Feeling 'the facts': Rhetorical struggles over affect and information in contemporary Scandinavian LGBTQ+ activism

On January 7, 2025, Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg announced fundamental changes to content moderation policies across Meta platforms, including the termination of Meta's partnerships with professional fact-checkers and changes to the company's Hateful Conduct Policy so that it now explicitly allows "allegations of mental illness or abnormality when based on gender or sexual orientation, given political and religious discourse about transgenderism and homosexuality" (*Hateful Conduct Policy*, n.d.). Activists and human rights groups fear that these changes will cause an increase in hateful content and misinformation directed at LGBTQ+ individuals and communities ("Meta's New Policies," 2025). While these concerns have fueled a movement away from Meta's platforms where users migrate to decentralized or simply safer alternatives, activists also seek to counter anti-LGBTQ+ rhetoric and -information online.

Bridging my previous work on the rhetorical circulation of anger as a catalyst for social change and my ongoing work on digital information activism (Broberg, 2024), this presentation will discuss some of the ways that queer and trans activists counter hate and misinformation online. The first part of the presentation focuses on the relationship between affect and social change. Here, I suggest that there are important lessons to be learned from the rhetoric of ACT UP, Radicalesbians, and other 20th century queer activists (Gould, 2009; Jasper, 2014). At the same time, the challenged faced by queer and trans people today are in many ways different from those fought by earlier generations. While the literature on queer and trans information activism has focused on activists responding to a *lack* of information about LGBTQ+ lives (Cifor & Rawson, 2023; McKinney, 2020), the second part of this presentation focuses on contemporary examples of information activism by Danish trans activists navigating the *abundance* of (often harmful) information circulating online and the hypervisibility of trans bodies characterizing the present cultural moment (Gossett et al., 2017).

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