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Information Mediation for Social Inclusion in a Poor Urban Community in Brazil

Abstract: This article presents a reflection on research in progress in the doctoral program of the Post-Graduate Program in Information Sciences of the Federal University of Bahia in Brazil, which is being developed in the Santa Clara Community (SCC), in the city of João Pessoa – Paraíba. This study is a continuation of previous Master's thesis research, and seeks to create and implement a model of information mediation for the digital inclusion of local residents in society. This article approaches the issue in the perspective of information mediation, seeking to develop digital competence among the residents of SCC, using the support of digital information and communication technologies. It describes the informational skills that will be implemented, in partnership with the Intellectual Technologies Laboratory (ITL) of the Department of Information Sciences of the Federal University of Paraíba. The article argues that, in this context, the information professional has a social function as information mediator, facilitating its access and use, supporting the subjects of research in the sense of appropriation of intellectual technologies of information, putting into practice the concepts around social responsibility of Information Sciences. The methodology adopted is action-research, chosen to promote the network of cooperation needed to support the formulation of a model of mediation, appropriation and use of intellectual technology, using the aid of participant observation to reflect the reality of this field of research.

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Introduction

The goal of this research, which is based on concepts of information mediation, is to develop competency in intellectual and digital information technologies to promote social inclusion and citizenship among the residents of the Santa Clara Community (SCC), located in the city of João Pessoa, Paraíba, Brazil. The research is grounded in the theoretical and methodological assumptions of Information Science, a field that according to Saracevic (1996) is focused on problems of the effective communication of knowledge and records of its use between human beings, within the social, institutional, and individual contexts of the use and necessities of information. This field strives for social responsibility by making information available to those that need it, by means of mediation conducted by professionals working in the area.

The question guiding this research is concentrated on identifying and testing a possible model of information mediation capable of promoting the inclusion of the SCC within the information society. Therefore we are asking: how to include a popular urban community in the information society through information mediation? The answer to this line of questioning signals the necessity to create, implement and test a model of information mediation, that leads us to make the following hypothesis, to be corroborated or refuted by this research project: the establishment and implementation of an information mediation model in the Santa Clara Community can offer theoretical and methodological benefits to research and social inclusion projects in the information society.

The decision to work on this issue arose from reflecting on the process of social exclusion experienced by the residents of the SCC, understanding that the effects of social exclusion on socioeconomically disadvantaged populations come both from lack of access to the labor market, be it formal or informal, as well as the lack of engagement and social interaction with people that share the same space, who are also marginalized, especially those not dependent on public social welfare, and that are not tied to the yoke of immediatist governmental policies. For this reason, it is apparent that exclusion has a cumulative and multifaceted nature, in which a person who is

considered socially excluded has no means to enjoy an acceptable level of inclusion in society. According to Dalla Zen (2010), social exclusion has institutionalized itself within society in a frightening manner, transforming into an intense, global and progressive process of pauperizing large portions of the population, fragmenting traditional standards of social conduct and increasing violations of the most fundamental human rights. Violence, instability, and the criminalization of politics increase daily with the spreading of social problems.

In this context, we note that access to information becomes a key factor in the fight against poverty, ignorance, and social exclusion, for one cannot simply leave the task of regulating access to the content of the “information highways” to market forces. It is this content that will become the fundamental challenge of human development in the realm of the information society (Quéau 2001). We understand that information mediation represents an opportunity to work together with and to empower residents of the world’s poor urban communities, such that they are both recognized and recognize themselves, as a way of motivating each resident to fight for improvements for themselves and for the collective, thus building a better world for present and future generations. With this in mind, as Almeida Júnior (2008, 46) clarifies, information mediation is “[...] every action of interference – done by an information professional direct or indirect; conscious or unconscious; singular or plural; individual or collective; that leads to a use of information that satisfies, partially or fully, an informational need.”

It is precisely this action of intervention that we intend to promote in the SCC, through the techniques, tools, aids, resources, personnel and processes of information mediation and that, ceasing to be simply artifices for transferring informational content, become true conveyances for producing meaning (Perrotti and Pieruccini 2007). Every action of mediation, of intervention in the information field of the Santa Clara Community, within the scope of this research, will have as partner the Intellectual Technologies Laboratory – ITL of the Department of Information Sciences of the Federal University of Paraíba (UFPB), driven by a project of action-research which has as its objective promoting actions of information mediation on the web. Alongside the actions for the development of informational skills among the residents of SCC, we formulate a reflection about the experience of using this kind of model for mediation, appropriation and use of intellectual technology in urban communities. We aim to transform realities and transcend frontiers, facilitating the communication of information and knowledge for those that need it most.

Research Context

This research is the continuation of a study conducted in a Post-Graduate Master’s Program in Information Sciences (PPGCI) at the UFPB, which sought to intervene in the process of digital exclusion experienced by the Santa Clara Community through field research to document, organize and disseminate the “information sources” (research subjects) made up by people of the Community. We aim now to continue this work in the doctoral program, beginning with the awareness of a researcher who continues to work with popular urban communities, to be able to offer those residents who find themselves at the margins of the information society the possibility of stepping outside of the exclusion process independently, depending on their own knowledge and desire to grow.

During the Master’s research, an information action was implemented in the SCC to create a virtual interface, the “Santa Clara Community Blog” <comunidadesantaclara.wordpress.com> on the Wordpress platform, seeking to disseminate the *wealth of knowledge*, that is, the social memory and wisdom of Santa Clara residents, to be made available for future generations. The use of the research results (the blog) by the Community generated the extension project “Blog Management Course,” in the scope of the PPGCI/UFPB, whose purpose was to develop information competency among Community resident volunteers who could continue the blog.

The research results in Santa Clara were augmented, in a reciprocal action by the Community, and according to the assumptions of the action-research methodology, from the determination to continue the publication of the blog (the virtual interface of information communication). In addition to the extension project to train volunteers from the SCC as pollinators of the community’s *wealth of knowledge*, an educational activity was developed through a tutorial for creating blogs. The inclusion of the SCC’s *wealth of knowledge* in cyberspace, as well as the community’s empowerment through intellectual competency in digital technology of information communication, can lead to the valuation of cultural identity and the practice of social responsibility among residents of the SCC.

Through these actions, we believe to have transmitted intellectual technology to some members of the Community, providing them with information competency to continue recording the Community’s social memory. The information transmitted by Santa Clara’s *wealth of knowledge* can become a source of production of economic goods, with possibilities of producing wealth for the Community, given that in the information society, information and knowledge are seen as sources of power. With the

wealth of knowledge registered and disseminated on the Web, the Community has the possibility to obtain the recognition of civil society, such as by institutions that may wish to invest in the SCC by creating projects that benefit the population. This was the explicit desire expressed by the Residents Association of the SCC.

Thus, this doctorate research proposal signifies a deepening of the study cited above, seeking now to contribute to the construction of an information mediation model that could also benefit other popular urban communities.

Social Inclusion and Access to Technology

Social inclusion is presented as a concept and as a practice in the field of Information Science, which is characterized by adopting an epistemological view of thinking of the *Other* beyond the primary needs of the individual. According to Freire (2010), this vision could mean a new view of the practice, the concepts and the technologies available in the field of IS. A vision that truly contemplates the *user*, and that can translate into the development of a *praxis* that brings us closer to people and groups in which information that we produce can manifest as the possibility of knowledge.

As Freire (2004) asserts, in such a way as to wake up other professionals in the area, that the central idea in the field of Information Science at this moment, in the beginning of the second decade of the twenty-first century, when he says that this is a historic moment for scientists and information professionals to work towards thinking about and developing modes and means for the digital inclusion of socially and economically marginalized populations, *pari passu* with actions to develop citizenship and social inclusion.

The social inclusion that we discuss in this research proposal includes digital/virtual inclusion, for the actions of inclusion through access to digital technologies should be, as Freire emphasizes (2004), considered relevant within the set of public policies for social inclusion, once the communication of information does not only represent the circulation of messages that contain knowledge with a determined value for the production of goods and services, but, also, the objectification of ideas of rationalization and efficiency that are dominant in modern society. Albagli (2006, 17) corroborates the thinking of Freire (2004), upon emphasizing that, “the processes and strategies of development and social inclusion find themselves today

indiscernible from the dynamics and politics of information, knowledge, learning and innovation.” Therefore,

The promotion of innovation is frequently seen as something disconnected from the promotion of local development and social inclusion. However, such objectives are not exclusive, and addressing them jointly for the development of a given territory tends to generate more consistent and long-term results. Without establishing environments propitious to the generation, the incorporation and the dissemination of knowledge, there is no way to guarantee the survival, maintenance or consistent growth of productive agents, much less the socioeconomic development of the environments of which they are a part. The challenge is to associate such strategies with the inclusion of marginalized social segments and with respect to cultural diversity. (Albagli 2006, 19)

Using technology as a means of communication to project cultural identity (Freire 2006b), and to make oneself heard at moments of political power, is a form of social/digital inclusion. In Crippa and Almeida’s vision (2011, 191), the digital revolution brought and still brings strong sociocultural changes. The introduction of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) strongly modifies all spheres of society, for they allow us to “see what we did not see before, at the same time as they make the process more complex, growing layers of mediation and involving individuals, groups and institutions.” In this sense, Freire (2010, 83) emphasizes that “the democratization of access to digital information and communication technologies should be seen as a foundational element in policies of social inclusion.”

We agree with Albuquerque and Cabral (2006, 10), that the challenge is great for those who “believe in and work for social inclusion, attained by different paths, including that which we call digital inclusion, not being sufficient simply the installation of computer equipment in communities,” for the real empowerment of ICT can become a true “instrument for needed transformations in social reality in the life of communities.” Especially if we think of information as a tangible good, like food, as Kobashi and Tálamo (2003, 8-9) explain, “In the same way as a shortage of food provokes hunger, shortage of information provokes lack of knowledge.” According to these authors, information technology in contemporary society plays a fundamental role:

[...] not just for increasingly constituting itself as a basic right, but also because it finds itself integrated in the base of action in the private or public sphere. It seems that, specifically, access to information imposes itself as both a global and globalizing right in relation to other rights.

Warschauer in his 2006 book, *Technology and Social Inclusion: Digital Exclusion in Debate*, traces the panorama

of social inclusion and exclusion in diverse countries based on ethnographic and case study research, including in Brazil, wherein he discusses literacy as skill development for the “fruitful” use of ICT, thus enabling us to participate fully in society and to command our own destinies, taking into consideration diverse factors related to economic resources, employment, health, education, housing, leisure, culture and civic engagement. For the authors, the concept associated with literacy provides the establishment of a model, “for literacy, like access to ICT, includes a combination of equipment, content, abilities, understanding and social support, with the goal of the user being able to involve themselves in significant social practices” (Warschauer 2006, 64).

In the perspective of the authors, access to ICT for the promotion of social inclusion cannot be based on the supply of equipment or connectivity alone. Warschauer (2006, 75) indicates that it should “involve a series of resources, all developed and fomented with the intention of strengthening the social, economic and political power of its users and of targeted communities.” For him, attempts to categorize these resources would be arbitrary. However, the author made an analysis based on four generic categories that serves the purpose of both analysis as well as policy formation. “These categories arise from my ethnographic research in Hawai’i and Egypt, as well as my case study research in California, Brazil and India” (Warschauer 2006, 75). According to him, these categories were identified “in similar terms by other theorists and researchers, who analyzed issues of technology and social inclusion in diverse contexts.” He explains the model, that is, the four sets of resources, highlighting its interactive relationship with the use of ICT (Warschauer 2006, 76):

- a. Physical resources including access to computers and telecommunications connections;
- b. Digital resources refers to digital material, made available online;
- c. Human resources refers to issues such as literacy and education (including specific types of literacy, necessary for the use of informatics and online communication);
- d. Social resources are related to communitarian, institutional, and societal structures that support access to ICT.

We agree with the author when he argues that the presence of these resources helps to assure that ICT can be used well and made best use of, that is, “through the good use of ICT, we can help to expand and foster these resources,” which could foment a virtuous cycle promoting development and social inclusion (Warschauer 2006,

77). And, if “insufficiently managed, these elements could be part of a vicious cycle of underdevelopment and exclusion” (Warschauer 2006, 77). As such, we understand that the adequate use of this set of resources, in our field of research, could promote the social inclusion of residents of the Santa Clara Community, developing informational competencies in each member and in the group of participants.

Information Mediation for Social Inclusion

Information mediation permeates the entire scientific weaving of this research, being treated, in principle, as an action connected to life, to movement and to the process of constructing meaning (Gomes 2010). In the words of this author, we act in relation to reality, taking into account the significance that we attribute to this constructed reality in our social interactions and symbolic mediations. It is by means of mediation that expectations are made manifest, sustaining our social interactions.

Information mediation is essential, as Kuhlthau explains (1993, 128), “[...] to permit people to make connections, move from the concrete to the abstract, recognize the necessity of learning more, study more deeply and obtain greater understanding.” As Goldmann suggests, such an understanding will provide residents of SCC with the needed consciousness to walk on their own to transcend the process of social exclusion in which they find themselves. For this, information mediation, following the reflections of Kuhlthau (1993, 128), it is fundamental to discuss the “[...] human intervention to observe the information search and the learning stemming from greater access to and use of information.”

According to Belmonte (2007, 23), the participation of a mediator becomes necessary in this context, as he or she is an “[...] intermediary, an amplifier, an adaptor, an organizer and a designer of educational processes,” which implies “[...] knowing how much to contribute to the authentic construction of the most complex work we can undertake, the education of a person.” During this study, the mediators will be information professionals that will be within the field of research, for as Gomes and Santos (2009, 3) emphasize, the “[...] participation of the information professional is fundamental to the process of mediation so that the user acquires the information that he or she needs, in both the activities of representation and organization and in direct interaction, for the facilitation of access and use of information.”

According to Almeida Júnior (2008, 48), information professionals, in accordance with the consciousness of their intervention, are understood as another professional strata, “[...] those that make history, are leaders in society and participate effectively in the construction of the destiny of humanity.” It goes further still for this author, as “[...] the consciousness of the professional who intervenes, and his or her relationship with the user, enables the tangible democratization of information,” such that informational spaces permit and support the struggle, “transforming such spaces into arenas for the concretization of democracy and of informational and social inclusion.”

In Varela’s vision (2008, 36), mediation occurs in the process of interaction of the professional with the user, in the moment of communication and transfer of information. The elements that compose the process of mediation are what will allow the consonance of objectives between what the user is looking for and what the professional has to offer, which happens long before the search, “[...] through a dialogic process in which the professional anticipates the desire of the user and organizes the stock of information, dialoguing with this potential user.” In this way, “[...] the elements that make up the mediation are those that will permit harmonious objectives between what the user is searching and what the professional has to offer.” In this context, the user plays the central role in the process of acquiring information, abandoning the category of mere receptor, as Almeida Júnior (2009, 97) explains upon defending that the user is who determines the existence or nonexistence of information. For the author, “[...] information exists only in the interval between contact of each person with the support and acquisition of information,” understood as the premise “[...] from modification, change, reorganization, restructuring and the transformation of knowledge.” In this way, information “[...] does not exist beforehand, but exists only in relation to the person with the content present in informational media” which are tangible without ceasing to dispense with the references, the collection of experiences, and the knowledge of each person. “The user is who determines the existence of information, he or she who makes use of the content of informational media” (Almeida Júnior 2009, 97).

For Gomes (2010, 87), upon referring to mediation it becomes necessary to situate it as an action connected to life, to movement and to the process of constructing meaning. In the perspective of Vigotsky (1984), this happens because human beings develop via social interaction upon acquiring the human condition in relation to the world, mediated by cultural instruments – signs, words and symbols. Knowledge is a cultural production, directly related to language, with social interaction and media-

tion as the action that interposes between the subject and the object of learning, being the word of fundamental relevance. Furthermore, according to Gomes (2010, 87), “[...] human beings act in relation to reality, taking as a reference the significance that they attribute to reality, which is constructed in social interactions and symbolic mediations.” An example of this is linguistic mediation, which occupies a central place in the constitution of the human experience, because language is associated with living together or coexisting, no longer seen as an instrument to be constituted as a structural element of human relationships. It is within this experience that human beings have the opportunity to construct meaning. “In their contact with the world, they deal as much with objects with the immediate dimension of perception, as well as with other objects of mediate dimensions, from which they construct and reconstruct their understanding” (Gomes 2010, 87).

In this way, we agree with the author upon clarifying that mediation relates to communication characterized by a “[...] process of intersubjectivity, resulting from the negotiation and contestation of meanings, which allows the subjects to transcend and interpenetrate these meanings and generate new significations. Mediation is opposed to immediacy because it demands a dialectic game, without which it would not exist” (Gomes 2010, 89).

For this dialectic game to exist in the field of research we perceive the necessity of building and applying a model of information mediation whose goal is the social inclusion of the Santa Clara Community within contemporary society through the development of informational competencies among the residents of the neighborhood. In this process, it is necessary to plan and implement the model in SCC, observe the real impact from the use of this model, evaluate the results of these action based on the implementation of the model, in order to then evaluate its theoretical and methodological contribution to the field of Information Sciences in Brazil.

Information Competence: Concepts and Perspectives in Research

This research is anchored in social responsibility by providing residents of a poor urban community with informational skills to generate knowledge that aims to escape the status quo of social exclusion. To do this, an informational structure will be organized that seeks to involve individuals with the possibilities of promoting civic engagement. More than simply accessing and using information available on cyberspace, the objective is to promote a change in

the cognitive state of these people, motivating them to become independent in the future acquisition of knowledge that they need. In this task, the information professional has the role of mediator in seeking to put into practice the concept of information competence of Didziak (2003, 30), which defines it as “research, study and application of techniques and procedures connected to the processing and distribution of information based in the development of *skills* in the use of technological media and tools. ‘Information competence’ is a translation of the expression ‘information literacy’ used by some theorists of Information Science, but there are also other denominations for this term.

Dudziak (2003, 28) analyzed the evolution of the concept, and according to the author, “could define it as the continuous process of internalization of foundational concepts, attitudes and skills needed for comprehension and permanent interaction with the informational universe and its dynamics, in such a way as to afford lifelong learning.” The American Library Association (ALA 1989, 1) defines information competence as follows:

In order to be information competent a person should be capable of recognizing when he or she needs information and possesses the skill to locate, evaluate and use this information effectively. To produce this type of citizenship, schools and universities must grasp the concept of information competence and integrate it into their educational programs and play a leadership role in preparing individuals and institutions to take advantage of opportunities inherent to the information society. Ultimately, people with informational competence are those that learned how to learn. These people know how to learn because they know that information is organized, how to find information and how to use information, such that other people can learn with them.

According to Feres and Belluzzo (2009, 78-79), this competence is made up of two distinct dimensions: “a broad domain of diverse knowledge and skills that allows for practical interventions in reality; and a critical vision of the reach of actions and the commitment with more tangible needs that emerge and characterize the present social context.” The authors present different conceptions of information competence, summarized as:

Digital – conception with emphasis on information and communication technology; **Strictly Speaking Information** – conception with emphasis on Cognitive Processes and the Social – conception with emphasis on social inclusion, consisting of an integrated vision of life-long learning and the exercise of citizenship [emphasis added by authors].

The authors explain that this emphasis is directed towards the exercise of citizenship, for the social being, “where the

emitter/receptor of the flow of information is considered as a being inserted into a social and ecological dimension of the learner, in the search for a personal and autonomous identity based on his or her action as a societal transformer” (Feres and Belluzzo 2009, 82). In turn, Dudziak (2005, 01) observes that competence is more than the sum of its attributes, “it is a constantly renewing process implying adequate mobilization of interconnected content, including knowledge, skills and attitudes.” Dudziak (2003, 30) argues that many other authors associate information competence to processes of information searches for the construction of knowledge involving the use, interpretation and quest for meaning, “The focus is on the individual, in his or her processes of comprehension of information and their use of it in particular situations.”

Methodological Journey

To achieve the objectives of this research we will have the contribution of action-research, thereby enabling the researcher to approach the empirical field, and allowing research and action to be reunited again in the same process. In Franco’s (2005, 496) view, he reaffirms that research with action is gradually also becoming action with research. “In developing action-research, there is an emphasis on flexibility, in progressive adjustments to events, strengthening the argument for research with action.”

According to Melo Neto (2005), action-research stimulates the participation of people involved in research, opens the universe of responses and goes into the conditions of work and life in the community. For Thiollent (1997, 15), action-research “consists essentially in coupling research and action in a single process, in which the actors involved participate, together with the researchers, to arrive interactively in elucidating the reality in which they are inserted.” In this perspective, an “actor” is understood as any group of people making use of their capacity for conscious collective action in a delimited social context. Upon designating informant groups within an organization as formally constituted groups, “participation” is seen as an emerging property of the process, and not as *a priori* (Friere 2006a, 65).

One representational schema was developed by Tripp (2005, 446) to show the basic cycle of investigation-action divided into four phases. The author explains that action-research is one of innumerable types of investigation-action, “[...] a generic term for any process that follows a cycle in which the practice is improved by the systematic oscillation between acting in the field of practice and re-

searching about it.” The process begins with research, followed by action, and returning to research of applied action for another possible action. In this process, “it’s necessary to make a plan, implement the plan, describe and evaluate the results of the action to improve the practice...learning more, throughout the process, as much about the practice as the research itself.”

According to Franco (2005, 493), during the action-research it is critical that there be time and space for each subject to adapt to the changes in how they operate within their understandings of the world, which essentially implies changes in their perspective as subject.

Time is needed to construct the intimacy of a more approachable cognitive universe; for barriers and resistance to be transformed; for apprehension of new facts and values that emerge from constant situations of exercising the novel; for reconsiderations both of their professional roles and of the schisms that emerge, allowing for the unexpected and for new beginnings.

In this research, the investigation will take place with the assistance of participant observers recording the situation in the field through the daily use of field journals. Upon collecting the data, we will record, discuss and contextualize them collectively, embarking on a process, as Franco (2005) suggests, of constructing knowledge intended for sharing. This process is a unique and dialectic one that transforms both participants and the existing conditions, “a process that should produce transformations of meaning, reframing what we do and think” (Franco 2005, 499).

Categories of analysis will be created to address the reality of the Santa Clara Community in order to develop the model of information mediation to be implemented, tested and analyzed, with constant verification of the impact of this model in the process of including SCC in the information society.

Model of Information Mediation for the Community

The motivation for creating a model of information mediation can be justified based on Sayão (2001, 86). As a model it is a representation of a piece of reality, with a utilitarian function. By means of its mode of expression, its structure and its equalities or inequalities in relation to its original, it seeks to communicate something about the real, that is, it is a representation of a human being as a user and/or part of a system of information and his or her relationships of acquisition, organization, appropriation and manipulation of that information.

One single observable reality can have diverse models, as Garcia (2007, 75), explains, as different visions exist, constructed around “different theoretical and paradigmatic currents – implying ideological and cultural aspects, among others – that end up structuring models from selected elements of their respective discursive universes that comprise, in turn, the vision being represented.” For that reason, this author explains that each model is destined to explain certain characteristics of a phenomenon and could plausibly come to complementary or even contradictory conclusions compared to other models.

We understand that the research field requires the occurrence of certain necessities providing for the construction of a preliminary model, to be tested together with the research subjects, returning to be restructured consistent with the needs pointed out by the SCC, given that, according to Garcia (2007, 86), “[...] the characteristics of formal and informal information sources and the functions of the channels of all levels can influence (stimulate or prevent) the necessity of information and determine informational behavior.” Mediation enters in this context seeking to build skills among the mediated and the residents of the community, to obtain the community members’ full autonomy, for as Belmonte (2007, 65) confirms, the “[...] mediation ceases to be a positive anthropological principle and it is the belief in the potential and perfectibility of human beings. Genetics does not have the last word. The force of mediation verifies the preoccupation with all determinisms in the field of developing the human being.” In this way, the author alerts the readers as to the necessity of understanding mediation as a humanizing, positive, constructive and empowering position, for the lack of mediation or cultural transmission comes from the discontinuity produced in the framework of the cultural group that abandons its own identity.

This cultural privation, to which Belmonte (2007, 66) calls attention, refers to the failure of adults to actualize the transmission of culture and values in the development of each person. On the other hand, with marked sociocultural characteristics, poverty comes to be the impassable wall, which excludes and creates total marginality. The lack of mediation at the familial level provokes cognitive differences that affect the development of cognitive rather than intellectual functions. For that reason, mediation is an essential quality for interaction, a source of cultural transmission that is both meaningful and affective, providing orientation for casual thinking, and establishing relationships, advancing the effects of an action. The mediator discovers in the other person the meaning of their activities, beyond the immediate necessities, overcoming episodic experiences, seeking to surmount the “impassable wall” together with the mediated.

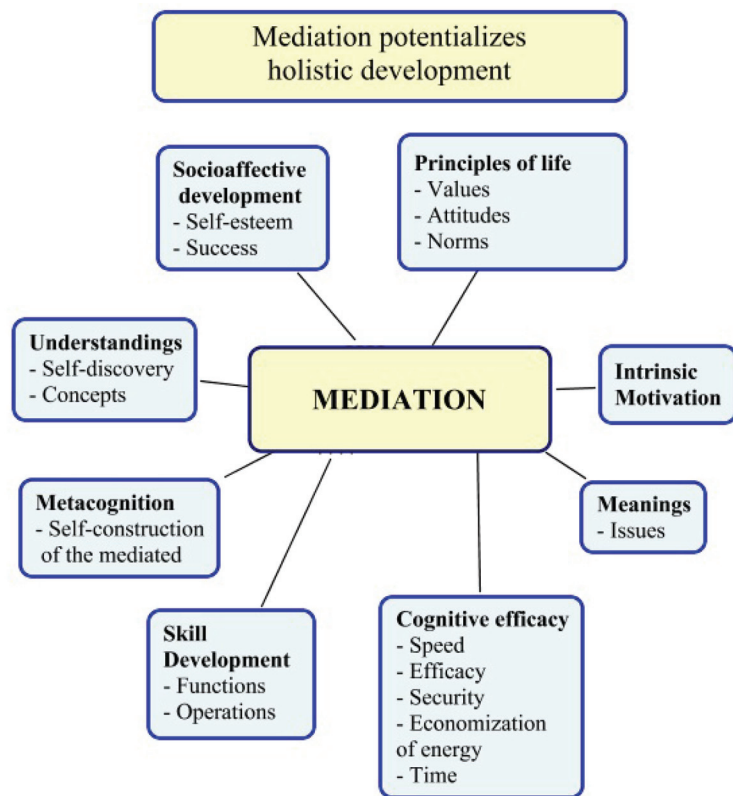


Figure 1: Map of potentializing mediation for holistic development. **Source:** Adapted from Belmonte 2007.

To synthesize his reflections, Belmonte (2007, 71) creates a map of potentializing mediation of holistic development (see Figure 1), demonstrating the extent to which mediation is a humanizing factor of transmitting culture, pointing to basic values of mediation:

- a. Monitoring and proximity;
- a. Establishing profoundly human relationships; awakening self-esteem;
- a. Helping in clarifying and discerning one's experiences
- a. Teaching to perceive and to contemplate;
- a. Gifting the mediated subject with learning strategies to develop greater cognitive skills.

Observation of this map leads one to infer that potentializing mediation for holistic development leads to change as a kind of flexibility, that expresses a permeability between different systems of a person: cognitive, affective, volitional, etc. While every change is an intentional qualitative shift, structural transformation is something that alters the repertoire of the individual, implying, as Belmonte (2007) suggests, a new tendency or necessity, a new capacity and a new orientation for acting in the world. According to the author, if the cognitive mind is the organization of the world, in the constructive focus intelligence

is a related energy: “For that very reason, every positive modification means a greater capacity to adapt ourselves to new situations in our transforming world” (Belmonte 2007, 57). To modify is to create new dispositions in human beings, to expand the world of relationships, to overcome the episodic perception of reality and to create new attitudes, perspectives, and meanings for the individual.

Belmonte's reflections (2007), upon explaining modifications as a qualitative and intentional transformation, synthesize our vision of this research. We intend to provide residents of SCC with transcendence of perceptions of exclusionary reality, by conveying the understanding that human beings have culture and media as sources of transformation. That is where information professionals intervene between the stimuli and exterior information to interpret and value them. The explanation of mediated populations increases the field of understanding of a statistic or an experience, creating new devices within the body, and a constant supply of information. To better visualize the system of beliefs that the individual can develop to feel included upon desiring a change in their life, Belmonte (2007) developed a model of information with an inclusive vision, which is currently in a phase of adaptation in our research, in accordance with the reality of the Santa Clara Community.

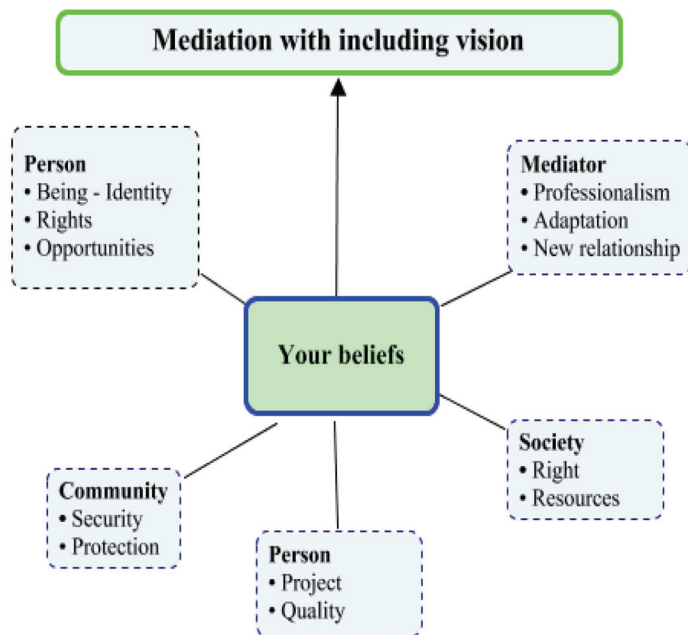


Figure 2: Preliminary model of information mediation for inclusion. **Source:** Adapted from Belmonte 2007.

In this preliminary model of information mediation for inclusion of the residents of SCC in contemporary society (see Figure 2), we can visualize that the beliefs of the community, of society, of the mediator and of the person (the residents) should be constructed by means of a mediation process with an inclusive vision, given as an assumption, the social identity which every one has for themselves, of the reality which surrounds them and which he or she can alone improve, breaking the barriers of constructed prejudices by the process of exclusion and marginalization. A professional and affective relationship will be constructed with the subjects of this research. This relation of professionalism is, however, adaptable; also characterized by the opportunity to be able to provide access to rights, resources, projects and to acquire information which will guarantee the identity of “being,” of the feeling of belonging, of being useful, valued and secure.

Final Consideration

Transforming reality and transcending boundaries, promoting information and knowledge for those who need it most, have become powerful inspirations for this research, for upon thinking of our social responsibility in relation to the researched object, we aspire, like Farias and Freire (2011), for our knowledge transmitted through this work to be disseminated and to bring public benefits, in this case, for the Santa Clara Community as well as for other communities through models of mediation, appro-

priation and use of intellectual technologies that will be created.

Whenever someone gets involved and engaged in seeking to discuss issues or problems pertaining both to themselves and to their community, these problems can easily take on other dimensions to find solutions. As Tavares (2011, 17) indicates, from access to information through ICT, and through the development of information competencies, this person becomes capable of making decisions, solving problems, better understanding reality and actively and critically engaging in their community.

This should take place to stimulate civic engagement, the involvement and participation of residents in their community, and making every resident feel capable of identifying the information that they need, to access and critically use this information, to analyze situations and to propose solutions (Tavares 2011). Our research proposes the construction and implementation of a model of information mediation for inclusion of Santa Clara Community residents in contemporary society through the development of informational competencies, in such a way as to make the users, the mediators.

From this perspective, the inclusion that we wish to provide residents of the Santa Clara Community should be tied to the opportunity to enable concrete, real and legitimate means of appropriating information and of empowerment. Hence, the social inclusion that we seek to promote in the SCC will follow the opposite path from the one that Demo (2005, 36) criticizes as being practices of social inclusion that are not accepted in their entirety, and that

“[...] we easily accept as social inclusion, inclusion in the margin. The poor are inside, but there inside the margin, almost falling out of the system.” What we seek to accomplish with this research is social inclusion as conceived by Moreira (2006, 1); that is, the action of providing improved opportunities and living conditions for socially and economically excluded populations – defined as those with reduced access to goods and below-average economic resources. One of the aspects of social inclusion is to provide Community members with the opportunity to acquire the conditions to understand their surroundings, to increase their opportunities in the labor market and to take political action with understanding of root causes.

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