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KEYBOARD WARRIORS IN CYBERFIGHTS
Conflict in Online Communities of Consumption

OLIVIER SIBAI

Doctor of Philosophy

ASTON UNIVERSITY

October 2015

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"A little rudeness and disrespect can elevate a meaningless interaction
to a battle of wills and add drama to an otherwise dull day."

Bill Waterson, 1993, Calvin and Hobbes: *The Days are Just Packed*, p.125-2

KEYBOARD WARRIORS IN CYBERFIGHTS
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Doctor of Philosophy in Marketing

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Thesis Summary

Nowadays, with the use of social media generalizing, increasingly more people gather online to share their passion for specific consumption activities. Despite this shared passion, conflicts frequently erupt in online communities of consumption (OCC). A systematic review of the literature revealed that a lot of knowledge has developed on OCC conflict. Different types of conflicts unfolding in an OCC context have been distinguished, various drivers of conflict identified and various consequences outlined at the individual level (experiential value) and the community level (collective engagement and community culture). However the specificity of conflicts unfolding in an OCC context has not been conceptualized. Past research is also inconclusive as to where and when does OCC conflict create or destroy value in communities. This research provides a theory of OCC conflict and its impact on value formation by conceptualizing OCC conflict as performances. The theory was developed by conducting a netnography of a clubbing forum. Close to 20,000 forum posts and 250 pages of interview transcript and field notes were collected over 27 months and analysed following the principles of grounded theory. Four different types of conflict performances are distinguished (personal, played, reality show and trolling conflict) based on the clarity of the performance. Each type of conflict performance is positioned with regard to its roots and consequences for value formation. This research develops knowledge on disharmonious interactions in OCCs contributing to the development of a less utopian perspective of OCCs. It indicates how conflict is not only a by-product of consumption but it is also a phenomenon consumed. It also introduces the concept of performance clarity to the literature on performance consumption. This research provides guidelines to community managers on how to manage conflict and raises ethical issues regarding the management of conflict on social media.

Key Words
Online Communities of Consumption, Conflict, Consumption and performance, Performance marketing, Consumer Culture Theory, Community Management

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The importance of value formation in Online Communities of Consumption (OCCs)

The notion of value creation, in spite of its elusiveness, is all-pervading in marketing (Karababa & Kjeldgaard, 2014). Originally, marketing researchers were interested in creating value for firms so value was defined in economic terms as profit (e.g. American Marketing Association, 1957). In the 1960s, consumer research was born and a large body of articles developed putting forward the importance of understanding consumer value. Value was thus redefined in psychological terms as something "good" in the eye of the consumer whether it be utility, or experiences (e.g. Vinson, Scott and Lamont, 1977; Sissors, 1978). In the late 1990s and early 2000s, marketing academics determined that consumers do not receive passively value offered by producers but co-create value through interaction (cf. Vargo & Lusch, 2004). Interactions creating value were originally thought to be those between consumers and producers so that knowledge on value co-creation developed overwhelmingly in a service context. However consumers also derive value from interactions with fellow consumers (Cova, 1997). Thus communities of consumption, soon gained attention (cf. Schouten & McAlexander, 1995). The value that consumers derive from such communities of consumption is not only utilitarian or hedonic but it can also be social, it is embedded in the relationships and the culture that consumers develop through interaction (Cova, 1997). A significant amount of research has therefore investigated social value formation in consumption communities (cf. Schau, Muniz and Arnould, 2009).

As the use of Internet and social media generalizes, more and more consumers gather in online communities of consumption (OCCs). An online community of consumption is an: "affiliative group whose online interactions are based upon shared enthusiasm for, and knowledge of, a specific consumption activity or related group of activities" (Kozinets, 1999, p. 254). 25% of search results for the World's Top 20 largest brands link to user-generated content and within the 200 million existing blogs, 34% of bloggers post opinions about products and brands; Britney Spears alone has more followers on Twitter than the entire population of Ireland (Qualman, 2009). Interactions and relationships follow a specific dynamic online because of physical distance, anonymity and asynchronic communication via text (Nitin, Bansal and Khazanchi, 2011). Therefore interest has developed in understanding social value formation in OCCs. Social value formation in OCCs has been investigated in various ways as culture formation (Kozinets, 2002; Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001), social capital accumulation (Mathwick, Wiertz and De Ruyter, 2008), community resource formation (Seraj, 2012), consumer practices (Schau et al., 2009), corporate practices (Cova & Cova, 2002) or

online word-of-mouth (eWOM) (Brown, Broderick and Lee, 2007; Kozinets, De Valck, Wojnicki and Wielner, 2010). Such research was conducted in a variety of OCCs whether brand communities (e.g. Muniz & Schau, 2005), communities of interest (e.g. Chalmers-Thomas, , Price and Schau, 2013), problem-solving communities (e.g. Wiertz, Mathwick, De Ruyter, & Dellaert, 2010), innovation communities (e.g. Füller, Hütter, Hautz, and Matzler, 2014) or communities associated with particular consumption ideologies (e.g. Luedicke, Thompson and Giesler, 2010; Husemann, Ladstaetter and Luedicke, 2015). Value formation in OCCs is a thriving domain of research in marketing.

The influence of conflict in relation to social value formation in OCCs

Because OCCs are based on feelings of kinship and togetherness, the majority of research on social value formation in OCC focuses on how social value is derived from harmonious interactions where members' goals are aligned (Gebauer, Füller and Pezzai, 2013). However, a growing body of articles has emerged developing an understanding of how disharmonious interactions where members' goals are misaligned influence social value formation. Researchers have thus investigated phenomena like member-to-member tensions (Chalmers-Thomas, et al., 2013), member-to-business tensions (Kozinets et al., 2010) or social problems and social control (Sibai, De Valck, Farrell and Rudd, 2015). Most recently conflict has been highlighted as an important phenomenon in OCCs (Husemann et al., 2015). From arguments, to frictions, discords, dispute, controversies, and quarrels, between 15% and 40% of online conversations in online communities are conflictual (Johnson, Cooper, and Chin 2008; Mishne , 2007). As an extreme event OCC conflict receives much attention, is well memorized and carries high weight when forming judgments about an interaction or the community at large (Lea, O'Shea, Fung and Spears, 1992). OCC conflicts therefore heavily influence social value formation in OCCs.

Knowledge gap and thesis objective

While the literature is united on the fact that OCC conflict heavily influences social value formation, it is divided as to whether it creates or destroys social value. One stream of research indicates that OCC conflict creates social value (e.g. Campbell, Fletcher and Greenhill, 2009; Muniz & Hamer, 2001; Gebauer, et al., 2013) while another stream of research indicates that OCC conflict destroys social value (e.g. De Valck, 2007; Reid, 1999). A thorough literature review reveals that this contradiction relates to the fact that OCC conflict has not been adequately theorized so far. OCC conflict and its relation to value formation have been mostly discussed descriptively without defining concepts and relations between them. Therefore this research aims to develop a theory of OCC conflict by (1) conceptualizing OCC conflict, (2) identifying the Drivers of OCC conflict, (3) conceptualizing social value in OCC and, (4) explaining how OCC conflict influences social value formation in OCCs.

In this thesis, these objectives are met in two steps. First the literature published on the topic is reviewed. OCC conflict is at the crossing of consumption-mediated conflict (e.g. Husemann &

Luedicke, 2012), community conflict (e.g. Luedicke, 2006), and online conflict (e.g. Alonzo & Aiken, 2004; VandeBosch & Van Cleemput, 2009). Based on the review of the literature of these three types of conflicts, OCC conflict is therefore defined as events opposing consumers, community administrators, community owners or companies belonging to the community which engage in face-threatening acts in order to gain instrumental benefits, social status or to (de)legitimize practices deemed immoral or inauthentic in an online community of consumption (object). OCC conflicts can relate to consumption in a variety of manner. Consumption can be the conflict context (community of consumption), the conflict object (legitimacy and morality of a consumption practice), the driver of conflict (service failure) or a conflict behaviour (boycott). OCC conflict emerges from the diversity of members joining communities (e.g. Chalmers-Thomas et al., 2013; De Valck, Van Bruggen and Wierenga, 2009), communicative specificities of technologically-mediated communication (e.g. Kiesler, Siegel and Mc Guire, 1984) and the public nature of interactions (e.g. Hiltz, Turoff and Johnson, 1989). OCC conflict has consequences for individual participants (positive or negative experience), collective engagement (members' engagement and community cohesion) and community culture (values, norms, shared history, and social structure). While OCC conflict is consistently found to have important consequences, the valence of effects varies. The explanations developed so far are based on the assumption that coercive behaviors have negative consequences and conflict resolution has positive consequences. Overall conflicts have constructive consequences when they involve limited coercion and lead to resolution. However several studies have highlighted that resolution is not necessary to reach positive consequences and coercive behaviors alone can have positive consequences. This calls for further investigations exploring the variety of OCC conflicts and their consequences.

Methodology and findings

To investigate the different types of OCC conflicts and how they relate to value formation, a netnography (online ethnography) of a British forum for fans of electronic dance music (EDM) and clubbing was conducted. The forum is 13 years old with more than 20,000 members and 7 million posts. The netnography was conducted over two years involving archive analysis, in-depth interviews and participant observations both on the website and in night clubs. While countless discussions have been read, and numerous informal interviews conducted in night clubs, the formal netnographic data set consists of 100 threads and 14,017 posts representing 3,585 pdf pages, 7 in-depth interviews representing 12 hours of discussion and 240 pages of transcript and 33 pages of field notes.

In the context studied, the researcher found that OCC conflicts are best captured as performances, events where participants take on the roles of performer and audience members. Based on this theoretical lens four types of conflicts with specific drivers and consequences for value formation were identified. The types of conflicts were classified based on the explicitness of the performance. In

implicit conflict performances none of the participants are aware that the conflict is a performance. Conflict is then personal. In explicit conflict performances all the participants are aware that the conflict is a performance. Conflict is then played. In uncertain conflict performances, the conflict has characteristics of both personal and played conflict. If all participants find it uncertain, conflict takes the form of a reality show. If participants' frames are misaligned, some interpreting it as personal and others as played, conflict frame it as the conflict takes the form of trolling.

Each type of conflict is associated with particular drivers and consequences. Personal conflict is nurtured by the heterogeneity of the membership base, technology enabled anonymity and physical distance and particular discussion topics taken seriously in the community. Personal conflicts create negative experiences for all participants and reduce collective engagement. Personal conflict also impact community culture by making heterogeneity or the definition of communal engagement proponed by the conflict winner a core feature of communal engagement (prescribed values, projects and activities in the community). It also warrants the creation of procedures for conflict management aimed at pre-empting or resolving conflict.

Played conflicts are nurtured by certain features of technology-mediated communication (written format of interaction, presentation of self via an avatar, public interaction), specificities of the communal context (communal norms), interactions (conflict script) and individual circumstances (bored mood, feeling under pressure). Played conflicts create positive experiences for all participants and enhance collective engagement. They also impact community culture by building shared understanding (shared narratives and share vision of communal hierarchy) and enacting and reinforcing the shared values of freedom, self-confidence and humor and prescribing banter and ranting as communal activities.

Conflict whose performed nature is uncertain (reality show and trolling conflict) are nurtured by specificities of technology-mediated communication (written format of interaction, forum as a place to hold both spontaneous and performed conversation), heterogeneity of participants (newcomers and regular members or regular members and moderators), individual circumstances (community experience) and interaction features (soap opera or game script). Reality show conflict creates negative experiences for the parties but positive experiences for the audience and it enhances collective engagement. Regarding community culture, reality show conflict impacts shared understanding by creating shared narratives. It also impacts teleo-affective structures by enacting entertainment and voyeurism as communal values and online reality show watching, as a prescribed activity. Trolling conflict creates positive experience for the troll but negative individual experience for the party trolled. For the audience it is generally associated with positive experience on the short term but negative experience on the long term. On the long term, trolling reduces collective engagement. Regarding community culture, trolling impacts shared understandings, community

engagements and procedures. Trolling conflict experiences build shared understanding by producing shared narratives. They also reinforce the fact that the community collates heterogeneous understandings of what freedom in the community should mean, thereby influencing community engagements. Finally their recurrent occurrence led to the creation of rules meant to prevent them from happening.

Theoretical contribution

This thesis develops a theory explaining the influence of OCC conflict on social value formation. Overall, this research contributes to an emerging stream of research investigating the influence of disharmonious interactions on social value formation in OCCs. It thus contributes to the development of a less utopian and more balanced view of social value formation in OCCs. While most research has used OCC conflict examples to account for community conflict, online conflict or consumption-mediated conflict, this study is the first to develop a complete conceptualization of OCC conflict explaining the uniqueness of conflict unfolding at the interaction of the three domains. This research thus conceptualizes OCC conflict as a performance opposing consumers, community administrators, community owners or companies belonging to the community (parties) engaging in face-threatening acts (behaviors) in order to gain instrumental benefits, social status, to (de)legitimize practices deemed immoral or inauthentic in an online community of consumption (object) or have fun.

Conceptualizing OCC conflict as a performance enhances current understandings of the consequences of OCC conflict on social value. Previous explanations of the positive and negative consequences of OCC conflict for collective engagement were focused on conflict coerciveness and conflict resolution. This research indicates that this is not the sole process operating. When OCC conflicts are explicit performances conflict is a mode of engagement with the community producing positive feelings which, in turn, promotes collective social value. The consequences of conflict for social value are thus independent of the attainment of low coerciveness and resolution. When the conflict performance is uncertain, the consequences of OCC conflict on social value depend on the shape of the conflict. Reality show conflict where the large majority of the participants view the performance as play produces social value while trolling which is more uncertain destroys it. Overall the clarity of the conflict performance determines which of the mechanisms dominates.

This research bears several implications for consumer research. First conceptualizing OCC conflict as a performance had led to identification of a conflict characteristic overlooked so far: conflict performance clarity. Overlooking performance clarity has led previous research conceptualizing OCC conflict to focus on conflicts which are implicit performances thereby missing out on the diversity of OCC conflict. Second, this research also complements Husemann's et al. (2015) findings that OCC conflicts gradually build a conflict culture, a toolbox of community specific habits,

skills, and styles community members use when engaging in OCC conflict to gear the conflict towards more positive collective engagement consequences. This research extends Husemann et al.'s (2015) concept of OCC conflict culture indicating that it is a multidimensional concept which consists not only of procedures but also of shared understandings and engagements and that the different dimensions are nurtured by different conflict experiences. Third conceptualizing OCC conflict as a performance provides novel insights as to how conflict can be integrated in theories of experiential consumption. At an individual level, OCC conflict has been largely been largely viewed as a negative by-product of consumption, something going in the way of the consumption experience, preventing the attainment of pleasure and hedonic feelings. A performance approach to conflict by contrast highlights how and when conflict can be at the core of a valuable consumption experience or a consumption experience on its own. Fourth, introducing the concept of performance clarity is also useful to the literature on performance consumption and the marketing of performance. This research reasserts the importance of distinguishing between implicit and explicit performance, as Deighton (1992) originally did in his foundational article, as this has very important implications for social value formation. This research further indicates that performances are not always implicit or explicit – they can also be uncertain. Consumers can revel in this uncertainty, as in reality show so that the consumption experience produces social value, or become anxious, as in trolling so, that the consumption experience destroys social value. Finally the conceptualization of OCC conflict developed here has implications for research investigating the ontology of social media interactions and digital consumption. It has often been highlighted that social media interactions follow a specific logic. However, how this logic operates has remained unclear as articles mentioned it without providing a conceptual frame to explain it. This research argues that all interactions on social media are performances and performances can follow three different logics, that of implicit, explicit or uncertain performances.

Practical contribution

Companies have a strong interest in creating social value for members in OCCs as online discussions are opportunities to benefit from positive word-of-mouth, to derive consumer insights, to develop new products, to develop consumers' engagement and loyalty to brands, and ultimately to increase sales (cf. Kozinets, 2002; Kozinets et al., 2010; Schau et al., 2009). Marketing practitioners are increasingly aware of this and invest considerably in OCCs. Social media advertising in the USA are expected to more than double in the coming five years, shifting from $7.3 billion in 2014 to $16.2 billion by 2019. As marketing practitioners increasingly take on the roles of social media managers their investments in OCCs aim to address conflicts whether it be by censoring, resolving them or nurturing them. Expenses in social software to support community management practices have thus multiplied by more than five between 2009 and 2014, growing from $370 million in 2009 to $2 billion in 2014 (IDC, 2011).

While conflicts have major effects on social value in OCCs, very limited information exists to help social media managers manage OCC conflict effectively. This dissertation is of major interest to them as it provides them with actionable insights for OCC conflict management. Overall social media managers should orchestrate and nurture played and reality show conflict and seek to eliminate personal and trolling conflicts. To engineer played conflict they should set up conflict games, highlighting that they are performances with a goal, rules and a point counting system. Highlighting that they are performances allowing venting will turn them into serious play while highlighting that they are performances allowing dodging boredom will turn them into light play. To engineer reality show conflict social media practitioners should seed conflicts focusing on intimate topics and highlight the narrative tension they create. Once the conflict seeded, managers should highlight or help the participant indicate themselves that the conflict is serious for parties and playful for onlookers.

Regarding personal conflicts social media practitioners can preempt them by dividing the community into sub-areas accommodating different users in different spaces and formalizing community rules. If personal conflicts still erupt, social media managers should try and turn them into ritual, played or reality show conflicts by following the recommendations given above. If this does not work, social media managers should have conflict resolution procedures with sanctioning rules and means to help members report personal conflicts. Regarding trolling conflicts, social media practitioners should forbid members' creation of multiple accounts. If trolling conflicts still emerge they should try and turn them into played conflicts by following the recommendations given above. If this does not suffice they should set up appropriate measures to monitor trolling activities, sanction trolls harshly and train members to help them manage troll by themselves.

Beyond managerial implications, this research also highlights important policy issues associated with the management of OCC conflict. OCC conflict often contributes to collective continuity and strength while damaging individual members psychological and physically. This calls for the development of ethical guidelines and codes of conduct for conflict management on social media. Furthermore, the impossibility to prevent the eruption of destructive OCC conflicts calls for the development of educational campaigns teaching Internet users the diversity of meanings of OCC conflict and how to manage destructive ones.

Thesis structure

The rest of the thesis is organized as follows. Chapter two provides a multi-disciplinary review of the literature on OCC conflicts, defining conflict in general, conceptualizing OCC conflict specifically, integrating the different Drivers of OCC conflict and the various consequences of OCC conflict. It concludes that the current explanations regarding the consequences of OCC conflict are incomplete.

Chapter three is the theory chapter. It introduces performance theory and, based on the argument that OCC conflicts are conflict performances, offers a typology of OCC conflict. The typology distinguishes OCC conflicts based on their seriousness and the clarity of the performed nature. Chapter four provides a detailed description of the methodology used. First, the interpretivist paradigm within which this work is rooted is made explicit. Then the research design is explained detailing the reasons for conducting a netnography and the criteria for research field selection. Subsequently the processes of data collection and analysis are described. Chapter five presents the findings. Findings are discussed along the three main themes emerging from the data: conflicts as implicit performances (personal conflict), conflict as explicit performances (played conflict) and conflict as uncertain performances (reality show and trolling conflict). In each case the type of conflict types, its drivers and its consequences are addressed. Chapter six offers a general discussion. It places the findings within the broader OCC literature, highlights the theoretical and practical significance of the work, addresses the limitations of the study and outlines opportunities for further research.

Chapter 2: Literature review

2.1. Introduction

Earlier research has found that conflict is widespread online (Alonzo & Aiken, 2004; Bocij & Mc Farlane, 2003; Kayany, 1998; Lorenzo-Dus, Blitivich and Bou-Franch2011; Mishne, 2007; Moor, Heuvelman and Verleur, 2010; Schneider, Passant and Breslin, 2010). Mishne (2007) found that 16% of conversations in a blogging context are conflictual while Kayany (1998) found 15% of interactions in listserv newsgroup across four countries were conflictual. On newspapers' discussion pages, Coe, Kenski and Rains (2014) found that more than 20% of comments were conflictual. On Wikipedia, Schneider et al. (2010) found that 12.1% of conversations were conflictual. Conflict was found to represent almost a quarter of exchanges (22.7%) in conversation oriented communities (Kayany, 1998) to be part of as much as 40% of online relationships (Johnson, Norman, Cooper and Chin, 2008). The prevalence of conflict online was noted across a variety of social platforms such as YouTube (Moor, et al., 2010), blogs (Mishne, 2007), online newspapers (Coe et al., 2014), listservs (Franco et al., 1995; Kayany, 1998), email (Alonzo & Aiken, 2004; Kiesler et al., 1984; Sproull & Kiesler, 1986; Kiesler & Sproull, 1992) and Wikipedia (Schneider et al., 2010). Online conflict has also been found across countries (Kayany, 1998). Community members interviewed further stated that online conflict is an inevitable part of the online experience (Franco et al., 1995) and online harassment was described as a banal and mundane behavior that is common among otherwise reasonable and law abiding people (Bocij and Mc Farlane, 2003). As online conflict is common across online platforms and countries it is reasonable to assume that online conflict is a common phenomenon in the OCC context too.

To determine what is known or not known regarding OCC conflict a review was conducted of the academic literature on the topic. Relevant sources were identified entering combinations of key words related to conflict (e.g. "conflict", "flame", "bullying", "harassment", "trolling", "impoliteness") and OCCs ("online community", "online community of consumption", "brand community" and "marketing") in academic databases. Retrieved articles were then used as a basis to snowball using database recommendations of similar articles and, most importantly, reference lists of retrieved articles. First articles published in marketing were reviewed as this is my primary field of study. 22 articles were thus identified discussing conflict occurring in an online context. Among them, only eight contributed to conceptualizing OCC conflict (De Valck, 2007; Gebauer et al., 2013; Hollenbeck & Zinkhan, 2006; Husemann et al., 2015; Kerr, Mortimera, Dickinson and Waller, 2008; Hongsmark-Knudsen, 2012; Van Laer & De Ruyter, 2010; Van Laer, De Ruyter and Cox, 2013) as the others did not focus theoretically on the specificity of online behaviors (Chalmers-Thomas et al.,

2013; Ewing, Wagstaff and Powell, 2013; Giesler, 2008; Hickman & Ward, 2007; Husemann & Luedicke, 2012; Luedicke, 2006; Luedicke et al., 2010; Muniz & Hamer, 2001; Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001) or focused on online specific behaviors unrelated to conflict (Bonsu & Darmody, 2008; Kozinets, 2001; Kozinets et al., 2010; Martin & Smith, 2008; Wiertz et al., 2010). Due to the scarcity of information obtained, the literature review was extended to articles published within other subject areas where OCC conflict has received attention: management, information systems research, sociology, psychology, semiotics, communication, digital studies, socio-linguistics and politeness research. As a result 62 articles were collected. For a list of all the articles reviewed see Appendix 1. The articles were reviewed analytically along the three themes of interest in this research: (1) definition of OCC conflict (2) drivers of OCC conflict, and (3) consequences for social value formation.

The rest of this chapter is structured as follows. First, an introduction to the concept of conflict is offered based on knowledge developed in conflict research. Second the notion of OCC conflict is conceptualized. Third, the drivers of OCC conflict identified in the literature are integrated. Fourth the consequences of OCC conflict discussed in prior research are summarized. It is concluded that the consequences of OCC conflict are imperfectly understood today.

2.2. Conflict

Conflict is generally defined as a series of interactions where two or more parties manifest the belief that they have incompatible interests (Kriesberg, 2007). Knowledge on conflict has remained dispersed across various disciplines for a long time. Conflict only became an integrative field of research in the 1950s and 1960s when research societies (e.g. Peace Science Society, Conflict Research Society) and associated conferences or publication outlets (e.g. Journal of Conflict Resolution and Conflict Management and Peace Science) specialised on conflict emerged. Conflict research is based on the assumption that every conflict combines unique features with features shared with other conflicts. Conflict research thus aims at identifying which features conflicts have in common. Conflict research has accumulated a large body of knowledge on the topic in the last decades. This loosely integrated knowledge is generally called conflict theory, although conflict theoretics would be a more accurate depiction. The expression “conflict theory” is often used interchangeably with “social conflict theory”. This is because conflict always plays out within the context of social interactions (Kriesberg, 2007) and social theorists have played a central role in the integration of knowledge (e.g. Simmel, 1956 [1922]; Coaser, 1956; Dahrendorf, 1973; Hirschmann, 1994; Kriesberg, 2007). Conflict theory is structured around five main questions: (1) what are the different elements of a conflict, (2) which context is conducive to the emergence of conflict, (3) which

dynamic processes lead to the resolution of a conflict, (4) what are the consequences of conflict and (5) how can conflict be managed (e.g. Bartos & Wehr, 2003). In this section, knowledge developed in conflict research around each question is reviewed. Table 1 gives an overview of the section.

Table 1: The main themes and concepts of conflict theory

Conflict elements	
Conflict parties	Party size and level of engagement, number of parties
Conflict actions	Coercive or non-coercive actions
Conflict object	Related to goal incompatibility (logical or pay-off incompatibility) and identity incompatibility (values)
Conditions conducive to conflict	
Structural drivers	Incompatible claims to the same resources, roles, or values
Mediating factors	Shared identity within party members, grievance against the other party, conflict ideology, availability of resources for conflict action
Trigger event starting off conflict	Often a minor apparently insignificant event
Conflict dynamics	
Conflict stages	Tension, conflict eruption, escalation, plateau, deescalation, resolution
Factors influencing conflict dynamics	Tendency to see positive payoffs in attacking others, hostility toward the other party, and tendency to reciprocate
Conflict dynamic models	Aggressor-defender models, conflict spiral models and structural change models
Conflict consequences	
Conflict resolution produces social benefits	Resolution of tensions between and within parties, solidarity
Coercive conflict actions produces social costs	Harm for the individual, relationship break, social instability, brutalisation of culture
A variety of factors promote conflict resolution and prevent coercive conflict actions	Among others: conflict object, interdependence between parties, free interaction between parties, high inequality between parties, balanced sociation, conflict duration, societal values, party solidarity, leadership style, negotiation style,
Conflict management strategies	
Pre-empting the eruption of violent conflict	Revealing false tensions, changing parties' mutual perceptions, ritualization of conflict
Fostering conflict resolution	Clarifying interests, identifying common interests, working toward meeting their shared and misaligned interests, arbitrating unresolved issues following principles of equity
Controlling the escalation of coercion	Third-party intervention (formal or informal mediation), embedding conflict in anti-violence ideology, institutionalizing conflict (institutions, roles, procedures)

2.2.1. Conflict elements

Conflict is generally defined as a series of interactions where two or more parties manifest the belief that they have incompatible interests (Kriesberg, 2007). Conflict is structured around three main elements or markers: parties, conflict actions and conflict object. Parties, also called adversaries (Kriesberg, 2007) are the agents engaged in the conflict, whether individuals (e.g. marital conflict), informal groups (e.g. ethnic clashes or social class unrest), formal organizations (e.g. legal quarrels about patents and intellectual property), nations (e.g. war) or cultures (e.g. Huntington's clash of civilizations). There are typically two parties rather than more as multiple parties tend to merge into two groups through coalitions and fusions (Mack & Snyder, 1957). Primary parties are directly involved in the conflict in that they perceive their goals to be directly incompatible with the other party. Secondary parties by contrast are indirectly involved in the conflict. They are allies of the primary parties whose goals are indirectly incompatible with the other party (Bartos & Wehr, 2003).

Conflict parties manifest the belief that they have incompatible goals through conflict actions. Different types of conflict actions have been distinguished based on the means used to influence the other party. Conflict actions are coercive or violent when a party engages in an action aimed at harming the other party. Parties can exert actual coercion whereby the opponent is harmed physically (Himes, 1980), symbolically (Goffman, 1967) or materially (Boulding, 1963). Parties can also exert threat of coercion whereby they attempt to influence their opponents' willingness to pursue their goals by reducing the foreseen pay-offs. Finally, conflict parties can behave non-coercively or non-violently, promising rewards or engaging in persuasion attempts with the aim of increasing the perceived payoff of alternative options for other party (Bartos & Wehr, 2003).

The object of a conflict is what the parties have incompatible interests about. Whether parties objectively have incompatible interests or not is irrelevant to determine whether a conflict is at hand. What matters is rather how participants subjectively view the situation. Two main types of perceived incompatibility of interests are generally distinguished in the literature: goal and identity incompatibility (cf. Bartos & Wehr, 2002; Kriesberg, 2007; Aubert, 1963; Hirschman, 1994). The two types are often mixed in real life but distinguished theoretically. In conflicts based on goal incompatibility, parties follow a logic of instrumental rationality, that is parties' actions aim at reaching specific goals. A variety of conflicts derived from incompatibility of specific goals have been discussed in the literature such as task conflict (Simons & Peterson, 2000), realistic conflict (Coser, 1956) or cognitive conflict (Jehn, 1995). Overall they can be divided into two categories. Goals are logically incompatible when both parties have the same goal which they logically cannot reach simultaneously. For example, two countries fighting over exclusive control of a territory. Goals can also have incompatible pay-offs, in which case parties are mutually dependent on a choice with several alternatives and each party values the outcome of each alternative differently. For example, two

partners consider the possibility of having a baby. One partner evaluates the option positively while the other evaluates it negatively. Here it would be logically possible for the two partners to have a child, but due to different value systems, they associate different payoffs to it, creating incompatible interests. Identity incompatibility arises in situations where parties follow a rationality of value whereby each party attempts to conform to self-defining values (Weber, 1947 [1922]). When following a rationality of values, one party can feel that the other party's mere existence or presence is a threat to their values, and subsequently to their identity. This results in hostile feelings and willingness to destroy or put down the other party. For example in a political discussion between a far left and a far right citizen, both parties rapidly feel that the interlocutor stands for everything they reject and rejects everything they stand for. Both parties therefore find their values threatened and develop hostility toward one another. Such conflicts are often called relationship conflicts (Simons and Peterson, 2000) or identity conflict (Kriesberg, 2007).

2.2.2. Conflict drivers

Two main factors lead to the emergence of conflicts: direct (i.e., a trigger event) and indirect drivers (i.e., structural drivers). A conflict may erupt at the occasion of a trigger event, an igniting spark launching a series of conflict actions. In the wake of the trigger event one of the parties mobilize its resources and attacks the other party, opening the conflict. Trigger events can be seemingly insignificant events, serving as a simple catalyst. For example, a massive argument about household responsibilities might open up in a couple after one partner involuntarily spilled bread crumbs on the floor eating dinner. Indirect drivers of conflict nurture tension, a situation where parties have incompatible interests (Das & Teng, 2000). Tensions emerge over the access to resources such as wealth, power or prestige (Weber, 1922; Walton & McKersie, 1965). Parties can vie for the same resources because of absolute deprivation whereby they feel that their dignity or survival depends on their access to such resources (Bartos & Wehr, 2002). Parties can also vie for the same resources because one of the parties feels that the distribution of resources is unfair. This can relate to a sense of proportional injustice, whereby the rewards received are not proportional to their contribution and investment (Homans, 1974). This can also relate to the lack of legitimacy of the party with more power (Weber, 1947 [1922]). Another driver is a sense of relative deprivation whereby a change in a party's circumstances creates an imbalance between expectations and capabilities (Gurr, 1970). For example, expectations remain constant while capabilities fall in economic crises or expectations rise while capabilities remain the same after exposure to a better way of life. Finally parties can also vie for the same resources because they have belligerent personalities or belong to belligerent cultures building a disposition toward coercive action (Bartos & Wehr, 2002). Beyond access to resources, incompatible interests can also relate to incompatible roles. Through social differentiation each party comes to embody a different social role dictating specific situational goals. In certain situations parties' roles dictate that their goals are incompatible, nurturing tensions between them. For example,

upper-class versus low-class roles in social class conflicts (Marx & Engels, 1846), defender of stability as the guardian of the group's interest versus defender of change as the champion of a sub-group's interest (Dahrendorf, 1959), or marketing versus finance roles in situations where roles are differentiated horizontally. Finally incompatibility of interest can relate to incompatible values. Separation of parties in different contexts typically leads to the emergence of incompatible values as individuals develop their own life experiences and build unique set of values. Also parties' affiliation to cultures with different values systems leads parties to give importance to different things and see their values as incompatible (e.g. Huntington, 1993)

Tensions can remain dormant and fester for long without any conflict to erupt. Between structural drivers building tensions and trigger events a number of factors facilitate the transformation of tensions into open conflicts. Factors can be broken down into four categories: identity, grievance, conflict ideology and ability to mobilize resources to engage in conflict actions. First, one of the protagonists needs to have a sense of identity distinguishing it from the other protagonists. While this requirement generally is taken for granted in conflicts between individuals, this is not always the case in conflicts between groups. Following Homans (1974), for a collective identity to emerge the most important factor is that members are free to communicate so they can interact a lot thereby building liking and similarity of beliefs, values and norms. This is most likely to occur in small groups of 15 to 20 people who are geographically close to each other (Berelson & Steiner, 1964) and empowered by communication technologies (Bartos & Wehr, 2003). Second, one of the protagonists must feel that they have been aggrieved, that is they have been treated unfairly. Grievance creates frustration, a form of floating hostility which can target almost anything or anyone (Dollard et al., 1939) thereby contributing to the transformation of tensions into conflict (Kriesberg, 2007). Third, the party must develop a conflict ideology, that is a set of values and value-based reasons supporting the engagement in a struggle (Dahrendorf, 1959). This typically involves articulating how the other party has incompatible interests and attributing the reason for grievance to the other party (Kriesberg, 2007). If parties are collectives or groups this generally requires the emergence of leaders committed to the conflict, building the conflict ideology, persuading group members that conflict is necessary and differentiating various roles in the group so it is ready to fight (Dahrendorf, 1959). Finally, protagonists need to have conflict resources they can readily mobilize. The kind of resources which matter vary in different conflicts. While ammunition and soldiers are necessary to wage war, a house wife divorcing needs financial security and a lawyer while someone disagreeing in a meeting needs support from friends and eloquence (Bartos & Wehr, 2003). In all cases it is important not only to have resources but to have sufficient resources so the protagonists feel empowered to win the conflict and serve their interests (Kriesberg, 2007).

2.2.3. Conflict dynamics

While early conflict research theorized conflict structurally (e.g. Simmel,1955 [1922]; Coaser, 1956), an interest for the dynamic nature of conflict developed in conflict research from the 1960s on with a strong focus on modelling behaviors (e.g. Boulding, 1963; Deutsch, 1973; Pruitt & Rubin, 1986). Conflict is thus conceptualized as a process marked by different stages in that literature. From latent conflict, also called underlying (Kriesberg, 2007), potential and hidden conflicts (Pondy, 1967) or tensions (Das & Teng, 2000) to conflict manifestation (Kriesberg, 2007) or conflict eruption (Marchetti & Tocci, 2009), conflict generally escalates rapidly. The conflict then generally reaches a plateau before potentially de-escalating and resolving (Boulding, 1963). Research studying the dynamics of conflict has focused on characterizing the logics of conflict escalation and de-escalation with the aim of minimizing the cost of conflict. This is generally modelled based on three factors: (1) parties' tendency to see positive payoffs in attacking others, (2) parties' hostility toward the other party enticing them to attack, irrespectively of any payoff, and (3) parties' tendency to reciprocate when they are attacked (Bartos & Wehr, 2003). Each of the three factors can be more or less influential depending on conflicts. Based on the manner in which these factors are combined, three major conflict models have been developed.These models are aggressor-defender models, conflict spiral models and structural change models (Pruitt & Gahagan, 1974)

In the aggressor-defender model parties play two different roles. The aggressor sees an opportunity to enhance their interests by coercing another party, the defender, who only tries to resist this change. The aggressor starts with mild coercions but escalates as they do not work. The defender responds to the aggressor's coercive actions without escalating. The conflict continues until the aggressor wins or escalation becomes too costly and they abandon. This process was unfolded when the Soviet Union attempted to prevent the re-unification of Berlin with West Germany during the Cold War. It first protested, before interrupting communications and finally organising a full blockage of the city (Pruitt & Rubin, 2004).

Conflict spiral models characterize conflict where party's coercive actions call for stronger coercive actions from the other party, calling in turn for stronger coercive actions from the first party, so that conflict follows a vicious circle of escalation (Richardson, 1967). Conflict spirals can be retaliatory whereby each party escalates actual coercion. For example, parties shift from argument to insults, to fist fights, to knives, and finally to guns. Conflict spirals can also be defensive whereby each party escalates threat of coercion in an attempt to protect itself from the other party's threatening behaviours. An arms race is a typical example of a defensive conflict spiral (Rapoport, 1960). Conflict spirals always unfold between adversaries with hostility toward each other. When conflict spirals take a defensive shape, adversaries prefer to prevent the other from exerting actual coercion than to retaliate to actual coercion.

The third type of model is the structural change model (Pruitt & Robin, 2004). In aggressor-defender and conflict spiral models, parties' tendencies to attack, respond and be hostile toward the other party are fixed. In structural change models by contrast each sequence of action changes parties' tendencies. For example past coercive behaviors nurture negative associations about the adversary so that hostility increases (Pruitt & Robin, 2004). If the adversary becomes weaker, perceived pay off of attacking increases (Bartos & Wehr, 2003). As parties increasingly think in terms of a zero-sum game, little room is left for compromise and the tendency to reciprocate with stronger coercion (retaliation) increases. When the conflict opposes collective parties, group dynamics further strengthen this escalatory trend. Oppositional social norms develop and new more radical leaders emerge. Third parties might join parties instead of mediating between them (Pruitt & Robin, 2004). All together this fosters further escalation. In contrast with these escalating processes, decreases in group solidarity, depletion of resources and fear of future attacks from the other party can nurture de-escalation (Bartos and Wehr, 2003).

2.2.4. The consequences of conflict

Conflicts have a variety of consequences. Some researchers have developed a conservative view on the consequences of conflict arguing that it is destructive. For example, governance research and peace studies are often based on the assumption that conflict is bad and should be prevented. Other researchers have argued that conflict is an integral part of social life so that conflict is constructive (Simmel, 1955 [1922]). The initial dislocation triggered by overt conflict leads to improved conditions in the long term so that coercion is a necessary evil to attain a greater good (Marx & Engels, 1848). In effect most conflicts have a variety of consequences, some destructive and others constructive. Most research on social conflict therefore investigates which social objects are transformed as a result of conflict and assesses whether the consequences for each social object are destructive (social costs) or constructive (social benefits). It then relates those different consequences to contingent aspects of the conflict and its social context to understand how social costs can be minimized and social benefits maximized. Many intricate processes have been depicted in conflict research, including how diverse factors explain how conflict generates social costs or benefits in relation with parties (e.g. solidarity, self-conceptions, material resources, ideology, stability), relationships between parties (e.g. interdependency, grievance towards the other) and the social system (e.g. third parties, conflict management institutions, dominant modes of conflict waging) (Kriesberg, 2007). Beyond contingencies and idiosyncrasies, social costs appear to always result from coercive action and social benefits from conflict resolution.

Good conflicts are waged through collaborative conflict action (persuasion, promising rewards) or moderate coercion (threat of coercion) while bad conflicts are waged though actual coercion. Boulding (1989) distinguished three ways of exerting power (from actual coercion to threat of coercion, to trade and gift) and argued that conflicts should, as much as possible, be waged through trade and gift to be constructive. Researchers who distinguished good conflict from bad conflict, based on their object, argued that conflicts which focus on values or identity (e.g. ethnic, religious, intercommunal, political ideology, class position) have worse consequences than conflicts focused on diverging goals because they are more conducive to the use of violent behaviors (Coser, 1956). Interdependence between parties is also considered to be a condition for the development of good conflicts because, as parties need one another, parties are disincentivized to engage in coercive actions which could harm the other party or seriously endanger the relationship (Oneal & Russet, 1997). Similarly, free interaction between parties fosters the development of good conflicts because this gives parties the opportunity to engage in non-coercive conflict behaviors and facilitates the development of rules for conflict management constraining the coerciveness of conflict actions (Oneal & Russet, 1997). High inequality of resources between parties has nuanced consequences. High inequality can prevent the eruption of conflict because the weaker party will not believe in its ability to redress the situation or may internalise the legitimacy of the stronger party. As a result they will avoid conflict. However if conflict arises it is very likely to be waged using very violent coercive behaviors (Kriesberg, 2007). “Balanced sociation” (Simmel, 1955) is put forward as a great way to manage conflict because it builds tension wisdom, that is tolerance toward differences and disagreement and, more generally, non-coercive strategies of conflict waging. Safety valve mechanisms (Coser, 1956) are institutionalized conflicts which unfold in the least coercive manner. Societies where institutions are unstable nurture destructive conflicts because those societies overvalue brutality and the use of coercion in conflict (Kriesberg, 2007). Similarly, long conflicts are particularly bad because they normalize the use of violence to resolve conflict and create a long term preference for coercive action (Mosse, 1990).

Conflict can have a variety of social benefits but, in conflict research, social benefits are always the result of conflict resolution. Conflicts resulting in a satisfying resolution are constructive while enduring, deep-rooted and protracted conflicts are destructive (Kriesberg, 2007). Conflicts with an out-group have positive consequences from an in-group perspective because it enhances group solidarity thereby helping to resolve conflicts between group members (Coser, 1956). Conflicts can also have positive consequences for the relationship between parties, because, if resolved, they are an opportunity for the parties to solve deep rooted issues and build a stronger relationship (Deutsch, 1990). Gandhi’s philosophy of conflict, satyagraha, was based on non-violence to reduce the costs of conflict, but also focused on continuous discussion and negotiation with the other party to help resolve the conflict and so maximize its benefits. To maximize the chances of finding a settlement through negotiation, Gandhi and his lieutenants retreated for meditation in an ashram after each conflict action

to ensure they enter the ensuing negotiation in a collaborative spirit and thus increase the chances of conflict resolution. Whether group solidarity and parties' leadership styles favour the development of positive or negative conflicts is also discussed in terms of their impact on conflict resolution. Low solidarity within each party increases the chances of conflict resolution in the short term but reduces them in the long term as new belligerent leaders tend to emerge after conflict settlement creating a third party aiming to revive the conflict (Kriesberg, 2007). Conflicts where parties are powerful autocratic leaders can be very costly as they often become violent. However, if violence is limited and a satisfying resolution is found, leaders can ensure enduring peace and positive social consequences (Kriesberg, 2007). Berger and Luckman (1966) developed a conflict management method turning negative conflicts into positive ones based on the idea of reality reconstruction. The procedure involves transforming parties' perception of the context, and their interests so parties become able to envision that avenues exist to resolve the conflict.

2.2.5. Conflict management

Three main types of conflict management practices influence conflict dynamics. Practically these practices fall into three categories: the ones pre-empting the eruption of conflict, the ones nurturing conflict resolution and the ones controlling the escalation of coercion (Bartos & Wehr, 2003).

Practices aiming to prevent the eruption of conflict focus on aligning parties' interests. The first kind of practices aims at distinguishing mistaken interest misalignments from real ones. A variety of speaking and listening skills such as using disarming language and body postures or rephrasing to ensure accurate understanding can also be taught to avoid misunderstanding during communication (Hocker & Wilmot, 1991). Consultation can be made a requirement for powerful actors so that they become aware of the problematic consequences of their acts for the less powerful (Bartos and Wehr, 2002). If parties still feel like their interests are misaligned, transformative techniques can be used to change their mutual perceptions. For example, building inter-group rituals nurturing feelings of communitas such as art and sports competitions promote shared goals (Goffman, 1974). Nevertheless, in many cases, interest misalignments cannot be avoided. Simmel (1955) therefore argues that societies should promote balanced sociation whereby disharmony is presented as inherent to social life harmony and as important and useful as harmony. This allows interest misalignment to exist while preventing protagonists from starting conflict, or at least destructive conflicts. Balanced sociation can be nurtured in various ways such as teaching skills at opposing constructively at school. Safety valves can also be embedded in society allowing the regular development of non-violent low intensity conflicts (Coser, 1956), such as dueling during the Renaissance in Western Europe, or ritualized conflict in sports or theatre play.

If, in spite of all this, intense conflict can still erupt, various practices are used with the aim of enticing parties to engage in cooperative rather than coercive actions, resolving the conflict as soon and effortlessly as possible. The main way of achieving this is to promote the development of integrative bargaining or negotiation (Fischer & Ury, 1981). Integrative bargaining starts by establishing good personal relations between parties. On this basis parties clarify their interests and identify which interests they have in common and which are misaligned. Parties then look for ways to meet their shared and misaligned interests. Finally, unresolved issues are resolved using fair standards, whether based on priority, equality or proportionality/equity (Zartman et al. 1996).

In many cases parties see more benefits in using force rather than negotiating so that negotiation is not an option. The last kind of conflict management approaches then must be used aiming to control conflict escalation. Controlling escalation can be based on third-party intervention. Third-party intervention can take the shape of formal mediation whereby a third-party helps parties to reframe the conflict as a problem to solve, builds an agreement signed by all detailing how conflict should be resolved and helps implement the agreement (Moore, 1986). It can also take the more informal shape of mediation where the third-party simply facilitates communication overtime (Yarrow, 1978), interposition where the third party is an observer (Carnegie, 1997) or multimodal mediation where various experts intervene at different moments playing different roles from reframing the conflict as problem solving to facilitating communication to helping the healing process after resolution (Mitchell, 1993; Miall et al 1999). Tactics to reduce escalation can also consist in embedding the conflict in anti-violent ideology so that most violent behaviors are avoided, guaranteeing pausing moments preventing the possibility of engaging in several coercive behaviors in a row and ensuring parties come back to negotiation attempts after each coercive action (Wehr, 1979). Finally, formal institutionalization of conflicts via institutions (e.g. justice), social roles (e.g. judge, police, mediators) and various procedures can avoid the escalation of conflict toward physical violence (Deutsch, 1973, 1977).

2.3. OCC conflict

Conflict covers a very diverse range of phenomena across social contexts: parties, incompatible interests, conflict actions, conflict dynamics, conflict outcomes and conflict management strategies vary a lot from one context to another. Various conflict types have therefore been differentiated depending on their social context. For example, organizational conflict within formal organizations (Rahim, 2002) was distinguished from family conflict between family members (Vuchinich, 1987) or cultural conflict between agents belonging to different cultural spheres (Huttington, 1996). The interest of the thesis lies in OCC conflict, that is conflict unfolding in the context of online communities of consumption. OCC conflict is unique because the conflict (1) relates to consumption, (2) occurs in a community, and (3) takes place online. In this section, the three dimensions of OCC context are discussed to develop a precise definition of OCC conflict.

2.3.1. Consumption-mediated conflict

In the marketing literature conflict has been discussed in the domains of relationship marketing and anti-consumption. In B2B relationships, suppliers and retailers aim at maximizing their economic interest during transactions. In principle suppliers and retailers have incompatible goals as the enhanced benefits of the buyer (seller) are to the detriment of the seller (buyer). However, building relationships between them can align their goals. Relationships create synergies so that it is more beneficial for them to find an agreement than engage in transactions outside of the relationship. Still, each partner is tempted to further optimize their economic interest by cheating the other party, hoping that the relationship will not be compromised (Mooi, Frambach and Ruut, 2009). Commercial relationships in marketing channels are thus an imperfect mechanism to align the goals of suppliers and retailers. Channel conflict erupts when one party engages opportunistically in a destructive act violating relational standards such as contracts or the norms of trust and reciprocity (Hibbard, Kumar and Stern, 2001). The defender punishes the aggressor to preserve its interest prompting a conflict spiral of increasing retaliation (Mooi et al., 2009). In marketing channels, the object of conflicts is, thus, generally the relationship between suppliers and retailers, and more specifically the requirements of the relationship, i.e., what is acceptable or not in the relationship. Literature on marketing channel conflicts has paid particular attention to power dynamics between channel partners (e.g. Frazier & Summer, 1986; Geyskens, Steenkamp and Kumar, 1999), governance structures preempting conflict (Anderson & Weitz, 1992; Gilliland, Bello and Gundlach, 2010) and influence strategies resolving conflict (e.g. Frazier & Summers, 1984; Payan & Mc Farland, 2005). These conflicts unfold in the market place but they generally have a tenuous link to consumption. Consumption could be considered as the context of the conflict.

In B2C relationship marketing, the conflicts depicted generally oppose customers and firm employees as a result of service failure or customer dissatisfaction with the product or service. Consumption is thus the driver of conflict eruption, building tension between consumers and firms as the consumer feels that the firm failed to deliver on its promise. Consumers can complain, demand a refund, abuse the employee, threaten the company and/or engage in campaigns of negative word-of-mouth (Beverland, Kates, Lingreed and Chung, 2010). The customer-facing employee can accept or reject the demand for compensation, choose whether to register the complaint and show some involvement and respect, or be derisive and rude (Tax, Brown and Chandrashekaran, 1998). Typically, employees engage in non-coercive behaviors such as persuasion attempts and rewards aimed at de-escalating the conflict. For consumers, incompatibility of interests might start as goal-incompatibility as they seek to maximize the economic output from the original purchase. However, it can also be incompatibility of values as they feel that the company disrespected them (Tax et al., 1998) or betrayed them (Aaker, Fournier and Brasel, 2004). For customer-facing employees, by contrast, incompatibility of interests is generally a goal incompatibility resulting from incompatibility of roles.

The literature on anti-consumption is another area of marketing where conflict has been discussed. Anti-consumption literally means being against consumption (Lee, Fernandez and Hyman 2009). It is a motivational state of resistance to the market, i.e. an internal feeling of tension produced by marketing related activities dissonant with consumers' representations (Roux, 2007). Anti-consumptive feelings can be directed at different market objects, whether a brand, a product category, a market practice or the market place in general (Fournier, 2006). Forceful consumer movements have been resistant to brands like Starbucks (Thompson & Arsel, 2004) and Nike (Kozinets & Handelman, 2004), product categories like dairy products (Kristensen, Boye and Askegaard, 2011) or genetically engineered food (Kozinets & Handelman, 2004), marketing activities like advertising (Handelman, 1999; Rumbo, 2002; Kozinets & Handelman, 2004), and sales (Kirmani & Campbell, 2004) or branding (Holt, 2002), and even market based exchange in general (Kozinets, 2002). Consumers are resistant to those market based objects because they attach moral values to consumption. Moral judgements can be based on certain perspectives of justice and self-actualization. For example, the consumption of certain products is condemned because of the social exclusion processes it nurtures (Cherrier, 2009; Kozinets & Handelman, 2004) or the environmental damages that today's consumption brings to the detriment of future generations' well-being (Luedicke et al., 2010; Dobscha & Ozanne, 2001; Shaw & Newholm, 2002). Consumption can also be seen as alienating for individuals because of the passivity it is believed to create (e.g. Firat & Venkatesh 1995; Kozinets, 2002) or, in the case of ostentatious consumption, the self-alienating focus on signaling social status (e.g. Cherrier, 2009). Marketing practices are condemned because they create false needs and nurture unnecessary consumption (e.g. Portwood-Stacer, 2012). When individuals are driven by anti-consumption feelings they can engage in conflicts with market agents or other consumers and these

conflicts focus on a particular aspect of consumption. Consumption is therefore the object of conflict. The party driven by anti-consumption feelings engages in two kinds of conflict actions: voice and exit (Roux, 2007). Voice consists of complaining directly to the other party or indirectly via negative word-of-mouth or cultural jamming (Rumbo, 2002; Thompson, Rindfleisch and Arsel, 2006; Handelman, 1999). Exit consists of boycotting, that is refusing to consume the particular good to pressure the market agent (Garett, 1987). In the case of boycotts, consumption, or rather its absence, is a conflict behavior.

To conclude, existing consumer research has investigated the relationships between conflict and consumption in various contexts. Research has delineated how consumption integrates with conflict research. It has shown that consumption can be the context of conflict, the driver of conflict eruption, the object of conflict and a conflict action. Yet it is not clear how conflict integrates with consumer research: what is the consumption of conflict? At first sight conflict cannot be consumed as conflict is not something sought or a source of pleasure. Yet, as discussed later, research on conflict in OCCs indicates that this is not always true.

2.3.2. Community Conflict

Consumer research has investigated conflict in a number of consumption communities, mainly communities based on a shared interest for a brand (e.g. Luedicke et al. 2010; Muniz & O'Guinn 2001; Schouten & McAlexander 1995) but also communities based on a shared consumption practice (Chalmers-Thomas et al., 2013; Giesler, 2008) or consumption ideology (Kozinets, 2002).

Parties can be any stakeholder entertaining relationships with the community. This can be members of the same community (e.g. De Valck, 2007; Chalmers-Thomas et al., 2013; Lorenzo-Dus, et al., 2011), members of different communities (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001, Ewing et al., 2013; Schouten & Mc Alexander, 1995; Muniz & Schau, 2005), community administrators (e.g. Van Laer & De Ruyter, 2010; Gebauer et al., 2013), community owner(s) (Bonsu & Darmodi, 2008) or even external stakeholders with commercial interests who contribute to the community (e.g. Van Laer & De Ruyter, 2010; Gebauer et al., 2013). In an online community, as opposed to an offline community, interaction is technology mediated so conflict participants usually must log in as members of the community to be able to interact. Conflict in online communities can therefore involve community members, community administrators, community owners or companies, but they cannot involve members of different communities.

Parties engage in conflicts because they feel that they have incompatible interests in relation to a particular object. Community members often fight to maximize instrumental benefits in relation to a scarce resource. While the resources can be directly economic and financial (Sibai et al., 2015), OCC conflicts often focus on social status. This manifests in "Who is the best" expertise fights where members engage in duels from which the winner hopes to gain recognition and status (cf. Campbell et al., 2009; De Valck 2007; Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001; Reid, 1999). This is a case where members' interests are framed as logically incompatible – if one member takes the expert positions, another member will not be able to have it too. Community members can also quarrel over the definition of what constitutes the best decision for the community when a collective problem arises. For example, in the case of a community producing an alternative Cola brand, what kind of relationships should the community entertain with its rival communities, how closely should it work with corporations or how should it communicate itself to the outside world (Husemann et al., 2015). This is a case where members' interests are misaligned because of incompatible payoffs: all members want the best for the community but they disagree about what will lead to the best results. Finally, community members can engage in conflict because they believe their values are incompatible. Values can also be incompatible because members have different views regarding the morality or the authenticity of a certain practice.

Regarding the morality of a practice, members of anti-brand and anti-advertising communities, for example, engage in conflicts with firms based on the belief that consumption and advertising corrupt society (Hollenbeck & Zinkhan, 2006; Kerr et al., 2012). In the case of Hummer vehicles, detractors accused Hummer owners of environmental irresponsibility. Hummer community members opposed the detractors based on the argument that American greatness needs to be revived and American manhood saved (Luedicke et al., 2010). Giesler discussed at length conflicts involving consumers and firms in the music industry, with both sides discussing illegal music downloads and whether it is morally acceptable. In an innovation community engaged in a competition for the design of new packaging, conflict erupted about the fairness of the selection of the winner (Gebauer et al., 2013). Regarding practice authenticity members of the same community argue about how things should be done to be "true" to the community of consumption's ethos. In the Harley Davidson community, Schouten and McAlexander (1995) described conflicts between the "outlaw" core members and the "rich urban bikers" regarding what it means to behave like a HOG member. Other examples include quarrels about the unacceptability of stealing other members' recipes in a culinary community (De Valck, 2007), not rating contributions in a problem solving community (Wiertz et al., 2010), or engaging in commercial activities in a community that does not have a commercial focus (Bonsu & Darmodi, 2008; Kozinets et al, 2010), all practices considered by certain members to violate the values of the community.

To conclude, community conflict opposes community members about scarce resources, typically social status, solutions to collective problems, and differing views on the legitimization of certain practices that are deemed immoral or inauthentic in the view of some, but not others.

2.3.3. Online Conflict

Internet users have developed countless expressions to describe their experience of online conflict. For example, baiting, fisking, smack talk, and fraping conducted by evil clowns, e-vengers, netiquette Nazis and Godzillas (cf. The Trolling Academy, 2014; Flame Warrior Guide, 2014; Flaming page on Wikipedia, 2014). Consequently, interest has developed among academic researchers in understanding online conflict experiences. Four prominent emic words have been investigated and conceptualized: flames, flame wars, cyber harassment and trolling. While flames are very common, the literature is beginning to include flame wars, cyber harassment and trolling as foci of investigation. This section explains the meaning of each term.

"Flames" and "flaming" are idioms developed by online users in the early days of the Internet. The word "flaming" first came into view in The Hackers Dictionary (Steele, 1983, p. 65) where it was defined as speaking ''rapidly or incessantly on an uninteresting topic or with a patently ridiculous attitude''. The meaning of "flame" evolved rapidly in online discourse. Short depictions in

the popular press were generally along the lines of “incendiary messages” or “inflammatory remarks”, “nasty and often profane diatribe”, “vicious attacks and “derogatory, obscene or inappropriate use of language” (Nitin, Bansal, Sharma, Kumar, Aggarwal, Goyal, Choudhary, Chowla, Jain and Bhasin, 2012, p. 3). A keen interest for flaming behaviors developed in information research with Carnegie Mellon University spearheading investigations (e.g. Lea et al., 1992). After years of definitional blurriness regarding the meaning of the word, a scale was eventually developed (Turnage, 2008) and the meaning of flame settled around exchanges of messages containing (1) a generally hostile and unfriendly *tone*, (2) aggressive or intimidating *intent*, and (3) offensive and profane *language characteristics* (O’Sullivan and Flanagan, 2003). Flames are generally assumed to take place between two members.

Flame wars are flames where parties are groups rather than individuals (Perelmutter, 2013). Cyber-harassment is a conflict where one individual inflicts emotional distress upon another through repeated, unwanted intrusions via means of digital communications (Bocij, 2002). It is also called online mobbing (Baruch, 2005), cyber-bullying, when involving teenagers (Vandebosch & Van Cleemput, 2009), or cyber-stalking when involving enduring harassment (Van Laer, 2014). Cyber-harassment is a conflict involving repeated impoliteness from a single party. For example, hacking someone’s account and outing private online content, stealing her identity, repeatedly sending unwanted messages or images, or engaging in sexual intimidation (Vandebosch & Van Cleemput, 2009). However, it can also involve the harassing party manipulating member pictures, spreading gossip and more generally humiliating the harassed party publicly (Vandebosch & Van Cleemput, 2009). Furthermore, the harassing party is always notably stronger than the victim so that cyber-harassment occurs within relationships with power asymmetry (Vandebosch & Van Cleemput, 2009).

The last form of OCC conflict identified in the literature is trolling. Trolling is instigated by an individual (the troll) deceitfully conveying the intent to contribute to a discussion while really intending to trigger or exacerbate conflict for the purpose of her own amusement (Hardacker, 2010). Trolls have been shown to engage in two types of conflict behaviors. Trolls always initially conceal their real intentions. Thus they typically pretend to ask stupid questions out of inexperience (Hardacker, 2010), to disseminate bad advice involuntarily (Donath, 1999), or to spam a someone with meaningless, irrelevant, or repetitive posts out of good will (Hardacker, 2010). In a second step, trolls can insult and attack other participants more openly, publicly trying to hurt them. Reid (1999) describes a troll in a social support community for sexual aggression survivors where a man joined the community pretending to be a woman. He subsequently changed his name to “Daddy” and repeatedly sent messages to all members where he pretended to rape them.

Taken together, the research presented above remains rather descriptive about the four types of conflict that have been addressed. Flames, flame wars, cyber-harassment and trolling are all described

as involving coercive behaviors. However, existing research has not sufficiently explained on which criteria the different types of online conflict can be distinguished and how they inter-relate to one another. Thus, it has not provided a systematic conceptualization of online conflict. Past research has assumed that online conflict is different from offline conflict, but how and why has not been explicitly specified. It is argued in this thesis that online conflict specificity lays in its conflict behaviors. Online conflict behaviors are technology-mediated and, as such, they cannot impact online users' physical health or economic resources. Online conflict actions are rather communicative acts. As such coercive behaviors harm others' self-evaluations or self-esteem. Furthermore, harm occurs during interaction so that the aspect of self that is hurt is "face", the public self-image that every individual wants to claim for themselves (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Online conflict behaviors are therefore face threatening acts (FTAs), or impolite behaviors, that is, acts hurting the addressee's wish to be accepted or liked by others (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Perelmutter, 2013).

Two types of impoliteness can been distinguished: positive and negative impoliteness (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Positive impoliteness aims to damage the addressee's positive face, the public image that they are wishing to associate themselves with to be seen in a positive light. Online this is commonly done in a direct fashion by calling the addressee names and associating them with a stigmatized group (Perelmutter, 2013). Positive impoliteness can also be indirect by means of actions whose harmful intent is not obvious to the receiver. Online users may for example pretend to help the other person by noticing an inappropriate behavior of hers such as incorrect grammar and spelling or inappropriate emotional framing of message (Perelmutter, 2013). Alternatively, online users may ignore another person's messages, thus conveying indifference or deliberately excluding the person from social interactions (cf. Wiertz et al., 2010). Between direct and indirect positive impoliteness lies mock politeness, ironic and sarcastic communications which follow the format of politeness but with a sharp, impolite, hidden meaning which people "in the know" can easily identify. This is a common form of online impoliteness (Perelmutter, 2013; Hongsmark-Knusden, 2012).

The second type of impoliteness commonly distinguished is negative impoliteness. Negative impoliteness aims to hurt the addressee's negative face, the intimate part of self that one wants to keep in control of to remain in control of one's public self-image. It can consist of reducing the addressee's freedom of action, that is preventing them from doing or being what they want. Online this can involve giving orders, threatening, censoring, logging out or banning (cf. Duval Smith, 1999). It can also consist of reducing the persons' freedom from imposition that is forcing them to do or be something they do not want by invading their intimacy. Online this typically involves publicly outing private content (Vandebosch & Van Cleemput, 2009), forcing unwanted interactions (Van Laer, 2014), stealing her identity (Bocij & Mc Farlane, 2002) or sending a virus (Vandebosch & Van Cleemput, 2009; Reid, 1999).

Based on this characterization of online conflict behaviors, the different types of online conflict discussed in past research can be related to one another. A flame is an online conflict where two members engage in positive impoliteness. A flame war is an online conflict where two groups of members engage in positive impoliteness. Cyber-harassment is an online conflict where the stronger party engages in negative impoliteness, invading the weaker party's intimacy. Trolling is an online conflict where one of the parties engages in indirect positive impoliteness to make the other party angry before moving on to direct positive impoliteness or negative impoliteness.

2.3.4. OCC Conflict

Conflict is generally characterized by the parties involved, the behaviors they engage in, and the object they quarrel about. However these markers vary from context to context. OCC conflict blends consumption conflict, community conflict and online conflict. Based on the review of the literature on conflict in these three contexts, OCC conflict is defined for the purpose of this research as *events opposing consumers, community administrators, community owners or companies who belong to an online community of consumption (parties) and engage in face-threatening acts (behaviors) in order to gain instrumental benefits and social status, resolve collective problems or (de)legitimize practices deemed immoral or inauthentic in the community (object)*. Conflicts can relate to consumption in a variety of ways. Consumption can be the conflict context (community of consumption), the conflict object (legitimacy and morality of a consumption practice), and the driver of conflict (service failure) or a conflict behaviour (boycott). Table 2 presents a summary of the discussion developed above.

Table 2: OCC conflict blending online, community, and consumption-mediated conflict

Consumption-mediated conflict	-	Consumption can be the context of conflict (community of consumption), the conflict object (legitimacy and morality of a consumption practice), the driver of conflict (service failure) or a conflict behaviour (boycott).
Community conflict	-	Parties: consumers, community administrators, community owners or companies
	-	Object: instrumental benefits, social status, collective problems, morality or authenticity of practices
Online conflict	-	Action: face-threatening acts, i.e. impoliteness, whether positive or negative

2.4. Drivers of OCC conflict

Drivers of conflict in online communities have been investigated since the 1980s, as the online context was recognized as being prone to the development of conflict. Reviewing the literature, three principal drivers of OCC conflict emerge. The first is the specifics of technology-mediated interactions. As explained below, a large number of articles discuss how technology mediation in online communities nurtures misunderstandings and disinhibited behaviors thus favoring the development of conflict. Second, it has been argued that the diversity of the membership base in OCCs nurtures tensions and disinhibition, encouraging conflict. Third, the public nature of interaction in OCCs has been highlighted as a driver of conflict. Each driver of conflict is discussed in more depth in the coming section. Table 3 provides an overview of the discussion and how each of the articles analyzed contributes to the discussion.

Table 3: Drivers of OCC conflict

Driver	**Sub-driver**	**Explanation**	**Supporting literature**
Technology-mediated interaction specificities	Reduced informational cues	Misunderstandings develop	Kiesler et al., 1984; Sproull & Kiesler, 1986; Kiesler et al., 1985; Landry, 2000
	Reduced social cues	Reduced perception of authority nurtures disinhibition	Kiesler et al., 1984; Sproull & Kielser, 1986; Siegel, Dubrowsky, Kiesler, and McGuire, 1986; Landry, 2000
	Lack of personal cues	Reduced sense of accountability nurtures disinhibition	Kiesler et al., 1984; Kiesler et al., 1985; Pinsonneault & Heppel, 1997; Reinig, Briggs and Nunamaker, 1997; Hiltz et al., 1989; Landry, 2000
Membership diversity	Reduced social cues	Higher propensity to interact with members of a different social background within the pool of members, hence a higher probability for tensions to arise	De Valck et al., 2009; Kiesler et al., 1984
	Variety of communal commitments	Diversity of participation motives nurtures tensions	Chalmers-Thomas et al., 2013; De Valck et al., 2009
Publicity of interactions			Hiltz et al., 1989; Marwick and boyd, 2011;

Specifics of technology-mediated interactions

A strong interest in understanding the drivers of conflict in online communities developed very early on in Information Systems research. This research generally focuses on the peculiarities of technology-mediated communication. Three characteristics relating respectively to the limited availability of informational, social and personal identity cues have emerged. Regarding informational cues, the online context lacks non-verbal informational cues which typically help interpret what an interlocutor says. Head nods, smiles, eye contact or tone of voice cannot be transmitted online due to the textual format of interaction. In addition, feedback must be delivered in writing which takes time and creates delays, inefficiencies and misunderstandings and thus fosters frustration and anger (Kiesler et al., 1984; Kiesler et al., 1985; Sproull & Kiesler, 1986). Second, many non-verbal social cues which position a person socially in terms of power and status (e.g. role/job and body language) cannot be appropriately communicated online (cf. Dubrovsky, Kiesler, and Sethna, 1991; Landry, 2000). This lessens perceptions of status and hierarchy, reducing perceived normative constraints and favoring the expression of uninhibited behaviors in cases of frustration and anger (Kiesler et al., 1984; Siegel, et al. 1986; Sproull & Kiesler, 1986). Third, personal cues are ill communicated in the online environment. The difficulty of verifying the accuracy of personal information such as name, gender, geographical location, past history and the lack of contact with fellow members offline give members a sense of partial anonymity, a feeling that one could be anybody when posting (Kiesler et al., 1984; Kiesler et al., 1985; Postmes, Spears and Lea, 2002). This depersonalization or deindividuation reduces individuals' perceived accountability: risks of social reprisal are significantly reduced or suppressed, normative constraints are relaxed which leads individuals to engage in uninhibited and expressive behaviors such as conflicts (Pinsonneault & Heppel, 1997; Reinig et al., 1997).

To conclude, a lack of informational cues creates frustration while a lack of social cues reduces hierarchy and a lack of personal cues reduces accountability. This leads to disinhibited behaviors, aggression and conflict. Note that most of the research investigating the drivers of OCC conflict was conducted between the mid-1980s and the early 2000s. It therefore focused on interactions mediated by early web 2.0 media such as email, chat and forums. Certain modern platforms such as social networking sites allow meshing text with pictures, voice and video thereby allowing the conveyance of richer information and easier communication of social and personal cues. Interestingly, innovation has given the opportunity to overcome some limitations of computer-mediated communication which created conflict but recent OCCs are not always designed to take full advantage of these technological advancements. For example, Facebook allows rich interactions while demanding posting under one own identity, Twitter allows only writing 140 characters, and Pinterest allows only tagged photos. It is therefore believed that the factors identified in this section still are

significant drivers of conflict, although arguably they have less importance today than twenty years ago.

Membership diversity

The second explanation for the prevalence of conflict relates to heterogeneity of the membership base, the important differences between online community members. While communities of consumption can be homogeneous or heterogeneous (Chalmers-Thomas et al., 2013), it seems that online communities are systematically heterogeneous and heterogeneity nurtures conflict. For example, Kayany (1998) argued that the predominance of conflict about religion in an online Indian newsgroup in comparison to conflicts about politics in other newsgroups studied (Japanese, Canadian and Arab) was explained by the high religious heterogeneity in the Indian newsgroup compared to high political heterogeneity in the other newsgroups. Two aspects of heterogeneity that foreshadow OCC conflict have been depicted in the literature. First, the OCC environment blurs social differences (Kiesler et al., 1984). Individuals from very diverse levels of education, wealth and social status are thus induced to interact on the same platform, nurturing tensions and conflicts (De Valck et al., 2009). Second, it has also been argued that consumption communities always unite members with different communal engagements. Different members necessarily have different levels of commitment to the community, give different meanings to the consumption activity, contribute out of different motivations and take on diverse community roles, which gives birth to conflicts (Chalmers-Thomas et al., 2013; De Valck et al., 2009). To conclude, reduced social cues and the variety of communal commitments together result in high levels of heterogeneity and subsequently frequent conflicts.

Publicity of interaction

A limited number of studies have indicated that publicity of interactions might be a third driver of OCC conflict as it intensifies what would have otherwise remained a benign friction. Marwick and boyd (2011) found that teenager conflict tended to die out rapidly when happening offline but continued and gained intensity when moving online. Hiltz et al. (1989) also showed that when tensions appear between two or more actors in an OCC, some members will do their best to "fan the flames" and start a fight. While these studies indicate that publicity of interaction nurtures the eruption of conflicts, the underlying mechanisms (i.e. how and why) are not clear.

Discussion

To conclude a number drivers of OCC conflict have been identified in the literature, all of them relating to the specifics of technology-mediated interaction, the diversity of OCCs' membership base and the publicity of interaction. However, what drives to the emergence of the different types of OCC conflict experiences is not clear. The lack of informational, social and personal cues associated with

technology-mediated interaction is commonly discussed as a driver of flames in the literature because this is the dependent variable studied in that stream of research. However it could equally be a driver of flame wars, trolling or cyber-harassment. The heterogeneity of the membership base has been discussed as a driver of OCC conflict. However, it is not clear if it nurtures all types of OCC conflict experiences equally. Publicity of interaction was found to be a cause ofconflict in studies investigating online "drama" between teenagers, but public interactions are not expected to be specific to only those types of conflict experiences. As for flame wars, trolling or cyber-harassment, their causes have not been investigated to the author's best knowledge. Altogether, this calls for a closer investigation of the link between OCC conflict drivers and the different types of OCC conflict experiences.

2.5. Consequences of OCC conflict for social value formation

This section aims to systematically characterize the consequences of OCC conflict for social value formation. While the drivers of OCC conflict have received researchers' attention, the consequences of OCC conflict have attracted comparatively less. This is a challenging task for two reasons. First the notion of social value in the context of OCC is ill defined. Second the consequences of OCC conflict have generally been mentioned in passing rather than systematically investigated since this was not the theoretical focus of prior research. As a result the processes linking conflict to social value creation or destruction have not been clearly outlined. The consequences of OCC conflict for value creation were therefore reviewed in two stages. The different understandings of social value in OCCs were first reviewed, developing a framework of meanings of social value in OCCs. The different consequences of OCC conflict discussed in the literature were then coded in this social value framework. The social value framework is first presented, followed by a discussion of the consequences of OCC conflict for social value.

2.5.1. Social value in OCCs

As explained in the introduction, value is a wonderfully elusive concept which has been given a number of different meanings (Karababa & Kjeldgaard, 2014). Here the interest lies in understanding social value in OCCs, namely value derived from social interactions in OCCs. To review existing knowledge on the topic, articles were gathered from academic databases and snowballing techniques. The review indicates two distinct understandings of social value in OCCs. The first one derived from social psychology defines social value at an individual level. Here it is a form of psychological gratification or positive experience that individuals derive from interacting with fellow consumers in OCCs. The second understanding derived from sociology defines social value at a community level. Here it is a form of collective resource, owned by no one but accessible to all members. Members can

access the collective resource to derive individual benefits. In the coming section, each approach is described in turn.

2.5.1.1. Social value at the individual level

Researchers taking an individual approach to social value identified a number of psychological benefits that OCC members derive from their participation. Overall these can be collated in four main categories: purposive, transformational, relational and hedonic benefits. Each type is described in the paragraphs below. For an overview of the different types see Table 4.

Purposive value is the value derived from accomplishing some pre-determined instrumental purpose related to objects or issues external to the self (Dholakia, Bagozzi and Pearo, 2004). Purposive value includes informational value, the value derived from getting information or facts in the OCC (Dholakia et al., 2004; Kozinets, 1999; Madupu & Cooley 2012; Mathwick et al., 2008), and instrumental value, the value derived from "accomplishing specific tasks, such as solving a problem, generating an idea, influencing others regarding a particular issue or product, validating a decision already reached or buying a product, through online social interaction" (Dholakia et al., 2004, p244).

Transformational value is a sentiment derived from self-transformation. It relates to the individual need for self-improvement. Transformational value can be broken down into self-discovery and self-actualization value. Self-discovery value is a sentiment relating to a changed understanding of salient aspects of one's self, such as preferences, tastes and beliefs, via online interaction (Dholakia et al., 2004; Madupu and Cooley 2010). Self-actualization value is a sentiment relating to feeling closer or further from achieving one's identity goals. This can be in terms of access to individual resources facilitating identity goal achievement (Dholakia et al., 2004; Madupu & Cooley 2010) or changing social order, whether in the community or outside the community, through activism (Kozinets, 1999).

Relational value is a valenced sentiment derived from social interactions aimed at bonding with others (Kozinets, 1999) and relates to the needs of our social self, the part of our identity defined through our relationships with others. Social value can be broken down into social integration and social enhancement. Social integration value relates to the experience of having meaningful desirable social interactions within the community. It is close to the notion of "linking" value (Cova, 1997). Social integration value can consist of developing meaningful bonds with either individuals or the group (Ren et al., 2007). Meaningful interactions with individuals consist of experiencing social support, friendship and intimacy with specific members (Dholakia et al., 2004; Madupu & Cooley 2012) while meaningful relationship with the group consist of experiencing a pleasurable feeling of fellowship and togetherness (Mathwick et al., 2008). Communitas, the experience of an overwhelming feeling of we-ness (Turner, 1974) is a particular form of it commonly experienced in (online) communities of consumption (cf. Celsi, Rose and Leigh, 1993; Cova, 1997; Kozinets, 2002).

Table 4: Social value in OCCs at the individual level

Category and subcategory of benefit			Definition	Supporting literature
Purposive		Information	The value derived from accomplishing some pre-determined instrumental purpose through OCC participation	Butler, Sproull and Kiesler, 2007; Dholakia et al., 2004; Dholakia, Blazevic, Wiertz & Algesheimer, 2009; Kozinets, 1999; Madupu & Cooley 2010; Mathwick et al., 2008
		Instrumental/ Problem solving	Accomplishing specific tasks, such as solving a problem generating an idea or buying a product through online social interaction	Dholakia et al., 2004; Madupu & Cooley 2010; Mathwick et al., 2008
Transformational		Self-discovery	An improved and deeper understanding of salient aspects of one's self such as preferences, tastes and beliefs via online interaction	Dholakia et al., 2004; Kozinets, 1999; Madupu & Cooley 2010;
		Self-actualization	Sentiment of coming closer to achieving one's identity goals through online interaction – either in terms of obtaining resources facilitating their achievement or contributing to transforming social order in the community or outside of it	Butler et al., 2007; Dholakia et al., 2004; Madupu & Cooley 2010
Relational	Social integration	Intimate relationships	Members' need for interacting with other members of the online brand community for social support, friendship, and intimacy	Butler et al., 2007; Dholakia et al., 2009; Dholakia et al., 2004; Kozinets, 1999; Madupu & Cooley 2010; Ren et al., 2007
		Feelings of we-ness	Pleasurable feeling of fellowship and togetherness in a group	Butler et al., 2007; Mathwick et al., 2008; Ren et al., 2007
	Social enhancement	Acceptance	Feeling accepted as part of the group	Dholakia et al., 2004; Kozinets, 1999; Madupu & Cooley 2010
		Status	Feelings of being attributed a high or enhanced social status in the group	Butler et al., 2007; Dholakia et al., 2004; Madupu & Cooley, 2010
Hedonic			Pleasurable, fun, and enjoyable activities that consumers indulge in with other members	Dholakia et al., 2004; Duval Smith, 1999; Kozinets, 1999; Madupu & Cooley 2010; Shah, 1999; Wasko & Faraj, 2000

Motivation to obtain value from dyadic bonds typically leads to behaviours prone to the development of strong relationships, while motivation to experience communitas leads to the definition of community standards and collective actions (Kozinets, 1999).

Social enhancement value relates to the experience of being approved and praised by peers in the community (Dholakia et al., 2004). It first consists of feeling accepted as part of the group and then feeling attributed a high or enhanced social status in the community (Butler et al., 2007; Dholakia et al., 2004; Madupu & Cooley 2010).

Hedonic value is an emotion derived from interactions with other members aimed at indulging in pleasure (Dholakia et al., 2004; Kozinets, 1999; Madupu & Cooley 2010). Hedonic value has been highlighted in gaming communities (Duval Smith, 1999) but also in online communities highly oriented toward purpose value such as communities of practice (Wasko & Faraj, 2000) or open source communities (Shah, 2006). In this thesis, hedonic value is argued to be positive when the emotion is positively valenced (e.g. fun, excitement, entertainment) and negative when the emotion is negatively valenced (e.g. frustration, pain, anxiety).

Individuals can enjoy all four types of benefits thanks to their membership but some benefits may be more prevalent depending on the situation (Kozinets, 1999). For example, in a user forum focused on solving problems and optimizing software usage, a majority of members will probably be information oriented as they came online to gain expert advice on a problem and develop their own expertise. Obtaining relevant information is generally very important to newcomers and recent members (Kozinets, 1999). By contrast, core members generally enjoy exchanging with people with a shared interest to develop feelings of togetherness (affiliation), dodging boredom at work by chit-chatting online (entertainment), and participating in the diffusion of practices beneficial to the community or society at large (transformation).

2.5.1.2. Social value at a community level

Social value at a community level refers to enablers of community "continuity" (Chalmers-Thomas et al., 2015, p. 1011) offering "practical" solutions to problems and allowing the community fulfill its purpose (Husemann et al., 2015, p. 276). Several expressions have been used to refer to social value at a community level. Metaphorically, it has been referred to using a vitality metaphor. OCC have thus been said to "develop a life of their own" (Wiertz & De Ruyter, 2007, p. 370), sustained through community "health" (Schau et al., 2009, p. 35; Butler et al., 2007, p. 172). Conceptually it has been referred to as community resource (Chalmers-Thomas et al., 2013). Four types of community resources have been distinguished: economic capital, i.e. material resources, informational capital i.e. content quality, social capital, i.e. community cohesion, and cultural capital, i.e. community culture (Chalmers-Thomas et al., 2013; Seraj, 2012).

Economic capital is “resources that take on material roles in the community such as objects, commercial experiences, and monetary instruments” (Chalmers-Thomas et al., 2013, p. 1011). Informational capital (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998) is the informational resources that community members can obtain by engaging in the community, in order to satisfy utilitarian purposes (cf. Seraj, 2012). Informational capital consist of the pool of relevant content publicly available in the community (Seraj, 2012) as well as the collective knowledge potential which individual members can appropriate by asking questions and interacting on the platform (e.g. Wasko & Faraj, 2005; Wiertz & De Ruyter, 2007).

Social capital is community cohesion or collective engagement. Community cohesion is built through individual members’ continuous engagement on the platform, cognitively (thoughts), emotionally (feelings) and behaviourally (interactions) (Brodie, Hollebeek, Juric and Ilic, 2011). As individual members engage with the platform, they build relationships with one another. Members can derive a variety of instrumental and expressive benefits from those relationships. The stronger those relationships, the more benefit they can derive from them. Members’ development of interpersonal relationships gradually leads to their engagement with the community as a whole. The more they engage with the community, the more the community becomes cohesive. Community cohesion is resourceful in that individual members can derive various instrumental and expressive benefits from it. Mathwick et al. (2008) developed a measurement scale for community cohesion and found that it consists of trust, reciprocity and voluntarism. Identification and forgiveness discussed in some previous studies as part of community cohesion (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Mathwick et al., 2008), were not tested and can be conservatively retained. Commitment, originally considered to be part of social capital (Wiertz & De Ruyter, 2007) was found to be a consequence of it.

The culture of an OCC nurtures members’ commitment to the group which enables the development of purposeful collective action. As such it can be considered a community resource (cf. Seraj, 2012). Muniz and O’Guinn (2001) originally defined three markers identifying OCC culture; consciousness of kind, rituals and traditions, and moral responsibility. However those markers were developed to identify the presence of an OCC rather than to determine how resourceful the culture is. Recently, Schau et al. (2009) introduced a practice theory approach (cf. Schatzki, 1996) to OCC culture. Practice theory conceptualizes human action as the direct result of cultural factors. Thus this approach delineates how OCC culture drives individuals to join the community and engage in particular practices which contribute to the achievement of the OCC’s purpose. Practices consist of three dimensions: shared understanding or know how, shared engagements, and procedures. Shared understanding or know how refers to tacit cultural templates that enable understanding of what people do and say in the community. It gives members the ability to identify, attribute, carry out, prompt and respond to linguistic and physical actions. Procedures are explicit rules, principles, precepts, and instructions describing appropriate thoughts and actions. Shared engagements are means-end systems

defining ends which should be pursued, projects which can be initiated to reach such ends, tasks to achieve those projects, and subsequent prescribed acts and emotions. Schau et al. (2009) introduced the approach to consumer research conceptually but did not use it to subsequently characterize OCC cultures. They developed instead a typology of practices building OCC culture that were unrelated to this classification. They distinguished practices related to brand use, individual engagement in the community, impression management toward individuals beyond the community boundaries, and networking. They did not provide empirical details of how those things relate to the three dimensions of community practice. Therefore, findings described in the OCC literature were examined to gain a better appreciation of what understandings, procedures and engagements include. For this purpose all available literature describing OCC cultures was collected and coded, with each description depending on the category it fits in. Findings are described in the following paragraphs. For an overview of the practices associated with OCC culture as well as the characteristics of the other community resources, see Table 5.

Community culture

Shared understanding or know-how

Shared language is the first element of shared understanding or know-how as it enables individuals to convey the nuances of meaning associated with consumption activity. *Shared language* includes shared vocabulary both in offline and online communities of consumption. Celsi et al. (1993) in their study of skydiving, explain how the skydiving language conveys the nuances of meaning related to skydiving and thus communicates the special world view developed in that distinctive subculture. Using the skydiving language further enables individuals to actualize experiences of communitas rooted in a shared activity, creating a feeling of fellowship toward the person using such language and generally giving more fluidity and cohesion to the subculture. In an online context, Schau et al. (2009) demonstrated how specialized technical vocabulary and jargon specific to the community strengthens the community by spanning boundaries. It gives members the opportunity to culturally prove their membership and to identify outsiders. Shared language also includes community *symbols*. Kozinets (2001) described how specific earrings symbolic of the Star Trek universe are used by certain members to assert their adherence to the values of the Star Trek community. Schau et al. (2009) described how members of online brand communities create symbols, recognizable by all members of seminal experiences with the brand. *Shared narratives* form a sort of community mythology and thus represent a pool of symbols used to interpret events in the group (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). The importance of shared narratives in defining a community's culture was repeatedly underlined in the literature on brand communities. Muniz and Schau (2005) discussed how consumer-to-consumer narratives in the Apple Newton community form a mythology or folklore binding the community together by reifying its values and beliefs. Brown et al. (2003) further discussed how consumers'

narratives and stories about retro brands create a mythical and utopian past which makes the brand sacred and enables consumers' affiliation with the community. Muniz and O'Guinn (2001) discussed how the history of the brand and personal stories shared by all members of brand communities are vital in creating and perpetuating a community's culture.

Language and narratives are rooted in shared language while practice theory (e.g. Schatzki, 1996; Schau et al., 2009; Warde, 2005) has shown that shared language is not sufficient for a shared understanding to emerge. *Shared doings* are also important elements shaping understanding in the group. In offline communities, Cova and Cova (2002) characterize tribes by their imaginary symbols (language) but also by the *rituals* they perform at certain times and places and the shared *day-to-day activities* (doings). Online, Muniz and O'Guinn (2001) discussed the importance of rituals and traditions in brand communities to perpetuate the community's history, culture and consciousness. Similarly, De Valck (2007) described how members of a cooking community are bonded by the shared day-to-day practice of cooking. Shared understanding or know how can thus be characterized in a community context as shared language and shared narratives (personal stories and community history) as well as rituals and day-to-day activities related to the consumption interest.

Shared rules or procedures

OCCs develop rules or procedures defining which behaviors are (un)acceptable in the group as a mean to manage conflict. Based on a qualitative review of rules in OCCs, Sibai et al. (2015) distinguished three types of shared rules. Group norms specify acceptable behavior between members considered as equal. They can be general to the whole community or local, i.e. specific to an area of the community. Authoritarian rules specify acceptable behavior between members considered as unequal. They can be based on authoritarian or meritocratic legitimacy. Transaction rules specify acceptable behaviors during transactions. They revolve around the definition of exchange rates and reciprocity.

Shared engagement

Following practice theory (Schatzki, 1996) shared engagements are hierarchically structured systems of ends, projects, tasks, actions and emotions. The shared e*nds* or teleology are the end goals. This has been discussed in the brand community literature as the community ethos, comprising several values (Schouten & McAlexander, 1995). Similarly, Chiu et al. (2006, p. 1878) discuss online communities' cognitive capital in terms of shared vision, the "collective goals and aspirations of the members of an organization". Kozinets (2001) depicted the Star Trek community culture in terms of its language, discussing its symbols and artifacts, its doings, discussing its rituals, but also, and perhaps essentially, its beliefs about how the world should be. Ends are broken down as prescribed projects, tasks, actions and emotions. These have not been investigated in the literature on (online) communities of consumption.

Table 5: Characteristics of social value at a community level

Social value type	Dimension	Subdimension	Names in consumer research	Supporting literature
Economic capital				Chalmers-Thomas et al., 2013
Information capital	Relevance of content in archives			Seraj, 2012
	Potential for relevant creation via Q&A			Wasko & Faraj, 2005; Wiertz & De Ruyter, 2007; Lampe & Resnick, 2004
Social capital	Group cohesion (social capital)	Reciprocity		Mathwick et al., 2008
		Trust		Adler & Kwon, 2002; Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998; Mathwick et al., 2008
		Voluntarism		Adler & Kwon, 2002; Mathwick et al., 2008
Community culture (Cultural capital)	Shared understanding or know-how	Shared language	Vocabulary	Schau et al., 2009
			Symbols and artifacts	Kozinets, 2001; Schau et al., 2009
			Mythology - Shared narratives	Brown et al., 2005; Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001; Muniz & Schau, 2005
		Shared doings	Ritualistic doings	Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001
			Shared day-to-day doings	De Valck, 2007
	Shared rules or procedures		Transaction rules: reciprocity and price	Sibai et al., 2015
			Hierarchical rules, despotic or meritocratic	
			Norms both general and local	
	Shared engagement or teleoaffective structures	Teleology/ends and projects, tasks, actions, emotions	Vision, Values, Ethos	Chiu et al., 2006 Kozinets, 2001

2.5.2. Consequences of OCC conflict on social value formation

In marketing research, only eight sources discuss theoretically the effect of conflict on social value in OCC (De Valck, 2007; Gebauer et al., 2013; Hollenbeck & Zinkhan, 2006; Husemann et al., 2015; Kerr et al., 2008; Hongsmark-Knudsen, 2012; Van Laer & De Ruyter, 2010; Van Laer et al., 2013). The literature review was subsequently extended to management, information systems research, sociology, psychology, semiotics, communication, digital studies, socio-linguistics and politeness research, extending the review to 28 sources. Most of the literature dealing with OCC conflict consequences is descriptive. It mentions consequences in passing rather than providing a systematic explanation of which conditions provoke which consequences. In this section the consequences of OCC conflict on social value are listed using the typology of social value developed in the previous section to organize the literature. As OCC conflict has received increasing interest in consumer research and digital studies explanations for the effect of OCC conflict have emerged. They articulate different rationale explaining when and why conflicts have different consequences. These explanations are also discussed and critiqued.

2.5.2.1. The influence of OCC conflict on social value at the individual level

At an individual level, OCC conflict can influence all types of value whether purposive, hedonic, relational or transformational value. The consequences of OCC conflict for all four types of value can be constructive or destructive. For an overview of existing knowledge about the influence of OCC conflict on social value at an individual level, see Table 6.

Table 6: The influence of OCC conflict on individual value formation

Type of social value	**Negative effect**	**Positive effect**
Purposive	Confusion, disinformation, waste of time	Learning
Hedonic	Irritation, annoyance, emotional distress, inhibition, anger, suffering	Fun
Relational	Social status loss, disaffiliation, shaming and humiliation, intimidation, fear, exile	Social status gain, affiliation, engagement, loyalty
Transformational	Self-loathing	Self-assertion
Supporting literature	Bocij , 2002; Donath, 1999; Duval Smith, 1999; Franco et al., 1995; Gebauer et al., 2013; Hardacker, 2010; Moor et al. 2010; Husemann et al., 2015; Perelmutter, 2013; Reid, 1999; Vandebosch & Van Cleemput, 2009	Campbell et al., 2009; Donath, 1999; Duval Smith, 1999; Franco et al., 1995; Gebauer et al., 2013; Hardacker, 2010; Husemann et al., 2015; Moor et al., 2010; Muniz & Hamer, 2001; Perelmutter, 2013; Reinig et al., 1998; Van Laer, 2014

Regarding purposive value, OCC conflict can be a source of confusion and disinformation (Donath, 1999) and thus be experienced as a waste of time (Franco et al., 1995). However it can also be lived as an opportunity to learn about a topic of interest or community norms (Campbell et al., 2009; Duval Smith, 1999). Regarding relational value OCC conflict can lead to loss of power and privileges in the community (Duval Smith, 1999) but it can also be an opportunity to gain experience and win social status as one can display qualities appreciated by the group (Campbell et al., 2009). OCC conflict can be a source of disaffiliation from the other party and the community as a whole (Franco et al., 1995; Perelmutter, 2013) as it nurtures feelings of shaming (Reid, 1999; Husemann et al., 2015), intimidation (Donath, 1999), exclusion (Husemann et al., 2015) and fear (Franco et al., 1995) and can lead to exile from the platform (Duval Smith, 1999; Husemann et al., 2015). However, OCC conflict can also foster affiliation with the other party and the group (Franco et al., 1995; Hardacker, 2010; Perelmutter, 2013) thus nurturing engagement and loyalty (Gebauer et al., 2013; Husemann et al., 2015). As for transformation, OCC conflict can help members feel self-assertive (Moor et al., 2010) but can also nurture self-loathing (Reid, 1999; Van Laer, 2014). With regard to hedonic value OCC conflict can develop irritation and annoyance (Franco et al., 1995; Moor et al., 2010), emotional distress (Bocij, 2002; Hardacker, 2010), stress and dissatisfaction (Gebauer et al., 2013), inhibition and intimidation (Husemann et al., 2015; Moor et al., 2010), anger (Donath, 1999; Reid, 1999) and more generally suffering (Duval Smith, 1999; Vandebosch & Cleemput, 2009). Experiencing negative feelings as a result of conflict is quite understandable as conflict, by definition, involves harmful intents. However OCC conflict can also nurture hedonic feelings of fun (Donath, 1999; Franco et al., 1995; Hardacker, 2010; Moor et al., 2010; Muniz & Hamer, 2001; Reinig et al., 1998).

2.5.2.2. The influence of OCC conflict on social value at the community level

At a community level, the literature reviewed does not discuss the effect of conflict on information and economic capital. However empirical findings indicate that OCC conflict influences community cohesion and community culture. Overall it appears that once again OCC conflict can create or destroy communal value. For an overview see Table 7.

Table 7: Consequences of OCC conflict at the community level

Social value type	Negative effect	Positive effect
Community cohesion	Reduced trust Negative atmosphere Reduced engagement Relationship break with other parties or the community as a whole	Increased trust Increased intimacy /belonging Increased commitment Increased relationship strength
Supporting literature	Baruch, 2005; De Valck, 2007; Donath, 1999; Duval Smith, 1999; Franco et al., 1995; Gebauer et al., 2013; Husemann et al., 2015; Moor, et al. 2010; Martin & Smith, 2008; Reid, 1999; Reinig et al., 1997; Wiertz et al., 2010	Chalmers-Thomas et al., 2013; Ewing et al., 2013; Hardacker, 2010; Husemann et al., 2015; Perelmutter, 2013;
Community culture	Destruction of group values Blurring of group norms	Reinforced group values and collective identity Creation of shared history Adaptation of social structure
Supporting literature	De Valck 2007; De Zwart & Lindsay, 2009; Forte et al., 2009	Campbell et al., 2009; Chalmers-Thomas, 2013; Ewing et al., 2013; Franco et al., 1995; Graham, 2007; Hardacker, 2010; Hickman & Ward, 2007; Husemann et al., 2015; Lea et al., 1992; Muniz & Hamer, 2001; O'Sullivan & Flanagin, 2003

Regarding community cohesion OCC conflict can damage trust within the group (Donath, 1999) and create "negative energy", or a negative atmosphere (Franco et al., 1995), reduce engagement of members in the community (Husemann et al., 2015; Moor et al., 2010; Reinig et al., 1997), create relationship breaks between members (De Valck, 2007; Duval Smith, 1999 and Reid, 1999), cause community abandonment (Franco et al., 1995; Martin & Smith, 2008; Reinig et al., 1997; De Valck, 2007; Duval Smith, 1999; Reid, 1999; Wiertz et al., 2010) and even group dissolution (Reid, 1999). Conversely, some studies noted that OCC conflict can strengthen members' affiliation to the group (Perelmutter, 2013; Chalmers-Thomas et al., 2013), commitment to the group (Ewing et al., 2013), sense of closeness and trust (Hardacker, 2010), voluntarism (Husemann et al., 2015), relationships in the whole community (Perelmutter, 2013) and group cohesion (Hardacker, 2010).

Regarding community culture, some studies have noted that OCC conflict has negative effects on community culture with conflict blurring group values and norms (De Valck 2007; De Zwart & Lindsay, 2009; Forte et al., 2009). Other studies stress the positive effects of conflict on community culture. It was found that conflicts refine, reinforce and adapt group values and norms (Ewing et al., 2013; Franco et al., 1995; Graham, 2007; Hardacker, 2010; Lea et al., 1992; Muniz & Hamer, 2001;

O'Sullivan & Flanagin, 2003). Conflict also favors the development of shared vision (Campbell et al., 2009; Chalmers-Thomas et al., 2013), and creates shared experiences and history in the group, bonding community members (Franco et al., 1995). Finally, it can adapt hierarchical social structures facilitating social mobility in the group (Campbell et al., 2009).

2.5.2.3. Discussion

Past research discussing the consequences of OCC conflict for social value generally mentioned them in passing because this was not the theoretical focus of the authors. As a result little research has systematically investigated the consequences of OCC conflict for social value. Only three articles provide empirically grounded explanations. The first is based on the distinction between routinized and transgressive conflicts and their relationship to the community's conflict (management) culture. The second is centered on the concept of frame alignment practices and the third on the concept of moderation. All three explanations are rooted in the classical argument of conflict research that the consequences of conflict depend on the avoidance of coercion, the main reason for destructive consequences, and the attainment of conflict resolution, the main reason for constructive consequences.

Husemann et al. (2015) investigated conflict in communities defined in a narrow sense, that is communities in which members engage in enduring relationships. They explained the consequences of conflict based on whether they are routinized or transgressive. Routinized conflicts are conflicts "that the community performs in controlled, habitual ways" (p. 275) by tapping into the community's conflict (management) culture. Routinized conflicts are collaborative rather than coercive as members invite conflict, show respect for otherness and stress the amicable basis of relationships. Routinized conflicts' objects remain specific subject matters and do not question relational sympathies between members, limiting potential harm. In routinized conflicts members strive to "collectively find and legitimize answers to controversial issues" (p.275) so conflict resolves rapidly. Members' ability to resolve contentions stresses the strength of the relationships, "energizing" social relationships (p.277). The destabilisation initiated by the conflict followed by the swift restabilisation allows members to "negotiate, and articulate (….) the community's key purpose and moral values" helping to collectively "shape and rework the community's identity" (p.277). Overall the avoidance of coercive behaviors and resolution of conflicts enhance community cohesion and allow the community to reenact and refine its identity.

Transgressive conflicts "break with cultural norms, stepping over boundaries set by the community" (p. 277). Transgressive conflicts involve coercive behaviours with intense aggressions, accusations and abuse. Community members' heightened emotions motivate them to use abusive posts over and over again "spurring the conflict even further" (p.277). Such coercive behaviours encourage

the ending of relationships between members as they associate negative emotions of frustration, offense, pain and embarrassment with one another. Collective abuse against one individual subdues their enthusiasm, encouraging them to leave the community: they feel embarrassed and intimidated, "losing trust in the community" or they realize that they "fundamentally disagree with the collective" (p. 280). Overall transgressive conflicts puts the community in temporary "state of despair" (p. 281) and "collective exhaustion" (p. 280), reducing community cohesion. High levels of aggressiveness also questions and dilutes collective identity as the members express embarrassment and the community is at risk of reputational damages. Passionate expressions of hostility during transgressive conflicts makes traditional conflict management practices unfit to "subdue the conflict" so the community becomes "temporarily unable to end the conflict" (p.277). The impossibility to resolve conflict through usual means stimulates community members to invent new conflict management practices to resolve it. For example, display of highly inappropriate behaviours has led to the exercise of "emergency exclusion" (p. 279), later institutionalized through rules and procedures as a legitimate method of resolving conflict. When transgressive conflicts eventually resolve, the relationships surviving such duress come out stronger as it is allows members to re-enact their commitment to the relationship. Overall, transgressive conflicts' coerciveness produces destructive consequences but their resolution produces constructive consequences. The authors conclude that transgressive conflicts have more destructive consequences than constructive ones. This can be explained by the fact that the costs of their coerciveness are higher than the benefits of their resolution.

Chalmers-Thomas et al.'s (2013) study is grounded in the North American long distance running community which is defined as a community in a broad sense, that is a community "in which members largely imagine their connections to others and where membership is self-determined" (Husemann et al., 2015). Their study is based on the perspective that communities are an assemblage of heterogeneous actors with varying identity projects, roles, and motivations to contribute. This focus on heterogeneity led them to investigate debates and conflict and their consequences for community cohesion. They found that whether conflict is constructive or destructive for community cohesion depends on community members' ability to deploy frame alignment practices. Frame alignment practices can be language highlighting that community members share communal social and economic interest beyond differences, social roles bridging between heterogeneous actors and highlighting the value of diversity or structural practices helping members to accommodate with frustrating cohabitation. Frame alignment practices are deployed when the community is endowed with economic and social resources as this motivates members to collaborate. Overall "frame alignment practices operate as a stabilizing mechanism through which the community is able to overcome tensions and reproduce and reform itself over time" (p. 1024). Language and social roles aligning frames helps resolve conflicts as it turns it into a problem to be solved together. Structural frame alignment practices help members accommodate conflict and so limits coercive actions. In other words conflict

has constructive consequences for community cohesion when conflict actions are collaborative rather than coercive and when conflict resolves.

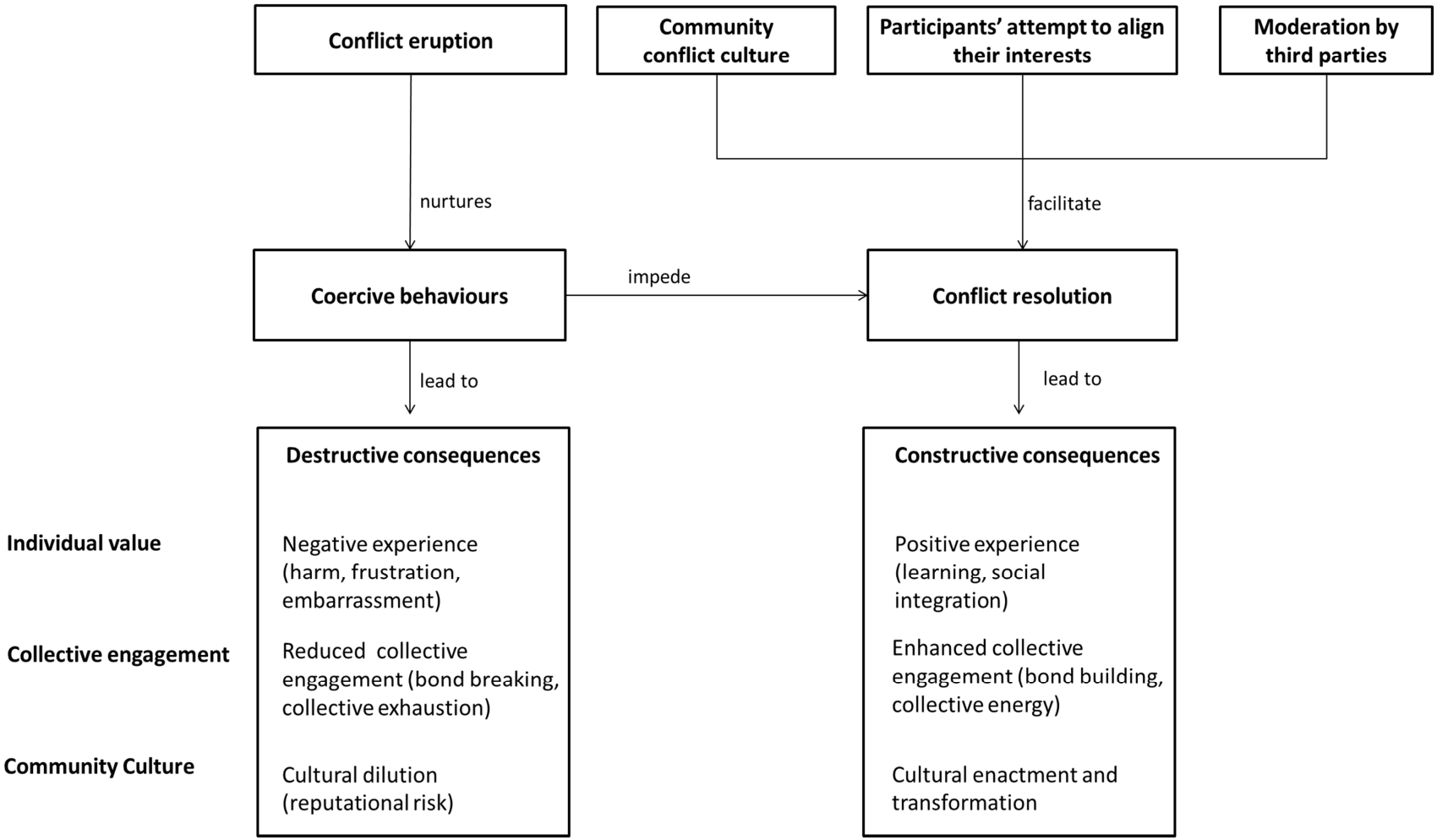
Gebauer et al. (2013) investigated OCC conflicts in creative communities. The authors investigated a brand community built around the supermarket SPAR in which a bag design contest was organized. Brand fans as well as design students and professional designers were invited to contribute their ideas to design the next grocery bag for SPAR customers. An elaborate selection system allowed the identification and ranking of the six best bags from 5,000 submissions. Conflicts emerged in that context because some members were dissatisfied with the selection and believed the decision was unfair, the winning design should not have won. They swarmed the community website and attacked the company, engaging in systematic campaigns of negative WOM and brand plundering. Community managers first discussed it with the members. When they realized how serious members felt about it they negotiated an agreement with the original winner and gave award to the designs originally ranked second and third. The authors found that the consequences of the conflict depend on conflict moderation. Conflict moderation is a set of practices aiming to maintain relationships between members during the conflict. For example, engaging in transparent dialog with the community to unpack unspoken assumptions, reminding of the community's terms and conditions, censoring spam and listening carefully to all parties' point of view.

Gebauer et al.'s description of the conflict further indicates that moderation followed different governance structures or social control principles (cf. Sibai et al, 2015) overtime and that, to be effective, moderation has to follow the right governance structure. First moderation was implemented following hierarchy governance whereby fairness was defined unilaterally by autocratic community managers and so the bag design initially ranked first should win the award. When this approach proved ineffective, SPAR shifted to clanic and reputational governance where fairness is defined communally by the members based on the community's traditions so other bag designs should win the award and the community managers should be the most popular members. This second approach proved much more effective. Overall Gebauer et al. (2013) found that the conflict should have led members to disengage from the community because community members felt hurt and frustrated and the community's identity should have been compromised because of the negative WOM campaigns and brand plundering activities. However effective moderation allowed "to calm down the discussion", that is reduce coercion, and facilitates persuasion of the fairness of the choice leading to an "an amicable agreement" (p. 1521), that is conflict resolution. This led disgruntled members to further engage in the community and spread positive narratives about it, building community cohesion and culture.

To conclude the three main explanations of the consequences of OCC conflict revolve around conflict actions' coerciveness and conflict resolution. Coercive conflict actions are destructive in every

respect. They are harmful for the members, break bonds between members and create reputational risks for the community. Conflict resolution has constructive outcomes. It allows individual learning, relationship building, communal engagement and community culture reinforcement. The overall consequences of OCC conflict depend on whether the constructive consequences of conflict resolution outweigh the destructive consequences of coercion. The current explanations are summarized in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Current explanations of the consequences of OCC conflict on social value formation



In sharp contrast with those explanations, an emergent stream of literature (e.g. Campbell et al., 2009; Ewing et al., 2013; Hickman & Ward, 2007; Perelmutter, 2013) indicates that coerciveness is not necessarily destructive and resolution is not necessary to reach constructive outcomes. Coercive behaviors can be experienced as humorous. Humor produces hedonic feelings which in turn generate feelings of fellowship with other members and the community. This energizes relationships, group cohesion and community culture. Hickman and Ward (2007), for example, described how members derive playful feelings of schadenfreude from trash talk during conflicts which feeds the community's culture and identity. Similarly Ewing et al. (2013) showed that conflict can be humorous and that it can build community cohesion. The presence of humor in the practice of OCC conflict was noted in the studies focused on coerciveness and resolution as determinant of conflict consequences too. However, in the more traditional explanations humor is used as a strategy to defuse hostility and encourage the parties to move towards more collaborative conflict actions (Husemann et al., 2015) while in the examples above coercive behaviours seem intrinsically playful. Regarding resolution, Perelmutter (2013) noted that OCC conflicts can erupt, escalate, never come to resolution and yet have constructive consequences for the community. "Agreement is not the goal of such arguments", they "peter out rather than culminate in a conciliatory discussion" (p. 78) and yet renew community members' sense of belonging to the community and allow an efficient negotiation of community values. This is because OCC conflicts can be a genre, that is a mode of communication within the community characterized by specific rhetorical strategies, impoliteness strategies and moments or stages. Community members use the OCC conflict genre to socialize, and use a "face-threatening 'snub the other' strategy" to engage with one another and the group. Several studies thus indicate that coerciveness is not always destructive and resolution is not necessary to reach constructive outcomes, contradicting existing explanations,

This contradiction indicates that current explanations are incomplete. It also raises a question as it is difficult to understand how conflict can be lived as a humorous mode of engagement as this goes against traditional premises of conflict research stating that conflict is a means of questioning an existing situation. Understanding this is important as playful conflict may allow conflict to have constructive consequences without the need to control for coerciveness or to aim for resolution.

2.5.3. Literature review conclusion

This literature review was conducted with the aim of determining what is currently known about conflict in OCCs, their drivers and their consequences. For this purpose, 62 relevant articles were identified and read analytically. OCC conflict is a series of technology-mediated interactions between consumers, community administrators, community owners or companies belonging to the community.

Conflict parties engage in face-threatening acts in order to gain instrumental benefits and social status or to (de)legitimize practices deemed immoral or inauthentic in an online community of consumption. Onlookers watch, comment and take sides for one party or the other. Consumption can be the conflict context (community of consumption), the conflict object (legitimacy and morality of a consumption practice), the driver of conflict (service failure) or a conflict behaviour (boycott).

Three main drivers explain the emergence of OCC conflicts. First are the communicative limitations of technology-mediated interactions which nurture misunderstanding, disinhibition, deindividuation and ultimately conflict. Second is the wide diversity of the membership base providing fertile grounds for disagreement. Third, the public nature of interactions nurtures the eruption of conflict.

OCC conflict has consequences for collective engagement (members' engagement and community cohesion) and community culture (values, norms, shared history, and social structure). While OCC conflict is consistently found to have a strong influence, the valence of effects varies. The explanations developed so far are based on the assumption that coercive behaviors have negative consequences and conflict resolution has positive consequences. Overall, it is understood that conflicts have constructive consequences when they involve limited coercion and lead to resolution. However, several studies have highlighted that resolution is unnecessary for reaching positive consequences and coercive behaviors alone can have positive consequences. Conflict is then seen as humorous or a genre used to engage with the community. This contradiction indicates that current explanations are incomplete and raises two problems. The fact that conflict can be viewed as a humor or an engagement practice is difficult to understand as this goes against traditional premises of conflict research that conflict is a mean of questioning an existing situation. Second, the two streams of explanations have developed separately so that it is not clear why and when OCC conflict should be a practice questioning the existing situation or reasserting it. Understanding this is important as the second option allows conflict to have constructive consequences without the need to control for coerciveness or to aim for resolution. Overall, this calls for empirical investigations exploring the variety of OCC conflicts, how they form, how they relate to one another, and their consequences.

Chapter 3: Theoretical lens

The explanations for the positive or negative consequences of OCC conflict for social value formation have revolved around the coerciveness of conflict actions and conflict resolution. Coercive conflict actions have negative consequences while conflict resolution has positive consequences. The overall consequences of OCC conflict depend on the balance between negative consequences of the one and positive consequences of the other. However, several studies contradict this explanation indicating that resolution is not necessary for OCC conflict to have positive consequences and that coercive conflict actions can have positive consequences for individual value, community cohesion and community culture. This calls for a theory untangling how OCC conflict experiences are constructed and what their consequences are. In this chapter a typology of OCC conflict experiences will be developed, forming a basis to offer a more integrated explanation of the consequences of OCC conflict. For this purpose an argument will first be offered that OCC conflicts are *performed* for an audience. Second, the principles of performance theory will be introduced. Third, how performance theory has been applied in consumer research will be outlined. Finally, performance theory will be used to build a theory of OCC conflict and its consequences for social value formation.

3.1. OCC conflict as performances

Discussions in the digital environment are technology-mediated so they generally involve written communication, asynchronic interaction, archival of interactions allowing to re-read them, and the ability to interrupt the experience unilaterally. As a result, digital social interactions have a unique and distinct feel. This uniqueness has been characterized as "*digital virtual*", somewhere between the imagination and the material (Denegri-Knott & Molesworth, 2010). Furthermore, interactions in online communities are typically *public events* which all members can observe and participate in. Interactions often involve a large number of participants and have been described as multi-user dialogs (Gebauer et al. 2013) or polylogal conversations (Lorenzo-Dus et al., 2011). Because of the large number of participants in the conversations, all members cannot talk at the same time and equally drive the conversation. This favors the expression of a few individuals in front of the majority. Most participants take a backseat watching and commenting on the conversation, while a few posters actively drive the conversation. A number of participants thus take on the roles of audience members, while a few take on the role of performers. This applies to OCC conflict too. O'Sullivan and Flanagin (2003) noted how participants in OCC conflicts tend to take on the roles of parties and onlookers. Perelmutter (2013) described the dynamic evolution of a conflict between two members into a conflict

involving a large number of community members as onlookers gradually joined the argument. The distinction between who is a party and who is an onlooker is fluid as onlookers can join the conflict at any point and become parties, but the roles of party and onlooker are conceptually distinct. Interactions where participants take on the roles of performer and audience are typically conceptualized as performances. Performance is therefore a useful theoretical lens to conceptualize OCC conflict and their consequences for social value formation.

3.2. Performance theory

The foundations of performance studies were laid by Erving Goffman in his iconic book *The presentation of self in everyday life* (1959). Since Goffman's groundwork, performance theory has attracted increasing academic interest at the crossroads of cultural anthropology, micro-sociology and art theory. This resulted in the creation of the first departments of performance studies at New York University and Northwestern University in 1980 and the institutionalization of the discipline throughout the 1980s and 1990s. Marketing scholars have also displayed an increasing interest in performance theory with the development of the notion of Performance Consumption (Deighton, 1992) and its offspring Consumer Drama Theory (cf. Celsi et al., 1993; Giesler , 2008; Moisio & Arnould, 2005). Here a short introduction to the principles of performance theory is provided using the work of the three founding fathers of performance studies, Erving Goffman, Victor Turner and Richard Schechner.

A performance is a particular arrangement of interactions transforming individuals into performers and an audience (Goffman, 1959). ***Performers*** drive the action while the audience attends action. The roles of performer and audience member are characterized by various practices. For performers this involves for example idealizing, that is accentuating communication traits to ensure effective communication, having manners, that is communicating social status during the performance, mystifying, that is building distance with the audience to create admiration from the audience, and deceiving, that is concealing certain information from the audience (Goffman, 1959). ***Members of the audience*** attend, appreciate and evaluate the performance (Schechner, 2003). Performers can play their role inadequately. For example, performers can break character indicating that they are not who they pretend to be, the character performed, but actors embodying the character. Members of the audience can then engage in performance protective practices to help performers to save the performance. For example, by overlooking character breaks or cheering the performer to motivate them to move on. Performers can preemptively display tact toward the audience to ensure they will engage in protective practices if they break character.

The design of performances is rooted in the separation of reality into two different levels: ***natural(ized) reality and performed reality***, performed reality being a fabrication derived from natural reality. Patterns of action and emotions belong to natural reality when they are believed to be the result of natural determinants. They belong to performed reality by contrast when they are believed to be intentionally fashioned by someone (Goffman, 1974). Natural events are turned into performances by combining them and altering them to compose new patterns, very similar to the original, but indicating intentionality (Goffman, 1959). For example, hilarity can be a spontaneous and unintentional behaviour reflecting someone's temporary state of well-being (natural laughter) or an intentional display of emotions by an actor on stage aimed at indicating a temporary state of well-being (performed laughter).

Performances normally follow a performance script or ***script***, a predefined set of rules determining how action should be conducted. Scripts define how to fabricate credible events allowing the transformation of natural events into performed ones. Scripts can vary infinitely but some scripts are more similar than others so that different types of scripts have been distinguished. For example, ritual scripts are scripts giving a sense of holiness to the performance. They involve the separation of participants from everyday life, their transportation into symbolic reality, their momentary merger with the audience through overwhelming feeling of we-ness (communitas) and reintegration into everyday life (Turner, 1974). Literary scripts by contrast aim at building make-believe and narrative transportation by organizing action in such a way that it creates mystery, suspense and surprise (Baroni, 2007). In game scripts, action is structured by a goal, a system of rules and a feedback system to count points (Huizinga, 1951; Caillois, 1967). Scripts can be more or less detailed and hence more or less constraining. Typically cultural performances which are more formalized involve very elaborate scripts while social performances which are less formalized involve less elaborate scripts (Turner, 1982). For example, in drama, a highly institutionalized type of performance, the script is written in advance defining the words the performers should say to play their role appropriately. Balinese holy dances are not written but none the less are very constraining. Teachers transmit to their disciples their knowledge of precise gesture sequences including movements of the hands, fingers, heads and even eyes. Street theatre is a less institutionalized form of theatre and so it is very much improvised. The script is changed and adapted depending on the context, the audience and the mood of the performer. Performances in social life are very informal and so scripts are very loose. For example a manager performing his role of manager in his office must typically engage in a number of behaviors to hold his position appropriately. They must hold appraisal meetings, check on the collaborators regularly, lecturing them when they display low levels of professionalism. However this can be done in a variety of ways and leaves a lot of flexibility regarding the content and form of daily interactions.

To ensure a smooth development of the performances, its boundaries are often marked by a special organization of space and time. ***Space is generally organized as a stage*** consisting of three

regions: front stage, back stage and off stage, separated from each other by physical and symbolic boundaries (Goffman, 1959). The front stage is the region where performers act out for the audience. The back stage is a region where performers go to prepare themselves for the performance, out of sight from the audience. The audience has no access to backstage. Performers can therefore step out of their role without fear of disrupting the performance. Offstage is all the places which are outside the realm of the performance, that is neither front stage nor back stage. Individuals offstage are neither performers nor onlookers, they are outsiders. As such they should not interact with performance participants. ***Time is organized to separate the performance from day-to-day life***. Opening and closing temporal brackets are often used to mark the beginning and the end of the performance as well as temporary pause during the performance (Turner, 1974). In the Western theatre for example, plays start after the bell has rung, the light has dimmed and the curtain has risen. It finishes after the actors have saluted, the audience has applauded and the room is bright with light again.

Different ***types of performances*** have been depicted in the literature based on the manner in which they are experienced. Performances can be experienced as ***serious or light***. Serious performances are perceived as liminal (Turner, 1974) or transformative (Schechner, 2003). Participants in serious performances believe that it will have important implications for some or all of the participants. For example rites of passage turn boys into men and weddings unite men and women until death (or nowadays divorce) separates them. Light performances are perceived as liminoid (Turner, 1974). Light performances, like serious one, stand separate from the social structures of day-to-day society. However they are lived as leisurely free time, optional moments of pause which do not aim at transforming the individual or the collective once they are finished. For example, a helium balloon release can be a commemoration of the victims of a plane crash, thus reviving memories of the dead and making the plane accident part of collective history (serious). However it can also be seen as an illusion of balloon release if a nylon thread is seen to actually keep the balloons tied to the floor or a pretense of balloon release if happening on stage as one knows that the balloons will be taken backstage once out of sight (light). Similarly hilarity can create a joyous atmosphere in a group and be cathartic in a tense situation (serious) but it can also be perceived as make-believe when on stage and deception when performed by a salesman (light). Real life performances are generally not purely serious or light. The two are generally combined with more or less weigh of one or the other. For example, games are generally very light but can also have some elements of seriousness and rituals are generally very serious but can also integrate some lightness (Schechner, 2003).

Performances have also been distinguished based on whether they are ***explicit or implicit***. In the discussion so far it has been assumed that participants are always conscious that the event is a performance and they knowingly play the role of performer and onlooker. Yet, whether an event is a performance is often ***ambiguous*** for the participants. The social dramas described by Turner (1974) occur when a society goes through a collective crisis. The crisis generally has a few individuals

leading the action while the rest of society observes and comments. The crisis follows a particular script going from breach to escalation, redressment and reintegration. It is therefore a performance. However, while most individuals in social drama are conscious that something important is happening they are not aware that they are being part of a performance. The boundary between explicit performances where participants are aware that a performance is taking place and implicit performances where participants are not aware is not always clear. Goffman's work on interaction rituals in everyday interactions (1967) is a case in point of performances where performers are half-conscious that they are playing roles. For example when two lovers date, two persons greet one another, two friends discuss in a group of people, or a group of colleague get together at a corporate meeting, there are rules about what should or should not be said, felt and done. When individuals become too conscious of this this can be a source of great anxiety but if they become oblivious to it they can be reminded of the rules and the role they should play. Individuals in social life thus commonly engage in semi-conscious performances.

The fuzziness of the boundary between explicit and implicit performances can create situations where some participants are conscious that a performance is taking place and others are not. Goffman (1974) named this performance where frames are misaligned. Two situations of ***frame misalignment*** have been documented (Schechner, 2003). In events "framed as a performance" performers see themselves as behaving naturally but onlookers perceive them as performing. For example, if two kids are fighting in a schoolyard, the fighters might be genuinely trying to hurt each other, but the crowd of curious onlookers may frame it as a friendly wrestling match. In "hidden performances" individuals play but the audience think they are behaving naturally. For example, when two conmen simulate a fight in a market to create a disruption, attract the merchants' attention and enable their confederates to steal from stalls, the frame misalignment is that of a hidden performance.

3.3. Performance theory in consumer research

Applications of performance theory in marketing have revolved around the notion of ***market place performance***. The notion of market place performance has been treated in two different but related ways: market place performance as performative discourses and market place performance as dramaturgic events (Thompson, 2015). ***The performative approach to market place performance*** starts from the fundamental assumption that words can do things (Austin, 1962). Performative utterances can be reiterations and recitations, that is orthodox expressions of social structures reinforcing them, or resignifications, that is utterances contesting the social norms, typically through parody, irony and subversion (Butler, 1990). Studies of performative discourses are thus primarily

interested in understanding how words reinforce or destabilize socio-cultural structure shaping the market place. From this perspective dramaturgic performances are just one form of performative discourses among many others. ***The dramaturgic approach to market place performance*** by contrast is the direct translation of performance studies in the context of market places. There, studies focus on understanding how the analysis of events, involving performers and spectators helps better understand the marketplace. Dramaturgic performances are performative and studies focusing on market place rituals have investigated performative processes specific to this kind of event. For example market place performances were shown to produce authenticating acts revealing and producing consumers' identities but also authoritative performances building collective identity (Arnould & Price, 2000). However exploring the performative consequences of dramaturgic performances is not the final aim of research working in this tradition. Here, we focus on research investigating the market place performances as dramaturgic performances.

Performance theory, from its inception, highlighted the relevance of the dramaturgic approach to explaining market place behaviors with Goffman (1959, 1974) often using examples of purchase experiences to illustrate his points. However performance theory was only introduced to consumer research formally in 1992 by John Deighton with his foundational article "The consumption of performance". Since Deighton's groundwork, the performance lens attracted a lot of attention from marketing scholars. It emerged very quickly that performance is a dominant interpretation frame which all consumers growing up in Western culture acquire, shaping their understanding of reality (Celsi et al., 1993). A number of ***consumption contexts*** were shown to take the shape of performances, from extraordinary consumption experiences such as rafting (Arnould & Price, 1993) or sky-diving (Celsi et al., 1993) to everyday shopping (Moisio & Arnould, 2005), spectacular shopping (Penaloza, 1998), clubbing (Goulding, Shankar and Elliott, 2002), music downloads (Giesler, 2008), advertising (Deighton, Romer and McQueen, 1988; Stern, 1994) or rodeos (Penaloza, 2001). Studies were conducted on performances occurring at various ***levels of analysis***, from micro-performances as in online conversations (Schau & Gilly, 2003) to meso-performances such as public events on the market place bounded in space and time (Moisio & Arnould, 2005) and macro performances constructing the market place as a whole (Giesler, 2008). Market place performances were shown to contribute to the ***construction of consumers' identity projects and consumption communities*** through rituals (Arnould & Price, 1993; Celsi et al., 1993) as well as the structuration of markets through social dramas (Giesler, 2008).

Different foundational elements of performances unfolding in the context of the market place were highlighted in this literature. With regard to the distinction between ***the role of performers and the role of the audience***, Deighton (1992) argued that service providers generally play the role of performers while consumers are the audience. Deighton (1992) further highlighted how service providers can be tempted to emphasize the fact that the event is performed, or "dramatistic", because

this is what the consumers are seeking. However, companies might sometimes prefer to ***mask the performed nature of a consumption experience*** to make it look authentic or unchangeable. Deighton identified three main strategies available to them. First companies can objectify the performance by keeping attention away from human agency (e.g. implying that the customer's good experience relate to the product rather than the customer himself or the context, or highlighting contractual obligation to make a dissatisfying decision of the company look unchangeable). Second, they can naturalize the experience by claiming to follow culturally defined rules of professionalism, thereby hiding vested interest in the interaction. Finally, companies can deny being dishonest when saying that the event is not performed and reject any hidden motives to be dishonest about it. Consumption performances fail when performers do not play their role correctly so consumers do not become engrossed in the performance, or when consumers feel that they are being deceived. With regard to action scripts Deighton (1992) also outlined how performance typically follow ***four types of actions scripts***, that of skill (e.g. tennis), show (e.g. theatre), thrill (e.g. rafting) or festive market place performance (e.g. theme parks). These scripts are distinguished in two ways. First, in the manner in which they anchor the market place performance in reality, whether as part of reality or as fantasy and make believe. Second, by the level of participation they offer to the audience, whether as a passive observer or a more active participant. Further research investigated performance content, the narratives that market-place performance draw on to build their script (Moisio & Arnould, 2005). For example, the myth of the Wild West in rodeo (Penaloza, 2001) or the ideologies of social utilitarianism and possessive utilitarianism and their manifestations through the myths of the hacker, the sonic warrior, the sonic pacifist, and the cyberpunks in the market place drama of music download (Giesler, 2008). Finally, attention was given to the ***organisation of space in the market place as a stage***. Penaloza (1998), for example, showed in her visual ethnography of Nike town how commercial spaces can significantly contribute to performance success by combining qualities of shops and museums, and displaying objects ripe with totemic potential, structuring consumers' movement around displays and highlighting the symbolic meanings of consumers' movement to the other consumers. All together the organisation of space in Nike town allowed the performance to create strong positive subjective experiences of competition, peak performance, style and recreation.

While the usefulness of this foundational knowledge has been widely recognised through citations, its limitations have also been criticized, especially in the specific context of digital market place performances. First, the systematic distinction between real and fantasy market place performances has been questioned with studies highlighting the ***blurring of reality and fantasy***. Penaloza (2001) showed how spectators of rodeo trade shows seamlessly blend fantasy and reality as they spectate. This hybridisation of performance was shown to be particularly strong in digital enabled performances. Kozinets et al. (2004), for example, described how spectators of basketball ESPN games revel in the dizziness and overwhelming vertigo that the video screens produce by transcending

physical limitations and bridging between the stage, the sitting area, backstage and the world outside the sports arena. Similarly, Rose and Wood (2005) showed how audiences revel in the paradoxes of reality show performances where the real is staged as make-believe and make-believe becomes extremely realistic.

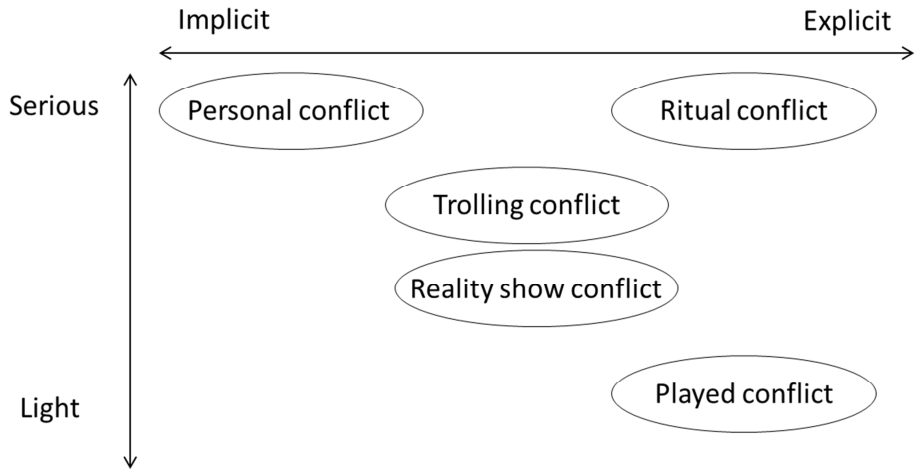
Second, the rigid ***association of the roles of performers and audience to individual participants*** has been criticized. While the conceptual distinction between performer and audience remains foundational to performance theory, performance participants were found to be able to slide between the two types of roles during performances so the different roles are not fixed. Penaloza showed how consumers walking around the servicescape are both audience of the company's performance and performers for the other consumers (2001). Kozinets et al. (2004) further argued that interactive digital technologies radically increase "opportunity for consumers to shift from passive audience members to participative actors"

Finally, it has been stressed that the script of market place performances on social media is collectively created by the company's employees and the consumers. While a participant might initiate the performance with a particular script in mind, the reactions of the other participants might build a completely different script. The performance ***scripts on social media are thus largely improvised***. Improvisation does not mean that interactions are random. Interactions during the performance follow certain rules. In a similar fashion to performances in improvisation theatre, the rules are loose, revolving around a topic or theme and a basic set of rules defining what is acceptable or not, and leaving a lot of opportunity for creative inventions (Singh & Sonnenburg, 2012). The scripts of social media performance thus define the genre of the particular performance rather than detailed guidelines about how the form each publication should take.

3.4. Theory of OCC conflicts and their consequences for social value formation

Building on the principles of performance theory introduced earlier, I distinguish five types of OCC conflict depending on the type of performance the conflict represents (serious or light, explicit or implicit). These conflict types are indicated in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2: Types of conflict performances



Personal conflicts are serious conflict performances implicit for all participants. This encompasses the conflicts described in the mainstream research on OCC conflict. ***Ritual conflict*** is defined in this thesis as serious conflict performances explicit for all participants. The ritualistic nature of certain OCC conflicts has been highlighted in several past studies. Muniz and Hamer (2001, p. 358) noted that most of online conflicts between Pepsi and Coca Cola fans "had an almost ritualistic quality about them" where the participants seemed to consciously follow a routine. Campbell et al., 2009, p. 461) further highlighted that conflict "embodies important rituals essential for maintaining and defining the contradictory social roles in online environments". ***Played conflict*** is defined in this study as light conflict performances explicit for all participants. The playful nature of certain OCC conflict has been highlighted in several past studies (Donath, 1999; Hardacker, 2010; Muniz & Hamer, 2001; Reinig et al., 1997). ***Reality show conflicts*** are conflicts performance which are light and explicit for onlookers but serious and implicit for performers. The presence of such conflict in OCC was previously noted by Marwick and Boyd (2011) in their analysis of social media "drama" among American teenagers. Finally ***trolling conflicts*** are conflict performances which are light and explicit for one party but serious and implicit for the other party.

Theory conclusion

The typology of conflict developed in this chapter forms a basis to map the different types of performances of OCC conflict. In the next chapter, the existence of these theoretically derived conflict performances is investigated and the different types of conflict performances found are related to their drivers and consequences.

Chapter 4: Methodology

The aim of this dissertation is to investigate the different OCC conflict performances, their drivers, and their consequences for social value formation. To do so, a number of methodological decisions needed to be made. This chapter outlines those methodological choices. It opens by positioning the research within the philosophy of science, indicating the research paradigm this study belongs to. The research design of the study is then discussed with an explanation of the choice of a netnographic design and a particular forum as the research field. The process of data collection is then detailed following the standards of netnography. Planning, entrée, data sampling and data collection are thus discussed in turn. Analytical procedures, following the principles of grounded theory, are then described.

3.5. Research paradigm

Research can be conducted following different paradigms, each of them functioning with its own assumptions. These assumptions define what exists (ontology), what can be known (epistemology), what should knowledge seek to achieve (axiology) and which methods should be followed to develop knowledge (metholodology). A research project applying a methodology belonging to one paradigm and research questions and conceptual background from a different paradigm is incommensurate. To develop an appropriate methodology, it is therefore important to determine to which paradigm the research questions and conceptual background guiding the investigation relate.

Two main research paradigms are generally opposed in the social sciences, including marketing: positivism and interpretivism (cf. Hudson & Ozanne, 1988). Positivism applies the assumptions of "hard" sciences (e.g. physics, biology) in the context of social sciences. Reality is thus considered to exist independently of individuals' perceptions. It consists of a variety of elements characterized by specific attributes related to one another through causal relationships (cf. Lee and Lings, 2008). To investigate the social world and develop knowledge about it, social scientists thus need to develop hypotheses, speculative propositions about what are the elements at hand and what are the relationships between them (cf. Holbrook & O'Shaughnessy, 1988). These hypotheses, expressed in general terms, must be tested empirically. If a theory, and its related hypotheses, are consistently supported it is considered to be scientific knowledge (cf. Calder & Tybout, 1987; Popper, 1959).

Interpretivism by contrast is derived from humanities (e.g. philosophy, literature theory, history) taking a radically different approach to scientific investigation (Hirschman, 1986). Following

interpretivism, social reality consists of all the interpretations of what exists and happens (cf. Hudson & Ozanne, 1988). While a material world might exist beyond interpretations, it belongs to a realm different from social reality and is therefore of no interest to social science. Subsequently, interpretivist research does not aim at identifying objects and explaining causal relationships between them (Erklären) but rather at developing a convincing understanding (Verstehen) of the interpretations, and evolutions thereof, that individuals make. In terms of empirical methods, developing interpretivist knowledge requires qualitative rather than quantitative approaches (cf. Calder & Tybout, 1987). Analysis is hermeneutic – it consists of interpretive cycles from the particular to the whole and from the whole to the particular to progressively decipher implicit interpretations behind explicit obvious interpretations (cf. Holbrook & O'Shaughnessy, 1988; Ricoeur, 1976).

Conflict is generally defined as a series of interactions where two or more parties manifest the belief that they have incompatible interests (Kriesberg, 2007). Conflict can be studied from a positivistic perspective or an interpretivist perspective. From a positivistic perspective, conflict would be viewed as an objective phenomenon measurable in interactions. Such research would then explain what causes conflict and which effect it has. From an interpretivist perspective by contrast, conflict is a subjective impression co-constructed through interaction. Such research would then explore the different meanings associated with conflict to understand the processes preceding and following the emergence of conflict. My research aims to explore the meaning and implications of conceptualizing conflict as a performance. The questions guiding my investigation are therefore all related to community members' interpretations of interactions in OCCs: how does the presence of an audience incite members to behave in a manner which seems aggressive and conflictual? What are the meanings which community members give to conflict? How do community members feel about OCC conflict? How does their relation to the community transform as a result of their participation in OCC conflicts? How does the community culture evolve due to conflicts in OCC? The conceptual work and questioning developed in this research are therefore interpretivist. An interpretivist methodology should therefore be adopted in the empirical part of this research.

Interpretivist research includes a myriad of traditions with their own assumptions about how meaning is created (Belck, Fischer and Kozinets, 2013). For example, existential phenomenology, hermeneutic, postmodernism, critical theory, semiotics, hermeneutic, or anthropology. Anthropology is an interpretivist approach assuming that meaning is made within the context of specific communities each of them having their own culture. Given our interest in conflict in the specific context of OCCs, the choice of an anthropological approach is logical. Anthropology itself is a heterogeneous approach including a variety of subdivisions. Generally two anthropological approaches can be distinguished: structural anthropology (e.g. Levi-Strauss, 1973; Malinowski, 1922; Mauss, 1923-24) and interpretive anthropology (e.g. Geertz, 1973; Turner & Bruner, 1986; Schechner,

2003). Structural anthropology investigates the structures of meanings that objective cultural outputs of collective behaviours (e.g. institutions, artefacts, rituals, structures of exchanges) reveal. Interpretive anthropology investigates meaning creation by individuals in particular contexts (e.g., we-feelings, the creation and enactment of values and social roles by individuals). In this dissertation, the focus is predominantly on the negotiation of the meaning of conflict by OCC members during interactions. While the consequences of conflict at the collective level are also investigated, the primary focus lies in the culturally situated creation of meaning by individuals. This thesis therefore sits within the domain of interpretive anthropology.

3.6. Research design

3.6.1. Netnography

Anthropology is practiced using ethnographic research designs. Ethnographic designs all share the same assumption that, to understand communal meanings, researchers must study individuals in their natural settings and engage in participant-observation whereby they go "native", becoming a member of the community. Further, ethnography is a methodological bricolage: it assembles a diverse range of data collection and data analysis methods to develop an understanding of activities in a community (Denzin & Lincoln, 1999). As such, ethnography takes different shapes in different contexts. Ethnography takes the shape of market-oriented ethnography in consumption communities (Arnould & Wallendorf, 1994). Ethnography also takes a peculiar shape online because the field of research is not physical but mediated by technology. As a result, communication between members is asynchronous and predominantly textual and discussions are automatically and permanently archived, creating a range of constraints and opportunities for data collection and analysis. Ethnography of OCCs is called netnography (Kozinets, 2002; Kozinets, 2010). As the object of investigation in this research is OCCs, a netnographic research design was adopted.

As netnography has become a widely adopted methodology, different approaches to netnography have emerged. Netnographies can be single-site or multi-site, observational or participative, purely online or blended with offline observations (Sibai & De Valck, 2014; Tuncalp & Le, 2014; Kozinets, 2010). This investigation focused on a single community because it perfectly met the criteria for research site selection (among other things: high volume of data, rich content, numerous contributors, long community history). As the online community also had an offline counterpart, the netnographic design included both online and offline observations. The researcher chose to participate in the community to triangulate the findings found through observation and as a means to gain access to informants for interviews and member checks.

3.6.2. Context selection

The context selected for the netnography is the UK-based HarderFaster community, a forum for fans of electronic dance music (EDM) and clubbing created in 2001. The forum was created to unite fans of Hard Style, a type of EDM characterized by heavy bass drums, intense faded basslines, a melody played by a synthesizer, a very fast beat (150 beats per minute) and the use of distorted sound. Its most known forms are Hard House, Hard Dance and Hard Trance. It also entertains links with Hard Core music. It was not possible to measure exactly how many members the community has gathered over the past 13 years as automated robots create "fake" accounts for Internet marketing purposes. Still, the number of members should be counted in thousands rather than hundreds. While the member counts on the website indicate more than 70,000 members, the community owner estimates that only 20,000 accounts represent real persons. Going through the list of members, more than 11,000 thousand registered members had posted at least once. Based on the owner's estimation, this would mean that another 9,000 accounts are real accounts of people who have never posted, preferring instead to lurk on the forum. Lurkers have been found to represent 45% to 99% of online communities (Preece, Nonnecke and Andrews, 2004). Therefore 20,000 seems like a conservative estimate of the number of community members. The HarderFaster community was a central hub in the London and UK clubbing scene until 2007 when Facebook appeared and took over. From more than 1,000 members contributing on a weekly basis, the community gradually dropped to approximately 100 regular contributors today. Over the past 13 years the community has gathered over 7.4 million posts and 300,000 since the beginning of the netnography.

When HarderFaster was created, Hard Style music was a relatively popular yet underground music movement played at a limited number of clubs and events. Therefore fans of this particular subgenre belonged to the underground scene of the clubbing industry where clubbing events are predominantly organized out of passion and for communal purposes rather than for professional and commercial purposes. When Hard Style music became less fashionable, HarderFaster incorporated different genres of electronic music but the positioning of members in the underground scene of clubbing has remained. As a hub for individuals with an interest in Hard Style music and underground clubbing, HarderFaster offers a range of core functionalities. It offers single and album reviews, an agenda of upcoming events, industry news, features about artists, a space to share clubbing pictures, an encyclopedic guide to clubbing (DJs, clubs, genres), a repository of links to websites which might be of interest to community members, a monthly newsletter and a forum area where community members can hold discussions (see a screenshot of the home page in Figure 3). The forum area is organized into 21 sub-forums, each serving a particular purpose (see Figure 4). For example, the "Welcome to HarderFaster" sub-forum is designed to ensure newcomers are greeted appropriately, the "Mixes and feedback", "Tunes and tracks", "DJing" and "Production studio" sub-forums are meant for

discussion of expert topics in music and business, the "Serious discussion" sub-forum provides members with an area to discuss serious topics such as questions about politics, religion, morality and life, and the "HarderFaster active" sub-forum is there to discuss football and sport. Finally, "General mayhem" is the oldest sub-forum of the community and the majority of discussions take place there. It is a place of total freedom in terms of which topics to address and where self-moderation is the rule. Members are expected to hold wild and unexpected discussions with the motto that "anything can and should happen". Everything on the website, including forum discussions is publicly available. However, one has to be registered to contribute content. Furthermore, the features, reviews, and news sections are managed by editors.

Upon joining, community members are automatically supplied with a profile page where a variety of information about the person are provided and can be edited (see Figure 5). Information about the member's online behaviour such as date of registration, last activity, total posts, total new threads, total profile views, latest threads started and photosets uploaded are automatically available. Members can also upload a profile picture, specify their demographics (age, gender, job, location, sexual orientation, height) and indicate their preferences in terms of band, club, music genres, food and drink to further detail their online identity.

As a grass-roots community HarderFaster is governed by clubbers for clubbers. HarderFaster was created in 2001 by Tom Allen, a graphic designer, semi-professional DJ and clubbing event promoter. Although he used the platform to promote his own activities, he created it mainly to bring together like-minded individuals that shared his passion for EDM. Three years later, he sold it to Matt Shipp, an IT entrepreneur and active member of the London clubbing scene. As an entrepreneur and firm director, Matt has marketed the community with cards, flyers, and paraphernalia such as fridge magnets and T-shirts. He has also ensured that the community generates sufficient money to operate. Money is generated via advertising revenue coming from banners on the website, in the newsletter, paid editorial or website push, and the clubbing events. At the height of the website, between 2005 and 2007, it generated £50,000 turnover per year while it now generates £4,000 a year, which is just enough to cover costs. While running the website like a business, Matt has always governed it putting the community before commerce, thereby keeping commercial-communal tensions to a minimum. Beyond ensuring sufficient cash flow, Matt directs the community by recruiting administrators, newsletter and features editors, organizing or allowing technological improvement of the platform, organizing offline community events, and organizing the annual HarderFaster awards for such things as best member. Administrators are volunteers and intervene only when they notice, or are informed about, behaviours violating the site's terms and conditions, for example, spamming, pornography, or illegal content. On a day-to-day basis, social control is predominantly ensured by community members themselves.

Figure 3: The HarderFaster website home page

Figure 4: The HarderFaster forum home page

Figure 5: Example of the researcher's profile page

Inspired by Kozinets' recommendations (2010) we selected HarderFaster based on a range of criteria which can be categorized in two ways. Criteria of the first type are specific to the particular research project and aim to select a context which fits the theoretical focus of the research. Criteria of the second type are general methodological criteria applying to all netnographies.

Regarding theoretical criteria, the context of the netnography suits the particular research objectives, that is (1) defining the different experiences of OCC conflict and (2) relating them to different processes of value formation. To investigate the diversity of OCC conflict experiences, the context investigated must first allow observation of ***numerous OCC conflicts***. HarderFaster is rife

with conflicts. The volume of conflict even prompted the community owner to set up a round-the-clock moderation system to control for conflicts day and night.

Beyond numerous conflict experiences, the context must present ***diverse conflict experiences*** to allow comparisons and contrasts. The community lets diverse conflicts emerge because its ownership structure and values limit censorship. First grassroots communities are created by consumers for consumers and therefore generally enjoy limited censorship by the community owner in comparison with commercial communities (Sibai et. al., 2014). Second, HarderFaster is derived from the clubbing culture in which freedom is a core value (Goulding et al., 2002) so members believe it is their right to attack other members in whatever ways for whatever reason they feel like doing so. Thus, self-censorship of conflict is also limited. Further still, HarderFaster has inherited the rebellious, anti-establishment values of the early club culture (Goulding, Shankar, Elliott and Canniford, 2009) so that conflict is actually promoted as a signal of free spirit.

Finally, the context must enable observation of ***variations of all types of value created in the community***, whether experiential value, cohesion or community culture. With regard to experiential value, the variety of sub-forums available on the platform indicates that the community seeks to derive all the kinds of experiential value previously identified in the literature review, whether purposive value (e.g. feedback on mixes sub-forum), social value (e.g. welcome sub-forum), hedonic value (e.g. lighthearted banter sub-forum) or transformational value (e.g. serious discussions sub-forum). Therefore negative and positive value formation in relation to those experiences can be observed in HarderFaster. With regard to community cohesion and culture, the community is a 13-yearold mature community. As such it has passed through the lifecycle stages of initiation, growth, and establishment, and is now in a phase of decline (cf. Colayco & Davies, 2003; Weijo, 2014). The community has thus shifted from a hotspot in the clubbing scene attracting cool young clubbers and clubbing professionals, to a casual gathering of online friends interested in a large palette of electronic music. At its birth in 2001, the purpose of the community was to enable members of the Hard Style community to keep in touch with each other during the week. In this sense, it was like the local online pub where friends and acquaintances can meet and socialize. The whole group was very cohesive. When it grew and matured between 2002 and 2007, it became a hub for the London underground clubbing scene enabling all stakeholders of the scene to interact and exchange. It was used for a number of different purposes from meeting up with clubbers, to doing business in the clubbing industry, to developing one's expertise in clubbing, to killing time when bored at work. During this phase of establishment, the group consisted of a system of loosely connected cohesive cliques. In the phase of decline, starting around 2007 after the introduction of Facebook, tensions emerged about the purpose of the community and it became a gladiator forum with constant disagreements with regard to what the community should be. In its present plateau stage, it primarily offers friends who don't see each other very often a way to keep in touch. In the last two stages, most members decreased their engagement, indicating

reduced community cohesion. The cohesion and culture of the HarderFaster community have thus sufficiently changed and evolved through the years to be able to study the role of OCC conflict in those changes.

Regarding general netnographic criteria, Kozinets (2010) further highlights the importance of selecting an ***active*** platform with recent and regular communications, an ***interactive*** platform with energetic communications between members, a platform with a ***substantial*** volume of communicators and a platform with ***rich interactions*** providing copious details and descriptions. HarderFaster is an active forum with recent and regular interactions. Since July 2001, the forum gathered over 20,000 members and 7.4 million posts, an average of over 1,500 posts per day over 13 years. In its heyday, HarderFaster attracted 1,000 visitors per day with a maximum of 400 registered members connected at the same time. The forum is much less crowded today but it still gathers a substantial number of contributions. Between the 27th February 2013 and the 5th April 2013 it gathered an average of 17 threads per day consisting of 199 posts and eliciting an average of 10 responses. The forum is also interactive with two-way communication between participants. The longest discussion thread identified has around 500 comments and encompasses 250 pdf pages. The level of activity and interactivity on the forum is substantial, enabling study of a critical mass of communicators. Finally, certain archived interactions are detail rich with members using a variety of means to express their opinions and ideas including text, poetry, pictures, videos, emoticons and hyperlinks.

Table 8: Descriptives of the focal site

Selection criteria		**Fitting characteristics of the netnographic site**
Theoretical criteria	Frequent conflicts	Anonymity (self-experimentation)
		Heterogeneous membership (large membership base, community of interest)
	Diverse conflicts	Grass-roots community with "laissez-faire" censorship
		Freedom as core value disinhibiting aggressive urges
	Variations in experiential value	The community serves purposive, social, transformational and hedonic needs
	Variations in cohesion and culture	Community has gone through lifecycles of initiation, growth, establishment and is currently in decline
General netnographic criteria	Active community	1,500 posts per day over 13 years
	Interactive community	In 2013, it gathered an average of 199 posts in 17 threads per day
	Substantial community	20,000 members and more than 7.4 million posts archived
	Data rich interactions	Forum-based community enabling long in-depth conversations

3.7. Methodology

With the context selected, the netnography was conducted following the process outlined by Kozinets (2010). This involves a range of activities related to data collection (planning, ethics, entrée, and data collection itself), data analysis and data representation. The data collection and data analysis process are presented in this section while discussion of data representation forms the next chapter on findings.

3.7.1. Data collection

Planning

Planning consisted of familiarizing me with the community and thinking through potential ethical problems. Gaining familiarity with the community consisted of spending several dozen hours surfing the website observing its *technological structure* (how the website is organized beyond the forums, how the forums themselves are structured, which communication channels are available for members), its *size* and *activity* (number of members, number of daily interactions). The more demanding task for me was to familiarize myself with the community's *culture* (the community's vocabulary, symbols, myths, rituals, shared day-to-day happenings, vision, values, and rules whether policies or norms). For this purpose I collected threads and analyzed them based on their classification as "Classic Threads", that is forming the official history of the community, because they were deemed particularly representative of the website's culture (e.g. Terms and conditions, FAQ, list of emoticons created especially for the website, recurrent behaviours). This initial sample was collected during the netnography and led to the creation of a sample of 66 threads representing 4,189 messages and 1,117 pdf pages (NCapture pdf). Appendix 2 provides an overview of this data set.

In keeping with University ethical guidelines, I drafted a research proposal including a risk analysis identifying and weighing the harm the research could potentially do to community members. The risk analysis was conducted based on two questions: (1) should the online site be considered a private or a public site? (2) What constitutes informed consent in cyberspace? The document was submitted to the University Ethics Committee on 27/11/2012 and approved by the Committee on 28/01/2013 (see Appendix 3). Generally, it was considered that the forum is a public site so posting to this website can be considered a public act and asking members for their consent is not formally required. Yet, following Kozinets' (2010) conservative guidelines, the research project was made public on my community profile during the phase of Entrée (see section below), when participating in offline events, when participating in the forum and when engaging in member checks. Furthermore, each stage of the research was cleared with Matt, HarderFaster's owner.

Entrée

Entrée was a two-step process. I entered the community as a member of the audience in June 2012 before becoming a poster in October 2013. In June 2012, I created my profile in the community personalizing the webpage appearance and facilitating the reading of discussion threads. I also disclosed my presence as a researcher to the moderators and the community owner. From June 2012 until October 2013, I interviewed moderators, former members and current members, but the community at large was not aware of my presence and observations. This was an opportunity to ask questions about the community's culture, its vocabulary, symbols, mythology, rituals, rules and values. In the second step in October 2013, I updated my profile and carefully crafted a message explaining how I got in touch with the community and how I now wanted to participate, posting it in the "Welcome to HarderFaster" forum (see Appendix 4). The time taken to become familiar with the community's culture before talking openly about the research objective was intended to minimize the risks of being ill received.

Data sampling

Three types of data could be collected for netnographic purposes: interview data, discussion threads and field notes. Field notes are part of a generative process and do not require sampling. However sampling choices were required with regard to interviewees and discussion threads. Sampling issues related to each type of data are now discussed.

Sampling archived discussion threads

With more than 7 million posts archived, it was impossible to read and interpret them all within the time limits of a thesis research. The dataset of discussion threads had to be a sample of the overall forum threads accounting for the diversity of conflicts on the forum as well as conflict roots and consequences. Building a dataset of threads was a three-step process. First, strategies were developed to decide which threads should be read. Second, criteria were defined to determine whether the threads related to conflict. Third, threads were evaluated for their potential to contribute to theory building, given the threads already collected.

First, strategies were followed to define **which threads should be read**. New community discussions were checked every two weeks on average between September 2012 and September 2014. The discussions were opened and rapidly read for signs of conflict. This allowed me to screen approximately half of the discussions posted during that period. Parallel to live monitoring, I mined the community's archive. To begin with, the last 100 discussion threads of each of the 21 subforums (in some cases this represented all the threads of the sub-forum) were read at the beginning of data collection to determine whether conflicts differ from one section of the forum to another. It emerged

that the “General Mayhem” subforum, the sub-forum concentrating most of the forum discussions, was also the sub-forum where conflicts were most frequent and most diverse, whether in terms of party size, object, forms of impoliteness or consequences. Then, threads were sought which involved conflictual contributors, members who are more prone to be involved in conflicts. A list of conflictual contributors was created using the results of the ‘dark side award’, a yearly nomination distributed by the members and awarded to the most controversial contributor. Interviewees were also asked whom they perceived as controversial, thus developing a list of members whose discussions are prone to involving conflict. I visited the profiles of the ten most prolific members on this list and went through their last 100 conversations looking for conflictual conversations. In addition, interviewees were asked to indicate conflicts they could remember which they believed created value for them or the community and conflicts which they believed destroy value for them or the community. This ensured that the conflicts read would be related to different consequences for social value. Finally, I snowballed, clicking on the hyperlinks posted in discussions related to conflict and using the community’s search engine to find the conflicts discussed in other threads. It is estimated that a total of approximately 8,000 threads were read using those various strategies.

Second, **criteria were defined to determine whether the threads read related to conflict**. This was achieved in two steps. First, discussion threads were rapidly skim read looking for easily identifiable proxies of the presence of conflict. The presence of words directly related to conflict such as “conflict”, “flame”, “flame war”, “raging”, “baiting”, “trolling”, “duel”, “bullying”, “mobbing”, “falling out”, “flounce”, “keyboard warrior”, “stir”, “bait” as well the presence of conflict related emoticons (40 out of 247 available on the forum) were used as proxies. These choices are based on the assumption that participants themselves generally recognize it when a conversation relates to conflict and mention it in the conversation. Very long posts were also used as an initial hint that a conflict might be occurring. This is based on text mining studies indicating that conflictual online conversations often include longer posts (Mishne, 2007). Second, discussion threads were read carefully to ascertain the presence of conflict markers: (1) misalignment of interests over a particular object (2) between community members leading to (3) face threatening acts or losing face. All three markers had to be present for a thread to qualify as a conflict thread. Relevant discussion threads related to conflict in two different ways. The first category of threads was discussions of conflict where members commented on conflict which happened in another thread. The second category of threads was conflictual discussion, namely discussions where conflict unfolds.

As the volume of text gathered rapidly grew, it rapidly appeared that collecting all conflict related threads would be impractical given the hermeneutic interpretation ahead. Also, downloading the threads itself was a time consuming process due to software limitations. Web pages needed to be downloaded one by one via the Ncapture browser add-on, before importing them into NVivo, exporting them as pdfs, merging the different pages into a single pdf document and reimporting into

NVivo. I therefore decided to assess the ***potential of the discussion threads relating to conflict to contribute to theory building***. Threads related to conflict but which lacked richness and novelty were not downloaded nor added to the dataset of threads. Threads were deemed rich when they included many comments related to conflict or the comments were long and insightful. Threads were considered novel when they had the potential to change my interpretation of the different conflict performances, their roots or their consequences. As the discussion threads were collected and interpreted in parallel, after some time during the two year process, I was able to determine quite accurately whether a thread related to conflict had something new or different with a potential to further my theory. Threads which seemed like replicas of threads previously collected and threads that were not rich were not collected.

The process of thread sampling stopped once theoretical saturation was reached two years after it started. For more details on the criteria defining theoretical saturation see the section on the process of hermeneutic interpretation page 89. In total, the 100 threads in relation to conflict that are part of the data set that I systematically analysed were published between 19/08/2003 and 14/10/2014 representing 14,017 posts and 3,585 pdf pages (NCapture pdfs). 68 of those threads are conflict examples representing 11,474 comments over 2,977 pages. This represents approximately two-thirds of the total content sampled. 32 of those threads are discussions about conflict representing 2543 comments over 608 pages. This represents one-third of the total content sampled. For a clearer sense of the large size of this dataset, the other ethnographic study published on conflict in OCCs by Husemann et al. (2015) was based on 18 threads representing 1,000 comments. For an overview of the conflict-related threads refer to Appendix 5.

Sampling interviewees

With over 20,000 members over the years it was necessary to sample interviewees. Sampling of interviewees was purposive rather than random. This is because community members who have lived through a lot of community conflict were assumed to be more useful interviewees as they could discuss a wide range of conflict experiences. All interviewees selected were therefore present or past core members who have a long membership history. Different profiles of potential interviewees were distinguished depending on whether the primary purpose of the interview was to understand the influence of conflict on value formation at the community level or the individual level. While all interviewees were probed on both aspects, they were sampled based on this criteria to ensure that "expert" in-depth opinions on each aspect were collected.

To understand the influence of OCC conflict on value formation at the community level (community cohesion, community culture), community moderators were the most suitable interviewees since their role is to govern the platform to create value for the community as a whole.

They are therefore the members with the most acute understanding of community level dynamics. All three moderators of the community today were therefore interviewed.

Regarding individual level value formation, ongoing observation of the community indicated that some community members find that conflict creates value while others find that it destroys value. To understand both sides of individual level value formation it was therefore necessary to sample both types of members. Two conflict-seeking and two conflict-averse individuals were contacted and interviewed. Conflict-seeking individuals were identified from ongoing observation of the community and interviews with moderators. Two members were contacted and accepted to be interviewed. The first conflict-averse individual was the gate keeper who introduced me to the community. The second conflict-averse individual was identified and contacted thanks to ongoing observation and participation in the community.

In total seven members were sampled for in-depth interviews. Members were interviewed between June 2012 and September 2014 with interviews lasting between 40 minutes and 3 hours. This represents close to 12 hours of discussion and 240 pages of transcripts. Table 9 provides an overview of the data set derived from interviews.

Table 9: List of in-depth interviews

Interviewee number	**Type of interviewee**	**Medium for interview**	**Interview length**	**Transcript length***
A	Forum owner and moderator	Face to face	1.5 hours	21 pages
B	Forum moderator	Face to face	2 hours	37 pages
C	Forum moderator	Video Call	1.5 hours	37 pages
D	Conflict seeking member	Face to face	1.5 hours	56 pages
E	Conflict seeking member	Face to face	3 hours	56 pages
F	Conflict averse member	Telephone	40 minutes	9 pages
G	Conflict averse member	Face to face	1.5 hours	24 pages

*double-spaced, Times New Roman, font 12

Data collection

Data collection spread over 30 months from June 2012 until December 2014. Three types of data were collected: discussion threads, interviews data and field notes. Discussion threads were first downloaded during the phase of entrée to characterize the community's culture, downloading "Classic Threads" and "Memory lane" threads. I then visited the forum every two weeks to enable skimming

of the discussions of the past week and mining the community's archive with the aim of finding conflict related discussions to download. I downloaded the discussions using the software NVivo 10 from QSR International. This Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) was selected because it was the only software including a module (NCapture) that enabled the capture of any webpage on the Internet in a codable pdf format. This functionality saved considerable time by reducing the number of actions necessary for capturing online data. It also enabled analysis of discussion threads and artifacts in situ, i.e. I read data as members would, in an unaltered format.

Regarding interviews, solicitation emails, a background sheet presenting the research project and a consent form were designed beforehand. A preliminary interview guide was also created providing a few loosely structured interview prompts around the main research questions. Depending on the interviewee's position in the community, and as themes emerged throughout the research process, the prompts evolved to focus on specific sub-questions. I tried to conduct interviews face-to-face as much as possible. This felt particularly important at the beginning of the netnography when I was a complete stranger to the community and needed to build trust. It is also easier to interpret what members mean if one can observe their face and body language during the interview. Face-to-face interviews were conducted in Cafes and in one case, at home. However conducting face to face interviews was not always possible, so interviews were also conducted via Skype and telephone (see Table 9). Interviews were systematically transcribed and added to the NVivo data base.

My engagement with the field of research did not stop at collecting conflict threads and interviewing a few members. Since HarderFaster members were bonded by a shared interest in electronic dance music and clubbing, I embraced this consumption activity, first listening to DJs promoted on the website. However London is one of the historical sources of EDM and clubbing and has a strong and diverse clubbing culture significantly different from that of my home country France or his city of residence, Birmingham. I thus moved to London and participated in various clubbing events to better understand how it feels and what it means to go clubbing in London, to grasp the diversity of clubbing communities co-existing there, and to gauge the position of HarderFaster in this constellation. From psy-trance parties in South London's shabby clubs, to East-London's fancy warehouses filled with techno music, all the way to a gay-friendly club in Soho, from an all-night long illegal rave party in the outskirts of West-London to afternoon parties in pubs and a heavily controlled mega club night in central London, I enthusiastically tested out a variety of clubbing events. I also attended several events which were typical HarderFaster rendez-vous. Overall the researcher attended 14 clubbing events. Table 10 gives an overview of them.

Participation in these clubbing events was vital for the successful development of the research project as it allowed me to contextualize behaviours on HarderFaster and minimize potential misinterpretations. The experiences gathered through these events were compiled in field notes. Field

notes were reflective, describing my thoughts about the event, the event's participants and how all of this related to forum members' discourses on the forum. Many discourses which appeared very abstract suddenly seemed much more concrete with a participant perspective. Reflecting on such moments both during and after events was thus an opportunity to develop useful interpretations. Field notes were also used to summarize the content of informal interviews with community members and former community members encountered during events. In total, 17 pages of field notes (double-spaced, Times New, font 12) were taken during clubbing events. Beyond field notes, participating in such events was also an opportunity to bond with community members, build rapport and legitimacy, and arrange interviews.

Table 10: List of offline clubbing events attended

Type of event	**Date**	**Venue**	**Clubbing night**
General clubbing event	August 2013	The Q bar, Soho	-
	December 2013	The Fabric, Farringdon	-
	January 2014	Crucifix Lane, London Bridge	Tribal Village
	January 2014	Club 414, Brixton	Futurity
	March 2014	A warehouse in West London…	Secret Soma
	May 2014	Crucifix Lane, London Bridge	Tribal Village
HarderFaster specific event	June 2013	Jamm, Brixton	Astral Circus
	July 2013	The Prince of Wales / Brixton Club House, Brixton	Lost Dawn
	December 2013	The Union, Vauxhall	HarderFaster Christmas Party
	April 2014	Charterhouse Bar, Barbican	Thirsty Thursday
	May 2014	The Prince of Wales / Brixton Club House, Brixton	Lost Dawn
	July 2014	Clapham Common	HarderFaster 13th picnic
	September 2014	The Prince of Wales / Brixton Club House, Brixton	Lost Dawn
	December 2014	Club 414, Brixton	Alumni
	December 2014	The Union, Vauxhall	HarderFaster Christmas Party

Field notes were also taken in relation to participation on the forum. Reflective notes were taken when posting on the forum, exchanging with forum members via email, Skype and Facebook, and reading discussions threads. Eight pages of formal field notes (A4, single spaced, Times New Roman, font 12) were taken. These were used to triangulate the findings derived from interviews and discussion threads, mainly in relation to the diversity of meanings of conflict and emotions associated with conflict. This participant experience was also integrated with findings through memos written continuously during the data collection and analysis process.

As a result of this long process of data collection, a very large data set combining discussion threads, interview transcripts and field notes was compiled. Table 11 provides a quantitative overview of the data set.

Table 11: Overview of combined data set

Type of data		**Volume**
Archival data	Discussion threads	100 threads 3,585 pdf pages and 14,017 posts (both conflict and culture related threads)
Elicited data	Interview	7 recorded interviews totaling 12 hours and 240 transcript pages (A4, double spaced, Times New Roman double spaced, font 12)
Field notes	Online	8 Microsoft Word pages of field notes (A4, single spaced, Times New Roman, font 12)
	Offline (clubs)	25 pages of Microsoft Word field notes (A4, single spaced, Times New Roman, font 12)

3.7.2. Data interpretation

Data was interpreted following the principles of grounded theory. The interpretation process involved iterative analysis (coding) and synthesis (memos) until a satisfactory fit between data and its interpretation was obtained. Analysis and synthesis cycles were executed using inductive strategies where syntheses were built from data by comparing codes. It also involved deductive strategies where syntheses were formulated spontaneously as a result of continuous engagement with the data and the literature. Here, syntheses were applied to data, with the aim of coding data strips using syntheses to test their validity. In the following sections, the general process followed for data analysis is first described in more detail. Second, how the different types of data sets were used to create a solid empirical account is explained. Third, the different interpretive phases representing the milestones of

the interpretation process are reported. Fourth, the final outcome of the interpretation process is briefly explained.

The interpretation process

The process of hermeneutic interpretation

Data analysis in grounded theory follows the principles of hermeneutics, the iterative process of breaking down data into elements and reconstructing a coherent whole with the elements (cf. Fischer & Otnes, 2006). Based on the research questions, conflict performances, their drivers and their consequences for value formation served as the reference point guiding thinking throughout the hermeneutic analysis. As OCC conflict was conceptualized, from the literature review, as an experience, conflict experience thus served as the primary unit of analysis. When analyzing conflict examples in forum archives, OCC conflict was operationalized at the level of the conversation, i.e. a series of posts bound by a common focus and involving several persons. Conversations could span an entire discussion thread, part of a discussion thread, or several related discussion threads. When analyzing interviews, field notes and discussion threads which were discourses about conflict, conflict experience was operationalized as a chunk of text relating to a particular type of conflict discussion (e.g. trolling, flame, mobbing or gang war).

Hermeneutic interpretation is a cyclical process of interpretation which can be broken down into four phases: precoding interpretation, first cycle interpretation, second cycle interpretation and evaluation (Saldana, 2012; Kozinets, 2010). During the phases of precoding, first cycle and second cycle the authors used analytical codes and synthetic memos. Precoding consists of all the activities conducted to record the first impressions created by a piece of data. First cycle interpretation aims at mapping all the interesting elements in the data and organizing them in a number of preliminary groupings. First cycle analysis is called initial coding or open coding in orthodox grounded theory (cf. Strauss & Corbin, 1990), but I adopt Saldana's (2012) label of first cycle analysis as it gives a more balanced role to coding and memoing. Second cycle analysis (also called axial coding) aims at integrating and abstracting the codes and memos written during the first cycle to build a more unified theory synthesizing the whole corpus of data (cf. Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Evaluation of the quality of the interpretation obtained determines whether analysis is finished or if corrective measures are needed (cf. Kozinets, 2010). The different steps involved in hermeneutic interpretation were conducted in various orders due to the cyclical and iterative nature of the work. However, in this section, a linear description of the analytical process is given for greater clarity. Table 12 below offers an overview of the method followed to analyze the data.

Table 12: The different steps followed to conduct hermeneutic interpretation

Interpretative phases	**Analytical codes**	**Synthetic memos**
Precoding phase	Holistic coding Striking quotes Turn-taking moments	Source summary Source overall meaning Source novelty and interest
First analytical cycle	Attribute coding Descriptive coding Structural coding	Reflections on the initial constructs and the relationships between them Rough code book
Second analytical cycle	Pattern coding Focused coding Axial coding Causation/theoretical coding	Word trees Diagrams Theming categories Synthesis of first cycle memos
Evaluation	Resonance: does the theoretical framework resonate with intuitive field knowledge? Theoretical saturation: did new concepts and relationships emerge from data analysis? Literacy: did additional literature shed new light or provide a competing explanation? Code coherence: Is the code book coherent? Are there any outliers remaining?	

Precoding - Analysis in the precoding phase involved writing analytical codes and observational and synthetic memos. Codes are InVivo codes capturing large blocks of text (holistic coding), shorter striking elements worthy of attention or turning-taking moments marking the separation between different sections of data. Memos in that phase summarized the raw facts embedded in the data, the overall meaning of the piece of data, and what is particularly interesting, novel or surprising about it.

First cycle interpretation - Coding in first cycle analysis started with systematically breaking down data into discrete parts, closely examining each part and comparing parts for similarities and differences. An eclectic mix of coding approaches was used during first cycle coding. Attributes were first coded to capture formal characteristics of the data such as date and place of collection and who participated in the discussion. Descriptive codes were then created, inventorying the topics explicitly addressed in the data and structural codes inventorying which topics addressed which research (sub-) question(s). Memos were written freely, recording emerging thoughts and trying to focus attention on potential constructs and their relationships.

Second cycle interpretation - In second cycle interpretation codes were systematically compared to one another across sources to define constructs, overarching categories or themes, and relationships between them. This involved several specific coding techniques: pattern coding, focused coding, axial coding and causation coding. Pattern coding consists of grouping codes into categories and subcategories to obtain a more parsimonious coding structure. This was followed by focused coding,

i.e. defining the most salient or important categories. Once the most important categories were defined, multiple types of conflict experiences emerged from data so that axial coding was used. Axial coding consists of identifying categories' attributes and dimensions to organize those attributes, whether along a continuum or within categories (e.g. Appendix 6). Finally causation coding was used to link conflict experiences with sources of conflict and consequences of conflict (e.g. Appendix 7). Coding was informed by a variety of memos that helped to develop second cycle codes and to build relationships between them. Codes were first organized into word trees within NVivo 10 to visualize how they relate to one another (e.g. Appendix 8). Diagrams were drawn to gain a visual understanding of how the categories relate to one another (e.g. diagrams provided in Appendix 6 and 7). Categories (concepts and constructs) were transformed into themes (sentences) to help elaborate on their meanings. Finally first cycle memos were read and brought together into meta-memos. Second cycle interpretations gradually led to the creation of a coherent code book, relating codes to concepts and comparing concepts to one another. The code book was the basis for the write-up of the final synthesis of findings and is therefore presented in the findings chapter.

Interpretation evaluation - As mentioned earlier, hermeneutic interpretation is iterative. The interpretive process starts with initial interpretations which lead to evaluation of the quality the interpretation, which leads to new interpretations, and so on. Evaluating how well interpretations fit with the data is therefore an important part of the interpretative process. Following the principles of grounded theory, evaluation was achieved by engaging in constant comparisons of data, codes and memos (cf. Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Fischer and Otnes, 2006). This evaluation method required the researcher (1) to define which piece of data is included in the comparison, and (2) to define evaluative criteria.

Data set - The data set used to compare codes and memos with data varies, depending on the phase of interpretation. During first cycle interpretations, codes and memos were compared to the individual pieces of data they were built from. This could be an interview transcript, a discussion thread or field notes taken on a specific occasion. Comparison involved assessing whether each code and memo accurately represented the data. During second cycle interpretations the size of the data set included in the evaluation grew to include multiple sources. Hence, comparisons involved assessing whether similar codes and memos represented similar phenomena in the data and whether different codes and memos represented different phenomena. The fit of codes and memos with data was evaluated across data of the same kind, i.e. across discussion threads, across interview transcripts and across field notes. When an acceptable fit was obtained for data of the same type, comparisons were made between data of different types.

Criteria – Beyond the definition of the data to use for comparison, constant comparison required developing criteria defining what constitutes an accurate representation of data, or a good fit of codes

and memos with data. Kozinets (2010) proposed 10 criteria adapted from positivist, realist, post-modern and post-structural thought to evaluate interpretations. He advises netnographers to select criteria within the list which fit their purposes and the standards of the academic field in which they work. I used resonance, theoretical saturation, literacy and coherence.

Resonance is attained when a person, after careful critical evaluation and reflexive thinking, is convinced that the theoretical framework developed is representative of the context under investigation (Kozinets, 2010). They are firmly convinced that the questions asked when investigating the context are relevant, the constructs and relationships between them meaningfully organize the data, and that no better explanation or organization can be found. These holistic and subjective criteria, derived from post-modernist thought, proved to be helpful throughout the analytical process. Members checks with community members were performed throughout the study to test inter-subjective resonance and hence increase certainty that the theoretical framework is resonant. Informal member checks with community members were performed at the end of the last two interviews conducted. I then presented my ideas and asked for the interviewee's opinion. Formal member checks were also conducted at the end of the study. Three members read the findings chapter and gave some feedback on it. Feedback was generally very positive, with members only asking for a few clarifications or specifications in a few paragraphs.

Theoretical saturation is attained when no more concepts and links between concepts emerge from analyzing more data (cf. Glaser and Strauss, 1967). This indicates *internal completeness*, that is, given the researcher's knowledge and the research questions guiding the investigation, the interpretation has explored all constructs and conceptual relationships found in the context studied.

Literacy means that no more literature is found providing relevant, novel information about the phenomena observed in the data (cf. Fischer and Otnes, 2006). Literacy indicates *external completeness*, that is, given the existing state of scientific knowledge, the research questions guiding the investigation are relevant and no other constructs and conceptual relationships can provide a better representation of the phenomena observed than the ones developed by the researcher.

Code coherence is attained when the analytical codes developed are systematically organized in reference to one another to form constructs and conceptual relationships and no outliers remain. These analytical criteria, again derived from post-positivist thought, indicate accuracy or "*internal validity*", that is, the conceptual framework developed reflects the content of the data set utilized given the questions asked (cf. Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Combining data sources

Interviews, discussion threads and field notes were all useful to explore OCC conflict meanings, their drivers and their consequences for individual value, collective engagement and community culture. However, each type of data has specificities which made it best fitted for certain aspects of theory building. This section describes how the conjoint use of the three types of data helped building a solid interpretation of data. Table 13 gives an overview of the use of the different types of data for theory building.

Table 13: Overview of the use of the different types of data for theory building

Type of data	**Main uses**
Interviews	- Familiarizing with the community - Identifying the lived meanings of conflict - Understanding the long term consequences of conflict at a community level - (Dis)confirming interpretations of conflict examples - (Dis)confirming the overall theory
Discussion threads	
- Conflict examples	- Understanding why conflict emerges on the short term - Understanding how the different logics of conflict are constructed - Understanding the consequences of conflict for individual value and short term collective engagement
- Discussions of conflict	- Understanding the long term consequences of conflict for collective engagement and community culture
Field notes	
- Descriptive field notes	- Understanding how newbies experience conflict and the consequences for their behavior
- Reflexive field notes	- Stimulating reflexive thinking when interpreting the other types of data

Interviews were first useful at the beginning of the research to facilitate familiarisation with the community. Interviewees were able to capitalize on their long experience as community members to provide information in a number of areas. They were able to share information on who are the most active participants, what are their roles, who are the community leaders, what are the most popular topics, community history, who are the rival communities, what are the demographics and interests of the members, what are the main practices and rituals of the community. Second, interviewees were able to identify the main types of conflict meanings in the community thanks to their wealth of experience as conflict participants. For example, the widespread presence of banter conflict, mobbing and trolling was stressed very early on, inviting me to pay attention to these types of logics in the discussion threads. Third, interviewees were able interpret the long term consequences of conflict at the community level as they were able to capitalize on their long experience as both parties and third-

parties in conflict to communicate their own interpretations. For example, they could highlight how trolling could be fun in the short term but nurtured suspicion and distrust on the long term. Community moderators were also as their role gave them an advantageous overview on community dynamics. Fourth, interviewees could (dis)confirm my interpretation of the conflict examples analysed in discussion threads. Interviewees were able to provide some complementary information like relational history between the parties, as well as private and offline discussions which occurred parallel to the thread. They were also able to explain ambiguities in the discussion threads, explaining specialised vocabulary, acronyms, symbols and cultural references. Finally, interviewees provided useful feedback on the emerging theory as I was able to discuss my emerging interpretations over longer conversations with some of them.

Regarding discussion threads, two kinds were collected: conflict examples and discussions about conflict. Both types of thread allowed exploration of the different logics of conflict, their drivers and their consequences. However, each type of discussion thread also had specific advantages. Conflict examples were particularly useful to analyse short term conflict dynamics. As such, they allowed characterizing the short term drivers for the emergence of conflict, the different conflicts logics, the value of the conflict experience for the individual participants and the short term consequences of participating in the conflict for collective engagement, i.e. participants' engagement with the website during and just after the conflict as well as the questioning or reinforcement of social hierarchy via conflict. Discussions of conflict were very useful to understand the long term consequences of conflict in terms of collective engagement and community culture. Discussions of conflict highlighted how conflict influences the transformation of norms shaping cohesion in the community. Discussions of conflicts were also very useful to understand the cultural consequences of conflict. Interviewees often found it difficult to articulate them and were only able to highlight how new rules or website functionalities were created as a result of conflict. Conversely discussions about conflict indicated which values, emotions and activities associated with the conflict resonate with community members, as well as which narratives and vocabulary are prevalent because of their collective nature.

Regarding field notes two types of field notes were collected: descriptive and reflexive field notes. Descriptive field notes allowed me to gain an in-depth understanding of how a newbie experiences conflict in the community and how it affects their behaviour. Reflexive field notes stimulated reflexive thinking when interpreting the other types of data, helping me make sense of what was happening but also ensuring self-consciousness and self-interrogation about what I observed and why I paid attention to it.

The different moments of the interpretation

The analytical process described above was iterative and was therefore (re)conducted a number of times. For transparency purposes, the different moments of the analysis are summarized here. Note that the analysis began as predominantly bottom-up and evolved gradually to become predominantly top-down.

Table 14: Chronological account of the analytical process

Round	Period	Concepts investigated	Primary coding methods	Output
1	June–October 2012	Conflict	Attribute, descriptive, structural versus pattern focused	Typology of online conflicts based on their external markers (parties, behaviors, objects)
2	October 2012 – January 2013	Conflict, social capital	As round 1 + value, emotion, axial	Typology of online conflicts based on the different meanings associated with conflict
3	January–March 2013	Conflict, social capital, drama	As round 2 + dramaturgical	Two meanings of conflicts appear essential: personal conflict and dramatic conflict
4	March – September 2013	Conflict, social capital, performance (ritual, drama, game), frame, emotions	As round 3 + performance, game, ritual, frame	Dramatic conflict is only one type of performance among several Different people can frame the same conflict differently The effect of conflict on social capital is mediated by emotions
5	September 2013 – January 2014	As round 4	As round 4 + elaborate, propositions, taxonomic coding	Development of a coding framework to see if coding incoherency can be found. The other three evaluation criteria were already satisfied
6	January 2014 – September 2014	Conflict, emotions, community cohesion, community culture, public nature of interaction	As round 5	Writing up of findings to enhance coherence of memos and consistency between final conclusions and codes

The end result

At the end of the interpretation process every conflict instance in the dataset had been associated with a particular meanings, particular drivers and particular consequences for individual value, collective engagement and community culture.

All the conflicts were analysed through the lens of performance theory so that all conflict were considered to be performances. However community members appeared to attach different meanings to conflicts based on the clarity of the performance, that is whether participants are aware of that the conflict is a performance and which participants are. In implicit conflict performances none of the participants are aware that the conflict is a performance. Participants in implicit conflict performances live them as events where parties send personal attacks on one another and so I call them personal conflicts. In explicit conflict performances, all participants are aware the conflict is a performance. Participants in explicit conflict performances live them as play and so I call them played conflict. In uncertain conflict performances, the conflict has characteristics of both personal and played conflict. Two types of uncertain conflict performances emerged from the data. In the first type, participants are not sure whether the conflict is personal or played. The nature of the conflict is ambiguous. This type of conflict was lived by onlookers as reality show so I call them reality show conflict. In second type of uncertain conflict performance frames are misaligned: one party is aware that the conflict is a performance but the other party is not. Onlookers can be aware that the conflict is a performance or not, depending on the members and the conflict. Participants who are aware that this type of conflict is a performance lived it as "trolling" and so I call it conflict trolling conflict.

The emergence of different types of conflict performances was found to be rooted in computer-mediation, the community context, and specificities of the conflict interaction or individual differences. Each of those factors can foster the emergence of several types of conflict performances. Computer-mediated communication fosters the emergence of feelings of disinhibition due to perceived anonymity and physical distance. This nurtures the emergence personal conflict. However computer-mediated communication also involves communicating via an avatar on a forum organised as a stage with public and private channels of communication. This fosters self-distantiation and impression management which favour the emergence of played conflicts. Finally the absence of non-verbal cues in written computer-mediated communication and the co-presence of conversations create uncertainty about the meaning of conflicts favouring the emergence of reality show and trolling conflict. The communal context also nurtures the emergence of different types of conflict performances. The heterogeneity of social backgrounds, sub-tribe affiliations and understandings of the community foster tensions giving birth to personal conflict. Communal norms give birth to redressive played conflict when a member violates them. Heterogeneous relationship strengths between the different members and heterogeneous roles and positions foster diverging interpretation of conflicts and the development

of uncertain conflicts. Regarding the characteristics of the conflictual conversation itself, certain topics are typically viewed serious in the community (e.g. politics, religion, electronica, community culture) so that conflict focused on those topics typically take the shape of personal conflicts. When the script of the conflictual conversation resembles that of a game with a goal, rules and a point counting system, it favours the framing of conflict as played. When the script resembles that of soap opera (intimate topic of discussion, starts in medias res, action structure creates narrative tension) nurtures onlookers interpretation of the conflict as reality show. When the script resembles that of a prank game (goal, rules involving teasing, points) it fosters onlookers' interpretation of the conflict as trolling. Since each conflict root can be a source of different types of conflict performances, it is their combination which explains why a specific conflict develops as one type of performance or another. Depending on the participants' position in the community, the way the interaction is organized and individual specificities of the conflict participant, the conflict performance takes on form of the other

Each type of conflict was also associated with particular consequences. Personal conflicts were associated with negative individual experiences, reduced collective engagement and regarding community culture, dilution of communal teleo-affective structures, reinforcement of the understanding of the community as heterogeneous, and the creation of rules to prevent or manage conflict. Played conflicts were associated with positive individual experiences, enhanced collective engagement and, regarding community culture, reinforcement of freedom, self-confidence and play as communal values, banter and ranting as a prescribed activity and the creation of shared narratives. Reality show conflict was associated with negative individual experiences for the parties, positive individual experiences for the audience, enhanced collective engagement, and regarding community culture, reinforcement of entertainment and voyeurism as communal value, reality show watching as a prescribed activity and the creation of shared narratives and vocabulary. Finally, trolling conflict was associated with positive individual experience for the troll but negative individual experience for the party trolled. For the audience it was often associated with positive experience in the short term but negative experience in the long term. Trolling was associated with reduced collective engagement Regarding community culture, trolling had mixed effects, diluting communal teleo-affective structures and leading to the creation of procedures to prevent and manage trolling but also shared narratives promoting shared understanding. For more details on the final analytical framework, see the complete code book in Appendix 9 or Tables 15 to 18 in the findings section..

Chapter 5: Findings

Warning!

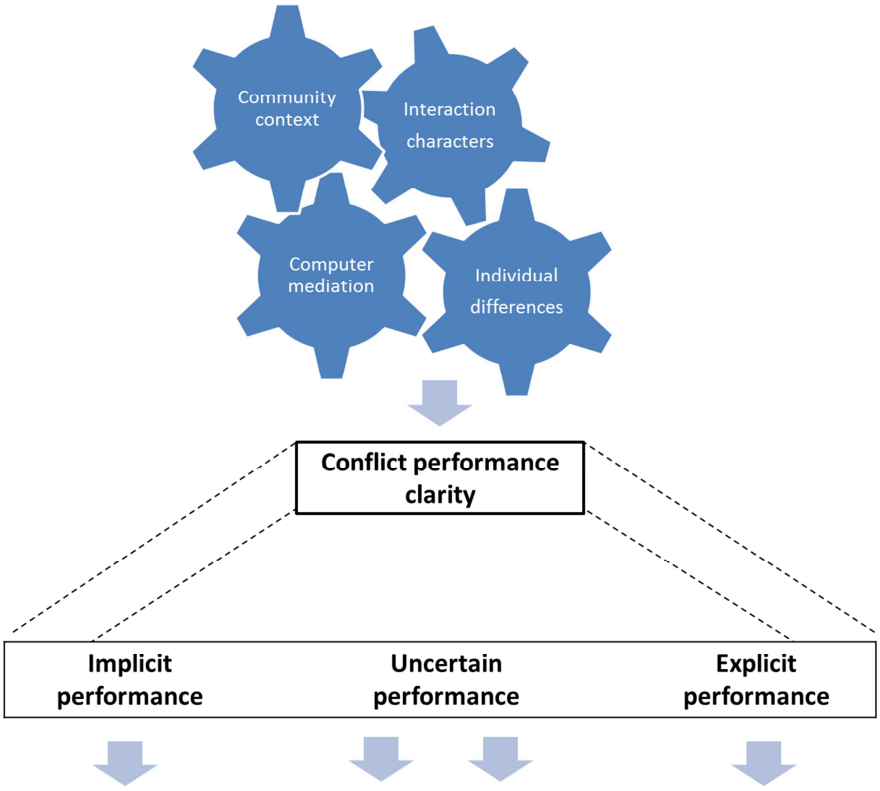
Parts of the findings chapter contain explicit written material, and may be considered obscene or offensive by some readers. However this research focuses on offense and the methodology requires the reporting of thick, detailed descriptions of the findings. To censor this section would not be in accordance with the methodology. The author therefore chose not to censor the following material, but readers are considered adequately warned.

Nota Bene

When quoting posts in the findings chapter, emoticons could not be integrated smoothly because of Microsoft Word limitations. Emoticons are therefore represented in quotes by a word between brackets. For example: "[blush]" or "[suspicious]". Also note that the community members' names were changed to warrant anonymity.

The aim of this netnography is to investigate the variety of conflicts occurring in the community studied, the drivers of those conflicts, and their consequences for social value formation. Different types of conflict emerged from the interpretation of data with the specific drivers and consequences. The different conflicts were distinguished based on the transparency of their performance. In personal conflicts all participants are unaware that they are performed so the performance is implicit. In played conflict by contrast all participants view the conflict as played out by performers for an audience so the performance is explicit. In a number of cases conflicts had features of both personal and played conflict so the nature of the performance is uncertain. Two configurations where performance is uncertain emerged. In reality show conflict, the nature of the performance is ambiguous for all participants: they hesitate between framing the conflict as personal or played. In trolling conflict parties' interpretations are misaligned: the troll views the conflict as play while the trolled party views it as personal and onlookers are divided. This chapter details the characteristics of the different types of conflicts, their drivers, and their consequences for value formation. Personal conflict, conflict as implicit performance is first discussed, followed by played conflict, conflict as explicit performance. Subsequently, reality show and trolling conflict, conflicts as uncertain performance are presented. To enhance clarity of the expose, the conceptual framework derived from the data is given before findings are described in Figure 6. For an overview of the discussion threads in the data set, see Table 19 at the end.

Figure 6: Conceptual framework derived from the data



	Personal conflict	Trolling conflict	Reality show conflict	Played conflict
Individual value	Negative experience	Negative experience for the trolled party Positive experience for the troll	Negative experience for the parties Positive experience for onlookers	Positive experience
Collective engagement	Reduced collective engagement	Reduced collective engagement	Enhanced collective engagement	Enhanced collective engagement
Community culture	Reinforcement of the belief that the community collates heterogeneous world-views	Reinforcement of the belief that the community collates heterogeneous understandings of freedom and humour	Reinforcement of entertainment, voyeurism, and online reality show watching as a prescribed values and activities	Reinforcement of freedom, self-confidence and humour, banter and ranting as prescribed values and activities
	Creation of rules meant to pre-empt and resolve conflict	Creation of rules meant to pre-empt and resolve conflict		
		Creation of shared narratives	Creation of shared narratives and vocabulary	Creation of shared narratives and hierarchy

5.1. Personal conflict: conflict as implicit performance

In the following section conflicts unfolding as implicit performances, their sources, and their influence on social value formation are elaborated upon. For an overview, see Table 15 at the end of this section.

5.1.1. Characteristics of personal conflict

When conflicts are implicit performances, participants remain unaware that the event is a performance. They behave spontaneously, i.e. unreflexively. Parties address each other without thinking about the public nature of the event, ignoring onlookers. As a result the conflict focuses on parties' identities, the object of the conflict is the definition of party's worthiness. This manifests with parties attaching self-authenticating meanings to their conflict behaviors: self-assertion and self-defense. In conflicts organized as implicit performances, other community members acknowledge parties' personal involvement. As a result they take on the roles of mediators or judges, addressing parties to influence the conflicts dynamics, rather than take a back seat as audience members. This can drag them to involuntarily gang up with a party when the other party turns against them.

Take example 1 of a conflict between two regular members whom I call Martin and Linda. While Linda used the forum to engage in casual conversations and just hang out with a group of friends, Martin "bearished" his language online, that is played up the traits of what he discussed as he liked online interactions to be extraordinary experiences and he expected other members to do the same. As a result, Linda's posts irritated Martin and so, at one point, he started abusing her on the forum. The text below illustrating this conflict is constructed from a series of exchange which unfold in several discussion threads.

> "Linda: Some might be happy but I am sad (…) i am forced to do this educational activities to get my visa...(…) i had a very hard week it's kind of people telling me what to do and where to go. i hate it
>
> Martin: I hope you're sitting there with tears rolling down your fat little cheeks, weeping for your broken life.
>
> Linda: why do you care? (...) do you have nobody else to talk to? (…) oh and before you say you don't i will be one in front of you and say yes ..you cared enough to post
>
> Martin: There's something incredibly satisfying about telling an ugly bitch exactly how fucking minging she is
>
> Linda: you are a minger
>
> Martin: Mingfest.

Linda : oh i see but i am still better than you

Martin: Why, because you're the most hated member on HF? Bravo, bra-fucking-vo.

Linda : hey was actually talking about the second most loved

Martin: They're laughing at you, not with you.

Linda: Haha get a life buddie

Martin: I will when you will.

Linda: only when we snog

Martin: Yeah yo feel special. Feel special that I want you dead.

Jenny: Don't be mean! I like Linda, she's funny and i've stood back and seen her take a lot of shit from people. Some she has brought on herself and some is just unnecessary hurtful comments.

Zoe: Jesus Martin you really need to get yourself a girlfriend.

John: You're a cunt for saying such a thing.(…) That's dark man.

Rebecca: his opinion doesn't matter to me so it doesn't offend.

Martin: Again with the racism? You disgust me.

John: Clearly you have hidden racial issues that need to be dealt with, seeing as you apparently see racism everywhere. (…) Step inside, make yourself comfortable over there on the couch - I'll be over shortly."

Martin and Linda do not seem aware that they are having a public argument. They address each other directly, not mentioning in the interaction that other community members might be watching. Other community members are not addressed as if they were absent. Parties do not engage in side conversations with other community members or attempt to make the interaction more interesting by qualifying their demeanor or polishing their posts. As a result, the conflict is very clearly personal, it focuses on parties' identities. The object of the conflict is the definition of party's worthiness. Martin's attacks on Linda aim to harm her sense of self-worth. He attacks her on her looks ("ugly", "your fat little cheeks"), states that her life is a failure ("your broken life") and ostracizes her by asserting that the community dislike her ("you're the most hated member") and ridicules her ("they're laughing at you, not with you"). He eventually posts a death wish indicating that her life is so painfully

insignificant life, is not worth continuing. Linda's attacks are equally focused on Martin's identity. She calls him name ("you are a minger") and asserts that he is the one whose life is sad for making the effort to abuse her (""do you have nobody else to talk to?"; "Haha get a life buddie"). She uses his despise of her to harm his self-image by engaging in romantic innuendos ("only when we snog"). Linda's defensive comments further highlight the personal nature of the conflict. She defends her self-esteem when asserting that she is much appreciated by the community ("the second most loved") and stresses how she must matter to him or he would not argue with her ("you cared enough to post"). The sequence of attacks and retaliations also indicates that both parties cannot be simultaneously worthy, if one member has worth the other one has to be worthless. When Martin tells Linda she is "fucking minging" she mirrors it calling him "a minger" which he mirrors back calling her "mingfest". In this sequence Martin and Linda thus attempt to associate the pejorative attribute "minging" with the other party so it is not attached to them. While Martin has the last word on this, Linda still concludes saying she is better than him, making it clear that the object of the argument is to determine who is worthy between the two of them.

The community members who read the discussion believe too that the conflict erupted spontaneously and was not staged. As a result they engage in the conflict as mediators or judges, addressing parties to influence the conflicts dynamics, rather than take a back seat as audience members. Jenny tries to mediate between two parties. After stating that she has background information on Linda ("i've stood back and seen"), she highlights that for all of Linda's defaults ("some she has brought on herself") Linda also has qualities ("she's funny") and she invites Martin for tolerance and acceptance ("Don't be mean!"; "unnecessary hurtful comments"). She does not say who is worthier between the two parties, she just asks for the argument to stop. Other mediating interventions typical involve celebrating commonalities between parties, highlighting that the problem is not worth the argument or inviting members to ignore one another rather than engage in harmful conducts. John and Zoe by contrast take the position of judges, condemning Martin's behavior ("You're a cunt for saying such a thing"; "Jesus Martin you really need to get yourself a girlfriend").

Because other community members take an active role in the conflict as judges or mediators, they can easily get dragged into becoming parties. For example, John intervened because he felt personally offended by Martin's comment. As a result he did not tell Martin that his behavior is horrible behavior ("That's dark man") he also called Martin names ("you're a cunt"). Martin, feeling attacked, abused him back leading John to abandon his role of judge and become a party, posting a comment purely aimed at demeaning and belittling Martin, thereby building an alliance with Linda. This process of "ganging up" is very common in this type of conflict. Groups typically emerge based on moral affiliations, members joining whichever group defends the values and norms with which they associate (wishing someone's death is not acceptable) or based on prior friendships. As a result duals

between two members typically turn into flamewars between two groups or mobbing conflicts where a group argues with an individual member.

5.1.2. Drivers of personal conflict

Three factors facilitate the emergence of personal conflicts in the community. The first relates to the peculiarities of computer-mediated communication, the second to heterogeneity of the community's membership base, and the third to conflict script, or conflict content.

First, computer-mediated communication fosters the transformation of tensions into personal conflicts. As members converse using an avatar, this gives them a sense of anonymity which reduces their sense of accountability for their actions. As a result, members are disinhibited so they express their opinions more easily and more aggressively on the platform, sparking conflict. "People are never brave enough to say something under their real names (…) because they know that they have to come out as themselves and back it up." (Interviewee E). Note that not all online platforms provide a sense of anonymity. HarderFaster was often compared to Twitter and opposed to Facebook. While everyday identities and online identities tend to be kept separate on Twitter, so that Twitter is full of conflict, on Facebook "the rule is that you (…) use your own name" so that identities are merged and there is "surprisingly little conflict" (Interviewee C). Physical distance inherent to computer-mediated communication also nurtures the conversion of tensions into conflict. Physical distance reduces members' sense of accountability as they cannot be physically hurt by another party. This disinhibits members, encouraging them to speak their minds bluntly when tension develops. As interviewee B explains, "people fight behind the keyboard because it's easier to say things", if someone said what they want to others face to face "they would get up and slap you in the face".

Another peculiarity of computer mediation communication is that it typically induces members to stay in the conflict and stand for their beliefs. While people would normally "just walk away, (…) on HarderFaster and (…) the Internet generally, people can't stay away" (Interviewee E). A famous comic by webcomic writer Xkcd was often referred to by members. It depicts a man in front of his computer, while his girlfriend in bed asks him to join her, and he replies that he can't "This is important someone is wrong on the Internet" (see below). According to interviewees this is exactly what happens when they switch to "keyboard warrior" mode and engage in personal conflicts on the forum. Members have difficulty explaining why they behave like this. One member explained that in online communities people feel like "their point of view is being threatened" so they are ready to "make ten times the responses (…) to hammer it into these people" if that is what is needed "to make them believe that [they are] right" (Interviewee D). Interviewee D's linking of the behaviour to the presence of multiple opponents and threats seems to relate to his maintained engagement in conflicts

once they have erupted. Being wronged in such a context implies losing face and being humiliated in front of a group.

http://xkcd.com/386/

Second, the community brings together a heterogeneous group of people: “the HarderFaster community is a village or a town, it is made up of totally different people” (Interviewee G). This is because the HarderFaster community is rooted within the clubbing subculture which is very “inclusive”, accepting people from highly diverse social backgrounds. “It doesn't matter whether you are from a council estate or whether you are a doctor” (Interviewee C). As a result individuals holding diverging values are brought together (Interviewee G). They hold different opinions on religion, politics, education, and life values in general which translate into different opinions regarding everyday life consumption practices, “things you eat, where you shop, the clothes you wear, the car you drive, football teams” (Interviewee F). All of these differences in opinions thus constitute a base for the development of tensions. This diversity of opinion brought together in one place is heightened in HarderFaster by the fact that the community is built on a forum. While diversity is not necessarily visible on a social networking site such as Facebook, because there you can “actually choose the people you are going to communicate with”, on a forum, members cannot choose and so are exposed to the whole range of opinions. This diversity of opinions is a source of tension, providing conflict potential or latent conflict.

Personal conflicts are not only nurtured by heterogeneity in terms of social backgrounds and personal values but also in terms of heterogeneous visions of clubbing. This is because the clubbing subculture is heterogeneous and so members associate with different subtribes “It's like The Beatles versus The Rolling Stones versus Elvis”. In HarderFaster the main genres are “house, trance, hard house, techno (…) and hardcore” (Interviewee F). Each subtribe has its own music tastes and clubbing practices so that tensions and conflict would emerge along the lines of “my music is better than your music” (Interviewee B) and whether one should “dress up for the night” by wearing fluorescent colours and using glow sticks (Interviewee F).

Beyond social backgrounds and clubbing subcultures, heterogeneity in the community arose in terms of diverse understandings of what constitutes appropriate behaviour on the website i.e. online behavioural norms: what should a post look like and where should different topics be posted. Tensions therefore developed in relation to writing style, such as whether writing using different coloured fonts is acceptable, and whether writing in the style of text messages is acceptable (Interviewee F, Interviewee D). Tensions also developed regarding where and how club nights and albums should be promoted on the website as promoters would be accused of spamming the website (Interviewee A).

While heterogeneity builds up tensions, it requires a catalyst inducing one member to say something offensive to another to turn tensions into actual personal conflicts. Some topics of conversation are better catalysts than others. Topics triggering conflict can be general topics viewed seriously in the community such as politics, religion, racism, homosexuality, sports, business transactions, electronica (clubbing tastes, music tastes). Topics can also be community-specific, relating to behaviour appropriateness (writing style, spamming, posting pornography), right to be a member, and reputational hierarchy in the group. Sometimes personal conflicts erupt without any visible trigger, with one member abusing another as soon as the discussion thread opens.

5.1.3. Influence on social value

Personal conflicts influence social value formation at the level of individual value as well as at the community levels of community cohesion and community culture. This section describes the influence of personal conflict experiences on each of these outcomes.

5.1.3.1. Individual value

At the individual level, personal conflicts are deemed as displeasurable and thus a source of negative hedonic value. Personal conflicts are a source of frustration, anger and sadness, building a negative experience overall. Let me illustrate this with example 1 opposing Linda and Martin and discussed earlier (see pp. 98-99). The conflict escalated over several weeks, culminating with Martin posting a shockingly realistic image of her lying dead in a blood-filled bath tub. Linda reported Martin's behavior to the moderation team which left Martin the choice of apologizing publicly or leaving the website. A discussion thread ensued in which Martin announced his departure and community members discussed their reaction to the conflict:

> "Martin: I'm sick of bickering with idiots, the trouble is they always drag you down to their level and then beat you with their wealth of experience. (…) So, Matt, thanks for the ride, the good times and the bad. It's been emotional. For the rest of you, enjoy a new & improved '100% Martin free' board. Anyway, enough of this shit.

Wali: God this website has actually turned into a pile of [shit] ((sorry but it just has))

Jenny: Personally I have had his vitriol steeped unnecessarily on me. I care less than nothing

Philip: Perhaps you could both agree to provide each other with as much attention as you could ever need and move it to a private thread. Permanently.

Linda: lock this thread and lets look to the future [pointing finger to nose while thinking]

Peter: How about you use that finger of yours for something constructive. The peace would be welcome

Jasmine: I am well aware how it looks to lurkers and such like, that is a pretty horrendous picture. (…) I think the way this site is moderated is excellent but to tell people to say sorry is stepping away for moderating and into mothering.

Trevor: if anything, you are keeping people from posting/joining Linda (…) Reeks of favoritism.

Matt: [sad and confused shrug]"

As the previous illustration already indicated, the main parties, Martin and Linda felt a lot of frustration and anger during the conflict. During conflict escalation, the party attacking feels frustration when the other party resists their self-assertive behaviors. Lasting frustration typically leads to anger whereby the party mobilizes his energy in an explosive move aimed at overcoming the source of the negative feeling. Here, Martin posting of a picture of Linda dead, was the straw which broke the camel's back. Linda had put on a brave face so far but, this time, reported Martin's behavior to the moderation team as she could not take the abuse anymore. Martin indicated frustration and anger when stating that he was "sick of bickering with idiots" and his bitter sadness of being dragged out of the forum now "100% Martin free" and "shit". Typically parties' anger manifests with members writing in capital letters, conveying the impression that they are shouting, and swearing. In a few extreme cases, anger was also expressed through offline physical abuse in clubs. Parties in personal conflict were further described in interviews as turning into "pissed off keyboard warriors". Keyboard warrior is an internet slang term describing how individuals tend to become enraged and excessively aggressive online when engaged in a conflict.

The community members who were not the main parties in the conflict also felt frustration and anger. Those who took the side of one party felt frustration and anger because they got dragged into the conflicts. Jenny thus welcomed Martin's exit, as a previous target of his "vitriol". When the conflict involves a group against an individual, members take sides for that member. They do not get

dragged in the conflict but simply empathize with the harassed party, leading to feelings of frustration and anger as well (e.g. “I must stop coming on this thread, makes me more angry every time I do”). Members who did not take sides for one party, taking the role of mediators often become angry, frustrated and sad at seeing their community filled with conflicts. Wali displayed his annoyance calling the website a “pile of shit” while Peter expressed his longing for “peace” and Philip called for turning the matter into a private discussion. In some cases members can empathize with both parties and then feel sad about seeing them torn apart. For example, during a particular duel between two members, onlookers posted numerous compassionate comments stating how sorry they were (“Oh my”, “Oh dear”) for both parties (“I sincerely hope everything works out for you”,“i hope you 2 can sort it out”). Community members often ask the moderators to arbitrate in personal conflicts. In this case the moderators decided to intervene. Some criticized their decision as “mothering” and nannying the website. Others criticized it as “favouritism”. When moderators do not intervene they also get criticized for being soft and not taking their responsibilities. Overall moderators explained in interviews how personal conflicts are irritating because they drag them into “petty arguments” which are not “worth” the investment of their time as community governors (Interviewee B). The community owner also explained that “the constant stress and the constant strain and the constant hassle” associated with dealing “with people’s complaints” is “demoralizing” and “self-destroying” (Interviewee C).

The personal conflicts read and analysed in the forum rarely resolve. Personal conflict typically drags on and festers with parties “sniping the same lines at each other, over and over” (Interviewee B) until a moderator decides to close the discussion thread, leaving the conflict unresolved. The only situation when conflict can resolve for good is when one of members gets banned and does not come back. In such situations, a winner (remaining party) and loser (party who left) emerge from the conflict. While defeat creates feelings of pain, shame and sadness, victory typically produces pleasurable feelings of self-content and power. Yet it seems that this positive feeling does not outweigh the negative ones. In the example above Linda thus ask for locking the thread, forgetting about the conflict and looking to the future, indicating that this is a negative experience she would rather not linger on. Overall, personal conflict experiences are negative for all participants.

5.1.3.2. Collective engagement

Personal conflict generally leads to reduced collective engagement by fostering the development of cliques, nurturing distrust, i.e. confidence that others are malevolent and dangerous, and reducing voluntarism.

At a micro level, personal conflicts transform the structure of relationships between community members. Relationships between parties who opposed one another in a personal conflict weaken or break. They might not talk to each other until the tension between them is forgotten or they might stop having any amicable interaction whatsoever (Interviewee F, Interviewee G). This is self-explanatory as they have harmed each other and so become distrustful of one another. Relationships weaken beyond parties and members who posted in the conflict, expanding to the members who were only indirectly exposed or involved in the conflict as they develop opinions about parties too. These opinions can be based on friendships, following the principle that foes of my friends are my foes. As a member explains "if someone I knew said to me X was acting like a dick on the forum last night [I would think] that person is probably a bit of a dick" (Interviewee A). These opinions can also be based on feelings emerging when reading parties' aggressive posts. For example, Jasmine commented in the discussion thread how Martin "can be very nice and is probably not an evil human being but he sure as hell came across as one". Martin further explained in an interview how he felt as though people whom he met offline and who had seen him fight on the forum had a bias about his personality taking him as being "a bit of an idiot". While personal conflicts divide the community across parties, personal conflicts opposing two groups of members build and strengthen relationships between members within parties. They are opportunities for members to bond with those who defended the same values as them and rejected the values they disassociate with, or reenact existing friendships (Interviewee F, Interviewee G).

This mechanism of boundary spanning within the community fosters the development of cliques, small cohesive and exclusive groups of members within the forum community. Cliques can be large. For example numerous fights developed on the forum between the Peachy ravers and the Hard Style clubbers based on their different lifestyles and visions of clubbing. The Peachy ravers, regular attendees at Peach trance night at the Camden Palace club in North London, liked fluorescent clothing, neon face paint, whistles, glow sticks, and trance music and posted on the forum in text message style with colorful fonts. They contrasted with the Hard Style clubbers who mostly went clubbing in South London, preferred Hard Style EDM and wore more casual attire. Cliques can also be small. Typically small scale flame wars oppose groups of friends who know each other offline so that when one member gets caught in a personal conflict their friends gang up to defend them.

Cliques have negative consequences for collective engagement because they entice members to identify with their clique rather than the community as a whole. This has several consequences.

First members are induced to restrain their participation to discussions in the forum areas where their clique interact, often a segment of the community with a particular focus of interest such as music production or sports (Interviewee E). Second, this limits the ability of the community to offer support to its members when it is needed. For instance, the community owner remembers how, at one point, the community decided to put together a clubbing event to help a community member raise funds for the town in Sri Lanka he was originating from after the island was hit by a Tsunami. Simultaneously a massive flame erupted highlighting the boundaries between the members who would accept the arrival of members from another rival community and those who would not. The divisions created by the flame war made members incapable of coordinating the fundraising event. Finally the structuring of social relations in the community around cliques can lead members to leave the community. This can be because members dislike cliques and prefer unified communities. This is the case of Wali in the example who explained how the conflicts and debates between cliques were uninteresting, making the website look "pathetic", inviting him to engage less and less with the website. This can also be because the members feel that they only need their clique and do not need the community as a whole. For example, a clique of core members left the forum after a lingering conflict with another clique, creating a rival forum called HigherFiner, open to members of the clique only.

At a macro level personal conflicts nurture distrust towards the community. Personal conflict very easily nurtures distrust for newcomers and members on the fringe. This emerged from my experience of being a community member. I was the object of mild abuse, probably meant to be playful, when I joined the forum and, as a newcomer, I was not certain whether I should take it seriously. Being the target of personal attacks is an "intimidating" and "frightening" experience. However viewing personal conflict as a silent lurker can also generate anxiety, as, "if this happens to someone else, it could happen to me". As several discussants explain in the example it puts off new members, lurkers and people thinking of joining. Reduced trust leads new comers and peripheral members to abandon the community. As they do not have strong bonds with the community, they rapidly disengage. In my case, I disengaged for a while, coming back because I needed to for the purpose of completing my research. At one point in time this became particularly problematic for the community as old timers systematically identified new comers as not "fitting in" from the first moment they arrived, developing negative prejudices against them and attacking them from the first moment they arrived. The typical reply to a newcomer posting became "You're a noob fuck off" (Interviewee C). It made newcomers feel unwelcome ("Oh, okay well I don't feel really welcome here, I'm gonna go") and systematically disengaged from the forum, "they wouldn't come back'" (Interviewee B), preventing the community from gaining "new blood". It has remained an acute issue in the later stages of the community as the flow of newcomers is reduced.

Personal conflicts' destruction of trust does not only influence newcomers and peripheral members, it can also influence regular members', i.e. well-integrated members posting frequently, view of the community. While regular members generally make a distinction between negative experiences with an individual forum member and the community as a whole, frequent personal conflicts nurture distrust toward the community as a whole. A moderator remembers a particular year as a "dark period" where there was so much conflict that "the atmosphere was toxic" and members felt the forum was a "quite unpleasant place to be". Eroded trust also leads regular members to leave the community. When the atmosphere becomes toxic they cannot be bothered anymore and leave. An interviewee who saw herself as an active member in the offline clubbing community, and used to be an active member on the fringe of HarderFaster, explained that she left HarderFaster because she could not deal with the "bitching" and the "bickering", the "gniagniagniagniagnia" and the "pia pia pia pia pia" happening there. Similarly a core member compared the forum to a pub explaining that:

> "If there's a fight in that corner and a fight in that corner but most people are merry and happy and getting on with it, it's fine. But when those fights are there every time you go to that pub, you're not going back to that pub. It's the same on the website. You won't go back to that website because every time you open a thread and try and read something it gets into something personal and it turns into a fight. So you just can't be bothered anymore. If you keep coming back to a website that is actually making you unhappy because you get bored of reading the same shit, or it makes you angry or upset, you are having to defend yourself, or you are having to defend your friends all the time, why would you go back? "

At a macro level personal conflicts also reduce voluntarism. This is particularly the case for moderators who are the most committed members of the community. As explained in the previous section the moderators' role of "peace keepers" generally engages them in tense interactions with parties when a personal conflict erupts. When they arbitrate between the two parties, they are generally accused of unfair favoritism or "nannying", giving too much help and protection thereby impeding members' autonomy. When they mediate between the two parties, highlighting the need for tolerance and acceptance of diversity in the community, parties typically accuse them of incompetence or softness because they accept people in the community who are not worthy of it. These reproaches and abuses can be disheartening to moderators. They make them feel that their investment in the community as volunteers moderating in their free time for the sake of contributing to the community is not recognized. This gives them the feeling that community members are ungrateful, thinking that they "should be so bloody glad that [members] would log in and post things on our forum" (Interviewee C). Personal conflicts suck their "sense of pride and passion for the forum" (Interviewee C). As a result moderators do not disengage entirely from the community but their willingness to volunteer their time

for the community is reduced. A moderator explained how she decided to “take a back seat” and Bottle of Water, a former moderator, resigned because “he had just had enough” (Interviewee B).

5.1.3.3. Community culture

When a number of members live a personal conflict experience, this influences the community’s culture in terms of shared engagement, i.e. the prescribed values, projects, acts and emotions associated with being a community member, and procedures, i.e. the rules prescribing certain behaviours to warrant effective social control in the community.

With regards to shared engagement, community members typically discuss personal conflicts, passing judgment about which party is right or wrong, basing their position on particular engagements, namely values, projects, acts or emotions prescribed in their life world. Diverging engagements emerge from such discussions so the discussion turns into debates where members oppose their respective engagement systems. As such debates do not lead to a common agreement between discussants, these discussions nurture an understanding of the community as an assemblage of heterogeneous engagement systems.

Let me illustrate this with the following, which unfold after Martin left the community as a result of his conflict with Linda (see example 1, pp. 98-9):

> “Patrick: Let that be a lesson to you. No longer will these shores be polluted with the total and utter dogshit you have posted over the years. I have lurked on this site for a while and always thought that your whimsical witterings and self obssessed warblings where always too much to bear and i for one am glad to see the back of you.
>
> Kevin: I'm glad you didn't apologise. I would have lost all respect for you.
>
> Lilli: In terms of commenting on how people look. It might not be big or clever, but if you put a picture of yourself on a web-site, you open yourself up to ridicule and if you're not particularly liked....you're probably gonna get it (justified or not).
>
> Keyla: Does this apply in real life too? If you walk out your door, does that make you fair game for ridicule?
>
> Lilli: Whether or not you yourself choose to ridicule someone for how they look is a different matter [dunno] But feel free

Simon: I ridicule people not on their looks, but on their words, actions and behaviour. Also i stick behind my mates come hell or high water, and u picking a fight with my mate, so [bring it on]

Jeannette: can't believe you WOULDNT apologise. that's pretty lame. even if you didnt feel you were in the wrong, it's a flipping website, not the Times newspaper. suck it up, roll your eyes and say sorry. you could have kept your fingers crossed.

Danny: [yeah that] & respect to Kev for being honest & saying he doesn't want to apologise & that it would be fake.

Jeannette: oh my god it's a flipping dance music website! fake is our middle name. he's not stepping down as leader of the labour party!

Sally: Exactly, so why should he have to apologise for something he doesn't mean if it's just a flipping music site?

Diva Danny: Hmmm I agree ref certain people & fakeness but in all honesty I know I wouldn't apologise for something I felt I hadn't done something wrong or I felt I didn't owe one. I wouldn't leave over it though

Jeannette: newsflash people things you say online mean bugger all.

Jenny: I think this site will be better for the absence of Kevs online persona, I am sure he can be very nice and is probably not an evil human being. But he sure as hell came across as one"

In this conversation members debate which behaviors should have taken place arguing in the process for the imposition of different values in the community. One central theme of the discussion revolves around whether ridiculing someone in the forum for how they look on a picture is an acceptable behavior. Some argue that it is: "if you put a picture of yourself on a website, you open yourself up to ridicule ". Whether the grounds to ridicule the person are "justified or not", it is the individual members' responsibility to control their image online, not the other community members' responsibility to censor themselves. Others disagree asserting that online is the same as offline and it is not acceptable offline: "does this apply in real life too? If you walk out your door, does that make you fair game for ridicule?". This leads the discussion to a higher level about what constitutes legitimate grounds to ridicule someone, some arguing that freedom of speech entitles us to it ("choos[ing] to ridicule someone for how they look is a different matter [dunno] But feel free") while others argue that ridiculing others is fine but only when one believes they misbehaved ("I ridicule people not on their looks, but on their words, actions and behaviour") and others still reject it for the harm it provokes for the individual ridiculed ("I have had his vitriol steeped unnecessarily on me (…) I think this site will be better for the absence of Martin's online persona). From a debate about whether ridicule is an

appropriate behavior online, the discussion thus evolved into a debate about which values should dominate, freedom of speech, integrity or consideration for others

A second theme of the discussion revolves around whether Martin should have apologized. Some argued that he should have ("can't believe you WOULDNT apologise. that's pretty lame") while others argued the contrary ("I'm glad you didn't apologise. I would have lost all respect for you"). Positions for apology are based on respect for order and hierarchy ("suck it up, roll your eyes and say sorry") while positions against apology are based on the idea that it would signal lack of integrity ("respect to Kev for being honest & saying he doesn't want to apologise & that it would be fake). From a debate about whether people should apologize when they trespass the terms and conditions of the forum, the discussion thus evolved into a debate about which values should dominate, respect for hierarchy or integrity. This led to another debate about whether integrity, an important value for members, applies in the context of the online community, some arguing that it does not ("it's a flipping dance music website! fake is our middle name") while others argue that it does ("Exactly, so why should he have to apologise for something he doesn't mean if it's just a flipping music site?

Similar mechanisms operate in the other personal conflicts in the dataset. For example in the wake of the conflict about underdressed female clubbers, judgments highlighted diverse opinions about whether or not sexualized attire is an appropriate behavior, revealing diverse views about what clubbing means as a lifestyle and the place of women in society. The conflict about the imam Abu Qatada condemned for incitement to hatred highlighted different positions regarding death penalty and how laws should be applied. The conflict generated by the announcement of the Best Member of the Year and the fairness of the vote revealed diverging views about what constitutes a valuable contribution to the community. In another instance, debates accompanying personal conflicts between newbies from a less underground community and regulars led to further debates about whether writing in a colourful and casual style constitutes an acceptable behavior on the site and whether the community should be a place open to all or people associating with the underground only.

In all cases, divergences are common but do not lead to a final agreement highlighting the heterogeneity of engagements collated in the community. In some cases members can become aware of this and, rather than transforming the debate into a conflict, acknowledge their differences, finding a "middle ground" where they "agree to disagree" (Interviewee A, Interviewee C, Interviewee D). There, the heterogeneity of engagements in the community is turned into a shared understanding of the community's culture**.**

With regard to community procedures, the recurrence of personal conflict experiences leads to the creation of hierarchical rules for conflict management. These conflict management rules aim to pre-

empt personal conflicts, or to resolve them once they have erupted. As far as preemption is concerned, rules were created to prevent the repeated harassment of newcomers and their subsequent abandonment of the forum. The community owner set up a "Welcome to Harder Faster" forum meant to preempt the involvement of new members as parties in Personal conflicts. Newcomers could introduce themselves in that forum without fear of being harassed. The moderating team also created a "Strictly moderated" section of the forum where conflict is forbidden so that new members, once they have introduced themselves, can post in those sections "without fearing abuse" and knowing that moderators "would take sides with the person making the complaint", telling the aggressor "if you want to be an arsehole go and be an arsehole over at general mayhem". This subsequently led to the emergence of a tradition whereby newcomers should be welcome in that particular forum, with newcomers introducing themselves in the Welcome forum and other members greeting them. Members would also internalize the rule regarding strictly moderated areas and refrain from engaging in personal conflicts there. Specific rules were also created for event promoters whereby the only forum in which they should advertise events is the "Upcoming Events and Adverts Forum". This was a means to avoid conflicts whereby members receiving information would feel "spammed" by certain promoters. Finally, for threads involving vile language, topics or images, the tradition was established to write "*NWS*" at the end of the thread title to indicate that it is "not work safe" and so readers should be aware of who is in their surroundings. This was a means of avoiding people blaming the forum for getting them into difficult situations at work.

Recurrent personal conflicts also led to the creation of conflict management rules to tackle them once they erupted. For personal conflicts which do not contravene the site's terms and conditions of policies but are "disruptive and tedious" (Interviewee C), dragging on with two members "sniping the same lines at each other, over and over" (Interviewee B), an "Asylum forum" was created where threads could be moved. This forum was meant to "clean up" the General Mayhem area to ensure discussions and conflicts unfolding there would be of interest and value to the community. Some rules were also created pertaining to monitoring and sanctioning of conflict behaviours contravening the community's terms and conditions and policies. Following "pretty unpleasant situations" where arguments dragged on for days, insults got "nastier and nastier" and personal details "that have no business being on the forums" were dragged up, the site administrators and moderators created a "report to moderators" button whereby forum members could flag unacceptable behaviours on the forum to the moderators. The moderators would then discuss the case via private messages to decide on what action to take, whether ignoring, mediating with or sanctioning the parties. They also set up a rule whereby the account of the contravener would be blocked by moderators preventing them from posting. This "time out and cooling-off period" or "hiatus period" is meant to give the parties involved in arguments "an hour or two, or longer" to "step back" and let all concerned simmer down. "Persistent flouting" of the rules of the forum would lead to "permanent banning", that is termination

of the relationship with the community and its members. These rules about how to monitor conflict behaviours and sanction them were then formalized in the Terms and Conditions page.

Table 15: Characteristics of personal conflict, its drivers and its consequences for social value

Drivers of personal conflict	
Computer mediation	Disinhibition because of anonymity and physical distance Public nature of interaction sustains continuous engagement in conflict
Community context	Heterogeneity of social backgrounds, sub-tribe affiliations and understandings of the community foster tensions
Interaction characteristics	Topics of conversation serve as catalysts or triggers. Typical topics viewed seriously in the community: politics, religion, sexuality, sports, business transactions, electronica (clubbing tastes, music tastes) and HarderFaster culture (posting norms, membership righteousness, members' status)
Markers of personal conflict	
Parties	Ignoring onlookers addressing the other party only Attaching self-related meanings to conflict behaviours whether attack, defence or retaliation
Other participants	Joining the interaction as mediators and/or judges
Consequences for social value formation	
Individual value	Negative experience because of harm, frustration, sadness
Cohesion	Development of cliques and reduction of trust and voluntarism leads to reduced engagement or disengagement of community members
Culture	Shared engagement: questioned and diluted Share understanding: heterogeneity is reinforced as a core feature of the community's identity Procedures: creation of rules meant to pre-empt or resolve conflict

5.2. Played conflicts: conflict as explicit performance

Conflicts can be lived by all participants as acted out on a stage by performers for an audience. I call them played conflicts. The following section characterizes each of them, their sources and their influence on social value formation. For an overview see Table 16 at the end of the section.

5.2.1. Characteristics of played conflict

Played conflicts are conflicts acted out by performers for an audience. In played conflicts parties visibly take the social role of performers acting to capture the interest of an audience while onlookers visible take the social role of an audience. Parties play their role by engaging in three types of behaviours: idealizing, mystifying and breaking character. Idealizing consists of exaggerating communication signals to make the exchange more engaging for onlookers. It involves, for example, using stylistic tropes, writing in a literary register, formatting text to emphasize emotional intensity (changing size and color, bolding, italicizing, underlining), qualifying demeanor of the post through emoticons (e.g. emoticons indicating nervosity, blushing, confusion or sadness) or expressing one's opinion via a gif image or through a story. Mystifying consists of behaviours explicitly highlighting that participants are taking on the social roles of performers and audience. Parties achieve this, for example, by directly addressing other participants as an audience or when speakers visibly indicate that their posting demeanor is fabricated (e.g. qualifying demeanor between asterisks or via bracketing tags pasticing html language). Breaking character consists of taking on the role of the actor performing a character on stage rather than the characters themselves. This typically involves parties commenting on the difficulty to perform the character, congratulating the other party for a great performance, defying the other party to take up a public challenge or explicitly stating self-distantiation with their own posts. Onlookers also visibly take the role of an audience. They do so by addressing parties as performers (stating it, evaluating the quality of their performance), indicating that they are watching (stating it, engaging with one another in commentaries of conflict) and breaking character, asking other onlookers what the conversation is about and generally disrupting the course of the performance.

The meanings of played conflicts fluctuate between serious and light moments. They are lived as serious when they appear to be rituals building parties' social identities or collective identity. This typically happens when participants explicitly attaches stakes to the conflict such as self-expression (catharsis), prestige benefits (winner), and when a participant clearly brackets the event in time with a beginning and end thereby indicating that it is liminal. Played conflicts are light when they are lived as belonging to the realm of make-believe. This happens when participants make jokes about the conflict or explicitly state that it is just play. Parties in particular can also use various strategies to indicate that their attacks should not be taken seriously. For example they can qualify them with playful emoticons

(e.g. humourous emoticons such as ";)" or "lol") or post abuses so extreme that the receiver must infer that it is meant as ironic and humorous (e.g. "Suicide is your only remaining task for today"). Let us illustrates this by the two examples below.

Take example 2, a discussion thread which begins with:

> "Here's your opportunity to tell that certain someone why they really piss you off: No names though, that's the only rule.
> Vent your frustration, share your annoyance. Get your point across. The best post will win the Order of The Golden Spoon award."

59 members vented abuse without using names. Participants had to infer the target of the abuse and whether they might actually be the target. While any forum member could potentially be targeted, most participants seemed to believe that some of the abuse was directed at them and thus retaliated by sending abuse back. This resulted in a large number of conflict behaviours unfolding over 298 posts. Abuse focused on a variety of values such as intelligence, generosity, social appropriateness or music taste. Approximately 24 hours after the initial post, the moderator who had opened the thread closed it with the following post:

> "It's been fun for the most part but I think it's time we put this thread to bed. This thread is now officially closed by order of The Grand High Poohbah! Thank you for your participation; light refreshments and calming influences are available here: *GP's soothing corner thread. settle down and have a cuppa*"

Parties clearly indicated that they were taking the social roles of performers. They often adjoined captions in their posts to qualify them. For example, phrases augmented by asterisked symbols (e.g. *stern look*, *taps foot*, *snigger*, *excited wiggle*, *wonder if this is directed at me*, *sucks in breath*) and emoticons (e.g. emoticons of anger, anxiety, scorn, thinking, shushing!) explicated the tone and the physical demeanor of parties. Brackets were also occasionally used as in "(clears throat)" or "(FYI - Rolled a few people up into one there)". These captions imply some self-distantiation and direct address to onlookers, indicating that parties behave as actors therefore serving mystification purposes. The use of language register and structures typical of formal English, both literary (e.g. use of metaphors as in "Rarely has your obscenity been seen outside the confines of an abattoir") and authoritarian (e.g. "Don't you "what" me in that tone of voice, young man!" or "Should I feel honoured?), gives strength and appeal to parties' statements. It also generates respect for the performer, serving mystification purposes. Finally parties expressed the difficulty of performing their role adequately (e.g. "Hmmmmm now where do I start ") and questioned whether their abuse respects

the rules of ranting or not (e.g. “that really hasn't narrowed down [the name of the target] very much has it?”), thus failing to dramatize their statements and indicating that they see themselves as performers.

Onlookers also displayed that they saw themselves as an audience by posting content describing their current behaviour in front of their computer screen, indicating how entertaining and impressive the conflict is to watch. This took the form of emoticons (e.g. applause, popcorn eating, kneeling in awe, laughter), sentences (e.g. “Impressive. The Force is strong with this one”, “Nicely done I could take lessons”, “.... breathe, must remember to breathe”, or “What a lovely thread!”), or both (e.g. “*sits back with [popcorn eating emoticon], looks around for cops while she lights a cone*”). A few onlookers took on the role of outsiders, those who joined the performance without understanding its functioning by asking what the rules are and what the thread’s purpose is.

There is an inherent ambiguity throughout this game as to whether it should be taken lightly or seriously. This starts in the opening post. The discussion was ceremoniously started and finished, thus marking its beginning and end and indicating that it is a serious ritual. It was also presented as an opportunity to “vent your frustration” and “get your point across” highlighting a self-restorative cathartic process. However the moderator also presented it as inherently playful since the prize for the winner, “The Golden Spoon Award” is lighthearted and probably does not exist. Therefore there was no goal in winning so the game should be played for no other purpose than fun. Similarly in the concluding statement, the moderator ceremoniously closed the thread thanking the participants and inviting discussants to continue more peaceful discussions in another part of the forum, as if the discussion had been a collective ritual. However this was done with much irony by invoking the orders of “The Grand High Poohbah”, an improvised imaginary Big Man. The area created for peaceful discussions was also labelled “GP’s soothing corner” and participants were invited to “have a cuppa” (for non-British readers, a cup of tea). The moderator thus simultaneously highlighted that the discussion is serious ritual but also light make-believe. Similarly, onlookers wholeheartedly laughed during the exchange but some also passed evaluative judgments on posters, combining feelings of lightness and seriousness.

To conclude, the participating members framed the experience as conflict, referring to the thread as “harsh”, “insulting”, “spiteful”, “shit-stirring”, and “bitch-fighting”. However, as a result of all the markers of performance most of them did not frame it as personal conflict but rather as a played conflict. Some framed it as a serious play, referring to it as cathartic “therapy” while others framed it as light play, referring to it as a “game” or “banter”.

Another example of played conflict, example 3, is the "Abuse the member above you" thread. Participants in this discussion were invited to insult the most recent contributor to the discussion. One thousand one hundred and eighty-nine posts were published over the course of 10 hours, the overwhelming majority of them being abusive. The constraints on interaction generally nurtured a form of generalized abuse where participants abused multiple members and were then abused by a variety of other members. However, minor bending of the rules, where participants posted replies to insults published shortly before the last one, enabled participants also to engage in dyadic rather than generalized exchanges of insults.

Conflict parties indicated that they took the social roles of performers by displaying a range of idealization, mystification and dramatization behaviours. Parties expressed scorn, ridicule and anger using very creative and unusual insults (e.g. "turd slayer"), thereby intensifying the meanings of abuse and making it more engaging. Unconventional insults had more meaning than conventional ones as, over time, insults lose their literal meaning to become symbols of extreme impoliteness. These behaviours served idealization purposes. Occasionally comments bracketed with asterisks (e.g. "*cracks knuckles*") indicated that parties behaved as actors. Performers also attempted to render the audience awestruck by commenting on their own performances (e.g. "*no, I can't believe I posted it either*") and publicly congratulating other's performances as if they were backstage. These behaviours served mystification purposes. Finally, performers also revealed how much effort it requires to be a performer by commenting on the difficulty of the role (e.g. "sorry I'm rubbish"), or by breaking character, speaking with the voice of the actor rather than the character (e.g. "Best insult I can come up with now"). Onlookers took on the social role of audience by making it obvious that they were watching (e.g. popcorn eating emoticon). A few onlookers also took the role of outsiders by disrupting the performances and posting before learning what the performance was about (e.g. "I have not looked at all of this thread but I like the sound of it so far") or by disrespecting the rules of the thread by publishing polite (e.g. "without being rude or anything but ….") and self-deprecating messages (e.g. "I am fucking stupid").

Similar to the previous example, a certain ambiguity remains in this discussion thread as to whether it should be taken lightly or seriously. The apparent pointlessness of the discussion would quite naturally make participants lean towards taking abuse light-heartedly and not self-authenticating. Participants also devised various strategies to ensure their abuse would not be taken seriously. Common strategies involved publishing abuse so extreme that it cannot be taken seriously or framing the abuse in a literary manner so as to indicate that it was an exercise in style and the real object of the abuse was not the other party's honour. For example, take "Suicide is your only remaining task for today". Sending a death wish out of the blue, without any known lasting grudge is so extreme that it indicates that the abuse should not be interpreted literally. In addition, rather than simply saying "Go kill yourself", the poster used the metaphor of a to-do list where suicide would be one of the items to

check off. Death was thus wished in an unusual and literary manner pointing toward the idea that the poster did not really mean death to the interlocutor. In case some ambiguity might remain, parties typically added a friendly emoticon (smiley, love, thumbs-up, mischievous laugh, waving) at the end of their insult to indicate that it should be taken as a joke. As a result of all these practices, the discussion thread was regularly referred to as "fun" and a "good game".

In spite of all its lightheartedness, the discussion thread also has some seriousness because parties can gain and lose social status in the group as a result of their participation in verbal jousts. Therefore, some self-related stakes were associated with the outcome of the conflict. Like in Labov's (1972) study of "sounding" in African American youth the winner and the loser were publicized by shouting "Owned!" Also, a new member who showed verbal jousting talents was congratulated while a defeated moderator was scorned for not being worthy of his status. Members thus regularly challenged each other, bragging that they are the best and others are not good enough for them. Therefore social status was the visible object of this series of abuse not because of the literal meanings of insults but because members displayed skill in throwing creative abuse, which is praised by onlookers (e.g. "that's the spirit boy"). Abuse was sometimes self-assertion, self-defence and self-restoration behaviours because the abuse playfully asserted the speaker's worthiness while challenging the receiver to prove his/her own.

5.2.2. Drivers of played conflict

Several explanations were found for the emergence of played conflict, explicit performances lived as such by all participants. Some factors relate to computer-mediation. These are the presentation of the self via an avatar, the written format of interaction and the organization of space as a stage. The communal context also leads to the emerged of played conflict. When a member violates community norms this leads to redressment rituals where the culprit is abused and judged publicly. Other factors relate to interaction characteristics, specifically, the organization of the conflict action script as a game. Finally, certain factors relate to individual differences. These are boredom and being under pressure in the offline environment.

The first characteristic of computer-mediation fostering the framing of conflict as played is that members must communicate via avatars. Building an avatar involves consciously selecting personal characteristics which the individual believes will convey a particular impression to forum members. Constructing an avatar also involves choosing an avatar name which is generally different from one's own and an avatar picture which is not always an image of oneself. For example, I chose an avatar name for my profile in the community that sounded similar to that of an electronic music label and selected a picture of a black and white pyramid of contact juggling balls which resonated with that name (ORBS) trying to convey an impression of mystery and being "underground" or

countercultural. The result of these choices was the creation of a character very distinct from my everyday self; a bricolage merging my core self (O. R. B. S. are my initials), "old" selves related to past activities and social identities (circus activities and contact juggling), and self-invention (association with a music label). The aim of this avatar construction was to fit in the community and be accepted by other members. The construction of an avatar usually implies the framing of oneself as a character derived from the everyday self (but who is not the everyday self). The ensuing behaviour in the community can be considered as the behaviour of a performer playing that character. The possibility to choose a different name was highlighted by several members as a strong reason for feeling like a performer. A moderator explained that "there is a profound split" between how members see themselves online and offline. Members often argue that if they are "assholes" online this is because of their "online persona" while in "real life" they are "different". Facebook was also regularly compared to Twitter and the forum. While Facebook members usually use their real names and so behave in a way closer to whom they really are, Twitter members and members of the clubbing forum do not use their real names and so behave more like performers.

The framing of one's behaviours as that of a performer is furthermore reinforced by the fact that interactions are written. The written format makes interactions asynchronous so that members have time to carefully craft their messages before posting them. Members do not have to speak spontaneously as they do when expressing themselves in real life encounters, but they can contrive their language to enhance the impact of their messages in the same way performers do. Interviewee E thus explains that, "because they know they are preparing the written word", members "bearish" their text, that is embellish what they say, "to make it engaging for other people to read".

The existence of both public and private communication channels also shapes the OCC environment as a stage. A stage is a place used to conduct performances and is characterized by a front region, a space where performers do things and which on-lookers can see, as well as a back region, a place related to the performance but which on-lookers cannot see. As forums are public and accessible to all members while private messages are accessible only to the participants of a private discussion, forums are perceived as the front region and the private messaging system as back stage. The forum area has thus been described as a "public area" where interactions may be read by "third parties" while the private messaging system is "behind the scenes". Performers use the back region to plan and coordinate joint attacks in the front region. For example, moderators highlighted a number of cases where members would set up "concerted campaigns of hate" in private, discussing who to attack and how to do it before starting off public abuse on the forums. The back region is also used by the moderators to mediate conflicts when performers fail to respect the standards of behaviour in the public arena. This generally implies figuring out what each party should do in the public forums to defuse the situation. While interactions occurring on a stage are not always performances, the

organization of space in the form of a stage favours the framing of events, including conflicts, as performances.

Beyond the specificities of computer-mediated communications, the violation of communal norms and ethos drives the emergence of played conflicts. When a member violates a norm, for example when a member post racists or homophobic comments, this can lead to the creation of discussion threads aimed at taking the deviant member's behavior publicly and let the community determine what their punishment should be. The FAO (for the attention of) sub-forum can be used for this purpose. If the member is popular, the community abuses them jokingly, while if they are not popular this can lead to a public lynching. For example, a discussion thread about a core member Arnie was created and named "Is Arnie a twat?", after he published a post in favor of rape. The conflict started as a lynching, Arnie being called "more unstable than a 90 year old", "mentally unhinged" and a "pussy". However, the conflict turned into a popularity vote for or against Arnie as he displayed sorrow and remorse, eventually leading all conflict participants to publish kind words, posting that, all in all, he is "ok", "cool", "funny", "quirky" and "eccentric".

Conflict action scripts also favour the framing of conflict as played. Numerous scripts of action have been identified as performance scripts such as social drama (Turner, 1974), theater, procession and eruption (Schechner, 2003), spectacles, festivals, and ceremony (Dayan and Katz, 1985), boxing and wrestling (Barthes, 1972) and news shows (Schechner, 1985). In principle any sequence of action commonly perceived as performance in a culture could be a cue indicating that a particular conflict is performed. In the particular context of the forum studied, action is typically organized as a game. As a game, it is organized around the achievement of a specific goal, which can be attained by gaining points and following specific rules.

In example 2 above (see pp. 115-116), members were invited to vent their frustration, share their annoyance, and get their point across without naming the person the abuse is targeted. From the first post, the moderator stated that there would be a winner so the thread is a competition where participants should aim to share their annoyance at other members. However this should occur under the constraint of rules. The official rule was that participants should get their point across without saying the name of the person attacked or making it known to others in one way or another. The unofficial rules which emerged during the course of the exchange were that abusers were evaluated based on the strength, style and entertainment value of their insults. The audience thus distributed "laughing points" to those satisfying the informal criteria.

In example 3 above (see p. 116-7), participants were invited to insult each other following the constraint that the target of the insult should be the most recent poster in the discussion ("Abuse the member above you"). As the discussion unfolded, it further mandated that insults should be original and creative. Plagiarizing another member's insult, or using an insult found elsewhere on the Internet,

or even reusing one's own earlier insult was thus forbidden. In addition, participants should always be self-assertive so that polite or apologetic posts were forbidden. The conflict thus had a clear purpose for participants: to be the most creative abuser within the discussion and participants' abuse should follow certain rules. In addition, the success and failure of participants was evaluated by the amount of interest that their abuse triggered. Being the target of insults gained points so a participant victoriously counted five insults targeted at her in very limited time, virtually jumping around in elation by means of emoticons. Triggering comments of surprise and appreciation from the audience was also a sign of success with the audience expressing their appreciation by laughing, commenting (e.g. "I'm glad you're back, the competition was slacking") and using symbols of approval specific to the cyberculture (e.g. "¬" or "\o/"). In contrast, receipt of depreciative comments from the audience lost points (e.g. "that joke is sooooo old. get some new insults. Loser.") The audience also determined who won and lost by shouting "Owned!" when someone could not respond to a particularly creative or enjoyable insult.

Finally, individual factors favour the framing of conflict as played. When participants are bored, this favours the framing of conflicts as light play. Interviewees mentioned regularly that when bored, participating in what they perceived as played conflict was a means for them to relieve this boredom. From the perspective of parties, an interviewee thus explained that she would regularly "make a statement that you know people are going to react to" because she was "aimlessly bored" (Interviewee F). Another one said that arguing "about something ridiculous" was a means of "passing the time" (Interviewee A). From the perspective of onlookers, users often "argue that HarderFaster would be boring without [performed] conflict" (Interviewee B). Boredom also came out as a source of played conflict in discussion threads about conflict in the community. Take the following example taken from a short thread:

> "Christian: (sleep) Someone entertain me before I chew my arm off. (…)
>
> Harry: come join a thread where we're all fighting and being horrible to each other. it's most invigorating. (…)
>
> Eric: or see the filth thread that Yann has put up. I'm sure u could contribute to that one (wink) (sticking tongue out)"

There Christian opened the discussion by saying that he was bored, using the sleeping emoticon, and demanding entertainment. The humorous way in which he stated it ("entertain me before I chew my arm off.") signalled that he was not necessarily asking for passive entertainment as an audience but that he is rather ready to contribute to the entertainment as a performer. Harry and Eric then invite him to join conflictual discussions. The way Harry frames his sentence by combining the style of a salesperson's speech, using a standard invitation structure ("Come join a…") and a short energetic

conclusive sentence (“It’s most invigorating”) with a reference to a violent discussion (“we’re all fighting and being horrible to each other”) indicates humour, indicating that it is a playful conflict. Similarly Eric characterizes Yann’s conflict as a “filth thread” but also adds emoticons at the end indicating performance and play. Therefore both Harry and Eric appeared to invite Christian to join played conflicts as a solution to his boredom.

Feeling under pressure appears to be a factor nurturing members’ perception of conflict as opportunities to vent online, thereby framing the conflict as a cathartic ritual. Interviewee F explained how she used to “take her mood out” on the forum as a mean of obtaining “a little bit of tension release (…) and a huge emotional release” when things were annoying in her life. She felt like this was the right place to do it because online she could do it “anonymously” while offline it would get her “into a whole lot of trouble”. She is far from being the only one on the forum with this reasoning. Indeed, Tuesdays are known for their “Tuesday morning comedowns” when members are still down from the excesses of the weekend and already tired of working so that they vent their frustration and uneasiness in rants. Interviewees not only engaged in this behaviour as parties but also felt able to recognize it when others do.

5.2.3. Consequences of played conflict experience for social value

Played conflict, as with personal conflict, has consequences for social value formation both at the individual and the community level. However the nature of these consequences is different. This section describes their consequences.

5.2.3.1. Individual value

Played conflict products feelings of flow, catharsis, self-development, pride, entertainment and communitas, building altogether positive experiences for all participants. Let us illustrate this with the following discussion derived from example 2 introduced earlier (see p. 115-116):

> Faye: “Here's your opportunity to tell that certain someone why they really piss you off: No names though, that's the only rule.
>
> Zelda: Where is the fun in that?
>
> Faye: (…) the point is that it gets people thinking, and possibly brings a few home truths to various individuals, who need issues pointed out to them, but without the ensuing humiliation.
>
> Kayla: (…) paranoia causes reflection and you start to think - do I really do that? And sometimes we do a lot of the things that have been mentioned on here. I would say that a lot of the regulars have had something aimed at them, and even if something was not aimed at me, I recognise something I do and might work on it.

Zoe: Because our views couldn't be more different, you're sexist, stupid, illiterate and think you're funny when you're not. Ohhh thanks Faye

Lawrence: *wonder if this is directed at me*

CK: [clap] for Faye - your thread was immaculately timed as I had come out of a bad meeting and needed to rage. [thumb up]

Paul: you're an arrogant little weasel you think you're the be all and end all of everything - but you're not aware that everyone who meets you also knows you're a cunt. You're a ball-bag..... a wank stain..... plain and simple. Get a life you sad, sad little person. God that felt good [smiley] (can we have some counseling to go along with this thread) [laugh]

Larry: Jesus, this is therapy to you innit?

Magda: Ahhh I can now vent... What the fcuk is your problem? Do I look like some kind of party escort??? You need to make a god damn decision because I am human and you need to take your head out of your skinny brown arse and take my feelings into account (…) You are a gutless wimp - how can you of such an age and yet still ignore your own fundamental flaws while happily sit there and highlight in neon everything that's wrong with me?? (…) here's a newsflash for you, you are an egotistical bitch, the sun does not shine out of your arse, you are only beautiful on the inside for about 50% of the time ahhh....I feel so much better now that I've got that down in words!

Lester: Is anyone else reading this and getting paranoid? (clin d'oeil emoticon)

Zoe: I'm not but you probably should. (clin d'oeil emoticon)

Lester: You're a cunt, you know who you are

Charlotte: Fireclub perhaps? [lol]

Lester: [thinking] No, he's an arsehole.

Samuel: Ooh, I want to know this one [clin d'oeil emoticon] [thumb up]

Kayla: Hmmm - wonder if that was the same person I thought of

Samuel: So blatent.... [laugh]

Damien: Do you all hate me that much then !!! [clin d'oeil emoticon] [smiley]

Tania: Yes.... (clin d'oeil emoticon)

Denis: Okay, okay, I feel inspired: Your wit is on par with that of a kindegarten child crippled by severe downs syndrome faced with a particularly difficult challenge, such as attempting to clap their hands together. Not only do you have the personality of a deflated balloon, your aesthetics are intriguing, mainly due to the fact that rarely is such obscenity seen outside the confines of an abattoir. Your attempt at intelligence exceeds only that of a fossilised gnat and your insults are about as effective as an onslaught from a guinea pig armed only with a feather duster.

Charles: That can only be one person, actually....hmmmmm [thinking] [lmao]

Charly: [laugh] [laugh] [laugh]

Kim: Switch on.... You are far too intense. You go one step futher than making every minor- and insignificant- detail into a drama....your life is one embarrasing pantomime. An air of obsession pervades your person; you're just a cringe personified.... Get a sense of perspective and a life. Switch off.

Faye: [clap] What a brilliant line! [laugh]

Zelda: The only thing greater than your need for attention is the need to be loved by one and all. You sad attempts to make fun of music genres that you don't understand are as unfunny and they are unoriginal (…) Lastly, your dependence on your status/post count on HF to justify the validity of your posts shows just how you are a fake individual who is concerned more your image and popularity than your being yourself. You sicken and disgust me.

Moe: Impressive. The Force is strong with this one.

Kayla: Zoolander just earned a [everybody kneel to the king]

Zelda: Phew! I think I'm about done. Man, that was fun! Thanks Faye!

Denis: [lol] Night. [wave]

For the attackers, this conflict is an opportunity to experience catharsis, emotional regulation through the release of repressed negative emotions (cf. Aristotle, 2013 [c. 335 BCE]; Bushman, Baumeister and Phillips, 2001). In the exchange cited above Zoe and Paul contribute their abuse before indicating how expressing their frustration made them feel relieved (“Ohhh thanks Faye”; “God that felt good [smiley]”). Magda further characterized the conflict as an opportunity “to vent” making her “feel so much better”. Other members also compare the conflict to therapy, thereby stressing how it makes participants feel betters (“Jesus, this is therapy to you innit?”). This cathartic feeling can be

obtained in two ways. First by expressing one's frustration and anger in relation to a particular object and a person, framing one's thoughts and feelings in a way which softens the aggressiveness of the statement, thus making it socially acceptable to express such negative feelings. When the discussion thread opens, several members explain how publishing abuses without giving the name of the person "brings a few home truths to various individuals (…) without the ensuing humiliation". Banter games were also described as opportunities to say "many a true word in jest", that is settle grudges under the guise of humour (Interviewee F). Second, catharsis can be attained via displacement and redirection. Aggressiveness is then released in full force upon people who are just a temporary representation, acting in place of the target. For example Kathryn commented that the discussion thread is "immaculately timed" because she just had "a meeting and needed to rage". Parties in such aggressiveness release exercises can hold a grudge against a person fitting the type of character depicted. However, aggressiveness is then released upon people who are just a temporary representation of the source of frustration, acting in place of the target. Typically the banter insult game created based on the rule that posters must insult the previous poster of the discussion was designed to ensure parties vent their anger at a random person unrelated to the frustration.

This played conflict is also a form of "banter" or "verbal sparring", that is a form of verbal "boxing" with "big soft gloves on" where "you cannot really hurt your opponent, you just tire yourself out by punching them" (Interviewee E). The whole discussion used as example can be seen as a verbal sparring exercise where members aim to post very expressive abuses based on the difficult constraint that they cannot name the target of the abuse or explicitly point at another member. Beyond an opportunity to rant, played conflicts are thus an opportunity to develop verbal jousting skills helping to keep face in embarrassing situations. As parties constantly try to surpass themselves they enter a state of flow, a sense of exhilaration, energy, and fulfillment that is more enjoyable than what people feel in the normal course of life" (Shoham, 2004, 29). Interviewees described such banter conflicts as "addictive", implying that the experience provides a kick, an intense, exhilarating feeling. Interviewees commonly involved in played conflicts also describe them as "exciting". The feeling of extraordinariness is visible in the way parties explain how they are not their ordinary selves when engaging in such conflict but rather their online abrasive doppelgangers. From a more competitive point of view, verbal sparring is also an opportunity to gain social status in the community by showing off one's skills. In the example, Zelda and Kim are lauded for the expressiveness of their abuses ("Impressive. The Force is strong with this one."; "Zoolander just earned a [everybody kneel to the king]"; [clap] What a brilliant line!). Similarly in other threads, new members showing verbal jousting talents are congratulated if they defeat a moderator in a battle.

For the members who feel that they could be the target of the abuses, the conflict is an opportunity for them to reflect on themselves. As they wonder whether abuses are direct at them ("*wonder if this is directed at me*"; "Is anyone else reading this and getting paranoid?"), it gets them

“to think - do I really do that?”. When participants do not feel targeted, this conflict is an opportunity to be entertained as an audience. The entertained audience expresses excited feelings of fun. The forum owner explained how much “amusement” community members gain from watching people abuse each other. Expression of amusement typically involves displays of laughter, often using emoticons. The audience can use a number of emoticons indicating different levels of fun, from “laugh”, to “laugh out loud” to “rolling on floor laughing”. Emoticons tend to be repeated and combined in a single post to indicate extremely high levels of hilarity. Entertainment can also manifest with members engaging in side conversations, games or jokes. In the exmple above for example, a few members engage in a little game aiming at discovering who the target of abuse is. A frequent mean of expressing entertainment during a conflict is to jokingly pretend to be friends watching a television program at home eating cakes and drinking tea. Members then offer to pour tea or ask others to fetch them food. Excitement is manifested here in exclamatory posts (“What a brilliant line!”; “Man, that was fun!”). Excitement is also often showed through the use of extreme punctuation (e.g. exclamation points, multiple question marks), acronyms (e.g. omg) as well as emoticons of surprise (e.g. emoticons of “shock”, “eek” and “jaw dropping). The more creative and unexpected the posts, the more excited onlookers’ comments are.

Finally, as all participants experience intense positive feelings, they experience a transient impression of togetherness or communitas (cf. Turner, 1974). Denis in the example thus waves good - bye to everyone, (“[lol] Night. [wave]”) indicating some clear consciousness that the experience was built collectively. Members also often refer to past played conflicts as important moments which built the group.

5.2.3.2. Community cohesion

Regarding collective engagement, played conflict nurtures engagement of all participants in both the short term and the longer term. In the short term, during the course of played conflict, members are emotionally, cognitively, and behaviourally engaged.

The range of positive emotions described in the previous section on individual value indicates how much emotionally engaged participants in played conflicts are. A member even made it a personal statement, using as their forum signature the quote from Calvin and Hobbes: “A little rudeness and disrespect can elevate a meaningless interaction to a battle of wills and add drama to an otherwise dull day”. In this quote impoliteness in the shape of “rudeness and disrespect” is depicted as a reason for conflict (”battle of wills”) which is a solution to the boredom of “meaningless interaction” and “dull day” because as it creates exciting “drama”. Members also regularly argued, in played

conflict threads, that they were “interesting”, “thought provoking”, “engaging”, “quality” discussions, indicating cognitive engagement.

In terms of behavioural engagement, “people are coming back and refreshing, to see what else has developed since the last time they looked” (Interviewee B). Banter conflict does not only entice members to watch the forum but also to post, whether as parties or audience members. Interviewee F explained how they “lost entire afternoons at work” on the forum attacking others in banter conflict. Audience members also post as they comment about played conflict. As interviewee E explained played conflict rapidly “takes on a life of its own” as it provides something to talk about so members discuss it. For example, the “Here’s your opportunity to tell a certain someone” thread (see example 2, pp. 115-6) generated close to 300 posts between 60 participants in one day. Similarly the banter insult game discussed above (see example 3, pp. 116-7) generated close to 1,200 posts between more than 100 participants in two-and-a-half days. Played conflicts also lead members who were not on the website to visit.

In the longer term, played conflicts makes member feel emotionally connected to the website and return in the hope that the experience will repeat itself. A moderator explained that, in his view, played conflicts “fuel this site and that’s what keeps [members] returning so that they can read other people’s conflict or (…) participate in it” (Interviewee E). Members also regularly discussed how played conflict gave the community “personality”, motivating them to “come back”. A short conversation in a discussion thread about conflict illustrates this:

“Jeannette: what and who keeps you coming back to the H to the motherfuckin

Cedric: for the banter

Lester: I've seen a picture of a twat on here. It was NeonBlue at the HF picnic. lol

Sean: The continued hope that any hot HF female users will post up pictures of their Vaginas.

Jeannette: see that's why i keep coming back”

This discussion focuses on the reasons why people keep contributing to the forum on the term while many other platforms are available nowadays. Cedric explicitly states that banter is the reason why he keeps coming back. Lester and Sean reply jokingly using banter: Lester abuse another member whom he calls a twat, while Sean addresses sexual innuendos to the female members of the forum. Jeannette shows her agreement with Cedric, approving the Lester’s and Sean’s bantery comments (see that’s why I keep coming back”). Similarly in another discussion thread focusing on “the rebirth of HarderFaster” whereby the community is said to be dying and ways to bring it back to life are discussed, members say:

> Lester: With Ismael we have a true contrarian in the style of Zephire who is just a little bit better than everyone else it would seem. Then we have Francine who could be any number of fuckwits we've had on here in the past. We just need a David analogue to tell us we're wrong about everything and that our partners are really ugly. Then we're back to the glory days.
>
> Dick: I miss the banter of old. Many a boring nightshift was made endurable by most of the stuff posted on here.

There, Lester explains how the "glory days" of the community when there were many memberes who were very active on the forum were enabled by the membership base whereby some members filled in conflict roles, allowing flamboyant played conflicts to emerge: the argumentative "contrarian" who thinks he is "better than everyone else", the serial abuser who "tell us we're wrong about everything and that our partners are really ugly" and the idiot or "fuckwit" who will loose the fight dramatically. Dick further comments how, for a long time, he came to the forum because he enjoyed the banter unfolding there, and how he misses it nowadays. The more members are emotionally, cognitively and behaviourally attached to the community the more they trust it and are willing to volunteer and reciprocate (cf. Brodie et al., 2013) so that community cohesion increases.

5.2.3.3. Community culture

Played conflicts influence the community's culture in term of its shared engagement and shared understanding. Performed conflicts define shared engagement because they create communitas or group feelings. As events triggering communitas, the values, projects, emotions and actions prescribed in performed conflicts become the prescribed ones for the group as a whole (cf. Turner, 1974; Collins, 2005; Schechner, 2003). Every time banter conflict and cathartic conflict emerges, members' behaviours thus (re)enact them as prescribed communal activities. As a result, the meanings of these conflicts (humour, unconventionalism, self-confidence, freedom and self-expression) turn into prescribed communal values. Played conflict also influence shared understanding in the community by building shared narratives. Performed conflicts become stories which all members know and discuss. For example, a "Top Fights on the Forum" thread was created. This was an opportunity for members to fondly recall the performed conflicts they took part in as performers or audience. Those cherished souvenirs were then discussed, uncovering the main elements of the thread and spreading the narrative across the forum. A number of conflict stories are very well-known, with members bringing them up systematically when discussing forum conflicts at clubbing events. Performed conflict can also be classified as "Classic threads", the community's official history, giving an overview of the forum's important moments from the mourning of members' deaths to the most amusing conflicts. Roughly half of the Classic Threads were found to predominantly consist of performed conflict experiences.

Finally played conflict influence shared understanding by nurturing a shared vision of social hierarchy in the group. As explained earlier, played conflict (see example 3, pp. 116- 7) involves banter which redefines members' status as this is an opportunity for them to gain or lose social status in the group, with new members showing verbal jousting talents being congratulated and defeated moderators being scorned as unworthy of their status. When the played conflict takes the shape of redressive ritual as a result of a communal norm violation, the conflict is a popularity vote, whereby deviant members are publicly lynched if they are unpopular or just lectured and reintegrated if they are popular. As a result played conflicts are liminal moments where social hierarchy in the group is questioned before being collectively either relegitimized or adapted.

Table 16: Characteristics of played conflict, its drivers and its consequences for social value

Drivers of played conflict	
Computer-mediated communication	Written format of interaction, communication via an avatar and organization of space as a stage with public and private channels of communication nurture self-distantiation and impression management
Communal context	Violation of communal norms gives birth to redressment rituals
Interaction characteristics	Resemblance of the action script with that of a game (goal, rules, points) favours the framing of conflict as performance
Individual circumstances	Bored mood favours the framing of conflicts as light play, External pressures favours the framing of conflicts as opportunities to rant
Markers of played conflicts	
Parties	Playing the role of performers: idealizing, mystifying, failing to dramatize
	Highlighting the seriousness of the event: stating that the stakes attached to the conflict are self-expression (catharsis) or prestige benefits (winner)
	Highlighting the lightness of the event: stating that it is playful, posting self-distantiating cues, posting abuse incommensurate in context
Onlookers	Playing the role of an audience or outsider: addressing parties as performers, watching, disrupting
	Highlighting the seriousness of the event: evaluating parties' talent and worth in the community
	Highlighting the lightness of the event: stating that it is make-believe, stating that it is playful
Consequences for social value formation	
Individual value	Parties: catharsis, flow, learning, pride, communitas
	Onlookers: entertainment, communitas
Collective engagement	Increased engagement of all participants, behavioural, cognitive and emotional, nurturing cohesion
Community culture	Shared engagement: enacting freedom, self-confidence and play as communal values, enacting banter and ranting as a prescribed activity
	Shared understanding: creating shared narratives, legitimizing or adapting social hierarchy

5.3. Uncertain conflicts: conflict as uncertain performance

In this section, uncertain conflicts are characterized and their drivers and consequences for social value discussed. For an overview, see Table 17 at the end of the section.

5.3.1. Characteristics of uncertain conflicts

Between personal conflicts and played conflicts, I have defined a third conflict type that is labelled uncertain. In these conflicts, performance is uncertain, i.e., the performance is neither explicit nor implicit. Uncertain conflicts typically take two configurations. In reality show conflicts, the conflict is ambiguous: participants hesitate between interpreting the conflict as personal or played, shifting between one interpretation and the other. In trolling conflicts, interpretations of the conflict are misaligned: the conflict is personal for one and played for the other. In uncertain conflict the markers of personal and played conflict co-exist. However two teasing behaviors specific to uncertain conflicts are also visible: baiting and stirring (n.b. teasing generally means taunting someone for sport and fun by persistently making annoying, irritating or provoking remarks). Baiting, typical of trolling, is a tease devised by the troll to feel spontaneous, personal and serious for the other party but as light play for onlookers. It relies on the use of performance markers (idealization, mystification or character breaking) which only onlookers can notice because they know something which the other party does not know (e.g. troll sex, age, occupation, hobbies, writing style, values). Baiting is a practice sufficiently widespread and known that two emoticons were developed for it on the forum. Stirring, typical of reality show conflict, is a tease devised by onlookers aimed at exacerbating antagonism between parties to gain longer and more intense entertainment. For example, asking for more details about, or pretending not to understand, a contentious point to escalate the conflict. When the conflict is dying out, stirrers ask a random question relative to the conflict to keep the conversation going. They also encourage parties to continue and congratulate them on the quality of their attacks.

5.3.1.1. Reality show conflict

Some conflict performances in the community take the shape of a reality show, with conflict being compared to episodes of “Big Brother”, “Jerry Springer” and, in a related fashion, “tabloid” journals. In reality show conflicts participants hesitate between interpreting the conflict as personal or played, shifting between one interpretation and the other. At some moment, parties interpret the conflict as self-authenticating. This manifests in their conflict behaviors to which they attach self-assertion, self-defence and self-restoration meanings. However parties are also conscious at other moments that their private personal conflict is a performance unfolding in a public context. Parties then engage in performance behaviors (idealization, mystification, failed dramatization) with the aim of gaining the sympathy of onlookers, hoping that this will induce them in passing judgments in their favor, helping

them to win the personal conflict. Onlookers sometimes take on the role of the audience by signaling that they are watching and appreciating the quality of the discussion. However they can also frame the conflict as personal and take on the role of mediators and judge.This perceived ambiguity can lead onlookers to engage in the teasing practice of "stirring". This involves a wide range of behaviours such as asking parties questions when they seem disinterested in the discussion, provoking them, or engaging in playful judgments. Onlookers, when they stir, are aware that they are worsening the situation for one or all parties but they disregard it and frame it as play because it will bring them entertainment. In such situations, onlookers are aware of parties' intent to gain their sympathy and refuse to take on the role of judges, reveling instead in the role of audience members.

To illustrate this, consider example 4, a selection of posts from a thread where two female members of the forum fight. Jessica, a DJ, and Mary, a clubber, are linked by men they have had romantic relationships with. Jessica's boyfriend cheated on her with Mary and Mary's boyfriend cheated on her with Jessica. The two members fight about their rights to these men:

> "Jessica: Who are you Mary? You used to fancy my boyfriend right? (…) *tapsfootputshandsonhips* (suspicious)
>
> Mary: *runs into thread from somethingawful.com looking panicked* Shit! Been caught cheating on HF! F****! Sorry (blush)
>
> Jessica: Shit - So it WAS true
>
> Mary: (…) Well, it was only the once. He came on to me
>
> Jessica: Er - like - HELLO..... Yeah, like I believe he came onto you!
>
> Mary: (…) He was not bad in bed, but not the best I've had...
>
> Jessica: That one wants a slap an' all. Treacherous, two-faced, miserable little child slut bride of Satan
>
> Fiona: (…) Cuts and pastes into word doc: :saves for future use:
>
> Jessica: (blush) (triumph) Been practicing for a year and a half now. Glad you like it!"
>
> Hamilton: Good lord. Two very pleasant and nice looking gals on war about some looser who so does not deserve any credits???? If I was you, I'd head to the bar whilst happy hour. There you BOTH could talk this through AND get in couple chosen words about this guy...as obviously neither one of you got him to keep at the end, did you? "

Samuel: Take a step back and look at the situation. Dont you think its a little bit sad to get into an arguement over the Internet on a message board?

Hamilton: Didn't they have "white collar boxing" held somewhere in east end..? Maybe you girls could hire the venue, they would have suitable seating for anyobservers and you could get someone to cash in for tickets? Acknowledged sponsors might sponsor the gear you'd wear and flyerers could maybe take some flyers for this?

Anna: Fight fight fight!!! Can i be ring leader?

Jago: Just thought i would pop back and its Jerry Springer online ([wink])

Samuel: all I can say on this topic is "Yes, YES YES!!!"

Paco: God, I hope this is a brilliant hoax [shock])

Fabian : WIND-UP WIND UP WIND UP, very unbeleivble i am afraid, it just doesnt happen like that.

Danny: How does it happen then??? [confused]

Garry: We've had the "cheating conversations" before.... if it did happen, surely a simple conversation to clear the air would do. Absolutely no point whatsoever (other then entertaining us), it happened over a year ago!!!... You are obviously over this guy so why bring it all up again? One should live in the present not in the past....

Barbie: This has to be a wind up!! Great reading though!!

Watson: “wind up or not this has been good entertainment for my boring wednesday afternoon”

Damien: Congratulations to both of you - whether or not this is serious you still deserve big fuck off gold shiny medals. By the way, if there is a fight could you both come dressed in those three quarter length baggy tracksuit bottoms, reeboks, pop socks, some sort of crop top and different coloured visors so I can tell you apart

Fuji: is that it then no more fighting???

Kayla: Ok, am all for bitch fights, but over something that happened like a year ago? Is the guy really worth it? [confused] it takes to two tango (and two to have a bitchfight [grin])

Samuel: I say you should name and shame the cheating bloke”

With regard to parties, Jessica and Mary interweaved signals of self-authentication with addresses to onlookers, indicating the presence of a personal conflict where parties try to win onlookers over via performance behaviors. Both Jessica and Mary first described their physical demeanor between asterisks ("*") thereby commenting as narrators and idealizing their communications to make them more dramatic. However, they simultaneously used emoticons of suspicion and shame and those emoticons are used in the forum to express authentic emotions. Therefore, while the two women were conscious that they were performing in front of an audience, simultaneously, Jessica was truly suspicious of Mary and Mary was truly ashamed. The next part of the sequence linked together self-authenticating behaviours, the two parties discussing in a very colloquial and direct manner. Mary defended herself, justifying her behaviour ("it was only the once. He came on to me"), Jessica asserted herself calling Mary a liar ("Yeah, like I believe he came onto you") and Mary finally responded in a provocative manner, most probably for self-restoration purposes ("He was not bad in bed, but not the best I've had"). Then, Jessica insulted Mary in a very elaborate manner hinting that it was probably carefully crafted to express feelings of hatred. The use of the third person singular "that" rather than "you" further implied a direct address to the audience and so explicitly acknowledged its presence. The insult was thus idealized and mystifying. When Fiona from the audience commented on how powerful the insult was, Jessica acknowledged the audience again by answering and highlighting the effort she put into it, thus executing both mystification and failed dramatization.

Onlookers' behaviours also indicated uncertainty as to whether the conflict is performed or played. For example Samuel takes the conflict as personal at one point, trying to mediate between the two women ("Take a step back and look at the situation.") but as playful entertainment at another ("all I can say on this topic is Yes, YES YES!!!"). Similarly, Hamilton encouraged the parties to peacefully resolve their conflict ("you BOTH could talk this through AND get in couple chosen words about this guy") but then jokes and fantasies about continuing the conflict as a boxing match ("Didn't they have "white collar boxing" held somewhere in east end..?). Kayla's indicates her uncertainty with regard to the conflict in a single comment. One the one hand she tries to give the parties an honest advice ("I am all for bitch fights, but over something that happened like a year ago? Is the guy really worth it? [confused]"), but, on the other hand, she cracks a joke about the discussion thread ("it takes to two tango (and two to have a bitchfight [grin])". Onlookers' confusion is also manifest through the conversation they engage in about whether the conflict is a hoax. Paco expresses his astonishment ("[shock]") and "hopes" that this is not for real. Fabian, Danny and Garry discussed the reasons why it should not be taken seriously ("it does not happen like that", "if it did happen, surely a simple conversation to clear the air would do", "it happened over a year ago!!!"). Finally the uncertainty of the performance is also manifest in Jago's comparison of the conflict with the "Jerry Springer", indicating resemblance to reality television. Onlookers faced with this uncertainty choose to revel in it,

stating how even if it “has to be a wind up”, it is a “gread reading” and a “good entertainment” which deserves a “big fuck off gold shiny medal”. Onlookers thus engage in stirring, fueling the fire when it looks like the conflict is dying. They ask for further information in relation to the conflict (“I say you should name and shame the cheating bloke”) and encourage parties to escalate (“Fight fight fight!!!”, “is that it then no more fighting???”).

Similar experiences of reality show could be described in a number of other conflictual discussions. For example, a thread was started Mathew, by a forum member who, one night, cheated on his girlfriend with another woman. As that other woman launched the rumour in the clubbing community that he assaulted her, he went online to make the whole story public and in so doing shame the woman for defaming him. He provided intimate details of how the night went, including very crude details of the sexual intercourse, to prove he was telling the truth. The conflict here was serious for the parties but simultaneously staged for an audience, the members of which framed it as a soap opera, comparing it to “Eastenders” and “Neighbours”, and as a reality show, comparing it to “Big Brother” and “The Truman Show”. In another thread, the reality show conflict did not focus on romance but on the trade of steroids, a drug which is legal to consume but illegal to sell. A client of John, a member of the forum engaged in steroid selling, came to the forum to publicly disclose that John took his money but never sent him his steroids by post. The purpose was to shame John and thus pressure him into providing the steroids. The client created a discussion called “Scammed By A Member of this Forum” where he explained the situation. The two members were very angry and abused and threatened each other while simultaneously trying to gain the sympathy of onlookers. The audience framed the duel as a very entertaining reality show, pretending to be a group of friends, drinking tea and eating cake while watching the show, occasionally providing a piece of advice.

5.3.1.2. Trolling conflict

Trolling conflict is a conflict performance where one party, the party trolled, is engaged in a personal conflict while the other party, the troll, is engaged in played conflict. The trolled party’s engagement in a personal conflict involves ignoring the audience by addressing the other party only, focusing the conflict on the definition of the parties’ worthiness, framing attacks as self-assertions, and defense as self-defense. The troll’s engagement in a played conflict involves weaving performance behaviors into the conflict. This is typically achieved through a particular tease called a “bait”. When baiting, trolls attach signals of idealization and mystification to their conflict behaviors that only onlookers can notice so they look like personal attacks for the party trolled but played attacks for on-lookers. This normally involves focusing the attack on vulnerable aspects of the other party’s self and engineering performance behaviours which the target cannot recognize. Baiting can also be achieved by simply

initiating a discussion about a topic that is known to be very sensitive to a forum member and stating an opposite position (Interviewee A). Then “trigger words” are generally used to set the discussion on fire (Interviewee F). Onlookers can take on the role of the audience in a played conflict by watching, appreciating and stirring. Occasionally they play the role of outsiders by disrupting the performance. Onlookers can also regard the troll’s behaviors as personal conflict behaviors under the guise of play and then take on the role of mediators or judges.

As an illustration, take example 5 opposing Marc and Tony, which Tony and several members of the audience referred to as “trolling”:

> Marc: Should I change degree? I'm in the second year of a business studies degree with two years left and I really want to do music technology at another uni. Should I transfer?
>
> Tony: No, Idiot.
>
> Marc: Why so? What is the point of doing something you don't like.
>
> Tony: Is that the reason I think you're an idiot? I think not.
>
> Marc: The thing is I've completely lost interest. All I want to do is get into the music industry with a burning desire regardless of how much money i make or lose. I don't care about time gone by but its my parents who will be disappointed as I've dropped out before but always doing what they want me to do and never what i've wanted to.
>
> Tony: So you are just a quitter then? Change degree, then you can quit that one too. Go you.
>
> Marc: No offence yeah but you are winding me up
>
> Tony: (…) I have tried to give you some honest advice, tell you some home truths.(…) Just fuck off, do what you want. You're obviously a c*nt. Hope you die.
>
> Marc: You do not insult ME without getting it back much harder
>
> Henri: [PLUR]
>
> Tony: Didn't daddy love you enough, Dorothy? (…) Now grow some testicles
>
> Marc: She [Tony] is a nasty unfriendly person
>
> Marc: Listen, don't tell me to die. Do you understand?
>
> Tony: Ha, Ha, Ha. DIE.
>
> Marc: Just don't fucking take the piss out of me

Tony: I have given you honest advice. If you aren't man enough to listen to it, without resorting to behaviour akin to a petulant 7 year old, that's not my fault

Marc: YOU WERE NOT GIVING ADVICE YOU CALLED ME A CUNT AND TOLD ME TO DIE WHICH IS LANGUAGE I WOULD NOT EVEN USE TO MY WORST ENEMY LET ALONE SOMEONE I DONT KNOW ON THE INTERNET. YOU NEED TO LEARN SOME FUCKING RESPECT.

Leo: He is very obviously feeding off your anger and using it against you! Every time you answer him back with a frustrated response he will use it as ammo to piss you off even more! (…) Just accept (…) that he is an insensitive and immature little boy with now better to do than wind others up. (…) Oh and as far as everyone else is concerned.... give the poor guy a break! You wouldn't like it if you were on the other end of it- its vicious and unneccessary no matter what he has said or done... and this is supposed to be a website for the clubbing COMMUNITY, which means a group of people who share some common ground. Instead of verbally abusing each other and putting people down, why not try encouraging each other and developing friendships!

Tony: I believe you are stupid c*nt with no future.

Marc: if you are male why dont you abuse me to my face and then we will see who will fuck off and die.

Pinkeh: Holy Christ

Renata: Can I ask what has prompted this?

Tony: If anyone hasn't seen round one of this Click here [posting a link to earlier parts of the discussion]

Francis: OMG!!!!!1111 Tony is such a cunt. Oh my god, I hate you. OMG I SAY!!!!!!!!!!

Sami: how funny is this, please keep it going

Naomi : [popcorn]

Sally: Is Swift for real?

Sami: hahaha how funny is this, please keep it going

Francis: This thread is ultimate jokes! Thank you Swift for making my day by showing that certain human beings are actually more stupid than dyslexic guinea pigs.

Matt: [cinematographic emoticon] Cut. It's a wrap!

Marc was a new member who opened a discussion thread to ask for advice on whether or not to drop out of his current university degree. Tony, who never talked to him before responded: “No, Idiot”. As the conversation unfolded, Marc remained courteous while Tony continuously abused him. After a number of exchanges following this pattern Marc felt humiliated. He started justifying his initial question (e.g. “What is the point of doing something you don't like?”) and defended himself, asking Tony to show him respect (e.g. “DO NOT talk to me in such a way”; “YOU NEED TO LEARN SOME FUCKING RESPECT”). He also asserted himself by punctuating his comments with insults directed at Tony. Marc also invited Tony to meet him face-to-face for a fist fight to restore his honour. Marc thus defended himself, asserted himself and attempted to restore his honour, generally taking the conflict personally.

Tony, by contrast, engaged in baiting. To ensure Marc would frame his abuse as personal, Tony focused on vulnerable aspects of Marc’s sense of self. When Marc mentioned that he failed degrees before and dropped out from his studies, Tony called him a “halfwit” and a “quitter”. When Marc reacted to Tony’s abuse in a macho fashion, Tony compared him to a teenage girl. When Marc, shocked by Tony’s death wishes, ordered him to stop, Tony told him to die again. To ensure that onlookers would frame his abuses as performance, Tony included subtle cues indicating that he is acting as a performer. He idealized his behaviour by embellishing his posts (e.g. “Ha, Ha, Ha. DIE.”), and mystified onlookers by indicating that he was not himself (e.g. he passes himself off as a woman all along), and rallying onlookers who have missed the beginning of the show (e.g. “If anyone hasn't seen round one of this Click here [posting a link to earlier parts of the discussion]”). Tony also altered his syntax, posting in a style typical of written rather than oral English and pretended to be a woman. Marc, who does not know Tony, could not catch these signals and therefore misinterpreted Tony’s statements by taking them literally. The audience however recognized them.

Most other participants took on the role of audience members, stating that they were watching entertainment by posting popcorn emoticons. They also displayed feelings of narrative tension whether it was surprise (“OMG!!!!!”; “Holy Christ”) or curiosity as to the offline identity of Marc. Onlookers also engaged in stirring, posting comments aimed at re-igniting the conflict by encouraging Tony to continue trolling (“how funny is this, please keep it going”), asking other members not to explain to Marc what is happening, and occasionally provoking Marc by expanding on Tony’s derisive remarks. A few onlookers took on the role of outsiders, interrupting the performance (e.g. “Can I ask what has prompted this?”). One member who empathized with the party trolled took on the roles of mediator and judge explaining to Mark how Tony uses his angry bursts to identify his soft spots, “feeding” off those burst and using them as “ammunition” to further enrage him. He further harshly

condemned Tony for being “insensitive and immature” and commanded the rest of the community to “give the poor guy a break”. Another member called for resolution, posting an emoticon of PLUR, an acronym standing for Peace, Love, Unity, Respect, four core values of the clubbing community.

5.3.2. Drivers of uncertain conflicts

Different drivers contribute to the development of uncertain conflicts. They relate to computer-mediation, the community context, characteristics of interactions and individual differences. With regard to computer-mediation, interactions on the forum are written, making speakers’ intentions uncertain. An interviewee explained that it is “difficult to pick up the tone” of written communications, they can mean “two or three different things and one of them might be offensive” (Interviewee A). This is because signals that parties are performers are limited to verbal indications (idealization, mystification, failed dramatization) and body language, props, make-up and physical demeanor, all the non-verbal communication cues which would normally indicate that the speaker is a performer are missing online. If verbal indications are not visible, it is not possible to identify whether the party is performing, and whether they are serious or joking. A member explained that he would “say something which sounds quite funny and quite light” in his head but “because it is words on a screen you don’t get the inflection”. A moderator further explained that online communication lacks the “patting (…) on the back and shaking of the hand” as well as the “ha-ha, wink-wink, nudge-nudge bit” (Interviewee E), indicating whether abuse should be taken seriously or lightheartedly. To conclude, the informality of performances and the written format of interaction result in uncertainty as to whether conflict should be perceived as spontaneous or performed, serious or light, and this enhances the likelihood that participants frame the same conflict differently.

Another peculiarity of computer mediated interaction, is that the platform’s organization as a stage with a front region visible to all (the forum area) and a back region invisible to onlookers (the private messaging system), cannot prevent the occurrence of private conversations on the front stage. As a result the forum area is used to hold both spontaneous (private) and performed (public) conversations. The dual use of the forum area raises uncertainty about whether a particular discussion is meant to be a performance.

With regard to the community context, membership heterogeneity contributes to the development of uncertain conflict performances in three ways. First the coexistence of members with heterogeneous levels of intimacy magnifies the difficulty of interpreting parties’ intentions. People who are close to one another can take abuse from each other and consider it as a playful sign of intimacy while people who are not close to one another tend to take abuse personally. A member explained that he and his online friends would “slate each other off and call each other’s mums names” without being offended because they are “good enough friends” while other people “don’t

have the right to say that because they don't know" him. When members who are close to one another interact online they can engage in lighthearted abuse but onlookers who do not know them would believe that it is serious abuse. A moderator explained that good friends would often "antagonize and bicker with each other in a good-natured way online" but this would appear to other users as if they were "being nasty to each other" (Interviewee E). A member similarly explained that a playful argument between "three or four people that know each other very well" would make an outsider reading it think "Oh Goodness this is horrible" (Interviewee A). This not only fosters divergent framings between parties and onlookers but also between parties themselves. A former key troll of the community (Interviewee D) remembers that when he first joined he would get abused by other members who would treat him "like one of the community", that is abuse him jokingly, but he would take it personally because he did not know them.

Second the coexistence of members with different roles in the community nurtures the development of diverging interpretations. In particular conflicts involving moderators as one of the parties are prone to divergent framing of the event. Moderators are the targets of a form of trolling called "mod' baiting". This consists of contravening the site's terms and conditions and disrupting community life with the aim of getting the moderators to take corrective action and retaliate. "Mod' baiting" typically involves behaviours like posting pornography, picking on other members inappropriately or corrupting the website (Interviewee C). Moderators are aware that the baiters frame their action as a playful game and so do not act short tempered or flamboyantly. They rather retaliate by censoring posts, deleting posts and banning. At one point, mod' baiters started attacking at night so that a night moderator role and secret moderator roles were created by the community owner. For the troll, the lack of moderator flamboyance is replaced by the amusement of having a sure and powerful retaliation to their actions. Moderators know that the trolls find it fun to engage in such behaviours but they do not feel the same because of the nature of their role in the community. Moderators are there to ensure that community rules are followed and to protect the community from disruption. The community owner himself actually engaged in disruptive behaviours before he bought the website and took on formal responsibilities, framing this as a playful game. However, as the owner, when he is "out at a party" receiving a call saying "the whole homepage has gone shit and nobody can login" because of "an arse finding it funny to corrupt the homepage" this severely irritates him. Furthermore as people with considerable experience of conflict, moderators have seen it all so while it is fun for the member, the moderator has seen it ten times, which "takes the fun out of it" (Interviewee C).

Third the coexistence of members with different levels of experience in the community creates the conditions for the development of different interpretations of conflict performances. As members gain experience in the community, they get used to conflict being played rather than personal.

Newcomers by contrast are often not attuned to the possibility that conflict might be performed. As newcomers are very prone to framing conflicts are personal they are a typical target of trolls. A former key troll interviewed explained that he was the victim of trolls when he arrived because he was new. The co-presence of newcomers and old timers thus creates conditions ripe for uncertain performances to develop.

With regard to interaction characteristics, certain conflicts' scripts make them prone to the emergence of uncertain performances. With regard to reality show conflict, conflict scripts often have important similarity with that of soap operas. First the discussion topic triggering the conflict generally revolves around intimate matters, very often relationship matters and romance in particular. Conflicts revolving around such topics were regularly referred to in threads and during interviews as "dirty laundry conflicts" (from the saying of airing one's dirty laundry in public). Second the action is structured like a soap opera. Rather than presenting a plot with a very clear beginning and end, the discussion starts in medias res, i.e. in the middle of the action, providing insights into slices of members' lives. Also, the script is very dramatic, that is organized to create narrative tension. Following Baroni (2007) narrative tension consists of having passionate expectations regarding a particular piece of action due to uncertainties regarding the development of action. Baroni (2007) explains that narrative tension can nurture feelings of suspense, curiosity or surprise. Each feeling is created by a different type of uncertainty of the conflictual action. Suspense is impatient anticipation of the future developments of the conflict. It is created by the introduction of an incident of crucial importance to the parties but it is unclear whether the consequences will be good or bad. Curiosity is an inquisitive desire to resolve a mystery related to the conflict at hand. It emerges when crucial information regarding the conflict unfolding is missing, creating uncertainty about its conditions or origins. Surprise is the sudden feeling of wonder or astonishment caused by the unexpected development of conflict action or resolution of conflict mystery. Surprise surfaces when unexpected things in relation to the conflict are revealed, disconfirming the anticipations built in suspense and curiosity.

Take the conflict between the women who fought over their ex-boyfriends (see example 4, pp. 132-3). The conflict revealed the two members' romantic lives, a typical topic of soap operas. Furthermore the thread began with Jessica saying "I have just sussed out….. Who are you Mary - You used to fancy my BF right???", starting in the middle of Jessica's thought flow, in medias res. The script of action was also dramatic. Because it was a conflict situation and, by definition, conflict has an uncertain outcome, suspense and anticipations about the future were nurtured. Still the twists and turns of the plot further nurtured surprise and curiosity. The discussion started as a cliché argument between two girls over a man with Jessica accusing Mary of having seduced her ex-boyfriend.

However, Mary revealed that Jessica seduced her ex-boyfriend too. After some verbal abuse, the two women arranged to meet in a pub and settle the issue face to face, most probably with physical violence. These twists and turns nurtured surprise, suspense and curiosity. The symmetry with the two women coincidentally having seduced each other's boyfriends was surprising. The setting up of a meeting in a pub to "settle things", combined with intimidations and threats, made everyone wonder whether a physical fight would occur. The extravagance of the coincidence and the women's high involvement in their finished romantic stories also made onlookers curious as to whether the conflict was real or made up to entertain the forum. Similarly the "Scammed By A Member of this Forum" discussion thread over misconduct of steroid business (see p. 135), dealt with a highly private topic. The narrative also created some mystery: who exactly was the client? Was he just an avatar invented by John to create some awareness of his business or to play a prank on the other forum members? If not, what exactly happened and did John actually scam this client? The audience also sensed suspense, expressing for example its eagerness to know whether John and his client would meet up and engage in fist fighting.

With regard to trolling, trolling conflict experiences are rooted in a game script. While the played conflicts analyzed were rooted in a banter game script, trolling is rooted in a prank game script. Trolling is a well-known prank game in the online world where the aim is to enrage the other party. The player (called "troll") wins when the other party displays dramatic enragement and loss of temper. The rule in trolling is that abuse should take the form of baits, abuse which looks authentic to the other party but playful to onlookers. Trolls mark points in different ways. They gain points if the party was difficult to enrage and a lot of skill was needed. The troll also wins points if he is humorous when baiting. Finally points are gathered when the discussion with the enraged party is dramatic. The audience's reaction serves as a yardstick to measure the troll's success. In the Tony vs. Mark trolling conflict for instance (see example 5, pp. 1366-7), Joe, a very experienced baiter commented "Too easy... way too easy", indicating that Tony's trolling should not be praised as it was not a challenge. Marc was inexperienced and insecure so he was easy to enrage. However, the intensity of Marc's rage and the humour embedded in Tony's messages earned him the kudos of the audience. After a while, several tried to explain to Marc that Tony is playing and the word "trolling" was explicitly said. However, Marc was so enraged that he would not listen – he abused those approaching him, telling them off, and continued to frame the conflict as a duel between him and Tony. Thus onlookers laughed out loud and posted emoticons of praise, qualifying the thread as the "ultimate joke".

Another aspect of interactions making conflict prone to take the shape of uncertain performances is that interactions are generally improvised so clear cues indicating whether speakers are engaging in a performance are often missing. The beginning and end of a performance are not clearly identified as they normally would be in theatre or at a sports event. The rules which the performance follows are generally not explicitly stated. Furthermore, the separation between

performers and audience roles is fluid as the audience can choose to become actors at any time. As a result it is uncertain whether interactions are spontaneous or performed.

Finally with regard to individual specificities, a high level of experience in the community is another factor favoring the emergence of uncertain conflict performances. As members get repeatedly exposed to conflict performances where participants hold diverging views about the performed nature of the event, they develop skills to evaluate which situations are rife with performance uncertainty and they willfully engineer uncertain conflict performance. Experienced members typically created newbie avatars to trick other members into making them think they are innocent and unable to troll.

5.3.3. Consequences of uncertain conflict for social value

Uncertain conflicts have individual and community level consequences for social value. This section discusses these influences.

5.3.3.1. Individual value

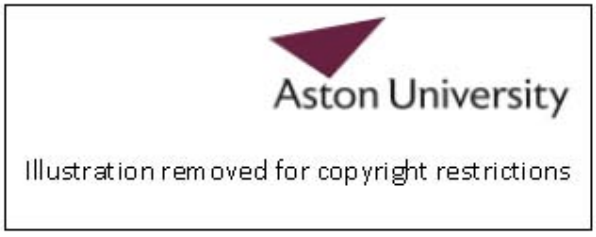
In uncertain conflict performance participants develop a different experience of the event with those predominantly interpreting it as personal living a negative experience and those predominantly interpreting it as played living a positive experience. They follow the output associated with each frame as discussed in the previous sections of the findings (see sections 5.1.3.1 and 5.2.3.1, p. 103 and p. 122). This section discusses the influence of trolling and reality show conflict on individual value.

5.3.3.1.1. Reality show conflict

In reality show conflict, parties feel frustration, anger, pain and shame while onlookers by contrast are entertained experiencing excitement and fun and exchanging jokes about the event. Interviews and thread analyses indicate that the entertainment derived from reality show conflict is voyeuristic. It satisfies members' wishes to peek into others' intimate lives and observe conflicts which they ordinarily cannot observe. Note that it is different from the sadistic pleasure of watching other's suffering because, in reality show conflict, entertainment involves narrative transportation. Whether the conflict is played or personal for the parties, it is an enjoyable conflict to watch as long as it gives the *impression* of being personal. In the thread where Jessica and Mary argued about their rights to their respective ex-boyfriends (see example 4, pp. 132-3), a member of the audience commented after the seriousness of the conflict was questioned: "wind up or not this has been good entertainment for my boring Wednesday afternoon". The audience members here indicated that the actual spontaneity of

the conflict is irrelevant. Rather, it is the impression that it *might* be spontaneous, the effect of personal conflict in the narrative that made it entertaining. The intensity of entertainment clearly creates communitas in the audience following a similar process as described in played conflicts.

Take the example of the reality show conflict where Dave "outed" John for cashing in his money but not sending him the steroids he was supposed to deliver (see p. 1355). The point of Dave creating the thread was to name and shame John for his unethical business practices, using social pressure and to obtain his due. The conflict clearly began as personal and the stage of frustration was over because Dave was enraged, swearing ("for fuck's sake") and threatening John, using drastic threats such as beating him up at home as he allegedly knew his address, or going to the police. John was very angry too that Dave would give him a bad reputation ("this is a public forum and not good for me") and so called him various names ("cheeky cunt", "stupid rat") and threatening him back ("u can come down all u want ill snap ur neck"). The audience by contrast was thoroughly entertained saying how "amused" they were, posting laughing emoticons and jokingly pretending to have a drink together while watching the HarderFaster TV ("Would you like a cup of tea?", "Earl Grey plz", "Hot choc for me please"). Onlookers also manifested feelings of suspense discussing how the conflict would continue and whether Dave and John would fight face-to-face. As the audience did not take the conflict seriously, John did not feel released from his anger or more self-righteous. Rather, the derisory comments and the ridiculing pictures sent in reaction to the thread (see below) made him feel bad, with him saying several times he wished he could delete the thread all together.



In the thread "For all those calling me a rapist" where Mathew intended to "out" the woman who claimed he had raped her (see p. 135), similar consequences are present. He expressed anger in that thread calling the woman and the members who spread the rumour many names ("cock", "fucking muppets", "fuck you") and telling off members trying to stir ("mind your own bees knees"). The audience in contrast was entertained. Feelings of suspense (will Mathew's girlfriend take him back after this?) and curiosity (what exactly motivated Mathew to make such intimate aspects of his life public?) were visible in participants' comments as a result of narrative transportation. High levels of excitement were visible through comments (e.g. "Teh dramas!") and some members sharing the thread and discussing how incredible the conflict was on an unrelated forum. Feelings of fun could be sensed

through a variety of comments too (e.g. “lol the only emotion I'm feeling is pure enjoyment”). The intensity of entertainment clearly created communitas. This was manifested in several members’ attempts to immortalize this collective moment by inventing a new expression “Doing a Mathew”, after the party’s name, and making it an article on Wikipedia:

> “The Mathew v. Mathew-ed, mathew-ing, mathews, doing the Mathew Etymology: Coined as a descriptive term after an adulterous confession on a UK clubbing website, the slang word is now informally used to describe illicit, drunken sexual intercourse with someone other than your partner. 1. to cheat on one's partner. Cheating 2. to make a series of mistakes, each one more incredulous than the last, to the amusement of others 3. to air one's laundry in public 4. to embarass one's girlfriend by letting everyone know personal details 5. to use an internet confession as a means of boasting about ones sexual prowess”

Mathew perceived the thread as his “right to respond” to her defamation and was expecting to get some cathartic release, hoping other members would agree with him about how awful the woman’s behaviour was. However, members preferred to laugh about it, and to laugh at him rather than with him, so that communitas occurred at his expense. As a result Mathew spent most of the thread justifying his behaviour to members picking on him rather than feeling released.

5.3.3.1.2. Trolling conflict

In trolling, the conflict is played for the troll but personal for the trolled party. Per the discussion in the personal conflict and played conflict sections (see sections 5.1.3.1 and 5.2.3.1, p. 103 and p. 122), the troll therefore feels flow while the trolled party feels harm, frustration, anger and possibly sadness. Onlookers, while they are aware that the troll is playing a trolling game, can consider it a form of mobbing, whereby the aggressive troll and the supporting audience are collectively harassing the trolled party within a personal conflict, under the guise of play. The playful intent of the troll and the audience is then acknowledged but the anger and frustration displayed by the trolled party prevents them from framing the event as play. The pleasure that the troll and the audience derive from the experience is deemed sadistic. These onlookers thus feel frustrated and angry. This manifests with some onlookers explaining the rules of the game to the trolled party and telling the troll and the other onlookers that they should be ashamed of themselves. If onlookers frame the performance as light play by contrast, they feel entertained and both the onlookers and the troll experience communitas.

For trolls, the conflict is a game nurturing excitement, fun and total involvement in the task and so it is a source of flow. A troll explained during interview that trolling is “amusing” with “a little bit of excitement”. There is also a feeling of danger in trolling as one knows that one will be at the receiving end of numerous very angry attacks. Yet the stakes are low as one is behind a screen. As a result, the danger is taken lightly and playfully, as a challenge requiring the troll to stay focused and

use his skills well, rather than as a serious risk. The interviewee compared their experience as a troll to being hero John McLane in the movie Die Hard 3 entering a black neighborhood with a sandwich board proclaiming “I hate niggers” around his neck. While John McLane knows he risks death, the forum member and their friends cannot be seriously hurt when pretending to be someone else behind a keyboard. The use of this fictional example is also interesting as it highlights that for them, it is not real, and hence the risk is more of a challenge than a serious risk.

For the trolled party, the conflict is personal and so the party feels hurt, frustrated, angry and sad. For example, in the case of trolling analyzed previously opposing Marc and Tony (see pp. 136-7), Marc first expressed a lot of frustration, saying that Tony was “winding him up” because Tony refused to answer his serious questions and just abused him. He escalated stating that he did “not appreciate being insulted on the internet by someone who does not know” him, before displaying outright anger aimed at impressing Tony and forcing him to show him respect. He called him names (e.g. “wanker“), wrote in capital letters (e.g. YOU NEED TO LEARN SOME FUCKING RESPECT) and abused people who were trying to advise him using many swear words (“Who the fuck are you? (…) I don't want your fucking advice, shove it up your ass”). As he could not manage to get Tony to show him respect and answer his original question he then felt sad, depreciating himself, calling himself “a COMPLETE loser”, “the worst student ever” and taking abuse without defending himself anymore (“I don't understand what on earth you are on about...”).

Onlookers of a trolling conflict can either frame it as personal conflict or play. In the Tony vs. Marc case, most onlookers framed it as a very entertaining game. Numerous comments of excitement were posted such as “OMG!!!!! Oh my god. OMG I SAY!!!!!!!!!!”. Some members found the whole discussion so incredible that they wondered whether Marc was actually a troll, instead trolling everyone. Numerous members also stated how fun the experience was posting emoticons of laughter and joking about it. For example, a member who first tried to give Marc some advice, and was told to “shove it up [their] ass”, decided to take it as fun since Marc would not listen. They thus started a role playing game in the thread where they are a patient and another member is the doctor trying to find the advice. Narrative transportation is also visible through comments such as “@ Marc take a bow” indicating that the onlooker, while they know that it is an personal fight for Marc, chooses to consider Marc as a comical actor who executed a majestic performance. All the markers are thus present indicating that these onlookers were feeling entertained.

Onlookers, while they are aware that the troll is playing a trolling game, can consider it a form of mobbing, whereby the aggressive troll and the supporting audience are collectively harassing the trolled under the guise of play. The playful intent of the troll and the audience is acknowledged but the anger and frustration displayed by the trolled party makes them refuse to frame the event as play. The pleasure that the troll and the audience derive from the experience is then deemed sadistic. These

onlookers thus feel frustrated and angry. This manifests with some onlookers explaining the rules of the game to the trolled party and telling the troll and the other onlookers that they should be ashamed of themselves. For example one onlooker said in the Marc vs. Tony trolling conflict:

> "Give the poor guy a break! (…) This is supposed to be a website for the clubbing COMMUNITY, which means a group of people who share some common ground. (…)So grow up or find somewhere where your sad little taunts are tolerated!"

Here the onlooker lectured the rest of the participants about the fact that their behaviour is unacceptable in a community ("This is supposed to be a website for the clubbing COMMUNITY", orders them to stop ("Give the poor guy a break!") and tells them off on the platform ("find somewhere where you (…) are tolerated!") Telling them to find a place where they are tolerated indicates that he cannot tolerate it and feels frustrated. Writing with capital letters ("COMMUNITY") and exclamation marks and name calling ("sad little taunts") indicate intense emotions so that frustration is mixed with anger. Other onlookers also called Tony a "sad sad boy", an "insensitive prick" and a "cunt" for making Marc look like a "muppet", indicating frustration and anger through name calling.

Whether onlookers of a trolling conflict frame it as a performance or a personal conflict depends on (a) how humorous the game is, and (b) whether the onlooker is related to the trolled party. Joe Black, the most famous troll on the forum was known for being extremely witty and funny with his trolling and therefore managed to gain a large supportive audience. The importance of humour in the framing of trolling as played or personal conflict is also visible in the Marc vs Tony trolling conflict where an onlooker addresses Marc saying "You're the joke (…) I'm not big on Tony's behaviour on here but in your case I'll make an exception." Here the onlooker makes it explicit that he normally condemns trolling games ("I'm not big on Tony's behaviour on here") but highlights simultaneously that this time he frames it as play ("in your case I'll make an exception") because the way the interaction is built makes it the ultimate joke ("You're the joke"). Similarly another onlookers post "OMG!!!!!1111 Tony is such a cunt. Oh my god, I hate you. OMG I SAY!!!!!!!!!!" indicating condemnation of Tony's ruthlessness ("Tony is such a cunt", "I hate you") although this is counterbalanced by the fun and exciting result of it ("OMG!!!!!1111").

In addition to humour, framing of trolling games as play or personal conflict by onlookers depends on their relationships with the trolling party. As a core member explained in an interview: "it's only funny if it's not you or your mates" (Interviewee F). If one relates to the person trolled, their pain cannot be ignored and it is no longer perceived as a playful prank but an personal conflict. This is visible through a particular trolling conflict thread. There, one onlooker starts defending the trolled party so the troll tells them off ("what HAS it got 2 do wiv you???") to which the onlooker replies that

they are looking after their friend ("[they are] a mate of mine and [they] do not need to get involved in your childish playground bitchiness.")

Finally, the troll and the onlookers framing the trolling conflict as play experience communitas as they engage in an intense positive collective experience. This is visible in members waving goodbye to all participants when they leave the forum and the classification of a number of trolling conflicts as part of the community's history.

To summarize the discussion, uncertain conflict performances influence individual hedonic, social integration, and social enhancement value. However, they do so in different ways depending on the form of the uncertain conflict performance and the roles of the different participants in the conflict. In trolling conflict experiences, the trolled party experiences pain, frustration, anger and shame, developing altogether a negative experience, while the troll, by contrast, experiences flow. Onlookers framing the conflict as harmless play are entertained. Trolls and onlookers framing the trolling conflict as play also experience communitas. Onlookers who frame the event as mobbing are frustrated and angry. In reality show conflicts, the audience is entertained by the conflict which provides hedonic value. They also tend to experience communitas which is social integration value. The reality show parties experience frustration and anger which is negative hedonic value. They also feel shame which is a form of negative social enhancement.

5.3.3.2. Collective engagement

With regard to collective engagement reality show conflict has a positive influence while trolling is detrimental. The following section details each process in turn.

5.3.3.2.1. Reality show conflict

For parties in reality show conflict, the performance is a source of anger and shame. However, because the objects of reality show conflicts are very intimate topics these conflicts generally oppose two regular members and, as explained earlier, regular members differentiate clearly their relationships between individual members on the forum and their relationship with the forum in general. Therefore the conflict does not influence their engagement in the community.

For onlookers, however, reality show conflict nurtures their engagement both in the short and the long term. In the short term it encourages members to stay on the forum and read the discussions, post on the forum and recommend other members to connect to the website. Interviewee B explained:

> "For the website (…) [reality show] conflict is good because people want to read what's going on. So they will be like Hooooo! Haaaa! And people talk about that. It's, it's you now if a celebrity does something stupid it's exactly the same thing. Oh my God ! Did you see that ??"

Here the interviewee explains how reality show conflict makes the members connected to the community cognitively and emotionally engaged as they "want to read what's going on" and revel in the surprising twists of the conflict ("Hooooo! Haaaa!"). Reality show conflict also entices audience members to post on the forum:

> "It's a bit like the playground. Two people start a fight and everybody will create a circle around them and encourage that fight while not letting somebody else comes in and break it up. (…)When it looks like it's dying you fuel the fire. You just throw in your own opinion because suddenly they are having to defend themselves all over again. (…) It is entertaining." (Interviewee F)

Here the interviewee, comparing reality show conflict to a playground fight, explains that because it is "entertaining", audience members post their "own opinion" and turn off well-meaning mediators to induce parties "to defend themselves", "fuel the fire" and "encourage" the fight, prevent it from "dying" or break up. Beyond watching and posting, reality show conflict entices highly engaged members to recommend other members to connect to the website. Interviewee B explains:

> "There would be a tremendous fight happening and they would be like"Go and log on to go and log on to harder faster now!" And all of a sudden there would be a massive page hits. (…) For somebody who come everyday it will be "ow my god have you seen what is happening on harder faster? There is this huge row taking place. And people would start logging in.

When "tremendous", very intense reality show conflicts occur, members thus call their friends, inviting them to follow the discussion so that "all of a sudden there is a massive page hit" (Interviewee B). In some cases, this can even lead new members to join the forum:

> "It was the famous thread 'Never done me like that' (...) you got some stage where people from other forums start signing up a bit like... really what's going on, and chip in. And this is someone who has never even been a part of the community." (Interviewee E)

In the longer term, reality show conflict is one of the reasons why members keep coming back to the forum. The community owner explained that even if he "did not approve of a lot of it", because some members were truly getting hurt, as a governor working for the benefit of the community, he just "let it run" because he "knew it was very popular". Members themselves repeatedly joyfully shared or reluctantly admitted that the enjoyment of watching others' serious fights, watching the "soap opera" of break ups and fights was one of the main reasons which made them come back to the forum. In the longer term attending a reality show conflict as an audience member therefore develops members'

loyalty to the community. As interviewee E explains: “That’s what keeps them [community members] returning, it is like watching soap opera that they can participate in, like sort of an interactive soap opera”

5.3.3.2.2. Trolling conflict

Trolling conflict by contrasts makes newcomers and EDM professionals abandon the community, disheartens moderators, nurtures mistrust towards newcomers and negative associations about the community for regular members, overall damaging collective engagement. Newcomers, given their lack of experience, typically frame conflict as personal and are easy to “wind up”. They develop negative associations and distrust toward the community and disengage. EDM professionals engaging with the community for business interests and to promote their club nights, music labels or DJ acts do not look for fun in the community but rather information and business opportunities. As a result when they become the target of trolls, this gives them the impression that the community does not fit their approach to clubbing as business, they dissociate from the community and leave it. Defection of EDM professionals is particularly problematic as committed DJs and promoters are rare and have very high social status in the clubbing culture so having them in one’s online community is a sign of quality. EDM professionals are also the ones who can provide information about upcoming parties and provide insider information from the scene. Losing DJs and promoters is therefore a blow to the community’s bridging capability. Moderators are also often the target of trolls in a form of trolling called “mod’baiting”. Like personal conflicts, moderators find trolling disheartening. Regular posters have described trolling as “the cocaine of message boards”: they get “a real buzz off of [it] at first” but in the long term it “gets them all wound up and aggressive” and they cannot remember the last time they “actually enjoyed the feeling”. They can find individual trolling conflict enjoyable in the short term but associate trolling conflicts in general with bad memories, nurturing their emotional disengagement from the community. Trolling also contributed to generating regular posters’ distrust towards newcomers. A common trolling strategy is to create a new account and a new persona and pretending to be involuntarily impolite or naturally aggressive. As a result every newbie’s behaviour is scrutinized and dissected with the aim of proving them guilty of having introduced themselves under false pretenses for trolling purposes. This suspicion led community members to harass newcomers who fit the community the best. Take the example of the following thread, created by a newcomer who wanted to introduce himself:

> “New member: Hi everyone! (…) Looking forward to getting to know you all (laugh)
>
> Adam: We might as well get this out of the way now. Which former user are you?

New member: You what?

Caroline: Ignore him, if you can. Based on history, anyone who (…) steams right in on the forums is regarded with suspicion due to former members who are itchy trigger alias niggas. Which means you will be watched closely in the beginning until proven guilty or banned (…)

Julian: Grammar, spelling, punctuation all present and correct. Can string a sentence together too and at least sounds fair minded and somewhat erudite.

Justin: I'll give you the benefit of the doubt (please God don't let it be Steve, Weirdo, Hitch) and say happy Friday and welcome to you

New member: I feel a bit like the new boy in the school. (...)

New member: So much for my hello page. Its turned into six pages of (…) suspicion."

Here the new member's fitting with the community style ("steam right") led a number of members to become suspicious as to whether he was a former banned member. They dissected his writing style ("Grammar, spelling, punctuation all present and correct"), named former users he could be ("please God don't let it be Steve, Weirdo, Hitch") and asked him who is really behind the avatar ("Which former user are you?"). The members eventually gave him "the benefit of the doubt" but remained distrustful, warning him that he would be "watched closely (…) until proven guilty or banned". As a result the member feels bullied ("I feel a bit like the new boy in the school") and disheartened ("So much for my hello page. It's turned into six pages of (…) suspicion.") In this case the member did not leave the community. However, it is believed by a number of community members that such behaviour has prevented many newbies from staying on the forum. Regular members' distrust towards newbies therefore appears to prevent new members from integrating and the community from sustaining its membership base.

5.3.3.3. Community culture

Uncertain conflict performances influence community culture in terms of its shared understanding, shared engagement and procedures. With regard to shared understanding, uncertain conflict performances are a source of shared narratives. Reality show conflict and trolling conflict performances, when they are entertaining for the audience are remembered and discussed over time (Interviewee A). The conflict "takes on a life of its own which everyone else then starts to allude to, even people that were not taking part in that initial interaction" (Interviewee E). Past uncertain conflict performances are often mentioned in discussions and can have specific threads dedicated to discussing and remembering them. For example past forum meltdowns which were an enjoyable watch for

onlookers were remembered and discussed in the “Falling out with your online mates” discussion. Reality show conflicts and trolling conflicts can also be stored as classic threads thereby becoming “famous” (Samy) and part of the forum’s official history. Classic threads were often brought up in discussion with forum members when meeting at night clubs. The reality show example (Jessica versus Mary) and trolling example (Marc versus Tony) described above (see example 4, pp. 132-133 and example 5, pp. 136-7) were both classified as classic threads and mentioned during inp-deth interviews and in clubs. Occasionally reality show conflicts can also create new vocabulary and symbols and words invented during these conflicts tend to stick in collective memory. For example “doing a Mathew” (see p. 145) is an expression still understood and used in the forum today. The pictures posted ridiculing Dave in the discussion thread where he outed John for not delivering steroids he had paid for (see p. 144) were reused later in other discussions about steroids. The expression “storking”, involuntarily created by a member in a thread meant to discuss his impression that photographers of the website Gurn.net were stalking him has become somewhat iconic. While this discussion thread was primarily a form of mobbing, some members framed it as a form of reality show where the performer makes a fool of himself.

With regard to shared engagement, onlookers are very engaged when experiences of reality show conflict emerge. Onlookers’ supportive behaviours present reality show conflict watching as a communally well perceived activity, (re)enacting it as a prescribed communal activity. The fact that reality show conflict watching is a communal activity, is visible in the creation of the “Best Meltdown” category, an award in the yearly community awards honouring the members who had the most entertaining row with an online friend. As reality show conflict watching is associated with entertainment (excitement, fun, a sense of extraordinariness, narrative transportation) and voyeurism, collective signs of appreciation of reality show conflict enacts and reinforces those meanings as communal values.

Regarding trolling, different members develop different meanings and feelings in relation to trolling conflict experiences. Some members find it humorous and enjoy it, while others find it sadistic and dislike it. Trolling experiences thus create debates opposing two diverging views about what should be considered humorous or not. Those disliking the trolling experience argue that laughing at someone is not humorous and publicly condemn the troll, making trolling a banned activity. Those enjoying the trolling experience, underline how humorous the troll is, publicly defend them and contend that trolling is an important social role in the community, making trolling a prescribed activity. The arguments developed in those debates are based on diverging perspectives on the boundaries of individual freedom in the community. Those defending trolling argue that freedom grants members the right to do what they want. Those condemning trolling argue that members’ right to do what they want is bounded by their duty not to hurt others. The debates are thus opportunities to negotiate the boundaries of freedom in the community, to continuously negotiate “where the line is

drawn" between what is "acceptable (…) and what isn't" when joking (Interviewee E). All members draw boundaries to freedom at some point. Members supporting trolls in a particular instance, arguing that it is their right to have fun the way they want, often condemn them in another instance arguing that they have gone too far. However different members draw the boundaries to freedom for different trolling activities and jokes. Trolling experiences, by fostering the negotiation of the boundaries of freedom in the community, reveal heterogeneous definitions of it. Let me illustrate this with further posts of example 5 opposing Marc and Tony:

> "Tony: Just fuck off, do what you want. You're obviously a cunt. Hope you die.
>
> Marc: Listen, don't tell me to die. Do you understand?
>
> Naomi: With all due respect unless it contravenes the T&C's Tony can do what Tony likes. Like it or lump it.
>
> Marc: It's not with all due respect cos its not common sense to wish the death upon someone you dont know.
>
> Naomi: Oh dear. Point missed.
>
> Marc: No not point missed you do not fuck with me
>
> Kayla: There's a first time for everything. Cope.
>
> Marc: Listen darling I am only defending an abusive comment made towards me which I in all fairness considered to be out of order
>
> Stagger: She's simply someone offering some friendly advice. People get insulted and told to die in horrible ways all the time on here. If you're particularly sensitive about being insulted then maybe this isn't the best place to be
>
> Kastor: you're the joke mate. Normally I'm not big on Tony's behaviour on here but in your case I'll make an exception.
>
> Salma: Toughen up then mate or leave
>
> Tony: I offered him some plain home truths about the direction he was taking with his life. Now I'm just winding the big gay fool up because he deserves it.
>
> Leo: Tony, (…) you have clearly done enough to hurt him, whether you feel he deserved it or not. I think its time you lay off him and take your malicious attitude somewhere else. (…) [Marc,] you just have to accept that theres a few losers like him on here, (…) who think they're so cool (…) and that it gives them the right to treat others like dirt."

In the posts above, different views on the boundaries of freedom are expressed. Naomi, Kayla, Stagger, Kastor, Salma and Tony legitimize Tony's violent abuses based on the rationale members should be free say what they want ("Like it or lump it.", "There's a first time for everything. Cope", "If you're particularly sensitive about being insulted then maybe this isn't the best place to be"), as long as it is not illegal ("unless it contravenes the T&C's Tony can do what Tony likes"). Marc and Leo by contrast condemn Tony's behavior because it is meant to be hurtful ("cos its not common sense to wish the death upon someone", "I am only defending an abusive comment (…) out of order", "I think its time you lay off him and take your malicious attitude somewhere else", "losers like him (…) think they're so cool (…) and that it gives them the right to treat others like dirt."). As a common agreement is not found, the discussion thus highlights to co-existence of diverging opinions about freedom of speech on the forum. Kastor, who normally condemns such behaviors ("normally I'm not big on Tony's behaviour"), appreciates it this time ("but in your case I'll make an exception") further blurring the boundary between what is acceptable or not.

Beyond shared understanding and shared engagement, trolling conflict experiences have influenced the community's culture in terms of its procedures. In terms of hierarchical standards, trolls' use of multiple avatars led moderators to adapt the terms and conditions and explicitly specify that "only one account per person is permitted". The people who created multiple aliases became liable to permanent ban from the community. In addition members who contravene this rule were liable to "naming and shaming" in the "Hall of Shame" discussion thread, where persons holding multiple aliases would be disclosed and scowled at. For example, Marc from example 5 was shunned in that thread. After Tony trolled him, he developed a grudge against the community and started trolling, using multiple alias:

> "Matt: Swift is having a little lie down till Monday to work through his multiple personality disorder
>
> Faye: Swift is having yet another break, after sending threatening PMs and creating yet another alias despite having been warned on numerous occasions."

At one point, the high level of trolling on the website and trolls' actions in attacking clubbing professionals led to the overnight creation of a 24/7 moderation system, with the creation of a new moderator role specifically dedicated to monitoring discussions in the creative areas of the forum where clubbing professionals posted. Also "secret moderator" roles were created whereby specific members, whose avatar is unknown to the rest of the community, were given access to a moderator account so that they could control interactions whenever unacceptable trolling took place. Finally trolling conflicts led to the creation of troll management traditions whereby whenever a troll was ill perceived, members would try and stop him. This can be done by ignoring the troll, not replying to his posts, based on the online saying "Don't feed the troll". It can also be done by demeaning the activity

of trolling, labelling the troll as a social outcast (e.g. “he is a pathetic depressive with no friends, looking back on a life wasted”) a loser (e.g. “You just have to accept that there’s a few losers like him on here”) or someone immature (“he is an insensitive and immature little boy with no better to do than wind others up”).

Table 17: Characteristics of reality show conflict, its drivers and its consequences for social value

Drivers of reality show conflict	
Computer-mediated communication	Written format of interaction and usage of the forum area for both private and public conversations creates uncertainty about the playfulness of conflicts
Community context	Membership heterogeneity: participation of members with strong and weak relationships, participation of regular members and moderators nurtures diverging interpretations of conflicts
Interactional	Action script organized as a soap opera (intimate topic of discussion, starts in medias res, action structure creates narrative tension) nurture interpretation of conflict as reality show
	Interactions are improvised so clear cues indicating whether speakers are engaging in a performance are often missing.
Individual	Varying levels of experience in the community nurture diverging interpretations of conflict
Markers of reality show conflict	
Parties	Attaching self-related meanings to conflict behaviours (self-assertion, self-defence, self- restoration)
	Ignoring onlookers or addressing onlookers by idealizing, mystifying, failing to dramatize
Onlookers	Playing the role of mediators and judges
	Playing the role of an audience or outsider: watching, disrupting
	Highlighting the playfulness of the event: stating that it is make-believe, stating that it is playful, stirring
Consequences for value formation	
Individual value	Party: pain, frustration, anger, shame
	Onlooker: entertainment: fun, excitement
Collective engagement	In the short term, increased engagement of onlookers, behavioural, cognitive and emotional
	In the longer term behavioural engagement of onlookers
Community Culture	Shared engagements: enacting entertainment and voyeurism as communal value, reality show watching as a prescribed activity
	Shared understanding: creating shared narratives, creating shared vocabulary

Table 18: Characteristics of trolling conflict, its drivers and its consequences for social value

Drivers of trolling conflict	
Computer-mediated communication	Written format of interaction and usage of the forum area for both private and public conversations creates uncertainty about the playfulness of conflicts
Community context	Membership heterogeneity: participation of members with strong and weak relationships, participation of regular members and moderators nurtures diverging interpretations of conflicts
Interactional	Action script organized as a prank game (goal, rules involving baiting, points) respectively foster the activation of misaligned conflict frames of reality show conflict and trolling conflict Interactions are improvised so clear cues indicating whether speakers are engaging in a performance are often missing.
Individual	Varying levels of experience in the community nurture diverging interpretations of conflict
Markers of trolling conflict	
Troll	Addressing onlookers: idealizing, mystifying, failing to dramatize Highlighting the playfulness of the event: self-distantiating cues, stating that it is playful, baiting
Trolled party	Ignoring onlookers addressing the other party only Attaching self-related meanings to conflict behaviours (self-assertion, self-defence, self- restoration
Consequences for value formation	
Individual value	Troll: flow, fun, communitas if onlookers are entertained Trolled party: pain , frustration, anger Onlookers: entertainment: fun, excitement, narrative transportation - or frustration and anger
Collective engagement	New members leave the forum Clubbing professionals leave the forum Moderators are disheartened Regular members' emotional disengagement and distrust toward newcomers
Community Culture	Shared engagement: heterogeneous understandings of freedom highlighted, heterogeneous views on trolling as a prescribed or disallowed activity Shared understanding: creating shared narratives Procedures: forbidding multiples accounts, naming and shaming and banning of contravenors, adaptation of the moderation system: creation of 24/7 moderation, hiring of a moderator for the creative areas forum, creation of "secret moderator" roles, creation of troll management traditions

5.4. Findings summary

A netnography was conducted on the HarderFaster forum which led to the creation of a theory of OCC conflict and social value formation. OCC conflict is conceptualized as performance and three types of conflicts were distinguished based on the explicitness of the conflict performance. Personal conflicts are implicit performances where participants remain unaware that the event is a performance and behave unreflexively. Participants take on the social roles of adversaries, judge and mediator. Played conflicts by contrast are explicit performances where participants are all aware that the event is a performance and consciously act out the conflict on the community stage. Participants take on the social roles of performer and audience member. Uncertain conflicts are neither entirely implicit nor explicit performances as they combine characteristics of both. Uncertain conflicts can take two shapes. In reality show conflicts, it is uncertain whether the parties are engaged in a personal or a played conflict. Participants are not sure whether the conflict is personal or played. In trolling conflict interpretive frames are misaligned. One party takes on the role of the adversary while the other takes on the role of the performer. The rest of the participants can take on the roles of judge, mediator or audience member. The configuration of conflict performances as personal, played or uncertain is the result of a variety of factors interacting with one another. Each type of conflict performance has different consequences for social value formation.

The roots of conflict performance lie in the computer-mediated context of interaction, the communal context of interaction, interactional characteristics and individual differences. Regarding the computer mediated context of interaction, presentation of self happens via an avatar and physical distance make members feel less accountable for their actions. This can disinhibit them so that tensions between members easily transform into personal conflicts. Computer-mediation also motivates member to stay engaged in a conflict instead of pulling off. However the written format of interaction also enhances members' ability to engage in impression management when posting and so nurtures the development of played conflicts. Presentation of self via an avatar also fosters members' self-distantiation from their behaviours, the perception of themselves of performers and subsequently the interpretation of conflicts as performances. In addition, the co-presence of public and private communication channels nurtures the perception of forum discussions as unfolding on a stage. Finally characteristics of the computer-mediated context of interaction also nurture the development of uncertain conflict performances. This is because personal and played conversations coexist on the forum creating uncertainty about the intentions of posters. Also the written format of interaction makes posters' intentions uncertain.

Second the communal context of interaction influences which type of performances conflict take on the forum in different ways. Heterogeneity of the membership base nurtures the emergence of personal conflicts as members' diverse social backgrounds, sub-tribe affiliations and understandings of

the community nurture tensions between community members and the emergence of personal conflict. At the same time the development of conflicts in a communal context implies that interactions take place within a set of community norms. When norms are violated this is an opportunity for the development of conflicts which take the shape of redressive rituals. The co-existence of different social roles and different levels of experience and intimacy between members in the community makes different members more prone to interpret certain conflicts as personal and others as played thereby nurturing the development of uncertain conflicts.

Third, characteristics of interactions themselves influence which type of performance conflicts take. Different conflict object typically lead to different types of conflict performances. When the object of the conflict is typically viewed seriously in the community, like politics, religion, homosexuality, sports, business transactions, electronica (clubbing tastes, music tastes) and HarderFaster culture (posting norms, membership righteousness, members' status), this enhances the chances for the performance to be implicit and the conflict to be personal. When the object of the conflict relates to private life the conflict performance is likely to be ambiguous and take the shape of a reality show conflict. Different specific conflict scripts also nurture the different conflict performances. When the conflict action is explicitly organized as a game with a goal, rules and a point counting system, fosters the framing of conflict as played. When the conflict is organized as a trolling game where the aim is to enrage the other party by teasing them with points awarded by the audience, it favours the emergence of trolling conflict. Finally when the conflict action starts in medias res and constructs narrative tension (surprise, mystery, suspense) reality show conflict tends to develop.

Fourth, individual factors influence which type of conflict performance unfold on the forum Individual members' bored moods or experience of pressure in the offline environment nurtures their interpretation of conflict as played. Experienced community members are also more likely to interpret conflict performances as played or uncertain while newbies are more likely to interpret conflict performances as personal.

Each conflict root can foster the emergence of several types of conflict performances. It is therefore the manner in which they combine which explains why a specific conflict develops as one type of performance or another. Depending on the participants' position in the community, the way the interaction is organized and individual specificities of the conflict participant, different features of the online environment play a stronger role (anonymity and disinhibition vs. make-believe and impression management) and the conflict performance takes one form or another.

Personal conflicts produce negative individual value, generating pain, frustration, anger, shame and sadness for participants, building negative experiences altogether. If the conflict resolves (which rarely happens) it generates self-righteousness for the winner but the overall harm outweighs this final feeling. Because personal conflicts are negative experiences, they break or weaken

relationships between members, foster the emergence of cliques and reduce trust in and willingness to volunteer for the community. Alltogether personal conflict thus reduces collective engagement.

Played conflicts by contrast produce positive experiences. Parties enter a state of flow, experience catharsis, feel proud and/or learn about themselves while onlookers are entertained. Played conflict also nurture feelings of social integration (communitas). Because explicit conflicts are positive experiences, they enhance communal engagement, both in the short term and the long term. In the short term, participants are highly engaged in the discussion and invite their friends to join the conversation. In the long term participants are emotionally engaged, feeling like conflict gives the community personality, and behaviourally engaged, because conflict makes them return to the community to post.

In reality show conflict parties experience pain, frustration, anger and shame while onlookers are entertained, feeling fun, excitement and narrative transportation. In trolling the trolled party feels pain, frustration and anger while the troll enters a state of flow. Depending on how they frame the conflict performance, onlookers become frustrated and angry or entertained and in communitas. The consequences of uncertain conflict for collective engagement depend on its form. Reality show conflict nurtures collective engagement while trolling sustains disengagement of most members (new members, clubbing professionals, regulars, moderators) and builds distrust toward newcomers, thereby reducing collective engagement.

With regard to community culture, personal conflicts reinforce the belief that the community includes heterogeneous teleo-affective structures or world-views. Personal conflict experiences also lead to the creation of rules meant to facilitate the harmonious co-existence of heterogeneous members in the community. The rules pre-empt conflict (welcoming of newbies, creation of strictly moderated forums, creation of an area for advertising and promotion, thread title writing norms) and manage conflict after they have erupted (creation of an “asylum forum”, creation of a report to moderators button, coordination between members and moderators for conflict resolution, graduated sanctions in case of misbehaviour, adaptation of T&C, involvement of all members in peace keeping).

Played conflicts enact and reinforce the communal values of freedom, self-confidence and humour. They also encourage and reinforce banter and ranting as prescribed activities in the group. Finally played conflicts build shared narratives and shared vision of group hierarchy facilitating the development of a shared understanding in the group.

Uncertain conflict performances, whether trolling of reality show, typically create shared narratives. Reality show conflicts enact and reinforce entertainment and voyeurism as communal values and online reality shows or “Net opera” watching, as a prescribed activity. Trolling conflicts enact and reinforce the belief that the community collates heterogeneous understandings of freedom

and humour. Trolling conflicts also led to the creation of hierarchical rules forbidding the creation of multiple accounts enforced by a 24/7 moderation system to preempt their eruption and the development of communal skills to manage them once they have erupted (ignore and demean the troll as social outcasts, loser and immature).

Table 19: List of discussion threads in the data set

Nb	Beginning date	Thread type	Conflict type	General topic	Content Summary	Consequences for value creation
1	19/08/2003	Conflict example	Reality show	Supporting a young DJ	A member who is an amateur DJ asks the community to help him become a successful DJ. His tone and writing style annoys some members who abuse him. The rest of the community enjoys watching the conversation.	Individual value: the harrassed party feels embarassed and intimidated. The other participant revel in surprise, feelings of fun and develop positive feelings of togetherness. Community cohesion: the harrassed party wants to stop the discussion while the rest of the participants post to make it continue. The party ostracized looses social status. Community culture: the thread is turned into "classic" status making it part of the community's official narratives.
2	15/10/2003	Conflict example	Reality show	Romantic relatonship in trouble	A forum member shares the link of a confictual thread on another platform and all participants have a good laugh about it.	Individual value: onlookers display their enjoyment of the conflict.
3	22/10/2003	Conflict example	Reality show	Looks and honour	An initial discussion about who club pictures is hijacked into a a fight between members of a clique because one member is being ostracized. Other community members unrelated to the clique than gang up.	Individual value: onlookers display surprise, feelings of fun and positive feelings of togetherness. Parties display frustration, anger and sadness. Community cohesion: onlookers encourage the parties to escalate, tease, joke, bet, displaying high levels of engagement. Community culture: entertainment and voyeurism are enacted as communal values; joking and community watching are enacted as communal activities. The thread is turned into "classic" status making it part of the community's official narratives.

Nb	Beginning date	Thread type	Conflict type	General topic	Content Summary	Consequences for value creation
4	19/11/2003	Conflict example	Reality show	DJs	Two members fight about who played longer between PvD or Tiesto at a concert in the Netherlands.	Individual value: onlookers laugh, evaluate the quality of the entertainment, display surprise, suspense and awe and experience positive feelings of togetherness. Community cohesion: onlookers joke playing role , invent twist and turn, posting a lot of comment in very little time, nurturing engagement with the website. Community culture: watching and discussing others' blunders are enacted as communal activities. The thread is turned into "classic" status making it part of the community's official narratives.
5	17/02/2004	Conflict example	Reality show	Romantic relationship	Two members fight accusing each other of having seduced their ex-boyfriend.	Individual value: onlookers show surprise, mystery, suspense, awe, fun and positive feelings of togetherness. Parties display anger. Community cohesion: onlookers encourage the parties to escalate, tease, joke, bet, invent twist and turns, generally displaying high levels of engagement. The thread attracts numerous posts in very little time. Community culture: entertainment and voyeurism are enacted as communal values. Joking and community watching are enacted as communal activities. The thread is turned into "classic" status making it part of the community's official narratives.
6	21/02/2004	Conflict example	Reality show	Clubbing and stalking	A member is ridiculed by all onlookers for misspelling a name.	Individual value: onlookers show surprise, awe, fun and positive feelnigs of togetherness. The party is ashamed. Cohesion: onlookers are highly engaged with the website during the conflict. Community culture: watching and discussing others' blunders are enacted as communal activities. The communal idiom "storking" is describing entertaining paranoia of being stalked.
7	04/05/2004	Conflict example	Played	Phone hacking	A member who's phone has been misused to post illicit content on the forum complains.	Individual value: participants laugh, are excited and experience positive feelings of togetherness. Community culture: fun is enacted as a communal value. Prank and identity play are enacted as communal practices. The thread turned into "classic" status making it part of the community's official narratives. Appropriate and inappropriate means of stealing other members' forum identity are debated and defined.

Nb	Beginning date	Thread type	Conflict type	General topic	Content Summary	Consequences for value creation
8	04/05/2004	Conflict example	Played	Phone hacking	A member hacks another's mobile phone and publish shaming content under the guise of his identity. The community is excited and in shock.	Community culture: fun is enacted as a communal value. Prank and identity play are enacted as communal practices. The thread is turned into "classic" status making it part of the community's official narratives. The rule of acceptable identity theft are debated and defined.
9	18/08/2004	Conflict example	Played	Irritating people	A thread where contributors are meant to spit their hatred at each other without mentioning the name of the person the abuse is targeted at.	Individual value: members shout out their anger, feel excited and released, laugh. They reflect upon themselves. Cohesion: members experience communitas and express their attachment to the community. Culture: the importance of channelling aggressivity of the website is highlighted. Rant is enacted as a communal practice resolving interpersonal tension. The thread is turned into "classic" status making it part of the community's official narratives. Appropriate means of expressing frustration and anger in the community are negotiated.
10	02/09/2004	About conflict	Played	Boredom on the forum	A members says that he is bored and wants to fight. Other members invite him to join them in a particluar discussion thread where they are currently having fun fighting.	Individual value: a played conflict is described as invigorating.
11	06/10/2004	Conflict Example	Played	Clubbing (DJ misbehavior)	A DJ outs another for unethical business practices. The rest of the community abuses him.	Individual value: parties and onlookers display anger; eventually parties apologize and everyone onlookers laugh about it and experience communitas. Community cohesion: the member supported by the community is further integrated, the one ostracised leaves. Community culture: parties social status is damaged. Pilorying enacted as a boundary spanning practice via humiliation. The thread is turned into "classic" status making it part of the community's official narratives.

Nb	Beginning date	Thread type	Conflict type	General topic	Content Summary	Consequences for value creation
12	17/01/2005	About conflict	All	The best community conflicts	Members dig out the "best" fights which ever took place on the forum and discuss them.	Individual value: nasty conflicts are deemed disagreable. Members state how they irritate them not only on the short term but also on the long term. This shows with members starting an argument again after remembering an argument they had a long time ago. Audience members have a lot of fun remembering reality show conflicts. Collective engagement: members state that they disengaged from the forum after personal conflicts. Lurkers develop negative opinions about parties engaged in personal conflicts. The revival of an old personal conflict argument shows how it lead to the creation of two cliques. Members joke about how much engagement played and reality show conflict produce in the community when they unfold. This starts a playful discussion indicating longer effects on engagement. Community culture: a number of reality show conflict have been turned into fondly remembered shared narratives . Members would have the personal conflicts forgotten rather than turned into shared narratives. Members discuss how parties in personal conflict can, at best, agree to disagree, thereby enhancing perceived heterogeneity in the forum regarding appropriate behaviors and values. enjoyable conflicts have been turned into shared narratives fondly remembers by community members
13	25/02/2005	Conflict example	Played	Membership right	A member announces his is leaving the forum because he does not feel welcome on the forum - but then decides to stay.	Community cohesion: the member's engagement is reinforced after the community displays affection. Community culture: pilorying is enacted as a punishment and reintegration practice. Flouncing is enacted as a practice to neutralize conflict related harm.
14	21/06/2005	Conflict example	Trolling	Legal suits over accidents	A member rants about people who "fall over and sue" offending another member. The offender takes it as an opportunity to offend her further and some other members join in.	Individual value: the trolled party is frustrated and angry.The audience enjoys the show, laughing, joking, indicating surprise and appreciating. The troll has fun. Community cohesion: The troll's mischievous comments are an opportunity for members to assert their attachment to the member. The trolled party is comforted by the members. Members join the discussion and post a lot. The two parties' social status is a stake. Community culture: the importance of self-reliance as a value is

Nb	Beginning date	Thread type	Conflict type	General topic	Content Summary	Consequences for value creation
						negotiated.
15	18/07/2005	Conflict example	Played	Popularity in the forum	A member braggs that him and his friends are good looking and the rest of the community is jealous. Numerous members abuse him for this, starting a fight	Individual value: all participants laugh and show signs of entertainment. Community cohesion: participants show high engagement in the conversation. Community culture: fun is enacted as communal value. Banter is enacted as a communal practice.
16	01/12/2005	About conflict	Played and trolling	The worse community members	Members vye to be in the short list of the "most bastard" members of the community and to be number one in the list.	Individual value: banter conflict is fun for parties and can result in pride. Community cohesion: waging conflict is a source of popularity and social status for members.
17	17/02/2006	Conflict example	Trolling	Dropping out from university	A member asks for advice about whether he should change degree. Another member abuses him. A fight between the two members ensues.	Individual value: the trolled party experiences frustration, anger and sadness. The troll has fun. Some of the onlookers have a laugh and display feelings of togetherness with the troll; the others feel the pain of the party trolled. Community cohesion: onlookers indicate their admiration of the troll. Members can build shared experience by exchanging shared jokes on the side of the conversation. Other participants post a lot. Community culture: the thread is turned into "classic" status making it part of the community's official narratives.
18	17/02/2006	Conflict Example	Trolling	Dropping out from university	Second round of a flame started off by one member asking for advice about whether he should change degree.	Individual value: the trolled party experiences frustration, anger and sadness. The troll has fun. Some of the onlookers have a laugh and display feelings of togetherness; the others feel pain. Community cohesion: onlookers indicate their admiration of the troll. Members can build shared experience by exchanging shared jokes on the side of the conversation. The party trolled is discouraged to continue posting in the community. The other participants post a lot. Community culture: the thread is moved to the General mayhem section reinforcing the norm that trolling should not unfold in strictly moderated forums. The thread is turned into "classic" status making it part of the community's official narratives.

Nb	Beginning date	Thread type	Conflict type	General topic	Content Summary	Consequences for value creation
19	21/04/2006	Conflict example	Played	Varied	Members engage in a game of insult where each poster must abuse the previous poster	Individual value: entertainment, excitement, communitas. Community cohesion: parties challenge each other negotiating their social status in the community. Community culture: fun is enacted as a community value. Banter is enacted as a community practice. The thread is turned into "classic" status making it part of the community's official narratives.
20	27/09/2006	About conflict	Played and reality show	Romantic relationship between two forum ennemies	A moderator opens a discussion about two members who consstantly quarrel on the website. The community comments on the fight.	Individual value: onlookers laugh and joke. Community cohesion: the conflict is an opportunity to invent stories and joke, incentivizing members to engage with the website. Community culture: members discuss the conflict fondly, building collectively an elaborate imagined plot around it, thereby turning the conflict into a shared narrative.
21	27/09/2006	Conflict example	Trolling	Behavioral standards on the forum	The community figthts about whether a particular member who posts a lot with flashy colour using numerous emoticons is annoying or nice.	Individual value: trolls and onlookers have a lot of fun. The members trolled are angry and frustrated. Collective engagement: the forum divides into two cliques. The forum is flooded with posts. Community culture: members are divided on the boundaries of freedom of speech, what is humorous or not and whether conflict is a positive thing in the forum and the role of moderators. The golden rules of cohabitation are asserted (ignore, celebrate commonalities, respect difference). The use of colourful posting is condemned.
22	29/10/2006	About conflict	Personal	Terms and Conditions of the forum	The forum owner announces changes in the Terms & Conditions some of them relating to conflict management.	Community culture: new formal behavioral rules are created to avoid future personal conflict or ensure they can be terminated: private messages will not be published, spam is precisely defined and condemned and harrassment if forbidden. In addition a hiatus "cooling off period" is created whereby parties can be logged off the website for some time to calm down. Members are worried that these rules will stop the development of banter and voyeuristic conflicts.
23	06/12/2006	About conflict	Personal	Censorship	A member relates a conflict with a moderator where the moderator deemed his photo to be pornographic.	Individual value: the party displays long lasting frustration and anger as a result of the conflict.

Nb	Beginning date	Thread type	Conflict type	General topic	Content Summary	Consequences for value creation
24	27/01/2007	Conflict example	Trolling	Religion and IT expertise	Members argue about the truth of Creationist theories	Individual value: participants experiencing it as performance display feelings of fun, entertainment and togetherness.
25	08/02/2007	Conflict example	Personal	Discussion of mood	A member posts that she feels sad hoping to get some comfort from other community mmembers. She only receives abuse.	Individual value: the party attacked expresses sadness
26	09/02/2007	Conflict Example	Played	Managing harrassment	A member who has been sent a picture of a member's penis by private message threatens to publish it.	Individual value: parties have a lot of fun
27	09/02/2007	Conflict example	Trolling	Discussion of mood	A member vents her frustration. Another member abuses her, starting a flame.	Individual value: the harrassing participants enjoy tourmenting the other member. Onlookers oscillate between enjoying it and condemning the behavior. Collective engagement: the troll's mischievous actions are an opportunity for members to assert their attachment to the character. Audience express their respect for the troll's skill.
28	09/02/2007	Conflict example	Personal	Responding to a scam email	A member received a scam email saying she won a million pounds. She says jokingly that she will answer giving the details of another community member she dislikes. A bitter argument between the two	Individual value: onlookers enjoy watching while the party trolled is bitter.
29	10/02/2007	Conflict example	Personal	Streaming website	A member enquires about the disparition of a streaming portal. A member abuses her.	Individual value: parties are irritated and angry.
30	11/02/2007	Conflict	Trolling	Censorship	A member ask moderators	Individual value: the party trolled is irritated. Othe community members

Nb	Beginning date	Thread type	Conflict type	General topic	Content Summary	Consequences for value creation
		example			why a conflictual thread containing hate speeches has been censored. As moderators explains him, he turns against them and abuse them. The rest of the community defends the moderators.	are irritate too. Collective engagement: duty to show deference to moderators is reinforced after being questioned.
31	14/02/2007	Conflict example	Personal	Flounce	A party who has been given the choice to apologize to the other party of to leave the forum chooses to leave. The rest of the community comments on it.	Individual value: all participants are frustrated, angry and/or sad. The winning party shows self-satisfaction but also embarrassment at the discussion. Collective engagement: the loosing party disengages from the site. Other discussants express their distrust towards the parties. A number of members argue that this nurtures newcomers' distrust toward the site as a whole. Moderators' ability to do their role properly is questioned (too much control, not enough). Community culture: participants debate about whether the forum should promote harmony or revel in disharmony, whether hateful messages on the board are inappropriate and whether harsher punishments should be enforced for members posting hateful messages.
32	15/02/2007	About conflict	All	Banning criteria	A member why some members got banned and others did not while they apparently engaged in similar behaviors. This opens a discssion about the difference between personal conflicts, playful conflicts and trolling.	Individual value: some conflicts are irritating and bewildering, others are fun. Collective engagement: banter conflict is believed to be engaging and to make members stick to the community. Community culture: debates around personal conflict leads to divisions about the boudnaries of freedom of speech, what constitutes humor. whether trolls should be banned and whether the community should be taken seriously.
33	26/02/2007	Conflict example	Personal	Clubbing (outfits)	Members debate about whether it is appropriate for women in clubs to go clubbing with revealing	Individual value: all participants shows anger and frustration. Collective engagement: several participants express their willingness to disengage because of the conversation. Community culture: the thread is turned into "classic" status making it

Nb	Beginning date	Thread type	Conflict type	General topic	Content Summary	Consequences for value creation
					cloths	part of the community's official narratives.
34	10/05/2007	About conflict	Personal and reality show	A conflict between two lovers	Members discuss a conflict which erupted between two members who are lovers, after one of them cheated on the other.	Individual value: personal conflict provokes onlookers'anger. Reality show provokes onlookers' fun, curiosity and excitement. Collective engagement: reality show conflict is an opportunity for the members to stick to the forum for a chat. Community culture: reality show conflict reinforces voyeurism and drama as communal values.
35	10/05/2007	Conflict example	Reality show	Romantic relationship	A member who has been accused of being a rapist both online and offline tries to clear his name.	Individual value: party shows frustration and anger because of the other party, and shame because of the audience's reaction. onlookers display surprise, fun, suspense, mystery, communitas. Collective engagement: onlookers post a lot of comments during the conflict where they state and display how engaged they are. Community culture: entertainment and voyeurism enacted are enacted as prescribed activities. The thread is turned into "classic" status making it part of the community's official narratives. "Doing a Mosey" is invented as a communal idiom indicating ridiculing oneself by discussing publicly intimate details of one's sex life.
36	22/07/2007	Conflict Example	Personal	Membership right	Members abuse a particular member who got another one banned from the website as a result of fighting on the website.	Collective engagement: the community is divided into cliques
37	09/08/2007	Conflict Example	Trolling	A person's worthlessness	A member starts venting her frustration so that another member abuses her, starting a flame.	Individual value: trolls irritate one another

Nb	Beginning date	Thread type	Conflict type	General topic	Content Summary	Consequences for value creation
38	12/11/2007	About conflict	Reality show	Murder attempt	A member was jailed for murder attempt. The community is in shock and wonders whether their constant bullying of him could have contributed to driving him insane.	Individual value: some members realise the potential psychological harm that conflict on the forum might produce. Collective engagement: curiosity and engagement from the previous reality show fights remain Community culture: shared narratives from the previous reality show fights remain
39	11/12/2007	Conflict example	Played	Evaluating a member	Members discuss whether a member is a twat or not. Aaron defends himself and then engages in a campaign to redeem himself in the eye of the community. The rest of the community discusses it seriously before everyone starts joking together.	Individual value: the piloried member displays sadness and then happiness as he gets reintegrated. Collective engagement: the member's engagement is reinforced after the community displays affection. Community culture: pilorying enacted as a punishment and reintegration practice. The importance of self-moderation is reasserted.
40	25/02/2008	About conflict	All	Defining the community	A member mentions that bullying new comer is part of the community's culture	Community culture: conflicts between old timers and new comers and "real life violence" watching are hailed as communal values. Spamming is condemned as inacceptable behavior.
41	17/03/2008	Conflict example	Personal	London Olympics	Members fight about whether the Olympics should take place in London	Individual value: parties are angry and frustrated.
42	29/05/2008	Conflict example	Played	Offense	A member pretends to apologize after a fight with another member has erupted to further abuse him. Onlookers rejoice.	Individual value: all participants laugh and are excited. Community culture: fun is enacted as a communal value. Prank enacted as communal practice.

Nb	Beginning date	Thread type	Conflict type	General topic	Content Summary	Consequences for value creation
43	18/09/2008	About conflict	Mixed	Online conflict with friends	Members discuss how and when they fight with their friends online.	Individual value: banter fights make participants laugh Collective engagement: personal conflicts break bonds while reality show provokes excited discussions
44	25/09/2008	Conflict example	Played	Plagiarism on the website	A member is attacked by another for lazily quoting previous posts to state their agreement rather than developing elaborate opinions in their answers. Other members gang up.	Individual value: laughter and catharsis Collective engagement: the played conflict is an opportunity to discuss Community culture: posting style norm is negotiated
45	02/12/2008	Conflict example	Played	Food	Members argue vigourously about whether satanism should be condemned	Individual value: all participants laugh and are excited. Positive feelings of togetherness are displayed. Collective engagement: during the conflict a large volume of posts are published expressing intense emotions. Parties challenge each other negotiating their social status in the community.
46	06/12/2008	Conflict example	Played	Clubbing (DJ misbehavior)	A clubber outs a DJ who allegedly uses his status to smuggle druggs in clubs.	Individual value: all participants laugh and are excited. Positive feelings of togetherness are displayed. Collective engagement: during the conflict a large volume of posts are published expressing intense emotions. Community culture: fun is enacted as a communal value. Prank and identity play are enacted as communal practices. The thread is turned into "classic" status making it part of the community's official narratives.
47	01/01/2009	About conflict	Personal and trolling	Behavioral standards on the forum	The moderator of the creative forums defines the rules of interaction strictly forbidding aggressive comments.	Community culture: coercive behaviors are banned from the creative forums to ensure constructive feedback.
48	03/02/2009	Conflict example	Reality show	Bank robbery	A member saying he served time in prison for bank robbery is abused from all sides, being called a lier.	Individual value: the "idiot" feels embarrassed and angry. The rest of the participants are curious and have fun together. Participants display positive feelings of togetherness. Collective engagement: the "idiot" leaves the website for a while. The rest of the participant posts a lot.

Nb	Beginning date	Thread type	Conflict type	General topic	Content Summary	Consequences for value creation
						Community culture: the thread is turned into "classic" status making it part of the community's official narratives.
49	20/02/2009	About conflict	All	Greetings and conflict	The community debates about whether a conflict-free "Welcome to HarderFaster" forum is truly necessary for the community to operate well.	Individual value: some members are very irritated to see new comers being harrassed. all members recognized that some conflicts are just "plain and nasty" Collective engagement: nastiness to newcomers entices a member to leave the forum and discuss in rival communities instead. Community culture: the necessity of having strictly moderated forums where new comers can interact with fear of being abused is reasserted.
50	22/10/2009	About conflict	Reality show	A specific conflict	Members discuss a flame between two members	Individual value: the conflict provokes enthusiastic discussions Community culture: the discussion promotes voyeurism and joking as communal values
51	22/10/2009	About conflict	Personal	A new sub-forum	A new forum, the "Asylum" forum was created for "tedious" threads	Individual value: protracted personal conflicts between two members are tedious for the other members. Collective engagement: protracted personal conflicts foster disengagement from the rest of the community members. Community culture: discussant generally agree that protracted personal conflicts should be taken away from the main discussion areas of the community.
52	19/05/2011	About conflict	Played, reality show and trolling	Reasons for community attachment	People discuss why they still stay in HF after so many years: friends, online friends, boredom/break at work, a place where people are smart and witty, entertainment, a feeling of drama also it seems	Individual value: several members say that banter conflict and watching other people quarelling like in a real life soap opera is the reason why they keep visiting and posting on the website.

Nb	Beginning date	Thread type	Conflict type	General topic	Content Summary	Consequences for value creation
53	24/05/2011	Conflict example	Personal	An irritating member	Members rant about how irritating one particular member is and whether she should be banned from the forum. That member fuels the flame.	Individual value: personal conflict create lingering frustration and anger Community culture: the posting style norm is questioned
54	24/05/2011	Conflict example	Personal	Footballer's salaries	Members fight over whether footballers are overpaid	Individual value: parties are angry Community culture: the heterogeneous valuation of different skills in the community is highlighted
55	25/05/2011	Conflict example	Personal	Silly questions	A member gets severly abused for asking allegedly stupid questions.	Individual value: parties are angry and frustrated.
56	25/05/2011	About conflict	Personal	An irritating member	Members rant about how irritating one particular member is and how this could be avoided.	Collective engagement: several members threaten to leave the forum becaseu of protracted personal conflicts with a few other very active members.
57	25/05/2011	Conflict example	Personal	Member exclusion	A number of members abuse a particular member demanding that she leaves the community	Individual value: all participants are frustrated and angry. Collective engagement: this conflict combined with previous ones develops “a toxic atmosphere”. Members express their disengagement from the website because of the annoying member and threaten to leave. The moderator is disheartened as he feels dragged into yet another conflict and which he is bound to lose as members will eventually turn against him. The annoying member is defined as an outsider intruding the community. Moderators competence is questioned as they are accused of softness and liberalism. Community culture: the community's openness to heterogeneous members is questioned as participants divide about the need for selective recruitment of members and the management of heterogeneity.
58	26/05/2011	Conflict example	Personal	Trolling	Members discuss whether a particular member voluntarily creates conflict in the community or not. That member	Collective engagement: a number of members try to ban a member by voting them out Community culture: moderators invite members to tolerance, enforcing the rule that bullying should not happen on the website

Nb	Beginning date	Thread type	Conflict type	General topic	Content Summary	Consequences for value creation
					replies.	
59	26/05/2011	About conflict	Personal and played	Drivers of conflict	Members discuss what they bicker about and whether they enjoy it or not	Individual value: "screaming arguments" are presented as painful and destructive for the relationship and should be replaced by disagreement and compromise. "Bickering" is meant to "let steam off" taking "out the stress and strains of life", providing tension release which helps the relationship going, as long as it is unfrequent, moderate and parties apologize afterwards. "Verbal jousting" "good-natured back and forth" "ribbing each-other" "banter" is fun, exciting and "keeps things fresh".
60	02/06/2011	About conflict	All	Community bullies	Members debate who is the biggest bully of the community.	Collective engagement: expectations of reality show conflict eruption builds attention and excitement.
61	20/06/2011	About conflict	Personal	An irritating member	A number of members rant about how irritating a particular members' posts are.	Individual value: personal conflict create stress and shows the worse of people. Dramatic conflicts are enjoyable entertaiment, like going to the cinema or watching a tennis match. Collective engagement: some regular posters choose not to engage with the website or engage less when they believe some other members are likely to get them engage in a personal conflict. Community culture: scandalous reality show conflicts are treasured shared narrative. In preparation of the community's 10th anniversary of HF members decide to build a discussion thread bringing together the most dramatic ones over the year to commemorate their important role in the building of the community. A rule has been created to facilitate cohabitation forcing the much member to post in a single forum created especially for her. The rule that post should be witty, and should not be written in colourful font or capital letters is reasserted.

Nb	Beginning date	Thread type	Conflict type	General topic	Content Summary	Consequences for value creation
62	14/07/2011	Conflict example	Reality show	Steroid transaction	A members outs another for unethical steroid business. The rest of the community abuses both parties for being silly.	Individual value: onlookers show surprise, fun and positive feelings of togetherness. Parties display frustration and anger. Collective engagement: onlookers post a lot of comment in very little time. Community culture: entertainment and voyeurism are enacted as communal values. Joking and community watching are enacted as communal activities. The thread is turned into "classic" status making it part of the community's official narratives.
63	09/11/2011	About conflict	Personal	An irritating member	Members discuss why a particular member annoys them.	Individual value: engagement in personal conflict makes members frustrated and angry.
64	20/04/2012	About conflict		Political activism	Members argue about whether a muslim preacher should be deported or not.	Individual value: parties are angry Community culture: members are divided on community values
65	15/05/2012	About conflict	Played and trolling	Absence of conflict	Members debate about the reduced amount of fighting happening on the website nowadays. Some long and ask for conflicts to come back while others say they would rather not have any of it.	Community culture: members celebrate banter as a communal practice. The importance of the ban of multiple account to avoid trolling is reasserted.
66	27/05/2012	About conflict	Personal	Rumors on a member beating his wife	The wife of a member who has been harrassed on the platform, being falsely accused of beating her up asks members to stop the rumor.	Individual value: a member has developed long lasting bitterness against the forum as a result of a prolonged personal conflict. Community culture: moderators close the thread to avoid further harm and protect the member.

Nb	Beginning date	Thread type	Conflict type	General topic	Content Summary	Consequences for value creation
67	06/06/2012	Conflict example	Played	Mistransaction	A member outs another member who deal sterroids who took the money and did not deliver him thedrugs. The complainer's misbehavior induces the forum owner to ban him.	Collective engagement: the member supported by the community is further integrated, the one ostracised leaves. Community culture: pilorying enacted as communal practice to punish, reintegrate and exclude via humiliation.
68	04/10/2012	Conflict example	Trolling	Evaluating a member	A member accuses another of being a pedophile.	Individual value: the trolled party is frustrated and angry. Onlookers say it is bad quality entertainment.
69	06/11/2012	About conflict	Trolling	Hippies	Members rant about hippies. The peace-loving comments of a community member known for constant aggressivity and trolling are read with surprise and suspicion.	Discussion thread helpful to characterize conflict types or their roots, not to analyse conflict consequences.
70	15/11/2012	About conflict	Personal	Legality of the website	Members discuss whether the posting of illegal content (e.g. illegal pornography) on the forum could create legal difficulties	Community culture: rule that copyrights should not be infringed on the website or this will create conflict.
71	29/11/2012	Conflict example	Reality show	Reporting private messages	A member complains ask how he should report an abusive message to moderators. This triggers other members' curiosity debating whether it should be published, asking for more information and joking about it.	Individual value: onlookers are curious of the content and author of the threatening private message. They have fun guessing. Collective engagement: onlookers are highly engaged with the website during the conflict. Community culture: entertainment and voyeurism are enacted as communal values. Joking and community watching are enacted as communal activities. The ban on publication of private messages is debated and reaffirmed.

Nb	Beginning date	Thread type	Conflict type	General topic	Content Summary	Consequences for value creation
72	30/11/2012	About conflict	Trolling	Newbie	Members discuss whether a new member is a troll under a fake newbie identity asking moderators to check the newbie's IP address	Collective engagement: trolling produces distrust toward newcomers.
73	18/01/2013	Conflict example	Personal	Spam	Several members abuse another one using the website for promotional purposes.	Community culture: spamming is condemned as a practice unacceptable on the forum
74	21/01/2013	Conflict example	Personal	Spam	A promoter advertizes an album on the website. Forum members make fun of the music.	
76	22/01/2013	Conflict example	Personal	Spam	Several members attack another for spamming the forum with advertising. That member is eventually banned.	Individual value: parties are angry and frustrated. Community culture: the conditions of commercial advertising on the website are reenacted as the spammer is banned.
77	04/02/2013	Conflict example	Personal	Sport	Members fight over who's responsibility it is if there is so much cheating in sports	Individual value: parties are angry and frustrated. Community culture: watching and commenting football are reinforced prescribed activities in the community .
78	11/02/2013	Conflict example	Personal	Racism in football	Conflict between several members about whether football is a legitimate sport to be fan of.	Collective engagement: participants are divided about which sports should be well perceived in the community.
79	14/02/2013	About conflict	Personal, played and reality show	Member status in the community	Members discuss about the fairness of the 2012 HF member award distribution, including conflict related awards	Community culture: badges, some negative and some positve are associated with members who engaged in a lot of conflict during the year (meltdown, flounce, darkside, most redeemed)

Nb	Beginning date	Thread type	Conflict type	General topic	Content Summary	Consequences for value creation
80	14/02/2013	Conflict example	Played	Community awards	Members challenge and abuse each other in relation to the Hf yearly awards.	Community culture: banter is enacted as a communal practice defining social status. Tradition says that members should aim for high social status in the community, but not officially.
81	14/02/2013	About conflict	Personal and reality show	Community awards	The member who received the Meltdown Award at the annual HF awards ask the other members which particular thread made them vote for him.	Individual value: members discuss how amusing friend meltdowns are to read on the forum. Collective engagement: being regularly engaged in conflict is believed to lead to temporary or permanent ban from the website. Being banned and receiving the meldown and darkside awards are a source of shame.
82	17/02/2013	Conflict example	Personal	Community awards	Members argue about the fairness of the 2013 HF awards.	Community culture: parties question what it means to add value to the community, whether being nice and peacful or belligerant and entertaining.
83	18/02/2013	Conflict example	Personal	Sport (cricket)	Members fight over which sport is the smartest	Individual value: all parties are frustrated and angry while onlookers are bored. Community culture: participants are divided about which sports activities should be valued on the forum. Intelligence as a communal value is reinforced.
84	22/02/2013	Conflict example	Personal	Fake newbies	A newcomer introduces himself on the forum, giving birth to suspicion as to whether he is a troll and arguments between contributors	Individual value: core members are anxious. Onlookers are bored and feel the newbie's pain. Collective engagement: core members are distrustful of the newcomer. They explain that this is because of past trolling activities. The new member is put off the negativity of comments posted in his welcome thread.
85	12/03/2013	About conflict	Personal and played	Political activism on Facebook	Members argue about whether one should react or not to rightwing propaganda on Facebook.	Community culture: personal conflict divide community members about the boundaries of freedom of speech on the forum. Ranting is reasserted as a communal value
86	15/03/2013	About conflict	Played and trolling	Member status in the community	A new member introduces himself. While the rest of the community welcomes him, a fight erupts.	Individual value: The new comer is put off. Collective engagement: old timers are defiant of the newcomer because of past trolling activities. Community culture: banter is enacted as a practice

Nb	Beginning date	Thread type	Conflict type	General topic	Content Summary	Consequences for value creation
87	21/03/2013	Conflict example	Trolling	Hippies	Members rant about hippies	Discussion thread helpful to characterize conflict types or their roots, not to analyse conflict consequences.
88	22/04/2013	Conflict example	Played	Advertising	Members abuse each other based on one members' abuse of British comedy actor.	Discussion thread helpful to characterize conflict types or their roots, not to analyse conflict consequences.
88	01/05/2013	Conflict example	Played	Desire for conflict	A member opens a discussion stating that he is "itching for a fight". A discussion starts arounds this and rapidly degenerates into an actual fight.	Individual value: participants laugh and are excited. Community culture: fun enacted as a communal value. Banter enacted as a communal practice.
89	03/05/2013	Conflict example	Personal	Attack on the community	Members warn each other off an apparently harmless thread actually containing vile pornographic content	Individual value: parties are angry. Collective engagement: suspicion develops as members wonder who did this. Community culture: the limits of freedom of expression are enforced as the pornographic pictures are taken down.
90	06/05/2013	Conflict example	Played	Attention seeking	A member opens up a thread abusing another one bluntly. A short flame follows.	Individual value: participants have fun. Collective engagement: parties challenge each other negotiating their social status in the community. Community culture: banter is enacted as a communal practice resolving interpersonal tension.
91	02/11/2013	Conflict example	Personal	Clubbing (clubber misbehavior)	A member recounts a fight he had with a DJ in a club. The rest of the community turns on him for that.	Individual value: parties are angry and frustrated. Onlookers express their discontent of being exposed to so much aggressiveness. Collective engagement: the party harrassed is ostracized for attacking a respectable DJ. Community culture: Djing is reinforced as communal practice. When interacting with a DJ in clubs members should show deference. The thread is turned into "classic" status making it part of the community's official narratives.

Nb	Beginning date	Thread type	Conflict type	General topic	Content Summary	Consequences for value creation
92	05/03/2014	Conflict example	Played	Career	Several members of the community ridicule a particular member based on his professional (non-)achievements after his has published racist comments	Individual value: the piloried member displays anger, bitterness, shame. Collective engagement: the member is ostracized Communitu culture: Self-reliance is enacted as a communal value. Pilorying enacted as a practice to punishment and reintegrate via humiliation. Racist posts are not acceptable in the community
93	24/03/2014	Conflict example	Personal	Spam	A members advertises his legal drug business all over the forum. Members tell him to stop doing as this is spamming. The member eventually gets banned.	Community culture: the rule that spam is forbidden is enforced
94	28/03/2014	About conflict	Reality show and trolling	Reasons to join the community	Members discuss what made them join the forum. One member remembers joining to avenge a female friend of him from a DJ who mistreated her in the context of a romantic relationships. Participants engage in an excited discussion about this. Another member starts trolling him. The rest of the participants condemn his trolling activities.	Individual value: trolling is entertaining for the troll but not the trolled party. For onlookers it is only entertaining when they are not befriended with the trolled party. Collective engagement: very personal trolling is toxic for the atmosphere in the community. Trolling is believed to break bonds with this friend. The reality show conflict engages all the thread participants in an excited discussion. Community culture: the reality show conflict has become a shared story.
95	06/04/2014	About conflict	Reality show and trolling	Past conflicts	Members recount the stories of past fights on the forum.	Collective engagement: members create threads to discuss reality show conflict, further engaging with the website Community culture: reality show conflict produce fondly remembered shared narratives .

Nb	Beginning date	Thread type	Conflict type	General topic	Content Summary	Consequences for value creation
96	28/04/2014	Conflict example	Ritual	Mauls in London	Members argue about where is the best place to go shopping in London.	Discussion thread helpful to characterize conflict types or their roots, not to analyse conflict consequences.
97	30/04/2014	Conflict example	Personal	New album	A member abuses a promoter advertising a DJ's new album.	Discussion thread helpful to characterize conflict types or their roots, not to analyse conflict consequences.
98	01/10/2014	Conflict example	Played	One of the members' mother	A number of forum members abuse one member insulting his mother after he made racist comments	Community culture: racist posts are not acceptable in the community
99	06/10/2014	About conflict	Trolling	Trolling	Member discuss what trolling is and whether they are bad.	Community culture: members are divided about whether trolls should be hold accountable for the harm they do to others when trolling in public social media spaces. It questions the boundaries of individual responsibility. It also generates divisions about when aggression is aggreable or not.
100	14/10/2014	Conflict example	Played	Membership right	A member creates a thread where he abuses all contributors.	Individual value: members shout out their anger and then laugh. Community culture: rant enacted as communal practice resolving interpersonal tension.

Chapter 6: Discussion

The research has led to the creation of a new theory of OCC conflict, its drivers and its consequences for social value formation. In this theory a complete conceptualization of conflict unfolding in an OCC context is developed. OCC conflict is an event opposing consumers, community administrators, community owners or companies who belong to the community (parties) and engage in face-threatening acts (behaviors) in order to gain instrumental benefits, social status, to resolve collective problems, to (de)legitimize practices deemed immoral or inauthentic in an online community of consumption (object). Most research has investigated conflict in OCCs to account for conflict unfolding in a community context, an online context or consumption context but has not explained the uniqueness of conflict unfolding at the interaction of the three. Understanding this intersection enhances our understanding of the specificity and uniqueness of conflicts unfolding in an OCC context. This research indicates that because OCC conflict unfolds in the context of an online community, interactions are always public. As a result OCC conflict is best captured by conceptualizing it as a performance, an arrangement of interactions transforming participants into performers acting out for an audience (Goffman, 1959).

Conceptualizing OCC conflict as a performance enhances the current understanding of the consequences of OCC conflict on social value. Previous explanations of the positive and negative consequences of OCC conflict for social value were focused on conflict coerciveness and conflict resolution. Conflicts were found to have constructive consequences when coerciveness is minimized and resolution ensured. Husemann et al. (2015) found that transgressive conflicts which are highly coercive and typically do not resolve, dilute relationships between members while routinized conflicts, characterized by low coerciveness and resolution have the opposite effect. Chalmers-Thomas et al. (2013) found that conflicts have positive consequences for community continuity when frame alignment practices ensure that the conflict resolves. Gebauer et al. (2013) found that conflict does not have negative consequences when moderation controls escalation and facilitates resolution. The previous explanations were developed in the context of utilitarian information- or action-oriented OCCs. This netnography confirms that a similar mechanism operates in the context of a hedonic and conversational OCC. Personal conflicts' high levels of coerciveness produces negative individual value, generating pain, frustration, anger, shame and sadness for participants. Because personal conflicts are negative experiences, they reduce communal engagement. Peripheral members distrust the community and leave while regular members engage less, display reduced willingness to volunteer and identify with their clique rather than the community as a whole and moderators are disheartened.

In the context studied, conflict resolution occurs very rarely. When it occurs, it reduces the negative consequences of the conflict but the positive outcome generally do not suffice to outweigh this.

This research not only confirms existing explanations, it adds new insights into the understanding of the consequences of OCC conflict for social value formation. This research revealed that OCC conflict, when taking the shape of explicit performances produce positive feelings (flow, entertainment, catharsis, learning, communitas and social pride) which, in turn, promotes collective engagement. The mechanism operating in played conflict is thus different than in the personal conflicts studied so far. Played OCC conflict does not question the relational and cultural status quo in the community but it is rather a mode of engagement with the community. In the same way as one can share information, support someone, share intimate thoughts for transformative purposes – one can engage in conflict. Disparate findings already contradict the explanations based on coerciveness and resolution by highlighting how conflict can enhance collective engagement even when it does not resolve (e.g. Franco et al. 1995; Hardacker, 2010; Perelmutter, 2013). However why this is the case remained unclear in extant studies. Finally, this research indicates that, when the conflict performance is uncertain, the consequences of OCC conflict on collective engagement depend on the form of the conflict. In reality show conflict, participants revel in uncertainty which promotes collective engagement. In trolling by contrast, uncertainty nurtures distrust which decreases collective engagement. Overall this indicates that the clarity of the conflict performance determines which of the mechanisms dominates, whether that of personal conflict based on coerciveness and resolution or that of played conflict based on positive experience. Overall this research indicates that two main mechanisms operate relating OCC conflict to community continuity and previous research investigated only one of them. I have identified the second mechanism and I have developed an explanation of which mechanism operates when.

Theoretical implications

The conceptualization of OCC conflict as performance has a number of theoretical implications. First, conceptualizing OCC conflict as a performance leads to the definition of an important conflict characteristic which has been overlooked so far: conflict performance clarity. Three markers from conflict research have been used to characterize conflicts in past OCC research: the parties involved, the behaviors they engage in, and the object they quarrel about. Drawing explicitly on conflict research Husemann et al. (2015) characterized OCC conflict as “an interaction relationship of individuals and groups with incompatible goals” (p. 268), thereby focusing on parties and object. Chalmers-Thomas et al. (2013) investigated OCC conflict as situations where heterogeneous members have misaligned frames, thereby also focusing on parties and object. Gebauer et al. (2015) characterized OCC conflict based on members engagement in “dysfunctional behavior” (p. 1517), active resistance and public attacks, thereby focusing on behaviors. This research indicates that the

three markers are useful to identify the presence of conflict. However they do not account for the performed nature of OCC conflict. Taking a performance approach, a fourth marker of OCC is necessary: performance clarity, how visible it is for the participants that the conflict is a public event unfolding on a stage. OCC conflicts can be implicit performances, explicit performances or uncertain performances. Overlooking performance clarity has led previous research conceptualizing OCC conflict to focus on conflicts which are implicit performances thereby missing out on the diversity of OCC conflict. A few studies indicated that the publicity of interactions on social media creates specific conflict dynamics. Marwick and boyd (2011) found that teenager conflict tended to die out rapidly when happening offline but continued and gained intensity when moving online. Hiltz et al. (1989) also showed that when tensions appear between two or more actors in an OCC, some members will do their best to "fan the flames" and start a fight. However this study is the first one to theorize how the publicity of interaction changes the meaning and consequences of OCC conflict.

Second, this research also complements Husemann's et al. (2015) findings that OCC conflicts gradually build a conflict culture, a toolbox of community specific habits, skills, and styles community members use when engaging in OCC conflict to gear the conflict towards more positive collective engagement consequences. Husemann et al. found that the conflict culture consists of community policies, conflict management roles (lead-agitator and moderator) and routinized conflict management behaviours (inviting conflict, showing respect for otherness, releasing aggression, raising awareness for conflict potential, emergency exclusion). Similar elements were found in this study with the creation of community policies such as well-defined conflict reporting procedures and conflict resolution procedures and segmentation of sub-forum's usage by audience as well as traditional conflict management behaviors (welcoming of newbies, qualifying thread titles' transgressiveness). This research also extends Husemann et al.'s (2015) concept of OCC conflict culture. It indicates that it is a multidimensional concept which consists not only of procedures but also of shared understandings and engagements and that the different dimensions are nurtured by different conflict experiences. While personal conflict experiences primarily nurture procedures, performed and misaligned conflict experiences primarily nurture shared understandings (conflict narratives, shared vocabulary) and shared engagements, whether prescribed values (freedom, self-confidence, humour, entertainment and voyeurism) or prescribed activities (banter, ranting, reality show watching and pranks).

Third, conceptualizing OCC conflict as a performance illuminates the relationship between conflict and consumption. Previous research delineated well how consumption relates to conflict theory. The literature on anti-consumption showed how consumption can be the object of conflict, like when consumers fight about the ethics of consumption practices damaging the environment (Luedicke et al., 2010) or alienating individuals (Kozinets, 2002). It also indicates that consumption, or its

absence in the case of boycotts can be a conflict behavior (Garett, 1987). B2C relationship marketing showed how consumption can be a driver of conflict as in the case of service failure (Aaker et al., 2004). B2B relationship marketing showed that consumption can also be the context in which conflicts develop, for example when supplier and retailers fight over the rules governing their relationship (Mooi et al., 2009). Consumption can thus be the driver of conflict, the conflict object, a conflict behaviour or the context of conflict. This research indicates that consumption relates to conflict in the same manner within OCCs. Some OCC conflicts observed during the netnographic process emerged because of a mismanaged transaction so that the customer was dissatisfied with the service delivered. For example a conflict developed because a buyer did not receive the clubbing drugs he ordered. Consumption was therefore the source of conflict. Other conflicts focused on the definition of what constitutes appropriate behaviors when clubbing so that consumption was the object of the conflict. For example a conflict unfolded about what constitutes appropriate clothing attire on the underground clubbing scene. Interviewees also discussed boycotting certain clubbing nights because of a general dislike for the event organiser generally deemed unethical so that non-consumption manifested as conflict behavior. In other cases consumption was only the context in which conflicts apparently unrelated to the market place developed. For example conflicts between members of the clubbing community debating religion or politics.

While this research confirms how consumption relates to conflict theory it also provides insights as to how conflict can be integrated in consumption theory. At an individual level, conflict experiences, as discussed above, have been largely viewed as a negative by-product of consumption, something getting in the way of the consumption experience, preventing the attainment of pleasure and hedonic feelings. A performance approach to conflict highlights how and when conflict experiences are an integral part of the consumption experience, if not something to consume on its own. When the participants are not aware that an OCC conflict is a performance, conflict is personal: verbal abuse harms the party's face or honor and it is taken as a personal offense. OCC conflict is then lived as a negative experience subverting the attainment of the experience sought in the community. When the participants are aware that an OCC conflict is a performance, conflict is played. Verbal abuses are then perceived to be targeted at the character the party embodies rather than the persons themselves. As a result face is saved and insults are not perceived as a personal offense. Abuse is rather perceived as a specific mode of interaction or a manner of interacting. OCC conflict is then lived as a positive experience largely contributing to the attainment of the experience sought in the community. Members come back to the community and engage with their fellow members with the hope of engaging in conflict. Members consume conflict, conflict is the purpose guiding consumers' actions. While existing knowledge on experiential consumption has constantly highlighted the importance of harmonizing the different factors of the experience to make it valuable to the consumers (Pine and Gilmore, 2011; Schmitt, 2000), I indicate how disharmony and conflict can also be at the

core of a valuable consumption experience. This explains how an individual has started a business whose main offering is to harass its customers on social media and found himself to be sitting on a juicy opportunity rather than going bankrupt (Jeffries, 2015). This taste for conflict should not be misunderstood as rare sado-masochistic tendencies but rather as a relatively common playful approach to give meanings to actions and socialize with fellow consumers.

Fourth, conceptualizing OCC conflict as a performance also contributes to the performance literature in consumer research theorizing performance consumption and the marketing of performance. In his foundational article Deighton (1992) made the distinction between implicit performances and explicit performances, labelling them respectively dramaturgic and dramatistic performances. He explained how market place agents, to gain credibility and persuasiveness, can choose to mask the fact that action is performed or on the contrary emphasize it. Since then the performance lens has been used to investigate various topics, extraordinary and peak consumption experiences such as river rafting and sky diving (Arnould & Price, 1993; Celsi et al., 2003) but also more mundane experiences such as grocery shopping (Moisio & Arnould, 2005), micro-level practices of impression management (Schau & Gilly, 2003) as well as the macro-level of market system social dramas (Giesler, 2008). The distinction between implicit and explicit performances has received little attention since Deighton's original article as later research apparently focused on one type or the other. This research emphasizes how important the distinction is when a dramaturgic framework are applied to conflict, as conflict as an explicit performance builds positive experiences while conflict as an implicit performance builds negative experiences. This research further indicates that performances are not always one type or the other. The distinction is continuous rather than categorical so that uncertain performances develop. OCC members are aware of this uncertainty and can choose to revel in (i.e. reality show conflicts) so that conflict produces social value or develop anxiety (i.e. trolling conflict) so that conflict destroys social value.

Finally the conceptualization of OCC conflict developed here has implications for research investigating the ontology of social media interactions and digital consumption. It has often been highlighted that social media interactions follow a specific logic. This has been explained by the fact that interactions are public and many people are involved. Expressions such as "networked", "many-to-many interactions" (Kozinets et al., 2010), "polylogical" (Lorenzo-Dus et al., 2011) interactions occurring in "the public sphere" (Gebauer et al. 2013) are thus commonly used to qualify the particular logic followed. Digital consumption has further been qualified as "digital virtual", somewhere between the material and the imaginary. However, how this logic operates has remained unclear as articles mentioned it without providing a conceptual frame to explain it. Adapting concepts from performance theory (Schechner, 2003), this research assumes that all interactions on social media are performances and performances can follow three different forms, that of implicit, explicit or

uncertain performances. The theory developed in this research explicates the logic of social media interactions as the combination of the three types of interaction experiences. This paves the way for a better understanding of the ontology of digital consumption using performance theory.

Practical implications

This research has implications for community and social media managers, helping them to manage conflict more effectively and efficiently. Practitioners have very limited information regarding how they should deal with conflict on social media. This research offers recommendations on how to manage conflict when aiming to build collective engagement.

First, social media managers should orchestrate and nurture played and reality show conflict to promote community continuity. To engineer played conflict they should set up conflict games with clear goals, rules and point counting systems. Highlighting that this is a way to vent frustration will give seriousness to the performance while highlighting it as boredom escapism will give lightness to the performance. Once the conflict is engineered social media managers should ensure that participants remain aware that it is a performance. To do so they should highlight parties' performance behaviours (idealization, mystification, failed dramatization). They can verbally incite parties to do so or help parties do it spontaneously by developing specific emoticons or communication features which indicate performance. To engineer reality show conflict social media practitioners should seed conflicts focusing on intimate topics and highlight the narrative tension they create (surprise, mystery and suspense). Once reality show conflict is engineered managers should highlight that it is serious for parties and playful for onlookers. To do so they should highlight self-authenticating cues in parties' messages and self-distantiating and playful cues in onlookers' messages. Offering specific emoticons and communication features indicating self-investment and playfulness would also help participants do this.

Social media practitioners should seek to eliminate personal conflict as it generally destroys community cohesion. Social media practitioners have a range of options available to eliminate personal conflicts. First they can try and preempt them. To do so they can divide the community into sub-areas meant for different profiles of users. They can create areas specifically designed for newcomers, areas for members participating for commercial purposes and areas for discussions revolving around specific topics (serious discussions, sports, music). By creating such areas they allow members with special needs or motivations to converse on the forum without obstructing other members' conversations. They can also divide the community between "strictly moderated areas" and free chat areas to allow members who are particularly prone to being harassed to engage in discussions on the forum without anxiety. Finally formalizing community norms and values in the Terms and Conditions, Community Policy or User guidelines should avoid any misunderstandings and

arguments. If personal conflicts still erupt, social media managers can try and turn them into played or reality show conflicts by following the recommendations given above. If this does not work, social media managers should develop procedures to resolve conflict hierarchically. Community members can be asked to monitor conflict with the creation of "report" buttons and systems of sanctions, from warning to banning, should be implemented.

Social media practitioners should also eliminate trolling conflicts. To do so they can formally forbid members' creation of multiple accounts to pre-empt the emergence of trolling. Social media practitioners can also try and turn trolling conflicts into played conflicts, explicit performances by following the engineering recommendations given above. If this does not suffice they should set up appropriate measures to monitor trolling activities and sanction them. They should also ensure that members know that to stop trolling they should ignore trolls or ridicule the activity of trolling, demeaning trolls as social outcasts, losers and immature people.

Beyond economic efficiency, this research bears important ethical implications. This research indicates that ambiguous conflict performances (reality show) contribute to communal continuity by building collective engagement and community culture. Reality show conflict described in this research is a case in point. Similarly certain communities with very aggressive and subversive cultures such as 4chan thrive on trolling. While such conflicts can have positive consequences for the group, they can also be harmful to individual participants. For example one of the community members was often a trolled party or a party in reality-show conflicts. The moderators let it be because they knew it contributed to building the community. Normally this would have, in the worst case, driven out the member out of the community. However the individual turned out to be fragile and instable and so one day attempted to murder an acquaintance and was convicted for that crime. Whether the harassment he felt in the community was an important factor building is not clear but it would be expected that it had some influence. A number of cases were also depicted in the press where people apparently engaged in playful interactions online actually felt harassed and seriously hurt themselves. Less dramatic but more common, ambiguous online conflicts have led members of the community to start fist fights offline. Ambiguous conflicts can thus promote collective continuity but damage individual members psychological and physically, raising ethical questions about when should community managers promote the community and when should they protect individual members. Beyond the definition of the right balance along the member-harm/community-benefit divide, the issue is further complicated by the question of individual responsibility. OCC members generally contribute to the community voluntarily, hence the question: when should a person engaging in self-destructive behaviors online by putting herself in difficult situation be stopped? These are complex issues requiring the definition of ethical codes in relation to conflict management in the social media management profession. Legal sanctions might be needed for indviduals who agreed not to engage in certain conflict practices when joining the forum and still engaged in them. Finally as it is very

difficult to prevent trolls from continuing their activity by creating a new avatars every time they are banned, this calls for educating and training Internet users to understanding the logics of OCC conflict and how trolls can be deterred.

Limitations

Two main limitations must be underlined relating to the research design chosen. The first limitation relates to the netnographic methodology used. While it enables in-depth understanding of community member's beliefs about the influence of OCC conflict on engagement beyond the conflictual discussion, engagement itself has not been observed. Netnography is therefore an imprecise method to capture members' engagement beyond conflictual discussion. While the convergence of in-depth interviews and prolonged involvement in the community gives support to the validity of the findings, this remains a methodological weakness reducing the external reliability and validity of the study's findings.

The second limitation of this research relates to the investigation of a single context and subsequently the lack of generalizability of findings. The HarderFaster community is a community whose primary purpose is to create hedonic value and relational value: chat, discuss, and spend agreeable time with like-minded people. In communities oriented toward serious activities such as creative communities or P3 communities, performed conflicts might be perceived as a waste of time while onlookers might perceive personal conflicts as opportunities to learn. Therefore the influence of OCC conflict experiences on experiential value might be different in communities with different orientations. The context was selected for the numerous and diverse conflicts it provided. This implies that the conflict experiences investigated unfold in a community with a very developed conflict culture. OCC conflict experiences might have different consequences on experiential value and community cohesion in communities with a less developed conflict culture as members might be less able to deal with conflict. In OCCs oriented toward support (e.g. diet community), where conflict is much less frequent, or in corporation-owned OCCs, where conflict unfolds "under the radar" of community members because they are censored by community managers, conflict might have very different consequences than in the present context. Nevertheless the choice of a single context allowed to control for extraneous factors which could have interfered the observation of the processes at hand (e.g. community orientation, community culture, community size) thereby enhancing the validity of the theory on the influence of OCC conflict on value formation. The author therefore sees the limitation as a trade-off between generalizability and validity. The choice of a single context favoring validity over generalizability was suitable given the exploratory nature of this work and this limitation is a necessary evil.

Further research

Several interesting avenues for further research emerge from this study. First, this research calls for a confirmation of the findings regarding the influence of OCC conflict on community cohesion using more precise measurement tools. In this regard a quantitative study relating OCC conflict experiences with members' actual behaviours would be a useful complement. Automated content analysis techniques would allow better understanding of when each type of OCC conflict experience occurs on a forum, and to what extent. These measures of conflict experience could then be related to members' behaviours using web analytics metrics as well as community members' positions in the community's social network using social network analysis. Field experiments involving the seeding of different kinds of conflict in the community could also be developed to confirm causality inferences. A specific protocol should be followed during the field experiment to tackle any ethical issues.

Second further research could compare OCC conflict unfolding publicly and privately. The investigation of OCC conflict in the present research is based solely on public conflict on a forum which any Internet user can potentially read if he has the URL. One might wonder how the meanings of conflict change when conflict takes place on private channels of communication (email, private messages, text messages). In particular one might wonder which conflicts are taken public, which are kept private, and how the dynamic of conflict is different in each case. One might also wonder whether OCC conflict is similar or different in closed communities, where conversations can only be read by a restricted group of people.

Third further research should investigate OCC conflicts in different contexts. This netnography was conducted in a hedonic community mainly oriented toward casual discussions and chats. For example, it would be interesting to investigate how played conflict, reality show conflict and trolling are perceived and which social processes they trigger in more serious OCC contexts oriented toward information sharing and gathering, transaction, collaboration or support. It would also be interesting to study the dynamics of OCC conflict and social value formation in online brand communities. In brand communities business actors' engagement in the community for commercial purposes should be more prevalent giving a more central role to commercial-communal tensions than in the context investigated. Also, while participants are only distinguished in this theory based on their role in conflict (party one, party two, onlookers), a theory of OCC conflict in brand communities would probably need to determine the different roles that the brand plays in the conflict. For example, one might need to distinguish the passive role of conflict object between community members from an active role of conflict participant i.e. when the social media manager posts in the name of the brand as a company employee (own avatar) or as the voice of the brand itself (brand avatar). Networks of consumers on social media, also called "OCC in a broad sense" (Husemann et al., 2015) would be another interesting context to investigate OCC conflict. This research could investigate what nurtures

conflict on social media outside online communities, how it escalates and how it impacts consumers' usage of social media. In this context reality show conflict experiences are expected to be prevalent (cf. Marwick & boyd, 2011), so such research would enhance current understanding of reality show conflict.

Finally this research calls for further investigation of cyber-harrassment. Cyber-harrassment has been depicted as an implicit conflict performance involving behaviors such as hacking, threatening, defaming and more generally willfully engaging in unwanted interactions with someone, and it has been opposed to cyber-play (cf. Van de Bosch and Van Cleemput). This research indicates that harassment and play entertain a very close link in an OCC context, with laughter and ridicule connecting the two. This calls for a qualitative investigation unravelling when and how laughter is with or at someone.

Conclusion

A HarderFaster member used to sign her posts with the bitter saying that "it is fair to say that everyone on the Internet is annoying" while another used a quote from Calvin & Hobbes saying that "a little rudeness and disrespect can elevate a meaningless interaction to a battle of wills and add drama to an otherwise dull day". OCC members look for and shy away from OCC conflict and disharmony. OCC conflict and disharmony can be the life and soul of the community as much as its cancer. This study has unpacked the multi-faceted nature of OCC conflict, laying robust conceptual foundations to understand its various forms, its drivers, and its consequences for value formation. However the study remains a first exploration calling for further research. Such research is essential to develop sustainable OCCs and clarify what consumers really want and get from OCCs beyond face discourses of "sharing the love". As the use of social media generalizes in our consumption societies, more and more people engage with OCCs so that it has become a concern for all.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Literature on OCC conflict reviewed

N°	Author, year	Outlet	Type of platform	Community focus	Aspect of conflict investigated	Subject
1	Aiken and Waller, 2000	Information & Management	Forum	Education & Learning	Flame	Information Systems
2	Alonzo and Aiken, 2004	Decision Support Systems	Group support system	Education & Learning	Flame	Information Systems
3	Baruch, 2005	Information & Management	Email	Unknown	Flame	Information Systems
4	Bocij and McFarlane, 2003	The Police Journal	Various (conceptual paper)	Various (conceptual paper)	Cyber-harrassment	Psychology
5	Bocij, 2002	First Monday	Email and Forums	Various brands, and consumption topics	Cyber-harrassment	Information Systems
6	Bonsu and Darmody, 2008	Journal of Macromarketing	Virtual World	None	Commercial-Communal tensions	Marketing
7	Campbell, Fletcher and Greenhill, 2009	Information Systems Journal	Forum	Financial products	Ritual conflict	Information Systems
8	Chalmer-Thomas, Price and Schau, 2013	Journal of Consumer Research	Forum	Running	Heterogeneity based tensions	Marketing
9	Coe, Kenski and Rains, 2014	Journal of Communication	Newspaper website	Local news	Uncivility	Communication
10	De Valck, 2007	Consumer Tribes	Forum	Cooking	Member to member conflict	Marketing
11	De Valck, Van Bruggen and Wierenga, 2009	Decision Support Systems	Forum	Cooking	Member to member conflict	Information Systems

N°	Author, year	Outlet	Type of platform	Community focus	Aspect of conflict investigated	Subject
12	De Zwart and Lindsay, 2009	Emerging Practices in Cyberculture and Social Networking	Virtual World	Various	Commercial-Communal tensions and their management	Digital studies
13	Donath, 1999	Communities in Cyberspace	Listserv newsgroup	Unknown	Trolling	Sociology
14	Duval Smith, 1999	Communities in Cyberspace	Virtual World	Teenager Socializatio n	Conflict management	Sociology
15	Ewing, Wagstaff, and Powell, 2013	Journal of Business Research	Forum	Car brands (Ford and Holden)	Brand rivalry	Marketing
16	Forte Larco and Bruckman, 2009	Journal of Management Information Systems	Wikipedia	Knowledge creation	Collaboratio n conflict	Information Systems
17	Fournier,Sele and Schögel, 2005	Thexis	Various (conceptual paper)	Various (conceptual paper)	Conflict Management	Sociology
18	Franco, Piirto, Hu and Lewenstein, 1995	IEEE Technology and Society Magazine	Listserv newsgroup	Internet	Flame	Digital studies
19	Gebauer, Fuller and Pezzei, 2013	Journal of Business Research	Crowdsourci ng platform	Supermarket brand (SPAR)	Conflict derived from service dissatisfactio n	Marketing
20	Giesler, 2008	Journal of Consumer Research	Peer to Peer Sharing Network	Music sharing (Napster)	Ideological conflict	Marketing
21	Graham, 2000	Journal of Pragmatics	Listserv newsgroup	The Anglican church	Impoliteness	Semiotics
22	Hardacker, 2010	Journal of Politeness Research	Listserv newsgroup	Horse-riding	Trolling	Semiotics
23	Hickman and Ward, 2007	Advances in Consumer Research	Unknown	Computer brands (Apple vs PCs) - Football brands	Brand rivalry	Marketing

N°	Author, year	Outlet	Type of platform	Community focus	Aspect of conflict investigated	Subject
				(university clubs)		
24	Hiltz, Turoff and Johnson, 1989	Decision Support Systems	Email	None (experiment)	Sources of uninhibited behaviors online	Information Systems
25	Hollenbeck and Zinkhan, 2006	Advances in Consumer Research	Multi-platforms (chat rooms, emails, webpages)	Food brands (Mc Donald, Starbucks, Wal-Mart)	Ideological conflict	Marketing
26	Husemann and Luedicke, 2012	Advances in Consumer Research	Various (conceptual paper)	Various (conceptual paper)	Consumption mediated conflict	Marketing
27	Husemann, Ladstaetter and Luedicke, 2015	Psychology & Marketing	Forum	Food brands (Coca Cola vs Premium Cola)	Conflict in OCCs	Marketing
28	Johnson, Norman, Cooper and Chin, 2008	European Journal of Information Systems	Chat room	None (experiment)	Consequences of flaming	Information Systems
29	Kayani,1998	Journal of the American Society for Information Science	Listserv newsgroup	National identity	Flame	Information Systems
30	Kerr, Mortimer, Dickinson and Waller, 2008	European Journal of Marketing	Blogs	Unknown	Advertising mediated conflict	Marketing
31	Kiesler, Siegel and Mc Guire, 1986	American Psychologist	Email	None (experiment)	Flame	Psychology
32	Kiesler, Zubrow, Moses, and Geller, 1985	Human Computer Interaction	Chat room	None (experiment)	Flame	Digital studies

N°	Author, year	Outlet	Type of platform	Community focus	Aspect of conflict investigated	Subject
33	Knusden Hongsmark, 2012	Advertising & Society Review	YouTube	Unknown	Advertizing mediated member to member conflict	Marketing
34	Kozinets, 2001	Journal of Consumer Research	Unknown	TV Series brand (Star Trek)	Member to member conflict	Marketing
35	Kozinets, de Valck, Wojnicki and Wilner, 2010	Journal of Marketing	Blogs	Mobile phone	Commercial-Communal tensions	Marketing
36	Landry, 2000	Negotiation Journal	Email	Unknown	Source of conflict online	Management
37	Lea, O'Shea, Fung and Spears, 1992	Contexts of Computer Mediated Communcation	None (conceptual)	Varied (conceptual)	Flame	Digital studies
38	Lorenzo-Dus, Blitvich and Bou-Franch, 2011	Journal of pragmatics	YouTube	Politics	Impoliteness	Semiotics
39	Luedicke, 2006	Advances in Consumer Research	Unknown	Car brand (Hummer)	Ideological conflict	Marketing
40	Luedicke, Thompson and Giesler, 2010	Journal of Consumer Research	Unknown	Car brand (Hummer)	Ideological conflict	Marketing
41	Martin and Smith, 2008	Journal of Public Policy & Marketing	Unknown	Brands (Sony Ericsson, Wal-Mart, Tremor)	Conflict mediated by stealth marketing	Marketing
42	Marwick and boyd, 2011	Working paper	Social Networking site	Unknown	Online conflict happening in front of an audience	Digital studies
43	Mishne, 2007	Unpublished PhD thesis	Blogs	Various (text mining)	Linguistic characteristics	Information Systems

N°	Author, year	Outlet	Type of platform	Community focus	Aspect of conflict investigated	Subject
44	Moor, Heuvelman, Verleur, 2010	Computers in Human Behavior	YouTube	Various (survey)	Impoliteness	Information Systems
45	Muniz and Hamer, 2001	Advances in Consumer Research	Listserv Newsgroups	Soda Brands (Coca Cola, Pepsi)	Brand rivalry	Marketing
46	Muniz and O'Guinn, 2001	Journal of Consumer Research	Unknown	Car and computer (Ford Bronco, Saab, Macintosh)	Conflict and community culture	Marketing
47	Nitin, Bansal and Khazanchi, 2011	Issues in Information Systems	Social Networking site	Varied (survey)	Flame	Information Systems
48	Nitin, Bansal, Sharma, Aggarwal, Goyal, Choudhary, Chawla, Jain and Bhasin, 2012	Working paper	Forums, micro blogging sites, social networking sites	Varied	Flame	Information Systems
49	O'Sullivan and Flanagin, 2003	New Media and Society	Various (conceptual)	Various (conceptual)	Flame	Communication
50	Perelmutter, 2013	Journal of Pragmatics	Blogs	Unknown	Impoliteness	Semiotics
51	Reid, 1999	Communities in Cyberspace	Virtual World	Playing and Peer Support	Flame, Cyber-harrassment, power and social structure	Sociology
52	Reinig, Briggs and Nunamaker, 1997	Journal of Management Information Systems	Group Support System	Ethics online	Flame	Information Systems
53	Schneider, Passant and Breslin, 2010	Web Science Conference	Wikipedia	Knowledge creation	Arguments	Digital studies

N°	Author, year	Outlet	Type of platform	Community focus	Aspect of conflict investigated	Subject
54	Siegel, Dubrovski, Kiesler and Mc Guire, 1986	Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes	Email	Unknown	Sources of uninhibited behaviors online	Management
55	Sproull and Kiesler, 1986	Management Science	Email	Unknown	Sources of uninhibited behaviors online	Management
56	Sproull and Kiesler, 1992	Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes	Email	Unknown	Sources of flame	Management
57	Turnage, 2008	Journal of Computed Mediated Communication	Email	Unknown	Dimensions of flame	Digital studies
58	Van Laer and De Ruyter, 2010	International Journal of Research in Marketing	Blogs	Unknown	Conflict derived from service dissatisfaction	Marketing
59	Van Laer, De Ruyter and Cox, 2013	Journal of Interactive Marketing	Blogs	Unknown	Conflict derived from service dissatisfaction	Marketing
60	Van Laer, 2014	Journal of Business Ethics	Social Networking Site	Unknown	Cyber-harrassment, conflict management	Management
61	Vandebosch and Van Cleemput, 2008	CyberPsychology & Behavior	Unknown	Communities of Teenagers	Cyber-harrassment	Digital studies
62	Wiertz, Mathwick, De Ruyter and Dellaert, 2010	Advances in Consumer Research	Forum	Software related peer-to-peer problem solving	Conflict governance	Marketing

Appendix 2: Sample of discussion threads used to characterize community culture

Note that most threads sampled for the analysis of conflict contained useful information to characterize community culture too. This list contains the threads sampled only to characterize community culture. For a view of the rest of the threads data set, see appendix 5.

	Starting date	Thread name	Conversation focus	Nb of messages	Nb of pdf pages	Thread category
1	31/07/2001	Just so you know	The creator of the website informs members of transformations in the forum and a member comments on it eight years later	1	1	Tunes and Tracks
2	31/07/2001	Progress report	The founder of the website informs users of the technological developments of the website in the first days after its creation	5	2	Site announcements
3	31/07/2001	So what do you think ?	The first thread ever posted in the community. The community owner asks for some feedback on the website	25	7	General Mayhem
4	02/04/2002	New feature - today's active threads	The founder of the website announces a technological innovation on the website	9	3	HarderFaster Active
5	05/01/2004	Adam/NLB to Burn U.K. Bus Pass in London	Tabloid style spoof of another discussion thread where a member discusses his trip in Bagdad	27	7	Classic Threads
6	09/01/2004	The Harder Faster 10 Commandments	Members playfully define the 10 commandments defining appropriate behaviour on the forum	317	68	Classic Threads
7	12/03/2004	SHOCK-48 hours Underground Strike	Spoof newspaper article of a strike in the underground clubbing scene as a result of a very bad party	21	3	Classic Threads
8	29/04/2004	Drugs Death - Teenager Dies	Fake article about the death of a teenager due to his addiction to the Daily Mail followed by a discussion	23	4	Classic Threads

	Starting date	Thread name	Conversation focus	Nb of messages	Nb of pdf pages	Thread category
9	05/05/2004	HarderFaster Site Updates	Thread listing the technological improvements made on the forum over the years	39	13	HarderFaster: announcements, suggestions and feedback
10	26/07/2004	101 uses for a pair of fluffy…boots	Communal game where members discuss all the uses of a "fluffy"	70	13	Classic Threads
11	15/12/2004	Time to clear out my funny images folder	Members share the funny images they have	98	28	Classic Threads
12	24/01/2005	Crop circles	Debate about the origin of the circles found in USA crop fields	66	22	Classic Threads
13	10/02/2005	Ye Olde Hfers	Members playfully invent the origins of the community	185	55	Classic Threads
14	02/07/2005	Do you think our flatmate (Red5) will like what we've done with his room….	Discussion of a prank a community member has performed on his flat mate	123	10	Classic Threads
15	06/08/2005	Nukleuz~Changing with the Scene	Discussion revolving around a member's business analysis of an electronica label (Nukleuz records) and the clubbing market	181	22	Classic Threads
16	20/09/2005	Melons	Thread consisting of a word association game	238	60	Classic Threads
17	31/08/2006	Word association game....	Thread consisting of a word association game	39	10	Classic Threads
18	16/01/2007	Changes to the HarderFaster moderating team	The community owner ceremoniously informs the community that moderators are stepping down and others are taking over	40	9	HarderFaster: announcements, suggestions and feedback

	Starting date	Thread name	Conversation focus	Nb of messages	Nb of pdf pages	Thread category
19	29/01/2007	Does anyone else hate how everything is linked?	Members discuss the difference between discussions on Harder Faster and newer platforms such as Facebook and Twitter	27	14	F.A.O.
20	02/11/2007	TO ALL THAT KNEW RICHARD ZIMMERLING AKA ZIMMA	A member died in an accident. The community gets together and mourns him	40	10	Community Notices
21	13/11/2007	The HF Xmas Photowall - Make your choice	The walls of the club for the next HF Christmas party will be filled with photos of the past years. Members choose which ones they want to have printed	580	290	Classic Threads
22	27/02/2008	Has anyone ever	A member ask others for information on therapies for people who are afraid of flying	26	7	General Mayhem
23	15/01/2009	Classic quotes	Members dig out "classic" quotes of forum members	40	10	Lighthearted Banter
24	18/01/2009	there's too many people talking on here	Members discuss a disruption of the website functions	16	5	General Mayhem
25	26/02/2009	I'm leaving too!	A member announces her departure from the forum and the other members wish her well	124	34	General Mayhem
26	18/11/2009	Been away from Harder Faster for over 2 years now.....	A member comes back and says hi after leaving the forum for two years	17	5	General Mayhem
27	17/05/2011	What genre of music are you predominantly listening to these days?	Members discuss the genre of music they like to listen to nowadays	40	8	General Mayhem
28	23/05/2011	Do you still go to hard house events??	Members discuss whether they still like HardStyle music and how their music tastes have evolved	26	6	General Mayhem

	Starting date	Thread name	Conversation focus	Nb of messages	Nb of pdf pages	Thread category
29	21/06/2011	Memory Layne : HF Over the Past 10 Years *NWS*	Members dig out the hidden gems of the forum and discuss them	240	58	General Mayhem
30	08/11/2011	10 years of HF photos	Compiling all the memorable clubbing photos of the past 10 years	114	18	General Mayhem
31	02/01/2012	Noteworthy Deaths 2012 (Celebrity Deaths)	Members inventory celebrity deaths	42	10	General Mayhem
32	13/08/2012	London - The Modern Babylon	Members discuss a movie about London	34	8	General Mayhem
33	22/09/2012	Serotonin Gallery June 14 WATERWORLD At Imperial Gardens	A member informs the community that the pictures of a party which happened years ago are now available online. The community suspects that it is trolling	9	3	Photos and Photography
34	30/11/2012	Friday is upon us, and with it brings the inevitable 'wot u up to this weekend' thread	Members discuss their weekend plans	79	22	General Mayhem
35	30/11/2012	My 1st thread. Comedic ideas please.	A member is posting his first thread and ask for ideas on how to be humourous in it	7	3	General Mayhem
36	30/11/2012	Normal trance vs that modern wishy washy bollocks	Members compare trance music today and ten years ago	8	2	General Mayhem
37	30/11/2012	paperless tickets for flying	A member asks whether plane e-tickets are a safe option	30	8	General Mayhem
38	01/01/2013	Voting in the HarderFaster Annual Awards 2012 goes live	The forum owner announces that the elections for the HF awards 2012 are now open. Members discuss it.	20	6	HarderFaster: announcements, suggestions and feedback

	Starting date	Thread name	Conversation focus	Nb of messages	Nb of pdf pages	Thread category
39	29/01/2013	Things I have learned this week.	The discussion starts with a member discussing what she learned this week. The conversation then drifts in a variety of directions.	142	40	General Mayhem
40	30/01/2013	Coops	Casual banter around comic book super heroes	23	7	F.A.O.
41	14/02/2013	HarderFaster Awards 2012 - The results are in!	The results of the HF awards are announced and discussed	12	7	Other
42	14/02/2013	Everyone	Members debate the validity of the HF award results	36	7	F.A.O.
43	15/02/2013	I really am thinking about retiring from DJing.	A historical member and DJ announces that he is seriously thinking of stopping DJing	124	16	General Mayhem
44	28/03/2013	Happy Birthday Vivacious	Members wish a happy birthday to a core member	5	2	Lighthearted banter
45	01/04/2013	Happy Birthday Harder Father	Community members wish happy birthday to the HarderFather, the owner of the forum	20	5	General Mayhem
46	04/04/2013	GTFRO ~DBB	Members discuss an article announcing that Justin Bieber will begin a DJ career	8	3	General Mayhem
47	04/04/2013	Retile massage	Banter based on the title of the message	5	2	Classic Threads
48	04/04/2013	Ways to Fuck Someone's Shit Up	Members casually banter about the different "ways to fuck someone's shit up"	30	10	General Mayhem
49	04/04/2013	Which hurts the most?	Members invent impossible dilemmas involving two harmful options	26	6	Classic Threads
50	17/06/2013	If you could change a single element of HF, what would it be?	Communal discussions of what should be improved on the forum	218	40	General Mayhem
51	18/11/2013	I can't stand the silence no more!!!!!	A member creates a thread just for the sake of creating discussion because he finds the forum too quiet	17	6	General Mayhem

	Starting date	Thread name	Conversation focus	Nb of messages	Nb of pdf pages	Thread category
52	29/11/2013	Hidden club is shutting for good!	Members discuss the closing of an iconic club	52	16	General Mayhem
53	03/12/2013	I wonder where this is going…	A member brings to the forum a discussion on another platform where someone tried to scam him and he trolled the scammer	12	4	General Mayhem
54	05/12/2013	So who will be at the HF Christmas party?	Members anxiously discuss who will attend the HF Christmas party	40	15	General Mayhem
55	10/12/2013	Recap of the events and holidays you went to this year	Members discuss all the noteworthy clubbing and music events they went to in the last 12 months	30	9	General Mayhem
56	15/01/2014	Harderfaster terminology	Thread listing all the words specific to the community created over the years	40	16	General Mayhem
57	29/01/2014	I'm not new just changing profile	An old member announces her return to the forum under a new pseudonym	13	4	Welcome To Harder Faster
58	03/02/2014	LOST DAWN and NICK WARREN present The Soundgarden - May 10th 2014	A party is announced and members discuss it	171	53	Upcoming Events and Adverts
59	10/04/2014	What is you HF Legacy?	Members discuss their legacy to the forum	30	10	General Mayhem
60	23/04/2014	HAFA 2.0	Discussion of a technological revamp of the forum	59	11	General Mayhem
61	02/05/2014	In need of a graphic designer	A member asks the community for advice in relation to his search for a graphic designer	22	6	General Mayhem
62	06/05/2014	Peach 10 year re-union	A long-gone iconic party/club is reorganized as a one-shot event. Members discuss	18	3	How good a night was that
63	08/05/2014	How many ways are there to skin a cat	Members discuss how many ways there are to rip the skin off a cat	2	2	General Mayhem

	Starting date	Thread name	Conversation focus	Nb of messages	Nb of pdf pages	Thread category
64	06/10/2014	hf 2.0	Members discuss the advancement of the revamping of the website HF 2.0	34	9	General Mayhem
65	-	Emoticons	List of emoticons created for the forum	0	2	Other
66	-	Frequently Asked Questions	List of Frequently Asked Questions published on the website	0	9	Other

Appendix 3: Ethical approval

Published on *Aston University Ethics Committee* (http://www.ethics.aston.ac.uk)
Home > PhD Student Ethics Application 440 > PhD Student Ethics Application 440

PhD Student Ethics Application 440

Current state: Final

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Date	Old State	New State	By	Comment

Workflow History

Date	Old State	New State	By	Comment
Tue, 2012-11-27 12:27	Final to supervisor	Final	Andrew Farrell	Dr Farrell has reviewed this submission, and this is the final version to be reviewed by the Ethics Committee.
Mon, 2012-11-19 14:05	Pending	Final to supervisor	Olivier Sibai	Hi Andrew, You should find my version of the Ethics Application 440 online. I am satisfied with it as it is. I only have doubts regarding questions D4m and D8a. They deal with: - insurance certificates (?? no idea!) - Prior evaluation of the research (?? does the QR fit?) Best regards, Olivier
Fri, 2012-11-02 13:12	(creation)	Pending	Olivier Sibai	

Source URL: http://www.ethics.aston.ac.uk/node/440/workflow

From: Grover, Bhomali [B.Grover@aston.ac.uk]
Sent: 28 January 2013 16:32
To: Sibai, Olivier (Student)
Subject: RE: Ethics Application n°440 pending

Dear Olivier,

I apologise for the delay.

I am pleased to be able to inform you that the committee has approved your application with the following recommendations:

1. PI leaflet needs Aston badging and also contact details for Olivier and his supervisory team in case there is a problem. All the leaflets need a bit more on them in terms of what the project is about...people won't remember.

2. We don't have the invitation email or letter to set up for the interview...what we have is a cross between a gate keeper email and a PI leaflet - I think we could see two separate focused documents!

Good luck.

Best wishes
Bhomali

Appendix 4: Entrée email

Message to be posted in the Welcome Forum

Object: New to HF, been lurking for a while!

Hi everyone,

I've been lurking here for a while so I wanted to pop out of lurker status to let you know I am here and how I got here. I believe I got to HF through a different route than most of you guys…

I am interested in conflicts and fights in online communities as part of a PhD I'm doing at Aston University. The purpose of my study is to better understand how conflicts play out in online environments so as to help both community members and administrators develop strategies to manage them. I also like music and worked in music labels (classical music and kid's music though!). So when my supervisor Futon (who some of you might know/remember) told me about HF it sounded like a cool place to look at online fights: I get (1) to discover music and (2) to party for work :-)

So I started reading your discussions. Some were really interesting, others got me on the floor laughing, some got me a bit nervous - I got hooked. In the end I got annoyed at my silence and decided to come out of lurkness.

If some of you are intrigued by the project, it's a pleasure to chat with you about it. In time, I also will make my findings on online conflicts available to any interested member of the forum for your perusal and comment. Your feedback about my interpretations will be most welcome as this will help making sure I get things right.

It would also be great to meet you at club nights – I'm new in London (Brixton) and eager to explore this reeeally cool city. I went to Lost Dawn in July thanks to you guys and thoroughly enjoyed it – clubbing seems to be much funkier in London than in France (my home country).

Cheerio,

ORBS

Appendix 5: List of conflict related threads collected

	Date when started	Thread name	Conversation summary in relation to conflict	Thread type	Thread category	Number of pdf pages	Number of messages
1	19/08/2003	this site help me get my name out there	A member who is an amateur DJ asks the community to help him become a successful DJ. His tone and writing style annoys some members who abuse him. The rest of the community enjoys watching the conversation.	Conflict Example	Classic Threads	11	103
2	15/10/2003	Teh most entertaining thread i've read all day	A forum member shares the link of a confictual thread on another platform and all participants have a good laugh about it.	Conflict Example	Other	6	10
3	22/10/2003	Post the WORST photo anyone has taken of you!!!!!!	An initial discussion about who club pictures is hijacked into a a fight between members of a clique because one member is being ostracized. Other community members unrelated to the clique than gang up.	Conflict Example	Classic Threads	64	216
4	19/11/2003	PvD or Tiesto	Two members fight about who played longer between PvD or Tiesto at a concert in the Netherlands.	Conflict Example	Classic Threads	17	237
5	17/02/2004	I have just sussed out.....	Two members fight accusing each other of having seduced their ex-boyfriend.	Conflict Example	Classic Threads	53	201
6	21/02/2004	GURN.NET ARE STORKING ME	A member is ridiculed by all onlookers for misspelling a name.	Conflict Example	Classic Threads	10	45
7	04/05/2004	Abuse of other people's phones if they leave them unguarded at the pub	A member who's phone has been misused to post illicit content on the forum complains.	Conflict Example	Classic Threads	10	41

	Date when started	Thread name	Conversation summary in relation to conflict	Thread type	Thread category	Number of pdf pages	Number of messages
8	04/05/2004	Medical problem.... HELP needed.	A member hacks another's mobile phone and publish shaming content under the guise of his identity. The community is excited and in shock.	Conflict Example	Classic Threads	11	46
9	18/08/2004	Here's your opportunity to tell that certain someone why they really piss you off:	A thread where contributors are meant to spit their hatred at each other without mentioning the name of the person the abuse is targeted at.	Conflict Example	Classic Threads	79	298
10	02/09/2004	WHERE ARE ALL THE INTERESTING THREADS???	A members says that he is bored and wants to fight. Other members invite him to join them in a particluar discussion thread where they are currently having fun fighting.	About Conflict	General Mayhem	3	13
11	06/10/2004	DJ Gecko names abusive DJ	A DJ outs another for unethical business practices. The rest of the community abuses him.	Conflict Example	Classic Threads	28	138
12	17/01/2005	Top HF Fights	Members dig out the "best" fights which ever took place on the forum and discuss them.	About Conflict	Classic Threads	72	232
13	25/02/2005	IM GOING SORRY!	A member announces his is leaving the forum because he does not feel welcome on the forum - but then decides to stay.	Conflict Example	General Mayhem	13	58
14	21/06/2005	Idiots who fall over and try to sue.	A member rants about people who "fall over and sue" offending another member. The offender takes it as an opportunity to offend her further and some other members join in.	Conflict Example	General Mayhem	76	302
15	18/07/2005	All you people bitter because you're not part of Team Handsome…	A member braggs that him and his friends are good looking and the rest of the community is jealous. Numerous	Conflict Example	General Mayhem	29	120

	Date when started	Thread name	Conversation summary in relation to conflict	Thread type	Thread category	Number of pdf pages	Number of messages
			members abuse him for this, starting a fight				
16	01/12/2005	2005 Most Bastard HFer poll... - CAST YOUR VOTES NOW!!!	Members vye to be in the short list of the "most bastard" members of the community and to be number one in the list.	About Conflict	General Mayhem	24	103
17	17/02/2006	Should I change degree?	A member asks for advice about whether he should change degree. Another member abuses him. A fight between the two members ensues.	Conflict Example	Classic Threads	114	400
18	17/02/2006	ToTehb00n	Second round of a flame started off by one member asking for advice about whether he should change degree.	Conflict Example	Classic Threads	35	144
19	21/04/2006	Abuse the Hfer above you	Members engage in a game of insult where each poster must abuse the previous poster	Conflict Example	Classic Threads	304	1,189
20	27/09/2006	Ms iparty vs Enfant Terrible: the true love thread.	The community figthts about whether a particular member who posts a lot with flashy colour using numerous emoticons is annoying or nice.	About Conflict	General Mayhem	15	67
21	27/09/2006	Why is it I find sexminx so god-damn annoying	A moderator opens a discussion about two members who consstantly quarrel on the website. The community comments on the fight.	Conflict Example	Classic Threads	539	2,081
22	29/10/2006	HarderFaster revises the terms and conditions of membership	The forum owner announces changes in the Terms & Conditions some of them relating to conflict management.	About Conflict	HarderFaster: announcements, suggestions and feedback	18	81

	Date when started	Thread name	Conversation summary in relation to conflict	Thread type	Thread category	Number of pdf pages	Number of messages
23	06/12/2006	Post classic photos. NWS Just Incase	A member relates a conflict with a moderator he had in another thread because the moderator deemed his photo to be pornographic.	About Conflict	General Mayhem	8	35
24	27/01/2007	FAO General Zod...	Members argue about the truth of Creationist theories	Conflict Example	F.A.O.	14	44
25	08/02/2007	Some might be happy now, but i am sad	A member posts that she feels sad hoping to get some comfort from other community mmembers. She only receives abuse.	Conflict Example	General Mayhem	3	9
26	09/02/2007	I am fucking annoyed	A member vents her frustration. Another member abuses her, starting a flame.	Conflict Example	General Mayhem	12	42
27	09/02/2007	i just got this email...what shall i write....back as a reply	A member received a scam email saying she won a million pounds. She says jokingly that she will answer giving the details of another community member she dislikes. A bitter argument between the two.	Conflict Example	General Mayhem	6	23
28	09/02/2007	What do you do if you get a pic of someone's cock	A member who has been sent a picture of a member's penis by private message threatens to publish it.	Conflict Example	General Mayhem	20	88
29	10/02/2007	What happened to peekvid.com?	A member enquires about the disparition of a portal for streaming TV shows and movies. A member abuses her turning the discussion into a flame.	Conflict Example	General Mayhem	9	33

	Date when started	Thread name	Conversation summary in relation to conflict	Thread type	Thread category	Number of pdf pages	Number of messages
30	11/02/2007	Why has iParty's lame Peekvid thread been locked?	A member ask moderators why a conflictual thread containing hate speeches has been censored. As moderators explains him, he turns against them and abuse them. The rest of the community defends the moderators.	Conflict Example	General Mayhem	24	98
31	14/02/2007	Well then here is a public non-apology to Iparty NWS	A party who has been given the choice to apologize to the other party of to leave the forum chooses to leave. The rest of the community comments on it.	Conflict Example	General Mayhem	71	275
32	15/02/2007	If enfant got banned for continued attacks on Iparty	A member why some members got banned and others did not while they apparently engaged in similar behaviors. This opens a discssion about the difference between personal conflicts, playful conflicts and trolling.	About Conflict	General Mayhem	15	56
33	26/02/2007	all the scantily clad women at HDA	Members debate about whether it is appropriate for women in clubs to go clubbing with revealing cloths	Conflict Example	Classic Threads	269	796
34	10/05/2007	For all those calling me a rapist	A member who has been accused of being a rapist both online and offline tries to clear his name.	Conflict Example	Classic Threads	74	252
35	10/05/2007	So! Who sent the PM to nuttybunny grassing up Moysey?	Members discuss a conflict which erupted between two members who are lovers, after one of them cheated on the other.	About Conflict	General Mayhem	100	412
36	22/07/2007	Now iparty has gone....can we have The Terrible Child back?	Members abuse a particular member who got another one banned from the website as a result of fighting on the website.	Conflict Example	General Mayhem	4	17

	Date when started	Thread name	Conversation summary in relation to conflict	Thread type	Thread category	Number of pdf pages	Number of messages
37	09/08/2007	I just don't like you	A member starts venting her frustration so that another member abuses her, starting a flame.	Conflict Example	General Mayhem	17	70
38	12/11/2007	Steve Prince	A member was jailed for murder attempt. The community is in shock and wonders whether their constant bullying of him could have contributed to driving him insane.	About Conflict	General Mayhem	18	79
39	11/12/2007	Is Aaron a twat	Members discuss whether a member is a twat or not. Aaron defends himself and then engages in a campaign to redeem himself in the eye of the community. The rest of the community discusses it seriously before everyone starts joking together.	Conflict Example	General Mayhem	38	138
40	25/02/2008	Friends of Alex Klement	A member mentions that bullying new comer is part of the community's culture	About Conflict	Classic Threads	70	385
41	17/03/2008	I would just like to air my utter disgust at those who want rid of the London Olympics.	Members fight about whether the Olympics should take place in London	Conflict Example	General Mayhem	14	54
42	25/09/2008	Quoting a post…	A member is attacked by another for lazily quoting previous posts to state their agreement rather than developing elaborate opinions in their answers. Other members gang	Conflict Example	General Mayhem	9	33
43	29/05/2008	DMX I'm sorry I've been immature	A member pretends to apologize after a fight with another member has erupted to further abuse him. Onlookers rejoice.	Conflict Example	General Mayhem	10	38

	Date when started	Thread name	Conversation summary in relation to conflict	Thread type	Thread category	Number of pdf pages	Number of messages
44	18/09/2008	Falling Out with your online mates	Members discuss how and when they fight with their friends online.	About Conflict	General Mayhem	8	31
45	02/12/2008	Baby P - speak out!!	Members argue vigourously about whether satanism should be condemned	Conflict Example	General Mayhem	15	59
46	06/12/2008	DJ's who become drug dealers because they cant get enough gigs	A clubber outs a DJ who allegedly uses his status to smuggle druggs in clubs.	Conflict Example	Classic Threads	101	378
47	01/01/2009	A guide to the Feedback Forums	The moderator of the creative forums defines the rules of interaction strictly forbidding aggressive comments.	About Conflict	Production Feedback	2	1
48	03/02/2009	Standards are slipping on the internet...	A member saying he served time in prison for bank robbery is abused from all sides, being called a lier.	Conflict Example	Classic Threads	222	725
49	20/02/2009	Welcome to HarderFaster	The community debates about whether a conflict-free "Welcome to HarderFaster" forum is truly necessary for the community to operate well.	About Conflict	HarderFaster: announcements, suggestions and feedback	11	40
50	22/10/2009	CK & DMX	Members discuss a flame between two members	About Conflict	The Asylum	3	11
51	22/10/2009	And here's another new forum	A new forum, the "Asylum" forum was created for "tedious" threads	About Conflict	The Asylum	6	23
52	19/05/2011	What and who keeps you coming back to the H to the motherfuckin F ?	People discuss why they still stay in HF after so many years: friends, online friends, boredom/break at work, a place where people are smart and witty, entertainment, a feeling of drama also it seems	About Conflict	General Mayhem	22	102
53	24/05/2011	Footballers salaries	Members fight over whether footballers are overpaid	Conflict Example	General Mayhem	15	54

	Date when started	Thread name	Conversation summary in relation to conflict	Thread type	Thread category	Number of pdf pages	Number of messages
54	24/05/2011	Blah blah fucking blah !	Members rant about how irritating one particular member is and whether she should be banned from the forum. That member fuels the flame.	Conflict Example	General Mayhem	6	29
55	25/05/2011	How Does One Swear In POSH?	A member gets severly abused for asking allegedly stupid questions.	Conflict Example	General Mayhem	10	30
56	25/05/2011	Is Samya wanted here	A number of members abuse a particular member demanding that she leaves the community	Conflict Example	General Mayhem	99	360
57	25/05/2011	I fear it may soon me Goatse time	Members rant about how irritating one particular member is and how this could be avoided.	Example of ranting	General Mayhem	4	13
58	26/05/2011	What do you bicker about	Members discuss what they bicker about and whether they enjoy it or not	About conflict	General Mayhem	21	82
59	26/05/2011	Is Samya trollin ?	Members discuss whether a particular member voluntarily creates conflict in the community or not. That member replies.	Conflict Example	F.A.O.	4	15
60	02/06/2011	Who, IYO, is the biggest bully on HF?	Members debate who is the biggest bully of the community.	About Conflict	The Asylum	4	50
61	20/06/2011	FAO everyone except Samya	A number of members rant about how irritating a particular members' posts are.	About Conflict	F.A.O.	10	40
62	14/07/2011	Scammed By A Member of this Forum	A members outs another for unethical steroid business. The rest of the community abuses both parties for being silly.	Conflict Example	Classic Threads	25	103
63	09/11/2011	Samya	Members discuss why a particular member annoys them.	About Conflict	F.A.O.	21	80
64	20/04/2012	This whole Abu Qatada thing, it's a total farce, right?	Members argue about whether a muslim hate preecher shouhld be deported or	Conflict Example	Serious Discussions	12	133

	Date when started	Thread name	Conversation summary in relation to conflict	Thread type	Thread category	Number of pdf pages	Number of messages
			not.				
65	15/05/2012	The rebirth of HF.	Members debate about the reduced amount of fighting happening on the website nowadays. Some long and ask for conflicts to come back while others say they would rather not have any of it.	About Conflict	General Mayhem	13	50
66	27/05/2012	Steve Hitch rumors	The wife of a member who has been harrassed on the platform, being falsely accused of beating her up asks members to stop the rumor.	About Conflict	General Mayhem	2	4
67	06/11/2012	Hippies…	Members rant about hippies. The peace-loving comments of a community member known for constant aggressivity and trolling are read with surprise and suspicion.	About conflict	General Mayhem	11	40
68	15/11/2012	First Jimmy Savile, then Gary Glitter, then Freddie Starr, and now…	Members discuss whether the posting of illegal content (e.g. illegal pornography) on the forum could create legal difficulties	About Conflict	Serious discussions	7	53
69	06/06/2012	FAO Kerb	A member outs another member who deal sterroids who took the money and did not deliver him thedrugs. The complainer's misbehavior induces the forum owner to ban him.	Conflict Example	F.A.O.	23	83
70	04/10/2012	Is it true Latex Zebra is a nonce?	A member accuses another of being a pedophile.	Conflict Example	F.A.O.	5	18

	Date when started	Thread name	Conversation summary in relation to conflict	Thread type	Thread category	Number of pdf pages	Number of messages
71	29/11/2012	How does one report a private message?	A member complains about an abusive private message he was sent and ask how he should report it to the moderation team. This other members' curiosity debating whether it should be published, asking for more information and joking about it.	Conflict Example	General Mayhem	41	157
72	30/11/2012	O great and powerful mods! Can you please answer me this?	Members discuss whether a new member is a troll under a fake newbie identity asking moderators to check the newbie's IP address	About Conflict	General Mayhem	18	67
73	18/01/2013	Lewi Cornwall	Several members abuse another one using the website for promotional purposes.	Conflict Example	F.A.O.	7	19
74	21/01/2013	Juan Kidd '212' - Yours for NOTHING!	A promoter advertizes an album on the website. Forum members make fun of the music.	Conflict Example	Upcoming Events and Adverts	3	8
75	22/01/2013	FAO Housecatboy	Several members attack another for spamming the forum with advertising. That member is eventually banned.	Conflict Example	F.A.O.	6	22
76	04/02/2013	European match fixing probe set to be revealed	Members fight over who's responsibility it is if there is so much cheating in sports	Conflict Example	HarderFaster Active	12	252
77	11/02/2013	Racism in football	Conflict between several members about whether football is a legitimate sport to be fan of.	Conflict Example	HarderFaster Active	55	207
78	14/02/2013	Awards 2012 thread	Members discuss about the fairness of the 2012 HF member award distribution, including conflict related awards	Conflict Example	Features	10	13

	Date when started	Thread name	Conversation summary in relation to conflict	Thread type	Thread category	Number of pdf pages	Number of messages
79	14/02/2013	Nominations for 2013 HF Awards…	Members challenge and abuse each other in relation to the Hf yearly awards.	Conflict Example	Lighthearted Banter	36	135
80	14/02/2013	What meltdown did it for you then	The member who received the Meltdown Award at the annual HF awards ask the other members which particular thread made them vote for him.	About conflict	General Mayhem	8	28
81	17/02/2013	Slink winning member of the year is everything that is wrong with HF	Members argue about the fairness of the 2013 HF awards.	Conflict Example	General Mayhem	17	50
82	18/02/2013	[Cricket] Why Cricket is the beautiful game.	Members fight over which sport is the smartest	Conflict Example	HarderFaster Active	66	222
83	22/02/2013	Hi Everyone pp1-3	A newcomer introduces himself on the forum, giving birth to suspicion as to whether he is a troll and arguments between contributors	Conflict Example	Welcome To Harder Faster	30	99
84	12/03/2013	Right Wing Propaganda on Facebook	Members argue about whether one should react or not to rightwing propaganda on Facebook.	Conflict Example	Serious Discussions	10	50
85	15/03/2013	Yo!	A new member introduces himself. While the rest of the community welcomes him, a fight erupts between some members putting the new comer off.	Conflict Example	Welcome To Harder Faster	9	41
86	21/03/2013	I can't stand hippies	Members rant about hippies	Conflict Example	General Mayhem	26	105
87	22/04/2013	Who is that twat in the aviva ads?	Members abuse each other based on one members' abuse of British comedy actor.	Conflict Example	General Mayhem	12	76

	Date when started	Thread name	Conversation summary in relation to conflict	Thread type	Thread category	Number of pdf pages	Number of messages
88	28/04/2013	Shopping in London	Members argue about where is the best place to go shopping	Conflict Example	General Mayhem	15	59
89	01/05/2013	Itching for a fight!!!	A member opens a discussion stating that he is "itching for a fight". A discussion starts arounds this and rapidly degenerates into an actual fight.	Conflict Example	General Mayhem	12	41
90	03/05/2013	DON'T OPEN ANY THREADS WITH Matt. AS LAST POSTER. SERIOUS	Members warn each other off an apparently harmless thread actually containing vile pornographic content	Conflict Example	General Mayhem	8	37
91	06/05/2013	You OK Aaron?	A member opens up a thread abusing another one bluntly. A short flame follows.	Conflict Example	General Mayhem	2	5
92	02/11/2013	GES WHAT TALL PUAL SAID TO ME	A member recounts a fight he had with a DJ in a club. The rest of the community turns on him for that.	Conflict Example	Classic Threads	27	112
93	05/03/2014	Career Paths that 3Radical has discounted.	Several members of the community ridicule a particular member based on his professional (non-)achievements after his has published racist comments	Conflict Example	General Mayhem	36	109
94	24/03/2014	Research Chemicals as LEGAL alternative to illegal substances pls contact me	A members advertises his legal drug business all over the forum. Members tell him to stop doing as this is spamming. The member eventually gets banned.	Conflict Example	General Mayhem	5	2

	Date when started	Thread name	Conversation summary in relation to conflict	Thread type	Thread category	Number of pdf pages	Number of messages
95	28/03/2014	What who made you join HF?	Members discuss what made them join the forum. One member remembers joining to avenge a female friend of him from a DJ who mistreated her in the context of a romantic relationships. Participants engage in an excited discussion about this. Another member starts trolling him. The rest of the participants condemn his trolling activities.	About Conflict	General Mayhem	31	125
96	30/04/2014	Steve Morley - 'Reincarnations' Out 19/05/14	A member abuses a promoter advertising a DJ's new album.	Tunes and Tracks	Conflict Example	2	5
97	06/04/2014	hf stories	Members recount the stories of past fights on the forum.	About Conflict	General Mayhem	7	55
98	01/10/2014	Aarong, I saw your mum doing pushups in a cucumber field.	A number of forum members abuse one member insulting his mother after he made racist comments	Conflict Example	General Mayhem	9	36
99	06/10/2014	Internet troll gets sky news in trouble by killing herself.	Member discuss what trolling is and whether they are bad.	About Conflict	General Mayhem	40	142
100	14/10/2014	Has Neonblue had enough then?	A member creates a thread where he abuses all contributors.	Conflict Example	General Mayhem	7	29

Appendix 6: Evolution of the conflict typology overtime through axial coding

Results of axial coding in October 2012: Four conflict categories were identified: banter game, broken record syndrome, gossip and online war. The categories were organized based on two dimensions: (1) type of conflict participant considered (protagonist or audience) and (2) valence of emotion of the participants (positive or negative emotions). Based on those dimensions conflict categories were characterized by the following attributes:

- Banter game
    - Protagonist experiences positive emotions (thrill)
    - Audience experiences positive emotions (fun)
- Broken record syndrome
    - Protagonist experiences positive emotions (thrill)
    - Audience experiences negative emotions (boredom)
- Gossip
    - Protagonist experiences negative emotions (pain)
    - Audience experiences positive emotions (fun)
- Online war
    - Audience experiences negative emotions (boredom)
    - Protagonist experiences negative emotions (pain)

		AUDIENCE (lurkers)	
		Fun	**Boredom**
PROTAGONISTS (posters)	**Thrill**	Banter game + +	Broken record syndrom -
	Pain	Gossip +	Online war - -

Figure 7: Typology of conflicts derived from data interpretation in October 2012

Figure 7 developed in October 2012 offers a visual overview of the four types of conflicts coded. This categorization was not kept because it did not account for a number of other recurrent conflicts (e.g. trolling). It also did not allow differentiating conflict meanings from their experiential value and explaining the consequences of conflict on community cohesion and culture.

Results of axial coding in June 2012: 40 conflict categories were identified based on four dimensions: (1) conflict performance (personal or performed), (2) frame alignment between conflict participants (alignment between all participants or misalignment between performers and the audience) (3) roles of the parties involved (attacker or defender) and (4) parties' social nature (individual or collective).

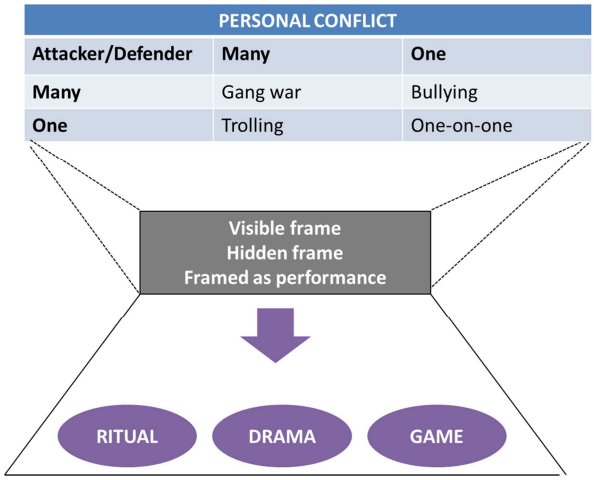
Four types of conflict experiences where frames are aligned for all conflict participants were distinguished based on dimensions (3) and (4):

- Gang war: conflict where both the attacker and the defender are a group
- Bullying: conflict where the attacker is a group and the defender is an individual
- Trolling: conflict where the attacker is an individual and the defender is a group
- One-on-one: conflict where the both attacker and the defender are an individual

Each of the four conflicts could be framed as personal or as performed (ritual, drama or game) by all conflict participants. For example a personal gang war could be turned into a ritual, dramatic or playful gang war. Personal bullying could be turned into ritual, dramatic or playful bullying, etc. In total, four types of personal conflicts and 12 types of performed conflict for all participants were possible.

Each conflict could also be framed differently by the parties and the audience. The parties could frame the conflict as personal (gang war, trolling, bullying or one-on-one) while the audience would frame it as performed (ritual, drama or game). For example parties could frame the conflict as personal gang war while the audience would framed it as ritual, dramatic or playful gang war – same thing with trolling, bullying and one-on-one. Therefore 12 extra types of conflicts "framed as a performance" (personal for parties and performed for the audience) were possible. Conversely, the parties could frame the conflict as performed personal performed (ritual, drama or game) while the audience would frame it as personal (gang war, trolling, bullying or one-on-one). Therefore another 12 types of conflicts which are "hidden performances "(performed for parties and personal for the audience) were possible. In total, 40 conflict types were possible. Figure 8 developed in June 2013 offers an overview of how the different conflicts relate to one another.

Figure 8: Overview of the different types of conflicts identified in June 2013



This organization of conflict was eventually dropped. While the dimensions were developed inductively from data analysis, the 40 conflict categories were developed deductively from crossing the dimensions. Going back to the data, all 40 conflicts could not be found so that theory did not fit the field of study. The typology could therefore not be kept as is. Further interpretations were made with the aim of simplifying the typology. The criterion used to simplify the typology was the effect of conflict on value formation: two conflicts with the same effect were considered the same while two conflicts with different effect were considered different.

Results of axial coding in final coding book of December 2014: see Appendix 9

Appendix 7: Causation coding: evolutions of causation coding throughout the project.

Causation coding evolved throughout data analysis in terms of (1) the type of value considered to be impacted (2) the mediating mechanism explaining how OCC conflict influence that particular type of value. I first focused on the influence of OCC conflict on members' involvement (see Figure 9). As I coded more data I realized that value was impacted beyond members' involvement. I thus coded all the different consequences of OCC conflict for value formation and identified different sorts of value (see Figure 10). First is the distinction between economic and social value. Economic value is value evaluated in terms of (potential) financial benefits (website traffic, advertising revenues, attitude toward the brand, sales) while social value is non-financial benefits derived from interacting with community members. Social value was found to operate at two levels, one is a community level while the other is relational. When focusing on the mediating mechanisms, I gradually identified a number of elements explaining the effect of conflict on social value creation, such as conflict participant awareness of performance and valence of emotions and moods (see Figure 11). Further interpretive iterations led me to conceptualize the different types of OCC conflicts as conflict experiences and to investigate how each specific experience influenced value formation (see Figure 12). This eventually led to the creation of the sections "Sources of Conflict", "Influence of Conflict on Individual Experience", "Influence of Conflict on Community Cohesion" and "Influence of Conflict on Community Culture" of the coding book (see Appendix 9).

Figure 9: The effect of OCC conflict on value formation as coded in July 2012

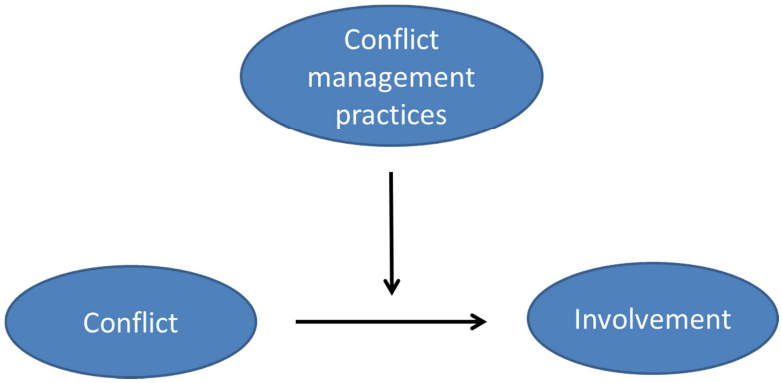


Figure 10: The effect of OCC conflict on value formation as coded in October 2012

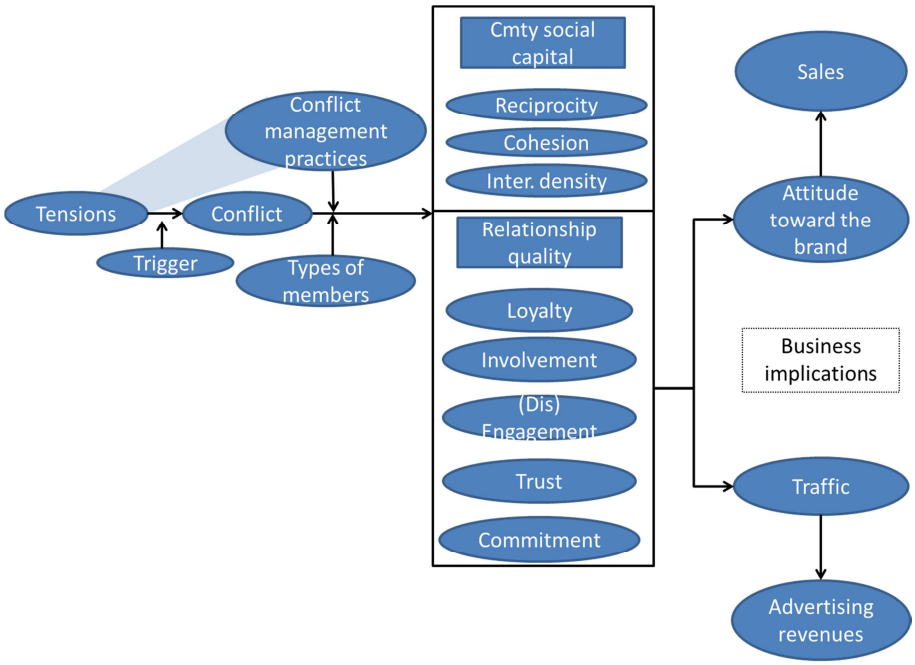


Figure 11: The effect of OCC conflict on value formation as coded in October 2013

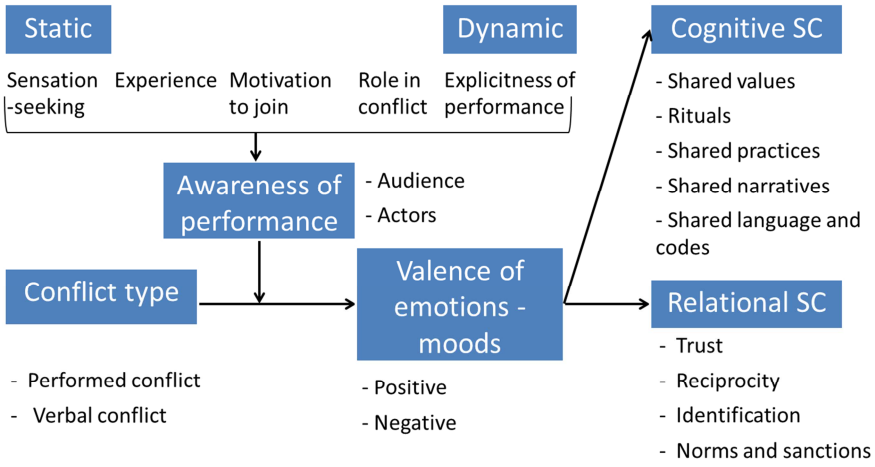
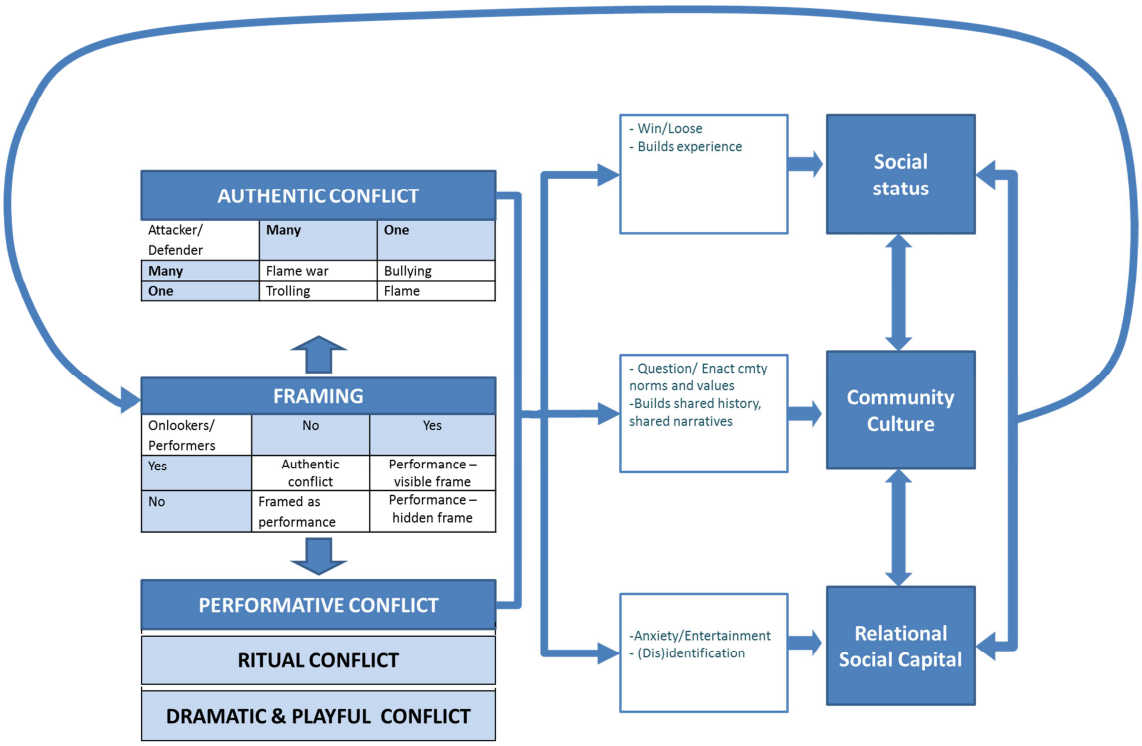
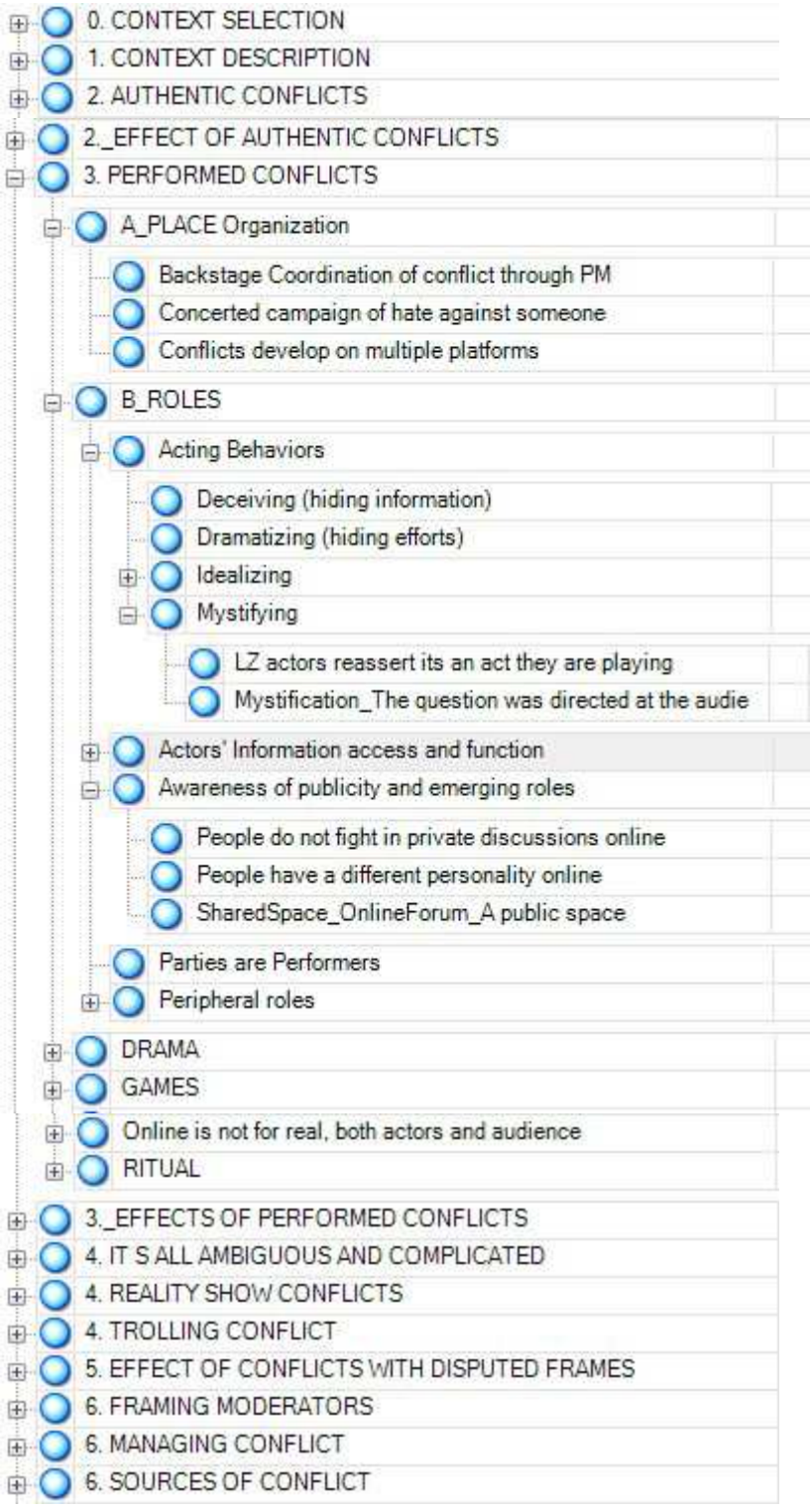


Figure 12: The effect of OCC conflict on value formation as coded in April 2014



Appendix 8: Example of code tree developed in NVivo10



Appendix 9: Coding book

Markers of implicit conflict performance

Roles	Attributes
Party	Addressing each other only, ignoring onlookers
	Attaching self-authenticating meanings to conflict behaviours: self-assertion (putting forth one's opinion in a way that implies that the other party is wrong) or self-defence (opposing the other party to protect one's self-esteem)
	Attaching judgments about the other party's worthiness to conflict behaviours: implying that one is better, implying that the other is worthless
Onlookers	Mediating: celebration of commonalities between parties, highlighting that the problem is not worth the argument, highlighting that parties' interests are not incompatible, invitation to tolerance and acceptance
	Judging: stating that one party is right and the other is wrong

Markers of explicit conflict performance

Roles	First level attributes	Second level attributes
Parties	Idealizing: exaggerating communication signals to make the exchange more engaging for onlookers	Using stylistic tropes
		Using of literature language register
		Formatting text to emphasize emotional intensity (changing size and color, bolding, italicizing, underlining)
		Qualifying demeanor of the post through emoticons (e.g. emoticons indicating nervosity, blushing, confusion or sadness)
		Expressing one's opinion via a gif image or through a story.
	Mystifying: keep the observers in awe of the performers	Indicating that they are performers: stating that they are performers, commenting on their own performance, using emoticons which indicate performance
		Qualifying demeanor: specifying demeanor between asterisks or tags pastiching html language, specifying demeanor with emoticons
		Addressing onlookers as an audience: asking onlookers to pay them respect as performers
	Failing to dramatize (revealing that they are putting on a role)	Commenting on the difficulty of the role
		Publicly congratulating other's performances as if they were backstage
		Stating self-distantiation with their own posts
		Defying the other party to take up a public challenge
		Questioning whether the rules of the performance are followed
	Highlighting the seriousness of the event	Stating that the stakes attached to the conflict are self-expression (catharsis) or prestige benefits (winner)
	Highlighting the lightness of the event	Posting self-distantiating cues
		Stating that the event is playful in words or emoticons
		Posting abuse incommensurate in context

Roles	First level attributes	Second level attributes
Onlookers	Watching	Stating that they are watching using words or emoticons Engaging with one another in commentaries of conflict Indicating feelings of narrative tension
	Addressing parties as performers	Stating it
	Disrupting	Asking other onlookers what the conversation is about
	Highlighting the seriousness of the event	Evaluating parties' talent and worth in the community
	Highlighting the lightness of the event	Stating that it is make-believe Stating that it is playful or joking about it

Markers of ambiguous conflict performance

Roles	Attributes
Parties	Engaging in behaviors characteristics of both implicit and explicit conflict performance
Onlookers	Engaging in behaviors characteristics of both implicit and explicit conflict performance Stirring: asking for more details about the conflict, pretending not to understand a contentious point, encouraging parties to continue

Markers of misaligned conflict performance

Roles	Attributes
Parties	The troll engages in behaviors characteristic of implicit performance
	The trolled party engages in behaviors characteristics of explicit performance
	Baiting: the troll uses performance behaviors (idealization, mystification or character breaking) which only onlookers can notice because they know something which the other party does not know (e.g. troll sex, age, occupation, hobbies, writing style, values).
Onlookers	Some onlookers engage in behaviors characteristic of implicit performance
	Other onlookers engage in behaviors characteristic of explicit performance
	Stirring: asking for more details about the conflict, pretending not to understand a contentious point, encouraging parties to continue, congratulating them on the quality of their attacks

Drivers of conflict performances

Conflict types	Computer mediation	Community context	Interaction characteristic	Individual circumstance
Implicit conflict performance	Anonymity and physical distance make members feel unaccountable for their actions resulting in disinhibition The public nature of interaction sustains continuous engagement in conflict because parties' honour is at stake	Diverse social backgrounds, sub-tribe affiliations and understandings of the community foster tensions	General topics viewed seriously in the community serving as triggers: politics, religion, racism, homosexuality, sports, business transactions, electronica (clubbing tastes, music tastes). Topics related to community culture serving as triggers: behaviour appropriateness on the forum (writing style, spamming, posting pornography), right to be a member, member status.	
Explicit conflict performance	Written format of interaction fosters impression management The co-presence of public and private communication channels nurtures the framing of the forum as a stage Presentation of self via an avatar creates self-distantiation	Communal norms: violations of communal norms motivate other members to publicly punish the perpetrator	Conflict constructed as a game: goal, rules, point counting	Bored mood makes played conflict an opportunity to get excited External pressures make played conflict an opportunity for cathartic ranting
Uncertain conflict performance	The forum area is used to hold both public and private conversations and performances creates uncertainty about posters' intentions Written format of interaction creates uncertainty about posters' intentions	Participation of members who know each other well and members who do not nurtures diverging interpretations of conflicts Participation of regular members and moderators nurtures diverging interpretations of conflict (trolling only)	Organisation of the script of action like a reality show conflict: intimate topic of discussion, starts in medias res, action structure creates narrative tension (surprise, mystery, suspense) Organisation of the script of action like a trolling game: aim is to enrage the other party, rule is to bait, points are awarded through audience evaluation Interactions are improvised so performance cues often miss	Varying levels of experience in the community nurture diverging interpretations of conflict

Influence of conflict on individual value

Conflict type	Consequences on individual value	
	Parties	**Onlookers**
Implicit conflict performance	Pain, frustration, anger when conflict escalates Self-righteousness for the winner (rare) Shame and sadness for the loser if conflict resolves	Sadness, frustration, anger
Explicit conflict performance	Flow: total involvement in task, excitement, fun Catharsis, learning, social pride Communitas	Entertainment: fun, excitement, narrative transportation Communitas
Uncertain conflict performance		
- Reality show	Pain, frustration, anger and shame	Entertainment: fun, excitement, narrative transportation Communitas
- Trolling conflict	Party A: Flow: total involvement in task, excitement, fun, communitas if audience is entertained Party B: Pain , frustration and anger	Entertainment: fun, excitement, narrative transportation or frustration and anger Communitas for those entertained

Influence of conflict on collective engagement

Conflict type	Consequences on collective engagement
Implicit conflict performance	- Relationships between parties weaken or break. - Relationships between parties and members who were only indirectly exposed or involved in the conflict weaken or break (if not close relationships) - Development of cliques restraining members' participation to specific forum areas, reducing the ability of the community to support its members, and inducing certain members to leave the community - Development of mistrust of the community – new comers' mainly, but also regular members when personal conflicts are frequent - Reduced voluntarism
Explicit conflict performance	- Emotional engagement of participants on the short term: positive intense emotions - Cognitive engagement of participants on the short term: interest, attention - Behavioral engagement of participants on the short term: sticking to the website, refreshing pages, posting - Emotional connection and attachment to the community on the long term
Uncertain conflict performance	
- Reality show conflict	- Emotional engagement of onlookers on the short term: enchantment - Cognitive engagement of onlookers on the short term: interest, attention - Behavioral engagement of onlookers: sticking to the website, refreshing pages, posting, recommending other members to connect - Emotional connection and attachment of onlookers to the community on the long term
- Trolling conflict	- New comers and clubbing professionals leave the community - Moderators are disheartened - Regular members develop mistrust towards newcomers - Regular members develop negative associations about the community.

Influence of conflict on community culture

Conflict type	Consequences on community culture		
	Procedures	**Shared understanding**	**Communal engagement**
Implicit conflict performance	Creation of rules meant to pre-empt conflict: welcoming of newbies, creation of strictly moderated forums, creation of an area for advertising and promotion, the NWS norm Creation of rules meant to manage conflict once they have erupted: creation of an "Asylum forum", creation of a report to moderators button and coordination for conflict resolution, graduated sanctions in cases of misbehaviour (from exile and warning to banning), adaptation of T&C, all members as peace keepers/police		Reinforcement of the idea that the community is a collation of heterogeneous engagements.
Explicit conflict performance		Creation of shared narratives Redefinition social hierarchy in the group	Freedom enacted as communal value Humor enacted as communal value Self-confidence enacted as communal value Banter and ranting enacted as prescribed activities
Uncertain conflict performance	Forbidding multiple accounts to pre-empt trolling, naming and shaming and banning of contraveners Adaptation of the moderation system to manage trolling: creation of a 24/7 moderation, hiring of a moderator for the creative areas forum, creation of "secret moderator" roles Creation of troll management traditions: ignore trolls or demean the trolls as socially unfit individuals	Creation of shared narratives Creation of shared vocabulary	Reality show: Entertainment and voyeurism enacted as communal values Reality show watching as a prescribed activity Trolling: Heterogeneous approach to freedom is highlighted Heterogeneous views on trolling as a prescribed activity is highlighted