



**DIPPING AND RINSING DISHES: A DISCUSSION INVOLVING CLEANLINESS
AND SUSTAINABILITY IN BRAZILIAN AND ENGLISH HOUSEHOLDS**

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Abstract

This paper compares the way people wash dishes in England and in Brazil to contribute to the discussion of how practices are undertaken in different national contexts and by people with different cultural backgrounds in both places, in order to verify if there are different levels of strength in the elements of practice described by Shove et al. (2012). It is based on twelve oral histories, both from Brazilian residents (three Brazilian locals and two English migrants) and English residents (two Brazilian migrants, one English local, and two cross-national couples). This data examines different social conventions and expectations from multiple perspectives, considering procedures, interplay between partners, expected outcomes and items associated to the practice, to name a few. Different social conventions of what is expected from a practice and the culture play a significant role in this dynamic, allowing us also to think about different strategies that could be employed by companies and governments to promote sustainable behaviours. Overall, the analysis provides an original account of social practices, which offers insights in multiple domains, such as consumer behaviour, marketing, sustainability and governance strategy.

Keywords: Practices; Household; Cleanliness; Sustainability; Cross-cultural.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the household environment, we perform many practices, such as cooking, cleaning, organising and disposing. These practices are part of everyday life and everyone performs at least some of them. Practices are motivated due to different reasons, which may include a cultural layer to their analysis (Barbosa & Veloso, 2014, Jack, 2017, Pullinger, Browne, Anderson & Medd, 2013, Richter, 2011).

Practices, as described by Shove et al. (2012), result from the combination of different types of elements (namely: materials, competencies and meanings) in a certain locus. We consume many resources while performing our daily household practices (Jack, 2017, Richter, 2011, Shove, 2003), and this consumption has been requiring more and more resources throughout the years in order to sustain a “normal” socially shared standard. However, different societies share different understandings of what is “normal” for them. For example, eating: what people usually eat in Brazil is different from what people usually eat in England (Barbosa & Veloso, 2014, Darmon & Warde, 2018).

In this study, we compared the way people wash dishes in England and in Brazil to contribute to the discussion of how practices are undertaken in different national contexts, and to unpack what counts as “normal” consumption and how this comes about. People have different social conventions of what is expected from a practice and the culture play a significant role in this dynamic (Barbosa & Veloso, 2014, Darmon & Warde, 2018).

While the ways of washing dishes may differ across cultures, the infrastructures are similar. In the households, we may usually find sinks, sponges, water, washing up liquid and, eventually, dishwashers. While in some places the dishes are soaped and rinsed individually (using clean/fresh water), in others the dishes are soaked in a mixture of water and washing up liquid and drained without rinsing afterwards. Such differences impact the volume of water that is used, drained away and needs to be treated, which may unfold into discussions of green products and their considerably low adoption by the market (less than 4% of worldwide market share) (Ritter et al., 2015, Bray et al., 2011, Joshi & Rahman, 2015). Therefore, the study of a practice can be used by many areas.

In this paper, we report on our empirical work with Brazilian and English residents using an oral history method to discuss water-consuming practices in the home. We chose to compare Brazilian and English residents in this research because both countries have similar conditions of water availability and quality (although both countries have regions that face

water shortage, usually they have good water conditions) (Rebouças, 2015). However, as we discuss in the following pages, Brazilians usually pursue a high standard of cleanliness in the home (Barbosa & Veloso, 2014), while the English are more permissive with more superficial cleaning practices (Knamiller, 2011, Shove, 2003).

Although we cannot objectively affirm that Brazilians consume more water per capita than English (in the UK, the majority of households uses a fixed rate system instead of a metered one, whereas in Brazil people only have the option to use the metered system), English residents seem to be consuming less water in recent years (Browne et al., 2013), while in Brazil the projections from the “Agência Nacional das Águas” (National Water Agency) point to continuous increase in its per capita consumption (ANA, 2019). These differences impact in the way that practices are performed, requiring specific material elements (Shove et al., 2012) to achieve cultural standards, for example. The different scenarios raise such questions as: What do Brazilians and English residents understand as cleanliness? When Brazilians move to England, do they wash their dishes like Brazilians or like English people? Knowing that practices are formed due to the interaction of three elements (materials, competencies and meanings), is there any difference in the level of strenght among these different elements?

With these questions in mind, it is possible to say that through the study of one practice, we can explore social conventions in the performance of this practice, allowing us also to think about different strategies that could be employed by companies to target their offers in different markets, and by governments to promote responsible water use. Also, by focusing on a practice that is performed in different places, by different people and with a cross-cultural approach, this paper gives insights into the discussion of the trajectories of practices and how they are adopted by migrants. The analysis provides an original account of cleaning routines, which offers interesting insights for those addressing sustainability, consumer behaviour, marketing and governance strategy.

2. PRACTICES, WATER CONSUMPTION AND SUSTAINABILITY

Consumption and practice approach have been put together for a long time. Water consumption, in particular, has more than 20 years of publications (Spaargaren, 1997, Browne et al., 2013, Evans et al, 2018, Shove, 2003). Although these discussions explored singularities of specific scenarios, there is still space in the academic debate involving differences of everyday water consuming practices in different places.

Social practice theories are polyvalent: they can help us to understand practices through a historical perspective based on their antecedents (Barr, 2015) as well as how a specific way of performing a practice became the “normal” of a society (Evans et al., 2018). Here, we had three key influences: 1. Shove and colleagues paved the theoretical basis of how practices are established and their changes due to the way the “elements” of practice (i.e. materials, competencies and meanings) are put together (Shove, 2003, Shove et al., 2012); 2. Darmon and Warde (2018), as a result of their discussion involving food practices performed by cross-national couples, are the background for our cross-cultural approach and involving practices and their performances in new environments; 3. Barbosa and Veloso (2014) is the third key influence of our work, as they relate cultural influences in household practices and sustainability.

At first glance, household practices have material elements that may be found virtually in any modern society: people cook using cookers, use water to wash the dishes, have a shower or a bath for personal cleaning and so on. Yes, we may find differences that go beyond objects and infrastructures (materials), comprising skills and learning processes (competencies) and socially shared understandings (meanings) as well to perform these practices (Shove et al., 2012), but we need to understand them based on the trajectories they had in their societies (Brahic, 2013, Darmon & Warde, 2018, Shove, 2003).

As said above, same/similar practices follow particular trajectories in their environments (Barbosa & Veloso, 2014, Shove, 2003), which highlights the importance of a cultural discussion. Darmon and Warde (2018) already evidenced that cross-national couples may face conflicts in the performance of some practices, as the partners upbringing in different environments with different ways of doing things, but it is still unclear how these couples manage the performance of a household practice directly related to comfort and hygiene expectations (Shove, 2003; Barbosa & Veloso, 2014).

Although similar practices are performed around the world, the elements of practice may be organised differently, as might the use of different cleaning products (Joshi & Rahman, 2015), infrastructures (Shove, 2003), and expectations of cleanliness (Barbosa & Veloso, 2014), it is still unclear if the elements of practice have different degrees of importance to establish how a practice will be performed.

However, not just for consumption reasons we should study the household unit, but it can also support discussions regarding environmental impacts. Access to drinking water is considered a fundamental right (Fachin & Silva, 2012), and we can find studies involving

discussions of its treatment for over 20 years (Otterpohl et al., 1997, Sharp, 2017). As Miller (2012, p. 66) posit, “the home is where the overwhelming bulk of commodities will be cooked in kitchens, hung in wardrobes, given to others”. Considering the vital importance of water, its presence in many household practices, and the fact that household practices help us understand more about consumption as a whole, water is a resource that deserves a closer look.

Studying human behaviour is complex, and a cross-cultural comparison is beneficial to mediate a discussion like ours. Howes (1996) already discussed that different cultures can have different ways of consuming the very same item, and this is directly related to the performance of a practice: material objects acquire value in the performance of specific practices and projects through and because of their roles in their performances (Shove & Araujo, 2010).

Knowing that cultures have their own histories, through the way their practices were organised we can learn more about what has more value in those contexts. As we discuss the performance of a practice by locals and migrants in this paper, the rearrangement of the elements of practice are useful to discuss the practices themselves (Cross & Gilly, 2014, Darmon & Warde, 2018), as it makes people question what they already had internalised as normal.

Thus, considering these previous findings, our discussion aims to explore the following key gaps in the literature: (1) Are there different strengths in the links of the elements of a practice, as this practice has a certain expected outcome? (2) How to address marketing communications that promote environmentally friendly behaviours, considering different cultural backgrounds?

Thus, through the discussion of bathroom cleaning, our research explores the following key gaps in the literature: 1) our discussion that compares a (water consuming) practice across two cultures, from the perspective of locals and migrants: by focusing on the nature of the practices that British and Brazilian residents engage in when cleaning their bathrooms, we help to uncover how the elements of the practice relate to each other; 2) discuss a water consuming practice both from the household perspective and from the sustainable development perspective: by asking people about the environmental impacts of their way of cleaning the bathroom, it is possible to explore the themes of sustainable consumption in cleaning practices. This will allow companies and governments to better target products and interventions in the two nations.

This research considers a particular perspective of a practice, as we will see in the following section: it considers a situation where people from different cultural backgrounds (locals and migrants) could perform a practice in the way they would like, considering a scenario where the practitioner could freely choose the way of performing a practice, so the original cultural background could overlap the current cultural background due to stronger influence of elements of meanings, which is something Daniel Miller's discussions on culture and consumption contribute to prove themselves as compatible to practices (Miller, 2012). This is something novel, as this goes beyond Shove's writings about practices, incorporating people's subjectivities to the practices (Shove, 2003, Shove et al., 2012).

3. METHOD

This is a qualitative research, with data constructed through four groups of people: Brazilians and English residents (both locals and migrants). All these interviews followed the oral history method (Janesick, 2010), with three interviews (at least) with each person (average of four hours/interviewee). We considered multiple interviews with each person as one whole interview.

Considering we were primarily interested in the performance of household water consuming practices, these involved practices we would not have direct access (as personal hygiene, for example), so we relied on interviews to explore the way these individuals perform the practice, how they learned to do so and what do they think about such practices. Therefore, we chose to use the Oral History (Janesick, 2010), a method useful for both data construction and analysis (Chaitin, 2008), and also compatible with the theory of practice (Browne et al., 2014, Hards, 2011).

A total of 12 people was interviewed, involving four groups: Brazilians living in Brazil (Brazilians locals), Brazilians living in England (Brazilians migrants), English living in England (English locals), and English living in Brazil (English migrants). Each interview required at least three meetings (different days, usually once a week) and resulted an average of four hours/interviewee. Each meeting focused on a different aspect of the elements of practice described by Shove et al. (2012).

We first explored the material elements, aiming to find out what people do and the way they do it. Here we had just one question: we asked the people to talk about their routines, detailing what they do from the moment they wake up until they go to bed again in

each day in a regular week. After this initial report, we explored if there were any differences at different times of the year (e.g. seasons, holidays). Then, each interview explored a particular route in the follow-up questions, where we asked for details about the way the practices were performed (e.g. does the person wash the dishes with the tap open or closed?).

Later, in the second day, the interviews were oriented towards competencies. In this day, we explored how the interviewees learned how to perform the practices mentioned in the first meeting. Questions such as “since when do you remember [washing the dishes] this way?” and “have you ever tried [a dishwasher]?” were asked.

Last, the third interview focused on the elements of meanings. The questions here asked people to disclose about their perceptions involving the way they performed the practices and how such practices are related to other meanings as sustainability, cleanliness, necessity and waste, for example.

The individuals had different backgrounds, all were adults and only one of them were still living with his parents. We searched mainly for adults who were not living with their parents anymore, otherwise they may not perform some of the household water consuming practices (like washing clothes or household cleaning).

At total, we analysed 12 sets of interviews: three from Brazilian residents (three Brazilian locals and two English migrants) and seven from English residents (one English, two Brazilians, one English-Brazilian couple, and one Irish-Brazilian couple). All of these interviews were carried by the same researcher both in Brazil and England. These interviewees represented the average Brazilian and English, considering a scenario where all of them are adults living in a city where they do not have shortages regularly, so they do not continuously live in a “water saving mindset”, which could influence the way they would like to consume water.

Although in practice research some consider that “there is too much emphasis on the individual” (Browne et al., 2013, p. 1015), and that the focus of the analysis should be on practices (Shove et al., 2012), we follow Evans et al. (2018) in that we think it is important to understand what people think about their practices in order to understand consumption. Although we worked with narratives and memories (which focus on the individuals) (Darmon & Warde, 2018, Maller & Strengers, 2013), this is compatible with the general practice approach as we accessed a rich understanding of practices through the individuals’ narratives.

4. CULTURAL DIFFERENCES IN WATER CONSUMING PRACTICES

After presenting the background that guided this research, now it is time to combine this with a discussion involving cultural differences of water consuming practices. The literature shows that Brazilians and English consume water differently (Barbosa & Veloso, 2014, Rebouças, 2015, Shove, 2003). Usually, Brazilians tend to use more water to supply their needs, which do not imply they have better/worse behaviours, only that Brazilians and English have differences. Part of this refers to cultural conventions of cleanliness, as discussed by Barbosa and Veloso (2014). Our data supports this statement, and we will see below a link between the influence one's cultural background may have in the performance of household water consuming practices, even if the person migrates to a different culture.

4.1. Individual attention

Initially, it is important to describe the Brazilian material elements people usually have access to wash dishes, which is slightly different from the English ones. Brazilian kitchens usually have a single bowl sink (on average, but it is possible to find households with double bowls sinks) which, as well as washboard sinks, can be made of different materials, but stainless steel and synthetic materials are the most common ones. The presence of dishwashers is not common in this case, as only 4.8% of Brazilian households have one (Szwarcwald et al., 2005)¹. Sponges are used along with water and washing up liquid to scrub the dirt off the dishes. Depending on how hard the dirt is, people also use steel wool and hot water (Brazilian household plumbing systems usually have cold water only). A drainer completes the layout (Figure 14).

¹This was the only national statistic found. IBGE's (Brazil's official statistic agency) historical and statistical series do not cover dishwashers. This data has a long time, but we still can sustain the gap between Brazilians and English households, as this last country had 33% of its households with this appliance (same period) (ONS, 2019).

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Figure 14. A typical Brazilian kitchen sink. Note. Source: Google Images.

In Brazil, people wash the dishes by hand, soaping them individually. After soaping the dish, two situations occur: (1) the dish is rinsed and placed aside to dry; or (2) the dish is put aside while the person soaps more dishes before rinsing them (individually). In these situations, the tap can either be left running water continuously or it can be turned off while soaping the dish.

A: Ahm... I don't have many things to wash... it is, like, one knife, one fork, and one plate. So, usually, I wash the knife and fork first, and then the plate. But, usually, the plate is not even too dirty. However, when I cook FOR REAL, which is when I decide to do something, I always go from the least dirty to the dirtiest. This is my way of doing it. So I start, I don't know, maybe from the glasses, cutlery, the plates, and then the pots, for example. It is something like this.

Q: Do you soap everything and rinse afterwards? Or do you soap and rinse at the same time?

A: I soap everything and then I rinse. I only put washing up liquid and I soap them, I scrub everything. Then I rinse them individually. After I finish rinsing one, I turn off the tap again. And then I start to rinse the next one... I turn on the tap to rinse it, and I turn it off again when I finish this other one. So I keep doing this.

Q: These dishes... are all of them outside the sink bowl or are them inside?

A: Usually, they are outside. Outside the bowl, over the sink area. I do this individually, I only do this on and off in order to not leave the tap on all the time, to not waste (I2, Brazilian local, male, 23 years old, capitals indicate emphasis).

All Brazilians (locals and migrants) reported procedures at least similar to this one above. It is worth to point out that all of them keep the same procedure as they used to see in their parents' home, it only varied if they used to see the tap being left on all the time or not (I2 and I5 reported they were used to see their mothers washing dishes with the tap on, but as they grew older, critical thinking from high school and university raised their environmental awareness and made them adopt a different procedure). The only exception was found in the

cross-national couple I7-I9 (Brazilian-Irish): they do not turn off the tap while soaping their dishes, they keep it on all the time. Although all the other Brazilians save some water by turning the tap on and off when doing it by hand, it still consumes more water than the English way (details in next section), but they refuse to change their procedure. They do not consider this procedure proper (Evans, 2018).

Q: You said something about cleanliness. But what about water? Do you have any perception about the way people use water here [in England]?

A: Yeah, they have a different way of washing dishes here. They have a different method I don't fully understand. They use a bowl and they fill this bowl with water and put things in there... I don't remember if they... well, they soap there. Some people do not even rinse these dishes, they take the dish from there and they put to dry. But some people rinse the dish. This is different.

[...]

Q: What about your perception of the way people wash dishes here? How is it?

A: I don't know, I'm more concerned with the soap, if it will make me ill, if it won't. Then, when I take something someone has washed, I do a quick rinse [laughs]. But I don't know, it is different, it is different from what we are used to. It is a little strange for us (I5, Brazilian migrant, male, 29 years old).

The presence of water is related to cleanliness and even hygiene. Differently from the second story, Brazilians now have all the material elements they would like to perform the practice the way they desire, aiming to achieve the result they want to. Again, this goes beyond the material elements, relying on the elements of meanings. The power of meanings is so expressive that it raises barriers to different ways of performing a practice, even when this other way could be less resource consuming.

This was the case with the dishwashers. All the Brazilian locals (and some of the migrants) only washed their dishes by hand, and they had negative perceptions of this appliance, even though research shows that using the dishwasher with a proper combination of how dirty the dishes are and how loaded the machine is (Richter, 2011) (which is an element of competence similar to the use of a washing machine to wash clothes, turning it on with a setting that matches the load, how dirty the clothes are, and the fabrics that are inside).

A: I was always taught to see the dishwasher as something unnecessary (I3, Brazilian local, male, 22 years old).

Q: In the first day, you told me you consider dishwashers as something unnecessary. Since then, do you still think the same thing?

A: It is absolutely unnecessary [laughs] (I1, Brazilian local, male, 24 years old).

However, when these people actually had an experience with a dishwasher, their perception of it changed, even though they have not started using it for environmental

reasons. Considering that in England this material element is more widespread than in Brazil, this certainly was something that eased this change of perception.

Q: Before having a dishwasher, before start using one regularly, how you used to see it?

A: Well, this is something I was always influenced by my mom. My mom thinks dishwashers are a waste. She says you have to clean your plate before putting it inside. So, she used to say “if you are going to wash something, wash it properly at once”. And I always thought that. When I moved to this other place, before the one I am living in now, there was a dishwasher there and I used to use it as a cabinet. I used to put pots in there until some day I don’t know what came to my mind and I said: “well, I will try it once”. And then I loved it, I said “wow, I was so wrong” [laughs], washing by hand is way more exhausting.

Q: Was this episode here or in Brazil?

A: Here, but I lived in this other place, I don’t know, maybe six months before trying it.

Q: Right. Nowadays, if you return to Brazil, is this something you would intend to have?

A: AHAM. Yes, it is (I4, Brazilian migrant, female, 28 years old, capitals indicate emphasis).

Still, there is also a cultural element that may be holding back the dishwashers’ market. The following excerpt is the immediate subsequent line from this last I4’s quote:

Q: Any particular reason?

A: Mainly with family, because it is way more practical. Each one just quickly cleans the plate, put it inside the machine, and it is done. Mainly because I think... me alone, me and my boyfriend alone already use a lot of dishes. If I had a family... wow, I would need one. Even more here in the UK, there are no cleaners. In Brazil, I think people care less about this because they always have a cleaner who would do this cleaning (I4, Brazilian migrant, female, 28 years old).

Brazil has an expressive number of cleaners. In 2018, 6.24 million people worked as cleaners, the highest number in the last seven years (Elias, 2019). These workers tend to be the main responsible for the dishes in families who hire them for their households (be it exclusive or daily) (Teixeira et al., 2015), at the same time they may feel they do not belong to that environment, being almost like a possession (Soratto, 2015), which reveals a disconnection that can lead them to be seen more as a thing than as a person, placing them in the role of a material element of this practice.

In this way, Brazilian way of washing dishes reveals there is a connection between the use of water and cleanliness, also revealing cultural influences in the elements of meanings that shape people’s perceptions of material elements, consequently impacting on the use of resources. English, however, reveal another trajectory in their performance of this practice.

4.2. Soak them all!

The material elements English have in their households are similar to the ones we saw previously in the Brazilian households (section 4.1.). Besides the fact dishwashers have a stronger presence in this country, the only other material element we see as different is the sink: in England, people usually have a double bowl sink. These bowls can either be twins (Figure 15), with different sizes (one of them has narrow width) or removable (which means it is a single bowl sink plus an extra one).



Figure 15. A double bowl kitchen sink. Note. Source: Google Images.

If the material elements were similar, we cannot say the same about the elements of competencies. As I5 described earlier, English do not use running water every time when they wash dishes. English locals fill the bowl with clean hot water and soap, and then they soak the dirty dishes in this solution, scrub them and put them on the drainer. Eventually, if the person considers this water is getting too dirty, the procedure is repeated.

Q: One thing... when you wash your dishes. Do you do everything by hand? Or, like, with a dishwasher?

A: No. By hand. The kitchen is too small for a machine. Far too small.

Q: Would you put a machine in there if you had the space available?

A: No, I don't think I would. 48 years married, I've never had one, so... why would I need one now?

Q: [laughs] Ok. Yeah... in Brazil, we wash our dishes differently. How do you wash your dishes? I mean... the procedure... do you wash one by one? In a bowl?

A: No, no. You put three, four things... wash them, put them on a drainer, then get another four, put them in the wash, then put them on the drainer. How do you do in Brazil?

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Q: Yeah. In Brazil... like, we soap, we rinse all of them. And then you open the tap, the water, and you wash the soap off and put on the drainer. All of them.

A: REALLY [in an incredulous way]? Very different.

Q: Yeah. That is why I need you to describe it for me, because... so I can write about this. Is it in a bowl that you put things inside? Hm... in a bowl... water and soap? How is it?

A: YEAH. Just in the sink. You just put water, washing up liquid...

Q: You fill it with water... put the dirty dishes inside...

A: The clean ones first. The cups. And then the dinner ones. I wipe with tissue. And then the pans, put them in the water. When I think the water is getting dirty... like on Sunday, that it is a big dinner... so, maybe, we change the water three times. Because there is a lot of cooking utensils.

Q: During this, you keep changing the water if it gets too dirty, right?

A: Yes (I8, English local, female, 67 years old, capitals indicate emphasis).

This last quote is from an English woman who is married to an English. In contrast, when we questioned cross-national couples about the way they wash dishes in their homes, it seems that the Brazilian way prevails when doing it by hand. I6 and I10 currently use a dishwasher, but they still need to wash some things by hand sometimes (if there is no available space to fit big pots in the dishwasher, for example).

Q: Uhum. And you said you started washing the dishes the Brazilian way. How was your perception when you saw, discovered this way? I don't know if I6 showed you... how was this transition?

A: [Laughs] First things first. I can't remember. So... I don't recall it as a significant event. It wasn't an event that affected me... I being challenged that my way of washing dishes was wrong [laughs]. I don't remember, really. I REMEMBER I6 moaning and expressing her disbelief of this way of British people would have the basin and just mixing it all together and leaving it in all this dirty water. So, that was something she had been in houses with British families before we were together... she already had a strong view on that... to how bad and how strange. So I would have been aware of her views on it and I think it would've been a very natural thing that... probably, if I hadn't already started doing it myself, because I don't think I would ever be a heavy washing up liquid person, you know, who put the dishes out with loads of washing up liquid on them. So, I probably would have preferred to have the dishes rinsed anyway. So... she was preachy and converted, it was probably quite an easy transition, if there was any transition to be made. So, I didn't find strange at all.

Q: Uhum. Besides washing the dishes, you had also transitioned to the dishwasher. I don't know if you already had this moment of start thinking in different ways of doing other activities... like doing cleanings, washing clothes?).

A: Involving water use?

Q: I would narrow it down to water, but if you feel more comfortable thinking in general things and narrow down to water, it is up to you.

A: I would say, probably, one of the biggest evolutions of the time has been recycling. See how much we had improved, from not recycling anything to now trying to recycle as much as we can. In times of how we do things... I would probably say our main concern would be about "how can we manage to do these things whereas we feel that we got less time to allocate to them?". Just, you know, buy when we prioritise doing things more efficiently. Impacts on water use I can't really think we trying to find different solutions to the activities.

Q: When you changed to dishwashers... why did you change to dishwashers, actually? Was it something that you have looked it would save water? Energy? Why did you change to this?

A: Well... a friend of ours, who is Portuguese, in fact. So, we saw them using theirs and... I think the motivation to get one... if I'm honest about it... PROBABLY, at the time, the

PRIMARY motivation would've been that it would be quicker. We were spending so much time doing dishes. And it would've been HELPFUL to know that, in fact, is more environmentally efficient as well. But, if I'm honest with you, I think the primary motivation would not have been the environment at the time (I10, English local, male, 48 years old, capitals indicate emphasis).

In cross-national couples, Brazilians kept their way of washing dishes. As the materials they had access to did not require them to adapt their practices, these migrants were not forced to follow the new structure they moved in.

Q: Uhum. And how was it for you, at the beginning, when you discovered that Brazilians and English wash dishes differently? Did you find this out WITH I9 or had you figured it out before?

A: I don't know how I found this. No, I had found out before... now... I don't remember. I do remember I always... I would always remove that bowl and I would wash Brazilian way [laughs]... living in with other people, sharing a place and so. Seeing people washing in this way. I wouldn't confront them but, when I washed the dishes, I washed them my way [laughs] (I7, Brazilian migrant, female, 45 years old, capitals indicate emphasis).

In Brazil, English migrants would also wash the dishes Brazilian way. I11's family has a dishwasher but, when washing by hand, all of them do it like Brazilians. I12, on the other hand, seems aligned to Shove's approach, as she followed the new environment she started living in.

Q: Yeah. Here, in Brazil, we don't have the two bowls to wash dishes. Last week, you said you changed your way of doing it. Is that something that your husband required you to do or how have you change it?

A: No, I think, again, it is just... I think it was the people around me. I see them doing it and I adapt. But, thankfully, he's never said: "this is how we do it in Brazil, you need to do it this way". No. It's different (I12, English migrant, female, 25 years old).

Last, it seems undeniable that culture influences practices, as people actively identify their standards of cleanliness (meanings) and the necessity of using more resources (materials) in order to achieve an outcome (competence).

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Our analysis of washing dishes has explored cultural patterns and differences in performing this practice both for locals and migrants. Taking the insights together, some arguments about standards of cleanliness and the overlap of different cultural backgrounds in the performance of practices emerge which we elaborate further here. First, there seems that people may refuse to follow the structure where they are inserted. Second, the environmental

impact involving the use of resources is something especially distinguishable for Brazilians. Third, in cross-national couples, the dishes tend to be washed in the Brazilian way.

The refuse to follow the structure, our first argument, is based on the interviews with Brazilian migrants. These people were used to wash their dishes in a way in Brazil, which they consider the proper way of doing it, and they continued to perform this practice in the same way in England. According to Shove's approach, the new environment should drive people towards a common way of performing a practice to that society.

However, as the material elements allow people to wash the dishes in the way they would like without requiring any new competence, the elements of meanings overpass the other elements in this situation. As the Brazilian migrants may consider the English way of washing dishes does not actually achieve a certain degree of cleanliness, they deliberately ignore the mainstream of their current culture and rely on the standards from their original cultural background.

This situation suggests that the elements of practices have links bonded with different strengths, as the performance of such practices might be driven more by a type of element than by the other(s). As expressed by I5, after moving to England, the elements of meanings seemed stronger than the materials and the competencies, as the person deliberately chose to subvert the British way of washing dishes to the Brazilian way. We suggest that agencies target communications to migrants to do this transition in a way that it does not seem abrupt to them, so they might accept easier a different way of performing a practice as a valid way. Also, we would suggest that future research investigates different approaches in these communications (e.g. local communities, real estate companies, targeted internet-based ads) to see if there are any better option.

Besides the suggestions mentioned above, a more radical one would be the installation of self-closing tap faucets in the kitchen. In this new layout, the situation of washing dishes with the tap continuously running water would be suppressed to a minimum. On the other hand, people could feel controlled, which would require marketing efforts from multiple players (e.g. government, real estate companies, plumbers, building supply stores) to gradually turn this perception into something positive (see Brei, 2007).

Second, we found Brazilians and English think differently about the use of resources when washing dishes. While Brazilians tend to use more water and consider acceptable its use with a purpose of achieving a shining standard of cleanliness (Barbosa & Veloso, 2014), English use less resources and look for convenience in their household activities. This look

for convenience might be a reason why English locals look more for using extra material elements (devices) to perform the practice, as is the case of dishwashers being way more present in English households (ONS, 2019, Szwarcwald et al., 2005).

Nevertheless, we must reinforce that dishwashers were used by English residents and English migrants for convenience reasons, not for environmental reasons (as Richter, 2011 demonstrated, the correct use of dishwashers save both water and energy when compared to the manual performance of this practice), and Brazilian locals do not use this material element due to lack of trust in its cleaning outcome). People do not necessarily know dishwashers can be eco-friendlier (although future research could explore the environmental impacts of their mass production), which means the elements of competencies must be developed along with the elements of meanings in order to make the performance of this practice better for the environment.

Also, most interviewees reported not buying eco-labelled washing up liquids. Among the four groups of interviewees, the exceptions occurred in the Brazilian migrants: I5 and I6-I10 cross-national couple were the only ones who affirmed buying environmentally friendly washing up liquids; the reason for choosing such option relied on the impact to treat the water disposed after the washing. However, none of the interviewees reported awareness with the amount of water used.

So, perhaps, considering the low preference for green-labelled products (Joshi & Rahman, 2015), a path that could be explored in marketing communications is that consumers, in the first instance, should use less of regular products. As this involves people buying less products, we suggest the government makes the first move in this marketing approach (after all, this goes against companies' interests). Later, the communications (now involving both government and companies) could focus on educate people that their results using eco-labelled and regular products are similar (Joshi & Rahman, 2015).

Last, our research evidences that cross-national couples tend to perform the practice in the Brazilian way (when doing it by hand). This is related to the standard of cleanliness, which is higher for Brazilians. Our results points to a different direction than the one discussed by Darmon and Warde (2018): the authors discussed that cross-national couples perform food-related practices in an intermediary way of both backgrounds. In our research, it seems the couples do not follow an intermediary standard because otherwise it would not be considered hygienic and proper for use, as I5's excerpt indicated.

DIPPING AND RINSING DISHES: A DISCUSSION INVOLVING CLEANLINESS AND SUSTAINABILITY IN BRAZILIAN AND ENGLISH HOUSEHOLDS

Even though the amount of water used tends to vary among Brazilians and English, the socially shared standards of washing dishes tend to surpass the concerns with the environment, as people usually use regular washing up liquids. For future research, it would be interesting to check if other water related activities are associated with different levels of environmental awareness. Further, we need to check if other water related practices performed both in the kitchen (e.g. cooking) and in different rooms (e.g. cleaning the bathroom) have different degrees of influence of elements of practices (see Maller & Strengers, 2013). These authors defend the study of the same practices in different households as something important for understanding the trajectories of practices. Here, we analysed the trajectories of the same practice in different cultures and this provides another path for future research.

Additionally, we believe that both nations have unique characteristics that should be addressed when discussing sustainability issues. Besides the managerial suggestions presented earlier, our discussions could also be used in advertisements and for political ends, for example. While in Brazil communications of green-labelled products should be focused on “shining” outcomes, in England the focus should rely on the “convenience” of their use. Also, we imagine that such meanings could also be used in governmental campaigns aiming to raise consumers’ environmental awareness (Middlemiss, 2018, Spaargaren & Oosterveer, 2010).

It is clear from our work that people’s upbringing background greatly influences their expectations of cleanliness (requiring from them a “proper” way of doing), which offered an additional discussion to practice theory (Shove et al., 2012, Hansen, 2018): the current environment has limited influence in the way of performing a practice, considering a scenario where people have access to elements of both cultural backgrounds (i.e. original and current), which suggests that the elements of meanings might have a stronger influence (compared to materials and competencies). Future research could combine complementary discussions of other household water consuming practices to explore if there are differences in the role played by the elements of practice, and also if there are differences in other practices that shares elements of meaning (e.g. washing dishes and cleaning bathrooms could have different degrees of hygiene).

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