



Conflict and Defense: A General Theory.

Review Author[s]:
Amitai Etzioni

Political Science Quarterly, Volume 78, Issue 1 (Mar., 1963), 122-124.

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Political Science Quarterly
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plete identification with any proposal and any point of view, no matter how good or how popular it might be. The best available proposal should never be accepted just because it is best; it should be deferred, objected to, discussed, until major opposition disappears. Compromise is almost always a rational procedure, even when the compromise is between a good and a bad proposal (p. 203).

The making of such compromises as will best maintain and improve the decision structure is for Diesing "the fundamental kind of reason" because the more rational a decision structure is, the more rational are the decisions it produces. The political problem is always basic and prior, and (except perhaps temporarily) nonpolitical questions must always be considered first by their effect on the political structure.

Diesing's analysis is at such a high level of abstraction that all kinds of entities (persons, small groups, formal organizations, governments, societies) are within the framework. The remarkable thing is that this in no way prevents his making numerous non-trivial and empirically verifiable statements about such diverse concrete phenomena as personality, labor arbitration and political party leadership.

The breadth and originality of the conception, and the clarity and fertility with which it is worked out, make this book a striking achievement. To those social scientists who would like to have a normative framework within which to theorize, it offers exciting possibilities. For, as Diesing remarks, political rationality is the only unconditional value (since it makes all other values achievable), and, therefore, if history moves toward a goal, it must be toward that one.

EDWARD C. BANFIELD

HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Conflict and Defense: A General Theory. By KENNETH E. BOULDING. New York, Harper and Brothers, 1962.—ix, 349 pp. \$7.00.

To be initiated into the study of conflict, the student or scholar could hardly find a better book. Boulding covers the area in a crystal-clear style, often supporting the argument with illuminating illustrations. Graphs accompany many of the points made, but the text can also be understood without their aid.

The book tackles many aspects of the problem of conflict. It studies conflicts among individuals, groups, organizations and nations; it examines conflict from psychological, economic, socio-

logical and political viewpoints; it surveys the effects of symbols (or images), of attitudes (such as friendliness and hostility), of arbitrators, mediators and control agencies, as well as those of threats. There is hardly a type or dimension of conflict that is not discussed.

Boulding does more than simply prepare the ground for the study, research and theory of conflict by reviewing what has already been done in the field. He also calls attention to lacunae that ought to be filled. The relationship of power to threats is one such lacuna, the effectiveness of non-violent resistance is another, the dynamics of images that determine how each party in the conflict views its opponents is a third one. Moreover, at several points Boulding pushes beyond the analysis of current thoughts on conflict to the presentation of his own ideas.

Here Boulding's main line of thought is the application of economic topologies of conflict, especially of competition among firms and price warfare, to the study of other conflicts, especially in international relations. He introduces the concept of conditional and unconditional viability, which expresses the ability of one firm to push the other out of existence either by imposing losses or by bringing about a merger. Secondly, he makes much of an analogy between the effect of transportation costs on inter-firm competition and the effect of shrinking of distances between nations due to modern weapons. The lower the cost of transportation of goods or violence, the less likely are the parties in a conflict to have unconditional viability.

Above all, *Conflict and Defense* is concerned with the need to develop a Keynesian theory of international systems. The nature of the economy is such that it is likely to get into upper crises (inflation) or lower crises (deflation) unless a movement in a certain direction is checked and reversed in due time through the activation of automatic and deliberate counter-cyclical mechanisms. The international system needs mechanisms that will counter conflicts while they are "young," before they pass the point of no return. In addition to controlling those conflicts that have occurred, Boulding stresses the need for preventive action to reduce the sources of conflict. There are several other fruitful analyses and insights which would be helpful for the construction of a general theory of conflict, but the structure of the book prevents Boulding from developing them. Whenever the reader's interest is sufficiently aroused so that he expects to penetrate deeply into the heart of a topic, the chapter closes and the discussion turns to the exploration of some other aspect of conflict; when the application of these various concepts and insights to the international

scene has just begun to be realized, the book reaches its end. We cannot but look forward to a volume in which the author will go on to provide the much sought after model for international regulatory mechanisms.

This wish is intensified as one reads the closing pages of *Conflict and Defense*, in which Boulding lays bare the normative assumptions of his work. The author believes that the present system of international relations is wholly obsolete, that it is apt to lead to a disaster of the largest possible magnitude. But recognition of the need for world peace and world government does not lead the author to expose a neat set of utopias, as so many writers have done before. Boulding is careful to point out that we know where to go but do not know how to get there. Moreover, he dispels any illusions about the ability of the peace movement to exert much influence in these matters. He does see some ground for hope in the increased interest in arms control. He is more tolerant than are most writers of the idea of developing non-violent resistance as a substitute for warfare although he is far from committed to this approach. His most provocative idea is that national disarmament might come out of a coalition of the military establishments of the world over the heads of governments; hence we should advance rather than resist the separation of military and state.

In sum, this is a well-written, well-argued book. No student embarking on the study of conflict should miss it. If upon reading the book one is left asking for more, this is mainly because the book contains the elements of a general theory of conflict, while the title promises that such a theory is actually being presented.

AMITAI ETZIONI

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

The Rate and Direction of Inventive Activity: Economic and Social Factors. (A Conference of the Universities-National Bureau Committee for Economic Research and the Committee on Economic Growth of the Social Science Research Council.) Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1962.—x, 635 pp. \$12.50.

Strategy and Structure: Chapters in the History of the Industrial Enterprise. By ALFRED D. CHANDLER JR. Cambridge, The M. I. T. Press, 1962.—xiv, 463 pp. \$10.00.

In American Economics the Universities-National Bureau Conference seems to have taken over the function of the venerable *Festschrift* along with most of its vices. In each, the selection of