Tulpamancy: A closeted community of imaginary-friend hobbyists

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Abstract

Social deviance often poses a barrier in socialization, as participation in deviant practices can be difficult to disclose to others. Despite these challenges, in recent years Internet communities that revolve around socially deviant practices have taken shape. This study looks into the Tulpamancy community, a relatively new online community of mainly adults who partake in creating seemingly sentient, autonomous hallucinations. These hallucinations, or 'Tulpas' typically serve as companions in participants' everyday lives, and in many cases resemble an imaginary friend that can be perceived in reality. The study looks into who commits to this practice, as well as when, how, and why current community members have joined. Through doing so, it intends to speak to the factors that drive individuals to join and maintain deviant online communities. The study finds real-life factors such as loneliness to have influence on willingness to join the community and commit social deviance.

Introduction

A small group of adults with dreams of interacting with My Little Pony characters have created a new subculture in recent years. They have successfully created a community of adults that conjure up seemingly autonomous imaginary friends of all kinds through the use of ancient Tibetan Buddhist meditative practices. It has grown to a membership of over 20,000, while keeping their community rather unknown to society at large. How can a community centered around such unusual practices come to stand on its own and attract so many members, while remaining largely unknown to the public?

This community, known as the Tulpamancy community, has been able to form and maintain itself by means of the Internet. These "Tulpamancers" have dodged the obstacles of social and spatial constraints by forming their community almost exclusively online, allowing for it to prosper without confronting taboo. The concept of Tulpamancy was introduced to the Western world in 2012 as a small circle of individuals on 4chan: an anonymous forum-like imageboard. Since its initial debut to Western society, the community has grown into a major sub-culture with over ten thousand members virtually unaffected by the taboo of creating an imaginary friend

(Veissière, 2015). Though it's clear that the Internet played a major role in this community's success, many questions remain about what key aspect of the Internet allows for socially deviant communities such as this one to prosper.

Previous research into anonymous communication has brought forth findings such as the Social Identity model of Deindividuation Effects (SIDE) – a model describing how anonymity can influence human behavior (Reicher et al., 1995). Anonymity certainly plays a key role in this community's success, however it is not the only factor which possibly contributes to the inception and maintenance of this socially deviant community. Other factors may come into play that allow for communities centered around social deviance to take shape, such as the lack of need for face-to-face communication, close geographic proximity, or local interested individuals. Additional social factors may also be at play, influencing one's willingness to participate as well as to maintain the community.

This study seeks to provide insight into how socially deviant Internet communities form, through looking into the Tulpamancer community in particular. Within this study, I do not directly test competing explanations of internet sub-culture creation, but rather look into this sub-culture's online interactions, history, and experiences to shed light on factors that shape deviant Internet communities' formation and maintenance. Additionally, the study seeks to bridge gaps of knowledge related the Tulpamancy community itself, as well as the implications that socialization with these imaginary friends has on an individual, as well as other groups.

Background

The history of Tulpamancy dates back to ancient times, as a practice in ancient Tibetan Buddhism (Melton, 2001). Monks in the Vajrayana esoteric tradition would create Tulpas to overcome their fears (Veissière, 2015). Though it remained a practice solely in Tibet for many thousands of years, it was eventually brought to the West due to exploration in the Tibetan region. Both Veissière and Mikles, two anthropologists describe the explorer Alexandra David-Neel's exposure to the concept in 1929, during her journey to Lhasa, Tibet (Mikles, 2015; Veissière 2015). It is written that she explored the concept of Tulpamancy for her own purposes, rather than using it as a means to overcome a fear. Instead, Veissière and Mikles describe the explorer having used those techniques to create an autonomous Friar Tuck Tulpa from Robin Hood, as a companion (Veissière, 2015).

Veissière describes the modern re-appropriation of David-Neel's findings on the Internet, on 4chan's /mlp/ (My Little Pony) board. Here, Bronies attempted to use David-Neel's methods to create a fully autonomous pony within one's imagination, with the focus of creating an imaginary friend that they could perceive in reality (Veissière, 2015). Since then, both Veissière and Mikles have described a shift from Tulpamancers remaining primarily on 4chan's /mlp/ board, to founding their own communities (Mikles, 2015; Veissière, 2015). It has since led to the creation of the /r/Tulpas page on Reddit, as well as the websites Tulpa.info, and Tulpa.io, the three of which have reached over 21,901 registered accounts.

The demographics of these modern Tulpamancers are described as white, middle-class youth, of whom most are undergraduate university students, though up to 1/3 are fully employed

(Veissière, 2015). In his surveys, Veissière also asked about the Tulpamancer's gender, which he reports has a male to female ratio of 3, while up to 10% of the population identifies as some degree of gender fluidity (Veissière, 2015).

In his study, Veissière found that most Tulpamancers report loneliness and social anxiety, and that many report that they started Tulpamancy to address these issues (Veissière, 2015). He goes on to propose improvements in the lives of those who have struggled with socialization, as well as mental illnesses aside from anxiety disorder (Veissière, 2015).

As for the Tulpamancy community itself, in the English-speaking world, Tulpamancy sites consist primarily of the /r/Tulpas subreddit and the Tulpa.info and Tulpa.io forums (Veissière, 2015). However, Veissière has noted that there are many other sub-communities where other languages are employed (Veissière 2015). His findings show that over half of the Tulpamancy community globally resides in those three English-language communities, while Tulpamancy websites in other languages remain dispersed throughout the Internet (Veissière, 2015).

Although information of where current Tulpamancers reside in cyberspace is well known, there are still gaps in knowledge about where many of these individuals come from. Though the concept spawned from 4chan's /mlp/ board, contemporary Tulpamancers within the online community more often than not have joined the community after the inception of sub-communities such as r/Tulpas and Tulpa.info. The community migrated to these sites to create a permanent home for Tulpamancers, rather than the quick, temporary communication which 4chan provides. The majority of the community began Tulpamancy after the subculture shifted from 4chan to their own independent sites, and thus the current population has gotten into the hobby from many websites other than 4chan.

Within each of the sub-communities, the general beliefs and practices remain the same. Though not a mental illness, Tulpamancy shares similarities to Dissociative Identity Disorder, in the sense that in both cases, the whole concept of interaction hinges on the idea that each personality is another person (Kihlstrom, 2005). The Tulpamancy community and practice also rely on the idea that Tulpas are real people within the mind, and participants interact with their Tulpas the same as they would with other human beings (Veissière, 2015). This core idea as well as the main practices of Tulpamancy remain consistent in each of the communities throughout the world, often diffusing outward from the English sub-communities (Veissière, 2015). Additionally, Tulpamancers are increasingly creating smaller, more intimate groups to discuss day-to-day findings and experiences; however, little is known about the mediums by which this is conducted.

The Tulpamancy community is a closeted Internet community, sustained and rooted in the concept of anonymity. For the most part, all interactions within this community are anonymous, and only a small few ever mention their practice of Tulpamancy to members of their social circle in real life. This is likely because the practice of Tulpamancy is considered socially deviant, and is quite difficult for outsiders to understand. Under ordinary circumstances, such a community would be more difficult to form in reality, due to the social deviance related to creating an 'imaginary friend' as an adult. But online, this is not the case.

An online community can easily take shape for a number of reasons, one being that members are all anonymous. In accordance with the SIDE model, the Tulpamancy community demonstrates a willingness to openly discuss and encourage participation in these socially deviant acts, that otherwise would be difficult to encourage – were the community to exist entirely offline (Reicher et al., 1995; Quinn et al., 2013). Other deviant online communities have been able to form and maintain themselves with ease for these same reasons, as members have felt more comfortable participating in deviant activity in part due to remaining anonymous throughout communication. This has been observed in other deviant online communities, such as the White Supremacy community, a community of which many describe as their "second home" (Douglas et al. 2005).

Online white supremacist groups who commit deviant acts through cyberhate and terrorism recruit new members and incite deviance through virtual means (Levin, 2002). While sharing no similarities in ideology, the Tulpamancy community and the White Supremacy community exhibit similar traits with respect to membership and maintenance of the community. Both communities are able to incite and promote socially deviant acts, as a basis for their own ideologies and values (Douglas et al. 2005; Veissière, 2015). The SIDE model suggests that through anonymity, these two communities have been able to incite and promote socially deviant acts, due to the lack of use of identities online. It is therefore suggested that anonymity plays a role in Tulpamancers' willingness to join and participate, and may be observed by looking through members' willingness to divulge their participation in this community with peers in reality. This, coupled with offline social struggles driving online participation, is one of the many possible factors that influence participation within these communities (De Koster et al., 2008; Veissière, 2015).

Additionally, community members are not burdened by the distance between each member, possibly furthering the ease of this community coming together and developing its own set of values and principles. Existing almost entirely on the Internet also allows for the community to easily validate their own values without facing any sort of social backlash (Quinn et al., 2013). Similar characteristics can be observed with other communities that partake in socially deviant behavior, like this community's relative, the Brony community (Veissière, 2015).

Bronies, like Tulpamancers are drawn to their practice primarily out of loneliness, and seek positive interaction (Robertson, 2013; Veissière, 2015). The positive messages from a television show geared toward young girls fulfills the need for interaction, which Bronies often lack due to social anxiety, and provide an experience and lifestyle among community members worth discussing (Robertson, 2013). Bronies found their home in anonymous websites, such as 4chan, due to the nature of absolute anonymity on the site (Robertson, 2013). Without faces and names tied to each individual, this community of mainly adult men were able to successfully create and sustain a community centered around a socially deviant practice.

From Bronies shrouded in anonymity came the Tulpamancer community, who experience similar communal traits with aspect to anonymity and other internet-related factors (Veissière, 2015). Without the need for face-to-face interaction, the Tulpamancy community too has succeeded in growing to a massive size, while remaining relatively unknown to the public. It is entirely possible that the Tulpamancer community and the Brony community are sustained by similar factors at play, involving young adults and socially deviant practices. Through studying groups

such as these, much can be learned about the driving factors behind membership of deviant online communities, and it is important to learn as much as possible about them to understand more about how groups can form without an identity tied to each individual.

Methods

This study takes a variety of approaches in looking into the Tulpamancy community. It consists of two surveys that have been distributed to three major Tulpamancy websites. The first survey seeks to answer demographic questions about respondents, such as the participant's race, gender, and country of origin, as well as other questions regarding their daily life and their practice of Tulpamancy.

I request respondents' email addresses at the end of the first survey, which I use to send them a second, more in-depth and qualitative survey if they consent. The second survey consists of much more extensive questions about the respondent's practice of Tulpamancy, as well as their daily lives, and is made up of primarily short-answer questions. This two-stage design was implemented not only to maximize participation within the first survey, but also to minimize the amount of time needed to complete each section. This method also ensured maximum completed survey results, as participants spent about one full day between the first survey and the second.

Sampling

I made posts on each of the three Tulpamancy sub-communities – /r/Tulpas (a sub-reddit on reddit.com), Tulpa.info and Tulpa.io (two independent sites) – recruiting future participants into the study. Each post describes the study (see appendix A), as well as a link to the initial survey. As Veissière indicated in his study, these three sites serve as the primary virtual locations at which Tulpamancers congregate, and thus the survey has been made publicly accessible to anyone who visits these sites (Veissière, 2015). Sampling includes all members of the community, including those who do not have a Tulpa, but participate in the community. In both the first and second surveys, responses are filtered based on whether or not the respondent has a Tulpa, and asks specific questions based on these two situations.

Data

This study utilizes survey responses from two surveys about community members' practices, collecting data from sets of multiple choice questions, 'select all that apply' questions, and free response questions. Using the survey responses, I look into who and what this community is, and the implications of being a member of this community.

Research Method

This study takes a mixed-methods approach, with hope to find explanations for a number of questions about the Tulpamancy community. By comparing the two types of survey responses, as well as analyzing publicly available posts and resources created by the community, I hope to find links between the publicly expressed opinions and disclosed responses to the surveys in order to develop theories inductively. Through doing so, previously unknown linkages between the Tulpa experience, and social factors may be exposed. The questions explored through comparison and inductive analyses include:

-The demographic characteristics of community members
-Driving factors behind participation in this deviant community
-How sociability affects participation in the practice
-How community members perceive their socially deviant practice
-Parent communities promoting interest in the practice
-General citizenship of other communities
-Community participation mediums
-Community retention time

To answer questions about the demographics of practitioners of Tulpamancy, I've provided a number of questions in the first survey about members' countries of origin, racial and gender identification, educational attainment, and others (see questions 1 through 10 of Survey A). From these responses, we can see what demographic groups take interest in the practice, and community.

To understand some of the driving factors behind participation in this community's socially deviant practice, I have chosen to include a short answer question in the second survey, asking why they are interested in creating a Tulpa (see question 18 of Survey B). These responses may potentially include thoughts, feelings, hesitations, and perceived benefits of creating a Tulpa – things that are not easily captured through typical survey questions. Such findings may assist in the development of theories as to why Tulpamancers choose to partake in this practice, as well as the community.

To better observe how social factors affect participation in the practice, factors related to sociability have been analyzed with respect to those who actively participate in Tulpamancy and those that do not. These observed variables include responses to questions regarding social ease, shyness, and friendship, coming from questions worded as "Is it easy for you to speak up in social situations?", "Would you describe yourself as more shy or outgoing?" and "Would you say that you have a lot of friends outside of the Internet?". These questions were asked on a four-point scale, ranging from very negative responses to very positive responses (see questions 38, 39, and 40 of Survey A). Through the analysis of these factors, offline influences may be observed, altering online behavior and deviant behavior within this community.

To examine how the community perceives the practice of Tulpamancy, I have also included questions regarding how Tulpamancers perceive their peers' views of their deviant practice, to better understand how social deviance can play a direct role in the practice (see questions 16 and 17 of Survey A). By looking into the community's self-identifying values as well as their perception of the taboo itself, theories regarding how deviance affects a community's function and role can be developed.

To learn about other sites and mediums by which members communicate, respondents were asked to describe other mediums that they personally use to partake in community participation. Through analysis of these responses, a clearer description of the structure of this community can be observed (see question 20 of survey A)

To see what other online communities Tulpamancers are a part of, a question in the first survey is asked, requesting that the respondent outline their other typical Internet dwellings (see question 21 of Survey A). Trends among certain common websites that these individuals browse may provide further insight into the types of people who choose to become members of these communities. Analyzing these factors may develop theories related to how other Internet habits and interests contribute to the willingness to commit social deviance, and join online communities.

Finally, to articulate how long average Tulpamancers have been a part of the community, respondents have been asked to indicate the amount of time since they have first been in practice (see question 13 of Survey A). By looking into this description, we can gauge the level of experience among members within the sample.

<div align="center">Results</div>

Demographics

Table 1: Basic demographics among participants.

Variable	N	Mean	SD
Age	160	22.1	5.02
Gender			
Male	103	62.8	-
Female	29	17.7	-
Other	32	19.5	-
Race			
White	120	73.6	-
Black	1	0.6	-
Hispanic	12	7.4	-
Asian	17	10.4	-
Multiracial	11	1.2	-
Other	2	6.8	-
Country of origin			
English-speaking countries	124	76.07	-
Other countries	39	23.93	-
Religious	45	27.4	-
Currently in school	84	51.2	-
Enrollment among students			
High school	17	20.2	-
University	63	75	-
Graduate study	4	4.8	-
Academic achievement level among not in school			
Less than high school	12	15.4	-
Graduated from high school	16	20.5	-
Completed 4-year degree or more	22	28.2	-
Full-time employment	32	59	-

Findings suggest that the average member of this sample is about 22 years old. Table 1 reports the average age for all community participants, both those who identify as Tulpamancers and those who do not, known in the community as 'Singlets'. Additionally, the table contains a breakdown of age based on whether or not the respondent is in fact a Tulpamancer. Results remained at an average of roughly 22 years of age. Of participants surveyed, most hailed from English-speaking countries, with the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia making up 76.07% of the sample. However, over 20 countries of origin are found within the sample.

When looking at the gender breakdown of this community, it was found that 62.8% of respondents identify as male, while 17.68% identify as female. Additionally, 19.51% of respondents chose not to identify as male or female, or chose to identify as some form of transgender.
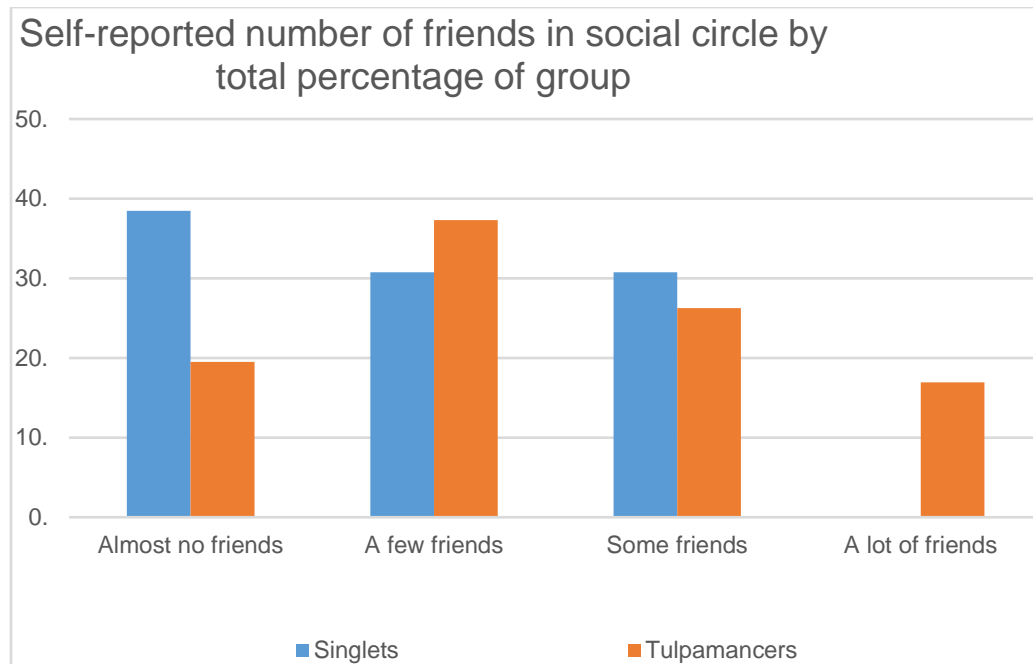
When looking at the ethnic makeup of the sample, findings show that the majority of participants identify as White. Almost no respondents identified as black, and there was non-trivial representation of other groups.

From these demographical insights, it can be inferred that members of this community are predominantly white, college-aged young adults, the majority of whom identify as male. Additionally, many respondents are identified as unemployed, or have dropped out of college, possibly suggesting struggles with societal adjustment among this population.
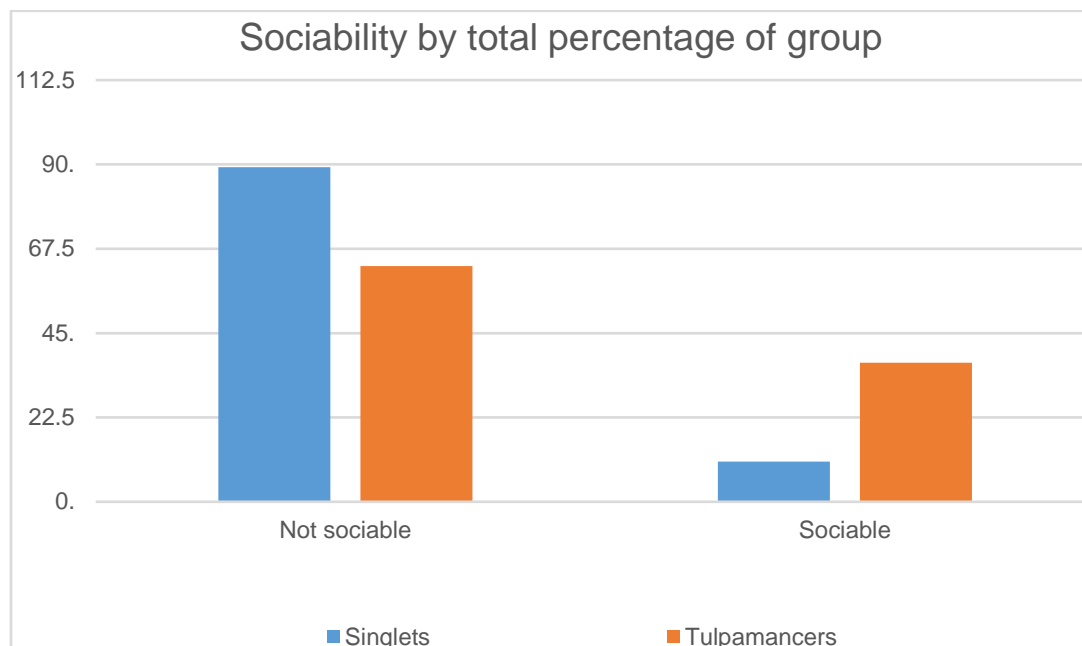
Factors promoting participation in Tulpamancy
Analyses of responses from community members that are not Tulpamancers, yet want to become Tulpamancers, has shown many trends in responses, particularly when asked why the respondent would like to make a Tulpa. The majority of responses to this open-ended question involved a longing for a friend and for companionship, suggesting that respondents without Tulpas seek socialization, and an escape from loneliness. For instance, one respondent wrote that they originally chose to commit to this "out of desire for a companion" and "out of loneliness".

I ran two tabulations on singlets' levels of loneliness, and indicators of Tulpamancers' levels of loneliness. Although having friends does not guarantee that one is not lonely, it does indicate it to be less likely. Perhaps surprisingly, this survey shows that Tulpamancers have more friends on average than singlet members of this community.

Self-reported number of friends in social circle by total percentage of group

(Bar chart showing percentage of Singlets (blue) and Tulpamancers (orange) across four categories.)

Category	Singlets	Tulpamancers
Almost no friends	~38.5	~19.5
A few friends	~31	~37
Some friends	~31	~26
A lot of friends	0	~17

I did another set of tabulations, combining the number of perceived friends respondents had, perceived levels of shyness, and social ease into a sociability variable. The three four-point variables were summed to form a single twelve-point sociability variable. Respondents were regarded as not sociable if their combined score resulted in less than 9 of the 12 possible total points between the three sociability variables.

Sociability by total percentage of group

(Bar chart showing percentage of Singlets (blue) and Tulpamancers (orange).)

Category	Singlets	Tulpamancers
Not sociable	~89	~62
Sociable	~12	~38

Findings further suggest that through participation in this socially deviant practice, participants are able to improve their own sociability. This lines up with Tulpamancers' responses within the survey, in which a number of respondents cited becoming more social as one of the benefits they

have achieved from Tulpamancy. For example, one respondent stated that through engaging in this practice, their Tulpa has "saved my social life for sure", through "giving mental support and advice". Another writes that by creating a Tulpa, they have been helped "set up relationships (of all kinds) that wouldn't have happened otherwise".

Perception of practice
Within the first survey, Tulpamancers were asked for their perception of how their peers would react if they knew that they committed to this deviant practice. Among Tulpamancers who could determine how their social circle would react knowing this, 69.44% stated that they believe that their peers would react negatively.

Table 2: Perceived peer reaction to learning of participants' deviance.

	N	Percent of sample
Positive reaction	22	30.6
Negative reaction	50	69.4

Thus, Tulpamancers believe that they would suffer social consequences if their practice was exposed to their peers, suggesting that Tulpamancers recognize that this is a deviant practice subject to social sanction.

Analysis of who within Tulpamancers' social circle is aware of their practice was conducted in order to gauge how many Tulpamancers had exposed themselves to their peers. Findings show that 49.64% of respondents have told no one – not acquaintances, friends, or family that they commit to this practice.

Table 3: Peer awareness of participant's deviance.

	N	Percent of sample
Peers aware of practice	69	51.4
Peers unaware of practice	68	49.6

These findings may serve implications in the development of the community, and highlight the importance of this community's grounding in the internet rather than physical reality.

Parent communities
In the second survey, respondents were asked to identify how they had first heard about Tulpamancy. Though some respondents indicated that they learned about the practice through an online or offline friend, many respondents learned about the practice through particular websites. Table 4 displays a breakdown of the sites of which Tulpamancers have come from.

Table 4: Internet communities by which respondents first learned about Tulpamancy.

	N
420chan	1
Kik	1
Reddit	12
4chan	10
Tumblr	4
DeviantArt	1
(Total number of respondents)	29

Findings suggest that the majority of respondents heard about the practice through reddit.com; however, findings may be skewed due to most of the sample already being members of the site.

Citizenship of other communities
Participants were asked to also describe other websites of which they are members of, unrelated to Tulpas. Using this data as a map, one can peer into the type of sites of which these Tulpamancers hail from, giving insight into Tulpamancers' character as well as underlying factors that may drive them to take part in a deviant online community.

Table 5: Participants' other Internet browsing dwellings.

	N
furaffinity.net	15
deviantart.com	23
tumblr.com	40
4chan.org	24
reddit.com	99
(Total number of respondents)	114

Findings display a strong affinity for reddit.com, despite Tulpamancy's origins on 4chan. However this is likely due to one of the major Tulpamancy sub-communities being held on this site at /r/Tulpas.

Community participation mediums
The first survey included a question asking for respondents to describe other mediums by which they participate in the community. Results in table 6 provide a more accurate representation of communication mediums within the Tulpamancer community.

Table 6: Mediums by which Tulpamancers communicate.

	N
/r/Tulpas	104
Tulpa.info	45
Tulpa.io	29
Tulpa-related IRC channels	26
Tulpa-related Skype groups	20
4chan	9
Tulpa-related Kik chats	2
(Total number of respondents)	128

Findings show that Tulpa discussion still occurs on 4chan in modern times. From write-in responses, it has been observed that members of the community participate in 4chan's new /trash/ board, in which they have Tulpa discussions fragmented from /r/Tulpas.

Community retention time
In the first survey, Tulpamancer respondents were asked how much time has passed since they first became a Tulpamancer. Findings were as follows:

Table 7: Time passed since first engaging in practice.

	N	Percent of sample
1 month	2	1.6
3 months	6	4.7
6 months	13	10.2
12 months	25	19.7
24 months	26	20.5
36 months	28	22
48+ months	27	21.3

Findings suggest that a majority of the sample contains respondents who have been members of this community for a long time, suggesting that much of the community consists of more experienced practitioners.

In addition, Tulpamancers' rates of participation were also measured.

Table 8: Rate of community participation among participants.

	N	Percent of sample
Daily	42	33.3
Every few days	28	22.2
Weekly	9	7.1
Every now and then	28	22.2
Hardly ever	19	15.1

Findings suggest that the majority of the sample participates periodically, implying that other Tulpamancers who do not participate as frequently through the three sites may primarily participate through the other mediums described.

Discussion and Conclusion

The results from this study suggest that this is a community of primarily white, college-aged individuals who have flocked to this practice both out of curiosity and as a means to escape loneliness. The majority of respondents have indicated that they struggle with social engagement, creating friendships, and being outgoing – coinciding with Veissière's reports within his study (Veissière, 2015). Additionally, it has been observed that these feelings of loneliness and struggles with socialization are more apparent among respondents who do not yet have Tulpas but take interest in the practice and are members of the community. Such findings could potentially suggest that with the practice of Tulpamancy, one's perceived sociability increases; however, strong evidence of a causal effect is lacking. It is entirely possible that other factors may contribute to the discrepancies between individuals with and without Tulpas in this community. Additionally, singlet members of the community likely differ from the general population of singlets, resulting in findings demonstrating changes in sociability only within the scope of this community. To look into how this practice affects an individual's sociability, further analyses would have to be conducted, comparing individuals outside of the community to those within it.

Results demonstrate one of the many possible reasons why individuals begin to partake in this practice. However, to look further into the reasons why Tulpamancers commit to Tulpamancy, other factors must be isolated and more detailed information must be collected about the circumstances that have brought participants to join this community and commit to this practice. Through the means of in-depth, direct interviews of community members who have just started their practice, moderately experienced Tulpamancers, and advanced Tulpamancers, deeper insight can be obtained as to the factors that attract members, as well as what pushes them to continue with the practice.

Future research may also benefit from observing the genderqueer population of respondents within this sample. Over 19% of respondents either identified as transgender or neither male nor female – a staggering number compared to those within the general population. By peering into

the conditions that affect non cisgender conforming communities, it is possible that some explanations as to why many respondents identify in such a way can be uncovered. Findings from future research into this particular demographic within this community may reveal certain factors within community members' personal lives that drive them to join this community and commit to this practice.

With a deeper look into the factors that bring community members toward participation, and through the contrast of other deviant online communities, theories about what drives the sustainability of deviant online communities can prosper. From the data collected within this study, loneliness and social difficulty has played a major role in respondents' decisions to join, but other latent factors may influence members' drive to participate.

Limitations

This study involves only respondents over the age of 18 due to IRB-related constraints. For this reason, members of the community have not entirely been represented. Future studies should seek to include all members of the community, to improve accuracy. Additionally, this study has been limited by responses being exclusively self-reported data, as well as has been restricted by its small sample size. Moreover, the sample consists of participants who have selected themselves as participants in the study, yielding more passionate members of the community than would be representative. Lastly, the majority of respondents are those who have been participating in the community for over one year.

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Appendix A

TITLE: Tulpamancy Research
TEXT:

Hello all!

I am an undergraduate sociological researcher who is studying the Tulpamancy community and phenomenon from a sociological perspective. I am fascinated by the concept and community of Tulpamancy. Like others before me, I want to illuminate this phenomenon and group to the research community, leading to greater understanding of this group. To do so, I am collecting original data about the experiences of Tulpmancers and members of this community that do not have Tulpas. Would you be willing to help me out?

If so, I've created a short, five-minute survey to fill out. To participate, you must be 18 or older. If you are younger than 18, unfortunately you cannot participate, and your data will not be used even if you submit anyway.

Additionally, at the end of the survey it will ask for your email address. You absolutely do NOT have to supply your email address if you do not feel comfortable. However if you do so, you will be sent an email with a link to a second, more in-depth interview. This could take between 5 and 20 minutes to fill out, depending on how much detail you'd like to supply.

If you fully consent to participating in this anonymous study, or have received parental permission to participate in it, please affirm this by clicking the link below and beginning the first survey:

[Survey link]

Thank you for reading this. I look forward to learning more about Tulpamancy and the community, and I hope that I can assist the community by bringing that knowledge to light.

If you have any questions, please send me a private message, or email me at [Email address].

<u>Survey B recruitment instrument</u>

Subject: Tulpamancy Research Follow-up Survey
Text:

Hello,

Thank you for completing the first Tulpamancy survey and supplying us with your email address. The second, more in-depth survey is now available for your response. This survey consists almost exclusively of short-answer questions, and could take 5 to 20 minutes of your time, depending on how extensively you choose to fill out the survey. Additionally, at the end of the survey you will be asked to supply your email address a second time, so that we can link your responses in the second survey to the responses you made in the first survey. You are *not* required to supply us this information a second time if you do not consent. Your responses are completely anonymous, so if you do not feel comfortable with linking your responses in the second survey to the first survey, you can choose not to respond.

If you hereby consent to participating in the second and final portion of this anonymous study, and have received parental permission to participate if you are younger than 18, then please indicate so by clicking the following link and filling out the survey:

[Survey link]

Thank you for your assistance.

Appendix B:

Survey A data collection instrument

The following questions refer to 'you' as the host.

1. How old are you?

2. What country do you live in?

3. What is your gender?
      Male
      Female
      Male (Trans)
      Female (Trans)
      Other (please specify)

4. What is your race/ethnicity? Mark all that apply.
      White
      Black
      Latino
      East Asian
      South-east Asian
      Middle Eastern
      Pacific Islander
      Other (please specify)

5. Are you religious?
      No
      Yes (please specify your religious preference)

6. Are you currently enrolled in school?
      Yes
      No

7. What level of school are you currently enrolled in?
      Less than high school
      High school
      University
      Graduate study

8. Do you also have a job?
      No
      Yes (please specify current employment)

9. What is the furthest you've gone in school?
    8th grade or less
    9th-12th grade
    High school graduate
    GED
    Attended college but did not graduate
    4-year degree
    Advanced degree

10. Are you currently employed?
    No
    Yes (please specify current occupation)

11. Have you created a Tulpa before?
    Yes
    No

12. How many Tulpas have you created?

13. How long have you been a Tulpamancer?
    Less than 1 month
    Less than 3 months
    Less than 6 months
    About 1 year
    About 2 years
    About 3 years
    More than 4 years

14. How many hours a week do you active force? (Force in the Mindscape)
    1-3 hours
    4-7 hours
    8-14 hours
    More than 14 hours
    I don't consistently active force
    I don't active force

15. How many hours a week do you passive force? (Force in reality)
    1-3 hours
    4-7 hours
    8-14 hours
    I constantly passive force
    I don't consistently passive force
    I don't passive force

16. In real life, does anyone know that you have a Tulpa?
    Family
    Close friends
    Acquaintances

17. If your family, friends, or acquaintances knew that you have a Tulpa, would they react well?
    They would react positively
    They would react negatively
    I don't know

18. Do you have other Tulpamancer friends online?
    Yes
    No

19. How often do you come to this site to interact with the community?
    Daily
    Every few days
    Weekly
    Every now and then
    Hardly ever

20. Which Tulpa-related groups are you a part of?
    /r/Tulpas
    Tulpa.info forums
    Tulpa.io forums
    Tulpa-related IRC Channels
    Tulpa-related Skype groups
    Tulpa-related Kik chats
    Other groups (please specify)

21. What other sites do you regularly visit?
    Reddit (Outside of /r/Tulpas)
    4chan
    Tumblr
    DeviantArt
    FurAffinity
    Other (please specify)

22. What is your [first] Tulpa's current form?
    Humanoid
    Semi-humanoid
    Anthropomorphic animal
    Pony
    Animal
    Mythical creature
    Robotic
    Has not attained form
    Other (please specify)

23. Was it mostly you, or your Tulpa that decided their appearance?
    I mostly decided their appearance
    They mostly decided their appearance

24. How many times has your Tulpa drastically changed their physical appearance?

25. What is your Tulpa's gender?
    Male
    Female
    Agender
    Other (please specify)

26. What basic skills is your Tulpa capable of?
    Mindvoice speech
    Fluent speech
    Visualization within the mindscape
    Thought/Word distinguishment
    Reality imposition
    Basic possession
    Full-body possession
    Switching
    Parallel Processing
    Total imposition (All senses)

27. Is there anything else we should know about your Tulpa's abilities?

28. Do you like your Tulpa's personality?
    Yes
    No
    I neither like it nor dislike it

29. Was it mostly you, or your Tulpa that influenced their personality?
    I mostly influenced their personality
    They mostly influenced their own personality

30. Do you have a good relationship with your Tulpa(s)?
    We have a good relationship
    We don't have a relationship
    We have a negative relationship

31. How intimate do you feel your Tulpa/Host relationship is?
    Less intimate than any human relationship
    As intimate as an acquaintance relationship
    As intimate as a friend relationship
    As intimate as a family relationship
    As intimate as a romantic relationship
    More intimate than a romantic relationship

32. Have you ever chosen to spend time with your Tulpa(s) over spending time with another human?
    Yes
    No

33. Do you feel it is easier to communicate with your Tulpa(s) than other humans?
    Yes
    No

34. Have you ever felt pressured to spend time with your Tulpa(s)?
    Yes
    No

35. Have you felt decreased loneliness since creating your first Tulpa?
    Yes
    No

36. Do you have any other Tulpamancer friends online?
    Yes
    No

37. Do you have any other Tulpamancer friends offline?
    Yes
    No

38. Is it easy for you to speak up in social situations?
    Very difficult
    Difficult
    Easy
    Very easy

39. Would you describe yourself as more shy or outgoing?
   Very shy
   A little shy
   A little outgoing
   Very outgoing

40. Would you say you have a lot of friends outside of the Internet?
   I have almost no friends
   I have a few friends
   I have some friends
   I have a lot of friends

41. Has a doctor diagnosed you with any of the following mental/emotional conditions?
   ADD/ADHD
   Autism (Including Asperger's Syndrome)
   Depression
   Anxiety Disorder
   Bipolar Disorder
   Schizophrenia
   Dissociative Identity Disorder
   Other (please specify)

The following questions refer to 'you' as the host.

1. Do you have a Tulpa?
    Yes
    No

2. Do you believe that your Tulpa has achieved sentience?
    Yes
    No

3. How long ago do you believe your Tulpa has achieved sentience?

4. How did you know your Tulpa was sentient?

5. How did you first hear about Tulpamancy?

6. How did you feel about the concept before you tried it?

7. What's your [first] Tulpa's name?

8. Describe your Tulpa's current physical appearance.

9. What is your Tulpa's personality like?

10. Why did you make a Tulpa?

11. How has your Tulpa(s) helped you in life?

12. How close/intimate is your relationship with your Tulpa?

13. How have/would your family and friends react to you having a Tulpa?

14. What are some things that Tulpamancy has helped you do? (i.e. better at drawing, better sleep, etc.)

15. What are some ways that Tulpamancy has hurt you? (i.e. unwanted hallucinations, nightmares, etc.)

16. What do you like about the Tulpamancer community?

17. What do you dislike about the Tulpamancer community?