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## BOOK REVIEWS

Alexander Mühlen. *International Negotiations: Confrontation, Competition, Cooperation* (Münster: LIT Verlag, 2010)

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Successful negotiators, remarked author Jim Hennig, have formed the habit of doing those things that unsuccessful negotiators dislike and will not do. Armed with Alexander Mühlen's new political negotiation manual, the student of international negotiation will at the very least know what is expected of a master of conciliation and, more likely, emerge from their reading with a deep understanding of negotiation tools, tactics and strategy. Heavy with specific and relevant examples from the international political and business spheres and including four detailed practical role play activities aimed at student and professional readers, Mühlen's book could well serve as a core text for tertiary students in both Bachelor and Master's degree programs.

Mühlen brings to his text a lifetime of theoretical knowledge and practical experience. While the author humorously claims negotiations for stolen kisses among his earliest successful dialogues, it is his career as a German diplomat spanning almost 40 years that provides the foundation for this overview of negotiation techniques. Beginning his career as a junior diplomat and rising to the ambassadorial rank, Mühlen claims to have represented his country "on four continents, in five languages and [in] six different cultures" (p. 301). Throughout the text Mühlen draws on this cross-cultural experience to offer readers real life examples of negotiations in places as diverse as a French airplane factory (pp. 42-44), the Yemeni desert (pp. 165-166) and a Singaporean business suite (pp. 170-173). The inclusion of more than a dozen separate case studies throughout the text allow Mühlen to illustrate specific claims while pushing the reader to recognise the book's broader point that negotiation is a skill that can be learnt, developed and practiced across borders, across cultures and in a variety of social, political and commercial environments.

*International Negotiations* is well organised across ten chapters and four annexes. Chapters One and Two provide the necessary introductory conceptual framework for a study of negotiation. The basic definitions, aims and broad roles are explained in the first chapter while the second chapter considered the structures into which these aspects fit. Strategies for bilateral negotiations (Chapter Three), multilateral negotiations (Chapter Four) and mediation (Chapter Five) are covered in some detail before two broad issues – structural imbalances and cultural difficulties – are identified and assessed in two short, consecutive chapters. The final three chapters

of the text consist of an overly complicated assessment of negotiating models (Chapter Eight), a more useful primer on successful argument strategies (Chapter Nine) and a very short, even superficial attempt to typify chief negotiators and other members of negotiating teams (Chapter 10). The four annexes to the text outline interesting and useful role play activities suitable for tertiary students and professional groups. They include a bilateral negotiation (Annex 2), a trilateral negotiation (Annex 1), a six-player multilateral negotiation (Annex 3) and a sixteen-player multilateral negotiation exercise (Annex 4). The last of these is both the most challenging and likely to allow participants to demonstrate their understanding of the key concepts and suggested strategies covered by Mühlen earlier in the book. That it also makes participants consider the crisis in Sudan is a further positive point as it necessarily pushes the likely-Western audience of the book to consider a critical international issue from the Global South.

Mühlen prefaces his text by differentiating between winning war and winning peace. The former, he argues, can be achieved with weapons while the latter “can only be reached on the basis of a negotiated settlement to which all those who are ready to contribute in a constructive way have agreed” (p. 11). There is much in the text of this volume that would aid the constructive contributors in striving towards their goal. Particularly strong sections of the text in this regard include Mühlen’s explication of basic and advanced bilateral and multilateral negotiating strategies, his differentiated and detailed treatment of the process of mediation in negotiation practice (including a focus on crisis *prevention* as opposed to crisis *resolution*) and the role play exercises found in the annexes. Similarly strong are the two opening chapters that develop concepts from simple definitions through to fully operationalised cases supported with examples drawn from the author’s considerable experience. Also worthy of mention is Mühlen’s humorous writing style which does not detract from the seriousness of his topic but rather enhances it.

The most significant problem the reader will have with the book has nothing to do with Mühlen’s argument, his examples or the manner in which he deals with the theoretical and conceptual issues relating to international negotiations. Instead it is the consistent frustration encountered with the layout and printing of the physical book that distracts the reader from the author’s message and which only serves to detract from the utility of the monograph for the interested reader. In every chapter and, in some sections, on almost every page there are either errors in English grammar or punctuation, strange layout choices, body text choked by the choice of a two-column layout (a narrow column runs down the edge of each page allowing Mühlen to highlight key terms, points and concepts), sentences that finish with ellipsis rather than a full stop, or other similar issues. All serve to divert the reader’s attention from the argument at hand and diminish the impact of an otherwise very useful text. *International Negotiations* has already entered its second edition in

German and, with attention to such details any future editions of the book in English will be much more likely to penetrate the native-speaker audience.

Alexander Mühlen has spent a lifetime negotiating at the international level and this practical experience shines through in his work. In concert with this practical experience, though, is his strong academic background in the field. Mühlen writes with both the wit and wisdom of a man who has been witness to any number of negotiated settlements in his career and who is keen to ensure that a new generation of negotiation experts emerge to take his place. Mühlen's book provides the student and scholar with the key foundational notions, strategies and tactics by which to succeed in an international negotiation and this reviewer cannot help but conclude that success is the likely outcome should the reader choose to heed Mühlen's advice.

**Graham Smith, *Democratic Innovations: Designing Institutions for Citizen Participation* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009)**

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Resurgence and reappraisal of democracies and democratic ideals in the 21st century has surely received its due share of academic attention. However, growing discontent with the existing forms and practices of representative democracy has facilitated the emergence and revival of ideas of deliberative and direct democracy. As a critical examination of the existing practices of 'democratic innovations', Graham Smith's book is a systematic and coherent collection of previously disengaged thoughts, practices and criticisms that were under-analyzed in the literature. Moreover, as a unique amalgam of democratic theory and new practices, it is the first comprehensive study of the different forms of democratic innovations.

As the title itself reveals, the volume on *Democratic Innovations: Designing Institutions for Citizen Participation* is mainly concerned with the 'institutions that have been specifically designed to increase and deepen citizen participation in the political decision-making process' (p. 1). The question that follows from Smith's main concern is whether institutions, such as participatory budgeting, mini-publics, direct legislation and developments in e-democracy, actually fulfill the expectations of contemporary democratic theories. The author argues that the theories of participatory democracy, deliberative democracy, direct democracy, difference democracy and cosmopolitan democracy all contain limitations on the range of institutions that can be analyzed and significant elements of democratic practices can be overlooked if the theories are applied imprecisely.