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Introduction

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Conflict and polarization

Observation of the media and institutional discourse in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic while writing this introduction only serves to emphasize the importance of looking at conflict, polarization and discourse. Although this could be an ideal situation for collaboration and help, discourses seem to be permeated by language related to war, blame, and self-interest. And within this context, one cannot help but wonder why. Previous researchers have attempted to explain why conflict seems to be innate to human communication (Hamelink, 2011) and have even looked at the positive social effects of individuals having different views (Kakavá, 2001). However, as argued by Janicki (2015, p. 2), the effect of 'conflict' depends on how this notion is defined. For the purpose of this book, and following the tradition in political discourse analysis, conflict is defined as a verbal or physical dispute between two or more participants who are understood to be opponent (Janicki, 2015, p. 2; Motta and Guazina, 2018, p. 123; Traquina, 2005, p. 84). By using this definition, we can already see the importance of language or discourse, and previous studies on discourse analysis or sociolinguistics have already emphasized the inextricable link between conflict and communication (Billig, 2003; Dédaic and Nelson, 2003; Gumperz, 1982; Schäffner and Wenden, 1995; Wright, 1998).

We can see conflict in everyday conversation, as when we communicate we are constantly negotiating meaning. Conversation and interaction are by definition cooperative, and meaning is jointly constructed by participants in a communicative

situation (Gumperz, 1982). However, conflict may appear when specific elements activate different frames (Goffman, 1974), hence transforming participants into antagonists who observe that cooperation and consensus in the interaction has been lost (Gumperz 1982; Morales-López, Prego Vázquez and Domínguez Seco, 2005, 2006). When this happens, "conflict interrupts the normal course of social exchanges and can lead to interactional breakdowns and yet it provides a central force for the constitution of social relations." (Jacquemet, 2001, p. 37).

Looking at how conflict evolves in conversation can not only help us understand how social and power relations are shaped at the micro-level, but also to understand how these relations determine the discursive and ideological construction of social groups (Duranti, 1992, 1998; Blommaert, 2005; Morales-López, 2004). Likewise, conflict may not only appear in spontaneous conversations but in other types of conventionalized interactions based on discursive oppositions and conflictual positions: haggling while buying and selling, the negotiation of trade agreements, or electoral and parliamentary political debates, among others (Grimshaw 1990, p. 11). As Nelson (2003, p. 449) explains:

> Human conflict begins and ends via text and talk. We generate, shape, implement, remember and forget violent behaviour between individuals, communities and states through a specific discourse. It is discourse that prepares for sacrifice, justifies inhumanity, absolves from guilt, and demonizes the enemy.

This justification of action and demonization of the enemy lies at the core of potentially conflictual public discourses, as words frame, mobilize and motivate ideological thought and socio-political action. One of the main reasons for the appearance of human conflict is what van Dijk (1997, p. 28, 1998) calls the "ideological or political square." Through this square, a polarization between "us" and "them" – i.e. the creation of an "ingroup" and an "outgroup" – is achieved. This political square is intrinsic to the process of "otherization" (Nelson 2003, p. 454) which promotes conflict and lies at the core of polarization: the ingroup creates an enemy, which usually corresponds to the members of the outgroup. This enemy stops being a "who" to become an "it" – an "other" –, usually through a process of demonization or threat-presentation, which justifies any possible attack and the lack of reconciliation with the enemy (Nelson,

2003, p. 454-455; Wright, 1998, p. 43-44). Moreover, this process of otherization also justifies the actions taken against the outgroup, while invalidating any act carried out by that group. Thus, positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation can be presented as the core (de)legitimizing functions performed by ideological discourse (van Dijk, 1998; Chilton, 2004; Filardo-Llamas, 2010, Morales-López, 2012). Although most discourse-based research on conflict and peace has looked at political discourse, some authors (Semetko and Valkenburg, 2000; Wasike, 2013) have found that conflict also functions as a frame in media discourse when they are informing about politics. With the advent of social media and the influence of algorithms in communication, messages which focus on negative other-presentation have become more and more prominent, hence rendering the ideological square into an axiological square where the good actions carried out by the others and our own unacceptable actions are silenced highlighting exclusively the negative actions of the others (Gallardo-Paúls, 2018, p. 119). This silencing of certain aspects of reality results in a polarization of discourses, as those voices which adopt more extreme positions are more easily and frequently reproduced and echoed in the media. Polarization, in those cases, may be not only ideological – and based on distinctness, group diversion and group consensus (Bramson et al., 2016) – but also affective (Iyengar et al., 2019), related to feelings and evaluations. Clear cases of this can be seen in some of the chapters in this book when considering such diverse issues as Covid-19 (Filardo-Llamas), nationalist discourses (Morales-López), discourses on the environment (Domínguez et al.), hate speech (De Cock et al.) or the influence of social media as exemplified by Twitter (Flores and Martínez-Guillem) or Facebook (Cárdenas-Neira and Pérez-Arredondo).

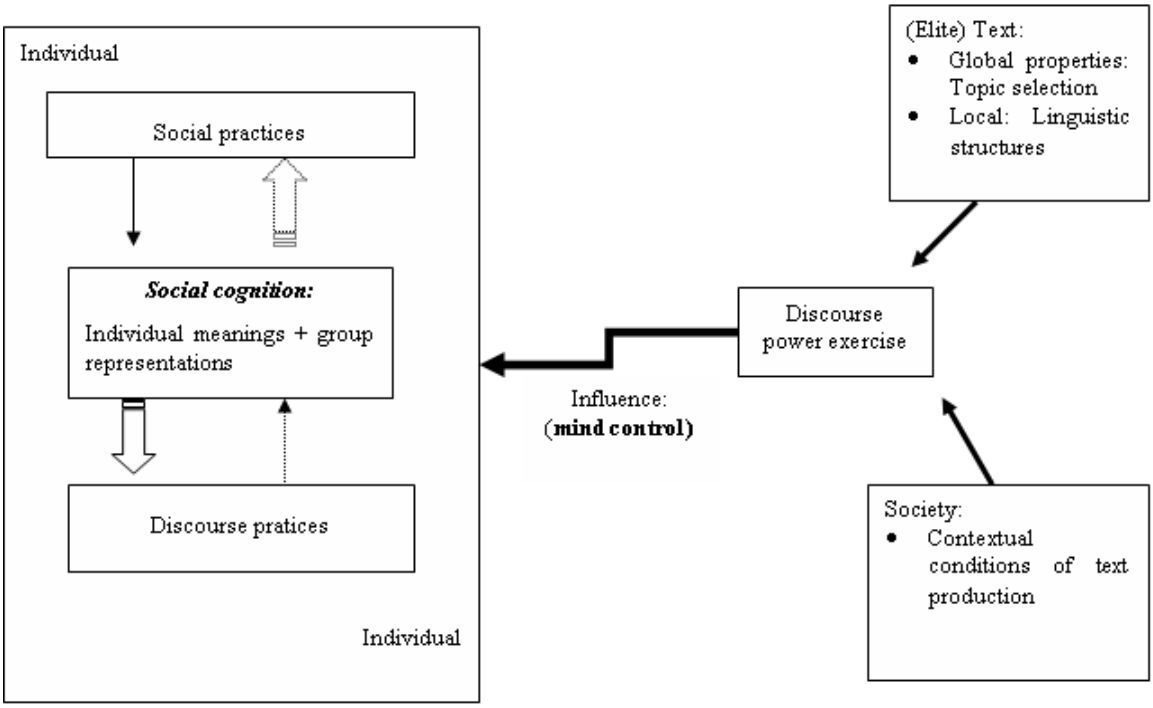
Conflict as a discursive construction

The link between language and conflict seems to be widely acknowledged in the literature. The first studies aimed at exploring the relation between language and conflict were based on interactional sociolinguistics and tried to explain which interactional and conversational strategies lay at the core of communicative and intercultural conflict (Gumperz, 1982, p. 185-187). Subsequent studies not only focused on conversation but explored the link between discourse and socio-political conflicts (Chilton, 1998, 2004; Dédaic and Nelson, 2003; Evans et al., 2019; Jahr, 1993; Janicki, 2015; R. T. Lakoff, 1990, 2000; Muller, 2010; Schäffner and Wenden, 1995; Wright,

1998). Most of these authors have focused on explaining the role of language in the initiation and development of conflict in different contexts, such as places where there are serious political conflicts, where we talk about language planning or language competition, or any other situation which may be potentially described as showing a "radical disagreement" (Ramsbotham, 2010) between different political groups. The notion of radical disagreement, defined as "the chief linguistic manifestation of intense and intractable political conflict" (ibid, p. xi) not only acknowledges overt conflict in which a war of words is publicly manifested, but includes deeper levels such as conflicts of beliefs or polarized evaluations of reality. This distinction between what we could call "surface" linguistically realized conflict and "deep" belief-related conflict allows us to propose a constructivist view to the study of conflict, which accounts for two elements: the discursive manifestation of conflict and how these discourses may construct – or create – conflicts. In our view, conflict is thus not only to be understood as a knowledge schema (Klar et al., 1988) which may be represented in discourse, but also as one which may be activated to construct given realities from opposed perspectives. As in the case of conflict, it can be argued that polarization can be seen on the surface, when it is related to a divergence of beliefs between groups, but also in the underlying discourse constructions and the evaluations and emotions triggered by them.

In our view, therefore, conflict and polarized positions can be understood as discursive constructs which may be evoked by a number of linguistic structures, rhetorical figures (which can be either creative or culturally-conventional) and/or argumentation strategies. When in context, discourses not only allow us to understand given social and political realities but also function as mechanisms that can help us define and interpret the world in which we live. This constructivist approach adopts a view in which the relationship between discourse and society is not necessarily mediated by a socio-cognitive interface but is an assembled process in which different levels of communication are integrated into a "semiotic field" (Goodwin, 2013, p. 11). Thus, cognition is an embodied process in which knowledge is the result of "an integrational process of sign-making" (Engel, 1972, p. 479; Harris, 2001, p. 131; Pennycook, 2018, p. 113). Language is understood as a complex process in which meaning emerges from the interaction between different elements (Morales-López, 2019). Amongst them, the notions of knowledge and social cognition also have a bearing. Social cognition can be defined as the socially shared representation of groups and the relations between them,

as well as the mental operations performed when processing discourse (van Dijk, 1993, p. 357), and it influences discourse dually: it both shapes discourse practices and may



re-shape the social practices and beliefs upon which those are based (see Figure 0.1). As argued by Hart (2014, p. 6), the relationship between discourse and society is dialectical, as not just language is constitutive of the immediate situational context and wider social relations and structures, but context also determines the way in which we use language.

Figure 0.1. Mediated relationship between text and society

This dialectical view is likewise pertinent when looking at polarization and conflict. If, as we have explained above, conflict is based on an ideological square (van Dijk, 1997, 1998) – or positive self-representation and negative other-representation–, the more extremely these positions are represented in discourse, the more polarized views will be constructed. Thus, not only is language a constitutive part of conflictual contexts, but it may also influence how conflicts evolve (Ramsbotham, 2010).

This constructivist view of discourse partly stems from Halliday's (2014, p. 3) explanation of the creative power of language and its ability to construct meaning. The

symbolic power of language – understood in its broadest multimodal sense and not only as linguistic realization (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996; Machin, 2013; Machin and Mayr, 2012) – is discursively maintained and (re-) shaped in different interactions. Meanings are thus not only contextually meaningful (Verschueren, 1999), but are a consequence of different linguistic choices (Hart, 2014; Langacker, 2008).

As argued by Halliday (2014, p. 4-19), linguistic structures have to be understood in "functional terms" which are realized through the various sub-systems of language. Although in Halliday's original account these sub-systems were equated to the semantic, lexicogrammatical and phonological form of utterances, more recent multimodal approaches to the study of discourse advocate the need to look at other semiotic modes of communication, such as a images, music, or gesture, amongst others (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996; Machin, 2013; Machin and Mayr, 2012; Way and McKerrell, 2017). Likewise, rhetoricians have also favoured analyses based on discourse-functions, including elements such as figures of speech, argumentation or fallacy analysis (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1958; Pujante, 2003; van Eemeren and Grootendorst, 2004). Underlying all these studies, we can see the performative function of language (Austin 1962; Hart 2004, p. 6) which is embedded within the three metafunctions proposed by Halliday (2004): i) an ideational function which explains language as a means of expressing and representing our internal or external experience; ii) an interpersonal metafunction which acknowledges the interaction and social relations between participants; and iii) a textual metafunction which explains how instances of discourse are structured in such a way that they fit genre and contextual conventions.

As we can see in table 0.1, these three metafunctions have not only influenced CDA approaches but are also relevant for explaining the different perspectives one may take for the study of political discourse (Chilton and Schäffner, 2002, p. 25; Fairclough, 1995, p. 134; Filardo-Llamas and Boyd, 2017; Hart, 2014, p. 7).[1] Halliday's textual metafunction explains how genre conventions are socially determined and are a consequence of social expectations about the type of language that can be used in different contexts. It is an enabling function and allows for the ideational and interpersonal function to take place while rendering a text cohesive and coherent. Following Grice (1989), we could argue that we expect communication to be

cooperative and participants to adjust to those social expectations. Thus, conflict may arise here when those expectations are not met and/or the inferential processes that

COMMUNICATIVE METAFUNCTIONS (HALLIDAY, 2014)	PERSPECTIVE FOR ANALYSIS OF POLITICAL DISCOURSE (CHILTON AND SCHÄFFNER, 2002)	STAGE IN CDA AND ROLE OF LANGUAGE (FAIRCLOUGH, 1995)	CONFLICTUAL RELATION
Textual	Textual features - Genre	Description stage ➢ Language is constitutive of the construction of a text and adjusts to contextually-determined social expectations.	Conflict may arise if: @ Social expectations about formal conventions are not met. @ Inferential process results in different interpretations of message.
Ideational	Representation	Interpretation stage ➢ Language is constitutive of social identities ➢ Language is constitutive of systems of knowledge and belief	Conflict may arise if: @ Social identities are based on opposed belief systems. @ Knowledge is not shared by discourse participants.
Interpersonal	Evaluation	Explanation stage ➢ Language is constitutive of social relations	Conflict may arise if: @ Evaluations are based on a polarized axiological square.

regulate communication result in different interpretations of the message. These multiple interpretations may be both communicative or intercultural (Gumperz, 1982, p. 185-187) and they may either reflect or create a discursive opposition, and hence a symbolic or communicative conflict. This is studied, for example, in the analysis of Twitter conversations carried out by Flores and Martínez-Guillem in Chapter 5.

Table 0.1. A constructivist view of conflict and polarization

Halliday's (2014) ideational metafunction is related to the content that is transmitted through discourse and to how the reality that is constructed by different linguistic choices. This is related to the notion of representation, which is one of the obvious functions of discourse (Chilton, 2004, p. 46; Hart, 2014, p. 7), and which has been

applied in recent studies on political discourse by relying on the concepts of "frame", "world-view" and "narrative" (Filardo-Llamas et al., 2016; Kaal, 2017; Morales-López, 2019). This view of reality is quite frequently determined by ideological beliefs (van Dijk, 1998) and influenced by the knowledge shared between discourse participants (Filardo-Llamas, 2019; van Dijk, 2008) and implies a particular relation to the world around the speakers, which is manifested in their discursive construction of social identities. As we will see in the chapters by Porto and Romano, Gutiérrez-Sanz, Pujante and Morales-López, the emphasis on the ideational function can help us explain how conflict may arise when social identities are based on opposed belief systems or when the common knowledge of discourse participants is not shared.

The interpersonal function is the one that focuses on participation and explains the constitutive role of language in shaping interaction and creating social relations. In CDA studies this function is related to the notions of the speaker's attitude or evaluation (Chilton and Schäffner, 2002, p. 32; Hart, 2014, p. 7). This positioning, or stance, can be defined as "the way that speakers code or implicitly convey various kinds of subjective opinion in discourse and in so doing attempt to achieve some intersubjective consensus of values with respect to what is represented" (Hart, 2014, p. 43). The notion of evaluation can be connected to the transmission of axiological values (Cap, 2010), and hence it may be argued that conflict arises when the discursive construction of social relations reflects a polarized axiological square (Gallardo-Paúls, 2018) in which we not only have positive-self and negative-other representations, but also a silencing of those values which could be evoked to reach intersubjective consensus between the ingroup and the outgroup. Biological studies (Maturana and Varela 1992; Maturana 2006) also endorse the importance of interaction and human communication in constructing social relations. They argue that "languaging," or the act of communicating with others, is what makes us human: "we generate the worlds that we live as networks of conversations in the dynamics of the interplay of our languaging and emotioning as different domains of objects, entities and relations" (Maturana, 2006, p. 96). As argued above, this discursive process involves the construction of a dialectical relationship with the subjectivity of the actors (their subjectivity and emotions, or ethos), their actions and surroundings (Morales-López, 2019). The prominence of the interpersonal function when considering conflict and polarization can be seen in this volume in De Cock et al.'s study of hate speech.

Whereas observation of the functions of language can help us explain how communication takes place, Halliday's tripartite description "fails to recognize" that communication not only means exchanging information or opinions, but is also aimed at coercing and convincing others "into acting in particular ways" (Hart, 2014, p. 7). As argued by constructivist rhetoricians (Browse, 2018; Pujante, 1998, 2017), inquiry into representation and evaluation is equivalent to the study of two of the argumentative appeals in classical rhetoric: logos and ethos. However, one cannot overlook the persuasive function – or pathos – of political discourses. Persuasion is defined as "an ongoing struggle for understanding the events in the world we are living in, while positioning ourselves coherently in the world through discursive means" (Pujante, 1998, p. 37). Thus, the persuasive function is not only based on expressing beliefs (Pujante, 2017) but also on appealing to the audience's emotional dispositions (Browse, 2018, p. 154).

The importance of persuasion has been widely studied in political discourse analysis, which performs three strategic functions: representation/misrepresentation – including dissimulation –, coercion and legitimization/delegitimization (Chilton, 2004, p. 45-46; Chilton and Schäffner, 1997, pp. 211-215). Two aspects have to be highlighted when considering these functions: i) they are contextually-dependent and are the result of a complex and multi-layered integrated process in which different communicative systems play a role (Goodwin, 2013), and ii) the role of language systems in appealing to emotions also requires further study (Hart, 2014; Janicki, 2015).

The importance of studying emotions in language and conflict is justified not only by previous studies on emotion and evaluation (Bednarek, 2008; Mackenzie and Alba-Juez, 2019) but also by psychologists, who have found that negative emotions "occupy a special place in our lives" (Janicki, 2015, p. 61) and that we react more swiftly and strongly to them (Haidt, 2006). This can be seen, for example, in how we react to insults or hate speech compared to praise. Cognitive approaches to the study of emotion in political discourse (Browse, 2018; Janicki, 2015) emphasize the need to look at the emotions triggered by an instance of discourse – or a word – as a consequence of the interaction between the multiple systems that influence communication. This means that it is language users that attribute emotions to the words, and this emotional load

attributed is not only dependent on the context, but is also in "accordance with our preferences" (Browse, 2018, p. 155).

Analytical methods

As has been argued throughout this introduction, the adoption of a constructivist approach to the study of conflict and polarization implies an understanding of discourse as a complex system. We argue that meaning is constructed by the interaction between the formal constituents of an instance of discourse and the local institutional and global context in which it takes place. Whereas linguistic approaches to the study of context focus on the analysis of linguistic forms signalling contextual presuppositions (Gumperz, 1982, p. 131), or any deictic indexical (Verschueren, 1999), we believe that the understanding of discourse has to account for a complex system (Filardo-Llamas, 2019; van Dijk, 2008) in which not only is discourse influenced by the actual circumstances in which it is produced but also by social knowledge about the roles of discourse participants and social actors, genre-related expectations and ideological and cultural knowledge schemata. This perspective implies that it is the analyst who selects the formal resources that are relevant for the analysis. This description of formal resources, however, is not enough, and following CDA approaches (Fairclough, 1989, 1995) and narrative epistemology (Pujante, 2017; Morales-López, 2017; White, 1973, 1978, 2017), we argue that it has to be interpreted and explained in context. The form is, thus, not merely a wrapping for the function, but is also a constituent part of the overall meaning, and it is the analyst who has to interpret how meaning is constructed in each particular context, and how this construction of meaning performs specific illocutive and/or persuasive functions. An example of the importance of form in shaping discourse can be seen in the chapter by García Riverón et al., where they analyse how meaning is constructed as a combination of prosodic, gestural and semantic-pragmatic features.

As we have seen above, and will see in most of the chapters of this volume, inferential processes play a key role (Blommaert 2005, p. 40). This inferential processes has not only been widely explained in linguistic theories, but also applied to the study of political discourse (Chilton, 2004; Wilson, 1990). In any communicative event, there is

a complex system of metalinguistic rules that regulate the denotational role of linguistic units and how these interact with contextual objects and events. Both constructivist approaches to the study of discourse (Morales-López, 2017; Pujante, 2017; Piquer, 2016) and cognitive linguistic applications of CDA (Filardo-Llamas et al., 2016; Hart, 2017) have focused on the metadiscursive activation of interpretive frames, or schemata, for understanding texts (see also Blommaert, 2005; Zienkowski, 2016; Morales-López, 2021). As argued throughout this introduction, thus, the construction of political meanings is understood in this volume as an active process in which not only discourse utterers are involved, but in which audiences and contextual embedding also plays a significant role. Constructivist and cognitive approaches to the study of conflictual discourse, such as the one proposed here, thus allow us not only to acknowledge the complexity meaning construction, but also explains this process as the active working of both discourse producers and audiences, similar to the one proposed in Browse (2018). To prove this, the chapters in this volume show that a variety of analytical tools proceeding from a wide range of discourse and linguistic theories can be used. Likewise, most of the chapters in this volume follow a qualitative approach, although quantification approaches are also adopted in those by Elmerot, Cárdenas-Neira and Pérez-Arredondo, and Romano and Porto.

A number of authors have focused on the analysis of representation in political discourse (Chilton, 2004; Filardo-Llamas, 2010; Hart, 2014). In these cases, the focus has been placed on the type of "worldviews" that are spread through discourse and how these are related to particular discourse construals. Systemic Functional Grammar and, more recently, cognitive linguistics have proved to be a particularly significant source of tools for the analysis. Two tenets underlie the analysis of representation in ideological discourse. On the one hand, it is argued that through linguistic choices a particular view of the world is constructed in order to make it conform to our beliefs about the sort of world we live in (Chilton, 2004; Filardo-Llamas, 2010; Filardo-Llamas, 2008; Kaal, 2017). This vision can be a personal view or a worldview with certain implied values; that is, values in the sense of ideological assumptions of the social group in which the text is produced (Jeffreis and O'Driscoll, 2019, p. 13).

In one of the first introductions to the study of cognitive linguistics in CDA, Hart and Lukeš (2007, p. x-xi) argue that a cognitive perspective can be defined as the inquiry

into the conceptual structures behind language and how these are related to the ideational function of language. They argue that our experience of "reality" is structured by a variety of construal operations, which can be defined as the range of conceptualization processes that are used to evoke a semantic frame (Croft and Cruse, 2004; Hart, 2017; Langacker, 2008). Several tools have been proposed and applied for the analysis of ideological discourse, amongst which we can mention the study of conceptual metaphor (Charteris-Black, 2005; Goatly, 2007; Hart, 2011), conceptual blending (Coulson, 2006; Filardo-Llamas, 2015), or deixis and proximization (Cap, 2017; Chilton, 2004, 2005; Filardo-Llamas, 2013; Kopytowska, 2015). All these proposals focus on identifying the mental representations that are activated by an instance of discourse and how these evoke particular construals of a single reality. The notion of Common Ground (Browse, 2018, p. 97) – or shared knowledge (van Dijk, 2005) – is of key importance when looking at world views: For communication to be successful, a proposition first activates a "frame" which functions as a "guide" when interpreting discourse (Goffman, 1974). This frame "has to be accepted by all discourse participants" and henceforth it becomes part of the "backgrounded information which is used by participants to construal a mental model of the events or situation being described by a speaker or writer" (Browse, 2018, p. 97).

The notion of construal and its application of the analysis of representation in political discourse allows the analyst to identify the world-view discursive resources which are highlighted or foregrounded and those which are backgrounded (Langacker, 2008). As mentioned above, this foregrounding is not only caused by linguistic and pragmatic-rhetorical choices but also by other semiotic modes such as visuals or sounds. Some of the chapters in this book focus on how different representations may result in polarized views of reality because only opposed aspects are highlighted. To study this, a number of tools are proposed, such as conceptual metaphors (see Domínguez et al. in Chapter 11, Filardo-Llamas in Chapter 10, or Cárdenas-Neira and Pérez-Arredondo in Chapter 9) or image schemas (see Romano and Porto in Chapter 8 and Filardo-Llamas in Chapter 10). In most of these chapters we can see an understanding of metaphor and images schemas not only as being textually activated, but as a multimodal device. Whereas the analysis of metaphor and schemas shows how reality is conceptualized, other authors in the book focus on the strategy of positioning and propose to consider how polarization and conflict can be studied as the consequence of the adoption of

clashing and opposed perspectives. To do so, the study of deixis is proposed by De Cock et al. in Chapter 4 as a mechanism for studying hate speech in interactions by politicians.

Studies based on cognitive linguistics in this book focus on three main construal operations (Hart, 2014, p. 111–112): structure configuration as done by schematization, which shows the basic understanding of any given situation; framing as done by metaphor, which shows the attributes which are associated to each conceptual entity and how these result in particular evaluations; and positioning as done by deixis, which shows the speaker's point of view and how reality is seen from a particularly perspective.

Whereas cognitive linguistics proves to be used for the study of ideology and political discourse, certain parallelisms can be established with concepts proposed by other theories. In this sense, metaphor is defined as a "framing mechanism" (Hart, 2014, p. 111; Lakoff and Johnson, 1980), where frames are understood as "theoretical constructs, having some cognitive, ultimately, neural reality. In terms of their content, frames can be thought of as structures related to the conceptualization of situation types and their expression in language." (Chilton, 2004, p. 51) This definition can be understood as a re-elaboration of Goffman's (1974) notion of frame, which is now presented as an interpretative schema of experience that can be constructed and re-contextualized with persuasive purposes (Lakoff, 2004). Frames are thus, in our view, the conceptual mechanisms consciously or unconsciously used by a speaker or writer to construct a particular view of the world. The cognitive effect of these mechanisms is related to their capacity for foregrounding or backgrounding certain aspects of reality.

Implicit to the notion of frame is the idea that several world views can be constructed about a single event (Filardo-Llamas, 2010). Thus, a parallelism can be established between frame theory and White's (1973, 1978, 2017) narrative theory. Examining the different historical accounts of one single event provided by 19th Century historians, White (1973) claims that it is not the facts that change, but the historical narratives and how these are textually and poetically constructed. Thus, any instance of discourse has two elements: the event which is accounted for and the narrative that is used to do so. From the relation between these two – or between content and form – we can see how

different views – or construals – emerge. To uncover how these views emerge, three stages have to be studied: i) identifying the narrative plot, ii) uncovering the argumentation strategies, and iii) showing the ideological implication of those choices. Although made from a historical perspective, White's (1973) is in fact a discourse-based account of history which proposes the identification of lexico-grammatical and semantic features and their figurative meaning as a step previous to the explanation of how these events are represented. Narratives can be studied from a micro-perspective – as seen in the previous description of cognitive-linguistic tools or in the trope-based analysis proposed by rhetoricians (Pujante, 2003, 2017) which suggests identifying four basic (rhetorical) mechanisms: metaphor, metonymy, synechdoche or irony.

Both the notion of frame and that of narrative are applied in several chapters in this volume: Pujante in Chapter 15 and Gutiérrez-Sanz in Chapter 17 propose a classification of narratives and consider their polarizing effect, particularly focusing on the figure of synecdoche. Both authors rely on the notion of narrative, which in our view can also be related to the idea of dominant discourse (Raiter, 2003, p. 171, 174), and argue that not all narratives are equally plausible in all contexts. For a narrative to be believable, it has to be related to a dominant discourse, or the one that fits within the set of beliefs shared by most members of a community. The closer to those beliefs a narrative is, the more believable it will be. The values upon which discourses are based change through time, although it can be argued that (extreme) conflict situations arise when there is no consensus on the narratives by the different social groups involved in an event (Filardo-Llamas, 2013; Montesano-Montessori and Morales-López, 2015; Ramsbotham, 2017, p. 4, 36; Wodak, 2019, p. 70, 85).

This approach to the study of narrative can also be seen in the analysis performed by Morales-López in Chapter 1, Morales-López and Floyd in Chapter 3, Matos et al. in Chapter 2, or Pascual- Espinilla in Chapter 16. Whereas the notion of frame and of narrative, in some of the chapters in this volume, has traditionally been used for the study of texts, recent developments in multimodality show its applicability to other semiotic modes. Flores and Martínez-Guillem, and Aguilera-Carnerero in Chapters 5 and 7 successfully explore how frames are interpersonally constructed and visually activated.

Closely related to White's (1973, 1978) proposal for the study of narratives is the analysis of the argumentative resources employed by the speaker or writer to justify given world-views. Argumentation theory and the identification of the topoi is one of the key analytic tools employed by the Discourse Historical Approach (DHA) to CDA (Reisigl, 2002; Wodak, 2015, p. 51-54, 2001; Wodak and Meyer, 2016). By relying on classical Aristotelian rhetoric (*Retórica* II, chap. 18ff..), and argumentation theory, Boukala (2016, p. 256-258) proposes a classification of topoi, understood as "rhetorical and dialectical scheme[s], universal persuasion device[s]." Closely related to Goffman's notion of frame (1974), topoi function as basic propositions, or formulas, shared in a particular speech community, which allow the speaker and audience to actively reach a given conclusion by departing from selected arguments; the notion of topoi can be considered synonymous of the one proposed by Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1958), that of common places or loci. In DHA, these topoi serve a number of functions, amongst which it is necessary to highlight the positive construction of the self and the negative construction of the other (Boukala, 2016, p. 250; Wodak, 2015, p. 52). Argumentation theory proves to be a useful addition to the study of metaphors in the chapter by Domínguez et al., and narratives in the chapters by Morales-López and Salvador.

As we have shown throughout this introduction, this volume seeks to explain how polarization, and conflict, may arise in different situations. By exploring a range of discourse analytic tools, the role of language and how it reflects different discourse choices is postulated and emphasized. In the chapters included in this volume, a dialogic relation is established between conflict and polarization, with the former being understood as dispute between two or more participants who are understood to be opponents (Janicki, 2015, p. 2; Motta and Guazina, 2018, p. 123; Traquina, 2005, p. 84), and the latter as the self- and other- presentation and categorization of social and political groups (Bramson et al., 2017; Iyengar et al., 2019; Masroor et al., 2019). Thus, two elements are of key importance in all the chapters in the book: group identity (and the representation of the ingroup and the outgroup, as in Bramson et al., 2017, p. 122), and the notion of partisanship (Iyengar et al., 2019, p. 130). The case studies included in this volume show how group identity is not restricted to the political realm but is rather based on different parameters including political allegiance, national identity, gender identity or religious identity, amongst others. The discursive constructions of these

identities – and the focus on just one single identity-defining parameter – shows how polarization stems from an extremely positive representation of the self, accompanied by a negative representation of others and a lack of any serious attempt to seek consensus or positions in between. Thus, not only the ideological square (van Dijk, 1998) permeates discourse, but rather a polarized axiological square (Gallardo-Paúls, 2018) where elements for inter-group consensus are silenced. Partisanship – understood as the opposition between the ingroup and the outgroup even on the most trivial issues (Iyengar et al., 2019, p.130) – becomes thus a salient element in the analysis included in this volume and shows how this positive/negative group discourse construction may lie at the core of socio-political disputes and conflicts. Some chapters in the volume also acknowledge the importance of social media (Castells, 2009, 2012; KhosraviNik, 2018) in increasing affective polarization, because they function as may have in increasing affective polarization because they do not only construct a world akin to your linking, but they also function as echo chambers where views of that world are spread.

Contents of the book

As explained above, the chapters in this book seek to explore how conflict becomes polarized and which are the discursive strategies, and linguistic and rhetorical-argumentative resources that construct conflict and polarization. Following explicitly or implicitly a constructivist approach, authors rely on the different analytical tools explained in the previous section and explain their ideological effect. While in quite a number of the chapters van Dijk's (1998) "ideological square" plays a key role, in others authors focus on identifying the aspects of the conflict schema (Klar et al., 1988) that are recalled. The collection has, thus, a double objective: i) advance further in the theoretical and applied study of the discursive construction of conflict, particularly in polarized contexts, as shown in this introduction, and ii) provide examples of different socio-political contexts in which polarization can be observed, as we can see in the different case studies covered.

The chapters included in this volume are organized in two sections. In the first section, studies related to the study of socio-political and polarized conflicts have been included. A polarized construction of national or political identities underlies all the chapters in

this section. In Chapter 1, Esperanza Morales-López looks at how the construction of national identities within one country can result in polarized positions. To do so, she studies how "the people of Catalonia" are discursively construed in the political debate on the independence referendum. In Chapter 2, Ana Raquel Matos, Dora Fonseca and José Manuel Mendes provide an overview of the different narratives about the concept of "austerity" found in Portuguese political discourse between 2013 and 2018. The analysis shows how discourse not only adjusts and reflects ongoing social and political processes, but also how official discourse narratives can be challenged by counter-narratives and how these may result in further political changes. The question of nationalism re-appears in Chapter 3, where Esperanza Morales-López and Alan Floyd explore similarities and differences in the construction of the self in two regions in Spain where nationalism has been traditionally important: Galicia and Catalonia. The chapter explores how political-left-wing – and nationalist identities are negotiated through the discourse of two regional parties, Galicia En Común and En Comú Podem, and the difficulties in integrating these essential characteristics in the discourse by the left-wing party Unidas Podemos, with whom the two former parties are allied in the wider national sphere.

The increasing importance of social media (particularly Facebook and Twitter) for political discourse is covered in Chapters 4 and 5. Barbara de Cock, Pauline Dupret, Philippe Hambye, and Andrea Pizarro Pedraza study the indirect polarizing strategies that are used by Belgian politicians when referring to the immigrant community in Chapter 4. They show that three main linguistic strategies – deixis, indirect referencing to menaces by others, and metaphors – play a key role in constructing discourses where the "others" are negatively presented. A different polarizing strategy is presented in Chapter 5, where Joseph Flores and Susana Martínez-Guillem analyse the role of memes and humor in constructing polarized political positions. By focusing on an example where Donald Trump is involved, they argue that through memes political views may be re-contextualized, hence increasing polarized views about political events and preventing the achievement of common will.

Polarized constructions of the ingroup and the immigrant outgroup in news discourse are the key aspect under analysis in Chapters 6, 7 and 8. In Chapter 6, Irene Elmerot studies how evaluative language contributes to the process of linguistic othering in

Czech newspapers, particularly when nouns and adjectives are used to refer to Arab and Muslim immigrants. Also, related to the study of the representation of the Muslim community is Chapter 7, by Carmen Aguilera-Carnerero. In this case, the author addresses self-representations, and how these may help in recruitment, in two e-magazines produced by the Islamic State. A multimodal dimension is included in the analysis, which is mainly focused on strategies of visual framing. Both the textual and visual semiotic modes are studied by Manuela Romano and Dolores Porto in their analysis of the representation of the Syrian refugee crisis in the British and Spanish press. The study identifies the multimodal construal strategies that underlie the activation of the CONFLICT and MORALITY frames.

The last two chapters in this section share a transition function as an overlap between political and socio-cultural conflicts underlies both of them. In Chapter 9, Camila Cárdenas-Neira and Carolina Pérez-Arredondo explore recontextualizations of the educational conflict on Facebook by the Chilean student movement. This multimodal analysis of students' counter-narratives shows how the ideological scope of the Chilean educational conflict is reframed and how strategies of self- and other-presentation contribute to specifying the political adversaries responsible for the educational conflict. In an attempt to explain increasing polarization and its possible relation to the Covid-19 pandemic, Laura Filardo-Llamas explores in Chapter 10 how the WAR/CONFLICT metaphorical frame interacts with force dynamics in the early political response to the pandemic in the UK, the USA and Spain. The study shows that the interdiscursive relation between the current war against the virus and former political conflicts allows for shifting constructions of the "us" vs "them" opposition.

The second section of the volume collects chapters focusing on the discursive construction of social or symbolic oppositions, or on the analysis of cultural artifacts. In Chapter 11, Martí Domínguez, Sara Moreno and Tatiana Pina provide an extensive analysis of how cartoonists have discursively constructed the two main positions on climate change in the USA. The analysis of the conceptual metaphors used shows that rather than seeking social consensus, humour reactions to climate change tend to be politicized and thus reflect polarized ideological positions. Climate change and controversies about energy sources are also the key themes in Vicent Salvador's chapter, number twelve. In it, he explains how the two main socio-political positions on

climate change justify the use of different energy sources. For the analysis, he relies on variation in lexical choices and relates those to different argumentation strategies. Oppositions stemming from different socio-political views on gender lie at the core of the three following chapters: thirteen, fourteen, and fifteen. In Chapter 13, Sara Molpeceres explores the discursive construction of "feminism" and "woman" by three right-wing female politicians in Spain. Her analysis shows that these concepts – and subsequent associations to them – function as empty signifiers which are discursively adjusted to different situations. However, her analysis shows how these discursive constructions reflect unreconciled positions. In Chapter 14, Sergio Pascual Espinilla looks into how different media outlets in Spain construct gender-based violence by analysing their treatment of a case with widespread media coverage. His results show how the increasing spectacularization of the media has resulted in a silencing, and in some cases even denial, of the gender dimension of this type of violence. In Chapter 15, David Pujante compares how different Christian theologies read some passages of the New Testament. He proposes the concept of "rejected synecdoche" to explain how controversies arise between heterosexist and Christian LGTB+ groups and their understanding of what is meant by "egalitarian".

The last two chapters in this section aim to widen the scope of analysis of conflict and polarization. Thus, in Chapter 15, Raquel García Riverón, Alejandro Marrero and Yoan Karell Acosta González propose an analysis of all the formal and meaningful elements in construction of the illocutionary force of a speech act. By taking a news piece broadcast on Cuban television, polarity is explained as a complex process in which prosody, gesture and syntactic-pragmatic choices influence the discursive construction of the two poles in a conceptual unit. Finally, in Chapter 16, Victor Gutiérrez-Sanz explores opposed representations of members of the Basque separatist group – ETA – in newspapers and fiction. By comparing the composition and tropes that can be found in the narrative plots of different news pieces and the best-selling novel *Patria,* Gutiérrez-Sanz proves how a hegemonic discursive view of the Basque conflict has been discursively constructed and how this lies at the core of current "discursive battles" in which different interpretations of this ethnonationalist conflict are provided.

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[1] A more in-depth description of the relation between Halliday's (2014) metafunctions and the different approaches to the study of political discourse can be read in Filardo and Boyd (2017).