

# **THE NEW SEXUAL CATEGORIES AND THE PSYCHOLOGY OF THE SUBJECT AS 'SELF- ENTREPRENEUR': AN ANALYSIS OF THE DILEMMAS OF SEX-GENDER DISSIDENCE IN THE NEOLIBERAL CONTEXT**

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## **Abstract**

This article investigates the ways in which different non-normative sex-gender identities—especially in the media context—are related to a neoliberal rationality of government of subjectivity and behavior. In particular, it proposes to show the consonance between certain forms of media construction of these identities and the notion of the subject as 'self-entrepreneur', present in contemporary psychological discourses. To show this relationship, the case of a press report titled "The new sexual categories" is analyzed, using discourse analysis tools from a pragmatic and Foucauldian perspective. Finally,

## **Introduction**

Studies on government technologies in contemporary societies increasingly revolve around the accelerated changes presented by the forms of subjectivation typical of current neoliberalism. These changes become evident in the most diverse areas of life—work, family, education, health, etc.—and generate important modifications in the ways in which subjects relate to and regulate themselves (Rose & Miller, 2013). These transformations can also be traced in the ways in which they understand the sphere of sexuality and gender and are

linked to it. Thus, various works have dealt with the points of intersection or contact between non-normative sex-gender identities and neoliberal sociopolitical logics in different contexts (Chasin, 2001; Duggan, 2002; Richardson,

This article aims to analyze the way in which different non-normative sexual-gender expressions and identities —p. e.g. queer, transgender, polyamorous— can enter into a relationship with a neoliberal rationality of government over behavior and subjectivity, specifically in the media context. Following the line of different studies that point towards the connection between various sex-gender identities and neoliberal policies in the cultural and media sphere (Shugart, 2003; Avila-Saavedra, 2009; Sender, 2006; Peterson, 2011; Oswin, 2014), this This work aims to investigate the consonance between certain forms of media representation of these identities and a set of psi knowledge (Rose, 1998) that, articulated to the idea of the individual as a 'yes entrepreneur',

To examine this relationship, a discourse analysis of a press report titled "The new sexual categories" is carried out. The analysis adopts a pragmatic perspective on language (Grice, 1991; Levinson, 1983) Grice's first book, includes the long-delayed and incorporates tools from discursive psychology (Edwards & Potter, 1992; Potter, Wetherell, & Wetherell, 1987) , also informed by a Foucauldian theoretical perspective (Castro-Gómez, 2010; Rose, O'Malley, & Valverde, 2012). The analysis allows us to show some tensions that emerge between dissident or transgressive forms of media representation of sexuality and gender and a sociopolitical agenda that operates, to a large extent, under the logic of government through freedom. This exploration shows, thus,

At first, the article presents a theoretical framework that allows us to characterize disciplinary power with respect to gender and sexuality, as well as the accelerated emergence of a different modality of power, namely, the neoliberal rationality of government. The latter incorporates the logic of the individual as a 'self-entrepreneur' in the context of contemporary psychological discourses. Subsequently, the analyzed corpus and the methodological framework used for the analysis are described. Below are some important aspects identified in the analysis that allow us to show how, in the context of non-normative sex-gender identities and practices, there is a shift that goes from disciplinary logic to neoliberal rationality of government. Finally, some tensions are noted,

## **1. Theoretical framework: from disciplinary power to neoliberal rationality of government**

### **1.1. Disciplinary power and sexual knowledge**

The critique of the sex/gender governing device, framed in queer and post-identity perspectives, has generally been a critique of the disciplinary framework of power (Binkley, 2011b; McCluskey, 2009; Penedo, sf). According to Foucauldian characterization, disciplinary power does not revolve around the legal rule - a characteristic of sovereign power - but rather the natural rule - the norm. Consequently, such power acts not so much through law as through normalization. Disciplinary logic generates knowledge apparatuses that promote the continuous domestication and molding of bodies and identities, integrating them into a specific norm that is based on a particular game of truth (Foucault, 1983).



The psi sciences and their discourses around sexuality have represented, sometimes in intimate coupling, lines of distribution and exercise of disciplinary power in modern society (Foucault, 2002; Parker, 1995; Rose, 1998). In this way, "in disciplinary power we have a series constituted by the subject function, the somatic singularity, the perpetual gaze, writing, the mechanism of infinitesimal punishment, the projection of the psyche and, finally, the normal-abnormal division " (Foucault, 2005, p. 67). Family organization, the naturalization of heterosexuality and mental health regimes are examples of a psy complex that acts on sex/gender relationships and identities,

Foucault calls *scientia sexualis* the monumental sociotechnical apparatus that emerged in the 18th and 19th centuries, charged with establishing a new field of intelligibility and subjectivity around sexual subjects. In this, the natural sciences, medicine, psychiatry, psychology and criminal sciences will be in charge of diligently undertaking the task of pursuing and exposing the supposedly hidden truths of human sexuality (Foucault, 2002). This *scientia sexualis*, as a modality of production and regulation of identities and bodies, within the framework of disciplinary knowledge about sexuality, will be the apparatus that will produce the margins where 'deviant' and marginal sexualities live.

In this sense, 'deviant' sexualities are not discovered: they are produced. They are constructed from a particular historical understanding of the body and sexual practices. One of the effects of this device is what Foucault calls the psychiatrization of perverse pleasure: a vigilant scientific practice that, little by little, establishes a model of health-illness and normality-abnormality that crosses the entire sexual sphere. The psychiatrization of perverse pleasure

establishes the origin of sexual life on the biological and psychological level, generates taxonomies and maps to organize sexualities and designs techniques and strategies to correct anomalies and deviations. The space inaugurated by this specific rationality allows, among other things,

The disciplinary regulation of sex/gender is linked to a mode of government in which psi disciplines generate subjects dependent on the external authority of experts. It is a relationship characterized by the search for a truth that resides in the depths of psychological interiority and that, to a certain extent, exempts the subject from direct responsibility for their practices, through internal agencies that organize psychic life (Binkley, 2011b). Likewise, this form of regulation operates through techniques of adjustment to normative ideals and forms of knowledge, dedicated to the differentiation, identification and treatment of deviations from said parameters.

Various critical perspectives—p. e.g. queer and post-identitarian—have raised important questions and challenges to this sex-gender control device. These critiques—which often involve questioning expert, normative, and essentialist knowledge—have opened new horizons of understanding and emancipation for abject sexual-gender expressions. However, this form of government and regulation, concomitant with the disciplinary model of power, is in a process of coexistence with—or transformation toward—a neoliberal rationality of government, which presents substantial changes in its *modus operandi* (Binkley, 2011a ; Lemm, Vatter, Noys, & Chirolla, 2012; Martínez, 2012; Orellana, 2009). This new scenario, present in the contemporary media and cultural imagination,

## **1.2. The neoliberal rationality of government and the psychology of the subject as 'self-entrepreneur'**

As a minimal characterization, we can understand neoliberalism not only as a set of economic practices that take place in contemporary capitalism, but as a specific rationality of government of late modernity—or postmodernity—. This rationality promulgates a particular social ontology associated with human capital and an epistemology that transforms the reason of 'natural' and 'truth' into utilitarian reason. In this context, the epistemological mechanisms of the economy become the instances of judgment: success replaces legitimacy as a criterion of government; the market becomes the site of veridiction and saturates the political field (Sánchez, 2012; Winnubst, 2012).

Neoliberal rationality thus establishes a "company society" (Dilts, 2011), whose fundamental impulse is to translate social relations in terms of entrepreneurial and productive activities, carried out by competitive subjects (Collazos, 2012; Hofmeyr, 2011). . An understanding of the role of psi knowledge is then necessary that goes beyond an analysis of the disciplinary production and regulation of subjectivities functional to the state apparatus—to its function of surveillance, normalization and adjustment—and that can, instead, understand its incursion into a neoliberal logic of government and the construction of an individual who will act as an 'entrepreneur of himself' (Foucault, 2009).

In this context, the appeal to freedom is part of a technology of behavioral regulation: it is no longer about dominating others through force or coercion but rather about guiding and directing them under your approval, which necessarily presupposes the freedom of those who are governed and promotes certain

conditions of possibility so that subjects experience themselves as free, even when they are the object of broad government strategies. In the words of Santiago Castro-Gómez:

Its purpose is, therefore, the self-regulation of the subjects: to ensure that the governed match their own desires, hopes, decisions, needs and lifestyles with government objectives set in advance. That is why political technologies do not seek to 'force' others to behave in a certain way (and against their will), but rather to make that behavior seen by the governed themselves as good, dignified, honorable and, above all, , as his own, as coming from his freedom. (2010, p. 13)

The psychology that emerges from this rationality is one that, as Nikolas Rose (1999) points out, forces us to be free, appealing to the entrepreneurial spirit of individuals. In line with business logic, individuals will have to shape their own lives through choices between different available lifestyles. This transformation has profound consequences for the way psi knowledges function as technologies of government. In the case of psychology, Sam Binkley (2011a) argues that psychological interiority, characteristic of disciplinary power/knowledge and focused on the deciphering of a deep psychological truth and its naturalization,

An illustrative case of this new psi rationality is the so-called "positive psychology" (Seligman, 2002) focused on the systematic empowerment of the subject and their ability to manage, efficiently and autonomously, their own life, even outside of disciplinary knowledge and expert authority. Thus, the appeal to individual autonomy and freedom of choice become key elements for neoliberal rationality. Neoliberalism reinvents the psi disciplines—centered on the



rejection of the introspection and docility associated with the therapeutic device, which constituted a fundamental axis of disciplinary power—as technologies of opportunity, entrepreneurship and self-government.

On the other hand, this rationality adjusts to an emerging social order, based on reticular and non-bureaucratic structures and modes of organization (Boltanski & Chiapello, 2002). This configuration, in line with the ideal of the self-entrepreneur, requires flexible, adaptable and dynamic subjects; values initiative, autonomy and versatility.

It is a government strategy that gives an inherent value to deregulated activity and, consequently, promotes a connectionist subject actively involved in its own management (Sánchez, Saurin, & García, 2005).

In this way, psychological discourse operates here through a very different logic of governance than normalization and treatment. Instead, it subjects individuals to different processes of subjectification, in accordance with a model of a self-sufficient subject, appealing to their spirit of originality, adaptability and self-empowerment (Binkley, 2011b). The individualization and privatization of experience then become dominant, placing the subject in a position of competitive differentiation (Larner, 2000; Lazzarato, 2009) the term has usurped labels referring to specific political projects (Thatcherism, Reaganomics, Rogernomics).

## **2. Methodological framework: analysis of a case in the media context**

In the context of this transformation of government technologies, it is pertinent to ask: what strategies does neoliberal government rationality use to stimulate





and convey the most marginal lives in the political distribution of sex/gender? How do you manage the diversity of gender identities and practices? What does it mean to govern gender and the body in a neoliberal logic, characterized by the individualization of experience and the ideal of the self-entrepreneur? Such questions demand an expansion of critical examination of technologies of psi governance to those that, in the neoliberal context, operate through authenticity and freedom.

The resonance that arises between certain constructions of non-normative sex-gender practices, on the one hand, and the rationality of neoliberal psi government, on the other, can be found in some contemporary media discourses. As Gill has shown, we are witnessing an important transformation of the relationship between the representation practices of media culture and contemporary forms of subjectivation related to sexuality and gender. In this context, the author argues that neoliberal, postfeminist and post-identitarian frameworks are central to understanding contemporary media culture.

To help examine these relationships, a text was analyzed that, at the media level and in the Chilean context, exemplifies possible consonances between certain discourses on non-normative sex-gender practices and identities and an expanding neoliberal government rationality. The corpus of the analysis is a report titled "The new sexual categories", published in a commercial magazine. This text does not constitute an exhaustive sample of the heterogeneous discourses linked to the practices of sex-gender dissidence that circulate in the vast sphere of the media. However, it can be considered a particularly illustrative case of certain forms of media construction of these dissidences. In this sense,

A pragmatic-oriented analysis was carried out, where discourse was understood as a set of social practices that carry out situated actions made possible by specific communicative contexts (Grice, 1991; Levinson, 1983). Along these lines, discursive elements such as the position of enunciation, the constitution of the audience and the communication implicatures. Furthermore, and in line with this perspective, some methodological tools from discursive psychology were used (Edwards & Potter, 1992; Potter et al., 1987), such as the identification of interpretive repertoires and rhetorical resources for the construction of factual objects. Finally, the interpretation was guided by a Foucauldian perspective, according to which discourses act as social practices distributed in a network of instances—institutions, protocols, knowledge, representations, programs, etc.—that, articulated in discursive formations, promote and reproduce certain social orders. The above establishes certain frameworks of knowledge and guides "what can and should be said" in a given context (Foucault, 2010). In this way, it also contributes to the generation of specific forms of subjectivity. The above establishes certain frameworks of knowledge and guides "what can and should be said" in a given context (Foucault, 2010). In this way, it also contributes to the generation of specific forms of subjectivity. The above establishes certain frameworks of knowledge and guides "what can and should be said" in a given context (Foucault, 2010). In this way, it also contributes to the generation of specific forms of subjectivity.

### **3. The "new sexual categories": proliferation of authentic individualities**

Below are some significant elements identified in the analysis that, as argued, show a certain consonance with a neoliberal government logic on sex-gender identities and practices.



A first element that draws attention is, precisely, the place of enunciation from which these "new sexual categories" are declared and disseminated. This is Paula, a Chilean commercial magazine, aimed predominantly at middle and upper economic strata, with content in line with the stereotype of 'the feminine'—p. e.g. fashion, cooking and beauty—and explicitly aimed at women. Among others, the magazine assumes values such as "proactivity" and "avant-garde." There you can see a profile related to the promotion of habits, patterns of behavior, modalities of thought and affectivity and, in general, what we could call, since Giorgio Agamben (2001), "ways of life." These types of discourses operate as instruments of specific "political technologies" that, as Foucault (2009) notes, they produce modes of existence. Through them, individuals and groups subject themselves and acquire a concrete experience of the world (Castro-Gómez, 2010).

In this context, Nikolas Rose (1999) argues that advertising images and media content are connected to the promotion of lifestyles and narratives of identity choice, emphasizing the ethical aspects involved in adopting one or the other way of leading one's life. This new "habitat of subjectivation" is characterized, in the neoliberal context, by "the belief that individuals can shape an autonomous identity for themselves through choices in tastes, music, goods, styles and habits" (Rose, 1999). , p. 178). In this sense, it is possible to identify how contemporary psychological discourses extend beyond the scope of institutional authority, characteristic of the psi complex.

The report presents a list of six "new categories": demisexual; androgynous; pansexual; polyamorous; queer and 'unlabeled'. Each one is briefly defined and accompanied by testimonies from people who



identify with said category. These answer three or four questions about their own identity definition and their sexual-generic practices. The list or inventory of categories that the article displays can be understood, following Edwards and Potter (1992), as a rhetorical resource that has the effect of instituting and declaring a new scope of exhaustiveness with respect to a field of human experience — in this case, sex-gender identities. This enumeration offers the audience a kind of catalog — "the list of new categories of identity and sexual orientation is long,"

Throughout the text, an interpretative repertoire associated with the notions of freedom of choice and authenticity can be identified. Interpretive repertoires are essential elements that speakers use to construct versions of the phenomena to which they refer. They are made up of a restricted range of terms, used in a specific stylistic and grammatical way. They are often derived from one or more key metaphors and their presence is signaled by certain tropes or figures of speech (Potter & Wetherell, 1996).

In this case, expressions such as "gender options", "alternatives [that] refer to gender" and "various identities [that] are available" deploy understandings of sex-gender identities in terms of the results of individual choices in the face of a set. expanding alternatives or options offered. At the same time, it implies that the categories presented name an inner truth, a deep and defining self that had been silenced until now:

I lived questioning myself, thinking I had a problem (...) I started searching on the internet. I needed to accept myself and for that I needed to get rid of the doubt of who I am and why this happens to me (...) It wasn't until when I met

the person who is now my boyfriend, that I knew that I was demisexual: I didn't feel desire for anyone, but with him it was different (...) That's how I am. The difference is that now I gave it a name, and that I know that there are other people like me in the world. Discovering it makes me feel calm because I feel normal. (Camila Tudela in Riedemann, 2014)

It is thus observed how, in a regime of government through freedom, the paradox occurs that the subject seeks and 'chooses' the deep nature that defines his being. The so-called "sexual categories" are offered as interior truths, which allow more individualized and free sexual-gender experiences.

The report also states that the abandonment of the old and restrictive sex-gender categories and norms by the younger generations is the correlate of a growing panorama of novelties and alternatives available for individual choice. This approach is reflected in the testimonies of professionals that the report cites:

Gender identities are opening up. People say: 'I don't fit into what is pink and blue. I don't want to fit in, I don't want to be a woman and walk with heels or I don't want to be a man and not be able to put on lipstick' (...) It is a generation full of criticism towards the norms of society. As there are an enormous number of options to choose from, more and more people are asking themselves: 'Who says I have to identify with only one way of being?' (Riedemann, 2014)

Here we can read a shift from a logic of disciplinary normativity - of correction and adjustment of the body, gesture and identity to normative canons - to a logic of proliferation of identities and individual choice. Nikolas Rose argues that this transformation is emblematic of the reordering of the ways in which political

rule is exercised in the context of advanced liberalism; the movement from government through society to government through individual capacities for self-actualization. Political rationality, in this context, is characterized by:

"individuality and plurality shaped not by the devices of citizen production such as church, school, or public media, but by regimes of commercial consumption and by lifestyle politics, where individuals identify themselves through their loyalty to one or several cultural communities" (Rose, 1999, p. 46).

In accordance with the idea of the individual as self-entrepreneur, the 'new sexual categories' no longer depend on the external and disciplinary authority of the expert; On the contrary, they are anchored in processes of self-regulation and self-control based on certain symbolic resources available in a specific context. This appeal is expressed in descriptions such as the following:

These definitions do not come from academia, but from young people themselves who have found a place of expression and identification in social networks. It is not a scientific phenomenon, but a social one. Today, more than ever, young people are asking themselves 'Who am I?' And it is on the Internet where they find the answer." (Riedemann, 2014)

The growing discredit of conventional psychological determinants, such as psycho-biography, psychological interiority and the authority of the expert, gives way - as Binkley (2011b) points out - to a subject in whose psychological life the essential truth and the weight of biography appear as residues of an ossified inheritance, which must be shaken off the new entrepreneurial spirit of the neoliberal psyche. Thus, in a paradoxical way, anti-capitalist emancipation

projects—which arise from the questioning of expert authority—and the problematization of psychological essence are, to a certain extent, reused by an even more intense capitalist subjectivation device.

It is a government strategy that is reflected in a new psychological discourse, which currently operates from various sites (Rose et al., 2012) and no longer only from the institutional and traditional domain of psi knowledge. It also operates through cultural and media channels that operate outside the territories of expert practice and that include discourses related to 'lifestyle' and self-entrepreneurship (Barnett, Clarke, Cloke, & Malpass, 2008).

Regarding the proliferation of differences and categories, it is striking that the report defines the 'queer' category in terms of a rejection of traditional sex-gender categories as "cultural reductions" and that, instead, it adopts a position according to the which every generic identity and every "type of sexual attraction" constitutes an option "possible in every human being" (Riedemann, 2014). Leaving aside the discussion about the theoretical precision of these approaches with respect to the queer perspective, what is interesting here is to note the functions that these descriptions have within discourses that promote an identity agenda through individual choices, in a space of supply. increasing number of possible identities.

The 'unlabeled' category, for its part, illustrates a particular conception of identity and the subject that, in line with the entrepreneur's notion of self, leans towards flexibility, versatility and continuous change as fundamental values of the identity function. It is a subject that is coupled with the logic of change and permanent innovation, which echoes the search for authenticity and renewal -





typical of neoliberal rationality - as a basis for self-definition and as an articulating value. of individuality. In this sense, it is observed that this rationality provides fluidity to the social space, until it is uniformized as a smooth consumer surface, while saturating the spaces with exhibitions of the heterogeneous (Castro Orellana, 2009).

In short, this analysis allows us to identify a dominant interpretive repertoire, linked to the understanding of sexuality and gender as individual experiences, as objects of personal choice and as signs of authenticity, novelty and self-empowerment. The function of the discourse that prevails in the case analyzed seems to be related to a rationality that translates the territory of sex-gender dissidence in terms of productive proliferation of individualities and authenticities. This discursive panorama evokes the argument of Zygmunt Bauman (2012). Liquid love: about the fragility of human bonds. Mexico: Economic Culture Fund, in the sense that the current battles and dilemmas around sexgender identities and practices are no longer articulated from the tensions between sex and gender or nature and culture. In the contemporary context, it seems that it no longer matters so much whether sex-gender expressions constitute natural attributes or social constructs; The high point of the discussion moves to the capacities and strategies that homo sexualis deploys to determine or discover which identity or identities, among that multitude of possibilities, are most appropriate to him. It seems that it no longer matters so much whether sex-gender expressions constitute natural attributes or social constructs; The high point of the discussion moves to the capacities and strategies that homo sexualis deploys to determine or discover which identity or identities, among that multitude of possibilities, are most appropriate to him. It



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This scenario allows us to observe how certain spaces of production of sex-gender subjectivities seem to be articulated with a neoliberal rationality, articulated with a neoliberal rationality, through a continuous search engine oiled by fragmentation and the mandate of change and self-improvement. Every identity chosen or achieved is at risk of being replaced by a more genuine, liberating or true one, which promises to satisfy the individual responsibility of stimulating one's own improvement and authenticity. The neoliberal rationality of government, which has no qualms about accepting—and even inciting—permanent change and the politics of self-transformation, praises multiplicity and processual reason as gears of its incessant (self) (re) production.

#### **4. Final reflections: dilemmas of sex-gender resistance in the neoliberal context**

Increasingly, the contemporary social scenario is articulated through a diagram of decentralized power, driven by a neoliberal rationality from which heterogeneous processes of subjectivation are mobilized. The languages capable of representing subjects multiply and, correspondingly, the technical modalities that define the relationship of subjects with themselves expand. This proliferation of languages and modes of subjectivation also unfolds—and particularly—around the area of sexuality and gender. Given the expansion of



this diversity of strategies, it is worth observing that "it is not the same to understand oneself—and therefore, act—as an inmate of a prison as a visitor to a shopping center" (Papalini, Córdoba, & Marengo, 2012, p. 204).

Although different dissident practices and identities with respect to the dominant sex-gender order have faced—and continue to do so—disciplinary devices and forms of normative control—e.g. institutional practices of pathologization and psychiatrization—now face, and with increasing frequency, a non-normative rationality of government, where dissident and transgressive identities, such as queer and transgender, become 'subjects of interest' that are coupled to the set of neoliberal government strategies.

Although it is important to point out that the analysis presented here is limited to the media sphere of a specific geopolitical context, the analytical exercise allows us to warn of the risk that these government strategies take the imaginaries generated from non-normative political movements and orient them towards forms of subjectivity connected to neoliberal logic. It also contributes to exploring the transition from a disciplinary logic, linked to surveillance and normalization with respect to certain sex-gender models, to a more gaseous or "control" logic (Deleuze & Pardo, 1996), linked to the government through freedom and choice, through self-regulation and the frenetic search for singular individualities. In sum,

Given the expansion of this new scenario, it is possible to glimpse at least three elements in tension, from which the rationality of neoliberal government can deploy lines of control and subjectivation in the field of sexuality and gender:

a) The understanding of sex-gender dissidence as a deeply individualized experience, where identity and the body constitute objects that can be magnified, maximized, intensified and manipulated, as objects of choice and voluntary intervention. It is about – in line with the ideal of the self-entrepreneur – about forging oneself, about forging better, freer and more authentic sex-gender identities. As some authors have pointed out, this conception of identity is linked to the overvaluation of individual agency in the process of construction of sex/gender, while at the same time it conceals or obliterates the recognition of forms of power and relations of domination linked, for example , to particular economic or geopolitical conditions in the distribution of bodies and identities (Ñamaste, 2009; Hallberstam, 2010; Puar, 2007).

b) Secondly, it can be observed that, unlike the critique of disciplinary power - centered on the question of the normative and the non-normative, the normal and the abnormal, the valid and the invalid identity -, neoliberal rationality It does not act so much through the logic of identity but through the logic of success (Winnubst, 2012). The question of identity, which has traditionally involved reference to a substance, mutates until it becomes a process absorbed by successist grammar. The question is no longer "who are you?", but "how good are you at being who you are?", "how much do you maximize your interests through your identity?" The qualities of flexibility and fluidity,

c) The media proliferation of sex-gender identity categories plays into the same logic of power/knowledge that it seeks to undermine. By appealing to the "sovereignty" of sex-gender identity and sexuality as a locus of freedom and choice, the key operation that scientia sexualis had already established, is being



preserved and reinstituted—in the most fragmented and flexible framework of neoliberal rationality— by establishing in the sexual sphere a source of differentiation and veridiction. Instead of social authority, which operates by establishing and reinforcing a normative ideal, the market institutes a purely formal veridiction—with interchangeable contents, emptied of historical and political residues—that operates through novelty and competition. In this sense, Advanced neoliberal capitalism does not work by repressing difference and diversity, but by managing them and making them productive. The rationality of neoliberal government establishes a line of subjectivity around a subject that obeys norms that seem to originate from their own interior or nature and, therefore, are difficult to identify as forms of control and oppression. Therefore, thinking about the question of resistance in neoliberal regimes is more relevant and necessary than ever.

Such is the knot that hangs around gender diversity and dissidence in this context. We are faced with the challenge of critically examining and questioning the still vigorous disciplinary institutional powers—the psychiatrization of sexual dissidence, the institutional control of bodies—and of generating processes of appropriation and agency, without thereby suddenly being absorbed by the logic of individualization, self-entrepreneurship and personal authenticity, which wait, discreetly, behind the door of the disciplinary institution.

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**Technology Journal of Management , Accounting and  
Economics (TECH)**  
ISSN: 2311-3995

**Vol. 6 No. 1 (2018)**