

**REGAINING VISIBILITY WITHIN AND OF STIGMATIZED DIGITAL
COMMUNITIES THROUGH INCREASING ORGANIZATIONALITY**

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Introduction:

New information and communication technologies have changed the way people communicate, interact, connect and do business with each other (Bennet & Segerberg, 2012). Technological affordances and cultural dynamics co-shape interaction on digital platforms like Facebook or Instagram (Beverungen, Beyes & Conrad, 2019; Hoof & Boell, 2019) and, therefore, have a significant impact on the constitution of organizational practices through communication.

The ability to interact, connect, and organize via digital platforms is especially important for stigmatized groups like pole dancers or sex workers, who struggle to gather and express themselves in the analogue world or in mainstream media (Olszanowski, 2014). The stigma attached to ‘dirty’ occupations (Mahalingam, Jagannathan & Patturaja, 2019) or stigmatized leisure activities (Kim & Kwon, 2019) leaves the individuals at a constant struggle to get socially accepted. Even more so, individuals in morally tainted professions like exotic dancers or sex workers are considered “more evil than necessary” (Ashforth & Kreiner, 2014: 85) - as opposed to physically tainted occupations like garbage collectors who are a “necessary evil” - and are often situated in a low position in business and social hierarchies (Grandy & Mavin, 2012). Linked to the ‘tainted’ and ‘sinful’ nature (Simpson & Simpson, 2017) of their occupation or leisure activity, such morally stigmatized groups are often trapped in a place of precariousness and “become differentially exposed to injury, violence, and death” (Butler, 2009: 25).

For them, the digital platforms and media offer the possibility to create a space for participation and virtual learning, to reach more like-minded individuals, to organize analogue and virtual events, to leverage business opportunities, and to establish a public voice (Smith, 2020; Olszanowski, 2014; Shane-Simpson, Manago, Gaggi & Gillespie-Lynch, 2018). While digital media plays an important role for the emergence and organization of a virtual community through enabling communication, it similarly can hinder it. Content moderation technologies can jeopardize the opportunity to communicate and thereby, to organize their community and to establish business opportunities virtually (Myers West, 2018). Blocking or hiding content that seemingly violates platform guidelines can disrupt a community’s communication, increase uncertainty for entrepreneurs and businesses depending on digital platforms, and, ultimately, even threaten their existence. By making speech acts and communication of stigmatized communities invisible, the content moderation practices undermine their

connectedness and feeling of belonging (Mahalingam, Jagannathan, & Selvaraj, 2019) in the digital and leave them in a precarious situation all over again.

However, the question “what is adequate to post”, is not necessarily fixed but can be negotiated and the affected individuals “try to ‘immunize’ themselves against precariousness, through family, social bonds” (Alberti, Bessa, Hardy, Trappmann, & Umney, 2018: 449). Observing a (hidden) content moderation by Instagram threatening the pole dance community, and the community’s organized and poetically drafted fight back, we show how the visibility and connectivity of speech acts are renegotiated in the digital. We find that this fight affects and is driven by varying the degree of the community’s organizationality (Dobusch & Schoeneborn, 2015; Schoeneborn, Kuhn, & Kärremann, 2019; Blagoev, Costas, & Kärremann 2019).

Theoretical framing:

To theoretically frame our research, we rely on works by communication (e.g., Cooren, Kuhn, Cornelissen, & Clark 2011; Schoeneborn et al., 2019), feminist (e.g., Butler, 2009; Davidson, 2016), and media scholars (e.g., Bennett & Segerberg, 2012; Hoof & Boell, 2019).

Scholars applying a communication understanding on organization(s) acknowledge communication processes within and among virtual formations to be fluid and partly loose (e.g., Schoeneborn et al. 2019; Ahrne, Brunsson, & Seidl, 2016). However, they do possibly have organizational character (e.g., Ahrne et al., 2016; Dobusch & Schoeneborn, 2015). Dobusch and Schoeneborn (2015) and Schoeneborn et al. (2019) as proponents of the ‘communication constitutes organization (CCO)’-perspective (see, e.g., Cooren et al., 2011; Ashcraft, Kuhn, & Cooren, 2009; Brummans, Cooren, Robichaud, & Taylor, 2014) use the term ‘organizationality’ to address the gradual existence of organizational elements, such as a shared identity or attributed collective actorhood, constituting forms of organizing that go beyond the common understanding of organizations, for example, markets, networks, communities, and other social collectives. Accordingly, we apply a CCO-perspective theorizing communication as “axial - and not peripheral” (Ashcraft et al., 2009: 22) to the (re-)production of organizational phenomena and conceptualize organization as a process of interconnected communication that constitutes somehow organizational communities. If a communicative act in form of a speech act (Austin, 1962) is connected to another speech act, a community emerges, grows, builds a shared identity, defines boundaries, and gets visible for outsiders who might attribute a collective actorhood (Dobusch & Schoeneborn 2015; Luhmann 2003). Applying the idea of connectivity to the topic of inclusion, we argue that individuals

aiming for connectedness and belongingness towards a community need to connect speech acts with those uttered by others inside. We focus on two dimensions to theoretically frame the conditions of connecting a speech act successfully in order to become or stay a community member: an uttered speech act needs to be (1) culturally (e.g., fulfilling certain criteria of politeness, sharing similar basic assumptions with other community members) and (2) physically (e.g., being audible, visible, readable) connective. To further explore the two dimensions and their relation, we use Davidson's (2016) concepts of defective and poetic speech acts. Similar to the CCO-perspective that we apply in this paper, Davidson roots her work in speech act theory (Austin 1962) and further addresses discrimination practices of stigmatized groups.

Davidson (2016: 157) uses the term "defective" speech act to describe utterances that violate certain ideals of a social group, for example, an institution or a community. She refers to a case of racism that is legally enforced through silencing certain forms of accented speech. On the basis of judgements linked to codified ideals (e.g., in laws or policies), the silencing of those defective speech acts leaves them physically non-connectable (Davidson, 2016; Ahmed, 2012). Losing connectivity of their defective judged speech acts discriminates those uttering them and makes it impossible to join a certain community or institution. However, as people often react with conforming through self-silencing, they strengthen the performativity of the codified cultural ideals (e.g., commitments to diversity in community guidelines or code of conducts) that the judgements are based upon (Ahmed, 2012). We, here, use Ahmed's (2006, 2012) understanding of performativity of institutional speech acts that are performative when they do what they promised to do in the first place (e.g., leading to more diversity). One way of resisting discrimination and disrupting this (self-)silencing, is to utter poetic speech acts by artfully expressing the otherness of the speaker. Poetic speech acts are the "endeavour to make visible this barrier that is invisible to those in power" (Davidson, 2016: 175). Taken together, we assume that whether a speech act is allowed and able to connect with others depends on whether it is judged as defective or poetic based on a community's or institution's ideals.

Viewing the cultural and physical interconnectivity of speech acts (Austin, 1962) as a key element of organizing (Luhmann, 2003) and thus, community building, we are stepping into the field of media studies (e.g., Bennett & Segerberg, 2012; Hoof & Boell, 2019). Cultural and technological properties of digital media, such as Instagram or Facebook, influence and co-shape communicational and thus, organizational practices (Beverungen et al., 2019; Hoof & Boell, 2019). They provide new communication technologies that people can use to connect

themselves with others, to join existing communities, and to contribute to building new ones. Compared to analogous communication, the connection of speech acts happens independently from temporal and spatial boundaries and is, for example, supported through specific connective technologies, such as hashtags (Eddington, 2018; Kavada, 2015; Jürgens, 2012).

Social media platforms enable stigmatized and discriminated groups, who might struggle to find potential community members in their daily analogous interactions, to connect their speech acts virtually. Thereby, these platforms support them to come into being and to gain collective identity, visibility, and attributed actorhood (Dobusch & Schoeneborn, 2015). Joining a digital community affects an individual's feeling of belonging, connectedness, and well-being overall (Zhao, Lu, Wang, Chau, & Zhang, 2012; Miño-Puigcercós, Rivera-Vargas, & Romaní, 2019; see also Shore, Cleveland, & Sanchez, 2018). With regard to their financial well-being, the community activities facilitated by the communication technologies links to new business opportunities, for example, pole dancers who advertise their (online) classes (Carolina, 2019b). Concludingly, to grow a digital community and organize activities in its context, the community and potential members particularly rely on a communication technology that makes their speech acts visible and connectable. However, the communication technologies on social media can not only enable but also hinder the interconnection of digitally uttered speech acts (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012), for example, by influencing their visibility to the addressed audience (Cotter, 2019; Myers West, 2018). We argue that people who utter a speech act, for example by posting a photo on Instagram, depend on their addressed communities' judgement, and, to a large degree, on the platform provider's judgement on whether it is defective or poetic. While speech acts that are judged to be defective might get silenced, for example through algorithm-based content moderation, 'poetic' speech acts remain visible and can drive a community's reproduction. We argue that the practice of silencing stigmatized communities by technologically hindering their interconnectivity and visibility can have two potential effects: Firstly, these communities lose their potential to organize due to the lack of connectivity of their speech acts. This might even lead to their disappearance as a community on a specific platform. Further, it can enforce the precariousness of their work conditions. It can disrupt their business activities, for example offering classes or marketing products in the role of an influencer. Secondly, we expect to find utterances of resistance by the silenced community that tries to renegotiate the visibility and connectivity of their speech acts in the digital. We aim to investigate how the visibility and connectivity of speech acts are virtually negotiated considering judgements of their 'defectiveness' and how this affects the

organizationality of silenced communities. Our research question is: *How do renegotiation processes regarding the visibility and connectivity of speech acts shape organizationality of stigmatized digital communities?*

Case & Method:

Research context:

With the Instagram's "spatial hybridity between a public space and a corporate entity" (Are, 2020), pole dancers and pole entrepreneurs use the platform to post online videos, to learn and establish new moves, to communicate with each other, to negotiate participation and collective identity, to express and create art, to promote their enterprising selves and to foster their sport's commercialisation (Donaghue, Kurz & Whitehead, 2011; Griffiths, 2016). As Carolina (2019b) puts it:

"[...] it's an integral part of our training. We experiment with moves, combos, and choreographies because we see fellow dancers use them. We buy products because fellow pole dancers wear them or use them. Whole brands in the pole niche depend on the 'Gram to make their money. Instructors and performers use it to get bookings. It's not just a recreational thing for us."

Instagram as a platform foregrounds visibility and connectedness as the dominant modes of interaction and as the desired outcome of communication (Shane-Simpson et al., 2018; Cotter, 2019). Although Instagram puts a low threshold on users to join the platform and to share their content, it moderates this openness through their community guidelines (Olszanowski, 2014). These community guidelines represent a codified social value system of the platform provider, which explicitly claims nudity and sexuality, among other things, to be a threat to their digital audience (Olszanowski, 2014; Instagram, Inc., 2020). Posts, which allegedly feature "inappropriate" (Instagram Inc., 2020b) forms of nudity and sexuality, are regulated through content moderation practices. However, it is unclear how these 'threats' are defined in particular. The content moderation practices are claimed to be subjective and vague, depending on the social status of the user within the platform, but also in respect to more general cultural ideals (Faust, 2017).

Case Description:

The case under study starts in July 2019, when members of the pole dance community started to notice a drop in likes, visibility, and followers as well as the dysfunctioning of more than 50

pole-related hashtags like #poledancing or #poledancenation in the explore section of Instagram (Justich, 2019) - the consequence of a so-called “shadowban”. Shadowbanning refers to a tactic of “(perceived) suppression of one’s post(s), such that a user becomes virtually invisible to others” (Cotter, 2019: 904). With the shadowban, Instagram is not permanently removing hashtags, accounts or posts, but rather makes them invisible for the rest of the Instagram community (Cotter, 2019; Myers West, 2018). Facing the huge impact of the shadowban, the pole dance community decided to address the hidden content moderation publicly with an online petition, to team up with other stigmatized communities, and to collectively fight back. In the beginning, the pole dance community protested against these practices with a petition on change.org (Carolina, 2019a; Osborne, 2019; Rao, 2019). Later on, the pole dance community started to address the “social media war on women’s bodies” (Shimmy, 2019) in more general terms (Rao, 2019) as the shadowban (banning female bodies and sexuality) also affects other stigmatized communities like strippers, sex workers or LGBTQIA+ artists, who have long been suffering from censorship practices, too (Nash, 2019). The ongoing stigmatization of sexuality and nudity led to the formation of a resistance collective called “everybodyvisible” (everybodyvisible, 2019) (see Figure 1).



Figure 1: Screenshot of the first post on the Instagram page of @everybodyvisible. Source: <https://www.instagram.com/p/B3hegPcpz33/> Everybodyvisible aimed to unite a variety of marginalized groups affected by the current shadowban tactics of Instagram, and defines itself in an Instagram post as:

“(…) We are many, we are diverse. We are respectful, we are not breaching Instagram Community Guidelines; we are united. People of Color, LGBTQIA, Dancers, Athletes, Fitness Enthusiasts, Yogis, Artists, Photographers, Carnival Attendees, Body Positive, Sex Positive, Sex Workers and Educators, Feminists, & other Content Creators...all of us want to hear from Instagram and Facebook to understand why we are being hidden, deleted, losing our hashtags and being prevented from connecting and sharing our content on this platform. (...)” (everybodyvisible, 2019b)

Data collection:

Applying a processual understanding of communication as organizing and organization (see e.g., Cooren et al. 2011), we are specifically interested in the communicative interactions between the two engaged parties of this visibility negotiation process: first, Instagram as platform provider – partly uttering speech acts, such as their community guidelines or statements about content moderation, on behalf of the Instagram community as a whole – ,and second, the pole dance community. We identified nine pole dancers that were extraordinary active in raising their voice in the context of the shadowban, for example, by actively motivating others for protest against it and initiating protest activities. We prioritized their respective speech acts for our data collection and extracted their Instagram posts as screenshots as well as blog posts by one of the actors. Further, we have decided to integrate “contextual voices” (Trittin & Schoeneborn 2017, 310) that co-constitute the phenomenon under research. We included speech acts uttered by other stigmatized groups on Instagram, such as, sex workers, strippers, or feminism activists, media outlets reporting about Instagram’s censoring practices, and legal documents that build the basis for censorship in social media.

Given the diversity of the actor groups that we have considered as important for the visibility negotiation process, we collected a variety of speech act types. We included Instagram posts and blogposts both containing texts, photos, pictures, sometimes hashtags, and/or videos. Further, we considered media articles published by more conservative and more liberal media outlets addressing pole dance or censorship as well as a video interview by a newspaper provider. Besides excerpts of U.S. laws as formal and official documents that legalize and legitimize the content moderation, we integrated Instagram’s and Facebook’s community guidelines as speech acts that are used as a reference for shadowbanning. Further, we extracted documents from websites (including texts and pictures), for example of Instagram as a platform provider including their announcements uttered in the context of censorship, of a petition on

change.org that was initiated by pole dancers, and of a resistance movement called “everybodyvisible.com” that tries to address Instagram’s content moderation and effects on stigmatized groups. Overall, our data base contains 411 screenshots/written documents and seven videos (please see Table 1 for an overview over the document groups, their uttering actors as well as type and amount of data). The main body of data was published/uttered in the time period from July 2019-July 2020. To get a processual understanding of the data, we sorted the collected material chronologically (Langley 1999) and divided them into two phases: the first phase with the collective protest in form of the petition in July 2019, and the second phase with the emergence of a diverse collective of actors with “everybodyvisible”, beginning in October 2019.

Table 1. Overview of the data collection.

Document Group	Actors	Period of time	Nr. of Documents	Types of document	Avg. pages
EveryBodyVisible Instagram Profile	EveryBodyVisibe, pole dancers, other stigmatized groups	12.10.2019 - 10.08.2020	90	- 86 Screenshots of Instagram posts - single posts or stories (incl. text, photo/picture, hashtags) - 4 Instagram Posts as videos	2
EveryBodyVisible Website	EveryBodyVisibe, pole dancers, other stigmatized groups	07.10.2019 - 09.02.2020 (partly date not identifiable)	58	PDF downloads of subpages of a website (incl. text, photos/pictures, screenshots of Instagram posts)	4
Law & Legal Documents	Government representatives, media outlets	01.08.2017 - 28.05.2020 (partly date not identifiable)	9	PDF downloads of laws, statements, comments by media (only text)	4
Main Actors of the Pole Community	Pole dancers, EveryBodyVisibe	29.07.2019 - 30.07.2020	127	- Screenshots of Instagram posts - single posts or stories (incl. text, photo/picture, hashtags) - PDF downloads of subpages of a blog written by a pole dancer (incl. text & photos)	5
Media Outlets	Journalists speaking on behalf of the media outlet, other actors from other actor groups that get cited in the articles	19.06.2019 - 30.07.2020	91	- 89 PDF downloads of media articles (incl. screenshots of Instagram posts) - 1 video - 1 transcribed video	6
Petition Change.Org	pole dancers, people who signed the petition	21.07.2019 - 27.10.2019 (partly date not identifiable, but July 2019)	13	- 1 very long PDF download of comments made by signing persons - 12 PDF downloads of sub-pages of the website	17
Platform Providers (Instagram, Facebook,...)	Instagram officials, Instagram as a platform provider, Facebook as the parent company of Instagram	31.03.2017 - 13.08.2020 (partly date not identifiable, but 2019 or 2020)	30	- 1 video posted by Instagram CEO on Twitter - 29 PDF downloads of sub-pages of the websites (texts, photos), e.g., announcements, actual guidelines, guidelines from a year before etc.	6

Data analysis:

We conducted a conversation analysis (see Dobusch & Schoeneborn, 2015; Austin, 1962; Cooren et al. 2011) to retrace the shape and content of the negotiation process among the involved actor groups and its influence on the organizationality of the pole dance community. Our data analysis was technically facilitated by the qualitative data analysis software MAXQDA. We started our analysis by, mainly inductively (Corbin & Strauss 1990), developing codes along three basic questions that functioned as categories (e.g., King 2004; Gioia et al. 2012): who uttered a speech act (actors), what does the speech act do (activities), and which other actors are mentioned by the speech act? We developed first order codes and respective second order codes within these categories by conducting two rounds of testing them on exemplary data. By adding one code for ‘precariousness’ separately from the three main categories, we tried to retrace important context information for our case. The preliminary code tree has 4 categories with a total of 24 first order codes and 26 second order codes (see Appendix I).

Preliminary findings:

Phase 1: Addressing censorship of the Pole Dance Community

In the beginning, the community guidelines of Instagram enable the pole dance community to contribute to an open and diverse Instagram community with their posts. Pole dancers considered Instagram as a space to share their content, build a community and express themselves. However, the inclusivity and the openness of Instagram as a platform was doubted by the pole dance community after experiencing the effects of a so called shadowban:

“As a community of thousands, we love Instagram. As a pole family with supporters in the millions, we appreciate Instagram as one of our foremost social media platforms. We are saddened that Instagram no longer seems to love us back.” (Rachel Osbourne, Change.org Petition “Instagram, please stop censoring pole dance” – About., July 2019)

Pole dance instructors and members of the pole dance community reported the disappearance of various pole hashtags on Instagram’s “Explore” page and observed a decline in their follower and like numbers and attributed this change to obscure and hidden content moderation practices on the platform. As a result, individuals feel powerless and not able to make a

difference. Further, the community loses the ability to communicate and connect through their posts and gets excluded from the digital public on the platform.



Figure 2: Instagram Post by @danrosenpole addressing the shadowban and the impact on the community (Source: https://www.instagram.com/p/B0LJOSPAObgQKwKJifQ-Swx8zt6ezv_M6G97Bk0/)

As a first reaction to the shadowban, the pole dance community issued a petition with more than 18.000 signers in summer 2019 (Osborne, 2019; Rao, 2019), reclaiming their visibility on the platform. With reference to Instagram's community guidelines, pole dancers address a perceived stigmatization of (female) nudity and sexuality and claim their legitimate right to show their art and their sport to the Instagram community as a whole:

“What we do does not violate Instagram’s community guidelines. It is not profane, pornographic, injurious or hateful. What we do requires skill, strength and discipline. It is a dance art; it is fitness training; it can be sexy and entertaining - but it does not violate Instagram’s terms of service.” (Rachel Osbourne, Change.org Petition “Instagram, please stop censoring pole dance” – About., July 2019)

With regard to the collectively uttered critique of the pole dance community, Instagram lifts parts of the shadowban, declares it as a misdirected algorithmic content moderation and apologizes to the pole dance community by claiming, it was never their intention to silence certain posts or specific groups. Nevertheless, the shadowban as partially operating still poses a latent threat and continues to ban certain hashtags, accounts or posts.

Phase 2: Stigmatized groups join forces – “everybodyvisible”

As a reaction to the unsolved problem of the intransparent content moderation practices, the pole dance community joins forces with other stigmatized communities like sex workers, strippers and artists. Reporting the same type of content moderation practices, they jointly create the resistance movement “everybodyvisible” (everybodyvisible, 2019). The second form of collective resistance is much more long-term oriented, with clearer negotiation of their collective identity, their shared values and common goals, their designated spokespersons and their (even though flat) hierarchical structures.

“We started to notice discrimination everywhere. It wasn’t just pole dancers. All kinds of self-expressed women, trans people, LGBTQIA folk, yogis, artists, photographers, the BBW community, feminists, disability activists, body-positive, sex and birth educators, fitness professionals had been reporting problems. We were not alone. It has been going on for years and it was getting worse. A core group of us realized this is a human issue, not a pole dance issue. And we are stronger together. Since then we have worked hard to link up with allies, combine efforts and organize a movement. One in which we WILL be seen.” (everybodyvisible, Website “About us”, October 2019)

Through carefully crafted poetic speech acts on the website and social media accounts of everybodyvisible, the stigmatized communities continue to define pole dance, sex work, femininity, nudity, and sexuality as artistic and authentic, and as a legitimate part of the open, diverse, and authentic community of Instagram. These poetic speech acts are carefully crafted artwork, professionally staged and purposefully produced to express the beauty in the body, in nudity and sexuality (see Figure 3 & 4).

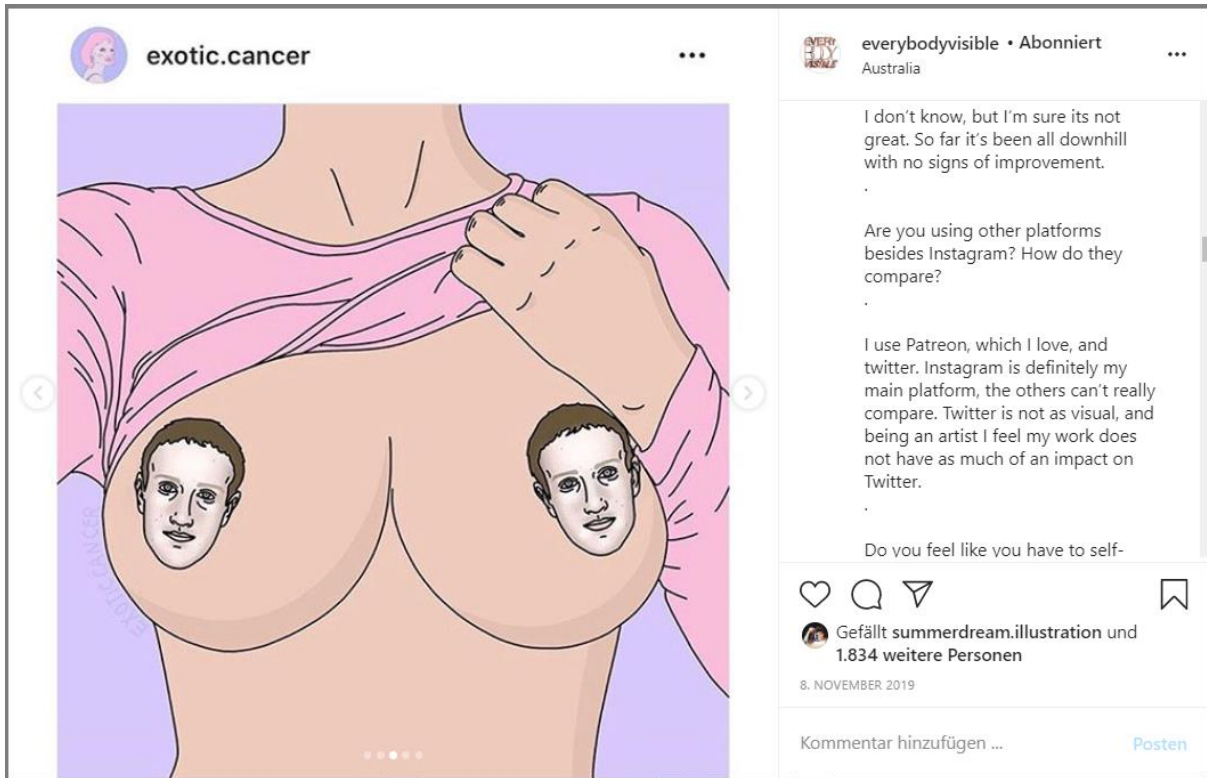


Figure 3: Sex worker and artist @exoticcancer in an interview about content moderation on the EveryBodyVisible Instagram account. (Source: <https://www.instagram.com/p/B4loOS0hj9x/>)

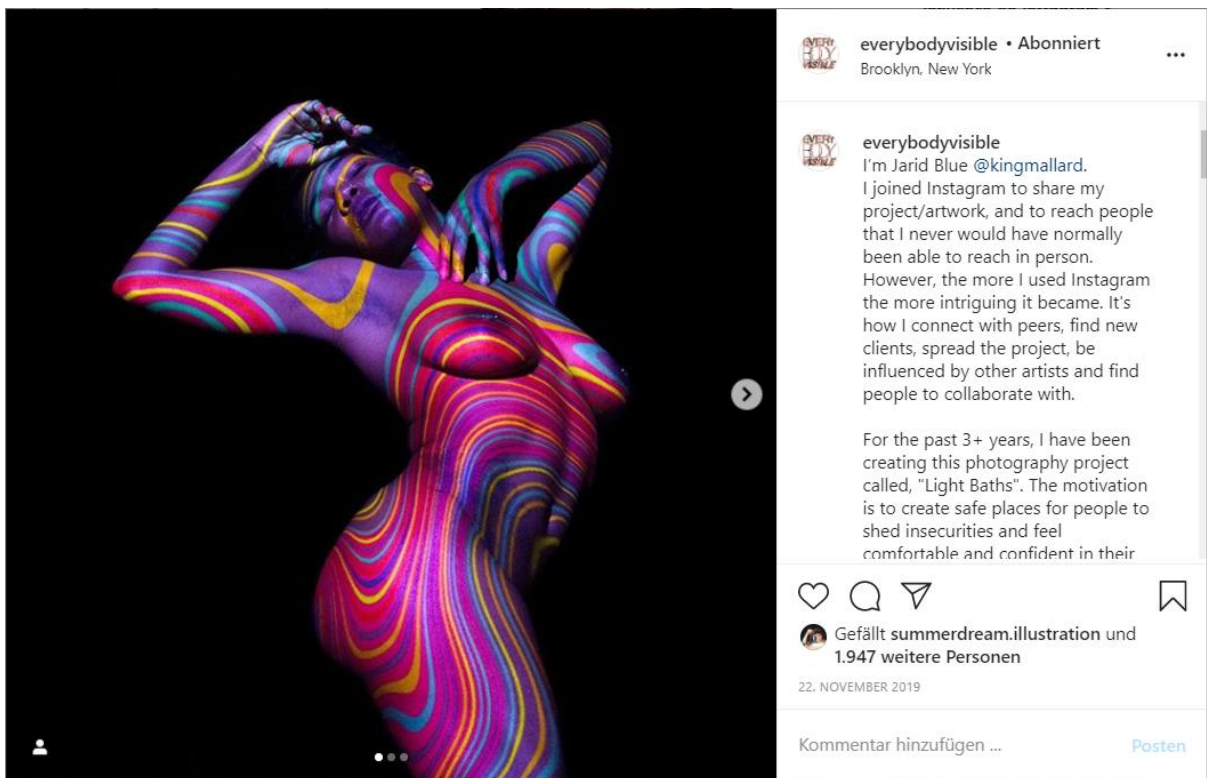


Figure 4: Photographer Jarid Blue (@kingmallard) and his work on the EveryBodyVisible Instagram account. (Source: <https://www.instagram.com/p/B5JrJSHB8J4/>)

By educating their communities about the ongoing content moderation and joining the voices of stigmatized actors across various communities, everybodyvisible address the ongoing intransparent und discriminating practices of the platform providers. With an organized protest on the platform on October 29th (International Internet Day) initiated by everybodyvisible, the communities try to reclaim their visibility and their rights on Instagram for “[...] clear guidelines, equally-applied ‘community standards’, right of appeal, and an urgent review into algorithmic bias disproportionately affecting the visibility” (see Figure 5).



Figure 5: Instagram Post of @everybodyvisible, 28th Oct 2019. (Source: <https://www.instagram.com/p/B4K6-ZRhrTh/>)

Preliminary discussion & contribution:

We show how a stigmatized virtual community tries to negotiate the interpretation and operationalization of cultural ideals and addresses technological silencing practices through increasing organizationality (Dobusch & Schoeneborn, 2015) and using poetic speech acts (Davidson, 2016).

With Instagram as corpo-civic space (Are, 2019), shadowbanning affects the dignity of the community and their feeling of belonging (Mahalingam et al., 2019) and studio owners or small businesses, who depend on the platform for their business ties. As gyms and pole studios all

over the world were locked down and income was limited to online classes during the Covid-19 crisis, the content moderation in the digital enforced the precariousness of the work situation of pole instructors or exotic dancers even more. With the shadowban, Instagram established an environment of “unequal distribution of protection within society” and left some groups “more exposed to precariousness than others” (Alberti et al., 2018: 449).

However, our case also exemplifies possible ways of resistance for stigmatized communities. With the petition and the resistance collective “everybodyvisible”, the community collectively addresses the content moderation practices of Instagram and fights back. Although researchers like Ashforth & Kreiner (2014b) have discussed such collective-level responses to precarity and stigmatization, we underline the crucial role of organizationality in the different instances of resistance. We show that the community goes beyond merely strengthening social bonds (Alberti et al., 2018) as it establishes (at least partial and temporary) organizationality across various stigmatized groups as a defence-tactic (Ashforth & Kreiner, 2014b) to the content moderation practices.

Additionally, through this different stages of organizing, the pole dance community also re-negotiates the boundaries and the stigmatization of its community: first, it reinforces the “stripper” stigma through differencing itself from sex workers (Gomez-Ramirez, 2007) and actively discusses the “soft” stigma (Kraus, 2011) sticking with leisure pole fitness. It then, surprisingly, establishes a more inclusive view on sexuality, nudity, and the historical roots in the sex work and exotic dance industry - it joins forces with other stigmatized communities as an act of solidarity.

Resonating with the focus on precarity in all forms of modern capitalist economies (Kalleberg, 2009), our paper investigates the silencing and censoring of stigmatized communities in a seemingly open and diverse environment of a social media platform. We want to critically discuss these silencing practices in the digital, which go hand in hand with cultural stigmas and suppression of marginalized groups in the offline realm. However, we emphasize how stigmatized communities are able to fight back: as an organized resistance. With our case study, we want to stress the need to critically question dominant cultural ideals and the precarious situation of stigmatized groups in the analogue and in the digital world, to address obscure practices of censorship and content moderation by powerful platform providers, and to illustrate how marginalized and stigmatized communities still manage to communicate, to be heard, and to be seen.

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Appendix I. Coding Categories with first- & second-order codes and according coding rules.

Category	First-order	Second-order	Coding rules
Activities	Resisting	Demanding visibility	- speech act claiming the right to be seen by others
		Calling for transparency (reg. banning practices)	- speech act asking for information about and clear definitions of banning/censoring policies & practices
		Organizing online protest (internet day, hashtags, EVB website)	- directive to join the protest on the internet day - directive to spread the word about the protest on the internet day - giving information about the protest on the internet day (e.g. date) - hashtags that contain words such as 'activism', 'protest', 'internet day'
		Organizing protest through petition	- directive to sign and share an online petition - initiating a petition - supporting the petition e.g., by sharing information about petition or signing it
		Organizing offline protest	- directive to physically join a protest in an offline space or to share information about it - joining an offline protest - sharing information about an offline protest
		Describing collective identity	Defining common goals/visions of the collective
	Attributing collective identity to...		'- describing the assumed characteristics of another group * to be coded for all collectives
	Defining one's own collective identity		- speech act expressing to be part of a group and describing activities done by this group - speech act describing characteristics of a group that the actor feels affiliated with
	Describing individual identity	Describing job identity	- often starts with 'I am a ...' - earn a living with the described activity (incl. doing the household)
		Describing private identity	- often starts with 'I am a ...' - describing a hobby or an activity that is not related to income - naming a group affiliation (I am black, queer, mum, etc.)
	Moderating content	Moderating/Banning	- speech act that describes one's own moderating/banning practices and policies or their planned implementation
		Addressing censorship	- when a speech act mentions words such as 'censoring', 'banning', 'deleting', 'blocking', 'reporting', 'removing',... - can also happen by other users - does not need to be a platform provider
Buidlung a strong community	Creating ties	- tagging other people - calling for engagement for the community - recruiting members who join the community (put the target members into 'reference')	

	Organizing learning	- providing information on 'how to do sth...' with the goal that the recipient gets new insights (e.g., explanations)
Stigmatizing	Observing stigmatization of others (digitally/analogous)	- if a speech act describes the situation that a member of one or more targeted group(s) is censored, banned, deleted, etc. in the digital - if a speech act describes the situation that members of one or more targeted group(s) are discriminated in the analogous world
	Stigmatizing other groups by emphasizing the difference	- distance oneself from the stigma of other groups (e.g., to avoid to be stigmatized themselves)
	Feeling stigmatized in the analogous world	- if a speech act mentions words such as "unequal/equal", 'unfair', 'feeling targeted', 'disproportionally affecting a specific community' in the context of analogous life (e.g., discrimination by other communities, institutions, employers, etc.)
	Feeling stigmatized in the digital world	- if a speech act mentions words such as "unequal/equal", 'unfair', 'feeling targeted', 'disproportionally affecting a specific community' in the context of censorship by another community, institution, or a platform provider in the digital
Censoring/being visible	Legitimizing censorship	- speech act answering the question: 'why should my speech acts be censored or why should another speech act be censored?
	Legitimizing visibility	- speech act answering the question: 'why should my speech acts be visible or why should another speech act be visible?
	Making sense of visibility	- explaining why my or someone else's speech act is visible
	Making sense of censorship	- explaining why my or someone else's speech act is censored
Actors	Other platform providers than Instagram	- speech act that is uttered by an official who speaks on behalf of a platform provider other than instagram (e.g., Twitter, Youtube)
	EverybodyVisible	- speech acts by the EVB instagram account - speech acts by the EVB on their website
	Government (politicians, law makers, etc.)	- speech act uttered by a state official on behalf of the government - speech act uttered by the government and written down in legal documents, e.g., a specific law
	Experts (researchers, social media experts, etc.)	- speech act that is uttered by a person who investigates social media platforms, the pole dance community or other stigmatized groups more or less professional (e.g., researcher, journalists...)
	Mediaoutlet	- speech act that is uttered by a journalist on behalf of a media outlet or as a personal comment published in a media outlet
	Other stigmatized groups (sex workers, strippers, artists, etc.)	- speech act that is uttered by a member of a more or less stigmatized groups excl. pole dancers (e.g. stripper, sex worker, artist, feminist activists)

	Pole dancers (activists, athletes, hobby dancers)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - speech act that is uttered by a member of the pole dance community - speech act that is uttered by a pole dance activist speaking on behalf of the pole dance community
	Instagram as platform provider (CEO, Instagram officials, etc.)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - speech act that is uttered by Instagram officials that act on behalf of the firm facebook/instagram
References to	Experts (researchers, social media experts, etc.)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - speech act that is uttered towards a diverse group of experts who investigate social media platforms, content moderation practices, the pole dance community or other stigmatized groups more or less professional (e.g., researcher, journalists...)
	Social Media community	Social media community in general	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - speech act that is uttered towards the general group of all users communicating on social media (without naming Instagram in particular)
		Instagram community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - speech act that is uttered towards the Instagram community as a collective (no specific naming of groups)
	Social Media platform providers	Instagram as platform provider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - speech act that is uttered towards the Instagram officials that act on behalf of the firm Facebook/Instagram
		Social media platform providers in general	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - speech act that is uttered towards officials that act on behalf of social media platform providing firms, such as Twitter, YouTube, etc.
	Government		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - speech act uttered towards state officials who communicate on behalf of the government - speech act referring to legal documents, e.g., a specific law, that represent governmental decisions
	Mediaoutlets		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - speech act that refers to a specific media article or media outlet reporting in general
	Other stigmatized group		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - speech act that is uttered towards a specific stigmatized group (e.g., sex workers, artists, strippers) or a single member of this group (excl. pole dancers)
	Pole dancers		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - speech act that is uttered towards the pole dance community as a collective or a member of the pole dance community - speech act that is uttered towards a pole dance activist communicating on behalf of the pole dance community
	EverybodyVisible		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - speech act that is uttered towards EverybodyVisible as a collective
Precariousness			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - direct naming a risk for business opportunities - naming a risk for business opportunities inferred from the context of the speech act (e.g., online brand + censorship)