

FROM THE HERMENEUTICS OF THE SELF TO ALGORITHMIC NORMALITY:
A FOUCAULDIAN READING OF DIGITAL SELF-CARE
KENDİLİK HERMENÖTİĞİNDEN ALGORİTMİK NORMALLIĞE:
DİJİTAL ÖZ-BAKIM ÜZERİNE FOUCAULTCU BİR OKUMA

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Abstract

This article examines the transformation of subjectivity within the framework of discussions on “algorithmic governmentality,” which have begun to emerge from a Foucauldian analysis. The study analyzes how subjectivity has evolved from an ethical construction to a data-driven optimization regime, tracing a historical trajectory from the ancient “technologies of the self” (*epimeleia heautou*) to today’s digital automation. The article attempts to show that digital self-care, particularly through self-tracking practices, functions as a governance apparatus that transforms the subject, once again using a Foucauldian term, into a kind of “biocapital” object. Synthesizing theoretical frameworks such as Foucauldian biopolitics, Rouvroy and Berns’ concept of “tele-objectivity,” and Zuboff’s “surveillance capitalism,” the study examines how the measurable self and data flows transform the subject into a “calculable entity,” sometimes bypassing ethical reasoning. Rather than seeking a Foucauldian micro-resistance to the subject, the study focuses on the ways in which the algorithmic systems in question reconstruct subjectivity and the ethical tensions this creates. Ultimately, this study seeks to demonstrate that Foucault’s theoretical framework retains its analytical power in deciphering the contemporary manifestations of algorithmic power and the transformations of governmentality, serving as a fundamental tool for understanding this nascent process of subjective reconstruction.

Keywords: Algorithmic Governmentality, Digital Self-Care, Subjectivation, Surveillance Capitalism, Biopolitics.

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Özet

Bu makale, Foucaultcu bir analiz zemininde ortaya çıkmaya başlamış olan “algoritmik yönetimsellik” tartışmaları çerçevesinde, özelliğin geçirdiği dönüşümü ele almaktadır. Çalışma, antik çağın “kendilik teknolojileri”nden (*epimeleia heautou*) günümüzün dijital otomasyonuna uzanan tarihsel bir izlek üzerinden, özelliğin etik bir inşadan veriye dayalı bir optimizasyon rejimine nasıl evrildiğini analiz etmektedir. Bilhassa çalışma, kendini izleme (*self-tracking*) pratikleri aracılığıyla dijital öz-bakımın, özne üzerinde bu defa yine Foucaultcu bir isimlendirmeye bir tür “biyosermaye” nesnesine dönüştüren bir yönetimsellik aygıtı olarak iş gördüğünü göstermeye çalışmaktadır. Foucaultcu biyopolitika, Rouvroy ve Berns’in “tele-nesnellik” kavramı ve Zuboff’un “gözetim kapitalizmi” gibi kuramsal çerçeveleri sentezleyen çalışmamız; ölçülebilir kendiliğin (*quantified self*) ve veri akışlarının, etik muhakemeyi zaman zaman devre dışı da bırakarak özneyi “hesaplanabilir bir varlığa” dönüştürme durumlarını incelemektedir. Çalışma, özneye dair, yine Foucaultcu kavrayışla bir mikro-direnış arayışından ziyade, bahse konu algoritmik sistemlerin özelliği yeniden yapılandırma biçimlerine ve bu durumun yarattığı etik gerilimlere odaklanmaktadır. Sonuç olarak incelememiz, Foucault’nun kuramsal çerçevesinin, algoritmik iktidarın çağdaş tezahürlerini ve yönetimsellik kavramının değişimini çözümlemede analitik gücünü koruduğunu ve özelliğin yeniden yapılandırıldığı bu yeni süreci anlamlandırmada temel bir araç olduğunu ortaya koymayı hedeflemektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Algoritmik yönetimsellik, Dijital Öz-Bakım, Özneleşme, Gözetim Kapitalizmi, Biyopolitika.

From the Hermeneutics of the Self to Algorithmic Normality: A Foucauldian Reading of Digital Self-Care

INTRODUCTION

Traditionally, power has been conceptualized as an external constraint—a boundary to be negotiated in the name of freedom. While conventional political philosophy often frames power as this top-down limitation, Michel Foucault's framework fundamentally challenges this view by analyzing power as a productive, constituent force. However, as we witness the shifting landscape towards algorithmic governmentality, this dynamic appears to be undergoing a further inversion. Rather than suppressing choices from the outside—as traditional models of power suggested—contemporary systems increasingly encourage them. By constantly processing our behaviors, predictive models and automated systems risk turning our freedom—our preferences and daily actions—into the very mechanisms that manage us. The current governing logic indicates a movement away from traditional forms of forced submission toward more subtle processes of optimization, where individuals are “nudged” into behaviors that may culminate in a state of “tele-objectivity”.ⁱ Consequently, “freedom” is increasingly functioning not as the limit of power, but as its most effective instrument. This article investigates the extent to which this nascent shift reconfigures our subjectivity, highlighting the growing tension between the ethical subject and the demands of data-driven rationalities (Rouvroy&Berns, 2013, pp. 10-12). Our central thesis is that algorithmic governmentality does not merely monitor the subject, but fundamentally reconfigures the Foucauldian “care of the self” by transforming reflexive ethical labor into a technical requirement for real-time optimization. While current literature often focuses on privacy or data extraction, this article offers an original contribution by tracing the genealogical mutation of self-cultivation practices. We argue that the contemporary subject is caught in a “tele-objective” trap where freedom itself is functionalized as a data-generating instrument, thereby hollowing out the capacity for moral deliberation.

It is essential to clarify that this article does not conceptualize digital self-tracking technologies as inherently dystopian or solely oppressive apparatuses. Rather, we adopt a more nuanced perspective: these technologies are pliable instruments whose impact is defined by the specific rationalities in which they are currently embedded. Our aim is not to dismiss these tools, but to critically interrogate the systemic shift that subordinates the ethical “care of the self” to the imperatives of data-driven optimization. By acknowledging the ambivalence of digital self-care, we seek to uncover how algorithmic systems might move beyond mere “predictive extraction” and perhaps reclaim their potential as spaces for reflexive self-cultivation, provided they are decoupled from the current logic of market utility.

This article proceeds in three steps: First, it maps the genealogy of the subject from Foucauldian governmentality to contemporary algorithmic rationalities. Second, it investigates how self-tracking

technologies operationalize these rationalities through the metricization of the self. Finally, it evaluates the ethical implications of this modification, exploring the extent to which digital self-care practices may complicate, rather than simply foster, the capacity for moral deliberation.

To unravel this complex entanglement of data and selfhood, we begin by excavating the genealogical foundations of power. We revisit the Foucauldian conceptualization of governmentality, not merely to rehearse a familiar history, but to isolate the specific mechanisms by which the subject is historically constituted as an object of governance. By tracing the mutation from the disciplinary regimes of the past to the fluid, predictive rationalities of the present, we seek to illuminate how the “care of the self” has been effectively colonized by the imperatives of algorithmic optimization. This foundation will allow us to critically examine how our most intimate self-practices are being restructured by the predictive logic of the “Quantified Self,” rendering our biological existence a site of continuous extraction and management (Lupton & Williamson, 2017, pp.6-13).

GOVERNMENTALITY AND THE HISTORICAL FORMATION OF THE SELF

To map the genealogy of the subject from the disciplinary regimes of the past to the algorithmic rationalities of the present, we must ground our inquiry in the turn from command to conduct. Let us first recall Michel Foucault’s understanding of governmentality. Foucault’s conceptualization of “governmentality” must be read not as a static taxonomy of power, but as a methodological intervention that fundamentally destabilizes the classical understanding of the subject. It constitutes an epistemological rupture: rather than interrogating the essence of power, governmentality maps the historical genesis of the subject: Demonstrating how subjects are constituted through regimes of truth, normative imperatives, and the technical organization of the self (Foucault, 2018, p. 140):

When I say regime of truth I do not mean that at this moment politics or the art of government finally becomes rational. I do not mean that at this moment a sort of epistemological threshold is reached on the basis of which the art of government could become scientific. I mean that the moment I am presently trying to indicate is marked by the articulation of a particular type of discourse and a set of practices, a discourse that, on the one hand, constitutes these practices as a set bound together by an intelligible connection and, on the other hand, legislates and can legislate on these practices in terms of true and false (Foucault, 2008, p. 18).

Within this framework, the subject is not a pre-given interiority or an originary site of agency, but a contingent effect of the practices that organize conduct. Introduced in the late 1970s, this rationality of power designates a decisive reconfiguration of the relation between political logic and subject formation (Foucault, 2008, p.67).ⁱⁱ

Central to this formulation is the “conduct of conduct,” a rationality that transcends the sovereign’s command or the disciplinary gaze. Herein lies the core paradox of modern power: it does not seek the subjects’ repression but, conversely, demands their emancipation. In this sense, freedom is no longer the limit of power; it is its primary instrument (Foucault, 2018, p.67). Subjects are mobilized to govern themselves, internalizing norms of responsibility, optimization, and normality under the guise of autonomy (Dean, 2010, pp.27-28, pp. 49-50). Governmentality reveals that the subject is not liberated from power but formatted by a regime that operates precisely through the production and orchestration of freedom. Foucault (2009a) elucidates the relationship between freedom and governmentality by framing freedom as an indispensable component of the governmental apparatus—a “technology of the self” that facilitates the internalization of normative conduct:

Economic practice, population management, a public law constructed on the respect of freedom and freedoms, and a police with a repressive function: you can see that the old police project, as it appeared in correlation with *raison d’État*, is dismantled, or rather broken up into four elements—economic practice, population management, law and respect for freedoms, police—which are added to the great diplomatic-military apparatus (*dispositif*) that has hardly changed since the eighteenth century (p.354).

To comprehend the radicality of this transformation, we must contrast governmentality with the preceding modalities of power. Where sovereign power relied upon the juridical apparatus of law and prohibition, and disciplinary power secured docility through the institutional enclosure of the body, governmentality operates at a distinct register. It targets the population as a collective reality: a field of probabilities, risks, and circulations. Power in this regime does not attempt to excise deviance through total exclusion; instead, it seeks to regulate the conditions of possibility. In this framework, the population becomes both the object and the active agent of its own governance, simultaneously regulated and encouraged to regulate itself (Lemke, 2011, p. 21; Dean, 2010, p. 151.).

Drawing on Nikolas Rose’s (1999) analysis of the “private self,” it is evident that the implications of this rationality extend deep into the ontological status of the subject. The implications of this rationality extend deep into the ontological status of the subject. Furthermore, if personalities, subjectivities, and social relations are not external to relations of power, they cease to be “private” domains. On the contrary, these realms are sites of intensive governance. Indeed, social conventions, legal norms, and religious injunctions do not merely frame the individual; they infiltrate the “invisible domain” of interiority, transforming raw affect and desire into manageable character. Consequently, what appears as the fabric of an intimate self is, in actuality, a socially organized and minutely governed terrain (Rose, 1999, p. 1). These transformations underscore the fundamental insight that governmentality does not operate upon subjects from the outside; rather, it actively constitutes subjectivity itself.

Informed by the Foucauldian genealogical foundations—which frame governmentality as the modulation of the “art of governing” within a new regime of truth—this theoretical framework is essential for engaging with the core problematic of our article: the systemic displacement of the ethical, reflexive subject by an optimized, data-driven identity. By attending to the translation of abstract rationalities into everyday practices, this approach exposes how ordinary behaviors and forms of self-relation are transformed into sites of governance. We argue that subjectivity should no longer be viewed solely as a pre-given interior sphere; rather, its “interiority” is increasingly reconfigured as a product of concrete techniques and norms. Even in “new-age” self-help or self-care practices, this supposed interiority is often operationalized as a site of data-driven optimization rather than a space of authentic reflexivity. This reading is further elaborated through an expanded notion of technology that encompasses both material instruments and symbolic, discursive practices as operative mechanisms of power. In this framework, technologies of government encompass diverse mechanisms—from calculative routines to pedagogical forms—through which authorities systematically direct conduct toward specific ends (Ettlinger, 2011, p. 539). This methodological reading has been further elaborated by scholars who emphasize the epistemological implications of governmentality for the analysis of everyday practices.

Governmentality analysis operates with an expanded notion of technology that exceeds purely material instruments and encompasses symbolic and discursive practices as operative techniques of power. Furthermore, the analytics of government conceptualizes technology as a fusion of material and symbolic instruments, where discourses and representation regimes function as performative practices rather than mere semiotic signs. This methodological orientation becomes particularly clear when governmentality is approached through the notion of technology. In this framework, technologies of government encompass the diverse array of mechanisms—ranging from calculative techniques and spatial routines to pedagogical and architectural forms—through which authorities systematically shape and direct the conduct of individuals and populations toward specific ends. What is crucial here is that these technologies do not function as top-down constraints; instead, they operate by organizing the very conditions under which subjects come to relate to themselves and to others in normatively prescribed ways (Lemke, 2011, pp. 29-30). To operationalize this critique, we must turn to Foucault’s (1988) articulation of the four major types of technologies, each functioning as a matrix of practical reason:

As a context, we must understand that there are four major types of these “technologies,” each a matrix of practical reason: (1) technologies of production, which permit us to produce, transform, or manipulate things; (2) technologies of sign systems, which permit us to use signs, meanings, symbols, or signification; (3) technologies of power, which determine the conduct of individuals and submit them to certain ends or domination, an objectivizing of the subject; (4) technologies of the self, which permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in

order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality (p. 18).

The decisive analytical move here lies not in this classification schema itself, but in the intersection of these technologies. By tracing how technologies of the self intersect with technologies of power, we expose the erasure of the distinction between external domination and self-directed practice. This genealogy underscores that subjectivation is not merely a matter of external regulation; it involves subjects' active participation of in their own formation through historically specific practices of self-relation. Technologies of the self thus provide the pivotal nexus between governmentality as a rationality of power and the lived experience of subjectivity. They demonstrate how freedom itself becomes a site of governance, as individuals are incited to align their self-understanding with normative ideals. Drawing upon this Foucauldian foundation, we suggest that these self-practices prepare the ground for contemporary algorithmic modes of knowledge that reorganize contemporary self-practice (Foucault, 1982, p.792).

Fundamental to this account is a radical recomposition of the connection between subjectivity, freedom, and power. If the subject is not ontologically prior to power but is constituted through historically specific governmental practices, then freedom ceases to be a natural capacity opposed to domination. Instead, freedom reveals itself as a specialized mode of self-relation, orchestrated and operationalized by the very rationalities of governance it ostensibly resists. Governmentality, therefore, dismantles classical conceptions of the autonomous subject by exposing how self-governance functions as a sophisticated technique of power. Within this regime, the subject emerges not as power's negation, but as its historically contingent product: simultaneously enabled and entrapped by the normative frameworks through which it is solicited to govern itself (Foucault, 1982, pp. 780-781, p.789).

TECHNOLOGIES OF THE SELF AND THE HERMENEUTICS OF SUBJECTIVATION

If, as argued in the previous section, governmentality operates as a mode of power that configures individuals by mobilizing their freedom and capacity for self-governance, subjectivity cannot be conceived as an autonomous domain situated outside relations of power. Rather, subjectivity emerges at the intersection of discursive practices, nondiscursive regulatory practices, and historically specific forms of thought through which individuals are obliged to recognize themselves as subjects of a particular experience (Keskin, 2002, p.121). In this sense, individuals do not become subjects simply by being governed; they come to recognize themselves as subjects within frameworks of knowledge, power, and self-relation that render their conduct intelligible, interpretable, and open to intervention. Subjectification thus involves the process through which individuals come to represent their own existence to themselves within particular categories of thought (Keskin, 2020).

Within this analytical framework, the question of self-practices becomes central. Rather than approaching subjectivity as a passive recipient of power, a Foucauldian perspective draws attention to the

concrete ways in which individuals are invited to relate themselves, to interpret their thoughts, affects, and behaviors, and to work upon their own conduct. As indicated above, these practices do not operate independently of power; however, neither do they position the subject as a merely passive recipient of imposed norms. Instead, they establish a field of action in which individuals actively participate in their own subjectivation, even as this participation unfolds within historically and politically structured conditions. It is precisely through such self-practices that governmental rationalities are translated into lived and experienced forms of self-relation.

In the final years of his life, Foucault devoted remarkable attention to practices of the self, conceptualizing them as *technologies of the self*. This term refers to historically situated practices through which individuals act upon themselves in order to shape, transform, and attain a particular mode of being (Foucault, 1988, p.18). Rather than assuming these practices to be given and fixed, Foucault approached them genealogically—an approach developed in his late lectures and seminars, most notably in the 1982 University of Vermont conference on *Technologies of the Self*—to trace the historical transformations of self-practices. His detailed analyses focus primarily on Greco-Roman philosophy in the early Roman Imperial period and on early Christian spirituality, while his genealogy extends back to the emergence of these practices in classical Greek philosophy.ⁱⁱⁱ

Before turning to these two periods, it is important to note that both Greek and Roman culture established two closely connected principles that underpinned ethical life: *epimeleia heautou*, or the care of the self, and the Delphic principle *gnōthi seauton*, know yourself (Foucault, 1988, p.19). As Foucault emphasizes, caring for oneself was considered a necessary condition for knowing oneself. Self-knowledge was not an autonomous, purely introspective activity, but emerged through practical engagement with one's conduct, habits, and ways of living. In this context, the self was understood not as an inner domain to be deciphered, but as an ethical project shaped through ongoing practices of self-care, pedagogical relations, and participation in public life. Foucault (1988) also stresses that this hierarchy is reversed in the modern world: whereas in Greco-Roman culture, knowledge of oneself followed from caring for oneself, in contemporary contexts, knowledge of oneself has become the fundamental principle (p. 22).

Building on this distinction, Foucault traces the emergence of practices of the self back to classical Greek philosophy, where the care of the self was closely tied to the formation of ethical and political subjects. In the Socratic tradition, self-care was primarily articulated as a pedagogical relation: young men were encouraged to attend to themselves through dialogue and guidance as a preparation for participation in public life. The care of the self thus functioned as a condition for ethical conduct and civic responsibility, unfolding through interpersonal relations rather than through solitary introspection. Knowing oneself, in this context, was inseparable from engaging in practices that shaped one's way of living, speaking, and acting among others (Foucault, 1988).

This configuration undergoes a significant transformation in the Hellenistic and early Roman Imperial periods. While the care of the self remains central, it is no longer confined to a specific educational phase or oriented primarily toward political preparation. Instead, it becomes a lifelong task concerned with the continuous management of one's conduct, body, and thoughts. Foucault emphasizes that this shift is accompanied by a reorganization of self-practices: dialogical pedagogy gives way to techniques such as self-examination, letter-writing, *askesis*, the interpretation of dreams, and the recording of daily activities. Writing, in particular, emerges as a key technology of the self, through which individuals attend to their own actions and ways of living, rendering the self-something that can be noted, revisited, and worked upon over time. In this regard, early Roman practices of the self deepen the ethical labor of self-care while simultaneously transforming its modalities, preparing the ground for later shifts that become more pronounced in early Christian spirituality (Foucault, 1988; see also Foucault, 1986, *The Care of the Self*, Vol. 3, where he meticulously details these techniques of the self). This inquiry draws upon Foucault's genealogy of the subject, extending beyond the framework of his 1988 lecture, *Technologies of the Self*, to incorporate the historical rigor of the *History of Sexuality* volumes. Specifically, we engage with *The Use of Pleasure* (Vol. 2) and *The Care of the Self* (Vol. 3) to map the transition from classical ethical self-cultivation to the modern hermeneutics of the subject. By integrating these foundational texts with Foucault's analysis of "governmentality"—as articulated in his lectures *Security, Territory, Population* (2007)—we establish that the "care of the self" was not a static concept but a shifting practice that moved from reflexive, ethical labor toward the calculative, algorithmic normativity examined by Rouvroy and Berns. This approach allows us to demonstrate that contemporary "digital self-care" is not a departure from Foucault's genealogy, but a mutation of these ethical techniques within the logic of surveillance capitalism, where the subject is increasingly governed through real-time feedback loops rather than discursive 'confession'.

A further and decisive transformation occurs in early Christian spirituality during the fourth and fifth centuries CE. In this period, self-practices were organized around the purification of the self. Foucault (1988) identifies two central practices: *exomologesis*, recognizing oneself as a sinner and penitential disclosure to a bishop, and *exagoreusis*, the continual verbalization of one's thoughts in a relational context with a spiritual authority (pp. 41–44). Although these practices differed in form, they shared a common logic: the disclosure of the self was inseparable from the renunciation of one's will. Truth about oneself was produced not through autonomous self-reflection, but through submission to an external authority and the negation of personal desire.

This Christian configuration marks a critical moment in the genealogy of the hermeneutics of the self. Here, self-disclosure functions as a technique of self-renunciation rather than self-construction. As Foucault (1988) argues, the act of telling the truth about oneself is directly linked to the renunciation of one's own will, whether through martyrdom or through obedience to a master (p. 48). Importantly, Foucault identifies a significant rupture beginning in the eighteenth century, when verbal techniques cease to operate primarily as

mechanisms of self-denial and instead become means for the constitution of the self in a positive sense. From this point onward, disclosure becomes oriented toward the constructive work of the self (Foucault, 1988, p.49).

Taken together, these historical transformations reveal that technologies of the self cannot be understood independently of broader relations of power. Across different periods, practices of self-care and self-knowledge have served as key sites through which subjects are constituted as ethical beings capable of governing themselves. At the same time, these practices have always been embedded within normative frameworks that define what counts as a proper relation to oneself. From the ethical cultivation of the self in classical antiquity to the confessional regimes of Christianity, what we might call the 'hermeneutics of self-interpretation'—rather than a static framework—has functioned as a crucial mechanism through which power operates by shaping the very terms under which individuals are obliged to interpret and decode their inner truths.

This genealogy underscores a central insight for the present analysis: subjectivation is not merely a matter of external regulation but involves the active participation of subjects in their own formation through historically specific practices of self-relation. Technologies of the self thus provide the missing link between governmentality as a rationality of power and the lived experience of subjectivity. They demonstrate how freedom itself becomes a site of governance, as individuals are invited to align their self-understanding with normative ideals articulated through ethical, medical, and spiritual discourses. This insight prepares the ground for the subsequent analysis of how contemporary forms of self-practice are increasingly reorganized through calculative, data-driven, and algorithmic modes of self-knowledge, marking a shift from the classical regime of “care of the self” toward new, data-driven regimes of normativity.

ALGORITHMIC GOVERNMENTALITY AND THE PRODUCTION OF NORMS

As argued in the previous section, subjectivation is not merely an external regulation; it involves subjects' active participation in their own formation through historically specific practices of self-relation. However, we must now address the central problematic of this inquiry: how these interpretive, hermeneutic practices are being recast by contemporary digital rationalities. The switch from interpretive hermeneutics to algorithmic modes of governance marks a fundamental transformation in how individuals are governed. In the wake of the reorganization of self-relation through calculative, algorithmic modes of knowledge, we observe a radical mutation in the very mechanisms of normativity (Rouvroy & Berns, 2013, p. 22). Central to this transformation is the concept of “algorithmic governmentality,” as defined by Rouvroy and Berns (2013). They argue that this regime does not operate through the imposition of general social norms, but through an “a-normative” rationality. Instead of aligning individuals with a pre-existing average, algorithmic systems rely on datamining to rebuild singular profiles through evolving correlations. This does not mean these systems emerge in a

vacuum, independent of human intentionality; rather, the authors emphasize that algorithmic governance shifts the focus away from the co-construction of technology toward the specific rationality of correlation—where social reality is processed not as a normative discourse, but as a set of measurements irreducible to any average.

At the core of this transformation lies what Antoinette Rouvroy and Thomas Berns identify as “algorithmic governmentality”. Unlike traditional governmentality, which functioned through the construction of the “average man”—a statistical ideal designed to regulate populations—algorithmic governmentality bypasses the “average” entirely. It operates instead through a correlational logic that reconstructs singular cases by identifying evolving relationships between disparate measurements. In this regime, the system does not seek to align the subject with a pre-existing moral or social norm; rather, it generates norms inductively and in real-time, from the continuous aggregation and processing of behavioral data. This results in an “a-normative objectivity”—what Rouvroy describes as “tele-objectivity”—where the governance of social reality appears to happen “automatically,” disconnected from explicit human deliberation or traditional political debate (Rouvroy & Berns, 2013, pp. 10-12).

This transition fundamentally challenges the public nature of knowledge. Drawing on Alain Desrosières (1992), traditional statistical knowledge was never a mere reflection of a pre-existing reality; it was a fragile, contestable construction that necessitated a public space of negotiation and debate (p. 142.) Algorithmic governmentality, by contrast, masks its normative dimension behind the veneer of purely technical, automated processes. By “solving” for social reality through predictive models, these systems silence the very norms they are (re)producing. Consequently, the tension inherent in traditional statistics—the tension between knowledge as a contestable tool for public discourse and knowledge as a purely technical, automated output—is eroded by the rise of algorithmic governmentality. Here, the “norm” is no longer something to be discussed or contested; it is an internal, intrinsic output of the system itself, functioning as a persistent, invisible mirror of society (Desrosières, 1992, p.146).

Crucially, this critique of algorithmic governance does not imply a crude technological determinism. It does not suggest that these systems emerge autonomously, independent of human volition. Rather, the point is to examine the “co-construction” of these technologies: they represent a new rationality of power where freedom itself becomes a site of governance. In this context, the individual is no longer governed solely by the “confession” to an external authority—as seen in traditional normalizing disciplines like psychiatry—but by the continuous, automated feedback loops of their own data. While psychiatric discourse relied on the “truth” revealed through diagnosis, contemporary algorithmic systems operate through a persistent, real-time optimization of behavior that bypasses the need for a discursive “confession”.^{iv}

The mechanism of algorithmic governance finds a critical precursor in what Foucault identifies as the security apparatus. As Foucault (2009) posits, the power of the security apparatus does not rely on the isolation of the sick from the healthy, but rather on the management of the population as a whole:

What does the apparatus that appears with variolization-vaccination consist in? It is not the division between those who are sick and those who are not. It takes all who are sick and all who are not as a whole, that is to say, in short, the population, and it identifies the coefficient of probable morbidity, or probable mortality, in this population, that is to say the normal expectation in the population of being affected by the disease and of death linked to the disease (p. 62).

This genealogical link suggests that the transition to algorithmic modes of governance is not merely a technological upgrade; it marks the logical maturation of what Stephen Shapiro identifies as a “new epoch of historical capitalism”. Algorithmic governmentality serves as the technological automation of the neoliberal imperative. By feeding the subject’s cognitive susceptibility—what Gilbert Simondon described as the tendency of consciousness to “clog” itself with stereotypical, automatic judgments—these systems do not force us into norms; they invite us to automate our own social reality. The “statistical double” we create is not merely an external byproduct; it manifests our reorientation toward automated patterns of behavior, where the self is increasingly rendered an object of data extraction rather than an active agent of its own cultivation (Shapiro, 2019, pp.1-2).

Algorithmic governmentality operates by fundamentally changing how power is exercised. Traditionally, governmentality aimed to align individuals with a predefined social “norm” or “average”. However, algorithmic systems bypass this “average” entirely. They function by identifying evolving relationships between data points, generating norms in real-time based on the continuous processing of behavioral data (Rouvroy & Berns, 2013, p. 17, p. 21, p. 28).

An essential insight here is that algorithms do not simply predict what we will do; rather, they manage the possibility or probability of our actions. This is what Louise Amoore describes as a “politics of possibility.” By shifting the focus to these probabilities, power no longer forces submission; instead, it nudges subjects toward constant optimization. Subjectivity is no longer viewed exclusively as a pre-given interior domain, but increasingly as a product of these concrete, technical mechanisms. While traditional forms of governmentality also utilized probabilities, the novelty of contemporary algorithmic power lies in its real-time, recursive optimization: it does not merely categorize the subject based on past records; it continuously modulates the subject’s future possibilities through a data-driven feedback loop that operates beneath the threshold of conscious deliberation. Admittedly, the notion of an “interior” self persists in contemporary culture—often fueled by self-help and wellness industries. However, we argue that this interiority is no longer an autonomous

space; rather, it is being re-functionalized as a domain of data-driven performance, where “caring for the self” is now inextricably linked to the metrics of algorithmic visibility” (Amoore, 2013, p.100).

As Alain Desrosières observed, traditional statistics functioned as a contestable reference for public debate; by contrast, algorithmic governmentality masks its normative dimension behind a veneer of technical, automated processes. By “solving” for social reality through predictive models, these systems silence the very norms they are (re)producing. Thus, the tension inherent in traditional statistics—the tension between knowledge as a contestable tool for public discourse and knowledge as a technical output—is entirely eroded. In this new regime, the “norm” is no longer a site of negotiation; it is an intrinsic output of the system itself, functioning as a persistent, invisible mirror of society (Desrosières, 1992, p. 138).

The “statistical double”—that algorithmic avatar we create—is not merely a digital byproduct; it has become the primary subject through which this new epochal capitalism reproduces its norms, operating largely indifferent to the individual’s subjective experience and reflective consciousness. Crucially, this process finds its most profound leverage in the cognitive susceptibility of the subject, as elucidated by Gilbert Simondon. The success of algorithmic governance lies not merely in its computational power, but in how it exploits the fragility of human individuation (Rouvroy, 2013, p. 20). As moral consciousness—the reflective capacity to navigate the social—is supplanted by automatic and stereotypical behaviors, the subject becomes a willing participant in their own categorization. Simondon warns that when we rely on group instincts or national stereotypes as tools of judgment, consciousness effectively “clogs” itself; it loses the ability to differentiate, opting instead for the immediate, categorical comfort of the collective agreement. By feeding this tendency toward “automatic teleology,” algorithmic systems do not force us into norms; they invite us to automate our own social reality, rendering the “self” an object to be optimized rather than an agent to be cultivated (Simondon, 2005, p. 336.).

However, the theoretical framework of algorithmic governmentality remains an abstraction until we examine the spaces where this rationality becomes embodied. The “statistical double” finds its most intimate and consequential expression within the domain of personal health and self-optimization. Here, health data functions as the primary site where Rouvroy’s “tele-objectivity” manifests as a daily, reflexive practice of the self. While historical normalizing disciplines—such as psychiatry—also penetrated the interiority of the subject, they did so through discursive authority and the subject’s narrative confession. By contrast, algorithmic governmentality bypasses this discursive layer; health data becomes a “self-evident” and automated feedback mechanism that does not require the subject to articulate their “truth,” but merely to adjust their conduct in real-time according to data-driven metrics. In this context, health data functions as the primary site where Rouvroy’s “tele-objectivity” manifests not as a distant systemic force, but as a daily, reflexive practice of the self (Rouvroy & Berns, 2013, p. 14, p. 17).

This “Quantified Self” culture represents the logical outcome of the cognitive susceptibility elucidated by Simondon. As subjects are increasingly invited to translate their biological lived experience into granular, quantifiable streams of data, the distinction between the “living body” and its “digital representation” collapses. We are no longer merely using tools to monitor our health; we are actively participating in the continuous construction of an algorithmic identity that operates independently of our subjective awareness. To understand how these automated normativities—the “automatic teleology” of the health algorithm—effectively bypass the critical labor of moral consciousness, we must examine the empirical reality of health-tracking technologies and their role in transforming the subject into a self-managing data set (Lupton& Williamson, 2017, pp.6-7, p. 13).

The reach of this governance is comprehensive, as demonstrated by Lupton and Williamson’s (2017) study of the “datafied child.” These monitoring devices do not merely observe; they configure children as “digital data assemblages,” transforming their biological life into a stream of actionable insights from the moment of birth. As individuals are configured as “calculable persons,” they are encouraged to become the primary agents of their own measurement—a transition toward an entrepreneurial subject who takes responsibility for managing their own biocapital (Lupton& Williamson, 2017, p. 9).

This process constitutes a modern form of “intimate surveillance,” wherein the individual, conforming to neoliberal notions of the entrepreneurial subject, assumes the responsibility of managing their own biocapital. We are witnessing a fundamental reconfiguration of the self, where the “automatic teleology” of the health algorithm effectively bypasses the critical labor of moral consciousness. By displacing embodied human judgment with the pattern-recognition of data analytics, these systems facilitate a mode of governance where the administration of the individual happens automatically, disconnected from explicit human deliberation. In this digital landscape, self-tracking technologies—ranging from health monitoring apps to algorithmic activity trackers—serve as the primary vehicles for this transformation. These devices do not merely “report” on the self; they actively participate in the production of a “quantified self,” where the metrics of performance, health, and behavior become the normative standards for defining the “well-adjusted” subject. To understand the mechanics of this governance, we must now turn our attention from this broader theoretical framework to the specific apparatuses that drive this reconfiguration: the emergence of self-tracking technologies and the concomitant metricization of the self (Lupton& Williamson, 2017, p. 9).

SELF-TRACKING TECHNOLOGIES AND THE METRICIZATION OF THE SELF

Self-tracking technologies should not be understood simply as tools for managing health or improving lifestyle. They constitute a concrete site where the rationality of algorithmic governmentality becomes operational in everyday life. As discussed in the previous sections, contemporary forms of power increasingly function through data collection, predictive analysis, and the continuous production of norms. Self-tracking technologies incorporate these logics into daily routines by converting bodily functions into measurable data

that can be continuously monitored and evaluated. In this context, individuals come to relate to themselves through ongoing measurement, evaluation, and adjustment.

Digital self-tracking refers to the ongoing collection and analysis of personal data obtained through sensor-embedded wearable devices and mobile applications. These technologies monitor users' bodily functions and everyday activities that were previously tracked using pen-and-paper methods: physical movement, heart rate, sleep patterns, caloric expenditure, stress indicators, reproductive cycles, neuronal activity, meditation practices, and even mood fluctuations. What differentiates digital self-tracking from earlier forms of self-observation is not the practice of monitoring itself, but the continuous automation, storage, and numerical processing of bodily data. The body becomes legible as data, and everyday conduct is rendered quantifiable.

This transformation is articulated through the Quantified Self movement's rhetorical formulation of digital self-tracking as "self knowledge through numbers" (Quantified Self, n.d.). By branding personal metrics as the ultimate path to insight, this movement positions numerical data as a more reliable source of knowledge than subjective perception (Wolf, 2010). In addition to this emphasis on numerical authority, another prominent feature in his writing is the comparative logic embedded in self-tracking practices. Insight does not emerge solely from one's own data, but from its aggregation and comparison with the data of others (Wolf, 2009). Through such comparison, numerical averages and reference ranges implicitly define what counts as normal, adequate, or optimal. The subject who tracks themselves through digital devices is therefore not merely observing their body; they are positioning themselves in relation to statistical norms generated through collective data infrastructures.

Lupton's account further situates digital self-tracking within a broader biopolitical framework. Drawing on the concept of biopolitics, she argues that contemporary forms of bodily monitoring operate not only through external regulation but through practices of self-surveillance aligned with institutional and commercial objectives (Lupton, 2020). Digital data, as she emphasizes, are "the product of human decision making," shaped by specific criteria that determine what should be measured and how it should be evaluated (Lupton, 2015). In this sense, digital self-tracking devices extend the micro-level disciplinary capacity of biopower by encouraging individuals to regulate themselves in accordance with the predefined standards. The responsibility to meet daily targets and optimize bodily performance is thus reframed as a voluntary practice of self-care, even as it aligns with broader expectations of productivity, responsibility, and self-management.

It is precisely this internalization of bodily regulation that resonates with Pierre Dardot and Christian Laval's analysis of neoliberal rationality. For Dardot and Laval, neoliberalism is not merely an economic doctrine but a normative order that produces a specific type of subject: the entrepreneurial subject. What is governed, they argue, are "beings all of whose subjectivity must be involved in the activity they are required to perform" (Dardot & Laval, 2009/2013, p. 343). Neoliberal rationality connects external governance with

internal self-government, directly linking how one is governed “from without” to how one governs oneself “from within” (Dardot & Laval, 2009/2013, p. 349). The individual is thus compelled to adopt the model of the enterprise as a principle of existence.

Within this framework, individuals are increasingly called upon to organize their lives according to the norms of entrepreneurship, competition, and performance. The enterprise is no longer confined to the economic sphere; it becomes an ethical model structuring how subjects understand and conduct themselves across different domains of life. Individuals are expected to invest in themselves, enhance their human capital, and remain permanently adaptable to changing demands. Competition functions as a central mechanism in the formation of this subject, requiring continuous work on oneself in order to remain viable and competitive (Dardot & Laval, 2009/2013, p. 347). The subject appears to act freely, yet this freedom is structured by an imperative to optimize, improve, and maximize performance.

Performance, in this context, becomes both obligation and source of pleasure. As Dardot and Laval (2009/2013) suggest, neoliberal rationality replaces earlier cycles of production and consumption with a “performance/pleasure” apparatus in which individuals are expected to exceed average standards and pursue maximum output (p. 371). Life becomes measurable, comparable, and codified. The body, rather than being shaped primarily through overt disciplinary mechanisms, is increasingly framed as a project of self-fashioning for which the individual assumes responsibility (Dardot & Laval, 2009/2013, p. 374). In this sense, quantified modes of self-relation contribute to the formation of a “quantified subject,” which can be understood as a concrete expression of neoliberal subjectivity: one’s existence is evaluated through categories of performance, competition, and entrepreneurial self-investment.

It is within this normative horizon that the technical features of contemporary wearable self-tracking devices acquire their significance. Among the most widely used and accessible forms of self-tracking technologies, smartwatches and fitness bands provide a clear illustration of how neoliberal norms are operationalized at the level of everyday conduct. These devices commonly allow users to set daily goals related to movement, exercise, or calorie expenditure, transforming bodily activity into a structured project oriented toward measurable completion. The logic of goal-setting resonates strongly with the entrepreneurial model of the self: each day becomes a task to be managed, progress must be tracked, and completion becomes a marker of responsible self-governance.

While neoliberal rationality has long utilized competition as a governing principle, contemporary wearable devices introduce a significant shift in modality. Unlike traditional competitive environments—which relied on periodic evaluations—algorithmic governmentality facilitates a constant, real-time visibility of the self. By translating personal activity into aggregated, comparable data, these devices transform competition

from a discrete social event into a perpetual, granular feedback loop that collapses the distinction between self-improvement and systemic benchmarking.

This dynamic is further reinforced through reward mechanisms and behavioral prompts embedded in device interfaces. Digital badges, congratulatory notifications, visual effects celebrating goal completion, and the so-called “nudging” functions operate as micro-techniques of encouragement. Rather than coercing behavior, they promote an implicit message: you could move more, improve further, close the ring, reach the next level. In doing so, they translate performance into both obligation and gratification. The user appears to act freely, yet this freedom unfolds within a structured field of optimization, where bodily activity is continuously measured, compared, and evaluated against implicit standards of adequacy and achievement.

DIGITAL SELF-CARE AS AN ETHICAL-POLITICAL PROBLEM

The proliferation of health-tracking technologies and the attendant culture of the “Quantified Self” represent a radical mutation in what it means to care for the self. Traditionally, as Foucault outlined in his later lectures, the “care of the self” (*epimeleia heautou*) functioned as a practice of freedom—an ethical labor through which the subject constituted themselves as an autonomous, reflexive agent capable of judging their own conduct. In the regime of algorithmic governmentality, however, this ethical practice undergoes a profound reconfiguration. By translating biological life into actionable data, digital self-care transforms the pursuit of a “good life” into a relentless mandate for data optimization.

This redefinition carries profound political consequences. Health is no longer treated as a social or public good; rather, it is reimagined as “biocapital”—a resource that the individual is compelled to curate and manage. As Lupton and Williamson (2017) demonstrate, this process is initiated early in the life course, where the individual is configured as a “calculable person” whose existence is validated primarily through the continuous production of data. The crisis here is not merely one of privacy, but of subjectivation: we are no longer invited to interpret our lived experience, but to submit to the “automatic teleology” of the algorithm. When the “norm” is no longer a socially negotiated value but a statistically derived pattern, the capacity for moral deliberation—the very heart of ethical life—is effectively hollowed out. We are faced with a paradox: as we “care” for ourselves through digital means, we increasingly divest from the critical labor of deciding what that care actually means. Consequently, digital self-care emerges not as a practice of freedom, but as an apparatus of governance, rendering the “self” an object to be managed rather than an agent to be cultivated.

When the “norm” is no longer a socially negotiated value but a statistically derived pattern, the capacity for moral deliberation—the very locus of ethical life—is effectively hollowed out. We are faced with a reflexive paradox: the more we “care” for ourselves through digital means, the more we atrophy the critical labor of interrogating what that care actually means. Thus, digital self-care cannot be reduced to a practice of freedom; it functions as an apparatus of governance that ensures the subject remains perpetually oriented

toward an algorithmic standard. In this regime, the “self” is fundamentally reconfigured: it is no longer an agent to be cultivated through reflexive action, but an object to be managed through technical intervention.

To grasp the gravity of this ethical crisis, we must look beyond contemporary technological critique and engage with the genealogical foundations of biopolitics. As Roberto Esposito (2008) illuminates, the modern subject has undergone a profound transmutation: we have been dismantled as “subjects of law”—historically defined by voluntary contracts and reflective consciousness—and reassembled as “living forms” (*Lebensform*), governed by instincts, natural drives, and biological parameters. Digital self-care serves as the operational mechanism of this reassembly (Esposito, 2008, p. 16.).

By treating our health and behaviors as measurable biological variables, these technologies effectively bypass the liberal contract of the “autonomous individual” and replace it with a biopolitical management of the organism. Consequently, the crisis is not merely that we are “being watched,” but that our very identity has been extracted from the sphere of ethical deliberation and relocated firmly within the sphere of biological optimization. This extraction signals a departure from the Foucauldian project of the self; we are no longer invited to perform the “critical labor” of subjectification but are instead compelled to submit to an algorithmic teleology that renders our existence a matter of market utility rather than ethical becoming.^{vi}

This reconfiguration of the self finds its primary economic engine in what Shoshana Zuboff defines as “surveillance capitalism” (2019, p. 9). Digital self-care, in this light, is no longer a merely private pursuit of wellness; it operates as a primary laboratory for the extraction of human experience as raw material. Within this economic framework, our health data—heart rates, sleep patterns, metabolic markers—are harvested, processed, and repackaged as “behavioral surplus” to be traded in predictive markets. As Zuboff (2019) argues,

Surveillance capitalism unilaterally claims human experience as free raw material for translation into behavioral data. Although some of these data are applied to product or service improvement, the rest are declared as a proprietary behavioral surplus, fed into advanced manufacturing processes known as “machine intelligence,” and fabricated into prediction products that anticipate what you will do now, soon, and later. Finally, these prediction products are traded in a new kind of marketplace for behavioral predictions that I call behavioral futures markets. Surveillance capitalists have grown immensely wealthy from these trading operations, for many companies are eager to lay bets on our future behavior (p. 9).

This extraction fundamentally alters the “care of the self.” When we engage with health-tracking technologies, we are not merely monitoring our bodies; we are actively contributing to a manufacturing process that turns our biological lived experience into a predictive asset.

This process brings the Foucauldian “conduct of conduct” into the heart of the marketplace. If the biopolitical management of populations once served the state, it now serves the “behavioral futures markets.” As the individual is configured as a source of “behavioral surplus,” the ethical labor of caring for oneself—which traditionally required moral deliberation and subjective reflection—is superseded by the technical

requirement of optimizing one's data profile. Consequently, the subject is rendered an object of extraction, where the "self" is not a site of cultivation but a commodity to be optimized for market utility.

If Foucault's biopolitics managed populations for the sake of the state, surveillance capitalism manages the individual for the sake of market prediction. By transforming our most intimate biological lived experience into a form of "biocapital", these systems bypass the liberal contract of the autonomous individual and replace it with a biopolitical management of the organism. Consequently, the crisis is not merely that our privacy is eroded, but that our very existence is extracted from the sphere of ethical deliberation and placed firmly within the sphere of predictive commodity. In this sense, digital self-care acts as the "labor" that fuels this capitalist extraction, ensuring that the subject remains perpetually oriented toward an algorithmic standard, rendering the "self" an object to be optimized for market utility rather than an agent to be cultivated for ethical life (Lupton & Williamson, 2017, p. 9).

CONCLUSION: THE ALGORITHMIC ERASURE OF THE SUBJECT

This inquiry has traced the historical reconfiguration of the self, tracing a trajectory from the classical regime of "care of the self" in antiquity to the "tele-objective" norms of contemporary algorithmic governmentality. We have argued that this transition represents a fundamental mutation in the mechanisms through which power constitutes the subject. By integrating Foucault's biopolitics, Rouvroy and Berns's "tele-objectivity," and Zuboff's surveillance capitalism, we have demonstrated that the classical ethical labor of "caring for the self"—once a practice of freedom and reflexive self-cultivation—has been dismantled and reassembled as a technical requirement for optimization. The "calculable person" that emerges in this process is no longer an agent primarily capable of moral deliberation, but an object of predictive extraction, where health-tracking technologies and algorithmic profiling intervene in the very formation of subjectivity (Rouvroy & Berns, 2013).

The "calculable person" that emerges in this process is no longer an agent capable of moral deliberation, but an object of predictive extraction. As we have seen, health-tracking technologies and algorithmic profiling do not merely "assist" the subject; they intervene in the very formation of subjectivity, rendering our lived experience as "behavioral surplus" for predictive markets. The crisis we face is thus twofold: we are losing the capacity to relate to ourselves as autonomous ethical agents, and we are unwittingly fueling an economic logic that prioritizes market utility over the cultivation of the self (Lupton & Williamson, 2017).

Ultimately, the danger of algorithmic normality lies in this invisible erasure of the reflexive subject. When our internal lives are categorized by the "automatic teleology" of data-driven systems, the space for critical reflection—the very condition for ethical life—is effectively hollowed out. Reclaiming the self in this epoch requires more than technical resistance; it demands a fundamental re-politicization of our biological existence. If we are to resist the transformation of our lives into "predictive commodities," we must begin by

recognizing that the “self” is not a data set to be optimized, but an ethical project to be cultivated against the grain of algorithmic necessity.

However, it is crucial to recognize that the digital apparatus of self-tracking is not inherently oppressive in isolation; its technological capacity for monitoring could, in different configurations, support self-understanding. The crisis lies not in the tools themselves, but in the specific rationality into which they are currently embedded—a logic that prioritizes market utility over the ethical cultivation of the self. Furthermore, this is not merely an individual or personal choice; it is a fundamental shift in the site of norm production. While traditional statistics invited public debate, algorithmic governance masks its normative power behind an “a-normative objectivity,” generating norms inductively from data flows rather than through social negotiation (Rouvroy & Berns, 2013, pp. 10-12). Consequently, the “norm” is no longer something to be contested or discussed by the public, but an automated, internal output of the system itself. Reclaiming the self in this epoch, therefore, requires us to look beyond the individual user and interrogate the invisible power dynamics that dictate what counts as “healthy” or “normal.” If we are to resist the transformation of our lives into “predictive commodities,” we must begin by recognizing that the “self” is not merely a data set to be optimized, but an ethical project to be cultivated against the grain of algorithmic necessity. In this endeavor, Foucault’s genealogical method remains a critical analytical apparatus for deciphering the techniques through which contemporary power reconfigures our subjectivity. His framework provides the indispensable perspective needed to dismantle the illusion of “automatic objectivity,” reminding us that the ethical labor of the self is not a relic of the past, but an essential counter-practice to algorithmic necessity.

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ⁱ Following Rouvroy and Berns, “tele-objectivity” refers to a mode of managing social reality that bypasses conscious human deliberation, functioning through an “a-normative” objectivity where governance is enacted automatically via real-time data processing (Rouvroy & Berns, 2013, p.3, p. 10).

ⁱⁱ Foucault characterizes this transformation as the emergence of a “new regime of truth”. As Foucault (2008) articulates, “Thus, in this way a whole section of governmental activity enters into a new regime of truth with the fundamental effect of reconfiguring all the questions formerly posed by the art of governing. At one time these amounted to the question: Am I governing in proper conformity to moral, natural, or divine laws?” For a contemporary elaboration on how this regime of truth is being fundamentally transformed by algorithmic rationalities and digital technologies—specifically through the lens of “cognitive proletarianization”—see (Şan, 2022, p. 117, p. 129). Durmuşahmet (2023), on the other hand, examines the concrete, practical manifestations of this framework within political communication.

ⁱⁱⁱ For an analysis of Foucault’s methodological periodization and the historical shifts within his work specifically regarding the transition from archaeology and genealogy to the technologies of the self see (Revel, 2015).

^{iv} See Lazzarato (2012) for a broader theoretical account of how contemporary power compels subjects to manage their lives as an enterprise; for instance, he highlights the pervasive pressure on individuals to perpetually evaluate and optimize their behavior to align with the requirements of productivity (Lazzarato, 2012).

^v Byung-Chul Han’s notion of “psychopolitics” offers a poignant entry point into this discussion, observing that digital power functions not through prohibition, but through the constant compulsion to optimize and perform. While Han’s analysis effectively captures the shift toward digital modes of governance, he tends to frame these technologies of the self primarily in negative, psychological terms, interpreting them as a form of subject erosion. Our analysis, however, seeks to expand upon this view. By situating these digital mechanisms within the broader Foucauldian framework, we propose that these technologies are not merely psychological stressors but are constitutive elements of a new, data-driven subjectivity. Thus, while Han provides a crucial critique of the psychological toll of digital optimization, our study offers a more systemic reading of how subjectivity is being reconfigured within these rationalities. For a more focused exploration of this tension within the digital paradigm, readers are encouraged to consult the section titled “Foucault’s Dilemma” in Han (Han, 2017, p. 17.).

^{vi} See Couldry and Mejias (2019) regarding the appropriation of human experience as raw material for capital; for instance, their concept of “data colonialism” illustrates how digital platforms systematically transform human life into a resource for extraction, effectively undermining the subject’s capacity for autonomous self-cultivation (Couldry & Mejias, 2019)