the information which they have access to and that may reduce the uncertainty and promote the mutual growing (MARTELETO, 2006, p.76).

Mainly when the information turn to be collective when emerging from professional and social practices of authors who enter in interaction in the network – an interaction which has

[...] the capacity to create a proper culture which develops itself according to the conduct of the leaders who, in the case of the consortium studied, promote the information sharing, and consequently, being possible the multiplication of information and this focus in the practice of the actors, changing them. The actors who

have higher number of information channels and diversified channels (from distinct levels of performance and places) receive information from the whole network. The more information they receive, the more their power of influence in the network, however, as they hold many communication channels they also increase the possibilities of being influenced (MARTELETO, 2006, p.89).

The author still points out that the centrality of the actors gives power to them; the higher the index of centrality the higher the influence and importance of an actor in the network. An influent actor may interfere in the information sharing, directs its flow, control the broadcast information, disseminating them and, mainly encourage the actions which intensify the sharing, the discussion, the reflection and the construction of knowledge, what in Beer's opinion (2005) cannot be understood anymore as something fixed and finished, because the knowledge is dynamic, flexible, alive and deliverer, and able to open new avenues, perspectives and futures in people's life.

In this sense, the speech of Foucault (1986) helps us to reflect, as information professionals, about the critical role inside the scientific practice which we would like to perform in the research: not everything is true, but everywhere, and every moment, exists a true to be said and to be seen, maybe a sleeping true, but that is waiting for our eyes to appear, and waiting for our work to be unveiled. To us, information scientists and professionals, there is the task to find the best perspectives, the approach and the most productive technologies, because anyway an approximation of the true is always present, here and everywhere. And it is inspired in the words of Foucault that we propose to reveal the *treasure of knowledge* from Santa Clara community, in an action in hands with the post-modern science and the common sense.

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- ⁱ The model of work has already been experimented in the Maré district, placed near the main highways from the city of Rio de Janeiro. See in Chalaça, Freire, Miranda (2006).
- ⁱⁱ This characteristic of the Spezialistentum is also mentioned by Santos (1988) when explaining that in the modern science the knowledge advances through the specialization. "It is today recognized that the excessive parcelization and disciplining of the scientific knowledge makes of the scientist a specialized ignorant and that this entails negative effects. These effects are, mainly visible in the domain of the applicable sciences. An example of this it that the hipper-specialization of the medical knowledge changed the sick into a quadricula without sense when in fact we are never sick if not in general" (SANTOS, 1988, p.64).
- ⁱⁱⁱ According to the community residents, in 2002, it was constructed a gallery for the rain water disposal and the paving of two main streets which pass through the community.

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