
COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS, COMMUNITY STRUCTURAL PLURALISM, AND LOCAL CONFLICT WITH NONLOCAL GROUPS

By Douglas Blanks Hindman



This important study of how newspapers address conflict contributes to an understanding of how the content of local newspapers is related to community conditions. In periods of change, newspaper content reflects the concerns of powerful groups within and beyond the community. Ultimately, newspaper reports of both internal conflict and conflict with outside groups contribute to the maintenance of community stability and community adjustment to change in the larger social environment.

Small, nonmetropolitan communities are particularly vulnerable to decisions made outside the city limits. Factory shutdowns, reductions in governmental aid, and the regional consolidation of services have contributed to the decline of many struggling communities. The growth in outside influence over community affairs is a natural outcome of the growth in bureaucracy and centralization of control over both public and private sectors.¹

Nonlocal control of the community is likely to meet local resistance, particularly in communities in which local elites are accustomed to using local government to manage economic development in the community.² Nonlocal control may interfere with the "growth machine" ideology that dominates local politics and local media in many communities.

Local newspapers are integral components of the community that tend to reflect both the agenda and the tactics of the local power structure.³ The local power structure in many communities is increasingly constrained by nonlocal forces, occasionally resulting in public disputes between local elites and nonlocal bureaucracies, both public and private. When local officials clash with nonlocal bureaucrats, an account of the disagreement is likely to appear in the community newspaper.⁴

This paper provides an analysis of local newspaper coverage of controversies involving nonlocal groups. An analysis of newspaper content would reveal the extent to which community leaders define local problems as having nonlocal causes or solutions, and would reveal some of the internal and the external dynamics affecting the community.

Changes in Nonlocal Government

During the past thirty years, the balance of responsibility for many rules affecting communities has shifted from the federal level to the state level. Since the Johnson administration, federal regulatory agencies have been dismantled as state-level bureaucracies have grown. The Reagan administration was particularly aggressive in returning power to the states

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through the policy of "New Federalism."

The "unfunded mandate" and welfare reform legislation of the newly elected Republican majority can be seen as part of a larger trend towards a redefinition of the role and power of nonlocal governments. State and local governments are growing in bureaucratic complexity, while the federal government continues to have influence. The complexity of the overall regulatory environment has grown as national standards are replaced by a multitude of state and local standards. The growing complexity of the social and political system is expected to result in an increase in conflict as different parties work out their new responsibilities.

Generally, conflict appears in the local mass media when that conflict has been initiated by community leaders. Previous studies have shown that newspapers in larger, more complex communities tend to have more stories about social conflict than newspapers in smaller, more structurally homogeneous communities. Over time, as the social system as a whole becomes more complex, the amount of conflict reported in local newspapers increases as well, regardless of the size of the community.⁵

The different ways conflict is reported in community newspapers illustrates the system maintenance role of the newspaper in both types of communities. Local mass media serve a system maintenance role that is supportive of community norms and social arrangements.⁶ Given the maintenance role of local newspapers, little of the conflict appearing in the paper would be initiated by the paper itself. In the larger, more complex community, conflict is controlled through the open expression of grievances, criticisms, and disagreements. Larger, more structurally pluralistic communities have a greater density of interaction and a more diverse set of groups competing for power and influence. Conflict in the more complex community is controlled via formal, "pressure valve" mechanisms such as public hearings, grievance procedures, and citizen review boards, all of which are extensively covered by the local press.⁷

In smaller, less structurally pluralistic communities, an open and public expression of differences may be disruptive to the normal functioning of the community. The local editor is unlikely to find individuals willing to be quoted in the paper until the controversy is settled. The community social structure affects both the actions of community leaders as well as the newspaper's account of the local decision-making process.

Although conflict among internal groups may be disruptive to the functioning of a small community, conflict between community leaders and outside groups may serve to enhance local solidarity by rallying the community against a common "enemy." This approach to the study of the system-derived and system-maintaining aspects of community conflict is consistent with Simmel and Coser's study of conflict in small groups.⁸ In this model, social conflict is viewed as a pervasive aspect of society that is a natural outcome of social interaction. Community conflict can stimulate public debate, bring attention to community problems, and activate the search for solutions. Because of the system-maintaining aspects of community conflict, it can be expected to take on different forms in different types of communities.

Earlier studies of newspaper reporting of community conflict dealt exclusively with conflict within the community. This study extends the conflict model to include a consideration of newspaper stories about conflict with nonlocal groups such as state and federal agencies. As the larger society

Community Media and Community Conflict

Conflict with Local /Non- local Groups

has become more complex, it is expected that nonlocal groups would be a growing source of community conflict. Conflict is expected to accompany deregulatory efforts to pass responsibility from federal to state and local levels of government.

County and local governmental officials would be expected to be acutely aware of the impact of the changing regulatory environment facing a community. As society has grown in complexity, large-scale, bureaucratically-organized groups headquartered outside of the community have become more influential in a wide range of community issues.⁹ These changes may result in conflict as the local leaders criticize "unfunded mandates" and other forms of regulation that adversely affect the community.

Community newspapers are likely to contain accounts of these clashes between local and nonlocal powers as part of regular coverage of local government. In addition, editorials or letters to the editor could contain mention of nonlocal groups.

As has been shown in previous studies, as the social system as a whole becomes more complex, there would be a greater level of all types of conflict appearing in newspapers.¹⁰ Conflicts mentioning outside groups would also be expected to increase as the social system becomes more structurally pluralistic. The amount of conflict with nonlocal groups is just one indicator of what is expected to be a greater level of all types of interaction between the community and the increasingly complex outside world.

The impact of the increasing complexity of nonlocal government would be greatest in smaller, less structurally pluralistic communities. These types of communities receive a larger proportion of their local funding from state and federal sources, and lack the economic diversification that can lessen the impact of the policies of nonlocal groups.¹¹

In the larger, more structurally pluralistic communities, the boundaries between local and nonlocal groups are less distinct. Metropolitan areas are often the headquarters of national and international organizations, or contain the corporate offices of businesses serving wide areas. Communities with greater structural pluralism also contain a highly mobile and cosmopolitan populace with extensive ties to the world outside the community.

Mass media in the more structurally pluralistic community would reflect the high degree of integration between the community and the larger world. Interaction between the community and outside groups would be more routine, and less prone to conflict than in the smaller community.

In sum, the local newspaper's accounts of local conflict are expected to contribute to system maintenance. In the more structurally pluralistic community, internal conflict is treated in a more routine, formal, and impersonal way through newspaper accounts of bureaucratic procedures such as open meetings and public hearings. In this type of community, the open expression of conflict through newspaper accounts can help to diffuse tensions by "airing" grievances. In the less structurally pluralistic community, internal conflict is controlled through informal and personal procedures that are seldom reported in the local newspaper. Conflict with large, formal, bureaucratically organized outside groups, however, is more likely to be expressed in the type of open forums that are routinely covered by local newspapers. In either type of community, then, the local newspaper reflects the way different types of conflict are controlled in the community.

Following the above discussion, the first hypotheses about newspaper content are stated for testing:

(1) The reporting of *internal* conflict in newspapers

(a) will be greater in communities with higher levels of structural pluralism, and

(b) will be greater in 1991 than in 1965.

Previous studies of community conflict have dealt primarily with conflict among community groups, and have demonstrated the positive relationship between structural pluralism and amount of conflict printed in the newspaper. Previous studies have also shown the tendency of the amount of conflict to increase as the system as a whole becomes more structurally pluralistic.¹²

This study extends this interpretation to include an analysis of conflicts with nonlocal groups. An increased level of structural pluralism throughout the social system should result in a greater degree of large-scale bureaucratic organization. Bureaucratic forms of organization allow businesses and governmental agencies to benefit from economies of scale by eliminating the duplication of services and by centralizing operations. As society becomes more structurally pluralistic, the need for bureaucratic forms of organization and control increases.¹³ Over time, community groups will find themselves increasingly controlled by nonlocal groups, both public and private. Local elites or local representatives of interest groups would be expected to raise challenges to the outside authority. Alternatively, outside groups may also appear as relatively neutral parties in local disputes that are caused by externally imposed rules or regulations, or may appear as referees or outside authorities that help determine the outcome of a local dispute.

The less structurally pluralistic community may be particularly resistant to the imposition of rules and mandates that do not appear to take local conditions into consideration, or that appear to adversely affect the economic well-being of local groups. Thus, the following hypotheses are stated for testing:

(2) The proportion of reports of conflict that involve nonlocal groups

(a) will be greater in less structurally pluralistic communities and

(b) will be greater in 1965 than in 1991.

These hypotheses incorporate Simmel and Coser's model of conflict. Small, homogenous groups cannot tolerate conflict within the group, but can increase internal solidarity through the creation of a common outside enemy.¹⁴ Conflict with out-groups may increase the internal cohesion of the group by helping to define the group identity and boundaries.

Less structurally pluralistic communities are more vulnerable to the decisions made by state and federal bureaucracies because these types of communities receive a larger proportion of funding from state and federal transfer payments.¹⁵ Governmental spending cuts and "unfunded mandates" can have disproportionate impact on less structurally pluralistic areas. Leaders in less structurally pluralistic communities would be expected to publicly raise challenges against the impersonal, bureaucratic agencies that

impose rules and regulations that adversely affect the community. Such challenges are more likely to be raised in public forums such as city council meetings, county commission meetings, and school board meetings as local leaders grapple with state and federal guidelines. Local newspapers, particularly in less structurally pluralistic communities, routinely cover public meetings, and would be likely to report local leaders' conflicts with nonlocal bureaucrats.

The proportion of conflict with outside groups is expected to decline in both more and less structurally pluralistic communities as the social system as a whole becomes more structurally pluralistic. Internal conflicts become more predominant as communities adopt more formal means of airing grievances and expressing disagreements. Although both more and less structurally pluralistic communities are expected to include a greater proportion of internal conflict, the relative differences between the two types of communities are expected to persist. That is, even though internal conflicts become increasingly predominant as the social system as a whole becomes more structurally pluralistic, less pluralistic communities will continue to include a greater proportion of conflict with outside groups than more pluralistic communities. This is because although the social system as a whole becomes more structurally pluralistic, a disproportionate amount of growth occurs in more pluralistic communities.¹⁶ The result is often a widening gap between more and less structurally pluralistic communities.¹⁷

Community Conflict and Political Change

Qualitative changes would be expected in newspaper reporting of conflict as the social environment changes.¹⁸ During the mid-1960s, the federal government was in an expansionist period, and came into increasing contact with communities of all types. Different forms of conflict would be expected during this period than in others. The economic recession of the early 1990s resulted in a great restructuring of public and private bureaucracies. Redundant services were withdrawn from local communities. Development was concentrated in metropolitan or regional growth centers. Newspaper coverage during this time period reflected a greater emphasis on state and regional groups rather than local groups.¹⁹

The governmental expansions of the 1960s and the governmental decentralization and contractions in the 1990s affected communities in similar ways. In both cases, nonlocal groups were affecting community change, often in the absence of input from local groups. Newspapers would be expected to reflect the activities and reactions of powerful groups within the community regardless of the time period. The following hypotheses are based on the notion that newspaper content not only reflects the community structure, but that it also reflects the structure of the world outside the community. As the federal government gives state and local groups increasing responsibility to administer programs affecting communities, newspaper coverage of conflict with nonlocal groups would change from an emphasis on federal agencies to an emphasis on state-level agencies.

(3) Between 1965 and 1991, the proportion of conflict stories with nonlocal groups that include mention of

(a) federal-level regulatory and administrative agency officials will decline.

(b) state-level regulatory and administrative agency of officials will increase.

The shift from federal-level to state-level administrative agencies and bureaucratically-organized regulatory groups involved in locally-relevant conflict stories would represent one outcome of the policy of "New Federalism" advocated by Reagan and Bush administrations.

Data for the study came from a content analysis of a purposive sample of 1965 and 1991 editions of Minnesota newspapers from eighty-five communities throughout the state.²⁰ The sample cannot be said to be representative of all newspapers in the state. The sample does, however, provide for a number of formal comparisons among communities with different levels of structural pluralism. The sample can be used for conclusions about relationships among newspapers and communities, at least within the group being studied.

The independent variables were community structural pluralism and year of study. Structural pluralism is defined as the degree of differentiation in the social system along institutional and specialized interest groups lines.²¹ This definition can be distinguished from the "linear development model" of early urban sociologists who were concerned primarily with the psychological impacts of population density, population numbers, and heterogeneity of inhabitants.²² The definition of structural pluralism being used here draws upon Durkheim's concept of "organic solidarity" as arising out of the interdependencies created by extensive division of labor.²³ The empirical indicators of structural pluralism used in this study are intended to represent the potential for specialization in occupations and interest groups, and the potential for complexity in the sources of organized social power.

Community structural pluralism was operationalized as the additive index comprised of standardized measures of community population, income, employment, and distance from the largest metropolitan area in the state. Community and county population, when combined with average per-capita income, are an indicator of the economic potential of the community and the region to support specialized occupations, and the potential of the community to contain more complex organizations.²⁴ Occupational specialization and complexity in organization leads to an increase in formalization of social interaction, including communication. Individuals in more pluralistic communities interact with one another in segmented roles. In the less pluralistic community, a communication among individuals is more likely to involve the multiple roles each person plays within the community. The indicator of employment used was percent of persons within the county 18 years and older not employed in agricultural, fisheries, or forestry occupations. This measure is an indicator of the degree to which the community has diversified the local economy. Communities that are dependent on agriculture are less likely to have the diversified economies that foster differentiation along occupational lines. Distance from the largest metropolitan area in the state is an indication of the availability of services and amenities associated with metropolitan communities, and an indicator of employment opportunities. Communities closer to the metropolitan areas are expected to contain greater levels of differentiation because the metropolitan area can

Methods

Independent Variables

support a greater variety of specialized occupations and social groups. Together, these measures provide an indicator of structural pluralism for communities across the state.

Indicators of structural pluralism were derived from the 1960 and 1990 U.S. Census. Measures included county population; city population; average per capita income in the county; distance from the Twin Cities; and percent of persons within the county 18 years and older not employed in agricultural, fisheries, or forestry occupations.²⁵

Dependent Variables

This study sought to expand the definition of newspaper conflict in order to analyze the role of nonlocal groups in locally-relevant conflicts. The expanded definition of conflict used for this study divided conflict into two analytical categories: internal conflict and conflict with nonlocal groups. Internal conflict was defined as: "locally relevant newspaper stories, letters to the editor, or editorials that express disagreements or controversies among local or regional groups or individuals. Internal conflict is the length of stories containing reports about manifestly differing positions or statements about a public issue from at least two persons, factions, organizations, or interest groups in the region."

This definition was most congruent with the definition used in the original community conflict study.²⁶ As with the original study, stories dealing with crime and law enforcement, business competition, and lawsuits were excluded unless broader questions of public policy were raised. "Region" was defined as the newspaper's home county, and communities within a two-county radius of the home county.

The category of conflict added by this study was defined as "conflict with nonlocal groups" which included internal conflict stories containing prominent mention of outside groups, as well as "newspaper stories, letters to the editor, or editorials that express disagreements, controversies, or criticisms between a local or regional group and a state or national group, law or rule, in which the local or regional group or groups are portrayed as being without disagreement regarding the actions, rules, or laws of nonlocal groups." Nonlocal groups were defined as state-level and federal-level elected public officials, regulatory agencies, and businesses headquartered outside the region. The headquarters of businesses mentioned in stories was determined by referring to state business directories.

Results

Between 1965 and 1991, there was a significant increase in levels of structural pluralism among the communities in the sample. Table 1 shows that levels of city population; county population; percent of work force not in agriculture, fisheries, or forestry occupations; and county per capita income levels increased from 1965 to 1991.²⁷

The county per capita income measure showed the greatest increase between 1965 and 1991; however, much of the 752% increase can be attributed to inflation. City population values grew from a mean population of 5,755 to 7,277. County populations grew by nearly 20%, and the percent of the work force not in agricultural, fisheries, and forestry occupations changed from 69.1% to 88.2%.

The first hypotheses were stated as follows:

- (1) The reporting of *internal* conflict in newspapers

TABLE 1
Measures of Structural Pluralism, 1965-1991

	1965	1991	1965-1991 change
city population	mean 5755 s.d. 5876	mean 7277 s.d. 8373	+26.4%
county population	mean 34045 s.d. 59681	mean 40692 s.d. 70531	+19.5%
% of work force not in agriculture	mean 69.1 s.d. 13.9	mean 88.2 s.d. 7.2	+27.6%
county per capita income	mean 1290 s.d. 226 N: 85	mean 10997 s.d. 1647 N: 85	+752%

(a) will be greater in communities with higher levels of structural pluralism, and

(b) will be greater in 1991 than in 1965.

To test the hypotheses, three measures of conflict reporting were used: mean number of internal conflict stories per issue, mean column inches of internal conflict stories per issue,²⁸ and mean proportion of news hole that was coded as internal conflict.²⁹ The sample of newspapers was divided into groups representing communities with higher or lower levels of structural pluralism. To test for hypothesis 1a, the mean level of internal conflict among more pluralistic communities was compared with the mean level of internal conflict among less pluralistic communities while controlling for the year of the sample.

As was shown in the original studies done with this group of communities, Table 2 shows that newspapers in communities with higher levels of structural pluralism contained more internal conflict stories than newspapers in less pluralistic communities.³⁰ The differences were greatest among the 1991 newspapers in which more pluralistic papers contained more internal conflict stories per issue (2.20 vs. 1.35), contained more column inches of conflict per issue (34.62 vs. 24.11), and contained a larger proportion of news hole dedicated to internal conflict stories. In the 1965 sample, newspapers from more pluralistic communities had significantly more conflict stories per issue than papers from less pluralistic communities (.619 vs. .372). The other 1965 measures of internal conflict were in the hypothesized direction, but were not statistically significant.

To test hypothesis 1b, the mean level of internal conflict among 1965 newspapers was compared with the mean level of internal conflict among the 1991 communities while controlling for the level of structural pluralism. As can be seen in the columns of Table 2, the 1991 levels of conflict were higher than the 1965 levels on all three measures of internal conflict and within each pluralism group. For example, in the number of internal conflict stories per issue measure, among less pluralistic communities, the mean level in 1965 (.372) was less than the mean level in 1991 (1.35). Similarly, among more pluralistic communities, the 1965 level (.619) was less than the 1991 level (2.20). The differences between 1991 and 1965 levels of internal conflict were statistically significant on all three measures of internal conflict and among both types of communities.³¹ These findings are consistent with a previous

TABLE 2
*Reporting of Internal Conflict in 1965 and 1991, by Level
of Structural Pluralism*

internal conflict measure	year	less pluralistic (N=43)	more pluralistic (N=42)	t-values (less - more pluralistic)
number of conflict stories	1965	mean .372 s.d. .44	mean .619 s.d. .82	-1.73*
number of conflict stories	1991	mean 1.35 s.d. 1.05	mean 2.20 s.d. 1.54	-2.95**
column inches of conflict stories	1965	mean 5.15 s.d. 7.6	mean 8.18 s.d. 10.6	-1.51
column inches of conflict stories	1991	mean 24.11 s.d. 19.3	mean 34.62 s.d. 26.7	-2.08*
proportion of news hole (x1000)	1965	mean 5.68 s.d. 8.39	mean 9.31 s.d. 10.48	-1.27
proportion of news hole (x1000)	1991	mean 17.46 s.d. 13.26	mean 31.32 s.d. 24.19	-3.26**

* $p < .05$ one tail

** $p < .01$ one tail

study which noted a significant increase in levels of newspaper conflict reporting between 1965 and 1979.³²

In general, these findings are consistent with the interpretation that newspapers serve as agents of community control of conflict. More structurally pluralistic communities contain more formalized means of expression of conflict and more diverse power structures. Newspapers are interdependent with the major institutions within the community, particularly powerful bureaucratic organizations designed to control and contain conflicts.

As less pluralistic communities grow and diversify to include greater levels of formalization and interdependence with groups within and beyond the community, newspapers can be expected to increase the amount of conflict reported in the newspaper. The extent to which this interdependence is reflected in newspaper coverage of conflict with nonlocal groups is the topic of the second set of hypotheses.

Conflict with Nonlocal Groups

The second hypotheses build upon the literature on newspaper reporting of community conflict by including a consideration of nonlocal groups in community conflicts. The hypotheses were stated as:

(2) The proportion of reports of conflict that involve nonlocal groups

(a) will be greater in less structurally pluralistic communities and

(b) will be greater in 1965 than in 1991.

In order to test the hypotheses about proportions of conflict with non-local groups, chi-square tests were performed on the distribution of conflict stories among communities with higher or lower levels of structural pluralism in 1965 and 1991.

Table 3 shows some support for hypothesis 2a. The proportion of conflict with outside groups was greater among the less structurally pluralistic communities. Although both 1965 and 1991 percentages were in the hypothesized directions, only the 1991 measures were statistically significant.

Hypothesis 2b was tested by comparing proportions in the columns of Table 3. As hypothesized, the proportion of conflict with nonlocal groups declined significantly between 1965 and 1991.³³ Among less pluralistic communities, the proportion of conflict with outside groups was 47.8% of conflict stories in 1965 and 32.2% in 1991. Among more pluralistic communities, the proportion was 46.5% in 1965 and 22.6% in 1991.

The Simmelian model of conflict is relevant to these findings regarding patterns of community differences in reporting conflict with outside groups. Small, homogenous groups cannot tolerate conflict within the group, but can increase internal solidarity through the creation of a common outside enemy.³⁴ Conflict with out-groups may increase the internal cohesion of the group by helping to define the group identity and boundaries.

As shown in Table 3, smaller communities tend to have a greater proportion of conflict with outsiders, perhaps because this type of conflict does not threaten the consensual nature of the community. Newspapers from more structurally pluralistic communities tend to emphasize internal conflict. This is because the more structurally pluralistic community has a greater level of formalization in all types of interaction, including conflict.

In 1991, there was a smaller proportion of conflict with outside groups among all types of communities than in 1965. This increased emphasis on internal conflict reflects a systemic change in the complexity of society as a whole and a change in standards for dealing with conflict. Relative differences between less and more pluralistic communities persist even as reporting of internal conflict rises in all communities.

The decline in the proportion of conflict with outside groups among all communities between 1965 and 1991 is also consistent with Simmel and

TABLE 3
*Percent of Newspaper Conflict Stories that Involve Nonlocal Groups,
by Level of Structural Pluralism, by Year*

	less pluralistic	more pluralistic	chi-square
1965	47.8% N=67	46.5% N=170	n.s.
1991	32.2% N=395	22.6% N=363	8.19**

** $p < .01$

TABLE 4
Percent of Newspaper Conflict Stories that Involve Nonlocal Groups, by Type of Regulatory Agency Mentioned, by Year

level of agency	1965	1991	chi-square
federal-level agencies	24.3	10.5	9.6**
state-level agencies	4.5	25.8	20.5***
	N=111	N=209	

** $p < .01$
 *** $p < .001$

Coser's conflict models. In this case, communities in 1965 represent the less structurally pluralistic system and communities in 1991 represent the more structurally pluralistic system. The large proportion of conflict with nonlocal groups in 1965 may reflect the defensive reaction on the part of all types of communities unaccustomed to the intervention of an active Federal government such as the Johnson Administration.

The next hypotheses are based on changes in the balance of power and responsibility among nonlocal groups. The hypotheses were stated as:

(3) Between 1965 and 1991, the proportion of conflict stories with nonlocal groups that include mention of

(a) federal-level regulatory and administrative agency officials will decline.

(b) state-level regulatory and administrative agency officials will increase.

The results are shown in Table 4. The percentage of nonlocal conflict stories that included mention of federal-level regulatory and administrative agencies was 24.3% in 1965 and only 10.5% in 1991. Similarly, the percentage of nonlocal conflict stories that included mention of state-level regulatory agencies was 4.5% in 1965 and increased to 25.8% in 1991.

These findings reflect changes in the responsibilities of state and federal regulatory agencies, and the general growth in the activity of bureaucratically organized administrative agencies at all levels. Because heads of regulatory agencies are less politically accountable than elected officials, community leaders in the 1990s may have less control over the outcome of local disputes, and may have less input into the rules and standards imposed on their communities.

Conclusion

These findings were interpreted from the perspective that newspapers and editors are not independent critics of the power relationships within and beyond the community. Instead, the content of the local newspaper is systematically related to community conditions. As community conditions change and as the world outside the community changes, newspaper content reflects the concerns of powerful groups within and beyond the community. Ultimately, newspaper reports of both internal conflict and

conflict with outside groups contribute to the maintenance of community stability and community adjustment to change in the larger social environment.

The findings reported in this paper also show that recent efforts at "decentralizing" or "reinventing" government by incorporating management innovations originating in private, entrepreneurial enterprises did not reduce the level of conflict in the social system. Instead, the locus of conflict shifted from local-federal disputes to local-state and local-local conflicts. The amount of local conflict increased as local power and responsibility grew. Smaller, less structurally pluralistic communities tended to have a greater proportion of their conflicts with nonlocal groups, reflecting the community's vulnerability to decisions made outside the community.

In general, this study has shown that a more complete picture of the newspaper's system maintenance role emerges when the analysis of newspaper reports of community conflict includes a consideration of conflicts involving nonlocal groups.

NOTES

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21. Phillip J. Tichenor, George A. Donohue, and Clarice N. Olien, *Community Conflict and the Press* (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1980), 16.
22. John D. Kasarda and Morris Janowitz, "Community Attachment in Mass Society," *American Sociological Review* 39 (June 1974): 328; Louis Wirth, "Urbanism as a Way of Life," *The American Journal of Sociology* 44 (July 1938): 8.
23. Raymond Aron, *Maincurrents in Sociological Thought Volume II: Durkheim, Pareto, Weber*, trans. Richard Howard, and Helen Weaver (NY: Anchor Books, 1965), 23-24.
24. Michael A. DuBick, "The Organizational Structure of Newspapers

in Relation to Their Metropolitan Environment," *Administrative Science Quarterly* 23 (September 1978): 418-33.

25. The raw scores for 1960 and 1990 measures of county population, city population, percent of work force not agricultural, fisheries, or forestry occupations were standardized and added. Per-capita income measures were standardized within each year to control for inflation before adding. Chronbachs' alpha for the pluralism index was .81.

26. Olien, Donohue, and Tichenor, "Community Editor's Power and the Reporting of Conflict," 246. In the original study, newspaper conflict was defined as "the amount of space devoted to stories in which there was an expression of difference or opposition between specific individuals or groups". The earlier definition required that coders identify the portion of articles containing conflict, measured in column inches, and then code each conflict story into one of three categories: local government, other agencies, and non-governmental.

27. Differences between 1991 and 1965 mean levels of city population, county population, percent of work force in nonagricultural/fisheries/forestry occupations were statistically significant ($p < .05$) via matched pair t-test. As a partial control for the effects of inflation, per capita income measures were standardized within each year before testing. Differences between the standardized values of per capita income were not statistically significant.

28. All measures were converted to a 2" column standard.

29. News hole was defined as the sum of local, regional, state, national, and international news, editorials, opinions, letters to the editor, editorial cartoons, legal notices, public notices, stock listings, sports scores, and entertainment news. Excluded from news hole estimates were advice columns, mastheads, advertisements, classified ads, comics, horoscopes, puzzles, tv and radio listings, subscription boxes, and white space not enclosed by stories or photographic layouts. The quotient of conflict inches divided by news hole inches was multiplied by 1000.

30. Olien, Donohue, and Tichenor, "Community Editor's Power and the Reporting of Conflict," 243-52.

31. 1991 and 1965 differences between means were tested using independent sample t-tests. An additional analysis was performed in which a continuous measure of structural pluralism was treated as a covariate and year of publication was treated as a main effect. The F-ratio for the main effect was statistically significant for all measures of internal conflict. Similarly, when year of publication was treated as a covariate and community pluralism was treated as the main effect, the F-ratios were significant for all measures of internal conflict.

32. Donohue, Olien, and Tichenor, "Reporting Conflict by Pluralism, Newspaper Type, and Ownership," 489-99, 507.

33. Among communities with lower levels of structural pluralism: 1965 vs. 1991 (47.8% vs. 32.2%), chi-square = 5.51, $p < .05$; among communities with higher levels of structural pluralism: 1965 vs. 1991 (46.5% vs. 22.6%) chi-square = 30.20, $p < .001$.

34. Coser, *The Functions of Social Conflict*, 103-104.