
Editor's Note

Negotiation Journal

We aspire for consistency in the way we organize material for *Negotiation Journal*. Our research digests always appear in the front and book reviews wrap things up at the end, buttressing theory pieces, teaching notes, research reports, etc., in the middle. I hope we have not been foolish, however, in observing that practice in this issue. A strong argument could be made that readers should start at the back this time, given the remarkable review that Bill Donohue has contributed on two important books about research methods in conflict analysis and negotiation. His review essay essentially frames everything else that appears in these pages. Indeed, it frames negotiation research at large.

Let me make this clear: Bill's contribution is *must* reading for those of us who seek to understand and teach negotiation. He examines two new recent volumes, each of which is a significant contribution to our field, *Doing Research* by Dan Druckman and *Methods of Negotiation Research*, edited by Peter Carnevale and Carsten De Dreu.

Those books pose important questions about how we do our work. What do we really know about what drives the process and how do we know it? What constitutes sound case-study methodology and elegant experimental design? What are the strengths and weaknesses of various research methodologies? And most important, how can insights from disparate disciplines be rigorously integrated?

Bill regards the appearance of these books as milestones in the development of conflict analysis. They offer innovative, diverse, and cross-disciplinary perspectives, especially in accommodating both quantitative and qualitative approaches. That is not to say that scholars in the field have created a theory of everything, but Bill believes that we are poised to move beyond narrow technical questions and instead address really big questions.

As luck would have it, other contributors to this issue have done just that. Frida Möller, Karl DeRouen Jr., Jacob Bercovitch, and Peter Wallensteen catalog a long list of civil wars in Southeast Asia from 1993 to 2004. Although these disputes have been more numerous than in other areas of the world, they have received relatively less attention. The authors found that neighboring states and other agencies have been reluctant to play peace-making roles. In a few instances, mediation has quelled violence somewhat, but the authors conclude that unless multilevel diplomacy — involving local, regional, and global parties — is undertaken, civil wars in Southeast Asia are likely to persist.

Stephen Goldberg and Margaret Shaw paint a more hopeful picture in reporting results of two studies of mediation in the United States. (This research follows up on Steve's survey, "The Secrets of Successful Mediators," that appeared in the July 2005 issue of the *Journal*.) That earlier work asked mediators themselves about their practices, while here Steve and Margaret sought the views and impressions of advocates representing disputants in mediation. While the authors' principal focus is on identifying the different ways that mediators earn people's trust, there are other tantalizing findings that warrant further research, including the possibility that former judges may not be any more evaluative than other mediators.

Turning to theory, organizational scholars have studied how we learn from experience, specifically, how over time we develop routines to handle problems that once seemed confusing and beyond our competence. In their article, Peter Kesting and Remigiusz Smolinski remind us that we do not always learn the right things from experience or, just as troublesome, what we have learned in one situation can blind us to the fact that we are now operating in a different context. As they note in their piece, "When Negotiations Become Routine," routine can be a double-edged sword whether we are problem solving or trying to build relationships.

Roger Volkema has certainly broken away from standard routine in his classroom by having students negotiate for real money rather than abstract points in their simulations. His hope was to introduce more realism into the students' experience. He is confident that the monetary rewards and losses (students had to put in their own money) sparked their interest. In his article he is careful, however, to note that the intriguing question of whether students actually learned requires further study.

Finally, we have broken from routine ourselves in offering a special section that examines the classic film *12 Angry Men* through the lens of negotiation. I believe it is the first time we have given so much attention to a film. Managing Editor Nancy Waters has written an introductory note to the four different pieces. Suffice it to say here, that the collection is a nice exemplar of the multi-perspective analysis that Bill Donohue champions.

Michael Wheeler