Chapter 8

Facebook and the Interaction of Culture and Conflict

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ABSTRACT

The intersection of culture and conflict is relatively understudied in communication, focusing on mass-self communication and power relations and new media scholarship. Conflict and the cultural dimensions in media coverage are well documented, but with less attention to new media cultural settings, often limited to use as one-way broadcasting media or as audiencing participants in social media marketing. Potentially more interactive communication exists within a closed community, especially because Facebook has defining cultural, psychological, and psychosocial characteristics. Conflict message interactions facilitate studying the intersection of culture and conflict within a new media setting. This chapter focuses on conflict within the cultural context of Facebook closed communities, theorizes about this relationship, and tests its application.

INTRODUCTION

This chapter reviews the literature on conflict and culture, focusing on their intersection. It integrates concepts from culture and conflict to analyse their mutual influence and develops a theoretical framework for studying culture and conflict. Adopting a methodological approach to investigating and understanding the intersection between culture and conflict in interactions, this chapter presents an empirical test of this methodological framework, reports the results of studying culture and conflict, discusses the thematic results and discusses their significance

and implications for theorizing and testing a model of studying culture and conflict. It concludes with a commentary on the intersection of culture and conflict within online closed communities in Facebook.

BACKGROUND

Why Study Culture and Conflict on Facebook?

Overview

The intersection of culture and conflict is a relatively understudied area of new media communication research. Embedded within such research are paradigms of mass-self communication and power relations (Castells, 2013) and new media scholarship (Boyd & Ellison, 2008). Conflict in media coverage is well documented (Arno, 2009), but there has been less attention to conflict within a new media cultural setting or to intractable conflict (Bar-Tal, Abutbul-Selinger, & Raviv, 2014), or to imagining such communities in newer media settings (Conboy, 2006). Even when such communities exist in social media networks such as Facebook, they are often limited to being used as one-way broadcasting media, among politicians for example, without real interaction (Ross, Fountaine & Comrie, 2015) or as audience participants in social media marketing (Fisher, 2015). There is potentially more interactive communication, with resulting opportunities for the intersection of culture and conflict within a closed community, especially as research on Facebook has defining cultural (Köhl & Götzenbrucker, 2014), psychological (Anderson, Fagan, Woodnutt, & Chamorro-Premuzic, 2012) and psychosocial characteristics such as oversharing (Agger, 2015). The conflict messages in interactions among members of a community offer an opportunity to study the intersection of culture and conflict within a new media setting. This chapter focuses on conflict within the cultural context of Facebook closed communities, theorizes about this relationship and tests its application.

A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF THE CULTURE AND CONFLICT LITERATURE IN NEWER MEDIA SETTINGS

A systematic review of the literature derived from a search of "Facebook AND culture" published between 1978 and 2017 produced extensive results for peer-reviewed journal articles (n=19,811). Refinement of this scoping search yielded fewer, but substantially high results for peer-reviewed articles for the period 2004-

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