Introduction
This is a book about communities. As the seventeenth-century poet John Donne put it, human beings struggle to thrive when they are isolated from others. Communities play a crucial role in negotiating shared and individual identities and in generating a sense of belonging. According to Norbert Elias, communities are responsible for structuring most of the interdependencies between human beings. They are the basic elements of functioning human activity; they lend a structure to daily life and the various forms of human interactions. Thus, Donne’s »no man is an island« adage appeals to us not just on the metaphysical level of the human need for companionship, but also reminds us of the corporeal necessity of co-operation for existence and co-existence.

Scholars intuitively agree that communities are a fundamental form of sociability, binding human beings across different cultures and times. But communities obviously come in many guises, whose forms are rooted in distinct historical and socio-cultural environments. Therefore, it hardly comes as a surprise that scholarly approaches towards the definition of community resulted in a myriad of conceptualizations. Even within disciplines, there are diametrically opposed convictions of what actually constitutes community, a term which continues to evade clear-cut definition. To give just one example, in his seminal 1955 review of literature in the Social Sciences, George Hillery identified 94
distinct definitions of community.\(^2\) However, on reflection, what many definitions have at their core is the common assumption that communities consist of groups of people who share, or are compelled to share, some form of connectivity. The difficulty of defining ‘community’ is a problem which we discuss in more detail below.\(^3\)

**Towards a Definition of Community**

A community may depend on shared geographic location, interest or objective, as in communities of culture or practice, or it can appear in an institutionalized or corporate form. Members of a community are linked together by shared practices, semantics and symbolic representations that are entangled with internal and external criteria of membership and an outward demarcation towards non-members. As even this preliminary attempt at reaching a general definition of community emphasizes, it is almost impossible to provide a precise definition of this form of sociality, which remains vague and elusive. Attempts at definition are further complicated as the semantics and practices of sociality shift and are deeply embedded in their specific historical, cultural and social settings. These practices and semantics consist of a shared repertoire of emotions, experiences and symbolic representations which define both the consciousness and solidarity of communities and the roles of the individual members.\(^4\)

Although membership is often linked to outward, formal criteria, it is always symbolically constructed and associated with meaning.\(^5\) Communities exist because their members perceive themselves as belonging and because they believe in the vigour of their social and cultural repertoire. This gives rise to the problem of translation. How do you translate practices into semantics? As academics, we have to make concrete what is often not concrete, what is understood, what is internalized, what is implicit. Many of the practices which are used to create

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2 Hillery 1955: 117. In a second study, comprising data from the 1950s to the 1970s, Willis 1977 added another 60 definitions. In spite of the abundance of differing approaches Hillery and Willis surveyed, the majority of definitions shared a limited set of recurring factors essential to the concept of community: social interactions, common ties and residence in a common geographic area. A review of classic ethnographic studies by McKeown et al. 1987 arrived at four core elements of community: locality, biological and social membership, common institutions and shared actions. Exploring the psychological dimension, McMillan and Chavis 1986 proposed four elements for a definition of a sense of community: membership, influence, integration and a shared emotional connection, Hillery 1955; Willis 1977.

3 This introduction does not intend to provide a comprehensive overview of the vast and often contentious literature about communities. Our aim is rather to suggest a framework that allows an interdisciplinary approach to the study of communities.

4 See Rapport 2002.

5 Cohen 1985: 118.
communities are employed intuitively. Belonging to a community often means doing things without putting words to them. Translating these practices into academic discourse in turn means inserting a layer of interpretation, while at the same time losing their instinctive, innate meanings, which evaporate when you try to capture them in scientific terms.

Where we cannot come to a conclusive definition, we often feel the need to describe. As a consequence, communities are often described according to the nature or quality of the bonds between their members. For example, family and kinship groups and networks of patronage or friendship have been analysed as communities with characteristic practices of interaction and communication. This volume concerns itself less with the—sometimes deceptively—more formal, clearly labelled social ties such as kinship, and more with the less explicitly denoted social bonds, such as trust, friendship, loyalty. These are the connections which underlie and underpin society and which give rise to communities, although we are aware of the need to differentiate between institutionally constituted communities and those which are more organic and driven more by their own self-dynamic. Non-institutional communities are constituted largely by personal ties and relationships, but these social ingredients alone do not make up a community. Mere co-existence does not mean community. A community needs both horizontal and vertical ties, but these ties need to go beyond the interpersonal level: they interconnect and entwine, to form a tissue, a web, a framework of connectivity. Communities require and engender a degree of co-operation, engagement and mutuality. And to be robust, sustainable and beneficial, communities need to negotiate performative and regulatory mechanisms, modes of understanding and etiquette.

Finding words to capture communities is not the only challenge. There are other caveats to be born in mind. In addition to its vagueness, the term ‘communities’ is emotionally charged, often carrying romantic and overly-positive connotations, which exclude conflict. Conflict is also integral to communities, as communities do not speak with one voice and are not heterogeneous in their interests; engaging with communities means addressing how they handle internal conflicts and challenges from outside. Further, the flexibility of notions of belonging can also alter the emphasis laid on the denominators commonly understood as constitutive of community, e.g. shared geographic location. Some form of shared space or zone of contact is one of the necessary preconditions for community. Thus flexibility in the understanding of spaces of belonging and the

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7 As, for example, Creed emphasizes, it may inadvertently carry and invoke other definitions, Creed 2006: 5.
physicality of space in turn leads to reassessments in the understanding of communities. Location was and continues to be a factor integral to constituting many, if not all, communities. However, what does it actually mean to be located somewhere? How is location delineated and bounded and in what ways and to what extent can those boundaries be crossed or extended? The potential for communication – defined here in its broadest sense to include for example non-verbal communication or habitus – and the nature, ease, speed and quality of that communication is one of the crucial answers to this question, from the ancient world to the 21st century. We hold that acts of communication are a constitutive element of community. Thus in some respects mapping communities often means mapping communications.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the analysis of letter exchange has been one of the key tools to explore friendship and other networks in the pre-modern period. This is more than a straightforward question of the survival and availability of source material. Technological advance has, of course, transformed this agenda in the modern era. First the telegraph, then the telephone and now tools such as Skype allow real time communication. In the last twenty years or so, internet users can increasingly choose the space which they inhabit without physically moving. People are not dependent on geographical location to be part of a community or to have a sense of belonging or to be part of the everyday life of a community. This has been recognized by academics, resulting in a noticeable shift in definitions of what constitutes communities, from an emphasis on shared geographic location to a feeling of collectivity and belonging together.

In particular social scientists have tried to address this by creating models which sought to explain the shifting forms of sociality. One influential visualization of shifts in the meaning of »communities« through time was proposed by the German sociologist and philosopher, Ferdinand Tönnies. He distinguished, for example, »Gemeinschaften« based on face-to-face relations determined by mutual bonding and spontaneous emotions and sentiments (»Wesenswille«) from »Gesellschaft«, which is based on relations grounded in self-interest and political and economic considerations (»Kürwille«). Tönnies also draws our attention to the fact that our concepts of »community« and »society« are not synonymous, although his definitions do not necessarily correspond to modern notions of society.

More recently, locality and space are understood as being the result of social relationships and the agency of people, see Bachmann-Medick 2010: 291 – 292.

Tönnies 1887.
For Georg Simmel on the other hand, all forms of social life could be observed as an abstraction of the various modes of interactions among individuals. In Western societies, modernity brought with it an idea of individualism which increasingly gained significance during the industrial age and the social changes which characterized this period. Longstanding concepts of community and structures of belonging were severely challenged. As Immanuel Kant epitomizes it: »Aufklärung ist der Ausgang des Menschen aus seiner selbst verschuldeten Unmündigkeit. Unmündigkeit ist das Unvermögen, sich seines Verstandes ohne Leitung eines anderen zu bedienen.« Kant denotes a shift in perception as all earlier ties are now regarded as not simply obsolete but ›handicapping‹. While Kant represents the philosophy of the Enlightenment, his views are not dissimilar to the philosophers of the ancient world, for example the Stoics’ emphasis on how emotions should not come into play in the forming of friendships as they obscured ratio. As this suggests, there are significant shifts over time in the understanding of community, for example that captured by the term ›industrial revolution‹, but these should not be overemphasized, or be seen as linear progression or be allowed to obscure continuities.

It is clear that any attempt to narrowly define ›community‹ is doomed to fail. Some scholars have even argued in favour of completely discarding either the term or the concept of community, because it is normatively laden and evades clear-cut definition. However, as Vered Amit points out, it is precisely the very ambiguity present in the term that ensures its persistence in both scholarly literature and popular culture. And, as the plethora of definitions highlights, a too narrowly framed definition of communities would lead to the exclusion of some forms of social relationships and networks from the canon of ›community‹. Yet, despite the term’s slipperiness and its shifting cultural, contextual, spatial and temporal applications, it remains a concept that researchers are reluctant to drop.

13 Simmel 1968.
14 The perception of the person as an individual has a specific genesis in the Euro-American context that is closely linked to processes of modernization and industrialization, cf. Carrier 1999: 24; Mauss 1985: 22. However, as e. g. the anthropologists Strathern 1988; 1992 and Carrier 1999 have shown the notion of an autonomous, self-contained individual is not universal, as in some societies the person is understood to be constituted through social relations, without a pre-existent self. At the same time Magnus Course attested to the possibility that other societies have developed similar concepts of the individual, despite having had very different histories, Course 2010: 169. Thus, Killick and Desai argue that social scientists should take into account the existence of multiple configurations and possibilities of how concepts of the person or the individual developed in different socio-cultural and socio-historical contexts, Killick/Desai 2010: 9 – 10.
15 Stacey 1974.
This volume arises from the second conference hosted by the DFG Research Group »Friends, Patrons, Clients«: *Binding and Breaking: Communities of Friendship and Patronage*. In this, the second phase of the Research Group’s interdisciplinary project, we are taking a closer look at ties and networks of friendship and patronage in a wider sense, particularly focusing on groups and less on dyadic friendships. As a result, we were particularly interested in exploring how communities came into being, what sustains them and gives them coherence, how they negotiate identities, and respond to conflicts and challenges to their underlying structures and modes of self-representation. As the conference title suggests, we are concerned with how the rules, structures and frameworks, both formal and informal, which permit social groups to operate, are negotiated, understood and performed. And conversely, with how communities and social bonds are re-negotiated and disrupted and transgressive behaviours handled.

Given both the complexity of the task (as outlined above) and the interdisciplinary ethos of the Research Group »Friends, Patrons, Clients«, this volume does not attempt to reach a prescriptive definition of community or communities. It approaches the concept through three themes – trust, loyalty and conflict – which we found to be transculturally and diachronically relevant to communities. These three themes, which represent three of the panels from the conference, are not exclusive and, as the chapters in this volume make clear, interconnect and even depend on each other.

As the title of this volume suggests, we aim to highlight different faces of communities. We do this in several ways. Firstly, each panel has a broadly conceived keynote address (represented in this volume) which provides a setting for the more detailed discussion which follows. In line with the necessity of recognizing the multi-faceted nature of communities, this volume was always envisaged as consisting of a series of case studies. The majority of the chapters therefore take the form of detailed analyses, drawn from a range of disciplines and epochs. Several contributions take a primarily emic approach to recovering and uncovering what community and belonging means; many focus on textual analysis, while others are drawn from authors’ participation and observation of communities (chapter summaries are given below). Finally, while we did not aim to provide a definitive definition, the chapters in this volume clearly suggest

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18 The research interests of the first phase are reflected in the Research Group’s first conference volume on *Varieties of Friendship*, Descharmes et al. 2011. For a concise summary see Ronald G. Asch’s preface to that volume, Asch 2011.
several constitutively and operatively relevant factors which are common to many manifestations of communities: these are summarized in conclusion.

Panel 1: Trust

Trust may not always be rational, but trust in others allows us to form a wide range of relationships. What would our lives be like without trust? How do we choose whom we trust? When do we need to trust? Can communities function without trust? What would society look like without trust? What happens when trust is lost? Trust is a form of social credit or, as Simmel defines it, a state between »knowing and not-knowing«,\(^{19}\) which operates between certainty and uncertainty. A degree of insecurity is intrinsic to trust, as we can never know if there will be a return on our investment or if the person we put our trust in merits it. Therefore the question of whether it is rational and when it is justified to trust is fundamental to most definitions of trust.\(^{20}\) Without trust, the most basic human interaction and collaboration – for example, forming friendships, raising a family, sharing social space, conducting business or knowledge exchange – would be rendered impossible. The readiness and ability to trust is what allows us to settle arguments and overcome conflicts; conversely to withdraw or withhold trust provokes and sustains disagreement and conflict.

Adam B. Seligman discusses the paradigmatic difference between the notions of trust and confidence in his key note chapter to the panel on trust. He revisits ideas which he defined in his seminal work on trust and explores them in respect to the problem of ambiguity in human relations.\(^{21}\) He points out how social difference and ambiguity were met throughout history with the human desire to disambiguate via ever more rigid categorization. Seligman’s process of notation reduces experience to a set of social categories correlative to his definition of confidence – the certain knowledge of how social actors will react in particular situations. Trust, on the other hand, demands a certain level of ignorance or uncertainty about another person’s motives and intentions. According to Seligman, trust and confidence correlate to different modes of collective organizations and social co-existence which have been challenged by the deeply plural nature of modern and post-modern societies. Faced with the unavoidability of ambiguity, the human need for order and categorization must be in balance with the acceptance of the negotiability of social roles and norms so as to enable the construction of confidence without destroying the potential for

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19 Simmel 1968: 263.
20 For a recent discussion see Wanderer/Townsend 2013.
21 Seligman 1997.
trust. While the creation of boundaries may be an innate human response to difference, the limits and impossibilities of notation in incorporating and tackling ambiguity demand a re-conceptualized way to contemplate our self-set boundaries. Seligman therefore concludes his argument by proposing that – in an age of pluralism – shared experience will provide a more reliable basis for living together with difference than either shared categories or shared meaning. The advance of trust and the background of shared experience combined will allow for an alternative mode of incorporating ambiguity into the present day reality of pluralistic living together.

Anthropologist Till Förster expands on these ideas by outlining the importance of trust in warlike situations. Against the backdrop of the Ivorian crisis, he shows how notions of trust transformed in a period of radical social and political change from the 1990s until 2012. People living in areas of armed conflict often speak of experiences of disintegration of trust in various aspects of their life, while at the same time they are more dependent on personal aid as state institutions lose their reliability. Hence, Förster emphasizes, in situations of war trust is needed more than ever. However, as people’s lifeworlds change dramatically, they can no longer rely on established habitual practices and have to find new ways to trust each other. Förster therefore depicts how trust was maintained and created during times of insecurity in the context of the Côte d’Ivoire. In accord with Seligman, Förster perceives trust as an integral part of agency which consists of three dimensions: rational choice, habitual practices and imagination. As an analytical concept, agency allows us to better grasp the situatedness of actors in their social context. To outline the interrelatedness of different types of trust, Förster first describes how trust in state institutions was affected from the 1990s on, before focusing on the experiences of trust and distrust among individuals. Overall, his chapter shows how trust in social relations can counterbalance problems of instability and insecurity in wartime.

With her focus on the consequences of trust betrayed rather than on how to generate trust, Lynette Mitchell’s chapter addresses apistia and the role of retribution in the society of the Classical Greek polis, which relied on the binding power of reciprocal ties of faith and friendship. Having analysed the strain a citizen’s ties to his philoi and xenoi could place on the faithfulness he owed to the community of the polis, Mitchell then explores the necessity of rituals, such as oaths and pledges designed to regulate bonds of loyalty and faithfulness, and roots them in the sacral sphere of the gods and their divine vengeance. Here, a paradigm shift can be observed in the transition from the archaic to the classical period. As the works of Homer and the Greek dramatists show, while vengeance guaranteed stability in archaic Greece, classical Athens was the forerunner in establishing the formalized civil space of the courtrooms to settle feuds and resolve quarrels rooted in severed loyalties. As a final aspect, Mitchell raises the
issue of faithlessness in the confined space of the Greek *oikos* with its complex individual relationships, which witnessed some of the greatest insecurities about faith and trust. The classical dramas speak of vengeance for trust broken by parents, children or spouses, a situation which has been confirmed by the evidence from lawsuits and court speeches. This may be due, as Mitchell points out, to there being less obvious mechanisms and rituals of reciprocity and exchange of favours than in the public sphere, yielding the floor to conflicting emotions and ambiguities.

**Ann-Cathrin Harders** explores a different aspect of trust in ancient societies, shifting the focus to late Republican Rome and the perspective of gender. She discusses whether *fides* as the pivotal virtue in the upholding of social relations cementing the *res publica Romana* also formed the foundation for including women – who were officially excluded from political participation in the Roman Republic – into male networks of friendship and patronage. In a community based on the importance of social identities rather than individuality, *fides* was not seen as a trait of character nor was it used to describe the quality of an interpersonal relationship; it constituted a social virtue attributed to a person as a result of their actions and public conduct, generating reliability and predictability of their social behaviour. Therefore, Harders links *fides* to Seligman’s conceptualization of ‘confidence’ instead of ‘trust’ (as described in this volume). While the body of source material characterizes *fides* as a male virtue and women as unworthy of trust, Harders recognizes this attitude as a cultural commonplace by which clearly defined relations to specific women, in particular to female relatives, remained unaffected. As demonstrated on the examples of Servilia Caepionis and Clodia Metelli, women acted within their ascribed social roles and identities just like male Roman aristocrats did and were therefore worthy of their confidence. Due to the interconnectedness of the public and private sphere in Republican Rome, both Clodia and Servilia acted as social brokers and confidant nodal points for the political relations of their male relatives and friends, arranging contacts, compensating enmities and influencing political decision making. However, employing the example of how easily Marcus Tullius Cicero was able to re-interpret the political intimacy between the siblings Clodius and Clodia as a sexual, even incestuous, relationship, Harders also emphasizes that trust between men and women remained potentially transgressive in Roman society.

Concluding the panel on trust, **Andreas Bösche’s** chapter outlines the importance of different forms of trust between high ranking dignitaries in the Habsburg Empire at the beginning of the 19th century. His case study closely analyses the correspondence between Stefan Stratimirović, a Metropolitan of the Serbian Orthodox Church, and two commanding generals, Baron Georg von Geneyne and Baron Peter von Duka. Similar to Förster’s chapter in this volume,
Bösche shows how the actor’s agency allows the development of trust against different backgrounds, by highlighting the ways in which interpersonal relationships are negotiated through particular patterns of communication. Mutual trust was crucial for the successful outcome of acts of support directed towards orthodox Habsburg Serbs, which was important for Stratimirović. However, trust was not simply granted due to the official position the three actors occupied, but had to be developed on a more personal level. Stratimirović’s relation to his correspondence partners was based on different forms of trust. While the relation with von Duka was characterized by trust based on a shared background, identity and religious affiliation – an aspect which recurs in Ingo Rohrer’s notion of generalized friendships later in this volume – the foundation of trust between Baron Geneyne and the Metropolitan developed over time from a strictly professional to a more personal relationship. Bösche highlights how different patterns of relatedness developed in various confidence building moments, making it possible for Stratimirović’s relationship with the two commanding generals to exceed the boundaries of official obligations.

**Panel 2: Loyalty**

Loyalty, as the chapters in this panel illustrate, is closely linked to trust, although loyalty may exist without trust. Loyalty, again like trust, may not always be wholly voluntary and loyalties may be unavoidable or be compelled; they can, for example, be inherited or coerced through force. Loyalty operates at a range of levels, from the purely ideological level to the formation of specified social bonds. Loyalty can have very positive connotations, as a virtue – as in the popular epitaph »she was a loyal wife« – or an ideal to be aspired to. But there are also negative connotations, of partiality or unthinking loyalty.

Where loyalties operate effectively they can provide a framework for social conduct and minimize conflict. However, loyalties are not just a cause of conflict but also perpetuate conflict, as seen, for example, in civil war situations. Another point of conflict is provided where multiple, perhaps competing, loyalties co-exist. This sensitivity around loyalties is one of the reasons why loyalty is often marked by ritual and visible signs. Loyalty is practiced, performed and displayed. It can be exhibited by patterns of behaviour and symbolic acts, for example the granting or exchange of tokens of loyalty. Oaths and promises help to structure the functionality of both trust and loyalty. The use of oaths and the consequences of the foreswearing of oaths are a way of regulating and making loyalties concrete and attempting to guard against disloyalty.

How loyalty was assured between friends in early modern Europe, how it impacted daily life and how it might have come into conflict with other obliga-
tions, are the central issues of Kenneth Loiselle’s keynote to the panel on loyalty. He shows that loyalty was frequently demonstrated through mutual declarations, friendship portraits, the formal pledging of oaths or rites of passage as utilized by freemasons. Another important marker of loyalty in friendship was the mutual rendering of services, which had a distinctly different quality than the services expected and provided in a patron-client relationship since friends were not expected to immediately and obligatorily render services when requested. While friendship did value practical assistance, it was not wholly dependent on materialistic concerns, but rather grounded in mutual affection and respect. The chapter goes on to explain how the concept of loyalty in friendships came under fire at the end of the eighteenth century. Loiselle points out how not only the increasing importance of marital relationships but also a shifting view on politics undermined the previous understanding of friendship as a fundamental source of social order. Having been valued as a core political factor since antiquity, in the eighteenth century friendship in the political sphere was increasingly seen as socially disruptive and corrupting.

Sharon Adams highlights the role friendship and friendship networks played in the building of allegiances during the Covenanting Revolution in Scotland between 1637 and 1651. Political opportunism, religious beliefs and the relation to the king were not the only factors determining which side Scottish nobles chose. With the aim of identifying the weight contemporaries put on relationships in the context of the revolution, Adams argues that it was not the precise nature of the connection which mattered, but the way in which it was utilized. She shows how the discourse of allegiance was cast in terms of loyalty and friendship. Through promises of friendship or references to former friendship, friendship became synonymous with the making and breaking of allegiances. Allegiances were also heavily influenced by an individual’s pre-existing social circles, sympathies as well as antipathies. The covenanting nobles came into close contact with each other during the turbulent 1640s, and these connections were crucial in creating a common cause. The organization and utilization of personal networks played an important part in the temporary success of the Covenanting Revolution. These networks generated trust which, as Förster also shows in his observation of the civil war in Côte d’Ivoire, was an extremely valuable resource during political turmoil.

Shuo Wang’s chapter sheds light on another aspect of loyalty in the field of politics. Her case study takes a close look at the interactions between British and Chinese officials during the Napier Affair of 1834, particularly the difficulties arising from intercultural differences. Outwardly concerned with questions of ceremony, diplomatic procedure and status markers, the negotiations provide insight into the different and clashing understandings of loyalty on both sides. Howqua, the Chinese mediator, was influenced during the negotiations by a
specific type of personal loyalty to his immediate superior. As Wang demonstrates, as a Hong merchant Howqua was effectively trapped in a patronage relationship with the governor of Canton, which he could not afford to risk due to his social standing. Therefore he concealed his knowledge of the superior military power of the British, inadvertently assisting the defeat of Qing China in the subsequent Opium Wars. In the context of Sino-Western confrontation, the chapter illustrates how the interlacement of individuals in different forms of loyalty relations can develop a fatal momentum.

Panel 3: Conflict

The theme of conflict may seem paradoxical in a discussion of communities and indeed conflict can be hostile to the constitution and stability of communities. But, as Simmel\textsuperscript{22} emphasized, conflict and discord also hold great significance for the negotiation of community and communal identity; in controversy people become truly aware of what they have in common with others and what sets them apart. Conflict is important when it comes to establishing boundaries and binding together a community. Communities operate not just by including but often also by excluding and practices of inclusion can sometimes fail. Therefore, locatedness is also relevant to conflict in community, as individuals may or may not be able to divorce themselves from a community, or may remain within and cause fracture or dissent.

Mechanisms for handling dissent and conflict can themselves be constitutive of communities. Moreover, these rules, implicit and explicit, frequently lie at the heart of how communities understand themselves, for example legal codes are primarily driven by rules to handle conflict. Boundaries are essential both to a community’s conception of itself and to the re-negotiation of its common grounds. Thus conflict can also be interpreted as a form of integration and as a practice of inclusion.\textsuperscript{23}

Hilay Zmora introduces the panel on conflict with a detailed survey of evolutionary biologist theories as a possible explanation for the origin of conflict in human societies. He explores how conflicts in close-knit societies come about. Departing from the prevalent sociological model, which according to him can only explain conflict between different groups, he theorizes that social conflicts are inherently intimate in their nature. Using the example of the feuds of German nobles in Franconia in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, Zmora shows how these feuds mostly took place between individuals who were linked to each other

\textsuperscript{22} Simmel 1904.
\textsuperscript{23} Hand/Hoffmann 2010: 111.
by multiple social and economic ties. Strikingly, many feuds were not regulated in private but deliberately brought into the open. According to Zmora, the concept of honour does not by itself account for this dual nature of social conflict in pre-modern times. It was the need for co-operation that led to highly public feuds. In order to portray themselves as valuable and reliant partners for future co-operation, Franconian nobles had to prove their willingness to defend the values of their peers. A feud was not only about enforcing or countering legal claims, but also about communicating moral character to the wider community, commitment to the values and norms that helped define membership in the nobility. Thus, according to Zmora, the need for co-operation became the very source of conflict and violence.

The importance of shared practices and values which have to be continually reinforced is also stressed in Ingo Rohrer’s chapter, which addresses conflict as instances of cohesion and dissolution in the punk and hardcore scene of Buenos Aires. Rohrer shows how members of the scene conceptualize and practice friendship and thereby create a community based on shared practices, values and outer appearances. The local scene of Buenos Aires is characterized by heterogeneity in terms of age, gender and social class. This stands in stark contrast to the everyday experiences of more status homogenous friendships in the different residential areas of the metropolis. Whereas mainstream society is experienced as hierarchical and suppressive, members of the punk and hardcore scene characterize their community as based on solidarity, equality and freedom. According to Rohrer, shared interests and values are important for the self-understanding of the scene community, building the foundation for what he calls generalized friendships. As everyone who is accepted as a member of the scene is at first perceived as a friend, friendship as such becomes generalized. In other words, members of the scene feel related because of their assumption that similar tastes and attitudes establish a fundamental affinity. However, friendship not only connects scene members but is also responsible for conflict and dissolution. Depicting how experiences of disappointment in friendship relations affect perceptions of the local scene, Rohrer shows that this generalized notion of friendship is more an idealized conception than an actual reality. He demonstrates how the idea of an ideal group is undermined when friendships dissolve. Like Förster, Rohrer highlights the importance of individual agency for the cohesion and dissolution of a scene that is bound by friendship.

While conflict seriously challenges bonds of friendship for Rohrer, Albert Joosse argues that for the Stoics conflict and friendship were mutually exclusive. He analyses key Stoic texts to draw attention to the value the Stoics placed on human relationships, not only between spouses but also between friends, before proceeding to point out that true friendship was only possible between the wise. Because the Stoics understood community as a shared participation in a uni-
versal λόγος, friendship or love was only possible among those who had achieved a state of coherence with themselves, with a harmonious world order and therefore all other wise. Two wise friends, Joosse explains, share the same knowledge about the workings of the cosmos and therefore have the same goals. Due to the concordance of their values and interests, any source of conflict is categorically eliminated. Joosse goes on to show how without such an inner coherence, relations with others were necessarily regarded as conflict-ridden and destined to fail. Relationships among unwise men are usually, according to the Stoics, governed by self-interest and will eventually implode, as two unwise friends do not love each other, but only the benefits they can potentially obtain through the other. A wise man, however, cherishes only his friend’s wisdom and views it as his own greatest good.

Gulio Marini presents a study on a society in conflict with itself. The very existence of the Mafia as a counter culture in Southern Italy pervades all aspects of society and unsettles and disturbs civic and public life. Marini states that traditionally Mafias in various contexts were solely analysed as familial networks and in terms of crimes committed, thereby failing to take into account the organizations’ dense entanglement with the wider society. He therefore highlights the importance of social relations for the Mafia. These social networks are not only comprised of individuals directly linked to the Mafia, but also include outsiders. According to Marini, this close entanglement of outsiders and non-outsiders in Mafia affairs affects society as a whole, and is therefore drastically different from other forms of organized crime. For that reason Marini draws on social capital theories to outline how social relationships are a cause of the ongoing presence of the Mafia in Southern Italy. Mafia practices are commonly taken for granted and the power and presence of the organizations are mostly either feared or underestimated. However, despite this background, anti-mafia movements have always existed in Italy and Marini demonstrates how the Italian government and the local media landscape tries and have tried to fight the Mafia by raising awareness about their practices.

As a conclusion to this volume Marko Bosnic takes on the difficult task of reconciling abstract philosophical concepts with the specific research questions about communities which were raised during the conference, and seizes the opportunity to discuss the role of philosophy within the canon of interdisciplinary research. Proposing an ontological approach to the subject, Bosnic offers a thorough and critical discussion of the multi-faceted concepts of community and belonging in the works of Derrida, Nancy, Kant, Simmel, Esposito and Heidegger, charting the field between »Wechselwirkung«, »Mit-Sein«, »Mit-Teilung«, and »ontischer Zwischenraum«. He illustrates how in particular Derrida’s deconstructivist approach – with its adherence to the primacy of community, behaviour and performance on a transcendental level – presents methodological
problems of translating philosophical discourse onto the framework of specific communities and emotional circumstances. Bosnic then suggests »Takt« as the primary experience of susceptibility and community, both in a psychological and a sensory and physiological dimension, a phenomenon of »zwischenleiblicher Resonanz« which acts as an interface between ontological philosophy and tangibility. Consequently, the chapter leads us to reflections about an atlas of atmospheres as a starting point for a fruitful interdisciplinary research on communities.

Concluding Thoughts

Communities are constituted by relationships but are much more than a collection of individual relationships. Members may have control over individual relationships, but not over all relationships in the community. Communities have a life of their own, their own internal dynamic, their own self-dynamic. The body of the community is bound by connective tissues, by an interconnecting, intertwined web. Mono-directional links can lead to unstable communities, while intersecting vertical and horizontal ties can allow for more stability. These links are crucial, but do not carry the whole story as the links must resonate, intermingle and carry meaning or force. Proximity is not enough; these resonances must be transported, must be communicated.

Communication is therefore integral to communities, but communication must be understood in its broadest sense as an exchange of shared values, norms, expectations, etiquette and as a process of exchange and negotiation. Communication can mean resolving conflicts and trust, like loyalty, can itself be a communicative act in its own right. Communication also negotiates belonging and functioning in communities. This can, for example, be verbal, or conveyed through outward markers like clothing, music or language. Sharing and identifying with markers such as these communicate belonging. Relationships like friendship can be a binding tie in communities, but they are not a pre-condition and can be excluded from the equation where, for example, trust or confidence, is present.

Communities need to find ways of understanding, of operating. This can be formal regulation, but also informal rules, etiquettes and understandings, which may be unstated or implicit. There have over time been shifts in the values, ethics and precepts which shape these rules, but this should not obscure continuities and similarities. Rules remain just as significant, as does their transgression. Rules serve a practical purpose, but they are also culturally situated and a shift in the content of the rules themselves is a cultural shift, not a shift in the mechanisms of regulation and co-operation.
Communities also need some form of shared space, which need not be geographic but must allow at least one zone of contact. Many communities have nodal points and are clustered around something. Members are attached, feel attached, or are compelled to be attached to a community through a link. Members do not always have to be active participants, membership can be passive and people can intentionally disengage from an institutional community and still participate on a functional level. Participating in communities can require adaptability, code-shifting, to find ways of functioning. Many of us inhabit several communities simultaneously, some of which are antithetical. This can lead not just to conflict with others, but to self-conflict and a quagmire of self-questioning and dilemmas of trust and loyalty. We shape the communities we inhabit, but we are also shaped by them: no man or woman is an island.

Works cited


