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FAMILIAL INTERACTION
AS A MODULATOR OF
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BEAUTY PRODUCTS

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FAMILIAL INTERACTION AS A MODULATOR OF THE PROCESS OF ADOPTION AND CONSUMPTION OF BEAUTY PRODUCTS

Roberta Dias Campos

ABSTRACT

Despite theoretical maturity of innovation diffusion field, its main methodological perspective remains macro-social and quantitative. Cultural, symbolic, or social aspects of adoption experience remain to be explored, under qualitative micro-social lens. Adoption experience may be a path to outline specific social dynamics that interfere with the innovation diffusion process. In that sense, the family, as a primary socialization unit, was chosen as frame to social environment investigation, drawing upon socialization, family and intergenerational influence literature. Fifteen lower class Brazilian families, with three generations of woman each, were interviewed and observed for one to two days. The in-home interviews were guided by a biographical approach, for both historical context and identification of innovation adoption moments. The findings of this study demonstrate that the family works as a modulator of innovation consumption, through flows of reproduction or renewal of family practices, influenced by social structure, cultural values and taste.

Keywords: diffusion of innovation, family, intergenerational influence, life story, beauty, socialization

RESUMO

Apesar da maturidade teórica do campo de difusão de inovações, sua perspectiva metodológica dominante permanece macrossocial e quantitativa. Aspectos culturais, simbólicos e sociais da experiência da adoção seguem inexplorados sob lentes qualitativas e microssociais. A experiência da adoção se oferece como um caminho para ressaltar dinâmicas específicas que podem interferir no processo de difusão de inovações. Neste sentido, a família, como unidade primária de socialização do consumidor, foi escolhida como enquadramento para uma investigação do ambiente social, desenhado a partir da literatura de socialização, família e influência entre gerações. Quinze famílias brasileiras de classe popular, com três gerações de mulheres cada, foram entrevistadas e observadas por um ou dois dias. As entrevistas domiciliares foram orientadas pela abordagem da história de vida, a fim de obter o contexto histórico do consumo e permitir a identificação dos momentos de adoção de inovações ao longo do ciclo de vida. Os resultados descrevem como a família funciona como modulador do consumo de inovações, através de fluxos de reprodução ou de renovação das práticas familiares de consumo, influenciadas pela estrutura social, valores culturais e gosto.

Palavras-chave: difusão de inovações, família, influência entre gerações, história de vida, beleza, socialização

1 – INTRODUCTION

The interest in the diffusion of innovations can be traced back several decades in the business and social science research. From the seminal work of Ryan and Grass (1943) to the first research compilations by Everett Rogers (1962) to the most recent research of the subject (FONTENELLE, 2012; GOLDENBERG et al., 2009; GOMES, MACHADO NETO and GIOTTO, 2011; GÖTZE, PRANGE and UHROVKS, 2009; MURRAY, 2009; VANDECASTEELE and GEUENS, 2010; WOOD and MOREAU, 2006), innovation has been an object of interest for managers and researchers in the field of management and marketing. The currently existing literature presents a relevant level of generalization regarding several specific aspects of diffusion, rendering popular concepts like “innovator”, “diffusion curve” and “opinion leader”, used even in publications aimed at the general public (ROGERS, 2003; CHRISTENSEN, 2003; CHRISTENSEN et al., 2004, 2008, 2009).

Not as common, however, are the approaches that adopts or are close to a micro-social point of view, describing how the adoption of innovations is received and

incorporated by consumers in their daily social interaction routines (GÖTZE, PRANGE and UHROVKS, 2009; KOZINETS, 2006; DESJEUX, 2006). Although Rogers (2003) alerts to the central role of social interaction in the diffusion process, in general, the field was kept in a quantitative, macro-social scale, seeking to describe the relationship between social-demographic variables and the willingness to adopt innovations (BASS, 1980; MAHAJAN, MULLER and BASS, 1995; FANG, 2008; STREMERSCHE et al., 2007).

As a result of the methodological lens commonly used in the field, the social group tends to be described as a relatively homogenous mass of people, where social interaction dynamics seems to be still superficially described (FISHER and PRICE, 1992; WATTS and DODDS, 2007). This conclusion naturally leads to the proposition of a qualitative approach, which, through an inductive, open and deep investigation protocol, may contribute with an alternative and complementary point of view on the subject of innovations diffusion process (DESJEUX, 2004; HIRSCHMAN, 1980, 1986).

Hence, the present research was conducted under a micro-social and interpretative perspective, which is expected to make its contribution, by allowing observation of diffusion phenomenon within its social interaction and structure contexts. Besides, innovations diffusion as a research field, has not yet been broadly considered under the tradition of cultural studies of the Consumer Culture Theory (CCT), which can provide an alternate perspective to the research mainstream (ROGERS, 2003), through a cultural and symbolic view, based on cultural value systems framing (ARNOULD and THOMPSON, 2005, 2007; McCRACKEN, 2003; OSTEGAARD and JANTZEN, 2002; GEERTZ, 1989). For its concern with social and cultural aspects of consumption, the CCT approach may enrich the diffusion field with a deepen description of social dynamics, movements and influences.

After the paradigmatic definitions, the research needed a locus decision. Which aspect, part, level or moment of the broad social experience should be investigated? The proposed research scope rested on a specific social space – the family - constantly filled with interactions, influences and negotiations, constituting a relatively definite social subspace, allowing rules and structures to emerge (COMMURI and GENTRY, 2000). The family operates a mediator function between its members and society, as it receives, absorbs and digests the influences coming up from society before passing them on to its members (RAMOS, 2006). Additionally, having families as alternative laboratories for innovation diffusion research allows bringing together two theoretical fields – family influence and innovation diffusion – that could end up complementing each other.

This choice of scope becomes even more justified when one considers the inter-generational interaction that takes place within this social group. Few are the social

spheres where individuals from one generation get to share a same space with individuals from other generations; within the family, such interaction is encouraged and, many times, even mandatory. The generation coexistence within the family has a dual role: (1) it reinforces the hierarchy within this group and confirms the determination and social structure message; and (2) by leading to a confrontation between different points of view, it promotes the experience of change, of structural reformulations, besides being a place where individual freedom is exercised. The family seems to be not only a place for intense social interaction, where one might observe the diffusion dynamics, but also a reference group where several points of view coexist by means of the inter-generational interaction (ROCHA-COUTINHO, 2006; SHAH and MITTAL, 1997; LAHAYE, POURTOIS and DESMET, 2007; COMMURI and GENTRY, 2000).

The beauty products industry was chosen as source of innovations for the research, due to its new product launch activity, at an average rate of 500 new items released in the market per month in Brazil. Additionally, Brazil constitutes the third market in the world, after only the United States and Japan (ASSOCIAÇÃO BRASILEIRA DA INDÚSTRIA DE HIGIENE PESSOAL, PERFUMARIA E COSMÉTICOS, 2010). Besides, consumer goods with short repurchase cycles in general, and beauty products in particular, have been less explored in the innovation diffusion literature (CHRISTENSEN, 2003; ROGERS, 2003).

In the search to investigate the average consumer, allowing emerging the social dynamics in innovation consumption, where any individual may be involved, this research prioritized the popular class family as an average representative of Brazilian population. Counting with 91 million people, the middle class in Brazil was, also, the social class that most benefited from the recently conquered economic stability, having grown 40% between 2003 and 2008 (VENTUROLI, 2010). The interviews were focused on suburban families of Rio de Janeiro, which represent an intermediate condition between the luxury of the city's South area (*Zona Sul*) and the relative poverty of the slums and poorer communities of the so-called *Baixada Fluminense*. It has been identified by recent studies in Brazil that women from the lower social classes are very concerned about their looks and should, thus, be considered important beauty products consumers (LIVRAMENTO, HOR-MEYLL and PESSÔA, 2011).

To summarize, the main goal of this study is to investigate the influence of familial transmission dynamics among women of popular social classes and different generations, in the process of diffusion and adoption of innovations on beauty products. By bringing the familial structure closer to the research on innovations, we hope to contribute for future studies on the relevance of the social dimension in the innovations adoption and diffusion process.

2 – LITERATURE

In order to orient the research on the social dimension of diffusion of innovations, the literature overview was organized into two areas. Firstly, general contributions on the social aspects of innovation diffusion will be presented and discussed. Then, a brief discussion of family, socialization and intergenerational influence will be outlined, to offer a conceptual basis for the social dimension analysis inside the family.

2.1 The social dimension of the innovations diffusion and adoption processes

The social and symbolic dimension of the innovation process is still seldom found in the literature and offers, therefore, some opportunities for further investigation (TAATILA, SUOMALA and SILTALA, 2006; ROGERS, 2003; KOZINETS, 2008). The relevance of social aspects, such as solidarity and influence networks, has been punctuated and studied by a few authors (WATTS and DODDS, 2007; BORG, 2008). Some indicate the wealth of diffusion research as a support to the research on influence networks, since they offer “an opportunity to pinpoint and document the social structure” (STRANG and SOULE, 1998), through the analysis of social influence patterns as a reflex of more perennial social relationships.

Rogers (2003) was one of the first authors to point out the social character of diffusion and the relevance of interactions in the innovations adoption process. By conceiving the diffusion process as an exchange of information between individuals, the author upholds the interpersonal influence as the most important factor for the determination of the persuasion that leads to the true adoption of an innovation, since, in his opinion, it is by copying other people that an individual convinces himself that it might be worth to overcome its own reluctance to try something new.

One example of Rogers contribution to a more social perspective on the diffusion process is the application of the concepts of homophily and heterophily (degrees of similarity or difference among individuals on certain social or individual attributes), first used in the communications field, to explain the diffusion process dynamics. When two or more individuals present homophily between them, the communication process will be more efficient than that observed in an environment marked by heterophily. (ROGERS and BHOWMIK, 1970/1971).

In the investigation of the innovation diffusion process, the so-called “opinion makers” have also been given special attention (BARBIERI et al., 2010; COLEMAN, KATZ and MENZEL, 1966). Such individuals, also called “opinion leaders”, “influentials” or

“stars” are capable of influencing a large number of people, acting as intermediates between mass media messages and the majority of the population (ABREU, BALDANZA and SETTE, 2008; BARBIERI et al., 2010). For Watts and Dodds (2007), however, the role of such “opinion leaders” is over-rated as the influence potential of an average individual has not, so far, been sufficiently investigated.

Some studies in the field of social sciences offer keys for the understanding of the social and symbolic dimension of the innovations diffusion and adoption process. Alter (2005) sustains that innovations are important drivers of social change and accomplish, through their diffusion, a reassessment of the social values, roles and order that had prevailed up to that moment. Desjeux (2004, 2006) considers innovation and consumption as two steps of the same system, soaked in social and cultural logics inherited from social actors, networks and social imaginary. Finally, McCracken (2003) offers a reflection on how to understand the introduction of a radical innovation (CHRISTENSEN, 2003) by the transformation process it produces in the pre-existing cultural symbolic framework (ALTER, 2005; FISHER and PRICE, 1992). In other words, the innovation becomes a constitutional and modifying element of the cultural symbolic web (GEERTZ, 1989), adding or negotiating new categories or stimulating the substitution of cultural principles.

2.2 The family as a key to reading the social dimension of innovations diffusion and consumption

Based on a relativistic perspective, that aims to bring the research on innovations (ROGERS, 2003; MAHAJAN and PETERSON, 1985; ALTER, 2005; CHRISTENSEN, 2003) closer to the perspective inaugurated by the cultural studies (OSTEGAARD; JANTZEN, 2002) and the CCT (Consumer Culture Theory – ARNOULD and THOMPSON, 2007, 2005), this work seeks in the familial dynamics some elements to rethink the diffusion and consumption of innovations. The choice of the family as both the context and the entrance door to the diffusion phenomenon provides an alternative framework to the one adopted by the traditional research, due to the consideration of the consumer as a member of a group, inserted in a particular social network, involved in negotiations and relationships and shaped by a history and a position within his family. The family makes it possible to see the consumer of innovations in his role as a social actor, and his consumption patterns as fundamentally shaped by his own context and life story.

While innovation is credited by some authors (ALTER, 2005; CHRISTENSEN, 2003) as a driving force behind the revision of social structures, the family is indicated by many as a privileged space for social reproduction (BOURDIEU, 2008), where one learns to be

an individual belonging to a society through what is known as the socialization process (DUBAR, 2009; DARMON, 2006). In other words, the family may either delay or obstruct the process of innovations adoption, in its effort to reproduce the structure of society. Some authors, however, see the family as a filter between its members and society, where new thoughts, behaviors and practices are interpreted and then retransmitted into the family environment, opening space for changes in the social order (ROCHA-COUTINHO, 2006; COMMURI and GENTRY, 2000).

The family is hence conceived in this case not as a universe where values are only diffused and reproduced, but also revised and re-interpreted. It represents a space for interaction and gathering, where different generations coexist, dialog and interact, allowing the exchange, confrontation and revision of essential values (LANI-BAYLE, 2007). By the means of beams of influence that go around within the family, two simultaneous processes take place: as the elder influence the young, a process of socialization – as well as of transmission and reproduction of a way of being, consuming and behaving socially – takes place; on the other hand, as the young influence the elder, we observe the renewal, the circulation of new values, the revision of rules and the diffusion of innovations (DARMON, 2006; DUBAR, 2009; WARD, 1974; SHAH and MITTAL, 1997).

It must be said that according to some authors only after understanding the social mechanisms of social reproduction and renewal that take place within a family is it possible to consider them as either catalyzers or hinderers for the search for innovation (ALTER, 2005; CHRISTENSEN, 2003). Mantovani, Korelo and Prado (2012) highlight that the way through which a person learns how to make decisions in its childhood influences its predisposition to adopt or reject innovations. Cotte and Wood (2004) point out to generational integration as essential for innovations diffusion, highlighting that the more the parents are perceived as innovators by their children, the more this second generation will seek innovations.

While discussing the families' influence in a broader scope (not restricted to aspects pertaining to the adoption of innovations), Shah and Mittal (1997, p. 55) suggest that family-based studies should take into consideration specific questions related to the generational integration phenomenon in order to designate the influence flows that go around in the family concerning consumption decisions or, more specifically, "the influence of one generation over another through the transmission of skills, attitudes, preferences, values and behaviors". The authors point out the power of familial relationships (mutual respect, trust between generations and the desire to cohabitate) as the main determinant, or the point of departure, for the influence flows between generations in the familial context. Ladwein, Carton and Sevin (2009) forge the term transgenerational capital, to describe the gains from intergenerational influences dynamics

between mother and daughters that get integrated into the life trajectory of the consumer. Curasi (2011) describes how older generations actively engage on value transmission, as a way of carrying on their personal history.

3 – METHODOLOGY

The aim of this work is to achieve an interpretative approach of innovations diffusion and consumption processes, by looking at them through the prism of a specific social space, represented by the family, with its unique interaction and influence flows. The preliminary assumption that constitutes the foundation of this research is that the “social system”, described in works from the innovations field as homogenous and smooth (ROGERS, 2003; CHRISTENSEN, 2003; MOORE, 2002), may in fact present irregular and uneven dynamics when seen under the lenses of a qualitative approach (DESJEUX, 2004). Data collection was made through in-depth interviews (McCRACKEN, 1988) regarding the participants’ life story or tale (*récit de vie*), as presented by Daniel Bertaux (1997), given the need for a methodology that allowed investigation of different moments of the consumers’ lives, in which they could recall getting in contact with and adopting new products.

The life story method is limited by the fact that it relies on participants’ memories (ROGERS, 2003). As an attempt to overcome this limitation, four procedures were adopted for the collection of data: (1) considering the family as an analytical unit, interviewing two generations of a same family (mother and daughter) and watching the space and behavior of a third generation (granddaughter), as a means of comparing different versions for a same event, adding details and confronting the stands adopted by each participant; (2) observing the family environment as a way on getting to know the family better and bringing observation elements into the interview (pictures, clothes); (3) doing longer interviews – at least three hours long – with each participant, giving the memory process enough time to happen; and (4) repeat some field work with some of the families, in order to deepen the information acquired.

In order to choose the participants’ profiles, we sought inspiration on the multiple generations research conducted by anthropologist Lins de Barros (1987), who adopted the technique of establishing a given generation as a pivot; as the starting point for the analysis. The central criterion used to choose the pivot generation for this work was the fact of having daughters with ages between four and ten years. The choice of children of this age was due to the possibility of observing children who already have some autonomy but still under the direct influence of their parents. Hence, the mothers of these children

were set as the pivot generation and the participants were these women (named “mothers” in the results) and their mothers (named “grandmothers”) and daughters (“granddaughters”).

The sample was chosen by using the sample saturation principle (STRAUSS and CORBIN, 2008), which was reached with 15 families. Each family had from six to ten hours of interview, summing all members from mothers and grandmothers generation, in addition to 15 direct observation visits to the participants’ homes. In 8 homes, a new, complementary, one and a half-hour long (in average) visit was scheduled with the goal of collecting further data.

For the analysis of the granddaughters’ generation, four data sources were used: (a) the information provided by their mothers, who were invited to describe the daily routine and consumption habits of their daughters; (b) the observation of their homes, bedrooms and toys; (c) pictures of the girls while interacting with the family; and, finally, (d) the information provided orally by the girls themselves who, present during the interviews, could talk about their preferences, points of view and consumption tastes.

During the interviews and observations, all information regarding the feelings and memories of the researcher concerning the places that were visited, spatial elements, the participants’ non-verbal reactions, the personal experiences of the researcher, their emotions and odd feelings were put into a field diary (BEAUD and WEBER, 1998).

The research was geographically limited to the suburbs of Rio de Janeiro, and the principle of only interviewing women from the middle popular class was observed. Such geographic delimitation offers a necessary framework to the qualitative research by reducing diversity in terms of the perspectives the participants’ might bring and by limiting their stories and experiences concerning the phenomenon to a certain time and space context.

Through the triangulation of the orally obtained data (from the in-depth interviews), the observations and the pictures taken, we tried to obtain more consistent results. The comparison between different data sources about one single family or participant offers critical elements for each isolated analysis, departing from a given single source (ALAMI, DESJEUX and GARABUAU-MOUSSAOUI, 2009; LEWIS and GRIMES, 2005). The data analysis observed the following procedure: (1) comparison of the data obtained with pre-existing categories found in the scientific literature; (2) analysis of the interviews in order to identify differences and patterns (BERTAUX, 1997); and (3) exposal of oppositions and more structuring relationships (DEMAZIERE and DUBAR, 2007). Therefore, the collected data was categorized into: inductive categories – deriving from the field work – or previous

categories – from the existing literature on the subject (ALAMI, DESJEUX and GARABUAU-MOUSSAOUI, 2009).

4 – RESULTS

The analysis of the interviews provided a rich illustration of the relationship between the way family interaction is organized and the adoption of new products. The family dynamics that determines the ways of a female consumer will be intimately related to her behavioral patterns concerning the adoption of innovations. Some aspects of these familial interaction dynamics will be detailed below, as well as the way they articulate with the consumption of beauty products.

Initially, during the investigation of the participants' life stories, in which the diachronic process of shaping a future cosmetics consumer is presented, we were able to identify two operational learning and shaping flows. The first one teaches the young consumer to replicate actions and gestures of her original environment; to be like the women in her family. This is what we shall call here reproduction flows. The second kind will be identified as renewal flows, as they correspond to the acquired knowledge that leads a young consumer to modify, renew or replace the actions of its original environment. Regarding the participants of the pivot generation, who are in most cases the first generation in these families to have had a job outside of the domestic sphere, both the reproduction and renewal flows are constantly present in their daily routines. On the one hand, they learn at home how to be a housewife and a mother with their mothers and other women in the family, and try to replicate this model when becoming a mother and housewife. On the other hand, they learn how to be a professional from other, external sources, as this is a new, unknown role for women; a new space where they need to reinvent their actions based on new references. Below, we shall illustrate how these reproduction and renewal flows participate in the participants' consumption decisions.

4.1 Reproduction flows: going back to one's origins

A woman's life and the way she develops as a social character is constantly marked by the "dialog" between the confirmation and modification of what she "has always been". For the interviewed consumers, the personal hygiene, the way she cares for her nails and hair – especially the curly, "difficult" hair – are connected to their first childhood memories. Helena (grandmother) related the way she dresses to the standard adopted when she studied in a catholic school. During her interview, she provided examples of reproductive

flows when recollecting the way her mother cared for her at home, in order to comply with school and family standards: hair well combed, cleanliness, ironed clothes, and skirt well below the knee. Today, she considers herself a “decent” and “simple” consumer, possibly based on childhood and youth references.

I have always dressed decently. I never liked short clothes, showing my belly around. I believe this comes from the time I went to a catholic school (Helena, grandmother, 60).

Reproductive consumption practices derive from examples given and transmission efforts made within the family. They might also derive, however, from a material context that only offers a certain number of options among which the young consumer may choose. This “choice” may be understood as what Bourdieu (2008) called “field of possibles” (*champs des possible*), the selection of products, practices, services and/or treatments from which the consumer will form her personal taste and make her consumption choices. Hence, while the consumer may have a certain liberty to consume whatever she wishes from the field of possibles, this freedom is restricted to the opportunities offered by this available materiality.

An example of such concept may be found in Eva’s (grandmother) and Karina’s (mother) case. Eva has always looked for hair treatment alternatives for Karina’s “difficult” and “very voluminous” hair. Throughout this time, Eva adopted exclusively products to straighten Karina’s hair, such as Henê (a chemical hair straightener cream very popular in Brazil). Eva’s search made a pre-selection of hair treatment options, focusing on a straightening effort. Maria do Carmo (grandmother) has also constantly sought options for treating her daughter’s – Ana Maria (mother) – also “difficult” hair. However, her story shows that she was open to different hair treatment and hairstyle alternatives. Her mother, Ana Maria’s grandmother, who also had a “difficult” hair, also used Henê. Maria do Carmo, however, many times opted for wearing her hair in a “natural” fashion. Hence, Ana Maria shows a different approach to that displayed by Karina when seeking solutions for treating her hair: she seems more open-minded and willing to try different things, from straightening it to wearing it voluminous and curly.

But how is this field of possibles, or material scenario of reproduction, presented to the participants and to the young women undergoing their socialization processes? The first step is through the products they find at home, which are used by other members of their families, which fit the activities they observe and which are recommended or prescribed to them by these people. At this phase happens what is called the *hairstylist*

trial, as the young woman tries the products of the other women in her family, which she can find kept or exposed in her home. It is a sort of home-made display window.

The frequent use of the *hairstylist trial* may be explained by the peculiarities of the homes that were visited. These are usually small spaces, where a large number of people coexist and where a sharing of products takes place. Some duos that participated in the research such as Sandra / Tereza, Carolina / Dora and Ana / Nair found it difficult to point out, during the interviews, to whom belonged which product.

Luana (mother) is an example of consented open sharing of her products. Clothes, make-up, creams are freely used by her daughters, who pick them straight from their mother's closet. On the occasion of purchasing her first imported bottle of perfume, however, Luana decided to hide it in a place only she knew, so she would not share it with her daughters. In order to preserve individual consumption, in this living space, consumers seem to have to hide products. Luana's consumption choices reflect even an influence and control strategy through sharing, as she chooses to buy only products that she thinks are adequate for her daughters' age. By limiting their consumption options, she creates a material offer that disseminates her own personal values.

4.2 Hair straightening or relaxation products: from the Henê to the progressive brush

The interviews given by the participants for what concerns hair treatment reveal the interaction of new products with pre-established structures, both in the families and in the Brazilian society at large, through social exclusion and segregation mechanisms. Initially, when comparing hair relaxing products to the chemical brushes, it is possible to notice that they present two different diffusion mechanisms. The use of hair straightening products follows the reproduction of daily family habits through which mothers teach their daughters how to seek and use solutions to deal with a hair considered as "difficult". In this case, family members and close friends prove to have more influence on the decision regarding the use or not of a certain product than the media and hair care professionals from the local salon, who have a more informative role ("here's a new product!"). Hence, even if women do try new products in the hair salon, it is at home, by exchanging impressions with family members, that the decision to adopt or not a new product is made.

The grandmothers' generation confirms that the Henê was adopted as a hair care product mainly by following their own mothers' examples. According to Sueli (grandmother, 42), the Henê was "the salvation for bad hair", because "there wasn't anything else". Eva (grandmother, 60), recalls her satisfaction with the Henê, which "straightened the hair, dyed her hair and did not make the hair dry". Besides, the fact of combining hair dye and straightening properties was something unthinkable for the upper

60 year-old interviewees, at the time of their youth. The continued use of Henê did, however, bring some problems: as it altered the structure of the hair itself, the treatment caused the permanent loss of the hair's curls.

Regarding chemical brushes, as a product that has been recently introduced, there is a lack of qualification within the family for its members to have much influence. Therefore, hair care professional and the media become the main influences on the decision to use such treatment, along with friends who have already tried and recommend it.

The analysis of the interviews for what concerns hair treatment products seems to indicate a first learning process regarding the consumption of new products that is connected to familial dynamics: both the reproductive flows, in which the behavior of previous generations is mimicked, and the renewal flows, when this same behavior is rejected, constitute two possible contexts for diffusion processes. In other words, innovation may be embraced as a way of modifying existing structures, as supported by some authors (ALTER, 2005), but also to reinforce existing social and symbolic structures, within a reproductive dynamic. Still regarding the case of the hair straightening methods, the decision of using chemical brushes seems to indicate the existence of a symbolic motor that organizes esthetic standards in the Brazilian society in a specific way: enforcing the straight hair standard and the volume control. Under this point of view, the multiplication of new solutions does not mean diversity of acceptable hair styles, but, on the contrary, points towards a reduction in such diversity.

Besides practical reasons, such as the difficulty of dealing with, caring for, and combing curly or very voluminous hair on a daily basis – mentioned many times by the participants – the arrival of the chemical brush seems to deal with yet another issue, pertaining to the Brazilian social imaginary and associated with deeper moral values according to which the straight hair is hierarchically superior to the curly hair in the bodies hierarchy in the Brazilian social imaginary (BOUZÓN, 2008). The racial issue was seldom mentioned in an open way during the interviews, but sometimes it underlies comments regarding most of Brazilian black people's hair ("difficult", "hard", "bad") or pointed towards a preference for the straight hair, closer to the "domesticated" mulatto described by Freyre (2002). Sueli is the participant who comes closer to explaining her desire of having a different look:

I want to make it straight because straight hair is easier and cheaper. I would like to have these two things: light-colored eyes and straight hair. (Sueli, grandmother, 42)

Therefore, the use of the Henê as a hair straightener, of hair relaxation to control the volume and of chemical brushes to obtain a perfectly straight hair seems to serve a logic which organizes the bodies according to a legitimation hierarchy (BOURDIEU, 2008), in which the straight hair occupies a dominant position. The participants confirmed, hence, the dominance of reproduction flows in the consumption of hair treatment methods, keeping the mother and other women from the family as the main source of influence in this decisional process.

4.3 Renewal flows: reinventing oneself as a consumer

The practices which are determined by the renewal flows seem to appear in two distinctive situations. In the first case, when the young woman must play a role that her mother never had to, such as getting a job. In the second case, when she makes a critical evaluation of the practices that were passed on to her, comparing them to her own current reality. When the set of practices she adopted during her childhood and youth no longer seems to work for her, the young woman starts seeking new solutions. Even on reproduction flows one can sometimes observe the appearance or infiltration of new elements that make possible and even stimulate the creation of renewal practices. These are people, places and media elements that broaden the existing *field of possibles*, allowing the young consumers to rethink their consumption choices.

The main examples of these elements are the school and work friends and colleagues as well as neighbors. Normally, these sources of outside influence are girls more or less of the same age or slightly older, who share the same challenges in a given phase of their lives (such as the first job or boyfriend) and exchange new findings and experiences, often providing better solutions to the needs of these young women than those known to their original familial and domestic universes. The products brought by these friends are a sort of display window for new possibilities which have been tested and approved by people who share their age and life style. Besides, the young women have a chance of testing their friends' products, reducing the risk of a first purchase without any previous references. Cousins and friends seem to work many times as translators of a commercial field that shows itself every time more and more diversified, and which seems too complicated for the mothers to keep up with or to know in detail.

Along this learning process, the participants of the pivot generation often acquire a repertoire of practices broader than that of their mothers, becoming, as adults, influences for them, in what Shah and Mittal (1997) call reverse intergenerational influence by expertise. Ana Maria, for instance, plays the role of expert in certain procedures, being responsible for her mother's care routines, such as hair dyeing and eyebrow trimming.

The opening of the field of possibilities can also come from the contact with other new social or cultural classes, where the participant has the chance of acquiring a cultural or even social baggage that differs from that of her original environment (BOURDIEU, 2008). Lilian (mother) is the daughter of a doorman in a building in the up-class neighborhood of Laranjeiras, in Rio's South area, and lived with her family in the building where her father worked. She therefore spent her childhood playing with the children whose families lived in the building, with whom she had the chance of getting to know new products, to travel and to diversify her repertoire of possibilities.

Luciana (mother) lived a similar experience when she studied in the Instituto de Educação, an excellence public education institution that attracted, therefore, students from all parts of the city. This made Luciana leave an environment where she interacted with her neighbors – who were also her school colleagues – and immerse herself in a universe of people from different origins. For many, the workplace will have the same role of renewing the material scenario, through the knowledge acquired from the work colleagues. Alzira (grandmother) recalls the story of a friend who knew a lot about make-up and who taught her tricks and introduced her to new products. In Tereza's case, becoming a Natura¹ consultant broadened her make-up knowledge and skills. She claims having left a "basic" level of knowledge on the subject for a more diversified use.

A final aspect in the process of shaping a new beauty products consumer refers to how differently it develops depending on the time, generation or family context in which it takes place. Our findings indicate that in families where there are more similarities between mother and daughter regarding their respective social roles, the influence of the mother on her daughter's development process can be significant. On the other hand, the bigger the difference observed in these roles, the greater will be the daughter's tendency for embracing renewal practices and searching for new references outside the familial and home environment.

This articulation between consumption standards (i.e. between reproduction and renewal aspects) and similarity between the women participating in this socialization process indicates how tightly bound are the consumer's and the individual's socialization. It is possible to say that the consumer's socialization is strongly conditioned by the social role she is "designated" for during her upbringing. A woman becomes a lipstick consumer as she learns how to be a woman – or maybe because she learns to be a woman. Therefore, it seems impossible to describe the process that forms a consumer without taking into consideration the broader context of her social development.

It is necessary, thus, to proceed to a contrast of a consumer's life's trajectory and of her development as a consumer of beauty products, making one the context or symptom of the other. Such approach reveals, through the analysis of the interviews performed for this work, that the development of consumers from the grandmothers' generation presents stronger traces of reproduction, while traces of renewal prevail in the mothers generation. In fact, even after having moved away from their town of origin and having left their

¹ Natura is a large mass-consumption Brazilian company, specialized on door-to-door commercialization of a broad line of personal care products (hair products, body and face products, make-up, moisturizers, baby care products, perfumes). The consultants are the door-to-door Natura representants that present and sell Natura's products to their own network or neighborhood.

original families, many participants belonging to the grandmothers' generation still kept consuming standards similar to those found in their original families. This may be explained by the fact that many of these women ended up working as housekeepers or cleaning ladies in other peoples' homes as they came to Rio de Janeiro. Some of the participants did learn some practices from the women they worked for, but seldom incorporated them to their own lives, as these did not seem to "belong" to their social condition.

Regarding the pivot generation, the picture changes greatly. First of all, because women in this generation have access to a larger offer of products if compared to their mothers' youth. On top of that, they are compelled by their families to leave their homes to study and/or find a job, for which they need to make use of new elements that their mothers do not seem to know at any level. Karina (mother) describes the consumption habits of her mother, Eva, as "simple" and tries to justify such simplicity by the fact that her mother is a "housewife", all while depicting her as "a reference" for what concerns make-up and nail polish products. Karina's consumption habits are, in fact, much more diversified than Eva's (grandmother) have ever been: besides wearing make-up to go to work and to go out, she embraced a whole range of products and colors that her mother never claimed to use. Karina nowadays plays a social role very different to that of her mother: she is a professional, goes to college, was married twice and wants to work as a professional in Rio's carnival. At Eva's time, a woman had fewer options in terms of work. Karina's story indicates she will learn a lot in terms of make-up products in an executive secretary course, shaping her own make-up consumption habits.

What about the process the granddaughters are going through nowadays? Will it be marked more by reproductive or renewal flows? Following the same logic and from what was said either by the mothers and the granddaughters during the interviews, it seems that the new generation will follow the example of their mothers and become professionals. It seems that they will have in their mothers – with whom they have, as seen, a lot of similarity – an important reference for what concerns the consumption of products used to support such activities. It was possible to notice, in the households visited during this research, that the young girls are fascinated by the products used by their mothers. When asked about her older daughter's favorite clothes, Luana answers, without thinking twice: "mine!" Therefore, the distancing between mothers and daughters experienced by the mothers' generation regarding the grandmothers' generation seems greatly reduced for what concerns the relationship between the pivot and the granddaughters' generations.

On the other hand, a material scenario more adequate for the promotion of renewal flows seems to be gaining momentum and acceptance in the domestic and familial environment. A significant part of the toys preferred by the observed girls make

reference to a universe that goes way beyond their households, containing external or foreign elements and references to professional categories unknown to or not performed by women from their original social condition. The access to the internet, to shopping malls, to television, to movies, to toys, and to private schools are all elements that contribute to open up a child's material universe, bringing new information that their mothers may not know or may not know how to deal with. Hence, although the impulse for renewal that lies on the differences between mother and daughter seems to be weaker for the granddaughters' generation, changes to their material scenario may suggest that renewal flows may gain new momentum.

Going through the declarations provided by the participants, it is possible to identify two consumption universes that stand out as illustrations of specific social processes of innovations diffusion: the consumption of hair care products (straightening, relaxing, coloring and massaging products) and the introduction to the use of make-up products at a given moment of a girl's life cycle.

4.4 Make-up as a material tool for playing new social roles

Regarding the use of make-up, it was possible to realize that the embracing of innovations is closely related to the beginning of a woman's professional life and to the changes that it brings to her social role. It is an event that Hirschman and Wallendorf (1979) describe as an accumulation of roles, in which an individual is called to perform new roles. Regarding the participants, having a substantial knowledge about make-up becomes very important, especially in their workplaces, and causes them to re-organize their daily routines. This connection between make-up and the conquering of a first job appeared in the stories of the grandmothers' generation – and mainly among those who had a job, such as Alzira (grandmother, 60) and Irene (grandmother, 68). However, it was on the mothers' interviews that a more systematic use of such products could be observed.

For most of the participants, make-up is not something that you learn about at home. Other than "just a little lipstick", the acquisition of such knowledge happened outside the domestic environment and is usually associated with the acquisition of other sets of knowledge related to their professional roles. Besides, even if these women stop, at any given moment, trying and purchasing new products, they will keep a minimum set of uses that is more sophisticated than that observed in their original familial environment, which reveals a renewal flow of consumption pattern for what concerns make-up products. It is likely, however, that the granddaughters' generation will, as opposed to preceding generations, develop its relationship with – and knowledge about – make-up products based on their mothers' examples. While observing the children in many households we

could see them handling different make-up products, which belonged to themselves or to their mothers, in evident displays of taste formation and rehearsal by imitation processes. Hence, if a generational perspective is adopted, innovations regarding make-up become determined by reproduction flows, in which daughters learn from their mothers', sisters' and cousins' examples.

5 – FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

As far as a research subject, the family proves to be very challenging, not only due to its diversity, but also for being an object in permanent transformation. New types of family indicate new possible group organization and new possible relationships between their members (BARROS, 2006; DÉCHAUX, 2007; EPP and PRICE, 2008), which calls for new research efforts. Many authors have and still do research on the subject of familial influence and socialization, both in the consumers' behavior field (CARTER and McGOLDRICK, 2005; COMMURI and GENTRY, 2000; SHAH and MITTAL, 1997; EPP and PRICE, 2008), and in the broader specter of human sciences (BOURDIEU, 2008; DARMON, 2006; DUBAR, 2009). With the exception of a few examples, however – such as Cotte and Wood's research (2004) on familial influence on the consumer's degree of receptivity to innovations –, few studies have tried to associate the subjects of family, primary socialization and innovations adoption processes.

According to this study's proposition to offer an interpretative approach combining the research on innovations (ALTER, 2005; CHRISTENSEN, 2003; MAHAJAN and PETERSON, 1985; ROGERS, 2003) and the Consumer Culture Theory perspective (ARNOULD and THOMPSON, 2007, 2005), we tried to investigate the influence of familial transmission dynamics between women from lower social classes (representing the average Brazilian consumer) and different generations, in the beauty products innovations diffusion process.

The results indicate that the process that shaped the participants into consumers, which takes place in their homes, is based on flows of reproduction and renewal of the uses and life styles of their original environment. These flows will then modulate, filter and conduct these individuals' patterns of consumption and of adoption of innovations as they provide goals other than consumption. The adoption that shows more traces of reproduction will validate, by the family group, taste standards, values and uses that are common therein. Renewal flows, on the other hand, demand a search for information outside the familial environment, establishing an opposition or an alternative to the uses which were internalized during the transformation of the individual into a consumer. The

results also indicate that depending on the generation and on the type of product, one or another flow may prevail.

Among the participants, many did not establish a clear connection between their personal tastes and those of their mothers, but indicated the existence of such process by depicting an environment where products, clothes and consumption experiences were shared. Through such processes these consumers seem to absorb, even if unwillingly, consumption patterns that work as filters to new offers; daughters of women who have always used little make-up, for instance, seem to have a tendency for choosing “lighter colors”, for using “just a little lipstick or eyeliner”. Hence, even in a segment in which evolution is stimulated by an ever more diverse commercial offer, the foundations of taste, which were set during childhood, remain at play. The formation of a consumer’s taste sets its roots in the unconscious portion of the mind during the primary socialization process, proving that even in cases where two generations seem to have very few similarities between them (SHAH and MITTAL, 1997) a reproduction behavior may arise. Besides, differently to what most people may think, an innovation may be embraced to confirm or reproduce a pre-existing social structure, and not necessarily to transform it.

Finally, evidence shows that the process that leads to the adoption and diffusion of innovations dialogs closely and intimately with invisible and unconscious elements of the individual’s mind – such as the formation of taste and the silent example – which are very hard to identify or to bring up through a questionnaire. Besides, it spreads by the work of the curious and active hands of a consumer, who reinvents with its creativity what the industry and the professional propose to her, manipulating influence sources as much as the others believe she can be manipulated by them. Hence, under a micro-social perspective, the process of adopting and disseminating innovations confronts, in the richness of the daily consumption routine, what we wish to sale, what we want to be, and what we want to buy. The consumer acts, produces, subverts, resists and teaches.

As a suggestion for future research, one path that could be worth exploring is the investigation of the ties between the internet, innovations and the consumption of beauty products. The interviews done for this work showed that women use the internet on a daily basis, to look, among other things, for information on beauty products and services. Another aspect which came up during the interviews and that might be worth investigating is the role of men in the adoption and diffusion of innovations in the familial environment.

Yet another subject commonly mentioned during the interviews and that could not be better detailed in this work is the leisure and pleasure dimension of consumption in these less privileged social classes. It deserves more attention in future studies as it seems to penetrate different consumption routines and, as said, due to the fact that it was

frequently mentioned during the interviews and observations. From the Avon and Natura catalogs, passing by the weekend visit to the mall as a leisure option, to the pleasure of looking at display windows, consumption seems to fill an important space in a function that gains proportions larger than simply responding to unfulfilled needs.

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