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# From production to consumption: cultural diversity in the collective uses of technology among low income groups

# Da produção ao consumo: diversidade cultural nos usos coletivos de tecnologia entre grupos populares

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**Abstract** *This article seeks to discuss certain uses of technology among low income groups, in which the collective dimension stands as a central aspect of the observed cultural dynamics. Therefore, it shows the results from an ongoing ethnographic study in Rio de Janeiro city, and analyzes the material, along with studies done in South Africa. The debate focuses on the discontinuity between dimensions of production and consumption, not in terms of content reception, but in terms of the usage experiences. The experiences surrounding television and mobile phones suggest the need to relativize the mode of individual consumption in favor of an investigation regarding the collective appropriations in contexts that are unlike those in the developed countries where these goods - as well as the dominant academic theories -are produced.*

**Key-words:** *Television; Mobile phone; Collective uses; Low income groups*

**Resumo** *A proposta do artigo é discutir usos de tecnologia em grupos populares nos quais a dimensão coletiva aparece como um aspecto central das dinâmicas culturais. Para tanto, são apresentados resultados de uma pesquisa etnográfica em andamento na cidade do Rio de Janeiro, cujo material é colocado em perspectiva com estudos realizados na África do Sul. O debate focaliza a descontinuidade entre as dimensões da produção e do consumo, não em termos da*

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*recepção de conteúdos, mas sim das próprias experiências de uso. As vivências em torno de televisão e celulares sugerem a relativização do modo de consumo individual em prol de uma investigação acerca de apropriações coletivas em contextos diversos aos dos países desenvolvidos, onde tais bens de consumo – assim como parte dominante das teorias acadêmicas – são produzidos.*

**Palavras-chave:** *Televisão; Celular; Usos coletivos; Grupos populares*

## Introduction

This article seeks to discuss certain consumption practices of communication technologies among low income groups in which the collective uses emerge as a central aspect of the cultural dynamics in question. To accomplish this, the results of an ongoing ethnography developed in the city of Rio de Janeiro will be analyzed and then put into perspective with studies conducted in South Africa. The search for a comparative dimension between the Brazilian context and the South African context first arises as an attempt to think about the discontinuity between production and consumption outside of the cultural experience more economically developed countries. In addition, as we know, such a discontinuity has a long tradition regarding reception studies, be they of British or Latin American origin. Parallel to these studies, another type of research can be conducted that will be geared toward understanding different experiences with these technologies, which also emphasize the ways in which particular subjects create meaning in their interactions with communication goods. It is this latter perspective, which is as of yet minimally explored, that this article intends to address.

As some scholars (ROCHA, 1985; Miller, 1987; SAHLINS, 1979, etc.) have already identified, production "is completed" through consumption, since it is in this last dimension that objects produced in series gain their singularity due to the appropriations of subjects inserted in a given culture. Therefore, the purposes for which the goods were planned in the production sphere can be greatly changed in their everyday uses, through various consumption practices.

The point of interest of this paper is to investigate certain uses of technology among low income groups in Brazil - extending it to comments about studies conducted in South Africa - trying to analyze how the subjects deal with consumer goods in their daily lives that are created based on models that are predominant in the European and North American contexts. The majority of the analysis effort focuses on research conducted about the TV watching habits on mobile phones, and the practice of games in low income internet cafes. The counterpoint

to be done with South Africa serves as an indication of the importance of comparative studies that consider the cultural diversity among South Atlantic countries in relation to those that are more economically developed.

In the specific field of television studies, Silveira (2004) has already pointed out that both ethnographic studies about media consumption in the British tradition of cultural studies, as well as those produced in the Latin American context of reception studies, almost always identify the home space and the family group as "basic structural units of the standardized situationality of the television audience" (Silveira, 2004, p.65). These are studies that try to understand the rhythms of domestic dynamics in their experiences related to television programs, as seen in the exemplary ethnography by Silverstone (1996), where in addition to an analysis of the family nucleus, a description of the furniture and other household objects is given in order to compose a scenario where experiences with the television medium succeed.

Silveira draws attention, therefore, to the fact that ethnographic studies about television reception in the British and Latin America varieties primarily emphasize "domesticity" audience. From this perspective, he argues, the interpretation of media content would depend on a deep dive into the daily lives of the subjects studied - in other words, understanding the senses that arise in the sphere of the audience should be sought from the perspective of a detailed look at home, housing, and family, which together make up daily life. From there, the author questions the existence of "a natural and universal way" of watching television, associated with domesticity and the family group, trying to point to its historic and socially constructed character.

Thus, the studies emphasize the television in its domestic locus, giving little importance, or even ignoring, other spaces and contexts outside the home where the medium is present. Why is there a trend in the studies that think about TV in connection with domestic environments?

Is there a certain "Eurocentrism", due to the influence of the family experience of most of the academics writing on this topic regarding the

television's context in the home? To escape this perspective, the "naturalization" of TV in the domestic environment begins to be relativized with the development of empirical studies that have other media experiences built in public and urban settings.

Although relatively unstudied, the audience has always been in other spaces outside the home, which has intensified with the arrival of new technologies - technological convergence in particular - and the advancement of mobility, which took the television and its audiovisual appeal out the boundaries of the home.

It is worth noting, for now, some Brazilian cases before the advent of new media and whose dynamics remain in daily experiences. In several Brazilian cities in the countryside, one can witness scenes where the TV is taken to the street sidewalks, mobilizing the neighborhood around it, or even the people who are walking by, to accompany the aired program together. Tufte (1997) did a reception study in the Rio Grande do Sul countryside regarding the soap opera *Rainha da Sucata* (Queen of the Scrap) which shows that the boundaries of public and private dissolve when "the windows and doors open," allowing you to see the TV from the street - here, the assumption of television domesticity is dismantled by observing other social practices formed by "hybrid situations".

Gastaldo (2005), in one study, explores the idea of a collective audience in urban areas, relying on an ethnography done in bars in the city of Porto Alegre, where football matches are shown. The author analyzes various aspects of this audience, focusing especially on the performances of masculinity and the collective reception of the game. Regarding the first aspect, it uses Radcliffe Brown's idea of "joking relationships" to understand the kind of provocation that occurs between fans of different teams; through play and verbal challenges during the game, people exercise a kind of sociability where play overlaps with open conflict. What could end up in a fight if it happened in another context, ends up in an atmosphere of settling the differences in favor social coexistence. Still using Goffman's concept of "focused interaction" (1963), notice how fans look at the TV set and comment on the game for the whole

audience, without having to look at a particular person - that's what the author calls "speak to all", a type or reaction to the media discourse in front of the audience of the fans in attendance. The broadcast of the match on TV draws several audience reactions that, in general, make critical and sarcastic comments regarding the comments of the sportscaster, commentators, and reporters on the field, as well as the images shown.

Looking to investigate existing audience contexts in urban environments, the reflection presented in this article dwells on a different type of situation than mentioned previously. It is, specifically, the adoption of mobile phones as television transmission platforms, which causes a reflection on the traditional public/private dichotomy. The point here is to think about devices created for individual use, such as mobile phones, that, because of certain situations in public spaces, end up being appropriated for collective use, as will be seen later on.

Besides the uses related to ways of watching TV on mobile phones, we intend to extend the discussion to other situations where there may be a move away from the individualistic way of dealing with information technology that is predominant in European and North American contexts. To start the analysis of the Brazilian case, here is a brief presentation of the most commonly found equipment during the ongoing study, called so called MPXs or *XingLings*.

## The emergence of *XingLings*

The situation chosen for observation in the study involves the so-called "MPX" or *XingLing* mobile phones. The name "MPX" refers to mobile phones that are being widely consumed in the low income markets in major urban centers across Brazil. It is important to remember that consumers present at these locations belong not only to the working class, but also to the urban middle class, although the former are the large majority. These devices are generally smuggled and counterfeit for famous brands - such as Sony, Nokia, Motorola and Apple) - and for the most part of Chinese origin, hence the nickname *Xingling*. Prices range from

BRL 150.00 and BRL 350.00 and their main attractive features are analog broadcast TV reception and the ability to use more than one chip, which allows the high costs of telephone services in Brazil to be faced by adhering to the promotional programs of various carriers.

The MPX type of devices are sold in Rio de Janeiro and in other urban centers in *camelódromos* (informal street vender market) and technology shopping malls geared toward the low income public, with attractive prices thanks to their entry into the country without paying taxes. In general, MPXs have touch screen, front and rear camera, wireless internet, room for two or more chips, and broadcast TV reception. In the formal market, only mp3 and mp4 format are accepted as audio and video file compression formats. In the field of work done in these low income markets, one could find the extension of this classification to an "MPX 20" device - the salespeople don't always have the same understanding regarding the technical specification of each device, but the differences are related to the presence of features such as GPS, the number of chips (two, three or four chips on the same machine), Wi-Fi, analog and digital broadcast TV, etc.

Despite the issue of piracy, an interesting phenomenon in the context of low income markets occurred - the wide diffusion of MPX type gadgets helped accelerate the habit of watching TV on your phone. That led to noticing another dynamic that is not very common - a technological "novelty," in this case the ability to watch TV on a mobile phone, was pioneered and broadly disseminated among a low-income public. The acceptance of products with analog TV in the informal market, especially among low income groups, aroused corporate interest to market this type of phone in Brazil legally. The first to venture into the market was EUTV, which in 2009 obtained the approval of the Brazilian regulatory agency to market a model produced by the Chinese company E-Techco. The CEO of EUTV when the device was released made it clear that their commercial strategy was to tackle the "gray market" of smuggled mobile phones by offering a model with two SIM cards and access to broadcast television, two of the most attractive MPX features.

Thus, the practice of watching TV on mobile phones, not only was pioneered by low income groups; it went on to inspire the market of legally established companies, such as Samsung and Motorola, to open spaces for the sale of devices like the MPXs widely consumed in the informal market . The important thing to note is that the wide diffusion of MPX type phones helped to accelerate the habit of watching TV on mobile in the context of low income groups, and not in the middle and upper classes, as would be expected. Therefore, the "newness" of the mobile TV did not spread from a "trickle-down" (SIMMEL, 1957) effect - When the subordinate classes imitate the fashions that arise from the upper classes - but from the increased consumption found in low-income groups. As Miller and Horst (2006) already noted in their ethnography of mobile phone use in the lower classes of Jamaica, consumer practices often follow very different paths than those designed by the technology developers.

## Watching TV of a mobile phone: conversations in movement

Unlike the cases where the TV is already inserted in a context of public and collective reception - as is the case of an operating device in a bar serving the enjoyment of the group of people present - the focus here is on situations that would be, "by definition" for individual use, but eventually are transformed into collective audiences. The chosen situation for observation occurs in public spaces where TV programming can be accessed by most people using by *Xingling* type phones; within the scope of the article, the analysis will focus on the use of mobile phones in urban trains.

There is a certain methodological difficulty in capturing less obvious moments of television watching, outside the domestic routines, and that multiply in numerous audience situations, such as the passengers ride in a taxi with a TV. In the specific situation of the mobile phone TV audience, the challenge of the observation intensifies due to the erratic

character of an audience who are in a state of mobility and without a predetermined for experiencing the mean.

The city of Rio de Janeiro receives a high number of workers who live in neighboring cities, and who spend about four hours a day round trip from home to work. Some of these people have of low-skill jobs, and use as urban mass transportation trains[2], subways, and buses.

The SuperVia trains circulating in the city are heavily criticized by the population - the poor maintenance of the rail cars and the delays are constant complaints. In travel, the environment is very noisy, especially with the screams of the many street vendors who circulate among the cars, offering various types of goods. Food is the most offered, but other products are present, such as DVDs, fingernail painting kit, and various technological items.

Since the trips are long, one way to pass the time is to share what you're doing on your phone with someone. In one particular observed scene, a mother shows the phone to her friend with a photo that will be posted on Facebook. In another situation, three guys talk while one of them asks another is he can use his own headphones on his friend's mobile phone, who is currently listening to a local radio on the device. The music plays loud enough for all those around to hear. In several other scenes that were observed, like those reported, the phone serves a collective purpose, linked to entertainment and the exercise of an intense sociability among peers, and is not restricted to the sole enjoyment device owner.

The soap opera *Avenida Brasil* - transmitted by TV Globo in 2012 with high ratings and a strong presence in social networks - deserves more detailed comments regarding the addressed reception context. Those who returned later from work in public transportation[3] watched their mobile device, often the broadcast content with those around

[2] The field work so far has been concentrated in the context of SuperVia, the rail network that transports passengers from neighboring municipalities to the city of Rio de Janeiro.

[3] The soap opera began a little after 9:00 p.m.

them, thus beginning a long conversation about the program. Here I highlight the reception of the program by maids[4].

The plot of the novel revolved around the revenge plan of the character Rita/Nina, abused in childhood by Carminha, her former stepmother. To carry out her plan, Rita takes a job as a cook in Carminha house, and ends up taking on the pain of the maids working at the house, who were constantly humiliated by their employer.

When watching the soap opera on their mobile phone, along with other maids heading home, a certain "sense of class" arose among this social group to condemn the authoritarianism and arrogance of Carminha's character. It was time to "speak ill" of employers and their excess of arrogance in relations to the maids, when the conversation revolved around real cases that had occurred. The maids did not participate in the intense activity on social networks caused by the soap opera because they were not Twitter users, but they amplified the program's reception in daily conversations on the way to and from work, both while watching on their phone, or when commenting on the previous day's episode. Eventually, this collective conversation about the soap opera continued at the employer's house.

Conversations about television programs may become a privileged type of dialogue, information exchange, moral judgments, and knowledge of new lifestyles between the worlds of the maids and their employers (AUTHOR). It is worth remembering here the idea of "shared repertoire", as proposed by Hamburger (1998), where the most important thing is the very feeling of sharing in a hierarchical society like Brazil:

> While social, economic, and cultural segregation segments and divides Brazilian society, television allows the possibility of connection, even if it is virtual. Viewers from subordinate and dominant classes share the same fascination with what they, in tune with the environment, call 'modernity'. (HAMBURGER, 1998, p. 485).

[4] The material regarding the reception of the Avenida Brasil was not collected during the train journeys, but in conversations later on with the maids.

The soap opera has, over the years, allowed the consolidation of formal narrative conventions that broadly in the public domain. Different interpretations are possible because everyone "knows how" to watch a soap opera (HAMBURGER, 1998, p. 483). The idea of "shared repertoire," therefore, does not imply a consensus of feeling; much to the contrary, it draws attention to the field of meaning negotiation that can be understood when the analytical focus is on the reception.

This "shared repertoire" created by the fact that the soap opera is viewed throughout the country by all social classes, is structured and strengthened every day when maids and their employers comment and discuss the content of various programs, especially the soap operas.

Regarding *Avenida Brasil*, the maid-employer relationship became the subject of many conversations in the workplace, where on the one hand, the maid did not achieve "catharsis" in relation to her domestic employment that was happening on the trains, but she would discuss with her employer about the absurdities of the authoritarian behavior and ill-treatment imposed by the character Carminha to her employees. In a country with strong oral tradition and intense sociability (DAMATTA, 1981) such as Brazil, just as important as watching the soap opera is the ability to talk about it, especially when the television product interests all walks of life, as was the case in *Avenida Brasil*. The act of watching TV on a mobile phone allows conversations that were previously restricted to homes and the workplace to be amplified and taken into the public space. Talking about yesterday's episode was already a habit; to be able to watch it on a mobile phone when the program is being aired increases the engagement of all who are in the environment, thereby creating a great collective conversation.

## Orality and collective uses surrounding media

We can now think about the importance of orality in Brazilian society and how the communication phenomena in the country are strongly marked by sociability and interaction, even before the advent of new media. In fact, these more recent technologies came to accentuate certain

cultural aspects that already existed. The anthropologist Gilberto Freyre (1987), in his classic *Casa Grande & Senzala*, already emphasized the strong oral tradition of Brazilian society since the colonization period, expressed in animated conversations present in the streets and in oral narratives with which the slaves, great storytellers, entertained the children of plantation owners. This was a social context that appreciated conversation more than writing, which has always had excessive formality airs opposite the "soft" speech found in the streets, the result of cultural exchanges between the groups that formed the country - slaves, Portuguese colonists, and Indians.

Glancing at everyday moments in Brazilian society where media consumption takes place in a shared manner, it is worth highlighting a typical scene in the city of Rio de Janeiro, which is the collective reading the news in the newspapers on display in the newsstands. The stand owners hang the daily newspapers on the outside of the stalls in the morning, and the people passing by gather in front of the headlines, weaving occasional comments regarding the various issues printed on the front pages. The headlines of the daily newspapers are read and commented on, without necessarily making a purchase.

In the ongoing research commented on in the article, it was also possible to observe a variation of this collective conversation around a media. In addition to monitoring the subjects in urban trains, the ethnography extends to a low-income community in the city of Rio de Janeiro. In the study site, a cable car takes residents to the highest points of the community. The driver of the trolley always left a popular newspaper inside the car, which was read and commented on by the driver or by any other passenger, drawing out comments from other people. In one scene observed on the cable car, after reading their own newspaper, a person sarcastically commented out loud about the behavior of a controversial footballer, hearing opinions of support and disapproval of some passengers. During the same route, other people read a newspaper headline. The newspaper was not read introspectively; on the contrary, it was the common for the person reading the paper to externalize their feeling to

others, expecting some kind of comment. Thus, the newspaper was read in parts and commented on during the short trip home.

This "socialized" reading reminds us of the contrast made by Chartier (1993) about possible modes of relationship between reader and object being read. For the author, there is a kind of intensive reading that marked a historical period in which reading was scarce and was connected to various practices, such as reciting what was read to others. This is opposed to extensive reading, which would be imposed as of the 18th Century, where the texts came to be read individually, in intimacy and silence. Chartier suggests that there was not a replacement of the first mode for the second, but that they can coexist in the experiences with reading in different social groups. Reports of socialized reading observed during the field experience could, to some extent, be associated with this idea of extensive reading, where the collective context is emphasized through sharing of content read within the group. In the contemporary case, the literacy rate is also low in the social group studied - either due to the low educational level of the population, or due to economic constraints that limit the purchase of newspapers.

Some authors are especially concerned about emphasizing the socio-cultural environment where the communication technologies are inserted, inviting a closer look at the interactions, networks, and sociability that precede the experiences with the media and are reconfigured from there. Miller and Horst (2006), in their ethnography of mobile phones in Jamaica, have shown how such objects are incorporated in the strategies to strengthen extensive existing social networks before the adoption of the new media. Winkin (1998), who also fits into this line of studies, thinks about technology "novelties" within specific cultural frameworks, focusing on broader interactions that reveal collective aspect of the studied practices, such as in his study of primary and secondary schools in Europe. In that work, Winkin (*ibid*) accompanied collective relations with the computer and not individual "student-machine" relationships, noting the behaviors and interactions surrounding the technological means. Analyzing the email exchange ritual between

children from schools located in England and Italy, he noted that the student's greatest pleasure was, in fact, sending and receiving text messages, which was totally secondary to what was being said, for example.

In previous work of the author (AUTHOR), studying gaming enthusiasts in popular internet cafes in Rio de Janeiro, a reception context was observed where learning the game happened through strong collective sharing. The group in question consisted of World of Warcraft gamers, classified in the MMORPG - Massive Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Game category - which are online games for multiple users. The use of computers at the internet café was interesting due to a specific aspect - not only were the users connected and interacting with other players online; there was also major interaction with the other people who were in the physical environment of the internet café. Young people, whether they were or were not in front of the computer, communicated intensively swapping "tips" on the best strategies and actions to be used during the game. The "teaching" was passed by on by someone who had greater expertise in the game than the others, a role is taken alternately by multiple actors - the internet café staff, and more experienced players. Various times, navigation was really shared when someone would take the mouse from who was in front of the computer, playing for a while, and then return the game control back to his colleague. Learning revolved around tips regarding the general logic of WoW, step by step instructions, the best strategies to be adopted, the meaning of words and phrases in English, and also the best way to handle the mouse and keyboard in order to achieve greater combat agility.

There could be two, three, or four people around a single computer, with one "officially" starring in the adventure, another with more expertise taking the mouse at times to advance through steps, and third commenting on the game or just "messing around". In a way, here is a counterpoint to the original idea of the personal computer - in the internet café environment I found machines that were collective to some extent, working in a collaborative manner, as a kind of "shared personal computer."

In the context of the cited research, the online gaming platform is collectively appropriated on a "physical" level, exacerbating the already interactive nature of the game. The interaction and collective learning of the game that takes place in the Internet café is the result of a dynamic audience that floats between machines forming new groups over time. The internet café player is affected by an ample sociability that is established there, as well as online interaction provided by the game. This is a scenario where the relationship with the computer must be seen beyond the individual level - or a strict man-machine interface - seeking to understand the communication phenomenon from the perspective of interactions that show the importance of conversation and sociability in the constitution of their own experience with the medium.

## Comparative dimensions between Brazil and South Africa

It is important to remember that the discussion about the economic rise of population segments - and new "consumer markets" - goes far beyond the Brazilian context, and is a topic of much debate in many developing countries, such as South Africa and India. In the latter country, for example, the economic growth of the poorest segments of the population has clashed with the old caste system, which although officially abolished the Indian society in 1950, remains as a strong hierarchy element and inhibits social mobility.

While they seek similarities and differences between the processes of socio-economic changes taking place, we can pay attention to other more "traditional" aspects present in the South Atlantic countries. So, shifting the reflection from Brazil to South Africa, some studies point to the presence of consumer practices related to technology that indicate similarities with the Brazilian context being studied.

The survey by Walton et al (2012), for example, investigates sociability among young residents of Khayelitsha, a poor community located in the urban outskirts of Cape Town, through certain mobile phone uses in a context where the devices are often shared. As other studies with

low-income groups show (Smyth et al, 2010; Silva, 2010), Bluetooth use in the community appears as an important recourse to face high internet costs. The study shows how the way the industry thinks about the uses of the objects can become very detached from the social practices of some groups. Thus, certain device features related to "protection" and "privacy" end up creating problems in contexts such as the South African study, where the emphasis is on sharing. While in the realm of mobile phone production it is assumed that "personal privacy" is something that is universally desirable, in the daily lives of the surveyed young people, the use the machine's privacy features can lead to conflict, either by expressing an anti-social behavior that hinders the sharing, or by suggesting that the person has "something to hide."

An important point to note is that cell sharing should not be seen in a deterministic way or as a simple consequence of "economic scarcity," because even in poor places where people have their individual mobile phone, collective uses can be observed. These practices together should not be seen as embedded in a kind of "sharing culture", since the maintaining of distinction and hierarchy mechanisms can be found, as in Burreell's (2010) survey in Uganda, where women were excluded from cell-sharing practices.

Schoon (2013), in turn, conducted an ethnographic study with low-income youth in the city of Grahamstown in South Africa, in an economic scenario of high unemployment. The author shows that the observed use of mobile phones is very different from the prevailing habits in developed countries, where ownership of the devices usually facilitates mobility, providing the extension of geographical barriers and freedom from the ties to one's original community. In the South African case study, the notion of "privacy" found in the middle classes did not exist, since a busy social life takes place in the street for everyone to see. In Grahamstown, the uses of mobile phones, with widely used features such as chat applications, end up intensifying local experiences, strengthening community ties, thanks to the incorporation of technology in situations like the "gossip and dating rituals." The result, according to

Schoon, is a condition of "immobility", since the young people remain attached to social facts defined by race, class, and gender.

The author of this article, in a study conducted in a poor community in the city of Rio de Janeiro, (AUTHOR), found results similar to those of Schoon (2013), with respect to an emphasis on local sociability in the use of social networks through computers. In this study, the posts on the Orkut social network were primarily about comments and photos of events with friends from school or the neighborhood, with people with whom they had just seen or spoken to, strengthening existing ties. They even denied the possibility of a "true friendship" emerging from the virtual world, as was stated in the words of one young informant: "*A friend of everyday life is with me, they know what I do, what I don't do, and they know what I like and what I don't like. But an Internet friend has no idea what I like or what I do not like.*"

Thus, South African and Brazilian studies discussed here show, as a whole, types of technological appropriations that find a special stage for the dynamics of local sociability through the collective and shared dimensions of these technologies.

## Concluding Remarks

This paper sought to discuss certain technology consumption practices among the low income groups, where the collective uses appear as a central aspect of the observed cultural dynamics.

The uses of mobile phones with TV addressed the occurrences in a specific cultural context, marked by strong orality and sociability - someone's mobile phone provides conversation content and fun for others, going beyond the owner, extending the reception moment to a permanent process of interpersonal relationships. As seen in the example of the maids in the soap opera *Avenida Brasil*, watching TV on a mobile phone during the commute to and from work allows the discussion regarding the relationship between maids and employer to be amplified.

After incorporating the investigation of certain situations in the South African cultural context, the need for the relativization of individual

consumption methods for communication goods is suggested as part of the search for a greater understanding of collective uses regarding television, mobile phones, and computers. It is about thinking in a broader way than the person-machine interface, seeking to emphasize interaction dynamics that occur in these practices and in the cultural systems that serve as the backdrop for technological experiences.

The Brazilian and South African studies mentioned found that technology is used in ways that relativize the dominant model in developed countries, where mobile phones are usually synonymous with individualization and geographic and social mobility. The discontinuity between the spheres of production and the spheres of consumption ends up pointing to technology consumption practices that are based on a public, collective and shared approach.

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