

strategies based upon reciprocity can actually police itself. By guaranteeing the punishment of any individual who tries to be less than cooperative, the deviant strategy is made unprofitable" (p. 136).

The role of the domestic environment contrasts with the realist position. Participants will observe that dissent within the state can have negative effects on foreign policy decision making. Although this does not fit the traditional realist model, neorealists have begun to investigate how foreign policy decision making is a two-level game (e.g., see Mastanduno, Lake, & Ikenberry, 1989).

Finally, the importance of communication should be addressed. One of the differences I observe in students playing the game for a second time is the importance that the bargaining sessions hold. Participants become more adept at lobbying for assistance and requiring that actors state their objectives clearly. Participants seek transparency and predictability in light of their tenuous security. Axelrod (1984) notes that communication is essential for reducing uncertainty: "The ability to recognize the other player from past interactions, and to remember the relevant features of those interactions, is necessary to sustain cooperation" (p. 139).

This game highlights the complexity of foreign policy decision making and the extent to which foreign policy choices are dependent on domestic and international actors. It can serve as a useful heuristic for introducing students to the theories of power politics.

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# Review

***Capturing the Complexity of Conflict: Dealing With Ethnic Conflicts of the Post-Cold War Era.*** Dennis J. Sandole (1999). Pinter Publishers (Wellington House, 125 Strand, London WC2R 0BB 127 West 24th Street, New York 10011, USA; telephone: + 1 020-7420-5555; fax: +1 020-7240-7261).

—Reviewed by **Nimet Beriker**  
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To understand the sources and dynamics of international conflict and war is one of the major concerns of the field of international relations and conflict resolution. *Capturing the Complexity of Conflict* is an effort to this end. The aim of the book is to develop a multilevel theory of violent conflict and war applicable to understanding and dealing with the complex ethnic conflicts and warfare of the post-cold war Europe (p. 12).

To achieve this goal, Sandole develops a pretheory by articulating a three-level framework based on Kenneth Waltz's (1959) classic *Man, the State, and War* (chapter 2), and tests the hypotheses derived from the pretheory by measuring variables over time in terms of data generated by the Prisoners' Dilemma Simulation (PDS) (chapter 3).

In chapter 4, the author presents models of complex conflict processes composed of variables ranked in terms of their explanatory potencies generated by the application of stepwise regression to PDS. A major finding in this section is that over time, conflict may become a self-stimulating/self-perpetuating process. Another conclusion is that "societal and trans-societal variables had the most, and decision-making variables the least impact on domestic and foreign conflict" (p. 179). To check the external validity of his findings, the author compares his findings with the findings generated by corresponding real-world as well as other laboratory/simulation studies. This comparison yields a correspondence rate of 75%.

The remaining chapters elaborate these findings in terms of their theoretical and practical implications. Chapter 6 combines the PDS findings and the results of the validation assessment with the background of current theory, and sketches out the outlines of a generic theory. One major theoretical contribution of this chapter is the distinction made between conflict as start-up conditions and conflict as a start-up process.

Chapter 7 applies the generic theory to the war in former Yugoslavia and explores the causes and conditions of violent conflict. In addition, in this chapter, the author addresses different issues, such as the spillover effect of war, ineffectiveness of existing institutions, and ways to improve the efficiency of these institutions. The last chapter of the book addresses the next steps in theory and research.

This book is impressive for its rigorous research and writing. The amount of material that Sandole presents in each chapter is extensive. In this sense, each chapter, in itself, stands as a separate monograph, reference material for graduate students of international conflict. The coverage of theoretical discussion in chapters 1 and 2, and the literature review on simulation-based design in conflict research in chapter 3, are worth mentioning. That said, *Capturing the*

*Complexity of Conflict* is not an easily readable book because of often-used acronyms and parentheses and the amount of information provided in each section. The result is a densely written book, which requires a very careful, sometimes laborious reading. *Capturing the Complexity of Conflict* is an ambitious project. It develops hypotheses, tests them, and based on the findings, it develops a generic theory, applies the theory to a case, and elaborates on the implications.

Despite the challenges, each chapter follows the theoretical and methodological tone set at the beginning of the book. One exception to this is the "the implication for practice" chapter (chapter 8). In this chapter, the theoretical focus shifts when the author deals with the issues of the spillover effect of war, ineffectiveness of existing institutions, and ways to improve the efficiency of these institutions in the context of ex-Yugoslavia. In this chapter, a stronger connection is needed with the concepts generated in the previous sections, such as with the conceptual distinction made between conflict as start-up conditions and conflict as a start-up process.

The book has several strengths. First, the book shows the heuristic value of simulation in the development in the fields of international relations and conflict resolution.

A second strength is the external validity of the PDS findings, which is reported as .75. In this context, the author deals with a major methodological issue, that is, "how and to what extent data generated in simulations can be used to further our understanding of international conflict" competently (see Druckman & Hopmann, 1988).

Third, the design of the study makes the work an exemplary piece of research design, especially at graduate-level research methods courses for conflict students. The effort made in this book to articulate theory, research, and practice is notable.

Fourth, the distinction between conflict-as-start-up conditions and conflict as process is an interesting differentiation. The practical implications of it reinforces the idea that a focus on process rather than static events, attributes, and structures might be more useful in studies of international conflict. Sandole, based on this argument, integrates the assumptions of realist paradigm and liberal paradigms. The book combines international relations theory with the assumptions and frameworks of the field of conflict resolution. In this sense, it is one of the rare works that combines the issues and understandings of the two fields. The work elucidates the contribution of the field of conflict resolution in the practice of international relations.

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## **Association news & notes**

### **ABSEL news & notes**

**Diana Page**

*University of West Florida*

#### **Distance learning and the ABSEL domain?**

The migration to the Web for ABSEL has been dynamic! Most of the board members' job duties have changed, and we are in the process of reviewing our domain statement.

ABSELers have contributed significant professional-level games and experiential activities; however, the thrust of these activities have been face-to-face activities. One major change under consideration is to adopt a distance learning element to our domain statement.

#### **ABSEL journal—To be or not to be?**

The hallmark of many scholarly associations is a publication that showcases its best manuscripts. Such a publication would take ABSEL to a higher level of professionalism enjoyed by other associations, such as the Academy of Business Education. We could put this year's conference papers online as a first step in the process. A special task force will examine several issues related to enhancing publication possibilities for ABSEL manuscripts. A couple of items the task force will investigate are: whether to join with another organization or whether to begin ABSEL's own journal. An ABSEL journal would help recruit new members and enhance the current membership retention.

#### **Future ABSEL conference sites**

Planning has already begun for the 2004 conference scheduled for Las Vegas, Nevada. We look forward to what Andy Feinstein, UNLV Department of Food and Beverage Management, our local arrangements person, has in store for us! So, mark your calendars for next spring. Papers will be due the beginning of October. Come to Las Vegas and bring a new member. For the 2005 conference, ISAGA will join

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