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Techniques and Forces and the Communicative Constitution of Organization: A Deleuzian Approach to Organizational (In)Stability and Power

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Abstract

This article introduces five principles of Deleuzian ontology and the conceptual framework of techniques and forces into emerging CCO scholarship addressing (dis)organization and power. By introducing Deleuzian concepts of (1) the virtual, (2) mutual (in)stability of meaning and materiality, (3) forces (and techniques), (4) communication, and (5) power, this essay builds a relational ontology that centers communication, speaks across existing theories of CCO, and offers a more detailed emphasis on power. In doing so, it enhances the explanatory power of CCO in general, as a set of theories useful for describing how organizational constitution and power play out in an increasingly (dis)organized world where the prevalence of bounded stable organizations can no longer be taken for granted.

Keywords: CCO, change, Deleuze, power

The communicative constitution of organization (CCO) has become increasingly important to the field of organizational communication studies, offering a body of diverse theories that "address how complex communication processes constitute both organizing and organization and how these processes and outcomes reflexively shape communication" (Putnam & Nicotera, 2010, p. 159). As a field of study, CCO research embraces a broad set of conceptions regarding what communication is, who is able to communicate, and what we analyze (organization*s* and organiz*ing*), while focusing on communication as co-constructed events that are the keystone of our social and organizational realities (Cooren et al., 2011). CCO parallels a broader trend in organizational studies acknowledging organizational change, becoming, or emergence as a norm of organizational existence and depicting stable aspects of organization as an achievement. This shift toward change as the rule rather than the exception has led to a focus on how organizational stability is accomplished (rather than taken for granted). However, as Brummans et al. (2014) point out, "Extant research has sometimes seemed overly focused on studying the continuity of organizations" (p. 188). Only recently have CCO scholars focused on understanding communication and disorganization as more than a simple failure of communication or organization (Kuhn & Burk, 2012; Vásquez & Kuhn, 2019; Vásquez et al., 2016). Shifting attention to organizational processes as balancing (in)stability and (dis)organization not only requires new theoretical tools, it also requires rethinking ontological and conceptual assumptions, including those associated with communication and power.

This article introduces Deleuzian[1] ontology into this conversation and offers techniques and forces (T&F) as a conceptual framework to guide organizational analysis. T&F draws on Deleuze's thinking to foster an analysis of organizational constitution and power well-suited to the precarious state of organizing that characterizes

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1. Deleuze is well known for his collaborations with Felix Guattari, two of which I draw on in this manuscript. However, the ideas in this manuscript are largely developed in solo authored texts. Thus, I refer to Deleuzian ontology, except in cases where I specifically cite the collaborative work of Deleuze and Guattari.

our current social and economic context (Kuhn et al., 2017; Mumby, 2019). Ultimately, Deleuzian ontology leads us to consider how the communicative constitution of organization is *always* a balance of (in)stability or (dis)organization, and *always* an act of power connected to a broader social context. In building this argument I also (1) highlight how Deleuze and T&F build capacity to speak across CCO theories and (2) reconceptualize communication as the means by which the (in)stability of both meaning and materiality mutually emerge into shared realities.

To make this argument, I begin by reviewing (in)stability in the CCO literature. I then introduce five principles of Deleuzian ontology, identifying where these principles resonate with existing CCO concepts. Because Deleuze is not geared toward organizational analysis, I then develop T&F as a conceptual framework built on his philosophy but more accessible to organizational analysis. I then revisit Albu's (2019) analysis of a Civil Society Organization's use of information communication technologies to demonstrate how T&F enables us to analyze power as integrated with organizational constitution in a global context.

The Shifting Pursuit of (In)stability

Concerns with (dis)organization, (dis)order, and (in)stability are significant to CCO scholarship because they connect with the broader field of organizational studies that addresses organizations as balancing stability and change (Tsoukas & Chia, 2002), as a process/entity paradox (Segal, 2017), and as the edge of chaos (Stacey, 2001). Each of these approaches, with their own nuance, ultimately suggests that organizational existence hangs in the balance of (in)stability, (dis)order, and (dis)organization. More broadly, the increasingly precarious nature of work (Kuhn et al., 2017) signals that understanding organizational (in)stability is important to the ethical maintenance of our social and economic systems at-large (see also Mumby, 2019). Thus, by identifying the role of communication in balancing organizational (in) stability and how power plays out in that balance, CCO scholars engage a broader set of concerns among organizational studies and our global world.

Historically, CCO scholars distinguish themselves by addressing questions that assume communication is necessary to organizational constitution (e.g., What communicative processes are necessary to constitute an organization? How is communication a fundamentally organizing practice?). More recently, CCO questions have expanded in two ways: (1) by attending to communication as fundamentally (dis)organizing, not just organizing, and (2) by letting go of communication as a starting point. These developments are particularly relevant to CCO approaches that embrace relational ontologies (Kuhn et al., 2017). Relational ontologies not only challenge the subject/ object divide, they question the concept of ontologically independent entities with essential interiority all together. Instead, these ontologies suggest that relations constitute the seemingly stable entities we learn to depend on in life. My goal is to address these interrelated developments, and to position Deleuzian ontology as a fruitful addition to the CCO literature. I do so by emphasizing his concepts of communication and power, and his capacity to bridge existing CCO theories.

Before continuing, a note on language is helpful: Generally speaking, the existing CCO literature uses (dis)order and (dis)organization interchangeably (see Grothe-Hammer & Schoeneborn, 2019 for an exception)—I do so as well. However, I also use (in)stability and (un)stable to highlight an ontological state associated with the precarity of existence of a whole that is based on necessarily related parts. By contrast, (dis)order and (dis)organization can often be thought of in disjointed parts without compromising the existence of the whole. For example, a disorganized house is not on the verge of collapse in the way an unstable house is.

The CCO literature consistently rejects the assumed stable status of organizations, while primarily focusing on the accomplishment of organizational stability (Bisel, 2010; Brummans et al., 2014). The four flows model (McPhee & Zaug, 2000), one of the earliest theoretical frameworks to explicitly use the CCO moniker, offers a clear example. This framework identifies four intertwined communication flows as necessary to establish a stable, recognizable organization: membership negotiation, self-structuring, institutional positioning, and activity coordination. While debates ensued over whether the four flows are necessary or sufficient to accomplishing an organization (Bisel, 2010), the primary concern with accomplishing *an* organization emphasizes communication as creating organizational stability rather than instability.

Early developments in The Montreal School stepped back from a primary focus on accomplishing *the* stable organization, instead focusing on how communication itself, through the imbrication of conversation and texts, has organizing qualities (Taylor & Van Every, 2000). These scholars begin with the concept of *co-orientation*, a process by which people achieve a common attitude or understanding toward a third entity, and *textualization*, which addresses how organization is materialized in policies, practices, and other texts on behalf of the collective. Montreal School scholars also describe *distanciation*, the processes by which common attitudes and understanding are sustained beyond a single communicative exchange and "become transformed into a single collective actor" (Brummans et al., 2014, p. 179). Other concepts highlighting how communication organizes include *authoritative texts* (Kuhn, 2008) which, by virtue of being cited repeatedly across organizations, reinforce relations of authority and appropriateness of action; and *hybrid action* (Bencherki & Cooren, 2011), in which individuals use narrative structures that link various actors into a single organizational multiplicity. The role of materiality in creating stability is also addressed in *ventriloquism* (Cooren & Sandler, 2014) which draws on Bakhtin to show how many voices—including the voices of objects—are folded into a single communication event, and *presentification* (Cooren et al., 2008), which suggests that organizations require a material embodiment or "incarnation" (p. 1343) in order to be constituted in a shared reality. These concepts describe how order emerges and reaches beyond single communication events to organize people, ideas, and things across time and space.

Still, the accomplishment of stability remains the driving question for these concepts. Obviously, organizational instability can result from interruptions to, or failures of, these communicative processes. However, the questions of why interruptions are inevitable or necessary to organizational constitution remain largely unanswered. Moreover, Vásquez et al. (2016) point out that scholarship tends to favor either order or disorder and separate the two temporally in organizational function, or through relative oversight in analysis. This occurs despite the fact that even "the most mundane experience of organizing . . . reveals that both order and disorder tend to simultaneously arise in the course of organizing" (pp. 632–633).

The Luhmannian approach to CCO (Schoeneborn, 2011) began to challenge that division. While this Luhmannian approach remains largely focused on questions of stability, *the paradox of undecidability* opened the door to an integrated version of (in)stability. According to Luhmann, organizations are uniquely constituted through the communication of decisions, which refers only to decisions with no clear optimal choice. Decisions made under such equivocal circumstances, "absorb" the not chosen possibilities, but those possibilities do not disappear. Accordingly, decisions must be reinforced by future decisions. For example, a budgeting decision requires that subsequent spending decisions align with the original decision. As people make aligned decisions, decision-making premises emerge and sustain alignment, thus constituting the organization (e.g., "This is a place where we do things like this!"). However, "absorbed" choices could resurface, leading to disorganization. In fact, the alternatives are necessary for organizational boundaries (e.g., "Here we do things like this, not like that"). Grothe-Hammer and Schoeneborn (2019) summarize this necessary instability well: "On the one hand, [the organization] is flexible through the capacity to produce new decisions continuously, while on the other hand, it always relies on a (relatively stable) set of decision premises, which indeed are also a matter of decision and therefore inherently contingent" (p. 66). Thus, the paradox of undecidability offers one account of the inevitable and mutual implication of organizational (in)stability.

Vásquez et al. (2016) offer an additional approach to the inextricable (in)stability of organizations by drawing on Derrida. They demonstrate how (dis)order occurs through three dimensions of texts-in-use and their respective (dis)ordering dynamics: *formalization/reformalization of genre, presence/ absence of language, and decontextualization/recontextualization of context*. They ground these disorganizing processes in a Derridian notion of différance which renders the meaning of any symbol or text (un)stable. This (in)stability derives from a sign's inevitable dependence on a network of (also (un)stable) signs, each depending on connected yet absent meanings that "'haunt' the text" (p. 635). Thus, just as the paradox of undecidability underpins organizational (in)stability in Luhmann's approach due to the present absence of alternative choices, so does the always deferred meaning of any particular text underpin (in)stability for Vásquez et al.

This slipperiness of meaning as an inevitable constitutive feature of language has taken center stage in many CCO accounts of imbricated (in)stability. In their introduction to their book, *Dis/organization as Communication*, Vásquez and Kuhn (2019) highlight both excess and scarcity of meaning as the core of (dis)organization. In addition to emphasizing (1) the mutual implication of (dis)organization, they center their book on two additional issues: (2) "The indeterminacy of meaning as triggering process for dis/ordering" (p. 8), and (3) "the struggle and control over meaning as the politics of dis/organization" (p. 8). These issues echo Vásquez et al.'s (2016) definition of (dis) ordering "as communication-based organizing processes through which meaning is simultaneously closed (i.e., ordering) and opened (i.e., disordering)" (p. 634).

The slipperiness of meaning revives instable features of concepts such as authoritative texts (Kuhn, 2008). Acknowledging the impossibility of fixing particular meanings to texts, and the political struggles over the authority to author those texts, reveals that communicative processes associated with organization simultaneously trigger disorganization (Kuhn & Burk, 2012). Kuhn and colleagues also introduce *intertextuality* as a source of dis/organization, suggesting that meanings of a particular text change upon connecting to new texts, a process that becomes increasingly relevant as texts extend across time and space (Vásquez et al., 2016). Thus, as texts, meanings, and communicative practices span time and space—a necessity for linking disparate communicative practice to a composite organized entity—they link with new contexts that simultaneously destabilize meaning and (dis)organize.

While the CCO concepts outlined above clarify the mutual implication of (dis)organization, there is still a catch. These concepts identify specific processes by which shared meaning and collaborative action are accomplished and linked across time and space as part of an organization (i.e., organizational stability). At the same time, because communication relies on fundamentally unstable meaning and a never-ending deferral of meaning to associated signs, a diversity of meanings and choices inevitably haunt any organizational process (i.e., organizational instability). This argument for mutually implicated (dis)organization is both compelling and incomplete. By focusing too heavily on meaning, it renders communication irrelevant or secondary to

many disorganizing events. Simply stated, slippery meaning does not explain why disorder ensues after a building collapses. If CCO scholars want to maintain communication as the key process for balancing organizational (in)stability and, in turn, constituting an organization, then we must carefully address how communication, though deeply steeped in processes of meaning-making, is not reducible to meaning-making.

While the emphasis on materialization (Cooren et al., 2008; Cooren & Sandler, 2014) of meaning moves CCO research in this direction, recent forays into affect theory make the move more explicit. For example, Ashcraft (2019) focuses on "communicative address" as ultimately organizing affect, which she describes as "circuits of feeling" (p. 115) that ultimately must be accounted for as part of a communication process. Similarly, Kuhn et al. (2017) explain that affect theory "redirects attention from the construction of coherent meanings, to their erratic and material circulation" (p. 91). Both of these moves have been taken up at length in recent attention to relational ontologies. I contend that this recent turn toward relational ontologies (Kuhn et al., 2017) not only helps CCO scholars conceptualize communication in excess of meaning-making, it sets the stage for a Deleuzian approach. In turn, Deleueze helps communication retain its central role in organizational constitution, relates seemingly disparate CCO concepts, and demonstrates how constitution is always an act of power.

Before addressing the shift toward relational ontology, I should summarize my claims thus far: CCO scholarship shares the assumption that organizational stability should not be taken for granted with a broader field of organizational studies. Early efforts to address this assumption emphasized organizational stability as an accomplishment, investigated means of achieving that accomplishment, and offered specific mechanisms by which communication organizes. Recently, attention has turned to mutually implicated (dis)organization and (in)stability, whereby communication scholars have often emphasized the slippery status of meaning as the source of instability. But this risks limiting the explanatory power of communication as the primary constitutive element of organizations. By turning to relational ontology and Deleuze, we can reconceptualize communication and retain communication as the core constitutive process of organization.

Relational Ontology, CCO, and One (of Many Potential) Primer(s) on Deleuzian Ontology

Kuhn et al.'s (2017) recent emphasis on relational ontology marks a significant shift in CCO questions. Rather than beginning with communication as *the* constitutive force, they ask: Given the increasingly relevant application of relational ontologies in an organizational world, what is the role of communication in relational constitution? To answer this question, they ground relational ontologies in five premises. First, relational ontologies forgo substantialism and embrace relationality, suggesting that constitution, broadly speaking, results from relations rather than some internally determined substance. Second, relational ontologies embrace "the real as enacted, multiple, and flat" (p. 32), forgoing any notion of coherent stability dictated by a transcendent structure, and relying on the networked enactments as the source of constitution. Third, relational ontologies embrace the real as always simultaneously social and material. Fourth, relational ontologies depict "agency as hybrid, distributed, and interrupted" (p. 36) as a means of decentering human dominance of the real world and depicting all acts of agency as collaborative efforts. Finally, because agency is hybrid, distributed, and interrupted, causality cannot be attributed to an origin with some stable and coherent substance or being. Thus, causality is a simultaneous and mutual relation. In short, relational ontologies do more than suggest that realities are constituted by relations, they suggest that meaning and materiality must be equally accounted for and that human sense-making processes should be decentered in scholarship. My goal in the following section is to introduce Deleuzian ontology and his contributions to these premises. In doing so, I also draw connections between Deleuze and other CCO approaches.

Immanent and Enacted . . . and also Virtual

First, Deleuze depicts structures as immanent and enacted (Deleuze, 1988). Immanence challenges concepts of structure as a transcendent, latent, and stable force dictating the power dynamics of everyday institutions and interaction. Immanent structures are constituted by, and exist only in, (inter) action. They are embedded in, constituted

with, and reshaped by everyday occurrences. This concept of immanence resonates with Kuhn et al.'s (2017) second premise that "the real is enacted, multiple, and flat" (p. 32) and Latour's (2005) shift from what he calls "sociology of the social" to "sociology of association" (p. 9):

> Whereas in the first approach, every activity . . . could be related to and explained by the same social aggregates *behind* all of them, in the second version of sociology there exists *nothing* behind those activities even though they might be linked in a way that does produce a society. (p. 8, emphasis in original)

This conceptual shift moves the point of analysis from discovering hidden structures that are *reflected* in everyday existence. That is, there is no trove of structural explanations to be discovered, no structural Rosetta stone to be decoded that will explain the patterns of history, life, and institutions. Instead, the goal is to discover how immanent structures are, and might be, *created* through everyday existence.

Here Deleuze (1988) makes a bold move that distinguishes him from many philosophers and CCO scholars. He recasts the project of ontology by emphasizing the potential that immanent creation portends. Such an account of potential requires understanding how pure potential becomes stable realities. Deleuze uses the term *actualization* to describe this process, and the term *actualized* to describe that which is formed and appears to have a stable coherent existence in shared reality. The parallel between Deleuze's concept of actualization, and CCO's concerns with constitution is evident, as both emphasize the processes by which realities come into existence. However, Deleuze brings a new emphasis to CCO: He requires that we attend to that which is not (yet) actualized as still *real*. For Deleuze, real and actualized are not interchangeable terms. While the actualized refers to shared and relatively stable social realities, the real includes the potential from which the actualized reality emerges. In this sense we might describe the infinite alternative and unknown interpretations of text (Vásquez & Kuhn, 2019) or Luhmann's not chosen choices and unknown choices (Schoeneborn, 2011) as real, but not actualized. Deleuze calls these unactualized aspects *the virtual* aspect

of our immanently and enacted accomplishments of structured reality. Thus, we must keep in mind that the virtual is immanent to, not apart from, actualized realities.

Always Social and Material . . . and Both Always (Un)stable

The second Deleuzian premise that resonates with CCO emphasizes the ontological parity of change and stability, or what I refer to as (in) stability. This claim resonates with CCO scholarship's focus on (dis)organization and (dis)order. However, given the immanence of the virtual, Deleuze offers unique language for analyzing how change is always and already part of immanently accomplished social structures and organizations. Deleuze infuses the actual with the virtual (unactualized potential): "What we call virtual is not something that lacks reality, but something that is engaged in a process of actualization" (Deleuze, 2001, p. 31). The virtual, however, is not a train on tracks moving toward actualization, nor is it a crossroads at which one of several paths must be chosen. Instead, the virtual is a curious child in a pathless forest. A path will be made, but infinite paths could be made. This infinite multitude of unactualized potential is embedded in and relevant to the actual. Whereas the actual can be understood in terms of relatively stable constituted identities or bodies, Deleuze suggests that the virtual evades identification altogether—it is pure potential (or in his terms, "pure difference," Deleuze, 1994.)

Here we encounter a significant difference between Deleuze and his contemporaries that extends CCO. While most poststructuralists and CCO scholars ground principles of contingency, deferral, and difference—that is, the *virtual*—in the slipperiness of meaning, Deleuze grounds (in)stability in the material as much as in meaning. While a multitude of relational meanings "haunt" (to use Vásquez et al.'s, 2016 term) our realities, a multitude of potential relational materialities haunt as well. For example, a CD hanging from the ceiling in a second grade classroom casts rainbows. Perhaps that CD once connected to a machine that produced sound and moved bodies. Now? The potential is real, but it remains virtual. Now, it is actually a prism. What else it might be we do not know.

This returns us to the task at hand: the (in)stability of organization as both social and material, and how communication constitutes

organization at this juncture. In part, instability occurs when coherent, yet conflicting, entities "run into" each other, causing tension and disorganization. However, Deleuze emphasizes change as immanent to entities themselves. This change results because immanently constituted entities never fully capture unactualized potential. Processes of actualization never fully wrangle in the virtual of either meaning or materiality: "[T]he masses and flows are constantly escaping, inventing connections that jump from tree (concept)[2] to tree (concept) and uproot them" (p. 506, Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). The virtual will eventually surface from the structure itself: A duck billed platypus is a mammal and yet she lays an egg. Workers don't comply. A child is born intersex. These occurrences expose the inherent vulnerability of actualized entities or structures and demonstrate their ontological (in)stability. And while the platypus remains a curiosity, futile efforts to fully capture the virtual are ongoing. That is, managers compel worker to act and intersex children are too often made to fit binary structures of sex. Thus, Deleuze emphasizes that structures are not the stable entities they appear to be. Instead, they are imbued with the virtual and teem with deviations, change, shifts, and consequent "corrections." As May (2005) explains, "[c]haos yields order, but does not yield to order; difference [potential] does not yield to identity" (p. 95). Thus, Deleuze pushes CCO scholars to focus on a specific type of (in)stability; one that does not emerge from collision and incompatibility, but rather from the virtual excesses—in both meaning and material dimensions—that imbue actualized organizations.

My goal here is not to suggest that meaning and materiality are separate in reality, but to ground them as two dimensions of reality with common ontological foundations. This Deleuzian move remains accountable to Kuhn et al.'s (2017) claim that all realities are simultaneously material and social:

> Anything that exists, by definition, takes on material dimension, in that it has to be made through relation to other "things." It does not follow that all things are similarly or

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2. Deleuze often uses the imagery of a tree to define concepts that are actualized in centralized, naturalized, and seemingly stable forms. This is in contrast to his better known "rhizomatic" concepts which embrace the virtual.

equally material, of course; we might envision or experience materialization in kinds, degrees, and gradations. It does mean, however, that nothing completely *im*material can exist. (p. 35)

Deleuze might clarify that anything that exists in a shared reality has *inseparable* dimensions of both materiality and meaning.[3] Thus, materiality and meaning are both (in)stable and bound up (though not necessarily equally) in relations that constitute the actual.

Forgoing Substantialism for Relations . . . of Force

How can we analyze both meaning and materiality as similarly (un)stable, virtual, and mutually implicated in processes of constitution and actualization? In his book, *Foucault*, Deleuze (1988) offers the concept of *force* as a basic analytical unit of ontology. He defines force in terms of the "capacity to affect and be affected" (p. 71). From the electromagnetic forces of the atom, to the gravitational pull of celestial bodies, the real consists of bundles of forces, interacting with other bundles of forces, making bigger bundles of forces that relate to other bundles of forces . . . and so it goes. While science highlights many forms of force (gravity, magnetism, friction, etc.), Deleuze and Guattari (1983, 1987) add flows (of ideas, of air, of bodies, of economies, etc.) as another way to identify force. Force is not the flow itself, but the capacity of flows to affect and be affected; to reinforce, merge, challenge, or block other forces or flows. Perhaps more important, Deleuze describes force in the virtual realm as random and chaotic intensities; not yet actualized in flows or lines. As realities are constituted, force is sedimented (but never completely) into (un)stable

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3. Deleuze does not use the terms "material" and "meaning" but I have chosen this language in order to connect with existing communication literature. I use these terms to make the argument accessible, but acknowledge that Deleuze often changes his own language—in this case using concepts like "content" and "expression" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) "the visible" and "the articulable" (Deleuze, 1988), "spatio-temporal relations" and "logical relations" and "being" and "thought" (Deleuze, 1994)—to refer to similar or slightly deviated yet connected concepts or ideas. This is intentional performative writing on his part to prevent concepts from fully settling.

relations or flows that connect with one another in a particular way. Forces, in this sense, move through relations or connections (after all, we affect and are affected at the point of connection).

Thus, any given entity is constituted (or actualized) when (un)stable force comes together in a particular way, in a particular time and space. According to Deleuze, relations of force are not the effect of a given entity; rather any given entity is the effect of relational lines of force. In his own words, "All identities are only simulated, produced as an optical 'effect'" (p. xix, Deleuze, 1994). These simulating forces are made visible in flows, and at points of connection. As identities dissolve into articulations of force, Kuhn et al.'s (2017) rejection of traditional cause and effect takes on a new nuance: No entity is a source of force, it is only a channel and an effect.

This proposition exceeds calls to understand actualized objects or concepts as defined by their relationship to other actualized objects and ideas (that is, the call to analyze the relationship between entities). Instead, it is a call to understand objects and concepts as middles themselves. We can describe this middle as an articulation of forces according to a particular *technique*—a momentary arrangement—that is at the middle of forces coming and going. While technique is not a term commonly used by Deleuze, I use it here to account for *how* articulation is done in an actualizing event; a noun that always inhabits a doing (e.g., writing technique, dancing technique, etc.). A technique is not an ontologically distinct substance from force, it is realized in the articulation of forces. This idea of entities as middles themselves aligns Deleuze with current relational ontologies. As Cooren and Caidor (2019) explain, "relations . . . are themselves beings or things that establish connections or links between other beings or things, which means that there is a priori no absolute difference between relations (what establishes the connection) and relata (the beings that are related to each other through these relations)" (p. 38). Using Deleuzian concepts of techniques and forces, we might say "there is a priori no absolute difference between the *coming together of particular forces according to particular techniques* and *the actualized entities that are the effects of those techniques and forces.*"

In his elaboration on Foucault and in his collaboration with Deleuze and Guattari (1983, 1987), Deleuze (1996) offers the concept of *machines* to describe the bundles of forces (or bundles of bundles

of forces) that make up actualized entities at the middle of flowing force. In Deleuze and Guattari's (1983)words, "every machine functions as a break in the flow, in relation to the machine to which it is connected, but at the same time, is also a flow itself, or the production of a flow, in relation to the machine connected to it" (p. 36). Deleuze defines the concept of a machine by highlighting connections, the points where forces or flows come and go. And, as May (2005) explains, these connections are always emerging and there are more potential connections than appear. Machines are actualized everywhere around us (and in us), and their potential to connect differently, and thus become something different, is always virtual and unfolding. By taking up Deleuze's use of the term "machine," rather than "assemblage" or "multiplicity" (terms he uses elsewhere, and to the complement of machines), we accentuate connection, or the "plugging" of one machine into another, as the critical event in constitution. Thus, while relational lines of force are the stuff of constitution, Deleuze enables researchers to bracket and analyze any given entity as a machine: a bundle of forces actualized according to particular techniques of articulation. This allows analysis of stable appearing entities while maintaining their ontological status as an (un)stable articulation of force.

Communication as the Meeting of Meaning and Materiality

What is the role of communication in this mutual emergence of material and meaningful force? Deleuze and Guattari (1987) found concepts of language based on representation (in which the thing represented was not constitutively questioned) and concepts of communication based on intersubjective meaning (in which the communicating subjects themselves were not constitutively questioned) insufficient to fully understand communication. They address this insufficiency by infusing both of these concepts with a new concept of communication that requires reinterpreting the old in light of the new.

   This new concept of communication hinges on an assumption discussed above—that realities necessarily have both meaning and material dimensions, though not necessarily equally (Kuhn et al., 2017). Deleuze and Guattari (1987) are particularly concerned with how the virtual chaotic force of meaning and materiality is capable of coming

together and actualizing into the mutual relations necessary to constitute realities. They suggest that mutual (in)stability (the virtual) of both meaning and materiality is a necessary condition of constitutive processes. Without mutual (in)stability there is no opening for connection, influence, or intervention between the two. This point is critically important: There is no constitution of shared reality without (in)stability in both meaning and materiality. Moreover, meaning and materiality themselves actualize into realities through their relationship to one another. Accordingly, the constitution of realities is not only both material and meaningful, but *fundamentally based in (in)stability*, which enables the capacity of material and meaningful force to mutually emerge into a shared reality.

Thus, I will summarize a complex explanation (Deleuze and Guatarri, 1987, pp. 75–110) of communication as follows: We should think of communication as *the processes by which force, in both material and meaning dimensions, comes together through particular techniques of articulation and emerges into (un)stable shared realities*. More succinctly, communication processes coordinate an (un)stable, meaningful, material and shared reality. Hence, Deleuze (and his work with Guattari) returns to the centrality of communication, despite not beginning there. This concept of communication does not negate the history of theories addressing language and representation, or communication as the pursuit of intersubjective meaning; these simply become particular modes of communication. Language becomes a meaning-heavy mode of communication that arranges sights, sounds, and meanings into words and phrases using familiar techniques that constitute (un)stable texts. Likewise, intersubjective modes of communication emphasize how human selves collaboratively articulate forces of bodies, experiences, knowledge, and other machines to create common understandings of themselves and the world they inhabit.

This concept of communication nuances claims that objects themselves communicate and Kuhn et al.'s (2017) recent call to reconsider communication as transmission, by identifying force as the stuff of articulation and transmission. At each point of connection, communication transmits force (in all its variations) by techniques of amplification, integration, deconstruction, redirection, multiplication, etc. I will return to this point in the discussion, but communication as an articulation and transmission of force begs the question: What about power?

. . . Constitution: Always Already an Act of Power

Deleuze distinguishes power from force itself. While force is the capacity to affect and be affected, power lies in the capacity to connect or arrange forces; to dictate particular relationships of force. In his own words, "Power . . . is diagrammatic: it mobilizes non-stratified (virtual) matter and functions" (Deleuze, 1988, p. 73). He clarifies that diagrams can be defined in several ways including "the presentation of the relations between forces unique to a particular formation" (p. 72). Otherwise stated, power is the capacity to mobilize force using particular techniques that set up particular relations, "inciting, inducing, producing a useful effect, etc." (p. 83), into broader formations. Thus, analyzing power requires identifying forces *and* attending to the ways force comes together in relations of mutual influence (or not). Because *how* forces come together is a question of power, and realities emerge through the articulation of forces according to particular techniques, all acts of constitution are acts of power. The constitutive coming together of force—the actualizing process accomplished through multiple modes of communication—systematically produces and enhances some forces, while extinguishing, denying, and capturing others.

Moreover, just as the arrangement of force can never fully capture the virtual, power also cannot be fully secured. The virtual will always emerge; "a diagram of forces presents particular features of resistance . . . to make change possible" (Deleuze, 1988, p. 89). Thus, (in)stability is not only an inevitable characteristic of (dis)organization and a necessary condition of constitutive emergence; the balance of (in)stability is an act of power. At the micro level, the moment we fail to embrace the potential offered by (in)stability, we become (for better or worse) part of the machine. Accordingly, Deleuze is especially concerned with the processes by which particular diagrams are reproduced and naturalized—extinguishing the potential to tap into the virtual. Thus, communication, by virtue of its function as the coming together of force, is an expression of power, in so far as it brings forth particular forces in particular ways, and not other forces in other ways.

Let me trace my steps before going forward: Deleuze enhances CCO scholars' understandings of reality as immanent (rather than

transcendent) by suggesting we must account for both the actualized and the virtual as imbricated features of the real. By clarifying that both material and meaningful aspects of reality are imbued with the virtual, he reasserts the (in)stability of materiality as paramount to the (in)stability of meaning. At the same time, he offers both materiality and meaning a common ontological foundation: force, which might take the form of intensities, flows, affect, or feelings, among other forms. Deleuze, in turn, offers the concept of machines as a tool to analyze entities we acknowledge and interact with daily. By examining entities as machines, he acknowledges them as simultaneously *in* and *of* relations, themselves constituted by flows of force articulated using particular techniques. At the core of this coming together of force are communication processes, which are particularly important because they enable force, in both material and meaning dimensions, to mutually influence one another. Because the emergence of mutually (un)stable material and meaning is the necessary condition of constitution, communication is thus the key process in constitution. Moreover, because power is not force, but the capacity to arrange relations of force, constitutive communication is also always enacting power. This is, however, a complex set of principles, so the next step is to present T&F as a conceptual framework based on these principles, and to demonstrate how to apply it.

Deleuze Becoming CCO: A Deleuzian Analytic of Organizational (In)Stability

Thus far, I have shown how Deleuze contributes to an emerging conversation among CCO that addresses (dis)organization, (dis)order, and (in)stability. While I have drawn on Deleuze's work to foreground (in)stability in sociomaterial constitutive processes and to revive questions of power at stake in (in)stability, I have not yet specifically addressed how one might take up this philosophical position in organizational analysis. The conceptual framework of Techniques & Forces (T&F) transposes the basic principles outlined above into more applied tenets for organizational analysis.

Tenet #1: Identify Forces

Given that organizations are not collectives of stable people, objects and ideas, but collections of force (e.g., flows, lines, relations) arranged in (un) predictable patterns, researchers should treat organizations as machines made up of machines, made up of machines, made up of . . . force (Deleuze, 1988; Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, 1987). By analyzing entities as machinic articulations of force, researchers maintain that entities are not the origins of force, but are produced by incoming and outgoing forces. Scholars can identify incoming and outgoing forces by identifying points of connection. For example, when organizational members draw on or connect behaviors to an authoritative text (Kuhn, 2008), they actualize the force of that authoritative text-machine as constitutive of the organizational structure. But how do we look for connections?

Recall the Deleuzian-inspired concept of communication as *the processes by which force, in both material and meaning dimensions, comes together through particular techniques of articulation and emerges into (un)stable shared realities.* Thus, communication is the place where such connection emerges and force is actualized as part of organizational structure. In turn, we can examine texts, conversations, and social events with an eye toward the connections between ideas, norms, concepts, objects, places, practices, bodies, etc. We can also examine how doors, cubicles, and locks both facilitate and impede connections. Ultimately, each connection facilitates force, moving from one machine to the next. Thus, we can identify significant constitutive forces by identifying how machines (i.e., bodies, ideas, texts, objects, etc.) engage other machines, and analyzing how those machines *and* the organization are simultaneously constituted by the force that moves through those connections. This allows us to identify flows of force as they move through multiple machines. The emphasis on force offers a unique approach to CCO scholarship that ultimately renders the analysis of specific entities and events as a means to an end that prioritizes analyzing force.

Tenet #2: Attend to Techniques of Articulation

It is not enough to identify forces that are significant to the constitution of organizations. We must also address *how* forces come together: Do they compete? Complement? Cancel? Correct? When assuming (1) that people, objects, and ideas making up an organization are (in)stable articulations of force, and (2) that those machinic articulations include virtual force that is not actualized, but could become so, then we must also acknowledge that, (3) the techniques of articulation are also paramount to constitution.

Attending to techniques implies focusing organizational research in two important ways. First, *techniques of articulation actualize a particular relationship between forces*. For example, techniques may differ if one treats environmental and financial imperatives as oppositional while the other treats them as collaborative. Thus, analyzing the technique of articulation highlights whether one force is adjusting, guiding, merging with, or negating another. Second, a machine's *techniques actualize certain forces as critical to organizational constitution while leaving others to the virtual*. This could be a matter of selection as techniques connect with actualized logics, ideas, people, objects, etc. This selective function resonates with Vásquez et al.'s (2018) analysis of how "matters of concern" become "matters of authority." By connecting a matter of concern to policies, decisions, etc., we might say it becomes a *force* of authority.

In addition to selecting and articulating actualized forces, techniques also facilitate the emergence of actualized force out of the chaos of the virtual. This is more akin to Ashcraft's (2019) concept of "address," which highlights how different forms of address constitute "hoarding" and "hoarder" in unique ways by facilitating (as Deleuze would say) the *coming together* of intensities of matter, and feelings, and smells, and bodies, and care. In other words, techniques not only arrange actualized forces in further processes of actualization, they also capture the chaos of the virtual to produce a particular version of actualized force. These aspects of techniques are critical to understanding power. By using techniques that actualize particular forces and not others, those forces are established as more significant or central to the structure of the constituted organization. Through repeated use of a technique, the forces it emphasizes and

actualizes become increasingly central to organizational constitution, and the virtual along with the potential it portends becomes less perceptible.

Tenet #3: Organizational (In)stability Inevitably Emerges in the Necessary Relationships Between Forces and Techniques, Not One or the Other

Techniques cannot be understood apart from the articulation of force any more than dance techniques can be understood apart from movement. Analyzing force without techniques overlooks power, as well as the unactualized potential and (in)stability that is the necessary condition of constitution.

By analyzing T&F, three forms of instability emphasizing relationality emerge, without dependence on meaning. First, instability occurs when techniques change, thus rearranging forces without necessarily changing the forces involved. For example, a work schedule or a chain of command could be altered. In this case, the people (and the forces that constitute them) remain the same, but the techniques of their arrangement are changed. Second, the integration of new forces into an existing structure fosters organizational instability. In this form, for example, a complaint is filed, a new security system is installed, or new regulations are imposed. However, introducing new force does not necessarily trigger instability. In acts of power, techniques may articulate those forces in ways that do, or do not, destabilize the existing articulation of force: (1) Techniques might minimize or ignore the force (ignore the complaint); (2) innovated techniques may acknowledge the force but work around it with little disruption (e.g., obtaining a key card to access secured spaces); or (3) techniques may take up introduced forces and rearticulate them to connected machines in ways that fundamentally change how the organization functions (e.g., all departments must create strategies to comply with the new regulation). Third, instability can be triggered by the removal or suspension of forces that were significant to the organized arrangement of forces. For example, a major client or funding source is lost, necessary information is left out of a document, or technology fails. In these cases, attempts might be made to replace the force ("I brought handouts just in case!"), or to innovate techniques that allow the machine

to maintain the stability of its other connections in the absence of the missing force ("I'll explain the charts").

Thus, one can focus a Deleuzian analysis of organizational constitution, (in)stability, and power by identifying both actualized and virtual force at play, and the techniques by which that force is articulated (or not). Moreover, the play of power in organizational (in)stability cannot be understood by simply tracing force; we must account for the techniques of articulation that bring particular relations into existence, and not others. To demonstrate how attention to techniques, forces, and the play of power in organizational (in) stability offers a compelling analysis, it is helpful to revisit a case focused on (dis)organization and CCO.

A Case of Organizational Constitution

To illustrate the potential for a Deleuzian CCO analysis using T&F, I revisit Albu's (2019) analysis of a human rights civil society organization (CSO) working in Morocco. Albu's analysis focused on (in)visibilities and dis/organization proffered by information and communication technologies (ICTs). Her research question and analysis considered the agency of ICTs, with Foucault's disciplinary power playing a role in describing how ICT's foster (in)visibilities that enable and evade state surveillance. My goal here is to illustrate how an explicitly Deleuzian T&F analysis might offer additional insights into the important context she analyzed.

By way of brief summary, the CSO documented human rights violations by Moroccan authorities with the goal of sharing evidence with Western Media and governments (Albu, 2019). Ideally, those media and government organizations put pressure on Moroccan authorities to change their practices. The CSO's work, however, had been outlawed by the Moroccan government, thus forcing the organization to "shift toward invisibility through covert procedures and encryption protocols" (p. 162). Without this shift toward invisibility, members of the organization were subject to state surveillance and punishment that would disorganize their efforts. Yet efforts to shift toward invisibility also (dis)organized as records could not be kept and encryption sometimes prevented organizational members from accessing flows

of information. Albu's emphasis on (dis)organization, her contextualization of micro-level data in a broader social context, and the clear stakes of power, all make this case useful for illustrating the potential of a Deleuzian T&F approach to CCO.

Let me begin by reframing the context according to Deleuzian principles. First, given that Deleuze hinges constitution/actualization on the balance of (in)stability, a T&F approach frames both the CSO and the Moroccan government organizations as seeking to influence the constitutive process of the other by influencing the balance of (in)stability. Consequently, research questions must address what techniques articulating what forces are at play in this balance. Additionally, it is critical to address the capacity to actually set forces in relationship to one another, that is, the capacity to actually connect (dis)organizing forces to other constitutive forces, which is a question of power. Finally, the Deleuzian approach suggests addressing ICTs as machines by attending to incoming and outgoing forces, and to the potential for ICTs to connect in a multitude of ways.

At the outset of her analysis, Albu (2019) identified three significant constitutive forces of the Moroccan Government as articulated in the Moroccan Constitution: the monarchy, religion, and territorial boundaries. Later, her informant, Nordin, clarified that while the country has a Parliament, "the parliament does not control Morocco, those behind it do" (p. 160), suggesting that power lies with the Monarchy. In other words, the participant suggested that the parliament has little capacity to create forces that actually influence and shape other flows of force (e.g., the military, spending, etc.), thus limiting its constitutive influence and power. Albu also highlighted a government letter issued to the CSO stating: "[Y]our organization and experts used and abused Morocco's open policy and well-known hospitality for no other reason than to tarnish the image of its institutions and its democratic achievements" (p. 162). Thus, T&F would frame the letter as connecting with and mobilizing values of "hospitality," "open policy," and "democratic achievements" in efforts to constitute the government accordingly. Moreover, in a practice of power, the technique of the letter (as machine) sets up the force of these values in opposition to the forces emerging from the investigative practices of the CSO and consequently demands that the organization cease operation. This technique of opposition reemerged later in the analysis

when Nordin stated: "CSO's that are being backed by international funding are automatically considered to have *contradictory interests* to that of Morocco" (p. 162, emphasis in original). Thus, the authoritative texts (the constitution, government letter) and conversations Albu presented (between her and Nordin) include multiple values and entities as garnering constitutive force for the Moroccan Government as well as varied capacities (between the monarchy, CSO, and parliament) to influence how those forces are set in constitutive relationship to one another with varying levels of impact. Accordingly, an emphasis on T&F nuances Albu's analysis, which points to varied capacities for power in the constitution of the government.

Turning attention to the CSO, Albu indicated that the CSO members organized toward the "central task of reporting human rights violations" (p. 167). In T&F terms, they focused on facilitating the flow of and directing the constitutive force of information regarding human rights violations by finding, collecting, and transferring that information. Facilitating this flow of information involved ICTs (as machines) as well as bodies (as machines) that met with other bodies and conducted interviews. Of course, the force of this flow could be captured by government machines, causing disorganization of the CSO, as once again, Nordin indicated: "I got detained a few years back for having notes in my pocket after I interviewed an informant. . .*When we are being watched, our work becomes slower, sometimes impossible*" (Albu, 2019, p. 164, emphasis in original). Thus, the flow of information offered the primary constitutive force. When the government interrupted or threatened that force, it threatened the existence of the organization.

Given that techniques of articulation are paramount to force itself in terms of balancing organizational (in)stability, we must also rethink ICTs as machines that facilitate the force of flowing information. When ICTs multiply force so that it connects to many people, it constitutes both the people as organizational participants and the organization itself. This, however, depends on the people's (as machines) techniques of articulating that force. Does the force of that flow of information move bodies to a protest? Get passed on as information? Get ignored? Get directed to authorities? As the force of information moves through bodies, it simultaneously constitutes the individual (as protestor, participant, or traitor) and the (un)stable organization.

However, Deleuze reminds us that machines always have many virtual connections. This case of ICTs involved potential connections with the government. If the government were to capture the force of the flowing information, it would plug into a state-prosecution machine, as a manager in the CSO explained, "we can no longer use social media because they [the authorities] look for the smallest smudge to send you to prison" (Albu, p. 165). In this way the virtual (i.e., potential for the state to connect with ICTs and redirect force) remained an integral aspect of the real, harboring instability and disorganization. While Albu used the language of appropriation (p. 169) to describe the relationship between the government and ICTs, the T&F framework focuses our attention on this process as fostering new connections through new techniques of articulation that fundamentally reconstitute the ICTs and disorganize the CSO by capturing its primary constitutive force.

Thus, the virtual is always infused in the (un)stable actualized organization. The potential for ICT-machines to connect with the state-machine pushed the organization toward invisibility practices. Albu described how various ICT-machines were deployed to encrypt, conceal, and obfuscate the flow of information. These invisibility strategies protected the primary constitutive force of the CSO from government machines that might capture the flow and force of information. The invisibility strategies simultaneously (dis) organized the CSO itself, by disrupting the constitutive force of information as it moved from a witness interview, through organizational members and reports, to foreign media and governments. For example, Albu stated that "obfuscation practices introduced disorder when members were unable to identify which of the activities were authentic and which were aimed at misleading authorities" (p. 167), demonstrating that an excess of force via multiple of flows of information caused disorder in the organization. In this way, the actualized forces of the organizations were consistently emerging from and returning to the virtual in constitutively significant flows of force.

By analyzing techniques and forces, we can also identify how organizational constitution inevitably involves power and trace constitutive connections through broader social structures. As mentioned, the CSO could not set the force of information flows into direct relationship with the Moroccan government. The government would

capture that force and redirect it as part of a prosecution machine that ultimately punished members and disorganized the CSO. Moreover, in acts of power, the government deployed machines (e.g., technologies, intelligence analysts, weapons, etc.) to impose their own techniques of articulation that (1) captured forces of information flow and (2) reconstituted machines that facilitated that flow (e.g., the capture of human bodies, as well as reconstitution of ICTs). Meanwhile, the CSO did not have a similar capacity to impose techniques that connected disruptive forces to constitutive flows of the government. Instead, the CSO directed the force of flowing information through reports presented to foreign media and governments. As one of the CSO managers explained: "Sometimes different international stakeholders can start pressuring here and there because of our *reports*, and then there is a big *media* debate about something, then *the government must take action*" (Albu, p. 168, emphasis in original). The force of flowing information moved through a media machine and through foreign government machines where it (hopefully) connected with forces of diplomatic flows and connections. By affecting diplomatic forces (a significant constitutive force of the Moroccan government), the CSO pursued the goal of (dis)organizing, and hopefully reconstituting the government indirectly. Thus, we analyze power by analyzing the entire diagram of forces, and by identifying the imposition or normalization of a particular technique that called particular forces into play and defused or eliminated others. While the CSO could not impose or normalize techniques and forces on the government directly, they appealed to broader social structures. Alternatively, T&F would suggest they could embrace the virtual and its unpredictable outcomes as a source for change.

Were this essay dedicated purely to the analysis of this case, we might analyze each of the machines involved in the facilitation and capture of force, addressing the incoming and outgoing forces that connect with and communicate amongst bodies, and texts, and technologies, and stories, and jails, and governments, etc. We might analyze how particular techniques are repeated, naturalized, and challenged, perhaps examining the techniques and forces that repeatedly constitute CSOs (and others) as villains. We could look more closely at the innovation of techniques, such as encryption, concealment, and obfuscation, and how those techniques function at the balance of (in)

stability in particular instances leaving the balance of power in play. We would continue to attend to each of these through specific communication events where force, in both its material and meaning dimensions, comes together through techniques of articulation that constitute (un)stable shared realities.

Still, this brief analysis demonstrates how power plays out in these constitutive communicative events as each balanced (in)stability for both the Moroccan government and the CSO. Organizational actors protected their organization's primary constitutive force, while fostering a disorganizing relation of forces for the other through the production and imposition of disruptive forces and techniques. This analysis also demonstrates how flows of force, identifiable here in flows of information and the mobilization of certain values, are ultimately the source of both stability and instability. Furthermore, the techniques for articulating those forces must be accounted for in order to fully understand organizational constitution through communication. This case also illustrates the importance of attending to both actualized and virtual force, as the unknown potential of the virtual made a real impact on how the machines of the CSO facilitate the force of the information flow that constitutes the CSO.

Discussion

The case of the Moroccan CSO illustrates how a Deleuzian approach nuances and speaks across existing CCO approaches, especially in areas of (in)stability, relational ontology, communication, and power. To begin, the Deleuzian approach casts *(in)stability as the necessary condition of constitution*: Absolute stability eliminates the capacity for constitutive elements to mutually engage, while too much instability results in chaos. By introducing the virtual as an immanent source of (in)stability, Deleuze encourages us to think beyond (dis)organization as failures of communication or the result of conflicting entities. On the one hand, we can think of the virtual as implied but not fully actualized *possibilities* in ways similar to Luhman's unchosen choices (Schoeneborn, 2011), Vásquez et al.'s (2018) "matters of concern," or alternative meanings that "haunt" texts and organizations (Vásquez et al., 2016). But Deleuze pushes CCO scholars to considerer the virtual

as pure *potential.* This is more akin to Ashcraft's (2019) concern with affect, which she suggests is actualized into "proper" flows of feeling through forms of address. Assuming (in)stability as the necessary condition of constitution requires analysis of the virtual, from which (in)stability emerges, as a real part of organizations. Vásquez et al. (2016) point toward the virtual when they identify three (dis)ordering dynamics of text-in-use, and Deleuze would suggest that researchers might continue to add to this list. In the case of the CSO, the virtual emerges in both the possibility and potential for state surveillance, which affected the CSO's constitutive communicative practices. Additionally, mutual (in)stability suggests we cannot attribute stability and instability to distinct entities. Thus, Albu's suggestion that visibility aligns with order, and invisibility aligns with disorder, underestimates the virtual. Visible flows of information also portend disorder, to the extent that the government could capture those flows, and invisibility portends order insofar as it protects the primary constitutive force of the CSO. Thus, we must always attend to the balance of (in)stability by attending to both the actualized and virtual as mutually imbued aspects of the real.

The Deleuzian approach to CCO research also makes important contributions to emerging considerations of relational ontology in CCO, especially by offering an analytical grounding for the question: "Relations of what?" By positing force as the "stuff" of relations, Deleuze offers a single concept to ground both materiality and meaning. Force can be virtual or actualized and have varying degrees of materiality and meaning. Perhaps more important, force can be transmitted into new actualizations through techniques of articulation. This conception breathes new life into McPhee and Zaug's (2000) four flows by analyzing forces that make up the flows and how they are rearticulated at different points in the actualization of the organization.

Moreover, while actor-network-inspired strategies (Latour, 2005) emphasize tracing that bears similarities to tracing forces, I have added analyzing techniques as equally important, particularly in considerations of power. For example, the primary constitutive force of the Moroccan CSO manifests in the flow of information regarding human rights violations. This moves through and links a multitude of machines (e.g., technologies, people, stories, etc.). While both activists and government agents are constituted by this flow of force, the

technique of articulation constitutes them differently. This T&F practice of following a force that simultaneously constitutes individuals, the CSO organization, and technologies as tools, demonstrates the capacity for T&F analysis to scale up and down and across time and space. The constitution of objects, people, and organizations are linked as simultaneous effects of a continuous force that flows, rather than linked as relations of traditional cause and effect. In this particular case, it requires that we rethink "appropriation" and instead proposes that ICTs are fundamentally "reconstituted" by the actualization of virtual connections with the government that captured and redirected the force of information flows—a process that Deleuze might refer to as "territorialization" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987).

Thus, by addressing forces and techniques as the "what" and the "how" of relational ontology, Deleuzian T&F not only offers a unifying analytical ground for the often bifurcated elements of meaning and materiality, it also offers a scalable tool for analysis that escapes traditional forms of cause and effect by acknowledging how a flow of force is involved in the simultaneous constitution of many objects, people, and organizations. This reminds us that, from a Luhmannian (Schoeneborn, 2011) perspective one decision does not cause the next, but the two are simultaneously constituted by their connection; it reminds us that authoritative texts (Kuhn, 2008) are not a source that regulates action, rather they are themselves constituted by their connections to individual actions.

The Deleuzian T&F approach also contributes to recent efforts to reconceptualize and move away from a human-centered notion of communication which has resulted in a series of somewhat disconnected ideas of communication. My Deleuzian concept of communication as *the processes by which force comes together according to particular techniques and mutually emerges into (un)stable shared realities* speaks to several of those ideas. Take Kuhn et al.'s (2017) concept of "communicative relationality" summarized in three versions of communication based on: (1) relating/linking/connecting, (2) logics of practice and articulation, and (3) constitutive transmission—all of which address the emerging need to attend to communication as a sociomaterial phenomenon. Bringing a T&F approach alongside these three versions to address ICTs shows how T&F speaks across different versions of communication. In the first sense, ICTs communicate

by virtue of the line of force that related, linked, or connected it with other entities. As flows of information moved across multiple machines—from witnesses, through CSO members, through ICTs, through reports, to foreign entities—each machine's technique of articulation reactualized the force of that flow. Thus, the entities communicate with one another by affecting the constitutive force that links them, and thus influencing how the forces ultimately "come together" (e.g., communicating) at each point in the flow. While the second version resonates in terms of articulation, T&F shifts away from language of agencies and practices toward forces and techniques. This shift not only sustains continuity between the first and second version of communication; it avoids shifting into a mindset of agencies as coherent things that do a practice. It reminds scholars that the thing itself is the effect of an event of articulating forces according to particular techniques. This is why ICTs are not "appropriated" as already given agencies, but reconstituted through novel articulations of force. Thus, T&F offers tools to reconcile the thing itself as communicatively constituted by the coming together of forces (version 2), while maintaining the linking to other entities as communication (version 1) by virtue of the force that moves through that machine and ultimately constitutes broader social structures. Finally, while the third version focuses on affect as the primary "stuff" transmitted through communication, a Deleuzian approach casts affect as one of several modes of force that can be transmitted through communication. Thus, Deleuzian T&F provides consistency across sociomaterial concepts of communication and decenters both human communication and objects as coherent communicating identities through an emphasis on force.

This brings us to a final point: A Deleuzian approach enhances discussions of power in the CCO literature. While CCO analyses have addressed power relations, as is the case with Albu (2019), there have been fewer explicit theoretical treatments of the relationship between CCO approaches and power. By defining power as the capacity to set forces into particular relations, this Deleuzian approach distinguishes force (the capacity to affect and be affected) from power and suggests that power is always present in communicative constitution. In the case of the CSO, the government's capacity to impose techniques and forces affecting the constitutive flow of information demonstrated a capacity for power that was not immediately reciprocated

by the CSO. This theory of power also speaks to other CCO critiques, such as Mumby's (2019) suggestion that the indeterminacy of meaning rather than indeterminacy of labor has taken over the source of capital accumulation in contemporary society. A Deleuzian approach might describe this as a shifting diagram, actualizing new aspects of the virtual into economic flows. Additionally, T&F analyses reveal the simultaneous constitution of multiple machines from a single force, a means to address large scale constructions of power when focusing on seemingly separate micro-level constitutive events. For example, ICTs are simultaneously constituted as tools for CSO activists, while also constituted as tools for Moroccan authorities. Mease and Terry (2012) offer a similar critical CCO analysis using performance theory to demonstrate how the constitutive performance of organization is simultaneously a constitutive performance of race. This points us toward an analysis of the reproduction of particular techniques as a further area of inquiry, including the ways those reproductions might function through unknowing human actors. Moreover, more explicit analysis of the virtual, particularly in organized resistance, might be another fruitful area of research.

As this discussion demonstrates, a Deleuzian approach to CCO research contributes to an understanding of (dis)organization, relational ontology, sociomaterial concepts of communication, and power. Additionally, as I suggested at the outset, Deleuze might help us locate existing CCO concepts and theories in relation to one another. The point here is not to supplant or subsume existing concepts, but to highlight how seemingly discrete CCO theories engage in fundamentally related processes of explanation. Positing techniques and forces as the "stuff" of relations does not negate existing concepts like authoritative texts (Kuhn, 2008), ventriloquism (Cooren & Sandler, 2014), appropriation/attribution of action, hybrid action (Bencherki & Cooren, 2011), decision making (Schoeneborn, 2011), or presentification (Cooren et al., 2008). Rather, it suggests that we might consider how all of these share a common thread that distinguishes CCO scholarship within the broader field of organizational studies. Each of these CCO concepts describe an arrangement of techniques and forces that resonates across organizational contexts; each describes a communicative machine that brings together forces to constitute social realities.

Perhaps most important, a Deleuzian approach centering (in)stability as the necessary condition of CCO and emphasizing power as always present in the processes of constitution leans fully into the increasingly precarious and (un)stable state of organizing in our contemporary society (Kuhn et al., 2017; Mumby, 2019). In a world where gig economies, agile organizations, customization, and increasingly precarious work run alongside powerful global corporations that consolidate media, food production, and medical care (among other things), Deleuze offers a grounding to CCO scholarship that acknowledges how power is ultimately at play in (in)stability even in the face of seemingly impenetrable hegemonic structures. By linking our everyday communication, and the techniques and forces that move through us, to the broader techniques and forces constituting our governments and institutions, Deleuze reminds us of the great stakes at play in our everyday actions and our connections to others. In addition to articulating force, we also reproduce techniques, normalize particular ways of relating, and ultimately strengthen and diminish the forces that construct our world every day. In the end, Deleuze was never motivated to build a philosophy that accurately reflected the world we live in; he was interested in building a philosophy that enabled the active creation of the world we want to live in. Nowhere are those stakes more critically at play than in the communicative constitution of organization.

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