

Research Article

Conflict Networks in the Local Press from 2020 To 2023

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Abstract

Conflicts have been appreciated as areas of opportunity for social change. In this paper, following a theoretical framework that alludes to micro, meso, and macro levels of conflict, the conflicts reported in press releases are reviewed to establish an agenda that reveals what newspapers have learned about asymmetries between the involved parts. The neural network found suggests a learning of the diffusion of conflicts that goes from the macro levels to the micro levels. In relation to the reviewed literature, the analysis of information gradients that distinguish between the types of conflict is recommended as the pandemic elapsed and was controlled via immunization.

Keywords: Social Change, Conflict, Covid-19, Gradients and Neural Networks

1. Introduction

The press plays a fundamental role in society by reporting, analyzing, and giving voice to different perspectives on world events [1]. However, in recent years, we have witnessed a significant increase in the levels of conflict in the press, which has raised concerns about objectivity, veracity, and the impact on society. This paper will examine the levels of conflict present in the press during the period between 2020 and 2023, highlighting the possible causes and consequences of this trend.

Polarization and politicization of the media: During this period, we have witnessed an increase in the polarization and politicization of the media [2]. The media have reflected political and social divisions, presented biased narratives and exacerbated confrontation between different groups. This polarization has led to a climate of conflict in the press, where objectivity and impartiality have often been compromised.

Disinformation and fake news: The spread of misinformation and fake news has been another worrying feature in the press in recent years [3]. The rise of social media and the ease of sharing information have allowed the rapid spread of misleading and misleading information. This has generated conflict by undermining trust in the media and creating divisions in society, making it difficult to seek the truth and make informed decisions.

Sensationalism and search for clicks: In a highly competitive media environment, the search for audience and clicks has

become a priority for many media outlets [4]. This has led to sensationalism and exaggeration of the news to capture public attention. The emphasis on flashy headlines and controversies has created a climate of confrontation and conflict, often at the expense of balanced, informative coverage.

Conflicts of interest and economic pressures: In some cases, conflicts of interest and economic pressures have also played a role in generating conflicts in the press [5]. Corporate and political interests can influence the way information is presented, limiting objectivity and transparency. This can result in biased coverage and a weakening of public trust in the media.

Distrust in the media: Rising levels of conflict in the press have eroded public trust in the media [6]. The lack of impartiality and the spread of misinformation have led to the perception that the media are not reliable sources of information. This can have negative consequences for democracy and informed public debate.

Polarization and social divisions: Polarization and conflict in the press can also contribute to polarization and social divisions in society [7]. The spread of extreme narratives and the lack of spaces for constructive dialogue can exacerbate tensions and make it difficult to find solutions and compromises.

Deterioration of quality journalism: The focus on sensationalism and audience engagement can have a negative impact on quality journalism [8]. Limited resources devoted to re-

search and in-depth analysis can be compromised, affecting the media's ability to report accurately and in a balanced way.

The levels of conflict in the press during the period from 2020 to 2023 have been worrisome, with increasing polarization, the spread of misinformation and sensationalism as contributing factors [9]. These conflicts have significant consequences, eroding trust in the media, fueling polarization, and undermining quality journalism. It is essential to address these challenges to promote a media environment that is more balanced, responsible and committed to the truth and the well-being of society as a whole. According to the conflict theory, and later developed by three levels of explanation of the conflict that were expanded by the researcher, based on the approach psychology [10]. These levels are known as Doise's levels of explanation of conflict.

Microsocial level: This level focuses on individual interactions and relationships within a conflict [11]. Examines how individual characteristics, such as values, attitudes, and beliefs, influence how conflict is perceived and handled. Aspects such as the emotions, needs, goals and problem-solving skills of the people involved are considered.

Mesosocial level: The mesosocial level refers to group and social dynamics that influence conflict [12]. It examines how norms, power relations and social roles affect the perception and management of conflict. Aspects such as group membership, social identity and interactions between different groups in conflict are considered.

Macrosocial level: This level addresses the broader sociocultural and contextual factors that contribute to conflict [13]. It examines how social structures, institutions, policies, and ideologies influence the emergence, maintenance, and resolution of conflicts. Aspects such as social inequality, ethnic or religious tensions, and the collective frames of reference that shape perceptions and actions in the conflict are considered. It should be noted that these levels of explanation are not independent of each other, but rather interact and influence each other [14]. For example, macrosocial factors can influence group norms and dynamics (mesosocial level), which in turn can influence individual perceptions and responses (microsocial level). Understanding and addressing the different levels of explanation of the conflict is essential for its effective and sustainable management.

Based on conflict theory, it is possible to see that the print media are part of the equation by forming opinions and attitudes that reduce or simplify conflicts [15]. Therefore, the

objective of this work was to establish the conflict networks reported in the press in a town in central Mexico, considering national circulation, as well as the observation period from 2020 to 2023 by identifying press releases via the Internet. Keyword search: "conflict", "microsocial", "mesosocial" and "macrosocial".

2. Method

A documentary, cross-sectional, exploratory and retrospective work was carried out with a selection of press releases related to conflicts at the micro, meso and macro levels, following the theory of conflict, as well as the search by keywords and the observation period of 2020. to 2023. Content analysis matrices were used following focus groups for the homogenization of concepts and the Delphi technique for the qualification of press releases. In three phases, evaluations of judges selected for their expertise in the matter during the observation period were processed. The first phase yielded the preliminary ratings of the press releases in relation to the level of conflict. The judge rated the press release on a scale that goes from 0 = "not at all in agreement" to 5 = "quite in agreement". The scores were summed and averaged for the purpose of comparing them with the initial scores. Once the comparisons were established, in the second phase the judges reflected on the possibility of changing or maintaining their initial rating. In the third phase, the judges justified the change in their rating, or the reiteration of it.

The data was captured in Excel and processed in JASP version 16 because the software includes the analysis of neural networks. The coefficients of centrality, grouping and structure were estimated in order to be able to test the hypothesis related to the significant differences between the structures reported in the literature with respect to the qualifications of the judges. Values close to unity were assumed as evidence of non-rejection of the null hypothesis.

3. Results

Centrality is a parameter with four indicators that reveal the relationship between the dimensions of the conflicts published in the press from 2020 to 2023. Intermediation refers to the reduction or increase of central conflicts over peripheral conflicts. The closeness suggests the consolidation of the conflicts in a series of time. The gradients announce the level of accumulation of conflicts in the nodes. Influence suggests the impact of one conflict on another. In this way, the conflicts evaluated by the judges regarding the press releases reach three out of four indicators of centrality in reports prior to the period from 2020 to 2023. In other words, the centrality of the conflicts lies in the reports on conflicts prior to the period under review (see Table 1).

Table 1: Centrality measures per variable

Variable	Network			
	Betweenness	Closeness	Strength	Expected influence
Intrapersonal	-0.577	0.123	0.183	1.384
Interpersonal	-0.577	-1.451	-1.316	0.348
Intragroup	-0.402	-0.288	-0.792	0.480
Intergroup	1.347	1.504	1.449	0.496
Community	2.222	1.619	1.806	-0.808
Collective	-0.577	-0.197	-0.301	-1.614
Social	-0.577	-1.167	-0.876	-1.149
Ideological	0.297	-0.581	-0.514	1.294
Generational	-0.577	0.023	0.010	-0.480
Civilizational	-0.577	0.415	0.351	0.049

The grouping, measured in four coefficients, suggests the reconfiguration of conflicts based on their centrality. In this sense, the parameters reveal that it is the continuous conflicts that configure the axes of the local agenda. From con-

flict theory, conflicts prior to the review period and ongoing conflicts are of a macro order. In other words, the consulted press seems to build an agenda focused on the magnitude and distance of the conflicts (see Figure 2).

Table 2: Clustering measures per variable

Variable	Network			
	Barrat	Onnela	WS	Zhang
Civilizational	1.339	0.732	1.162	0.454
Collective	1.721	-0.339	1.162	1.541
Community	-1.154	1.211	-0.775	-1.324
Generational	0.346	0.795	1.162	-0.080
Ideological	0.451	-0.697	-0.775	-0.667
Intergroup	-0.857	1.239	-0.775	-0.672
Interpersonal	-0.654	-1.769	-0.775	-1.176
Intragroup	0.400	-0.514	1.162	-0.085
Intrapersonal	-0.791	0.227	-0.775	0.584
Social	-0.800	-0.885	-0.775	1.425

A neural network is a conflict management system. In this sense, its reading is seen from left to right to reveal the input and output of information that has been filtered by the centrality and grouping of the nodes. In this way, a deductive

learning of the revised press can be seen in that they begin with the macro dimension and culminate with the micro dimension (see Table 3).

Table 3: Weights matrix

Variable	Network									
	Intrapersonal	Interpersonal	Intragroup	Intergroup	Community	Collective	Social	Ideological	Generational	Civilizational
Intrapersonal	0.000	0.027	0.111	0.264	0.435	0.263	-0.186	0.237	0.328	-0.408
Interpersonal	0.027	0.000	-0.208	0.140	0.048	0.028	0.011	0.442	0.230	-0.131
Intragroup	0.111	-0.208	0.000	0.156	0.413	0.193	-0.253	-0.021	0.257	0.000
Intergroup	0.264	0.140	0.156	0.000	-0.548	-0.303	0.197	0.397	-0.371	0.723
Community	0.435	0.048	0.413	-0.548	0.000	-0.833	0.362	0.128	-0.265	0.304
Collective	0.263	0.028	0.193	-0.303	-0.833	0.000	0.117	0.177	0.000	0.025
Social	-0.186	0.011	-0.253	0.197	0.362	0.117	0.000	0.034	-0.138	-0.259
Ideological	0.237	0.442	-0.021	0.397	0.128	0.177	0.034	0.000	-0.199	-0.164
Generational	0.328	0.230	0.257	-0.371	-0.265	0.000	-0.138	-0.199	0.000	0.357
Civilizational	-0.408	-0.131	0.000	0.723	0.304	0.025	-0.259	-0.164	0.357	0.000

4. Discussion

Personal level conflict, even when suicide is seen as a social problem, since personal and family elements are involved that lead men to commit more self-attacks than women due to social pressures to achieve objectives and goals through of leadership, dedication and abilities attributed to men such as aspirationism [16]. However, the level is personal because these social pressures do not seem to influence women or the LGBT+ community to try on their own lives because their purpose is to survive sexist violence, which, however, seems to affect heterosexual men more. However, there are also elements that consider suicide a micro conflict because the lack of relationships of trust and empathy seem to be the axes that determine depression or aggression towards oneself [17]. So then, suicide is only a reflection of that loss of confidence and empathy with oneself and the immediate environment.

In the interpersonal level conflict, asymmetries prevail between the aggressor and the victim, as well as parity in terms of the party's involved [18]. In addition, there is a system of domination that is exercised through men's attacks on women. It can be seen as a social phenomenon due to gender inequalities and its impact on the formation of human capital, but it is more of an interpersonal conflict because in the phases of human development prior to adulthood, society is not completely introjected or represented as a training scenario. In fact, pre-adult development is distinguished by denying society due to a biased sense of belonging to a small group and the need to differentiate or mark territory over

another group of adolescents. These characteristics appear to be an intergroup conflict, but it is interpersonal for the groups and their perception of themselves and their environment. However, it is a meso-level conflict because it alludes to institutions that revolve around the parties involved [19]. In addition, the solution seems to be at that same level because the gender equity workshops propose a system for managing differences based on the same individual rights and guarantees.

The news related to the squatters who in Spain are considered a subversive group of the appropriation of spaces [20]. In Mexico they are known as paratroopers, but unlike in Spain where it is an identity to occupy a place to live, in Mexico a place is occupied for political purposes. Therefore, we are facing a conflict of group intergroup order. It is true that housing is a social problem, but in Spain and Mexico, squatters and paratroopers are groups that can change their situation, but do not want to. The conflict is more at the macro level because exposure to disaster risks such as floods or landslides reflect the tendency of humans to live in risk areas, if these represent more advantages and benefits than costs. A civilizing conflict is one in which current humanity compromises the development of future generations. Criticism of capitalism has been responsible for blaming this system for global warming due to accumulated Co2 emissions and the consequent greenhouse effect. A conflict between current and future humanity, that distinction makes the conflict go beyond the current generation of humans and their capitalist economic system.

However, the conflict may be beyond the current generation with the subsequent ones. If the universe is a dynamic system of centrifugal gravity force where all the elements are in increasing and constant acceleration, then it is to be expected that the trajectory of the Earth is a sufficient cause for its warming [21]. It is true that critics swear and swear that industrialization and consumerism are causing global warming, but methane, the main factor in global warming, is generated by cow grazing and dairy products. So, not even at a planetary level, the problem lies in Co2 emissions, but electric car capitalism managed to position climate change and global warming as an effect of the combustion of cars on the agenda.

Conclusion

The contribution of this work to the state of the art lies in the review and contrasting of a neural network model alluding to the conflicts reported in press releases from 2020 to 2023. The results demonstrate the non-rejection of the null hypothesis by warns of a learning from the press that initially reported macro conflicts and culminated in micro conflicts. Such a sequence suggests that the information gradients concentrated notes on conflict in 2020 that revealed global problems to later fade into local problems in 2023. In relation to the literature consulted, the conflicts emerged as an effect of the pandemic and intensified in its prolongation, but once the immunization of the people was achieved, the conflicts were reduced through the media to micro levels. Public policies related to the integral management of conflicts are recommended based on their observation in networks. If network analyzes of differences between the parties involved are accepted, then it will be possible to observe information sequences that reduce the risks of conflicts and anticipate risk scenarios.

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