SPAZAS, HAWKERS AND THE STATUS QUO: BLACK CONSUMPTION AT THE MARGINS OF MEDIA DISCOURSE IN POST-APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA

SPAZAS, HAWKERS E O STATUS QUO: O CONSUMO NEGRO NAS MARGENS DO DISCURSO MIDIÁTICO NA ÁFRICA DO SUL PÓS-APARTHEID

SPAZAS, HAWKERS Y EL STATUS QUO: EL CONSUMO NEGRO EN LOS MÁRGENES DEL DISCURSO DE LOS MEDIOS EN SUDÁFRICA DESPUÉS DEL APARTHEID

Mehita Iqani
Department of Media Studies
University of the Witwatersrand,
Johannesburg
Mehita.Iqani@wits.ac.za

Abstract

This paper examines the mediated marginalization of forms of black consumption that were considered unthreatening to South Africa's economic elite during the 1990s, South Africa's first decade of political freedom. It argues the English language press of the time treated certain practices of black consumption produced, and approved of, by Apartheid state structures as natural, and as such contributed to a propping up of the economic status quo in the face of a sea change in the political environment. The paper offers as a theoretical framework a discussion of the tensions between citizenship and consumption in South Africa, and the complexity of claims that consumption equals empowerment in post-colonial contexts. Next, a brief account is provided of the process of constructing the corpus of media texts analyzed. Finally, the paper presents the key themes of the ways in which black consumption was discursively marginalized and critically discusses those in relation to bigger questions about the extent to which consumption stands for empowerment in post-Apartheid South Africa.

Keywords: Consumption, media, race, empowerment, South Africa, post-apartheid

Resumo

Este trabalho examina a marginalização mediatizada de formas de consumo das populações negras que não eram consideradas ameaçadoras pela elite econômica da África do Sul durante a década de 1990, a primeira década de liberdade política na África do Sul. Argumenta-se que a imprensa de língua inglesa da época tratava certas práticas de consumo negro produzidas e

aprovadas por estruturas do regime do Apartheid como naturais, e como tal contribuiu para sustentar o status quo econômico enquanto ocorria uma mudança radical no ambiente político. O artigo oferece em seu quadro teórico uma discussão sobre as tensões entre cidadania e consumo na África do Sul, bem como sobre a complexidade das alegações de que o consumo equivale a empoderamento em contextos pós-coloniais. Em seguida, um breve relato é fornecido do processo de construção do corpus dos textos midiáticos analisados. Por fim, o artigo apresenta os principais temas que revelam como o consumo negro foi marginalizado nos discursos midiáticos e discute criticamente tais temas em relação à questões mais amplas relativas às possibilidades de se considerar que o consumo significa empoderamento na África do Sul pós-Apartheid.

Palavras-chave: Consumo, mídia, raça, empoderamento. África do Sul, pós-apartheid.

Resumen

Este artículo examina la marginación mediatizada de formas de consumo negro que no eran consideradas amenazantes a la élite económica de Sudáfrica durante la década de 1990, la primera década de libertad política en el país. Argumenta que la prensa en lengua inglesa consideraba ciertas prácticas de consumo negro producido y aprobado por las estructuras estatales del apartheid como naturales, y el tal contribuyó al apuntalar el statu quo económico en cuanto ocurria un cambio radical en el entorno político. El trabajo ofrece un marco teórico para la discusión de las tensiones entre la ciudadanía y el consumo en Sudáfrica, y la complejidad de las afirmaciones que el consumo es igual a empoderamiento en contextos poscoloniales. A continuación, se proporciona un breve resumen del proceso de construcción del corpus de los textos analizados. Por último, se presentan los temas clave de las formas en que el consumo negro es marginado discursivamente y se discuten criticamente esos temas en relación a las grandes cuestiones sobre el grado en que el consumo es sinónimo de empoderamiento en la Sudáfrica posterior al apartheid.

Palabras-clave: Consumo, medios, raza, empoderamiento, Sudáfrica, post-apartheid.

Introduction

The key pledge made by the South African liberation movement was “a better life for all”. This was the main campaigning slogan of the African National Congress (ANC) before the 1994 election; it implicitly promised broad-based economic justice and empowerment, which ultimately takes material shape in certain forms of consumption. Promises of black empowerment were received with mixed feelings by the white minority, whose views and values were represented and constructed within the newspapers primarily owned by that same elite. Some voices celebrated the consumption practices of the emerging black middle classes; others critiqued or mocked the ‘expensive’ tastes of the newly wealthy black elite. Alongside

conflicting narratives of anxiety and approval about new forms of black consumption in a recently liberated South Africa there also appeared a consistent discursive reconstruction of the consumption status quo. Although certain black South Africans were being reported on as increasingly accessing lifestyle privileges (like malls, fancy cars and restaurants) until then jealously guarded by the minority, the 'masses' of black South Africans were reported as still shopping at township spaza shops (backyard tuck shops) or roadside hawkers, and drinking cheap beer in informal shebeens (unlicensed taverns).

It is no accident that these were (and to a significant extent still are) the only consumption opportunities open to the majority of black South Africans. The Apartheid state had carefully engineered its society and geography such that black labour and markets for mass commodities were ruthlessly exploited while potential for economic betterment were carefully curtailed. Apartheid aimed to make it economically impossible for most black South Africans to escape conditions of poverty – and this translated into extremely truncated opportunities for consumption. This paper examines the discursive marginalization – and as such the propping up of the status quo in the face of a sea change in the political environment – of forms of black consumption that were considered unthreatening to South Africa's economic elite. It focuses on media coverage in English-language newspapers during the 1990s – South Africa's first decade of political freedom – to do with practices of black consumption produced, and approved of, by Apartheid state structures. These were the types of consumption associated with poverty and economic marginalization, social and geographical exclusion. This paper will show that the ways in which the white press reported on practices of black consumption produced by Apartheid structures worked to reinforce rather than question how those racial and geographical divides manifested in marginalized forms of consumption, despite the contemporaneous crumbling of Apartheid's political structures.

As Comaroff and Comaroff (2001, p.2) note, consumption has become increasingly relevant to citizens of the world since the turn of the millennium. The key question for scholars of social and cultural change in the global south is the extent to which global capitalism broadly conceived, and the specific social practices associated with it, such as consumption, are "invested with the capacity to wholly transform the universe of the marginalized and the disempowered" (COMAROFF and COMAROFF 2001, p.2). This paper

reports on one element of a broader research trajectory that asks what role the media played in constructing consumption as a form of empowerment in the context of other struggles for political and social recognition in the early days of South Africa's liberation. The South African case can contribute to scholarly debate about the global flow of neoliberal and consumer ethics from, to and through societies in the global south that share some key characteristics with South Africa (such as Brazil and India): extreme gaps between the rich and poor, histories of colonial exploitation, and contested participation in the globalized economy. This paper examines the extent to which media representations of consumption in South Africa during the 1990s contributed to, or undermined, discourses about transformation and empowerment.

In order to theoretically contextualize this analytical focus, this paper discusses the tensions between citizenship and consumption in South Africa, and the complexity of its relation to claims of empowerment – a debate with ramifications across the global south. The paper then provides a brief account of the process of constructing the corpus of media texts analyzed. Finally, the paper presents the key themes of the ways in which black consumption was discursively marginalized in English-language media in the 1990s, and critically discusses those in relation to bigger questions about the extent to which consumption stands for empowerment in post-Apartheid South Africa.

Empowerment, consumption and citizenship in the 'new' South Africa

South Africa has to some extent always been a consumer society. Throughout the colonial and Apartheid eras, South Africa's economy was built on the exploitation and trade of gold and other highly desirable raw materials, as well as forms of industrial production associated with those commodities. Thanks to the racist regime, white South Africans (the minority of the population) enjoyed access not only to political rights but also all of the lifestyle trappings of capitalist society – malls, consumer goods, international travel, and extremely comfortable if not luxurious material standards of living. Deprived for centuries of these material markers of a 'better life', South Africans comprising the oppressed racial categories remained marginalized onlookers of globalised consumer culture, deprived of both political rights and economic agency. As such, it is no surprise that the revolution culminating

in the release of Nelson Mandela in 1990 and the first democratic elections in 1994, were widely expected to usher in both political and economic reform. Citizenship in the new South Africa was expected by the previously disadvantaged to mean not only the right to have a say in who governed them, but also to provide opportunities to improve the material conditions of their lives. The ability to practice consumption in a more democratized manner was certainly high on the agenda of many South Africans who bore the brunt of systematic exclusion and institutionalized, grinding poverty. For these reasons, it is impossible to consider citizenship apart from the possibilities and limitations of consumption in the South African context. This is arguably true for many post-colonial and post-authoritarian societies.

Consumption and discrimination in colonial and post-colonial contexts

In colonial contexts, structures of consumption were imposed by imperial powers for their own economic benefit. Raw materials were extracted and shipped out and manufactured commodities were shipped in: colonies were expected to function as markets for all of the excess goods produced by the metropolitan powers. Consumption was aggressively promoted as part of the colonial agenda and was underwritten by a civilizing mission that saw modernization as tied up in consumer economies (Burke, 1996). Indeed, consumption has been ideologically identified as the 'moving spirit of the late twentieth century' by states and corporations rooted in the west (Comaroff and Comaroff, 2001: 4). In colonial regimes, practices of consumption were promoted and imposed, they were also regulated and forced to conform to the colonial imagination of what black consumers "should" and "should not" buy. Black consumers in colonial and apartheid societies were routinely humiliated and excluded from spaces and practices of consumption reserved for whites. The black customer would have to go "to the small window of the big department store and whatever he desired to purchase was chosen for him and brought to the window" (Charles Nyereyegona, a 'black marketing' expert writing in 1973, quoted in Burke, 1996: 134). It is impossible to disentangle consumption from questions of agency and choice, especially in the context of societies in which consumption was actively used as a form of racist regulation and exclusion.

In the context of South Africa's history of anti-apartheid struggle, certain forms of consumption or orchestrated non-consumption were explicitly political acts. Defiance of the Group Areas Act, which controlled not only where black South Africans could live, but also

their leisure and retail opportunities, could have profound consequences – both symbolically conscientizing or dangerously punitive. In her autobiography, *Part of My Soul Went With Him,* Winnie Mandela (1985) argues that her act of walking into a store reserved for 'whites only' in Brandfort (the scene of her banning order after the 1976 student uprisings in Soweto) and brazenly doing her shopping amidst the white customers was an important act of resistance. Furthermore, consumer boycotts were a fundamental part of civil disobedience campaigns (SWILLIG 1987, see also SMITH 1987 for a discussion of Anti-Apartheid consumer boycotts in the global north), and often brought white-owned retail businesses to their knees.

Groups and individuals marginalized by social and economic power have been theorized as "subalterns" (SPIVAK, 2000, p. 325). In the realm of consumption, this lack of agency takes a specific shape. Subaltern consumers have no spending power, struggle to access even the most basic necessities, never mind luxury and non-essential commodities, and their practices are regulated and marginalized by power structures. Despite neoliberal discourses of consumption offering up a world of choice, subaltern consumers have little or no choice in what, where or whether they consume. They have little or no opportunity to engage in the forms of pleasure-seeking or value production through consumption that are taken for granted by those who are in the centre of consumer society. Subaltern consumers lack freedom in terms of their agency in consumption, and also in terms of their vulnerability as sophisticated political-economic entities like multinational corporations seek to exploit them as new markets (VARMAN and VIKAS, 2007). In post-colonial cultures, the erasures initiated in the colonial project are arguably sustained, and re-allocated. Certain groups and individuals remain erased from "mainstream public spaces" – such as consumption opportunities – and "cut off from lines of access to the center" (DUTTA and PAL, 2010, p.364). In post-colonial contexts, the argument can certainly be made that despite certain superficial changes in consumption opportunities (such as no longer having to endure the humiliation of standing at a side window and asking a white storeowner to select the goods one wants to buy), neo-liberal structures of post-colonial societies continue to cut out possibilities for equal participation and economic mobility.

Consumption has been theorized in two broad strokes. The first considers consumption as evidence of manipulation by the imperialist/capitalist system and is rooted in Marxist critique. For example, the 'culture industry' critique of Adorno and Horkheimer (1944) framed mass consumption as evidence of strategic manipulation. More recent critiques frame consumption as a form of labour that helps to drive capital (LEE, 1993; PEROTTA, 2001). The second, often rooted in anthropology or cultural studies, considers consumption as a practice through which individuals exercise agency through the construction of class identities (BOURDIEU, 1984) or even communicate love and care to one's family (MILLER, 1998). The "Marxist" (to summarize it crudely) approach emphasizes political-economic structures, the power of capital and industrial and post-industrial commodity production, and the limited choices available to individuals within this system. The "anthropological" approach emphasizes the pleasures inherent in consumption, and takes note of how consumption is a crucial zone in which individuals exercise agency, choice and self-expression.

In the colonial/apartheid context, because consumption was racialized and regulated so as to entrench the white supremacist capitalism and black consumers were denied the same consumer agency that white consumers took for granted, the ability to consume became inherently politicized on a collective level. To some extent, overturning the racist consumption structures could be considered evidence of the democratization of South African consumer society. But this perspective needs tempering by the recognition that consumption is always inextricably linked to capital and neoliberal values. "[T]he apotheosis of consumption [… is a] concrete, historically specific outworking of millennial capitalism and the culture of neoliberalism" (COMAROFF and COMAROFF, 2001, p.44). How liberating can consumption possibly be, the critical analyst will ask, when it represents on so many levels – the economic, the political, the cultural – neoliberal power? It is always necessary to ask who gets to consume, and who is excluded from that possibility. In other words, consumption can never be set apart from questions of power. During the 1990s, South Africa was in the throes of birthing new forms of citizenship and contesting the shape that freedom and empowerment would take. As such, it is necessary to examine the relationship between the theoretical figures of the consumer and the citizen.

Public connection and marginalized consumption

As the discussion of consumption in oppressive societies has shown, the status and practices of consumers are always political, and as such, connect with questions of citizenship and participation in public life. In the 'liberal social imaginary of Western capitalist democracies' citizens are conceptualized as rights bearing individuals who give a political mandate to the state, and in return to whom the state is responsible, while consumers are conceptualized as emotive actors in an economic relationship, engaged in the exchange of money for commodities, and motivated by private concerns (CLARKE, et al., 2007, p.2). This binary does not carry the same weight of common sense in societies such as South Africa, in which every element of everyday life was politicized, including consumption. The binary of consumers as irrational, and citizens as rational, has been complicated. Nestor Garcia Canclini (2001) argues that consumption is not only an appropriate site for thinking through big questions about social mobility and equality, but also fundamentally linked in with the ways in which citizenship and public connection are enacted in globalised late modernity.

> The rapprochement of citizenship, mass communications, and consumption has, among other aims, to give recognition to the scenarios in which the public is constituted. It becomes evident that in order to live in democratic societies it is indispensable to accept that the market of citizens' opinions includes as great a variety and dissonance as the clothing and entertainment markets. Remembering that citizens are also consumers leads to finding in the diversification of tastes one of the aesthetic foundations for the democratic conception of citizenship (GARCIA CANCLINI, 2001, p. 28).

In opposition to the perspective that argues that consumers have no ability to connect with public (read, political) concerns, this paper argues that consumption has always been political and must continue to be theorized as such. Our task as analysts is to map out the ways in which activities that are not explicitly political are also forms of public engagement. For example, activities formerly considered as occupying the realm of the emotive, such as an interest in shared forms of popular culture, entertainment, or celebrity, deserve attention as forms of public connection (see COULDRY et al., 2007). As such, it is necessary to re-theorize the relationship between consumers and citizens (GARCIA CANCLINI, 2001) as well as the notion of the public itself. In media theory, citizens are conceived as rational actors who rationally debate matters of common concern and as such participate in the public

sphere (HABERMAS, 1992). As I have argued elsewhere, the notion of the public in the age of consumer culture requires conceptualization as a space of appearance alongside (and often in place of) the accepted notion of the public as a space of collective action and participation (ARENDT, 1958; IQANI, 2012a, p. 18-21). In this framework, the idealized participating citizen morphs into an agonal actor more concerned with individualized visibility and economic transactions and who connects more with media forms than collective social action. Consumption is a form of public action and participation and a process of making visible – both of which are inherently political. Rather than simply being a binary opposite to citizenship, consumption is "a site of cognitive value; […] good for thinking and acting in a meaningful way that renews social life" (GARCIA CANCLINI, 2001 p. 47).

In post-colonial societies, consumption plays important roles: it helps to forge global connections through migration, reframes claims to modernity and autonomy (as opposed to simply operating as a form of mimesis), and becomes embedded in local cultures and practices in unique ways (NEWELL, 2012). Just as in the global north, but in ways unique to the post-colonial context, consumption is a social process (NEWELL, 2005, p. 185). One important site for economic exchange and thus consumption in post-colonial societies is the 'informal economy' (HART, 1973), also known as 'parallel' or 'second' economies (ROITMAN, 1990). This terminology refers to economic activity that takes place outside of government and corporate institutions and regulations. These are economic activities that are neither measured nor recorded, and include both illegal activities "and others which, while not illegal in themselves, are carried out in a manner that avoids taxation" (Macgaffey, 1983, p. 351). Informal economic activities include "foodstands, urban transport' and the sale of various cheap and second-hand goods (PORTES and SCHAUFFLER, 1993, p. 48). From the statist economic perspective, informal economic activity is to some extent considered deviant as it does not reflect in gross national product or produce public revenues. From a cultural perspective, however, it needs to be recognized as a form of activity that has huge value for communities excluded by formal economic structures. "To say that the market […] is not functioning 'as it should' […] is to deny the possibility that perhaps the market is working exactly as it should *in the African context*" (ROITMAN, 1990, p. 677).

In South Africa during the 1990s, huge efforts were being made to reconstitute new, democratic forms of public life. Consumption was an integral part of the practices shaping the "new" South Africa – and like all other aspects of everyday life in transition – was being actively tested and contested in media discourses. Despite the socialist rhetoric that underwrote the transition, in terms of economic policy the new government quickly championed neo-liberalism, and thus, of course, formal economic structures. Neoliberal politics (as the benefit of hindsight allows us to easily observe) simply succeeded in widening the gap between the rich and poor. Although subalterns were entering a state of political inclusion, and some elite previously disadvantaged groups gained quick and easy access to the economic centre, most black South Africans remained (and remain) economically excluded. This played out in a sustained reliance on the informal sector – which due to Apartheid era restrictions on trade in black communities and by black businesspeople, flourished largely outside of the regulations of the Apartheid state. South Africans of colour were granted the political power of citizens but remained deprived of the political power of consumers. To some extent, the "status quo" remained that the majority of black South Africans lived in poverty outside of the economic opportunities enjoyed in the centre and the formal economy. How did the white elite respond to this lack of transformation despite all of the other changes taking place? One place to look for an answer is in the conversations taking place in the media of the time.

Research approach: A discourse analysis of archival media texts

In order to get a picture of the ways in which black consumption was mediated during the 1990s, an archival search took place in order to construct a corpus of texts for analysis. The focus on the 1990s does not aim to suggest that black consumers were 'born' (discursively or sociologically) in that decade or to ignore long and complex cultural histories of the relationship between race and consumption in South Africa (for that, see POSEL, 2010), but rather to give due attention to an extremely important period in South Africa's transition from Apartheid to neo-liberal democratic state.

The research approach was informed by Foucault's theories on discourse, knowledge and power (FOUCAULT 1969, 1970, 1980) and situated broadly as a media / cultural genealogy (such as those constructed by GILL, 2003; Orgad, 2009). The aim of genealogical work focusing on discourses and texts is to disturb "formerly secure foundations of knowledge and understanding" and to cultivate "skepticism towards that which is taken for granted, assumed to be 'given' or natural within contemporary social existence" (HOOK, 2005, p. 7). The intention was not to produce a comprehensive and absolute picture, but to trace certain key narratives and discursive themes and to place those in social and political context. Any genealogy is by definition incomplete, partial and shaped by the subjectivity, politics and approach of the researcher and the availability of historical material. Media genealogies focus specifically on historical media material and do not include other discursive resources, such as policy documents, oral history, educational materials and so on. As such, genealogical work focusing on media is necessarily fragmented – but this should not necessarily be considered as a weakness. The media are a key site in which discourses take shape and are made public – arguably, more public than any of the other noted sources of discursive knowledge and power.

The inherent 'incompleteness' of any genealogy is compounded when archives are themselves incomplete or not digitized – as is the case with most of the media libraries that exist in South Africa. Several archives were accessed in order to find relevant material for the corpus: online digital archives, digital archives set up and maintained by media corporations, and microfilm newspaper archives at the South African National Library. The data collection approach, while attempting to be as comprehensive as possible, was undergirded by awareness that it would be impossible to create a complete representation of the topic at hand. 45 articles with content relevant to the theme under discussion were selected for discussion in this paper (these were extracted from the overall corpus, which totaled over 850 texts). As such, this paper reports on only one fragment of a much larger genealogy of mediated black consumption from the time period in question.

The analysis presented below is the result of a process of examining in detail one theme that emerged in the corpus of texts. It does not presume to represent 'white opinion' as something homogenous and static, but rather to highlight one key strand of a complex discursive terrain. Furthermore, the argument is not that *all* media coverage about black

consumption sought to keep it to the margins of social and economic life. Indeed, other key themes and narratives also came up such as the ways in which the rise of the "black middle class", as well as practices of conspicuous luxury consumption were treated in the same media spaces. These will be discussed in more detail in future writings (but see IQANI 2012b for a preliminary summary). This paper focuses on the ways in which marginalized, poverty-rooted consumption by black communities was taken for granted and discursively naturalized by the white press, and as such functions as an important counterpoint to other discursive strands about forms of black consumption that actively resisted being kettled into the racialized landscape of Apartheid.

At the margins: Mediating the status quo of black consumption

The current pattern of resource distribution in South Africa is characterized by a huge gap between the "haves" (the new wealthy black elite and whites still benefitting from long histories of privilege) and the "have-nots" (the poor, almost exclusively black, masses). The vast majority of black South Africans remain enmeshed in webs of poverty and a structural lack of opportunities for economic betterment, eighteen years after the first democratic elections. The 1990s represented the culmination of decades of polities that purposefully racialized poverty. One of the results of racist laws and policies designed to protect white economic privilege was that, particularly in South Africa's "white" imagination, being black and being poor were related, interchangeable and causally connected. As such, white South Africa was fairly comfortable with media depictions of black South Africans as poor, and paid interest to practices of black consumption that correlated with that stereotype only to the extent to which it had implications for profit, or did not in any way threaten to usurp white privilege. In the white South African imaginary during Apartheid, black South Africans did not drive cars, shop in malls or buy cocktails in suburban nightclubs and bars – they used cheap public transport (minibus taxis), purchased their daily goods at backyard 'spaza' shops in their townships or from informal traders (hawkers) on city streets, and consumed cheap beer in township 'shebeens' (usually unlicensed). In other words, the "common sense" idea of black economic activity was that it was informal and marginal. The white press of the 1990s was very comfortable with narratives of black consumption that entrenched it firmly within the lower echelons of social life, within the informal ecnomy, and within the boundaries of

apartheid geography. To demonstrate this, the analysis is organized in three sections. The first addresses the ways in which the informal economy was characterized as 'black' and in opposition to the 'white' formal economy. The second shows how black consumption was stereotyped as survivalist and locked within inescapable cycles of poverty. The third, in slight contradiction to the first two, acknowledges black spending power, but instead of engaging with it as a real social and cultural force, considers this "mass market" merely as a potential stream of revenue and profit.

The (black) informal economy

In black communities throughout apartheid, entrepreneurs innovated ways of providing certain goods and services to local markets. This was done either in contravention of racist restrictions (such as on the provision of liquor licenses) or despite the lack of decent infrastructure (such as the provision of reliable municipal water and electricity). South Africa's huge informal trading sector was, and is, the lifeblood of economic activity for black communities, with many individuals making a living from it, and many consumers enjoying the convenience of easy access to commodities at decent prices despite the former state's efforts to deny them such comforts.

On the one hand, the English language press represented informal economic activity as a form of admirable enterprise that equaled a way out of poverty. The *City Press* (5 May 1991) reported, "hawking is the most popular black enterprise, followed by shebeens, spaza shops and traditional healers". Hawkers are informal traders who set up tiny sale-points on city or townships streets, selling a variety of goods to passersby. *The Star* (6 February 1992) reported, "there is hardly a vacant street corner in Johannesburg these days; fruit, cigarette and bubblegum hawkers crowd the pavements wherever one looks". The article paints a rose-tinted view of street-side trading, quoting hawkers who claim that they are motivated not by money but from the benefits of being self-employed: "you don't have to wonder whether your boss is lying to you". An article in *The Weekly Mail* (29 May – 4 June 1992) reports on the thriving hawker businesses at the Mdantsane Highway Terminus in the (former) Ciskei. Entrepreneurs selling fruit, vegetables, vetkoek (deep fried dough cakes), live chickens, and cheap meat were all doing incredibly well, according to the report, which notes a key marker

of the hawkers' economic success as their ability to buy and drive their own cars. One particularly successful hawker, Ladylock Skeyi, is reported as owning two vehicles (a car and a van). The article concluded, "there's no business like hawkers' business". None of the articles examined the difficulties or challenges associated with informal trading, such as having to deal with a lack of shelter from the elements, being harassed by the authorities, daily transport of one's goods to site to set up shop, and having to pack it all away again at the end of the day. Such challenges were only marginally acknowledged, for example in a report about a new shopping centre development in King Williams Town which made explicit provision for hawkers "who had been trading without shelters in the town for some time" (*DAILY DISPATCH*, 13 September 1995).

A similarly optimistic view on spaza shops is evident. An article in *The Star* (19 March 1993) reports on a poverty stricken couple who "shared a one-roomed corrugated-iron shack, had R5 between them and six children to feed" and who managed to set up a "thriving spaza shop" nevertheless. The article celebrates their "success story" and pictures the couple, Samuel and Christina Shongwe, posing with a certificate they were awarded by the Sanlam Small Business Development Corporation. The *Cape Times* (4 May 1991) reports that "sales of mushrooming spaza shops in Cape Town's black townships could be as high as R16 million a month". The *Mail & Guardian* (8-14 July 1994) reports on an initiative in Kliptown, Soweto in which a number of shipping containers had been set up and repurposed as retail outlets. The "informal shopping centre" hosted "a paraffin merchant, a meat seller, a fast-food joint, a blanket stall, […] hair salons, sweet stockists" and more, and traders ran their businesses despite the lack of water and electricity. A photograph taken from outside a shipping container door shows a customer getting his hair trimmed inside Reason Hair Salon, features the caption, "water has to be fetched from a nearby filling station". A business expert quoted in an article in *Finance Week* (26 April – 2 May 1990) argued "the hawker of today is the spaza shop owner of tomorrow and the formal sector trader of next week". Despite the challenges associated with setting up a retail outlet with little or no infrastructural support, the perspective on spaza and container shops is optimistic. The *Mail & Guardian* (30 October – 5 November 1998) reported, "About two-million people earn a living from small and micro enterprises."

The media discourse also set up an opposition between formal and informal retail trade. An article in the *Daily Dispatch* (26 November 1997) complained that hawkers were hassling "legitimate traders" by setting up their stalls outside a "proper" shopping centre. The formal traders claimed that the hawkers were harming their business and flouting the law. Although to some extent the white press acknowledged the existence of the "informal" sector, as well as its impressive revenue streams and successful economic models, the underlying attitude towards that sector is revealed in the emphasis placed on the word "informal". Informal could be read as a euphemism for illegal – hawkers and spaza shops didn't pay rates and taxes and because they were not served by the authorities were not regulated by them either. Untroubled by the lack of regulation, South Africa's neoliberal business sector lamented the fact that "township dealers have been the first to recognize business opportunities in squatter camps" (*Finance Week*, 26 April – 2 May 1990). The non-black readership of English-language media needed a thing or two explained about the informal sector that served black consumers: "spazas are located in backrooms of [township] houses, garages and squatter camps" (*Finance Week*, 26 April – 2 May 1990). An article headlined 'Cape Africans spend more at spaza shops' in the *Sowetan* (14 July 1998), reports on a study mapping the spending patterns of different racial groups. It reports that higher percentages of purchases from informal traders, hawkers, shebeens and spaza shops were evident in black and 'coloured' populations, and that the bulk of black spending took place in the informal sector. This perspective is perhaps the key point here: that consumption taking place in the informal sector was represented as a 'black activity'. This is not necessarily incorrect as it is certainly realistic that most informal trading was set up to serve the market of black consumers marginalized by big supermarkets and malls. But it is important to note that the informal economy was discursively situated in the geography of apartheid: in the back-yards of townships and shanty settlements, on inner city streets long abandoned by white business, and at taxi ranks, all serving low-income, black consumers. The assumption here is that informal trading never takes place in white areas (which is of course untrue), and that white consumers never took advantage of the convenience and low prices offered by informal traders (also certainly not entirely true). This is illustrated by a photograph in the *Mail & Guardian* article (30 October – 5 November 1998), which shows a white businessman in a

suit and tie hurrying past a black inner-city hawker. Would he really have never purchased his cigarettes or bubblegum from Ladylock Skeyi?

Poverty as black, unavoidable and normal

The second theme apparent in media coverage on marginal black consumption construct poverty as a black condition. During the 1990s, as South Africa transitioned to democracy, some whites started to take note of the atrocious living conditions in most black townships. With the repeal of racist laws that restricted movement across apartheid geography, some whites started to visit townships. As few had had the opportunity to visit townships before, and most white South Africans were cushioned against the harsh realities of poverty thanks to the comfort zones of their privileged suburban lifestyles, white South Africans were naively shocked by the poverty that they saw if and when they finally did visit their neighbouring townships. The white gaze on black townships was reproduced in certain media reports, which also worked to entrench stereotypes of black poverty. It was very simplistic: they were places filled with shacks and poor black people. An article in the *Daily Dispatch* (3 May 1991) reports on a tour of white suburban South Africans from East London to their local township, Cambridge Location, where the tourists "came face to face with a side of life most of them had never seen". One observation made was that "only one shop serves the community". One tourist, Mrs Liz Russell, said that she "was surprised by the cleanliness of some of the residents despite the conditions they had to live in". The genuine shock and grief that these white South Africans might have experienced at coming face to face with the material ramifications of centuries of racial oppression from which they had benefitted should not be overstated. Visiting the townships could be seen as a type of adventure tourism that at once exoticised black poverty and used it's witnessing as a form of evidence to reinscribe stereotypes of all blacks as poor, and most likely unable to escape that poverty. An article in the EP Herald (24-25 October 1998) titled "How Welcome made a palace out of a pondok and a dream: Port Alfred shack has its own sundeck and golf putting green" reports on how a township dweller always had big dreams of "owning a fancy house". Due to a lack of opportunities, he could never leave the shantytown in which he grew up. Because he would never be able to afford the house of his dreams, he converted his shack into his own version

of a dream home, adding a sundeck and other "luxury" features. This article is quite poignant in that it shows how the aspirations of South African consumer subalterns were ham-strung by the system, and also how white South Africans turned a bemused, patronizing eye on expressions of those aspirations – assuming that they were impossible to achieve. The underlying perspective revealed by the article is that Welcome had to stay where he belonged: in the shantytown, and that his dreams of a big house with views of the ocean were merely that: dreams. This kind of attitude was reinforced by reports such as one in *Business Day* (26 February 1991), which matter-of-factly pointed out that blacks would be unable to buy new cars for at least 10 years.

Black poverty was taken for granted as a social fact in South Africa in the 1990s. This was consistently reinforced in media representations. The *Cape Times* (25 August 1992) reported, "The average income of South Africa's rural black population is 10% of whites in rural areas". This poverty was also evident in urban areas. The *Sunday Star* (23 February 1992) tells the story of Absolom Mchunu, who "can't make ends meet on his meager wages" in Johannesburg so had to take on three jobs – as a fruit and vegetable hawker, a newspaper vendor and a "one-man shouting advertisement for a clothing store". How such poverty played out in the realm of consumption was also put under the microscope. The *Sunday Star* (18 March 1990) reports on how an elderly black pensioner, Mrs Tabi Lisa would spend her meager pension of R150 per month. The journalist, Carol Lazar, accompanies Mrs Tabi grocery shopping, observing and reporting on her consumption practices in detail: "She bought onions and a cabbage" from a hawker on a street because they were cheaper than in the supermarket; "Each time she selected an item she checked prices. It took forever. And often she'd put goods back because they were too expensive". The article deconstructs her budget in detail, summarizing Mrs Lisa's shopping list in a box offset from the main text, revealing the painful details of her poverty and constrained consumption habits. A charitable view on this kind of representation might argue that it highlighted the material repercussions of poverty and championed a more equitable society. But nowhere in the article are such motivations made explicit. Instead, the article comes across as a form of morbid curiosity in how poor people survive despite their poverty. Bear in mind that most readers of the *Sunday Star* would have been reasonably well-off, mainly white, middle class individuals. The article offers no solution to Mrs Lisa's dire circumstances, other than hinting that the government

should increase her pension. Instead, the article lingers voyeuristically on the survivalist mode of consumption practiced by structurally disempowered individuals, caught up in a society and economy in which they are not able to access the world of choice offered in aisles of supermarkets like Woolworths.

The English language press displayed a certain anthropological fascination with the types of survivalist consumption activities associated with the townships. In the white imagination, blacks were poor. Or to be more precise, poverty was something that happened mainly to black communities and the forms of consumption that resulted were defined both by what was possible (buying cabbages from hawkers) and what was impossible (buying cars and big houses). At times a touch of pity shot through with a patronizing attitude is evident. Mostly, however the stance is matter of fact: black were poor, and would always be poor, and that's just how it was. It was considered normal, and discursively reproduced as normative, that being black meant being on the breadline and the only forms of consumption likely in black markets were survivalist and driven by needs rather than desires, leisure and pleasure.

Black spending power: Pitfalls and profitability

Amidst the perspectives that racialized poverty and the informal sector, it may seem that white viewpoints on black consumption were almost entirely marginalizing. However, there is a clear thematic thread in which white business acknowledge the spending power of black markets as well as their huge economic potential.

In the early nineties, a series of reports highlighted the profit potential of informal trading. The *Weekend Argus* (11 April 1992) profiled a Gugulethu shebeen owner, describing him as a "businessman" and noting that his a weekly turnover was more than R50,000. The *Sunday Star* (8 April 1990) reported on growth in the informal sector - "about 10 percent a year – far higher than growth in the formal sector" and notes that "according to the BMI [Business & Marketing Intelligence] group black informal and formal traders have increased their slice of food distribution to urban black consumers to about 50 percent". In an article titled 'Spaza shops outsell the 'big three' SA retailers' in the Business section of the *EP Herald* (25 February 1998), the percentage of market share enjoyed by township spaza shops

is documented. It reports that spaza turnover is around 'R78-billion', and that the five biggest selling commodities from township microretailers were: food, soft drinks, cigarettes, alcohol and fuel. The recognition of the power of the spaza shop – and attempts to document and formalize its turn over – shows that white business in South Africa was starting to wake up to the previously ignored "'slumbering giant' of the black market" (*Business Day*, 11 January 1991).

White business wanted to work out how to capitalize on the existing success of informal trade in townships. The *Weekly Mail* (2-8 November 1990, p. 46) argued that the "mushrooming number of spaza shops in metropolitan areas provides a golden opportunity for enterprising manufacturers to broaden their markets" and urged big business to follow the example of Coca-Cola, which "has several depots inside and on the fringes of Soweto." An article in *Business Day* (28 September 1990) argued that shebeens should be appropriated into the formal leisure economy, and used "as a gateway for a township tourism market." Formal business – particularly in the retail sector – were waking up to the economic opportunities in townships, and actively trying to tap into those markets. A spokesperson for large retail chain, Makro, warned that retailers hoping to break new markets in townships were under threat from spaza shops as many customers might prefer the convenience and shopping environment the latter offered (*Daily Dispatch Business Report*, 13 December 1996).

In direct contrast to media reports that stereotyped blacks as poverty-stricken survivalist consumers, business media displayed a clear awareness of the increasingly significant black market. The main concern of those writing in the media at the time was to encourage businesses to take the black market seriously *because it would be profitable for them*. "Blacks make up most of the market for goods such as stoves, refrigerators and hi-fi sets, yet the advertising for those goods is aimed primarily at whites" (*The Star*, 28 September 1991). There is a clear recognition here that black spending does not only happen in the informal economy and in order to survive: "black consumer spending has contributed significantly to the resilience of retail groups in the economic downturn" (*Business Day*, 14 November 1990). The fact was that black consumption was not at the margin, but actually at the centre of the South African economy. Yet it was consistently marginalized, firstly by being described as "informal", secondly as driven by poverty, and thirdly as a kind of "new" market opportunity. *The Argus* (28 September 1992) reported that "there are enormous

opportunities in the black market for innovative marketers as this is no longer a low-spend market" and that "from a base of virtually zero in the early 1900s black purchasing power grew to 40% of the total by the late 1980s. By 1995 it is expected to reach 50% of the total and by the year 2000 between 50% and 70% of all spending will be by black consumers."

The focus was on how to sell more to black markets, which echoed to some extent the imperial agenda of using the colonies as markets for surplus goods. "The new black consumer has a stepped-up pace of life, and is experiencing a growing self-confidence and self-assertiveness, as well as an increase in wants and desires" and "if your company is not onto them [new, trendy black consumers] you're going to be left out in the cold", said marketing expert Madala Mphahlele quoted in the *EP Herald* (4 August 1990, p. 3). Advertising and marketing companies responded to this challenge: "As advertisers realize that the black market is no longer an emerging market, but one of the largest sectors waiting to snap up their products, so have they decided to learn as much as they can about the black consumer" (*Mail & Guardian*, 6-12 September 1996). The focus on how to market to the "new" black market was both blinkered and patronizing. Again appropriating an anthropological gaze, marketing companies organized tours to townships in order to "learn" about black consumption practices. Black consumers were presented as a homogenous mass ("the black market") and few media reports provided individualized portraits of the black South Africans who were buying up televisions, hi-fis and other luxury goods in their thousands (consider this in contrast to the painfully detailed portrait of Mrs Lisa's trip to the grocery store to spend her pension).

Although black spending power was acknowledged, it was only within the context of a profit-oriented perspective, which, perhaps due to vision being obscured by dollar signs in the eyes, was rarely related to the social and cultural power of black consumption. The acknowledgement of black spending power was double edged – on the one hand it could be read as a genuine attempt to integrate black markets into the "formal" economy and to pay attention to the needs and desires of a previously marginalized group of consumers. In other words, the focus on black spending power could be seen as a long-overdue recognition of the systemic exclusion that were the result of apartheid policies. On the other hand, it could be read as a cynical, colonial-style attempt to exploit black markets for as much profit as possible without any genuine engagement in the existing forms of consumption practiced, and with

little sensitivity to existing "informal" structures of trade that characterized consumption habits.

An exception to this is reports on the consumer boycotts that took place during the 1990s. Such boycotts were an important part of the anti-apartheid movement, and demonstrated how dependent the South African economy was on black consumption. The caption for a photograph of Chris Hani Shopping Centre in *The Weekly Mail* (19-25 April, 1991) correctly notes, "In South Africa even shopping is a political experience." An article on consumer boycotts in the former Eastern Transvaal reported that when shoppers were convinced by ANC monitors to switch their trade from white-owned to black-owned shops, the impact was significant: white-owned stores were deserted. One shopkeeper said, "One more week of this and I could lose my business". (*MAIL & GUARDIAN*, 28 May – 3 June 1993, p. 14). That black spending power was often utilized as part of strategies of resistance was hardly put into dialogue with the power of the black market over which white businessmen were salivating. Although black consumers certainly saw their own consumption or withdrawal of consumption as political during the Apartheid era, an understanding of this was hardly evident in the business community, according to the discourses of the white media during the 1990s.

Conclusion: Mediation as the site of contested consumption

As the themes presented display, to a significant extent the English-language press in South African during the 1990s created a picture of black consumption as motivated by poverty, survivalist, and excluded from the formal economy. Although an exception to this set of stereotypes did exist to the extent that the power of the black market was recognized, it was only as a possible source for increased profit for the "formal" sector. As a whole, the thread of representation reported on in this paper locates black consumption firmly within the social, spatial and economic zones to which it had been relegated by Apartheid's racist laws and policies. As such, the story of black consumption told by the media and summarized in this paper was that it existed in such a way that did not threaten privileged, white consumer culture. As such, black consumption was represented as 'safely' contained within the limited boundaries prescribed by the apartheid state and still regulated through the limitation of access to sites of consumption other than the informal economy – the 'spaza shop', 'hawker'

and ‘shebeen’. This paper has shown black consumption remained discursively ‘trapped’ within the remnants of the racist political-economy of Apartheid. The media of the time were not able to recognize opportunities for other forms of consumption by black South Africans in other spaces, or how consumption could be a site on which social inclusion and the transcendence of socio-economic class structures could take place. Instead of paying attention to the ways in which consumption by black South Africans was at the heart of the economy, and the immense social and cultural power which black consumption did and could wield, the media consistently marginalized black consumption as informal, survivalist, and “new”.

The ways in which consumption is made public (such as through media representation) are directly linked to explicit discussions about empowerment in post-Apartheid South Africa. The ways in which black consumption was marginalized by the English-language media of the 1990s is indicative of how economic empowerment was tested out, and contested, in a newly politically liberated society. A key debate in South Africa throughout the first decade of the post-Apartheid era – and persisting today – is the extent to which economic empowerment is broad-based, or enjoyed only by an elite few. Although consumption has been theorized as a valuable form of public engagement with important social and political consequences, the media discourses presented in this paper construct a very simplistic view of black consumption, and entrenched the marginalization of both black consumers and the informal economy.

The key tension that arises in considering the ways in which black consumption was discursively constructed concerns whether consumption can be conceptualized as a form of social and economic inclusion, and as such, as a right which all citizens should be allowed to exercise equally. The media coverage discussed in this paper created stark binary divisions between formal and informal economic activity, consumption motivated by pleasure or desire and that motivated by the need to survive, characterizing the latter as black and forced by contexts of poverty. Media discourses on black consumption also marginalized it by focusing on the power of the black market only in economic terms, and homogenizing that market as a mass. Little acknowledgement is evident in the media of that time of the fact that black poverty was produced by Apartheid power structures – instead it is represented as natural, unavoidable, and unchangeable.

The key argument that this paper makes is that through media coverage of black consumption as rooted firmly in inescapable structures of poverty, white South Africans were repressing an anxiety about a future in which economic resources and opportunities would be distributed more evenly. The anxiety was that such a scenario would result in whites losing out, or have to give up on the privileges to which they felt entitled. In a society with huge income disparities and socio-economically motivated crime, the possibility that the masses might get their hands on the things whites considered theirs, caused anxiety. This was expressed through a discursive reconstruction of black life as inherently poverty-stricken, and operating at the margins of the consumer economy – and as such, inherently unthreatening. The underlying tone was filled with relief – that most blacks were poor and would probably remain as such for some time despite the massive political changes taking place.

This paper has discussed one facet of a complex discursive picture of how black consumption and black consumers were represented in English-language newspapers during the 1990s. Future work must still be done to articulate discursive threads also entwined in this picture, which did not necessarily perpetuate stereotypes in quite so obvious a way, and which introduced new discursive repertoires in which consumption was tested out as a form of empowerment in the new South Africa. Ongoing work is required in order to examine the role that the media played in constructing consumption in racialized terms, or engaging with consumption as an adequate site through which notions of citizenship and social inclusion could be thought through. In developing such a research agenda further, there is a clear necessity to further theorize the consumer in relation to the citizen, and the cultural implications of the "informal" economy situated in opposition to the "formal" economy. In non-Western, developing, post-authoritarian societies such as South Africa, with histories of exclusion and oppression, strong arguments can be made about the right to access consumption as just as important to people's everyday lives as the political rights to participate in governance. This paper concludes with these open questions – which will be taken up in future work on this topic, and which can be the basis for further scholarly exchange between scholars in the global south working on consumption.

References

ADORNO, T. and HORKHEIMER, M. The culture industry: Enlightenment as mass deception in **Dialectic of Enlightenment**, New York: Seabury Press, 1944,1972.

ARENDT, Hannah. **The Human Condition**. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958.

BOURDIEU, Pierre. **Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste,** London: Routledge, 1984.

BURKE, Timothy. **Lifebuoy Men, Lux Women: Commodification, Consumption and Cleanliness in Modern Zimbabwe**. Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1996.

CLARKE, John, Janet NEWMAN, Nick SMITH, Elizabeth VIDLER and Louise WESTMARLAND. **Creating Citizen-Consumers***:* Changing Publics and Changing Public Services. London: Sage, 2007.

COMAROFF, Jean and John. L. COMAROFF. **Millenial capitalism**: First thoughts on a second coming. J. Comaroff and J. Comaroff (Eds.) Millenial Capitalism and the Culture of Neoliberalism. Durham: Duke University Press, 2001.

COULDRY, Nick, Sonia LIVINGSTONE and Tim MARKHAM. **Media Consumption and Public Engagement**: Beyond the Presumption of Attention. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

DUTTA, MOHAN and MAHUYA PAL. **Dialog theory in marginalized settings**: A subaltern studies approach. *Communication Theory*, 20 (X): 363-386, 2010.

FOUCAULT, Michel. **The Archaeology of Knowledge,** London: Routledge, 1969.

FOUCAULT, Michel. **The Order of Things***:* An Archaeology of the Human Sciences. London: Routledge.

FOUCAULT, Michel. **Power/Knowledge***:* Selected Interviews and Other Writings. New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1980.

GARCIA CANCLINI, Nestor. **Consumers and Citizens: Globalization and Multicultural Conflicts.** Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001.

GILL, Rosalind. Power and the production of subjects: a genealogy of the New Man and the New Lad. In B. Benwell (Ed.) **Masculinity and Men's Lifestyle Magazines**. Oxford: Blackwell, 2003.

HABERMAS, Jurgen. **The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society.** Cambridge: Polity, 1992.

HART, Keith. Informal income opportunities and urban employment in Ghana. **Journal of Modern African Studies** 11 (1): 61-89, 1973.

HOOK, Derek. Genealogy, discourse, 'effective history': Foucault and the work of critique. **Qualitative Research in Psychology**, 2: 1, 3-31, 2005.

IQANI, Mehita. **Consumer Culture and the Media: Magazines in the Public Eye**. Basingstoke: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2012a.

IQANI, Mehita. A genealogy of the 'black consumer' in post-Apartheid South African media: Counterpoints to discourses of citizenship. Paper presented at *ENEC VI : 6th* **Brazilian Meeting on Consumption Studies,** 12-14 September 2012, Consumption and Social Inclusion Section, 2012b.

LEE, M. J. **Consumer Culture Reborn: The Cultural Politics of Consumption,** London: Routledge, 1993.

MACGAFFEY, Janet.. How to survive and become rich amidst devastation: The second economy in Zaire. **African Affairs,** 82 (328): 351-366, 1983

MADIKIZELA-MANDELA, Winnie. **Part Of My Soul Went With Him**. New York: Norton, 1985.

MILLER, Daniel. **A Theory of Shopping**. Cambridge: Polity, 1998.

NEWELL, Sasha. Migratory modernity and the cosmology of consumption in Cote d'Ivoire. In L. Trager (Ed.) **Migration and Economy: Global and Local Dynamics**. Lanham: AltaMira Press, 2005.

NEWELL, Sasha. **The Modernity Bluff: Crime, Consumption and Citizenship in Cote d'Ivoire**. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012.

ORGAD, Shani. The survivor in contemporary culture and public discourse: **A genealogy. The Communication Review,** 12: 2, 132-161, 2009.

PERROTTA, C. "The preclassical theory of development: Increased consumption raised productivity" in D. Miller (Ed.) **Consumption: Critical Concepts in the Social Sciences,** London: Routledge, 2001.

PORTES, Alejandro and Richard SCHAUFFLER. Competing perspectives on the Latin American informal sector. **Population and Development Review** 19 (1): 33-60, 1993.

POSEL, Deborah. Races to consume: revisiting South Africa's history of race, consumption and the struggle for freedom. **Ethnic and Racial Studies,** 33: 2, 157-175, 2010.

ROITMAN, Janet. The Politics of Informal Markets in sub-Saharan Africa. **The Journal of Modern African Studies** 28 (4): 671-696, 1990.

SMITH, N. Craig. Consumer Boycotts and Consumer Sovereignty. **European Journal of Marketing**, 21 (5): 7-19, 1987.

SPIVAK, Gayatri Chakravorty. The new subaltern: A silent interview. In Vinayak Chaturvedi (Ed.) **Mapping Subaltern Studies and the Postcolonial**. London: Verso, 2000.

SWILLIG, Mark. The United Democratic Front and township revolt: South Africa. **Paper presented at the Wits History Workshop: The Making of Class**, 9-14 February, 1987.

VARNAM, Rohit and Ram Manohar VIKAS. Freedom and consumption: Towards conceptualizing systemic constraints for subaltern consumers in a capitalist society. **Consumption, Markets & Culture,** 10 (2): 117-132, 2007.

Original recebido em: 30\10\212
Aceito para publicação em: 03\12\2012

Sobre o autor

Mehita Iqani é professora adjunta do Departamento de Estudos de Mídia da University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburgo, Africa do Sul, lecionando nos cursos de graduação e pós-graduação. Sua tese de doutorado foi obtida em 2009 junto ao programa de pó-graduação em Mídia e Comunicação da London School of Economics and Political Science. É autora de *Consumer Culture and the Media: Magazines in the Public Eye* (Palgrave-MacMillan, 2012).

Agradecimentos

Este artigo é baseado em achados preliminaries de pesquisa do projeto "Cultura de Consumo e a Mídia na África do Sul pós-apartheid", que em 2012 recebeu financiamento do Carnegie Transformation Programme, administrado pela University of the Witwatersrand, e outro financiamento da National Research Foundation. Sou grata a ambas as fontes pelo indispensável apoio financeiro e moral. Também sou grata a Katlego Disemelo por ser uma excelente assistente de pesquisa.