Gatekeeper under the Influence

A critical discourse analysis of gatekeeping practices in the online support forum: Tuvaforum.se.

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to
El Hedi ben Salem M’Barek Mohammed Mustapha
who said Angst Essen Seele Auf
Abstract

A great number of traditional theorists state that the Web 2.0 environment is interactive, deliberating, and decentralised, hence, empowering. Much recent work undertaken by scholars orientated toward a critical theory approach associate online interactivity with forms of oppression and exploitation. An increasing number of studies have examined factors related to contributors' willingness to contribute in an online Web 2.0 environment. The current study aims at understanding how gatekeeping is practiced during the co-creative process.

The purpose of this study is to with the aid of Critical Discourse Analysis produce critical knowledge (both negative and positive) for the oppressed group. Results from this study suggest that the gated technically can practice gatekeeping. However, it is still the co-creator with the access to the administrative tools who exercise unchallengeable gatekeeping practices such as removal of content or banning a contributor. The results explain the power in discourse, i.e., how co-creators constrain each other and the power behind discourse, i.e., the hidden power of power-holders. By focusing exclusively on a specific oppressed group, this thesis presented a rich and thick description of a colorful example that illustrate how socially generated ills are constraining a group of people during the emancipatory process.

Keywords: Online Support Groups, Gatekeeping online, Gated and Gatekeepers, Co-creation online, Critical Discourse Analysis, Discourse of Therapy, Gender Violence, Violence Against Women
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Introduction

The internet, a post-modern Klondike even for those suffocated by the politics of the real world, still influences discussions about the enhancement of the way of life that people live. However, the answer to the question about how to achieve the change in society seem to differ among scholars and layman. Contemporary scientific conversation suggests that since the advent of Web 2.0 environment the internet is two-faced. A great number of researchers belonging to the traditional theory advocating a gradual reformation of society state that the Web 2.0 environment is interactive, deliberating, and decentralised, hence, empowering (Delwiche ed. 2013; Saariketo 2014). Much recent work undertaken by scholars orientated toward a critical theory approach contradict this view by associating interactivity with forms of oppression and exploitation such as surveillance (Fuchs 2011; 2013; Olsson ed. 2013).

Undoubtedly, this study has gained inspiration from both fronts, especially studies showing interest in longevity of online forums. The results of internet studies conducted by traditional theorists willing to achieve a more satisfactory functioning of the social structure (Butsch ed. 2007) and papers written by critical theorists (Fuchs ed. 2013) aiming to change society as a whole by challenging and contesting domination has shaped the embryo of this study. The embryo developed into a belief that Web 2.0 as a tool has considerable potential for making social change. However, I believe that domination hidden in social relations and arrangements (Fuchs 2009; 2011; Olsson ed. 2013) clouds our ability to harness the full potential of interactive, deliberating and decentralised environment. Thus, this study adopts a critical theory approach aiming to make social actors aware of domination and oppressive social structures and motivate social actors to reflect on domination.

Unlike earlier work, here the focus is exclusively on relationships between the gated and gatekeepers that create emancipatory knowledge aiming to facilitate change both in society and for a specific oppressed group. Focusing on relationships will give an understanding of how relationships constrain individuals from taking part in co-creating content that might lead to a change. By focusing exclusively on a specific oppressed group, this thesis sets out by presenting a rich and thick description of a colorful example that illustrate how socially generated ills are constraining a group of people during the emancipatory process. Notably, in this colorful example oppression towards this group of individuals, namely victims/survivors of gender violence actively seeking to change relations of superordination and subordination has long history. Thus, one might assume that these individuals are aware of being oppressed since they are willing to contribute to a public forum discussing issues connected to gender violence. Hence, one might assume that reflection is used as a method to challenge and contest domination (Marrow et al. 1994) throughout the creation of content (e.g., supportive message, sharing information) in the online discussion forum. Yet, this would be enough for a researcher orientated toward traditional theory but not for a critical theorist because domination feeds off delusions projected by dominant ideologies that hide in a discourse that in turn hide in a situation.

The purpose of this study is to produce critical knowledge (both negative and positive) for the oppressed group in question so that this group can reflect on what structures and domination might constrain their use of the online discussion forum as a tool for emancipation. In addition, critique may also aid those willing to assist the oppressed group in their quest for emancipation (e.g., policy makers, volunteers and professionals working with VAW, Violence Against Women), and users of Web 2.0 tools who still believe in the internet as a decentralized space where freedom of speech and two-way conversations expand boundaries of participation and open discussion. The aim of this
project is to understand how content creators on the public forum tuvaforum.se practice gatekeeping and respond to information control, and what discourses justify given gatekeeping strategies.

This study is based on assumptions of Critical Theory, specifically Critical Discourse Analysis (henceforth CDA) advocating the dual relationship between structure and agency. In this particular study, CDA offers analytical framework and methods enabling the visualization of how discourses of dominant ideologies are embedded in the social context of the oppressed group, and how these ideologies constrain the ability to challenge and contest domination through reflection.

Results from this study suggest that the gated technically can practice gatekeeping. However, it is still the co-creator with the access to the administrative tools who exercise unchallengeable gatekeeping practices such as removal of content or banning a contributor. This study offers a possible explanation for why online discussion forums might change their appearance (e.g., from public to private) due to gatekeeping practices protecting messages conveying dominant ideologies. In addition, there is some evidence to suggest that there is a need for a public discussion forum constituting a neutral territory, hosted by a neutral, non-commercial party, where gender violence can be discussed in order to find a consensus between the existing notions of what it means to be a victim, a survivor or a perpetrator of gender violence.

1.1 Background

1.1.1 Forums, Co-Creation and Gatekeeping

An online forum is a disembodied environment free from constraints of the material world (Tredinnick 2008). An online discussion forum is: "a ubiquitous communication tool (...) to facilitate interaction between learners to share knowledge, (...) deriving and analysing solutions of different problems." (Nandi, Chang and Balbo 2009, 666) A distinguishing feature of online discussion forum is asynchrony because it provides the possibility for discussions to occur over time (Tredinnick 2008; Baym 2010; Nandi et al. 2009). Another characteristic of online forums is two-way communication (Tredinnick 2008, 71-72) or symmetrical communication enabling dialogue. In combination asynchronous symmetrical communication has influenced the writing style to a more informal one (ibid.). Writing and reuse of existing information has become a "mutable and malleable medium" (Tredinnick 2008, 71 .) substituting the individual creative act with continuous cultural production of meaning (Tredinnick 2008, 67-68; 103-104). Thus, an online forum also is a space where, according to Tredinnick (2008, 140):

(...) we make public our opinions, beliefs, fantasies and narratives of our experience.

At the turn of the century an online forum as technological application was strongly associated with digital democracy, believed to emerge out of the "dialectical interaction between technology and society" (Castells 1997, 5 in Hague ed. 1999, 3). In a forum contributors have equal opportunities and responsibilities, due to the interactive nature of the contributions (i.e. action and content) meaning that self-regulation activities will substitute traditional gatekeeping strategies. According to G. Scott Aikens (1999, 191): "This makes people think about what they are doing, and maybe about who they are." Aikens (ibid.) states that some of the self-regulating and censoring strategies are reacting, or ignoring. The well-being of a community is thus dependent on "minimum preservation of freedom of the participants” as each individual contribution including individual
self-control per se is a contribution to the survival of the online community, e.g. forum. The rules of civic engagement and tangible context make it possible for ideas to be challenged, transformed or refined (ibid.). Aikens was certain that forums as “models for the rights and responsibilities of personal liberty within socially cohesive communities” (1999, 191) will influence transformation of existing systems, where self-correction is achieved through social capital and political trust.

Now when some time has past many scholars (Curran 2013; Jenkins et al. 2013) question the transformative power of the net and its platforms. The renaissance of the collective intelligence online where experts and amateurs switch roles more easily than in an off-line environment is also questioned. What puzzles scholars is whether the internet will ever bring a more tolerant and understanding audience fostering knowledge instead of an alter ego through the individual production? The question is of particular interest to internet scholars focusing on power relations on the internet (Fuchs 2009, 2011, 2013; Olsson ed. 2013). Even some traditional theorists are wondering if the net is used to its full potential. One of them is Henry Jenkins, the author of Convergence Culture. Broadcast mentality persists among the users of Web 2.0 platforms argues Jenkins and Green (Jenkins et al. 2013, 148) meaning that instead of harnessing collective intelligence users focus on individual creation. According, Jenkins and his co-authors (2013, xi; 48) of the book Spreadable Media, Web 2.0 potential have resulted in conflicts rather than collaboration between media rights holders and the platforms.

Users of Web 2.0 technologies are defined as ”co-creators”, an umbrella term merging terms such as users, consumers, and audiences (Jenkins et al. 2013). Co-creators can influence the production and distribution of culture. Activities such as uploading, tagging, organizing and categorizing content are features of co-creation. Seemingly visions of how co-creation should be practiced differ between producers and Web 2.0 users. Interactivity in a Web 2.0 environment enables the audience to be active. Yet producers continue to deliver services resembling an all-inclusive experience thus denying possibility for co-creation (Jenkins et al. 2013, 49). However, Tim O'Reilly (in Jenkins et al. 2013, 175) describes the role of an authority in an interactive environment as:

(... an intelligent broker, connecting the edges to each other and harnessing the power of the users themselves.

The statement should inspire authorities with power over production and distribution of content to empower the former audiences by treating them as co-creators and publics, which includes leaving the action and decision making to the latter (Jenkins et al. 2013, 175-176). Yet, as stated before, authorities regard participants in Web 2.0 environment merely as Green and Jenkins puts it: “data returns audiences”(Jenkins et al. 2013, 176). For instance, the number of followers or number of likes is more attractive for producers. In contrast, the public (what producers regard as audience) wish to interact actively with the content. These colliding visions, according to Jenkins et al. (ibid.) result into unsatisfied goals for both parties, those who regard themselves as producers and those identifying themselves as public. Where the former, as reported by Sam Ford (2010 in Jenkins et al. 2013, 177), are “shocked by the lukewarm response.”

1.1.2 Statement of the Problem
The conflict of interest between those who regard themselves as producers and those identifying themselves as public has influenced the way we use Web 2.0 (Jenkins et al. 2013). Internet researcher Jodie Dean wrote about ”ghost blogs” (Dean 2007) year 2007. Some online forum users

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1 In august 2015 the search engine Google delivered 7,350,00 results as a reply to the phrase ”are forums dying”. 
are concerned about inactivity in online forums. One of them, a senior member in MyBB asked June 22, 2014:

Do you think forums are dying? or will be dead soon? (Say in 2024)

More recent research address the reasons behind the absence of co-creation and persistence of broadcast mentality. An increasing number of studies have examined factors related to contributors willingness to participate in an online Web 2.0 environment. Studies show that conflicts (Laniado et al. 2010) or absence of trust among co-creators (Ebner, Leimeister and Krcmar) can lead to dropout, thus influencing the longevity (i.e., continuity in content creation) of an online discussion forum or community. Notably, according to Ulrik Brandes and Jürgen Lerner (2010), a co-creator requires survival skills (e.g., rhetorical skills) in a co-creative Web 2.0 environment. Thus, traditional theory oriented research so far has described how to eliminate disturbing and dysfunctional elements (e.g., reasons for withdrawal from contribution). Inspired by Barzilai-Nahon, the author of this thesis argues that gatekeeping can also be a survival skill. Since a co-creator in an interactive environment such as forum simultaneously acts as gated, (i.e., the controlled individual), and a gatekeeper (i.e., individual who controls access to other information sources, and whether a given message will be distributed). To better understand gatekeeping as a survival skill, research is needed that focus on relationships between the gated and the gatekeepers from a critical perspective. Thus, this study will cover reflection on humanly produced constraints/socially generated ills, and a reconstruction of the conditions which direct to change.

1.2 Significance of the Study

For some people, the internet is part of everyday life (Bakardijeva in Consalvo ed. 2011). And for some internet users isolation and control is a significant part of their everyday life. Isolation for a social animal, such as a human being is a curse. Hence, an online support group can be vitally important for people experiencing involuntary isolation from their peers. Social isolation, i.e. a loss of place within one's social groups (familial and friend network) is either voluntary (i.e., disengagement from society is an active choice) or involuntary (i.e., imposed by others) (Biordi et al. 2006, 85). Victims/survivors of intimate partner violence (violent action between two individuals sharing an emotional bond see WHO.int) experience involuntary seclusion from supportive networks due to a powerful tactic – isolation and dependence - used by controlling partners (Larance et al. 2004). The tactic may force the abused to withdraw from friends, relatives and acquaintances in order to avoid public humiliation or confrontations with the controlling partner. Thus, fear and embarrassment are two of many reasons preventing a victim/survivor from seeking assistance from established social support networks (ibid.) and professional help. The absence of an alternative interpretation of the situation, for instance by hearing friends perspectives, lead to further abuse and repetition of the cycle of violence (Bolden 2010; Larance et al. 2004). Joining an online support network for victims, and survivors of intimate partner violence can support an isolated person in various ways (Krantz 2001; Hart 1995; Michau 2005; Westbrook 2006).

Three types of prevention aim at preventing gender violence: primary, secondary and tertiary. According to Ministry of Women’s Affairs (2013, 10): “Primary prevention is aimed at effecting social, behavioural and attitudinal change.” Popular activities regarding primary prevention are campaigns (UNIFEM). In the year 2009 the pilot project Kvinnofrissajten (Röhl, 2009) was introduced by Brottsofrerjouren, investigating the need for a community inviting all the stakeholders and actors interested in combating VAW, Violence Against Women in Sweden. Among
the various activities and functions proposed, the forum aimed to facilitate discussions concerning gender violence. The project, however, did not realize.

The author of this thesis during 2011 conducted eight interviews with professionals working with VAW on a daily basis to better understand attitudes towards online forums as a complementary tool for primary prevention of gender violence. All informants acknowledged online forums for VAW as being of vital importance for victims/survivors of gender violence. However, they also stated that to manage a forum is a costly enterprise both emotionally and financially. They also added that the responsibility for keeping a forum is better undertaken outside of institutional settings as those who need support would be able to express themselves more clearly, freely and openly. Surprisingly, the online forums discussing gender violence close down or become inactive (Ifocus.se and FågelFenix.se) or become private (Tuvaforum.se).

Tuvaforum.se\(^2\) changed the course from a public forum to private forum requiring an account name and membership payment. This forum was a popular online support forum containing a website and two forums (a private and public) for victims and survivors of intimate partner violence. The content on the website is created by the owner of the website. The public forum, however, contains user-generated content. Despite popularity of the forum among various users such as members of the public and authorities, the public forum closed down in October 2013 and the content produced on the public forum was removed by the owner of the website in April 2014. In an open letter published in October 2013 on the public forum and the website, the owner and creator of tuvaforum.se Julia/Tuva summarized the reasons for closure as follows: technical issues, private issues, collective issues. The letter also indicated that the owner and creator of the website was displeased with the communication style adopted in the forum. Therefore, one can assume that the public forum closed down because of the power struggle between co-creators on the public forum. Hence, this particular forum is an ideal site for studying relationships between co-creators.

### 1.3 Aims and Objectives

**Topic**
Gatekeeping as a survival skill among the gated and gatekeepers in an online co-creative environment.

**Aim**
The aim of this project is to understand what ideological 'common sense' constrains co-creation, and what discourses are re-produced and negotiated with the aid of gatekeeping strategies. The goal of this study is to produce critical negative and positive knowledge that might contribute to a raising of consciousness for victims/survivors of gender violence and for those willing to aid the oppressed group in their quest of emancipation (e.g. policy makers, volunteers and professionals working with VAW) about exploitive social relations. In addition, critique may also aid those users of Web 2.0 tools who still believe in the internet as a decentralized space where freedom of speech and two-way conversations expands boundaries of participation and open discussion.

**Research Objectives**
The aim will be achieved by bringing two aspects of power (power in discourse and power behind discourse) into the picture using CDA (see chapter Methodology), specifically Norman Fairclough's...
method of analysis of power relations.
Objective 1: To determine powerfull and less powerfull contributors will find power in discourse
Objective 3: To develop a typology over roles and functions of contributors as co-creators and
gatekeepers/gated will find power in discourse and unable to find power behind discourse
Objective 2: To deconstruct dominant discourse types on the forum will find power behind discourse

Research Question
The central research question and sub-questions can thus be formulated as follows (see Creswell and Clark 2011):

- How do co-creators use gatekeeping as a survival strategy when constraining and enabling the co-creation of content in the public forum tuvaforum.se?

Sub-questions:
- What are the features of the dominant discourse type(s), and to what institutional power-holders do these conventions belong to?
- What are the dominant discourses in which co-creators exercise and enact power?
- How do co-creators legitimize their roles and functions in the forum?
- What gatekeeping strategies enable co-creators to constrain or protect co-creation or individual creation of content (e.g. supportive message)?

1.4 Analytical Framework
A case study is chosen as data collection method; the purpose is to provide a holistic and rich description of both the case and its context. The analysis includes events taking place between August 2008 to December 2011 on the online public support forum for victims/survivors of intimate partner violence Tuvaforum.se. Critical Discourse Analysis is employed as a theory and method in order to understand and explain the findings (Maxwell 2005). CDA brings together social theory and textual analysis. The role of the analyst is to study the relationship between texts and social practices. The analysis of the text involves the study of the language structures produced in a discursive event. Moreover, the analysis of the discursive practice involves examining the production, consumption, and reproduction of the texts. The analysis of each discursive event has three dimensions: description, interpretation, and explanation (Fairclough 2010; 1989, Phillips and Jorgenson (2002). The critique in CDA refers to exposing “the manipulative nature of discursive practices” (Hidalgo Tenorio 2011, 188), and improving “communication and well-being by removing the barriers of assumed beliefs legitimised through discourse” (ibid).

1.5 Limitations
This study is using some concepts and theories regarded as old school teaching, and traditional media theories are assumed to be inadequate in the new online “territory” (McQuail 2006; Christensen et al. 2011). The inadequacy, according to Dennis McQuail (2006), comes with interactivity. However, recent texts written by those internet scholars displeased with the current development of the internet (see Curran 2012; Green and Jenkins 2013) argue that the Web 2.0 is used correspondingly to the traditional broadcast-model (i.e. addressing public as audience) suggest that the good old media theories such as information control might still be beneficial. Undoubtedly, there are useful concepts such as Network Gatekeeping Model (see Barzilai-Nahon 2006, 2008) which stem from gatekeeping theory, or the term Produsers coined by Axel Bruns (2008). However,
in order to explain what is going on in the new “territory” (Christensen et al. 2011) requires use of existing theory in unexpected ways (Maxwell 2005). Indeed, a theory or a concept helps to illuminate expected and unexpected findings. Some of the findings presented in this thesis, could only be explained merging new concepts with traditional ones. This is considered as a limitation since the author of this thesis is merely a master student with somewhat limited knowledge compared to practicing researchers or PhD-students. Nevertheless, the author of this thesis listened closely to Maxwell (2005) argument that by not making good use of an existing theory one is missing the insights that only existing theory can provide.

1.6 Outline of Thesis
This chapter has introduced statement of the problem, purpose and significance of this research project. The chapter gives a brief summary of theories, concepts, and methods this study will employ. The sub-chapter Limitations acknowledge the reality of limitations of existing theories in the field of Internet Research. Lastly, the key terms are defined, and the outline of the thesis is presented. Upcoming chapters are organised in the following manner:  
Chapter 2 Theoretical Framework consists of relevant literature, concepts and theories used to analyse the data  
Chapter 3 Methodology accounts of methods employed  
Chapter 4 Findings: Results and Analysis present extracts from significant discursive events and analysis of the latter. Moreover, this section includes an interpretation of the findings.  
Chapter 5 Discussion contains detailed discussion of relationships between gatekeepers and gated in a co-creative environment  
Chapter 6 Conclusion rounds up the thesis

Central concepts and their meaning
Political Power – refer to the level of influence over an individual or group of individuals. In every discourse event, there is at least one powerful participant and one less powerful participant. (Fairclough 1989).

Gated and Gatekeepers; Gated/Gatekeepers – refer to co-creators on the forum. In this study, a gatekeeper, as a role and function understood with the traditional theory of gatekeeping, is a co-creator with the access to the administrative tools. This type of co-creator has highest political power on the forum since s/he can close the forum. A gated is a co-creator with less political power since this type of co-creator does not have access to administrative tools. However, as suggested by Barzilai-Nahon (2006; 2008), a gated can use strategies that make the co-creator a gatekeeper, and a gatekeeper can become a gated.

Gatekeeping strategies – refer to use of, for example, communication (i.e., writing or rhetorical skills) or access to administrative tools. Gatekeeping strategies can be unchallengeable (e.g., removal of content, stop contributing) and challengeable (e.g., change communication style).

Co-creators – in this study co-creators refer to users of Web 2.0 technologies. Co-creators is an umbrella term merging terms such as users, consumers, and audiences (Jenkins et al. 2013) as they can influence the production and distribution of culture. Activities such as uploading, tagging, organizing and categorizing content are features of co-creation.

Supporter and Supported; Supported/Supporter – refers to co-creators in the forum. A supporter is a co-contributor who gives support while a supported seeks support. Notably, there is a category of
users switching between the roles this is illustrated by the hybrid category Supported/Supporter.

Supportive message – refers to a design of a message aiming at supporting a co-contributor.
2 Theoretical Framework

This chapter is divided into two sub-chapters: Previous Research and Theoretical Foundations: Concepts and Theories. The purpose of the first sub chapter is to introduce results deriving from studies using either a qualitative or quantitative approach to their search for convincing solutions to the problems related to co-creation. The second sub-chapter aims at discussing theories and concepts used as analytical tools in this study.

2.1 Previous Research

This subchapter aims at describing and discussing internet studies focusing on survival of online communities, information control and relationships between powerful and less powerful contributors.

2.1.1 Survival in Online Communities

A co-creative Web 2.0 environment requires surviving skills. Studies in this review using quantitative approaches focus on prediction of success of an online community (Brandes et al. 2010; Li 2011). Ulrik Brandes and Jürgen Lerner (2010), are two authors discussing the probability of surviving in a co-creative environment. More concretely, it considers whether a user survives as a Wikipedian (i.e. continues to contribute) or dies as a Wikipedian (i.e. not contributes anymore). The focus in the study was prediction of dropouts. The authors performed a statistical test in order to find specific endogenous factors that increase or decrease the probability of leaving Wikipedia. Results from such a study can be useful for designers of Web 2.0 applications as the study uncovers the mechanisms that sustain users, as Brandes and Lerner point out. Transparency and openness can also be an issue in an online community. Xigen Li (2011) mentions discretionary information and retrieval of such information as a crucial factor for willingness to contribute. In addition, the author emphasizes the importance of approval and gratification (getting a reward) from the co-creators as a motivating factor.

Conflicts can lead to dropout. A qualitative study conducted by several authors 4 focus on communication skills and leadership styles when searching for an answer about the willingness to continue contributing to the community. The authors of the study suggest that more experienced editors can settle conflictive discussion by encouraging positive emotions among the contributors. This strategy, according to Liando, Castillo, Kaltebrunnen and Fuster Morel, can minimize the risk for dropout (Laniado et al. 2010, 10). Conflicts even in online spaces need to be resolved. Hence, some communities focus on normative requirements during the socialization process of a new member. A qualitative case study of online support group for eating disorders, conducted by Wyke Stommel and Tom Koole (2010, 357), suggests: “(...) becoming a member involves subscribing to normative requirements, centrally, displaying the insight that you are ill.” However, the authors underline that access to the internet does not guarantee admission to the online community of one's choice. According to Stommel and Koole, there are specific criteria to determine a legitimate member and some of these members have authority and power to either promote or demote a member.

The absence of trust among co-creators in an online community can influence the longevity of a community. Winfried Ebner, Jan Marco Leimeister and Helmut Krcmar (2005), in the article Trust

3 Information valuable to all the community members, however, it is controlled by one or few people.
4 David Liando, Carlos Castillo, Andreas Kaltebrunnen and Mayo Fuster Morell.
in Virtual Healthcare Communities: Design and Implementation of Trust-Enabling Functionalities, describe how trust-enabling functionalities can be systematically designed and implemented in a virtual community for cancer patients, thus contributing to the maintenance of a community. Also, Junghee Lee emphasizes the importance of socio-psychological factors of social capital, such as trust and life contentment. According to Lee, technology may enhance communication. Nevertheless, face-to-face communication improves the quality of the whole community.

In short, the studies reviewed in this sub-chapter suggest that trust, openness, and power are major aspects that influence the longevity of an online community. These studies focus on the micro-level of analysis and either function or dysfunction of a structure or a system.

2.1.2 Gatekeeping within Online Communities

One of the authors concerned with gatekeeping practices within online communities is Karine Barzilai-Nahon. In the article “Gatekeepers, Virtual Communities and the Gated: Multidimensional Tensions in Cyberspace,” Barzilai-Nahon examines how power is manifested and exercised through information control on online forums. In addition, Barzilai-Nahon examines the relationship between the gatekeepers in communities and service providers. She emphasizes the role of self-regulation mechanisms in online communities and gatekeepers dual role as censor and protector. Barzilai-Nahon (2006, 24) stresses since she applied the mixed method approach she could conclude that:

(…) in contrast to off-line communities, marginal groups in virtual space are not more subjugated to intolerant behavior of outsiders.

Later Barzilai-Nahon explains that case study as a method is less likely to capture the dynamics between the gated and gatekeeper compared to mixed methods as an approach. The role of the gatekeeper is, according to Barzilai-Nahon (2007), dynamic and changeable since a gatekeeper simultaneously can undertake roles of the gatekeeper and gated. According to these findings, the traditional notion of gatekeeping has to be modified to fit the Web 2.0 environment. Moreover, gatekeepers exercise power by deleting messages that are not in line with the mainstream attitudes within a community. As a consequence, information diversity is decreased (Barzilai-Nahon 2006, 21). Hence, self-regulation mechanisms may serve in a positive and negative way. Norms can both enhance the effectiveness of the operation of a community and serve as censorship which empowers hegemonic speech (Barzilai-Nahon 2006, 24, see Gramsci).

In summary, most studies mentioned in this review try to find out how individual skills such as leadership and communicative skills can serve an online community. The focal point is how conflicts may be resolved and prevented. The results from a qualitative study emphasize the gender-bias among contributors (Laniado 2010), which is not visible in the results from papers holding a quantitative approach (Brandes et al. 2010; Li 2011). These studies focus on a micro-level of analysis and either function or dysfunction of a structure or a system. Evidently there is a link between the results of the studies mentioned above and Henry Jenkins notion of power of contribution: “Everyone will survive if everyone works together” (Jenkins, 2006). Jointly, the

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5 Assistant professor at Information School at University of Washington.
6 Karine Barzilai-Nahon (2006) discussed the method in terms of top-down and bottom-up approach.
suggestions deriving from the results focus on economic impacts on society created by the interplay between corporations and user-generated content, thus leaving consequences of the interplay between the independent user-generated content and content created by powerful authorities (e.g. government), somewhat in the shadow. Nevertheless, the Wiki-study mentioned previously (Laniado et al. 2010) indicates that not everyone is willing to work together. Likewise does the study conducted by Stommel and Koole, showing how members are coping with different thinking and opinions.

The most useful results for this particular paper are found in the articles written by Stommel et al. (2010) and Barzilai-Nahon (2006). Findings reported by Stommel and Koole clearly show that powerful members can control the less powerful members (especially newcomers) and their contributions. However, Stommel and Koole analyse the interaction between members/contributors using conversation analysis and membership categorization analysis. Consequently, the study mentioned above focuses less on power relations between the contributors.

Barzilai-Nahon combined quantitative and qualitative approaches with the intention to generalize a wider pattern of virtual behaviour, something that has been neglected by the internet researchers (Barzilai-Nahon 2006, 5). The author of this thesis argues that since Barzilai-Nahon makes a generalization she might have overlooked several factors that could explain, what she terms as “the illusion of open virtual space”. According to Barzilai-Nahon, the most powerful activity that a gatekeeper can exercise is deleting messages. However, the author of this thesis doubts that Barzilai-Nahon's research design included tools that could shed light on other gatekeeping activities such as withholding or withdrawal of information. Neither does the author discuss the impact of communicative skills that gated might use in order to influence gatekeepers. Another interesting question that one could ask is who is the owner of the co-created content? That way one might question the rights of the gatekeeper to delete messages. Nonetheless, Barzilai-Nahon's study has influenced and inspired the author of this paper. In contrast to Barzilai-Nahon, the author of this paper strongly believes that some of the answers to the questions above can be found using qualitative methods such as the case study and discourse analysis.

2.1.3 Finding the Gap

To sum up, the body of knowledge indicates that traditional concepts need to be redefined before they are applied to empirical studies of the everyday life on the internet. A multitude of studies examines why online communities fail, how they are used, and how users benefit from user-generated content. When it comes to methodology, various traditions are represented as well as disciplines within the Social Science, and it is suggested that in order to build a substantial body of knowledge further research should make use of qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods.

According to the results from reviewed studies, communities close down due to the lack of motivation from users, and inadequate leadership. Regardless of the theoretical lens and epistemological tradition, studies mentioned in this short review focus on function or dysfunction of the system. Some authors believe that longevity of online communities can be strengthened by appropriate design. Only few studies focus on relationships between community members, and the ways they control co-creation using various control strategies. The author of this thesis could not find studies describing the process of transformation of an online forum from open to closed. Neither could she find studies examining how gatekeeping is practiced during the co-creative process of information production, and to what extent contributors use their political power in order to protect their contribution. Moreover, the body of knowledge would benefit from a study looking
Gatekeeper Under the Influence Juliana Stawe. 2IV092 Master Thesis Department of Informatics and Media Uppsala University. Spring 2014.

at online forums through the lens of critical theory.

2.2 Theoretical Foundation: Concepts and Theories

This section presents concepts and theories used as analytical tools in this study. It begins with a short introduction of the assumptions which underpin Critical Theory and Critical Discourse Analysis. The chapter continues with explaining concepts and theories used to illuminate studied phenomenon.

2.2.1 Language in a Disembodied Environment

Forums are interactive, however, disembodied environments free from constraints of the material world (Tredinnick 2008). Staging elements or parts of semiosis, such as body language, (Fairclough 1989) in the discourse do not exist in the way one is accustomed to in the physical world. Language, visual and verbal, becomes a vital communication tool used by co-creators in order to be able to express themselves and maintain their relationships. Thus, the social function of language is of high interest for this thesis. Norman Fairclough (1989, 3) points out that in modern society varieties of language is high therefore the modern citizen is expected to have complex language capacities which include awareness of language as medium of social control and power. As such, language is a carrier of ideologies thus contributing “to domination of some people by others” (Fairclough 1989, 4). As mentioned in previous chapter, the goal of this thesis is to provide negative and positive critical knowledge contributing of raising consciousness of domination among co-creators of content in an online forum dedicated to issues of gender violence. In order to be able to provide critique, this study discourse types in which discourses are either reproduced or negotiated. Hence, this study applies principles of Critical Discourse Analysis, since CDA is theory and method (Woodak 2008; Fairclough 1999). In this study, Fairclough's approach to critical discourse analysis is chosen out of many types of CDA (van Dijk 2008) which will be discussed in Chapter 3 Methodology.

2.2.2 Rooting out Delusions and Demystifying Discourses

Critical Discourse Analysis, (henceforth CDA) originates from Critical Theory. CDA advocates philosophical assumptions of critical theory, therefore this study strives to be explanatory, practical, and normative at the same time (Harvey 1990; Cameron 2001). Simply put, this research project must explain the shortcomings of current social reality, identify the actors capable of making a change and last but not least provide norms for criticisms and achievable goals for social transformation (Harvey 1990; Fuchs 2008; 2011). A critical scientist aims to unmask and reveal the injustice done to one or few oppressed groups in society (Harvey 1990; Fuchs 2008; 2011; Cameron 2001; Woodak 2008). Therefore, it is necessary to understand the context of social reality and the lived experience of the people who construct this social reality.

Critical theory and critical discourse analysis in their theoretical capacity apart from describing and explaining seek to “root out a particular kind of delusion” (Woodak 2008, 7). Further, she offers the following explanation:

“Even with differing concepts of ideology, critical theory intends to create awareness in agents of how they are deceived about their own needs and interests.”
The quote above explains the reason for preoccupation in this study with emancipation of groups who suffer from social discrimination. Even though individuals are capable of acting according to their own will power relationships (see Giddens) still might find a hiding place within various discourses. Hence, as Woodak (2008, 7) points out: “One of the aims of CDA is to “demystify” discourses by deciphering ideologies.” CDA uses (Woodak 2008) John Thompsons definition of ideology (1984, 10.) “ideology refers to forms and processes within which, and by means of which, symbolic forms circulate in the social world.” Ideology presents a set of values, perspectives, and social practices as the norm. For Thompson preservation and creation of domination is central for ideology. For instance, through the language one might establish or sustain asymmetrical power relationships (i.e. some agents or groups of agents are excluded or prevented from access to resources) (Thompson 1984, 130). Language is “the principal medium of the meaning (signification) which serves to sustain relations of domination” argues Thompson (1984, 131).

CDA has its roots in Foucauldian poststructuralism which regard everything as discourse (Fairclough 1989, 1999; Schiffrin; Cameron 2001). Fairclough (1999, 47) points out that weakness of Foucauldian discourse tradition is its determination “to construct social subjects as ‘effects’ of structures,” thus leaving behind the impact of agency (i.e., individuals capabilities to act independently see Giddens). Critical discourse analysis is focusing on the dual (i.e. two-sided) relationship of discourse, what is termed “joint action” (Fairclough et al. 1999, 47-48), focusing on interaction, interpretation of action and semiotic and non-semiotic structures. Fairclough (1999, 48) summarizes:

“Our view of discourse as a moment in social practices and as a form of social production ("joint action") in practices entails a constructivist focus on social life as produced in discourse, as well as a structuralist focus on semiotic (including linguistic) and non-semiotic structures, which are both conditions of possibility of discourse and products of social (including discursive) production.”

Thus, CDA underlines the dual relationship between agency and social construction, stressing that even though a discourse is constraining, the agency still helps individuals to negotiate a discourse and even change it. As response to the critique in regard to weakness of Foucauldian discourse analysis, CDA assumes that language is powerless until powerful individuals transform it into a powerful tool. Yet within CDA research, discourse (language use in speech and writing) is regarded as a form of “social practice” (Woodak 2008, 5 citing Fairclough et al. 1997). Discourse, stresses Ruth Woodak (2008, 6), is a “(...) relatively stable use of language serving the organization and structuring of social life.”

Critique of CDA
CDA has influences from social scientists like Marxism, Frankfurt School, Gramsci, Foucault, Bourdieu, Habermas and Giddens (Chouliaraki et al. 1999; Breeze 2011; Forchtner 2010). This subchapter addresses critique towards CDA which is vital to understand for this particular study. Critique in regard to methodology will be addressed in Chapter 3 Methodology. Criticism directed towards CDA focuses on the philosophical foundations of the approach (Chouliaraki 1999). CDA is

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Ruth Woodak 2008, 7
9 (e.g., language, media content, institutional messages from government, religion, etc. in a certain context)
criticised for being too much influenced by orthodox Marxism. One of the critics Martyn Hammersley pointed out that assumptions of CDA are unfounded and irrelevant because the Marxist theory is now discredited. This critique was passed on in the late 1990s. Contemporary internet researchers (not necessarily followers CDA) such as Christian Fuchs (2008; 2011; 2013 in Olsson ed.) argue that Marxist ideas are more than relevant in understanding and producing knowledge about the interactive internet.

Forchtner (2010) points out that some critics of CDA argue that the word critique as it is understood by CDA (namely, reveal hidden power structures, fight inequalities and discrimination, analysis self-reflection) is unjustified since for instance discrimination is “tabooed in most Western public spheres” (Forchtner 2010, 19). Van Dijk (2008, 823) answers to the critique by explaining that CDA representatives require:

(…) a detailed applied ethics that allows CDA researchers to judge whether discourses or discourse properties, or their users, are „bad“ because they violate fundamental human rights.

The author of this thesis takes van Dijk’s statement in consideration by reflecting on her role as a CDA representative (which is discussed in Chapter 3 Methodology).

Also criticised application of linguistic methodology, and theories of language and communication. The latter, according to the critics, is evident in the CDA projects that fail to “integrate context and audience satisfactory into their analytical framework, leading to naively deterministic assumptions about the workings of the discourse.” (Breeze 2011, 2) In order to avoid this kind of failure, the author of this thesis was particularly careful with understanding the member's resources (e.g., beliefs) of the studied group, and the context. This was done by reading information produced on the website belonging to the forum as well as taking part of information outside the research site. For instance, English speaking forums concerned with gender violence such as Womensaid.com, DailyStrength.org and information produced by authorities such as UNFPA, WHO.int, as well as research papers found in NCK's, Nationellt centrum för kvinnofrid (National Center for Women's Safety) database. Specifically research addressing victim and survivor discourse was of particular interest for this study (see van Dijk 2009; Vollhardt 2009).

2.2.3 Oppression, Socially Generated Ills and Agency

Oppression is not always synonymous with lack of power. Individuals can simultaneously be powerful and powerless (Barzilai-Nahon 2006; Fairclough 1989). Some of the concepts used in this study explain power systems and techniques maintaining inequalities such as patriarchy, synthetic personalization and the therapy discourse. As previously mentioned, gender violence is now regarded as one of the socially generated ills (Fairclough 1989). The aim, the goal and the research questions presented in this study follow the principles of CDA. The author of this paper takes an advocacy role for the oppressed group namely those suffering from gender violence by illuminating a) discourses constrain co-creation of alternative information; b) negotiation of constraining discourses c) ideology supporting constraining discourses. Moreover, CDA assumes that discourse should be studied in its historical context, i.e. culture, society, and ideology (Woodak 2008, 15). Tuvaforum.se is located in Sweden (even though the forum is floating in cyberspace) since the language used by the contributors is Swedish and most of the discussions regarding, for instance, shortcomings within law systems are country or culturally specific.
2.2.3.1 Ideology of Inequality

Ideology, notes Fairclough (1989), are 'common-sense' assumptions implicit in conventions. These conventions (discourse types) determine how people are to interact linguistically. In most instances, people are not consciously aware of such conventions. For instance, Fairclough (1989, 2) labels a traditional consultation between a doctor and a patient as a 'common sense' assumptions advocating authority and hierarchy as natural. In this thesis, the notion of hegemony is used in the way Antonio Gramsci and CDA view it (Fairclough 1999; Woodak 2008). In short, hegemony is about consent and submission. Hegemony is invisible exercise of power, and it is achieved through coercion and consent. Coercion is exercised through various types of institutions. Social order is enforced through the use of power. Consent, in turn, is obtained through instrumental institutions. (Gramsci selected writings in Forgacs ed. 2000)

In order to understand the research site and the participants (i.e., co-creators in the forum) the notion of patriarchy was vital to explore since the author of this thesis takes an advocatory role for the victims/survivors of gender violence. According to feminist theory, the root to the gender violence is found in the patriarchal structures. In short, patriarchy or ideologies of inequality is a system relying on various forms of oppressions in order to maintain class power and inequality. Feminists when discussing patriarchy focus on the power relationships between men and women (Sultana 2011). In a patriarchal structure, a woman subordinates to a male (Tracy 2007, 577) that way the male may hold power while women are powerless (Sultana 2011, 2-3). However, some scholars argue that patriarchy and sexism are two outdated terms (Diabah 2011, 174). One of them is Judith Baxter (2002) stating that depending on the context an individual can be simultaneously positioned as powerful and powerless in any discourse. Hence, one can no longer see the liberation from patriarchy in universal terms, rather that patriarchy and sexism are context-specific (Baxter 2002; Diabah 2011).

2.2.3.2 Techniques for exercising power

On of the techniques for exercising power is synthetic personalization which is a linguistic strategy used in order to erase the distance between a communicator (e.g., communication planner, politician or salesman) and anonymous audience (e.g. consumer) involved in a communication act. In practice, the text producer (e.i. communicator/sender) individualises the addressee with the aid of lexical choice (e.g. using personal pronoun “you”). The outcome of this strategy is as Norman Fairclough (1995, 10) expresses it: “(...) the manipulation of “interpersonal” forms for strategic and instrumental purposes.” In other words, synthetic personalization gives an impression to an individual that the treatment is individual while individuals are handled as a mass (Fairclough 1989, 52). According to Fairclough (ibid.), synthetic personalization constitutes merely part of modern techniques for exercising power.

The discourse of therapy is one of the three discourse technologies (Fairclough 1989, 164). Many people in society of today, according to Fairclough (Fairclough 1989, 164; 184):

(...) experience problems and “crises of identity”, which they perceive as their individual “personal” problems, and for which they seek “help” from one source or another.

By sources Fairclough refers to, for instance, professional psychiatry and voluntary organizations. In addition, a variety of therapies and counselling techniques have emerged from these organizations. (Fairclough 1989, 164; 184-185) The main assumption found within this discourse technology, is that:
(...) the effects of social ills can be remedied on the basis of the hidden potentials of individuals (...)

What Fairclough implies is that within the discourse of therapy the responsibility is misplaced as since the socially generated ills causing suffering to individuals, can be remedied, if individuals achieve behavioural changes with the aid of a skillful counsellor. (Fairclough 1989, 186-187) Indeed, looking for the “hidden potentials” of the individual the social problem becomes internal rather than external (Fairclough 1989, 186). Hence, therapy and counselling can be regarded as ideological practices (Fairclough 1989, 187). “The confession\textsuperscript{10} - therapy and counselling’s predecessor – Fairclough explains “has become a vital ingredient in social control” (ibid.) since the technique can be found in institutional orders of discourse such as education and social work. Equally general medicine and vocational guidance practice the discourse of therapy.

2.2.3 Traditional Theories of Information Control
Information Control Theory or Gatekeeping Theory is a widely used theory across scientific disciplines within social sciences. The gatekeepers function is to select among commodities (e.g. material, goods, information) and let it enter a social system. Within the information and mass communication theory, according to Pamela Shoemaker et al. (2001) the gatekeeping is tracted as a selection process. Werner J. Severin et al. describes gatekeeping as: “a coupling between two systems among other coupled systems which human communication is built upon.”(Severin et al. 1997, 54) The gatekeeper can thus exercise power over the communication process, as it is up to the gatekeeper to decide what information to discard (Windahl et al. 2006). According to Sven Windal et al. (2009, 159), various aspects of gatekeeping are included in roles taken by communication planners (note that for this study these old concepts are valuable since a co-creator might act as communicator). Through decision making process concerning content, the communicator can exercise power over the communication process. Moreover, gatekeeping as activity is routine during which a gatekeeper asks questions regarding the audiences interests. That way the communicator might fill the knowledge gap by producing accurate information for the audience. The selection process of information, i.e. what to discard and what to let pass, depends on communicators’ values such as proximity, conflict, human interest (Windal et al. 2009, 159; 2006, 125-126). Gatekeeping, however, may reduce openness in a social system, warns Windal and his colleagues (2009, 160). Distrust can become a major issue between the gatekeeper and the gated, thus encouraging the gated to look for alternative sources of information. Withdrawal of information by the gatekeeper may evoke unease in audience members. (Windal et al. 2006, 127)

Since a gatekeeper may also act as a communicator, a researcher using the Maltzke model\textsuperscript{11} (Windal et al. 2006, 126; 2009, 160) can examine the various roles and functions of a communication planner. Such a description may provide an understanding of how communicators perceive their audience. In an interactive Web 2.0 environment traditional roles such as communicator and audience are more flexible since the communicator may simultaneously become audience, and audience, in turn, can switch to communicator. Consequently, according to the author of this thesis, in an interactive Web 2.0 environment a researcher also has access to, for instance, the self-image of users traditionally termed as audience. The mirror image of the communicator is vital since it affects the design of communication strategies (Windal 2006, 127). Windahl et al. (2006, 127) state

\textsuperscript{10} Norman Fairclogh (1989, 1987) refers to Michel Foucault when talking about the concept of the “confession”.

\textsuperscript{11} Original: Schema des Feldes der Massenkommunikation (Maletzke 1963) (Windal et al. 2006, 126).
that most communicators are unaware of the way the self-image and the job orientation might have an impact on their work:

Every communication planner has a job orientation (…) that guides him or her, its influence on his or her work should not be underestimated.

How communicators perceive their audiences is also reflected in the communication plan. Windahl et al. (2006, 131) argues that many communicators perceive the public as remote and anonymous. Therefore, they use secondary audiences (e.g., colleagues and friends) when working with communication planning. The primary audience is often regarded as incompetent (Altheide 1974; Burns 1977 in Windahl 2006, 131). Hence, according to Windahl (ibid.), communicators regard it as their function to educate and inform their audience since the audience is less aware of their needs compared to the knowledge of the communicator (see Jenkins et al. 2013 in upcoming subchapter). Communicators failing to acknowledge the audience as competent, decide the media content for the audience members. Moreover, they might either concentrate on a small target group whose needs are known. (Windahl 2006, 131-132). According to Windahl, most of communicators working with mass communication planning either neglect or overestimate the power of feedback from their audience. Windahl et al. (2006) underline that those who give feedback seldom represent the average reader.

2.2.4 Gatekeeping and the Internet
Gatekeeping in Internet studies as a concept is still under development. It aims to understand information flow and information control in various online environments from a free speech point of view. Karine Barzilai-Nahon (2007, 5) explains:

All traditional models of gatekeeping ignore the role of those whom gatekeeping is being exercised upon (…).

According to Barzilai-Nahon, agency creates an unusual angle in regard to information control within the new interactive environment. Further, the author suggests that gatekeeping theory applied to fit the information society where communication patterns differ from traditional top-down process should not treat the gated as passive and powerless receivers of information. The author introduces the concept of network gatekeeping, a model intended to analyze relationships between gated and the gatekeepers. In summary, the author provides a model for explaining gatekeeping through political and social relationships. (Barzilai-Nahon 2007, 13) Other scholars who challenge the traditional unidirectional flow of gatekeeping are Lianne Chin-Fook and Heather Simmonds. The authors present the Multidirectional Flow model, appropriate for the digital environment emphasizing equal opportunities for everyone to become a gatekeeper Chin-Fook et al. (2011, 26).

Barzilai-Nahon (2007) stress that a revised version of gatekeeping theory can be used to explain the gatekeeping practices on the internet. In such a new, extended version of gatekeeping, relationships between the gated and the gatekeepers should be taken into account. Briefly speaking, the main difference between the theories is that the Network Gatekeeping illuminates the power of the gated. Network Gatekeeping theory suggest that the gated have more power to influence information control coming from an authority: “Focus shifts to institutional actors. Two dimensions are suggested: authority and functional gatekeepers” (Barzilai-Nahon 2007, Table 7, Network Gatekeeping ). The notion of political power is of importance since information control reflects the
power struggle among the stakeholders protecting their political interests. Barzilai-Nahon discusses the notion of political power from various perspectives. She chooses the positivist perspective and argues that analysis of power should be two-dimensional that is to say, examining decisions as:

a) “choice among alternative modes of action” (Barzilai-Nahon 2007, 14)
b) “result in suppression or thwarting of a latent or manifest challenge to the values or interests of the decision-maker” (Bachrach et al. 1970, 44 in Barzilai-Nahon 2007, 14)

However, when talking about analysis of power, Barzilai-Nahon (2007, 14) refer to Lukes, who stresses that power manifestation takes place through actions and inactions, the third dimension of analysis of power. This particular thesis follows the assumption that power and language are closely related. Power in discourse and power behind discourse are two aspects of this relationship (Fairclough 1989, 43-45). Power in discourses means that power can be exercised in a discourse (Fairclough 1989, 45-46). Power behind discourses refer to discourse types as conventions “which embody particular power relations” (Fairclough 1989, 58-59). An important aspect of power struggle is that power can not be monopolised by either powerful or powerless participant (Fairclough 1989, 43). Rather it is a process of ongoing negotiation of power positions because discourse as “a place” (Fairclough 1989, 43) powerful participants can control and constrain the contributions of non-powerful participants while non-powerful participants can negotiate and even change the discourse (Fairclough 1989).

In this study, Lukes' notion of action and inaction is taken into consideration when analysing power in discourse in the forum. The gated may become a gatekeeper since gated may also produce information that might be of value as well as control on contrain other co-creators. Consequently, gated may also have political power due to the autonomy achieved during the content production. On the other hand, the autonomy of the gated does not ensure that the content will reach the audience. This uncertainty is well described by the words of the creator of the model: “Gated may also have political power.” Therefore, network gatekeeping salience model does not elaborate on the idea that the gated may have enough political power to influence gatekeepers with less or none political power, yet it is the gatekeeper with most political power who makes the final decision regarding distribution of content. Nonetheless, the author of this paper agrees that the focus should shift from the selection process to relationships between the gatekeeper and the gated when using the gatekeeping theory in order to describe and understand information control online.

2.2.5 Conceptualization: Combining New and Old
In this particular study, the traditional gatekeeping theory is combined with the elements such as relationship, information, and political power from the Network Gatekeeping Salience-model presented by Barzilai-Nahon. In addition, two elements from The Maltzke model: communicator's self-image and communicator's image of the audience are added to the previously mentioned concepts. In assemble, these theories and concepts constitute the set of analytic tools. Last, but not least, Jenkins et al. (2013) offer a handful of useful examples illustrating conflicts of interest regarding co-creation. These examples might be useful when looking for what Jenkins et al. (2013) describe as "an intelligent broker, connecting the edges to each other and harnessing the power of the users themselves" (O'Reilly in Jenkins et al. 2013, 175). More concrete, how this “intelligent broker” may use gatekeeping strategies during a co-creative process.

2.2.6.1 Roles and Functions of Contributors

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12 Barzilai-Nahon 2007, Table 7, Network Gatekeeping
Perception

Elements and relationships presented by the Maltzke model are, according to Windal et al. (2006; 2009), relevant to analyse the role of communication planner. However, some of the elements from the Maltzke model (Windal et al. 2006, 126; 2009, 160) are suitable for this project. The two elements are: the communicator's self-image and the communicator's image of the audience since the analysis of the communicators self-image and image of their audience enables the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of the relationships between contributors. More importantly, these two elements need to be adjusted to the online environment before they can be used since in a Web 2.0 environment the communicator can simultaneously be the audience. The elements from the Maltzke model need to be combined with elements reflecting interactivity.

Gated and Gatekeepers

As the literature review reveals, there are yet too few studies addressing online gatekeeping. One of the reasons is that as a traditional theory, gatekeeping has its weaknesses since it focuses on the selection process rather than relationships between the gatekeeper and the gated (Barzilai-Nahon 2007). In this paper, it is assumed that a contributor simultaneously can undertake the role of the gatekeeper and the gated. Since during the co-creative process information production and consumption is an ongoing process during which the contributor can decide which information to reuse or build upon, and what information to discard or not take into account. Since a contributor can produce content the same contributor has to protect their content. In addition, a contributor re-using information (see Tredinnick 2008) becomes a channel. Therefore, a gatekeeper (with most power or less power) also has to regard a co-contributor as a possible gate and channel through which the produced content passes.

2.2.6.2 Use of Political Power

Power, as mentioned previously, can be analyzed from three dimensions (see Barzilai-Nahon). In addition, social power is a property of the relationship between social formations or persons as social members. According to Norman Fairclough, in every discourse event there is at least one power participant and one less powerful participant. Jointly, they shape the outcome of the discourse event by choosing a discourse type within which either of the parties positions themselves. (Fairclough 1989) On Tuvaforum.se one possible discourse type is a Forum Discourse type enabling to communicate according to conventions described earlier. On the public forum political power constitutes access to administrative and managerial tools of the forum and communication skills, i.e. writing and rhetorical skills. Contributors with most political power can either remove or add any information on the forum. Due to lack of permission to exercise managerial responsibilities, the less powerful group of contributors may only influence each other through the means of communication, i.e. writing and rhetorical skills. A contributor can use their political through action and inaction. For instance, removing information constitute an action, and in-action happens when a contributor ignores a post.

One of the tasks is to create an understanding about how contributors position themselves as valuable information sources using language as a powerful tool. The reader might notice that the choice of presenting the participants as gender-less is done in order to underline that regardless of gender a participant can either be powerful or powerless in a given situation. Thus, examining “how” something is said the focus remains on the dialectic relationship between the discursive event, structures, situation, institutions when analysing a discourse as a practice.

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14 Writing “s/he” since the gender is unimportant, and impossible to verify in an online environment.
3 Methodology

In this chapter, the research process is described so that the reader can get a clear view of all the happenings during the research project. Consequently, the reader will be able to make their own judgments about the quality of the study. This chapter constitutes a discussion of the particular issues concerning methods in critical discourse analysis, followed by a presentation describing the central aspects of the research process: data collection, selection and analysis.

3.1 Strategies of Inquiry

The aim of this study is to understand how co-creators of content on the public forum tuvaforum.se practice gatekeeping and respond to information control. Therefore, the case study approach was regarded as suitable since focusing on a single case will provide a thick (Silverman 2005) and rich description of an example.

3.1.1 Data Collection Strategy

In short, a case study grants an in-depth understanding of a single case. Traditionally as a strategy of inquiry, case study has its roots in the constructivist paradigm, according to which the truth is relative and subjective; thus, the reality is socially constructed (Baxter et al. 2008, 544-545). A qualitative case study such as this is not concerned with generalisability and grand theories. The approach rather enables to observe how meaning is produced in specific settings, the community, by community members themselves, thus allowing the understanding and theories emerge inductively (Payne et al. 2004, 31-34).

It is also clear that the case is not a sample; it is a unique example (Payne et al. 2004, 32). Tuvaforum.se is considered as a unique example because it went through a significant transformation. When the forum was launched year 2008, a contributor was able to participate either in private (membership requirements) or public (open for everyone); since 2014 the forum requires members fee, and the owner of the forum gains access to true identity of a member (e.g., real name and address). In addition, a case study provides the analyst with additional information that is used to gain a better understanding of subjects (e.g., forum participants) members resources in order to make an interpretation of the relationships between text and interaction (Fairclough 1989; 1999). For instance, in this study in order to understand the relationships between the co-contributors (e.g., identify the powerful and less powerful contributors) it was necessary to understand the notion of being addicted to violence. Fortunately, the qualitative inquiry as a process is circular making it possible to revise the knowledge the researcher had before entering the research site. In this study, the data dictated when the researches were in need for additional information. For instance, during the naïve reading of the posts the author discovered that a group of co-contributors alienate themselves from the rest. The reason behind the alienation could be explained by what Women's Aid explains as myth about the abused being addicted to the abuse. Simply put, an individual who does not leave the abuser enjoys the suffering and the pain. In order to understand the myth, a thorough reading of personal accounts (see Appendix 5) about the experience of being addicted to violence was done by the author of the study. In ensemble, different sources provided additional information that helped the researcher during the process of analysis by broadening her knowledge about the social context on the research site.

The aim was to gather first-hand information (i.e., discursive events) about social processes in naturally occurring contexts (i.e., online discussion forum concerned with gender violence).
According to the principles of CDA, the intention was to study the interaction between contributors (i.e., co-creators as gatekeepers and gated) on the forum, e.g. what they did, rather than focus on individual's thoughts. In CDA the “good data” (see Sarah H. Matthews 2005, 800) refers to data that is collected from situation that has already taken place, that way the behaviour of participants, is impossible to manipulate1, which also is are characteristics of a case study (Yin in Baxter et al. 2008, 545). CDA's response to the critique for discourse analysis relies too much on the participants accounts of reality being true. However, a participant's account is socially created even if a researcher is absent2. Hence, the subject may, as Cameron (2001, 14) argues:” (...) construct a certain representation of themselves for the researcher's benefit (...).” Cameron explains that this self-construction is ”an unavoidable element of all communicative acts” (ibid.) since all the elements (e.g., status, clothing) of a discursive event have an impact on the outcome. For such reason, doing a discourse analysis, a researcher has to admit that there is no objective reality. Also, as John Thompson (1984, 133) points out, a discourse analysis is an interpretation of an interpretation since language goes through an interpretative process such as writing or speech before it becomes a discourse. The researcher was not present at the time the discursive events took place as the forum posts were created from August 2008 to October 2011 and all discursive events were documented/stored in a visual format on the forum. In such a setting, the researcher had no possibility of manipulating the interaction taking place. The approach rather the observation of how meaning is produced in specific settings, the discussion forum, by the members themselves, thus allowing for understanding and theories emerge inductively (Payne et al. 2004, 31-34).

According to Silverman, the concern might be that working with case studies a single case might produce too little data. Silverman refers to Mitchell (1983 in Silverman 2005, 55): "The validity of qualitative analysis depends more on the quality of the analysis than on the size of the sample.” Further Silverman states that "the comparative method can be used on a single case by isolating and comparing elements” (Silverman 2005, 150). In this study, the qualitative data is collected from 19,967 number of posts of which 129 posts were transcribed and analyzed in-depth, and 22 posts are presented in the result section.

A discursive event, i.e. a discussion thread, shapes a particular story (Silverman 2005, 150; 160) waiting to be told. Accordingly, an active data selection was performed with a goal of picking out data that could best illustrate power struggle in a limited number of pages. Also, the analysis takes place unconsciously already in the early stages of data collection (Silverman 2005, 150). Hence, in this project collection of data and analysis went hand in hand. Further, the aim was to present the text as a whole, e.g. discourse events in which interaction between participants took place. In some cases, extracts from discourse events are presented. This is the uncommon way of presenting data according to CDA. However, CDA still lacks a clear set of methods that could be applied to data available on online discussion forums. Consequently, a single extract does not have to limit the analysis. Moreover, all posts assembled tell a story creating a comprehensive text: the history of the public forum.

3.2.1 Data Sources: Written Conversations about Violence

Discussion threads on tuvaforum.se create their stories, in which community members reality is reflected. A researcher doing qualitative analysis should be familiar with the social context constructed by participants (Matthews 2005, 800). Words, useful for this study, come from various sources, such as interviews, articles and researches field notes and written texts (e.g., forum threads) and visual texts, namely GUI, The Graphic User Interface and UI, The User Interface. All of these
text types enabled the understanding of the social context of the participants together with allowing for the collection of the information necessary in making any interpretation of the phenomenon. In this study discursive events, consisting of discussion threads and replies created by participants, represent the qualitative data. On the forum - the social setting - words are used to express feelings, judgment and justifications (of their own and others actions) regarding gatekeeping and creation of content, and gender violence. As Cameron (2001, 14-15) noted, the investigation of the "how"-question of the interaction is vital the discourse studies because the how-questions explain how people construct meaning. Therefore, for this study it was less important to focus on "what" people said. However, “how” they say it is was crucial in order to make interpretation of what was going on between the co-creators.

To focus on “how” people say something was not always easy and being able to present two realities was a challenge. This could have resulted in the manipulation of data owing to researchers values and beliefs. This other type of data manipulation is defined by van Dijk (2009) as “a form of illegitimate influence (…) against the best interest of the manipulated” (in Forchtner 2010, 20). Hence, in order to obtain "good data" or “adequate data”, as Matthews (2005, 800) puts it, data should be collected using active listening in order to understand both sides without making preferences. In order to avoid manipulation of data and reach the ability of what Sandra Harding (1991, 123) refers to "opening ones eyes", required self-discipline, or put in Haskell's words: "work of the intellect" (1990, 7). Since CDA, according to van Dijk, the weakness of CDA in regard to subjectivity of interpretation:

is the lack of theory about norms and principals of its own critical activity, that is a detailed applied ethics that allows CDA researchers to judge whether discourses or discourse properties, or their users, are 'bad' because they violate fundamental human rights.

Thus in order to make a judgment about the influence of discourses, the notion of Intellectual discipline (Haskells 1990) was an inspiration for the author of this paper. Thomas Haskell (1990, 7) states that intellectual discipline is a form of detachment which involves self-reflection in order to obtain objectivity. Yet for Haskell objectivity does not mean neutrality or disinterest. In this paper intellectual discipline means facing ones prejudice. For instance, the author of this paper believed that victims of violence are passive and in need of assistance in the liberation process. During the data collection and analysis process, the author changed her opinion after reading personal accounts on the role of the victim. Semantics reflects our perception of the gender violence. Labeling someone a “victim,” as Jan van Dijk (2009, 1; 8) expresses it, “assigns to them a social role of passivity and forgiveness”; thus, diminishing the inner strength of those who are in the process of liberation. In order to process this new knowledge, the author of the paper took a two month break from the data for reflection. When the process of reflection was over, the author could better understand the two realities presented in the forum (i.e., those who victimize and those rejecting the social role of a victim). Moreover, to question wether the researcher could cope with the emotional impact from the personal stories told by the participants on the forum. Namely, control her emotions such as anger and sadness while reading about abuse of adults, children, and pets. In such a case, it is inhuman to talk about objectivity and detachment through positivist perspective. However, self-reflection was not enough. The author of this study could partially detach herself when she truly accepted what it means to study how people make sense of their world not hers (Merriam 2009).

This experience allowed the researcher to make a more refined judgment about discourses and their influence. Another challenge was practicing the constructivist orientation regarding utterances made
by participants on the forum. Initially, it was difficult to focus on the process through which texts depict “reality” (Silverman 2005, 160). I was tempted to value the truthfulness of the statement. Notably, intellectual discipline was a fruitful exercise in order to maintain the necessary level of communicative validity, while collecting valid data. In practice, the author tried not to focus on the sensitivity of the topic discussed on the forum. A post-it note on the computer monitor reminding me that I am not studying “What” people say, I am studying “How” they say it, was most helpful.

3.2 Material and Sampling

This subchapter describes the reasons behind the choice of the site. Discourse analysis is a qualitative method focusing on the interpretive process of different “voices” in communication acts in order to construct their social reality. Therefore the investigation site, Tuvaforum.se, was chosen for its potency to enable different voices exchange and use collectively shared resources when discussing issues concerning gender violence.

3.2.1 Choosing the Research Site and Participants

Non-probability sample technique is assumed to adequate since the population holding information needed to answer the research question is hidden and difficult to locate (Berg et al. 2014, 50). The population is careful with their appearance and it is not always clear if a participant creating a thread uses two aliases in order to be able to hide the real identity or simply ask two different questions without disclosing the online identity used in the forum. Anonymous posters are such instances. In this study, it was possible to list active members as their openly used their identity. However, it was unclear whether they have an alternative alias. Also, this study intends to find out how members construct their reality which is only possible through a qualitative method looking at a population of a specific character. This sampling technique is called purposive sampling or judgmental sampling (Berg et al 2014, 52). In order to develop a purposive sampling, I used my special knowledge (or expertize) about the group of forum members who are active participants in online support forums discussing issues of gender violence. My special knowledge consisted of knowledge acquired from reading information about gender violence in, for example, forums, blogs, articles. In addition, this knowledge also consisted of narratives told by volunteers and professionals working with primary prevention of gender violence, and friends and acquaintances who had experience of abuse and had abused others.

As theory and method, CDA or Critical Discourse Analysis has its roots in Critical theory, and it is influenced by Foucault's notion of discourse. Inheritance from Critical theory is the concern with inequality and oppressed groups since even CDA aims to liberate people from their oppressors. Tuvaforum.se technically speaking should not be included in the oppressed category (see previous discussion about “Critique” in CDA), as it was independent and had frequent and unique contributors and readers. There were no indications of dependence on, for example, governmental funds or connections to governmental agencies or other organizations associated with VAW. The absence of advertisement on the website and the public forum indicates “online self-sufficiency” (i.e. the space is financed by one or more members of the public). This was of a particular interest since gatekeeping/information control can manifest differently in an independent setting and institutional setting (for instance an authority within VAW). Moreover, internet users on various Swedish-speaking websites, blogs and discussion forums described Tuvaforum.se as a valuable source.

Apart from independence, this site could be described as an alternative source of information (e.g.
addressing shortcomings within the system) seldom disclosed to a public by authorities. In consequence, the site constructs its own discourse regarding VAW, where gatekeeping as an activity is a discursive practice. Gatekeeping, therefore, could be used for self-regulation purposes; thus, functionalist-structuralist tradition would be preferred to the critical approach. However, the open letter, published on the website by the owner, revealed information indicating that gatekeeping is not just a function (i.e. censure and protection), it might be an example of how political and social institutions use power and social control in an interactive Web 2.0 environment described as decentralised and liberating.

The website Tuvaforum.se consists of a static website and two discussion forums, a private forum requiring a membership and a public forum accessible for everyone. The content on the website consisted of articles signed by Julia, Julia/Tuva or Administrator. Since the website did not show any signs of co-creation or information control practices, it was excluded from the analysis.

The private forum is not included in the analysis. To begin with, the forum was deleted before this research project commenced. Moreover, the forum required membership since the expected level of privacy (Sixsmith et al. 2001) was high. Hence, the ethical decision-making process would require consent from all participants as contributors exchanged sensitive information. That being the case, a contributor could access the forum either through invitation or written request. When doing discourse analysis especially critical discourse analysis invisibility is important for the analyst. Otherwise, the analyst takes part in the manipulation of the communicative act. In consequence, the private forum was excluded from the analysis.

The public forum is included in the analysis. Reaching the public forum a presumptive contributor could learn that the forum is aimed for women who either are experiencing or did experience physical or psychological violence from an intimate partner. Thus, the content available on the public forum is the “discursively constructed” reality with the aid of collectively shared resources available to participants. The author of this paper was able to save screenshots of the information that was about to be deleted as the web-hotel providing the technical solution for the website and the forum, was changing the system from asp to htm. However, the information on the new website indicates that both forums were saved by the owner of the website. Also, a few selected threads exemplifying the supportive process are still available on the new version of Tuvaforum.se for contributing and non-contributing members. Most importantly, the public forum resembled a public sphere - a meeting place for public and their contrasting discourses. The miscellaneous voices on the forum assembled constituted an invaluable source for in-depth analysis of relationships between the gated and the gatekeepers in this particular interactive online environment.

3.2.2 Obtaining Information: the Ethical Decision-making Process
The report from 2012 “Ethical Decision-Making and Internet Research” contain recommendations from the AoIR Ethics Working Committee. It is clear that the association members agree that internet is a social phenomenon, a tool, and also a research site therefore it should be approached holistically (Markman et al. 2012, 3-4). Some of the key principles are identified as fundamental and are to be considered in order to meet the requirements of the ethical internet research. A researcher is to take into account the vulnerability of the participants since the researchers obligation is to protect the community from harm (Markman et al. 2012; Lotz et al. 2004; Hewson et al. 2013; Weeden 2012; Flicker et al. 2004). In the AoIR report, Markman et al. (2012) stress that

16 Written by Annette Markham and Elizabeth Buchanan.
the context defines the word “harm,” for this reason when constructing a study the application of ethical principals should be done inductively taking into consideration the specific context. In addition, ethical decisions should weight in the rights of research subjects as authors, participants and people, and the social benefits of researcher's rights to engage in research activity. Another key principle mentioned is that a researcher should consult as many people and resources as possible due to, as Anette Markman et al. put it, the deliberative nature of the ethical decision-making process (Markman et al. 2012, 4).

One of the most important questions asked in this study is presented in the report: “Does the connection between one's online data and his or her physical person enable psychological, economic, or physical harm?” (Markman et al. 2012, 4). To answer this question I shall draw the readers attention back to the aim of CDA described by Ruth Woodak (2008, 7):

Critical theories, thus also CDA, want to produce and convey critical knowledge that enables human beings to emancipate themselves from forms of domination through self-reflection.

In the quotation above, the reader can learn that my obligation as a researcher is to provide the suffering group with critique necessary to facilitate the process of self-reflection that might lead to liberation. Critique aims to make the hidden visible by revealing power structures and ideologies behind discourses (Woodak 2008). Thus, the critique produced in this paper is not focusing on a single individual or group. The knowledge conveyed, however, should aid the individual and the group as a whole.

3.2.2.1 Protecting the Participants

In order to determine the level of vulnerability of the chosen group, scholars such as Amanda D. Lotz and Sharon Marie Ross (2004), and Sarah Flicker, Dave Hanns, Harvey Skinner (2004) advice to follow the rules (written and unwritten) of the chosen forum since rules reflect participants expectation of privacy. In the initial stage of the research project, I took part of the material (forum rules included) available on the website in order to understand the social and cultural context of the setting. Another advice is to balance the knowledge about the participants with the methodological demands (Lotz et al. 2004; Flicker et al. 2004; Hewson et al. 2013; Weeden 2012). As previously reported, CDA assumes that the reality is constructed between the scientist and the participant in the study. Thus, the ideal way of obtaining information is by what one could call lurking since invisibility does not manipulate the interaction between the participants. This methodological requirement, undoubtedly, brings up the question of privacy.

3.2.2.2 Participants Expectations of Privacy

Reading the posts, I discovered that contributors on the public forum were aware of the non-contributing participants (i.e. lurkers/passive readers) even though the low level of self-disclosure through the GUI could, according to Craig D. Murray and Judith Sixsmith (2001, 10) suggest otherwise. Also, administrators on the forum repeatedly encouraged contributors wanting to share sensitive information to join the private forum enabling private communication. In addition, contributors were encouraged to withhold information such as email addresses or information that could lead to the identification of a person. In my role as a researcher I never intended to gain sensitive information about contributors in order to answer the research questions. Moreover, data

17 Adam N. Joinson (2001) is one of the scholars who devide the available amount of self-disclosure into levels.
18 In contrast to the study conducted my Marin Rimm mentionen by Elizabeth A. Buchanan in the article Enter the Internets (in Consalvo et al. 2011 88-90).
was not accessed by using any form of deception in order to gain participants trust.

The only contributor deliberately sharing personal information was the owner of the forum. Posts written by this contributor disclosed profession and interests. Yet never the first name and surname, even though the contributor mentioned an interview with one of the leading women's magazines in Sweden. Hence, this kind of self-disclosure is intentional and can be regarded as a strategy rather than unawareness of one's actions since the possible interpretation of self-disclosure in this case is pride, a celebration of one's achievements. Moreover, in one of the posts Julia/Tuva explained that the forum is named her/his alias Tuva. Thus, by replacing the contributor's alias I would face the problem of ownership and authorship, and it would do more harm to the owner's self-image as a creator of the forum.

3.2.2.3 Is the Topic Sensitive?
The topic of this study is: How information control constrain contribution in a co-creative online environment? The topic itself is not sensitive. However, the online forums designed for the studied support group, contains both sensitive and non-sensitive information. The sensitive information was reserved for the private forum, whilst less sensitive information could be found on the public forum. In an article written by Lotz and Ross (2004), the authors mention Michael King's ethical choices when he studied victims of sexual abuse whom he identified as socially sensitive group even in an online environment. King chose to preserve the anonymity of the support group (Lotz et al. 2004, 505-506).

When reading threads posted on Tuvaforum.se it becomes evident that the oppressed group is aiming to make their voice heard. Hence, identifying the group as vulnerable would aid to the victimization of those trying to make a change. In addition, the research questions do not require to examine the quality of the supportive message, therefore, all sensitive information such as personal narratives could be excluded. When writing the results and doing analysis, I ensured that the data revealing detailed information about a crime committed or a personal account of the situation were discarded. Instead, if the discursive event was of significance only parts demonstrating the relationship between the contributors were kept. The sensitive material was never included into the analysis. Thus, the confidentiality is prevailed even though the perception and /or expectations of privacy on the forum was low.

Indeed, there are many strategies how to approach the anonymity in order to protect the participants. Ross et al. (2004) refers to King, who chose to remove signatures, names or user names, etc. thus making the user untraceable and hard to identify. In another study mentioned by Ross et al. (2004) the researcher S. Herring's regards Kings measures (such as removing headings, nicknames etc.) as too extreme. In connection with Herring's and King's strategies for balancing anonymity and data accessibility, Lotz and Ross (2004) suggest that a researcher may provide possibilities of identifying the website or group, yet the names could be excluded. However, even though the names are removed. Some problems prevail. Firstly, the content itself reveals a great deal about the author, by this I mean that if a sentence or an extract is pasted into an internet search motor the possibility is high that the whole conversation will appear. Secondly, contributors on the forum encourage each other to use names and aliases they can identify themselves with. The name chosen is expected to be original and unique. In order to achieve that contributors apart from using female or male names as aliases, used adjectives or titles. This implies that they were proud users of their aliases, thus if I am to change a nickname or alias with “Member1”, for instance, I am depriving the research subjects to express their uniqueness, which turned out to be of vital importance on the forum. In addition, if a contributor is deprived by me the right of showing
his/hers alias I am depriving this contributor his or her right to: “(...) to emancipate themselves from forms of domination through self-reflection” (Woodak 2008, 7). Since the knowledge produced by the contributors themselves but gathered by me using a method known for serving to the oppressed groups. That way I would have harmed the contributors. As mentioned before, in my research I am not considered with who says what, I am interested in how contributors use language in order to constrain each others contributions on the forum.

As a result, I replaced the original aliases and nicknames with analogues conveying similar connotations found in the original. However, the aliases of one of the contributors remain unchanged since this contributor (Julia/Tuva) is the owner of the website and forum, that way no harm can be done to the owner's self-image as the creator of the forum.

3.3 Data Analysis Approach
This sub-chapter provides an overview of the process of data analysis. CDA as a method of analysis will aid in answering the research questions; hence, briefly speaking, Critical Discourse Analysis will aid this study to provide an understanding of how discourse is implicated in power relations. An ontological assumption of critical theory is that reality is constructed within and through discourse, i.e., through acts and practices of spoken and written language-use. As an approach, critical discourse analysis focusses on the construction of reality through discourse by analysing in detail examples of content and their form (Cameron 2001, 51).

3.3.1 Steps in Analysis Phase
Critical Discourse Analysis as a method enabled the analyst to find themes and patterns in recorded texts (e.g., online conversations). Thus, even an online conversation has to undergo a process of transcription in order to prepare it for the first step in the analysis process. For example, all threads within a discursive event were copied into a separate word-processing document so that the analyst could mark important passages in the text that, for instance, revealed patterns of relationships between co-contributors. The original posts were written in Swedish. The analysis was done using the original language material. However, to achieve communicative validity in the study (Kvale 1995) it was necessary to translate the extracts into English. The author of the paper decided to stays as close as possible to the sentence structure of the original (Schneider 2013), a so-called verbatim translation so that the reader can relate to the text. Doing a literally would mean to engage a professional translator who would have to be familiar with the context (e.g., have knowledge of myth regarding gender violence) of the research site in order to avoid manipulation of data. The knowledge of context is of vital importance in CDA since language covers both langua (language system) and parole (language in use). For example, when encountering a word “beroende” one has two choices – dependence or addiction. In the context addiction was a more appropriate interpretation of what was going on in the social world of the participants in the forum and how it was related to the world outside the forum. However, even a competent translator could damage the data due to her or his values because the translation would be a literally one. As van Dijk (2001, 96) once pointed out “CDA is biased - and proud of it”. Because it is through subjectivity that researcher becomes more alert and sensitive to variations of interpretations. Thus, the author of the thesis is aware of the fact that the reader might have an alternative interpretation of the data.

3.3.1.1 Step 1: Establishing Discourse Type using Members Resources
Language is a form of social practice meaning that relationship (sometimes asymmetrical) between language and society is internal and dialectical (Fairclough 1989; 1999). Fairclough (1989,22-23)
explains that linguistic phenomena are social since text production (e.g., writing) and consumption (e.g., reading) is socially determined and has social effects. Some social phenomenon are linguistic as the language activity is part of social processes and practices. A text is a product which is part of discourse (the whole process of social interaction). Discourse (the process of social interaction) includes process of (text) production and interpretation. Discourse types (i.e., conventions of interaction) are embedded in the situation. The interpretive procedure done by the text consumer (in this case contributors on the forum) depends highly on the situational and intertextual context. For this reason, this chapter aims to discover external cues including features of the site, and some properties of the contributors that shape the situational context of the site. The interpretative procedure also depends on contributors (i.e. text consumers) experience. For such reason, variations in interpretation may occur. This section includes a description of the social conditions of production and interpretation, which determine how people use their members resources (i.e. values, assumptions, knowledge of language, beliefs etc.) (Fairclough 1989, 167) during the production and interpretation process of a discourse (Fairclough 2001, 19-21).

The analyst applying the critical discourse analysis is looking at the discourse through the eyes of the participant (Fairclough 2001, 1989; Woodak 2008). Encarnacion Hidalgo Tenorio (2011, 16) explains:

> The analyst looks for what is encoded in sentences (i.e. signification) and its interaction with context (i.e. significance). In this respect, the analyst is merely doing what an ordinary reader would normally do, but with more conscious attention to processes of comprehension, their possible effects, and their relationship to a wider background knowledge than the ordinary reader may assume to be relevant.

Consequently, the interpretation of the discourse type is based on the assumption that the analyst's members resources are similar to members resources of text consumer's (e.g. contributors) encountering the public forum for the first time. Moreover, CDA assumes that discourse should be studied in its historical context, i.e. culture, society, and ideology (Woodak 2008, 15; Phillips and Jorgenson 2002, 5).

The author of this thesis takes an advocatory role of the individuals suffering from gender violence. Members resources (Fairclough 1989) of a potential contributor encountering the public forum for the first time are summarized as follows:

- enough knowledge in Swedish in order to be able to participate using writing or reading skills
- in need for support or information that enables to help somebody else
- has no access to administrative tools
- took neither part in the creation of the website or forums

After the two DT were identified, it was time to getting to know the co-creators on the forum. That included identification of the most active contributors.

### 3.3.1.2 Step 2: “shaking hands” with participants

CDA requires the researcher to be invisible during collection of adequate data therefore the author of this thesis was not present when discourse events took place. During the naïve reading of the threads, it became necessary to identify and categorize recurring co-creators since this category of co-creators could shed light on how co-creation is constrained. In order to recurring co-creators it was necessary to be accustomed with the site and with the authors of the threads (i.e., co-contributors). One way of getting to know the co-creators was by using descriptive statistics. Even if quantification in general is said to reflect merely a small part of a socially constructed reality
(Krauss 2005, 759) it was most useful in this study. Since the public forum contained 19,967\textsuperscript{19} posts getting an overview of discursive events that could tell something about relationships between the co-creators in their roles as gated and gatekeepers was difficult. Using frequency distribution as a method, the author of this paper could identify the most frequent contributors on the public forum (see Appendix 2). Counting the frequency of aliases and nicknames can be compared to the initial stage of face-to-face interaction. For example, between a focus group and a researcher when these shake hands before interview commences. As a result, the author of this paper was able to enter the social world of the participants, as in this early stage she felt that she become familiar with most of the significant contributors and their communication style (e.g., how they addressed co-creators). At the end of this stage, the author of the paper had gained good knowledge of the material, i.e. she could easily recognize aliases and nicknames of the active participants as well as their writing style.

The threads created by recurring long-term co-creators included design of supportive message. Two types of design of supportive messages based on two different discourse conventions were found. This finding made it necessary to deconstruct the detectable discourse type in order to uncover the concealed discourse type. The process of deconstruction was performed in two steps including a detailed analysis of the Graphic User Interface, GUI and User Interface, UI of the public forum, and a detailed analysis of the design pattern of the supportive message used by powerful and less powerful contributors. Thereafter, contributors were categorized according to their communication style and the way they contributed to the forum. Moreover, the pattern of interaction unfolded showing relationships between the contributors and the way they position themselves within the conventions of the preferred discourse. Consequently, the pattern of gatekeeping strategies among the contributors emerged. At this point, the most significant discursive events were identified. These particular examples illustrating the struggle for dominance between two discourse types found on the forum were analysed in-depth using three levels of analysis described in the next sub-chapter.

\subsection*{3.3.1.2 Step 3: In-depth analysis of most significant discursive events}

As previously mentioned, CDA brings together social theory and textual analysis. The role of the analyst is to study the relationship between texts and social practices. The analysis of the text involves the study of the language structures produced in a discursive event. Moreover, the analysis of the discursive practice involves examining the production, consumption, and reproduction of the texts. The analysis of each discursive event has three dimensions: description, interpretation, and explanation (Fairclough 2010; 1989). Since CDA as a method of analysis provides a rich description, it was important to select the most significant discursive events that could, put into Silvermans (2005) words, tell a story. Thus the selected discursive events should represent:

\begin{itemize}
  \item all categories of co-creators found in the data
  \item discursive events were interaction took place among both less powerful and powerful participants
  \item discursive events were interaction took place between less powerful or only powerful participants
\end{itemize}

The departure point in the analysis process is spoken or written text reflecting the discourse practice involving the production and interpretation of texts. The first level of analysis is concerned with finding traces of systematic functional linguistics. During this stage, the analyst looks for various types of verbs, involved in the interaction. Analysis of the mood is included that is to say, a sentence

\footnote{\textsuperscript{19} Last for analysis significant entry was made 21\textsuperscript{st} of November 2011. From year 2012 users were redirected to a new forum.}
may be designed as a statement, question, or declaration. Modality (the degree of assertiveness in the exchange) expresses confidence. Modality is direct in claiming one's rights or putting forward one's views. (Fairclough 2010; 1989; Chouliaraki et al. 1999) Hence, use of modality aids the analyst in gaining understanding about the agency work during the communicative act. The second level of analysis involves the analysis of the process of production, interpretation, and consumption (Fairclough 1989). This level is concerned with how text consumers (e.g., contributors) interpret and reproduce or transform texts. On this level the two-dimensional nature of the interaction is evident since negotiation of the discourse type can take place. Consequently, the discourse type is either accepted or rejected. The third level of analysis is concerned with issues of power. The analysis of the sociocultural practice explores how discourses operate in various domains of society (Fairclough 1989). At the end of this document, specifically in the Appendix 4, examples of the three dimensions of the discursive event are presented.

The coding process started with looking at the lexical choices (see Appendix 2) since the choice of words and syntax design a discourse in which action is either constrained or released. Consequently, the first main team was found: Action. However, words could not reveal the second theme, namely Inaction. Notably, the second theme unfolded first after the second level of analysis commenced. Since action is merely one aspect of interaction, inaction is the mirror image of the action. For instance, some discourse events got started (e.g., a contributor created a new thread) yet they subsequently remained incomplete (e.g., no replies were posted). Yet that does not mean that the message remain unnoticed. When working with categories, the aim was to understand the participants categories and their use in concrete activities (Silverman 2005, 160): restraints in giving and taking support over time.

**Unexpected Findings**

The finding regarding one particular contributor turned out to be the last piece of the puzzle completing the picture of the relationships between the co-creators and to unmask hidden power (see Power behind discourse). At first the finding appeared to contradict the patterns and explanations emerging from the data analysis since the style of communication of this particular co-creator was different compared to the rest of the participants. However, the author of this paper deconstructed the supportive message designed by this particular co-creator revealing additional explanations. This finding could easily have been overlooked if the author of this study used statistical methods (co-creators would blend into the numbers of most frequent contributors) or Conversation Analysis. The latter does emphasize the importance of contradicting patterns and explanations during the analysis. Yet CA focuses on interactions between the participants not power relations, therefore, this particular contributor could have been compared to the most powerful contributor. Since CDA does focus on power relationships between various social formations the deviant case could reveal unexpected findings.
4 Results and Analysis

As previously mentioned, ideologies are linked to power and language, ideological 'common-sense' assumptions are embedded in discourse types, power relations determine the nature of conventions. Because conventions are seldom questioned, they become “means of legitimizing existing social relations and differences of power” (Fairclough 1989, 2). Hence, the quest for unmasking hidden structures and power (Harvey 1990) begins in the first section of this chapter with a thorough deconstruction of dominant discourse types in the forum. Thus, the ideological 'common-sense' assumptions embedded in each discourse type will be clarified. In the second sub-chapter, the analysis focuses three types of constraints: content, relations, and subjects that will explain how discourses legitimize existing social relations and domination. Constraints are found in the discursive events showing how co-creators legitimize and justify a preferred discourse type and their roles, and the image of others. Thereafter, extracts from significant discursive events will show how co-creators constrain and control each other's contribution. The final sub-chapter, consists of selected discursive events exemplifying how co-creators within each discourse type use information control as protection of their rights to contribute within the preferred discourse type.

4.1 Two Dominant Discourse Types

Reconstruction of the dominant discourse types begins with adopting the members resources of co-creators. The analyst adopted members resources similar to members resources of text consumer's (e.g. co-creators) encountering the public forum for the first time. Specifically, potential co-creators willing to contribute their knowledge and experience about VAW. Two reasons underly the decision. Firstly, because the analyst had limited knowledge about the forum. Secondly because those most affected by the closure of the forum are probably co-creators unable to start an independent forum because of limited means and knowledge of Web 2.0 tools. Thus, the external cues including features of the site, and some properties of the co-creators that shape the situational context of the site were interpreted from the perspective of a less powerful contributor (i.e., a co-creator with limited access to administrative tools of the platform). As a result, the analyst was able to discover two discourse types – the Forum Discourse Type and the Rehabilitation Discourse Type. Simply put, a discourse type is a set of rules guiding interaction between the participants in a discursive events. A discourse type contains clues that give the participant an idea about how to interact in the forum (i.e., co-create), for instance, what roles the participant might adopt during the process of content creation.

4.1.1 Discourse type legitimizing roles of co-creating public

Using members resources of a potential contributor encountering the public forum for the first time the following interpretation could be done by the analyst. The public forum constitutes an interactive online environment, without any connections to the physical/material world. The graphic user interface conveys visual signs that form staging elements in the forum. By analysing GUI and UI, the analyst retrieved information about the first discourse type. As a text consumer who reaches the site Tuvaforum.se, the analyst could learn that this is a place for women who either are experiencing or did experience physical violence or mental cruelty from an intimate partner. To conclude, the activity type on the public forum was to exchange information experience through discussions with other contributors.

Extract 1. The entry written by contributor Daphne reflects how a text consumer (e.g., potential
co-creator) might interpret the discourse type in the public forum:

Extract 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>0</th>
<th>After a break-up? Daphne 090207 23:57</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1 | Ville kolla om någon har erfarenheter med hur man fixar det praktiska med en person  
   Just checking if anyone here have experience about how one can approach the practical issues with a person of  |
| 2 | man är rädd för och som vägrar kommunicera annat än när den ska attackera en? Och hur man  
   who one is afraid of, and who resists communicating apart from when it goes to attack? And how does one  |
| 3 | hanterar att man aldrig någonsin kommer att få upprättelse för vad man varit utsatt för?  
   handle the fact that one is never going to get vengeance for what one has been through?  |
| 4 | Jättetacksam för svar och tips.  
   Grateful for replies and tips.  |

The questions are designed to call for a discussion between equals while s/he could also have designed the question indicating unequal relationships. Using a gender-neutral, indefinite pronoun, “man” “one” (row 1, 2,3) s/he positions her/himself as/he occupies a subject position of a someone who needs support. However, s/he expects equality in the relationship between her/him and co-creators entering the conversation.

Extract 2. Reaching the public forum the analyst encountered a headline summarizing the aim of the public forum:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>0</th>
<th>Extract 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1 | Ett forum för kvinnor som har blivit illa behandlade fysiskt och eller/ psykiskt.  
   For women who have been treated badly physically and/or psychologically.  |

The aim is described using the present perfect tense (the action is either perfected, i.e. completed at some point in the past or the action extends to the present) thus indicating that a woman who enters this online space has knowledge or is aware of her being abused (i.e., continuous, repeating) or assaulted (i.e., random attack) either physically or mentally, or both. Thus, the activity type suggests that production of alternative information to a particular audience is taking place. Which is interpreted as a sign to text producers and consumers on the forum to be aware of that the activity type might constrain and limit the choice of discussion topics. However, the sentence does not indicate what roles count as legitimate in the forum. For example, what counts as a suitable and adequate source of information and who is entitled to spread it.

Interaction is enabled through the GUI of the forum application and provides basic thread functions: create threads, reply to threads, view created threads. Thus, technically every contributor is allowed to suggest a topic without being constrained by the activity type. Implying that in terms of contents, a co-creator is required to create content according to a following routine: reading and commenting. Another activity type is exchange of information and experience. As previously mentioned, forums are conventionally regarded as tools facilitating dialog and co-creation (see Background). Furthermore, the structure of the forum is very basic and elementary suggesting that the forum is created by an enthusiast, rather than a professional (see Appendix 5). This activity type indicates that a co-creator is operating in an equal relationship with other co-creators.

Extract 3. On the bottom of the front page on the forum, the copyright information is presented, nevertheless it is emphasized that the responsibility for content lies with the creator of the post:
Emellertid var och en ansvarar för sina inlägg.
Still, each individual is accountable for their posts.

The statement does not provide the consequences of the irresponsible behavior as the sentence is suggesting that individual censorship (as constraint) is one of the rules of the discourse type. However, there was no statement indicating possible actions exersized by the authority administrating the platform in order to control the information flow. Even if the activity type includes self-regulation when creating content on the forum, co-creators relationships to others are suggested to be equal.

### Legitimate Roles within the Forum DT

As mentioned before, a discourse type is a convention while discourse is a practice. The activity types presented above demonstrate that a potential co-creator might interpret that the forum discourse type endows the co-creator with the opportunity to occupy a subject position of a co-creative public without being in subordinate position to powerful participants. Hence, a co-creator may simultaneously undertake various roles. That is to say, a co-creator is able to switch between three sets of roles and tasks (adopted from Windahl et al. 2008; 2006):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role and Tasks of a Co-Creative Public</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communicator/Audience – during a communicative act when giving and/or seeking support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Producer/Consumer of information – during the co-creative act (e.g., production of a supportive message)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gated and Gatekeeper – during the selection process (e.g., choice of valuable source) and self-regulation process</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Co-creators simultaneously undertaking various roles within the forum discourse type are categorized by the analyst as **Supporters/Supported**. However, the analyst found a category of co-creators categorized as **Supported**.

### Supported - within the Forum DT

A significant characteristic of a *supported* is that even though they might seek support in an emotional manner, they position themselves within the forum discourse type thus expecting equality in the relationship with their co-contributors. Supported often contribute during a short period of time. Yet some of them are apt content producers on the forum, and they re-use the information produced by their co-creators. Another significant characteristic of a contributor categorized as supported is that they are choosy when it comes to what counts as a valuable source. Supported have no access to the administrative tools which classifies them as less powerful. Nevertheless, they are apt users of their writing and rhetorical abilities as a gatekeeping strategy to control information or protect their contributions. A popular gatekeeping strategy among the supported is inactivity (e.g., 'lurking' – reading the content without contributing).

### Supporters/Supported - within the Forum DT

*Supporters/Supported* are apt content producers on the forum, and they re-use the information produced by their co-creators. Another significant characteristic of a contributor categorized as supporters/supported is the willingness to switch between the roles of expert and non-expert. When seeking support, supporters/supported can express themselves in an emotional manner. While when
giving support, they might be perceived as a tower of strength. This characteristic was not found among the powerful group of co-creators. Supporters/supported have no access to the administrative tools which classifies them as less powerful. Yet since they interact according to the rules of the forum discourse type they seek equality in the relationship with their co-creators. Moreover, they are apt users of their writing and rhetorical abilities in order to control information or protect their contributions.

**Extract 4.** The extract below illustrates a co-creator occupying a subject position of a supporter/supported:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extract 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 <strong>How may I help</strong> Louisa 111108 19:18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Jag kom till detta forum via ett annat forum. Nu är det så att jag funderar på hur jag kan hjälpa till på något sätt. I reached this forum through another forum. You see, I am wondering if I may help in some way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Ser så mycket elakhet och ja vill bara kunna göra något. Hur bär jag mig åt? I see so much evil, and I just want to do something. How do I go about this?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The post created by co-creator using alias Therese s/he wishes to exchange experience instead of merely producing and receiving information. Thus s/he is interpreting the rules and norms according to the forum discourse type, where a co-creator may position him/herself as co-creative public. This is evident in the use of the pronouns “I” (row 1 and 2) in the subject position of oneself as active and in the construction of the image of others (relations) as equal - every contribution counts as valuable source of information.

**Superiority and Subordination – Victims VS Survivors**

The examples above suggest that relationship between the co-creators choosing to interact according to the conventions of an online forum are harmonious. However, some co-creators categorized as supporters/supported use control and constrain the contributions of other co-creators with the aid of syntetic personalization. Which is evident in the template of supportive message stating that a woman who is in an abusive relationship ought to leave the abuser without delay. The language used by these contributors is emotional, spontaneous, and the tone can be familiar. Supported are addressed affectionally using nouns such as “Sweetheart” or “Honey”. Hence, relationships between co-creators categorized as supported and supporters/supported are in times unequal were supported are subordinate to the supporters/supported. In these instances, supporters/supported treat some co-creators as co-creative public; in other instances as subordinate audience, which is illustrated in the discursive event below.

**Extract 5a-e.** In the first snippet, the author of the thread gives an account of facts related to the situation implying the need for support and advice. The original post receives several replies. The contributor categorized as supported uses discourse of the forum discourse type:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extract 5a</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 <strong>Psykisk och fysisk misshandel</strong> Mary 081225 17:28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 (…) Finns det någon annan som sitter i samma situation och vill prata? (…) Is there anyone out there in a similar situation willing to talk?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The original message written by Mary contains personal and emotional account of being pregnant and isolated. Mary is looking for people in the same situation in order exchange experience, thus, s/he expects to interact equally with another co-creator. The original post receives several replies such as this:
Extract 5b

0 SV: Psykisk och fysisk misshandel Amber 081226 00:27
Rpl: Mental and physical cruelty Amber 081225 00:27

1 Om du känner dig ensam och mår dåligt, ring kvinnofridslinjen som har öppet dygnet runt 020-50 50 50. Jag

2 skulle även rekommendera att du tog kontakt med Kriscentrum för kvinnor eller en annan kvinnojour för att kunna
   جاء diskussion om att det är viktigt att fortsätta med behandlingen. Denna förklaring avviker från den
   rekommenderar att du använder de resurser som finns tillgängliga för att få stöd i din situation.

3 få stöd i din situation. du är inte ensam.
help needed in your situation. you are not alone.

4

5 Vi är många som gått igenom liknande som du och har kunnat gå vidare i livet. Ge inte upp,
Many of us here have been in a similar situation and have been able to move on with our lives. Don't give up, you

6 du är värd ett liv med trygghet och glädje och att vara omgiven av kärleksfulla människor.
are worth a life in safety and happiness and be surrounded by loving people.

The post is written by a co-creator occupying a subject position of a survivor (Khor XXX, 7)
operating in a superior relationship to a victim, in this case, the co-creator Mary. Amber diverge
victims from survivor by stating that emotional weakness is the past for a survivor. This statement
makes the relationships between the victims and survivors unequal were the victim subordinates to
the survivor. Hence, the advice given by co-creator Amber is reliable and should be followed. When
addressing victims, the co-creators occupying subject position of a survivor, diverge themselves
from victims by using pronoun "we"; the pronoun "you" is used to refer to what they regard as
victims (row 2). In the extract 24b Amber uses the past tense in order to underline the difference
between victims and survivors showing that the true survivors are finished with the process of
leaving a destructive relationship which legitimize their role as educators towards victims. The co-
creator underlines that all supporters/supported have been strong enough to end the destructive
relationship, and that is why those identified as victims might learn of the superior survivors.

However, Amber constrains Mary's contribution since s/he encourages her/him to look for help
from experts outside the forum, thus meaning that here is not a place for discussions. Mary is
looking for an exchange of experience which contributor Amber denies. Already in the first
sentence Amber separates the author of the thread from her/himself by interpreting Mary's state of
mental health - "if you are feeling badly" (row 1) - as s/he later states by using the pronoun "we"
referring to the survivors that they are done with the process. Thus, showing disinterest in engaging
in a communicative act with a victim who is still in an abusive relationship. The talking should be
done outside the forum in a more controlled environment such as institutions as women's center
who specialize in VAW. Stating that Mary is not alone s/he refers to other victims whom s/he may
reach outside the forum.

Using the present tense Amber labels the author of the thread as a victim in need of assistance from
professionals (e.g., group therapy), being "you are not", "do not give up" (row 5-6) s/he
encourages to further action. Using negative "inte" Amber assumes that the addressed might do the
opposite. Using the past tense, Amber draws the line between her/himself and those in "your
(Mary's) situation" (row 2-3). When promising that Mary is not alone s/he refers to other victims.
The phrase "have been able" (row 5) states that the s/he and other survivors have succeeded with the
mission.
Since victims are not a reliable source of information due to their limited and subjective knowledge, e.g., they only feel that something must be wrong. The victim's knowledge is on an emotional level, thus, unreliable.

Extract 5c

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SV: Psykisk och fysisk misshandel Lea 081228 22:48</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Wanted to send you a hug a big warm hug and say that you are not alone, but it is hard and moreover all this takes Ville skicka en kram en stor varm kram och säga att du är inte ensam, men det är så svårt och allt detta tar så mycket kraft när du borde rikta kraften till ditt barn som finns där i magen. Ta hand om dig. Sänder många tankar och kramar till dig. Hoppas nästa år blir ett bättre år, det kommer det att bli, för då är du inte själv, då finns en bär bos vid din sida och ett helt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>so much energy when you instead ought to give all the strength to your child who is there in your tummy. Take a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>good care of yourself. Sending you many thoughts and I am giving you a hug. Hopefully the next year will be a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>better one, it is going to be, because then you are not alone anymore, as there is a baby at your side and a whole</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>nytt liv öppnar sig... new life ahead of you....</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Lea, co-creators occupying the subject position of a survivor, is expressing her/his thoughts about Marie's future responsibilities towards her/his unborn child. As a survivor, Lea advises Mary to think from the social identity of a mother instead of focusing on her/his emotional pain. The advice is designed using discourse technique used to exercise power, namely Counselling/Therapy technique. This is done by using the modal verb "Ought to" (row 2) which points towards the weakness of the victim unable to create a safe environment for either her/his unborn child or herself/himself without involving authorities. In this example, using counselling/therapy technique, the co-creator (Lea) occupying the subject position of survivor of abuse believes that socially generated ills can be remedied by individuals using their hidden potentials (Fairclough 1989; 1999).

Mary, the creator of the thread, does not respond to any of the replies. In hope that Mary is reading the forum two of the counsellors look for progress report:

Extract 5d

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SV: Psykisk och fysisk misshandel Jane 090128 17:13</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Mary! Hur är det med dig? Mary! Are you alright?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Mailade men din @adress funkar inte. I emailed you, but your @adress does not work.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Extract 5e

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SV: Psykisk och fysisk misshandel gina 090128 20:50</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Mary.... Mary....</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Hur mår du idag...Vi är många som undrar How are you feeling today... Many of us are wondering</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

The communicator, according to Jenkins, fear "(...") subjectivity" which occurs when audiences become co-creators of audience data (Jenkins et al. 2013, 176)
Despite the encouragement, the contributor Mary chooses silence. This action might be an example of agency since her/his inaction (s/he stops contributing) may be interpreted as a refusal to occupy a subject position of a victim.

4.2 Discourse Type legitimizing roles of Victims and Survivors

The discourse event presented in the extract 5 is one of many instances indicating a certain degree of distance between victims and survivors. Hence, the analyst examined discursive events dominated by victim-survivor discourse. The analysis revealed an alternative discourse type – rehabilitation discourse type. Apart from victim-survivor discourse, a discourse of therapy was also embedded within the rehabilitation discourse type. Compared to the forum discourse type, the rehabilitation discourse type is more constraintful allowing powerful co-creators to control and constrain the less powerful co-creators. The constraint is possible because the discourse of therapy is found in a counselling situation in which one participant is occupying the subject position of a skilled counsellor while the other is expected to occupy the position of a patient. That way the goal of a counselling session (to help the individual during the process of individual problem-solving) will be achieved. The therapy discourse as a social practice revolves around the assumption that socially generated ills causing suffering to individuals can be remedied by achieving behavioural changes (Fairclough 1989).

While the forum discourse type was easy to interpret with the aid of the member resources of a potential contributor, the rehabilitation discourse type was concealed until the analyst deconstructed the template of the supportive message designed by co-creators occupying the subject positions of supporters/supported and survivors. In short, victims of abuse need protection, and this forum is the safest place imaginable. Survivor's function is to enlighten the victims about their current situation, promising that the advice victims receive will change their lives for the better. This convention (discourse type) is based on one of the three discourse technologies – the discourse of therapy (Fairclough 1989). Within the rehabilitation discourse type in the forum, counselling technique is used by the survivors as means of enlightenment. The co-creators occupying the subject role of a counsellor depict victims as weak, lacking ambition, under the influence, passive, brainwashed, unable to proceed without professional help. Counsellors expect other participants to respond to this design of the image of the victim (e.g. metaphors and adjectives that reflect the social role of a victim).

At this point, it was of vital importance for the analyst to understand the world view of the co-creators identifying themselves as survivors, especially those co-creators occupying the position of counsellors. Therefore, in addition to the reading of forum threads, the analyst searched for complementary information about victim-survivor discourse (see Appendix 6), especially the notion of addiction to violence.

Extracts 6a-b. The following two extracts exemplify how through the use of negative connotations (e.g., weak ) contributors position themselves as subordinate undertaking the role of incompetent patients within the rehabilitation discourse type.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extract 6a</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 ... Casey 090503 12:58 ... Casey 090503 12:58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A contributor Leticia suggests that a victim of abuse requires rehabilitation since, and that the forum can aid during the rehabilitation process.

### Extract 6b

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>0</th>
<th>SV: ... Leticia 090503 Rpl: ... Leticia 090503</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Jag förstår dig och ditt och mitt beroende av våra män kan liknas vid alkohol och drogmissbruk. I understand you, and your and my dependence(addiction) to our men can be compared to addiction to alcohol and drugs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Skriv mer här på Tuva och berätta hur det går för dig. Continue writing here on Tuva and tell how it is going.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Kram Hugs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Extract 7

In the following extract, Connie is using the pronoun “we” to underline the importance of the rehabilitation discourse type. By identifying her/himself with other incompetent victims s/he positions her/himself as a patient that way justifying the role of the counsellors as educators and skilled counsellors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>0</th>
<th>Connie</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Vi utsatta kvinnor ”hittar” alltid anledningar till att stanna kvar utan en tanke på oss själva. We battered women always “find” an excuse for remaining without taking ourselves into consideration.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Also the pronoun “We” (row 1) helps to convince her/his audience about the correctness of the image of an abused victim. Thus, Connie is balancing the relationship between her/himself and her/his audience in order to strengthen her/his argument.

The analysts interpretation of the situational and intertextual context in which the rehabilitation discourse type was embedded, lead to the conclusion that the rehabilitation discourse type offers a co-creator one out of a set of roles and functions:

### Interpretation of legitimate roles and functions of a Counsellor

- communicator – during a communicative act when giving and/or seeking support
- producer – during the co-creative act (e.g. production of a supportive message)
- gatekeeper – during a selection process (e.g. choice of the valuable source) and self-regulation process

### Interpretation of legitimate roles and functions of a Patient

- audience – during a communicative act when giving and/or seeking support
- consumer of information – during the co-creative act (e.g. production of a supportive message)
- gated – during a selection process (e.g. choice of valuable source) and self-regulation process

### Counsellors – within the Rehabilitation DT

The author of the post probability refer to “in a relationship”.

---

43
Contributors claiming to have knowledge of violence due to their experience identify themselves with survivors of VAW. While their co-creators due to their inexperience are assigned the social identity of a victim of VAW. According to the data, there are few contributors positioning themselves as counsellors. Some of them had access to the administrative tools. Hence, due to their managerial capacities (e.g. removing content) they are believed to be powerful participants on the forum. Only one co-creator was unchallengeable in the question of power since this participant was able to remove the entire content, i.e. close down the public forum.

**Extract 8.** Counsellors, in their role as knowledgeable and competent communicators, claim to be able to provide the necessary help to a victim thus helping them to improve victim's mental state.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extract 8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 1 | (...)  
You are going to find yourself again, a new and little wiser version. One who is not a doormat, I hope. |

In the snippet above, Jane is using the future tense combining it with the adjective "wiser" (row 1) indicating the ignorance the victim possesses in the current state of mind.

**Extract 9.** In the example below, one of the powerful co-creators Julia/Tuva occupies the subject position of a counsellor when addressing the co-contributor Daisy. In the capacity of a counsellor, s/he expects the co-contributor to deliver a status report. Thus, the relationship between Julia/Tuva and Daisy are unequal since a patient is in a subordinate position to a counsellor. In the same instance, the counsellor informs about the opportunity to receive private counselling.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extract 9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 1 | Jag har varit borta från forumet från och till en tid. Men jag har tänkt och tänker på dig. Undrar om du fortfarande är med oss här och undrar så hur du har det. (row 1)  
I have been away from the forum for a while. But I have thought of you and I am still thinking of you. I wonder if you are here with us, and I wonder (misspelled word) so how you been. |
| 2 |  
Would you mind writing something here so that I/we know that you are all right? You can also email me. |

Julia/Tuva is using pronouns “I” and “we” (row 1,2 and 4) in the same instance. With the aid of personal pronoun “I” s/he refers to her/himself as the highest authority and most valuable source of information, since s/he refers to her/himself in the first hand that way labeling the rest of the supporters as secondary source. However, it is unclear to who s/he is referring as “we” (row 4), it might be either all supporters or the small group of those identified as survivors by the powerful group of contributors, categorized as counsellors.

The counsellors adopt the discourse of therapy within which person-to-person form of communication is a norm (Fairclough 1989, 186). Hence, the rehabilitation discourse type facilitates unequal relationship between the counsellor and the patient. The counsellor facilitates the process of self-conscious reflection (ibid.) during which a patient becomes aware of the abilities...
that can change the patient's current situation that cause suffering. The co-creators who seek support in the forum are expected to interact according to the rules of the rehabilitation discourse type. The roles and functions together with the access to administrative tool make a counsellor into a powerful participant in a discursive event on the forum.

**Patients - within the Rehabilitation DT**
The contributors accepting the victim-survivor discourse identify themselves with victims of abuse. They occupy the subject position of a patient due to the lack knowledge and inexperience. They rely on counsellors experience and knowledge assigning them the social identity of a survivor of abuse. None of the patients has access to the administrative tools on the forum thus they are considered as less powerful participants in a discursive event.

**Extract 10.** In the snippet above the contributor positions her/himself as subordinate within the rehabilitation discourse type. S/he rely on the counsellors knowledge completely denying her/his knowledge by stating that s/he is “in desperate need for support”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extract 10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 <strong>SV: julia Rpl: julia</strong> April 110821 00:28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Julia,så desperat efter stöd så satt o väntade tills du svarade,jag griper efter allt stöd. NU ska jag ut med Julia,I am desperate for support so I sat an' waited until you replied,so I clutch at any support. NOW I shall walk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 hunden.kram the dog.hugs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A patient can only use communication skills (e.g., writing) as a powerful tool. Hence, contributors belonging to this category are believed to have less political power compared to the group of contributors positioning themselves as counsellors.

### 4.3 Use of Power – Negotiating Discourses

The aim of the previous chapter was to describe the two discourse types (conventions) in the forum. The results suggest that co-creators interact according to the rules and norms of the discourse they prefer. Since the forum discourse type is detectable (in the GUI and UI) while the rehabilitation discourse type is concealed (can be found only in the supportive message), co-creators seem to choose freely between the rules and norms of the preferred discourse type. The analysis of constraints within each discourse type gave an understanding about the roles and functions that co-creators assigned to themselves when designing adequate supportive message directed towards co-creators requiring help during the emancipatory process from their abuser. This sub-chapter draws attention to power relations between the co-creators. More concretely, how co-creators respond to constraint by negotiating the subject positions they either voluntarily occupy or they are assigned to. The process of negotiation most frequently took place when conflicts of interest between the most active co-creator arrouse. The conflicts in all these instances were connected to interpretation of the discourse types by co-creators. Briefly speaking, a co-creator occupying a subject position of a supported/supporter expected to be able to freely participate in the creation of content. However, co-creators occupying a subject position of a counsellor expected other co-creators to occupy a subject position of a patient in order to receive for a victim of abuse adequate information. Simply put, the norms and rules of the two discourse types collided, and this made it necessary for each active co-creator to reproduce or negotiate their subject positions within a preferred discourse type by justifying the discourse type they want to interact in.

### 4.3.1 Negotiating Discourse of Co-creating Public
Counsellor Julia/Tuva, Extract 11. In the upcoming extract, a co-creator Julia/Tuva occupies a subject position of a counsellor, and as mention before functions of a counsellor is to educate. In this instance, Julia/Tuva created posts in which s/he underlined that s/he is the owner and financier of the forum, and being the owner sustains her/his subject position of the counsellor. A that way trying to establish the rehabilitation discourse type as the only convention on the forum. Julia/Tuva is using the passive voice instead of using personal pronouns referring to the second or third person when referring to the collective work of co-creation on the forum. However, s/he acknowledges her/himself as the first person “I” (row 1-3) when talking about the accomplishments of the support group on the forum. When doing so, the powerful contributor employs power and at the same time positions her/himself as a valuable and the only source of knowledge on the forum, since all important tasks that keep the forum going are completed by this particular contributor.

Extract 11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>0</th>
<th>Om TuvaForum Julia 110627 22:33 About TuvaForum Julia 110627 22:33</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Jag har byggt om forumet helt från grunden, den är lättare för mig att se över och administrera nu. Jag har också I have re-built the forum from scratch, it is easier now to control and administrate for me. I have also</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>ändrat det grafiska utseendet på forumet och hoppas att det känns ok, att ni kan vänja er vid det - kanske kändes changed the graphic design of the forum and I hope that it feels alright, that you can get used to it – maybe the old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>det gamla tryggt, men ibland behöver man fräscha upp och förnya lite. Det var några år offered some security, but sometimes it is necessary to freshen up and make minor changes. It was a few years ago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>sedan jag startade och byggde upp TuvaForum så det var dags. since I started and built TuvaForum so it was time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Jag är otroligt glad och stolt över TuvaForum, över det arbete, det otroligt värkarbete som görs här. Det är så I am very happy and proud of TuvaForum, of all the work, that incredible toil that is done here. It is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>mycket kraft fast många av oss känt ossss svaga, rädda och filled with fortitude even though many of usss (misprint in original text) have felt being weak, scared and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>små emellanåt - men himmel vad här uträttas mycket. Glöm inte det. sometimes small - but god knows a lot has been accomplished. Do not forget that.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Kram Julia Hugs Julia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Julia/Tuva chooses neither mention nor acknowledges the few moderators helping with minor administration of the forum. Also s/he does not acknowledge the work done by less powerful participants. The statement “a lot has been accomplished here” (row 8) implies that the positive changes were enabled by her/his individual creative act. In the statment “(...) I hope it feels ok” (row 2) the co-creator Julia/Tuva constrains other co-creators by disregarding the importance of less powerful contributors as valuable sources and co-creative public. By not referring to co-creators in second or third person s/he diminishes them to the role of a passive audience, who's duty on the forum is to consume the information produced by the counsellors. Another way of constraining contribution is by not imploring feedback which is evident in the phrase conveying her/his expectations on her/his audience to accept the changes. The interpretation of what the phrase “I hope” is that it conveys a definitive decision, and the power of the co-creator since the phrase might mean that opposition is unwelcome. In this example, the communication process is one-way; the sender (Julia) transmits the message, and the receiver (the anonymous audience) gets it upon which the process is completed. Further, s/he describes her/his feelings about achievements using adjectives “proud” and “happy” (row 6) in combination with the pronoun “I” (row 6) and the absence of an object in the sentence indicates that the producer of the content is Julia/Tuva, while
the audience is there to consume the information. Being irreplaceable gives her/him power necessary to control co-creation on the forum, which s/he expects the rest of the participants to accept.

Counsellor Alma, Extract 12. Counsellors are hand picked and perceived as survivors by the most powerful contributor Julia/Tuva. However, communication between the latter and Julia/Tuva is unequal, even though there are indications of them being acquainted. This is illustrated in the extract below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extract 12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 SV: Härskarteknik Alma 081023 12:21 Rpl: Suppression techniques Alma 081023 12:21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Jag har stött på det jag med ! Personer med Narssictiska (stavas det så?) störningar använder sig väl blå annat I have also experienced it ! People with Narcissistic (is it spelled that way?) personality disorder use this don't</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 utav det? they?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Jane det du beskriver om jobbet så exakt så var en kollega till mig också! Jane your description is so precise, a colleague of mine was just like that too!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Contributor Alma, the author of this reply, is in agreement with Jane's ideas, as she describes Jane's contribution using adjective "precise" (row 4) which made it possible for her to recognize a specific behaviour. Trust towards community expressed in Alma's uncertainty about her spelling the word "Narcissistic" (row 1), which might indicate that no judgment will be expressed from the community. Apart from that, Alma is positioning her/himself as subordinated compared to Lena, who is described as superior, by designing the sentence as a question rather than as a statement. That way strengthening Jane's position as a trustworthy information source – a communicator. Alma gains a position of less reliable source of information – audience, who is still lacking knowledge. Nevertheless, in many discursive events Alma is giving advice freely, without being contradicted by the two most powerful contributors. Therefore, the hierarchy reflected in the extract 5 might be intended in order to discipline presumptive (future) contributors, thus introducing the Rehabilitation discourse type for communication between the communicator and the audience. Contributors adopting the rehabilitation discourse type are expected to deliver results illustrated by their learning curve (row 4), like the snippet illustrates it, being able to recognize the problem and apply it to own experience.

4.3.2 Negotiating Position of a Less Powerful Participant

Counsellor Mildred, Extract 13. Mildred presents her/himself as a victim and survivor of abuse from an intimate partner (row 1-4) at the beginning of the presentation. However, at the end of the presentation, the contributors self-image change towards the social identity professional working with VAW (row 12-14).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extract 13</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 ... Mildred 100422 15:30 ... Mildred 100422 15:30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Jag är ny här på tråden. I am new here on the thread.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Träffade mitt livs kärlek för drygt två år sedan igen. I met the love of my life two years again.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Vi var förälskade i ungdomen men för blyga då. We were in love in our adolescent years, but we were far too shy back then.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Så träffades vi igen efter drygt 30 år och allt föll på plats mellan oss, trodde jag visste vem jag hade framför mig. Then we met about 30 years later and it clicked, I thought I knew who he was.

Vad jag inte kunde fatta under hela tiden var att denna underbara man faktiskt är en kvinnomisshandlare och What I could not realise during all that time was that this wonderful man in reality is an abusive person and a

grav alkoholist. chronic alcoholic.

Jag har gått igenom helvetesporten, utsatt för såväl psykisk som fysisk misshandel. Vi bröt för tre månader I have gone through the gate of Hell, tormented with both mental and physical abuse. We broke up three month

sen, nu står jag inför beslutet att polisanmäla honom. ago, now I contemplate reporting him to the police.

Jättejobbigt, vi har gemensamma vänner, jag är god vän med familjen, vi har så många beröringspunkter. It is awfully hard, we have mutual friends, I am a god friend of his family, we have many connections.

Till saken hör dessutom att jag jobbat professionellt i drygt 15 år med mäns våld mot kvinnor, föreläst, Appart from that, I have worked with mens violence against women for 15 years, invited as a speaker, for

aktiv i kvinnojouren under många år, har ett utbrett kontaktnät med kvinnojouir, BUP, polis, socialtjänst med many years active in womens shelter, have a broad network with women's shelters, police, social workers and so

mera. Alla vet vem jag är i detta sammanhang. Det var lite om mig on. Everyone knows me in those connections. Shortly about me

Kram Mildred
Hugs Mildred

Mildred states that s/he was able to break out of the abusive relationship (row 6-7). However, s/he underlines that s/he is a highly professional within the field by emphasizing her/his achievements. Using rhetorical tools such as ethos, s/he strengthens her/his position as a valuable and reliable source of information. The above is exemplified in the statement that authorities ranging from private organizations to governmental institutions acknowledge her/his expertise (row 12-14). By stating “Everyone knows me” (row 14) s/he indicates that her/him being on the forum will bring positive results.

Mildred distances her/himself from contributors labeled as victims by the use of synthetic personalization. Mildred's design of the supportive message influenced some of the powerful co-creators. Especially Julia/Tuva who after Mildred's arrival alters the design of the supportive message of the group categorized as counsellor. Mildred undertakes the role of a communicator who knows the needs of her/his audience. The design of Mildred's supportive message is according to the rules of therapy discourse when addressing the patient: “a person to person communication” marked by the development of a subtle emotional understanding often described technically as “rapport” or “empathy”; that is centered upon one or more problems of the client; (...) (Fairclough 1989, 186). In addition, s/he uses value-free words free from “authoritarian judgments and coercive pressures by the counsellor” (ibid.). The alteration in Julia/Tuva's message resulted in absence of “authoritarian judgements and coercive pressures”23, as Fairclough would put it.

Mildred is conscious of her/his writing style since all her/his posts have identical design. Moreover, the lack of emotions or grammar errors such as misprints in her/his posts indicate self-control, which is evident in the sentence (row 8-9) were Mildred informs her/his reader that s/he recently

23 For instance, when giving advise instead of using “You must” the powerful contributors use “Take your time.”
left the abusive relation “We broke up three months ago (…)”. Self-control strengthens her/his image as a trustworthy source of information, which is evident in many discourse events. Moreover, Julia/Tuva accepts Mildred's choice of the subject position, namely a counsellor. Such promotion is highly unusual since according to the rehabilitation discourse type a patient is never promoted to a counsellor due to the lack of experience. A counsellor requires knowledge in order to educate, support and protect victims of intimate partner violence. In addition, Mildred is allowed to act as a hostess welcoming new members to the forum.

By recognizing Mildred as irreplaceable due to her/his professional achievements (see row 12-14), the most powerful co-creator Julia/Tuva subordinate to the authorities outside the forum through Mildred. This is the only example demonstrating how a less powerful participant becomes powerful due to her/his expertise. Even though this particular co-creator is unable to remove the entire content on the website, s/he is still the highest authority on the forum. On two occasions Mildred threatens to withdraw from the forum. Her/him leaving the forum would mean withdrawal of information. Thus, this particular co-creator is able to constrain contributions of other co-creators.

4.3.3 Negotiating Counsellor-Patient Discourse

Supporter/Supported Selena, Extract 14. In this example, a co-creator Selena comments a post created by Julia, a co-creator occupying the subject position of a counsellor. The post is a personal account of her/his experience of domestic abuse. The post is written in a narrative style using metaphors. The choice of the genre indicates that s/he expects the reader not to confuse the genre with the supportive message designed according to the rules of the victim-survivor discourse within the rehabilitation discourse type. However, s/he receives some comments concerned with her/his current mental state:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extract 14</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 SV: Misshandel finns inte i mina.. Selena 090430 07:56 Rpl: Misshandel finns inte i mina.. Selena 090430 07:56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 (…) Hur känner du dig idag Julia? Ibland när man skriver mycket jobbiga minnen, kan det liksom vara (…) How are you feeling nowadays Julia? Sometimes when one writes a lot about painful memories, one might feel as</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 som om luften går ur en ett tag. Hoppas du kunde sova åndå. one was in a void for a while. Hope you can sleep anyway.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is no visible reply from Julia to the question. The silence might mean that Julia does not intend to build any relationship with other co-creators. Also, synthetic personalization helps the counsellors to reach their patients rather than building a relationship with them. Thus, Julia maintains the facade of a survivor who is assumed to be in full control of her/his emotions.

Supporter/Supported Layla, Extract 15. Supporter who contributed under the name Layla adopted the survivor's discourse. However, Layla makes some alterations to the message by using different verb form. S/he uses "try" instead of modal verb "must", thus encouraging rather than attempting to convince or persuade the receiver. Otherwise, the message also promotes that the abused ought to disband the abusive relationship immediately. Also Layla is using synthetic personalization in the same manner as the counsellors. In following snippet using imperative combined with capital letters (row 1) and exclamation marks, Layla creates the feeling of importance of her/his statement. In order to make the statement sound sincere s/he rounds up with synthetic personalization.
### Extract 15

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Snälla, rara du!! GÅ ifrån honom!!</th>
<th>Please love!! GO away from him!!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Detta kommer aldrig att bli bättre!!</td>
<td>This will never get better!!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Låt inte åren gå och sitt och ångra dig om femton år, som jag gör!! Jag lovar dig att du och</td>
<td>Do not let the years pass and sit and regret when fifteen years have passed, like I do!! I promise you that you and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dina små får det bättre på egen hand!</td>
<td>your little ones will make it on your own!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRO MIG, det blir inte bättre!!!</td>
<td>BELIEVE ME, it will not get better!!!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Du är stark, du klarar det!</td>
<td>You are strong, you will make it!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Du kommer att kunna älska igen, en man som är snäll. Som får dig att må gott, njuta av livet och kärleken!</td>
<td>You will be able to love again, a nice man. Who will make you feel good, enjoy life and love!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stora kramar till dig!!</td>
<td>Huge hugs to you!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The extract shows how co-creator Layla perceives her/himself as valuable source of information because of her/his experience of abuse which makes her into a survivor. Thus, s/he expects to be able to occupy a subject position of a counsellor, and to be treated equally by other counsellors.

### Extract 16

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jag skulle vara tacksam för kommentarer.</th>
<th>I would be grateful for your comments.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jag skulle gärna vilja läsa mer om psykisk misshandel, hur man upptäcker det, hur man skyddar sig</td>
<td>I would like to read more about physical violence, how one may recognize it, how one may protect oneself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>osv. Jag behöver bygga upp mig själv och jag behöver kunna ge min son rätt instrument för att i and so on. I need to recreate myself and I have to be able to give my son right instruments so that he can</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>framtidens kuna umgås med sin far på ett sätt som inte riskerar att skada honom.</td>
<td>have a relationship with his farther without risking to take any damage from him.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Statements such as "I need to recreate myself" (row 4) exclude emotions and affections. As Grace describes her/himself as active and capable of action, s/he is trying negotiate and change the victim-survivor discourse. Thus by not accepting the social role of the helpless victim, s/he is breaking the
cardinal rule within the rehabilitation discourse type. Despite her/his rebellion, Grace received support from both counsellors and supporters/supported. However, this is the only instance demonstrating the tolerance towards a co-creator breaking the rules.

4.4 Gatekeeping Strategies: Dealing with Harmful Contributions

In order to protect the message and the victim-survivor discourse, the powerful group practices various strategies of information control. Aborting conversation if a message advocated is contradicting the knowledge of the powerful group is one of the strategies. Interference with the goal of the powerful group is regarded as harmful by the contributors with most political power.

4.4.1 Aborting Conversation

**Extract 17a-c and 18a-b.** The two upcoming discursive events are examples of gatekeeping strategies used during the negotiation of the emancipation discourse and the victim-survivor discourse in the forum. The powerful group counsellors in their roles as gatekeepers are practicing gatekeeping in order to protect their fragile audience seeking refuge on the forum. Since the counsellors in their role as communicators know what their audience need they decide what information to discard and what to promote. Harmful content counts as posts using masculine language, and content that can diminish the professionalism and legitimacy of the forum.

**Extract 17a-c.** The original post in the thread is about the law against stalking in Finland. The thread receives two replies. One of them is from a co-creator using a male alias Garry. Garry's reply to the original post had been removed. However, the answer addressed to Garry was still visible in the forum.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extract 17a; Original post: Något för oss? Jane 090130 08:31</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 Något för oss? Jane 090130 08:31 Något för oss? Jane 090130 08:31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Något att införa även här? Something to introduce even here?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Extract 17b**

| 0 -------Deleted post------------------- |
| 1 |

**Extract 17c**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extract 17c</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Det är ju så, Garry, att vissa människor, oavsett kön, tar sig rätten att trakassera personer It is quite so, Garry, that some people, regardless their sex, think themselves being entitled to harass people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 i sin omgivning. För din notis bara så är denna site för kvinnor. Män har sina siter around them. Just to bring to your attention, this site is for women only. Men have their own websites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 där ni kan stötta varann. were you can support each other.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The reply indicates that Garry had an alternative interpretation of the original message created by Jane. In the first sentence, Jane singles out the co-creator by using noun of direct address “Garry” (row 1). All three sentences are constructed as declarative sentences, yet the command is given in

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24 In this case ”fristad” is translated as ”refuge” from swedish to english.
25 The contributor is most possibly referring to the online support forum for men: Farsa.nu, where men supported each other in issues regarding custody of children, divorce e.t.c. The forum is not active anymore.
form of a suggestion in the second and third sentences.

The second sentence is missing a subject as the sentence starts with the word "Just" (row 2). That way, the sentence expressing strong emphasis with the goal of singling out the object described with the aid of a personal pronoun "you" (row 2). "Just" (row 2) is followed by "to bring to" (row 2) making it sound an instruction. The instruction is explained in the following sentence in which Jane informs about alternative online spaces. By the instruction, Jane expresses a request, namely to stop contributing, without using imperatives. This action also strengthens her/his position on the forum as s/he clearly demonstrates her/his political power, which in action is deleting posts.

Jane deletes Garry's reply, yet s/he chooses to keep her/his reply to him/her. From the reply, one can assume that Garry's post contradicted Jane's original message by stating that the information is not relevant. Thus, putting him/herself in a position as an alternative source of information in the forum. However, Jane has interpreted Garry's post as harmful for the forum. That way the selection process is based on Jane's decision in her/his role as communicator in which s/he knows the need of her/his audience (in this case co-creators assigned the role of a victim).

The fact that the reply is removed indicates a conflict of interests. Since Jane writes “some people, regardless their sex, think they have right to” (row 1), one can assume that Garry might have been talking about women who are acting violently towards men. Also, as Jane is mentioning “forum for men” (row 2) one may think that Garry was talking about men as victims of violence from their intimate partner, who happen to be a woman. This discussion concern gender, women or men, not biological sex: male or female, therefore, according to Garry, positioning a woman as subordinate to man is an untrue statement. As such, his/her statement would deny the inequality among women and men being rooted in the social structures. On the other hand, Jane might claim that a woman is always a victim.

This aborted conversation demonstrates that neither party is willing to create a dialogue. As powerful contributors could have asked Garry to elaborate his/her opinion or contradict it which would lead to co-creation of knowledge. Both parties are willing to act in the role of a communicator informing and producing content as well as express their opinion and highlight their perspective. However, there is no intention of creating a dialogue. When it comes to interpretation of the discourse type, one could assume that Garry is interpreting the discourse type as a forum discourse type, as he/she is expressing an opinion. The contributor Garry might also interpret the discourse type differently, and therefore practice gatekeeping by reducing the relevance of the particular source of information. Regardless the intentions of the less powerful contributor Garry, the powerful contributor Jane seems to interpret Garry's action as constraining, and willing to dominate the forum.

There are no more visible replies from neither participants nor co-creators. This finding indicates that Jane is rejecting the patriarchal structure as s/he rejects Garry's contribution as a valuable information source. By deleting his/her post s/he is constraining his/hers ability to contribute to the collective knowledge on the forum. Co-creation thus is not taking place.

26 http://www.onestopenglish.com/community/your-english/word-grammar/your-english-word-grammar-just/156864.article

27 Farsa.nu was a forum for men active during the same period, now I could only find Dads-r-us-se, which is a static website http://www.dads-r-us.se/vardnadstvist/ and Daddys-sverige.com, a blogg http://www.daddys-sverige.com/daddys-blogg/hur-nyheter-grs-om-till-propaganda
Deleting his/her post and keeping her/his reply can also be understood as a symbolic ritual during which a celebration of emancipation from the patriarchal ideology of male dominance takes place by removing a contradicting opinion. As the snippet (25c) illustrates, Jane is assuming that Garry is a man. Looking at this gatekeeping action as a ritual, by rejecting patriarchy Jane is claiming social status on the forum. While patriarchal social structures forces a woman to subordinate to a man s/he forwards him to a place for men. Nevertheless, Jane acknowledging these websites as alternative sources of information.

**Extract 18a-b.** In the next extract, a contributor is trying to negotiate the dominant topic on the forum: men are perpetrators and women are victims. Moreover, the author of the thread suggests that depicting women as victims is per se harmful. Hence, the less powerful contributor is pointing out possible idiosyncrasies within the victim-survivor discourse. When criticising, the author does not single out anyone, rather the subject is called “movement” (row 4). This design strategy neutralises the discussion by focusing on the alternative interpretation rather than finding a scapegoat. The design of the message enables the discussion to continue. By presenting positive features of the forum, motivating why the discussion is needed on this particular forum, and at the posts ends with two questions that could lead to a discussion. The author of the thread uses pronoun “We” (row 2) in order to strengthen her/his argument. However, without specifying to whom she/he is referring by “we”. The use of pronoun indicates that *t* emphasizes that the notion is common knowledge, which seem to be forgotten in this particular online space. However, this is a rhetorical trick. Because when the communicator talks about the “truth” known to everyone in the logos part, the communicator talks to one’s audience in a manner that is supposed to give new insights and knowledge. This is done by calling upon experiences which the co-creator assume to be known or experienced by the audience (Josefsson et al. 2008, 32-34).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extract 18a</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 tuvaforum <em>t</em> 110619 20:46 tuvaforum <em>t</em> 110619 20:46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Det är mycket som är bra med tuva-sidan, så det är kanske synd att klaga, men att man hela tiden utgår ifrån there is much that is good with the tuva-page, so maybe one should not complain, but if one always assumes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 att det är en &quot;han&quot; som misshandlar. Vi vet alla att personer med manligt kön är överrepresenterade, särskilt i det that it is a &quot;he&quot; that assault and battery. We all know that the male sex is over represented, especially when it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 grova och det dödande våldet. Men härskaren, gärningsgöraren är ofta också en kvinna. comes to severe violence that leads to death. But the enforcer and ruler is also often a woman.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Det ligger också ofta utsatta kvinnor i fattet, att det finns en rörelse, som fastslår: Mannen är förrövaren, It is often also vulnerable women in the barrel, that there is a movement that say's: The man is the perpetrator,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 kvinnan är offer. the woman is a victim.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Det finns också komplexa, destruktiva relationer, där det inte går att avgöra, där det finns två there are also complex, and destructive relationships, where it is not possible to judge, there are two</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 gärningsgörare, och därmed också två offer. perpetrators, and therefore also two victims.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Om en gärningsgörare ska förändra sig, så är det väl inte så käckt om denne per kön ska känna sig utmålad, och döm? If a perpetrator should change, it is not so jaunty if one just because of the gender will be portrayed and judged?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Eller hur hade det sett ut om gärningsgöraren i Tuva-serien i samtliga fall varit färgad? Or how would it have looked like if the perpetrator in the Tuva-series in every case was a colored person?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Extractor 18b: In original thread: tuvaforum started by *t*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>0</th>
<th>Träden är avslutad Moderator 110619 20:55 The thread is closed Moderator 110619 20:55</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>TuvaForum vänder sig till kvinnor som har utsatts/utsätts för psykisk, fysisk och sexuell missandel i nära relationer. TuvaForum vet att det finns ett utbrett våld man mot man, kvinna mot kvinna och man mot kvinna, man mot kvinna och kvinna mot man. Men vi fokuserar dock på det våld som utförs av män mot kvinnor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Texterna på TuvaForum är till för alla och för dig som läsare är det enbart att byta ut han/hon så att du kan dig till dem på bästa sätt. they can suit your needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Tråden är avslutad. The thread is closed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The reply is written in a formal manner by Moderator. The gatekeeper’s action is closing the thread, thus rejecting the author of the thread *t* as a useful source of information. The placement of the sentence ”The thread is now closed” underlines that further discussion is undesirable. The gatekeeper rejects the idea that the forum is open for discussions and ventilation of contrasting ideas. Thus the gatekeeper “Moderator” (row 10), is positioning her/himself as the communicator and the contributors as passive audience. As communicator rights to select adequate information and select a correct source of information. To control the information flow the moderator uses the unchallengeable gatekeeping action, i.e. aborting a conversation thus making the co-creators powerless diminishing them to the role of passive audience. The moderator finalizes the discussion by rejecting the forum discourse type as useful.

4.4.2 Denying Support

Supporter/Supported Andy and Counsellor Jane, Extract 19a-c. A co-creator Andy asks for advice. However, s/he seeks to understand the implications of silent treatment by discussing the issue and reflecting on the topic:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extract 19a</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the extract 20b, the counsellor Jane implies that contributor Andy is breaking the rules of the discourse since it reflection is unnecessary:
4.4.3 Using communicative skills as a gatekeeping strategy

The most powerful contributor Julia/Tuva subordinate Mildred by recognizing Mildred as irreplaceable due to her/his professional achievements. This is the only example demonstrating how a contributor with less political power becomes powerful due to her/his special position on the forum. Even though this particular contributor is unable to remove the entire content on the website, s/he is the highest authority on the forum. When Mildred threaten to withdraw from the forum s/he positions her/his co-contributors in a subordinate position since Mildred perceives her/his co-creators as passive victims of violence. S/he can therefore “punish” them by leaving the victims at their own fate.

Extract 20. Mildred's position allows her to practice various gatekeeping strategies during a co-creative process using only her/his communication skills. In the following instance, Mildred bans a co-creator using her/his writing and rhetorical skills. Thus practicing gatekeeping without the aid of the administrative tools.
För dig är taket högt, att skriva fan, skit och helvete är okej för dig. Då finns det andra forum för dig men håll dig från Tuvaforum. För mig är taket lägre, jag vill ha en ödmjuk, stilla och vänlig samtalston där dessa uttryck inte hör hemma.

Mildred constrains the contributor from co-creation. Mildred positions her/himself as superior by comparing her/his communication strategies with Layla's. Using adjectives connotating feminine attributes e.g. “humble” (row 4) s/he describes her/himself as stable, while Layla as source is described using swearing expressions e.g. “shit” or “fuck” connotating aggressive masculine way of dealing with emotions. Since Lill assumes a masculine tone s/he is not welcome on the forum. Note that the way Mildred of addressing Layla derive from the therapy discourse, rather it stems from the sexist discourse positioning a woman into the social role of forgiving victim (see van Dijk 2009). More concrete, a forgiving female victim's duty is to forgive her enemies without becoming overly emotional (according to the sexist discourse) rather she is to look into herself in order to solve their individual “personal” problems (according to the therapy discourse). Thus, a contributor rejecting the role of the victim is not even positioned in the subordinate role of a patient, rather s/he is considered as harmful source of information. Mildred's power is reflected in the use of the pronoun “I” (row 4) when s/he talks about the forum as a whole. Instead of implying that other contributors might share her/his opinion, s/he expresses a certainty that this is already the case. That way, Mildred diminishes other contributors to the role of a passive audience since Mildred (as a communicator) knows the need of the audience. Mildred is the only contributor who accomplishes changes using this particular unchallengable gatekeeping strategy with the aid of writing and rhetorical skills. In this particular case, the contributor Layla became less active, yet s/he did not alter her/his design of the supportive message, which could be interpreted as an act of agency. Julia/Tuva, however, never responded (in public) to this messages, thus positioning Mildred as the highest authority on the forum.

4.4.4 Inaction as agency

Extract 21a-b. A woman herself is responsible for not becoming a victim of abuse, which is reflected in following discourse event describe below. The thread “Are there men who do not” initiated by a less powerful contributor is seeking to discuss whether there is a chance of a healthy intimate relationship between a man and woman. The powerful contributor Jane continues the conversation stating that a former victim can avoid becoming a victim by making behavioural changes. S/he also describes characteristics of a typical perpetrator.

Extract 21a

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SV: Finns det män där ute som inte</th>
<th>Jane 090330 23:15</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rpl: Are there men out there who do not</td>
<td>Jane 090330 23:15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 (…) Vi pratar till och från, som vänner, trots allt. Och min man vet om att han finns och vilken relation vi haft, det är ok. Bättre än att ligga runt. Så det är inte alltid så att vånskapen förstörs.

relationship we had, (and) it is ok. Better than sleep around. So the friendship does not have to be destroyed.

3 Däremot förstörs dina chanser till ett seriöst förhållande och ditt rykte om du ligger runt. De snälla killarna
However, your chances to a serious relationship and your reputation diminish if you sleep around. The good guys
do not want a girl with such a bad reputation.

In addition, Jane is advising to make changes in lifestyle since premarital relationships are an
obstacle to finding a trustworthy partner. Jane's advice regarding a woman's reputation derives from
own experience. A woman's reputation is at stake if she “sleeps around” (row 2). Therefore,
matriomony, according to Jane, is as a goal to achieve. Jane points out that her/his husband is
informed about her/his previous sexual relationships. The husband is not resentful towards Jane's
past as s/he explain “it is ok” (row 2). The statement suggests that Jane is subordinate to the
superior husband. Thus, s/he reproduces the sexist discourse generated in the patriarchal cultural
contexts in which the male dominate the conventions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extract 21b</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 SV: Finns det män där ute som inte</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rpl: Are there men out there who do not</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Om man söker utanför de cirklar man tidigare rört sig i så är det lättare att inte trilla dit för samma sort.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If one is looking outside one's circles it is easier not to fall of the map for the same sort.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Tex, byt krog du går på, byt gym, börja på en ny aktivitet. (…)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Jane's posts are not contradicted. Therefore, one might conclude that reproduction of sexist
discourse is taking place. Another interpretation is that those who would like to contradict wish to
avoid unnecessary tension between themselves and the powerful contributors. This inaction would
indicate agency, a way of negotiating the sexist and therapy discourses. Thus, a group of co-creators
voluntarily position themselves in a subordinate position to the superior contributor Jane.

4.4.5 Change From Supported into Lurker

Supported Violet, Extract 22. A snippet below is taken from a discursive event were a co-creator
Violet seeks support, Violet had received replies from a number of co-creators advising her/him to
leave the abusive relationship immediately. Since Violet stopped contributing to the thread, another
creator created a new thread asking Violet to create a status report: “Rpl: Violet, how are
things?” (row Title). It turned out that Violet had not left the forum. S/he change the co-creating
practice from contributing to reading. Violet explains the change in practices by referring to her/his
inability to interact according to the rehabilitation discourse type. Part of which a patient is to
deliver results:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extract 22</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 SV: Violet, hur går det? Violet 100815 14:14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rpl: Violet, how are things? Violet 100815 14:14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 1 Ni är så gulliga och omtänksamma. Jag har känt mig lite rädd att skriva för att jag vet vad jag borde göra
You all are so sweet and thoughtful. I have been a bit afraid to write because I know what I ought to do
| All are so sweet and thoughtful. I have been a bit afraid to write because I know what I ought to do
| 2 och att ni har rätt. Men jag kan inte gå nu så som ni säger att man ska. Det är en lätt att höra att många
and that you are right. But I can not go just now like you say one should. It is a relief to here that there are many
| others who have had difficulties with leaving and that it had taken time. I shall read what you have written many

29 source: http://idioms.thefreedictionary.com/sleep+around
4 gånger nu och smälta.
times and sleep on it.

5

6 Kram och tack!
Hugs and thanks!

7 Violet
Violet

The post is written as a farewell. Violet acknowledges the supporters as a valuable source of knowledge (row 2) by saying, “you are right” (row 2). S/he underlines, however, by using the conjunction “But” (row 2) in the following sentence that s/he can not interact according to victim/survivor discourse. Nevertheless, the contributor also expresses a promise by stating “I shall read” (row 3) to underline that s/he values the shared knowledge regarding her/his case. One interpretation is that with the aid of synthetic personalization (“Hugs and thanks” row 6) s/he wants to maintain a good relationship with the forum for future support.
5 Discussion

The aim in this chapter is to discuss the results presented in the previous chapter. It aims to link the analysis of the data, previous research and theory, in order to demonstrate the importance of the findings found in this case study for those willing to aid the oppressed group in their quest of emancipation (e.g. policy makers, volunteers and professionals working with VAW). This chapter explains the findings by looking at power in discourse and power behind the discourse.

To be able to answer the main research question, *How do co-creators use gatekeeping as a survival strategy when constraining and enabling the co-creation of content in the public forum tuvaforum.se?* following sub-research questions were asked:

- What are the features of the dominant discourse type(s), and to what institutional power-holders do these conventions belong to?
- What are the dominant discourses in which co-creators exercise and enact power?
- How do co-creators legitimize their roles and functions in the forum?
- What gatekeeping strategies enable co-creators to constrain or protect co-creation or individual creation of content (e.g. supportive message)?

This section aims at discussing the findings that answer the research questions above. The answers to the research questions gave a deeper understanding about how power operates in discourse and behind discourse thus this chapter will provide negative and positive critique that might serve during the reflection process.

5.1 Power in Discourse

Four discourses were found on the public forum: the therapy discourse, the emancipation discourse, the sexist discourse, and the victim-survivor discourse. The victim-survivor discourse was used by co-creators identifying themselves with the social role of a survivor (see van Dijk) diverge from victims. The victims were expected to operate in a subordinate relationship to the survivors. Thus, the victims-survivor discourse provided unequal encounters between co-creators during which survivors (as powerful participants) could constrain and control the contribution of less powerful co-creators labeled as victims. However, there was a lack of consensus between the co-creators identifying themselves as survivors about which co-creators are entitled to be called survivors in the public forum. A true survivor was expected to adopt the traditional role of communicators and function as information producer with the goal to educate the victim. While the victim was expected to adopt the traditional role of the consumer of information with the goal to achieve behavioral changes.

The expectations caused conflicts of interest between the co-creators during which various gatekeeping strategies were used. The results show how co-creators used their political power in order to protect their right to contribute in conflicting situations. Co-creators with access to managerial tools (with most political power in the forum) acted as traditional gatekeepers. These co-creators favored unchallengeable gatekeeping strategies such as removal of content or banning a contributor. Due to lack of permission to exercise managerial responsibilities, the less powerful group of contributors may only influence each other through the means of communication, i.e. writing and rhetorical skills. For a contributor with less power, the only unchallengeable gatekeeping strategy is to stop contributing thus becoming a lurker, i.e. a passive reader of the content on the forum. The gated in an online environment may also become powerful due to the
autonomy achieved during the content production (see Barzilai-Nahon). However, the results of this study show that only one less powerful co-creator became the highest authority in the forum due to the professional achievements of the particular co-creator. While the contributor with most political power on the forum had to use unchallengeable gatekeeping strategies, e.g. removing threads in order to accomplish changes on the forum, the highest authority could accomplish a change with the aid of writing and rhetorical skills. In the light of this, it can be argued that gated may also have political power as Barzilai-Nahon claimed if they master communicative skills as ”mutable and malleable medium” (Tredinnick 2008, 71).

According to Barzilai-Nahon, self-regulation mechanisms may serve in a positive and negative way; norms can both enhance the effectiveness of operation of a community and serve as censorship that empower hegemonic speech (Barzilai-Nahon 2006:24). This study shows that gatekeeping strategies are used in order to maintain what powerful co-creators regarded as order since their goal is to protect the victims of violence. However, order favors hegemonic speech and hierarchical structures, constraining the co-creation. In their role as communicators, they failed to acknowledge the audience as competent even though, as results show, the audience attempted to negotiate their roles trying to change the victim-survivor discourse.

The data revealed that sexist discourse is reproduced in the forum. This finding was unexpected since initially the oppressed group was expected to combat discourses that have roots in patriarchal structures that subordinate women to men. However, it is impossible to determine whether the sexist discourse is adapted and reproduced by all the contributors on the forum since there are only a few instances that show a positive response from the ideal reader. Nevertheless, most of the contributors identify themselves as passive media audiences; thus, not being able to take part in co-creation according to conventions of the forum (i.e. forum discourse type). These audiences respond positively to the authority, the owner of the platform, since they value less their contribution and rely on the contributors with most political power as the main producer of information.

According to the data, there are exceptionally few posts that acknowledge and recognize the support community as a co-creative public. One could say that there is no sense of community. Instead, there is adoration of the expert. The less powerful participants did not recognize their own value and potential. Notably, without their contribution either a question, reflection or any text, the forum will cease to exist or simply transform into a static website with a plentiful supply of information. An indication of self-constrain in an online environment is a useful complement to results from studies based on traditional theories. As Xigen Li (2011) argued, transparency and openness and gratification from the co-creators is a motivating factor. Tredinnic (2008) describes individualisation of content as the curse of the individual ego since the invention of print and copyright. The results of this study demonstrate that many contributors regarded the content on the public forum as a result of an individual creative act, rather than the fruits of co-creation. Only one contributor was openly celebrated as the creator, producer and communicator (see Windahl 2006) of the forum. A co-creative Web 2.0 environment requires surviving skills (Brandes et al. 2010). The results of this study show that contributors with good communication skills were not always able to negotiate the discourse types shaping the public forum. Only the highest authority on the support forum due to the professional achievements could shape the discourse types with the aid of writing and rhetorical skills.

So far the results of this study are in agreement with scholars who argue that depending on the context individuals can simultaneously be powerful and powerless in a number of situations (Diabah 2011; Baxter 2002; Barzilai-Nahon 2006; Tredinnick 2008; Aikens 1997). Yet power in
discourse gives us only one interpretation of power and domination. Therefore, power behind the discourse will be discussed in the upcoming sub-chapter.

5.2 Power behind Discourse

As noted in the previous section, the powerful group counsellors distinguish themselves from the less powerful patients in order to justify their roles as communicators and gatekeepers. In the role of communicators who knows the need of their audience, counsellors exercise power over less powerful participants categorized as supported and supporters/supported. In addition, the results indicate that there were less powerful participants even among the co-creators categorized as counsellors. Three most powerful counsellors exercised power over co-creators within encounters based upon the rehabilitation discourse type. Conventions of the rehabilitation discourse type attributed rights to control discursive events to these three most powerful counsellors. Part of their power was to act as communicators towards the patients who only had power to act as passive audience. For powerful counsellors, in powerful ment to impose the rehabilitation discourse type upon less powerful co-creators because these three counsellors new what information was needed to aid the less powerful co-creators who were regarded as victims unable to leave their abuser. Thus, powerful counsellors pressured supported and supporters/supported to occupy the subject position attributed by the rehabilitation discourse type and behave in constrained way, namely as passive audience whose function is to learn, listen and act according to the counsellors advice.

Looking behind the discourse, one finds that the properties of the discourse type are also imposed on the three powerful co-creators occupying the subject position of counsellors by both the medical institution/system (especially psychotherapy and CBT, Cognitive behavioral therapy) and patriarchal structure. The power behind the discourse convention belongs to the power-holders of institution (let's say The National Board of Health and Welfare) who also police (enforce) conventions (Fairclough 1989, 61). Towards the powerful co-creators conventions are enforced in negative (sanctions) and positive (benefits) sense. In the forum, those who make the first contact with individuals suffering from abuse are individuals (especially the two most powerful participants Julia/Tuva and Jane) who have experienced abuse and have taken part in CBT. Thus, the way the powerful participants act is enforced by the institutional hierarchy (e.g., The National Board of Health and Welfare, CBT therapists). Simply put, through the powerful participants occupying the subject position of a counsellor people can be disciplined towards the process of individual problem-solving. The affirmation to the powerful participants pushing others towards individual problem-solving is to be accepted as survivors of violence.

The appearance of the professional (Mildred) on the forum is a way of sanctioning the co-creators who identify themselves with the survivors since the professional makes it her/his responsibility to regain order among the victims and survivors. The true gatekeeper in this example (case study) is the highest authority in the forum representing governmental institutions who aim to aid women suffering abuse from their intimate partner. This co-creator (Mildred) could use unchallengeable gatekeeping strategies – withholding information - without the need for administrative tools in order to constrain and control the process of co-creation. Her/his affiliation to authorities working with gender violence made her/him powerful in the forum.

Moreover, the conventions within the rehabilitation discourse type can be understood from the perspective of the societal order of discourse. As previously mentioned, the sexist discourse existed side by side with the emancipation discourse in the supportive message designed by the powerful
category of co-creators counsellors to aid an individual during the liberation process from the abuser. All co-creators aiming to help an abused are on the one hand supporting the abused and on the other hand treating them as inferior using synthetic personalization when trying to explain the need for behavioral changes in order to leave the abuser. Consequently, the socially generated ills causing suffering to individuals will be remedied by achieving behavioural changes - a woman should accept the rules of patriarchal structures.

Gatekeeping as a strategy is used to protect the rehabilitation discourse type and the supportive message designed based on the counselling techniques. Since the most powerful contributors and the highest authority on the forum favored the therapy discourse jointly they were able to control the information flow and production on the public forum. In addition, they were able to choose contributors who could act as additional gates and channels. In order to control the information flow within the framework of the rehabilitation discourse type, the powerful contributors in their role as gatekeepers transformed the communication style of some of the contributors.
6 Conclusion

The concluding remarks begin with the meaning of critique in CDA. Firstly, critique refers to exposing “the manipulative nature of discursive practices” (Hidalgo Tenorio 2011, 188) was dealt with in the discussion chapter. Secondly, it refers to improving “communication and well-being by removing the barriers of assumed beliefs legitimised through discourse” (ibid) which will be the aim of the final part of this thesis.

6.1 Oppression within the Oppressed Group

Women suffering abuse from their intimate partner constitute an oppressed group by the patriarchal structures in our society. When seeking support from their peers part of this group is similarly oppressed by the hierarchical structure of the support forum. In addition, the discourse of therapy aids to this oppression. Since according to the therapy discourse, an individual is capable of solving problems, which suggests that the responsibility lies with the individual rather than on society. The author of this thesis claims that having a professional volunteering to control the supportive message advocated on the forum can lead to infiltration of the therapy discourse in the everyday life of the women suffocated by the patriarchal structure. That way the authorities such as governmental institutions are displacing and diffusing responsibility for actions or inactions resulting from the continuity of violence, and strengthening the patriarchal order in our society. The one who is truly oppressed in this example is the individual in need for support. The person who is isolated and feels that s/he does not receive understanding from the authorities institutions and organizations working with prevention of gender violence. Thus, this thesis argues, in contrast to some scholars (Baxter 2002; Diabah 2011), that patriarchy and sexism are not two outdated terms.

6.2 Nobody wants to be a victim

It is evident that all the co-creators struggled for the right to be treated as survivors of gender violence. Nobody, not even those co-creators living with the abuser, wanted to accept the social identity of a victim. Surprisingly only those who believed in the power of expert transformed their communication style so that expert would share their knowledge. Nevertheless, some co-creators rather left the forum or stopped contributing than identified themselves with a subordinate role of a victim. The victim-survivor discourse created unnecessary tensions between the contributors. The focus shifted to protection of produced information and legitimization of oneself as a valuable and knowledgeable source. Instead, all the creative power could have been used to co-create, re-use and share information.

Online territories (Christensen et al. 2011) are complex social settings, and only because everyone has access to the internet, not all online “territories” are open to everyone. This thesis showed that the forum could was regarded as a tool for primary prevention of violence by some co-creators. However, not all participants were welcome to enter what was described as a safe place for the abused. For one, the safety was challenged by the myth about the addiction to violence. Also, since the forum (or a group of survivors) focuses on women as they target group women, it excluded they excluded participants being abused in a same-sex relationship. For instance, if a man was abused by his male partner in life he had to assume a female alias in order to receive support or support others in the forum. By focusing on biological sex, the co-creators reproduced one of the myths about gender violence: “Domestic violence only happens to poor women and women of color.” (domesticviolence.org). Curiously, the authorities working to prevent gender violence have tried to eliminate this myth by spreading information: “by running powerful campaigns” (Refuge.org.uk;
The knowledge produced in this thesis indicate that apart from campaigns, there is a need for a public discussion forum constituting a neutral territory, hosted by a neutral, non-commercial party, where gender violence can be discussed in order to find a consensus between the existing notions of what it means to be a victim, a survivor or a perpetrator of gender violence.

Further research should examine forums and sites were the discussion about gender violence are present. A question arrises, what can a bunch of comments about let us say Nabokov's Lolita on youtube.com tell us? Quite a lot. These online territories contain truly “miscellaneous voices” (Cameron 2001) since these voices represent different cultures and sub-cultures. These voices should be heard and understood. Because, as this thesis showed, it is most unfortunate that the abused women (gender) find refuge in the patriarchal structure which is the cause of oppression. Such knowledge may be useful in understanding how primary prevention is working and how it might be enhanced.
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Tuvaforum.se


VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN. The Communications Evolution


Accessed: 2013-12-01


World Health Organization. *Intimate partner violence*


Accessed: 2013-12-01


Appendix 1

Recurring contributors between August 2008 and December 2011

Total threads started: 2,919 of total posts: 19,967

Between August 2008 and December 2011, 2,929 new threads were started by fifty-four recurring contributors visiting the public forum. Forty-eight percent of the contributors were one-time contributors. Out of fifty-four recurring contributors, thirty-one created 1 – 19 new threads. Fourteen contributors started 20-39 new threads. So many as 40-59 new threads were created by seven contributors. Last but not least, two contributors started 60 or more new threads on the public forum.

According to the data, two recurring contributors have posted more than 60 new threads each in four years time. This data led to the conclusion that the two most frequent contributors require further investigation since they could represent either apt content producers on the forum or owners of the application.

---

30 Only visible threads were counted since deleted threads were not accessible.
Appendix 2

Appendix 3 contains a coding example. The coding process started with looking at the lexical choices made by contributors, as in CDA some linguistic elements are considered of high importans, as it is believed that language and action, and re-production of discourse goes hand in hand. Action and agency is reflected in the language as well. According to CDA the choice of words and synax, namely the way the discourse is designed, constrains or releases an action. Thus power relations can be examined on a deeper level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Raw data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SV: Psykisk och fysisk misshandelChrystal 081226 00:27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kriscentrum för kvinnor eller en annan kvinnojour för att kunna få stöd i din situation. du är inte ensam.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vi är många som gått igenom liknande som du och har kunnat gå vidare i livet. Ge inte upp, du är värd ett liv med trygghet och glädje och att vara omgiven av kärleksfulla människor.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preliminary Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use of pronoun “Du” “You”: för att kunna få stöd i din situation. du är inte ensam.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of pronoun “Vi” “We”: Vi är många som gått igenom liknande som du och har kunnat gå vidare i livet.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Final Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interpretation: “you”, “in your situation” in need for an outside expert to solve your problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpretation: “We” have been able to handle it, ”we” have experience and knowledge</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One group distinguish themselves from other contributors.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Te Victim-Survivor discourse</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 3

a. Approaching a discourse event

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original post</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>new here and uncertain...</strong> &lt;tintin 110822 15:25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In need for advice; (...)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Now to my question; I have chosen to lie low -e.g. I am not taking any initiative to conversation, I am not asking for forgiveness (as I used to do), does that mean I am treating him in the same way he does to me?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Replies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>new here and uncertain...</strong> Lena</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is your question?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original post</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>new here and uncertain...</strong> &lt;tintin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hello!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oops, was my post so unclear? Well, I have bad concious because I am ignoring him for now, meaning that I am using silence in a way he used to do to me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does this mean that I am using “silent treatment” as vengance? Something tells me that it is so, on the other hand it does not feel that I want to reconcile, because it will lead to the same thing again</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Does not receive a reply. The conversation is aborted.

b. First level of analysis

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Original post</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
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</table>

| Replies |
new here and uncertain... Lena

What is your question?

new here and uncertain... <tintin

Hello!
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Does this mean that I am using ”silent treatment” as vengance? Something tells me that it is so, on the other hand it does not feel that I want to reconcile, because it will lead to the same thing again

Does not receive a reply. The conversation is aborted.

c. Second level of analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original post</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>new here and uncertain... &lt;tintin 110822 15:25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In need for advice; (...) Now to my question; I have chosen to lie low - e.g. I am not taking any initiative to conversation, I am not asking for forgiveness (as I used to do), does that mean I am treating him in the same way he does to me?

<table>
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<th>Replies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>new here and uncertain... Lena</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What is your question?

| new here and uncertain... <tintin |

Hello!
Oops, was my post so unclear? Well, I have bad conscious because I am ignoring him for now, meaning that I am using silence in a way he used to do to me.

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Does not receive a reply. The conversation is aborted.

d. Third level of analysis

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Original post</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>new here and uncertain... &lt;tintin 110822 15:25</td>
</tr>
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</table>
| In need for advice; (...) 
Now to my question; I have chosen to lie low - e.g. I am not taking any initiative to conversation, I am not asking for forgiveness (as I used to do), does that mean I am treating him in the same way he does to me? |

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| new here and uncertain... &lt;tintin |
| Hello! 
Oops, was my post so unclear? Well, I have bad conscience because I am ignoring him for now, meaning that I am using silence in a way he used to do to me. 

Does this mean that I am using "silent treatment" as vengeance? Something tells me that it is so, on the other hand it does not feel that I want to reconcile, because it will lead to the same thing again |

Does not receive a reply. The conversation is aborted. |
Appendix 4

a. GUI of the public forum.
The table below is presented in the article written by Barzilai-Nahon (2007, 28) and it is an overview comparing the traditional gatekeeping theory with elements from the online gatekeeping theory that she terms Network Gatekeeping.  

**Table 7: Comparing Traditional Theories of Gatekeeping with Network Gatekeeping**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Network Gatekeeping Identification</th>
<th>Traditional Gatekeeping</th>
<th>Network Gatekeeping</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gate (the passage point)</td>
<td>One-to-few number and types of gates</td>
<td>Few-to-many number and types of gates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gatekeeping (the process)</td>
<td>Primarily a process of: Selection (communication); Intermediation (management); Dissemination and preservation of culture (info. Science).</td>
<td>A more inclusive definition which encompasses any process of information control (Table 1).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gated (on whom gatekeeping is exercised)</td>
<td>No vocabulary in the literature</td>
<td>Network Gatekeeping Identification recognizes the role of those subjected to gatekeeping. Network Gatekeeping Salience presents the dynamism of gated types (Table 6).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gatekeeping mechanism (the means used to carry out gatekeeping)</td>
<td>Mainly editorial mechanisms</td>
<td>Many mechanisms to execute gatekeeping (Table 3 exhibit some)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gatekeeper (who performs gatekeeping)</td>
<td>Individuals</td>
<td>Focus shifts to institutional actors. Two dimensions are suggested: authority and functional gatekeepers (Table 4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Network Gatekeeping Salience</td>
<td>Relations of sender-receiver. The gatekeeper is the sender</td>
<td>Continuity modes of relationships between no relations or indirect relations (sender-receiver mode) and through frequent, enduring, and direct exchange</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Production (of gated)</td>
<td>Notion of source-destination. The gatekeeper is the source.</td>
<td>Association between source-destination and gatekeeper-gated positions are interchangeable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternatives (for gated)</td>
<td>Only gatekeepers produce information freely</td>
<td>Gated may also produce information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Power (in relation to the gatekeeper)</td>
<td>Gatekeeper has most of the political power</td>
<td>Gated may also have political power.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 6

Addicted Victims
In this Appendix are presented accounts on what constitutes an addicted victim and accounts that respond to the notion of addicted victim. These accounts were used in order to understand the social world of the participants on the tuvaforum.se.

1. The Addiction Of Being In An Abusive Relationship
Rabia Khan
36 Comments
"Pain is addicting. I have experience being in love with pain for quite some time, which is why I think I had no problem being in an abusive relationship. At first, it seems like you’re helping humanity in some way by dating a person who has low self-esteem, who is abusive and always finds a way to sabotage your happiness, but I tell you this nurturing and mother-like qualities in a woman, is the precise reason why we make excuses for the person we love.”

2. Myths about domestic violence
"Myth: Women must enjoy or be addicted to the abuse. Otherwise she would leave.
Reality: One of the frequent questions Women's Aid is asked is - why doesn't she just leave. We would never tell a woman what she should do. We consider her to be the best judge of her situation. Women stay with violent men because it is extremely difficult for them to leave. No one enjoys being beaten, threatened and humiliated in their own homes.
There is a growing understanding of the barriers women face when trying to end the abuse. It isn't as simple as telling the woman to leave. As a key national organisation that has been supporting women for 40 years, we know that leaving an abusive relationship is fraught with difficulty.”
http://www.womensaid.ie/help/whatisdomesticviolence/myths.html#m3

2. Why Women Sometimes Become Addicted to Abusive Partners
"MARCH 17, 2011/PAUL SUNSTONE
Have you ever wondered why anyone might become addicted to an abusive partner and simply cannot leave them for long? As most adults know, a lot of women seem to have a great deal of emotional difficulty leaving an abusive spouse. In fact, some women will stay forever with such a spouse, though he (or she) destroys their mental and emotional well-being, crushes their self-esteem, and — perhaps — even threatens their lives or the lives of their children. And, sometimes, abused men have much the same problem leaving an abusive spouse as abused women do.

However, it now appears that science is in the process of revealing the underlying reasons why (1) women seem to have such difficulty leaving an abusive spouse, and why (2) women seem to have much greater difficulty than men leaving an abusive spouse. But to understand what science has to say about it, we must begin by discussing popular notions of love.”
Read more at: https://cafephilos.wordpress.com/2011/03/17/why-women-sometimes-become-addicted-to-abusive-partners/

4. Lifestyle of the Victim
"People who feel victimized are often those who have developed a strong sense of entitlement. Victims tend to be self consumed and they will take great pains to share their troubles and negativity with you. Most of their sentences begin with “I”. Narcissism personality disorder is similar to the victim mentality.
One can sit with a victim for a couple of hours talking, and it will never occur to them to ask you anything about your
life. It quite simply does not occur to them because their world view does not extend to include your thoughts or feelings. Victims, who are self centered by nature and usually narcissistic, have a worldview which is extremely constricted, where their only reference point in life is themselves.

Victims are interested in you if you have something they want, such as sex, money, drugs or to be their audience. Victims can easily fall into compulsive behaviors such as gambling. The lasting effect these people leave with you is toxic. This self centered victim mentality typically drives all addictions. One would need relief from oneself somehow some way, hence addiction ensues.”

Read more at: http://newliferecovery.net/treatment/victim-mentality-entitlement-recovery/

5. Can domestic violence be addictive?
(“...”) So when the abuse happens it is unexpected or there was a subtle lead up to it. But after the first strike, the abuser overcompensates with the desire to be forgiven. The apologies are made more believable with tears and periods of euphoric love. The pleasurable part is later met by the abuse. Pain then pleasure. Pleasure then pain. The person is conditioned. Then it repeats. Much like an addict being soothed by a high. The swings or emotions become normal. Toxic love sends people swinging from emotional highs to emotional lows. More than likely triggering the same effects of uppers and downers. So as the person is conditioned into the abusive pattern, he or she looks for a similar high each time. So the "love" feeling is a desire of the victim that cannot be obtained without the "pain". Could this be the problem that binds abuse victims to their abusers? Is it possible that domestic violence can be addictive?”

Read more: http://www.examiner.com/article/can-domestic-violence-be-addictive

6. Abusive Relationships and Love Addiction
Jan 28th, 2009 by admin

“Love addiction” can cause a person to be prime target for abuse by causing them to pathologically seek out painful relationships with people who are in some way unavailable and can’t meet their needs. It can keep victims of abuse “stuck” in abusive relationships, and if a love addict does manage to extricate him/herself from the relationship or is left by their partner, (s)he will often have trouble “letting go” and/or will immediately seek out another relationship to replace the one recently lost.”

Read more: http://www.escapeabuse.com/?p=182