

## Demystifying guilds: MMORPG-playing and norms

### ABSTRACT

One of the most influential gaming trends today, Massively Multi Online Role Playing Games (MMORPG), poses new questions about the interaction between the players in the game. Previous work has introduced concepts such as community, commons, and social dilemma to analyze situations where individual choices may result in sub-optimal global results. We propose to use the concept of norms instead.

Modelling the players and groups of players in these games as normative systems with the possibility to create norms and sanction norm violations, we can analyze the different kind of norms that may deal with the trade-off between individuals, groups, and society at large.

We argue that our model adds complexity where we find earlier concepts lacking some descriptive or overstressing when trying to analyze the balance between individual players and the game playing society.

### Author Keywords

Clans, guilds, norms, cooperation

### INTRODUCTION

Both computer games and console games are starting to focus on the opportunities that online game playing can provide for the gaming experience. Games such as World of Warcraft (WoW) can have as many as thousands of active players in one of their gaming servers at the same time. Much of the “Massively multiple online role playing games” (MMORPG) genre seems to be all about cooperation and playing together and this in turn makes MMORPG an interesting phenomenon to investigate. In WoW there are many opportunities to engage in different social formations of different sizes with one of the most common ones being the wish to join a guild. A guild is a group of players that decides to play together for a period of time exceeding the length of one playing session. It is also possible to form smaller groups with short term goals.

After exploring the game world of WoW it is obvious that these games have rules, codes of conduct, do’s and don’ts that are either explicit or implicit. We may even want to call them norms and these norms seem to be part of the very fabric of the interaction in this game genre. It is important to get an understanding for the differences between where a designer actually could influence the norms and where the norms are beyond the control of the designer and perhaps constantly evolving. If we take a close look at different

aspects of most MMORPG it will be apparent that some parts of the game will live a life of its own, where local norms will appear through the interaction between players.

In this article start describing current frameworks of analysis of social processes in online MMORPG. Following this we will introduce the view on norms as it has developed in the social sciences, mainly sociology. Then we will propose an extension to the normative framework developed in [2] and apply this framework to situations in WoW. Finally we will describe some related research before we finish with conclusions and proposals for future research.

### MULTIPLAYER GAMES, COMMON GOODS AND SOCIAL DILEMMAS

In [8], Smith tries to balance the picture of games being built upon conflict with cooperation as a second central issue. The issue of “local norms” addressed by the author in previous work ([7]) is thus extended. However instead of using the framework of norms to its full extent, [8] turns to the concepts of “collective action” and “tragedy of the commons” to analyze cooperation issues. We first give a summary of Smith [8] and Pargman and Ericsson [6] before we turn to our alternative solution.

The problem of collective action (and its closely related variety of the “free rider” problem) in essence expresses that individuals may get benefits from the collective of which they are part without contributing to it. One way to analyze this problem (used originally in economics and political science) is the idea of “commons”, Here the problem is not that individuals get benefits but rather that individuals, following their own preferences, do not always produce well-being for all (as Adam Smith would have wanted it in his concept of the invisible hand). Consuming of finite resources or any form is the prime area of this concept. Abstaining from consuming a resource so that global well-being is not in danger is the driving force behind this concept. The more general form of the tragedy of the commons is “social dilemmas” (which [8] does not want to distinguish from collective action) Collective action and commons are in fact related to two very different situations, namely either a situation where individuals profit without contributing or situations where individual should abstain from using a shared resource in the light of other individuals’ needs.

In [7], Smith deepens the analysis of multiplayer games using social dilemmas, more specifically he focuses on the

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gaming situation (including player characteristics and the cultural context in the analysis) rather than the game as a rule system (where the definition of wins and losses is at stake). The game rules themselves create opposing parties that are competing whereas the gaming situation itself usually implies compliance with game external “rules” such as not using out of the game moves to win in the game (e.g., kicking your opponent in a car race in real life is not ok, bumping into him in the game is ok).

Further expanding this, [8] takes three types of conflicts in multiplayer games and analyses each of these from a social dilemma point of view. These three are “cheating”, “grief play” and “responsible participation”.

In terms of the analysis, the common good at stake is by [8] seen as “even chances on the battlefield” (comparable to the arguments against using certain substances in sports) and the social dilemma is “the temptation to cheat”. One interesting aspect of cheating is that various sorts of cheating involve knowledge about “the intent of the game”. An example of counter actions mentioned in the cheating case is players proposing to have a forum to display cheaters (so they use face and also prevent others from cheating) and to only play other players that one can trust (based on previous experience or because they are part of a trusted group).

Grief play is the breaking of an implicit community rule, usually followed by sanctioning. Moreover, it is done intentionally and usually does not imply any gain by the player exhibiting grief play. Here the collective good is “an enjoyable game environment” and the social dilemma is “the temptation not to make the effort needed to maintain the value of the game”. The third category is irresponsible participation. Even this is related to breaking the implicit rules of the game to make the game entertaining and pleasant for all involved. Again, the collective goods the enjoyable gaming environment and the social dilemma is “the temptation to put personal gratification (or other selfishness) over the interests of other players”.

Summarizing, one can see that in all three cases the collective good at stake is an enjoyable game environment for all players (this being the implicit goal of game play) and the social dilemma is the temptation to either break this implicit goal or to abstain from forcing others to comply with the implicit goal. Solutions proposed in general include:

1. A neutral body for surveillance and punishing
2. Privatization of the commons
3. Use of strategies to regulate the use of the commons such as developed by Ostrom [4], including communities with a degree of permanence, the ability to monitor others and a prolonged interaction.

In [8], Smith gives examples of similar solutions in the area of game play. An example of measure one would be the

tool PunkBuster, a tool that for a number of games automatically can detect cheating. Another solution mentioned is to make certain behaviour impossible (this is for natural reasons impossible in the real world and thus not part of the list above). The ability to see other peoples’ actions via (built-in) tools is unfortunately combined by [8] in this solution, where it should an item on its own in parallel with measure three mentioned above. In-game communication and out-of-game forums are other ways to deal with this. Other aspects of measure three addressing the community aspect as such can be seen as equivalent to the existence of clans or guilds in games, an analysis proposed in e.g. [5]. The absence of trust systems (such as the ones used in e.g. EBay or Slashdot.org) in gaming communities is signalled by [8] and he offers some suggestions on how this could be implemented. It would amount to a system for monitoring game behaviour as such.

With respect to measure two [8] does not give an example and in fact it is hard to imagine one. What would it mean in the case of multiplayer games, how can one privatize an enjoyable game environment? Maybe this is the essence of our critique. The commons defined cannot be protected in (all) the ways commons are protected in real life, so the question is, is the concept of commons helping or hindering game research? This issue is all the more prominent since the other two solutions offered by the commons analysis are also part of other conceptual frameworks.

The approach chosen in [6] has some resemblance to [8] even if [6] is not mentioned in [8]. Analyzing behaviour in Everquest, the authors describe a set of “unsuitable” behaviours. These include kill-stealing (breaking official rules of conduct), trains (not warning other players you are endangering them while you yourself are trying to get to a safe spot), camping (not recognizing or acknowledging that others have “the first shot”), twinkling and power-levelling (shortcuts to higher levels), automatic play (a shortcut involving coding), and virtual commerce (officially not allowed by game manufacturers). If we disregard misunderstandings and not knowing the local rules, all situations can be seen as social dilemmas (according to the authors). To give the aspect of collective rationality more perspective, the sociological theory of Granovetter [3] about weak and strong ties is translated into 3 different levels of collectivity:

1. micro-public (small groups with strong ties),
2. meso-public (relatively small groups with semi-strong ties) and,
3. macro-public (large groups of loosely connected individuals bound by weak or no ties).

Unfortunately the paper does not explore the proposed framework in any depth.

## **NORMS AS A FRAMEWORK TO ANALYZE MMORPG SOCIAL ASPECTS**

In sociology, norms are seen as one way to explain why prisoner dilemma type of problems are solved in ways that are contrary to the analytical solutions proposed by game theory. Game theory (and prisoner's dilemma as the prime example of a game theoretical analysis of a social dilemma) builds upon rational individuals choosing according to their own preferences including the norms at stake within the decision situation. Other norms may exist that are outside of the direct situation at hand such as: "it pays off to be a nice guy in the long run" which makes 'real' humans choose in ways different from the theoretical rational actors. We will describe some definitions and typologies of norms, then apply these on some the MMORPG behaviours mentioned above and finally map the analysis of [8] and [6] on our analytical framework.

### **The definition of norms in the social sciences**

Within the social sciences and more particularly in sociology and social philosophy norms are discussed and defined in different ways. We present some of the definitions common on the social sciences and conclude with the framework we will use.

In [2] a typology of norms concerning the regulation of behaviour and acts is described encompassing conventions, morals, mores, rules and laws as depicted in appendix 1. These various social mechanisms are structured using the following dichotomies:

- Probability that a sanction will be issued (yes – no)
- Characteristics of the individual issuing a sanction (special status or no special status)
- Evaluation of an act (collective or not)
- Expectation concerning the act (collective or not)

While [2] focuses on social norms, others have build theories and frameworks addressing other types of norms. Tuomela [11] distinguishes two kinds of social norms (meaning community norms), namely, rules (r-norms) and proper social norms (s-norms). Rules are norms created by an authority structure and always based on agreement making. Rules can be formal, in which case they are connected to formal sanctions, or informal, where the sanctions are also informal. Proper social norms are based on mutual belief and consist of conventions, which apply to a large group such as a whole society or socioeconomic class, and group-specific norms. The sanctions connected to proper social norms are social sanctions and may include punishment by others and expelling from the group.

Therborn [10] distinguishes three kinds of norms. Constitutive norms define a system of action and an agent's membership in it; regulative norms describe the expected contributions to the social system, and distributive norms defining how rewards, costs, and risks are allocated within a social system. Furthermore, he distinguishes between non-

institutionalized normative order, made up by personal and moral norms in day-to-day social traffic, and institutions, an example of a social system defined as a closed system of norms. Institutional normative action is equalled with role plays, i.e., roles find their expressions in expectations, obligations, and rights vis-à-vis the role holder's behaviour.

In [1] a whole range of social mechanisms are described. Among them is the concept of social norms. A social norm is defined as an injunction to act or abstain from acting. The working mechanism is the use of informal sanctions aimed at norm violators. Sanctions may affect the material situation of the violator via direct punishment or social ostracism. An open question is the costs of sanctioning. Apart from social norms, [1] describes moral norms (that are unconditional) and quasi-moral norms (like social norms these are conditional but triggered by being able to observe what others are doing instead of by being observed by other people as is the case for social norms). Other connected concepts are legal norms (where special agents enforce the norms) and conventions that are independent of external agent action. In [1] some examples of norms are discussed in detail such as: norms about etiquette, norms as codes of honour, and norms about the use of money.

Combining these frameworks results in the following: [10]'s regulative norms encompass all of [2]'s categories whereas [10]'s constitutive and distributive norms are outside of [2]'s scope. [11]'s r-norms describe situations of collective evaluation with certain individuals in charge of sanctioning. The s-norms also coincide with collective evaluation but here any individual can issue sanctions.

The quasi-moral norms of [1] seem to fit to situations where there is no collective evaluation and no expectation and where only certain individuals can sanction. [1]'s conventions map to [2]'s collective conventions and the legal norms to the combination of collective evaluation, only specific individuals sanction using force. This is presented in appendix 2.

In the remainder of this paper we will use the following notion of norms:

"Norms are statements about the appropriateness of an individual's act which may result in a sanction being issued by another individual or an individual belonging to a specific class of individuals."

### **NORMS IN MMORPG**

We propose to use the revised framework presented above to understand the dynamics of the most common norms and norm violations in MMORPG.

In MMORPG severe violations are usually punished by ostracisation of the norm violators or the loss of points in a value system where a player can earn points for assisting

the guild in raids (measured in DKP<sup>1</sup>). It may be difficult to differentiate between what social behaviour is acceptable and what is not.

Some players exhibit behaviour that violates norms in ways that could be described as cheating or grief play. Some of these examples are so common that most guilds have structured their rules to cover these issues as well. [7] Mentions three different categories of behaviours that might infringe on the gaming experience of others. These are even part of the above analysis by in [8]. The three categories are cheating, local norm violation and grief play.

#### *Cheating*

Cheating is difficult to prove. The risk of sanctions being made against a violator depends on the severity of the violation. If the violation is very severe there usually is a “High probability that an attempt will be made to apply a sanction when the act occurs” (from [2] corresponding to [11]’s s-norms).

#### *Local norm violation*

Local norm violations have different level of implications for other players and the players are usually sanctioned if the violation appears repeatedly. These violations have a “High probability that an attempt will be made to apply a sanction when the act occurs” from [2] but we have to keep in mind that minor violations might be ignored. These actions could potentially be sanctioned by anyone in the group, but the most probable solution in the case of a raid group would be that the raid leader would solve the problem without the use of force. The severest forms of violations may be punished with ostracism.

#### *Grief play*

Examples of grief play are; unprovoked harassment through game chat channels, repeatedly killing a player as soon as the character comes back to life, and behaviour not related to the winning condition of the game. Grief play in its different forms is behaviour that infringes the higher level norms of the realm and can be difficult to sanction. The penalty for someone engaging in this kind of activity should perhaps be ostracisation, but since the players are from different factions, it is difficult to make any sanctions from the victim’s side. Grief play would therefore fit the description of “Low probability that an attempt will be made to apply a sanction when the act occurs” from [2].

All examples above are examples of social norms, since norm violations are punished with sanctions and are thus in accordance with e.g., [1] and our definition of norms. In the case of the last example this can be hard to prove however. The typology taken from [2] gives a better understanding at least when it comes to the probability of a sanction to occur, but it is very difficult to judge from case to case, since all

these violations have different severity and impact on other players. Thus it seems that the framework from [2] and consequently also our revised framework may need to be extended to produce a more fine grained categorization.

#### **Norms regulating the distribution of resources**

Not surprisingly, resources such as money (or the equivalent such as DKP) and valuable equipment may lead to conflicts in MMORPG. There are multiple ways of breaching norms for how to distribute resources between all members of a guild. Some of the most common examples where discussions about resources occur are the following situations; begging, ninja looting, and twinkling.

#### *Begging*

Begging is usually other gamers in game asking for money, and this can in fact be disturbing behaviour that many guilds have strict rules against. Most beggars are being ostracised or ignored, since it is hard to make other sanctions against them. Beggars will eventually earn a bad reputation since gamers will gossip about this unwanted behaviour. It may be argued that this is addressed by [10]’s distributive norms.

#### *Ninja looting*

Ninja looting is another form of misconduct that most guilds have rules against. When a gamer steals the loot from another gamer under certain conditions when playing as a group this is defined as ninja looting.

Both begging and ninja looting have a “High probability that an attempt will be made to apply a sanction when the act occurs”, ostracism is the most probable action taken, but other actions may occur. The probability of sanctions including force is not very probable. Ninja looting can also be seen as a breach against [10]’s distributive norms thus placing it outside the set of regulative norms.

#### *Twinking*

When a high level gamer decides to help a low level character with money to buy better equipment or helping the low level gamer killing creatures above his/her skill level this is labelled as twinkling.

The last example is actually not a serious norm violation and most gamers do not care about it and thus it would fit in the first category of [2]’s typology where no sanction would appear. It would also fit in under [10]’s distributive norms.

#### **Norms regulating the use of tools**

Most MMORPG today are highly complex and sometimes a player can find that it is hard to keep track of the situation in game. Most games with a certain degree of complexity will eventually be subject to “add-ons”, where someone develops tools to highlight information in the game or perhaps give certain advantages for a player with the add-on installed.

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<sup>1</sup> An abbreviation for dragon killing points, originally taken from Everquest

Add-ons range from small “cheating” applications in games such as “Counter strike” where “auto aiming” and the possibility to see through walls were used by some players. In WoW the most common add-ons are used for co-ordinating raid groups and displaying statistics for all characters in an instance (both players and Mob). This gives all players in the group an advantage that is not considered unfair, since most players use this kind of tools. But what is interesting is where to draw the line of what is considered enhancing the game and what is considered cheating. Norms are usually subject to constant change and there are interesting stories where new forms of norms are being created.

Taylor [9] describes the use of a tool called CTRaidAssist during a raid. This tool monitors many statistics of the characters of a raid group and in this example someone in the group came a bit too close to a mob (a non-player character or NPC) and therefore the entire group was being attacked by the mob and nearly killed. The raid leader (using CTRaidAssist) could see that the amount of aggression (a measurement of how close or threatening a character is to a mob) had increased, which had triggered the attack. The interesting part about this story is that the raid leader told everyone in the raid group that if someone would do the same thing again, this would result in penalties. This shows that tools can be used to monitor the players’ behaviour and thus enable the possibility of sanction behaviour that previously could not be sanctioned. This involves a move from one category in the framework proposed in [2] to another. Without the tool there is no or a very low probability of a sanction since the action cannot be detected. The tool enables a special person (in this case the raid leader) to issue a sanction. The message send by the leader leads to a collective expectation that players will refrain from this action and it is only the leader that can evaluate so there is no collective evaluation. So, introducing the tool moves the raid group from the logical null-class (non-normative situation) in [2]’s typology to the situation labelled as “exogenous rules” (type N) even if the rules and sanctioning agent are mutually agreed upon in and part of the group.

### **Different levels of organisation where norms appear in MMORPG**

WoW can be described at different organisational levels and as different types of norm systems, ranging from a high level perspective (the different types of servers, usually called realms in the game) down to the lowest level focusing on players and small groups. What seem to be characteristic about the higher levels such as the different gaming realms and factions is that the norms are of a wider scope, and communicate the spirit of the game without much attention to detail. On the middle level (Guilds) there seems to be a stricter way of communicating, creating, and changing norms. It is apparent that a large group needs some form of organisation to work properly. On the lowest level (groups) there seems to be a mutual respect for the

group and the norms are close to what could be considered common sense. The difference between the highest level and all levels below is that sanctions are more easily distributed on the lower levels, perhaps because they are agreed upon within a group with a finite number of players in a way similar to the proper social norms discussed by [11]. The use of “local norm violation” in [7] defined local as the server. In our view, both other levels also define “local”, thus extending the definition of local norms and local norm violation.

### *Game servers*

The different types of game servers give rise to different sets of norms for the type of interaction that takes place on the server. Three different kinds of servers will be mentioned here, since they are the most common:

1. Normal servers (No special rules applied),
2. PvP servers (Player versus Player), and
3. RP servers (Role Playing Servers).

There are combinations of these types of servers, but they will not be discussed here since these combinations do not interfere with our analysis of the basic types.

For our purpose the most interesting types of servers are the fairly restricted RP servers where all players are to stay in character when playing. This means that the player has to play along and make decisions according to what would be most likely for the character in the game. For instance, discussing game functionality or other meta-gaming issues is not allowed on these servers, since it would interfere with the overall gaming experience.

Normal servers are servers where no explicit rules are applied. This gives players a freedom from the strict rules of the RP servers which could possibly lead to a different kind of interaction. The special rules on the level of game servers are an example of the constitutive norms as described by [10].

### *Factions*

All MMORPG have some kind of history and a world with resources that are being shared between its inhabitants in one way or the other. For the sake of making this history interesting a player belong to a faction. In WoW one is associated with either the Horde faction or the Alliance faction depending upon the race chosen during the character creation process. On all types of servers it would be fair to kill a character from the opposing faction. But there are specific norms on what is acceptable and what is not. For instance, a high level player who kills someone from the opposing faction who does not stand a chance of defending him/herself would be regarded as playing unfair, or even as a performing grief play, and may, if repeated, leads to a stressful disadvantage for the target.

### *Groups (Guilds and small groups)*

Groups in WoW may lead to observable behaviour and sometimes conflicts. Guilds usually have a forum page where all issues concerning in game tactics are being discussed. Rules are usually available in the forum pages of guilds, to inform all players of the norms that all players should stick to.

### *Large groups/Guilds*

Guilds are large group of players that play together often aiming at co-operating in so called raid groups. A raid group consists of as many as 25 players co-operating to overcome Non player characters (NPC) in special instances of the game.

### *Small groups*

Small groups can consist of 2 or more players co-operating on small missions in game, called quests. In WoW, it's sometimes apparent that the quests are too hard for a single player and that joining a group is the only solution to solve the quest.

### **Norms and sanctions in a WoW guild**

In the following sections we present the findings of studying high-level WoW guild (guild X in the remainder of the text).

### *Norms on the use of skills*

In one guild X, part of the decision on who is allowed to become a member or not is based on how skilful the player is. The guild has a trial period that all applicants have to pass to become members of the guild. One of the main reasons is that players sometimes buy a high-level character and cannot play the character using all the skills and abilities in a way that is beneficial for the group. Skills are very important when playing and players that lack the skill will in this case be excluded from the guild. The gamers applying for membership in the guild must fill in a form where they account for their experience of raid instances, which guilds they have been members of and what level of commitment they can offer. All of the questions are there to clarify that to be a member of this group, you should be able to join a raid at least three times a week, and that the members that are most fit for the task ahead, will be the ones to join the raid group. This is also a safeguard to make sure that the applicants really have the right level of skills to become members of the guild.

This is a local norm on guild-level. Sanction: being left out of the raid-group if not fit for the task.

### *Norms on preparation*

Neglecting to prepare before a raid is a local norm violation (guild-level), preparation meaning: to be equipped with the right gear (different weapons and armours have different attributes) and can make a big difference depending on which instance the raid-group will raid. Other types of

preparation typically mean bringing ingredients and healing potions that are needed to survive a raid.

Sanction: Loss of DKP, if repeated being kicked from the raid group ( explanation: not being fit for the task).

### *Norms on guild composition*

Shared values are something that also could be transformed into a set of norms for the members of a guild. Initially some common ideas about how the guild ought to play is transformed into a set of rules. In the case of guild X participation, high ambition, and commitment where all part of the value that the guild was a hard working guild with talent and ambition. When summer came the guild was split in two factions where the hardcore gamers on the one side accused the other side of abandoning the values of the guild because they did not show up for raids, probably due to a really nice and warm summer. Eventually the guild was split in two, the hardcore gamers left the guild to create a new guild with the same core ideas about the guild being hardworking and ambitious, so in a way the sanction here is not ostracizing the less ambitious part of the group as much as abandoning what the hardcore gamers considered being a sinking ship.

Local norm violation (guild-level), sanction: ostracizing a whole group of players

### *Norms concerning raiding and attendance*

When it comes to guild X, all members reside in Europe and the rules of the guild state at what time every player that is part of a raid group should be online. Raids were usually performed three times a week, and each joining player should be online at 18:30. All raids started at 19:00 and stopped at 00:00. This planning made it easy for the class leaders and raid leaders to pick the members that will be part of the raid group. If someone could not join the raid group the player had to report this to his class leader or the raid leader 24 hours ahead of time so that someone else can get that spot. Ultimately failing to do so would be regarded as negligence and could lead to DKP-penalties and being excluded from the guild if it happened repeatedly.

The members get DKP for being in the raid group; even players that are requested to act as a backup<sup>2</sup> for the players in the raid group are awarded DKP. The rules also state when someone might lose DKP mostly because of misconduct or disrespect towards the guild and guild members.

Local norm violation (guild-level), sanction DKP-penalties or being excluded from the guild if it happens repeatedly.

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<sup>2</sup> Backup players are logged in to the world and can fill the gap if someone has to leave the party.

### *Norms concerning raiding and communication*

Another norm of guild X is that the different channels of communication should be kept “open” during raids. If someone is talking over the ventrillo-channel about issues not related to the raid this ultimately leads to DKP penalties. Clogging the chat channel did not seem to violate the norms as much and did not lead to penalties as often as violating the rule against talking gibberish over the ventrillo channel.

Local norm violation (guild-level), sanction: DKP-penalties, ultimately being kicked from the raid-group.

### *General code of conduct*

All communities need responsible members and in the case of a guild, commitment and responsibility comes in different kinds. Perhaps the most important aspect is the social one, meaning that a member of a guild should show a level of commitment towards the guild’s cause and act responsibly. Another issue is raised when talking about the “in-game” consequences of this criterion. There are many rules that imply that as a member of guild X you should act responsibly and show all guild members an appropriate level of respect. Looking at the forum of guild X it is evident that many players have a deep commitment towards the guild and that they try to help each other out when someone encounters a problem. Guild X has a hierarchical structure, with a Guild Master (GM) as their leader. Each class has a class leader and there are raid leaders in charge of the raiding groups. Both class leaders and raid leaders have the rank of “officer”. But the rules of the guild, state that all decisions are to be taken with “mutual respect” for all, and that the officers have no formal power besides performing the tasks they are in charge of. The game itself has mechanisms for promoting characters in game within the guild as well as for degrading characters, and you have to have the officer rank to be able to invite new members to the guild. This means that in a way there is a general idea that players in a guild should have some kind of differentiation when it comes to status. An officer can be degraded for not acting responsible and on the other hand a player can be promoted for being valuable for the raid-group.

Local norm violation (guild-level), sanction: being ostracized, being degraded (stripped of ranks if officer), reward: being promoted.

### *Whining about rules*

The rules and norms are something that all members are in contact with. Guild X states that the rules are open to change after a discussion that proves to be useful for the guild, but that whining about trivial issues will not result in any changes. This is actually one of the norms that is most easily identified in their forum, guild X does not encourage people to whine about things, since this seem to be one of the reasons behind the split with the old guild. Whining may even result in the loss of DKP, if it is done for no good reason.

Local norm violation (guild-level), sanction: DKP-penalties

This far we have identified 6 different sanctions:

- Different levels of ostracism, towards a single player
- DKP-penalties
- Exclusion from a raid-group.
- Degradation: when an officer or player with a higher rank than “private” or regular player loses his/her rank(s)
- Exclusion: being excluded from the guild
- Guild split: ostracism against a group of players

### **Fitting in Smith and Pargman & Ericsson**

We suggest the following; in the table proposed by [2] (see appendix 1) we can add the analysis based on ideas of a commons problem or social dilemmas in the following way:

- Smith’s solution 1 equals the situation where a specific person or group is endowed with the power to sanction. Smith’s solution 2 was already by the author proposed to be impossible to copy to the world of MMORPG. Smith’s solution 3 has several components. The community component is expressed in the whole framework of norms. Even the longevity of the interaction is part of the concept of norms. The monitoring of behaviour is equal to the category “high probability a sanction will occur”. The proposal about a trust system in [8] (or the example of PunkBuster in the same article) is in our mind equal with the introduction of a monitoring system and thus part of solution 3.
- Pargman & Ericsson micro-public is the community with close ties to speak with [3]. This is equal to the situation with collective expectations and collective evaluations. Pargman & Ericsson meso-public is a situation that is equal to a situation with collective evaluations but no collective expectations. Pargman & Ericsson macro-public is the weak ties situation of [3]. This is equal to the situation where there is no collective evaluation.

Since our solution encompasses the useful suggestions from previous work while eliminating the less useful ones we believe it lives up to the general advice of the guide lines of Occam’s razor.

### **CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION**

We have introduced the reader to an extended version of the norm categorisation scheme developed [2]. In our examples we have shown that this framework enhances our understanding of human MMORPG gamer behaviour. We propose that the extended framework should to be developed further to a finer grained categorisation to deal

with the (close to) real world phenomena encountered in MMORPG. Analyzing behaviour in and between guilds on a RP server is another future research topic.

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Appendix 1 Norm typology as proposed in [2]

		Low probability of a possible sanction when the act occurs	High probability of a possible sanction when the act occurs			
			By anyone (i.e., without regard to status)		Only by a person or persons in a particular status or statuses	
<i>evaluation of the act</i>	<i>expectation concerning the act</i>		By means that exclude the use of force	By means that may include the use of force	By means that exclude the use of force	By means that may include the use of force
Collective evaluation	Collective expectation	Type A: Collective conventions	Type D: Collective morals	Type H: Collective mores	Type L: Collective rules	Type P: Collective laws
	No collective expectation	Type B. Problematic conventions	Type E: Problematic morals	Type I: Problematic mores	Type M: Problematic rules	Type Q: Problematic laws
No collective evaluation	Collective expectation	Type C: Customs	Type F: <u>empty class</u>	Type J: <u>empty class</u>	Type N: Exogenous rules	Type R: Exogenous laws
	No collective expectation	Logical null class, i.e., non-normative	Type G: <u>empty class</u>	Type K: <u>empty class</u>	Type O: Coercive rules	Type S: Coercive laws

Appendix 2 Gibbs [2] combined with Tuomela [11] and Elster [1] including MMORP G behaviour, Smith [8] and Pargman and Ericsson [6]

		Low probability of a possible sanction when the act occurs	High probability of a possible sanction when the act occurs			
			By anyone (i.e., without regard to status) (Smith third solution to the commons problem)		Only by a person or persons in a particular status or statuses (Smith first solution to the commons problem)	
<i>evaluation of the act</i>	<i>expectation concerning the act</i>	(Granovetter – weak ties, Pargman & Ericsson macro-public)	By means that exclude the use of force	By means that may include the use of force	By means that exclude the use of force	By means that may include the use of force
Collective evaluation	Collective expectation (Pargman & Ericsson micro-public)	<b>Elster conventions</b>	<b>Tuomela s-norms interaction in small groups and in guilds, cheating, and local norm violation</b>	<b>Tuomela s-norms interaction in small groups and in guilds, cheating, and local norm violation</b>	<b>Tuomela r-norms</b>	<b>Tuomela r-norms/ Elster legal norms</b>
	No collective expectation (Pargman & Ericsson meso-public)	Type B. Problematic conventions <b>Grief play</b>	<b>Tuomela s-norms cheating, and local norm violation</b>	<b>Tuomela s-norms cheating, and local norm violation</b>	<b>Tuomela r-norms</b>	<b>Tuomela r-norms/ Elster legal norms</b>
No collective evaluation (Granovetter – weak ties, Pargman & Ericsson macro-public)	Collective expectation	Type C: Customs	Type F: <u>empty class</u>	Type J: <u>empty class</u>	Type N: Exogenous rules <b>Guidleader using CTRaid Assist</b>	Type R: Exogenous laws
	No collective expectation	Logical null class, i.e., non-normative	Type G: <u>empty class</u>	Type K: <u>empty class</u>	<b>Elster quasi-moral norms</b>	<b>Elster quasi-moral norms</b>