

Rural women and their mediated uses of ICTs: tensions and continuities in gender inequalities¹

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Abstract

The paper explores the map of communicative mediations of culture (MARTIN-BARBERO, 2003) for the analysis of daily practices of women farmers in relation to Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). Thus, we have adopted also a gender perspective in the analysis. The investigated group consists of farming families living in a rural municipality in Rio Grande do Sul and with an economy structured in tobacco production. Regarding the use of Martín-Barbero's map, this has provided conditions to note that the use of ICTs is affected by different dimensions, specifically, the *institutionality*, *sociability*, *technicity* and *rituality*. Although this study has identified tensioning spaces, it is necessary to recognize the predominance of continuities in gender relations when observing the habits, routines and use of ICTs from women investigated.

Keywords: Mediations; Martin-Barbero; Rural context; Gender relations; ICT.

Introduction

In this study, we explore the use of the map of Communicative Mediations of Culture (MARTÍN-BARBERO, 2003) as a methodological, and mainly interpretative, key, in the analysis of daily practices of rural women regarding information and communication technologies (ICTs). The data collection, within the context of an interdisciplinary research², during 2014 and 2015, was theoretically shaped by the understanding that practices are formed by habit: regular, oblivious activities, strongly tied to contexts that give them meaning (COULDRY, 2010). Henceforth, habit is the central routine space to understand

1 This article is an reviewed and expanded version of the one presented in the XIII Congreso Latinoamericano de Investigadores de la Comunicación. Thematic Group 7 – Estudios de Recepción [Reception Studies].

2 The investigation joins two different groups in two different research projects, connected to two different post-graduation programs – one focused on Regional Development, at UNISC (Universidade de Santa Cruz do Sul), and the other focused on Social Communication, at PUCRS (Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul) – and two teams with a diverse background. Both projects are supported by national research institutions: *Mulheres, práticas cotidianas e tecnologias de comunicação: o caso de jovens e adultas relacionadas à cadeia agroindustrial do tabaco* (MCTI/CNPq/SPM-PR/MDA Nº 32/2012) and *Tecnologias de comunicação nas práticas cotidianas: o caso de famílias relacionadas à cadeia agroindustrial do tabaco* (MCTI/CNPq Nº 14/2014).

the dynamics surrounding the symbolic appropriation of technologies. If, on the one hand, we understand such approach as an embrace of the notion of displacement of research towards the diverse contexts of social life (highlighting the individual's practices), on the other hand, it intends to sustain the gaze on the properly communicative aspect implicated in it. In this sense, the “communicative mediations of culture” – *institutionality*, *sociability*, *technicity* and *rituality* – would be the enablers to recognize such aspect.

Thus, this is the foundation for our motivation to understand practices related to media – from radio, television, and newspaper, to mobile phone, tablet and computer – experienced by rural women, residents of a Rio Grande do Sul municipality with a predominately rural population (88,72%) and an economy based on tobacco agricultural production. Therefore, our analysis carries a gender perspective as well. As a general view, we intend to identify a) the *rituality* mediation, concerning regular and repeated uses of the communication technologies – cellphone, computer, newspaper, television –, and to understand how the use builds up a routine, both in the pragmatic universe (related to labor, in the agricultural production and in the domestic environment), as well as in the symbolic universe (related to the family culture); b) the *sociability*, formed by the distinct experiences with the ICTs related particularly to family agriculture elements, and the sociocultural references system, which makes the rural environment much more complex, and also to gender experiences in the rural context; c) the *technicity*, that is, how the subjects relate to the apparatus and formats, i. e., technological devices, but also how they create capabilities in different languages and content and, finally d) the *institutionality*, mostly focusing on the importance ascribed to schools, via demands of the younger generations, regarding the introduction of ICTs in the respective domestic realms, and also on the process of regulation of communication in Brazil, including the Internet.

In order to address the proposed challenge, this paper is organized in three parts. In the first one, we briefly expose the methodology adopted in the data collection. In the second, we present the map of mediations and also articulate the empiric material, evidencing the mediations in operation. Lastly, we outline possible future developments.

The followed path

The basis to rebuild and understand the practices related to media relies on the selected perspective asserting that “what explains the relevance of their presence [ICTs] is the symbolic refunctionalization they suffer in the daily usage” (WINOCUR, 2009, p.13 – Our translation), creating meaning in the cultural, cognitive and emotional landmarks of the family (MORLEY, 2008 – Our translation). The four mediations proposed by Martin-Barbero's Map of Communicative Mediations of Culture (2003) are the cornerstone to

understand those practices, anchored in contexts that give them meaning. This idea will work as a methodological and interpretative key to analyze the daily practices of the researched women in relation to ICTs.

The data collection comprised six field visits to families who are tobacco farmers, two visits for each family. In the first encounter, we conducted an introductory collective conversation, intending to bring researchers and researched closer and to get to know the family dynamics. Later on, we introduced individual sociocultural forms, and another one directed to the whole family. The forms intended to survey objective data and to establish a better knowledge of the individuals, the communication technologies existent in the household, their usage, and general data about the property. Following the first visit, each researcher was instructed to develop a field report, describing their observations and producing ideas about the collective conversation and the forms applied. In addition, they were asked to produce an individual profile and a family profile, based on their experience on the field interview.

In the second visit, individual interviews were done in order to have an in-depth notion of how, when, and with what purpose the ICTs are used by the family members, enabling the reconstitution of their practices in relation to those technologies. In both visits, we applied two complementary instruments: photography – of the property, of the house, of the subjects, of the environment where the ICTs are used, as well as of the ICTs themselves – and observation – the researchers assumed a registry attitude, that is, from the beginning to the end of the interview the team was careful to observe in details the spaces in which the devices are used. The research performed in two different phases allowed the development of a relationship of relative trust between researchers and participants, enriching greatly the individual interview³.

Rural women and their mediated uses of technology

In the preface of the fifth edition of *De los medios a las mediaciones* – published in Spanish in 1998, and translated to Brazilian Portuguese in 2003 – Martín-Barbero outlines the “new map of mediations”. There we can find in prominence the mediations of *sociability*, *rituality*, *technicity* and *institutionality*. Whereas in the map introduced in 1987 the “cultural mediations of communication” were highlighted, now the emphasis relies on “communicative mediations of culture”. To the author, the change is in recognizing that communication is “mediating all sides and all forms of cultural and social lives of people. Therefore, the gaze does not reverse in the sense of going from the mediation to

³ In order to offer directions to future studies, the details of the methodological proposal can be found in Escosteguy, Sifuentes, Bianchini (2016).

the means of communication [media], but from the culture to communication” (MARTÍN-BARBERO, 2009, p.153 – Our translation).

The Barberian model moves in a diachronic axis, also called a long history – constituted by Cultural Matrixes and Industrial Formats – and a synchronic axis – formed by Production Logics and Reception Competence. The relations between the elements of each one of the axes are connected by different mediations. The interactions between Cultural Matrixes and Production Logics are mediated by *institutionality*. *Technicity* is the mediation between Production Logics and Industrial Formats. The relation between Cultural Matrixes and Reception Competence are mediated by *sociability*, whereas *rituality* occurs in the overlapping of Industrial Formats and Reception Competence.

Here, we apply Araujo’s (2016, p.126 – Our translation) idea using the “Barberian circle or circuit” in “spiral, supporting the historical inspiration of the relation between the constituent parts and the totality of the communicative process, in an associated perspective covering production, circulation and reception”. Consequently, by applying the map as a key to read the collected data, we begin the analysis in one specific mediation – *institutionality* – but this one, in turn, establishes a connection with another – for instance, *rituality*, and so on.

Although our objective is not to explore the historical axis, we can observe that in this research, the Cultural Matrix concerns the notion that the contemporary rural is a social construction of the different social actors sharing this space and giving meaning to some behaviors, which configures new images of the rural. Therefore, the rural is perceived as “a historically-forged cultural phenomena” (CARNEIRO, 2008, p.34 – Our translation) that experiences, today, a particular moment of blurring of rigid borders between urban and rural environment, mostly through the intensified physical and cultural mobility of their inhabitants, where the role of the ITCs cannot be overlooked.

Improvements, as small as they may be, in services (electric system, roads, transportation, phone line and internet), in spaces of sociability and entertainment – the last two being a constant demand, especially among the young people interviewed –, directly affects the symbolic re-elaboration of contemporary rurality by the residents of the place. It also contributes, in some cases, to ease the desire to leave the rural environment, expressed by the youngsters, at least for a period. This is the case with Ricardo K.⁴ (20 years-old). After graduating from high school, he decided to settle in the family property. However, during the research period, we were informed that he was now living in the city.

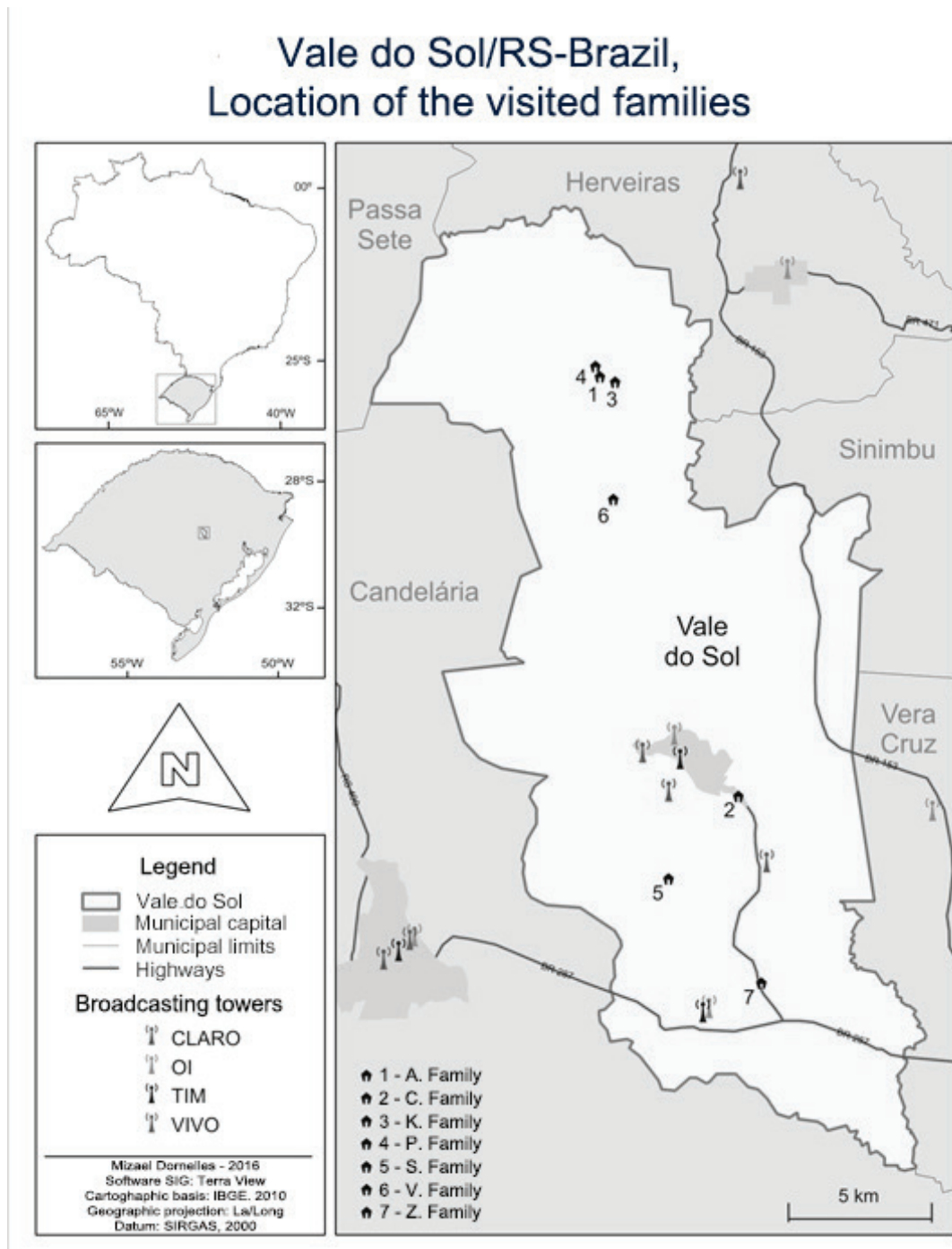
Regarding *institutionality*, we outline two regulation regimes strongly affecting the ICTs appropriation within the investigated families. On the one hand, the connectivity

4 We use initials to identify the families, avoiding the disclosure of their identities.

conditions (the network itself) of mobile phone service providers are essential for the incorporation and the uses ascribed to the mobile phone in the rural environment, which constitutes a regulation regime. On the other hand, school as an agent promoting computer acquisition, even though it progressively loses its capability to guide/regulate usages throughout its appropriation in the rural household.

In the rural zone investigated, the mobile phone signal is unreliable. That is why, in many cases, the mobile phone is used as an actual phone only within the context of traveling to the urban center, a city with 11,077 inhabitants (2010).

Figure 1 – Location of the families participating in the research in relation to the radio distribution towers



Source: Map produced by the research group based on information extracted from the Brazilian Association of Telecommunications (Telebrasil)

In houses where the signal is received, the mobile phone is mostly used by women, to bring family members closer, particularly those living afar, and, in smaller proportion, mostly by men, as an instrument to enable their labor activities (product trading, services requests and purchase). K. family is an outstanding example of it.

In Z. family, we observed two particularities. Number one, the household is located in the threshold of rural and urban, which makes possible for father and one of the sons to work in the city. Number two, this is the only case among the families in which the woman is responsible for the agricultural production. The husband helps in the activities following his first work hours. Thus, Leoni Z. (40 years-old), while performing three different roles – farming manager, wife, and mother –, uses the mobile phone for two functions: to perform tasks associated with work and to integrate the family. This case evidences a negotiation of gender roles in the family unit. Although one cannot affirm that the man loses his position as the provider of the family, the situation observed amplifies the sphere of activity extended to the woman, that is, she is considered the chief in the agricultural production. Thus, she is also responsible for the family budget, achieving greater equality within the family unit.

It is also noteworthy that in the absence of mobile phone signal, as well as unavailability of multimedia service access, other categories of mobile phone use emerges – in this case, of *smartphones*⁵. For instance, in P. family, where each young member has his or her own mobile phone, it is frequent to use it in the car. The descriptions mention the routine night travels from the family house to the closest village, where there is a school with *Wi-Fi* internet network. The regular activity, carried out several times a day collectively, inside of the car, or in front of the school configures various forms of *rituality* and *sociability* among rural young people, both male and female.

It is also important to report some aspects of the process of regulation of communication in Brazil, concerning internet and telephone signal. According to Silva (2015, p.165 – Our translation), “there is no general communication law in the country capable of inserting digital communication in the wider context of convergence”. Besides, the only service provided in public domain is of fixed telephony, all others follow a private regime. As the author says, the choice establishes that investments are focused on urban centers, generally an economically profitable area, in detriment of rural areas, countryside towns, remote regions, and also the outskirts (Idem).

As a consequence of this communication policy, we encounter inequality in the use of digital technology artifacts that rely on internet access services; hence, we can say that the eradication of the digital gap is intertwined with an improvement in infrastructure. Clearly, we have to acknowledge that cultural processes (including representations, uses

5 Mobile phones that can access the internet.

and appropriations of such technological devices) operate through construction and reproduction of inequalities. In the case studied, we address the uses and meanings assigned to rural women. For instance, even though Angélica P. (23 years-old) has a mobile phone and participates in the night drives to access the internet, she admits not having the same familiarity in using the mobile phone and the computer as her husband and her brother-in-law, revealing differences among the group. This is one of the reasons why we do not adopt the premise of the technologic determinism that considers technology itself as a solution for social problems.

On the other hand, we acknowledge school as an important institution in legitimizing the importance of new communication technologies⁶, as well as in offering the first contact, particularly with computers. But, before that, we find reports of the school as a role of “bridge” towards more traditional media, such as magazines, in the case of the V. family. Claudia V. (30 years-old) remembers she did not have access to magazines at home or in other places, and that the school was responsible for providing her first contact with the media. “In school we had magazines to make collages and things like that, you know? Sometimes we even read it and everything” (Claudia V.). In other accounts, the influence of the school in book reading among the family is also evident.

From recurrent observations, we noticed the crucial role of the school in introducing the computer within the contemporary rural environment, representing the second regulation regime observed. At least in the first moment of its presence in the rural home, the computer is associated to school. Among the C., K., A. and Z. families, the computer was acquired following a demand for school homework.

Actually we bought the computer because Ricardo needed it for high school, right? There, in the Agricultural School of Santa Cruz, then he had a lot of homework to do and he always had to go to the Alto Castelhana when he had to research something on the internet. Then we had to go there every time, you know? And then we decided to have one at home so he didn't have to go every time. And it was better for him, then (Eliane K., 37 years-old).

When the technological device is appropriated by other family members – especially father and mother –, its use is detached from school guidance and, therefore, the institution loses its regulatory role. This is also true for the students, who start to use it for different ends.

⁶ Originally, the tobacco industry could be considered a stimulating agent in purchase and use of computers in the rural environment analyzed, considering the information that it created strategies towards that move. However, there is no empiric evidence that sustains such influence. The only family that purchased a notebook via facilitation of the industry was the family A.

Certainly, the ICTs cause an impact on and are affected by various forms of *sociability*. The insertion of the computer in the rural families houses is seen as a strategy to improve the children's capabilities in school, and also, as a lever for social mobility⁷. In the A. family, both children have their own notebooks, but their mother established a safety strategy: she purchased a third one, that is stored in their house, waiting to be used in the event of any damage striking their daughter's notebook, and thus preventing her from performing academic activities when she visits the family on weekends.

It seems clear to us, that what happens in school, with the use of a new communication technology, has an impact, first and foremost, on mothers, clearly forming different social relationships due to the distinction between the sexes. Take the case with books, for instance: they are recommended in school for the sons, and they end up being read by the mothers – this is the case of Solange (40 years-old), from C. family. Or the use of the internet to help the son on a school task, as Claudia V. mentions. In this sense, Carvalho (2004, p.55) outlines that the involvement with school “has been limited to a maternal obligation, in the context of a sexual division of educational work, which persists and is considered natural by the school itself”. This model, reinforced by the school and by the family, not only overloads the mothers, but also perpetuates a gender inequality (Idem).

The ICTs in the rural environment studied, represent to women, mostly, a condition of family integration, which exemplifies Tomlinson's (apud MORLEY, 2008, p.156 – Our translation) understanding of the mobile phone as a “technology of the heart”: “imperfect instruments, by which people attempt to maintain a level of security of their cultural location”. In the case of the rural women interviewed, the mobile phone allows them to control the distance and the time of those who are close, but also of those that are dispersed⁸. The role assumed by women is visible, as the managers of family ties, assigning almost completely to these devices great importance in connecting the family members. “I have brothers living in Porto Alegre, I have brothers living [...] in Gravataí [...] if all of them have phones I can talk to them. I can't go there to visit, but I can talk to them, that is why I like the phone” (Aderia P., 45 years-old). In addition, the same evidence can be interpreted following the clues by Ann Moyal (apud MORLEY, 2008, p.158 – Our translation): “men tend to see women talking on the phone [telephone or cellphone] without a purpose’, [however], this can also be seen from another point of view, as a crucial part of the ongoing work necessary to maintain the family and social networks”, i. e., it grants importance to the type of use and the role performed by women.

⁷ Winocur (2009) observed this condition among urban popular classes.

⁸ Even though it applies partially to the understanding that it offers security in an uncertain, dangerous, and violent world, only Solange C. mentioned the violence aspect, since her son travels to the university daily and alone, in a car, and comes home at night.

In what concerns the connection between *technicity/sociability*, articulated in a gender perspective, it was possible to notice the essentially female use of social media. Adult men do not mention frequently using Facebook, whereas, among the young, the subject emerges, but in a less meaningful manner than among women of all ages. The appropriation of social media as a new way to narrate their own lives appears remarkably in participants such as Eliane K. and Ana Karolina K. (11 years-old), in which the narrative of the daily life occurs through the language established in the virtual environment (*technicity*). Eliane described a significant episode in which she wore a new dress to take a picture with her parents, with the sole purpose of posting it on Facebook. When she explained the wardrobe choice to make the picture look pretty, she added: “Then I like to see the likes, the comments. [...] The comments are all from friends like, that I look good in red, that we are beautiful, and ‘I like you all very much’, you know. ‘Miss you’”.

Several accounts demonstrate that Facebook is a space to highlight and detail the personal and family life aspects of the users (the ones they choose to share with others), representing a socialization tool and a complementation of face to face interactions – therefore, it also concerns the *sociability* mediation. The face to face interaction, however, was not replaced by the new forms of social media and remains deeply valued; it is actually the preferred activity among the participants. Several of them declared “family visits” to be among their favorite activities.

In this context, we observed that in the rural environment, specifically in the agricultural family domain, the time dedicated to social networks, in this case, Facebook, is not associated with fragmentation and dispersion within the domestic space, since the daily meals and also the work are shared. And even if Facebook does not represent a platform for demands associated to the rural space, or to dissatisfaction about the situation of the country, it still clearly affects the *technicity* in the *sociability* of the female participants – in bonding with the family as well as with friends.

Among the women, in the *technicity* domain, we notice that some of the adult women and all of the older ones claim to lack technical competence in handling mostly the internet and the computer, emphasizing the fact that they do not use them by themselves, only through their children and grandchildren. Some indicate they ask for their husband’s help to set up their equipment and to download pictures from the digital camera to post on Facebook. It is noteworthy to point out a recurrent perspective that associates the technology field with masculinity – consider cars, and in the rural environment, the tractor. Regarding the capabilities in technology and computer use, there is one exception among those participants, Eliane K. She comments that the fact of her not driving the family car⁹ and,

9 Among the participant families, only one of the women drives the family car.

thus, not having mobility to perform activities outside the domestic domain, is compensated by the intensive use of the computer, most of all, her use of Facebook. This is evidence that the use of this artifact allows her to escape the boredom of home. In this case, we can see a tensioning of the gender role previously built before the introduction of ICTs: if Eliane K. is not capable of dealing with the car, she now acquires control over the computer.

The tensioning in gender roles is also expressed in the case of Leoni Z., even if in an ambivalent way. She drives the family car and she is the responsible for the agricultural production, in addition to using the desktop computer, but she declares [she] “can’t use the notebook” and has doubts about which is her favorite: “I think it is the mobile phone because now you can listen to music”, even though she acknowledges she does not know how to use that feature on her phone. About the computer, she says: “it has to ‘stay put’ over there”, as an explanation for not picking it as her favorite media. In conclusion: the two participants with stronger capabilities in handling the computer still reveal insecurities with the handling of any technological artifact.

Those pieces of evidence lead us to contemplate the importance of developing a historic perspective as Morley (2008, p.140 – Our translation) asserts: “in practice, the dynamic of making technologies user-friendly to the consumer often means inserting them in recognizable forms related to previous times”. Summing up, women were not exposed to certain technologies – car, tractor and other agricultural equipment – except for simpler domestic technologies – for instance, refrigerator and clothes iron. In some cases, they were not exposed even to television. As Leoni Z. remembers, there was only one person allowed to turn on the television in her house, which was her father.

Another aspect observed, even among the younger female participants, such as Diana A. (22 years-old), is a mild disinterest in technology regarding the ongoing replacement of equipment, for new and updated versions.

[...] I noticed other people felt they needed to replace it before I did [...] I noticed I could pay more attention in class than my classmates, then I thought: ‘I’m not changing it, you know, I don’t want to get distracted with other stuff’. But now, [...] since I sell sweaters in the university, I felt a stronger need to talk to people, to set meetings where I would deliver the product, or where I could meet them to show my product.

Aderia P. highlighted the fact that the evolution of the mobile phones is an obstacle to its use: “[...] those phones that they [the children] have nowadays, with all those things, I would need to learn first. Because I don’t know how to deal with all that. I know how to make a call, how to answer a call, but on those that are simpler, those with buttons. Most of them don’t even have buttons now”. And even Leoni Z., who uses the phone for family

integration as well as to optimize her labor activity, admits that “she doesn’t know how to operate the internet on the mobile phone”.

Associating the types of ICTs use, the role exercised by technology for rural women, and also the insecurity revealed by almost every single participant in handling the mobile phones and the computers, we can agree with the conclusion of another study (CRUZ; CASTRO, 2014) that indicates the interest in enabling the use of ICTs is not always present, unless in a context related to concerns of survival and reproduction of their families. This seems to be the case of the rural women interviewed.

Nevertheless, since the mobile phone has a more simplified language and, thus, more inclusive, it also appears with a special meaning in the sense of acquiring autonomy. According to one of the older women interviewed (Nilsa S., 64 years-old), the mobile phone allows her to “be responsible for herself”, mentioning the importance of these media for obtaining information about transportation and orders of goods in the urban area of the town.

Regarding the internet, we can see how a change in device support – from a desktop computer to a tablet, for a particular participant – alters the daily practices in internet use and its connection to domestic chores. This aspect reveals an articulation between *technicity* and *rituality*. To Eliane K., with the new device, she does not need to travel several times a day to a room to check her Facebook messages. She is used to being online during her domestic chores; now she takes her tablet with her, connected to the internet, to any room where she performs her chores – in particular, the kitchen.

[...] when I’m cooking I bring the tablet to the kitchen, right? Then, I go there to prepare lunch and I bring it with me. It is much better, much more comfortable, you know, that I can take it wherever I go, then I don’t need to be going to the room all the time, to see if there is anything for me (Eliane K.).

It is important to highlight that in the rural environment, besides performing roles of mother and wife, central roles in the domestic domain of home, women also “help out” their husbands in the farm work. All adult women residing in the rural property that participated in the interviews declared they work in farming. Usually, they stress they do not partake in “hard” work. Often, in tobacco farming, that means working with agrochemicals – which reinforces and reproduces the identity markers of gender: strength and skill in managing machines, male characteristic; frailty and skill to “wrap” the leaves, female ability. In any case, women’s participation in farm work is welcome, but it also sustains a division of labor based on gender distinctions. The possibilities for tensioning and negotiating this role were observed, remarkably in the case of Leoni Z., and less so in the K. family. At Eliane

K.'s home, we notice that the housekeeping routine and the distribution of domestic chores included, at least, the participation of one male family member, her son Ricardo K.

The work as a female farmer is a key factor surrounding the *rituality* of media consumption, mostly due to the fact that the production cycle and the routine organization are focused on working on the land. Radio, for instance, is the main companion of families during tobacco tanning season: “We listen to it more during, like, around March, April, May, when we are in the tanning season” (Claudia V.); “We use the radio only when we are in the shed, you know, doing the tanning. [...] we listen to the radio mostly during three months of the year.” The rest of the year, the days are spent in the fields, where access to media is harder. In these periods, media consumption happens mostly in the early morning, at noon, and in late afternoon/evening, when families are at home to have meals and rest. For older women, though, such “rules” do not apply, since it is common for them to spend the day indoors, between domestic work and leisure activities, like watching television.

Final Considerations

Several aspects can be evoked and listed to conclude the data analysis proposed by the Map of Communicative Mediations of Culture (MARTÍN-BARBERO, 2003). First, however, we establish that: a) investigating the relations built between subjects and ICTs implies, necessarily, to consider the devices as a wide range of inter-related technological artifacts, since those are complementary to each other – new and old media live next to each other, such as portable radios and mobile phones, for instance – and, in some cases, they overlap – the same action, like listening to music, can be performed in both; b) investigating the information and communication technologies in a domestic context also implies including the use and handling of various domestic technologies, in a historical perspective (MORLEY, 2008); c) the importance of matching these uses and appropriations to social and personal contexts, in our case a “contemporary rural” one, that no longer implies a dichotomy between city and country – the permanent physical movement between spaces creates mixed symbolic constructs – and, in family cultures where marked differences between men and women are still present, as well as between the young and the old, it implies identifying spaces of tensioning, negotiation and reproduction of inequalities – especially the ones related to gender.

Throughout the research, it was possible to identify tension spaces in the traditional gender relations. Contrary to the other investigated families, where female work in the field happens but is invisible to a certain point, Leoni Z. shows that, even if she does not assume the role of “the head of the family” and, therefore, does not create an objective change in her position in the family hierarchy, by leading the agricultural production of

their land, she shares the position of family provider along with her husband. And this, in its turn, is connected to the uses she makes of communication technologies. In regards to the appropriation of ICTs, Eliane K. also reveals a unique capability regarding the handling and incorporation of those devices in her daily life, creating another tensioning situation. Although this work might have identified these spaces, it is necessary to acknowledge the prevalence of ongoing inequalities in gender relations when observing the customs, routines and uses of ICTs of the other women studied.

Concerning the use of the map, it enabled the observation of the use of ICTs as affected by distinct dimensions, specifically, by the *institutionality*, *sociability*, *technicity* and *rituality*. And that these, too, influence one another, establishing spiraling circularities. The map proves to be valuable to the extent that it helps to identify uses and appropriations of ICTs and to structure the relation between them, making daily practices visible and helping to understand these dynamics.

Finally, it is meaningful to elucidate the possibility to continue the methodologic reflection proposed by Martín-Barbero (2009), especially with regards to new mediations as new forms of temporality/shapes for spaces and flow/mobility. In other words, exploring the coexistence between the times of the older generation's traditions, and the contemporary and urgent times of the rural youth, who belong to a certain rural space but also move around the urban one, which they often visit – physically and virtually – and, therefore, is distant but also, sometimes, close. Not forgetting, also, questions that become a conflict between these generations, like the cult of the present and the weakening of the historical relation with the past – especially considering a community of strong Germanic tradition which has been, since the time of the settling of the country's southern region, tied to land and agriculture.

It would be equally possible to investigate those same rural dwellers that go into and out of the digital social medias, linking it with their personal and professional lives, located in a contemporary rural environment that allows them to experience intense physical and cultural mobility. This notion leads to questions regarding mobility, information flow, education, identity and belonging which can still be explored. There lie the challenges for future researches.

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