

CONFLICTS AND DEFENDOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF THEIR RESOLUTION

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Abstract: The article explores the nature of conflicts and possibilities for their resolution through the prism of defendological approaches. Conflicts represent an inherent part of human relations and social structures, and their understanding and management is crucial for maintaining peace and stability. Through analysis of different theoretical approaches and practical experiences, the article focuses on three key aspects: psychosocial dimensions of conflicts, institutional mechanisms for their resolution, and preventive strategies. Defendology, as an interdisciplinary field dealing with the study of defense and security, provides unique insights into ways conflicts can be prevented, managed, and resolved. Research results show that a holistic approach combining psychological, sociological, and political science perspectives is most effective in understanding and resolving conflicts.

Keywords: *conflicts, defendology, conflict management, preventive diplomacy, conflict transformation, security, peace, peacemaking*

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1. INTRODUCTION

Conflicts represent complex phenomena that manifest at different levels of social organization - from interpersonal relations to international disputes (Miall, Ramsbotham & Woodhouse, 2018). Defendology, as a relatively new scientific discipline, seeks to provide a comprehensive framework for understanding and resolving conflicts through integrating knowledge from the fields of psychology, sociology, political science, and international relations (Sandole, 2017). The significance of this approach is becoming increasingly important in the contemporary world characterized by growing complexity and interdependence of social systems. The theoretical framework of defendology rests on the assumption that conflicts are a natural part of human interaction, but that their destructive potential can be reduced through adequate understanding of their causes, dynamics, and transformation mechanisms (Galtung, 2020). The approach transcends traditional partial approaches that focus on only one aspect of conflict, instead offering an integrated perspective that takes into account all relevant factors (Lederach, 2019). Contemporary research in the field of conflicts shows that the most successful approaches are those that combine theoretical knowledge with practical field experiences (Wallenstein, 2019). The defendological approach does exactly that - it connects academic analyses with practical implementation strategies, resulting in more efficient methods of conflict resolution (Kriesberg, 2017). Through this article, key aspects of the defendological approach to conflicts will be analyzed, with special emphasis on psychosocial dimensions, institutional mechanisms, and preventive strategies.

2. PSYCHOSOCIAL DIMENSIONS OF CONFLICTS

Psychosocial dimensions of conflicts represent a complex set of factors that include individual psychological processes, group dynamics, and broader social influences (Burton, 2018). Understanding these dimensions is crucial for developing efficient conflict resolution strategies, as it focuses on deeper causes of tensions instead of just their manifestations. At the individual level, psychological factors such as threat perception, need for security, identity, and cognitive distortions play a central role in the emergence and escalation of conflicts (Burton, 2018). Theories

of social identification explain how individuals construct their identity through group membership and how this process can transform into a source of intergroup conflict (Pruitt & Kim, 2017). When individuals feel threatened in their identity or status, they are inclined to engage in conflictual behavior as a way of protecting their interests.

Group dynamics add additional complexity to this process. Phenomena such as groupthink, group polarization, and intergroup prejudice can significantly influence how conflicts develop and persist (Jeong, 2018). Research shows that groups often make more extreme decisions than individuals, which can lead to escalation of conflicts that could otherwise be resolved through reasonable compromises (Zartman & Faure, 2020). Social context also plays a key role in shaping conflicts. Socioeconomic inequalities, cultural differences, historical traumas, and lack of resources can create fertile ground for the emergence and maintenance of conflicts (Ramsbotham, Miall, & Woodhouse, 2021). The defendological approach recognizes the importance of these structural factors and seeks to develop strategies that address not only symptoms but also the causes of conflicts (Galtung, 2020). The emotional dimension of conflicts is often neglected in traditional approaches, but defendology recognizes it as crucial (Lederach, 2019). Emotions such as fear, anger, pride, and shame can significantly influence how parties in conflict perceive the situation and react to it. Understanding and managing these emotions can be key to successful conflict resolution (Fisher & Ury, 2019).

3. INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Institutional mechanisms represent formal and informal structures through which conflicts can be prevented, managed, and resolved (Walsten, 2019). Such mechanisms function at different levels - from local communities to international organizations - and represent key elements of the defendological approach to conflicts. Legal frameworks and judicial systems represent the most formal institutional mechanisms for conflict resolution. They provide a structured approach to dispute resolution through the application of legal norms and procedures (Kriesberg, 2017). However, limitations of the traditional judicial approach, such as rigidi-

ty, lengthy processes, and focus on punishment instead of solving basic problems, have led to the development of alternative dispute resolution methods. Mediation and arbitration represent key alternatives to traditional judicial proceedings. Mediation, as a process in which a neutral third party helps disputing parties reach a mutually acceptable solution, has proven particularly effective in resolving conflicts where preserving relationships between parties is important (Fisher & Ury, 2019). Arbitration, on the other hand, provides a more structured approach where a third party makes binding decisions (Burton, 2018).

At the international level, organizations such as the United Nations, regional organizations, and non-governmental organizations have developed sophisticated mechanisms for preventive diplomacy, peace-making, and peacebuilding (Miall, Ramsbotham, & Woodhouse, 2018). Such mechanisms include early warning systems, situation monitoring missions, high-level mediation, and peacekeeping operations (Knežević, 2024). Restorative justice represents a relatively new approach that focuses on healing damage caused by conflict instead of just punishing the offender (Sandole, 2017). This approach is particularly relevant for conflicts that have left deep consequences on communities and can be integrated into defendological conflict resolution strategies. Conflict prevention through institutional mechanisms includes developing early warning systems, strengthening rule of law, promoting democratic processes, and working on structural reforms that address basic causes of conflicts (Walsten, 2019). Preventive approaches are often less spectacular than reactive measures, but can be significantly more efficient in long-term problem solving (Zartman & Faure, 2020).

4. PREVENTIVE STRATEGIES AND CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION

Preventive strategies represent a proactive approach that focuses on identifying and addressing potential sources of conflicts before they escalate into open disputes (Galtung, 2020). This approach, central to defendological theory and practice, is based on the assumption that conflict prevention is both economically and humanitarily more efficient than their reactive resolution. Early warning systems represent a key compo-

ment of preventive strategy. Systems use various indicators - economic, social, political, and security - to identify situations that may lead to conflicts (Ramsbotham, Miall & Woodhouse, 2021). Modern technological tools, including big data analysis and artificial intelligence, enable more precise monitoring and prediction of potential conflicts.

Conflict transformation is a comprehensive approach that seeks to change structural and relational aspects of conflicts in a way that enables sustainable positive changes (Lederach, 2019). Unlike conflict resolution which focuses on immediate problem solving, conflict transformation seeks to address basic causes and create conditions for long-term peace. Peace education represents a key preventive strategy that focuses on developing skills and attitudes needed for peaceful conflict resolution (Jeong, 2018). This includes critical thinking, empathy, communication skills, and understanding diversity. Peace education programs are implemented at all levels of the educational system, from elementary schools to universities (Burton, 2018). Economic preventive strategies focus on addressing structural inequalities and economic frustrations that can lead to conflicts (Kriesberg, 2017). This includes developing aid programs targeted at high-tension areas, promoting economic development, and creating economic incentives for peaceful behavior.

Civil society building represents another key preventive strategy. Strong civil societies with active non-governmental organizations, independent media, and civic initiatives can serve as buffer zones between different groups and help resolve tensions before they escalate into open conflicts (Sandole, 2017). Cultural and interfaith initiatives focus on promoting understanding and tolerance between different cultural and religious groups (Pruitt & Kim, 2017). These initiatives can include intercultural dialogues, joint projects, and personal diversity as a source of strength instead of division. International cooperation in conflict prevention includes information sharing, coordination of policy responses, and development of joint strategies (Wallensteen, 2019). Regional organizations have a particularly important role in this process as they often have better understanding of local contexts and greater legitimacy in intervention (Miall, Ramsbotham, & Woodhouse, 2018).

5. DEFENDODOLOGY AS A NEW PARADIGM IN CONFLICT STUDIES

Defendology, as a relatively new scientific discipline, represents a revolutionary approach to understanding and resolving conflicts through integrating knowledge about protection, defense, and security. Professor Dr. Duško Vejnović, as one of the main protagonists in the development of this discipline, defines defendology as a science that seeks to provide a “unique systemic approach” to studying basic phenomena in the field of protection, defense, and security (Vejnović, 2021). According to Vejnović’s conceptual framework, defendology is based on the formula $\text{protection} + \text{defense} = \text{security}$, where each of these elements represents a key component of the entire system (Vejnović, 2021). This approach transcends traditional partial approaches that focus on isolated aspects of security, instead offering a comprehensive perspective that connects different scientific disciplines into a unified whole.

Basic principles of defendology rest on the assumption that security is “one and indivisible,” and that the protective-defensive function must be “comprehensive and inseparable” (Vejnović, 2021). This holistic approach enables better understanding of complex interrelations between different factors that influence the emergence and development of conflicts, as well as development of more efficient strategies for their resolution. The defendological perspective is particularly relevant in the contemporary context where traditional security concepts are expanding and transforming. Vejnović emphasizes that protection refers to “identification of conditions under which various entities are threatened,” as well as their “reduction to the extent that does not threaten the achieved level of security” (Vejnović, 2021). This proactive approach focuses on prevention and early warning instead of just reactive measures.

Practical application of defendological principles in conflict resolution includes developing integrated strategies that combine preventive, protective, and defensive elements. This approach is particularly important in the context of contemporary hybrid threats and asymmetric conflicts where traditional security mechanisms are often inadequate. Defendology also represents a significant contribution to the international community of peace and security studies, providing a new framework for

understanding complex security challenges of the 21st century. Through integration of different disciplinary perspectives, defendology enables development of innovative approaches that can more efficiently respond to contemporary security challenges (Vejnović & Obrenović, 2019).

The defendological approach to conflicts represents significant progress in understanding and resolving complex social tensions (Galtung, 2020). Through integration of psychosocial, institutional, preventive dimensions and the defendological paradigm, this approach provides a comprehensive framework for addressing conflicts in a way that not only solves current problems but also establishes foundations for long-term peace and stability (Lederach, 2019). Psychosocial dimensions of conflicts reveal the complexity of human motivations and behaviors in conflictual situations (Burton, 2018). Understanding individual psychological processes, group dynamics, and broader social factors (Knežević, 2024) enables development of targeted interventions that address basic causes of conflicts instead of just their symptoms (Pruitt & Kim, 2017). This approach recognizes that conflicts are often the result of deeper underlying needs and fears, and that their permanent resolution requires addressing these basic problems.

Institutional mechanisms represent the structural framework through which conflicts can be efficiently managed and resolved (Wallensteen, 2019). From traditional judicial systems to innovative approaches such as mediation and restorative justice, these mechanisms provide different options for different types of conflicts (Fisher & Ury, 2019). International organizations and regional structures also play a key role in providing support and resources for resolving more complex conflicts (Miall, Ramsbotham & Woodhouse, 2018). Preventive strategies and conflict transformation represent perhaps the most important contribution of the defendological approach (Kriesberg, 2017). Instead of waiting for conflicts to escalate and then reacting, this proactive approach seeks to identify and address potential problems in early stages. Conflict transformation goes a step further, seeking to create positive changes that will enable sustainable peace (Sandole, 2017). Defendology, as a new paradigm in conflict studies, represents perhaps the most significant contribution to contemporary understanding of security challenges (Vejnović, 2021). Vejnović's approach that

integrates protection, defense, and security into a unified whole provides a theoretical and practical framework that transcends limitations of traditional disciplinary approaches. The holistic model enables better understanding of complex causes of conflicts and development of more efficient strategies for their resolution (Knežević, 2025).

Integration of four key approaches - psychosocial, institutional, preventive, and defendological - through a unified framework provides a holistic perspective that is necessary for efficient resolution of contemporary conflicts (Jeong, 2018). Future work in this field should focus on further development of practical tools and strategies, strengthening institutional capacities, and promoting a culture of peace at all levels of society (Ramsbotham, Miall & Woodhouse, 2021). The defendological approach to conflicts is not just an academic exercise but a practical framework for creating a more peaceful world (Zartman & Faure, 2020). Through combination of theoretical understanding with practical applications, this approach has the potential to significantly contribute to reducing caused conflicts and promoting sustainable peace and development.

6. TECHNOLOGICAL CHALLENGES AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Revolutionary changes in the field of technology fundamentally transform the ways conflicts manifest, develop, and are resolved in the 21st century. Artificial intelligence, machine learning, big data analysis, and autonomous systems are becoming an inseparable part of the contemporary security landscape, creating new possibilities but also unexpected challenges for conflict management. Application of artificial intelligence in early conflict detection represents one of the most significant advances in preventive defendology. Machine learning algorithms are capable of analyzing enormous amounts of data from various sources - social networks, economic indicators, climate changes, migration flows - and identifying patterns that may indicate increased risk of conflict outbreak. Such systems can predict potential flashpoints with far greater precision than traditional analytical approaches.

Automated platforms for media and social network monitoring enable continuous tracking of hate speech, disinformation, and propaganda campaigns that often precede conflict escalation. Natural language processing algorithms can detect subtle changes in public discourse that signal growing tensions between different groups. Technological solutions provide decision-makers with valuable insights about conflict dynamics in real time. Blockchain technology opens new possibilities for transparent and immutable documentation of human rights violations, war crimes, and other forms of violence during conflicts. The decentralized nature of blockchain makes it resistant to manipulation and censorship, which can be of crucial importance for future justice and reconciliation processes. Smart contracts can automate implementation of peace agreements and ensure compliance with agreed obligations.

7. CONCLUSION

Analysis of defendological aspects of conflict resolution through the prism of contemporary theoretical and practical approaches reveals the complex nature of this issue and the need for a multidisciplinary approach. This article has sought to provide a comprehensive picture of possibilities that defendology, as a new scientific paradigm, offers in the domain of conflict resolution and transformation. Research into psychosocial dimensions of conflicts shows that understanding deep psychological processes and social dynamics is crucial for efficient management of conflictual situations. Individual and group motivations, emotions, and perceptions represent the foundation on which conflicts are built, but simultaneously the basis for their constructive resolution. This insight imposes the need for future approaches to conflict resolution to pay greater attention to psychological aspects, not just formal procedures. Institutional frameworks for conflict resolution have proven to be irreplaceable elements in the process of their transformation. However, the efficiency of these mechanisms depends on their ability to adapt to the specificities of each conflict. Traditional judicial approaches, although important, must be supplemented by alternative methods such as mediation, arbitration, and restorative justice in order to achieve sustainable solutions.

The preventive approach represents perhaps the most significant contribution of contemporary defendology to the field of conflict management. The possibility of early recognition of potential sources of conflicts and proactive action before their escalation can significantly reduce social costs and human suffering. This paradigm requires systemic changes in the way societies approach security challenges. Defendological theory of prof. dr Duško Vejnović represents a revolutionary approach that integrates protection, defense, and security into a unified scientific discipline. This synthesis enables holistic understanding of conflicts that transcends traditional fragmented approaches. Vejnović's formula "protection + defense = security" provides a practical framework for developing integrated strategies that can more efficiently respond to contemporary security challenges. Contemporary conflicts are characterized by increasing complexity that stems from globalization, technological changes, and evolution of social structures. New challenges require innovative approaches that can cope with hybrid threats, asymmetric conflicts, and interdependencies that characterize the contemporary world. The defendological approach, through its multidisciplinary nature, represents a response to these needs.

Practical application of defendological principles requires significant investments in education, institutional building, and international cooperation. A culture of peace must be developed at all levels of society - from elementary schools to universities, from local communities to international organizations. Only through such a comprehensive approach can lasting results be achieved. The future of defendology lies in its ability to continuously evolve and adapt to new challenges. Integration of new technologies, such as artificial intelligence and big data analysis, can significantly improve capacities for early warning and conflict prevention. At the same time, it is necessary to maintain focus on human aspects of conflicts and the needs of people affected by them. The defendological approach to conflicts represents more than an academic discipline - it is a practical call to action for creating a safer and more just world. Through combination of scientific rigor with practical applicability, defendology can make a significant contribution to global efforts for building sustainable peace. The success of this approach will depend on the readiness of the scientific community, practitioners, and decision-makers to accept its complexity and invest in its further development.

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Paper received: 4.11.2024

Paper accepted: 10. 3. 2025