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The Critique of the Political Economy of Organization as a Genealogy of Power

The critique of the political economy of organization (CPEO) enjoys an independent theoretical status distinct from a universalist and rationalist concept of organization. Instead of a neutralist concept that views organization in terms of the mediation of interests, efficiency, and maximum utility, the CPEO focuses on differentiating, excluding, and selecting mechanisms: in short, the power exercised by the organizational form. Thus, rather than treating organization as a ubiquitous phenomenon of universal history, the CPEO approaches it as a mobile system of relations and syntheses that provides the historical conditions for the material and institutional existence of organizations, of a specific "organizational" knowledge, and of the (organizational) forms of subjectivization. Organization may then be analyzed as a phenomenon specific to the modern world and as a central element in the constitution and establishment of bourgeois domination.

The CPEO method resembles the principles of analysis on which Foucault's "genealogy of power" rests. Foucault's books operationalize a historical-critical method of inquiry that calls into question presumably self-evident and patent truths in regard to their power effects. Just as for Foucault "madness," "sexuality," or "delinquency" are not an-

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thropological constants, historical universals, or essences existing outside of time, in the CPEO organization is not a general phenomenon of human history but a specific historical-cultural form--a social relation which serves as an important condition for the existence of capitalism and the modern state. The point I shall try to make is that in situating the phenomenon "organization" in a historical and political context, the CPEO is undertaking nothing less than a "genealogy of organization."

I should first like to take up some points reflecting the theoretical affinity between the critique of the political economy of organization and Foucault's "genealogy of power." The brief comments below, however, are less intended as a systematic comparison-space alone precludes that possibility--than they are an attempt, by way of contrasting the two theoretical perspectives, to show how the CPEO differs from mainstream organizational sociology. The first section especially sets out in explicit form the historical and theoretical premises of the two approaches by way of comparison and contrast. In the second section, I attempt to show the analytical fruitfulness of such a confrontation by taking Foucault's concept of a "critique of political anatomy" a step further and applying his method in a critical sociology of organization. The (clearly quite illegitimate) child of this union will be presented in the third section. Drawing on the works of the anthropologist Emily Martin and the historian of science Donna Haraway, I examine the changes undergone by representations of the body (individual and collective) over the past few decades with respect to the conceptions of order and organization incorporated in them. The idea is that a clearly identifiable concept of the body demarcated by fixed boundaries is finally replaced by a much more flexible conception of the body as an immune system which leads to a recoding of social asymmetries and a "modernization" of organizational domination.

A genealogy of organization

Let us first look more closely at the distinction between the analytic approaches of the philosophy of history and vulgar materialism, on the one hand, and the specific version of historical materialism to be found in the works of Foucault and the CPEO approach, on the other. It is my thesis that these two theoretical traditions distinguish themselves through their consistent skepticism vis-à-vis anthropological constants and natural laws.

Contrary to what many interpreters assume, Foucault's books do not give us a history of *madness, disease, crime*, etc., but a history of the conditions under which it came to be accepted as fact that certain abnormalities are regarded as mental illness, that disease is treated as a dysfunction of individual anatomy, and that lawbreakers should be incarcerated as delinquents. When in his books he inquires into the "genesis" or the "origin" of sexuality, madness, etc., he does not treat them as "phenomena" that are to be traced back to, or derived from, some more fundamental "essence" (whether that be the economic base, political domination, or human nature). He is not concerned with reducing singularities to universals or phenomena to essences, but on the contrary, for him the task of genealogy is to decipher universals themselves as historical singularities (see Foucault 1992b, 34-36; 1994, 23-24).

Similarly, the CPEO refers to the "special, independent history" of organization (Türk 1995, 44) to counter all forms of historical and theoretical reductionism. On the assumption that organization in principle does not exist, the CPEO raises the question of which different elements and practices make it possible for something like "organization" to have historical reality and possess factual consistency. If organization does not exist as a universal, what forms of knowledge and what practices are responsible for giving this "illusion" and "imagination" a historical reality? How is it that organizations are regarded as a productive and selfevident form of human association, and how is it that there are no theoretical categories for purposeful, collective activities that take place outside or beyond the organizational form? Organization is, according to the "constructivist approach" of the CPEO (Türk 1995, 45), a historical "invention" and not a natural given. This, however, does not mean that "organization" has simply been an ideological fiction, but rather that it is a hegemonic discourse and a "mode of existence" (see Maihofer 1995) that is not only socially produced or constructed, but is also lived. To that extent, organizations "should be seen as blueprints that are generated by forms of thought inspired by social practices and that (re)produce social structures" (Türk 1995, 13). Or to put all this in seemingly paradoxically terms, the CPEO demonstrates, on the premise of the nonexistence of organization, its real historical existence.

Foucault called this theoretical strategy a "political history of truth" or "historical nominalism" (1977, 78; 1994, p. 34). The objective of this approach is not to dispute that there is some "object" to which "organization" (or madness, sexuality, and disease, in Foucault's books) refers;

the only point called into question is whether this "referent" is identical to "organization" itself. The CPEO shows that this identification is itself an "effect specific to organization." The task of staking out the difference between "referent" and "organization" in order to establish a critical point of reference belongs in the CPEO to the more general concept of cooperation. This concept, which designates or is meant to designate the "real, systemic, and systematically desymbolized flow of human practice, [which] is the basis, the resource, or even the 'problem' and 'object' of every institutional 'superstructure' that cognitively, restrictively, and practically dissolves this connection" (Türk 1995, 98). Just as Foucault's hypothesis that *madness as such* does not exist by no means suggests that there are no "insane" subjects or that therapeutic success is a conceit (see, for example, Foucault 1985, 23), so the aim of the CPEO is not to characterize *organization as* an ideology or a fiction but to analyze it in performative terms of the "pragmatic realities of social life" Türk 1995, 95).

Thus, in this regard the CPEO articulates an approach to the definition of a problem that Foucault so successfully practiced in his books. If it is true that "madness," "sexuality," "disease," and "delinquency" are "real" and historically contingent at one and the same time, then by implication this poses the problem of power: namely the question of what has been "objectified" as objects by power. Only when it is no longer self-evident or natural that, for instance, lawbreakers should be incarcerated, can the question be raised as to why precisely this-and not something else--happens. The purpose of this operation is thus to show that "things were not self-certain." This interest is illustrated by Foucault's books: *Madness and Civilization* shows that the classification of the insane as mentally ill was a historically contingent result of specific social practices; *The Birth of the Clinic* demonstrates that it was not self-evident that the causes of illness should be sought in the individual medical examination of bodies; *Discipline and Punish* shows that the incarceration of lawbreakers is not the only form of penal practice; *The History of Sexuality* proves that sexuality is a quite specific form of the uses of pleasures. The CPEO opens the way on precisely the same lines to a "historical ontology" (see Foucault 1990, 48) of organization by showing that organization designates "merely *one* way of regulating and utilizing cooperation" (Türk 1995, 93-111, esp. 97; emphasis added). Organization, therefore, does not "suppress" or "distort" some "pristine" human cooperation, but "produces" a historically specific form of

cooperation. Or more precisely, organization refers to a social relation that is accompanied by numerous effects of domination, of which suppression is only one. However, what is decisive is that these effects cannot be described in terms of a relation of externality (suppressed vs. suppressor), but rather, the idea of an externality itself as an integral part of this social relation. Hence unlike various hypotheses focusing on repression, the CPEO conceives organizational domination not simply as something that "happens to man from the outside, but as an intrinsic component of our mode of existence" (Türk 1995, 4 1).

The object "organization" in this historical conception is not so much a point of departure as the object of the investigation itself. This investigation concentrates on the network of connections, power relations, strategies, and circularities that makes it possible to establish at any given point in time what is to be regarded as "objective" (in other words, as self-evident, universal, and natural). Thus the CPEO is concerned not with the history of organization as an object (and the historical "variations" of the object), but with an analysis of the "objectification of objectivities" (see Foucault 1994, 34). Thus the focus of research shifts from the object "organization" to the practices of organization. The CPEO inverts the primacy of the object: instead of explaining social practices starting from organization (in the sense of its effectiveness, functionality, purpose, reproduction, etc.), organizations become "correlates" or "projections" of practices. In other words, this theoretical conception is not concerned with tracing social practices back to their "origins" in different forms of organization, but, on the contrary, the principle of the analysis is to show that the form of organization is itself the result of practices that function via the assumption that there is a "reified" object that preceded and structured the analysis.

In this sense, practices are not defined in opposition to the domain of thought. Reflection is not an additional element that joins practice to give it a direction and to guide it. Rather, practices are always reflective and systemized. This linkage of forms of action with forms of thought is what Foucault in his later works refers to as governmentality, in which he distinguishes three domains of practice: the practices of knowledge, power, and self (see Foucault 1984, 35). The CPEO also differentiates three dimensions--order, structured entity, and collectivity--that together make for the (contradictory) coherence of a historically specific organizational regime (Türk 1999; Bruch 1999, 2000). Like Foucault in his lectures on the "history of governmentality," where he compares

land contrasts modern forms of government (from the *raison d'état* of the sixteenth century to contemporary neoliberalism) as different political rationalities (see Gordon 1991; Lemke 2001), the CPEO's concern is with the genesis and the various transformations of a paradigm of order that initially referred wholly to the absolutist state for which permitting "free" associations was unthinkable and continued to the formation of modern organizations and the establishment of a division between state and society (Türk 1995, 45-53 and 113-54; Tauchnitz 1999). As for the dimension of the structured entity (*Gebilde*), the CPEO is not so much interested in organizations as institutionally closed spaces or as an ensemble of rules as it is in the attempt to find "behind" or "under" organizations those practices through which specific "elements" are linked together or "condensed" (see Poulantzas 1978) in such a way that retrospectively an "object" appears that may be assumed to have been prior to the historical process, which the object then "organizes." Just as in Foucault's genealogy of the prison, which in fact is not a history of the prison but a history of the technology of discipline, the CPEO concentrates, with regard to the dimension of structure, on the techniques that first make the historical formation of specific organizations possible (for example, through the construct of the legal person). It seems to me in reference to the last point that differences with Foucault are more conspicuous than commonalities. Whereas Foucault uses the concept of technologies of the self exclusively to refer to the constitution of individual subjects, the concept of collectivity (*Vergemeinschaftung*) comprises first and foremost "processes of closure by social groups" (Türk 1995, 68) of organizations as collective subjects and refers primarily to the forms of personal inclusion and exclusion. However, it is important not to concentrate only on one aspect of the relationship between organization and individual and to analyze the constitution of both the individual and the collective subject in their relation to one another. Foucault offers a tentative step in this direction with his concept of a "critique of political anatomy."

Elements for a critique of the political anatomy of organization

Before we look into Foucault's outline of a "critique of political anatomy," we must first draw one last parallel between the genealogy of power and the CPEO. Both are a critical further development and amplification of the theoretical perspective elaborated by Marx and an attempt to reformulate a

materialist theory of society. Unlike Marx, whose analysis of bourgeois society and its relations of power and domination focused on the asymmetric laws of ownership and access to the means of production, the CPEO makes the point that the capital relation is historically built upon the "organizational relation" and that the forms of organizational domination cannot be done away with simply by abolishing private ownership of the means of production (see Bruch 1999).

Similarly, Foucault repeatedly pointed out that the power of the economy was vested on a prior "economics of power," since the accumulation of capital presumes technologies of production and forms of labor that enable it to put to use a multitude of human beings in an economically profitable manner. Foucault shows, especially in his analyses of discipline, that labor power must first be constituted as labor power before it can be exploited: that is, life time must be synthesized into labor time, individuals must be subjugated to the production cycle, habits must be formed, and time and space must be organized according to a scheme (see also on this point Türk 1995, 217-14). Thus since economic exploitation required a prior "political occupation of the body" (Foucault 1976, 37), Foucault hoped to complement the Marxist critique of political economy with a "critique of political anatomy" and a "microphysics of power":

What is meant by this is not an analysis of a state as a "body" (with its elements, sources of energy, and forces), but also not an analysis of the body and its environment as a "ministate." Rather, the "body politic" should be treated as the totality of the material elements and techniques that serve as weapons, control points, lines of communication, and support points for power and knowledge relations that human bodies possess and subjugate by making them into objects of knowledge." (Foucault 1976, 40, see also 131 and 277)

Foucault distinguished historically and analytically two dimensions within this "political anatomy": the disciplining of the individual body on the one hand and the social regulation of the body of the population on the other. Whereas the technology of discipline aims at the production of "normal" individuals, the biopolitics of the population is a "technology of security" that "strives for something on the order of homeostasis and the security of the whole against its inherent dangers" (Foucault 1992a, 54). This raises the question, however, of whether Foucault's analyses in terms of disciplinary power or the "technology of

security" might not indeed now need amending. My assumption is that individual discipline and social regulation are today being recoded in a "post-discipline" and "post-social" rationality (see Deleuze 1993 and Castel 1983), in which the tendency is to replace "dangerous individuals" with "risk populations" and the "technology of security" is progressively being replaced by a reference to the body of the population in order in turn to be replaced by management of the insecurity of the (individual and collective) subject.¹

This rationality, which I call "immunologic," will be briefly described in the following section from a CPEO perspective by means of an anatomy of the "body of organization." I shall at the same time touch upon the historical "origin" and the various semantic dimensions of organization, recalling that the concept of organization, like that of differentiation, revolution, constitution, and many other specialized terms of social science, comes from the language used to describe nature.

Organization formed a common semantic field with "organism" and "organ" and, down to the end of the eighteenth century, served to designate the properties of natural bodies. Later, in the nineteenth century, after organic notions of the state fell into disuse, an independent social concept of organization formed. As a consequence, organizations were regarded as embodiments of relations of the will, and conceived as dynamic bodies for action, oriented toward change. However, the organism analogy was not abandoned in principle, but rather reformulated under new historical and social conditions. There was no replacement or suppression of "organistic" ideas by "rational" concepts of society; rather, in the context of the "dual utopia of the modern age" (Türk 1995, 14; see also Latour 1995), organizations were construed in terms of sociality and naturalness, self-organization and conscious planning, and "socio-biological" references were repeatedly articulated anew, reformulated and "modernized" (on the history of the concept of organization see Böckenförde and Dohm-van Rossum 1978; Türk, Lemke, and Bruch forthcoming).

My premise is that another shift of the semantic field of organization, and of its "natural" subtext or context, is taking place today. The metaphors and representations of the body have begun to change dramatically in recent decades and with them the concepts of health and illness, normality and deviance, self and others. This development is of interest in more ways than merely in regard to the history of ideas or metaphors. The crucial point here is how different "representations" of organiza-

tion "organize" the body social itself, how they function as a part of social reality, and how they naturalize it: in other words, how they inform specific

interventions into the social domain or also show the limits of possible interventions. In the last section I outline more precisely the changes in the rationality of organization: in other words, to confront the knowledge of the body with the corporeality of knowledge from the perspective of the CPEO.

Immunologic and the body of organization

The starting point of my argument is to be found in the work of the U.S. anthropologist Emily Martin, who draws on her evaluation of the popular media, investigations in the history of science, and abundant interview material in her analysis of the changes in the images of the body and health since the middle of the twentieth century (Martin 1994, Martin 1998). Martin identifies three characteristics that determined the picture of the body until but a few decades ago:

First, the early twentieth century was marked by the influence of the new science of bacteriology. Until far into the 1950s, the things most dangerous to health appeared to reside in the immediate environment outside the body. Enormous efforts were undertaken in the area of hygiene: protecting and cleaning the outer surface of the body, washing, dusting, airing, and disinfecting acquired a strategic importance. Since the main focus of concern was the protective surface of the body, it made little sense to look for perils within the body. All the more important therefore, was a demarcation between inside and outside; for one's identity, the differentiation between my own and someone else's, between I and not I, rested on this distinction.

Second, this striving for cleanliness and order called for the permanent imperative to clean and keep clean and gave prominence to practical routines. The publications drawn on by Martin referred repeatedly to the beneficial effects of good habits, thereby giving primacy of stability. The prevailing pictures of the body were marked by uniformity, constancy, and the idea of an ideal state of equilibrium. Accordingly, deviations were imbalances and hence *per se* pathological. The body's own capacity for homeostatic self-regulation guaranteed an adaptive function, the end of which was to restore the status quo ante.

Third, the prevailing model for the body was a machine, whose parts had to be regularly checked and repaired if necessary. At the time, the

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idea that there was something that held the body together as a whole did not "yet" exist. To be sure, the body was referred to as a system, but at the time, the concept of system meant nothing specific and could be replaced by "body" at any moment. A further aspect was that resistance to disease was conceived in this period as "passive resistance" (like a wall which both offers protection against dangers coming from without and draws the boundary between the internal and external). Given this conception, the idea that physical resistance might be capable of growing on its own was "unthinkable" (Martin 1994, 24-33; 1998, 509-13; Gilbert 1997).

In the last decades of the twentieth century, this system, which was so fundamentally based on balance and boundaries, has itself become imbalanced and its boundaries have become increasingly diffuse. Martin's thesis is that the traditional bacteriological paradigm is being progressively replaced by an immunological discourse. She sees the first signs of this transformation in the interest in the inner body, which has grown exponentially since the 1960s, while at the same time concentration on the cleanliness of body surfaces has decreased. Media analyses and the evaluation of inter-view material show that the idea of the body as a complex system is becoming increasingly common alongside the machine model of the body. In such a system it is not rest, regularity, and predictability that function as the indicators of health and performance, but, on the contrary, mobility, irregularity, and "openness."

Parallel to this development, immunology has made advances and become an independent discipline, while its position within the biological sciences grows steadily in importance. Whereas the First International Congress of Immunology in 1971 was attended by 3,500 persons, more than 8,000 participated in the fourth congress. The number of professional immunology journals increased from twelve in 1970 to over eighty in 1984. One crucial aspect is the changes in the basic epistemological structure of the discipline as a consequence of its adoption of concepts from information and communications theory. In the conception of the body as an immune system (the concept appears for the first time in the mid-1960s in a scientific essay), the notion of a passive, simple, and reactive defense mechanism gives way to the conception of an active, complex, and fundamentally open production of "responses." Francisco J. Varela reconstructs the history of immunology as the progressive abandonment of research focusing on heteronomy, which views systems as being "determined from without," to today's increasing ac-

ceptance of the idea of the immune system as an autonomous network. The decisive factor here is the recognition that antibodies, which are presumed to be responsible for the distinction between "self" and "nonself," are *themselves* a part of the organism. Although Varela does not dispute the possibility that the immune system has defense functions, he sees these as secondary to the more fundamental task of constituting molecular identity:

This "dance" of the immune system with the body is central to the new conception we have here described. It is this dance that enables the body to have a constantly changing and plastic identity throughout its entire life and in the most diverse confrontations. The constitution of this system identity is of course a positive task and not a reaction to antigens. Furthermore, the task of constituting identity is here regarded, both logically and biologically, as primary. (Varela 1991, 738, italics in original; see also Duden 1997, 264; Haraway 1991, 251-52; Martin 1994, 33-37)

This transition to an immunological discourse, however, concerns not just the individual body. In the age of globalization, "immunological logic" (Luhmann 1984, 504) has also found its way into theories of political control as well as in corporate consultation, management styles, and production models. In organization theory and industrial sociology, this transformation is discussed in terms such as "learning organization" or "systemic rationalization." Outside the previously dominant model of hierarchization, centralization, and bureaucratization, new forms of a "post-Fordist" organization (networks, strategic alliances, etc.) are appearing, tending to replace the "old" rationalization model with decentralized, "flexible" techniques of control. Outside the bureaucratic model, new forms of organization are emerging, and here too the question of boundaries is central:

On the outside, the boundaries that formerly circumscribed the organization are breaking down as individual entities merge and blur in "chains," "clusters networks" and "strategic alliances," thus questioning the relevance of the "organizational" focus. On the inside, the boundaries that formerly delineated the bureaucracy are also breaking down as the empowered flexible post-Fordist organization changes or loses shape. (Clegg and Hardy 1996, 9; see also Martin 1994, 207-25; and Siegel 1995)

To sum up, we can say that this creeping farewell to the idea of a hierarchically organized body based on the division of labor is characteristic for both the individual and the collective body. In its place we

find a reinvention of the body as a system of communications technology that is no longer oriented to a fixed, static state of equilibrium but rather functions as a fluid network of control and regulatory technology. Concentration on the external has been replaced by attention to internal life and fear of dangers has been replaced by "risk communication." The notion of a mechanical body that consists of simple components with diverse, fixed functions is giving way to the idea of a body based on a finely distributed, fluid system. Furthermore, a new demand for flexibility is replacing the old interest in rigid routines and habits.

I should now like to explore in more detail two central elements of the immunological discourse: the concept of risk and the imperative of flexibility.

Risk

Until recently, risks were regarded as an expression of social pathology: they indicated some deficiency and signaled the "need for action" to eliminate or neutralize risks. The Keynesian "security state," which treated risks as a problem to be eliminated, has itself now become a problem case for neoliberal critique. According to this critique, the welfare state serves as the foundation for a society of assurance that not only regulates individual existence down to the last detail and prescribes specific forms of life, but also creates a mentality of assurance that undermines any initiative and entrepreneurial spirit. Accordingly, current neoliberal programs have adopted another attitude toward risk: risks are not testimony to a deficiency which must be eliminated, but on the contrary, they are the constitutive condition for individual development and social progress. Accordingly, readiness to take risks is a sign of initiative and engagement, while "risk-shy" bodies demonstrate that they cannot qualify as reasonable, rational actors that are able to care for themselves and others. From this perspective, it is not simply the existence of risk that is pathological, but the lack of active precautions against risk. In other words, risks are dealt with in the wrong way. Given this conception, lack of personal initiative is already the symptom of an illness that manifests itself precisely in confrontation with risks. These symptoms are often described with metaphors such as obesity, rigidity, and dependence and are, moreover, equally applied to individual and collective bodies (for example, state administrations, private firms, individuals, families, etc.) (O'Malley 1996; Fach 1997).

Moving from a reactive to an active orientation toward risk provides the criteria for distinguishing between ill and healthy bodies. This of course is also accompanied by changes in the meaning of health and disease. As the medical sociologist Monica Greco shows, health may paradoxically be seen as an object of both rational choice and personal will. In psychosomatic and "holistic" approaches, health is viewed less as a consequence of individual capability than as a function of moral qualities. This becomes possible by broadening the concept of illness and extending it to a space-time that resides prior to and outside of the "actual" illness. Psychosomatics diagnoses not only the symptoms of an illness long before it occurs, but also effaces the distinction between the internal and external causes of illness: what remains are the dimensions of risk. However, this also alters the status of risk. What in classical medicine was only a possibility or a probability is, from the psychosomatic standpoint, a real problem. Just as precaution in regard to bodily risks (for example, negatively, giving up smoking; or positively, observing diet plans) calls for a self-determined life, failure to act in this regard is conversely viewed as a form of irrationality, a lack of willpower, incapability or (why not?) even dependence and heteronomy. Thus, while successful "self-governance" is a precondition for health, its absence is an "illness" which precedes the actual physical troubles. In this sense, there is no longer a clear line between prevention and cure: prevention is already a form of therapy and precaution is the first step to cure (Greco 1993; see also Rose 1998; Sedgwick 1992).

If health is, according to this conception, an object of rational and free choice, it follows that health is no longer something that we merely possess or do not possess. It has become a visible sign of a "proper life" and, therefore, the occurrence of illness becomes a moment of truth in regard to an individual body's deficient moral capacities. This strategy can be extended to collective bodies as well. For example, "survival" and success on the market is testimony to the "morals" of economic actors, to their "ability to learn." At the same time, however, it delegitimizes those who fail on the market by reproaching them for their reluctance to take risks, their deficient capacity for innovation, and their lack of dynamism (otherwise things would not have turned out the way they did).²

Within the immunological discourse, the ability of individual bodies to regulate themselves in regard to risk also functions as the decisive political element in the transformation of the body politic. Barbara

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Cruikshank shows in her analysis of government programs in the State of California how "taking care of oneself" is being transformed from a personal right or private objective to a social duty and central resource of political authorities. The invocation of "self esteem" and "self empowerment" shifts the point of application of possible political and social interventions: it is not social, structural factors but individual, subjective factors that are critical for reducing unemployment, criminality, or child abuse. For the besieged social immune system, self esteem is supposed to function as a vaccine against collective diseases: "Self esteem is the likeliest candidate for a *social vaccine*, something that empowers us to live responsibly and that inoculates us against the lures of crime, violence, substance abuse, teen pregnancy, child abuse, chronic welfare dependency, and educational failure" (*California Task Force to Promote Self Esteem and Social and Political Responsibility*, quoted in Cruikshank 1996, 232; italics in the original).

Flexibility

The imperative of flexibility is closely linked to the semantics of risk. Flexibility means the ability to respond swiftly to changing environmental conditions. It is one of the ideal properties of both individual and collective bodies and is expected and required of governments and firms as well as workers and academics. In innumerable press campaigns, advertising brochures, political programs, products, and concepts, flexibility emerges as a fixed value worth striving for. Without regard for specific targets or material preconditions, flexibility appears to be less a means to an end than an end in itself, as an ultimate value that no longer requires justification. In this context, Zygmunt Bauman spoke of a "philosophy of fitness": "Thus it is no longer conformity and the endeavor to meet standards that drive our lives, but rather a kind of meta-effort, the effort to remain fit, i.e. in good form, in order to exert oneself" (Bauman 1995, 19).

Flexibility is a synonym for a system that is never in equilibrium but always in movement, adjusting itself continually to changes. Such changes, which only appear as changes retrospectively, cannot be charted as deviations from an ideal state. What makes flexibility so difficult to recognize as a principle of power, however, is the fact that while the term signals openness and a readiness to compromise, inflexibility stands for rigidity and the likelihood of conflict. Flexibility gives the impression that one can discuss anything, although, of course, on the basis of

an all-encompassing reality principle that obligates the individual to flexibility. Flexibility is a problem in process, a concept that exists only as a problem and refers only to itself as a solution: the problems that are created by flexibility can only be solved through a new and radicalized flexibilization. If the term flexibility can be applied today in such a comprehensive manner and in such diverse areas, it is because of its claim to represent some intrinsic good on the one hand, and because of the tremendous semantic versatility it possesses on the other. Quite different and in some cases contradictory expectations and behavioral requirements can be grouped together under the heading "flexibility." Concerning the relationship between organization and the individual, flexibility can mean the freedom to break out of rigid organizational and hierarchically structured confines, thus allowing to flourish spontaneity, initiative, and a readiness for change on the part of the individual. However, at the same time, it can refer to the need of organizations to deal flexibly with their labor power--to hire and fire their employees as they deem fit. When employees are dismissed as a consequence of organizational flexibility, again the advice to the unemployed is to be flexible in order to find a new job. In some cases this can also mean, and here we see a direct link to the idea of risk, relinquishing social assurances and rights. Whatever the case, no one can avoid flexibility (Martin 1994, 143-59; Bauman 1995; Sennett 1998, 57-80; Türk 1984).

The immunological (dis)order

Flexibility and risk are the trademarks of the new immunological order that is better described as disorder in process. It is an order that is unstable, permanently in motion, and never in a state of rest. Flexibility consists in enabling anything in principle to be construed in terms of immunity parameters and therefore as a potential risk. Since there is no fixed standard of health to follow, there is henceforth nothing that cannot be deciphered as a disease or risk of disease.

Experience with the "immune deficiency" syndrome AIDS has played a central role in blurring the boundaries of the concept of disease in the immunological discourse. Whereas bacteria are identifiable, enter human beings from the outside, and thus in such cases enable disease to be presented as a war between the internal and external, AIDS poses the problem of a struggle against enemies within ourselves. However, "immunologic" is to be seen not so much as a result of the social perception

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of AIDS, but on the contrary disease can be "discovered" anew in the context of this discourse. Whereas during the cold war and during the East-West confrontation the danger always came from external enemies (for example communist "infiltration") and demanded a corresponding policy of containment (for example, the "quarantine" against Cuba), today the world political situation is different and requires completely new conceptions of what "friend," "enemy," and "alien" mean (Zimmermann 1996, 8 1; Martin 1994, 127-42; Waldby 1995).

A further aspect of this "new world order" is the reconceptualization of external nature in terms of an "ecosystem." Nature, which once meant an independent space clearly demarcated from the social with an independent power to act (and autonomous laws) or symbolized the source of life, is increasingly becoming the "environment" of the industrial, capitalist system. Like the redefinition of the body's boundaries in terms of an immune system and the operationalization of the difference between the internal and external, the ecosystem conception is also a reinvention of the boundaries between nature and society. In view of today's "global" perils, the main issue now is less the restrictive notion of the "limits of growth" as it is a dynamic growth of limits. In an age of "sustainable development," previously untapped areas are being opened in the interests of capitalization and chances for industrial utilization. Nature and life itself are being drawn into the economic discourse of efficient resource management:

No longer is nature defined and treated as an external, exploitable domain. Through a new process of capitalization, effected primarily by a shift in representation, previously "uncapitalized" aspects of nature and society become internal to capital.... This transformation is perhaps most visible in discussions of rainforest biodiversity: the key to the survival of the rainforest is seen as lying in the genes of the species, the usefulness of which could be released for profit through genetic engineering and biotechnology in the production of commercially valuable products, such as pharmaceuticals. Capital thus develops a conversationalist tendency, significantly different from its usual reckless, destructive form. (Escobar 1996, 47; see also Stickler and Eblinghaus 1996)

Bodies and antibodies

In view of the "global" significance of the immunological discourse, historian of science Donna Haraway's thesis is hardly surprising:

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The immune system is an elaborate icon for principle systems of symbolic and material "difference" in late-capitalism. Pre-eminently a twentieth-century object, the immune system is a map drawn to guide recognition and misrecognition of self and other in the dialectics of Western biopolitics. That is, the immune system is a plan for meaningful action to construct and maintain the boundaries for what may count as self and other in the crucial realms of the normal and the pathological. (Haraway 1995, 162)

Because the immune system "embodies" two conflicting tendencies that are locked into a productive and self-reinforcing circle and ensure the coherence of immunology, it can function as a universal metaphor for the coding of difference. First, the immune system occupies a special borderline position between nature and society. Although it is indeed innate and to that extent natural, the immune system has a social component as well since it can be trained-it is changeable and capable of adaptation. In a word, it is flexible. Second, the immune system operates at the borderline between self and nonself and its task is to secure these boundaries while at the same time keeping them flexible. In times when identities are fragile, in which the question of what the self is has no "self-evident" or "of-course" answer and the boundaries of nationstates, genders, and ethnic groups are increasingly "open," the stabilizing function of "antibodies" is becoming more urgent and the metaphors of the immune system are becoming increasingly martial.

It is therefore not surprising that the term immunology also acquires an explicit military and political significance and assumes a central role in the repulsion of internal and external "alien bodies." What is special about this immunological racism is that it avoids any appeal to a specifically biological nature; and it is precisely this which makes it (post?) "modern" and dangerous. This transformation from a biological to a cultural or a "differentialist" racism (Taguieff 1992), was dubbed "racism without racists" by Etienne Balibar. Its theme is "no longer biological heredity but the ineradicability of cultural differences" (Balibar 1990, 28). No longer is the central point the -superiority of individual nations or races over others, but the "harmfulness of blurring borders and the irreconcilability of different ways of life and traditions" (ibid). Balibar correctly points out that this is a second-order naturalism, in which the concept of culture functions as a kind of second nature. "Natural boundaries" are replaced by irreducible cultural differences, and strict observance of "tolerance thresholds," "absorption capacities," and "immigration controls" is required.

Emily Martin also notes that a kind of "post-Darwinist" conception is emerging whose electoral slogan of "survival of the fittest" no longer refers to a prior nature but to the aptitude for fitness, permanent adaptation, and a readiness to receive and respond to positive and negative stimuli. Within this recoded orientation toward fitness, the individual alone is responsible for living and surviving in society. Flexibility becomes a surrogate for nature which, however, achieves the same discriminatory effects without recourse to a biological vocabulary. The immunological discourse harbors the "danger of making us believe that there is a natural basis for why nimble men and women with tough immune systems and indestructible personalities survive in acceptable jobs while others of us with poor or rigid immune systems are sinking into poverty and disease" (Martin 1998, 523; see also Martin 1994, 229-50; Howe 1994).

If this assumption is correct, then the immunologic can no longer be seen exclusively as a version of sociobiologism (that is, modeling society after the example of biology) since the social and that which makes it different from the biological are themselves at stake. When one speaks today of information, coding, and decoding, not only in social organizations but also in reference to biological organisms (in genetic engineering and immunology), then obviously there is henceforth nothing that cannot be translated into the categories of information theory and communications theory:

In the wake of the technological and conceptual changes we have been witness to in the last three decades, the body itself has changed permanently, perhaps especially in biological discourse. The biological organism of today shows little similarity with the traditional maternal guarantor of the wholeness of life, the source of care and nourishment; it is no longer even the passive material substrate of classical genetics. The body of modern biology has become like the DNA molecule, or like a modern political structure or enterprise, simply another part of an information network, now machine, now message, always ready to exchange the one for the other. (Keller 1998, 146-47; see also Haraway 1991, 161-65; Tanner 1998, 167-69)

Recent developments in systems theory take up these trends. Terms such as autopoiesis or self-referentiality in fact no longer refer to functional disorders of social systems or the repulsion of deviant behavior, but rather focus on the active production of limits through inclusion and exclusion (instead of through integration and expulsion). However, even if the mechanisms of direct discipline and normalization may be declining in importance, they are complemented by a model of moderation

and modulation, while fixed standards of normality are expanded by a "flexible normalism" (see Link 1996; Deleuze 1993). This self-reflective mode not only makes it possible, through the use of a system's own code, to determine the criteria of intervention, its limits, and the conditions of its success; at the same time, systems are able to be "immunized" against "alien" ("outside") demands, norms, values, etc .4

Conclusions

In summary, the first part of this article was concerned mainly with theoretical parallels between the CPEO and the "genealogy of power" inspired by Foucault. The second step combined the two theories in the form of a "critique of the political anatomy of organization." The following section explored, in terms of CPEO categories, changes in rationality and the order dimension of organization that go beyond Foucault's account of disciplinary power and biopolitics. Central to the presentation of what I have called "immunologic" was, on the one hand, the demonstration of the historical contingency of this organizational discourse and, on the other, its specific power effects. This emphasis seems to be especially important since the prevailing social theories either regard the production of risk as an objective trend, obeying technological or industrial laws in the development of modern societies, or place theoretical stress on the self-reproduction and intrinsic logic of autopoietic systems. However, this excludes from consideration the strategic dimension of the "organizing of organization" and their links to political interest and economic profit. In contrast, the CPEO perspective here presented analyzes the immunological rationality within the framework of a "political history of organization" precisely to counter this immunization strategy, or better yet, to develop "resistances" to it. The purpose of this essay has been to offer a few ideas in this direction.

Notes

1. Foucault himself recognized this transformation of the technologies of power. He discusses them under the heading "neoliberal governmentality" in his 1979 lecture (Cf. Lemke 1997, 239-56, and 200 1). However, in none of his other works does he treat it systematically.

2. See also Türk (1997) for the implications of the distinction between security and insecurity for the analysis of power and social theory.

3. For example, in the professional periodical, *Military Review*, U.S. Colonel

Frederick Timmerman argued in favor of the creation of an elite corps for special missions in a future army: "The most appropriate example to describe how this system would work is the most complex biological model we know--the body's immune system. Within the body there exists a remarkably complex corps of internal bodyguards. In absolute numbers they are small--only about one percent of the body's cells. Yet they consist of reconnaissance specialists, killers, reconstitution specialists, and communicators that seek out invaders, sound the alarm, reproduce rapidly, and swarm to the attack to repel the enemy (quoted in Haraway 1991, 254). As regards the enemy within, Manfred Brunner, the former party leader of the Bundes Freier Bürger, who has since returned to the Freie Demokratische Partei, proposed the following comparison: Germany, like a human body, "has vacilli, viruses, or pathogens that disturb people"; therefore it is important "to strengthen the immune system of the German nation" (quoted in Zimmermann 1996, 82).

4. On the crime control system and crime policy, for example, David Garland observes: "The aim is no longer to respond to external social demands for the control of crime and the reform of offenders. Instead the aim is to develop an immunity from outside the demands of this kind by setting up internal aims and self-generated criteria of success" (Garland 1995, 195).

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