LIFELOGGING: DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES OF THE SELF AS THE PRACTICES OF CONTEMPORARY BIOPOLITICS³

ABSTRACT: In the paper we apply a theoretical concept of technologies of the self developed by Michel Foucault to the field of lifelogging practices. Lifelogging is a global social phenomenon, a part of contemporary experience of everyday, especially in the developed societies of the West. Our hypothesis is that, despite different ways of quantifying self, lifelogging practices have some characteristics in common: they all belong to the field of biopolitics. This is demonstrated on the levels of the body, identity and subjectivity, since they are influenced and changed by lifelogging. At the same time, lifelogging practices blur the relationship between coercion and consent, power and resistance. The theoretical framework for addressing lifelogging is the concept of biopolitics, also developed by, since it refers to the mechanisms, techniques and technologies, as well as the forms of rationality that regulate life and its various manifestations. In conclusion, we claim that it is still not possible to explain lifelogging exclusively in the terms of biopower, since it has a potential for the “counter-conduct” and resistance. This also makes lifelogging practices open for development of new forms of subjectivity.

KEY WORDS: Biopolitics, digitization, quantification of self, technologies of the self, lifelogging

APSTRAKT: Rad predstavlja pokušaj primene koncepta tehnologije sopstva Mišela Fukoa na oblast upisivanja života, odnosno na prakse primene različitih oblika samopraćenja i kvantifikacije sopstva. Upisivanje života je globalni društveni fenomen koji se javlja u savremenom iskustvu svakodnevice, posebno u razvijenim...
društvima Zapada. U radu polazimo od hipoteze da, uprkos različitim načinima kvantifikovanja sopstva, prakse upisivanja života imaju zajedničke karakteristike koje ih istovremeno čine poljem koje prožima savremena biopolitika. To pokazujemo kroz primere tela, identiteta i subjektiviteta koji se menjaju zahvaljujući praksama upisivanja života. Prakse upisivanja života na izvestan način zamagljuju odnose između prinude i pristanka, moći i otpora. Teorijski okvir za razmatranje problema upisivanja života predstavlja koncept biopolitike koji je razvio Fuko i koji se odnosi na mehanizme, tehniike i tehnologije, kao i oblike racionalnosti koji regulišu život i različite manifestacije života. Zaključujemo da, iako još uvek nije moguće do kraja ove prakse objasniti kao polje isključivog delovanja biomoci, one sadrže potencijal za alternativne prakse upotrebe podataka, odnosno za razvoj novih oblika subjektivnosti.

KLJUČNE REČI: biopolitika, digitalizacija, kvantifikacija sopstva, tehnologije sopstva, upisivanje života

Introduction

Today we are witnessing the rapid development of the data driven world, the emergence of new technological devices, and changes in the social practices influenced by these technologies. Both personal and social are being progressively digitized. Hence there is a need to understand how (digital) data influence people’s lives, how people use them, engage with them, and what are their individual and social costs. We see the paradigmatic example in the so-called lifelogging practices. They are inextricably linked with digitization and datafication processes, which is the quantification of social phenomena. Among researchers in social sciences, lifelogging practices are already recognized as important on a global social scale. Generally, lifelogging refers “to diverse types of self-tracking that range from health monitoring and the detection of one’s location and presence to the measurement of productivity at work” (Selke, 2016: 3). As such, they are not a completely new phenomenon.

According to Stefan Selke, the “promise” of lifelogging is “to use the management”, in order to “turn our lives into a permanent project of optimization in which we observe, recognize and change ourselves” (Selke, 2016: 3). That is why an attempt of this paper is to try to recognize the biopolitical framework of lifelogging and explain it in the Foucauldian terms, as the contemporary form of the technologies of the self. Lifelogging practices become popular among users of digital technology, mobile phones, and other mobile devices: “These technologies are not only used instrumentally, but rather become participants in everyday worlds, thus going beyond their role as providers of measurements and lifelogging information”; they “generate new types of social and technological presence” as well (Fors, Berg and Pink, 2016: 111). A growing number of applications are available or free for downloading: “Smartphones themselves include sensors such as GPS, gyroscopes, and accelerometers that can be employed for self-tracking, and iPod Nanos come already equipped with fitness tracking apps, such as Nike+ and a pedometer” (Lupton, 2014: 4).
Various dimensions of lifelogging phenomena are a part of the interest of contemporary social science and sociology (Lupton, 2014: 4). There are different terms in use in the social research of lifelogging, such as: quantified self, self-tracking, self-optimization, personal analytics, bio-hacking, etc. We opt for lifelogging because it is both general and generic. It encompasses all kinds of practices of quantifying self. The theoretical framework and the foucauldian concepts of technologies of the self and biopolitics, are also the reason for adoption of the term. Foucault's notions of biopolitics and biopower “deal” with life, since biopower is the “power over life”. These are complex terms which are already discussed widely (Heller, 1996). In this context, it is important to note that Foucault’s notion of power and the “exercise of power” is to be understood as “a way in which certain actions modify others... a total structure of actions brought to bear on possible actions. The exercise of power consists in guiding the possibility of conduct and putting in order the possible outcome” (Foucault, 1982: 788–789). Accordingly, lifelogging practices are the exercise of power, since they structure and guide the possibility of conduct, and order the possible outcomes. Furthermore, they are always invested in some aspect of life, and at this point they become the practices of biopower. Beneficiaries of the recorded or tracked data are not exclusively the users/lifeloggers, but also the companies that produce the software and applications.

Our aim is to show how and why lifelogging, as practices of power, has this transformative capacity to modify the actions of individuals (Heller, 1996: 83; Giddens, 1986). We conceive them not as practices that have power “over” individuals, but as data engagements. They are consequences of people’s engagement with devices and applications through recording, modifying, applying, and analyzing data. Our hypothesis is that the connection between lifelogging and biopolitics is to be seen through the practices of optimization and improvement of the body, identities, and subjectivities. These are not distinct, but deeply intertwined phenomena.

A far reaching consequence of lifelogging is the fact that data engagements with the “smartphone applications, monitoring devices, and sensors are posited as mediators and interpreters of knowledge“ (Ruckenstein and Pantzar, 2015). Hence, these data/self-quantifications become a self-knowledge and a general framework in which people situate themselves and understand their behavior.

Digital technologies of the Self: Body, identity, subjectivity

The importance of information and communication technologies and the process of digitization are not exclusively in their ability to mediate and accelerate transfer of information, but also it is in their ability to datafy different aspects of social life. The rise of this “culture of measurement” (Ajana, 2017) reflects an intensive growth and the increasing use of the digital devices, applications, and data. The researchers in the field has already coined the term datafication of life (Ruckenstein and Pantzar, 2015; Lupton, 2014; 2016; Schäfer and van Es, 2017).
It means that digital data as “the acquired data instantly function as a guideline and landmark for individuals and their further actions and performances” (Gertenbach and Mönkeberg, 2016: 26).

Datafication, measurement, and quantification of self could be placed within the wider frame of the culture, as a part of what Karin Knorr Cetina calls “the move to a culture of life” (2005). This “move” implies “changes in regard to the source and defining concepts, the human versus life, of our collective imagination” (Knorr Cetina, 2005: 80). Thereby, the notion of ‘life’ stands for an “open-ended series of biological, psychological, economic, and even phenomenological significations and processes” (Knorr Cetina, 2005: 80). The move to a “culture of life” signify changes in many aspects of (social) life, and if Knorr Cetina is right, it “replaces the notion of the human as a concept that bridges developments in several sciences and in practical discourses” (Knorr Cetina, 2005: 80), like in lifelogging. Accordingly, lifelogging is to be seen as the “expression and emblem” of the processes of datafication and the culture of life.

In another analytical context, Gertenbach and Mönkeberg (2016: 36) identify alterations in their analysis of “vital normalism”, in the forms of contemporary processes of association, namely, in the changes from the “logic of the social” to the “logic of life” (see also: Rabinow, 1996). The authors see the main implication of these changes in a similar fashion as we do in this article, by connecting them to the contemporary technologies of the self and lifelogging.

It is important to note that lifelogging is not a new phenomenon, but it is a new concept. For example, it is argued that the idea of the first pedometer goes back to Leonardo da Vinci since he made a “wheeled device” designed to count the daily steps of Roman soldiers (Ajana, 2017). In the context of contemporary societies, it is claimed that quantification of self practices or usage of the digital technologies, “began to gather momentum with experiments by North American computing engineers Gordon Bell, Steve Mann, and others with lifelogging and early versions of wearable digital technologies from the 1970s onwards” (Mann, 2013; MyLifeBits, 2015; Lupton, 2016). A greater public attention for lifelogging practices came with the establishment of the movement called Quantified self during 2007, which was initiated by two Wired magazine editors, Gary Wolf and Kevin Kelly (Lupton, 2016). Two of them noticed that their colleagues had begun massively “to engage in digitized self-tracking”, so they started to organize meetings and run “the official website” (Quantified Self, 2015; Lupton, 2016: 4). Therefore, when we think today of the lifelogging practices, we think of the situation in which availability and low prices of mobile technologies and devices, with their applications, “made possible for the average person, especially in Western countries, to effortlessly generate various types of large statistical data, and deploy quantitative methods of analysis akin to those found in science and business” (Ajana, 2017: 3). Digital devices and technologies that were once used only by professionals or experts to “measure people’s activities” are now accessible and used by many. Kate Crawford and her colleagues identified this change through the example of “the weight scale” (Crawford et al. 2015; Ajana,
They took two different cases of self-tracking, “wearables” and the “weight scale”, and “situated current discourses of big data within a historical framing of self-measurement and human subjectivity” (Crawford et al. 2015: 479). The conclusion was that “over time, the location and meaning of the weight scale has changed, shifting from “the doctor’s office to the street to the home”, from a “form of specialist medical knowledge, to public entertainment, to a private habit and an everyday domestic discipline” (Crawford et al. 2015: 480). This change signifies an increase in the consumer’s practices and the number of users of wearable devices as well. Global market for “wearable self-tracking devices” has already reached billion dollars in US during 2013 (Ajana, 2017: 4). Therefore, an increase in the market and a growth of the interest in such technologies by many draw attention of researchers to closely examine what is called the practices of lifelogging.

These encompass “life-protocolling such as self-monitoring, human or self-tracking, e-memory, and forms of digitalized and digitalizing self-control (sousveillance) that are mainly grounded in the quantified self movement” (Selke, 2014: 13; Gertenbach and Mönkeberg, 2016: 27). The online Oxford Dictionary defines self-tracking as: “The practice of systematically recording information about one’s diet, health, or activities, typically by means of a smartphone, so as to discover behavioral patterns that may be adjusted to help improve one’s physical or mental well-being” (but see: Lupton, 2014: 6). Lifelogging encompasses the following: “All practices that record, process, and report data from daily actions and interactions of individuals, groups and their environments” (Biniok and Hülsmann, 2016: 82). There is an increasing amount of references on this topic, where “lifelogging is considered to be the capture of personal experiences for personal use” (Caprani et al. 2013), or the “process of automatically, and ambientally, digitally recording our own day-to-day activities” (Wang and Smeaton, 2013: 147; Fors et al. 2016: 112). Furthermore, the point of lifelogging is to monitor, analyze and share the “personal” data. It is also a contemporary “pursuit for self-knowledge”, self-optimization, beauty, health, and improvement of what is called “the healthy lifestyle”. It is also a contemporary form of a diary for many people, potentially a research tool or a form of anticipatory knowledge (Kinsley, 2012: 1555).

According to the Quantified Self website (2015), there are hundreds of self-tracking tools or applications for monitoring of fitness, weight, sleep, diet, mood, feelings, social interactions, e-mails, social media status updates, driving habits, financial expenses, time use, learning or achievement of personal goals (see also: Lupton, 2016). Deborah Lupton (2016) gives a good typology of these, by dividing self-tracking in five distinctive modes: private, pushed, communal, imposed, and exploited (Lupton, 2016: 3). Hence, private self-tracking is “undertaken for voluntary and personal reasons that are self-initiated”; pushed self-tracking “involves encouragement for people to monitor themselves from other agencies”; communal self-tracking “relies on people sharing their personal information with others”; imposed self-tracking “involves moving from encouragement to requiring people to collect or engage with data about themselves in situations...
in which they have little choice”; and exploited self-tracking mode “represents the use of personal data by other actors and agencies for their own purposes, either overtly or covertly” (Lupton, 2016: 3). Besides its potential to “capture” the wide spectrum of practices, this typology confirms that lifelogging practices are not exclusively individual, but social activity. Although this is the “quantitative translation of every individual experience (into data)” (Buongiorno, 2017: 342), lifelogging takes place or is connected with public, through internet for instance. Many recorded data are shared and compared with others as a way of “social recognition”. Lifelogging includes business as well, since the self-tracking applications are made and owned by the companies. Hence, the digital data that are generated by individuals are always “invested with symbolic and commercial value and status” (Andrejevic, 2013; Lupton, 2014: 5).

All lifelogging practices seem to be “unifiable in the vision that digital data help in making the biological body healthier and having a better life in general”; ultimately, “the core of the ideologies of the lifelogging movement is the idea of ‘creating a better human’” (Gertenbach and Mönkeberg, 2016: 27). However, lifelogging is “a technical form of self-observation and a passive form of digital self-archiving, with which a lot of potential, but also pathologies are associated” (Selke, 2016: 3).

Our attempt is to contextualize and explain the lifelogging practices as technologies of the self within contemporary biopolitics. According to Michel Foucault, technologies of the self have a “long history”; and are always practices in which people monitor and control themselves and others. More precisely, technologies of the self “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” (Foucault, 1988). Research of the motives of self-trackers show that they got involved for different reasons. Many have specific goals they wish to achieve, such as documentation of activities, improvement of health, changing habits, etc. One study in America found that the reasons self-trackers give for engaging were related to curiosity, experimenting with new tools, wanting to lose weight, etc. (Li et al., 2011; according to: Lupton, 2016: 6). In another study, researchers found that self-trackers monitor “health-related factors such as physical activity, food consumption, weight and mood”, but also “the work productivity and cognitive performance”, “new life experiences”, “experimentation” (Lupton, 2016: 6). Nielsen market research survey from 2014 found that “only one in six American adults used wearable devices (including digital fitness tracking bands) in ther daily lives”. Furthermore, “while women and men were equally likely to use them, owners of fitness bands, in particular, were more likely to have a high income” (Nielsen, 2014; according to: Lupton, 2016: 7). Despite the differences in research results and the number of users, “digital self-tracking devices” and lifelogging practices generally “expand individual’s capacity for self-knowledge and self-care”, and at the same time “serve the convergent interests of biopower” (Sanders, 2017: 38).
Lifelogging practices may be theorized as technologies of the self since they conform to the rules and importance of governing oneself and others, improving the capabilities and capacities for self-knowledge and self-care. A Foucauldian perspective in theorizing the contemporary selfhood is already adopted by some researchers (Elliott, 2013; Rose, 1990; 2007; Lupton, 2014: 12). Lifelogging practices, or what Deborah Lupton describes as “the reflexive monitoring of self in the context of digitized tracking technologies is an aggregation of practices that combine regular and systemized information collection, interpretation and reflection as a part of working towards the goal of becoming” (Lupton, 2014: 12). Furthermore, the “ideal reflexive monitoring subject” focusing on “the benefits of self-tracking are highly rational, motivated and data-centric”, as claimed in representations in the popular culture and academic literature (Lupton, 2014: 12).

Finally, the personal data generated through lifelogging practices are to be considered as a form of the care for the self that raises many issues concerning “the use of people’s personal information about their lives and bodies. These include the ways in which this information is purposed and repurposed as a part of the global digital knowledge economy, data privacy, and security issues” (Lupton, 2014: 12). That is why we accept that lifelogging should be theorized as “an exemplar of the ways in which digital technologies participate in the configuration of selfhood, embodiment and social relations and locate the individual within digitized networks and economies” (Lupton, 2014: 12).

We assume that the fields of body practices, selfhood, and identity practices and subjectivity/knowledge practices are influenced by lifelogging. All these fields are not clearly distinctive. The point is to demonstrate that the body, identity, and subjectivation are all important part of contemporary biopolitical processes and in Foucauldian terms: power/knowledge “games”. According to Ajana (2017: 5), lifelogging is a “key illustration of a neoliberal attitude towards the self and its governance, given the way this movement encourages individuals to become rational entrepreneurs of themselves and embrace its metric culture of self-improvement” (Ajana, 2017: 5), since the “profit” or benefit for an individual is greater than “expenses”. Critics have already recognized shift towards “neoliberal ethos of (self) governance and health management whereby individuals are increasingly expected to be in charge of their own health and wellbeing, at a time when state support for social and health programs is in decline” (Ajana, 2017: 4).

Hence, the practices of embodiment and formation of selfhood are “fields” where it is possible to see the strongest effects of lifelogging. It is because lifelogging is about the datafication and quantification of the self. The notion of self is not considered as an exclusively psychological entity, but as an element of the (social) identity building process. Lifelogging practices help people think of themselves...

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4 Knowledge or self-knowledge aspect of the lifelogging practices is a distinct topic, and we will not go further in the analysis. This is just to note and establish connection between the subjectivation and knowledge, since we assume that each act of subjectivation is an act of knowledge (creation) at the same time.
and help them present themselves to others. The body and identity are also to be considered as parts of the datafication practices: “Rendering [social] phenomena into digital data assemblages” (van Dijck, 2014), with the “imperatives of audit culture, which highlights the importance of collecting detailed information about individuals, groups and institutions and using these data for surveillance and improvement” (Lupton, 2014: 15). In contemporary societies in the West, processes of metricization, calculation and measurement with the aid of digital data has become a central part of the process of normalization (Gertenbach and Mönkeberg, 2016). Furthermore, the notions of accountability and improvement are an important part of the identity building processes. Besides the body regulation and “optimization”, many other daily life activities has become datafied, although they “may previously have been regarded as unquantifiable” (Amoore & Piotukh, 2015; Day et al., 2014; Pugliese, 2010; Lupton, 2014: 15; 2016). Ajana writes that the actualization of “self knowledge through numbers” redefine a relationship towards body and identity, but also “the relationship between body and identity” (Ajana, 2017: 5; see also: Ajana, 2010). An important point, especially in the context of biopolitics, is that “identity can ‘objectively’ be determined through the body”; furthermore, today the “biometrics has given the body unprecedented significance over the mind, casting it as a source of ‘instant truth’” (Ajana, 2017: 5). Buongiorno also expresses it in a similar fashion: “What matters in lifelogging is not the experience itself but its translation into measurable data – not ‘what you experience’ and how you experience it, but ‘how much you have experienced’” (Buongiorno, 2017: 345). Therefore, datafication of experience in lifelogging establishes a direct relation “between the body and the self, between biology and knowledge, between technology and truth” (Ajana, 2017: 5). All these issues require additional theorization and explanation. Our point is that body practices and identity formation processes become an increasingly “quantified experience”. In other words, lifelogging practices are sources of self-awareness, self-optimization, the control of bodily functions, and the public presentation of the self.

At the same time, lifelogging practices include the “distribution of subjectivity”. In this paper, the process of subjectivation is considered as inextricably linked with the body and identity. Subjectivation process involves the “enforcement of a culture of self-adjustment, self-governing, and self-normalization”; the result is that the work on the self through lifelogging “becomes one’s own responsibility instead of being primarily guided through disciplinary institutions” (Gertenbach and Mönkeberg, 2016: 35). In this way, we see not only advancement and changes in the Foucauldian notion of the technologies of the self, but also the changes in the notion and practices of (self)discipline (Foucault, 1995) and power. The main effect or the important consequence in the (digital) subjectivation process of lifelogging, where people become a subject through digital data, is the emergence of the “new kind of the self”: disembodied, objective and algorithmic (Buongiorno, 2017: 346; Cheney-Lippold, 2017; Lupton, 2019). In lifelogging, the “living body” becomes a “digital body” or a “digitally advanced living body”. People record, track, and measure
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their daily activities, and then they use data to “optimize” their future behavior. The idea is to improve the experience and to “optimize” bodily functions.

Gertenbach and Mönkeberg (2016: 35–36) give us a good example, by referring to Zygmunt Bauman. The example shows the semantic change from the model of health to the model of fitness. It also illustrates the changes in the relationship towards oneself, the body and identity:

To live along the model of health is by and large coherent and steady, since its primary goal is to conserve the (normal) status quo. In an attempt to confront each individual with accurately defined parameters of health, it defines a threshold above which any additional change becomes undesirable and unnecessary (Bauman, 2005a: 198; 2005b: 93). In this regard, the idea of health is characterized by a quasi-external reference, building up an external guide to consult, evaluate, and define conditions of the self and the body. Fitness, however, is characterized by the absence of this sort of orientation. As such, ‘fitness’ knows no upper limit; it is, in fact, defined by the absence of limit; more to the point by its inadmissibility. However fit your body is, you could make it fitter. [...] In the search for fitness, unlike in the case of health, there is no point at which you can say: now that I’ve reached it, I may as well stop and hold on to, and enjoy what I have. There is no ‘norm’ of fitness you can aim at and eventually attain. [...] Each dose is to be followed by a larger dose. Each target is but a successive step, one in a long string of steps already taken and yet to be taken (Bauman 2005b: 93).

This passage has a few important points. A change towards the model of fitness is the change towards a new model of self-discipline and self-optimization. It is an extension of the earlier model of health. It is a “never-ending process” since “to be fit” is not a reachable goal. The point is also in the possibilities offered by “lifelogging tools”: applications and devices that help us to be fit. Then, the possibility of analyzing data and getting “objective” information is the point “where” we become fit. Therefore, lifelogging is always a practice that:

... requires not only more personal initiative and responsibility: It enforces a more body-related self-perception and the rise of such forms of sociality that are solely based on biological data and/or gathered around biological phenomena. As a result, lifelogging is far from being just a renewal or intensification of established social and cultural techniques. It might rather be the most enigmatic point at which a novel culture of life connects with established technologies of normalization, focusing on fitness, optimization and prevention (Gertenbach and Mönkeberg, 2016: 37).

Finally, datafication and lifelogging are in many ways “paradigmatic”: they reflect the processes of association, socialization, and social control. This also brings us to the sociological context and the framework of this paper – biopolitics.
Lifelogging and Biopolitics: 
Blurred boundaries between coercion and consent

Let us briefly remind of the Foucault’s notion of biopolitics, since it represents a theoretical framework for the understanding of lifelogging practices in the context of this paper. In the Will to know, which is the first volume of his History of sexuality, Foucault writes about the notion of biopolitics as a power over life (Foucault, 1990). This kind of power has two principal poles: one is constituted by disciplines and represents “an anatomo-politics of the human body” (Foucault, 1990: 138) and the other is centered on the body “imbued with the mechanics of life and serving as the basis of the biological processes”; in other words, it is “a biopolitics of the population” (Foucault, 1990: 139). Foucault then writes about biopolitics as “the setting up, in the course of the classical age, of this great bipolar technology – anatomic and biological, individualizing and specifying, directed toward the performances of the body, with attention to the processes of life” (Foucault, 1990: 139).

There are (at least) two aspects of biopolitics to be mentioned here, as relevant in the contemporary context of lifelogging. One is its reference to life as the object of power, and its function to “invest in life through and through”. The specificity of biopolitical techniques, as Maria Muhle points out, “lies in the positive and not repressive relation to life and in the fact that such techniques are intrinsic and not exterior to its object. Biopolitical techniques increase, protect, and regulate life – in short, they ‘make live’” (Muhle, 2014: 79). According to Ajana, Foucault’s notion of biopolitics encompasses “the mechanisms, techniques, technologies, and rationalities that are put at work for the purpose of managing life and the living, and governing their everyday affairs” (Ajana, 2017: 5). This is then an argument close to the “heart of the Quantified Self philosophy” and “self knowledge through the numbers”: “whereby technologically mediated quantification is regarded as the most reliable and efficient path towards ‘truth’ and self-improvement” (Ajana, 2017: 5). Ajana has already recognized the connection between practices of lifelogging and the biopolitics – they are actually “an instantiation of a ‘biopolitics of the self’ in which the body is made amenable to management techniques according to a set of agreed upon fitness norms, like eating five vegetables or fruits a day or walking 10,000 steps per day as recommended by the World Health Organization” (Ajana, 2017: 6). Lifelogging is a field of biopolitics, since it encompasses both discourses and practices that “exerts a positive influence on life, that endeavors to administer, optimize, and multiply it, subjecting it to precise controls and comprehensive regulations” (Foucault, 1990: 137). Lifelogging is also a kind of rationality, invested with power relations. It is not just about (self)discipline, but the “neoliberal modality of free choice and the promise of reward” (Ajana, 2017: 6).

The fact that self-tracking and lifelogging practices are always conditioned by some kind of software and application made by private companies, brings us back to the disciplining aspect of power relations. As pointed by Biniok and Hülsmann (2016: 86), “current lifelogging applications make notable that
technologies mediate discourse and exert power by disciplining. Moreover, users define themselves in relation to brands, technological products, and their functions”. That is because data that are generated through the lifelogging practices are invested with commercial value. They are products that, at the same time, have an influence on behavior of the user, and give valuable information to companies which applications the user uses. At that point, we can see the problem of the blurred boundaries between exertion of power and practices of resistance, between coercion and consent. In lifelogging, people voluntary engage, download or buy products and applications. At the same time, applications and data from lifelogging practices record and generate valuable information about users for the private companies and the market. From this point of view, it is still not easy to recognize whether we could speak exclusively about power relations, or the lifelogging practices are to be seen with its potential for resistance. Research and ethnography of the Quantified Self movement, show that when “participants collect extensive data about their own bodies”, that can “go beyond simply internalizing predetermined frameworks” (Nafus and Sherman, 2014: 1784). In other words, the practices of Quantified self movement, according to these authors, “constitute an important modality of resistance to dominant modes of living with data”, a kind of resistance they call “soft resistance”. It happens when the users roles are performed through the “critical sense-making”, which can enable users to “partially yet significantly escape the frames created by the biopolitics of the health technology industry” (Nafus and Sherman, 2014: 1784). This point is still under a question mark, since many other researchers have demonstrated the opposite. For example, there is the problem of privacy, which is the question of sharing and ownership of data, and it remains “unsolved”. Furthermore, recorded or tracked data stay on the market, to be bought and sold. It is true that data could be invested with the critical meaning, sense or significance out of this framework of power. However, whether we speak of digitized self-tracking as a form of dataveillance or not, at the end of the day all personal recordings self-tracking practices and lifelogging data become Big Data, beyond the reach of the lifelgger-user.

**Conclusion**

We are witnessing that more and more everyday activities become recorded, tracked, datafied, or digitized. Digital self-tracking practices, or lifelogging practices, are a part of this process. Deborah Lupton considers that “a feedback loop is established, in which personal data are produced from digital technologies that then are used by the individual to assess her or his activities and behavior and modify them accordingly” (Lupton, 2016: 14). However, what we tried to express in this paper is that it is still a debatable point whether something like (“soft”) resistance or “counter-conduct” is to be recognized in the lifelogging practices. If we recall again Foucauldian approach, not just in terms of explaining power relations, but also to theorize the “power of resistance”, we can remember that there is no power without resistance. Of course, we are neither the first to
ask this question, nor the first to offer an answer. This theoretical question has
been already recognized as the important issue in the analyses of biopolitics,
as a question of a possible “way out” of “this positive and omnipresent form
of power” (Muhle, 2014: 93). Maria Muhle has already come to an interesting
conclusion, offering a possibility for further theorization. She writes about
the need to understand that “the normativity of life” is not “exterior to these
strategies of power and thus cannot propose an ‘outside of power’ as some of the
recent interpretations of Foucault’s notion of biopolitics suggest” (Muhle, 2014:
93).

Furthermore, lifelogging practices should not be theorized “outside” or
“inside” power relations, but as they represent power relations. At the same
time, they leave enough space, like any other practice, for “alternative” discourses, or
“counter-discourses”, and “counter-conducts” in Foucauldian terms. An obstacle
in this way is definitely the fact that:

...users do not know how technologies operate and/or how algorithms
work. It seems that especially in the case of lifelogging and smartphones,
these technologies are more influential than their proliferation is
justified. When the ‘black-box’ is used unquestioned and parameters
and calculations are taken seriously, there is a danger that sociotechnical
constellations are not looked at in their complexity (Biniok and Hülsmann,
2016: 94).

In other words, many people “express powerlessness” in “the face of the
authority of the internet empires to collect, own, and harvest their personal data”
(Andrejević, 2014; Lupton, 2016: 17). In a way, this is a proof of techno-reliance
of an average user of information and communication technology today. This is
also pointed by Biniok and Hülsmann (2016: 94), who write that people often
“willingly accept their dependence”.

In that sense, just as other types of social practices, lifelogging stays a part
of the processes of datafication, digitization, and commodification as well.
Importance of the “resistant self-tracking efforts” lay in the first place to make
“visible forms of power relations, injustice, and inequalities hidden from view”
(Lupton, 2016: 18). Even though lifelogging practices are an example of power
relations today, they at the same time have a potential for the “counter-conduct”,
since they already transform ourselves, and open the space for the new forms of
subjectivities to emerge.

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