



International Conference on Computing, Artificial Intelligence and Information Systems

Hosted Online from Warsaw, Poland

Date: 11th June, 2026

Website: <https://econferencia.com>

SCIENTIFIC ANALYSIS OF CONFLICTS: THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

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Abstract

Today, in the context of increasingly complex social relations in modern society, the importance of conflictology – the science that studies conflicts scientifically — is growing significantly. Conflictology examines the nature, causes, structure, and resolution of conflicts arising in human activities, intergroup relations, organizations, states, and international relations. It is an interdisciplinary field formed at the intersection of philosophy, psychology, sociology, law, and other sciences.

Today, conflicts are increasingly becoming part of our everyday reality. Wars occurring in different countries, struggles among political leaders and parties, interethnic and territorial disputes, and "settlements" in the criminal world constantly concern people and create entirely new challenges in state and social life. People continuously struggle with conflicts; however, instead of decreasing, they continue to increase. Economic, political, and legal institutions are being created and reformed, yet they have not significantly influenced the tendency toward the escalation of various conflicts.

The earliest views on conflict date back to ancient thinkers. In ancient philosophy, contradiction was interpreted as a natural component of world order. For example, according to Lao Tzu's teaching, the world is based on the unity of



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opposing forces of "Yin and Yang." Without Yin there is no Yang, and without good there is no evil. Thus, conflict is considered an inseparable element of world balance.

The ancient Greek philosopher Heraclitus expressed the idea that "war is the father of all things," viewing conflict as the source of movement, change, and development. According to him, the world exists through continuous struggle and contradictions, a concept that still remains relevant today.

Epicurus, while recognizing the negative consequences of conflicts, considered them as factors that encourage people to strive for peace.

During the Middle Ages, religious-philosophical approaches dominated explanations of conflicts, wars, and religious disputes. One of the prominent representatives of this period, Erasmus of Rotterdam, emphasized: "According to Christian values, no person should enter into conflict with another in the name of Christ." During this period, the concept of theodicy (the issue of good and evil) occupied a central place, and attempts were made to explain conflicts through divine will.

The scientific foundations of conflictology began to develop during the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries, when new schools of thought emerged concerning human nature, society, and state relations. Thinkers such as Hobbes, Rousseau, Kant, Hegel, and Marx proposed different approaches to conflict.

The pessimistic approach to conflict, represented by Thomas Hobbes, interprets human nature in a negative way. According to Hobbes, human beings are naturally selfish, and their interests inevitably come into conflict with one another. He believed that the natural state of humanity is characterized by a "war of all against all," where competition and struggle dominate social relations. Therefore, Hobbes argued that the only effective way to maintain social harmony



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and prevent chaos is through the establishment of a strong state authority, which he referred to as the "Leviathan." In his view, conflict is primarily a source of danger and instability that should be controlled and restrained through power and authority.

In contrast, Jean-Jacques Rousseau proposed an optimistic approach to conflict that differed significantly from Hobbes's perspective. Rousseau believed that human beings are naturally good by nature and that conflicts emerge not because of inherent human tendencies but because of defects within social structures and institutions. He argued that private property and social inequality are major sources of struggle and competition among people. According to Rousseau, conflicts can be reduced through fair governance, democratic relationships, and proper education. He viewed conflict as a consequence of social problems that can be overcome by promoting justice and creating a more equitable society.

The development of conflictology as an independent scientific discipline accelerated significantly during the twentieth century. Rapid social transformations, world wars, revolutions, and ethnic and political conflicts created a need for a more systematic and scientific understanding of conflict phenomena. During this period, different fields such as psychoanalysis, represented by Sigmund Freud, behaviorism, sociology through the works of Parsons and Coser, political science, and management theories contributed to the formation of scientific methods and theoretical foundations for studying conflicts. As a result, conflictology gradually evolved into an interdisciplinary field that provided both theoretical explanations and practical approaches for understanding and resolving conflicts in various spheres of social life.



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The acceleration of social processes, wars, revolutions, ethnic and political conflicts in the twentieth century led conflictology to emerge as an independent discipline. During this period, psychoanalysis (Freud), behaviorism, sociology (Parsons and Coser), political science, and management theories provided scientific and theoretical foundations for studying conflicts through scientific methods.

Based on the above, the following concepts emerged as central categories in the theoretical foundations of conflictology:

- A) Conflict – a socio-psychological condition arising from clashes of interests, goals, values, and resources. It may be destructive or constructive (developmental).
- B) Contradiction (Antagonism) – direct opposition between positions and goals. This forms the main root of conflict.
- C) Conflict of Interests – competition between individuals or groups over resources, goals, influence, or any valued object.
- D) Subject of Conflict – the participating side in a conflict, such as an individual, group, organization, or state.
- E) Conflict Dynamics – the stages of conflict emergence, intensification, escalation, reduction, and resolution.
- F) Conflict Resolution – negotiation, intervention, mediation, agreement, redistribution of resources, and other methods.

In conclusion, although the history of conflictology dates back to ancient philosophy, its scientific foundations are closely connected with the theoretical heritage of modern thinkers. By the twentieth century, conflictology had become fully established as a discipline, creating opportunities for the scientific analysis of social contradictions. Today, conflictology has practical significance in various



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fields, including law enforcement, public administration, education, sociology, business, and foreign policy.

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