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The Escalating Dis/Organization of Post-Truth Communication

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Abstract

The proliferation of unsupported, misleading, and deceptive communication in public discourse, often referred to as post-truth communication (PTC), presents a pressing challenge to democratic societies today. While PTC thrives on attacking established organizations such as political parties, academic institutions, traditional news media, and societally engaged corporations, in doing so it also brings forth its own forms of organization of various degrees. However, the organizational dynamics of PTC have received limited attention in organization theory, thus far. We shed new light on these dynamics based on a perspective that considers communication as constitutive of organizational phenomena (CCO). We further advance this perspective by integrating Robert Cooper's notion of "dis/organization" and Michel Serres' notion of the "parasite." We develop a model of escalating dis/organization, highlighting how PTC maintains its own organizational properties by persistent disordering of established organization. More specifically, we show how PTC accomplishes interconnectivity, identity, and actorhood by disordering these same properties in established organization through escalating disruption of decision-making, identity simulation, and authority exploitation. Our contribution to organization theory is twofold. First, we offer an explanation of how PTC attains its organizational existence at the expense of disordering established organization. Second, we develop a model that specifies in detail the dynamics between PTC-driven and established organization as a two-sided form of escalating dis/organization. In addition to this, our study yields practical implications for how established

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organization can de-escalate PTC by embracing rather than seeking to suppress its foundational disordering properties.

Keywords
communication constitutes organization (CCO), dis/organization, organization theory, organizationality, parasite, post-truth

> Rule one: Attack, attack, attack.
> Rule two: Admit nothing, deny everything.
> Rule three: Claim victory and never admit defeat.
> Three rules for winning, taught by Roy Cohn to the young Donald J. Trump, quote from the fictionalized motion picture *The Apprentice* (Abbasi, 2024)

Since its nomination as Word of the Year in 2016 (Oxford Dictionary, 2016), and given the turbulent times that have followed, one thing has become increasingly apparent: "Post-truth" is here to stay. Despite valid critique of the term as reflecting a historically romanticizing and epistemologically binary conception of truth (Farkas & Schou, 2020), post-truth has become firmly established as an umbrella concept indicating an alarming proliferation of unsupported, misleading, and deceptive communication in public discourse. The present increase of post-truth communication (PTC) is associated with three developments that are closely intertwined: an erosion of public trust in the evidence-based communication by established organizational authorities; a turn to communication that appeals to personal beliefs instead; and the deliberate distortion of evidence and targeting of personal beliefs in various fields of strategic communication (Harsin, 2018; Maddalena & Gili, 2020). Accordingly, PTC manifests in a wide variety of communication phenomena (Zeng, 2021), including rumors and gossip (Harsin, 2018), conspiracy beliefs (e.g., Douglas et al., 2019; Mahl et al., 2022), bullshit (Christensen et al., 2019), fake news (e.g., Tandocet al., 2017; Waisbord, 2018), and coordinated disinformation campaigns (e.g., Bennett & Livingston, 2020). This surge in PTC is identified as a key contributing factor of contemporary forms of public polarization, democratic backsliding, and rising authoritarianism (e.g., Arora et al., 2022; Bennett & Livingston, 2020; Habermas, 2022; Van Dyk, 2022). PTC has thus become a core topic in political science (e.g., Kalpakos, 2018; Wodak, 2019) and communication studies (e.g., Maddalena & Gili, 2020; Waisbord, 2018). In organizational scholarship, however, it has received only scant attention, thus far (apart from Foroughi et al., 2019; Knight & Tsoukas, 2019; Meyer, 2025; Meyer & Quattrone, 2021; Schreven, 2018).

In this article we argue that PTC should be a topic of serious concern for organizational scholarship. More specifically, organization theory can help address the puzzling question as to how PTC manages to organize and maintain its dedicated "anti-establishment" character over time, while simultaneously attacking, simulating, and partly displacing organizations representing this very "establishment." This question is grounded in three main observations of how PTC relates to established forms of organization. First, "established organization" in its three constitutive features of formal decision-making, legitimate identity, and societal authority (Du Gay & Vikkelsø, 2016; King et al., 2010; Scott, 2013) presents the prime object of PTC attacks (Van Dyk, 2022). Such attacks can come from the outside, but also from within established organizations. These attacks can range widely on their level of abstraction—from sweeping accusations against "the establishment," specific doubts in positions and procedures of established political parties, research institutions, traditional news media, or corporations, to the individual level of formal authorities representing these organizations. Second, these continuous attacks simultaneously enable PTC to organize itself in various degrees. This can range from the spontaneous networking of like-minded communities (Nguyen, 2020), and their digital amplification

by filter bubbles and echo chambers (Kitchens et al., 2020), to the rise and consolidation of fully-fledged counter-organizations, such as neo-authoritarian political parties (Wodak, 2015, 2020), fake news industries (Waisbord, 2018), or para-scientific associations (Taylor-Neu, 2020). Third, this new environment of PTC-driven political parties, news media, or institutional providers of alternative knowledge ultimately leads to the perplexing situation that these new organizations not only successfully simulate but eventually displace organizations representing the "establishment," which they claim to fight against (Taylor-Neu, 2020).

The aim of our conceptual inquiry is to develop a model that can explain such dynamics between established organization and PTC-driven organization. For this purpose, we mobilize a scholarly perspective that considers communication as constitutive of organization (CCO) (Ashcraft et al., 2009). The CCO lens fits particularly well as a theoretical basis for our inquiry for several reasons. First, CCO reasoning approaches phenomena of social organization as inherently communication-born (Basque et al., 2022), which then provides a shared analytical foundation to investigate constitutive features of both established and PTC-driven forms of organization. Second, CCO scholarship suggests approaching organization not as a fixed entity but instead considering *organizationality* as a gradual phenomenon (Dobusch & Schoeneborn, 2015; Schoeneborn et al., 2019). Such organizationality manifests to a high degree in the case of established organization but can also be observed to a lower degree in informal and public self-organization, emerging below and outside the boundaries of established organization, as in the case of PTC. Third, with the notion of *dis/organization* (Vásquez & Kuhn, 2019; Vásquez et al., 2016; see also Cooper, 1986), CCO scholarship acknowledges a foundational interplay of competing ordering and disordering attempts underlying all forms of organization. Fourth, yet while extant CCO reasoning captures dis/organization mostly as an equilibrium to be navigated in the context of single organizations, we advance this theorizing by integrating Michel Serres' (1982) concept of the parasite. In line with recent scholarship from both organization studies (e.g., Rintamäki et al., 2024) and communication studies (e.g., von Nordheim & Kleinen-von Königslöw, 2021), we consider Serres' notion of the parasite a useful addition to conceptualize how dis/organization can escalate in terms of two-sided and mutually reinforcing host-parasite dynamics. This, ultimately, presents the analytic basis for our main proposition: *PTC parasitically accomplishes its own organizing properties by disordering the corresponding properties of established organization as its host.*

In this article, we unfold this proposition along three communicative properties, which CCO reasoning regards as the minimum criteria of organizationality (Dobusch & Schoeneborn, 2015): the collective capacity to attain (1) *interconnectivity* of decision-making, (2) *identity* from boundary-drawing practices, and (3) *actorhood* from authority mobilization. While established organization has a tendency to emphasize the ordering dimension of these three constitutive properties, our model shows that PTC, reversely, organizes parasitically through creating disorder around these properties: More specifically, we will unfold in three interrelated sub-propositions how PTC collectively accomplishes (1) *interconnectivity* through continuous disruption of the decision-making of established organization; (2) *identity* through simulation of the surface identity of established organization; and (3) *actorhood* through the blame-reversing exploitation of the authority of established organization.

By modeling these dynamics between established and PTC-driven organization, our study contributes to organization theory in two main ways. First, we offer an integrated explanation of how PTC accomplishes organization of various degrees at the expense of disordering established organization (see also Rintamäki et al., 2024). Second, we develop a theoretical model that specifies in detail how PTC-driven and established organization currently reinforce a two-sided dynamic of escalating dis/organization with detrimental implications for our societal capacity of collective decision-making, identity, and authority. In this way, our model also yields valuable practical implications by elucidating

the need for established organization to acknowledge and embrace its foundational disordering properties to become capable of debunking and de-escalating PTC.

Insights on Post-Truth Communication from Organization Theory

Despite its acknowledgment as one of the most salient grand societal challenges of our current times (Gümüsay et al., 2020, p. 2), PTC has gained only limited attention in organization theory, thus far. Only a few notable yet scattered scholarly works have started to address how PTC (1) disrupts the interconnectivity of established organization, (2) puts pressure on boundary-drawing efforts of established organizational identities, and (3) contributes to new exploitative forms of collective authority.

First, addressing the disruptive properties of PTC, Knight and Tsoukas (2019) warn that PTC has the potential to shatter the very foundations of public trust, on which established organizations depend for their social license to operate. To unpack this argument, the authors employ speech act theory (Searle, 1979) and language game theory (Wittgenstein, 1953) for analyzing the first inauguration speech of former and now re-elected United States president Donald J. Trump. Knight and Tsoukas (2019) offer the following incisive account of PTC as a form of de-legitimization:

> Trump's use of the term 'alternative facts' [. . .] is not about offering a different perspective within the same language game. It is about de-legitimating the current language game-in-use and switching to another in which his facts [. . .] have a different and more resonant meaning for his audiences. (p. 187)

Rendering two distinct interpretive communities unable to agree on the most basic sets of assumptions and meanings leads to an erosion of societal common ground, thus undermining one of the key preconditions of deliberative democracy (Habermas, 2022; Meyer, 2025). This argument is valid for various manifestations of PTC that have been systematized in communication scholarship (Zeng, 2021), including rumors and gossip (Harsin, 2018), conspiracy beliefs (Mahl et al., 2022), bullshit (Christensen et al., 2019), fake news (Waisbord, 2018), and strategic disinformation (Bennet & Livingstone, 2020). All these phenomena share persistent efforts to disrupt the interconnectivity of established language games both in content and underlying production rules, which we thus identify as one key organizing property of PTC to consolidate its own language games.

Second, Meyer and Quattrone (2021) focus on boundary drawing as a key practice to create and maintain collective identity in their reflection on how to conduct organization studies in a post-truth era. More specifically, the authors address the current pressure that PTC exerts on academia's institutional identity to "defend the quest for knowledge without retracting into the rule of a single, authoritative, and final truth nor falling into the trap of vacuous relativism" (p. 1375). This pressure also concerns other established evidence-based organizations besides academia, including educational institutions, political parties, and traditional news media. In these contexts, PTC challenges established ways of organizational evidence production and communication through counter-positioning as the one and only reliable provider of the "alternative truth"—despite lacking evidence and by relying instead on affective appeal, selective exposure, and self-confirmatory reasoning (Arora et al., 2022; Kumkar, 2023). As such, PTC provokes a competitive positioning and boundary-drawing between established and PTC-driven organizational identities "in binary terms—fake as the opposite of true news; right as the opposite of left policies; science as distinct from fiction; us versus them" (Meyer & Quattrone, 2021, p. 1373). Accordingly, we theorize such competitive boundary drawing as a second important organizing property of PTC to attain collective identity.

Third, some organizational scholars have also discussed the implications of PTC on the organizational capacity to mobilize collective action based on authority. Foroughi et al. (2019), for instance, focus on the role of PTC in leadership

contexts and how the current decline of public trust in established organizational authorities (Harsin, 2018) is connected to the instrumentalization of PTC by new forms of political authoritarianism (Bennett & Livingston, 2020) and its capitalization by digital platform providers (Zuboff, 2019). Such dynamics have given rise to post-truth "narrative ecologies," in which novel forms of populist, narcissistic, and illiberal leadership can thrive (Adler et al., 2023). This type of leadership exploits "dialectical tensions" (Deye & Fairhurst, 2019) that emerge from "what it casts as the hegemonic narrative of corrupt elites" by articulating a fundamentally resisting "counter-narrative" (Foroughi et al., 2019, p. 146) to mobilize followership for oneself as the only credible authority alternative (see also Porter et al., 2018). By showing how PTC relies on generating suspicion and resistance toward established organizational authorities as a main source for building own authority, these considerations point at a third crucial organizing property of PTC.

We commend these prior studies for directing the attention of organizational scholarship to PTC as one of the most pressing societal issues of our present times (Gümüsay et al., 2020). Importantly, all these prior studies identify communication as a central mode of explanation to capture the dynamics between established and post-truth-driven organization, albeit each with a different emphasis. What remains lacking in extant scholarship though is an integrative reflection on how these properties—(1) disrupting established language games, (2) competitive boundary drawing, and (3) hijacking authority—interrelate and thereby facilitate the gradual organization of PTC at the expense of established organization and the democratic societies in which they are embedded. In the next section, we develop the conceptual foundations for such an integrative reflection.

Rethinking Post-Truth Communication as Escalating Dis/Organization

Given the pivotal role that prior scholarship has assigned to communication in explaining post-truth phenomena, we draw on the CCO (Ashcraft et al., 2009; Basque et al., 2022) perspective as a theoretical basis, in which organization is conceptualized as a social phenomenon that is created and maintained in and through communication (Kuhn, 2008; Taylor & van Every, 2000). This perspective has gained increasing traction and spurred fruitful exchange between organization and communication studies over the past two decades (Ashcraft et al., 2009; Cooren et al., 2011; Schoeneborn et al., 2019)—a cross-fertilization that is particularly suited to address our research interest in understanding PTC in its organizational character. This theory perspective further befits our inquiry since CCO scholarship has shown growing interest in gradual and ephemeral forms of organization beyond the boundaries of established organization. Accordingly, this lens can help enhance our understanding of the gradual emergence of PTC-driven forms of organization in public and informal communication, as well. Moreover, CCO scholarship acknowledges competing ordering and disordering attempts as foundational to all organization attempts, thus providing a basis to conceptualize mutually reinforcing "dis/organization" dynamics (Vásquez & Kuhn, 2019; Vásquez et al., 2016) between established and PTC-driven organization. In the following, we unfold, advance, and integrate these core assumptions of CCO reasoning in three consecutive steps to provide the theoretical basis for modeling the escalating dis/organization dynamics around PTC.

Step 1: The communicative properties of organizationality

CCO scholars have coined the notion of *organizationality* (Dobusch & Schoeneborn, 2015; Schoeneborn et al., 2019) to highlight how organization can be considered an attribute of various social phenomena that can vary by degree. Dobusch and Schoeneborn (2015) identify three key communicative properties that constitute forms of organization at various degrees. More specifically, these properties rest in the communicative capacity to collectively

attain: (1) *interconnectivity* of decision-making (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2011, 2019; Luhmann, 2018); (2) *identity* from joint boundary-drawing efforts (King et al., 2010; Taylor & van Every, 2000); and (3) *actorhood* from animating a fictional authority to mobilize coordinated collective action (Bencherki & Cooren, 2011; Kuhn, 2008). Prior research in this area has been primarily concerned with explaining how organizationality emerges from situated ordering attempts and develops toward more durable and established forms of organization over time (e.g., Rasche et al., 2013). However, when applied to PTC, these properties seem to follow an inverted dynamic: PTC does not seem to organize through order, but rather at the expense of ongoing disorder of the decision-making, identity-related, and authoritative capacities of established organization, as argued further above. To be able to better grasp and conceptualize how order and disorder are interrelated, in the next step we draw on the notion of *dis/organization* based on Robert Cooper (1986).

Step 2: Dis/organization as communicative order and disorder

Cooper's (1986) central contribution to organization theory lies in highlighting that "in its most fundamental sense, organization is the appropriation of order out of disorder" (p. 328). Condensing this insight to the notion of *dis/organization*, extant CCO research has drawn on Cooper's work to analyze organization as an ongoing interplay of communicative ordering and disordering attempts (e.g., Plotnikof et al., 2022; Vásquez et al., 2016). In doing so, CCO scholarship follows Cooper's critique of an excessively order-oriented understanding of organization dominating practice and research alike. To counter this overemphasis on order, Cooper (1986) introduces the idea of a "zero degree" (p. 316) of organization representing the foundational indeterminacy of meaning. Then, from Cooper's (1986) critical perspective, all further ordering attempts of organized modernity can be scrutinized as enacting a "certain force of violence" against this zero-degree baseline (p. 314). Cooper's critical perspective can be applied to all three constitutive communicative properties of organization (see step 1)—(1) interconnective ordering attempts "separating the decidable from the undecidable" (p. 314); (2) identity-related order that "must fight to retain its 'purity'" (p. 315) through ongoing boundary drawing attempts; and (3) the "imposed determination" of authoritative order, which "cannot in any ultimate sense be based on a natural 'logic' or 'rationality'" (p. 321). With these elaborations, Cooper presents a genuinely critical reading of the relentless ordering attempts of organized modernity appropriating and suppressing disorder to the sphere of illegitimacy and secrecy. Cooper (1986) regrets such a suppression of disorder, which, to him, stands for autonomy and playfulness as it "always runs beyond the constrained of the fixed position or meaning [. . .] in absence of centre and authority" (p. 319).

While Cooper's reflections are insightful in their critical reading of organized modernity as an *escalation of order*, they evidently come to their limits regarding our guiding research interest in how disorder, so positively associated with autonomy and play by Cooper, can eventually also escalate into something such as PTC. Although Cooper provides no explicit answer, a repeated note in his work may point in the right direction: considering both order and disorder as "mutually parasitic" (Cooper, 1986, p. 306, 315). If this intuition is correct, then order arises not only at the expense of appropriating disorder, but also vice versa. This leads us to Michel Serres and his concept of the "parasite," which we want to employ in a third step to extend existing CCO theorizing on dis/organization toward escalating forms of disorder as in the case of PTC.

Step 3: The parasitic properties of disorganizationality

Similar to Cooper (1986), Michel Serres' (1982) work *The Parasite* envisions dis/organization as an ongoing interplay of ordering and disordering attempts. As Serres (1982) puts it:

"Systems work because they do not work. Nonfunctioning remains essential for functioning" (p. 79). To specify this assumption, Serres draws on the three meanings of the word parasite in French: noise, social scrounger, and feeding organism. Again, these meanings can be related to the three communicative properties of any organization identified by CCO (see step 1), however, with a stronger emphasis on their disorderly dimension: (1) In line with key information and communication models (e.g., Shannon, 1948; von Foerster, 2003), Serres (1982) argues that "*noise* is part of communication" (p. 12). This means that there is no interconnected meaning making without disruptive noise, which inevitably emerges when using any communication medium—be it in terms of transmission interference (in French: *parasite*), distraction, misunderstanding, and so on. (2) Serres (1982, pp. 3–5) also reflects on boundary-drawing efforts around questions of contribution and affiliation to collective identity. Referring to the term "l'hôte," which in French means both host and guest, Serres argues that any host identity, given the arbitrariness of drawing a boundary around whom to host and to what extent, has to account for an uninvited and intrusive guest—the parasite as *social scrounger*. (3) Serres ultimately tackles the question of collective actorhood based on authority mobilization. In the same context, Serres (1982) argues that there is no use value without "abuse value" (p. 75) reminding us that there is no collective value creation without exploitation—the parasite as *feeding organism*.

As such, Serres' three meanings of the parasite provide an insightful conceptual extension of the key features of Cooper's zero degree of organization. Both Cooper and Serres scrutinize (1) the susceptibility of interconnected meaning and decision-making to disruption, (2) the fragility of identity-based boundary-drawing attempts, and (3) the limits of authoritative control of collective action as foundational tensions at the heart of dis/organization. However, while Cooper emphasizes how dis/organization can escalate in terms of relentless ordering attempts suppressing disorder, Serres develops a more ambivalent interpretation, also considering an escalation of disorder at the expense of order. Like Cooper, Serres critically highlights that there is a tendency to underestimate the foundational role of parasitic disorder in research and practice. Typically, the emphasis is (1) on shared meaning making, not the underlying disruptive noise; (2) on the identity formation within self-set boundaries, not the intrusion of the excluded; and (3) on collective value creation, and not on exploitation. Hence, in line with Cooper, Serres (1982) assumes that parasitic properties often remain unobserved and suppressed (pp. 22–25). However, this state of suppression makes Serres (1982) attentive that neither a dominance of order nor a well-balanced "equilibrium" (pp. 12-30) of ordering and disordering attempts present a given. Rather, continuously suppressed parasitic disorder may find ways to organize and eventually escalate at the expense of an order-driven host system. Serres' reflections on parasitic organization again correspond to the three constitutive communicative properties of any organization (see step 1). Yet, they fundamentally differ in the way interconnectivity, identity, and actorhood are attained not from ongoing ordering, but disordering attempts: (1) *interconnectivity*, then, emerges from the formation of "parasitic cascades" (Serres, 1982, pp. 3-14), the low-threshold connection logic of which consists of ongoing disruption of meaning-making capacities of a host system; (2) *identity* emerges from simulation, by which an intrusive guest succeeds in claiming to be the host through perfect adaptation (pp. 77-85, pp. 116-120); and (3) collective *actorhood* rests on coordinated exploitation of a host (pp. 147-196).

Integrating the analytical steps

Pulling together the conceptual reflections of these three steps, we can conclude that dis/organization can *escalate* in both directions: through an escalation of order (Cooper, 1986), and also through an escalation of disorder (Serres, 1982). While modern forms of established organization represent an escalation of

organizationality (see step 1) in terms of relentless ordering attempts *at the expense* of suppressing a foundational zero degree of organization (see step 2), in the case of parasitic organization, an inverted dynamic is at play: here, connectivity, identity, and actorhood are attained from an escalation of disorder *at the expense* of established organizational order (see step 3). To keep these dynamics distinct, we propose the notion of parasitic *disorganizationality*—as gradual organization through ongoing communicative disordering attempts—in direct juxtaposition to the notion of organizationality (Dobusch & Schoeneborn, 2015), where gradual organization is accomplished through ongoing communicative ordering attempts.

Serres' reflections on the foundational and potentially escalating properties of parasitic disorder have gained increased attention in both organization and communication research in recent years, albeit with different emphases. Within organizational studies, Steven Brown (2002, 2004; Brown & Reavey, 2017) has engaged most extensively with the concept of the parasite. In Brown's work, as well as in neighboring works, the parasite concept is interpreted, for the most part, positively, in the sense of a source of organizational innovation (Espinosa-Cristia & Brown, 2017), change (Rhodes & Price, 2011), or learning (Clegg et al., 2004; Letiche, 2007). An escalation of parasitic disorder at the expense of established organization, in turn, has received only limited attention—with the rare exception of the recent article by Rintamäki et al. (2024). The authors explicitly emphasize the disruptive capacities of parasite-host dynamics by modeling the conditions and consequences of different dynamics between established institutions and their parasites, yet without a relation to post-truth or communication phenomena.

Things look different in recent communication research, where a few critical studies directly apply Serres' notion of the parasite to specific PTC phenomena such as democratic backsliding (Magoulas, 2020), climate change denialism (Taylor-Neu, 2020), or disruptive digital media logics (von Nordheim & Kleinen-von Königslöw, 2021). Yet, these works do not address the underlying organization dynamics of PTC. Also, these studies have focused on very specific expressions of PTC and, in contrast to organization studies, they follow an overall negative interpretation of Serres' notion of the parasite. Hence, our model developed below pursues two main integrative aims: first, explaining on a more general level the dis/organization dynamics between established and PTC-driven organization; second, acknowledging the foundational role that parasitism as both a constitutive and disruptive force plays in these dynamics.

Unfolding the Escalating Dis/Organization Dynamics of Post-Truth Communication

Figure 1 provides an overview of how the dis/organization dynamics between established and PTC-driven organization can unfold and escalate. In line with our conceptual reflections elaborated above, established organization then can be considered as organizing *at the expense of* suppressing foundational parasitic properties. In line with Dobusch and Schoeneborn (2015), we argue that this is accomplished by collectively attaining a high degree of communicative order through (1a) *interconnective* decision-making, (2a) *identity* from boundary drawing, and (3a) *actorhood* from authority mobilization (see left column in Figure 1).

Integrating Cooper's (1986) reflections on the zero degree and Serres' (1982) three meanings of the parasite, we further specify the *foundational parasitic properties* that are suppressed in the course of these ordering attempts of established organization: (1b) the foundational *undecidability* underlying all decision-making; (2b) the problem of *hypocrisy* arising from boundary-drawing identity claims; and (3b) the *fictionality* of any authority claim mobilizing collective action (see middle column in Figure 1).

This setup, ultimately, allows for unfolding the gradual organization of PTC through escalating disorder *at the expense* of established organization (see right column in Figure 1,).

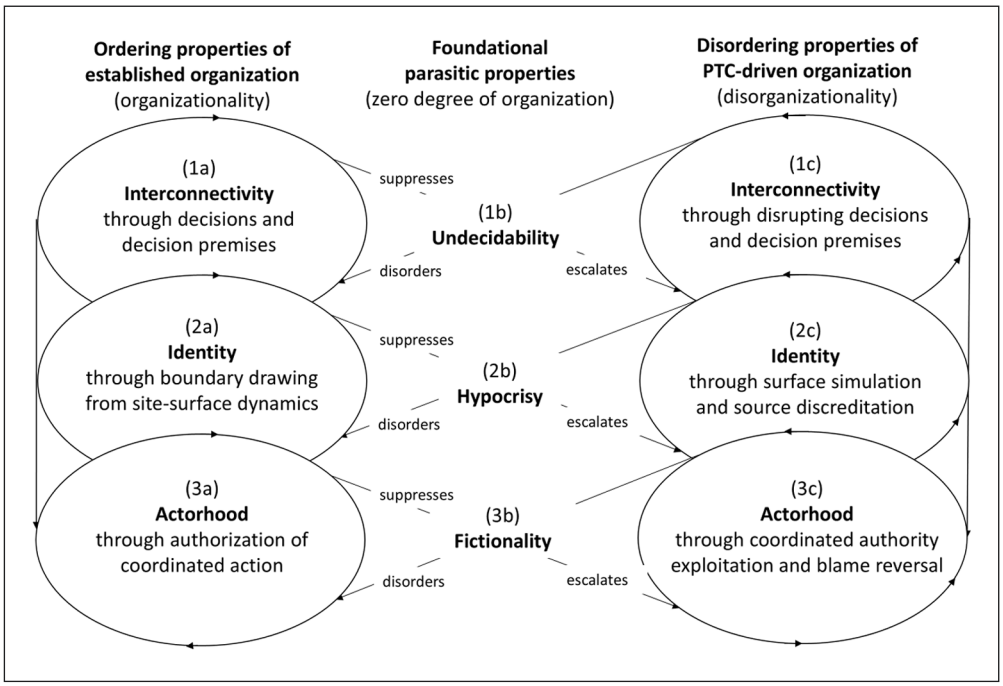

Figure 1. The escalating dis/organization of post-truth communication.

More specifically, we propose that *PTC accomplishes its own organizing properties through disordering corresponding properties of established organization.* This manifests in an escalation of undecidability, hypocrisy, and fictionality claims against established organization, and in turn allows PTC to organize at various degrees through an escalation of the following disordering properties: (1c) PTC accomplishes *interconnectivity* through ongoing disruption of decision-making; (2c) *identity* through the simulation of the identity; and (3c) *actorhood* through the exploitation of the authority of established organization.

Before unfolding these three dynamics of our model in more detail, to avoid misinterpretations we ask the reader to bear in mind our particular understanding of organization, parasitism, and escalation. First, our model considers competing ordering and disordering attempts as gradual communicative accomplishments that can be observed in and outside the boundaries of established organization. Accordingly, our model is not restricted to the scenario of *external attack*, in which a fully-fledged organization such as an established university, political party, or traditional news media provider is publicly assaulted by PTC from the outside. Our model can also be applied to the scenario of *internal infiltration*, in which PTC subverts ordering attempts within established organization. Such infiltration of PTC can be observed in cases such as the diffusion of "populist reason" in established democratic parties suffering from voter loss (Wodak, 2015); the diffusion of click baiting, yet misleading content into the editorial line of established news media suffering from reader loss (Waisbord, 2018); or the diffusion of bullshit in management echelons overburdened with decisions, yet in need of success (Christensen et al., 2019). Furthermore, our model also reflects on the scenario of *partial displacement*, in which PTC has successfully hijacked or infiltrated established organization to the extent that it attains a certain degree of established legitimacy and authority as in the case of popular fake news outlets (Waisbord, 2018),

conspiracy-based political parties (Adler et al., 2023), or bullshitting businesses (Christensen et al., 2019). In these cases, it is evident that a minimum of own ordering attempts will become necessary. However, the dominant logic remains disorder—in terms of the disruption, simulation, and exploitation of established organizational properties, which they gradually displace. The scenario, which is out of the scope of our model, is when the boundaries between PTC and established organization fundamentally collide, as in the case of *total takeover* (i.e., a collapse of left and right column in Figure 1). In this case, we are heading toward the well-researched scenario of totalitarianism (Arendt, 1979; Schindler, 2020)—as most fatal liaison of naturalizing PTC claims as the only admissible ordering principle, while extinguishing everything that contradicts and comes from outside.

Second, as authors coming from countries with a historical background in regimes that instrumentalized the notion of "parasite" as a combat term to mobilize for an unprecedented genocide, it is a genuine concern for us to remind the reader that, despite all justified criticism of PTC, we by no means intend to devalue any particular view or group of people through the use of this term. Conversely, building on Cooper and Serres, one key point of our model is to rehabilitate the analytic value of the parasite concept. Only through acknowledging its foundational character can we comprehend that the problem of established and PTC-driven organization is not parasitic properties, but rather their suppression and escalation, respectively.

This leads us to our third conceptual clarification concerning the notion of escalation. Here, our model challenges the dominant academic and political argument (see, critically, Farkas & Schou, 2020) that the blame lies entirely with PTC, leading to calls for unilateral de-escalation of PTC for the sake of returning to established "order." In contrast, our model aims to demonstrate that the current escalation dynamic is grounded in mutual reinforcement of both ordering and disordering attempts. From this perspective, unilateral de-escalation of PTC may have the opposite effect. This holds promising potential for an alternative reflection on de-escalation, as we will elaborate within the discussion of our model, which follows next.

How PTC accomplishes interconnectivity through disrupting decision-making

To unpack *how PTC accomplishes its communicative interconnectivity through disrupting the interconnected decision-making of established organization* requires some engagement with the concept of decision-making so foundational to established organization, and with its parasitic counterpart: undecidability, so foundational to the zero degree of disorder (Cooper, 1986), and a potent source of disruptive noise (Serres, 1982).

As basic reproduction logic of any organizationality (Dobusch & Schoeneborn, 2015), *interconnected decision-making* presents the primary mode of formal ordering in established forms of modern organization (Cooren & Seidl, 2020; Schoeneborn, 2011). This manifests in formalized procedures of everyday *decisions*, and more fundamentally in *decision premises* justifying who is allowed to decide what, when, how, and why on behalf of the organization (Kühl, 2013) (see Figure 1, section 1a).

Underlying this interconnected decision-making, however, is the foundational parasitic property of *undecidability* (Cooper, 1986) (see Figure 1, section 1b). Undecidability is inherent in every organizational event of formal decision-making, given that decisions only need to be made if there exists at least one potentially valid alternative, albeit one that is typically *suppressed* once a decision has been made (Luhmann, 2018; von Foerster, 2003). Undecidability also invariably attends principles guiding decision premises, which are typically highly polysemic, context-dependent, and disputed (Leanza, 2014). One only needs to think of principles such as truth, justice, or democracy on which modern research, legal, or political organizations rest. To suppress the

disruptive potential that lies in the ultimate undecidability of these principles, hence, established organizations tend to focus on specific (scientific, legal, political) decision techniques that approximate truth, justice, or democracy in daily business instead (Teubner, 2001). Lastly, established organizations also deliberately decide to leave certain sensitive decision premises undecided (Kühl, 2013), relying instead on informal resources such as unauthorized tinkering, workarounds, or personal networks. Yet, informality is not only vital for organizational creativity and innovation, it can also turn destructive—as in cases of unguided solo efforts, fraudulent practices, or nepotism (Horak et al., 2020; Kühl, 2013). Consequently, and also in the case of informality, we find evidence for a general tendency in established organization to overemphasize its decision-making capacities at the expense of suppressing undecidability despite its foundational character.

We argue that this foundational yet typically suppressed undecidability inherent to established organization serves as the main gateway for PTC to attain its own interconnectivity. More specifically, drawing on Serres' (1982) concept of "parasitic cascades" (p. 3), we contend that such interconnectivity is accomplished through an *escalating* disruption of the decision-making capacities of established organization (see Figure 1, section 1c). According to Serres, parasitic cascades follow a low-threshold and thus extremely viable connection logic, as they work in the case of *any* successful disruptive attempt. Facilitated by declining public trust in established organizations and the advent of largely unregulated and attention-driven digital media environments (Bennett & Livingston, 2020, Farkas & Schou, 2020), parasitic cascades of PTC manifest at the most basic level in persistent *disruption* by recurrently questioning and raising alternatives to the everyday decisions communicated by established organization and its authorized representatives. Questioning whether there are really no alternatives to decisions and querying why alleged decisional alternatives have not been disclosed irritates established organization, as confirmed by research on doubt and rumors, for instance (Harsin, 2018). This disruption from "collaborative mistrust" can be further escalated when random decision alternatives are publicly introduced, interconnected, and promoted as in the case of "alternative facts" (Kumkar, 2023). Thereby, PTC is not limited to the disruption of everyday decisions, but also concerns *decision premises*, on which the operability of established organization rests. By posing fundamental questions such as "Why this expert?," "Why this discipline?," "Why this purpose?," and "Why now?," PTC can systematically absorb public attention, generate doubt, and consecutively advance its own "alternative" experts, disciplines, purposes, and priorities (e.g., for fake business news, see Illia et al., 2024). Lastly, principles such as truth, justice, or democracy that are guiding decision premises of established organization can become the object of disruptive PTC attacks (Farkas & Schou, 2020, Fuller, 2018; Magoulas, 2020). Conspiracy beliefs (Douglas et al., 2019; Mahl et al., 2022; Schreven, 2018), for instance, are based on casting doubt on the guiding principles of established organizations and instead attributing sinister "founding myths" and "hidden agendas" to them. This process, too, is likely to disrupt trust in established organizational compliance with formal decision goals and procedures, and evokes suspicions that informal vested interests are the "true" drivers of established organizations under attack.

All these disordering attempts of PTC by disrupting everyday decisions, underlying premises, and principles of established organization are never only "about offering a different perspective within the same language game [but] about de-legitimating the current language game-in-use and switching to another" (Knight & Tsoukas, 2019, p. 187). Indeed, PTC is hardly ever restricted to raising single doubts and alternatives at the expense of the decision-making capacities of established organization. Rather, PTC is all about successively establishing its own erratic language games by flexibly switching to and interconnecting random suspicions, doubts, and decision alternatives in parasitic

cascades (e.g., for a recent longitudinal reconstruction of the Covid19 misinformation discourse, see Carrasco-Farré, 2024; for the far right-wing discourse, see Kumkar, 2023).

Taken together, we identify interconnected attacks against the decision-making capacities of established organization as the first communicative property constituting the disorganizationality of PTC. In doing so, we posit that PTC increases its own communicative interconnectivity precisely at the expense of disrupting the interconnective decision-making capacities of its host. Such continuous disruptive attacks provide a fertile condition for communicative reproduction. It enables PTC to incorporate all sorts of episodic suspicions, accusations, and alternative explanations if only they share the common denominator of producing "noise" disordering established decision-making capacities. Consequently, there is no necessity for PTC to accomplish its own consistent decision-making, let alone coherent own premises. To the contrary, the core interconnective principle of PTC is disorder through escalating the foundational undecidability of its host. This is also why established organization can neither ignore nor reject PTC-driven attacks straightforwardly irrespective of how insubstantial and absurd the accusations and alternatives may be: PTC systematically reintroduces and highlights the unpleasant but inevitable existence of undecidability as a foundational feature of established organization. This very undecidability is difficult to address and tackle within standard formal decision-making procedures and hence is often even further suppressed when under pressure and attack.

How PTC accomplishes identity through surface simulation

To unpack the second disordering property of PTC, we turn to Serres' (1982) reflections on dynamics between host and guest, which share the same word (*l'hôte*) in French. Serres employs this double meaning for two reasons: first, to point at the arbitrariness of boundary-drawing by a host to deal with uninvited and intrusive guests; and second, to highlight the ever present risk of an escalation scenario, in which the uninvited guest simulates the host so perfectly that it becomes difficult to tell "who is the host and who is the guest, who gives and who receives, who is the parasite and who is the *table d'hôte*, who has the gift and who has the loss, and where hostility begins within hospitality" (Serres, 1982, pp. 15–16). This is the moment at which the parasite as "impostor" (p. 5) and "hypocrite" (p. 201) attains identity through persistent efforts of simulating, discrediting, and ultimately displacing the host. This reflection guides our next proposition: *PTC accomplishes its own identity through the simulation of the identity of established organization.*

To further unpack this proposition, we again begin by exploring the foundational parasitic property that renders established organization susceptible to PTC attacks. As previously noted, organizational scholarship explains the communicative constitution of organizational identity as ensuing from continuous boundary-drawing efforts aimed at distinguishing between communication that belongs to the organization and communication that is part of the organizational environment (e.g., Dobusch & Schoeneborn, 2015; King et al., 2010) (see Figure 1, section 2a). To maintain this boundary, established organization shows a tendency to accomplish a fairly stable, appealing, and representative communicative *surface* toward its environment—which, however, necessarily only highly selectively and inconsistently reflects the communicative site of everyday organizational life (Kühl, 2013; Taylor & van Every, 2000). Strong efforts of modern established organizations to *suppress* this inevitable inconsistency in their surface communication lead to unintended effects: increased distrust and accusations of *hypocrisy* (Brunsson, 2003). In line with Fuller (2018), we argue that it is exactly this climate of proliferating claims of organizational hypocrisy (Bromley & Powell, 2012) that also facilitates the current surge of PTC (see Figure 1, section 2b).

More specifically, we posit that PTC escalates hypocrisy claims against established organization through relentless discreditation of

the host's identity, while simultaneously *simulating* this identity and presenting oneself as the "true" host (see Figure 1, section 2c). Drawing on Serres (1982), Taylor-Neu (2020) has investigated this dynamic in detail, proposing the concept of *para-s/citation*. The idiosyncratic spelling of this concept is intended to reflect three meanings: first, "para-" means "next to", indicating the parasite is not involved in any productive site but only takes advantage of the host it assails; second, "-citation" specifies that the parasite gains advantage by drawing on the host as source; and third, the inclusion of an "s" in "s/citation" indicates that no credit is given to this host source, but "para-s/citation" appropriates the cited while simultaneously *discrediting* the source.

Taylor-Neu (2020) provides a striking empirical example of para-s/citation in her comparative analysis of the online presences of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and its PTC-driven counterpart: the Nongovernmental International Panel on Climate Change (NIPCC), which is set up to propagate skepticism about anthropogenic climate change. The author shows how the NIPCC systematically discredits the IPCC by accusing it of scientific malpractice and sinister political influence underlying its surface appearance; simultaneously, the NIPCC deceptively reproduces the form and content of this very surface appearance by simulating the IPCC's imagery, fonts, labels, reports, and so on. Lastly, the NIPCC presents itself as the only true and trustworthy representative of independent research on climate change, emphasizing its duty to reprimand the IPCC.

Evidently, forms of PTC-driven identity simulation are not restricted to the domain of science communication (see also Beers et al., 2023). Other examples are authoritarian parties claiming to be the only "true" democrats (Wodak, 2015, 2019), or fake news outlets claiming to be the only "true" fighters for freedom of speech and public enlightenment (Tandoc et al., 2017; Waisbord, 2018). In all these cases, PTC-driven collective identity is attained through escalating hypocrisy claims against established organizational counterparts, while simulating their identities and then pretending this simulation to be the only holder of what is true, just, and fair.

We posit that this escalation of identity simulation presents the second property constituting the disorganizationality of PTC. Again, PTC achieves this identity at the expense of disordering the identity-building properties of established organization, putting them under severe pressure (Meyer & Quattrone, 2021): First, ongoing hypocrisy claims by PTC spur generalized distrust in shady agendas underlying the surface of established organization. Second, surface simulation by PTC—if sufficiently professional and perfected—makes it difficult to tell which organizational identity is authentic and which is the "hypocrite". Third, individual communicative contribution to PTC-driven identity simulation is tempting—as it promises an effortless status upgrade from an "uninvited guest" to an acknowledged host of alternative truths.

How PTC accomplishes actorhood through exploitation of authority

To unfold the third disordering property constituting the escalating disorganizationality of PTC, we turn to Serres' (1982) understanding of the parasite in terms of a feeding organism, which the author applies to various exploitative settings. For Serres, escalating exploitation is all about coordinated parasitic positioning. Coordinated positioning emerges from growing mutual awareness in parasitic casacades, which consequently start to organize in a way that the most exploitative gain cumulates at the very end (in the shape of a downstream funnel or an inverted pyramid, hence the exact opposite of an authoritative hierarchy, see Serres, 1982, pp. 166–167). Furthermore, Serres refers to Girard's (1989) work on scapegoating (see also Roulet & Pichler, 2020) to explain how self-coordinating parasitic chains evade accountability for their exploitative practices. In the strict sense of blame reversal, Serres (1982) argues that coordinated parasitic casacades not

only systematically exploit a host but, when accused, also deflect the status of an arcane and exploitative parasite onto this very host . For this purpose, Serres introduces the figure of "the Joker" to address a particular form of authority that can emerge in coordinated parasitic chains. Jokers have developed advanced capacities in the second-order observation (i.e. observation of observations) of parasitic cascades. This allows them to flexibly switch to those positions promising most exploitative gain while making strategic use of blame reversal (Serres, 1982, pp. 155–162). As such, a Joker is a master of avoiding accountability: the one who "troubles and is never troubled" (Serres, 1982, p. 238). In formulating these propositions, Serres provides a complementary, explicitly disorder-driven explanation of coordinated social action. Challenging the standard assumption of authoritative and accountable mobilization of collective action toward a shared goal, he proposes placing a stronger emphasis on joint exploitation and accountability avoidance as central dynamics of coordinated collective action. Following these considerations, we put forward our last proposition: *PTC accomplishes actorhood through the exploitation of established organization's authority.*

To unpack this proposition, we start our reflection with the communicative ordering properties that allow established organization to attain collective *actorhood* (see Figure 1, section 3a). At the most basic level, organizational actorhood is accomplished whenever two or more constituents orient their communication not only toward each other but toward an abstract authoritative "third" in the form of a shared goal or value as a common point of reference (Taylor & van Every, 2000). This authoritative "third" becomes the central source for defining who is authorized to speak, decide, mobilize, and guide the trajectory of *coordinated action* "on behalf of" an organization (Bencherki & Cooren, 2011; Kuhn, 2008; Taylor & van Every, 2014). Vice versa, "the organization [only] exists inasmuch as it appropriates other beings and fills itself, so to speak, with them" (Bencherki & Cooren, 2011, p. 1580).

In this view, organizational actorhood entails a continuous trade-off of authority claims whereby "contributors" (Bencherki & Snack, 2016) borrow authority to act on behalf of an organization, while the organization lends its authority to mobilize contributors' actions. While this trade-off is ultimately what makes established organization productive, it is also highly precarious as it depends on continuous "fictional games of make-believe" (Savage et al., 2018, p. 984) in a shared authority to ensure accountable action. If coordinated efforts to animate this fictional authority lose momentum due to a decline of faith or excessive abuse, established organization as a collective actor is at risk of failing (Taylor & van Every, 2014). Consequently, established organization is compelled to *suppress* the inherent fictionality of its authority (see Figure 1, section 3b).

We posit that PTC accomplishes its own actorhood from escalating exploitation of this very fictionality of established organization's authority (Figure 1, section 3c). More specifically, we contend that PTC attains actorhood from the formation of coordinated parasitic cascades exploiting the authoritative principles of established organization and appropriating them for self-serving purposes. von Nordheim and Kleinen von Königslöw (2021) have analyzed the formation of such coordinated parasitic chains, drawing on digital media environments exploiting established news media. Their study argues how a multitude of parasitic digital media agents—including demagogic populists, pseudo-science, the promotional industry, platform providers, and so on—benefit from the formation of self-serving exploitative cascades by abusing the established authoritative principles (e.g., freedom of expression, reasoned controversy, democracy) of the established news media system. More generally, we hence contend that PTC exploits the fictionality of established authoritative principles by pretending to uphold them, while in fact distorting them for self-serving purposes (Fuller, 2018; Harsin, 2018; Magoulas, 2020).

We further argue that coordinated authority exploitation goes hand in hand with accountability evasion through *blame reversal*, as elaborated by Serres (1982). This becomes most evident in the context of conspiratorial PTC (Douglas et al., 2019; Mahl et al., 2022), which typically accuses established organizations under attack to present the true exploitative parasites that endanger common values (e.g., suspicions of a smug, selfish, corrupt "establishment"). This holds true for both "upward" and "downward" conspiracy accusations (Nera et al., 2021): upward conspiracy accusations focus on a conceived threat by multiple, cleverly positioned chains of parasitic intruders (e.g., bribed communal politicians, lawyers, scientists, journalists), whereas downward conspiracy accusations emphasize the threat posed by a powerful arcane elite as master-exploiters at the downstream end of parasitic chains (e.g., Deep State).

This communicative climate of escalating authority exploitation and blame reversal, ultimately, facilitates the emergence of Jokers. Knight and Tsoukas' (2019) analysis of Donald Trump's speech style, more general inquiry on the "politics of denial" (Wodak, 2015, 2019, 2020) of far right-wing parties, as well as recent reflections on different manifestations of post-truth authoritarianism (Adler et al., 2023; Foroughi et al., 2019), unanimously see the success of these new types of authority grounded in three interrelated skills that show striking resemblances to Serres' Joker: switching flexibly to positions from which public attention can be drawn away from established authorities; abusively appropriating established authoritative principles for self-serving purposes; and avoiding accountability through blame reversal.

This exploitation of established organizational authority presents the third and final property constituting the escalating disorganizationality of PTC. Again, PTC achieves actorhood at the expense of disordering this very property of its host. Contributing to this form of disorder is again tempting as it promises quick wins and attention from the self-serving instrumentalization of established authoritative principles. Simultaneously, accountability for the consequences of this abusive instrumentalization is systematically evaded through putting all blame on the host, who is, in fact, exploited. Established organizations, in turn, struggle severely with the parasitic exploitation of their constitutive authoritative principles, because PTC hits another inevitable weak spot that typically remains suppressed: the fictionality of any authority. Restoring authority consequently presents a major challenge to established organizations, as the "cheap wins" are on the side of the escalating parasite, not the host.

Discussion and Conclusion

Theoretical implications

Taken together, the theoretical contribution of our paper is twofold. First, we add to emerging research on PTC within the field of organization theory (e.g., Foroughi et al., 2019; Knight & Tsoukas, 2019; Meyer & Quattrone, 2021). While these theorizations have significantly advanced scholarly understandings of the organizational dimension of PTC, extant research cannot sufficiently explain how PTC is able to attain its own organizational and dedicated "anti-establishment" character over time, while at the same time infiltrating, simulating, and partly even displacing organizations representing this very "establishment." Our model of escalating dis/organization addresses this gap by unpacking the dynamics based on which PTC accomplishes organization in various degrees. We unfold in three interrelated dynamics how PTC organizes through escalating disordering attempts against established organization. First, we identify relentless attempts to disrupt the decision-making capacities of established organization as the basic interconnectivity principle underlying seemingly arbitrary accusations and assaults of PTC (Knight & Tsoukas, 2019; see Figure 1-, sections 1a-1c) –*Attack, attack, attack* (Abbasi, 2024). Second, we highlight how PTC attains self-aggrandizing identity

claims through successful simulation and concurrent discreditation of established organization (Meyer & Quattrone, 2021; see Figure 1, sections 2a-2c)—*Claim victory and never admit defeat* (Abbasi, 2024). Third, we unfold how PTC accomplishes actorhood through exploiting the authority of established organization while at the same time evading accountability and blame reversal (Foroughi et al., 2019, see Figure 1, section 3a-3c)—*Admit nothing, deny everything* (Abbasi, 2024). In sum, our integrated model provides a nuanced entanglement of the assumed "dialectical tensions" (Deye & Fairhurst, 2019; Foroughi et al., 2019) underlying the dynamics between established and PTC-driven organization. Explaining these dynamics via the notion of escalating dis/organization makes evident that there is more to it than one-sided assaults, but two-sided parasitic interdependency and escalation.

This leads us to our second contribution to scholarly inquiry of dis/organization (Vásquez & Kuhn, 2019; Vásquez et al., 2016). By elucidating the "mutually parasitic" (Cooper, 1986) relation between ordering and disordering properties of dis/organization, we invite fellow scholars to expand the current emphasis on single organizational phenomena in isolation and to further explore how dis/organization dynamics also apply to interdependency relationships beyond single organizations. Concretely, Serres' (1982) figure of the parasite enables us to better understand how certain forms of organization can only sustain their existence at the expense of established organization, for which we have suggested the concept of parasitic "disorganizationality" as gradual organization through disorder. Furthermore, our reflections invite stronger consideration of dis/organization not only as equilibrium, but also as escalation—both in terms of escalating order as in the case of modern established organization (Cooper, 1986), and in terms of escalating disorder (Serres, 1982) as in the case of external attacks, internal infiltration, or partial displacement by PTC. These reflections may inspire further inquiry into other escalating dis/organization phenomena such as terrorism (Bean & Buikema, 2015), hacktivism (Dobusch & Schoeneborn, 2015), and organizational misconduct (Rintamäki et al., 2024; Roulet & Pichler, 2020).

Practical and societal implications

Our reflections on the escalating dis/organization of PTC offer a novel perspective on the pressing societal question of how established organization as a central target and host can develop meaningful de-escalation strategies against PTC (Bak-Coleman et al., 2022). Drawing on Serres' (1982) reflections on the parasite for one last time, we depict two scenarios.

In the first, more intuitive scenario, the host attempts to *expel the parasite*. Serres (1982), however, was skeptical that such attempts could succeed, since foundational parasitic properties are inherent to any host and thus parasites will inevitably find opportunities for re-entry over time, thereby potentially forcing the host into a defensive, paralyzed position (pp. 201-208). This also applies to attempts by established organization to expel PTC, we argue, since this entails even more rigid suppression of the foundational parasitic properties of undecidability, hypocrisy, and fictionality (see middle column of Figure 1), and consequently also a stronger assertion of the "orderliness" of the organization's own decisions, identity, and authority claims (see left column of Figure 1). This increased rigidity of order, again, generates further opportunities for PTC to challenge established organizational decisions, surface appearances, and authority claims. Hence, defensive assertiveness catalyzes further escalation of both order and disorder, and ultimately rather serves the parasite and not the host. Moreover, it leads established organization into the trap of "retracting into the rule of a single, authoritative and final truth" (Meyer & Quattrone, 2021, p. 1375). Thus, critical scholarship on science communication (Fuller, 2018), political communication (Farkas & Schou, 2020; Kalpakos, 2018), or journalism

(Waisbord, 2018) warns practitioners not to let themselves be goaded by PTC into a struggle over absolute truth claims. In effect, this only leads to an unrecoverable backlash against one of the greatest achievements of established organization in modern democracies, being its capacity not only to generate, but also to scrutinize and revise its own decisions, identity, and authority claims.

Accordingly, we propose to move on to the second scenario proposed by Serres (1982), in which the host acknowledges and *embraces its foundational parasitic properties* to avoid further escalation, and in doing so, finds a new equilibrium (pp. 165-181). In line with Cooper's (1986) intuition of dis/organization as mutually parasitic, the chance of de-escalation hence lies in the recognition of mutual conditionality, despite evident contradiction. Accordingly, we contend that reappropriating foundational parasitic features as unavoidable properties of the organization's own interconnectivity, identity, and actorhood can generate novel response opportunities for established organization. It facilitates creating public awareness of the genuine communicative capacities of established organization (1) to make binding decisions despite valid alternatives; (2) to maintain a productive site beneath a necessarily superficial surface; and (3) to do justice to authoritative principles such as truth, justice, or democracy which, however ambiguous and contested, are far from arbitrary (Farkas & Schou, 2020; Fuller, 2018) (re-integrating left and middle columns of Figure 1). Developing such "tolerance of ambiguity" (Schwoon et al., 2022) by embracing foundational parasitic properties can equip established organization to de-escalate and debunk the, in many ways, "empty" disorganizationality of PTC—(1) its disruptive escalation of undecidability without substantial capacity for binding decision-making; (2) its surface simulation without meaningful productive site; and (3) its abusive appropriation of authority while evading any accountability (see right column of Figure 1). Adopting this approach may not only enable established organization to contain the escalating disorganizationality of PTC, but may also contribute to a more self-reflective democratic system less vulnerable to public distrust and polarization.

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