

Different Wargames for Different Purposes

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Introduction

- A wargame is a tool designed to explore a question and aid decision making.
- Different questions require different approaches, some require specific answers, some examine complex interactions, others explore abstract ideas.
- Different types of wargames are suitable to explore different subjects.
- This presentation shows some of the different types of wargames and why you may use one type of wargame over another.
- Note: There are no hard and fast rules, different wargames can be used in different ways and there's nothing to stop you combining separate concepts.




What is a Wargame?

Wargaming is a technique to support decision-making incorporating players, scenarios, rules and, most importantly, play.



A Wargame is based on a question, it requires at least two sides with unique aims (not necessarily antagonistic), a structure and a way to record outcomes.



In essence, a debate can be a wargame (often called a BOGSAT) however practical analytic wargames will normally have rules and incorporate interaction in a space.

The Three Pillars of Professional Wargames

Analytical games

- Games designed to answer specific questions about a subject or comparing variations on a subject.

Educational games

- Games designed to inform players on the specifics of a subject.

Training games

- Games designed to teach principles, processes and skills relating to a specific subject.

Common Wargame types

- Boardgame
 - A rigid rules-based game which may be played on a board, usually used to examine a narrow and specific subject in a quick and approachable manner.
- BOGSAT (bunch of guys sitting around talking)
 - The least rigid form of Wargames, it can be used as in lieu of more detailed games when there is limited time to conduct more in-depth research.
- Course of Action (CoA) games
 - A subset of wargames used to support the planning process by testing alternative courses of action.



Common Wargame types

- Seminar Games
 - An argument-based discussion, often between experts, to elicit opinions and judgements. This is a step up from a BOGSAT due to its inclusion of decisions and adjudication of their consequences.
- Matrix
 - A procedural, narrative-based game where players propose and argue in favour of an action. The efficacy of this action will then be discussed before its outcome is adjudicated on.
- Kriegspiel
 - Literally the German for wargame, a Kriegspiel is the most recognisable form of wargame. It is usually map based and pits multiple antagonistic factions against each other in a rules based, kinetic, confrontation.



Further Variations

Business Games

- A wargame usually with the term 'war' removed. Used by commercial agencies to explore business strategy and risks.

Agency Games

- A game that examines the interactions between various agencies or factions, either civil, government, military or commercial, often in a geopolitical context.

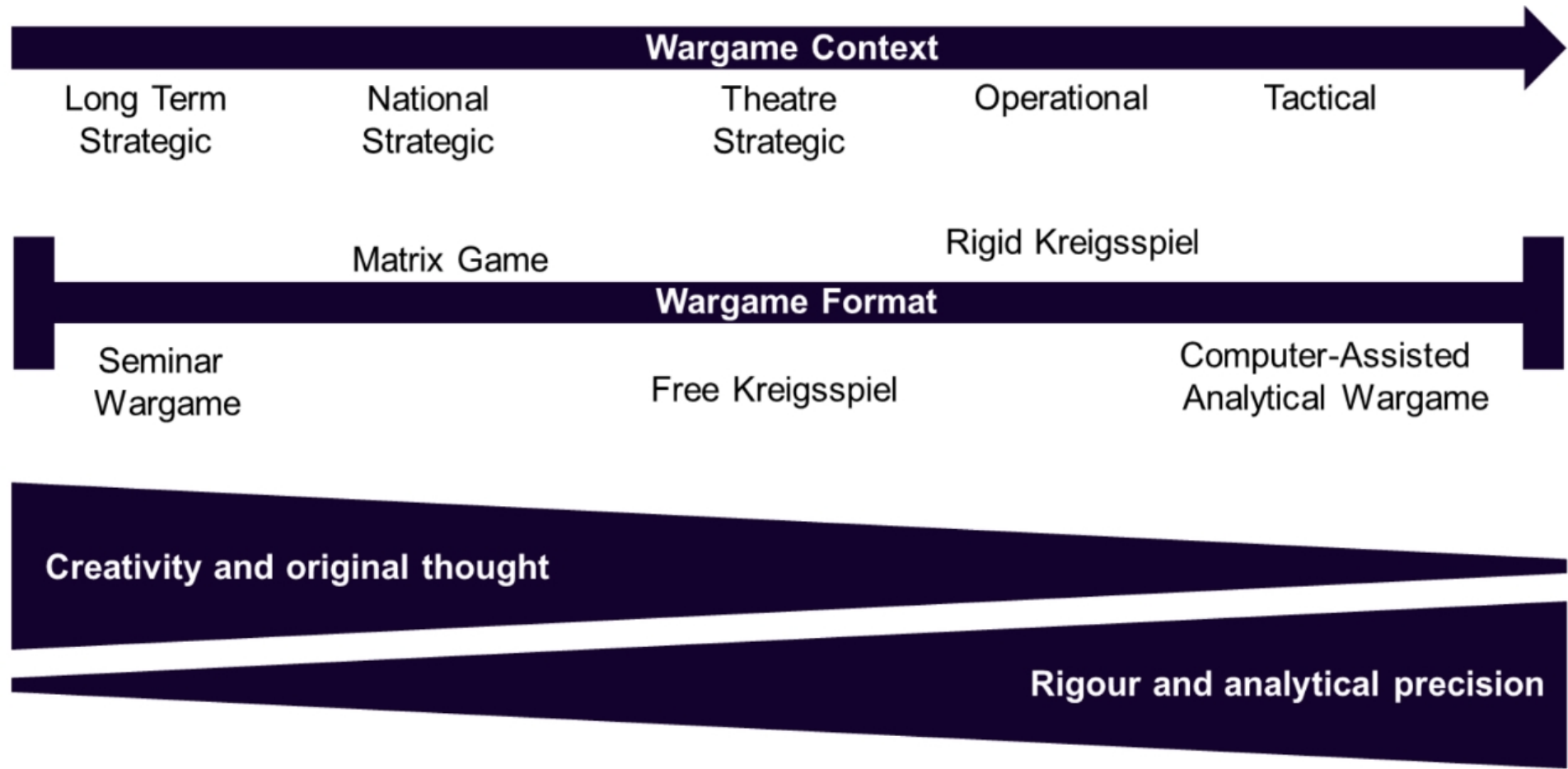
Resilience Games

- A game designed to examine processes and vulnerabilities in infrastructure.

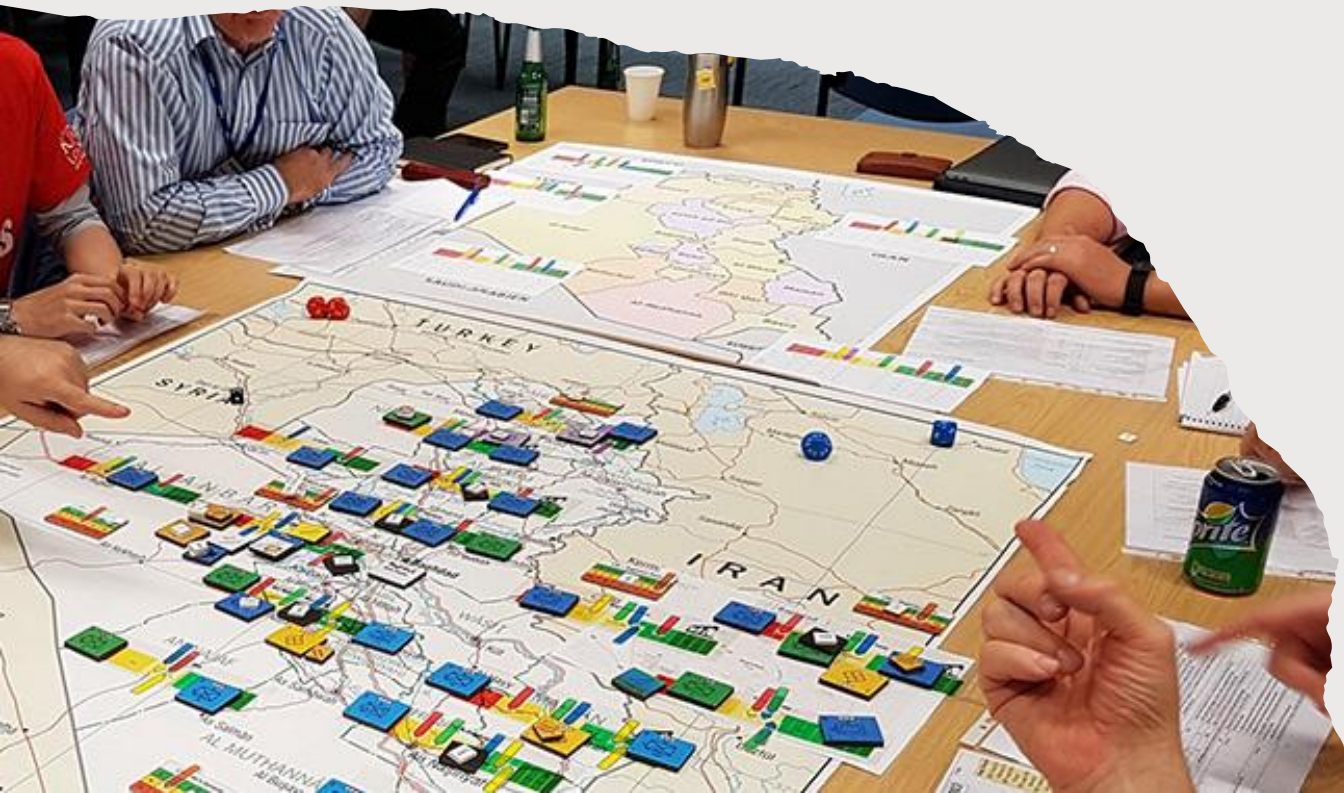
Hobby Games

- Games designed for recreational purposes that are suitable for use in a professional context.

Format of a Wargame: The Wargame Spectrum



Rigid vs Free Play – Why does it matter



- Mechanics and structure of a wargame changes the dynamics
 - This changes how players interact with the game
 - Changing interactions changes the outputs of the game
- Free Play games more likely to have high level, broad, qualitative outputs
- Rigid games are more likely to have comparative, detailed outputs that may be qualitative and/or quantitative
- Rigid games require more data to design because they put constraints on the players
 - This requires the designer to be confident in their understanding of the subject matter
- Free Play games don't require as much data because they rely more on player interactions
 - However, it's important to have the right players and SMEs to provide confidence in the game's outputs

Further Variables

- Environment
 - Domain
 - Geography
 - Human Terrain
 - Adversary
 - Scale
 - Mechanics will be different depending on the scale of the game
 - Broad or focused
 - Strategic, operational or tactical
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- Time
 - Real time
 - Turn Length
 - Players
 - Solo against automation
 - Head-to-head
 - Multi-team
 - Situational Awareness
 - Blind, Open or mixed
 - Modelling and Simulation/AI Assistance

Summary

- The purpose of a wargame drives its design and mechanics; no one game is suitable for all.
- Different Wargames have different strengths and weaknesses supporting their suitability for different subjects.
- Subject data availability can lead you to more rigid or free games.
- The different design decisions in creating a wargame lead to different outputs and it is important to consider whether the wargame type, variables, rules and design will deliver the desired outputs.