

# ***The Cultural Conflicts in Virtual Communities Brought about by the Deconstruction of Social Identities in Media***

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**Abstract.** As a technological empowerment tool, social media is profoundly reshaping the path of individual identity construction. Users reinterpret and reconstruct the traditional identity structure in the digital environment through role-playing, symbolic expression, etc., so as to achieve the recognition of self-expression and group belonging. However, this digital identity construction characterized by mobility has also caused a series of problems in virtual communities, leading to the complexity of identity and an increased sense of crisis. This article analyzes the correlation mechanism between identity structure and cultural conflict in combination with the theory of sociology and communication, and puts forward a governance path in order to build an inclusive virtual community as a reference and explore the identity structure. This study focuses on language use, interaction patterns and information dissemination mechanisms on social media platforms, and analyzes how these factors affect the construction and expression of individual identity. By deeply exploring the behavior patterns of users in different social media environments, the intrinsic connection between identity construction and cultural conflict can be revealed. Through case studies, we analyze how interaction within a specific community leads to the amplification of cultural differences and community polarization. On this basis, a targeted governance strategy is proposed to promote the harmonious coexistence of virtual communities and enhance mutual understanding and tolerance among community members.

**Keywords:** Identity deconstruction, cultural community, cross-cultural dialogue, cultural conflict

## **1. Introduction**

This study focuses on the rapid development and dissemination of social media today; this study is of great significance to promoting the standardization of the network environment and network security. It is important to study the impact of major social media accounts on the deconstruction of user identity and the promotion of the restructuring of cultural communities. The literature analysis method is used to conduct relevant research and interpretation of relevant information and literature. This method can analyze the development direction of today's social media and the diversity of cultural communities. It is conducive to the progress of research.

Today's social media, where digital technology reconstructs social relations, has become the core place of individual identity structure and construction. Users constantly reshape self-awareness through virtual image symbol interaction and content generation [1]. However, this identity mobility has also given rise to cultural conflicts within the virtual community while breaking the boundaries of traditional society [2].

Social media gives users unprecedented freedom of identity expression through algorithm recommendation model communication and layered social networking. For example, users can build multiple identities through role-playing or their favorite subcultural symbols or by drawing a virtual image they like, breaking through the limitations of social roles in reality. However, this kind of freedom is not absolute. On the one hand, identity deconstruction allows individuals to explore multiple possibilities, but on the other hand, the closed nature of information cocoons and community norms driven by algorithms will imprison users in specific labels, resulting in identity alienation, easy to be community participating members, gradually losing in the so-called organized writing. Independent thinking ability falls into group polarization.

The boundaries formed by the virtual community through cultural barriers strengthen internal identity and exclude heterogeneous culture. This is easy to be a different community. When interpreting the same issue, it creates antagonisms and even stimulates contradictions. In this situation of boundary solidification, it becomes very difficult for me to cross-cultural communication in the community. At the same time, in different cultural communities, different perspectives or different cultural accumulations will easily interpret the same symbol differently, resulting in misunderstandings or triggers of conflict. Moreover, opinion leaders in the virtual community strengthen group norms through discourse manipulation, so it is difficult for ordinary members to rebel or leave. This phenomenon not only exposes internal hierarchical contradictions, but also reflects the individual's pursuit of self-identity. This article will analyze from three aspects: the motive conflict performance of the identity structure and the debugging strategy.

## 2. Literature review

The digital technology revolution has subverted the information communication mode in the era of mass communication, and the monopoly position of information production and dissemination of traditional media groups has been broken. The information communication logic of a single monopoly in the era of mass communication is replaced by the open and diverse communication logic of social media [3]. The popularity of social media has reshaped the way of identity construction. Users have formed a relatively fluid digital identity through multiple accounts, roles, role-playing, and other ways to structure traditional identities. This deconstruction process causes cultural conflicts in the virtual community, which is mainly manifested in the differences in identity and values of users with different cultural backgrounds. Collisions produce ideological collisions and contradictions.

With the popularity of the Internet and mobile terminals, the relationship between people has become closer and closer. The rise of social media has turned the original self-presentation behavior in daily life into a grand display on social media [4]. Social media platforms provide a space for "performance self-presentation", and users can freely switch their identity roles. For example, in online games, set your own virtual gender to the opposite gender to your own, or perform multicultural dimension decomposition in different software or different accounts. At the same time, under the cover of the virtuality of the Internet, many people will choose to establish multiple accounts and join different cultural communities, so as to express themselves more purely, find friends from the same cultural community, and enhance their sense of belonging. At the same time,

they can avoid the virtual community through group norms, strengthen member identity, and exclude heterogeneous culture. Conflicts and troubles brought about [1].

Merovitz combined the theory of the media environment of Goffman and McLuhan to put forward the theory of media situations, pointing out that the influence of electronic media on space can change individual behavior and role-playing [5]. It shows that users constantly reshaping their image in the virtual community that pursues their ideal self will also lead to conflicts between self-identification and community norms. For example, in some e-sports enthusiasts, in order to pursue community recognition, they are forced to undergo over-training or exclude community norms of casual players, resulting in physical and mental fatigue and self-value. Value alienation, in the loving community, on the contrary, because of the normative pressure, falls into identity separation, which leads to identity alienation. At the same time, under the influence of the algorithm, the intensification of information cocoons and the internal homogenization of the circle have weakened cross-cultural dialogue and increased the confrontation of the circle. So under this influence, the antagonism between cultural communities is more obvious and serious. Among them, it is more obvious that subcultural groups and mainstream communities are more obvious. Among them, two-dimensional culture lovers are often labeled as "childish" and "escape from reality" in traditional communities; or punk-style enthusiasts are often called non-mainstream.

In order to alleviate this identity conflict, community members can try to establish a more inclusive communication platform to promote understanding and respect in different cultural contexts. For example, by organizing multicultural activities, dialogue and cooperation between different subcultural groups are encouraged, so as to break the information cocoon and reduce misunderstandings and antagonisms. In addition, community leaders and members can work together to redefine community norms to make them more flexible and inclusive to adapt to individual differences and reduce excessive requirements for members. At the same time, through education and public publicity, improving the public's awareness and respect for subcultural groups is conducive to reducing the attachment of negative labels and promoting the harmonious coexistence of cultural diversity.

### **3. The theoretical framework and core concepts of identity deconstruction**

#### **3.1. The theoretical basis of identity deconstruction**

The theoretical basis of identity deconstruction is rooted in many disciplines of postmodern philosophy, sociology, and cultural criticism. Its core mainly lies in the challenge to the stability of traditional identity and the exploration of mobility. It mainly comes from the structuralism of Derrida, the grand narrative of Leota's distrust, and the rational criticism of Habermas.

##### **3.1.1. The relationship between derida's deconstructivism and today's social media**

The structuralism of Derrida is one of the most subversive philosophical trends in the late 20th century. It was proposed by the French philosopher Jacques Derida, who took the criticism of Western traditional metaphysics as the core. The structure of language, text and rights reveals the mobility and uncertainty of meaning. So what is reflected in today's social media is the mobility and attributes of identity. In social media, we allow users to build multiple identities through virtual images. This freedom leads to fragmentation and alienation of identity. Derrida pointed out that the essence of identity is the product of his surname Chu, and the human society in social media just

confirms this point. Users constantly explain social roles in reality by imitating performances or rebelling against traditional norms.

Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter provide users with a stage to display and shape their personal identity. Users have built a virtual self-image by posting photos, updating status and sharing links. These images are often carefully selected and edited to present the idealized self, and sometimes even very different from the identity in reality. Derrida's theory is vividly reflected here, because the identity construction process on social media is the process of continuous deconstruction and reconstruction of meaning. The social change brought about by a new way of information dissemination is not limited to the content it conveys. Its greater significance is that it itself defines the symbolic way, the speed of dissemination, the source of information, the amount of dissemination and the context of the existence of information. "[6]. Users switch roles in different social occasions, and their identities become fluid and changeable, and are no longer a fixed entity. This phenomenon not only challenges the traditional concept of identity, but also reflects the complex relationship between individuals and social structures in modern society.

### **3.1.2. Leota does not trust the connection between grand narratives and today's social media**

Leotta's distrust of grand narratives is the core proposition of postmodern philosophy, which has deeply challenged rational traditionalism since the Enlightenment. Leotta believes that the legitimacy of postmodern knowledge no longer depends on grand narratives, but is obtained through diversified small narratives. The generated content and character displays of users on social media express this feature that challenges traditional narratives through decentralized fragments. This fragmentation of identity echoes Leota's prediction of the dissolving of the subject. At the same time, social media algorithms push content based on users' preferences, which leads to the formation of information liberation. This self-reinforcing echo reflects the terrorist platform criticized by Leota, which makes users fall into the dilemma of being agreed by disseminating and rejecting content. At the same time, Liota's criticism also revealed that technological restoration may become a tool for new hegemony. This contradiction, but users can resist it through small narratives. This reflects the confrontation between the subcultural community and the mainstream cultural community.

The subcultural community builds its own small narrative space by creating and sharing symbols, languages and behavior patterns with specific meanings. These community members express their identities and positions on social media through tags, emojis and specific visual styles, forming a subcultural language that resists mainstream culture. Although the use and dissemination of this language is fragmented, it can effectively build consensus within the community and form a force against the mainstream grand narrative. In this way, the subcultural community not only maintains its own uniqueness, but also can influence or even change the trend of mainstream culture to a certain extent.

### **3.2. Definition of cultural conflicts in virtual communities**

In different cultural contexts, users often cause antagonism and exclusion in virtual communities due to differences in identity structure, values, code of conduct and symbol understanding. The human spirit has the potential to destroy and poison, just like the damage of contaminated water and food to the body of netizens." [7]. It is especially obvious among the conflicts of cultural communities. At the same time, these conflicts are amplified or reconstructed in virtual space because of their characteristics of decentralization, anonymity and communication mechanisms,

further exacerbating the contradictions within the community. For example, in the player community of "Star Dew Grain Language", there is a boycott of "invasion" of "Code Irin" players through Mod, which reflects the maintenance of "cultural purity" by the circle culture and the strong rejection of foreign cultural penetration. Such conflicts between cultural boundaries and identity often revolve around core users and continue to ferment in the virtual community.

In addition, technical features such as algorithm recommendation mechanism and anonymous interaction in virtual space have strengthened the structure of community conflicts. The information cocoon built by algorithms on social media exposes community members to homogeneous information for a long time, thus enhancing hostility to heterogeneous views. Conflicts in the virtual community are not only an internal phenomenon in digital space, but also often rely on the cultural tension of the real world, and form a specific logical expression in digital practice, making aggressive and exclusionary behavior easier to escalate and externalize. Nevertheless, the conflict in the virtual community is not entirely negative. They also promote cross-cultural communication and understanding, and provide opportunities to learn and adapt to different values. For example, through online discussion and interaction, users can better understand the code of conduct and symbolic meaning in other cultural contexts, so as to reduce misreading. In addition, conflicts sometimes stimulate the innovative thinking of community members and promote the emergence of cultural integration and new cultures. Although technical characteristics such as anonymity may exacerbate conflicts, they also provide users with a platform to express different opinions, which is conducive to the formation of diverse social voices. Therefore, the management of virtual community conflicts needs to balance the relationship between protecting cultural uniqueness and promoting open communication to achieve a more harmonious network environment.

#### **4. Conflict debugging path**

##### **4.1. Prevention mechanism**

In order to clarify the boundaries and core values of virtual communities, the bottom line of members' behavior can be defined by formulating community charters or behavioral conventions (such as prohibiting discriminatory language) and emphasizing respect for the principle of diversity. For example, the Zhihu community reduces offensive statements through the "friendly interaction" rule. Moreover, online lectures or workshops should be held regularly to popularize the knowledge of cultural differences. For example, virtual communities can introduce cross-cultural communication courses to help members understand the symbolic meaning and behavioral logic of different groups, so as to reduce misreadings and conflicts caused by cognitive misalignment and build a more harmonious communication atmosphere.

While maintaining community order, members should be encouraged to actively participate in community construction, and commend those members who have made outstanding contributions to community development through the establishment of contribution lists, honor systems and other incentives. For example, Douban Group will regularly select "Excellent Group Members" to encourage users to share high-quality content and actively participate in group discussions. At the same time, community managers should regularly collect feedback from members and adjust community rules in time to ensure that they keep pace with the times and meet the needs of members. For example, the Weibo super talk community will adjust the topic classification and management mechanism according to user feedback to improve user experience. Through these measures, the community can not only create a harmonious and positive communication

environment, but also constantly attract new members to join and achieve the sustainable and healthy development of the community.

In order to improve the effectiveness of community governance, algorithms can be used to realize dynamic prompts and guidance of community rules. For example, a real-time rule reminder mechanism is embedded in the user's speech process to reduce the possibility of users breaking the rules due to cognitive differences or unconscious behavior by marking sensitive words or high-risk statements, so as to prevent conflicts. Moreover, because the extremes of identity labels (such as "casters" and "black fans") lead to the escalation of fan circle conflicts, algorithm recommendations exacerbate antagonism, and it is recommended that the platform establish an "identity boundary" management mechanism. By setting the specifications for the use of user identity tags, limiting the spread of extreme speech, and optimizing the algorithm recommendation system to reduce the push of negative emotional content, so as to alleviate the antagonism and conflict within the fan circle.

At the same time, it is also crucial to establish a dynamic rule iteration mechanism. The platform can continuously update and refine the code of conduct based on historical conflict cases to enhance the flexibility and timeliness of the rule system. For example, the player community of "Star Dew Grain Language" decides whether to ban controversial content through member voting, which realizes the democratization of rule formulation and the sense of community participation, and improves the legitimacy and adaptability of rule implementation.

## 4.2. Conflict intervention

The advancement of recent technology in information systems and e-commerce has obviously changed the way entrepreneurs market their products and services [8]. Changes in marketing practices with the advancements of technologies in social networks have opened new windows with full opportunities for entrepreneurs [9,10]. The introduction of a neutral mediation mechanism in the virtual community helps to achieve effective intervention before the conflict escalates. By introducing a professional mediation team or a credible community key opinion leader (KOL), pragmatic strategies such as "interpretation" and "symbolic consent" can be used to alleviate conflicts and promote the parties to reach a preliminary consensus on the basis of understanding the differences. For example, in reality, when handling online abuse cases, courts often use mediation procedures to guide the two parties to reach a settlement through consultation, which is of certain significance.

In addition, building a multi-subject collaborative governance mechanism is equally important for improving the transparency and inclusiveness of community governance. The platform can join forces with user committees and external experts to participate in the formulation and implementation of community rules, form a relatively "decentralized" decision-making model, and avoid the suppression of user voices by a single authority. For example, virtual communities can set up user complaint committees so that members can have complaint channels when faced with disputes or punitive measures, so as to balance multi-party appeals based on procedural justice and improve the legitimacy and sustainability of governance.

Encourage members to reinterpret controversial discourse (such as weakening offensive statements) or actively withdraw offensive content. For example, Twitter allows users to withdraw tweets to reduce conflict escalation. Moreover, when implementing the interpretation and withdrawal mechanism, the platform can set clear guidelines and time limits to ensure that members can take timely action after being aware of inappropriate remarks. For example, Facebook has introduced the "edit" function, which allows users to modify or delete their posts within a certain period after publication, thus avoiding possible misunderstandings or conflicts. In addition, social

media platforms can develop intelligent algorithms. When potentially offensive content is detected, the system will prompt users to reconsider their remarks and even provide suggestions for modification to promote a more harmonious communication environment. Through these measures, social media platforms can not only reduce users' negative experiences but also improve the overall community atmosphere and encourage more responsible and respectful online behavior. At the same time, adopt an emotional cooling strategy: suppress the spread of negative emotions through emoticons, humorous content or the "silence principle", such as neutralizing serious antagonisms with harmless plots.

### 4.3. Optimization of technical governance

In virtual community governance, the intervention of technical means can effectively improve the ability to warn and intervene in conflicts. For example, emotional analysis technology can use artificial intelligence algorithms to identify potentially conflicting verbal content (such as abusive and inflammatory language). Once high-risk expressions are detected, they can automatically trigger warning, flow limitation, or shielding processing, so as to curb the spread of malicious behavior at the source. For example, the Discord platform effectively reduces the occurrence of discriminatory remarks through the keyword filtering system. In order to reduce the probability of cross-cultural friction, community diversion can be carried out based on users' interest tags, and users can be guided into sub-communities with consistent preferences and convergence of values. However, while improving the cohesion within the community, this strategy also has the risk of exacerbating the "information cocoon" effect, which may further weaken members' understanding and tolerance of heterogeneous cultures.

In terms of identity governance, the introduction of a limited anonymity mechanism is one of the key ways to improve the sense of responsibility. By requiring real-name authentication or binding social accounts, extreme expressions in the context of anonymity can be effectively reduced. For example, some sub-sections of Reddit implement a real-name speech system to curb anonymous attacks and the spread of false information. At the same time, the platform can also support users to present their identity in the form of multiple labels (such as "programmers + homosexuals"), allowing individuals to express their complex cultural backgrounds and social identities. The display of such multiple identities helps to enhance the community's understanding and acceptance of diverse individuals and promote the construction of an inclusive community culture.

## 5. Conclusions

The identity structure in social media is not only the product of technological progress, but also the catalyst of cultural conflicts. Its core contradiction lies in the tension of individual free expression and community norms. So further research in the future needs to explore the impact of emerging technologies such as virtual reality and the original universe on cultural conflicts, and promote pluralistic subjects. Collaborative governance to realize the inclusive development of virtual communities. In the process, researchers should deeply analyze how emerging technologies shape individual identity and how these technologies affect the interaction within the community and the social structure outside. At the same time, research should also pay attention to how to promote the active application of technology through education and policy guidance, reduce cultural conflicts, and enhance understanding and respect in different cultural contexts. In addition, researchers need to explore how to use technical means to promote communication and cooperation among community members under the premise of ensuring personal privacy and data security.

Through these efforts, it is expected to build a more harmonious and open virtual social environment in the future, which will provide reference and inspiration for multicultural exchange in the real world.

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