The categorical dimension of document in Information Science[*]

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ABSTRACT

Considering an epistemological perspective of analysis, a historical-conceptual study of document in Information Science (IS) was proposed to retrace theoretical aspects based on the subjects of History, Diplomacy and Documentation. For that, we guided ourselves on the presuppositions of the history of concepts which allowed us to study synchronic and diachronic aspects of concept by establishing *tradition* and *innovation* as anti-ethical categories of analysis. Finally, we tried to show the categorical character of document in the theoretical frame of IS.

Keywords: Document; history of concepts; epistemology; Information Science.

RESUMEN

La dimensión categórica del documento en la Ciencia de la Información
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Considerando una perspectiva epistemológica de análisis, se propone hacer un estudio histórico conceptual del documento en la Ciencia de la Información (CI) buscando remontar aspectos teóricos basados en las disciplinas Historia, Diplomática y Documentación. Para eso, se orientó en los presupuestos de la historia de los conceptos, lo que permitió estudiar aspectos sincrónicos y diacrónicos del concepto mediante la configuración de la tradición y de la innovación como categorías antitéticas de análisis. Por fin, se buscó demostrar el carácter categórico del documento en el cuadro teórico de la CI.

Palabras clave: Documento; historia de los conceptos; epistemología, Ciencia de la Información.

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Introduction

Under an epistemological perspective, one seeks to put in evidence the importance of historical-conceptual studies to elucidate theoretical development aspects of Information Science (IS). For that, an analysis is carried out on the *document*[1] concept, which brings along historical requirements in order to be an object of analysis in the ambiance of *history of concepts*, the historiographical method idealized by Reinhart Koselleck.

In the specific case of the proposed historical-conceptual study, it is observed that the categorical – and polysemic – aspect of *document* has not been contemplated. It is argued that the overrating of the discussions on "*innovation* of the support of information" are overlapped with those seeking to explain the social dimension of the document that appreciate the *tradition* and the *innovation* in the theoretical and philosophical field. The lack of comparison between *tradition* and *innovation* has, consequently, implied the difficulty of understanding the dynamic relation, under tension, between these two dimensions for the theoretical-conceptual construction process of IS.

Considering this issue, the aim here is to learn at what rate disciplines such as History, Diplomatics and Documentation contributed for the meaning acquired by the term *document* in IS. It is said that those disciplines gathered previous efforts to the latter for the investigation of *document*. This situation points toward the specific aim of understanding the nature and range of the concept of *document* in IS (from a social perspective) and the dynamic relation between *tradition* and *innovation* in its theoretical-conceptual frame. Such aims were oriented by the central hypothesis that *document* is configured as a category in the theoretical frame of IS.

This study stemmed from the interpretative horizon of Koselleck's (1992, 1997, 2006) *History of concepts*. This author put the philosophical perspective in relation with the theoretical and methodological plan of History (Alberti, 1996; Pereira, 2004; Castelo Branco, 2006) so as to contextualize the epistemic platform to the referred approach, seeking theoretical subsides in hermeneutic philosophers such as Martin Heidegger and Hans-Georg Gadamer. Heidegger and his concept of *Dasein* are particularly important, as that was the starting point for the adoption and creation of the transcendental historical *metacategories: experience spaces* and *expectation horizons*, which led Koselleck to propose five pairs of categories, also transcendental, which help understand history as possibility and speculation; they are: 1) opposition between "inevitability of death" and possibility of "killing or being killed"; 2) opposition between "friend" and "foe"; 3) opposition between "in" and "out", deriving from the opposition "public" and "private"; 4) the "generativity", i.e. the generation gap; and 5) opposition between "master" and "servant".

Such categories would be part of *Historik*, justified as a "transcendental theoretical science" in the hermeneutic plan for representing "structures of finitude", found in opposition of

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[1] It is important to begin by saying that, etymologically, the word *document*, derived from the Latin word *documentum*, presents a vast semantic load. It stems from the Latin verb *docēre*, which means *to teach, to show*, proceeding etymologically to the Greek verb *δοχετν* in its immediate relation with the Latin forms *dicere, ducere, (in-)ducere* – all of which allude to their communicative meaning (Sagredo Fernández; Izquierdo Arroyo, 1983: 171, 187). With the suffixes *–men* or *–mentum*, they indicate an *instrument, example, proof*. The meaning of the word *document* comes close to that of the word *example* or *proof* of what was *taught* or *exemplified*. In other words, it represents, more broadly, the *object/means of transmission of knowledge*. Considering this etymological closeness, aspects such as a certain restriction of the term (when the *document* is conceived only as a *text-object*) or its amplification (when it is thought as the *objectification of knowledge on a support*) (Valente, 1978; López Yepes, 1995, 1997; Rodríguez Bravo, 2002) motivated the proposition of this study.

the antithetic pairs, whose characteristic is of opposition and inseparability of the categories, i.e. of divergence and interdependence. So one may state that *Historik* is placed in the philosophical plan and helps organize two other levels in the scientific plan: a) *Geschichte*, that is, factual History or History as discipline; and b) *Historie*, i.e. the art of presenting or narrating (Koselleck, 1997).

Thus, under the influence of the metacategories and of the categories of *Historik*, we come to the scientific-disciplinary plan, in which the interpretation of the sources is necessary. It is at this moment that the *history of concepts* acquires strategic position, in a markedly hermeneutic plan. For the proposition of this approach, Koselleck started from the thesis that this diachronic feature is found in the synchronic use of concept, i.e. as time goes by, semantics may include modifications, altering the content of the concept, without necessarily changing the term in its linguistic exteriorization. This situation points to the needed dialogue with the aforementioned transcendental metacategories, in which the concept here studied may present itself as "indices of reality", i.e. as permanence, as evidence of the existent, and as "factors of change" in "perspectives of future", expressed in projections, in tendencies of what "will be".

Contextualizing that approach to this research, it is sought to adapt, by comparison, Koselleck's categories of *Historik* and two other categories, presenting a transcendental relation similar to the antithetic pairs, i.e. diverging, but not excluding each other, for being interdependent. Those categories are: *tradition* and *innovation*.

Finally, based on the assumptions of the *history of concepts*, what is sought here is to study the relation between *tradition and innovation* under an epistemological view. This investigation started from a markedly interdisciplinary focus in which the studied disciplines provided the historical-conceptual elements for the understanding of the diachronic aspects found in the conceptual formulations of *document*. The "mapping" of the aspects linked to the tension between *tradition* and *innovation* in the theoretical frame of IS rendered it possible to configure the *document* concept in the condition of a category for this discipline.

The document in a historiographic ambiance

The dimension of *tradition* in the field of historiography can be interpreted at two stances. The first of them is aligned with the necessary comprehension of Positivism, which helps understanding the "positivistic spirit" of the 19th century which points to the notion of *history* and *science* of the creator of this line of thought, the French author Auguste Comte, in the ambit of Philosophy of History. The second stance, now in the plan of science, leads to the understanding of the Methodic History discipline (or "Positivistic History"), proposed by the German author Lepold von Ranke, whose concept of document stems from that "spirit".

The idea of *positivity* was predominant during the period known as *scientificism*, when it was sought to interpret the reality of phenomena, bringing Philosophy close to the Sciences of Nature. Resulting from this movement, Positivism was a philosophical school that sought to theoretically systematize the political interests of the bourgeoisie in the 10th century. For Comte, the study of history would be carried out through the "theory of the three states". Those states are: theological, metaphysical and positivistic. They would explain their "evolution" and serve as fundamental instrument for the realization of their political project: the construction of a "positive society" (Comte, 1972; 1983). That philosopher counted on the classification of the social element "scientifically". Furthermore, Comte worked towards an assessment of the social aspect by a different understanding of the laws of Physics, resulting in the proposition of the so-called Social Physics, or Sociology (Benoit, 1999).

It is possible to state that, in his metaphysics, Comte did not effectively have the concern to intervene scientifically in reality and did not idealize a properly empirical method. Comte's theory was elaborated eminently in the philosophical plan, although this line of thought influenced, at different rates, the scientific field, as in the case of Sociology (institutionalized by Durkheim) and History (in a similar situation, elevated to the category of "methodic science" by Ranke).

It is interesting to observe that Ranke conceived history under a perspective differing from Comte's, as he sought to attribute from it the scientific statute to History as discipline when defining for it an object and a method, based on documental critique, supported by written official documentation (diplomatic-archival). With such "virtues", History could take an autonomous disciplinary space in universities as we know them now. Furthermore, Ranke believed that the empirical relation between the History professional ("man of science") and the studied documentation was stained by objectivity and neutrality (Gay, 1990; Burke, 1997; Reis, 2004).

The act of narrating something that happened and register it on a written support, i.e. of producing a written document, is a "classic" example of the action of documenting which helps us understand the dimension of *tradition* in the historiographic ambit. It comes to our attention here that the document/product which originates from this action was so broadly accepted and conventionalized that Ranke's "Positivistic History" considered only *written documents* – contained in archives – as valid historical sources.

In reaction, the *innovation* in historiography would emerge from the critique to the traditional conception, characterized by not denying the theoretical advances obtained so far. Such *innovation* could be thought from the critical analysis of the movement of the *Annales* to "Positivistic History", in which the subsequent conceptual amplification of *document* is unveiled under the perspective of the interpretational universe of material culture.

The so-called "*Annales* movement" (Reis, 2004) or "*New History*" (Le Goff, 1978; Burke, 1992) or "*Annales* School" (Burke, 1997) resulted from the meeting and exchange of ideas, with the elaboration of projects, between Lucien Febvre and Marc Block, in Strasbourg, France. The theoretical success started when the project of publication of the journal *Annales d'Histoire Économique et Social* took place, in Jan 15th 1929.

This movement came from the questioning of the "traditional" narrative form, which ennobled the great political feats, great personalities and State happenings, etc. in which the official documentation – mostly archived diplomas – was the main source of analysis. Diverging from this understanding, the creators of the movement thought a historiographic perspective that could interdisciplinarily dialogue with the Social Sciences[2].

The broadening of the conception of document in this movement could be observed from the *first generation*, at the moment when it was noted that "Positivistic History" turned its

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[2] With the proposal of bringing itself closer to the Social Sciences, this movement was characterized by the diversity of theoretical and methodological approaches. In the methodological plan, the hermeneutical dimension was important as its proposition, still in the *first generation* (from 1920 to 1945), assumed "subversively" an emphasis in the interpretation and understanding of the phenomena, as well as a focus on the "problem-History" and "global History". This theoretical heterogeneity can be equally noticed in the *second generation* (the period after World War II), with Fernand Braudel, whose focus was directed to the regularities, series, techniques, quantification, and structural approach. This diverse theoretical line of thought was persecuted also in the *third generation* (after 1968) in the occasion when the privilege was shifted to the models, conceptual invariants, and interpretations, noticeably with Georges Duby, Jacques Le Goff and others (Burke, 1997; Reis, 2004).

method of analysis only to the superficiality of historical phenomena, expressed only on the official written documents. The problem, in this case, was not in the use of those sources, but in the understanding that they were the only valid ones for the writing of History. In other words, those historiographers put in evidence what was constituted as the naïve positivistic conception of document.

The *innovation* in the historiographic meaning of the document, in this movement, comes from the acknowledgement of the relevance of the study of the material culture (Rede, 1996; Bucaille; Pesez, 1989; Pesez, 1978), particularly on the occasion when the historiographers of the movement learned that the act of documenting is external to the object, in an interpretative, subjective or social action. This understanding was what drew a limit separating different views allowing new unfolding conceptual thoughts, as one may perceive in the interpretations regarding the document as a "monument" (Le Goff, 1994) and as an "object of memory" (Meneses, 1998), with a "social life" (Appadurai, 1991) and a "biography" of its own (Kopytoff, 1991). With that, the historiographer's work became more complex, particularly when that professional undertakes the difficult task of, in an interpretative process, select, identify and gather the documental evidences relevant for his/her work, considering the interpretative totality that an object, be it artificial or natural, may bring.

Thus, the possibility of "reading the document between the lines" (Block, 1997; Le Goff, 1994) meant transcending the apparently harmless (and inert) informative of the object to search for the documental evidences needed for the clarification of the doubts that arise from investigating the past.

The document in the diplomatic tradition

Studied in a different discipline, Diplomatics[3], it is possible to visualize more clearly the emphasis on *tradition* by means of the perceptible influence of the "positivistic spirit" that, even now, lingers in the discipline and is constituted as its "disciplinary pillar". The traditional conception derived from it also covers the understanding of *document* in the ambiance of Archival Science.

The academic consolidation of Diplomatics took place in France with the creation of the *École des Chartes* in 1921 for the historical study of medieval documents. Although that institutionalization occurred only in the 19th century, one can state that Diplomatics originated with *documental critique*, whose advancements in technical procedures of documental analysis can be observed since the 17th century. This long way marks the development of the so-called "diplomatic method" in its diversity of instrumental applications in different disciplines, such as History, Law and Archival Science. In sum, the discipline originated from philological and

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[3] The word *diplomatic* is derived from the Greek διπλοω (*diploo*) which means "double", referring to the Greek understanding given to the *diploma* (official-public document) characterized by a support of the writing formed by two articulated small planks called "diptychs". The *diploma*, for the Greek, meant "[...] any writing that included two united parts." (Paulius Rabikauskas, 2000). The term that gives a name to the discipline could be interpreted, also, as an adaptation of the Latin in the work *De re diplomatica libri, VI*, written by the French Benedictine monk Jean de Mabillon in 1681. It was published aiming to clarify the fundamental rules of textual critique and, specifically, to respond to the diplomatic critiques performed by the Jesuit Daniel Van Papenbroek, who questioned the veracity of the Benedictine diplomas contained in the archives of the Order of Saint Benedict (Duranti, 1995). In Duranti's (1995: 23) words, that book represents "[...] the first writing about this theme referring to the critical analysis of the forms of the diploma."

theological studies from the acknowledgement of the need for a "methodic systematization", hoping to achieve a certain "scientific rigor" for the development of the activity of telling apart fake documents from real ones. The disciplinary creation of Diplomatics converges with the initiatives that resulted from the "positivistic spirit" in the bowl of *scientificism*, that envisaged to fundament the documental critique in a supposed "objective method" to perform veracity a and authenticity proving tests in medieval documents, all handwritten, which were the historiographer's documental sources above all others (Bauer, 1957; Valente, 1978, Duranti, 1995; Paulius Rabikauskas, 2000; Rondinelli, 2002).

From an academic point of view, the creation of the *École* was important for the later bringing Diplomatics closer to Archival Science, when diplomatic analysis procedures were employed so as to help managing archival documents in the second half of the 20th century (Duranti, 1995). However, even before this interdisciplinary dialogue of French orientation took place, in the 19th century, other authors, such as the German ones Julius Ficker and Theodor von Sickel, also showed concern with this approximation and contributed for that (Bauer, 1957; Paulius Rabikauskas, 2000).

While "classic" Diplomatics was mostly concerned with the practice and technique of identifying and describing formal (structural) elements of written documents in order to confer documental authenticity and trustworthiness, a distinct instrumental function was added to the discipline by means of employing the "diplomatic methodology" to the archives. From this interdisciplinary relation, Contemporary Diplomatics was originated in the 20th Century (Duranti, 1995; Bellotto, 2002).

Since then, that discipline was not limited only to the study of the medieval "diploma", i.e. handwritten document (Heredia, 1988). Bringing Diplomatics closer to Archival Science, the diplomatic document was then conceived as a synonym to archival document, that is, "written documental sources", be them handwritten or printed, with legal and administrative nature (Bellotto, 2000). The diplomatic document presents, hence, historical and legal-administrative values, i.e. it brings along a conceptual nature similar to what constitutes the archival document (Nuñez-Contreras, 1981; Riesco Terrero, 2000; Galende Díaz; García Ruipérez, 2003).[4]

In other words, from the approximation of Diplomatics towards Archival Science drives Contemporary Diplomatics, also called Documental Typology. Constituted as the broadening of "classic" Diplomatics, the study of Contemporary Diplomatics goes on towards the "documental genesis", converging and contextualizing itself with the attributions, competences, functions and activities of the generating/accumulating entity of documents. Its object of study is the "document type", bringing with it the "organic logic of documental conjuncts", i.e. the document as an only issue (Bellotto, 1990, 2002).

This still recent approach of Contemporary Diplomatics has made possible the interdisciplinary dialogue with Documentation regarding the questions involving *documental procedure*. Particularly, this approximation has occurred in the ambit of Thematic Treatment of Information that, as a field of studies, hosts the French perspective of Documental Analysis, as pointed out by Guimarães (2008). Contemporary Diplomatics and Documental Analysis converge

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[4] The elements (or characters) that compound the diplomatic document are characterized by being "external" (structural or formal) and "internal" (substantial or of substance). It is from the analysis of such characters that the "diplomatic method" can be understood as the identification strategy of documental formulae, in distinct types and typologies, aiming to establish particular relations between form and content. With this, one can affirm that the referred "method" is proposed to identify what linguists conceptualized as textual macrostructure or semantic macroproposition (Bellotto, 2002).

for prioritizing the study of the *written text* for documental reasons, although they present different focuses – while the first prioritizes the documental *structure*, the latter dedicates its studies to the *thematic content* of the document (Guimarães, Rabello, 2007; Rabello; Guimarães, 2008).

On the other hand, the perception of the emphasis on the *tradition* of Contemporary Diplomatics and Documental Analysis, considering the primacy of the *written text*, is important not only to observe how much current studies in Documentation inherited from diplomatic tradition, but also to understand the possible theoretical limitations of the naïve positivistic conception of document, ennobling its supposed "attributes of objectivity", as well as those of "unmistaken" material representation "of reality". Such issues were discussed by Cook (2001), who criticized Duranti's (2005) traditional understanding of Archival Science and of document. Those concepts were fundamental for Duranti to defend Contemporary Diplomatics as a discipline.

The document in the context of Documentation

It is important to begin by highlighting that the term *documentation* historically has assumed different designations, such as: a) means of historical proof; b) profession taught formally at technical schools, demanding a specialized technical-intellectual knowledge; and c) an academic discipline dedicated to the creation of knowledge that inspire documental practices (Meyriat, 1993). The latter meaning started taking shape in the beginning of the *bibliographical movement* in the late 19th century (Woledge, 1983; Blanquet, 1993; Rayward, 1994; López Yepes, 1995; Santos, 2006; etc.), and its aspects became clearer with the publication of the *Traité de Documentation*, written by Paul Otlet in 1934.

Documentation derived disciplinarily from the studies performed in the bowl of the *bibliographical movement*, systematized at first in a discipline called Bibliography. That movement was important for the initial development of the activities of analysis of the content of documents for the organization and "memorization" of the registered knowledge. In addition, with Bibliography, certain notions started being used, such as "diffusion" and "access" to information. These notions are relevant for the later proposition of Documentation.

One can say that Otlet was the main character of the bibliographical movement in the late 19th century. In addition to encouraging the creation of specialized publications, he helped to articulate scientific meetings and forums of academic debates and to create associations that were fundamental in order to propose Documentation disciplinarily (Blanquet, 1993).

As much as Bibliography and Documentation had a common origin for both having the *document* as an object of study (Blanquet, 1993: 201), this latter discipline was different from the first due to a primordial function: the diffusion of information in a conception of document transcending the notion of bibliographical document (Rayward, 1995). For Otlet, the concept of *document* was not limited to the distorted understanding of *book* such as modern Library Science (Shera, 1980) and Bibliography (Woledge, 1983) conceived, i.e. implying that it is nothing but the object resulting from a technical enhancement of the medieval codex after Gutenberg developed movable types.

To reach a comprehension of the referred conceptual broadening, it is necessary to remember that the word *book* corresponds to what in Latin was called *liber*. It is an adaptation of the transcendental notion that corresponds to the ancient and medieval understanding of *biblos* (in

Greek, "βίβλος", a stem found in the words *biblioteca* and *biblioteconomia*[5]; and *biblion* (*βίβλιον*) in its plural form. In such designations were recognized the rational thought, the rational discourse or knowledge, represented in the Greek expression *logos* (*λόγος*), contained in its support (Rendón Rojas, 2005: 134). In order to reformulate the concept, Otlet (1934: 9, 372, 373) retook the conception of *biblos* and started to acknowledge the conceptual equivalence in *book/document/biblion* that represented every artificial object in which some informative property was acknowledged – or *logos*. The document, in this context, would assume the condition of a *category* of Documentation.

However, in addition to the word *document* assuming this new meaning, comparing it to the restricted notion of *book*, the retaking of the notion of *biblos* made it possible for Otlet to advance comparatively also towards the notion of documental source of "Positivistic History", as, for that author, the written text would not be the only documental representative endowed with objectivity. Even with this advance, it is interesting to observe that the persistency of the notion of objectivity, attributed to the document, evidenced the conceptual approximation between Documentation and "Positivistic History".

Considering this approximation, a first moment of Documentation emerges – one of a "positivistic phase", representing a period of transition from *tradition* towards *innovation* in concept. This phase was marked by the Otletian understanding of *document* after the 1930s, when the concept was formulated considering man-made objects towards the *informational content*. Such emphasis would constitute the distinctive factor for the transformation of the *object* in *document*, with the human action of adding to the object an informative function guaranteeing it the status of being objective. Under this view, the document would be characterized by being constituted in several supports, presenting itself in different types and typologies, "stained in objectivity". This supposed objectivity would be confused with the creative process itself of exteriorization and settling down (register) of knowledge or technique in a material object. That conception was the starting point for the French librarian Suzanne Briet (1951), in her essay *Qu'est-ce que la documentation?*, to broaden that concept even more.

Considering this amplification of meaning and coming closer to the *innovation* of the concept emerges the second moment of Documentation: the "hermeneutic phase". In this phase it is possible to make a parallel between the advancements of the conception of document headed by the movement of the *Annales* and by Briet. The "hermeneutic phase" would be constituted after the 1950s when Briet's (1951) ideas were highlighted, along with her followers: Meyriat (1981), Escarpit (1981), Day (1997), and Buckland (1997), among others. The arguments commonly employed by those authors show that no document is really objective, i.e. no object/support is produced originally with a *document status*, since that appraised aspect will be only constituted at a later moment. In this context, the document will be the product of a process of objectification (appraisal) in an interpretative act, attributing meanings, under the influence of subjective aspects, "conditioned" by the social and cultural context with which the subjects are necessarily related. Considering this specificity, the document is, hence, the product of an interpretative (subjective) action of a subject who lives in a society and receives its passive and dated influence at once.

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[5] This paper was originally written in Portuguese and later translated into English. "Biblioteca" is the Portuguese word for "library" and "Biblioteconomia" is the Portuguese word for "Library Science". The Portuguese word for "book" is "livro", which comes from the Latin "Liber", which may be why the author brought it up. The English word "Library" comes from the Latin word for book, "Liber", while the Portuguese one comes from Greek. (Translator's note.)

The categorical amplitude pursued by Otlet, deepened in the second moment of Documentation, made an opening for the acknowledgement of the *museological document*, confirming its polysemic character. From this referential, we will seek to reflect on the importance of the studies of historical-conceptual nature, above all, for the *document* to be thought in the context of the dynamic relation between *tradition* and *innovation*, in a social perspective of IS.

The document as a category of Information Science

This paper seeks to propose a metadiscourse explaining the historical trajectory of the *document* under an *epistemological* view[6], contextualizing the concept in the theoretical frame of Information Science. From this perspective, the proposition here is to keep within its epistemes and their underlying narratives that contemplate historically and theoretically the *practical* focuses which favor the relation between the disciplinary configuration of IS and theories from other disciplines to form a conjunct of instrumental knowledge.[7]

White the *practical-disciplinary* perspective seeks to instrumentalize the knowledge to keep within a certain phase and/or issue concerning information, contemplating practices, focuses and particularized informational spaces/ambits, the *epistemological studies* seek to accommodate the assumptions from that perspective in a theoretical-methodological explanatory plan in which the practices would not simply form a discipline; they would be part of a conjunct of knowledge with a specific place in the universe of knowledge, under the influence of a philosophical base of methods, other theories in Social Sciences, etc. *Epistemological* studies seek, hence, to establish an interrelationship between the *practical-disciplinary* perspective and the scientific and philosophical field.[8]

The *metadiscourses* created in the bowl of *practical-disciplinary* perspective commonly report, in the ambit of *tradition*, to the change in the relation between man and knowledge since the invention of the press and, consequently, in what occurred with the restricted understanding of *book*. With this comes the change in the conception of the "classical" library, which gradually ceased to have a universalistic function in the patterns from the renaissance (Shera, 1980: 93) and started to provide, later on, for the demands of specialized and scientific knowledge (Fayet-Scribe, 2001: 14). The specialization in services of information originated from these new social demands and their beginnings can be observed at the moment of the creation of the tools for a greater delimitation of the content of documents for the process of organization and retrieval of information.

We can also state that such *metadiscourses* defend the overlapping or co-existence of different lines of thoughts when it comes to the claiming of an origin for the statute of creation of

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[6] This field is dedicated to the discourse/knowledge (*logos*) on *science* (*episteme*) – *Epistemology*, also known as *Philosophy of Science*, which points to, as mentioned by Japiassu (1997: 16), "[...] the methodic and reflexive study of knowledge, its organization, its formation, its development, its functioning, and its intellectual products."

[7] For example: the practical-disciplinary assumptions that seek to bring IS closer to the theories and practices of Library Science, Archival Science, Museology, Computer Science, Cognitive Science, etc.

[8] The term *practical-disciplinary* was suggested by Rabello (2009) as a referential to designate the distinction among different approaches, i.e. tell *theoretical-practical* focuses apart from *epistemological* ones. For such, that author sought elements to fundament this in the text by Dick (1999).

IS. The largest lines "in dispute" would be those of Anglophone orientation and the Francophone ones. In the Anglophone ones, a certain tension between the US professionals working in traditional and in specialized libraries is often highlighted (Meyriat, 1993: 194), adding to the instrumental influence of the technologies for retrieving information, based on Vannevar Bush's (1945) ideas, also pointed out by Saracevic (1992, 1999). In the Francophone lines of thought, a similar tension is observed between traditional French librarians and documentalists, as they had the prerogative of organizing specialized information based on Paul Otlet's (1934) ideas, in the ambit of Documentation (Wersig, 1993; Rayward, 1995; Fernández Molina, 1993; Meyriat, 1993). Complementing the interpretative *practical-disciplinary* frame, to a lesser effect, two other perspectives are also mentioned: the German Documentation and Information Science (*Informations-und-dokumentationswissenschaft*), based on the ideas by Shober, Pietsch, Koblitz, Wersig and others; and the Russian Informatics (*Informatika*), whose exponent authors were Mikhailov, Chernyi and Gilyarevskii (López Yepes, 1995).

Such assumptions are important for bringing the theoretical-practical development in different *disciplinary contexts* that help to think the disciplinary figuration of IS itself and, furthermore, they can be taken as object by Epistemology to help interpret the internal dynamics of IS. These dynamics can be observed, for instance, in the epistemological interpretations by Rafael Capurro (2003), who interpreted an explanatory structure of IS using the *scientific revolutions theory*, based on the works by Thomas Kuhn (2005) and Miguel Rendón Rojas (2005), who thought in a different structure from the *investigations programs*, by Imre Lakatos (1999).

The conceptions of *scientific community*, i.e. the manifestation of organized science by means of a social activity, and of *scientific paradigm* comprise Kuhn's interpretative axis to analyze what he called *scientific revolution*. As a hypothesis, this phenomenon starts with an origin in *science*, in its *pre-scientific* phase, at a moment when it is not possible to observe the definition of a structure. So this phase is characterized by the absence of paradigm. On the other hand, when theories, methodologies and scientific values take form, then there would come the *normal science*. We could say that *normal science* would become hegemonic, both theoretically and politically, as it takes its position in the "scientific front".

On the other hand, for Kuhn, the *revolutionary* process does not occur harmoniously, as the dynamics of power and theory disputes that take place within *normal* paradigm reveal problems manifested in *enigmas* (problems that can be solved) and in *anomalies* (problems that not always can be solved). This situation can lead to the scientific *crisis* when there are dissidences in *normal science* resulting in the proposition of an *extraordinary science*. Supposedly, when *extraordinary science* gathers theoretical arguments and political strength in the scientific community to "destitute" the hegemonic power of the old *normal science*, a new structure is revealed, i.e. a *new science* emerges from that (Kuhn, 2005: 24-25).

In Kuhn's perspective, theories tend to be kept and defended by members of the paradigm to comprise the basis that justifies the keeping of *normal science*. Hence, although the emphasis of *tradition* is a marking characteristic in the constitution of *normal science*, the revolutionary process within the structure seeks the overlapping of old and recent theories so as to impose the new formulations proposed by *extraordinary science*. This occurs until this *new science* becomes *normal science*. When it acquires such a status, it will be subjected to go through the questioning process coming from new problems (enigmas and anomalies) within its structure. In an ultimate analysis and under this view, *innovation* will always be superposed on *tradition*.

Interpreting that theory, Capurro (2003) proposed to transpose it to the field of IS. In order to do so, he sought to contextualize the phenomenon of information in three paradigms. The

physical paradigm would mark the birth of IS in the early 20th century, soon questioned by the *cognitive paradigm* and, then, by the *pragmatic or social paradigm.*

In Capurro's (2003) work, it was necessary to identify these three dimensions – objective, subjective and social – of information in the ambit of IS. Even so, his analysis can be rendered problematic. It is not correct to state that such lines of thought can really be considered *paradigms* in Kuhn's terms, as one may question even if IS itself has acquired enough scientific "maturity" to be in the stage of *normal science*. And even if such theories were paradigms, the questioning here sustained stems from the certification that, when shifting from one paradigm to another in a revolutionary process (from the *normal paradigm* to the *extraordinary* one and then to this *new science*) aforementioned, there is an overrating and superposing of the *innovation* on the *tradition*. Hence, one questions if, in the case of IS, there really is a sequential overcoming among the objective, subjective and social "paradigms". In this case, would it be correct to trace an evolutionary frame as interpreted by Capurro?

In counterpoint to this understanding, the structure proposed by Rendón Rojas is relevant for this investigation, since, supposedly, in this view, *tradition* can dialogue and coexist with *innovation* in the theoretical and conceptual ambit. As previously mentioned, Rendón Rojas made reference to Lakatos' theory.

The *investigation program* proposed by Lakatos (1999) is comprised of "three layers". The *hard core*, where *tradition* is located, constitutes the first layer. The purpose of the second layer, called *protective belt*, is to protect the core by means of theories and concepts, once, in this *belt*, the theoretical-conceptual relation is marked by tension and the mutual coexistence between *tradition* and *innovation*. The third layer is found in the terrain of Heuristics (negative and positive), which performs the role of protecting the core methodologically.

Transposing this structure to IS, Rendón Rojas (2008) sought to demonstrate that the *hard core*, responsible for the disciplinary delimitation, would be the *documental informative system* and would be surrounded by five categories comprising the *protective belt*. Those categories are: *user, information professional, documental informative institution, information* and *document*. In each category there is the occurrence of more aligned theoretical-conceptual influences, sometimes from *tradition*, sometimes from *innovation*.

Although Rendón Rojas had said that such categories perform an ontic function in the theoretical frame of IS, it converges partly with the author's approach to come to this conclusion, as he works with the hypothesis that this affirmation only gains theoretical consistency by means of a deep historical-conceptual study, able to comprehend the historical, theoretical and philosophical ballast of the supposed category. From this conjecture, the study of the History, Diplomatics, Documentation disciplines and of IS itself were crucial for the justification of the document as a *category* belonging to the theoretical frame of IS[9].

For the understanding of the diachronic dynamics of the *document* concept in the theoretical-conceptual field of IS, a study of the *information* concept was made necessary, retaking the three understandings to comprise Capurro's (2003) supposed "paradigms", as the perception of an important variety of this concept, the *registered information*, presupposes the *document* concept itself. So, different approaches occurring in the conception of

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[9] Supposing the need for realization of a historical-conceptual study for a hypothetic category to be thus enunciated and justified, Capurro & Hjørland's work (2007) was of great importance as it helped to unvail categorical and polysemic traits of the *information* concept.

information/register help remount the diachronic frame of the *document* concept in a disciplinary context. Those approaches are:

a) *objective*: with emphasis on the datum and on the communicative process, i.e. on the message (García Marco, 1998; Pérez Gutiérrez, 2000; Rodríguez Bravo, 2002, etc.);

b) *subjective*: with emphasis on the interpretation of the isolated individual, i.e. on the interpreting subject, information professional, user, etc. (Fernández Molina, 1994; Pratt, 1977; Belkin & Robertson, 1976; Belkin, 1978, etc.);

c) *social objective/subjective*[10]: materialized and contextualized in a documental information system, which will have institutional and social value (Buckland, 1991; Silva; Ribeiro, 2002; etc.).

After evidencing the existence of this theoretical-conceptual frame occurring in the concept of *registered information* in IS, we come to three types of producers of the *object*, on the verge of becoming *document*, to which, by its own nature, is related with the understandings of *information* previously discussed. In philosophical terms and touching the field of the Theory of Knowledge, it is observed that, in this relation, either the subject (subjectivist approach) or the object (objectivist approach) can, in turns, be favored (Hessen, 1973). From this analysis, it is possible to speculate an approximation to the producers of the document of *first, second or third* nature.[11]

The *first nature* producer is the one that, in an objectivist approach, seeks to imprint knowledge directly on a support (regardless its type), by means of writing or registering. *In this case, the object performs any role, not necessarily as a document.*

On the other hand, the *second nature* producer attributes meaning for practical ends, performing a specific informative role for the individual (legal, administrative, aesthetic and other sorts of values) in a subjectivist approach. *Then, the object necessarily performs a documental role for the subject.*

The *third nature* producer is one who, also in a subjectivist approach, the product, considers the product of the process of signification attributed by the *first and second nature* producers and, in a particular way, confers meaning for social-cultural and/or informative-documental ends. *In this case, the document clearly assumes a social function.*

These natures can be more deeply understood by means of Dodebei's (1997: 172-175) contribution. This author sought to explain the process of transformation of the object in document of cultural memory by means of three categories: *substance, mode/accident* and *relation*. These led to the creation of three other ones, respectively: *oneness, virtuality,* and *signification*.

The *substance* category refers to the *being that exists*, that is, the artificial object (object *in itself*) produced socially and characterized by predicables occurring to the *form* and *content*. In

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[10] Based on the hypothesis of the necessary coexistence of *tradition* and *innovation* in the theoretical frame of IS, adding with the expression "social objective/subjective" a representation that seems to be more adequate to designate this relation.

[11] It is important to highlight that we have reached these distinct natures of the producers of the object/document after considering the long way from the beginning of the "social life" of the object and what "will be" the document (Appadurai, 1991).

the case of natural objects, the predicables occurred only in the *form* attribute. The *oneness* category is related with *substance*, as, in this moment, the object/document, in the social memory plan, is not differentiated in its essence.

Distinctly, the *mode/accident* category refers to attributes existing in the *substance* in a "first reading of insistency", i.e. in the attributes regarding *time* and *space*. It is marked by ideas of *mobility* and *selectivity* in the social field that allow the "free traffic of the objects throughout the institutions of memory." In these institutions, the objects will keep their *substance* and will be able to alter their externality (support), suffering, thus, a "metamorphosis" by means of the "marks of time" (natural), of "space" and of man (cultural). In fact, the *virtuality* category is constituted by means of selective attribution of predicables (space-time) and of an arbitrary classification, by nature.

The *relation* category regards what links one being to another in a "second reading of insistency", i.e. it is characterized by the intellectual intent to reduce two or more attributes to constitute a third one in a process in which the previous categories (substance and mode/accident) do not cancel each other. On the other hand, it shows that the appraisal process occurring in the object is not definitive and that every *signification* is circumstantial in favor of the *essence* and of the *virtuality* that are always present in the said object. Hence, it will be the *meaning* attributed to the memory that will act in the transformation process of the "social object" in an "object of memory and cultural value", i.e. a *document*. Thus, the transformation of everyday objects in documents is intentional, temporary and circumstantial. So the document would be "[...] a representation, a sign, i.e. a temporary and circumstantial abstraction of the natural or accidental object, constituted of essence (intellectual form or form/content), selected from the social universe to witness a cultural action." (Dodebei, 1997: 175).

To think the "social dimension of the *document* in IS comparatively to its historical-conceptual configuration, the contributions from Documentation are retaken, allowing the configuration of the concept in two marking moments of the discipline.

The *objective/social document* was configured at the first otletian moment, when the concept assumed a category dimension for the discipline. This moment marked the process of transition between *tradition* and *innovation*. Hence the broad conception of register began and, also, the museological object started being considered, produced by man. Although the question of objectivity of the "real producer" was naïvely overrated, the document already presented social value, as it was thought within an institutional context.

The *subjective/social document* was configured at a second moment, with Briet, in particular, when there was an amplitude of hermeneutic action on the object in the subjective plan to decentralize the "objective" figure from the "real producer" of the object, now "giving voice" to the *second* and *third nature* producers. In this sense, the possibility of also considering the object natural, as a documental source in an *institutionalized information system*, was acknowledged in the disciplinary ambit of Documentation. The *innovation*, in this context, started an important trajectory.

Seeking to systematize the synchronic and diachronic possibilities of the *document* considering its historical aspects, a comparative table was made summarizing its polysemic nature and of ontic assumption when thought, above all, as a category belonging to the theoretic frame of IS. For such, the reference taken was its disposition facing the tension between *tradition* and *innovation*.

Table 1 – tradition/innovation relation and the document "being" in Information Science

		Auxiliary disciplinary universe	Interdisciplinary Relation/ theories	Theoretical focus – information/ document	Focus on the subject/object relation	Object/Register Nature	Dodebei's categories – object/document phase	Producer of the document
T R A D I T I O N		**History**	"Positivistic History"	Objective	Objectivist	Artificial + Written	Oneness Virtuality	First nature
		Diplomatics	Archival Science History Law	Objective	Objectivist	Artificial + Written	Oneness Virtuality	First nature
		Documentation (first moment)	Archival Science Library Science Museology	Social objective	Objectivist	Artificial + different signs	Virtuality Signification	First, second and third nature
I N N O V A T I O N		**History**	*Annales* movement	Objective Subjective	Subjectivist	Artificial / Natural + different signs	Virtuality Signification	First and second nature
		Documentation (second moment)	Archival Science Library Science Museology	Social Objective/ Subjective	Subjectivist	Artificial / Natural + different signs	Virtuality Signification	First, second and third nature

Source: Rabello, 2009, p. 313.

With this table, it is possible to note that the *document* category has theoretical-conceptual support within the ambit of *tradition* by means of the variation of the History, Diplomatics and Documentation disciplines, characterized by their *objectivist* focus that orients the relation between subject and object of knowledge. While the first two disciplines focus on the nature of the object/register (in its *oneness* and *virtuality*) by means of the *artificial support* characterized by the *scripture*, generated by the *first nature* producer (emphasis on objective information); Documentation, in its first moment, included the *logos* in this artificial support to a variety of distinct signs that can be identified (*virtuality*) and interpreted *(signification)*. In the field of otletian tradition, one can observe that the *first, second* and *third nature* document producers and *objective* and *social* aspects of information are considered.

In the sphere of *innovation*, there is only the variation of the History and Documentation disciplines, which are characterized by their *subjectivist* orientation in the subject/object relation of knowledge. Another common factor comes from the fact that both disciplines focus on the *object/register* nature, taking as a parameter the *virtuality* and *signification* categories, that find meaning in different sings interpreted in *natural* or *artificial* objects. Nevertheless, while a historical study prioritizes the *first* and *second nature* producer (emphasis in *objective* and *subjective* information), Documentation finds one more its ample meaning, considering the *first,*

second and *third nature* producers of the document and, consequently, the *objective, subjective* and *social* aspects of information.

 Conclusions

In the historical-conceptual retrieval her performed, *semantic* problems are considered, as well as, more specifically, some of the ontic problems from the theoretical field of IS. In this perspective, this science was regarded as a "science-process" (Freire-Maia, 1997), i.e. in movement, with the *scientific knowledge* always unfinished and under construction, needing constant reviewing and/or improvement to the object of continuous questioning by the *scientific community* that legitimizes it, by means of theories and methods. In this context, the results of the historical-conceptual study served as a starting point for the problematization of the understanding of *scientific concept* when thought as a defining positivity.

The approach herein proposed aims, hence, to differentiate itself from traditional postulates, often observed in the dominions of Human Sciences, that persecute the search for the synthesis of the concept in a tone of definition, in a pretentious precision, which renders the refutation of its content, at least apparently, unviable. This distinction of an approach is due to the inclination of the research towards Koselleck's methodological perspective. That perspective did not limit the employment of the *history of concepts* to a propaedeutic of a logical epistemology, as it did not have the pretense to identify the promiscuous or arbitrary use of the concepts to, then, intervene, proposing the correction, normatization and/or reuse of an old concept (Villacañas; Oncina, 1997: 12-13).

Based on this interpretative horizon, this investigation has sought, above all, to demonstrate countless co-existing positivities under tension that influence the construction of the *document* concept. In prospect, such positivities unveil "the hidden face" of the *document* as a *category* of the theoretical frame of IS. Thus, the categorical dimension of the concept can be observed from polysemic aspects that illustrated the conceptual *tradition* and *innovation*, systematized in Table 1.

The dynamic character of the theoretical frame of IS was then made evident by means of the polysemic character of the concept herein studied. In the theoretical frame presented, one can observe conceptual *tradition* and *innovation* without overlapping, whose coexistence illustrates the assumption that the hypothetical "social paradigm of information" is configured in the one able to congregate *tradition* and *innovation* without exclusion, in a constant theoretical tension.

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