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DESTIGMATIZATION THROUGH VISUALIZATION:

STRIVING TO REDEFINE REFUGEE WORKERS' WORTH

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Destigmatization through visualization: Striving to redefine refugee workers' worth

Abstract

Refugee workers struggle to find employment because they are stigmatized. Research suggests that organizations can help *de*stigmatize actors such as refugees by recognizing them and confirming their worth in society. Here, we explore pictures that refugee job-placement organizations in Austria and Germany used to redefine refugees' *moral worthiness* – that is, their worth in relation to higher-order normative principles such as civic duty, efficiency and creativity. Analysing images used in organizations' destigmatization efforts is essential, as pictures visualize and materialize refugees rather than abstractly describing them. Hence, visualization shapes the worthiness of refugee workers in the eyes of prospective employers. Combining social semiotics with the economies of worth framework, we found that job-placement organizations use three visualization practices – *professionalizing*, *domesticizing* and *stylizing* – that draw on distinct moral orders. We found that although these practices were intended to destigmatize, they also – counterintuitively – restigmatize. By leveraging social semiotic studies of visualization, our results advance stigmatization studies by showing how visualization can unintendedly restigmatize and by revealing that the visualization practices we identified are built upon multiple forms of worth. Our analysis also theoretically and methodologically extends studies of organizational morality by explaining how moral dimensions are expressed through visual registers.

Keywords:

destigmatization, economies of worth, employment, refugee workers, social semiotics, visualization

Introduction

An influx of refugee workers to European countries over the last ten years has led to so-called social 'crises' in Germany and other countries (Florian, Costas, & Kärreman, 2019). Politicians and the media stigmatize refugees, which influences the broader public and organizations and subjects refugee workers to cultural processes that 'negatively qualify' their differences and identities in the labour market (Goffman, 1963). Organizational studies can help tackle stigmatization by moving away from analysing stigma as a feature of organizational actors and viewing it instead as a social process and analysing how organizations can contribute to removing stigma (Hampel & Tracey, 2017; Siltaoja et al., 2020; Zhang, Wang, Toubiana, & Greenwood, 2021). Destigmatization is 'the process by which low-status individuals or groups gain recognition and worth in society' (Lamont, 2018, p. 420), in which recognition comes about from 'the affirmation of positive qualities of human subjects and groups' (Honneth, 2014, p. 39) and operates by redrawing boundaries between social groups and redefining the worth of stigmatized actors (Lamont, 2018). For people to be viewed as worthy requires mobilizing moral repertoires (Cloutier & Langley, 2013; Lamont, 2012) because destigmatization involves normative judgments about an individual's or group's contribution to societal welfare (Suchman, 1995). Some research indicates that visual communication plays a role in processes of (de)stigmatization – for example, churches displaying the rainbow flag (Lamont, 2018; see also Banks, 2012; Farias, Seremani & Fernández, 2021) – yet little is known about how organizations' choice of which visuals to use in their communication, such as on their websites, contributes to destigmatization. Our question, then, is *How do visualization practices aimed at destigmatizing groups of actors reshape their worth?*

To address this question, we use the insights of social semiotics (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006) to visually analyse higher-order normative principles, i.e. orders of worth

(Boltanski & Thévenot, 2006). Compared to written text, visuals are better at evoking emotions, capturing attention, creating involvement and describing complex relationships (Lefsrud, Graves, & Phillips, 2020; Meyer, Jancsary, Höllerer, & Boxenbaum, 2018). Using visuals to (de)stigmatize is distinct from using verbal text because rather than writing about refugees abstractly, photographs show individuals and groups and thereby influence our 'space of imagination' (Vollmer & Karakayali, 2018) and our valuations.

We identified and critically analysed three *visualization practices* organizations used to reshape the worthiness of refugee workers: *professionalizing*, which builds on the industrial world that values refugees working diligently; *domesticizing*, which seeks to show that refugees can fit into the domestic world; and *stylizing*, which borrows from the worlds of fame and inspiration and adopts the visual codes of the fashion-industry to cast refugee workers as young, dynamic and stylish. Reading these practices more critically, though, reveals that although well-intentioned, these practices can communicate negative messages about refugees that reinforce stereotypes and restigmatize them.

Our first contribution is to organizational and sociological studies of stigmatization (Lamont, 2018; Siltaoja et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2021) by showing how the organizations' visualization practices we identified contribute to processes of destigmatization by redrawing moral boundaries, and at the same time how they inadvertently contribute to *re*stigmatization. The visualization practices we identified offer a starting point for unpacking how 'recognition gaps' (Lamont, 2018) – 'disparities of cultural membership between groups' (p. 423) – are addressed and reproduced through visual practices in labour markets. Our second contribution is to analyses of organizational morality and the economies of worth framework (Cloutier, Gond, & Leca, 2017; Hampel & Tracey, 2019). More specifically, we contribute by explaining how moral valuation is involved in visualization practices that draw on different orders of worth. In addition, we provide a method to unpack such a process. Our

analysis moves beyond verbal text-focused approaches to show how visuals express forms of worth.

Organizing destigmatization: Reshaping moral worthiness through visualization

In response to growing inequalities, sociologists in North America have developed an agenda to address the discrimination faced by stigmatized groups such as African Americans, the LGBTQ+ community, undocumented migrants and refugee workers (Lamont, 2018; Loyd & Bonds, 2018). This agenda is focussed on destigmatization, with Lamont explicitly claiming that 'social scientists, policymakers, *organizations*, and citizens can contribute to broadening cultural membership' (2018, p. 420, our emphasis), and thus destigmatization. Goffman (1963) identified stigma as consisting of relationally constituted, socially 'discrediting attributes' that stigmatized individuals carefully manage. Organizational scholars using Goffman's work to analyse stigma have focussed on different levels of analysis: from individuals stigmatized in the workplace (Jones & King, 2014) to stigmatized occupations (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999) to organizations and industries (Devers, Dewett, Mishina, & Belsito, 2009). This research has advanced our knowledge of stigma sources and types, and has also revealed individual and organizational strategies to deal with stigma.

While stigmatization as a socially embedded process and a means of power and control is included in Goffman's definition of stigma, organization and management researchers have paid less attention to it (Tyler & Slater, 2018; Garcia-Lorenzo, Sell-Trujillo & Donnelly, 2021). Instead, scholars have focussed more on organizational strategies to reduce, eliminate or resist stigmatization (Hampel & Tracey, 2017; Siltaoja et al., 2020) rather than on the social process by which stigma can be removed (Zhang et al., 2021). The societal level deserves further attention, though, because both stigma and attempts to overcome it depend on societal constructions of who is worthy and who is not. Unless we

consider stigmatization as a socially embedded process, the complex endeavour of destigmatization is likely to be unsuccessful because stigma in societies is persistent, especially when the tribal attributes of ethnicity and race are the source of the stigma and are part of social dynamics that reproduce inequality and discrimination (Lamont, 2018; Zhang et al., 2021).

Destigmatization uses cultural repertoires to make people be 'seen' as 'worthy' members of society. Overcoming the 'recognition gaps' they face is important because stigma directly relates to physical and subjective well-being of these groups, as they tend to suffer more from negative health outcomes, poverty, isolation and scant welfare support (Lamont, 2018). The struggle for cultural recognition is intertwined with the struggle for socio-economic (re)distribution (Fraser, 2000), especially in the realm of work and employment. Destigmatization expands the boundaries of cultural membership by being more inclusive. Accordingly, destigmatizing may involve (a) adopting practices that visualize stigmatized actors' worth, such as in organizational communication and visualization (Lamont, 2018); and (b) redefining the moral worthiness of stigmatized groups, such as refugees (Cloutier et al., 2017; Lamont, 2012).

Destigmatization through visualization

Tribal stigmas are related to race and ethnicity, are more visible and are thus more challenging to remove, as evidenced by the persistence of racism and sexism (Zhang et al., 2021). Visuals possess unique affordances – the potential to create meaning for producer and audience (Kress, 2010) – to construct people as 'other' and reproduce racism or to contribute to recognition and destigmatization. As visual forms of communication, photographs portray a seemingly objective, but potentially perverted representation of reality (Meyer, Höllerer, Jancsary, & van Leeuwen, 2013). They materialize by providing culturally and historically

specific context information (i.e. a specific refugee rather than an abstract notion of 'the refugee') (Meyer et al., 2018). Pictures can spatialize complex and multidimensional relationships and captivate audiences by appealing to viewers' emotions (Lefsrud et al., 2020). Rather than mere illustration, the aesthetic properties of images can powerfully mobilize and persuade (Kornberger, 2017). Visualization allows organizations to present one image that can be differently interpreted and to address potentially conflicting expectations, as Höllerer, Jancsary, Meyer, and Vettori (2013) illustrate referring to a picture in a CSR report showing laughing children on a meadow in front of a power plant.

Visuals can subtly depict social actors as 'others'; for example, excluding them or showing them in subservient roles. In addition, van Leeuwen (2008, p. 141) describes three ways people can be depicted as 'others' in visuals through how they are related to the viewer: (1) from a distance, (2) using a specific camera angle to disempower and to look down on them and (3) as objects for the viewer's gaze rather than as interaction partners looking viewers in the eyes. As for refugees, studies have shown how the media visually appeal to viewers' compassion. In 2015, for instance, audiences were 'captivated' (Meyer et al., 2018) by the image of three-year-old Aylan Kurdi lying on a Turkish beach (Klein & Amis, 2020). Once viewers realized that the boy was not asleep, but was actually dead, they had an immediate personal response and shared a collective feeling of shame and pain that shifted the media discourse in Germany – briefly – toward empathy for refugees (Vollmer & Karakayali, 2018). This empathy, though, is closely linked to refugees' deservingness, with children and families being perceived as deserving, while men are often portrayed as illegitimate economic migrants (see also Hardy & Phillips, 1999). More recent media coverage has been less empathetic, visually dehumanizing and stigmatizing refugees by depicting them as faceless silhouettes or showing mug shots of criminal migrants that confirm stigmas (Banks, 2012). These visual representations have also shown refugees from a

distance, implying that to be close to them is dangerous (Farias et al., 2021), or have presented them in large groups as a scary mass, evoking fear more effectively than written numbers could. In Australia, for example, the media showed images of refugees in groups to evoke this fear in a country where the number of refugees was relatively low (Bleiker, Campbell, Hutchison, & Nicholson, 2013). The images presented a skewed representation that could have easily been refuted in verbal text.

Visual communication studies applying social semiotics can help to analyse cultural attempts to redefine the worthiness of stigmatized actors such as refugee workers. Instead of looking only at what a picture captures, social semiotics seeks to uncover 'all the values and ideas which the popular culture associates with "that" place of origin' (van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 137). Social semiotics is therefore uniquely suited to make explicit how visuals' construct the worth of refugee workers.

Destigmatization as moral worthiness redefinition

Understanding who is defined as worthy – and how – is key to explaining how 'a larger proportion of the members of our society can be defined as valuable' (Lamont, 2012, p. 202), which is the aim of destigmatization. To better understand the process of stigma removal requires unpacking the various forms of valuation (Lamont, 2012; Vatin, 2013), involved in redefining the worthiness of a stigmatized group such as refugee workers. This type of analysis necessarily involves normative and moral evaluations, since stigmatization can be seen as an extreme form of moral devaluation (Hampel & Tracey, 2019).

To explain how valuation – and hence destigmatization – operate, Lamont (2018) suggests focussing on the cultural repertoires that inform how members of a society define worthiness. Boltanski and Thévenot's (2006) economies of worth framework offers a conceptual tool; it captures the richness and multidimensionality of the cultural repertoires

used to evaluate or define worthiness (Lamont, 2012; Stark, 2011). This framework recognizes the plurality of 'orders of worth' or 'worlds' that correspond to higher-order normative principles which actors can use as 'toolkits' (Swidler, 1986) to justify their claims in situations of disputes (Boltanski & Thévenot, 1999). These worlds form a grammar that provides individuals and organizations with a 'repertoire of cultural-cognitive and normative resources' (Cloutier & Langley, 2013, p. 371) to evaluate whether beings or things are worthy. Worthy beings or things are those that are positively evaluated according to the normative principles – and therefore the moral norms – that govern a specific world (Demers & Gond, 2020). To identify worlds and their corresponding forms of the common good, Boltanski and Thévenot (2006) combined insights from the realm of work (Boltanski & Thévenot, 1989) and from foundational works in political science (e.g. Auguste Comte, Thomas Hobbes, Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Adam Smith).[1]

In the original framework, Boltanski and Thévenot (2006) identify six common 'worlds': the industrial, the domestic, the inspired, the world of fame, the civic, and the market. The *industrial* world is dominated by a focus on technical efficiency; the *domestic* world is a realm of traditions, hierarchy and trustworthiness; while the focus of the *inspired* world is on creativity, passion and grace. The world of *fame* values public opinion and reputation; the values of the *civic* world are on collective welfare in terms of rights and responsibility; while competition, cost and profit dominate in the *market* world. Each world is governed by higher-order normative principles and uses specific tests to evaluate worth (e.g. competitiveness in the market world, passion in the inspired world), forms of proof (e.g. statistics in the industrial world, solidarity in the civic world), specific objects (e.g. patrimony in the domestic world, freely circulating goods in the market world) and human beings (e.g. citizens in the civic world, engineers in the industrial world) (see Gond, Leca, & Cloutier, 2016, p. 207 for a more detailed presentation).[2] In disputed situations, actors evaluate the

moral worthiness of beings and things using the resources from these worlds to back their arguments and shift the debate, until they either agree on a given world or temporarily 'compromise' by combining various worlds (Cloutier & Langley, 2013). Actors can use the resources from these worlds in discourse, as in Patriotta, Gond, and Schultz's (2011) study of the controversy surrounding a nuclear power plant accident. In this debate, actors used these worlds to evaluate the moral worthiness of beings, such as humans and the environment threatened by the accident, and things, such as the technical inefficiency of the plant. In this paper, we use the economies of worth concepts to investigate how visualization practices redefined stigmatized actors' worthiness; specifically, refugee workers in Austria and Germany.

Research methods

Empirical phenomenon

In the late summer and fall of 2015, the so-called refugee crisis reached Austria and Germany, and many refugees – mostly Syrian, Iraqi and Afghan – who came via the 'Balkan route' were stranded in Hungary until Austria, with Germany's agreement, opened its border with Hungary to prevent a humanitarian catastrophe. Initially, the media in both countries propagated a sense of hospitality and strongly supported quickly organized humanitarian aid (Florian et al., 2019; Kornberger, Leixnering, & Meyer, 2019). The public discourse changed, however, in the months following the events of New Year's Eve 2015 in Cologne, during which women were sexually attacked in public spaces, allegedly by North African migrants (Vieten, 2018), and the Paris terror attacks in November 2015. A political shift in Austria led to the election of a coalition of the conservative party (ÖVP) and the far-right 'freedom party' (FPÖ) who ruled from 2017 to 2019; in Germany, it led to the rise of the new nationalist and

right-wing party 'Alternative for Germany' (AfD) and an increase in racially motivated attacks against refugees.

Austria and Germany have a shared history of racism, antisemitism and stigmatization of 'the other'. Austria was occupied by the Nazis between 1938 and 1945 and was part of the Third Reich. The Nazi bureaucracy stigmatized 'racial enemies', primarily Jews, but also 'asocial elements' such as the unemployed, criminals and people deemed 'useless eaters' such as the (mentally) disabled (Tyler, 2017). Since then, both countries have experienced massive economic and social changes,[3] yet the recent rise of neo-Nazi ideology in both countries makes them a relevant place for studying (de)stigmatization. In Austria and Germany, the source of refugee stigma is 'tribal', since it is based on membership in a cultural group (Zhang et al., 2021). Tyler (2017, p. 12) claimed that 'the refugees arriving in Europe in the summer of 2015 are difficult to characterize in terms of a single religion, nationality or through racial colour lines', but that the 'preeminent form' of refugee stigma is racism (Tyler, 2017, p. 11) because it is visible, 'written into the flesh' (p. 9) and used by politicians to disseminate the fear that '"white" Europe was being "invaded" by brown migrants' (p. 8). Other aspects of refugee stigmatization are Islamophobia (Vieten, 2018; Wodak & Reisigl, 2015) and a discourse centred around refugees not wanting to adapt to 'Western values'. One concrete example of refugee stigmatization is Austria requiring asylum seekers to 'learn Austrian values' in order to ensure their 'integration' into society (Schiocchet, Bauer-Amin, Six-Hohenbalken, & Gingrich, 2020); another is the media debate in Germany about refugees' 'integration and gender equality skills' after their alleged involvement in sexual assaults on New Year's Eve 2015 (Vieten, 2018, p. 73).

While stigmatization affects all areas of refugees' lives, it severely affects their participation in the labour market. Baranik, Hurst, and Eby (2018) found a 'refugee-specific stigma' that kept companies from recruiting refugees. Employer reluctance leads to refugees

being unemployed, under-employed or underpaid (Ludwig, 2016) and is related to an assumption within host societies that refugees are under- or unqualified. In Austria, Eggenhofer-Rehart et al. (2018) found that refugees' cultural capital was seriously devalued because of their poor command of German. Many refugees cannot find employment in the occupations they previously held in their home countries, since they lack informal job skills and knowledge and host countries oftentimes do not recognize their formal qualifications.

Data sources

Organizations that focus on placing refugees in the labour market are appropriate sources for a study on attempts to destigmatize through visualization, since these organizations operate in this stigmatized space and need to have refugees' moral worth recognized in order to successfully find employment for them. We used a sampling strategy that captured a diverse landscape of organizations, reflecting differences in activities, audiences, governance and the refugee skill-level they recruit for. We selected six organizations (see Table 1) that provide a range of activities: two focus on providing information (one mentors refugees about local recruitment processes and job application procedures; another provides companies with legal and practical advice about employing refugees); three matchmakers use either online portals (two organizations) or their own networks (one organization) to connect refugees and employers; and one temporary-work agency directly employs refugees and hires them out to client companies. All these organizations listed well-known companies as clients. We used the organizations' websites and online brochures as data sources because these media were the first point of contact for employers, refugees and the public. We collected and initially analysed 150 photos from the websites and online brochures and included the verbal text that accompanied these images as well to capture the context of the picture.

Insert Table 1 about here

Data analysis

Methodologically, we were interested in reconstructing the meaning that visuals communicate (Meyer et al., 2013); specifically, the meaning these visuals attribute to refugee workers, because we assumed that visualization mirrors, creates and changes broader meaning structures in organizations, fields and society. Our focus on meaning, values and beliefs closely aligns with social semiotics (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006), an approach to analysing pictures in terms of viewers' social practices and their social context. In social semiotics, the meaning of a picture is not communicated simply by what it shows; instead, what needs to be made explicit is how an image conveys the values of the context in which it was produced (van Leeuwen, 2008). Kress and van Leeuwen's social semiotic approach (2006) provides a framework for analysing the interpersonal relationship between a picture and its viewer. This approach seeks to understand how the viewer makes meaning of it, and is distinct from other approaches using experiments or ethnographies to directly assess how visuals impact an audience (Meyer et al., 2013; Rose, 2016). Using social semiotics (Jancsary, Meyer, Höllerer, & Boxenbaum, 2017) and the economies of worth framework (Boltanski & Thévenot, 2006) allowed us to capture visualization and account for how it relates to (de)stigmatization in the four steps described in Table 2.

Insert Table 2 about here

Step 1. To account for who and what is depicted, we first documented the content of each visual, paying attention to *people and objects* (italics in this step and in the following steps indicate the social semiotic categories that we used for coding each picture), the depicted actions and the setting. We coded for the *situation* that actors were facing to answer the

question ‘What is happening here?’ and described and categorized the roles of those depicted (often together with specific objects) in a given *setting*. The visually implied *relationship* between participants showed hierarchies and power distribution. Some relationships were narrative, as when people were doing something to, for or with each other (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006); some were classificatory, as when they showed someone as a ‘member of the same class’ (Harrison, 2003, p. 51); and others were symbolic, as when they referenced more-general ideas, like being part of a group (Jancsary et al., 2017). Additionally, to capture the general context, we transcribed the written *text* that was either included in the visual or in a caption under the picture; if neither was available, we used the headline of the section. At this stage, we excluded photos which did not explicitly depict refugees, such as photos of mentors, the founding team or customers. Following this step, our sample comprised 83 photos.

Step 2. To capture ‘how is the content depicted and the audience addressed?’ (Jancsary et al., 2017), we focussed on four aspects of the visuals. First, we coded for *contact with or appeal to the viewer*, since the viewer’s embodied position indicates whether the viewer is conceptualized as passive observer or active participant. This contact or appeal might be strong (i.e. direct eye contact with the viewer), weak (i.e. not looking at the viewer) or non-existent (i.e. no people present). Second, we coded for the *social distance* between viewer and content – how accessible and available people and objects are as implied in the gaze – as intimate in close-up pictures and headshots; interpersonal when the viewer can see the whole person or people in a small group; or impersonal when depicted objects or people are so far away that they are out of reach. Third, we focused on the vertical angle, which determines who is in a position of *power* (e.g. if the viewer is looking down on the depicted); whether a person seen at eye level, for instance, indicates equality; or whether, in a horizontal angle (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006), the depicted person faces the viewer directly or not – which

might imply involvement or detachment and otherness. Fourth, we captured different image *modalities* in terms of whether a picture showed 'truth or fantasy' (Machin & van Leeuwen, 2005, p. 104): naturalistic pictures convey a sense of everyday realism while sensory and consciously aesthetic pictures that are highly stylized or digitally reworked induce pleasure or displeasure to a degree that is 'more than real' (Machin & van Leeuwen, 2005, p. 106). Finally, we also coded the *implied role* of the viewer in relation to the role of the depicted person or people.

Step 3. We then compared coded pictures and together with the third author discussed potential discrepancies to further update and refine the coding and identify possible patterns, a step which indicated that pictures could be grouped into *types* (Step 3a). For example, visuals that depicted people in the role of workers or job candidates, such as situations depicting an 'authentic' work environment with narrative relationships and weak viewer contact, we labelled as '@work' pictures. This process of categorizing pictures into types was recursive rather than linear, iteratively moving between our coding and the emerging patterns, which resulted in three different semiotic picture types: '@work', 'role model' and 'social media'. These picture types allowed us to gradually move from interpreting individual pictures to grouping a greater number of visuals in our subsequent analysis (cf. Delmestri, Oberg, & Drori, 2015).

In parallel (Step 3b), we used deductive analysis to code the order of worth a picture evokes, based on its social semiotic characteristics (analysed in Steps 1 and 2). We therefore compared the pictures 'visual registers' (Jancsary et al., 2017) with the definition of each order of worth (Boltanski & Thévenot, 2006) (e.g. a depicted senior manager corresponds with the father figure in the domestic order of worth), to produce a visual 'grammar' of each world framework (see Table 3). We differentiated whether an order of worth was prominent – relating to who or what is depicted – or background – relating to the setting and context –

because we observed empirically that pictures were very rich and might evoke several (but not equally strong) worlds. We then mapped these two orders of worth onto the picture types.

Insert Table 3 about here

Step 4. Because pictures 'suggest different interpretations and evaluations of what is happening' (Höllerer, Jancsary, & Grafström., 2018, p. 620), two authors independently coded each file (Steps 3a & 3b) and then swapped their coded files with the other author, who then independently coded each visual. In this dual coding of the swapped files, each author was blind to the other author's original coding. Once the files were unblinded, the two authors – together with the third author – discussed any discrepancies and evolving conceptual patterns. In this final step of our data analysis, we used the picture types and orders of worth coding to develop three visualization *practices* – professionalizing, domesticizing and stylizing – and then labelled each visual as belonging to one of the three. To do so, we compared how the picture was composed in terms of its social semiotic characteristics and which orders of worth combinations were coded in it. We recognized three distinct patterns: '@work' pictures prominently evoked the industrial order of worth (with either the domestic or the civic in the background), and hence we labelled the corresponding visualization practice as *professionalizing*. In contrast, in pictures in which refugees were depicted as 'role models' the domestic order of worth was most prominent (with the industrial order of worth in the background), and we therefore labelled this visualization practice as *domesticizing*. Finally, the most prominent order of worth in the 'social media' pictures was inspiration, fame, or both (with the domestic and the civic in the background). We labelled pictures of this type as using a *stylizing* visualization practice.

Lastly, we double-checked the robustness of our findings by writing a short 'storyline' for each visual and comparing it with the practice in each picture. One example of

a storyline is ‘Refugees can integrate themselves in the workplace and adjust to hierarchies’, which corresponded to the *domesticizing* practice. Another storyline, ‘Our refugee workers are hardworking professionals’, corresponded to the *professionalizing* practice. In the ‘Unpacking three visualization practices’ section below, we provide more examples, and Table 4 walks through an example of all the data-analysis steps we took for each photo.

Insert Table 4 about here

After carrying out the steps above, we reconstructed the meaning of these images in context by exploring how they were used and placed on organizations’ websites or in their brochures. We empirically observed similarities in how meaning was constructed in the pictures: the orders of worth evoked by the pictures were visually structured using the same or similar social semiotic characteristics, suggesting a visual grammar underlying each order of worth. The combination of the picture types and this grammar formed the basis of the visualization practices we analyse in the next section. The readings we describe there are interpretive and do not necessarily represent how recruiting managers or refugees themselves received or interpreted the visuals. Despite our rigorous analysis and contextual evidence, we recognize that each visual could be read differently.

Unpacking three visualization practices

Here we describe the social semiotic characteristics, the implied worth and valuation, and then the redrawing of moral boundaries of the three different visualization practices.

‘Professionalizing’ through depicting refugees ‘@work’

Visually portraying refugees at work. The ‘@work’ pictures show people at work who are visually marked as refugees or migrants (see Figure 1 for examples), with the accompanying

verbal text often clearly identifying them as refugees by stating their names and countries of origin. Workplaces are often shop floors, assembly lines or warehouses, all signifying manual labour; less frequent are offices for engineering or computer work. The people depicted are actively engaged in work activities as an unfolding action, either alone or with others.

'@work' pictures also depict their content in specific patterns. Viewers are passive observers of the work scene – instead of looking directly into the camera, the people in the pictures are focused on something else. The bodies of most protagonists are visible, sometimes presented in close-ups as they focus on their tasks from an intimate distance. This interpersonal distance foregrounds their 'work' and the workplace setting. In these pictures, the power distribution between the viewer and the depicted appears relatively equal. Some pictures imply involvement and others detachment. The local in one picture, for example, faces the viewer, indicating that he is 'one of us'; the refugee, by contrast, appears detached, as 'one of them'. '@work' pictures appear to be natural, unedited and 'true' depictions of the workplace – as if the observer is getting an unembellished inside view of refugees at work.

'Professionalizing' as a visualization practice. The social semiotic characteristics of the '@work' picture type suggest particular storylines. Their 'industrial' setting tells the story of people who are professional, hardworking, focussed and thorough. They are also stories of refugees and locals working together productively and in harmony – professionally and safely in a construction industry facing a labour shortage, for example, or of refugees motivated to become qualified and skilled – suggesting these attributes are best way for them to integrate in the host country.

The common underlying thread of these stories is that the refugees depicted are valuable because they managed to find a job, are eager to learn and develop their skills and can prove their worth by their productivity and performance. Attributing worth to people in this way is associated with the industrial order of worth, the one most common to the

'@work' picture type, which depicts people as professionals or experts at work. Hence, we labelled this visualization practice 'professionalizing'. In addition to the industrial world, some pictures present the domestic order of worth in the background, because they imply a power hierarchy between locals and refugees, with locals there to supervise refugees and tell them how to work properly. In the 'professionalizing' practice, motion creates an unfolding story within the picture. People and objects are valued because of their movement and the results the movements bring – indicating an industrial order of worth – which, when applied to refugees, 'professionalizes' them.

Insert Figure 1 about here

Domesticizing' refugees as 'role models' of integration

Visually portraying refugees as role models. This picture type presents refugee workers as role models. 'Role model' pictures identify the people portrayed in them as refugees – either because of their ethnicity and/or the text in the caption – and show them in work settings (see Figure 1 for examples). Some pictures centre on one refugee worker, others show a group of people, but two protagonists are often featured – refugee workers accompanied by their host-country managers, mentors or colleagues – with a distinction sometimes made by the clothes they wear. Other than looking friendly, smiling into the camera and posing for the (group) picture, the people in these pictures are not engaged in any activity. This lack of an implied unfolding action or narrative suggests a classificatory relationship between protagonists, especially when the same picture type is used several times. One brochure, for instance, features six pictures of refugee-manager or refugee-colleague pairs, thus 'classifying' individual refugees as role models representing friendly refugee workers in general.

‘Role model’ pictures show different workplaces (e.g. offices, workshops with tools and machines, and warehouses) in the background, and in some, refugee workers wear work uniforms. Few of the pictures seem retouched or modified to produce a sensory or aesthetic effect. In general, the aim of ‘role model’ pictures is to create a factual and accurate impression.

‘Domesticizing’ as a visualization practice. Because ‘role model’ pictures present refugees in the workplace but not ‘at work’, they draw attention to certain refugee workers’ attributes (as opposed to their skills), transmitted through their facial expressions and their relationship to the other depicted protagonists – often host-country nationals. The storylines revealed in our analysis are about refugee workers’ attributes such as friendliness, trustworthiness and gratefulness, often indicating that these attributes are essential to successfully integrate in the host-country workplace. The stories told in pictures that include managers or business owners is one of employers who express their own selflessness by giving refugees a chance. Their age and dress however often blatantly indicate a hierarchy. In one picture, the body language of a host-country manager surrounded by his refugee workers suggests he is a father figure to the three refugee workers. ‘Role model’ photos which present refugee workers together with host-country nationals and in authentic work settings render refugees as ‘domestic’ and familiar’ because it suggests that they ‘fit in’ to the domestic workplace and that trusted and reputable local colleagues vouch for them. Most of the ‘role model’ pictures use the ‘domesticizing’ visualization practice, which primarily references the domestic and industrial orders of worth.

‘Domesticizing’ is unique in that the relationships depicted in this practice are mirrored in the relationship with the viewer. The pictures often imply a hierarchical relationship between host-country nationals ranking higher than the refugees, who are presented as role models for all refugees (i.e. their class or group). The persons depicted

make direct eye contact, thereby entering into a relationship with viewers and strongly involving them. The protagonists in these pictures seem to be asking viewers to see them as trustworthy, implying a hierarchy between refugee workers and a powerful, legitimacy-providing audience.

'Stylizing' refugees for social media

Visually portraying refugees according to a social-media aesthetic. 'Social media' type pictures are not from social media, but they might easily be found there as profile pictures on LinkedIn or other social-media websites. It is not obvious that the young and stylish people in these pictures – either alone or in groups of up to 20 – are refugees. They wear professional attire – the men wear shirts or suits, for example, and the women wear stylish blouses, dresses or suit jackets. Often, the protagonists in 'social media' picture are not in a work context; instead, many pictures have no background or are taken outdoors and look like they were taken for a professional photo shoot. Protagonists are not engaged in any activity other than presenting themselves and having fun. 'Social media' pictures have no narrative because they lack context, and it is unclear what the depicted are doing. The people portrayed in 'social media' pictures seem carefully arranged and the photos appear as if they have been digitally reworked. Like models, the people depicted seem artistically and playfully positioned and staged. Many 'social media' pictures (compare examples in Figure 1) indicate that viewers should perceive them as style or pleasure shots rather than as truthful and factual snapshots.

Stylizing as a visualization practice. In contrast to 'professionalizing' and 'domesticizing', the valuation of the people depicted in 'social media' pictures is not as refugees. The storylines in these pictures are centred on young and stylish people who are members of a big, diverse group. A 'personal brand' dominates these pictures, with self-presentation

seemingly the most-important feature. Their similarity to social media and LinkedIn profile pictures is especially clear in the single-person pictures. The aim of these pictures seems to be creating a recognizable and fashionable brand to capture, convince and influence an (ostensibly) social-media audience rather than potential employers. All pictures in this type draw on elements from the world of fame, which can be seen in the artistic stylization. The aesthetic shots of creative, fun and passionate people in these pictures also evoke the world of inspiration, and many of the 'social media' pictures use the domestic world as well to create value, mostly by presenting well-crafted and staged group pictures highlighting a friendly, trustworthy and familiar team atmosphere. The general aesthetic of these photos is similar to stock photos because they seem to 'symbolically represent marketable concepts and moods' (Machin, 2004, p. 316) and lack a background, context or other personal characteristics. The relationships – both within the pictures and with the viewer – are therefore symbolic, with refugees symbolizing diversity according to the aesthetics of social media. The visualization practice of 'stylizing' is therefore aimed at increasing refugees' value by blurring the distinction between locals and 'newcomers' (as they are sometimes labelled) and aestheticizing them as modern, fashionable and valuable.

Practices of visualization and their interplay with (de)stigmatization

The aim of professionalizing, domesticizing and stylizing is to destigmatize refugees by visually addressing stigma in Austrian and German society and to increase their chances of being employed. Counterintuitively, our findings illustrate how these attempts to visually recognize and destigmatize refugees can also communicate negative meanings and can even be considered as re-stigmatizing.

Domesticizing, the visualization practice with the most potential to restigmatize, seems to be a response to media discourse in Austria and Germany that stigmatizes refugees

on racial, religious and cultural grounds, portraying them as not willing to adopt 'Western' values such as gender equality or – at worst – portraying them as criminals. Domesticizing shows refugees who are not only friendly workers and colleagues but 'role models of integration'. The practice of domesticizing invites viewers to assess how well-integrated refugee workers are or could be, if given a chance to work. The undertone seems patronizing and implies that the traditions of the host countries, in which foreigners have to integrate, are superior. The practice of *professionalizing*, which depicts refugees as hard-working and motivated, suggests that the only way for refugees to gain acceptance in the host country is through work. The overt or intended message might be that refugees are qualified and willing to work, a message that aims to debunk the common stigma that refugees are unqualified. The implicit message of professionalizing seems to be that worth is equated with performance, a message which denies refugees value as human beings. The visualization practice of *stylizing* is less clear-cut: Presenting refugees as stylish and creative young people in modern settings makes it difficult to determine which aspect of refugee stigma is being addressed. Presenting refugees in social-media–inspired pictures as self-confident contrasts with the ascribed helplessness of refugees in the media (Hardy & Phillips, 1999) and in the other two practices, in which refugees are depicted as dependent on host-country nationals for help.

We can make explicit the values of the context in which the pictures were produced by critically reading our findings, which is consistent with social semiotics practices. For the most part, the pictures we analysed showed refugee workers either at interpersonal distance, at eye level with viewers, or establishing a relationship with viewers by directly looking into the camera – all of which are visual strategies that do not construct refugee workers as 'others' (van Leeuwen, 2008). Despite these visual presentations, at least some of the pictures might restigmatize. Our analysis indicates that two factors determine whether a picture

destigmatizes or restigmatizes refugee workers. First, whether the stigma is made visible, and second, the relationship between depicted actors as well as between the depicted and the viewer. Pictures that blatantly depict a person as a refugee make the stigma visible. For instance, refugees in pictures using the professionalizing and domesticizing practice visually represent refugees as ethno-racial, non-majority Austrians or Germans. Sometimes the accompanying verbal text or the position of local bosses, mentors or colleagues at their side reinforces this visual demarcation. The domesticizing practice in particular focusses more on generic, 'cultural' or 'biological' characteristics to portray refugees as belonging to a social type (van Leeuwen, 2008) – in other words, as a 'refugee' with all its accompanying stigma. While pictures show only specific people, thereby 'materializing' them (Meyer et al., 2018), they can nevertheless generically categorize and portray refugees (van Leeuwen, 2008). By contrast, we found that the visualization practice of stylizing foregrounds specific individuals' attributes and blurs the fact that these are photos of refugee workers.

As for the relationship between the depicted actors, we found that professionalizing implies a narrative relationship between actors who work together, domesticizing a classificatory relationship and stylizing evokes abstract ideas such as fun, therefore implying a symbolic relationship. Classification is problematic in the context of destigmatization, as visuals that show refugees and host-country managers and colleagues often classify 'good refugees', suggest a power difference and reinforce the superiority of the locals. These portrayals thus evoke the domestic order of worth with its focus on traditions, hierarchies and localism. Referring to these higher-order principles to establish recognition seems particularly at odds with destigmatizing refugees, as this order of worth implies that anything not local and familiar is devalued. A foreigner in this scenario can only gain worth by integrating and being friendly, trustworthy and grateful (cf. Schinkel, 2018, for a discussion of the problematic implications of the focus on 'integration'). The relationship between the

depicted and the viewer reproduces the skewed power distribution and assesses refugees' worth according to the domestic world. Viewers, more likely to be locals than to be refugees, are presented with people as a category (well-integrated refugees) rather than as individuals, and are invited to assess their worth. According to this critical reading of our findings, organizations that use domesticizing in their attempts to open up employment opportunities for refugees might actually restigmatize rather than destigmatize them.

Discussion and implications

Our initial question was how organizational practices of visualization can contribute to reshaping the moral worthiness of stigmatized actors, focussing on the case of refugee workers in Austria and Germany. To answer this question, we combined insights from studies of stigmatization (Hampel & Tracey, 2017, 2019; Lamont, 2018) with studies of social semiotics (Jancsary et al., 2017; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006) and the economies of worth framework (Boltanski & Thévenot, 2006). Our aim was to explore how photos used by job-placement organizations in both countries drew on moral worlds to make visible and redefine the moral worthiness of refugee workers. We identified and conceptualized three visualization practices – *professionalizing*, *domesticizing* and *stylizing*. While the aim of these practices was to redefine refugees as morally worthy workers by connecting them to different higher-order normative principles, our analysis of each practice suggests that these well-intended attempts at destigmatizing may unintentionally restigmatize refugee workers and reify some social stereotypes or prejudices. Next, we articulate how studying visualization practices can contribute to research on destigmatization and organizational morality.

Destigmatizing by reshaping moral worthiness: The potential and drawback of visualization

Our first contribution is to organizational and sociological studies of destigmatization (Lamont, 2018; Siltaoja et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2021) by showing how organizations' visualization practices can contribute to destigmatization by redrawing moral boundaries in the market to define refugee workers as worthy, and by making explicit how these practices may inadvertently contribute to restigmatization. Organizational scholars have for the most part neglected destigmatization (Garcia-Lorenzo et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2021), even though a focus on the social embeddedness can potentially help tackle prevalent grand challenges such as structural racism and discrimination (Lamont, 2018). In addition, although research on destigmatization has highlighted that the cultural repertoires used to destigmatize might include material and visual elements (Lamont, 2012, 2018), and that this process involves moral valuations (Hampel & Tracey, 2017, 2019; Siltaoja et al., 2020), it has said little about how visuals can help redefine moral worthiness, a necessary step to destigmatization. Our study shows that using visualization practices to destigmatize addresses the worth of a stigmatized group because of visuals' specific affordances (Meyer et al., 2018). Specifically, visualization materializes refugees or can blur whether the depicted person is a refugee. It captivates in the sense that it involves the audience personally as evaluators of refugee workers' worth, and it spatializes, locating the complex relationship between depicted persons and between depicted and viewer. Our study therefore contributes to the few existing studies on destigmatization (Zhang et al., 2021).

More fundamentally, our study advances earlier insights about destigmatization. Goffman (1963) suggested two ways to ameliorate stigma. First, stigmatized individuals or groups can gain acceptance by explaining their situation to stigmatizers to 're-educate' (p. 141) them. Second, the stigmatized can try to correct their 'blemish' or compensate for it, an approach Tyler and Slater (2018) call 'schooling the stigmatized'. A good example of re-educating is Garcia-Lorenzo et al.'s (2021, p. 17) study of long-term unemployed some of

whom organized themselves to challenge their stigmatization and to 'resist expectations of what it is to be unemployed'. Fernando, Reveley, and Learmonth's (2020) study is an example of the schooling approach, showing how the stigmatized can tone down their ethnicity-related stigma, such as changing one's first name to one that is more 'pronounceable', while accentuating other characteristics (e.g. emphasizing one's Christianity in a majority-Christian host-country). At first glance, the visualization practices of professionalizing, domesticizing and stylizing seem to be exclusively aimed at re-educating host-country audiences that refugees are worthy, either as diligent workers from the industrial world, as role models of integration in the domestic world or as stylized prospective employees from the fame and inspired world. A deeper reading of the pictures, though, sees refugees as needing to be 'schooled' in the superiority of local traditions and norms and expectations of hard work. Refugee workers might thereby learn how to correct their 'blemish' but the refugee stigma prevails. This competing reading of these pictures effectively restigmatizes refugees because it implicitly invites viewers to 'classify' (Harrison, 2003) the working refugees as 'good refugees'. In contrast to written text, visuals can simultaneously communicate such conflicting messages (Höllerer et al., 2013) – the same image can communicate a message of both re-educating the stigmatizers and schooling the stigmatized. In contrast to verbal accounts (e.g. interviews, cf. Ortlieb, Glauninger, and Weiss, 2021), we are able to show that visuals can elegantly conceal a message that refugees have to change to be accepted.

An intriguing aspect of our analysis is that the stylizing visualization practice does not clearly depict people as refugees; instead, it 'invisibilizes' the stigma by not categorizing refugees as belonging to a social type. In the stylizing practice the visible tribal stigma is downplayed, while in the practices of professionalizing and domesticizing it is highlighted. Just as in the professionalizing and domesticizing practices, the stylizing practice addresses

the same (oftentimes) visible stigma, but much differently, by showing stylish young individuals – not refugees – who seem to be posing for social media, thus making the stigma 'invisible'. This finding is an interesting instance of how visuals can 'enable signification through invisibilities' (Quattrone, Ronzani, Jancsary & Höllerer, 2021, p. 5). Not being able to distinguish between refugees and host-country workers makes the distinction itself meaningless, thereby diluting the stigma of being a refugee. This finding opens up a third way of destigmatizing – one that is aimed at changing the stigma of being a refugee and 'the structures that shape social relationships' (Pescosolido & Martin, 2015, p. 105) rather than trying to directly change the behaviour of people, as implied in the professionalizing and domesticizing practices.

How organizations deal with moral multiplexity through visualization

Our second contribution is to studies of organizational morality (Hampel & Tracey, 2019), and more specifically to the organizational studies of the economies of worth (Cloutier et al., 2017; Demers & Gond, 2020; Patriotta et al., 2011). Adopting the economies of worth lens enabled us to unpack the multiple worlds –involved in placement agencies' attempts at destigmatizing refugee workers – in ways that advance organization studies, both theoretically and analytically. On the theoretical front, our analysis shows how organizations can actively deal with 'moral multiplexity' (Reinecke, van Bommel, & Spicer, 2017) in the context of crises, such as the one involving refugee workers in Austria and Germany, through visualization practices that draw on multiple moral worlds. In their practices, organizations visually reconstructed and demonstrated the worthiness of refugee workers to employers, the host-countries' public and refugees themselves. Our results suggest that such organizations do more than simply 'reveal' the moral qualities of actors involved in commodified market transactions (Kornberger, 2017); instead, these organizations are more directly involved in

shaping and co-constituting the moral worth of the actors they represent visually. This suggests that visualization practices can be regarded as 'valorisation' practices (Vatin, 2013), in the sense that they co-produce and redefine the moral worth of refugee workers (Lamont, 2012, 2018).

Analytically, our study advances economies of worth studies by introducing a protocol to capture moral worlds in visuals (see Table 2). We provide organizational scholars with a new methodological tool that facilitates systematic inquiries into the visual constitution and definition of moral worth, and we also extend prior organizational studies of the economies of worth framework in the process (Cloutier et al., 2017; Demers & Gond, 2020). This analytical device extends the approach in terms of 'visual registers' (Jancsary et al., 2017) by showing how to capture the moral bases of such registers.[4]

Our study also moves beyond orders of worth analyses that are focussed on content (e.g. Patriotta et al., 2011; Cohen & Dromi, 2018) or are automated (e.g. Richards, Zellweger, & Gond, 2017) textual analyses focussing on the verbal semantic characteristics or vocabularies associated to each moral world. We show that the repertoires of worth conceptualized by Boltanski and Thévenot (1999, 2006) can be visually operationalized by making salient the 'materiality' of these various worlds through specific visual representations. Carrying out the multiple interpretative stages described in Table 2, our analysis allowed us to unpack how various worlds are meaningfully represented to sustain visual narratives associated to the moral worthiness of workers.

Our analytical protocol also shows the value of approaching the economies of worth framework not only as a 'cultural repertoire' (Silber, 2016) or 'toolkit' (Swidler, 1986) providing market actors with moral agency, but also as a 'visual grammar' that can help researchers decipher how morality is involved in market-making practices. Our analysis suggests that researchers should pay particular attention to how human or nonhuman entities

are made morally 'warm' in market contexts; how 'concerned' markets, such as fair trade, can help reveal how various moral worlds are hybridized in order to build a 'fair price' (Reinecke, 2010); and how these worlds are made visible to market actors through labelling or by relying on standards, logos and images to generate empathy for market actors located down the supply chain. Insights from Boltanski's (1999) analysis of 'distant suffering' and the role played by media, such as television, to create empathy with victims of hunger or wars could help us understand how market actors could potentially be constituted as spectators of unfairness, and subsequently be politically mobilized through market practices.

Conclusion, boundary conditions and future studies

Our analysis confirms that destigmatization through visualization is potentially powerful (Lamont, 2018), but it also suggests that it can be a double-edged sword – reinforcing some form of stigmatization while aiming to de-emphasize others. Our study has limitations related to the boundary conditions of our analysis which could be explored in future research. First, our results are bounded to some extent by the cultural contexts of our research setting. Austria and Germany have a unique historical background, and relying on the cultural repertoire of the moral worlds we identified in our analysis – as well as some stereotypes we described as restigmatization – could be related to these countries' peculiar socio-political context. Future research could evaluate and extend our insights by contrasting and comparing the visualization practices of placement agencies operating in other countries.

Second, our study was constrained by our methodological choices. Although our analytical protocol helped us decipher how moral worlds are embedded in visuals, it did not allow us to evaluate how visualization practices relate to refugee workers' subsequent integration in the job market. Future studies could use our repertoire of visualization practices as a starting point to evaluate such impacts, and could use experimental research designs to

evaluate how such practices are received by different audiences to advance our knowledge of the effectiveness of visual attempts at destigmatizing.

Third, our study focussed mainly on placement agencies that self-identified as willing to facilitate refugees' integration, and our data collection did not include refugee workers themselves nor did it include a broader set of field actors. Interviewing and ethnographic analysis could capture refugee workers' perspective on the visualization practices we identified and would be useful. Such an approach could help further evaluate the forms of restigmatization that emerged from our visual analysis. We therefore encourage future studies to adopt multimodal research designs to evaluate how visual, verbal and interactional facets of destigmatization attempts interact to produce societal effects.

Footnotes

[1] Even though Boltanski and Thévenot (2006) (and later Lamont [2012]) refer to *worth* and *worthiness* rather than *moral worth* or *worthiness*, their analysis reveals that actors behave according to high-order principles that closely correspond to moral orders, and the multiple definitions of the common good they provide are grounded in political science classics that also form the bedrock of numerous ethical theories (e.g. Adam Smith for utilitarian ethics). Although clarifying the relationships between ethical theories and the economies of worth framework would probably require further research, this striking parallel probably explains why organizational scholars have often redefined these principles as moral worlds and refer to moral forms of worthiness (e.g. Demers & Gond, 2020; Patriotta, Gond, and Schultz, 2011). Embracing the labels *moral worth* and *moral worthiness* is also consistent with our focus on the morally loaded issue of stigmatization.

[2] In subsequent analyses, this foundational grammar of justification based on six worlds has been updated to integrate the 'green world', which values harmonious relationships among humans, fauna and flora (Thévenot, Moody, & Lafaye, 2000) as well as the 'project-based world' (Boltanski & Chiapello, 2005), which values connections and flexibility. We decided to not consider these two supplementary worlds in this paper, as they did not play an important role in our empirical material.

[3] After World War II Austria and Germany developed into welfare states and experienced major influxes of people before 2015. For instance, Austria welcomed – based on their 'similarity' – Hungarians, Czechs, and Bosnians in the 1950s, 1960s and 1990s respectively, all former Habsburg empire countries (Schiocchet et al., 2020). At the time of writing this article, the Austrian Chancellor used the same reasoning when publicly announcing his willingness to take in refugees from 'neighbour' Ukraine, differentiating them explicitly from 'unwelcome' Afghan refugees.

[4] We thank one of our reviewers for bringing to our attention the parallel between the concept of visual register and the moral repertoire of the economies of worth.

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Table 1. Organizations, their characteristics and data sources

Organization	**Activities**	**Addressed audiences**	**Refugee skill level**	**Governance**	**Data sources** (unless otherwise noted, all titles and captions are the authors' translations)
Austrian Federal Economic Chamber	In the program 'Mentoring for Migrants' (MfM), well-connected members of the business community mentor highly trained migrants and refugees.	Refugees, local mentors	'Finished vocational training, A levels, or academic degree'	Public	Online brochure, 3 photos
Confederation of German Employers' Associations (BDA)	BDA represents the interests of German employers in terms of social and economic policies. Regarding refugees, it provides information to companies about legal and practical issues of employing them.	Employers	N/A	Public	3 online brochures; 'Integration of refugees through internships', 8 photos; 'Shouldering challenges together', 9 photos; 'Use potential – employ refugees', 12 photos (all German titles translated by the authors)
Workeer	Two students in Berlin developed this online matchmaking website, which is free for refugees and offers service packages for companies (e.g. publishing job advertisements) for a monthly fee.	Refugees, employers	N/A	Non-profit	Website, 21 photos
Hire.social	This online matchmaker started in the fall of 2015 in Munich, Germany with an entrepreneurial grant and then continued as a non-profit organization.	Refugees ('newcomers'), employers, 'helpers and mentors'	N/A	Social business	Website, 25 photos
More Than One Perspective (MTOP)	MTOP is an Austrian social start-up that provides training, mentoring, coaching and matchmaking to highly skilled refugees, and hosts networking events.	Refugees, employers	Academic degree in IT, engineering or business	Social business	Website (without blog and news section), 39 photos
Social-Bee (S-B)	S-B is a temporary-work agency in Munich that hires low-skilled refugees and hires them out to client organizations. It also provides language courses, training and leisure activities to refugees.	Refugees, employers	Low-skill, untrained labour	Non-profit	Website, 22 photos; 'Soft skills can come the hard way' campaign with a separate website, 9 photos

Table 2. A framework for analysing visualization as an attempt to destigmatize refugee workers

Research stage	Aim	Method	Outcome
Data selection	To capture the representation of refugee workers as used by placement organizations to try and reach employers and/or refugee workers as well as the general public	Taking screenshots of websites Downloading online brochures Selecting visuals: Removing of logos, symbols, drawings, etc.; including accompanying text (caption or headline) for context information	150 photos
Overall approach to data analysis	To reconstruct values that are materialized in visuals to understand practices of moral visualization and their interplay with (de)stigmatization	Combining social-semiotics analysis (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006) and orders-of-worth analysis (Boltanski & Thévenot, 2006) Social semiotics to understand how viewers make meaning of visual signs in specific social settings (Rose, 2016) Orders-of-worth analysis, adapted to analysing visuals to not only include 'worthy' subjects and objects but also assess worth in how they are depicted	Framework to combine social-semiotic analysis with visual orders-of-worth analysis
Data analysis Step 1	To capture the content (i.e. who and what is depicted in the visual)	Describing *participants* (people and objects), their *actions*, the *setting* and implied *situation*; transcribing any *text* within the visual, caption or heading of the section that contained the image (to capture the context); and assessing the *relationship* between depicted actors Excluding photos not depicting refugees (e.g. headshots of the organization's founders, etc.), based on the description in the accompanying text	Social-semiotic analysis of the ideational metafunction of 150 photographs 67 photos excluded not depicting refugees, 83 photos remaining
Step 2	To analyse how the content is depicted and the viewer addressed	Coding visuals according to social-semiotic categories (Jancsary et al., 2017; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006): *contact with or appeal to the viewe*r, *social distance* between depicted and viewer, their relationship in terms of *power and involvement*, and *modality* as expression of truth or credibility	Social-semiotic analysis of the interpersonal metafunction between the depicted and the viewer of the picture of 83 photographs
Step 3a	To move from interpreting individual pictures to identifying patterns in a greater number of visuals	Comparing coded pictures and discussing discrepancies to refine coding Discussing emerging patterns (i.e. similarities in content and how the content is depicted) Grouping most pictures into three emerging types	Three inductively identified picture types: '@work', 'role model', 'social media'
Step 3b (in parallel with Step 3a)	To map orders of worth onto visuals to gain insights into how social-semiotic characteristics of visuals differently evoke moral worth	Operationalizing orders of worth (see Table 3) based on each world's inherent grammar (Boltanski & Thévenot, 2006; Cloutier & Langley, 2013) Deductively coding for the orders of worth that visuals evoke as a result of their content and style	Visual orders-of-worth analysis of 150 photographs Identified most-common combinations of orders of worth
Step 4	To identify connections between picture types and orders of worth that indicate distinct approaches to how visuals make visible the moral worthiness of refugees	Comparing picture types and coded orders of worth Identifying patterns emerging in terms of combinations of orders of worth and picture types	Three moral visualization practices: Professionalizing, domesticizing, stylizing

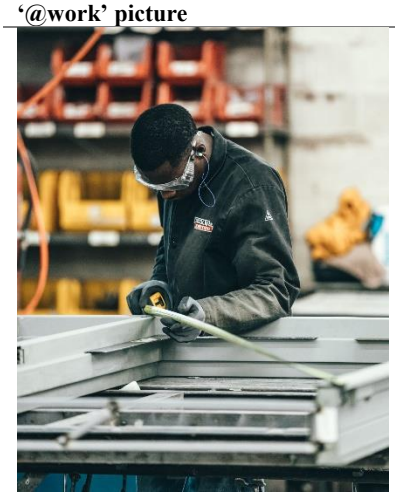
Table 3. Description, operationalization and empirical illustrations of orders of worth in visual coding

Orders of worth	Industrial	Domestic	Inspiration	Fame	Civic	Market
Description (Cloutier & Langley, 2013; Boltanski & Thévenot, 2006)	*The realm of measures and efficiency. In this world, what is valued is precise, functional, professional, productive, efficient and useful. Actors in this world are professional, hardworking, focussed and thorough.*	*The realm of the 'family' in its symbolic sense. In this world, what is valued is that which is firm, loyal, selfless, trustworthy. Superiors are informed and wise and must care and nurture those who are lower in the hierarchy. Great importance is attached to one's upbringing, as upbringing and good manners reflect where one 'comes from'.*	*The realm of creativity and 'art'. In this world, what is most valued is that which is passionate, emergent, spontaneous, inspired. Actors in this world are repulsed by habit and shun routines. They dream, imagine, take risks and 'live'.*	*The realm of fame and popularity. In this world, what is valued is that which is visible, famous, influential, fashionable, recognized. The worth of actors is determined by the opinion of others. Any and all means for achieving fame and recognition are sought after and legitimate.*	*The realm of duty and solidarity. In this world, what is valued is that which is united, representative, legal, official, free. To place individual interests ahead of collective interests is panacea in this world. One for all, and all for one.*	*The realm of money and the market. In this world, what is valued is rare, expensive, valuable, profitable. Actors have the ability to judge market opportunities objectively, unemotionally and thus 'win'.*
Worthiness	effectiveness, productiveness, planning	recognition, trust, tradition	creativity, non-conformity	fame, publicity, honour, reputation	civic duty, equality, fairness, participation	demand, price, competition
Human dignity	work, energy	authority, comfort, flexibility	love, passion, inventiveness	recognition in public sphere, well-known, visible	recognition in public sphere, well-known, visible	self-interest, consumption, purchase power
Operationalization (Cloutier & Langley, 2013; Boltanski & Thévenot, 2006) *List of subjects*	professionals, experts, specialists	father, king, superiors, inferiors, boss, stranger, chief	visionary, child, artist, woman, fairy, crank	star, fans, spokesperson, thought leader	elected officials, the party, members, representatives	competitors, client, buyer, seller
List of objects	tools, resources, methods, plans, norms, tasks	good manners, etiquette, titles, rank, gifts	spirit, body, dream, the unconscious	media, brand, campaign, message	elections, law, committees, lists, criteria, decrees, codes	wealth, luxury, objects
Empirical illustrations *Who /what is depicted?*	(hard-)working, productive individuals	nice, trustworthy people posing with locals	passionate, arty, fun, creative person	fashionable people that present themselves to a (social-media) audience	showing someone as in need of protection (e.g. refugee on boat)	market actors striking a bargain
Background	work setting (work clothes/suit, tools)	working together with locals (incl. hierarchy)	creative setting, artistic design	well-designed and staged setting, carefully arranged	setting of rescue or people helping each other	setting of market transaction
How is the content depicted and the audience addressed?	Visuals seem like authentic snapshots of people working with various tools or with each other and therefore they do not look at the viewer, who is in the position of the observer of an unfolding action or narrative.	Visuals imply a hierarchical relationship between people. Trust is not only implied among the depicted, but visuals also attempt to gain trust from viewers through direct eye contact, smiling or putting them in the powerful position of looking down on the depicted, etc.	Visuals use artistic means (colour saturation, differentiation, brightness, etc.) to depict an abstract idea and to invoke sensations such as pleasure in the viewer. The depicted do not necessarily establish contact with the viewer through looking at them.	Visuals showcase fashionable people in a unique staging, as if to underline their professional 'personal brand'. Similar to advertisements and profile pictures for social media, these visuals seem to be taken to impress an audience.	Visuals want to trigger the viewer's empathy; for instance, by creating an intimate relationship with a clearly identified refugee who is shown in a close-up, directly looking at (and appealing to) the viewer. Other visuals aim at identification with people helping refugees.	Visuals represent a successful closing of a deal between market actors. The viewer is in the position of an observer who sees this action unfolding, implying a fast pace or dynamic that is created through the blurring of the background.

Table 4: Sample visual analysis of Picture 6 in our data set

Step 1	Social-semiotic analysis – ideational metafunction	*Participants (people):* Four men are depicted standing side by side; first – from left to right – a young black man, possibly sub-Saharan; second, a young man who might be North African; third, an old white man with grey hair; and fourth, a young black man, also possibly sub-Saharan. *Participants (objects):* The most obvious objects are the clothes that the four men are wearing: the first man wears grey work clothes and a red bandana; the second and the fourth, casual clothes (e.g. a leather jacket and jeans); while the third (older white) man wears a dark suit and a tie. *Process (actions):* They are obviously posing for the picture, displaying a more-or-less bright smile. The first man has his hand in the pockets of his trousers. The third man seems to touch the backs of the second and fourth men, who stand next to him, in an embrace that is common in group pictures. *Setting:* The picture is taken outside, in front of what seems to be a parking lot and a metal construction that looks like a factory building. *Verbal text (headline of the section):* The internship as a stepping stone into work: 'Reuther STC offers refugees a chance for integration through internships and welding training' (translated from German by the authors) *Situation:* The participants seem to be posing in front of the company, which might be managed or owned by the third man, while the first man seems to be a worker there and the other two men might be new or potential workers. *Relationship:* The relationship between participants seems to be classificatory: viewers are presented with two classes of actors – the friendly refugee worker and the helpful host-country employer.
Step 2	Social-semiotic analysis – interpersonal metafunction between the depicted and the viewer of the picture	*Contact with or appeal to the viewe*r: Participants are all looking directly into the camera, thereby establishing a *strong* contact with the viewer of the picture, who is not addressed as a passive observer of the scene but is directly appealed to. *Social distance:* The viewer is able to see almost the entire bodies of the participants – from the upper bodies to about their knees. This view implies an *interpersonal distance* and a relationship to people whom the viewer perceives as individuals but who are not intimate contacts. *Relationship between depicted and viewer in terms of power:* The vertical angle implies *equality* in terms of the power relationship between the depicted and the viewer of the picture: The viewer neither has to look up to powerful depicted actors nor look down on someone powerless. *Relationship between depicted and viewer in terms of involvement:* Three of the four men face the viewer directly, implying that they are approachable and involved in a common endeavour; the fourth participant puts his left shoulder forward and therefore is at a slight oblique angle towards the viewer of the picture, which can be read as a slight detachment or otherness that this participant displays. *Modality:* The picture uses a colour saturation, contrast, brightness, etc. that are similar to how we also perceive the world with the 'naked eye', and can therefore be classified as *naturalistic*. The picture presents itself as a fact that everyone can observe rather than as aesthetically pleasing fiction. *Implied roles (depicted persons)*: The depicted participants seem to be in the role of the employer (owner or manager of the company) and the three persons of colour are the refugees that the employer is helping. *Implied role (viewer):* The implied role for the viewer of the picture is to be witness to the employer's generosity and the refugee workers' gratefulness and ability to fit in. The picture also directly appeals to the viewer to take an active role as approving of the trustworthiness of refugee workers in local work settings in general, while the depicted refugee workers are exemplary role models.
Step 3a	Picture type	This picture shares with other 'role model' pictures a depiction of easily identifiable refugee workers who are engaging in friendly poses and looking at the viewer rather than actively working.
Step 3b	Economies of worth	Domestic order of worth (prominent): Employer as the good father figure, taking care of those in need, paternalistic Industrial order of worth (background): Work setting, company owner or manager and worker
Step 4	Moral visualization practices	Domesticizing (Storyline: Companies/employers take on responsibility and play an important role in the integration of grateful refugees.)

Figure 1. Three examples for each picture type

‘@work’ picture	‘Role model’ pictures	‘Social media’ pictures
 Photo by Spencer Davis on Unsplash	Photo by Christina @ wocintechchat.com on Unsplash (A similar photo in our data set features a young woman, specified in the caption as refugee, with an older, white man, specified as her employer.)	Photo by Susan Duran on Unsplash
Photo by YakobchukOlena on iStock	Photo by XiXinXing on iStock (Compare Table 4 for our analysis of a similar photo in our data set.)	Photo by Brooke Cagle on Unsplash
Photo by SeventyFour on iStock	Photo by dusanpetkovic on iStock	Photo by Yogendra Singh on Unsplash

For copyright reasons, we could not use examples from our data set. However, in order to provide an illustration, we searched for similar stock photos. It has to be noted that while for the ‘social media’ picture type, it was relatively easy to find similar pictures, ‘role model’ and ‘@work’ pictures were harder to find and deviate more from the pictures in our data set.

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