Foundations of Political Action: An Exchange Theory of Politics. By Sidney R. Waldman. (Boston: Little, Brown and Company. 1972. Pp. 256. $3.95.)

In *Foundations of Political Action*, Professor Waldman, building on the work of George Homans, constructs a model of political exchange, fortifies it with propositions from learning theory for realism, and demonstrates that many broad- and narrow-gauge social theories can be brought within its terms. He has written an interesting book.

Waldman is at once confident of the wide explanatory power of exchange analysis and critical of the psychological assumptions with which it has so far been infused by economists, sociologists, and political scientists. He sets out to refine the assumptions with data about the ways in which people seek rewards from one another and reinforce each other's behavior patterns. The result is a reduction of old and new lines of thought in the study of the individual and society to statements about the exchange of human activities.

Illustrative chapters on political culture, modernization, legitimacy, political parties and interest groups, and conflict resolution follow the general arguments. To regard political behavior as give and take is less commonplace in some of these areas than in others, and therefore the chapters are not equally provocative. But on the whole, they are a mine of ideas. The strength of the book is in these chapters. They can be consulted separately by those with matching interests.

At the end of the volume, Waldman goes on to suggest other applications:

> The theory could be applied to an examination and analysis of electoral politics (the exchanges between parties and voters, between competing parties, between would-be officeholders and their following, between party activists and voters, between candidates and the media, etc.). It could be used to analyze the rationales underlying party and voter activities and, for that matter, to analyze the exchanges between legislative parties. It could be used to examine the relations of the mass media to the public, the government, and the business community, to analyze the relations between various interest groups, and to explain the bases of power in various institutions. It could be used to analyze the dynamics of revolutionary and radical movements . . . (pp. 205-6).

And so on, at some length.

Waldman's forte is the manipulation of ideas. He is as often as not content to establish the equivalence of exchange and other theories, describing many things with a single model rather than concentrating his resources to describe a few things better. It is suggestive, for example, but not clearly advantageous to translate Peter Blau's idea of the growth of trust between those who exchange into the reward-and-reinforcement language of learning theory.

And Waldman is conspicuously more interested in putting theories together than in making sure they work, for all of his criticism of unchecked *a priori* reasoning in the social sciences. He sometimes falls into a categorical mode of expression—notably that X "explains" Y—that obscures an underlying commitment to empiricism. His statements should read as hypotheses to be tested, or further tested, whatever the nuances of his style.

Foundations of Political Action is not the best introduction to exchange theory for undergraduates. The writing is unnecessarily difficult. The general reader will still find Blau's *Exchange and Power in Social Life* more to the point. Waldman's book is to be recommended instead to those with a serious interest in the elaboration of exchange theory or in one or more of the topics he has selected for illustration.

The publisher includes this volume in its series on comparative politics only by stretching the term some.

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Systems Theory in International Relations: A Study in Metaphoric Hypertrophy. By John J. Weltman. (Lexington, Mass.: D. C. Heath and Co., 1973. Pp. 99. $12.00.)

This book is a critique of the systems-theory approach to international relations. The author begins by suggesting that the roots of the approach are in general systems theory and sociological functionalism, both of which are characterized as "holistic" and overly abstract. He then focuses on the works of Morton Kaplan, Ernst Haas, and Richard Rosecrance.

Professor Weltman performs a valuable service in the second chapter by condensing the main features of *Systems and Process in International Politics*, and Kaplan's subsequent revisions of that work, into nineteen pages of quotations and commentary. Weltman discusses problems raised by Kaplan's notions of stability, equilibrium, regulation and disturbance. For example, he says, "In what sense a change involving change in the system itself can still be indicative of a form of *stability* is unfortunately not made clear" (p. 16). Weltman criticizes the "six essential rules" of the balance of power or multipolar system and the rules of the loose bipolar system as tautological or logically inconsistent or both.

In the third chapter, the author takes aim at *Beyond the Nation-State*. Weltman criticizes

Haas for using the systems approach to relabel old concepts without adding to their usefulness, for classifying states into ideological types, for talking about the motives or objectives of states and international organizations as if they were not "complex, ambiguous, and resistant to description" (p. 41), and for "the ease with which the approach is employed to give a pejorative characterization to one group of states" (p. 46). His main concern, however, is that "Haas is unable to demonstrate the necessity of the systems approach in arriving at his substantive conclusions" (p. 48). This is the weakest chapter in the book.

In the fourth chapter, Weltman criticizes Richard Rosecrance's *Action and Reaction in World Politics*. This chapter is much more on the mark than the previous one, emphasizing as it does that the main explanatory variables, the "disruptive" and "regulative" factors in Rosecrance's nine historical systems, are not defined precisely and are not measured independently of the dependent variable, international "stability." He also criticizes Rosecrance for overemphasizing the effect of ideology on cooperation and conflict in international systems.

The fifth and sixth chapters are devoted to a review and critique of works on "regions" or "subsystems" and on bipolarity and multipolarity. Although it is a fair review, the criticicisms are neither original nor convincing. Weltman fails to discuss any of the empirical findings of scholars like Bruce Russett, Steven Brams, and Michael Haas.

Weltman reserves the final chapter for a summary and his ideas for an alternative approach. He criticizes systems theorists, especially Kaplan and Rosecrance, for "reifying" the concept of a system (p. 78). He criticizes them for not providing testable hypotheses or quantifiable variables. He suggests that even if quantification were possible, the systems approach would still be unable to provide novel hypotheses. I disagree. It seems clear to me that this approach already provided novel hypotheses. Hypotheses linking the "stability" (peacefulness) of international systems to bipolarity and multipolarity are novel. They are much more precise and testable than traditional "balance of power" formulations. Using international systems as units of analysis is novel. Indeed, it is one of the perhaps unanticipated effects of systems theory that we are now talking about hypotheses at all.

The alternative which the author proposes begins with Weber's fourfold typology of conduct: 1) goal-oriented conduct, 2) value-related conduct, 3) private, emotional conduct, and 4) traditional conduct. Weltman suggests that political action is primarily goal-oriented and tradition-oriented activity. Social relationships are the results of interactions between individuals are therefore highly complex. "A state is not an organism, but a bundle of individual action" (p. 87). Nevertheless, the state may die if essential "behavioral orientations" are changed. These essential behavioral orientations are the product of tradition-oriented behavior, sometimes originating from goal-oriented activity.

Given this epistemology, Weltman suggests four "levels of analysis" for the study of cooperation-conflict in international politics: 1) the state, 2) "discrete interstate social relations," 3) a map of these relations in a given period of time, and 4) the "typological evolution of this map" (p. 90). What these levels mean is not entirely clear from the two pages which are devoted to them. Nor is it clear what the author means by saying that "in the abstract" his approach "would appear promising" (p. 91).

I found this book to be difficult to read, primarily because it condenses into such a small space the arguments which originally occupied several thousand pages. But that is also one of its primary attractions. It would be useful for graduate assignments, in conjunction with the original works. Nevertheless, Weltman is not consistently careful in his criticisms, and he shows very little awareness of the field outside the works cited in the book. This is particularly unfortunate since several writers have attempted to extend or modify the systems approach in ways which answer some of Weltman's criticisms. For example, Steven Brams attempted to replace the systems approach with a "structural" approach, based on mathematical theories which allow quantification of variables and hypothesis testing. The fact that these theories are "holistic" requires some rethinking on the part of critics of systems theory. Herbert Simon, in his *Sciences of the Artificial* and articles on decomposable systems, extended the range and applicability of systems theory far beyond the limits imposed by Bertalanffy or Talcott Parsons. A more satisfactory critique of systems theory would have to take into account a wider range of works than are discussed in this book. An exploration of the theoretical similarities between systems theory and "structuralism," although a very difficult undertaking, would be extremely valuable.

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System and Structure: Essays in Communication and Exchange. By Anthony Wilden. (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1972. Pp. 540. $23.75.)

This volume collects the numerous essays in which Anthony Wilden has developed some