'Becoming-Resistance' and 'The New Spirit of Capitalism'

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I. Introduction

In his "Postscript on the Societies of Control", which was written 30 years ago in 2020, Gilles Deleuze leaves us with the diagnosis that a profound transformation of society and capitalism has taken place: having left behind the disciplinary societies, which Foucault analysed (cf. Foucault 1975), after World War II, we are now living in societies of control that are inseparably connected to a new form of capitalism (cf. Deleuze 1992: 3-4, 6). This transformation of society has led to a "generalized crisis in relation to all the environments of enclosure" (Deleuze 1992: 3-4) which were being reshaped through various reforms, resulting in "the installation of the new forces" (1992: 4), that is, the "progressive and dispersed installation of a new system of domination" (1992: 7). Apparently, Deleuze's clairvoyant idea of the society of control seems to have come true: we no longer need to imagine science fiction, since contemporary reality is already structured by digitised control mechanisms of multiple sorts and characters. Many of our social, economic, and political actions in both public and private everyday life are at least influenced or even caused by algorithms. Several of these algorithms may make our lives more convenient, especially in terms of the possibilities of the Internet, such as deterritorialised connection, access to information, and shared technological knowledge. However, in the "age of algorithm" (Sunstein 2017: 3), most areas of digitised reality based on 'big data', like social media, financial markets, smart technologies, or artificial intelligence systems are characterised by anonymity, non-transparency, and undemocratic structures which appear like asymmetrical mechanisms for controlling individuals. The function of algorithms enables all kinds of political and private organisations, like companies and governments, to evaluate patterns of individual behaviour and actions and to handle them as impersonal, general, and – in the Deleuzean idiom – dividualised facets of reality (cf. Baranzoni 2016: 45-46): a reality that is rather to be calculated in capitalistic terms than to be created and to be designed by human beings themselves (e.g. as political actors).

In the transformation process described by Deleuze, the logic of the corporation becomes the dominant principle that takes effect in every societal sphere (cf. Deleuze 1992: 6), a phenomenon that points to the economisation of all areas of human life. Following Wendy Brown, the overall internalisation of the neoliberal rationality poses a serious threat to democracy. Neoliberalism, conceived of as "an order of normative reason that, when it becomes ascendant, takes shape as a governing rationality extending a specific formulation of economic values, practices, and metrics to every dimension of human life" (Brown 2015: 30),[1] undoes the demos and therefore undermines and destroys the foundation of democracy and citizenship. The most problematic aspect of the internalisation of the neoliberal logic is the reductionist identification of the multifaceted human existence with the figure of *homo oeconomicus*: Nation states as well as human beings are modelled as corporations, that is, they are expected to maximise their skills and capacities (i.e. their 'value') by applying practices of entrepreneurship (cf. 2015: 21-28, 33-38). The progressive incorporation of the neoliberal logic thereby modifies not only the structures of human cognition, it also transforms the political into an economised semantic order. At the point at which individuals can no longer operate outside of an economic semantic order, the ability to criticise that very order, and in turn the possibility of resistance, will be lost as a result of the neoliberal "form of governing that is soft and total" (2015: 208, cf. ibid.: 201-08). So far, the lack of indignant critique of and resistance to the neoliberal restructuring of all spheres, e.g. by workers unions or in the form of class struggle, seems to prove the extent of this internalisation (cf. 2015: 35-45). Referring to the Euro-Atlantic Left, Brown thus identifies the dilemma that "we know what is wrong with this world, but cannot articulate a road out or a viable global alternative" (2015: 220).

While we agree with Brown that in this process of transformation from disciplinary societies to societies of control the known and proven forms of resistance with respect to the organisation of capitalism have lost their reference points and organisational basis, we question her perception of a loss of the possibility for individuals to criticise and to create seeds of resistance – even though these may well be different from the traditional forms of unionised protest or class struggle. On the contrary, by proposing to understand the dynamic between capitalism and its critique along the lines of Luc Boltan-

[1] Referring to Foucault, Brown points out that neoliberalism is a "loose and shifting signifier" (2015: 20) which "takes diverse shapes and spawns diverse content and normative details, even different idioms. It is globally ubiquitous, yet disunified and nonidentical with itself in space and over time" (2015: 21, cf. ibid.: 20-21, 28-35). What Deleuze identifies as a profound transformation of society and capitalism could be understood with Brown as an ascendance and expansion of the neoliberal rationality. As an extensive rationality, neoliberalism affects capitalism in a specific way: we can thus speak of neoliberal capitalism. As analytic terms, capitalism and neoliberalism may be closely related, but they are not to be understood as being synonymous (cf. 2015: 20-21, 28-35). Brown states: "Neoliberalism is the rationality through which capitalism finally swallows humanity" (2015: 44). We will therefore look at the specific (neoliberal) transformation of capitalism to unfold our argument about possible forms of resistance to capitalism and a destructive neoliberal rationality.

ski and Ève Chiapello's *The New Spirit of Capitalism* (first published in French in 1999), we argue that the ability to be critical is preserved in the human affect of indignation and the human capacity to learn in a creative manner. The capability of creativity, as Iain MacKenzie (cf. 2018: ch. 3 and 5) argues, predisposes the learning subject to be the subject of critique and resistance. We argue that even in times of an expanding neoliberal rationality, indignation and creativity are human qualities that are not lost; on the contrary, they may be, among others, human qualities that prevent the governing neoliberal rationality from becoming 'total'.

In our article, we therefore look at Deleuze's prognostic, yet slightly vague, remarks on possible forms of resistance against societies of control, which seem to be situated in a relationship of tension between Deleuze's philosophical criticism of capitalism, on the one hand, and his ontological concept of the "rhizome" (together with Félix Guattari, cf. Deleuze/Guattari 1987: 3-25; see e.g. Bell 2011) as a term for a non-hierarchical, complex, and multiple theory of knowledge and culture, on the other. Boltanski and Chiapello criticise the concept of the rhizome as being compatible with and even complicit in capitalist principles and structures rather than being resistant to them (cf. 2005: 97). However, it seems that because Deleuze's focus lies on a philosophical reflection on essential features of capitalism and not on a sociological elucidation, Boltanski and Chiapello's accusation somewhat misses the point. In spite of their scepticism towards Deleuze's characterisation of capitalist society, we argue that their conceptualisation of the dynamic relationship between capitalism and its critique, which focuses on indignation as a relevant source of critique, is an insightful perspective to reconsider the potentials for critique and resistance. Inspired by, though not always following, Deleuze's thoughts, the following article does not present a Deleuze exegesis, but brings the philosophical and sociological perspectives into a mutual exchange. Our intention is to point out the critical dimension of Deleuze's ideas about the societies of control. Moreover, in connection with Deleuze's other works, such as *Difference and Repetition* (1994), the texts he wrote together with Félix Guattari, e.g. *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987) or *What is Philosophy?* (1994), and scattered statements in interviews (cf., e.g., Deleuze/Foucault 1977), it can be shown that Deleuze implies a concept of the subject as a learner (cf. MacKenzie 2018). This capacity to learn should be interpreted as a source for "becoming-resistance" (Herngren 2008) rather than being affirmative of the capitalist system. The concept of 'becoming-resistance', as we will argue later on, should certainly not be considered in terms of some kind of big cataclysm or a Copernican revolution aimed at immediately overcoming the capitalist system. However, as has recently been pointed out, central aspects of Deleuze's work can be identified as a form of political philosophy and as a theory of power in a political sense (cf. Patton 2011; Penfield 2014; Rölli 2017). Referring to these findings, we argue that Deleuze's visionary yet vague outline of the society of control should be contextualised in his analytical rather than critical thoughts

on domination. This opens up manifold opportunities to carve out the political potential of the trails laid out by Deleuze.

II. Societies of Control: From Mole to Serpent

According to Deleuze, disciplinary societies were characterised by different spaces of enclosure defined as fixed "*molds*, distinct castings" (1992: 4). These existed as closed, independent co-environments (family, school, army, factory), sharing a common analogical language, but each of them with its own laws. In control societies, such rigid boundaries no longer exist: control should be understood as a "*modulation*" (1992: 4), a modulation of a single principle that has a simultaneous impact on all institutions. In the disciplinary society, discipline runs in a vertical direction, as a force that "constitutes those over whom it exercises power into a body and molds the individuality of each member of that body" (1992: 5). In contrast to that, the guiding principle of the society of control, namely the corporation, is understood as a "spirit" (1992: 4) and therefore, by definition, as being without fixed shape and materiality. Control mechanisms are inseparable variations of one modulation and therefore refer to a numerical language, the formation of which was accompanied by the development of computers. The computational technologies, in particular, intensify the connection between the different societal spheres as "*metastable* states coexisting in one and the same modulation, like a universal system of deformation" (1992: 5, emphasis added). This transformation of society is deeply connected with, and indicative of, a mutation of capitalism, particularly evident in the process of the replacement of the factory by the corporation. As a space of enclosure, the factory fulfilled several purposes: it concentrated, distributed, and ordered individuals in time and space with the aim of bringing together its internal forces in such a way as to allow for the lowest possible wages and the highest possible production. Deleuze thus characterises the capitalism of the nineteenth century as being focused on concentration, production, and property; capitalists owned the means of production and, based on the factory as an organisational unit, profit was mainly generated by reducing the costs of production and thereby increasing what, following Marx, is known as surplus value. In the course of the transformation from disciplinary societies to societies of control, the model of the factory has been replaced by the model of the corporation (cf. 1992: 3-6). Now, capitalism is "no longer a capitalism for production but for the product, which is to say, for being sold or marketed" (1992: 6). As the defining feature of this new form of capitalism, the model of the corporation thus increasingly undermines the former basis for critique and resistance, namely the assembling of individuals into one collective body, as was the case in unionised forms of mass resistance. Due to its logic of modulation, this new form of capitalism transforms individuals into dividuals, because the logic of the corporation "presents the brashest rivalry as a healthy form of emulation, an ex-

cellent motivational force that opposes individuals against one another and runs through each, dividing each within" (1992: 5, cf. ibid.: 3-6).

The development of capitalism which Deleuze refers to was first characterised by the enlargement, centralisation, and bureaucratisation of industrial firms, the end of family capitalism, the separation of ownership and management, mass production, product standardisation, the rational organisation of work, the emergence of marketing practices as well as strengthened workers' rights, with the organisation, the manager and management methods at the centre (cf. Boltanski/Chiapello 2018: 17-19, 64-70). In the following phase, the increase of capitalist actors[2] – which in a way led to the globalisation of capitalism, to the constant technological development of machinery as well as to the increasing importance of information technology – resulted in intensified competition (cf. 2018: 70-75). The outcome of this development is the idea of "*lean* firms working as *networks* with a multitude of participants, organizing work in the form of teams or *projects*, intent on customer satisfaction, and a general mobilization of workers thanks to their leaders' *vision*" (2018: 73).[3]

According to Deleuze, societies of control are characterised by a numerical language consisting of codes "that mark access to information or reject it" (1992: 5). Information becomes the central source of productivity and profit in an "economic universe where the main source of value added is no longer the exploitation of geographically located resources (like mines, or especially fertile land), or the exploitation of labour force at work, but the ability to take full advantage of the most diverse kinds of knowledge, to interpret and combine them, to make or circulate innovations" (Boltanski/Chiapello 2018: 75). Thus, "firms [and their staff] are going to become 'learners'" (2018: 76). While the individual in disciplinary societies never stopped starting over and over again, "passing from one closed environment to another" (Deleuze 1992: 3, cf. ibid.: 4-5), the individual in societies of control is never "finished with anything" (1992: 5).

However, this new setting of capitalism – in which work is organised around transborder networks and projects between workers who are geographically dispersed – also requires new forms of control, as the spaces of enclosure and their particular forms of control – the distribution and ordering of people in space and time (cf. Deleuze 1992: 3) – no longer exist. The answer to the task of "'[c]ontrolling the uncontrollable'" (Boltanski/Chiapello 2018: 80) is therefore self-control. In an ongoing process of capitalistic

[2] From the 1960s to the 1990s, the formerly "free, capitalistic world – Western Europe and the United States" (Boltanski/Chiapello 2018: 72) – was confronted with "the emergence of a third capitalistic pole in Asia. […] Japan, […] followed by the four dragons (Taiwan, South Korea, Singapore and Hong Kong)" (ibid.: 72).

[3] In section III, we will take a closer look at the transformation of capitalism, which, following Boltanski and Chiapello, corresponds to a specific 'spirit of capitalism' and its (lost) ability to justify the participation in the accumulation process.

transformation, individuals must not only internalise the previously externally generated control mechanisms, which are also consistent with the objectives of the company, but 'become a company' themselves. In a connexionist world, individuals are the "product of a labour of self-fashioning" (2018: 154, cf. ibid.: 75-76, 80-81). Or as Wendy Brown puts it: "As neoliberal rationality remakes the human being as human capital, an earlier rendering of *homo oeconomicus* as an interest maximizer gives way to a formulation of the subject as both a member of a firm and as itself a firm, and in both cases as appropriately conducted by the governance practices appropriate to firms" (2015: 34). Following Brown, today, the *homo oeconomicus* is constantly trying to increase its value and to enlarge its portfolio (cf. 2015: 32-35).[4] In this context, the organisation of work in teams and projects offers always new possibilities to do that.[5] This description corresponds to Deleuze's observation that more and more young people express their desire for further education and training (cf. 1992: 7). The mechanisms of control are therefore less obvious and much more difficult to reveal, or as Deleuze puts it: "The coils of a serpent are even more complex than the burrows of a molehill" (1992: 7).

III. 'The New Spirit of Capitalism': Indignation as a Source for an Ever-Renewable Articulation of Critique

Identifying and revealing those tortuous and complex mechanisms of control and power is, however, the precondition for critique and resistance. As we shall see, the possibilities for critique and resistance in capitalist societies, regardless of their specific form and the underlying mechanisms of control, are inherent in the control system itself and, in fact, constitutive of it.

As we have seen in section II, capitalism is subject to change. According to Boltanski and Chiapello, the competition among capitalists results in the finding of new ways of generating profits, whether in the development of new technologies or products or in attempts to expand the sphere of commodities and establish monopolies, which in turn alter the accumulation process. In accordance with Albert O. Hirschman, Boltanski and Chiapello conceive this kind of change of capitalism as a reaction to what they call 'exit critique'. Exit critique means the expression or practice of refusal, e.g. the refusal to consume or to be employed. Capitalism reacts to these forms of critique and seeks to reduce the possibilities for refusal, e.g. through building monopolies or through the (technological) increase of convenience for consumers (cf. Boltanski/Chiapello 2018: 42, 489).

[4] For Brown's understanding and discussion of the concept of *homo oeconomicus*, which is contrasted with the concept of *homo politicus*, see Brown 2015: 79-111.
[5] Though this is not our focus in this article, it would be interesting to compare the three forms of the capitalist 'spirit' and the circumstances of their formation elaborated by Boltanski and Chiapello more closely with the emergence and expansion of the neoliberal rationality described by Brown.

However, exit critique does not provide a sufficient explanation for changes in the ideological orientation of capitalism. Since social arrangements "are subject to an imperative of justification[,] […] [they] tend to incorporate reference to a kind of very general convention directed towards a common good, and claiming universal validity" (2018: 22)[6] Thus, capitalism is subject to this imperative, too, always in need of providing a moral dimension it does not entail by definition.[7]

In order to provide sufficient reason for participation, capitalism must convincingly point out individual and collective benefits in terms of autonomy (freedom and self-realisation), the common good, and justice. This is the case on an abstract as well as on a concrete, localised level and every-day basis (cf. Boltanski/Chiapello 2018: 7-16, 485-88).[8] To do so, capitalism equips itself with an ideology, that is, a "set of beliefs associated with the capitalist order that helps to justify this order and, by legitimating them, to sustain the forms of action and predispositions compatible with it" (2018: 10). Therefore, Boltanski and Chiapello speak of a "spirit of capitalism" (2018: 8).[9] In a process of acculturation, the spirit of capitalism incorporates already existing beliefs which guarantee a high degree of legitimacy at a given time and remodels and aligns them with the necessities of the accumulation process (cf. 2018: 12-16, 20-22). As Boltanski and Chiapello point out, the reflectivity of this spirit is twofold, geared toward the necessities of the accumulation process, on the one hand, and the demand for justification, on the other. In this constellation, critique, following Boltanski and Chiapello, functions as a critical reference point. It calls attention to where capitalism violates demands for justice and loses legitimation, e.g. by challenging existing justifications. Capitalism per se is not responsive to the demand for moral justifications; therefore, these justifications, as well as their violation, have to be pointed out to it, which means to its reflective spirit. Only the confrontation with critique enables this spirit of capitalism to reflect on the moments when the invoked justifications are losing their mobilising power, and thus adapt to a new ideological configuration by incorporating other or new justifications. Hence, the

[6] To conceptualise those beliefs, Boltanski and Chiapello draw upon the model of the 'city' developed by Boltanski and Thévenot (1991). A city is conceived as a specific logic of justification that entails guaranteed beliefs which determine what is to be considered just with regards to the status of a person in a social order. The basis of this judgment of value are principles of equivalence. At a specific point in time, different logics of justification can be invoked in a given society (cf. Boltanski/Chiapello 2018: 23-24, 103 ff., 147-88; Boltanski/Thévenot 1991).

[7] Boltanski and Chiapello understand capitalism on the basis of a "minimal formula stressing an *imperative to unlimited accumulation of capital by formally peaceful means"* (2018: 4, see ibid.: 4-7).

[8] For an elaboration of why wage or force are (in general) not sufficient or reliable sources of participation in the process of accumulation, see Boltanski/Chiapello 2018: 7-12, 485-87. To elaborate a description of the actual spirit of capitalism, the authors focus on (French) management discourse, as it addresses executive and managerial staff to whom they assign a central role in capitalism. As a link between the firm and its employees, their persuasion by and involvement in the accumulation process is regarded to be crucial (cf. 2018: 12-16).

[9] Boltanski and Chiapello understand ideology not as "a moralizing discourse, intended to conceal material interests, which is constantly contradicted by practice", but as a "set of shared beliefs, inscribed in institutions, bound up with actions, and hence anchored in reality" (2018: 3).

capitalist ideology simultaneously legitimates and constrains the accumulation process because putting forward some justifications entails rejecting others. Claiming to comply with certain demands for justice means in turn to be measured by that compliance. Therefore, it is possible to make distinctions between supposedly legitimate forms of profit and illegitimate ones, between just forms of enrichment and unjust ones, between licit forms of accumulation and illicit ones (Boltanski/Chiapello 2018: 22-27, 486-88). The dynamic between capitalism, in the form of its spirit, and critique plays itself out in so-called 'tests' (cf. 2018: 22-43, 485-91).[10]

In contrast to the above-mentioned exit critique, the critique that plays itself out in tests literally gives voice to violations of justice and thus influences the spirit of capitalism – and, by implication, capitalism itself. According to Boltanski and Chiapello, the precondition to formulate 'voice-critique' arises from the feeling of indignation. Feeling uneasy with certain aspects of capitalism can lead to protest, regardless of whether one is directly affected – e.g. exploited employees – or whether it is the fate of others that motivates this criticism (cf. Boltanski/Chiapello 2018: 36-43). The ability to be responsive to feelings like indignation is a condition sine qua non for human beings, as the forms of indignation "may be regarded as emotional expressions of a meta-ethical anchorage, and concern infringements that are believed, at least implicitly, to affect people's possibilities of realising their humanity" (2018: 491).[11] The basis for critique thus exists at all times. To be effective, however, it is crucial that critique is able to give expression to emotionally experienced suffering in terms of an articulated framework that designates the concrete violations of justice by referring to a specific logic of justification concerning justice and the common good. Therefore, both critique and the spirit of capitalism draw on the same principles for justifying and criticising the accumulation process respectively (cf. 2018: 20-35). With regard to the criticism of capitalism, Boltanski and Chiapello identify four sources of indignation, which are typically expressed in the form of what they conceptualise as either 'artistic' or 'social' critique.

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[10] To describe those situations in which capitalism is confronted with critique, that is, with the demand for justification, Boltanski and Chiapello use the concept of the 'test'. In those tests the legitimacy of used resources and the level of conventionalisation, e.g. in laws, can be criticised, or the legitimacy of the test itself can be rejected. Those tests examine whether the conditions of accumulation comply with the normative demands of the social order (cf. Boltanski/Chiapello 2018: 24-35).

[11] According to Boltanski and Chiapello, people are never going to identify completely with the requirements of capitalism. This argument derives from the fact that people belong to multiple lived worlds and have therefore internalised different values, which may conflict with the insatiable character of capitalism (cf. Boltanski/Chiapello 2018: 486-87). This is what Brown (2015) conceives as fundamentally threatened by the expansion of the neoliberal rationality, in the course of which the *homo politicus* is entirely replaced by the *homo oeconomicus* in all spheres of human and political life and the capacity for critique is lost. Boltanski and Chiapello also consider this possibility: "Perhaps these tendencies [to insatiability] would be unbounded if human beings knew only one kind of goods and only one way of attaining them. But one-dimensional individuals of this variety – close to the fiction of *Homo oeconomicus* – would not grow indignant at anything, would have no compassion for anyone, or any critical spirit" (2018: 487). However, in contrast to Brown, they conclude that "[t]here would no longer be anything distinctively human about them" (ibid.).

Artistic critique is a critique of disenchantment, inauthenticity, and oppression. Artistic critique complains about the loss of the relevance and substance of beauty and value in both artistic and everyday life contexts. The reason for this loss stems from standardisation and commodification produced by the capitalist economisation of all spheres of society. Artistic critique stresses that capitalism, on the one hand, dominates human beings through market mechanisms which decide about inclusion or exclusion, valuable and worthless things, while, on the other hand, oppressing them through the control of waged labour in the form of bureaucracy and hierarchy, and through the monitoring of work and various dependencies. This stands in contrast to the wish for freedom, creativity, and autonomy. Social critique, on the other hand, draws its arguments from the societal problem of poverty and inequality as well as from opportunism and egoism as sources of indignation. As the motives for indignation often contradict each other, e.g. regarding individualism, it is difficult to integrate both artistic and social critique within a single framework. The relationship between artistic and social critique is therefore frequently marked by a certain tension (cf. Boltanski/Chiapello 2018: 36-40, 70).

When it comes to reality tests, critique can affect the spirit of capitalism in different ways. If critique, in general, acknowledges the invoked principles of justification but identifies violations of justice when it comes to their concrete implementation, e.g. regarding workers' rights or the level of wages, it can aim at correcting injustice and reform the test by increasing the level of conventionalisation. But if the critique refers to other principles of justification, the validity of the test itself is rejected. In these cases, critique attempts to completely replace the tests with new ones and therefore manifests itself as more radical (cf. Boltanski/Chiapello 2018: 32-33).

The spirit of capitalism can, in turn, react in three different ways: The first option is acknowledging reformist critique and increasing the degree of conventionalisation – or proving the critique wrong. The second option is acknowledging radical critique by incorporating new tests. The third option is evading critique by way of displacement, e.g. if the costs for restoring its own legitimacy seem too high, or if the criticism has revealed the illegitimate use of resources, something which (should the critique be acknowledged) results in a decline of profit. If capitalism reacts with displacement, capitalism disarms critique[12] in the short run, because it completely eludes the test, that is, capitalism does not even attempt to justify the test anymore. The spirit thus incorporates other tests which critique has not focused on before, and which are therefore less strict and codified. As capitalism escapes some constraints by displacement, it loses parts of the justification that has legitimised the commitment to the accumulation process before. In such a situation, the crucial question is whether capitalism can rely on other justifica-

[12] If critique is disarmed, it means that it is (temporarily) unable to translate "indignation into the framework of critical theories, and then voicing it" (Boltanski/Chiapello 2018: 36), not that the source for critique – indignation – is lost (cf. ibid.).

tions, e.g. from radical critique, which derive from distinct principles of justice (cf. Boltanski/Chiapello 2018: 28-30, 33-35). This is how critique influences the spirit of capitalism or – if capitalism reacts with displacement – capitalism itself. The justifications incorporated in the spirit of capitalism are therefore not fixed but vary over time, because they depend on the dynamics of different expectations of different actors in their specific historical constellations, social orders, and particular life worlds (cf. 2018: 12-16, 24-27).

In their study, Boltanski and Chiapello identify a new ideological configuration of the spirit of capitalism since the 1980s. In the course of capitalist development, this 'third' spirit was preceded by two other ideal-typical forms of the spirit of capitalism, which exemplify the variability of the ideological configuration.[13] At the end of the 19th century, the first spirit was congruent with the forms of a capitalism that was still organised around family businesses, with the bourgeois entrepreneur at the centre. At that time, employers and employees were personally known in relatively small-sized firms (cf. 2018: 16-19, 24).[14] From around the 1930s to the 1960s, when industrialisation and technological developments changed the basis of accumulation, the spirit adopted a new ideological configuration to maintain its mobilising power. With this industrial capitalism, the 'second' spirit shifted the focus from the bourgeois entrepreneur to the manager, and from the small family businesses to large industrial and highly bureaucratised companies, which increasingly recruited qualified managerial personnel. Mass production, product standardisation, the rational organisation of work, and the beginning of marketing were characteristic for this phase (cf. 2018: 17-19).

The changes that occurred in the course of the transformation from industrial capitalism to its current form led to a crisis of capitalism in the 1960s and 1970s, when the second spirit of capitalism was faced with a massive increase in both social and artistic critique. At that time, financial markets and merger-acquisition activities were restructured by government policies aimed at making labour more flexible (cf. Boltanski/Chiapello 2018: l). Among the effects of these developments were "impoverishment of the population of working age, regular increase in unemployment and job insecurity, stagnation in income from work" (2018: li) as well as growing inequalities regarding income distribution. The critique of these developments was therefore typically articulated by workers who were mobilised by highly organised unions, using the rhetoric of exploitation and egoism. At the same time, students, intellectuals, and managerial staff criticised, on the one hand, inauthenticity and dehumanisation caused by technicisation and, on the other hand, bureaucratic domination, hierarchical structures, fixed working

[13] Although, Boltanski and Chiapello focus their analyses on the French case from the period of May 1968 to the late 1990s, they are positive that similar developments can be identified in other so-called developed countries (cf. 2018: 3-4).
[14] To illustrate the dynamic between capitalism and its critique, in the following we will only sketch some developments, without claiming to recapitulate Boltanski and Chiapello's argument in its entirety.

hours and work assignments, and insufficient co-determination within the corporations, because of which autonomy, freedom, and creativity were perceived to be lost (cf. 2018: 19, 169-77). Criticism in terms of social critique was first acknowledged by employers within the established tests and among the known actors. Unions managed to make the tests stricter and negotiated benefits in terms of wages and security (cf. 2018: 199, detailed: 178-84). Regarding these aspects, the spirit incorporated the critique and constrained the process of accumulation in a specific regard. However, when the corporations were faced with the challenge of looking for new ways to compensate for the granted benefits in reaction to the critique of exploitation and egoism (which persisted despite the concessions made), they gradually imposed displacements which enabled them to circumvent the established tests regarding the organisation of work by seemingly meeting the artistic critique's demands for autonomy and creativity. However, since the second half of the 1970s, the implementation of flexible working hours, subcontracting in connection with temping and other forms of hiring on a temporary basis, part-time work, and the establishment of different forms of labour contracts within the same company led to rising inequality, job insecurity, a segmentation of the wage-earning class, reduced protection of workers, and an increased workload without wage increase. As the tests social critique had referred to were suspended, social critique was disoriented, and it became possible to shift the wage-profit relation in favour of the companies again. Due to the spirit of capitalism's ability to incorporate artistic critique while dismantling social critique, capitalism experienced a reinvigoration in the 1980s and 1990s (cf. 2018: 184-95, 199-202, 217-54).

How to evaluate, on the one hand, the third spirit in terms of its mobilising power today, and, on the other hand, critique in terms of its ability to identify the central tests of today's capitalism, requires a separate analysis. What should have become clear at this point is that capitalism benefits only temporarily from the disempowerment of critique. Even if capitalism initially liberates itself from limiting constraints, seeking to stabilise and extend its forms of accumulation without being chained to tightened, institutionalised tests regarding workers' rights, growing inequality, or the division between wages and profits, it must at the same time provide new justifications for participation in the accumulation process. But it is precisely the absence of critique which makes the spirit of capitalism unaware of the injustices and inequalities it produces, and which sooner or later leads to a waning of its legitimacy and mobilising power. Therefore, the absence of critique may simply indicate the next crisis of capitalism. The question of whether there are new forces to resist capitalism is thus a twofold one: On the one hand, the answer is yes, because indignation as a source of critique never disappears. On the other hand, the articulation of critique depends upon its ability to identify the crucial tests in present-day society, to then point out violations of justice and demand their correction in a reformist way, or to radically reject the test altogether (cf. Boltanski/ Chiapello 2018: 32-35). Concerning this process of once more restricting capitalism and

tying it to principles of justice and the common good, Boltanski and Chiapello stress the importance of the law, because the law entails normative requirements – which originate from non-juridical social arrangements that are subject to an imperative of justification – as well as the possibility to enforce them by means of coercion and punishment. Capitalism must be exposed to a vigorous and credible critique on a high level, as this would increase the pressure on political actors who can legislate laws to clarify and codify the decisive test in contemporary capitalism (cf. 2018: 399-400). While artistic critique seems to still be disarmed by its incorporation into this evolving third spirit of capitalism, the chances for a comeback of social critique are rising. Indeed, a reinvigoration of social critique appears more likely as the new form of capitalism – with growing inequality and poverty as well as a widening gap between the rich and the poor – increasingly lacks sufficient mobilising power regarding a common good. Critique, then, has to reformulate the categories of exploitation and exclusion in the context of a "connexionist world" (2018: 345, cf. ibid.: 345-98).

IV. 'Becoming-Resistance': From 'if-then' to 'what-if'

In the last section of his Postscript, Deleuze asks whether "the rough outlines of these coming forms [of resistance], capable of threatening the joys of marketing" (1990: 7) can be already grasped – even though the effects of control, within the different areas of society and economy, appear to be all-embracing. There is no simple answer, since it is not obvious whether Deleuze himself identified the same forms of resistance 30 years ago as we would today. And neither is it evident that Deleuze's reference to resistant actions is meant in an explicitly political sense.[15] Our purpose here is to explore the way in which Deleuze's remarks on the 'coming forms' can be understood along the lines of a process of political subjectification in terms of the idea of 'becoming-resistance'. As we have already mentioned in the introduction, the expression 'becoming-resistance' is not to be understood in terms of a Copernican revolution of the capitalist system. Maybe that is the reason why Boltanski and Chiapello are so sceptical of a critical dimension in Deleuze and Guattari's approach to the capitalist structures of the societies of control. Pointing out that the prevailing narratives of management advice literature often resemble the narratives of the intellectual and artistic critique of capitalism, they accuse Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the 'rhizome' of being rather affirmative of the new spirit of capitalism. And here, they may in fact have a point:

> Thus, for example, the qualities that are guarantees of success in this new spirit – autonomy, spontaneity, rhizomorphous capacity, multitasking (in contrast to the narrow specialization of the old division of labour), conviviality, openness to oth-

[15] For a discussion of whether Deleuze can also be understood as a political theorist, see Penfield 2014.

> ers and novelty, availability, creativity, visionary intuition, sensitivity to differences, listening to lived experience and receptiveness to a whole range of experiences, being attracted to informality and the search for interpersonal contacts – these are taken directly from the repertoire of May 1968. (Boltanski/Chiapello 2018: 97)

However, Boltanski and Chiapello's discerning reflection on the capitalist usurpation of intellectual and artistic critique misses Deleuze's purpose in the Postscript of first of all understanding and reflecting on the predicted new forms of control within a globalised capitalist system. Being more an analyst than a critic (cf. Nathan 2011: 1), Deleuze's purpose is to pose a question concerning the characteristics of the historic shift from disciplinary societies to the societies of control. Endowed with a good sense of future challenges, he observes the situation at the beginning of the turn of the millennium – the era of the revolution in information and communication technology – when writing:

> The old societies of sovereignty made use of simple machines – levers, pulley, clocks; but the recent disciplinary societies equipped themselves with machines involving energy, with the passive danger of entropy and the active danger of sabotage; the societies of control operate with machines of a third type, computers, whose passive danger is jamming and whose active one is piracy and the introduction of viruses. (1992: 6)

Talking about the passive and active dangers of the digitised era and its corresponding computer technologies is not to be confused with a moralistic warning against processes of cultural decay or the loss of specific cultural techniques. Instead, Deleuze clear-sightedly analyses the capitalistic essence of the societies of control, where control is not executed by individuals or institutions but, quasi anonymously, by the societal structures themselves. According to, e.g., Sara Baranzoni (2016), borrowing the term from Antoinette Rouveroy and Thomas Berns (2013), the current societies of control are characterised by an 'algorithmic governmentality'. Rouveroy and Berns use the term algorithmic governmentality to describe a certain type of calculation "founded on the automated collection, aggregation and analysis of big data so as to model, anticipate and pre-emptively affect possible behaviours" (2013: x). As such, algorithms may not be 'problematic' in a functional sense. Technically speaking, algorithms are finite, self-contained processes of calculation and aggregation performed by computational systems that produce data profiles, with the help of which future decisions and patterns of behaviour of individuals can be evaluated and predicted. Whereas algorithms are initially simple operations that can be carried out by human beings as well as by machines, they turn out to be a system of governmentality insofar as individuals are no longer the actors behind these operations. Instead, actors are confronted with a big data-based, non-transparent control system produced by high-power machines that are not tied to the democratic public but are in the service of private-public partnership institutions and private companies. Since the modes of operation and the usage rules of algorithms

do not match the requirements of equality, transparency, and the public will, their functioning is presently removed from collective access and political control by the democratic public. As Rouveroy points out, the "impacts of the computational turn on governmentality are far from trivial. The constant 'adaptation' of environments to individual and collective 'profiles' produced by 'data intelligence' [...] is an unprecedented mode of government" (2012: 143). In this regard, Deleuze proves to be a prophet when he depicts an algorithm-based reality in terms of "impersonal, disparate, and dividualized facets of daily life and interactions, where multiplicity is reduced to the impersonality of patterns, independent of any system of differentiation, and immanence reduced to an ideology directed towards the exhaustion of the virtual" (Baranzoni 2016: 46). The result is an asymmetrical power relation between those who are controlled as citizens and consumers (even if they have the impression of having the control over the computer programs), on the one hand, and the control system, on the other. In view of the fact that the practically unlimited collection of mass data of individuals from most countries all over the world is organised by only a few large multinational corporations, the question arises whether there is a realistic option to resist such asymmetric control structures and gain political power in the decision-making processes in order to change the (globalised) capitalist setting. Since digital technologies have become relevant for nearly every aspect of human life – from learning at school or universities to healthcare, communication, consumption or public services – it seems almost impossible, nor desirable, to withdraw from technologies in a networked world. Given the inevitability of an algorithmically generated reality, it is all the more important to take a critical attitude towards the asymmetrical power relations that are produced by numerical operations in the service of non-transparent actors – as long as their functionality is not controlled by a democratic public. Until then, non-transparently executed control by players who are not democratically elected and whose power is not democratically controlled remains a mode of domination. In view of the mode of algorithmic governmentality, digital information is practically out of the hands of the individuals.

As self-contained, finite processes, algorithms can be conceived as functioning according to a specific 'if-then' logic (cf. MacKenzie 2018: 125). Given this specific logic, which leads to the closure of the system of domination, Iain MacKenzie examines the possibility of critique and resistance within control societies. With special regard to Deleuze's works, he identifies the possibilities for critique and resistance in the figure of the subject as a learner. According to MacKenzie, it is the human being who, because of her capacity to think creatively, can challenge the automatised mechanism of the 'if-then' conditioning and transform it into a 'what-if' question (cf. 2018: 129). For MacKenzie, what makes a difference is this capacity of creatively conceiving an alternative which is not merely another operation of calculation. Yet, it is not the mere capacity to learn which distinguishes human beings from machines. In a technical sense, a machine may learn more efficiently than a human being – but only a human being is able to voluntarily

act against the rules of a given logic of learning, e.g. the logic of 'if-then' conditions. Only a human being is able to *commit* herself to a learning process, and for MacKenzie, this is exactly the core of the argument of the learner as the subjective figure of resistance. The individual's capacity for commitment is a necessary requirement for any reflection on the circumstances of the algorithmic governmentality and for acquiring the comprehensive knowledge needed to transform the given regime of knowledge and imagine an alternative – that is, in Deleuze's terms, to think *difference* (cf. MacKenzie 2018: 120). In the process of thinking difference, the individual opens up a vacant space, a creative lacuna that a machine could neither identify nor appreciate as the very opportunity to pose the question of 'what-if'. Certainly, a machine would not be able to enjoy this lacuna as a non-predefined, unconditioned task representing a chance to escape the inevitability of the 'if-then' mode. In this respect, the unconditioned dealing with the conditioned is the preeminent virtue of the human individual. This capacity to think and act unconventionally predestines human beings for critique. For MacKenzie, being critical and being resistant must be conceived as intertwined insofar as the learning process *could* result in the awareness of a momentum for 'becoming-resistance'. The learning process can be initiated – among other motives – by the feeling of indignation. Affections like indignation, outrage, or disgust can trigger the individual's willingness to scrutinise given situations and structures of control and to commit herself to a learning process that involves the imagination of different possibilities. For the area of product marketing, e.g., Boltanski and Esquerre point out that the algorithmic calculation of individuals' behaviour patterns cannot entirely match the complexity and contingency of wishes and needs, because aggregated data assign the individual merely to certain categories built upon selectively available information (cf. 2017: 217).[16] Even if it is only the discomfort with the unfulfilled promises of capitalism (and not the elaborated critique of social theory) that gives rise to the feeling of indignation, it may nevertheless be an incentive for the imagination of difference.

To a certain extent, MacKenzie's perception of the learning process as a process of subjectification departs from Deleuze's concept of difference and can better be linked to Jacques Rancière's conception of political subjectification: "Politics is a matter of […] modes of subjectification. By *subjectification* I mean the production through a series of actions of a body and a capacity for enunciation not previously identifiable within a given field of experience, whose identification is thus part of the reconfiguration of the field of experience." (Rancière 1999: 35) What Rancière calls 'reconfiguration of the field of experience' can be denoted as 'learning' in the Deleuzean sense. 'Learning' does not mean to simply reproduce given data but to reconsider them ('what-if?') in order to cre-

[16] Boltanski and Esquerre present this argument in connection with the proliferation of the so-called standard form, in the course of which the relationship between human beings and objects is transformed. In the mechanical reproduction of a prototype, the produced object does not inherit particular qualities of the producer (which stands in contrast to handcrafted objects) (cf. Boltanski/Esquerre 2017: 209-17).

ate alternative data and different settings of actions. Instead of obedience to the "perpetual training" (Deleuze 1992: 7) that is typical of the managerial self in capitalism, Deleuze in *Difference and Repetition* formulates a concept that stands in stark contrast to a mechanical concept of learning: "We never know in advance how someone will learn: by means of what loves someone becomes good at Latin, what encounters make them a philosopher, or in what dictionaries they learn to think" (1994: 165). Within the contingency of the individual's commitment to the process of learning, even including the contingency of her emotions – such as enthusiasm or indignation, joy or disgust, love or outrage – there is always the possibility of a 'what-if?'. And every 'what-if?' contains a starting point for resisting the logic of control, a starting point for reflecting on alternatives, and not least a starting point for practically breaking, by way of political action, the supposedly inevitable logic of control. In Rancière's terminology: "For a political subject – and therefore for politics – to come to pass, it is necessary to break with this logic" (2010: 30).

V. Conclusion

As Rancière points out, political actors do not emerge ex nihilo, they create and define themselves by "instances of experience of a dispute" (1999: 36). Dispute, dissent, refraction, and rupture are part of the essential vocabulary of Rancière's theory of radical democracy. He conceptualises the importance of dissent and rupture for the emergence of political practices in terms of a process of critical and resistant subjectification. In this respect, the Deleuzean figure of the learning subject might shed some light on the role of dissent, because the moments of dispute and rupture are often motivated by affects such as indignation or outrage. As we have already mentioned, it is not the fiction of the *homo oeconomicus* who can grow indignant, not the one-dimensional individual, it is the learning subject who can feel compassion for others and be a critical spirit (cf. Boltanski/Chiapello 2018: 487). That does not mean that indignation and outrage necessarily lead to the moment of collective becoming-resistance but that there is always a potential for new forms of resistance to come. This is similar to what Deleuze asks for in his Postscript, when he writes that "[t]here is no need to fear or hope, but only to look for new weapons" (1992: 4). It seems that Deleuze did not have in mind the classical types of institutionalised political fighting, as they had long been on the agenda of unions in the age of disciplinary societies. Indeed, it is doubtful whether the unions' former power of critique and resistance still exists in societies of control, for due to the prevailing ideology of individualised personal responsibility, traditional forms of class-related solidarity have been severely weakened. The question if there are new forces to resist today's and tomorrow's capitalism is therefore a twofold one: On the one hand, the answer is no, because there is no collective subject already in the making to succeed the unions. On

the other hand, the answer is a cautious yes, because we can observe a growing breeding ground for indignation as a source of critique and resistance, although the actual processes of political subjectification are not completely identifiable yet.

Already in the early 1970s, in a joint interview, Deleuze and Foucault shared the anticipatory observation that the various revolutionary movements were about to create multiple centres – and this not, as Deleuze argues, "as the result of weakness or insufficiency" (Deleuze/Foucault 1977: 216) but because of increasing totalisation within the societies of control. He is uncertain of how to define the diverse networks and transborder connections between the discontinuous actions of critique and resistance all over the globe, movements that were then emerging and that did not understand themselves as part of the classical struggle of the workers anymore. He could not foresee that the traditional influence of the former protagonists in the fight against capitalism, like the unions, would increasingly vanish in the following 50 years. However, 30 years after the publication of the Postscript, we might agree with Foucault's response to Deleuze that different experiences of being oppressed lead individuals to diverse struggles which can no longer be identified in terms of class contradictions. Yet, the very point is to recognise that all these particular struggles by women, homosexuals, prisoners, hospital patients, or conscripted soldiers could be understood as connected to each other "to the extent that they fight against the controls and constraints which serve the same system of power" (Deleuze/Foucault 1977: 216).

It can thus be assumed that the most likely and most necessary forms of critique and resistance will be based on alliances between individuals with diverse and even ideologically oppositional positions – people, that is, who become creative learners and are open to come together in joint processes of subjectification which may lead to "nouvelles formes de communauté" (Deleuze 1986: 123) that are yet unknown. Collectively posing the question of 'what-if?' would be a first step. In the present moment, we witness the emergence of some of these diverse and dispersed forms of critique and resistance which turn into bigger movements all over the world, quite distinct from traditional forms such as unions or political parties. It may not be a coincidence that many young people are currently inspired by a schoolgirl to establish a mass movement in a surprisingly short time. Through their political strikes, they put existing slogans into practice – e.g. "Time for Outrage. Indignez-vous!" (Hessel 2011). By means of their strike against the current climate policy, the teenagers carry the process of creative learning onto the streets. This form of learning, which seems to differ from that taking place under the control of the school system, could unite a generation in a political subjectification process. Following their prominent Swedish role model Greta Thunberg, the striking pupils literally transform outrage into a common creative learning process, whose outcome remains open. In any case, this sign of indignation might be a spark of hope for a less capitalist future and a rupture in the neoliberal rationality.

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