

2014

The Art of Negotiation: How to Improvise Agreement in a Chaotic World

Roger H. Ducey

Michael Wheeler

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review>

Recommended Citation

Ducey, Roger H. and Wheeler, Michael (2014) "The Art of Negotiation: How to Improvise Agreement in a Chaotic World," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 67 : No. 4 , Article 12.

Available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol67/iss4/12>

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Naval War College Review by an authorized editor of U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. For more information, please contact repository.inquiries@usnwc.edu.

differences between reality and gaming provide a means of capturing what the culture sees as important in the reality of war. Culture and the structure and execution of games by that culture should provide insights into the differences and similarities between that culture and ours when thinking about war. Of special interest is the author's examination of the effect a culture has on how and why it games, thus providing insight into how to integrate gaming with other techniques drawn from the culture to improve performance in war.

STEPHEN DOWNES-MARTIN
Naval War College



Wheeler, Michael. *The Art of Negotiation: How to Improvise Agreement in a Chaotic World*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2013. 304pp. \$26

In his latest book Michael Wheeler incorporates his years of experience as a professor at Harvard Business School, his membership in the Program on Negotiation (a cross-disciplinary consortium of negotiation experts from Harvard, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and Tufts University), and the research of the latter of over ten years in a project led by James Sebenius to take the study and practice of negotiation to a new level.

The members of this project analyzed such diplomats as George Mitchell and Richard Holbrooke, investment banker Bruce Wasserstein, United Nations special envoy Lakhdar Brahimi, and sports agent/marketer Donald Dell, to learn what these individuals believed to be the most important factors in successful negotiation.

Wheeler credits his colleagues who published before him: Roger Fisher, Bill Ury, and Bruce Patton, whose groundbreaking text published thirty years ago, *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement without Giving In*, significantly contributed to the development of negotiation. Readers are reminded that relationships are important and that though aggressive, value-claiming tactics may work once, people rarely come back for another drubbing. Wheeler also agrees that a careful consideration of your own interests, as well as those of the other party, is important before beginning negotiations. He recognizes the necessity of establishing your own best alternative to a negotiated agreement—or, as he calls it, your “baseline”—as the minimum agreement you must achieve to get as much value as you are giving. He maintains, however, that although these things are important, it is often impossible to identify your baseline, never mind those of others, until you actually begin negotiations. Wheeler seeks to recommend ways to deal with that situation, arguing that successful negotiators are those who are able to see new possibilities for agreement by improvising, in a process he likens to what jazz musicians do. The greatest value of this work is that the author takes this difficult concept of how to improvise successfully during negotiations and offers great examples of how to accomplish it.

This is a great book for anyone involved in negotiations, whether it be diplomacy, national policy, or purchasing. It takes the study and practice of negotiation to a level that had not previously been reached.

ROGER H. DUCEY
Naval War College