Conflict and Cohesion: A Review of the Literature and Recommendations for Future Research

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This essay contains a reappraisal of empirical research on conflict and cohesion. Behavioral studies of the linkage between domestic and foreign conflict are described in some detail. The consensus of that literature is that internal conflict is externalized only under very restricted conditions. However, in the process of reviewing this research, several important conceptual problems have been identified. Testing has focused on static rather than dynamic manifestations of conflict. Fragmentary indicators have been used to assess conflict at both levels of political interaction, and measurement is further complicated by the question of cross-national validity. In addition, the role of the state and environmental constraints on projection are in need of further exploration. It is recommended that all of these factors be considered in any new model of the conflict nexus that is intended for empirical testing.

I. THE RATIONALE FOR CONFLICT AND COHESION

Freud hypothesized that an individual might cope with internal conflict by projecting it outward. Perhaps a nation-state in turmoil could be expected to react in much the same way (Freud 1949). Sometimes referred to as “externalization” or “projection”, the notion that leaders will engage in foreign conflict in order to promote domestic cohesion was popularized initially by sociologists (Coser 1956; Reuck and Knight 1966; Kluckhohn 1960; Simmel 1955; and Sherif and Sherif 1955).

According to sociological theory, an elite faced with social disintegration might attempt to restore order by diverting the public eye toward an external menace. Domestic strife then is expected to subside, because those within the group will put aside their differences (at least temporarily) in order to pursue the higher goal of national preservation.

Students of international politics became intrigued with this state-oriented line of reasoning, seeing it as a potential explanation for the pervasiveness of conflict. Several pioneers of international relations theory commented directly on externalization as a process. Wright asserted that

> [i]ntegration has often been effected through the organization of opposition. By creating and perpetuating in the community both a fear of invasion and a hope of expansion, obedience to a leader may be assured.\(^1\)

Similarly, Haas and Whiting argued that elites would try to preserve their power in the face of domestic threats by uniting their followers against external danger. They predicted that would occur in “periods of rapid industrialization and large-scale social change” (Haas and
Whiting 1956:62). At an equally general level, from his analysis of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries Rosecrance concluded that "there tends to be a correlation between international instability and the domestic insecurity of elites". He thus conceived of domestic tranquility as a "vehicle of international stability and external peace" (Rosecrance 1963:304, 306).

From the outset, the theory of conflict linkage found a receptive audience among those concerned with explaining international conflict. It provided a plausible explanation for aggressive actions which could not be traced to outstanding grievances at the international level. The theory also had the potential to be tested in a straightforward manner. Two decades ago, the interest in conflict and cohesion crystallized in the form of a sustained effort to obtain confirmation through aggregate research. This research program will be described and appraised in some detail. The purpose of the review is to develop a strategy for further investigation of conflict and cohesion.

II. THE ERA OF SYSTEMATIC TESTING

What is most remarkable about the theory of externalization is its practically uniform record of failure when tested on an aggregate basis. Seldom has so much common sense in theory found so little support in practice. In that regard, Rummel's study of domestic and foreign conflict linkage is an obvious point of departure. He conducted the first data-based research on projection and discovered some surprising patterns. Rummel collected data for 77 states over the period 1955–57, using a wide range of indicators of domestic and foreign conflict. (Table 1 displays these indicators, which are typical of those used in subsequent research.) Relying upon factor analysis and some related statistical techniques, he inferred from his data that (1) discrete dimensions of foreign and domestic conflict behavior could be identified and (2) domestic and foreign strife have no apparent connection to each other (Rummel 1963). Soon afterward, Tanter used data from other years to replicate these findings, although the introduction of a time-lag in his study did produce a minor level of association between internal and external conflict (Tanter 1966).

Prominent historical cases like the French Revolution and the Russo-Japanese War of 1905 had created a

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*Unless otherwise noted, the indicators refer to absolute frequencies.
predisposition to believe in conflict linkage, and Rummel’s study (along with the confirmation by Tanter) contradicted the conventional wisdom. The new findings made the entire process of externalization seem questionable, thus stimulating a wave of scholarship. Subsequent research efforts followed two not entirely separate paths, with the common element being quantitative analysis. One branch of inquiry used different statistical tests and new data as a means of checking the reliability of previous findings, although of course that also involved somewhat different formulations of the principal hypothesis. The other branch focused on the nexus of internal and external conflict in specific geographic regions.

While the following survey does not exhaust the literature, its contents are representative. Reliability and regional studies conducted prior to about 1973 will be assessed first. This breakpoint corresponds to the appearance of Wilkenfeld’s *Conflict Behavior and Linkage Politics* (1973) which, as will become apparent, had a profound impact upon the direction of research. Scholarship since that time will be reviewed separately.

Like their predecessors — the factor-analytic research designs of Rummel and Tanter — the reliability studies failed to reveal a general linkage between foreign and domestic conflict, although some specific connections were discovered. Phillips found that under conditions of domestic strife, modernized states which had experienced political instability tended to “overreact” to conflict encountered. In other words, they responded in a more extreme fashion to foreign hostility than otherwise would be expected (Phillips 1973). However, that result did not constitute evidence that warfare or other serious types of conflict would be initiated by a state in response to internal disruption.

Hazlewood derived composite yearly measurements of domestic and foreign strife for the years 1964 and 1965, and used these data to test three models which predicted foreign conflict. He based each model on a different kind of internal conflict, with mass protests, elite instability, and structural war (meaning armed violence on a massive scale) comprising the categories of domestic strife. Hazlewood incorporated curvilinear relationships into his models, whereas the usual practice had been to associate the two levels in an incremental fashion. By way of example, according to the model for elite instability, foreign conflict initiated by a state is expected to reach a maximum under moderately unstable conditions. Hazlewood reasoned that, to a certain point, elite dissension could be diverted outward. However,

Hazlewood obtained mixed but generally unfavorable results from testing the three models. The hypothesized breakpoints (such as that for elite instability) found little support, although Hazlewood enjoyed some degree of success in predicting less severe types of foreign conflict (Hazlewood 1975:238). Once again, however, international warfare and other serious forms of conflict failed to show a connection with domestic strife over a wide field of observation.

Through their research, Wilkenfeld and Zinnes obtained two insights about conflict linkage. First, they confirmed Rummel’s findings, and did so with Markov analysis, an innovative statistical technique. Since their study did not rely upon
factor analysis alone as the means of pattern recognition, this improved the credibility of the existing body of research through a different method of testing.

Second, Wilkenfeld and Zinnes demonstrated that linkages could be discerned under particular sets of conditions, and this had the effect of promoting interest in the role of mediating variables. (In their research, Rummel and Tanter failed to allow for the possibility that outside factors might intervene.) Specifically, they found that certain types of domestic strife predicted foreign conflict successfully, although not for all states. Wilkenfeld (and later Zinnes and Wilkenfeld) classified members of the international polity according to type of government, with the categories being Polyarchic (western, industrialized democracies), Centrist (centralized regimes), and Personalist (including dictatorships based on an individual personality). In the presence of this intervening variable some specific connections emerged. For example, in the case of Polyarchic states, external belligerence could be traced to the presence of internal warfare. But even these results could not be cited as evidence that the most serious forms of international conflict are associated with the prior occurrence of domestic conflict.

Following a different approach, some members of the research community hypothesized that linkages would have a regional basis. Two studies focused on the Middle East. Burrowes and Spector monitored the foreign and domestic political behavior of Syria in the aftermath of the breakup of the UAR, from 1961 to 1967. However, they discovered no connection between serious international conflict and internal strife for the newly-formed Syrian state (Burrowes and Spector 1973). Wilkenfeld's study of the principal Middle Eastern states involved in the Arab–Israeli conflict had a similar outcome, revealing the foreign conflict in a given period predicted subsequent foreign conflict with considerable accuracy, while domestic strife (with some minor exceptions) demonstrated relatively little value in forecasting. Only in the case of Jordan did internal conflict have a notable impact on conflict sent to the outer environment (Wilkenfeld 1975).

Research on other developing areas produced similar results. In his study of Africa, Collins discovered that violent foreign behavior could not be explained in terms of prior domestic strife. He did find, however, that anti-foreign unofficial behavior and complaints about foreign interference in internal affairs could be predicted from the level of domestic disorder (Collins 1973). Onate examined the conflict behavior of the People's Republic of China from 1950 to 1970, and his results suggested a minor relationship involving specific kinds of internal and external conflict (Onate 1974).

Like the other research efforts reviewed so far, these regional studies were able at best to reveal linkages only under highly specific conditions. These connections lacked the straightforward character that the theorists had been expecting. Taken together, the two branches of scholarship do not support the theory of externalization on a grand scale, meaning the association of serious international conflict with domestic strife. But this lack of a general linkage does not mean that the early years of the research program should be viewed as an era of failure. To discover that something may not exist is no less difficult an enterprise than finding covariation among variables, and often no less important.

With the advent of Wilkenfeld's Conflict Behavior and Linkage Politics (of which some portions already have been reviewed), the "first wave" of quantitative scholarship reached a point of culmination. No comparable summary of research has appeared since then,
although a number of extensive reassessments have been published before and after. Some general observations should be made regarding the Wilkenfeld collection and the studies which appeared prior to its publication, in order to set the stage for the second phase of the review.

First, and foremost, a uniform linkage involving internal and external conflict had not been supported, even though some scholars found specific connections. The doubts raised by Rummel and Tanter received overwhelming reinforcement, and the collective consciousness among scholars changed with respect to externalization. A linkage had been assumed to exist between foreign and domestic conflict, and Wilkenfeld’s authoritative compilation of research dramatically altered the conventional wisdom on that subject.

Second, there is no reason to believe that the results generated by the first wave were a product of bias toward either a cross-sectional or longitudinal approach. The research program included several examples of each type of study. Third, the findings suggest that efforts to link absolute levels of foreign and domestic conflict may have been misplaced. Perhaps elites are not uniform in their sensitivity to internal strife, meaning that the nexus of external and internal conflict will change from one state to the next. Fourth, and finally, the first wave of quantitative analysis offers implicit support to the position that factors which operate beyond the borders of a nation-state will affect its propensity to externalize conflict.

Catalyzed by Rummel, the initial wave of research left the theory of conflict linkage in a problematic state. Since that time activity has declined precipitously. A “second wave” has yet to develop, although in the wake of Wilkenfeld’s compilation there have been some innovative studies. Interest has shifted to societal factors such as militarization and population density, along with environmental constraints on the projection of conflict. The more recent studies suggest some interesting directions to follow in theorizing about externalization.

III. THE AFTERMATH

Kegley and his associates conducted an analysis of the foreign and domestic conflict behavior of 73 states in the system during the 1960s. They used Gurr’s well-known index of civil strife to measure internal conflict, and relied upon variables from the World Event Interaction Survey (WEIS) on the external side. The Kegley group found no correlation when they lagged foreign conflict behind that which occurred at the domestic level \( r = 0.02 \), once again failing to support the general hypothesis. However, they introduced an intervening variable (the degree of militarization of a society, measured through its level of military expenditures expressed as a percentage of GNP) and obtained an intriguing result. For highly militarized states, foreign conflict showed a negative association with prior domestic conflict \( r = -0.49 \). By contrast, less militarized countries exhibited no linkage whatsoever. The obvious explanation for these different patterns is that the government in a militarized society may be in a better position to restore order through coercion of its own population, as opposed to relying upon a potentially dangerous foreign conflict to do so. It is reasonable to assume that such regimes also are less likely to be inhibited about the use of force against their own citizens (Kegley, Jr., Richardson and Richter 1978:744, 745, 750).

Vincent attempted to replicate the study by Kegley and his associates, and in the process claimed to have overturned their results. For the years 1963–67, Vincent factor-analyzed attribute data for 128 states, and obtained two dimensions of domestic conflict, labeled Turmoil 1 and 2.
respectively. The first factor incorporated such diverse events as political assassinations and constitutional changes, while the constituents of the second ranged from riots to executive adjustments, in all cases expressed as mean frequencies. Vincent discovered that Turmoil 2 correlated significantly \((p < 0.01)\) with external conflict (also based upon events data). He also found that the \(-0.49\) correlation (from the Kegley study) between internal and external conflict for highly militarized states had disappeared (Vincent 1981). However, as pointed out by Richardson and Kegley, these results should be viewed with skepticism. In a larger factor-analytic study by Vincent, Turmoil 1 and 2 had ranked third and ninth in explaining the variance in domestic conflict, with 4.2 and 2.5% respectively. Thus it is reasonable to doubt, as did Richardson and Kegley, whether Turmoil 2 has any practical relevance, and to observe also that any statistical analysis incorporating Turmoil 2 as a variable "would, in turn, seem to be of dubious credibility" (Richardson and Kegley, Jr., 1981:150). On grounds of method, the results obtained by Kegley and his associates are more convincing.

With others, Eberwein conducted a cross-sectional analysis of internal and external conflict for 125 nations over the period 1966–67. This study relied upon the usual sources of data (such as WEIS) and featured a standard set of variables at both levels. The Eberwein team factor-analyzed its data, and found a significant correlation between dimensions of foreign and domestic conflict. However, the linkage virtually disappeared when size of population was introduced as an intervening variable. The initial correlation had been spurious, with larger states simply having more events at both the internal and external levels (Eberwein et al. 1979).

Wilkenfeld and his associates assessed the impact of a set of societal factors as part of a more comprehensive model of foreign policy behavior. Societal attributes included governmental instability, social unrest, the level of economic performance, and the population growth rate. The evidence suggested that these domestic factors had a "modest" effect on foreign policy, while behavior received from abroad served as a much better predictor of behavior sent (Wilkenfeld et al. 1979:133; Wilkenfeld et al. 1980:163–173). Indirectly, the research of Wilkenfeld and his associates reinforced the argument that externalization should be examined in a more general context that includes the prior foreign experiences of the nation-state.

With others, Bremer tested an intriguing variation of the domestic-foreign conflict linkage. To be more specific, this research group evaluated the "crowding-combat" hypothesis, which holds that conflictual behavior at the international level is a product of Malthusian population pressure. Bremer and his colleagues used COW Project data on foreign conflict and demographic change over the period 1816–1965 to test this proposition, and found no support for the notion that international violence is a function of objective (or even subjective) crowding within the nation-state (Bremer, Singer and Luterbacher 1979). Their results suggest that long-term changes at the domestic level (such as population growth) may not be able to explain foreign conflict any better than short-term, behavioral indicators, at least in isolation.

More recently, Ward and Widmaier have provided a further clue about why the pursuit of conflict abroad as a means of restoring domestic tranquility may be less than automatic. They observed that some historical context for interstate conflict probably must exist "if a decision maker were to think about mobilizing it to help alleviate political instability at home". Furthermore, according to Ward
and Widmaier, the decision to initiate a war would require some expectation of success. On the strength of these precautionary observations, they inferred that domestic and foreign conflict would not necessarily have a uniform connection, and their findings are consistent with that line of reasoning. Ward and Widmaier charted protests and civil war over the period 1948-76 and found no general connection between these events and the frequency of serious international disputes. However, for larger powers in the system some covariation could be observed between internal and external conflict. Taken together, the results suggest that more capable states might be able to pursue external conflict in order to restore internal cohesion, while such policies would be self-destructive for militarily weak states (Ward and Widmaier 1982).

IV. A CRITICAL REVIEW OF THE RESEARCH PROGRAM

At first glance, the implications of research to date are rather bleak for the externalization theory. The findings appear to suggest that creative energies ought to be directed elsewhere. But a review of the conceptual basis of the research program will produce a different recommendation altogether. To be sure, the first wave of scholarship demonstrated that something probably did not exist. But that something may not have been the process of externalization.

One fundamental point of contention with the regime established by the first wave of testing concerns the static conception of conflict. To begin, it is not clear that the impressionistic writings of Simmel and other theorists implied that there ought to be a mechanistic connection involving high absolute levels of foreign and domestic strife. Some countries experience internal unrest quite frequently, and their elites may not react automatically by trying to “export” this conflict. For example, although the current strife in El Salvador is unusual even by Latin American standards, the leadership of that country may have little inclination — or even capability — to seek a solution beyond its own borders. By contrast, the elite of an unusually stable system member may feel threatened even by a very low level of conflict, if it represents a significant departure from the societal norm. Having said this, an initial restructuring of the general hypothesis would be as follows:

A significant increase in the internal conflict experienced by a given state may result in a significant increase in the foreign conflict behavior of that state.

Change in foreign policy, according to this dissenting viewpoint, is a product of evolving domestic reality, although naturally it will depend on international factors also. As Sullivan commented with respect to research on population dynamics, “theoretically, the idea that changes in attributes will affect behavior is more pleasing than the simple, gross attribute-behavior linkage because it views national systems as changing, living entities” (Sullivan 1976). Absolute levels of conflict or cooperation are likely to be devoid of implications for subsequent behavior, unless notable by comparison to some meaningful standard (Zinnes and Wilkenfeld 1971).

Fragmentation of conflict is a second conceptual problem that has plagued systematic research from the beginning: is it reasonable to expect that isolated manifestations of conflict at the international level will be linked to highly specific forms of domestic strife? Why should events such as politically-motivated strikes be useful in predicting the withdrawal of ambassadors or other singular actions?
Among those who have engaged in aggregated testing, the norm either has been to concentrate on such fragmentary linkages directly, or to rely upon statistical techniques (invariably meaning factor analysis) to demarcate classes of conflict behavior.

Of course, aggregation of action-categories through an inductive method can be a useful exercise if the goal is to identify dimensions of behavior at the two levels in question. Rummel saw descriptive analysis along those lines as the highest priority, and argued that theoretical relevance could not be used to select measurements of domestic and foreign conflict, since "comprehensive theories of conflict capable of test do not yet exist" (Rummel 1963:21). But is it likely that such theories will be discovered through an approach that almost completely eschews deductive reasoning? An effort to correlate dimensions of conflict across the domestic levels is misplaced without some convincing reasons about why they should be connected to each other in the first place.

Consider the breadth and depth of external conflict that might be necessary for a regime to obtain renewed support from its citizens. Among others, Barbera has referred to the "sustained massive impact" of war on the nation-state, with the changes involved having dramatic implications for the domestic political process. In time of war, governments as a rule are able to achieve greater centralization of power. A regime at war also can expect higher levels of cooperation and conformity from its population, at least initially (Barbera 1973:34). It is less reasonable to expect that loyalty will be restored to a government that is engaged in a lesser conflict beyond its borders. If the objective of an elite is to restore (or preserve) order at home, the process of externalization often should result in war or at least a serious confrontation with some other state. Many of the fragmentary linkages that have found a place in previous testing become implausible when viewed in such terms.

Two central conceptual problems have been identified in the research program so far, each focusing on the meaning of conflict itself. One is that the sociologists who popularized the externalization theory probably never meant that the absolute degree of domestic conflict would be useful in forecasting an absolute level of foreign conflict. The other is that a general mapping of conflict at one level onto the other ought to be explored, as opposed to the fragmentary approach seen to date. There are, in addition, some other conceptual difficulties which merit attention. These are problems which to some degree have been confronted at various points during the second phase of research, though in all cases there have been more questions raised than answered.

One criticism raised by Stohl in his review of the literature is that researchers have neglected the role of the state in its internal processes. Is government coercion of private citizens actually a component of domestic conflict which may contribute to later foreign strife? Or should repression by a regime instead be viewed as a substitute for externalization? Either way, to assess social disruption properly, it is essential to incorporate more fully the role of the government as a participant within the state (Stohl 1980:328). Kegley and his research team provided support for that position when they found that militarization seems to have an impact on the projection of conflict abroad. Their discovery makes it all the more urgent to assess the effects of government behavior in explicit terms.

Along with Bueno de Mesquita, Zinnes has isolated a further conceptual problem, although each describes it differently. Zinnes made the following generalization about research derived from Waltz's second image:
Neither slow-changing nor fast-changing attributes of nations by themselves appear to be directly related to a nation's war behavior. When considered in combination, however, these attributes can predict some violent behavior of nations. ... The environment is a critical ingredient for understanding the violent activities of states (Zinnes 1980).

This observation is true especially with regard to externalization. "The domestic/foreign conflict proposition", as Bueno de Mesquita has noted, "fails to isolate those circumstances in which generating conflict is likely to distract attention from domestic unrest from those in which foreign conflict might exacerbate such unrest" (Bueno de Mesquita 1980:394). Together, Zinnes and Bueno de Mesquita have pointed out that environmental constraints on externalization are not thoroughly understood at present. (See also Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff 1971:142.)

While very little can be said with confidence about the impact of the international environment, there are some clues available in existing research. First of all, there is no reason for a beleagured elite to look "instinctively" beyond its own borders for salvation. Its members are not lemmings, and cannot be expected to choose an external solution unless it holds some promise of success. This is implicit in the results obtained by Ward and Widmaier, because stronger states have a greater tendency to engage in what appears to be externalization.

Incorporating the environment in more explicit terms, Bueno de Mesquita has proposed a cost-benefit analysis to explain decision making by an elite under domestic pressure. He began by assuming that either a domestic or a foreign strategy could be selected by the leadership, and that each is associated with benefits, costs of implementation, and a probability of success. The expected values of the strategies may be calculated as follows:

\[
(1) \quad E(F) = [PB_f + (1 - P)B'_f] - C \\
(2) \quad E(D) = [QB_d + (1 - Q)B'_d] - K
\]

where

- \(E(F)\) = expected value of a foreign strategy, \(F\).
- \(B_f\) = benefits from success of \(F\).
- \(B'_f\) = benefits from failure of \(F\).
- \(C\) = the fixed costs associated with \(F\).
- \(P\) = probability of success for \(F\).
- \(E(D)\) = expected value of a domestic strategy, \(D\).
- \(B_d\) = benefits from success of \(D\).
- \(B'_d\) = benefits from failure of \(D\).
- \(K\) = the fixed costs associated with \(D\).
- \(Q\) = probability of success for \(D\).

The choice of externalization would require that \(E(F)\) is greater than or equal to \(E(D)\). This is a step forward in explaining the "poor empirical fit" of previous studies, because \(E(D)\) may have been greater than \(E(F)\) in many cases (Bueno de Mesquita 1980:394, 395).

In sum, the choice of projection will be influenced by the "fringe benefits" and risks associated with foreign conflict, in addition to domestic considerations. The equations effectively summarize those concerns about environmental factors.

Cross-national comparison of conflict is a conceptual difficulty which critics are fond of noting but, sadly, not of solving. They have contended for years that the absolute frequency of events is not a commensurate indicator of conflict from one state to the next. For example, is a given number of political strikes in one country necessarily equivalent to the same number in another as a measurement of internal strife? The "weight" of an event will differ from one country to the next, if for no other reason than diversity in population, as discovered by the team headed by Eberwein. A focus on change (as opposed...
to absolute value) in event frequencies provides a starting point in dealing with this problem.

Examining conflict change in proportional terms is one approach that would attenuate the bias inherent in size differences. However, this conception is too extreme, and creates a bias in the opposite direction. Consider as an illustration the case of two hypothetical states, one small (X) and the other larger (Y). In year ‘t’ state X receives a frequency score of 3 for domestic conflict, and this score rises to 6 the next year, while Y has scores of 500 and 550 respectively over the two years in question. For X, the transformed domestic conflict score would be 100%, while for Y it would be 10%. Even though Y experienced far more manifestations of conflict at home in each year (and even a greater absolute increase), the change experienced by X over the same period is more dramatic on a percentage basis.

These extreme results suggest that some role should be preserved for the absolute level of conflict. Rather than using percentages, the absolute changes could be exposed to a logarithmic transformation:

\[ C = \pm \log (1 + |C_t - C_{t-1}|) \]

where

- \( C_t \) = conflict change.
- \( C_t \) = conflict in year \( t \).
- \( C_{t-1} \) = conflict in year \( t - 1 \).

If \( C_t - C_{t-1} = 0 \) then \( C = 0 \) also, which explains the increment of one unit in the logarithmic expression. The transformation itself reduces high absolute frequencies, thus taking cross-national differences into account in a manner less extreme than a percentage score. For states X and Y in the previous example, the scores for C would be 0.60 and 1.71 respectively. If the increases had been from 3 to 9 and from 500 to 600, the corresponding scores would be 0.85 and 2.00. The disparity in the C-scores for X and Y therefore has increased marginally from one case to the next. By contrast, a percentage-based conception would yield scores of 300% for X and 20% for Y, an outcome with little or no face validity.

One further aspect of Equation 3 requires an explanation: the sign of the expression for \( C \) will depend on whether \( C_t - C_{t-1} \) is greater or less than zero. In sum, the use of an expression such as Equation 3 would facilitate an operationalization of conflict which incorporates both absolute and relative change.

V. CONCLUSION

Several conceptual problems have been identified in the preceding review. First, rigorous evaluation of the theory of externalization demands a dynamic as opposed to static conception of conflict. Second, attempts to connect fragmentary manifestations of internal and external conflict have been misplaced. Third, the role of the state in domestic conflict has been neglected in efforts to test the theory. Fourth, environmental constraints on the appearance of the expected linkage are understood poorly at present. Fifth, and finally, in past studies the cross-national meaning of conflict has been problematic, primarily because indicators have been based on absolute frequencies.

For researchers, the experience with externalization has been much like that of the fabled blind men with the elephant. In both cases the primary cause of failure rests in the scope of the investigation. Preconceived notions led to an excessive concern with individual manifestations of conflict, while research on the environment suitable for projection suffered from neglect. Some highly specific patterns linking domestic and foreign strife have been discovered, but understanding of fundamental processes of change has remained elusive. The next logical step is...
to operationalize and test a theory of the conflict nexus that is consistent with the concerns expressed in the preceding review.

One approach would be to focus on the transition from crisis to war and its linkage to varying amounts of domestic conflict. This choice of research question would be helpful in at least two of the problem areas. Cases of crisis escalation to war could be compared to those resolved otherwise, in order to see whether outcomes are affected by changing levels of domestic conflict among the actors. This would constitute a dynamic formulation of the conflict nexus. Furthermore, the transition from crisis to war, in conjunction with the use of a wide range of indicators at the domestic level, would be an integrative rather than fragmentary assessment of conflict change.

Other problems potentially could be met through such a crisis-based analysis. For example, change in each indicator of internal conflict might be assessed on the basis of Equation 3, in order to facilitate cross-national measurement validity. Further areas of difficulty, such as the role of the state and environmental constraints on projection, must be dealt with in a more precisely specified model. At present, it is at least one step forward to have identified some basic points of uncertainty.

NOTES

1 Wright (1965:1016). See also Huntington (1962) and Lasswell (1965).
4 There is one scientific study which, at least partially, is exempt from the preceding criticism. Zinnes and Wilkenfeld (1971) have used change in foreign conflict levels as the dependent variable in an analysis which relied upon the Markov technique to identify breakpoints in those levels. They did not, however, examine the effects of domestic change, relying instead upon absolute levels of conflict to make predictions about foreign strife.

5 Equations (1) and (2) are modified versions of those presented by Bueno de Mesquita. There are two essential differences. One is that the benefits from strategies D and F are no longer treated as equal; benefits derived from successful implementation of a foreign strategy would include concessions from the enemy, which could not be obtained from a domestic response (Frohlich, Oppenheimer and Young 1971). In the latter case, restoration of domestic order would be the principal benefit. Secondly, when the strategies fail, the benefits will be unequal, too. The “benefits” from failure under strategy F might include destruction of the government itself, as opposed to continued existence of the elite in some form under failure of strategy D.
6 For but three such examples, consult Stohl (1980), Mack (1975) and Scolnick (1974).

REFERENCES


