

H-Net Reviews

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Ho-Won Jeong. *International Negotiation: Process and Strategies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016. 295 pp. \$34.99 (paper), ISBN 978-1-107-65148-7; \$99.99 (cloth), ISBN 978-1-107-02640-7.



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As history has shown us time and again, international negotiations are no easy endeavor. From bilateral negotiations to end conflict between warring groups, to multilateral talks like the negotiations over Iran's nuclear program, to discussions involving dozens of nations such as those aimed at curbing carbon emissions, negotiations can be messy and long drawn-out affairs. While quick and relatively straightforward deals can be made, they are the exception to the norm.

Because negotiations can seem so difficult and unpredictable, diplomats, negotiators, and academics alike have spent decades trying to devise usable theories to make them more predictable. Summarizing and building on these efforts is the challenge that Ho-won Jeong has undertaken in *International Negotiation: Process and Strategies*. An introductory text to negotiations, the book approaches negotiation from the perspectives of strategic interaction where one actor's situation is fully dependent on another actor's action (p. xi). Thus, the main attention is paid to negotiator strategies to influence each other's behavior as well as their interactive patterns which are composed of competition and cooperation (p. 4).

Jeong uses the first third of his work to provide an un-

derpinning of game theory and its different variants, thus providing a basic tool for understanding the structure of bargaining relationships. As the author notes, viewing the decision-making process within the structure of a game helps us explore different possibilities for solutions to conflicting preferences and assists in uncovering order in seemingly chaotic interactions among negotiators (p. 21). If nothing else, games such as Chicken, Battle of the Sexes, and Stag Hunt give us examples of obstacles to reaching a successful negotiating outcome.

As negotiators and diplomats throughout time have learned, though, reaching an outcome that is amenable to all parties in a negotiation is not as easily dissectible as game theory. While useful as a basis for understanding the broad parameters of negotiation, as Jeong points out, one needs to dive deeper into the complexities and variables involved in specific negotiations not to mention the widely divergent types of negotiations that exist in order to get a better understanding how and why events unfold the way they do. As the page numbers increase in this volume, so does the level of negotiating complexity. As the author rightly points out, the efficiency of negotiation is often hampered by a lack of sufficient information about each other's priorities for effective decision-making. In fact, negotiators may not al-

ways find it easy to define even their own best interests and alternatives especially in a setting that entails multiple actors, evolving sets of issues and their linkagesâ (p. 107). After embedding game theory thoroughly as a basis, Jeong moves to describe the different individual, group, and institutional issues that affect negotiation.

Arguably at its best and most educational, the remainder of the book analyzes the process and dynamics of negotiations, their psychological and institutional context, and different types of negotiationsâfrom mediation to multilateral negotiations. Beyond introducing students to negotiating complexities, the remainder of the work stands out for its use of real-world examples to clarify more theoretical points. For example, when discussing negotiating process, Jeong notes that talks do not âproceed neatly from initial stage to conclusion in a linear flowâ (p. 118). In fact, they are often highlighted by long lapses, short bursts of forward momentum, and sometimes incoherent sequencing. The negotiations to end the Vietnam War, according to the author, provide a good example of the need to understand process. Originally begun in May 1963 and not concluded until January 1973, âthe Paris Peace Talks can be characterized as covert bilateral preparatory talks, formal meetings, walkouts from negotiations, and return to the table after intense military engagementâ (p. 118), all while also being intertwined with secret talks. Likewise, when dealing with issues of cognitive bias, Jeong refers to US Senator Henry Jacksonâs reference to Neville Chamberlainâs appeasement of Adolf Hitler at Munich in 1938 when attacking President Jimmy Carter and the SALT II agreement. In explaining how âanalogiesâ affect negotiations, Jeong correctly points out that âoverdependence on a preestablished mental shortcut often contributes to a misapplied association of similarities in different events. It results in a misjudgment of the likely co-occurrence of different events by overweighing or exaggerating certain characteristicsâ (p. 176).

This work is commendable for two main reasons.

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First, and in Jeongâs own words, âthe main task has been integrating a diverse spectrum of negotiation research traditions ranging from bargaining theory to political coalition-building to social psychologyâ (p. xiii). By doing so, Jeong provides students with not only a fuller picture of what negotiations look like in the real world but also an up-to-date synthesis of the most relevant literature in the field.[1] Second, Jeongâs use of historical negotiating cases goes a long way toward making a sometimes convoluted and jargon heavy book more understandable for students. At the same time, though, it seems that the bookâs main downside is that it would have benefited from more relevant case study inclusion. In many instances, the author only uses limited space to relate theory and practice, thus leaving out sufficient context from the chosen cases that could potentially provide a fuller picture of the negotiating process. This is no easy task, though, as textbooks have limited space and there is a lot of ground to cover. In the future, approaching negotiation textbooks from a different methodological standpoint may solve this issue. Ultimately, as an introduction to theories and strategies of negotiation, and as a guide to analyzing them, *International Negotiation* is a useful book for both practitioners and students alike.

Note

[1]. Rudolf Avenhaus, âGame Theory as an Approach to Conflict Resolution,â in *The SAGE Handbook of Conflict Resolution*, ed. Jacob Bercovitch, Victor Kremeneyuk, and I. William Zartman (London: Sage, 2008); Robert Powell, *In the Shadow of Power: States and Strategies in International Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999); Robert Powell, âBargaining Theory and International Conflict,â *Annual Review of Political Science* 5 (2002): 1-30; and Mara Olekalns and Laurie R. Weingart, âCommunication Processes in Negotiation: Frequencies, Sequences, and Phases,â in *The Handbook of Negotiation and Culture*, ed. Michele J. Gelfand and Jeanne M. Brett (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004).



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