

ABSTRACT

A SOCIAL NETWORK ANALYSIS OF EMERGENT INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITIES: A GLOBAL DISCUSSION ABOUT THE 2013-2014 UKRAINIAN CRISIS

Transnational global interactions observed through activities such as international voting measures, trade transactions and participations in alliances have historically provided researchers an opportunity to analyze international relations (IR) amongst national actors within the global power structure. In addition to these traditional macro-level global interactions, the recent emergence of social media has ushered in a new era of global connectivity amongst individual people throughout the world, thus enabling micro-level global interactions. This thesis provides a more holistic view of global international relations by capturing both macro-level and micro-level global interactions and viewing them as comparable networks. By using social network analysis (SNA) tools to detect emergent communities within networks, this thesis directly compared the community structure of two macro-level networks (United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) voting records and arms trade transaction networks) and one social media micro-level

network (e.g. Twitter). The UNGA macro-level voting network served as a measure of validation for this approach by properly showing East-West geopolitical divisions during the Cold War and a North-South socio-economic division following the Cold War. The micro-level Twitter network was created from tweets harvested from conversations about the Ukrainian crisis from the initial Euromaidan protests in November 2013 through June 2014, which included the annexation of Crimea by Russia. The community detection results for the micro-level Ukrainian Twitter network shared the greatest similarity (0.42 on a 0-1 scale) with the UNGA Cold War community results. This result suggests that Ukrainian citizens did not shed their historical cultural roots that aligned themselves with the Cold War East-West geopolitical structure. Additionally, a further analysis evaluating the level of cooperation between the NATO alliance and Ukraine showed that there exists very little evidence of cooperation between the two entities in either the micro-level or macro-level networks.