Article

The New Brazilian Identification System: Unique Features of a General Transformation

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Abstract

The adoption of a new ID document in Brazil, most commonly known as RIC (*Registro de Identidade Civil* or Civil Identity Registry) has already a long story, having started with its provision by Law number 9.454, enacted in 1997. In order to contribute to the analysis and critique this process, this paper highlights the specificities of the Brazilian implementation of the new identity document (RIC). Therefore, we will firstly present the general characteristics of this new document and its historical context and, secondly, we point out the unique features that mark its implementation.

Introduction

The adoption of a new ID card in Brazil, most commonly known as the RIC (*Registro de Identidade Civil*, Civil Identity Registry) already has a long history, starting with the provision in Law 9.454, enacted in 1997. However the implementation of the new ID card itself is much more recent. It is possible to date the beginning of this process back to the acquisition of the equipment needed to digitalize biometric identification, which was made in 2004. But neither the law nor its process of implementation have been visible enough to prompt a public debate over the issue. The absence of theoretical and academic debate about this change in people's identification and the technologies involved in this transformation must be added to this Brazilian picture.

This process is influenced by discourses and practices which deserve a more detailed analysis, especially because it also points to extensive as well as specific changes marked by multiple shifts in meaning, as will be detailed in this paper. It is worth noting that the technocratic aspect of this process makes any attempt at opposition almost impossible, as if this system of identification was already free of any obscure or negative characteristics. This fact alone already justifies the importance of a more accurate analysis of a system which has consequences that shall, in the near future, be directly experienced by all Brazilians.

In order to contribute to the analysis and critique of this picture, this paper highlights the specificities of the Brazilian implementation of the new identity document (RIC). Therefore, first, we will present the general characteristics of this new document and its historical context and, second, we point out the particularities that mark its implementation.

Why an analogous system had not been implemented in other countries that had, before Brazil, the economical and technical possibilities to do so is our main question. Initiatives of this order have been

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proposed and successfully contested several times. On these occasions, the general understanding that such systems would be prejudicial to a certain balance of information power between citizens and the State or private corporations - by weakening citizens while giving away means to control their lives and activities - played a major role. Opposition to initiatives of this sort has contributed to the growth of the protection of personal data as a fundamental right in the information society (Doneda, 2006).

New forms of identification

In Brazil, the RIC will replace the national document of civil identification, the present Identity Card, also known as RG (*Registro Geral*, or General Registry). Brazil is among the countries that has traditionally provided its citizens with identity cards as a mean to make their identification to public or private instances possible or easier. One should note that this tradition has its counterpoint in another tradition, equally strong, present mainly in countries of Anglo-Saxon culture, in which such a document is not needed *per se*.¹

The RG in Brazil is issued by the Public Security Secretary (*Secretaria de Segurança Pública*) of each State of the Federation and, given the absence of a centralized system of registration between these offices, it is possible for a single person to obtain more than one ID card, each from a different federated state and with a different number of identification.

The main arguments of the Federal Government in favor of the adoption of RIC are: the idea of modernization and national coordination of this system, the combat to frauds or duplicity of identity, as well as the promotion of citizenship and democracy.

The institution of RIC is supported by Law 9.454 of April 7th 1997, which establishes that the unique number of this document will be the main form of identification of all Brazilian citizens, in all their relations with the society and private or government organizations. For this purpose, RIC will merge several others documents, as aforementioned Identity Card (RG), the driver's license, the Registry of Physical Persons (CPF – *Cadastro de Pessoa Física*, a tax number), the voter's ID, the work and social security card (*Carteira de Trabalho e Previdência Social* – CTPS), the national insurance number (*Programa de Integração Social / Programa de Formação do Patrimônio do Servidor Público* – PIS/PASEP), and the social security number (*Instituto Nacional do Seguro Social* – INSS). It will thereafter be possible to connect of most of the databases that are most relevant to the life of a regular citizen in a unique document and in a new single database.

Act 9.454 was sanctioned by the president of Brazil at the time, Fernando Henrique Cardoso². Its passing into law was due to be within 180 days of the publication of the act, and its implementation should have begun within 360 days. The passing into law, in RIC's case, is fundamental in determining its actual effectiveness³. However, this did not happen in full until 2010. As the Brazilian term for passing this kind of regulation expires every 5 years, there have been several requests in Congress to extend this term (RQS 190 of 2001 and Law project 5.297, of 2005)⁴. During the processing of these requests there were times when the present ID card (RG) and the CPF were without legal validity in the country.

¹ A chart of countries and their requirements for an identification for their citizens, as of 2007, is available at: Bennett, Lyon. "Playing the identification card", in Bennett, Lyon. *Playing the ID card*. (London: Routledge, 2008), 6-8.

² Bills drafted by the House of Representatives and by the Senate have their own different identification numbers. The PL 2.319 of 1996, that became Law 9.454/97, has the same nature as Senate Bill (PLS) 32 of 1995. Other bills regarding changes in Civil and criminal ID were linked to PL 2.319 of 1996.

³ The regulation of an Act is a duty of the Government and it can not reduce or increase the Act's purpose and effects as intended by the legislator. The purpose of such regulation is basically to clarify the way the Act should be applied.

⁴ It should be noted that the regulation of this Act took so long not because it faced strong opposition or because a wide debate was in course. Only occasional manifestations could be noticed in this sense, such as one of Brazilian Bar of Lawyers

Indeed, the process of implementation of a new identity card – including biometric data – goes beyond this legal sphere. Given that the Act had not become law, legal mechanisms that could be specifically applied to the process and would have stipulated forms of external or independent control and supervision of the card itself were equally lacking. It is important to note that the most active groups in RIC's implementation are basically organs of Public Security. In the same way, no clear normative rules regarding the access and utilization of personal data that will be present in the new document and its respective database have been developed.

However, the slowness to pass the law, the absence of a public debate and legal supervisory mechanisms, or even the obscurity regarding the rules to the access of data must not be understood as implying that project is a long way from real-world implementation. According to the website of the government of Rondônia State (a federated state in the North region of Brazil), Rondônia is one of the pioneering States in the implementation of the new document, due to its small population. The Institute of Civil and Criminal Identification of the capital of Rondônia (Porto Velho) began the process of digitalization of nearly 1.1 million identity cards in December 2008, as one of the phases of the implementation of RIC. The same process then began in four other Brazilian states, at the same time as the broadening of the structures of identification and training for the new system. On the website of the State government, the Secretary of Security asserted that Rondônia had adopted the best system for the execution of RIC: “While other States are building their systems with private corporations, investing around R\$ 20 millions, we are working in partnership with the Federal Police.” (Identificação, 2009).

Thus, despite the absence of regulation, transparency and public debate, the project has been implemented slowly and almost invisibly, mainly in regions far from major centers, where such news would have had most repercussions. Despite the fact that these procedures were initiated in 2008, it is possible to date the beginning of this process back to 2004, the year the federal government invested 35 million dollars to acquire the Automatized Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS), needed to computerize the identification in the country. This system, now the responsibility of the Federal Justice Office, makes it possible to scan fingerprints, store this information in databases and cross-reference it with other data.

The new ID document itself resembles a credit card, - a rigid polycarbonate thick enough to allow the insertion of two memory chips to store personal data, including those already written in the document (also called biographical data, as name, parent's names, date of birth and gender, for instance) and information related to other documents, as the worker's identification number, for example. The identity card may also be used as a credit card.

On the back of the document there is a digital reproduction of the right thumb, preferably extracted from the AFIS System. The scan is made when the finger is positioned on a glass surface and the optic reader shines a light over the fingerprint, which is “photographed”, generating a digital image, a sequence of zeros and ones that represents tiny dots (pixels) to form an image. Once this capture is made, one can either add it to the database, or to verify the fingerprint through its comparison with others in the same database.

This verification is made through the analysis of the details or characteristic features of the fingerprint by a mathematical algorithm. These details are analyzed by their relative position and the patterns they create. To check the correspondence between a pair of fingerprints, for instance, the system searches for common patterns, the amount of which may vary according to the system's configuration. At this point, it is important to stress that the utilization of biometric technology and of AFIS must not be understood as the

(OAB) and a Bill, PL 1.931 of 1999 that would cancel the Act 9.454 of 1997. The opposition to the Act is involved in such a partisan sphere that falls outside the objective of this article. It should be stressed, however, the absence of a real public debate.

mere application of a more sophisticated technology to perform the same tasks already being done when identifying someone just based on their RG. This new system which essentially creates an enormous database and allows cross-referencing, besides many other procedures, is also related to a series of typical contemporary transformations.

According to the first RIC project, elaborated by the present director of the National Identification Institute, Marcos Elias de Araújo, in 1998, the initial part of RIC's database would be fed by scanning the criminal records which already have fingerprints archived on paper, a database called the Initial Register (*Cadastro Inicial* – CIN), which contains nearly 8 millions records.

After this first phase, the project entails the building of a single database to archive the data of 150 million Brazilians in the National Register of Civil Identification (*Cadastro Nacional do Registro de Identidade Civil* – CANRIC), which will contain the biographical data and details of every citizen. The Justice Ministry is responsible for the implementation, coordination, and control of the register. It will be executed through the interaction of several state organizations, including the Departments of Public Security connected with the national Secretary of Public Security, the National Institute of Identification, the Federal Police Department, other regional bodies responsible for identification, and local organizations like notary offices. The system will be able, for instance, to verify the correspondence between fingerprints personally scanned (in a process known as live scan) and the digitalized data from CIN and will also be able to verify if a single person has tried to obtain more than one identity card with different names.

During this process everyone will have to go to the regional identification bodies to register with the new system. Then, citizen's photo, signature and fingerprints will be collected. All these data can be considered biometrical: the digitized image of a person's face, the signature and the fingerprint. In this procedure, the thumb and all the other hand fingers' images will be collected by the States' identification organs and sent electronically to the National Institute of Identification (INI), which, in turn, will make the verification and comparison, by the AFIS System, with data from the now digitized criminal archives (CIN) and the ones already recorded in the National register (CANRIC)

The protocol intends to confirm the uniqueness of the fingerprints for each citizen, before the attribution of a RIC number, which could be the same as the PIS/PASEP number, for those who already have one. If uniqueness cannot be confirmed, the INI will redo the analysis through their fingerprint specialists. The data will be exchanged through the internet or magnetic files sent via mail.

Another very important characteristic, common to all the most recent modalities of implementation of identification systems, must be emphasized: the fact that the ID document, in itself, has become little more than the visible component of a system that is, in fact, much more intricate than its predecessors. What we can consider as the core of the system is the database (Lyon 2009) that will allow several new uses of individual personal information. These new uses, indeed, may form the more serious potential risks for registered citizens.

Unique Features of the Brazilian case

The focus of this paper is the new identification document, the RIC. Nevertheless, it is necessary to emphasize that besides the RIC, there are other three projects being run in the country which add up to a broad effort from the Brazilian state to identify people by means of biometric technology inserted in documents and the consequent building of databases about the population. These other projects are the National Driving License (*Carteira Nacional de Habilitação* – CNH), the Voter's Card and the Passport. All these documents already include biometric technology and their own databases are being built.

At first sight, it may look like these projects overlap or even cancel one another out in the sense that a single document would dismiss changes in others like the CNH or the voter's document. However, as there is the explicit goal of integrating the Registry of Voters into a single system of citizen identification, it is reasonable to assume this process is ultimately part of the consolidation of databases into a single system. These projects complete one another in many spheres aiming to cover all the population, in their various kinds of relations with the State and Non-Governmental Organizations. Multiple overlapping projects make particular sense when one takes into account the area, population and diversity of a country like Brazil.

The multiplicity of identification projects in Brazil also highlights a series of underlying foundational discourses. The promotion of citizenship, democracy, modernization and the fight against fraud are some of these notions triggered as justifying factors for these changes in the form of identification in the country (Murakami Wood and Firmino 2010a, b). These projects take those ideas and redefine or displace them and at the same time connect them with new technologies which allow the surveillance and identification of people. However, outside Brazil, these notions are not the same. In other words, it is important to notice that the presence or the attempts of implementation of identification technologies already typical of western contemporary societies, but there are also particularities that characterize this process in different parts of the globe.

In this sense, the alterations related to these technologies can be observed at two levels, which are not clearly separated, and, consequently, sometimes intersect and reinforce one another. As an example, we will present a general level and a specific one. On the general level, it is possible to note that technologies which allow the identification and surveillance of people, such as cell phones, GPS devices, smartcards, Internet social networks (Twitter, Orkut, Facebook, etc.), documents with chips and biometric data, among others, are related with changing notions of individual, privacy, subjectivity, public and private, etc. These changes are fairly common in different places, once they are also typical of contemporary modernity. On the other hand, there is a more specific level of changes and displacements of concepts, which are associated with notions that are triggered as justifications for the projects that use those technologies. In the case of identification documents (as passports) it is possible to observe that, outside Brazil, instead of modernization, combating fraud or the promotion of citizenship, it is more common to find justifications that relate to ideas of fighting terrorism and clandestine immigration, which are connected to issues such as globalization, the securing of international mobility, sovereignty, and so on. It is in this level, therefore, that the particularities of this process can be seen.

The elements triggered in the Brazilian case to justify the above mentioned projects are also specific to an attempt at technological transition in Brazil, connected to a certain notion of modernization. Beyond the simple idea of the incorporation of new technologies – as in the case of biometrics in RIC – that brings to the surface a certain sensation of modernity, in spite of the continuity of the asymmetry and inequality that characterize the country (Kanashiro 2008), it is still necessary to rethink this permanent notion of deficit, or modernization understood as overcoming delay, which permeates the constitution of Brazilian identity and also marks the RIC project.

“In fact, historically, through successive governments and economic plans, Brazil has recognized its ‘deficit’ and has sought to overcome this in order to reach the ideal model of developed countries. In the continuous, dynamic, relational and situational construction of a national identity, there is the idea of the other which is advanced, modern, and developed (...) Deficit shows us the evolutionary path of science and technology, a path which we should follow in order to go through the stages of development through which advanced countries have already been. The deficit and the financing to overcome this deficit give us the guidelines of this path and end up maintaining an unchangeable situation.” (Evangelista, R.; Kanashiro, M. 2004)

Notwithstanding the fact that in European or North American countries the use of biometric technologies and the incorporation of a single document are broadly debated (Lyon 2009; Ceyhan 2006a; Ceyhan, 2006b; CAPPS II) and opposed, as we shall see below, it remains in the Brazilian imaginary the notion that the presence of technology is related with progress itself. This characteristic is connected to a broader acceptance of (or even desire for) technologies, whatever they are, in daily life.

Another specificity of the Brazilian case is the triggering of the idea of citizenship (Murakami Wood and Firmino 2010a, b) as something to be promoted by the implementation of the RIC project. This citizenship is not the same as the one that is defined by social movements since the 70's, as a "new citizenship", or "broader citizenship", which includes the notion of the "right to have rights" and which is characterized by the creation, invention and definition of new rights by subjects as active political agents (Dagnino 2004). Citizenship, therefore, does not mean the mere inclusion of people in a previously given and definite system, determined in a top-down process.

The political scientist, Evelina Dagnino (2004) discusses the notion of broader citizenship contrasting it to: 1) citizenship as a liberal concept, that is, "the claiming to access, inclusion, participation and belonging to a given political system", 2) to the conceptions of citizenship traditionally adopted in Brazil, that is, "a dominant class and State strategy of gradual political incorporation of the excluded sectors, with the goal of a larger social integration, or as a legal and political condition necessary for the installation of capitalism", 3) to the citizenship understood in its neoliberal connection with the right to consume in the market, or as solidarity with the poor. With this definition in mind, the citizenship promoted by the new RIC document seems to be displaced from broader citizenship due to elements related whether to the liberal or traditional notion, or in its connection with neoliberal ideology. To this scenario must be added the fact that the citizens' identification by the Brazilian State is, traditionally, seen favorably by a majority of the population because it is a pre-condition for social inclusion and for the access to services and benefits made possible by the State. The civil identification in Brazil is not seen with the same almost atavistic distrust with which it is treated in some countries, especially Anglo-Saxon cultures.

But there are still other elements that also characterize the particularity of the Brazilian situation. In an interview conducted in April 2006 as part of research into biometric technology in Brazilian documents, an entrepreneur involved in R&D in the electronic security sector said that most of the countries bind the collection of fingerprints or the supply of personal data to criminals and the idea of suspicion, but that this does not happen in Brazil. According to him, the Brazilian RG already contains fingerprints, a fact that reduces a potential popular opposition to the collection of fingerprints. In the same way, the requirement for personal data from Brazilians is normal in all kinds of everyday transactions in order to gain access to services and commodities. He also stated that the comparatively minor opposition from Brazilians was a fact considered important by those who invest in biometric technologies in the country.

We should add to this scenario marked by the acceptance of the majority of the population, the absence of juridical norms or social movements concerned with new surveillance and identification technologies making it possible to characterize the country as an immense testing ground for biometrics and other surveillance technologies and implementation of databases about the population.

It is also important to highlight that the Brazilian case is marked by the fact that little of the security equipment is developed or manufactured in Brazil; most of it is imported and is only assembled in the country. Entrepreneurs in the sector point to the saturation of the market for electronic security in places like Japan, Europe and North America, and the expansion of new markets in Brazil, China, Russia and India. According to another interview for the research mentioned above: "We do not have here the machines that can recognize a person's face. It must come from abroad. This is another great advantage, because it means we have a lot of things to build here."

On a more general level, it is worth noting that the acceptance of the biometric technology in documents also relates to the idea that the new technologies make things easier and bring comfort and speed, besides modernization and safety. In this sense, the introduction of these transformations in the country must also be seen in connection with the commonplace use of the biometric technology which trigger those notions in Brazil. Today, the use of biometric identification is already a reality in places like private schools and universities, health insurance plans (like *Unimed Paulistana*), and also for access to computers and commercial buildings. In other spaces, like gyms and video rentals, one can also see the voluntary participation of users, many times attracted to promises of speed, safety and comfort.

It is as if in a series of spaces people have begun to wish for biometric technology, that is a transformation of identification procedures, in their daily life. It is exactly this comfort and this speed that are incorporated by projects like the RIC, when its text states that the Brazilians will not need to carry many different documents anymore. The participation of people is promoted in the multiple uses of biometric technology, and they indicate that they wish those facilities, the comfort, speed, as well as the sensation of ascending to modernity, or overcoming the delay by means of technology. The new forms of identification are not, therefore, only a State imposition neither they are externally imposed on people, on the contrary, they count on people's participation and seem to capture their desire.

Even if we do not approach, in this text, the concept of Empire, as proposed by Michael Hardt and Antony Negri, it is interesting to stress here how Peter Pál Pelbart (2002) presently sees this idea of capture of desire and participation. The proposed analysis by Pelbart also agrees with that more general level which relates to all the specificities before mentioned:

“In fact, how could the current Empire survive if not by capturing million of people's desire? How could it expand itself if not by selling everyone the promise of a certain safety, happiness, a way of life? (...) Through flows of images, information, knowledge and services that we constantly access, we absorb ways of living and life's meanings, and we consume tons of subjectivity. Be it called by any name, such as cultural capitalism, immaterial economy, society of spectacle, bio-politics age, truth is that we saw in the last decades a new relation between capital and subjectivity. Today, capital does not only penetrates the most distinct spheres of existence, but it also mobilizes them, makes them work, other than explore and enlarge them, producing a plastic subjectivity that, at the same time, evades from itself, making the control become a nomadic one.”(Pelbart 2002)

In short, if there are elements that differentiate the process of implementing a single identification document and the use of biometrics in Brazil from what has happened in other countries and that can be traced to the particular level, it is also necessary to connect these elements to those more general ones seen in several other countries, as this is still a contemporary global phenomenon resulting in profound changes. There are several interconnected and self-reinforcing factors, which need to be pulled apart in order to analyze them.

Databases and profiles constitution

In order to examine this, we need to look at the changes to the Brazilian passport system which, unlike the other Brazilian cases of use of biometric identification mentioned so far, was driven by external factors. Internationally, changes to passports have resulted in a reaction in defense of privacy from social movements and intellectuals in both North America and Europe. For example, in 2003 and 2004 there was an intense political debate in the United States around attempts to implement a program that involved new technology in passports and the cross-referencing of information with other databases, including commercial ones.

The US Transportation Security Administration (TSA) promoted the CAPPS (Computer Assisted Passenger Pre-Screening System) II, which had the goal of identifying passengers who represented higher risks and selecting them for additional security proceedings before they boarded planes. The verification of the passengers' identities involved risk assessment using commercial databases as well as state intelligence information. In other words, data contained in the passports were cross-referenced with those in other databases in order to assess the potential threat that certain passengers might represent.

The Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF), a US NGO, attempted to make the issue more visible:

“The U.S. Transportation Security Administration has announced plans to implement CAPPS II, a controversial passenger profiling and surveillance system that would require you to give your birth date, home phone number, and home address before you can board a U.S. flight. Under CAPPS II, travel authorities would check these and other personal details against the information collected in government and commercial databases, then “tag” you with a color-coded score indicating the level of security risk that you appear to pose. Based on your assigned color/score, you could be detained, interrogated or made subject to additional searches. If you are tagged with the wrong color/score, you could be prohibited from flying.” (cf CAPPS II)⁵

Curry (2004) pointed out that the building of profiling systems to identify potentially dangerous passengers can only exist within the creation of broad stereotypes and the splitting of the population into groups, in this case, not only relying in definite attributes, but in their statistical probability of engaging in certain activities considered dangerous. The use of biometrics in passports, the greater capacity of information storage those documents possess and the building of profiling systems can be seen in the same way. To Curry, the surveillance of mobilities also requires a search for more detailed data to build narratives of the people's activities:

“What is he really doing? Is he a mentally deranged person, desperate to escape his troubles by escaping the country? Is he a criminal, out to hold the plane and its passengers hostage, for a huge ransom? Is he a Cuban émigré, now homesick? Or is he simply a somewhat frazzled businessman, who has bought a ticket with cash at the last minute because an important deal has suddenly emerged, and he has lost his credit card? If so, he will, to use Jackson's terms, ‘test green’ and be ‘free to go’.” (Curry 2004, 485).

Curry also points to how the market survey techniques are being used in profiling systems, for instance by the airlines. The author sustains that a sophisticated system is built in these connections of personal and commercial data from narratives that incorporate opinions about a series of mobile behaviors and patterns which are defined as acceptable or suspicious. He also argues that these profiles are intended not to identify the “trusted” traveler but the “risky” traveler.

This case is linked to the problem with databases, information cross-referencing and the use of personal data, as in the case of the RIC project in Brazil. One issue in particular remains open for debate in Brazil: if outside Brazil, in an ID card that incorporates biometrics and was backed by a broad database, the concerns were about international mobility yet it promoted the sorting of the travelers, would RIC promote the similar things?

Conclusion

⁵ It is important to note that CAPPS II was never introduced in the exact form discussed by Curry (2004). Despite it, the situation as described in that article can point possibilities of risky.

In this paper we intended to stress some elements that characterize the implementation of the new Brazilian ID card (RIC) in Brazil, aiming to initiate scholarly and political debates over the issue. The very implementation of such an ID card points to an unequal distribution of power between the State, corporations and citizens, weakening citizen's leverage while providing the State or corporations means to control their lives and activities. In Brazil, this situation is worsened by the fact that the implementation of RIC almost entirely bypasses the legal sphere and has not been visible enough to incite public debate. And, outside basic legal regulation, the lack of legal mechanisms to control and supervise the use of the new card or the personal information incorporated in it becomes obvious.

With regard to the implementation of RIC, there are at least two points which denote a lack of democratic patterns of conduct: in the first place, the absence of a specific regulation related to Law 9.454/97, the Act that provides the normative basis for RIC's implementation (and that could also be subject of previous judicial control); as well as the fact that the system proposed implies a concrete and qualitative change in the power distribution between the individual and the State (as well as certain private entities) in relation to the effective control over his or her own personal data. This imbalance cannot be offset by less invasive technological solutions. A normative solution, such as a set of data protection laws, providing the individual with instruments to effectively control the uses of their own information also cannot compensate.

In this paper we also tried to identify the particularities which mark the project of a single identification document incorporating biometric technology. These are based in notions such as citizenship and modernization, that are respectively connected to the proposition of social inclusion (by means of the connection between the identification of the citizens by the Brazilian states and the projects of social inclusion) and to the representation of the use of advanced technologies in the Brazilian imaginary (connected to the idea of ascension to modernity). Both are the basis for the broader acceptance of those technologies in Brazil, which are incorporated in an irrational and non-critical way. (Murakami Wood and Firmino 2010a, b).

Such acceptance counts on another important element: the use of fingerprints in the present identity card and the requirement of personal data from the individuals in many quotidian situations. These characteristics and the absence of laws or social movements aiming to discuss or limit the implementation of RIC created a great opportunity for companies specializing in electronic technologies of surveillance and identification.

This level of particularity however, is constantly influenced and reinforced by a broader level that relates to the use of new surveillance and identification technologies across several countries. At this other level, we could see the voluntary use of biometric technology in its quotidian form as a way of capturing the desire and the active participation of people. This relates to a broader sphere of change which includes subjectivity.

Several countries attribute a national identification number to their citizens. RIC, however, goes beyond that when it proposes the unification of several identification systems that were originally separated and obeyed their own logic and rules. Thus, the new Brazilian identity card unifies not only the identity number, but also other documents as the fiscal number (CPF), the voter number and several others. The cross-referencing or merging of these databases is seen by many as a strong point in the implementation of RIC but, in fact, is one of its more questionable aspects and the major reason for the opposition to similar systems in other countries. At the same time, a computerized system makes it easier to obtain data about a particular person and it makes this person more susceptible to profiling and classification exclusively based on his or her personal information. These data can also be displaced or abusively used, resulting in a range of troubles and inconveniences, from misidentification to "identity theft".

We point, finally, to the progressive increase of possibilities for control and monitoring of citizens in Brazil, while citizens in other countries can count on norms and systems of identification that provide them with actual protection against the concrete risks of a single system of identification, besides several other general guarantees regarding their personal data. In this sense, the so called “digital divide” can enlarge between citizens of different countries, not exactly in the form by which the theme is constantly referred to (that is, regarding the access to information and the services of the information society), but due to the ease of access to personal information, which allows an intensive control over citizens of certain countries. In Brazil, an apparent one-way route has been taken by the RIC project, and it poses a concrete risk of placing Brazil decisively in this last group of countries.

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