



# *The Right to Extimacy and the Technological-Neoliberal Social Control*

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## **ABSTRACT**

This research has as its subject the right to extimacy and its relationship with the practices of technological control provided by neoliberal rationality. Based on this, the proposed research problem is: what is lost with the exercise of the right to extimacy in the current techno-neoliberal context? The general objective is focused on determining the affectation of this right and, in the same way, understanding the dimensions that are interconnected through current technological control devices and the domain of neoliberal logics applied to the governmentality of life. To achieve these purposes, we adopted the phenomenological-hermeneutic approach method, which takes as its object of investigation a way of "being in the world", in which the parameters of the observer are inserted, complemented by the method of monographic procedure and the technique of indirect documentation research with bibliographic emphasis. Based on these considerations, we concluded that spaces for individual, social and democratic construction are lost with the current practices of technological-neoliberal control exercised over extimacy, capturing it as part of the capitalist dynamic and reducing its meaning in the construction of subjectivities in favor of the commodification of life and the precariousness of social relations.

*Keywords:* right to extimacy; neoliberalism; social control; technology; capitalism.

## ***El derecho a la intimidad y el control social tecnológico neoliberal***

### **RESUMEN**

Esta investigación tiene como su objeto de estudio el derecho a la intimidad y su relación con las prácticas de control tecnológico provistas por la racionalidad neoliberal. Basados en ello, el artículo propone el siguiente problema de investigación: ¿qué se pierde en el ejercicio del derecho a la intimidad en el contexto tecnoneoliberal actual? EL objetivo general está enfocado en determinar la afección de este derecho y, de la misma manera, entender las dimensiones que están interconectadas a través de los dispositivos de control tecnológicos actuales y el dominio de las lógicas neoliberales aplicadas a la gobernabilidad de la vida. Para cumplir estos propósitos, el estudio adopta un enfoque fenomenológico-hermenéutico, el cual toma como su objeto de investigación como una manera de "ser en el mundo", en la cual los parámetros del observador están insertos, complementados por el método del procedimiento monográfico y la técnica de investigación documental indirecta con énfasis bibliográfico. Basados en estas consideraciones, el estudio concluye que los espacios para la construcción individual, social y democrática se pierden en las prácticas actuales del control tecnológico neoliberal ejercidos sobre la intimidad, capturándola como parte de una dinámica capitalista y reduciendo su significado en la construcción de subjetividades a favor de la comodificación de la vida y la precarización de las relaciones sociales.

*Palabras clave:* derecho a la intimidad; neoliberalismo; control social; tecnología; capitalismo.

## ***O direito a extimidade e o controle social tecnológico neoliberal***

### **RESUMO**

Esta pesquisa tem como objetivo de estudo o direito a extimidade e sua relação com as práticas de controle tecnológico fornecidas pela razão neoliberal. Com base nisso, o artigo propõe o seguinte problema de pesquisa: que está a perder com o exercício do direito a extimidade no contexto tecno-neoliberal atual? O objetivo geral está nitidamente focado em determinar a condição desse direito e, da mesma maneira, entender as dimensões que estão interconectadas através dos dispositivos de controle tecnológicos atuais e o domínio das lógicas neoliberais aplicadas a governança da vida. Para cumprir estes propósitos, o estudo adota um enfoque fenomenológico-hermenêutico, o qual tem como objetivo de pesquisa como uma maneira de “ser no mundo”, na qual os parâmetros do observador estão insertos, complementados pelo método do procedimento monográfico e a técnica de pesquisa documental indireta com ênfases bibliográfico. Baseados nestas considerações, o estudo conclui que os espaços para construção individual, social e democrática são perdidos nas práticas atuais de controle tecnológico neoliberal exercidos sobre a extimidade, capturando-a como parte de uma dinâmica capitalista e reduzindo seu significado na construção de subjetividades a favor da codificação da vida e a precarização das relações sociais.

*Palavras-chave:* direito a extimidade; neoliberalismo; controle social; tecnologia; capitalismo.

## INTRODUCTION

It should be noted that the result of this study is located in the axis of the projects "Fundamental Rights, Democracy and Inequalities" and "Criminology, Violence, and Control", from the Graduate Program in Law of Faculdade Meridional – IMED, in Passo Fundo – RS, Brazil. Such projects are developed by the professors who wrote the article and work together in the execution and development of research at the aforementioned institution.

In an article published in 2021, Wendy Brown analyzes the dilemmas that occur because of certain rights and paradoxes that sometimes are not considered in a (neo) liberal context, in which the existence of some rights "cannot be not desired" (2021, p. 460). Therefore, the author questions about "what is lost when conquering (?)" certain legal positions.

The paradox in question can easily be related to the discussion we are proposing in this essay: what is lost with the exercise of the right to extimacy in the current technological-neoliberal context? In this form, the concept of extimacy will be explored throughout the first chapter. However, it can be anticipated that among its premises is the yearning and valuing of revealing oneself to the world, embodying a kind of reinterpretation of the Cartesian cogito to "I show, therefore I am/I resist". Evidently, this issue is developed within the scope of highly complex intersections of individual and social dimensions.

In a sense, extimacy gives a new meaning and expands the right to intimacy, which is greatly favored by the numerous technological resources that are available nowadays. On the other hand, it is co-opted by these same resources, that are not only able to financialize any good of life but also capable of capturing and conducting extimacy, shaping and controlling subjectivities in a way that is dangerously imperceptible to most individuals.

Furthermore, contemporary societies are immersed in a neoliberal rationality that spreads itself to all imaginable domains, imposing a dynamic of individualization and competition, not only interpersonal but also individual. In this context, we propose to analyze the capture of extimacy by neoliberalism.

At first, we will elaborate a path from the acceptance of the idea of extimacy to its most recent challenges, and subsequently, decompose the main discourses and strategies of the neoliberal ethos in the imposition of a logic of control and competition that subjugates extimacy. For that, we will methodologically use a phenomenological-hermeneutic approach, taking the object of investigation by its way of "being in the world", in which the parameters of the one who observes are inserted. Also, we will adopt the monographic procedure method, combined with the indirect documentation search technique through bibliographic search.

## 1. ASSUMPTIONS AND CHALLENGES OF THE RIGHT TO EXTIMACY IN CONTEMPORARY

The first reality shows and pioneering social networks were triggers for discussions about the notion of extimacy. The scope of the debate was varied, touching on the cultural, legal, and political aspects of this practice, which was clarified with the massification of the internet (Bauman, 2012, p. 227)<sup>1</sup>. For nearly two decades, starting in 2000, the focus was on the existence, definition and scope of the idea of extimacy. Currently, there is a greater consensus on the structural aspects and the challenges become how to deal with the effects and consequences of extimacy.

The technical notion of extimacy concerns the natural tendency of each person to want to reveal, to a greater or lesser extent, selected parts of their intimacy to third parties and/or in social environments, to enrich or empower themselves in identity (Pavón-Cuéllar, 2014, p. 661).

From this, as a legal thesis, it is defended the possibility of recognizing a "right to extimacy", as an active dimension of privacy. It is suggested, in short, that such a right consists of seeing one's privacy and intimacy as a propositional legal element, in addition to the defensive one. Therefore, it refers to actively enjoying one's intimacy, through the rights of the personality, through its voluntary exposure in socialization environments, without, for that reason alone, the information being taken as public and freely appropriated by third parties. It is a proposal that aims to emancipate certain elements of intimacy that shape personal identity, allowing them to be defended and ratified in social spaces of human interaction. It concerns, especially, facing certain structural pressures, especially on people from vulnerable groups, who hinder or atrophy the free development of identity through the social enjoyment of their own privacy in its most intimate aspects (Bolesina, 2017, p. 237).

Regardless of the technical meaning, it is common to interpret extimacy as simply the exposure of one's intimacy in social environments, through speech, image, and/or writing.

Regardless of the interpretation carried out, there is in common among them the fact that extimacy refers to a communicational desire that has always existed and has always been important to humanity. However, this desire was stifled by certain socio-cultural, legal, and political conventions (Tisseron, 2001). Such conventions, each in its own time and space, dictated the "correct and adequate" way of enjoying one's intimacy and of communicating, extolling certain practices, and repressing others (exalting certain people and repressing others).

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<sup>1</sup> The acts of extimacy do not necessarily depend on the world wide web. The internet and its applications are facilitation channels. For example, Bauman assumes that the first contemporary act of extimacy occurred on a French talk show in the 1980s, when a participating wife revealed to the audience that she had never had an orgasm in her marriage because her husband suffered from precocious ejaculation. Based on the case, Bauman admits that the fact itself caused two ruptures in the public-private division: one of taking intimate events to the public; another of using the public arena to debate intimacy.

In the West, for example, the idea of extimacy had to face the bases built around the right to privacy, whose matrix was inherited from legal modernity and, therefore, tied to the foundations of a Law classically seen as individual, patrimonial, and patriarchal.

The legal perception of privacy stimulated positions that reinforce the distinction between public and private spaces; it made privacy a class privilege (Rodotà, 2008, p. 27; Prost, 2009, p. 59); and it formatted an interior imagination, that is, a duty and not a right<sup>2</sup>.

If it is impossible to say that extimacy overcame the old beliefs around the imagination of privacy, on the other hand, it is feasible to assert that it was successful in questioning the rigidity of those constructions. It was through the debates instigated by the daily practices of extimacy, alongside influxes for the protection of personal data, that other aspects of personal emancipation and respect for human dignity were considered, either because of respect for individual freedoms or because of necessity recycling of legal concepts.

Today, extimacy is the desire or practice that values the act of showing oneself to exist and resist (Butler, 2018). But this does not happen in a complex way, in the individual and social dimensions. Individually, it makes personal emancipation possible. Socially, it enables community insertion and sociality based on dialogic relationships with the other (Tisseron, 2011, p. 84), under the logic "exposing oneself to create bonds with oneself and with the other" in a dynamic of (re)cognition (Cardon, 2012, p. 59). These are facts that range from the "death of the hamster", through the "beginning of dating" to more sensitive issues around physical acceptance, sexuality, or personal beliefs, among others.

In such a context, extimacy gives active life to intimacy, without being confused with it (Tisseron, 2008, p. 39), removing it from the sacredness that the bourgeoisie placed it on. Precisely for this reason, the practices of privacy originate from freedom of expression and privacy, originating in an environment of sociability (Arendt, 2010, p. 47), especially within the internet and its applications. No wonder the combination of the words "expression" plus "intimacy" ends up forming the neologism "extimacy" (Bolesina, 2017, p. 239).

In short, not even the solidified foundations of privacy have passed unscathed over time. As Goya painted Saturn, the French warned: "le temps détruit tout" and, again relentlessly, time acted, strengthened the facts, challenging culture, politics, and law. The final extract is the recognition of the practices of extimacy as habitual and important behaviors for the free development of the human personality.

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<sup>2</sup> The interior imagination works in such a way that privacy is seen as something to be enjoyed in the hidden and certain issues must be kept exclusively in the private space, not taken to the public or the social. This was the moral and good customs way to enjoy privacy.

Since then, discussions, tensions, and challenges migrate to the next level, orbiting the effects and consequences of extimacy. The themes tend to come up against established cultural, political, and legal issues, both in sectional and intersecting ways. The debates became peremptory, especially after the General Personal Data Protection Law, which established specific rules for data processing and the validity of consent.

We understand that there are at least three dimensions of effects: individual, interpersonal and democratical. In all of them, there are pressures from visibility policies (Sennett, 2014, p. 483)<sup>3</sup>, surveillance and control, operated from personal data collected from practices of extimacy, especially in social networks.

In terms of individual consequences, all effects are typical of the "society of tiredness" (or "society of performance") (Ehrenberg, 2010). As summarized by Han (2017, pp. 83-91), a context of neuronal violence, of the mutilation of creative and contemplative leisure time and of control through discourses of performance, motivation, and success. The transit of multiple extremities inserted in performance policies, reflected in bubbles, echo chambers, and information cataracts (Sunstein, 2014) creates a vicious and comparative circle of failure and success, competence and incompetence, personal sufficiency and insufficiency, whose referee, executioner and executed are the person oneself.

The interpersonal implications arise in situations such as sharenting (Steinberg, 2017, p. 839; Sol & Ankeren, 2011) and plural intimacies of friends, accomplices, or couples<sup>4</sup> appeared, which raises the agitation of academic bases, revealing the need to revisit dispositions of legal matters involving extimacy in the face of other rights of the personality. In the same sense, problems such as revenge porn (Citron & Franks, 2014), cyberstalking (Sani & Valqueresma, 2021), cyberbullying, gender violence, and hate speech against vulnerable groups gained new tones, sounded from the practices of extimacy exercised by victims themselves (in a movement of emancipation and identity development).

No wonder the question "who has the right to extimacy?" is still a question to be answered by the Law. Although the conclusion suggests a right for extimacy for all people without distinction, we must consider the intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989; Bilge, 2009) woven by the base inequalities (Crenshaw, 1989), that is, white, cisgender, and rich people, to put it only on these characteristics, face less risk and less

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<sup>3</sup> However, today a "tyranny of visibility" is addressed, which imposes a "duty of visibility": in order not to run the risk of not existing, it is necessary to always be visible and, if possible, transparent: "*si no se muestra, si no aparece a la vista de todos y los otros no lo ven, entonces de poco sirve tener lo que sea*" (Sibilia, 2013, p. 100).

<sup>4</sup> The idea of "plural intimacy" (or "social intimacy") builds a personal data management relationship that is common to two or more people. They are, therefore, intimate and/or sensitive data that two or more people share simultaneously due to their friendship, complicity, and/or affection relationship, that is, tied by bonds of trust. Precisely due to the dynamics of good faith, in theory, data cannot be used freely by one of the subjects without the consent of the other.

collateral damage than black, transgender and poor people in the same situation of extimacy. The Law, while preserving its already established foundations, tends to perpetuate structural violence by not protecting contemporary difficulties that demand complex and avant-garde answers.

In addition to all these challenges, the extinction also feeds problems arising from the dynamics between extimacy and large private companies or the State, mediated by technology. In this area, the risks and dangers are more subtle but more pervasive. For all possible examples, we can cite the countless data stored only by social networks, e-shopping sites, and public databases. A photo with *#fashion* or *#happy* hashtags has consequences beyond the visible and the same can be said of searches for products or services.

Tensions, political manipulation, and digital violence can also be mentioned as part of the notion of "infodemic", a pandemic of misinformation. Notwithstanding this reality does not choose nationality, Brazil has a peculiar case, since Brazilians are the people who most believe in misinformation in the world (Dias & Kampff, 2020). This is aggravated by considering the studies according to which the spread of reliable information is less successful than disinformation, as well as the fact that people who spread or agree with disinformation are less likely to revise their beliefs (Chan *et al.*, 2017).

In the party-political sphere, misinformation incites opponents, confronting ideas, inflaming public debate, and challenging the self-regulation of the free market of ideas. The situation is aggravated when cabinets of hate are formatted and used by the State and by the political agents who run it, not exclusively for attacks on the democratic and constitutional order, but also virtual lynching's through of extimacy information by the victim, not to mention public health and safety issues (Mello, 2020).

Therefore, the link between extimacy and disinformation happens in a dialogic relationship, where disinformation stimulates extimacy and this, in turn, repays disinformation by spreading it. This occurs when inadequate information finds shelter and resonance in the person's identity convictions. Since then, it is not uncommon for intimate beliefs on political, social, moral issues, among others, previously kept to themselves, to gain light in acts of extimacy. Due to this emotional appeal generated by fake news, the thoughtless sharing of information is common, which, in short, reveals intimacy and identity tendencies. As can be seen, intimacy has long ceased to be just that linked to modesty and sexuality. Intimacy, and now also extimacy, shape identity.

This context refers to a global problem that, in Brazil, is still regulated in an incipient way, due to the form of regulation and current judicial interpretations. On the one hand, the General Personal Data Protection Law predicts for the waiver of consent when data has been made public by the holder (Article 7, paragraph 4). Thus, if someone posts a photo, video, or posts comments or confesses a preference on a



social network, in theory, did it voluntarily in a public space, because social networks are still interpreted as public environments (notwithstanding privacy settings).

On the other hand, it is not uncommon to find court decisions that ignore the different types of consent and the legal scope of each of them<sup>5</sup>. Generally, they claim that the publications were made voluntarily in a public space and, therefore, the victim must bear the burdens arising from their own conduct, arguing the lack of profit in the use of the publication by the company or the State. On both sides (legislative or judiciary), the problem is the insistence on the obsolete public-private dichotomy, ignoring the existence of social spaces and a better distinction based on the perspective of personal and non-personal data, in high or low visibility (Cardon, 2012), demanding specific consents and results of personal acts of privacy for the development of personality, social life, and democratic participation. This is because, in the face of acts of extimacy, data is considered "personal" (not necessarily public data or private data).

The elements presented so far represent only a portion of the many faces of the relationships from the practices of extimacy. In the current scenario, it is not absurd, or even an exaggeration, to think that the extimacy is usually and daily confiscated by the contemporary policies of visibility, performance, and control, which feed and are fed by neoliberalism, as will be seen below.

## 2. NEOLIBERALISM AND THE TECHNOLOGICAL CONTROL OF SUBJECTIVITIES

The contemporary way of life is unique and unprecedented. Conflicts, crises, inequalities, and other attributes that mark the present century have always crossed civilizations at different scales, however, it is no exaggeration to say that the intensity and breadth of some of these dilemmas are unprecedented.

Social networks are mentioned as a unique field of visualization of these conflicts and feelings precisely because they have become a privileged space for false and hateful manifestations of all kinds, supported by an alleged (and mistaken) idea that they are covered by individual freedom of expression. The individual exposure of oneself and one's opinions is linked to the idea of extimacy discussed in the previous topic, through which voluntary exposure in socialization environments shapes the subject's own identity. In this sense, social networks provoke this exposure, which is disguised as the idea of freedom, even though the only freedom that is effectively possible and desired is that which conforms to market standards (commodification of extimacy).

In terms of social coexistence, there is hatred and resentment that reverberate from individual relationships (for example, the toxic environment into which social networks

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<sup>5</sup> As examples: (i) Brasil. Tribunal de Justiça de São Paulo. Apelação Cível n. 0002051-05.2010.8.26.0011. 2017; (ii) Brasil. Tribunal de Justiça de São Paulo. Apelação Cível n. 0002051-05.2010.8.26.0011. 2017; (iii) Brasil. Tribunal de Justiça de São Paulo. Apelação Cível n. 1022608-89.2017.8.26.0224. 2020; (iv) Brasil. Tribunal de Justiça do Rio de Janeiro. Apelação Cível n. 0287134-54.2015.8.19.0001. 2022; (v) Brasil. Superior Tribunal de Justiça. REsp 595.600/SC. 2004.

have become) to political institutions (the rise of authoritarian and even fascist leaderships from the alt-right as a global trend), intensifying tensions and conflicts of all kinds. In terms of social existence, inequality becomes a global problem (Milanovic, 2012, p.145), generating a picture of true inhumanity, especially with its accentuation and acceleration in the Covid-19 pandemic period<sup>6</sup>.

To specify some nuances of this complex feeling called "resentment", which permeates social and political relations of the present, we will use the meanings and explanations detailed by Kehl, for whom "resentment is an affective constellation that serves the characteristic conflicts of individuals and social groups in the context of modern democracies" (Kehl, 2020, p. 161). From an individual point of view, it manifests itself "between the demands and imaginary configurations of individualism and the defense mechanisms of the self in the service of narcissism", so that resentment means attributing to the other the responsibility for what causes us suffering (Kehl, 2020, p. 9). Socially, it is expressed by the dissatisfaction of groups or classes that have repeatedly and systematically frustrated the fulfillment of the modern promises of equality, which never come true as expected. In this sense, "social resentment would originate in cases where inequality is felt to be unfair in the face of a symbolic order based on the assumption of equality" (Kehl, 2020, pp. 162-163).

In this way, paradoxically, people find themselves isolated and individualized in an increasingly unequal and complex world, against each other in a competitive logic (which tends to deepen in the future) and of perverse self-responsibility.

Among the multiple factors that contribute to the formation of this reality, neoliberalism is the key concept that is capable of grouping them in such a way as to make it clear that such a paradox is not only illusory but also purposeful. Complex and polysemic, neoliberalism is "associated with a bundle of policies privatizing public ownership and services, radically reducing the social state, leashing labor, deregulating capital, and producing a tax-and-tariff friendly climate to direct foreign investors" (Brown, 2019, p. 29). It is not by chance that such practices embody the idea of "attack on the social" that is characteristic of neoliberalism.

In this context, a new discourse of valuing the 'risk' inherent in individual and collective life is opposed to the social state and assigns it the responsibility for a kind of "accommodation" of subjects, who cease to be inventive and innovative to surrender to welfarism. However, the preconceived conviction that the individual is solely

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<sup>6</sup> In addition to thousands of bereaved families, Brazil has more than 14 million unemployed, faces high prices that make it difficult to access everything from cooking gas to basic foodstuffs and, given that, it is not surprising that it has returned to hunger and food insecurity rates, which reach about 50 % of the population. These are alarming data that, along with so many others, can be easily found in virtually any news source, in addition to official studies and reports that every day expose social inequality, among which, we recommend: Ibge (2020), Oxfam (2021) and Dieese (2021). It is still recommended to read the article by Guasque and Guasque (2020).

responsible for its own destiny and that society owes nothing has a cost, imposing on this same individual to “demonstrate constantly, prove themselves, to merit the conditions of their existence” (Dardot & Laval, 2013, p. 186).

This type of rationality finds a privileged space within societies typically populated by neoliberal ideals that incorporate the meritocratic discourse as a way to justify and legitimize inequalities, as “what is conventionally called merit is actually an ideological conceit, constructed to launder a fundamentally unjust allocation of advantage” (Markovits, 2019, p. 278). Occurs that “meritocracy’s bright shine blinds people to the ideological traps in which it ensnares them—creating false pride in the rich and false resentment in the rest, to obscure the harms that meritocratic inequality imposes on both groups” (Markovits, 2019, p. 295). Believing that all success stems solely from individual abilities and skills and, more than that, that individual effort will be enough to ascend socially becomes a seductive and powerful idea. However, despite being equally flawed and illusory, it is enough to capture most people.

Such discursive premises reach and transform all spheres of life and, in this way, the subject’s relationship with oneself is affected. As elucidated by Dardot and Laval, all dimensions of the human are considered as “resembling pieces indispensable to the functioning of an ‘economic machine’ which imposes private study, private health, private retirement plans, etc., while overloading subjects and eroding the idea of solidarity (Dardot & Laval, 2013, p. 105) (after all, according to neoliberal and meritocratic canons, everyone can access rights and benefits if there is sufficient dedication and effort).

There is a tempting and constant stimulus to freedom that, in practice, turns into imprisonment (commodification of extimacy), since the only possible freedom is that which is functional for the market and capital. When market principles become government principles applied by the State, such as neoliberalism promotes, also circulating throughout society and its institutions (schools, workplaces, etc.), these principles become reality, starting to govern every sphere of existence, reorienting “homo oeconomicus itself, transforming it from a subject of exchange and the satisfaction of needs (classical liberalism) to a subject of competition and human capital enhancement (neoliberalism)” (Brown, 2018, p. 20).

In this sense, Fraser makes a valid observation in differentiating a type of progressive neoliberalism from the reactionary and hyper-reactionary types. In common, all these aspects adopt distribution policies that, in practice, favor financialization, deregulation of markets, job insecurity, flexibility in environmental rules, and other items in the neoliberal booklet in general. What makes them different are recognition policies. While reactionary and hyper-reactionary neoliberalism, introduced with the election of Donald Trump, defends manifestly excluding policies of recognition (sexist, racist, homophobic, etc.), the so-called progressive neoliberalism, hegemonic before

Trump, "combined an expropriative, plutocratic economic program with a liberal-meritocratic politics of recognition" (Fraser, 2017).

Indeed, the progressive neoliberal program intended a (supposedly) fair and diversified status order, without this implying the abolition of the social hierarchy<sup>7</sup>. Consequently, the "deserving" individuals of the "under-represented groups" would rise to the top, that is, women, black people, and sexual minorities who are truly talented and deserving of rising to positions of prestige and purchasing power just like the "straight white man" (Fraser, 2017). Although the author considers the North American political context for her analysis, her diagnosis is clearly applicable to Brazil (and to other countries co-opted by the neoliberal ethos).

So, insofar as they are free to choose, subjects are exclusively and completely responsible for where their choices lead them, whether to success or failure. The phantasmagoric illusions supported by the neoliberal dictates of merit, performance, and competition co-opted the ways of life at both the individual and collective levels. This capture makes use of technological devices and new forms of (algorithmic) governmentality (Rouvroy & Berns, 2015, p. 42), which stimulate the constant improvement of subjects (self-entrepreneur) at the same time as they exhaust their strength and jettison their social capillaries.

In this last passage, it is worth highlighting Lazzarato's warning, since in general, the production of subjectivity is usually the focus of most approaches, which to some extent dialogue with power relations, neoliberalism, and its consequences, but tend to pay little attention to slavery/machinic servitude, which "dismantles the individualized subject, consciousness, and representations, acting on both the pre-individual and supra-individual levels" (Lazzarato, 2014, p. 12). This alert is intended to remind that in the neoliberal and capitalist era, in addition to the production of subjects who self-explore while exposing their own visions of themselves sharing their extimacies, they also operate articulations of devices that segment social relations and separate the association capacities between people and groups.

In summary, in the current neoliberal ethos, life remains captured by the production processes of subjectivity and machinic slavery that demand total knowledge/vigilance,

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<sup>7</sup> Regarding this aspect, we reproduce the pertinent criticism of Dardot and Laval: "nothing better illustrates the Left's neo-liberal turn than the change in the meaning of social policy, in a break with the whole social-democratic tradition, whose guideline was a mode of sharing the social goods indispensable to full citizenship. The fight against inequality, which was central in the old social-democratic project, has been replaced by the 'fight against poverty', in accordance with an ideology of 'equity' and 'individual responsibility' theorized by various Blairite intellectuals like Anthony Giddens. Solidarity is now conceived as aid targeted to those 'excluded' from the system, aimed at 'pockets' of poverty, in accordance with a Christian and Puritan vision. Such aid, targeted at 'specific populations' ('disabled', 'early retirement', the 'elderly', 'single mothers', etc.), so as not to create dependency, is to be accompanied by personal effort and real work. In other words, the new Left has adopted the ideological matrix of its traditional opponents, abandoning the ideal of constructing universal socialrights" (Dardot & Laval, 2016, p. 203).

capable of configuring individuals in parts –dividuals in the classic expression of Deleuze (1992. p. 222) –, managing the most diverse aspects of your reality. This consideration takes into account the willingness of surveillance capitalism, willing to absorb the human behavioral surplus and commodify it, transmuting subjects into data capable of automating and predicting behavior (Zuboff, 2019, p. 15), desires, deviations, and any other manifestations of their existence.

The primacy of competition (Dardot & Laval, 2013, p. 34) calls for the constant struggle for social inclusion based on self-exposure (Beiguelman, 2021, p. 40), reaching everyone in the demand for existential visibility (although not all have the same possibilities of exposing and existing according to the technological mechanisms in operation) while absorbing data to improve the governmentality of the population. However, without forgetting the accessible possibilities of exercising coercion and control to those who disturb the progress of this society and its (unsustainable) model of “development”.

Regarding the naturalization of surveillance and control even in ordinary practices, which are related to the performance of extimacy, Beiguleman explains:

The culture of surveillance is so introjected into our daily lives that it doesn't intimidate us to use such a police vocabulary as “follow” and “be followed” on social networks. Other signs of this dilution of control and surveillance parameters in everyday life are the abundant use of facial recognition features in applications, such as Facebook, which has been using it since 2010, and for the composition of short videos, such as TikTok. (pp. 62-63)

Thus, there is a confluence between current neoliberal and capitalist practices, to functionalize human manifestations into tradable objects, while in parallel carrying out technopolitical power exercises (Lama & Sanchez-Laulhe, 2020, p. 24; Sampaio, Furbinio & Bocchino, 2021, p. 511) of control and surveillance of the population, which often adheres it without realizing the level of their waiver of rights, or even without projecting the impacts of the transfer of significant portions of their lives to the knowledge and management of corporate or state agents. The statements that reflect such conduct are the passive acceptance of absurd and illegal terms of use by applications/platforms or even the free disposal of parts of your body (face, iris, digital, biotype) for recreational activities of “aging/rejuvenation” or “filters”, without questioning the supposed free of charge of the device in question.

We can notice that the investment that captures the extimacy only obtains its success by investing heavily in instruments of control-security and that bet on freedom as a mantra by technological means (which can point to a transformation in power strategies), allied to the entrepreneurs of the self's delusions, merit, and ill performance.

Acting at this point earns the capture of mundane life practices, making behaviors and subjectivities predictable, but also allows for the abandonment of the

silent subtlety (Han, 2019, pp. 9-10) of these new practices against inconvenient or unadapted individuals to the new profile, always remembering the neoliberal postulate that "there is no alternative" (Brown, 2018, p. 75). Therefore, it can be inferred that the neoliberal capture of extimacy puts much more than rights at risk. In reality, it puts ways of existing, representing, resisting, and living in a condition of constant threat, resulting in the exploratory increase, illness, the permanence of hidden and visible violence, reserving humanity a slow death, watched by posting its funeral procession online.

## CONCLUSIONS

In the Grimm brothers' tale, Hansel and Gretel (Hänsel und Gretel), after being abandoned by their parents and without food, found a charming and tasty sweet house. Hungry, they gorged themselves immeasurably until being approached by a lady. The woman, in contrast to Hansel and Gretel's parents, promised them attention and comfort. What Hansel and Gretel didn't know is that the attractive house was a trap, and the lady was a witch who loved to feed on helpless children.

Among the many punch lines of the tale, one is timely and pertinent: how social networks act similarly to seductive candy houses to attract people, whether they are hungry or helpless, maintained by witches who feed on data from their visitors. If you consider Hansel and Gretel's situation to be evident and naive and judge the processing of personal data transmitted on social networks not so obvious, it is only because the Grimm brothers' tale is a children's story and purposefully exaggerated.

Extimacy enters this context from the moment its notion was popularized, in particular, by movements carried out in the network society, under the promise of personal empowerment and identity emancipation. Paradoxically, the same context that gave it popularity, is today its tormentor, constantly capturing it for purposes other than those promised (just like the witch in the tale).

Currently, the technical notion of extimacy refers to the natural tendency of each person to desire to reveal selected parts of their intimacy to develop their own personality. However, it is common to interpret extimacy as being simply the exposure of one's intimacy in social environments. Once its structure is pacified, on the other hand, the discussions, tensions, and challenges migrate from its recognition to its enjoyment and management, that is, to the effects and consequences of the practices of extinction in the face of visibility, performance, and control.

The themes tend to flow into at least one of three dimensions of implications: individual (typical of the burnout society), interpersonal (of identity relations and their intersectional plots), and democratic (of social control and misinformation). In the current scenario, it is not absurd, or even an exaggeration, to think that extimacy is habitually and daily captured by technological devices, together with neoliberal policies.

Neoliberalism acts as an ethos capable of catalyzing the resentful and boosting the self-exploitation of those alienated through meritocratic discourse, demonstrating its changing and adaptable character to any context, as long as it can impose its basic primaries. This line of action leads to an increase in inequalities while promising that competition will lead humanity to evolutionary and innovative stages, as long as individuals are entrepreneurs, investing in themselves.

This modus operandi causes human exhaustion, although it does not reach its promises, maintaining its course allied to contemporary capitalism, in its technological aspects of data and, at the same time, surveillance. The explanation lies in the discourses that feed the production of subjectivities, segmenting social relations (machinic servitude/slavery) and developing human beings castrated in their collective aggregation capacities, since they are pressured to constantly expose themselves in an attempt to achieve "success" (facilitating the dynamics of control and behavioral prediction based on data), which demonstrates that the commodification of extimacy becomes part of a duty inherent to neoliberal commandments.

At the end of the Grimm brothers' tale, Hansel and Gretel had a happy ending after overcoming the witch. The question to be answered is: will life imitate art also in the "happily ever after" endings or just in its tragic and inescapable endings? In the meantime, we should pay close attention to alluring and tasty candy houses along the way.

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