



PRACTICE-BASED STUDIES ON SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION: A METHODOLOGICAL PROPOSAL

ESTUDOS BASEADOS NA PRÁTICA EM CONSUMO SUSTENTÁVEL: UMA PROPOSTA METODOLÓGICA

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Abstract

The paper proposes a methodological approach for practice-based studies on sustainable consumption. The methodological proposal aims to overcome prescriptive models, seeking a deep understanding to support interventions that promote changes towards sustainable consumption. The proposal adopts phenomenology as a method and ethnography as a strategy. Interview-to-the-double, self-crossed confrontation and digital technologies are proposed for data collection, and phenomenological semiotics as a method of analysis. The increasing participation of the researcher and the techniques indicated for intervention situations are a contribution because they allow to study a practice and cause its transformation.

Keywords: Sustainable Consumption; Practice-based Studies; Phenomenology

Resumo

O artigo propõe uma abordagem metodológica para estudos baseados na prática sobre consumo sustentável. A proposta metodológica visa superar modelos prescritivos, buscando um conhecimento aprofundado para apoiar intervenções que promovam mudanças em direção ao consumo sustentável. A proposta adota a fenomenologia como método e a etnografia como estratégia. A entrevista com o sócia, a autoconfrontação cruzada, e as tecnologias digitais são propostas para a coleta de dados, e a semiótica fenomenológica como método de análise. A crescente participação do pesquisador e as técnicas indicadas para situações de intervenção são uma contribuição, pois permitem estudar uma prática e provocar sua transformação.

Palavras-chave: Consumo Sustentável; Practice-based Studies; Fenomenologia.

Introduction

The issue of sustainability is increasingly present in people's daily lives, precisely because society is increasingly living in an unsustainable way. According to the Global Footprint Network current levels of human consumption demand the natural resources of 1.7 planets, and this global ecological overcoming continues to grow despite the steady increase in biocapacity since 1961 (Lin, Hanscom, Murthy, Galli, Evans, Neil, Mancini, Martindill, Medouar, Huang & Wackermagel, 2018).

This situation results in at least two consequences. The first is academic and has been reflected in the intensification of studies on sustainable consumption, which adopt the practice theory to “better understand consumption patterns as a means to shape the societal sustainability transition” (Corsini; Laurenti; Meinherz; Appio & Mora, 2019, p.1). According to the authors, this growth already allows us to identify some research trends such as consumer identity, business and governance, sustainable consumption and production, urban living and policy, and household energy, as well as future trends such as sharing economy, circular economy and smart cities.

The second is a practical consequence: change is unavoidable. For consumption to be (more) sustainable, given the data presented above, it is essential that consumers consume less and more sustainably. This transition is a great challenge, considering that in contemporary society consumption is no longer just a problem of production and has reached the cultural dimension, making social norms more variable. As such, it has become a fundamental element of society's reproduction. More than products and services, what is consumed are meanings (Featherstone, 1990, 1997).

In a hyperconsumist society, the consumer is also hyperindividualist (Lipovetsky, 2007). Consumption has become a way for individuals to access their identity, making consumer relations more tense and conflicting, whereas adherence to the consumer society is imposed by a social obligation to consume, generating and intensifying an identity crisis (Baudrillard, 1995; Bauman, 1999, 2005).

Grunert (2011) points out that having a positive attitude towards sustainable products is not enough for change, because there are many reasons why consumers do not buy sustainable alternatives, including perception problems, misjudgments, lack of awareness and/or credibility, and lack of motivation at the time of choice. These conditions demonstrate that the changes towards sustainable consumption must be collective, surpassing the individual behavioral level and embracing the change in practices, challenging scientific research to find theoretical and methodological approaches capable of understanding the phenomenon, and pointing out new paths.

The aspects mentioned above refer to the need to adopt a broad and deep vision of sustainable development, which considers the interconnection of human beings and the planet. Sachs (2008; 2009) points out some dimensions that society needs to consider in the search for a sustainable world. I highlight some of these dimensions that are contemplated by the methodological proposal in question.

The social and cultural dimensions have the more direct connection to the methodological proposal. Hyper-consumer society is the result of social and cultural changes and impacts both the individual and the social organization in its various dimensions (Lipovetsky, 2007). Research that seeks to contribute to transforming consumer practices, needs to be able to describe, represent and understand these practices, without leaving aside the understanding of the individual dimension, but not from an individualistic perspective.

The paper proposes a methodological approach for research that adopts practice as unit of analysis, also known as practice-based studies (PBS) and that focuses in the domain of sustainability research in consumer studies. In this perspective, the relationship between sustainability and consumption is

approached as social, aiming to go beyond the individualistic approach or ABC - attitude, behavior, choices - (Shove, 2010).

Considering the challenges that society must face in search of a sustainable world, I argue that it is necessary to go beyond describing and explaining how (sustainable or not) consumption practices occur, to understand how changes occur, and how interventions are able to change these practices so that they become (more) sustainable. This aspect of the methodological proposal is directly related to the economic and political dimensions.

According to Sachs (2008; 2009), the economic dimension must consider both the allocation and the management of resources in the search for a regular flow of public and private investment, reducing the dichotomy between macro and microeconomic criteria. I consider that intervention actions are inevitable, they are political per se and need a high degree of integration and interconnection at regional, national and international level.

Therefore, it is necessary to study: (1) how a practice is created, maintained and recreated; (2) how people become practitioners; and, finally, (3) how change occurs considering the interconnection between practices. Shove's (2010) contributions and other researchers who were preceded or inspired by her, were crucial to link practice theories and studies on sustainability, with a policy focus (Shove, Pantzar & Watson, 2012; Shove & Pantzar, 2007; Shove & Spurling, 2013; Shove & Walker, 2010; Strengers & Maller, 2016; Warde, 2005). However, given the current moment and the identified trends, a focus on understanding consumer practices and their relationship with different dimensions of sustainability is required (Corsini *et. al.*, 2019).

I consider that the field has peculiarities and imposes some challenges, such as the role of the method as intervention (Browne; Medd; Anderson & Pullinger, M. 2016). Moreover, I argue that the phenomenological immersion method, presented below, opens a promising path for practice-based studies on sustainability and consumption, because it increases: (1) the immersion of the researcher in the field; (2) the researchers' ability to represent and understand the consumption practices; (3) the intervention capacity. Some research can benefit significantly from this approach, especially those that focus on the production and consumption practices of goods and services that have a high impact on economic, environmental, social and cultural sustainability, and contribute to environmental education programs that go beyond individual cognitive changes.

Based on these assumptions, I discuss the general practice-based approach and the theoretical aspects that support it. I also present a discussion about the concept of sustainability and some examples of studies on sustainable consumption that take this approach. Finally, I present and defend the methodological proposal and discuss how it can contribute to deepen the studies presented as examples.

Practice-based Studies (PBS)

The adoption of practice as unit of analysis is the main, but not the only, characteristic of a PBS, which refers to a set of research efforts based on diverse theories, and which also require diverse methodologies. In this diversity lies the strength of the PBS, and it is not advisable to build a single theoretical-methodological framework. On the other hand, the strength of this diversity is based on some essential common points, including the quest for overcoming the theoretical and methodological individualism and the separation between subject and object, as well as some dualisms that emerged from the very development of the PBS, such as the discussion between routine, habit, action and agency (Gherardi, 2009a, 2009b).

Other implications for the PBS are: (1) practice is not manifested through relations between external properties of elements that relate to each other, but is the very fundamental unit of social constitution;

(2) The creation, maintenance and recreation of a practice coincides with the creation, maintenance and recreation of social elements such as power relations, learning, change, among others; and finally (3) in the study of practice one should avoid an epiphenomenal perspective, as if it were only a context in which social phenomena occur.

The development of these characteristics was not *a priori*, as part of a theoretical project or a deliberate research agenda, but they were constructed over time, given the diversity highlighted above. This development, the diversity of themes and approaches, and the way in which some common elements have been established can be seen through a series of special editions of European journals published between 2007 and 2011.

Initially, efforts were directed towards the definition of the concept of practice and the radicalization of the notion of knowledge, especially the construction of a lexicon focused on field delimitation and methodological construction (Dreyfuss, 2007; Schatzki, 2007; Simonsen, 2007; Turner, 2007; Brownlie; Hewer; Wagner & Svensson, 2008; Fendt, Kaminska-Labbé & Sachs, 2008; Holbrook, 2008). In a second moment the works began to make explicit and discuss the polysemy of the concept of practice (Bjørkeng; Clegg & Pitsis, 2009; Gherardi, 2009a Nicolini, 2009a). At that time, the practice was still seen as a "lens", in a conception that still sought the vision of a more integrated social organization.

This diversity of approaches still kept for some time the discussion of the concepts of practice in the agenda, with some thematic scope, such as: the embodied nature of the practice; the critique of the notion of knowledge as verbal or textual representations of the world; the appreciation of the way of acting and using artifacts in the constitution of knowledge; the meaning of material objects and artifacts for practice (Llewellyn & Spence, 2009; Miettinen; Samra-Fredericks & Yanow, 2009; Nicolini, 2009b; Sandberg & Dall'Alba, 2009).

Such development has gone through the revision of the concepts of organization and knowledge as it has deepened in the field of Organizational Learning and the discussion of gaps between theory and practice in Organizational Studies (Gherardi, 2009b; Labatut; Aggeri; Astruc; Bibé & Girard, 2009; Svabo, 2009), which led to a field consolidation effort, the typification of approaches, and the emergence of more critical work (Eikeland & Nicolini, 2011; Iedema & Carrol, 2011; Kostulski, 2011; Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2011).

The consolidation of the field led to the development of studies on certain topics such as governance, tourism, strategy, among others (Montenegro & Bulgacov, 2015; Rese; Bulgacov & Ferreira, 2015; Bispo, 2016). This paper is part of this movement and efforts to expand PBS into the field of sustainability studies. To this end, it considers the efforts already made in this direction and proposes a method here called phenomenological immersion, which will contribute to overcoming the ABC approaches. The presentation of the method needs a brief discussion about some theoretical references in which I support my argument.

From the synthesis presented and also based on other important works (Gherardi, 2012; Nicolini, 2013; Schatzki, 2012), it is possible to identify at least three dimensions developed over time in PBS: (1) development of a lexicon to support the philosophical, ontological and epistemological discussion of the concept of practice; (2) the consolidation of theories in which practice is the unit of analysis, not a mere locus of occurrence of social phenomena; and, finally, (3) the development of a set of methods and techniques capable of supporting research in the field, especially in the sense of its main challenges.

The paper discusses a fourth dimension (or at least the unfolding of the third), namely the expansion of PBS into the field of sustainable consumption studies. I propose a method I call phenomenological immersion, to contribute to overcoming ABC approaches. The presentation of the method needs a brief discussion of some theoretical paths already outlined, on which I base my argument.

Practice-based studies on sustainable consumption

As pointed out by Corsini *et. al.* (2019), studies have proposed adopting the practice-based approach to sustainability in consumer studies, and others that address this relationship more broadly (Liedtke, Hasselkuß, Speck & Baedeker, 2017; Silva & Figueiredo, 2017). The first discusses the role of sociotechnical and product/service innovations in the transition of sociotechnical systems, emphasizing the multilevel perspective in broadening the understanding of the phenomenon.

The second, also a theoretical discussion, emphasizes the understanding of sustainability as socially constructed actions and intentions, and proposes the concept of sustainability as a practice through practice-based approaches and the institutional logic. In both cases there are relevant proposals for broadening the understanding of the phenomenon through consistent theoretical-methodological frameworks. However, despite the differences, both studies emphasize the practice as routine actions, losing sight of the need for radical change to overcome some challenges towards a sustainable world.

Eizenberg and Jabareen (2017) propose a conceptual framework of social sustainability based on four interrelated concepts of socially oriented practices, namely, equity, safety, sustainable urban forms and eco-prosumption. Each dimension encompasses different social aspects, and its central axis is the issue of risk as a constituent of social sustainability. The work contributes to the need for a framework capable of addressing the global dimension of sustainability, and consequently focuses on the broader policies related to the theme.

Thus, the question of how social change occurs in everyday life and what are the possibilities for intervention for the radical changes mentioned above have not yet been answered. The proposition of a practice-based approach that seeks to answer the above questions and focuses on consumption beyond the individual needs a concept of sustainability that is broad enough to embrace the collective, global and future dimension. However, this concept must be delimited in such a way that it allows understanding the specificities of these practices. More than the notion of sustainability, the concept of sustainable development is needed.

For this purpose, it is not necessary to “reinvent the wheel”. The UN Brundtland Report (World Commission on Environmental and Development, 1987) defines sustainable development as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. It is very difficult (if not impossible) to know how people and practices will be impacted by future events (Schatzki, 2016), but this concept is sufficient to highlight the importance of knowing deeply current consumption practices so that, through intervention, it is possible to build more sustainable practices.

I propose that studies on sustainable consumption that adopt a practice-based approach have a distinguished focus on the issue of social change, given that the background to all discussion is the need for radical change in productive and consumption bases that prevail in capitalist society. It is not possible to contain and reverse the accelerated process of deterioration of the environmental, social and economic conditions the planet is going through by just knowing how things happen, but fundamentally by developing global and local policies that effectively generate this change.

The approach is strongly based on Schatzki's practice theory (2001, 2006, 2007, 2012), and emphasizes the links between sayings, doings and material objects that support those actions. These, in turn, bind to other actions of the subject itself and of others with a greater degree of complexity in activities that are human and collective, which, as they involve human and collective projects, are also states of existence (Schatzki, 2012). Having one of its ontological bases in Heidegger's phenomenology (2010), intelligibility assumes a fundamental role in this theory, because people usually do and say what is constituted with some meaning. However, meaning and the individuals who define them are situational and contextual

elements, and are not a unit of analysis in themselves: only real-time practice can help reveal this intelligibility, and what enables the individual to understand human conduct and social order (Nicolini, 2013). To devise order and social change as practices is to direct the interest in arrangements between people, artifacts, objects, organisms, and how their relationships and meanings are established.

At this point it is necessary to face some questions: what are the theoretical-methodological implications of the practice-based approach to studies on sustainable consumption? How can it help overcome the ABC approach and its hegemony to understand the phenomenon? First, it must be clear that this task is not only theoretical and methodological, but political.

Some criticism of the ABC approach emphasizes the social dimension of the phenomenon and the practice theories to understand it (Walker, 2016). Shove *et al.*'s (2012) and Schatzki's (2012) practice concepts agree on the construction of the intelligibility/meaning of practice, and the role of socio-material arrangements, both fundamental elements for a practice to be produced, maintained and reconstructed. Moreover, they consider the practice a procedural phenomenon and situated in a non-representational and non-propositional perspective.

My position is that describing and understanding (1) how a practice is created, maintained and reproduced; (2) how people become practitioners; and, finally, (3) how the change occurs considering the interconnection between practices depends fundamentally on the description and understanding of the process of constructing intelligibility by practitioners. This task is crucial whether in studies that seek a reformulation of the problem and the possibilities of intervention policies and programs in social life, and which are placed in an antagonistic and incompatible position with the ABC approach (Shove, 2016; Spurling and McMeekin, 2016); or in studies that argue about the need to redefine and reorient common problems of behavior change, considering that studies on sustainability must focus on environments where the influence of the ABC approach is predominant (Strengers; Moloney; Maller & Horne, 2016).

In both cases, the biggest challenge is how to capture, represent, interpret, and understand the intelligibility of practice. Some aspects contribute to that: (1) there is no single intelligibility as it exists in the web of interconnections of practices, which are constantly constructed and reconstructed by practitioners. (2) the description and delimitation of intelligibility cannot be achieved in a totally objective way; (3) intelligibility is situated, and only makes sense if understood within the arrangement of practices to which it refers; (4) cannot be fully expressed by language, and must be sought also in corporeality, in sociomaterial arrangements, and in ethical and aesthetic elements.

A practice can also be accessed by focusing on the collective negotiation of what the practitioners think is right and appropriate to do. Because this meaning is created intersubjectively, it allows the practice to be performed repeatedly, and this repetition may reveal elements of it. But it is important to note that their breakdowns and variations are also revealing, as they allow access to what is not visible in repetition (Gherardi, 2009c; Pimentel & Nogueira, 2018).

These aspects justify the methodological proposal defended in the paper to overcome the proposition of prescriptive models and patterns that predominate in ABC approach, seeking to understand deeply consumption practices and to support intervention policies that promote social changes towards sustainable practices.

Studies on sustainable consumption: some examples

In this section I present three examples of studies on sustainable consumption that use practice theory approach, summarized in Table 1. The choice of papers was due to their suitability to the objectives of the discussion undertaken here. The aim is to present studies on concrete and situated practices, the

results achieved, and how the methodological proposal defended here could contribute to the deepening or broadening of the respective results. This last aspect will be discussed in the presentation section of the methodological proposal.

It is noteworthy that the reason for this discussion is not to point out the weaknesses of these studies, but to discuss how the methodological approach could contribute to be stronger, in an eclectic perspective as suggested by Nicolini (2013).

Table 1: Examples of studies on sustainable consumption: overview

Mu, W; Spaargaren, G. & Lansink, A. O. (2019)	
Purpose	Studying mobile-app-based forms of intervention and co-construction for more sustainable food practices
Practice(s) focused	Dining out practice in the broader context of everyday life food practices.
Theoretical approach/concepts	Conceptual framework built based on inventory of existing research in the fields of food sustainability, food practices, and food apps development.
Method	Focus group discussions
Verkade, N. & Höffken, J. (2019)	
Purpose	Understand the emerging practices of Civic Energy Communities (CECs) within a changing energy system.
Practice(s) focused	Energy practices, specifically to generate and manage energy collectively.
Theoretical approach/concepts	Practice theory and system of energy practices
Method	Fieldwork on sites of the CECs (visits); Semi-structured interviews; Data triangulation by visiting events and utilizing reports from the Dutch community energy network organization (HIER); Mixed analysis method (without specific information and details)
Mylan, J. (2015)	
Purpose	Enrich the sustainable product-service system (SPSS) to provide a deeper understanding of the use of products and services in daily life contexts
Practice(s) focused	Lighting and laundry
Theoretical approach/concepts	Practice theory; modular innovation; loosely and tightly coupled linkages
Method	Comparative case-study research; in-depth semi-structured interviews; secondary sources (consumer research reports, trade and governments publications).

Source: the author based on the selected papers.

Mu, Spaargaren and Lansink (2019) seek to understand more broadly how to make mobile apps attractive to consumers by understanding and analyzing the food practices and relevant sustainability issues within the different food practices. The study focuses on the dining out practice of young Chinese and Dutch, and presents as main results the differences and similarities in their preferences regarding an app. The study contributes subsidies for the development of new apps, as well as the improvement of existing ones.

Energy practices are focused by Verkade and Höffken (2019) from the investigation of CECs in the context of changes in the energy system in the Netherlands. The study has three main results: (1) there are three different collective energy practices (promotion of individual energy practices, collective energy generation, collective energy management) and they are in different stages of development; (2) the relation between sites of practice is varied, can change with time, and most important, both enables and

hinders the energy practices; and, (3) the goals to be achieved are defined by collective energy practices, and when implemented, not only support the collective but also shape it.

Finally, Mylan (2015) seeks to deepen the approach of the product-service system in the daily life context, and focuses on laundry and lightning practices, based on insights from consumer sociology and practice theory. The study identified that the resistance to absorption of innovations is stronger in tightly coupled elements practices, because there is more demand for changes in practitioners' skills as well as in the meaning of those practices. In addition, when practices are less extensively linked, the sustainable product-service system diffusion can proceed more easily.

In the next section I present the methodological proposal, and apply the above examples to discuss how it contributes to deepen the analysis in order to broaden the comprehension capacity of sustainable consumption practices.

The Methodological Proposal: Phenomenological Approach and the Toolkit for Practice-based Studies on Sustainable Consumption

Ontological, epistemological, and theoretical coherence (Grix, 2002) is a condition for researchers to make new discoveries safely, in addition to the fact that all research (and all theory and method) has political implications because it ultimately produces reality (or hiding it) in a specific direction (Law & Urry, 2004). This is even more important when research and the method adopted, are also intended to be an intervention, and need to go beyond protocols and procedures, as in the case of the sustainability research mentioned and already proposed by other authors (Browne, et al. , 2016, Pink & Mackley, 2016).

I agree with Browne *et al.* (2016) that the expansion of the range of methodological possibilities is a way to consolidate the research method as a form of intervention, and that this intervention has the potential to create ruptures that cause changes. This paper joins this effort of interventionist methodological construction by increasing the capacity of apprehension and understanding of the individual and collective dimensions of human and social phenomena, specifically those related to environmental, economic and social sustainability. In addition, as suggested by Shittu (2019), future research should consider the connections of household consumption to broader sociocultural institutions.

This expansion of methodological possibilities follows the very development of PBS, which, according to Nicolini (2013), should invest more in diversity than in the search for theoretical and methodological unanimity, among other ways, by the construction of a "toolkit" as a source of methodological alternatives capable of accounting for the nature of the practice phenomenon. Some authors propose a combination based on quantitative survey and qualitative interviews, I propose the adoption of a phenomenological immersion based on phenomenology as a method and on ethnography as a research strategy. Despite this difference, I consider that the two options allow to shift the debate "from epistemology (where what is known depends on perspective) to ontology (where what is known is made different)" (Browne *et al.*, 2016, p.179).

First, it is necessary to argue about the combination of phenomenology and ethnography. Social life is essentially based on multiplicity and reflectivity, and on procedural, relational, and negotiable activities. Hence, intersubjectivity is a fundamental element in the apprehension of social phenomena, and must be, also, an important part of the methods used to apprehend and understand such phenomena. However, it must be ensured that there is no symbiosis between the researchers' experiences and the experiences of the subjects surveyed (Prus, 1996; Patriotta, 2003; Manidis, 2015).

It is precisely to face the challenge of the subject-object relationship showed above that I get support from the phenomenological dimension of the proposed immersion. First, this dimension is consistent with a theory of practice that is based strongly on Heideggerian notions of being-in-the-world and breakdown. According to Schatzki (1996):

It follows that interrelations among lives that transpire through life conditions also presuppose practices. Sociality, consequently, is not merely a hanging-together as established by and otherwise transpiring within practices. Sociality is essentially an interrelating of lives within practices (Schatzki, 1996, p.180).

The maintenance and reconstruction of a practice is a condition of sociality, inasmuch as it places the elaboration of the objectives and ends to which a practice proposes, and of which not always the practitioners are fully aware in the rational sense of the term. As part of the being-in-the-world, intentionality is part of another type of rationality, in view of the condition of entwinement, because we are constantly intertwined with other human beings and with objects, in a specific sociomaterial world, or in a specific sociomaterial practice. Called by some of practical rationality or practice logic of practice, it can often only be accessed in the occurrence of a breakdown, when a practice does not happen in the way it should or does not achieve the ends it is intended for, when, then, practitioners may become aware of it (Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2011; Dall'Alba & Sandberg, 2014).

In the proposed immersion, there is still the adoption of ethnography as a research strategy. To the objection that ethnography is a method, I answer that it is a method that belongs to the domain of methodological theories, and of the forms and strategies of carrying out scientific research, and that it can be oriented to a diversity of objects, among them practice as unit of analysis. This distinction between method and strategy loses its contours when we consider that different theoretical presuppositions or paradigms (e.g. interpretivists, constructivists, constructionists, critics, among others) unfold in different procedures without losing their ethnographic character.

I highlight some aspects of ethnography that support the idea of its role as a research strategy in the proposal presented here, and I trust the synthesis elaborated by Ybema, Yanow, Wels and Kamsteeg (2009), which emphasize some characteristics: (1) fieldwork; (2) real time contact with the object of study; (3) existence of non-material and often non-apparent dimensions; (4) attention to context; and finally (5) multiplicities of positions, situations, actors. I also follow the indications of Angrosino (2009), emphasizing that ethnography is based on field research in a personalized way and has the possibility of combining various techniques inductively, dialogically and holistically.

The use of ethnography in a study on sustainable consumption assumes a specific strategic role because it allows the researchers' to be involved with the studied practice(s) in such a way that the continuous and recursive process of identification and estrangement enables the approximation with the lived experience, and that its apprehension is more significant than in "non-emic" approaches (Pimentel & Nogueira, 2018).

The phenomenological immersion allows the researchers to elaborate methodological alternatives prior to fieldwork, without losing sight of the possibility of appearance of new alternatives that are demanded by new and emerging elements, considering the perspective of non-representational and non-propositional practice adopted. If knowing the process of constructing the intelligibility of a practice is a fundamental element to know this practice, the practice of research itself must offer a fertile means for the construction of its own intelligibility. I believe that it is in this recursive process that analytical depth can flourish, as well as the capacity for intervention to increase, considering that to adopt the practice-based approach it is necessary to focus on at least two practices: the one that interests us and the researchers' epistemic practice (Nicolini, 2013).

In the Mylan's paper (2015) phenomenological immersion could contribute to a deeper understanding of resistance to the absorption of innovations and what changes are needed in practitioners' skills through access to the intelligibility of practice, and support intervention for shift towards (more) sustainable consumption.

Phenomenological immersion could also contribute to the study by Verkade and Höffken (2019) to broaden the understanding of the differences between collective energy practices, and the variations between different sites of practice. The focus on the interconnectedness of practices and on intelligibility supports the ability to intervene in the pursuit of relatively more stable practices.

A question then arises: how to turn these assumptions and guidelines into a feasible and consistent fieldwork? In the section that follows I try to answer that question.

The Toolkit

The choice of the toolkit should privilege access to everyday life, to the thoughts, feelings, understandings and meanings produced by the practitioners. I present below some possibilities for this construction, with an emphasis on alternative and less commonly used approaches, considering that more known options such as the in-depth interview in qualitative research is already consolidated, and it is proven by the profusion of studies that adopt it, due to the nature of the object of study, and the efforts of social researchers to broaden and diversify the discussion of research methods (Dumay, 2011).

This proposal suggests the need to intensify the apprehension of elements that are not directly "visible", as well as the interconnection of different practices. In addition, it seeks to broaden the view on a given social organization, and especially to expand the capacity that method be also a form of intervention as required by the studies on sustainable consumption. I focus on the interview-to-the-double, on the crossed self-confrontations, as well as on some artifacts and technological resources focused on the capture of images and sounds to overcome the limitations imposed by the spoken and written language, considering the importance of the corporality and of the sociomaterial arrangements in this type of research. At the end, I present and discuss one data analysis method.

Interview-to-the-double

The technique consists of instructions given by the interviewed in response to the question: suppose I am your double and tomorrow I should replace you in your work. What instructions should you convey to me so that no one notices the replacement? The dialogue is focused on the description of the action, not its motives.

According to Nicolini (2009a), the interview-to-the-double generates a form of discursive production, and the understanding of the nature of this production is critical if one intends to adopt the methodology of representation of the practice reflexively.

The dialogical interaction becomes useful for the analysis and representation of a practice, since it allows you to overcome a view *from inside*, by evoking critical elements such as normativity, detailing, and morality involved in a practice. In addition, it allows a projective view from the forefront, where practice is experienced as orientation and irreversibility. Being a simple and feasible technique, but not less profound or important, it allows to (1) overcome the barrier of rationality and unconscious repression; (2) give visibility to past work by describing the future; (3) access to the way the interviewee orders the collective world from an individual perspective; (4) reveal ambiguities; (5) contribute to access the normativity of the practice; and, finally, (6) grasp the interconnections between different practices as a means of accessing and representing social organization (Nicolini, 2009a; Gherardi, 2012).

Gherardi (*id. ibid.*, p. 164) identifies the interview-to-the-double as a projective technique that allows to focus the interests and concerns of the respondent, through the clarification and understanding of aspects of the actions and activities that would not be clarified because they are ambiguous, unconscious, unusual and bizarre for him/herself. In making a projection of these elements out of himself as instructions, the respondent puts forward relevant elements of his/her activity. According to the author, the interview-to-the-double "has the advantage of rendering the work 'visible' by making it 'tellable'". This situation in which the subject dialogues with him/herself through the dialogue with the other leads him/her to find strange his/her own experience, rediscovering it and then reorganizing it from another point of view, which is already a form of intervention.

Strangeness, rediscovery and reorganization are epistemological in nature and have a significant methodological impact. According to Gherardi (2012), this process encompasses the researchers and practitioners in a different but related way. While for the researcher it is a process of representing the practice to interpret it, for practitioners it is a process of representation and re-apprehension, which gives them the condition of reflecting critically upon: (1) having to organize a narrative in the form of instructions; and (2) being confronted with the awareness of their narrative as feedback provided by the researcher. In view of this impact, some elements and precautions should be considered prior to deciding to use them, according to Table 2.

Table 2: Interview-to-the-double: Overview

Elements	Interview-to-the-double
Theoretical assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The interview is a social interaction and not an objective data collection; The themes discussed are socially constructed in the interview; interviewee and interviewer play an active role; The interview contextualizes the situation of the dialogue with the broader context; The reciprocal knowledge between interviewee and interviewer increases the interviewee's trust and commitment; The interview makes explicit the organization of a partial and implied discourse, and allows a view from inside of a practice;
Possibilities of use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emancipatory: to increase practitioners' power of action; Heuristic: collective reflection on group knowledge; Interventionist: change and improvement of the work process through the discussion of internal and external conflicts and the construction of new perceptions of reality; Methodological: describe and analyze one or more practices.
Benefits of adoption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Transpose the barriers of rationality, selective self-consciousness, social influences and unconscious repression; ✓ Gives present visibility to past work, through narrative in the future; ✓ Access to the way the interviewee imposes an individual and collective order on reality; ✓ The instructions given allow the interviewer to grasp ambiguities that the interviewee might be reluctant or unable to reveal; ✓ It gives access to morality and the normativity of practice by allowing access to what should and what should not be done.
Care in adoption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ It should not be used as an isolated technique, but as part of research methods that prioritize the researcher's participation; ✓ It should be applied after building a trust relationship with the interviewee (s). In this sense, it requires a significant time of the researcher's presence in the research environment; ✓ The respondent should be explicitly encouraged to offer second-person instructions to a fictitious double, to provoke internal dialogue and increase attention to detail; ✓ In a PBS, the interview should have a low degree of structuring to allow the analysis of how the interviewee prioritizes aspects of practice; ✓ The interventions of the interviewee should be in the sense of only requesting more information (When? In what situation? How?), But not reasons and explanations (Why?).

Source: prepared by the author from Nicolini (2009a) and Gherardi (2012)

The use of the mobile app by practitioners can be understood beyond an individual activity (Mu *et.al.*, (2019). The ITTD allows us to go beyond identifying commonalities and/or differences of use in different contexts, because the situation of the dialogue puts the practice in a broader context.

The ITTD may also contribute to studies such as Mylan's (2015). The need for building new skills and new meanings can be better understood because ITTD can be applied to building new perspectives of reality.

Crossed self-confrontation

A crossed self-confrontation was developed in the context of Yves Clot's Activity Clinic. For the French author, there is a difference between real activity and actual activity because not always what is important in what is done is accessible by simple observation and description. For him, the activity is also formed by "what one does not do, what one tries to do without being successful (...) what one would wish or could have done and what one thinks to be able to do elsewhere... what is done to avoid doing what must be done; what should be redone, as well as what had been unwillingly done" (Clot, 2008, p. 103). Thus, the crossed self-confrontation is based on a dynamic of debate and search for the collective dimension of human action and can contribute to studies on sustainable consumption that are focused on intervention for change.

The main objective to be achieved is to transform work (here understood in the broad sense) into an object of thought by triggering a reflexive analysis of habitual and daily activities. In the crossed self-confrontation, each subject analyzes and comments on the actions of others that occur in the same activity. The basic material for this analysis is the recording of sound and image of each one's actions, followed by the comments of the various subjects, creating a collective subject that is formed from that analysis, since the agents involved in the analysis (researchers and workers) occupy the roles of observed and observers simultaneously, becoming co-authors of the data collected, and having an important role in their analysis (Clot, 2008).

It is necessary to consider that the work of Yves Clot was elaborated as an interventionist proposition that aims to increase the subjects' power to act, through the dialogical interaction that allows the encounter of the subjects, not in the activity itself, but in the analysis of the work process, which enables the creation of a new object of thought and its development. However, we consider that its application can be very useful in sustainable consumption studies that seek collective changes, because by the collective subject it is possible to access the practice, and that we can think of an intervention that goes beyond the individual, without leaving aside the individual capacity of agency.

Clot (2008) also shows that through the enunciations, the dialogical interaction enables the encounter between the subjects, not in the activity itself, but in another one: in the process analysis activity that enables the creation of a new thought object and its development. That is, expanding the power of thinking and the power to act, which started from a dialogue where the initial objectives were different. The reported discourse and the discourse that reports by means of a hybridization of the utterance (intentional hybrid) engenders a new thought that is an awareness of the interlocutors about their activity. It is from the relation of the inner discourse with the outer discourse, which occurs in dialogical activity that one reaches the passage from one thought to another, the awareness, the development and expansion of the power to act.

New perceptions of the reality can emerge from conversational activity, and by accompanying and explaining how the meaning of words changes throughout the dialogue, the researcher can put the conversational activity at the service of the analysis activity, enabling to organize the bifurcation of meaning, that is, the subjects do not need to agree fully. They can find mutual support points for the development of their own thinking. These mutual points can contribute to represent a practice, to

understand the process of construction of its intelligibility, and to support the process of intervention and change.

As previously pointed out in the case of ITTB, the possibility of generating new perceptions of reality may contribute to the study by Mylan (2105), but also to the other two examples presented.

Because crossed self-confrontation allows practitioners to broaden their understanding of the practice, impacting researchers' broadened understanding, the dialogic interaction between mobile app users for green foods could go beyond the focus group results (Mu *et. al.*, 2019). Besides allowing the expression of feelings and the generation of ideas, it could generate the intentional hybrid, with the consequent broadening of awareness about the activity, and the development and expansion of the power to act. It can further enhance the ability to understand and overcome developmental stage differences between collective energy practices, and how they shape and sustain the collective (Verkade, & Höffken, 2019).

Studies on sustainable consumption and capture of everyday life

One of the challenges of the sustainable consumption studies is to capture the experience of practitioners in the "here-now" of everyday life, because it is in it that the connections between the elements of practice are actualized through a continuous reproduction, circulation and integration (Strengers *et. al.*, 2016; Shove *et al*, 2012; Warde, 2005). In this sense, a research that seeks to generate - or to be itself - an intervention, requires access to practices not only as reports or shared meanings, but as daily and concrete experiences.

The capture of the daily experience is easier to propose than to perform, due to some factors: (1) the behavior change of the subject when observed; (2) the attention of the subject focused on an object does not mean the impediment of the perception and influence of other elements around him; and finally, (3) some elements of everyday experience are tacit, distributed in the group and transient (Lahlou, 2010). There are a few studies aimed at capturing and transmitting everyday experience using new digital technologies (Cordelois, 2010; Habert & Huc, 2010; Kane & Fichman, 2009; Le Bellu; Lahlou & Nosulenko, 2010; Lewis; Pea; & Rosen, 2010).

For Lahlou (2010), experience-focused studies can benefit from the use of digital technology. One benefit is the ability of those technological means to allow the multimodal and situated experience to be revived from the point of view of the subject, allowing its subjective recording. This is achieved through portable cameras that portray the subject's point of view making him/her his/her own observer.

This self-observation contributes to overcome another challenge of the capture of experience, that is, the reduction of the effect of the observer on the behavior of those who are observed. This benefit has special value for research that seeks to intervene and bring about changes, as it allows a critical analysis after the execution of actions and activities that make up a practice, as close as possible to what that experience would be without any type of interference. In addition, the possibility of reviewing the experience from the same point of view helps to recall and relive the objective and subjective details present at that time. Those benefits get close to those offered by the interview-to-the-double and by the crossed self-confrontation, suggesting that a combination of these techniques can be quite fruitful.

All the practices studied in the examples presented can be better understood by using the techniques shown above. Laundry, lightning, dining out, collective generation and energy management practices can best be described from the practitioners' point of view, and from detailed images of how practices happen in the here-now.

Even with the benefits mentioned, the use of those technologies can cause some bias, since the interference in the perception that others that interact with it have of the situation, changing their

behaviors and, therefore, the situation. The combination of interview-to-the-double and crossed self-confrontation can minimize this bias by allowing the change of position between observer-observed, by the conversational dynamics that both techniques cause.

If data collection plays an important role in the type of research focused on this paper, analysis procedures are no less important. In the next section, I suggest an analysis process compatible with the immersion proposed.

Analytical possibilities

The need to capture the construction, maintenance and reconstruction of intelligibility and the meaning of a practice in an intervention research requires the use of data treatment and analysis procedures that can go beyond the individual dimension, without neglecting the lived experience of the practitioners. One of the procedures I suggest is to give special attention to language to be a channel for accessing the sense given by the subject to the lived experience (Giorgi, 2005; 2007; Lanigan, 1994; 2013)

According to Lanigan (1994), experience is the flow between perception and expression. In this sense, apprehending this flow can help explain the refinement and increasing clarity of perception and expression as a process for accessing the subject's consciousness. In another paper, the author (2013) explores this discussion by showing that communication is a means (*medium*) between four interconnected levels: the intrapersonal, interpersonal, group and intergroup levels. Communication is a verbal and gestural form of conscious experience, socially and culturally contextualized as a discourse. It is believed that this approach. Thus, it is possible to group the phenomenological analytical techniques into three progressive, but synergistic procedures: (1) phenomenological description, whose focus is discourse as a system of signs; (2) phenomenological reduction, where the expression of meaning is sought through revelatory sentences, and where the focus is the signifiers in the signs system; and (3) the phenomenological interpretation where one seeks the perception of the senses with a focus on meaning, or that which "can be said". The search for the evidence is given by the revelation of the dialectical relation between what is experienced (captures) and what is processed by thought (date), and which constitutes the consciousness of experience.

In the analysis of the data collected through the phenomenological immersion, I propose their description, reduction and interpretation at each phase of the process. The description should take as a starting point the identification of the relevant themes, taken as the immediate manifestations of the practice, from which units of meaning are proposed from these themes and correlated to the set of data collected. The aim is to reduce these units of meaning to a general chart with agglutinating classifications, on which a new reduction effort is made to identify similarities and differences, and to arrive at the descriptive categories of the focused practice.

The analysis follows by interpreting the descriptive categories that emerged from the analysis, taking as reference the elements of the studied practice that was apprehended in the ethnographic approximation. This process often requires the return to the field for new data collection, as well as the return to data for new analysis procedures, repeating the sequence description, reduction, and interpretation. This agrees with Lanigan (2013), who considers that each of the three phases contains elements of the others, and with the strategy of zooming in and zooming out proposed by Nicolini (2009b). In other words, the process of description, for example, is already a reduction and an interpretation, and so on. The final effort of interpretation must always be to understand the intelligibility of practice by analyzing their process of construction, reconstruction and maintenance by practitioners. In studies on sustainable consumption this analysis is also linked to the change of individuals "from being autonomous or norm-following decision makers to being carriers and performers of socially shared practices who can be recruited into, or out of, various practices" (Strengers *et al*, 2016; Shove & Pantzar, 2007).

Conclusions

The reflections presented in the paper were motivated by the challenges highlighted: the unsustainable way of life in contemporary society; the need for effective changes in society to stop and reverse the situation of resource consumption beyond the planet's biocapacity; the role of consumption in this context; the need to deepen knowledge about consumer practices; and the need for intervention actions capable of making this change concrete with global effects. The methodological proposal aims to contribute to theoretical and practical studies, which support the actions of governments and society, in order to overcome the challenges identified.

The main contribution of the methodological proposal is the expansion of the researcher's participation in the studied reality, in order to overcome the proposition of prescriptive models and standards that predominate in the ABC approach, seeking to deeply understand the consumption practices and subsidize intervention policies that promote social changes towards sustainable practices.

The phenomenological immersion proposed assumes that intelligibility is a constitutive element of practice, not just a prerequisite or a result. Moreover, as the content, process and product of collectively organized human activities, practice is the basic unit of social analysis, and its in-depth study allows us to focus on the process of building and changing a social organization.

In this sense, in research where the method as an intervention is essential, the combination of phenomenological and ethnographic approaches allows nuances and elements whose delimitation is not possible in a totally objective way, to be captured by the researcher through successive approaches to the studied object. A practice is also composed of what is not said and what is not done, fundamental components of its intelligibility, but not in an immediate way. Thus, the researcher can experience the role of practitioner, as well as observer and analyst, and increase its ability to intervene.

Change is at the heart of the intelligibility of a practice that is constantly under construction, reproduction, and reconstruction. In a research in which changes play an epistemic role, it is necessary to understand the process of construction, reproduction and reconstruction of the intelligibility of the research practice itself. It is in this confluence that the adoption of the proposed method is justified in the case of studies on sustainable consumption.

I presented three examples of consumption studies in order to discuss some possibilities to adopt the proposed phenomenological immersion. In all of them, increasing researcher participation is an important contribution. ITTD and crossed-self confrontation are especially suited to know practices as laundry, lighting and using an app, where some activities are not accessed immediately. The techniques are also indicated in intervention situations, where, in addition to the researcher studying the practice also seeks to provoke its transformation.

The study does not yield results of an empirical investigation, but I consider that the discussion of the examples overcomes this limitation. The valorization of the diversity of theoretical, methodological and data collection techniques opens space for what emerges from the field, allowing for changes without quality loss of the research, since the researchers monitor them, at the same time as they are part of the result expected. In addition, the article sought to offer a contribution as an argumentative essay, by presenting propositions for the approach of the PBS to interventionist research on sustainable consumption. In this case, bring and discuss ideas that seek to broaden methodological and analytical resources such as interview-to-the-double, crossed self-confrontation, and digital media and their implications.

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