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DOSSIÊ: RESSONÂNCIA E DIAGNÓSTICOS DO TEMPO PRESENTE

A plea for agency: the Brazilian jeitinho revisited

Um pleito por agência: o jeitinho brasileiro revisitado

Un pleito por la agencia: una nueva mirada al jeitinho brasileño

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Abstract: This article revisits the Brazilian Jeitinho as a prospective resource for recovering human agency in the face of increasing proceduralisation, automation, and formalization in late modern societies. The diagnosis of a contemporary trend that reduces subjects to mere executors of rules, algorithms, and protocols is drawn up. The argument posed plays with the possibility of a sociability that engages with the creative, situational circumvention of rigid obstacles and reveals the necessary role of flexible, improvised action in all modern societies. However, concepts such as Jeitinho are not devoid of their own socio-historicity. jeitinho is firmly embedded in Brazilian cordiality, a sociability rooted in patrimonial traditions that carries ethical ambivalence. Therefore, one should avoid romanticizing jeitinho and instead engage in a critical, historically aware way. A critically-reckoned jeitinho, exercised with practical wisdom, can function as a practice of critical responsiveness, neither just rule-breaking nor survival tactic, but a mode of acting that interrogates and humanizes deficient social systems. The text opens the dossier on Resonance and diagnoses of the present, which engages with Hartmut Rosa's theoretical ouvre across themes such as integral ecology, spirituality, genealogy, technology, revolution, normativity, and social ontology.

Keywords: Jeitinho. Agency. Cordiality. Responsiveness. Critical Theory.

Resumo: Este artigo revisita o jeitinho brasileiro como um recurso promissor para recuperar a agência humana diante da crescente proceduralização, automação e formalização nas sociedades da modernidade tardia. Nele é apresentado o diagnóstico de uma tendência contemporânea de reduzir os sujeitos a meros executores de regras, algoritmos e protocolos. O argumento apresentado explora a possibilidade de uma sociabilidade que se engaja em contornar de forma criativa e situacional obstáculos rígidos; revela, ademais, a necessidade de espaços para ação flexível e improvisada em todas as sociedades modernas. No entanto, conceitos como o jeitinho não estão desprovidos de sua própria socio-historicidade. O jeitinho está firmemente enraizado na cordialidade brasileira, uma sociabilidade fundamentada em tradições patrimoniais que carrega consigo ambivalência ética. Portanto, deve-se evitar romantizar o jeitinho e, em vez disso, abordá-lo de maneira crítica e historicamente consciente. Um jeitinho avaliado criticamente, exercido com sabedoria prática, pode funcionar como uma prática de responsividade crítica, não sendo apenas uma quebra de regras nem uma tática de sobrevivência, mas um modo de agir que questiona e humaniza sistemas sociais deficientes. O texto abre o dossiê *Ressonância e diagnósticos do tempo presente*, que se articula com a obra teórica de Hartmut Rosa em temas como ecologia integral, espiritualidade, genealogia, tecnologia, revolução, normatividade e ontologia social.

Palavras-chave: Jeitinho. Agência. Cordialidade. Responsividade. Teoria Crítica.

Resumen: Este texto examina el jeitinho brasileño como un recurso prometedor para recuperar la agencia humana ante la creciente proceduralización, automatización y formalización de las sociedades tardomodernas. En el se taza el diagnóstico de una tendencia contemporánea que reduce a los sujetos a meros ejecutores de reglas, algoritmos y protocolos. El argumento planteado juega con

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la posibilidad de una sociabilidad que se involucra en la elusión creativa y situacional de obstáculos rígidos y revela el papel necesario de la acción flexible e improvisada en todas las sociedades modernas. Sin embargo, conceptos como el jeitinho no están destituidos de su propia sociohistoricidad. El jeitinho está firmemente arraigado en la cordialidad brasileña, una sociabilidad enraizada en tradiciones patrimoniales que conlleva una ambivalencia ética. Por lo tanto, se debe evitar idealizar el jeitinho y, en lugar de eso, abordarlo de manera crítica y con conciencia histórica. Un jeitinho considerado críticamente, ejercido con sabiduría práctica, puede funcionar como una práctica de responsividad crítica, no solo como una violación de las reglas ni como una táctica de supervivencia, sino como un modo de actuar que cuestiona y humaniza los sistemas sociales deficientes. El texto abre el dossier *Resonancia y diagnósticos del tiempo presente*, que aborda la obra teórica de Hartmut Rosa a través de temas como la ecología integral, la espiritualidad, la genealogía, la tecnología, la revolución, la normatividad y la ontología social.

Palabras clave: Jeitinho. Agencia. Cordialidad. Responsividad. Teoría Crítica.

The age of executors and the useful illegality

The idea of a diagnosis of the present time represents an effort to provide an interpretative framework for developmental trends that unfold over time and condition practices and forms of social life. Critical Theory has shown that despite modernity promised for individuals and collectivities the possibility to conceive and realize their own life projects and had made available a multitude of norms and procedures as well as technological instruments and devices to assist them in the pursuit of their plan for a good life, internal contradictions, failures, and non-intended side-effects partially emptied that promise. Norms and procedures have sometimes become excessively rigid, producing results opposite to those intended; instruments and devices have increasingly taken control of events to the detriment of the people involved. While actors are expected to interpret complex situations based on their experience and judge them according to ethic and aesthetic standards, late modern society is increasingly turning them into mere executors who follow protocols or are guided by rules and algorithms that are immune to their interpretations and moral judgments.

This text aims to revisit the sphere of action for these subjects and the incremental restrictions imposed by these developments. But it also asks whether cultural traditions from regions other than the West may offer examples of spaces for maintaining or recovering agency for subjects. And examine if they could help make Critical Theory more sensitive to the diversity of contemporary challenges and potentials for transcending reality. Specifically, it takes the Brazilian *jeitinho* within a sociability marked by cordiality as a potential room for actors to recover agency.[4]

The experiences of many people reveal a striking contrast between the ideal of a meaningful life and their daily routines. Work, which could be the combination of a fulfilling interaction with the physical and social world and self-expression, is often bound by previously established procedures and far from being a fulfillment of oneself. From the separation between intellectual and procedural activity in Taylorism, through the production lines so well portrayed in Modern Times,[5] to the detailed sequential work-steps according to ISO 9000 series standards, it ceases to be an activity that expresses subjectivity. Quite far from being meaningful because it connects with others, as Durkheim (1960) suggests, it increasingly becomes routinized and exhausting. Also, the shop assistant who cannot take a break even when the shop is empty, the fast food or supermarket assistant who must follow the routine of greeting, serving and saying goodbye to customers, or the civil servant who must fill out a series of forms regardless of whether the citizen's needs correspond to them or not: The space to act according to the specifics of the situation is being replaced by a list of fixed, predefined sequential mandatory steps.

But it is not only the world of work that is undergoing increasing proceduralisation with the aim of achieving more in less time in a standardized

[4] Some of the ideas developed here have already been addressed by us separately and are sometimes accepted literally without further detail (Rosa 2026; Santos and Sobottka 2026).

[5] *Modern Times* (1936) comedy film by Charles Chaplin, 87 min. In public domain.

manner. Leisure activities, which are subjectively distinct from the sphere of work, are also exposed to the same trends. Take, for example, the adoption of VAR in football. With the aim of making refereeing more accurate, technological mediation removes the margin for interpretation from referees and shifts the decision-making on the game's most exciting and decisive plays off the field and far into the future, thereby diminishing their brilliance. This is but one example of the broader trend where the introduction of technology reconfigures the activity itself. The demand for precision, calculability, and review begins to override the latitude of the human practice, stripping it of its spontaneity and interpretive richness. When this happens, the actor is no longer a referee, a doctor, or a teacher, but a mere operator of a technological system. This subordination extends the proceduralisation of the workplace into the very heart of our lived experience, creating a world in which actions are judged not by their contextual fit but by their compliance with a pre-programmed script.

With this in mind, if everyday life seems colorless, joyless, and gray to us today, this is (also) because our subjectivity appears irrelevant, muted, or disruptive in the executive activity. The *product* or *result* of our doing may be perfect – the successful meal, the perfectly trimmed lawn, the flawless piece of music, the masterful photograph of the starry sky, which the new telescope camera produced entirely without our involvement; we don't even know where in the sky the photographed nebula is located or what it represents. But the interaction between us and the social as well as the material world, in its technologized (or bureaucratized) form, is not only de-emotionalized but also desubjectified: it expresses nothing of us. Physically, it has often been reduced to a few clicks and scrolls, and emotionally, it becomes increasingly emptied.

In light of such an expressively impoverished one-sided everyday life, it is simply not enough if we indulge in a purely expressive activity "to compensate" on weekends or during vacations; if we, for example, start painting or singing. Our self is shaped and developed in everyday engagement and often also *in the struggle* with the world and with the changing situations of life, in the persistent work on them. If this work is reduced to click-and-scroll functions and the struggle with technical and bureaucratic hurdles, there is no longer a personality left on the weekend that we could express.

The disappearance of room for maneuver, and thus the elimination of genuine action, has made social reality worse. The reason lies in the diffuseness, ambivalence, and diversity of life situations, and in their constant, dynamic, and interactive change, which allows reduction and stagnation only at a high price. Often, an untapped, unresolved, and unconsidered residue remains, leading to the situation that, even when the foreseen steps are executed correctly, the character of the situation is missed, failing to do it justice. Especially in technical and bureaucratic contexts, we repeatedly experience – and how – the options remain overly simplistic relative to the situations that demand a response, thereby depriving us of the flexibility to respond appropriately. For example, we hear in the endlessly repeating call center loop, "Press 1, 2, or 3 now", while the realization that our request doesn't fall into any of the offered categories increases both our sense of powerlessness and our anger.

In stark contrast to the frantic quest to sequence, detail, and even automate procedures, perhaps under the pressure of practical rationality breakdowns, the incorporation of insights that promote flexibility and the associated reorientation has already begun. Reclaiming room for maneuver is a topic of growing relevance in organizational sociology as well as in project management. In his book *Room for maneuver: project management beyond burnout, stress, and the obsession with efficiency*, management consultant Tom DeMarco (2001, 4), for example, defines room for maneuver as "the degree of freedom necessary to effect change". And he blames the notorious pressure for time and efficiency for its disappearance: "Margins for maneuver are the natural enemy of efficiency, and efficiency is the natural enemy

of margins for maneuver" (DeMarco 2001, 4).[6] Scope for action and trust granted to employees is, in fact, an "investment" that ultimately even pays off economically (DeMarco 2001, 42). On the other hand, those who curtail such scope due to pressure for efficiency, a desire for control, or fear of (economic and legal) risks lose precisely the ability to manage, which is what matters. Furthermore, the ongoing formalization, automation, and standardization of work processes do not make work easier, but rather more difficult, because the crucial moments of knowledge work simply cannot be formalized:

> This is the paradox of automation. […] In my experience, standard processes for knowledge work are almost always empty shells. For example, a new process prescribes the twenty-nine steps you *must* go through when applying for and hiring a new engineer, without giving you the slightest clue to the only question that really matters: Will the guy be up to the task? I know design standards that don't tell you how to arrive at a good design, but only how to write it down; employee evaluation standards that don't help you build a fruitful long-term relationship with your employees; testing standards that don't show you how to develop a test worth administering. Each of these standards essentially says: 'I will dictate exactly how to do every aspect of the job... except the really hard part' (DeMarco 2001, 108).

Management in organizations, therefore, works best where such standards are formulated as sparingly as possible and applied flexibly, and where – there's no other way to put it – sense of proportion, good intuition, and discernment are used in decision-making. Even more radically, the Bielefeld sociologist Stefan Kühl (2003, 15) describes rule-breaking, violations of the law, and thus operating illegally as an everyday, functional necessity in organizations of all kinds – from businesses to government agencies, schools, universities, and hospitals, to the police, army, and ministries. Without the systematically anchored readiness in the organizational culture for such deviations from the guidelines laid down in the formal structures, he argues, organizations would become rigid and inflexible, and ultimately incapable of reacting to the complex situations in their sphere of action and operating appropriately. "The social world of organizations is so diverse, so surprising, and so contradictory that it cannot be adequately controlled by a fixed set of rules or laws", writes Kühl (2003, 17).

This means, quite clearly: Without room for maneuver for the work of organizational members – without their willingness and ability to do what is *not actually* foreseen – even modern Western organizations simply would not function. This applies not only to work *within* an organization, but equally, and sometimes even more so, to the relationships *between* organizations. Kühl (2003, 11) formulates this with shocking clarity:

> In academic circles, the functional deviation from rules for an organization is referred to as 'useful illegality'. Useful illegality encompasses not only behavior that violates state laws, but also behavior that breaches formal expectations within organizations—that is, the organization's own rules […]. Thus, useful illegality includes disregarding occupational safety laws, exceeding legally mandated rest periods for truck drivers, or bribing customers to secure contracts, as well as cases such as failing to follow prescribed procedures or violating internal procedural guidelines […]. It is striking how regularly rules are broken within organizations. These deviations are so deeply ingrained in the organization that members disappoint informal expectations if they do not participate in or tolerate them. They are a central part of the organization's culture.

The terminology used by Kühl (2003) – "useful illegality" – reinforces an attachment to the utopian desire for predictability and total controllability, even while pragmatically acknowledging the impossibility of achieving it. The Western-modern concept of rationality rests on the hope of gaining ever better and more sophisticated control over life – legally, bureaucratically, economically, and technically – until we can more or less master all situations. At this point, however, a serious problem arise: It concerns the distinction between *situationally appropriate* deviations from routines,

[6] Thanks to Stefan Amann for pointing out this book. See also the discussion on the positive effects of organizational slack in companies, i.e., a certain surplus of resources that opens up operational scope, for example in Hans Christian Krcal (2010).

rules, guidelines, and laws, which enable actors to act and allow them to carry out meaningful and important projects without unreasonable time, bureaucratic, or financial obstacles, to establish fairness, or in one case or another, simply to show humanity, and *situationally inappropriate* violations, which simply serve private interests and are clearly to be assessed as corruption – even if the boundaries between them are fluid.[7] Can a society ensure that the former remain possible (because they are functionally necessary), while the latter are sanctioned? In the following lines, a case will be made to challenge how clear this question can or will ever be answered.

The Global South side of Modernity

Max Weber's idea of modernization as rationalization means making the world systematically calculable and controllable – or more precisely: *believing* that the world *can* be made technically and bureaucratically calculable and controllable.[8] Florian Hoffmann calls this a "Weberian concept" of modernity and argues that modern (Western) society is mired in this highly consequential self-misunderstanding. Wherever actors in modern Western societies experience that the formal, legal, or bureaucratic rules do not work seamlessly in practice or prove inadequate, or that the technical infrastructures and solutions do not function, forcing them to circumvent them and improvise, they are, from their perspective, dealing with regrettable breakdowns of rationality, with systemic failure, with cases that should not actually occur.

In contrast, Hoffmann (2026) argues, there is the wisdom of non-European (knowledge) traditions, which recognize and always take into account the necessity of flexibly developing creative, innovative, situational scope for action both *with* and *against* the logic of bureaucracy, routine, and technology. Hoffmann (2026) illustrates this with the concepts of Jugaad and jeitinho from the (North) Indian and Brazilian linguistic areas, respectively. Both terms denote and describe the finding of (everyday practical) solutions for technical and quasi-bureaucratic or financial hurdles and problems that stand in the way of planned actions or activities).

In management literature, *jeitinho* is already an established concept to explain situations in which institutional rules are complemented by a welcome space for participants' freedom of action. Fernanda Duarte (2006) describes it as "a social mechanism that entails bending or breaking the rules in order to deal with difficult or forbidding situations. It is a particularly useful informal strategy to 'get things done' in work organizations", as to say, an institutional by-pass to overcome obstacles in overbureaucratized contexts. It essentially denotes the overriding of a logic of execution in favor of an appropriate or useful response to an acting situation. *jeitinho* describes nothing other than the art of creating room for maneuver in order to be able to act. It makes it possible to enforce situational equity in the Aristotelian sense against execution-based law. As Hoffmann (2026) observes:

> Even if it is recognized and acknowledged that jeitinho undermines the Weberian conception of the rule of law, it is nevertheless granted a (sometimes considerable) degree of legitimacy because it is perceived as a necessary and indispensable remedy against the excesses and dysfunctions of Weberian bureaucracy.

The perception, in this context, is that formal organizations and bureaucracy place individuals in situations that cannot be adequately managed without creative adaptations that are external to or even contrary to the rules.

The concepts and practices of *jeitinho* do not appear to be cultural exceptions, but rather the (non-European) rule. What is called Guanxi (Chen,

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[7] Kühl (2020, 65–104) discusses this in detail. For the question of definition and evaluation of corruption and the difficult borderline cases see Hollstein (2023) as well as Rosa and Oberthür (2008).

[8] Increasing intellectualisation and rationalisation means "the knowledge or the conviction that if only we wished to [...] we can in principle control everything by means of calculation. [...] Unlike the savage for whom such forces existed, we need no longer have recourse to magic in order to control the spirits or pray to them. Instead, technology and calculation achieve our ends" says Max Weber (2004, 12–13) in his famous speech *Science as vocation*.

Huang and Sternquist 2011) in Mandarin is related to this, as are the Arabic Wasta (Hawkins et al. 2014), the Russian Blat (Snejina and Worm 2003), the Hebrew Kombina, or the Bantu-language concept of Ubuntu (Essien and Abumere 2024). From the perspective of Western modernity (and dominant sociology), all these terms represent modes of action forced upon them by incomplete modernization: In countries where the legal system is underdeveloped, resources are scarce, the economy is backward, the bureaucracy is corrupt, and the technical infrastructure is deficient, people simply have to improvise and become creative and resort to such practices, so the assumption goes. In a fully modernized society, however, these are superfluous, even dysfunctional; their emergence signals a failure of rationality. Therefore, modern Western societies lack a culturally established, legitimized, and practically embedded concept for the creative exploitation of available space.

In fact, however, this assumption is based on a massive misinterpretation of social reality, even in the centers of Western modernity, a fundamental misunderstanding or "false consciousness" about the nature of social reality. People everywhere and again are forced to become an acting subject against the constraints of mere execution, to utilize or create room for maneuver, even where none (or no longer) exist or should exist. We experience this in everyday life, everywhere where things happen that shouldn't actually be possible. If we didn't keep doing it, again and again, in all areas of life, what is actually impossible, not only would all humanity freeze in social interactions, but social life itself would grind to a halt. In fact, these exceptions dominate our lives and our actions at least as much as the "correct" guidelines, but the "Weberian" understanding of modernity has rendered them so invisible, so much so unspeakable, that we systematically deceive ourselves not only about the functioning of modern societies, but even about our own way of life.

From this perspective, Jeitinho and other concepts and practices suddenly describe not a supposedly backward reality of the Global South, but an essential aspect and a functional prerequisite of social life, especially in Western modernity, which has only been rendered invisible by its epistemology and conception of rationality. Hoffmann therefore considers the global South to be the epistemologically privileged location for recognizing the true character of modern society, without the distorting perspective of a Weberian--influenced self-understanding that characterizes the North. Only from this perspective does the complex interplay between the (also important for the South) technical and bureaucratic categories of rationality and their indispensable correction through these practices become fully visible.

> From the perspective of the South, comparative analysis thus no longer serves to reproduce and reinforce the Weberian self-understanding of the West, which is based on highlighting the supposed backwardness of the South, but rather becomes an instrument for making visible the social functional logics and deep structures that are obscured by the Weberian concept of modernity – in both the North and the South. [...] Jugaad and jeitinho can then be understood as practices that enable us to achieve such (self-) knowledge by preventing the multifaceted social reality from being simultaneously oversimplified and overdetermined. They help us to establish capacity to act not by reducing social reality to a set of ideal-typical categories, but by strengthening the individual and collective capacity to deal with the contingencies of modern life (Hoffmann 2026).

Hoffmann's argument that societies in the Global South offer a privileged perspective on the limits of Weberian rationality is exemplified by Cordiality. Cordiality embodies a relational mode that resists the classical modern liberal citizenship, but this resistance does not entirely belong to a pre-modern world. Instead, it emerged from the dynamic interplay of traditional and modern elements in Brazilian society, suggesting that social relationality is layered with enduring forms of interaction that constantly reshape in context-specific ways.

The diagnosis of an increasingly algorithmically defined world underlines the need for room for maneuver, which grows ever more urgent. It

remains open the task to recover the Brazilian jeitinho to offer means to reclaim agency in our everyday actions. Clearly, one step in this direction is to view the jeitinho not as an exception to the system, but as an essential foundation enabling individuals and communities to cultivate social bonds. To understand how the creative exploitation of room for maneuver might be culturally embedded and practically enacted, it is useful to turn to a specific example. The Brazilian *jeitinho* offers a particularly rich case study. It is not merely a practice of rule-bending, but a complex social phenomenon deeply interwoven with a specific form of sociability: *cordiality*. To regard it as a legitimate form of situational agency, its nuances must be considered. What exactly is this *jeitinho,* and how does it manifest in the everyday life of Brazilians?

Jeitinho and cordiality revisited

Jeitinho is the diminutive of jeito, Portuguese for "way", literally meaning "little way", and refers to the creative, flexible, innovative, and often improvised circumvention of a formally prescribed but practically impassable path toward a situationally appropriate solution. The expression is far from unambiguous and can appear in many situations. On the one hand, *jeitinho* manifests as a self-understanding among Brazilians: lightness of being, affection, good humor, joy of life, and a degree of creativity. It reflects an existential concern with being seen as good people, developing friendships, cultivating empathy, kindness, and mutual help. On the other hand, *jeitinho* is also a way of coping with life's adversities: fixing equipment without proper tools or materials, letting someone jump the queue, and taking advantage of the discretion that rules or laws may allow. It is often linked to survival amid social inequalities, deficiencies in public services, and Brazil's legislative and bureaucratic complexities. This last aspect in particular relates to the extremely formal and hierarchical origins of the country's social and institutional order, with its tradition of very strong interpersonal relationships, also described as Brazilian cordiality (Santos and Sobottka 2026; Duarte 2006).

It is worth noting that jeitinho is tied to a particular form of sociability: cordiality. Something that intensifies the questions previously posed on the ethical ambiguity of this room to maneuver that jeitinho gives actors. Cordiality in Latin America has a multifaceted background (Monteiro 2020). However, Sergio Buarque de Holanda's paradigmatic work solidified the figure of the cordial man as a cornerstone of Brazilian social theory. The essay *Roots of Brazil* (Buarque de Holanda 1995, 139–151), in the chapter entitled *The cordial man*, Buarque de Holanda (1995, 146) considers the term cordial man the "Brazilian contribution to civilization" and emphasizes: "We will give the world the 'cordial man'". The draft of Buarque de Holanda's book was part of a project on the theory of the colonization of America, which was conceived in the years 1929-1930 while he lived in Berlin and frequented the local university and libraries. In it, Buarque de Holanda (1995) takes Max Weber's analysis of the rationalization of work and enterprises as a strong reference insofar as the old civilization gives way to the modern world. In this analysis, he finds that in Iberian Europe, the roots of traditional forms of life were transplanted to the New World and that they subsisted there, even if mixed with modern elements. At that time, Brazil was beginning its double transition: from an agricultural, rural country, strongly dominated by landlord oligarchies and local idiosyncratic features, to a more urban society with nascent industrialization. It was taking its first steps towards the formation of a national identity, having previously been largely diluted within regional units.

Buarque de Holanda (1995, 204) captures this spirit and, at the same time, perceives how the deep Iberian roots remain alive behind modernized appearances. But he distances himself from the optimistic tone of previous literature by emphasizing that he takes cordiality in its etymological sense, without ethical or apologetic judgments, since it can express affection and harmony, but also hostility. For him, the expression instead captures the ambiguity of the political

situation where the social relations are informal, loose, and unable to move individuals to dedicate their energies to building a collective.

The *cordial man*'s bonds are maintained even when he is far from his clan's physical presence and provide him with protection. Becoming a citizen in a liberal society would imply breaking these bonds, becoming autonomous, thinking for oneself, taking responsibility for one's actions, and thus becoming an active participant in the public sphere with one's own voice. He instead aims to preserve those family and community bonds before launching himself into society as an emancipated individual and citizen. He fears exposure to competitive individualization and sees with anguish that the modernizing transformations – not entirely undesirable – bring with them the gradual loosening of the bonds that give him stability, security, and, in short, identity. Buarque de Holanda (1995) associates this tension between the domestic and the public with the conflict between Creon and Antigone to emphasize that, unlike the romantic conception, which saw continuity between family and society, the individual becomes a citizen responsible before the laws of the city by transcending the limits of the closed circle of the family order. For the author, it was Positivism that sought to bring "reason and will" to politics, but did so without managing to imbue social institutions with them (Buarque de Holanda 1995, 150).

Precisely because the ethical ambivalence of jeitinho is tied to its source, the Brazilian Cordiality, it demands a historical reckoning and a critical interrogation to fit an emancipatory situational agency. If Brazil's contribution to civilization is the cordial man, it is worth taking a closer look at what this contribution means (Buarque de Holanda 1995, 146). Cordiality, according to the author, is expressed in the spontaneity of hospitality, generosity, and the transgression of hierarchies in the pursuit of intimacy despite any formal hierarchy; it is a "natural and lively form".[9] Buarque de Holanda (1995) describes cordiality with great insight and considers that it humanizes rituals, hierarchies, and formalities. Even so, he is critical of it; he considers it a "living in others" that would provide protection but dilute individuality. In this, he expresses his influence from Weberian sociology.

If we understand jeitinho not as a little way around the rules but as a situational virtue, it becomes possible to perceive its productive aspects. In Aristotelian terms, virtue lies in finding the right action in the right way at the right time, a definition that fits jeitinho perfectly when it is exercised with practical wisdom (phronesis). The everyday life of Brazilians is full of examples of outside-the-box thinking despite limited resources, of flexibility (*jogo de cintura*) to adapt quickly to changes and unforeseen events, and of humor that usually emerges to alleviate tension in these situations.[10]

The incorporation of jeitinho into a project of the good life would entail acknowledging the limitations of the modern project and the modern subject. Rules and systems are necessary and yet insufficient, human judgment and improvisation are indispensable, and cordiality, while it can never be detached from its patrimonial roots, can be a resource for humane and responsive action. The jeitinho, in this sense, becomes a social capacity

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[9] The intimacy and spontaneity, according to the author, are also reflected in religion. In a population that was still almost entirely Catholic at that time, the most venerated saints were those who expressed kindness and brotherhood. He even mentions a typical regional festival in which Christ would descend from the altar to dance samba with the people (Buarque de Holanda 1995, 150). Typically, each family also has its own domestic chapel with its saints. In addition, in circles where Catholicism is still traditional, the younger generations ask for blessings from their elders, who in turn lay their hands on them in response. Currently, the personal relationship with one's respective *orisha* in African-based religions and the practice of speaking or ordering "in the name of Jesus" to rebuke evil or promote extraordinary good in Pentecostal movements seem to be a functional equivalents.

[10] Buarque de Holanda (1995) mentions an observation of a surprised Philadelphian businessman according to whom in Argentina and Brazil one have to be friend the customer to w in him or her over. A broader emprirical investigation by Lee Park and colleagues (2018) with Brazilian leading professionals working for both national and international companies conclude that despite the consciousness of its ethical ambiguity, the use of jeitinho in business seems to be related "to the possibility of making something possible or more effito society, or an attempt to express superiority over others, a condition of pretending to be a special personcient, regardless of the requirements of the formal procedures set down by norms, laws and rules". In his research, Duarte (2006) confirms this need to seek closeness: "For a jeitinho to be successful, it is essential that the supplicant is able to establish an immediate affinity with the person from whom she or he is requesting a jeitinho. I 'turn on' my charm and warmth to establish simpatia when I want to receive a jeitinho".

for attunement: the ability to listen and respond to the unique needs of a situation, particularly when formal structures fail to do so. Such a re-orientation aligns with a mode of relating to the world characterized by responsiveness, which stands in stark contrast to mute, desubjectified interactions.

Because it is embedded in a context in which cordiality is fundamental, jeitinho does not involve only solutions strictly linked to explicit institutional ends. It can simply express improvisation in a situation where caution was lacking. It can also be a shortcut to placing personal feelings or relationships above one's duty to others and society, or an attempt to express superiority over others, a condition of pretending to be a special person, by overriding the rules. Corruption is also one of the ethically questionable possibilities of using jeitinho. In part, this is linked to the ethical ambivalence of many people's attitudes. Where there is room for maneuver, it can be exploited for personal gain or used to perpetrate systemic discrimination, leading to highly unjust and detrimental outcomes for the common good.

This brings us to the central, unresolved tension at the heart of this plea for agency. The ethical-functional necessity of useful illegality or the *jeitinho* is clear: without it, organizations and social life would become rigid and incapable of responding to the complexity of real-world situations. However, as said before, we cannot simply extract jeitinho from its historical context. To do so would be to repeat the error of the extraction of Western-European rationality from its own cultural-historical background. The patrimonial roots of cordiality are not to be scrubbed away, they are constitutive of how this sociability emerged, where both the creative improvisation of the marginalized and the corrupt entitlements of the powerful are involved. To pretend otherwise is to risk legitimizing the latter in our pursuit of the former.

Only by facing this ambivalence we begin the work of discernment, of developing the collective capacity to distinguish between its expressions. This is the work of building a phronesis at the societal level. The historically-aware engagement transforms jeitinho from a survival tactic or a cultural stereotype into something else: a practice of critical responsiveness. It could become a way of acting that is not just reactive to the failures of the system, but is also a constant interrogation of that system. For example, one could say, hopefully one day, that when I use the jeitinho to make a bureaucratic process perceive the human being that is inadvertently or not ignored, I am not just improvising; I am enacting a critique. In this sense, a critically-reckoned jeitinho holds the potential for emancipatory agency. It does not promise liberation from all rules. Instead, it can offer a humane mode of being in a critical relation to the rules.

The dossier *Resonance and diagnoses of the present* brings together a selection of texts that aim to offer an interpretive framework for a variety of contemporary situations and themes, in dialogue with Critical Theory, particularly drawing on the new developments in the theory of resonance proposed by Hartmut Rosa. In his text *Resonance and integral ecology: diagnosing the present and designing institutions*, João Akio Ribeiro Yamaguchi builds on Rosa's thesis that social acceleration, the imperatives of growth, and desynchronization erode the conditions for a meaningful relation with the world. Direct implications of this atrophy of relational capacity can be seen, for example, in the aggressive and destructive attitude toward the environment. Overcoming this would require a resonant relation, a relational ethic in which subjects and the world interact along horizontal, diagonal, and vertical axes. Yamaguchi proposes that both Roman Catholic integral ecology, as expressed in encyclicals such as *Laudato si'* and *Laudate Deum*, and the theory of resonance hold potential for recovering the human capacity to be called and to respond to the call through a relational ethic of non-domination and to envision ways to the restoration of the conditions for a good life. As for Augusto Waga in *Resonant religiosities: rethinking mysticism, esotericism, and contemporary spiritualities through Hartmut Rosa*, his text turns to contemporary religiosities and

spiritualities viewed as alternatives to institutionalized forms of religion. His perspective is informed by the sociology of religion and, building on it, seeks a synthesis between mysticism and esotericism to relate it to contemporary forms of spirituality, which are not necessarily religious, and to the concept of resonance developed by Rosa. He proposes to infer from these relations a reconceptualization and reformulation of the mysticism-esotericism-New Age-spirituality complex as resonant religiosities.

If Hartmut Rosa's dual diagnosis of modernity (the alienating forces of social acceleration and the emancipatory promise of resonance) moves beyond its phenomenological roots into transformative critique, it will require a particular approach to gauge its own ambitions. This is the argument James William Santos poses in the essay *Prolegomena to a genealogy of world-relations*. Engaging with Martin Saar's stylistic dimension of genealogy and Michel Foucault's notion of effective history, he outlines the initial steps toward a "gray genealogy" that would synthesize Rosa's insights into a historically grounded, narratively potent mode of inquiry. The essay proposes that such a genealogy could serve as the missing link between Rosa's macro-level diagnosis of modernity's pathologies and the situated, lived possibility of a more resonant life, transforming critique from a theoretical exercise into an emancipatory intervention.

João Tziminadis's *The friction of mediation* intervenes at a crucial theoretical crossroads, where technology is no longer just a tool but a co-constitutive force in shaping our sense of self, and our very experience of the world. This article introduces the concept of friction as a constitutive discontinuity in technologically mediated world-relations. He stages a productive tension between postphenomenology's relational account of mediation and Hartmut Rosa's diagnosis of modern acceleration. Tziminadis argues that modernity's escalatory logic tends to reduce friction (the care-requiring points of engagement that enable adaptive transformation) to a mere obstacle to be overcome. Ultimately, he sketches the contours of a critical theory of technology that seeks to rehabilitate friction as an indispensable source of responsiveness and world-disclosure.

The next two contributions to the dossier raise issues dear to Marxism and seek to relate them to the theory of resonance. In *Resonance and revolution*, Arthur Bueno proposes a critical dialogue between Lukács and Rosa, grounded in parallels in their diagnoses of modernity: in both, the subject's relationship with the world becomes increasingly reified and alienating. The difference emerges when analyzing how both conceive of the possibilities for overcoming this – Lukács's emphasis on the reappropriation of the world by a collective subject versus Rosa's critique of the pretensions to make the world and the course of events entirely available. Bueno proposes that a reinterpretation of the respective ways in which both authors conceive of the subject's efficacy – in Lukács, the perception of an alienating blockage, and in Rosa, the desire for control and instrumental appropriation – would open up new interpretive horizons for approaching the two authors.

Lara Bortolusci Leporati identifies in contemporary sociology a neglect of normativity as a guiding principle in its analyses of pressing issues. In her text *From praxis to resonance: overcoming a normative deficit*, she returns to the young Marx to revisit what he considers the constitutive activities of the human being. However, she notes that Marx's focus on the dimension of labor leaves a normative deficit in the elucidation of the subject-world relation. Leporati argues that resonance theory, with its multidimensional approach to these relations across three distinct axes – horizontal, diagonal, and vertical – broadens the perspective and brings into focus the dimension of its meaning, making it suitable for diagnosing an accelerated and constantly transforming society that lacks a consistent framework for evaluating the multiple projects of relationship-with-the-world currently in contention.

The dossier Resonance and diagnoses of the present concludes with the text *Critique of 'world-relations' or 'forms of life'? Phenomenology and Practice Theory in the Frankfurt School's new social*

ontologies, by Alexis Gros. Contrasting Hartmut Rosa's emphasis on relation with the world with Rahel Jaeggi's focus on forms of life, the author argues that the two are complementary, despite the former being phenomenological and the latter praxeological. For Gros, Jaeggi's greater focus on objective collective dimensions of social life could serve as a counterbalance to the subjectivist tendencies of Rosa's phenomenological approach – and vice versa.

We hope that the texts presented here will contribute to the attempt to provide an interpretative framework for developing trends in our societies. We hope you enjoy reading them.

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