Inside the Box:
Using Integrative Simulations to Teach Conflict, Negotiation and Mediation

Natasha Gill

Foreword by Chris W. Moore, Author of "The Mediation Process"

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CSS Mediation Resources is a series that aims to provide methodological guidance and insights to mediators, negotiators and peace practitioners working to address violent political conflicts. It is produced by the Mediation Support Team of the Center for Security Studies at ETH Zurich, with contributions from occasional guest authors.

Dr. Natasha Gill is founder and director of TRACK4, an organization that runs conflict, negotiation and mediation simulations for diplomats, mediators, journalists, policymakers, students and people directly involved in conflict. She has 20 years teaching experience in universities, and developed her simulation method while teaching at Barnard College and The New School University in New York City. She has been running the modules for ten years, both within and outside academia.

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Content

Foreword

From time immemorial, people have sought more effective ways to peacefully resolve disputes or conflicts. Whether elders in traditional societies, diplomats, government officials, members of non-governmental organizations, citizens, business people or students of dispute resolution – all have looked for ways to be more effective negotiators or mediators, the most promising methods other than force to settle differences.

To accomplish this goal, participants in negotiations, either as advocates or intermediaries, need to acquire the fundamental information and skills related to conflicts and their resolution. First, they should have a firm grasp of the *history and dynamics of conflicts* in general, as well as of the particular one being addressed; the key parties and their issues and interests; and the potential or actual means of influence available to them to achieve their goals. Second, they must learn effective *negotiation techniques and mediation procedures and strategies* that will promote successful agreement-making, and know when these are applicable. Third, both advocates and intermediaries are at an advantage if they understand *the negotiation styles and complex psychological dynamics, concerns and motivation of individual negotiators* and *other parties* with an interest in the outcome of negotiations. Finally, negotiators or mediators should be able to integrate all of the above into *coherent and effective strategies and actions* to resolve differences and potentially transform parties' relationships for the better.

Historically, learning about negotiation and mediation procedures – or acquiring skills for these disciplines – was accomplished by individuals or teams working on their own, getting into the trenches and learning-by-doing. This was a risky proposition if what was learned was flawed or not appropriately applied.

In the last four decades, prospective advocates or intermediaries learned about negotiation and mediation procedures by participating in academic or professional short courses. In these forums, most information exchange and learning was conducted using very traditional teaching methods – lectures and discussions. Additionally, if prospective negotiators or mediators were lucky, they might have had an opportunity to participate in a clinic where they could learn and practice procedures and skills, or on occasion accompany and observe a successful negotiator or mediator in action.

In the last 25 years, however, new interactive, participatory and integrative methods for teaching and learning about negotiation and mediation

– such as simulations or games – have been developed and applied in diplomatic institutions, academia and private sector. These tools have long been used to teach and learn effective military strategies, but in recent years their use and sophistication have increased exponentially and been applied to a range of diplomatic, governmental and business-related conflicts.

Natasha Gill's *Inside the Box: Using Integrative Simulations to Teach Conflict, Negotiation and Mediation* is the most recent and masterful work to date on how simulations can be used to teach individuals, groups and organizations to be better negotiators and mediators. Based on years of experiments and use of simulations in academic and professional settings, Gill presents a cohesive and compelling case for how this methodology can effectively be used to convey information and train participants to better understand conflict and become more effective negotiators and mediators. Gill argues that the use of simulations over an extended period of time allows participants to learn by doing, integrate what they have learned and more effectively apply it in the resolution of future real disputes, something that cannot be adequately achieved through lectures, discussions or brief simulation exercises.

Gill recommends that participants engage in extended pre-simulation research on the particular conflict being studied to understand its history and dynamics, past efforts to resolve it, and potential negotiation and mediation procedures and strategies that might be used in the future. She also provides a structure for participants to analyse and gain an in-depth understanding of the personal negotiation styles, characteristics, interests, and motivations of the parties who will be directly engaged in talks, as well as their constituent groups. Armed with this information, participants are prepared to engage in a simulation to address and attempt to achieve the resolution of parties' differences, and help them integrate knowledge and action.

Gill also strongly recommends that integrative simulations be conducted over an extended period of time, from two to three days, to the length of a university semester. She compellingly argues that such a length of time is necessary to give participants a sense of contentious issues between parties, and help them discover why conflicts are so difficult to resolve or where space exists to move forward.

Inside the Box also presents several ways in which simulations can be used. They can be implemented to help participants explore the dynamics of conflicts in general, or gain insights into specific conflicts. They can also be used prior to real negotiations to prepare negotiators or mediators to respond

to or anticipate issues and dynamics they may encounter in future negotiations.

Whenever new approaches for teaching are introduced, there are always questions about whether or not they are effective in transferring information, in helping to achieve their objectives or in improving participants' critical thinking skills. One of the most interesting chapters in Gill's book is where she identifies concerns about the use of simulations, fully addresses and answers them and provides strong arguments in support of the kind of modules that can be effective and limit potential flaws in the method. Gill concludes with chapters that present detailed descriptions of how to develop integrated simulations, and offer practical tools for their use.

My experience with using simulations confirms Gill's findings and conclusions. Over the past 21 years, colleagues and I have conducted negotiation and mediation simulations for United Nations and African Union diplomats, Foreign Service officers and diverse other parties using an extended mediation method, and found that the approach has been well received, and participants have strongly endorsed the value of the methodology for teaching complex procedures for conflict resolution.

This is an outstanding book, and I highly recommend it to anyone interested in improving their teaching of effective negotiation and mediation approaches, skills and strategies.

Christopher Moore, Ph.D.
Partner, CDR Associates, mediator and author of *The Mediation Process: Practical Strategies for Resolving Conflict*

Acknowledgments

I am most grateful and indebted to Mark Carnes for introducing me to *Reacting to the Past (RTTP)* games, and for his generosity in sharing his method and giving his colleagues the freedom to cultivate it further. The structure and spirit of the 'Integrative Simulations' reflect and draw from RTTP more than any other modules I have seen or read about, in ways explained in the Preface.

This book would not have been possible without the steadfast support and generous feedback of Simon Mason (Center for Security Studies (CSS) at ETH Zurich). I am grateful to him not only for this support, but for introducing my work to various programs and institutions in Switzerland, for his patience with my approach, and for his determination never to separate the professional from the human.

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Preface

Radically Conservative: The Paradox of Modern Education

Education has long been trapped between the radical and the conservative. On the one hand, in most universities the 'what' of education – the *content* of courses – is considered to be highly progressive: course materials are said to overturn established paradigms, bring cutting-edge ideas into the classroom and challenge students to think critically. On the other hand, for the most part the 'how' of education – teaching *methods* – is highly conservative, and the basic features of classroom instruction have remained almost motionless for centuries. Despite vibrant debates about how to reform education and exciting initiatives by individual teachers and a number of educational programs, the most common model is still the lecture and/or seminar. It is based on a view of learning that is sedentary and often passive, assumes a separation between the rational/objective/analytic and the affective/subjective/experiential, and is seemingly immune to questions about the nature of the learning process. Among university professors and administrators there is a surprising lack of 'critical thinking' around questions of how critical thinking is conveyed, and little interest in the question of how education can be progressive when only its content is dynamically evolving. Instructors who wish to challenge traditional approaches have few educational tools or methods from which to draw, and little institutional support for pursuing alternative methods. As a result they tend to design brief and fairly superficial ad hoc exercises to enhance classroom exchanges. This often backfires, making students feel they are being abandoned to their peers in an artificial attempt to generate student-led discussions, and losing out on a rigorous learning experience.

This contradiction between progressive content and conventional methods is nowhere more pronounced than in the social sciences. Students learning about international affairs, politics, diplomacy and conflict aim to acquire a deep understanding of the forces at play in their world. And yet teaching in these fields I was struck by the wide gap between, on the one hand, students' enthusiasm about the inspiring theories of conflict transformation they learned and the ideals and justice-oriented perspectives to which they became attached; and on the other hand, their limited capacity to engage in sophisticated discussions about the realities that drive live con-

flicts, or understand the political and social forces that often determine the limits and choices available to people engaged in them.

Conversely, when I later became involved with professional participants being trained in negotiation or peace-building programs, I noticed how often skills-based exercises were decontextualized and lacking in depth. They appeared to me to simplify a conflict in order to offer participants a menu of generalized techniques and 'scientific' theories or methods that would be applicable and effective in all situations and negotiations. However, by excluding so much of the context – the situation on the ground, the political, diplomatic and regional situation and the visceral, human elements of a particular conflict that might undermine negotiations – these techniques did not seem to offer participants the chance to test their skills in a realistic environment, or learn more about their own strengths and weaknesses as negotiators or mediators.

My experimentation with alternative ways of teaching conflict was a response to my feeling that both university students and professional participants would benefit from learning modules where theory and practice, or reflection and skill building, were well integrated, and which offered in-depth encounters with the realities of a conflict. My work was also deeply influenced by the many years I spent researching the history of educational philosophy, culminating in a book on the subject.[1] I continue to be amazed at how many of the principles of integrative and experiential learning were conceived and wisely expounded upon in the eighteenth century.

I have written this book for three main reasons. First, through the lens of conflict, negotiation and mediation I look at some of the assumptions that sustain the gap between the 'what' and the 'how' of modern learning. I offer what I have called 'Integrative Simulations' (which will be described in detail in the Introduction) as an example of one educational model with the potential to act as a conduit between them. Second, I have endeavored to address some of the critiques leveled at simulations. I attempt to show how and under what circumstances they can provide rigorous educational experiences that can merit a place in universities and professional negotiation and mediation training programs. Third, I suggest a best-practice model of conflict negotiation/mediation simulations, for those instructors who wish to develop their own modules.

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1   Gill, N., (2010), *Educational Philosophy in the French Enlightenment: From Nature to Second Nature*, Surrey: Ashgate.

My encounter with simulations

In my early years of teaching I did not notice the fault line between the *what* and the *how*. I had enjoyed my experience as a student immensely, and thrived in my role as a teacher. My university student evaluation forms confirmed my hopes about what I was achieving in my courses, and my research into the history of educational philosophy inspired me to modify some aspects of classroom learning. In short, I was continually challenging myself and my students, and was pleased with the results.

It was thus only gradually that I came to realize that if my classroom was a success according to standards set by myself or the university, this did not necessarily indicate a great deal about how students were learning, whether their learning potential was being maximized or indeed whether they were learning what was most appropriate or important for them. I began to feel that the problem with education was not what I had previously assumed – the need for more engaged, demanding teachers and motivated, disciplined students. Rather, there appeared to be a gap between the best that engaged teachers and strong students could accomplish in a traditional learning environment, and the kind of learning environments that students need in order to thrive.

It was a sense of frustration with this discrepancy between the *what* and the *how* that led me in 2002 to spend some time observing a program of historical games at Barnard College, where I was teaching at the time. The program was created by historian Mark Carnes and is called *Reacting to the Past*.

Like many professors, when I first heard about *Reacting* I was highly skeptical. It sounded to me as though these 'games' involved acting, or that they modified educational methods and goals in order to pander to students' resistance to disciplined work, rather than finding ways to make disciplined work compelling.

What I found through observing and then teaching *Reacting* was not what I had expected. Far from acting, *Reacting* students learn about a moment in history and a set of debates from the perspective of particular individuals or groups involved. Their ability to articulate the position they take on emerges from their gradual understanding of the individual/groups they are representing. Many *Reacting* students are self-motivated, gain confidence in their ability to argue and persuade, become highly articulate and study in a focused manner. The process inspires some excellent analytic work: students in the games plunge into the details of historical primary texts, obsess-

ing about the significance of one word or phrase and learning how language and symbols can be manipulated.

I taught several modules linked to *Reacting* at Barnard College, and with co-author Neil Caplan created a new *Reacting* historical game, *The Struggle for Palestine, 1936.* I then drew upon and adapted Carnes' method to create an elaborate series of semester-long negotiation simulations for graduate students at the New School University's Graduate Program in International Affairs, which I called TRACK4. This was partly out of a desire to run real-time conflict negotiation simulations rather than historical modules, partly in order to address what I considered to be some limits in the *Reacting to the Past* model.

These longer and more personalized modules gave me a chance to test how rigorously-designed, multi-session simulations can help to inspire motivation, increase retention of information, build skills, develop wisdom, deepen perceptive powers and challenge participants beyond what we call critical thinking to a form of critical self-awareness – one that helps them recognize the limits of their own analytical powers in order to further refine and develop them.

However, despite the divergence between my work and *Reacting to the Past,* the modules I run are influenced by the latter, in three ways: 1) the process is extended over multiple sessions; 2) roles, scenarios and objectives are set out in great detail; 3) debates focus around a set of primary texts and 'big ideas' rather than merely strategy or mission-roles.

In 2007 I left the university to work on TRACK4 with a broader audience, adapting the method to offer shorter (2 – 3 day) but still highly structured exercises for negotiators, mediators, policy-makers, diplomats, students, journalists and people involved in conflict. This allowed me to focus more on the practical training and skill-building aspects of the process, and assess which skills and learning experiences were transferable for professionals. It also allowed me to offer training for those who wish to learn how to design and run IN-simulations.

The explanation of simulations as described in this book is based on the combined experience that I acquired from two decades of teaching in universities and one decade of running Integrative Simulations, both in universities and with professionals outside academia. It is my hope that people wishing to experiment with various ways to teach and learn about conflict and gain negotiation and mediation skills will find they can make use of the information and examples provided.

Introduction

Today we receive three contrary forms of education: from our fathers, from our teachers and from the world. What the third tells us overturns all the ideas we receive from the first two. ~~ Montesquieu, 1748

Simulations generate enthusiasm – about this there is little dispute. Brief or extended, well organized or ad hoc, most participants respond to the experiential aspect of this learning method. Even a forty minute role-play exercise can engross otherwise disengaged individuals, and bring an unresponsive class to life.

Enthusiasm, however, is not a guarantor of rigor or effectiveness, and as simulations have become more popular in academic and professional training programs, their limitations have been revealed more clearly. For legitimate reasons there is skepticism in the academic community regarding the long-term educational value of these modules, and an equal amount of critical self-reflection from instructors who use simulations for purposes of professional negotiation and mediation training.[1]

This book offers Integrative Simulations (henceforth IN-simulations) as one model of learning that has the potential to address the limits of some current simulation exercises, and more broadly, narrow the gap mentioned in the Preface between the 'what' and the 'how' of education – ensuring that *the way* we teach is as progressive and investigational as *what* we teach. IN-simulations are particularly useful for those studying political, social and cultural conflicts and receiving professional training in negotiation and mediation. They provide participants with the opportunity to immerse themselves directly in a conflict and negotiation, learn about the beliefs and interests of a wide variety of actors from their own perspectives, and experience the dynamics between parties in an environment that closely replicates reality.

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1   I am using the word "simulation" an as umbrella term for modules that are alternatively called simulations, games or role plays, and to describe the particular model I discuss in this book and define as 'Integrative Simulations'. There is, however, a body of literature on the difference between the terms and methods guiding simulations, role plays and games, and there is also a lack of clarity when it comes to defining their differences. Simulation is the most widely used term (with games and role plays often seen as a subset of it) and is applied to a variety of modules. However, the terms simulation and game are also often used interchangeably. Some scholars argue that definitional issues are causing significant problems for the field, and there have been a number of attempts to clarify the differences between the three terms. See for example Sauvé, L., et al., (2007), "Distinguishing between games and simulations: A systematic review", *Educational Technology & Society,* 10, pp. 247–256.

The guide should be useful for instructors who offer training in negotiation and mediation to professionals and practitioners; university professors and program directors who wish to provide courses that integrate academic knowledge with practice-based learning; and experts, mediators or negotiators who seek to develop teaching methods that help them convey what they have learned and experienced 'in the field'.

Simulations are not a panacea, and cannot solve the many problems that afflict educational institutions or training programs in the field of conflict studies. They are not lifeboats for rescuing an instructor who is unable to generate interest from students, or gimmicks that add temporary spice to a lifeless program. Nor do they represent a rejection of or substitute for traditional learning. Rather, they should be seen as a complement to it. Tightly structured, well-designed and closely supervised simulations that are well-integrated into a course or training program can provide profound and exceptional learning experiences, acting as a pathway between the kind of knowledge acquired through analysis and dialogue and the wisdom gained through immersion in a process. Simulations can also act as laboratories of educational innovation, because they allow participants and instructors alike to experiment with and address many core questions about learning, as well as the specific challenges faced by those teaching conflict studies or offering training in conflict-related skills.

Integrative Simulations – the Method

The simulations I advance in this book are multi-session scenarios (designed to take from two days to several months) based on existing conflicts, reflecting the perspectives of authentic parties. They are elaborate in structure, with thoughtfully designed scenarios and substantive role descriptions that offer an insider's view of a conflict and the beliefs, values, interests and concerns of various individuals and groups. An intricate choreography of strategies, personalities and perspectives leads to sophisticated and focused exchanges that evolve over time. IN-simulations are face-to-face, interactional modules, held in a real-life and intimate forum rather than online or in large groups. The process is guided by an active supervisor who provides frequent feedback, ensures that participants remain true to their role and that the scenario evolves realistically. The supervisor is supported by external 'coaches' – people

Definition: Integrative simulations

1. Are run over a period of at least two days
2. Provide substantive role descriptions
3. Are based on real conflicts rather than fictional scenarios
4. Include details about the conflict on the ground as well as the psychological dynamics between parties
5. Are held in a face-to-face, intimate forum
6. Do not separate analytical and affective learning modes
7. Are supervised by a qualified instructor who provides individualized feedback to participants.

with direct experience of a conflict or negotiations/mediation process, who give input to participants on questions of content and strategy.

These immersive simulation modules incorporate the relational and visceral elements of a real encounter, bring to the fore the human and psychological dynamics between parties and within factions, and include the multiple domestic and international pressures that are brought to bear on negotiators, mediators and decision-makers. They also provide skills-based training, as participants are faced with a dress rehearsal for both conflict-based encounters and peacemaking – a 'live negotiation'[2] that challenges their view of their strengths and weaknesses, tests their skills in communication, relationship building and leadership, and compels them to tackle the many and complex pressures that ensue from a negotiation taking place in the context of various social, political and diplomatic realities.

Finally and crucially, the value of an IN-simulation lies in the integrative nature of the learning process – a form of active and interactive engagement that incorporates reflection and action, and integrates analytical and affective engagement. IN-simulations are forums where the traditional separation of human faculties breaks down, and participants are able to learn through multiple learning faculties simultaneously: intellectual-analytic, emotional-affective, visual-observational, oral-communicative, aural-listening, intuitive-perceptive, active-experiential and relational-interactive. During the course of the exercise these learning faculties are allowed to function as a broad-spectrum learning antenna that absorbs different catego-

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2   When using the term 'live negotiation' I do not mean that the simulation is an actual negotiation, but that as the process evolves it is generally experienced by participants as more than a mirror image of the real thing. It is felt to be an animated and dynamic process that has the aspects of a live encounter.

ries of information through a variety of channels. As a result, the process draws on and provokes a multiplicity of human capacities and talents that often lie dormant in traditional educational or training settings.

IN-simulations versus other role-play models

The distinctive nature of an IN-simulation is best highlighted by contrasting it with:

- Brief skill-building role play exercises that take place over the course of a few hours or one full day, are based on loosely structured or fictional scenarios, and include roles that are generalized or invented;
- Modules that are longer and include detailed strategies and intricate gaming aspects, but are run with a large number of participants or moderated through the internet;
- Modules that run on auto-pilot, with little feedback or monitoring from instructors.
- Varieties of the above modules that include intensive input from instructors, but where supervision tends to focus on ensuring the game remains on track and participants are following the general rules, rather than on offering personal feedback to individual participants relating to their skills development, or their strengths/weaknesses in various areas.

While these and other types of simulations can be exciting for participants and offer a variety of insights and learning experiences, they often miss out on some of the most crucial learning experiences that emerge from being immersed in a structured, intimate and realistic negotiation. For example, although short simulation exercises are useful for familiarizing participants with basic negotiation and mediation skills, longer modules allow participants to internalize these skills as they are practiced in a realistic conflict environment. Short role-plays are especially problematic when they sacrifice a deep understanding of a conflict for a premature leap into creative problem-solving or deal-making, or create a chaotic alternate reality that forces participants to manage crises before they have learned about the positions, interests, pressures and options faced by various real world actors. Finally, because of the lack of structured input from instructors, many simulation modules leave the door open to a variety of tensions and frustrations between participants, give individuals the liberty to distort or caricaturize roles they are assigned and allow the process to spiral into improbable scenarios that offer participants few (or misleading) lessons about 'real' conflict or negotiations.

The model of simulation explained in the following pages takes some time and energy to design and run. I am aware that it is not for everyone, and that many simulations of the types mentioned above successfully achieve the specific goals they aim for. IN-simulations are intended for those who are looking for a degree of depth in their understanding of a particular conflict, or an intensive level of skills-training and personal development. They have been devised with a view to confronting some of the problematical aspects of simulation-learning described above – as well as those pointed out by critics[3] – and developing a module that can claim to be rigorous and deserve a place in institutions of higher learning. As such, these modules require planning and supervision from instructors, and commitment and engagement from participants. It is my view that if instructors wish to ensure that simulations evolve from being entertaining exercises with dubious outcomes to becoming exacting learning environments that respond to the needs of learners, they must bring depth and structure to the process.

The Goals of Integrative Simulations: What Participants Learn

IN-simulations take several forms and have a variety of goals. Some of the central goals are introduced below, and will be elaborated in the following chapters.

Understanding conflict: Getting into the box

IN-simulations provide a space where participants are challenged to understand conflict in two ways. The first has to do with the level of detail and authenticity in the materials provided, which compels participants to delve

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3   For the past 30 years simulations have been a dominant learning method employed for negotiation training. During this time a number of studies have analyzed their effectiveness, including the multi-year and multi-volume research project *Rethinking Negotiation Teaching* at the Hamline University School of Law (See volumes edited by Honeyman, C., J. Coben, and G. De Palo, Hamline University School of Law, St Paul, MN: DRI Press, *www.hamline.edu/law/dri/rethinking-negotiation-teaching*). In general, the project concluded that negotiation pedagogy must improve in order to better address issues such as 'Wicked Problems' (discussed at length in Volume 2); cultural differences in relation to negotiation (Volume 1); the emotional and relational aspects of negotiation (Volume 2); the need for improved assessment tools (Volume 3) and in-depth debriefing (Volume 4). The project also focused on new methods of teaching, such as 'adventure learning', which aim to bring students outside the simulated classroom and into the world, to encounter real negotiation situations. While many project contributors suggested that negotiations training should move beyond simulations, some argued that the method could still be valuable if it evolved to meet the aforementioned challenges (for example, Ebner, N., and K. K. Kovach, 2010, "Simulation 2.0: The Resurrection", Volume 2, p. 245).

deeply into the heart of a particular case. Learning about the realities of the conflict on the ground, as well as seeing it within the context of local and regional developments, brings a new level of complexity to the issues, and reveals some of the lesser known reasons for continued impasses between key players. This is especially the case with participants who are resistant to learning about the interests of parties they consider to be immoral or illegitimate. Here the structure of IN-simulations is central, as it compels a confrontation with all individuals and groups that are influential and may affect (negatively or positively) a conflict or peace negotiation.

Further, in the context of an IN-simulation participants are not encouraged to leap over the most intractable problems and search for 'out of the box' solutions. Rather, they are first required to get *into the box* – to make sure that before attempting to improve on current policies they 1) develop an intimate understanding of the limits and restrictions faced by various parties and 2) grasp why seemingly 'reasonable' deals cannot be accepted by some players, or sold to key constituents. This goes some way to preventing the often-repeated phenomenon whereby like-minded people come together to devise proposals that appear to be eminently reasonable, but are ultimately unworkable because they do not address the true interests of the various players or the sources of their resistance.

The second aspect of understanding conflict has to do with how IN-simulations help participants understand the dynamics of conflict more broadly, beyond the one being studied in the module. By engaging in a live negotiation, they often find that the reactions and interactions between individuals and groups reveal a great deal about patterns of conflict in general, and provide them with a form of wisdom that can be applied in a variety of personal and professional situations. Here too, learning from 'inside the box' brings participants face to face with the ambiguities and complexities that drive human behavior in conflict, and which cannot be overcome simply through reasonable debate or intelligent proposals.

Negotiation and mediation skills

IN-simulations provide a forum where negotiation and mediation skills can be built, in a setting that closely mirrors a professional environment. Skills are thus not learned as 'techniques' in isolation but are put to the test in a context where the behavior and responses of parties can bewilder even an experienced practitioner, and various approaches can be considered and reconsidered in real time. This also means that in an IN-simulation skill

building and understanding conflict are intimately linked. Skills are developed while participants engage in an intricate and multifaceted process where perceptiveness, common sense, wisdom, decisiveness, humility, sensitivity, adaptability and an understanding of context refine and sharpen the tools used by negotiators and mediators.

Personal development

Finally, linked to the skills-development aspect of the process is the opportunity afforded by IN-simulations for each participant to recognize and work on their individual strengths and weaknesses – as communicators, listeners, leaders, team members, negotiators or mediators. The environment is professionally challenging and reproduces many of the elements of a real life situation, but it is also 'safe' in the sense that it is separated from participants' personal and professional lives. Thus participants often feel they can take chances without risking the kinds of consequences for their reputation or career that they would encounter in their jobs. The role-play aspect of the process (which many initially feel skeptical about but in the end find to be most effective) often allows individuals to step outside their habitual patterns, recognize qualities in themselves that they resisted seeing in more familiar settings, hear feedback from others and adjust and test new ways of thinking and behaving.

> **Goals: Integrative simulations**
> 1. Help participants gain deep insights into one particular conflict, and into *patterns of conflict* more broadly
> 2. Enable participants to practice *negotiation and mediation skills* in a true to life environment
> 3. Provide a safe space for *personal and professional development,* where individuals can focus on their strengths and weaknesses.

The Method of IN-simulations: Why and How Participants Learn

In addition to the above-mentioned lessons, IN-simulations allow for a considered approach to three challenges faced by universities and professional training programs. The first is often referred to as the theory/practice divide. In Chapter Three I consider the problematic tendency for educational

programs to address this divide by sequentially assembling various courses or modules rather than reconsidering the relationship between them. IN-simulations allow reflective and experiential learning to be integrated, since theory and practice are part of the same learning process: participants are able to analyze, reflect, experience, re-consider, adapt, and re-reflect in the same module and in a cyclical manner.

The second concerns the skill of critical thinking. Although critical thinking is often considered to be a central goal of higher education, there are few efforts made or means available to evaluate whether it has been effectively transmitted. IN-simulations attempt to address this by challenging participants to *test* their critical thinking skills as they are learning. During the process their ideas, actions and choices are reflected back to them in real time. As a result, they are able to recognize the limits of their own impartiality and to *experience* (not only objectively analyze) the traps into which various parties to a conflict often fall. This shift from objective analysis to direct and subjective involvement, and from critical thinking to critical self-reflection, opens new vistas of learning for participants – about conflict, human interaction, politics, themselves – that they often find to be startling and enlightening.

The third issue is related to motivation, and the importance of creating innovative training modules where participants experience the thrill of 'active learning' but where the rigorousness of the exercise is not sacrificed for the sake of a pleasurable or watered-down educational experience. In IN-simulations participants' motivation is remarkably high, as they feel they are involved in a rigorous and stimulating process. They often remark that they come to 'own their knowledge' in a way they could not in a course where they are more passive recipients of information. The module retains the spirit of an academic exercise by ensuring that materials and requirements are clear and participants are challenged intellectually throughout; at the same time, however, they are becoming specialists on a variety of issues, working together in an intense and pressured environment, managing complex processes that contain many moving parts, juggling conflicting demands from various parties and making decisions that give their work a sense of meaning and purpose.

Target Audiences

The primary target audiences of this book are instructors of conflict, negotiation and mediation, whether they work in an academic environment or provide professional training for practitioners. People who want to participate in such an exercise may also find parts of the book (e.g. the introduction and Chapter One) helpful to get a basic understanding of the approach before trying it out.

The goals of IN-simulations differ depending on the nature of the participants, the extent of their involvement in a conflict, their background and their personal and professional needs. The exercises can be relevant for various individuals and groups.

- *Professional mediators, conflict analysts or topical experts* who wish to become more specialized in a particular conflict, refine their skills, practice negotiation or mediation, or walk through a 'dress rehearsal' version of a particular negotiation they plan to be part of.
- *Undergraduate, graduate or mid-career students* majoring in peace and conflict studies, or politics and international affairs. IN-simulations can be used to push these participants beyond ideal-outcome scenarios based on theories of conflict resolution, to a more direct engagement with the realities on the ground, the political and diplomatic environment and the motivations or resistances of various parties.
- *Negotiators, people directly involved in or impacted by a conflict,* including NGO or civil society leaders, policy-makers, academics, journalists, community and religious leaders or affected civilians/non-combatants. These participants can gain new perspectives by stepping back from their direct, daily and often emotionally charged involvement in a conflict. Engaging in an IN-simulation with strict boundaries and goals, they are encouraged to articulate their interests clearly, learn in detail about the interests of their adversaries, and become familiar with the language of policy, politics or diplomacy.

Training versus Education: A Misleading Distinction?

It should be noted that while most aspects of the IN-simulation method described in this book are applicable to all the groups listed above, a few sections are more relevant for university students and professors and less so for

professional instructors and training programs. Readers might want to take note that Chapter Three deals with questions that can be perceived as more strictly related to educational *methods* and problems confronting universities.

I have chosen to examine the value of IN-simulations in both university and professional training programs because while 'pedagogical' reflections are not always considered relevant to those constructing practice-based training, I believe it is an error to assume it is possible to separate training techniques from educational methods. It seems to me counterintuitive to relegate reflections on the *how* of learning to specialized teachers, when there is hardly an aspect of training that is not educational – in other words, that does not require a well thought-out approach to how a particular exercise should work and what makes it work most effectively. In the end, anyone who sets out to convey information or skills to others has a set of underlying educational assumptions on which the success of their approach depends, even if these are unstated or unrecognized by the instructors themselves. Drawing out these assumptions and refining one's method as a result usually improves the outcome.

Further, participants as diverse as 18-year-old undergraduate students and 50-year-old professionals respond in a strikingly similar way to IN-simulations, and this is the case even when the duration of the module and some of its goals are quite different. I have found that participants themselves do not appear to perceive a distinction between the skills-based and 'educational' aspect of the process. For example, professionals tend to comment as much on the value of how they learned as what they learned, or point out ways in which method provided space for surprising breakthroughs. It would thus seem useful for instructors developing IN-simulations to be aware of some of the reasons why various participants feel that certain aspects of the process trigger powerful learning experiences, in order to be better able to make use of these aspects when constructing a module.

The structure of this book therefore represents my personal approach when developing IN-simulations. In constructing these modules I have considered how the understanding, skill-building and personal development aspects may be most usefully integrated, and I have tried here not only to demonstrate that this can be effective but also explain *why* it is so. At the same time, I have tried to keep in mind the different interests that readers might have, and have thus indicated by means of section headings when a particular discussion is more geared to academia or a professional training environment.

Structure of the Text

Following this introductory chapter, Chapter One gives the reader an overview of how IN-simulations work, from the preparation to the debriefing phase. Chapter Two clarifies what participants learn from being part of an IN-simulation in relation to the three goals outlined above: understanding conflict, learning negotiation and mediation skills, developing personal strengths and working to confront weaknesses. Chapter Three looks at how IN-simulations address some of the educational challenges faced by universities and professional training programs; in particular, how the method addresses the theory-practice divide, offers a self-reflective form of critical thinking, and motivates participants. Chapter Four discusses frequent criticisms aimed at simulations, and seeks to both explore the limits of the method and make suggestions about how best to address these challenges. Chapter Five provides a 'How to Manual', with more-detailed advice on how to design and run simulations for prospective instructors who wish to use the method. Chapter Six provides a 'Sample Role Packet', indicating the kinds of materials that might be used to develop a rigorous module. A brief Conclusion discusses how the challenges of designing an IN-simulation are balanced with positive outcomes for both participants and instructors. Finally, an Annex offers a set of provisional questions to help instructors devise evaluation forms that would allow them to assess the merits and pitfalls of simulations.

1 Integrative Simulations – from Preparation to Debriefing

Simulations have a long and distinguished past: Roman Empire commanders replicated battlefields in sandboxes, strategy games were used in Asia and the Middle East in ancient times, and throughout the modern period, games of various types have been a key component of military training.[1] In the last century simulations became widespread in STEM disciplines (science, technology, engineering, math), were often used for the purposes of medical training and became a staple in training programs in law, business, negotiation and mediation. More recently, they have made inroads into university courses in the social sciences, especially courses on international affairs, political science and conflict resolution.

There are, of course, many different types of simulations, games and role play exercises that have been used in a variety of educational contexts. In this book we discuss the model described in the Introduction as 'Integrative Simulations'. Before proceeding to analyze the method of IN-simulations, in this chapter I outline what a best practice model might look like. This is for the benefit of those who do not know at all how simulations work and who would like to gain a sense of the stages and rhythm involved. It will also be of use to those who are familiar with simulations, allowing them to read the following chapters with a clear sense of the elements that are highlighted in these particular modules.

The 'ideal type' outlined below assumes that an instructor has the time and support to develop a tightly structured scenario and run it over several sessions (e.g. a minimum of 2–3 full days, excluding preparation time for reading materials before the simulation; in a university or longer program this could go on for as long as several weeks or even a full semester). Although not all instructors and trainers are able to take the time required for such a course, and not all modules can fulfill all the goals outlined in this and the following chapters, it is useful to keep in mind the variety of elements that together are most likely to provoke the richest and most rigorous learning experience.

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1   Smith, R., (2010), "The Long History of Gaming in Military Training", *Simulation & Gaming*, 41:1, p. 1, *http://www.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a550307.pdf*.

It should be noted that this book discusses only one form of IN-simulation – conflict negotiation/mediation modules. There are, however, many other interesting forms these modules can take, other than negotiations, such as trials, truth commissions, UN Security Council or General Assembly debates, or structured debates on a particular topic. Historical simulation games, such as those run by the *Reacting to the Past* program at Barnard College[2], focus on a wide variety of topics such as history, philosophy, science and mathematics; these provide university students with a unique window on to the past, and the opportunity for passionate engagement with other cultures, epochs and modes of thought.

The focus here is on 'real time' conflict negotiations/mediation scenarios, for two reasons. First, although IN-simulations may be valuable exercises for people studying a variety of subjects, this manual focuses particularly on those interested in conflict, negotiation and mediation, whether they approach the issues as academic subjects or in the interests of professional training. Second, negotiation modules allow instructors to make best use of the opportunities provided by simulations, where others often leave an imbalance in terms of participant engagement. For example, a trial or truth commission, which includes lawyers, judges and witnesses, usually leads to a situation where those representing witnesses will remain quiet a great deal of the time, and interaction between various participants will be limited to formal interrogations. Direct negotiations are the most enriching format for participants, as each individual usually feels the burden of responsibility for their part in the group; all take an equally active part during the entirety of the module; they experience a variety of exchanges and interactions over the course of the exercise, each of which challenges them in a different way; and individuals can test out various approaches to negotiation or mediation, developing their style and tactics throughout the module.

Some of the basic elements necessary to ensure a rigorous exercise are outlined below. Several of these are further elaborated on in the 'How To Manual' in Chapter Five and in the 'Sample Role Packet' for instructors who want further guidance on how to construct an IN-simulation. Other issues, such as those relating to the educational process and its impact on participants, are discussed in more detail in Chapters Two and Three. The goal here is to offer the reader a general picture of what an IN-simulation looks like, from start to finish.

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2   *https://reacting.barnard.edu*

1.1   The Context

Before describing the basic structure of an IN-simulation – preparation, negotiation, debriefing – two preliminary points should be made. The first concerns the importance of integrating IN-simulations into a class, course of study, program or negotiation/mediation skills training module. The second relates to the role of the instructor in an IN-simulation.

Integration

An IN-simulation is most effective when it is well integrated into a course of study (in universities) or module/program (in professional training programs). A simulation module run as a stand-alone exercise, without preliminary sessions or debrief, can be exciting and instructive, but a great number of the most powerful lessons it can provide are likely to be lost. The most effective way to heighten the value of the process is to set it within a course or module where 1) the reading and research participants have done during or in preparation for the course will lead up to and be built upon during the simulation, 2) participants can use the simulation to test out skills, techniques and theories/hypotheses they are discussing in their course program or preparatory readings, and 3) they are given time after the module to distance themselves from the 'practice' of the simulation, reflect critically on their experience and integrate the lessons learned into further analysis.

In some cases it may be useful to provide some basic input on negotiation and mediation concepts, skills and techniques before the simulation module begins. Participants will then have a set of tools from which to draw during the negotiation. In many ways, however, the IN-simulation process reveals the limits of skill-building inputs and micro-exercises when isolated from the realities of a real conflict. These are most useful when taught within the context of an experiential learning module such as an IN-simulation, where the gaps between ideas and practice will be quickly revealed.

Further, it is important to keep in mind that an IN-simulation *is in itself* a training exercise in negotiation/mediation. One of the aims of this method is to move away from a linear mode of learning, which goes from theory/analysis to practice/experimentation, and instead provide a learning zone where participants are continually moving between reflection and action, and developing skills by virtue of being placed in a situation where they must sink or swim. In such a context, the most useful skills-related input comes either *during* the simulation itself – here, participants are in a situa-

tion where the problems and obstacles are in plain sight, and suggestions on how to manage these are quickly absorbed and applied; or during the *post-simulation* debrief period, where participants have learned first-hand from their successes and mistakes, can see clearly what these are, and are eager to engage in a discussion about them.

The role of the instructor

The role of the instructor in an IN-simulation appears at first glance to be more passive than in a classical educational or training environment. Although this should not in fact be the case it often becomes a reality, in part because one of the great merits of simulation-based learning is also one of its greatest potential shortcomings: the element of 'active learning' is so exciting and self-perpetuating that even a poorly structured simulation that leads to flawed lessons can be experienced as exhilarating by participants, and often their enthusiasm is interpreted by the instructor as a sign of the effectiveness of the learning process. Further, once participants are 'in role', if the facilitator withdraws from active engagement the exercise will likely continue to run itself, with participants happy to control the dynamic, convinced that they are on track to developing innovative proposals or ready to let it unfold erratically.

Some simulations thrive on this element of 'auto-pilot', but as a result they take the pedagogue out of the pedagogy. They miss an opportunity for instructors to offer valuable support and feedback to participants, and for participants to learn key lessons about a conflict *and about themselves*. True, a great deal of simulation learning takes place when participants are alone in rooms without the instructor, faced with difficult decisions they must make in light of what they know about their role and the needs of their 'faction'. However, these lessons are most effective when built upon a strong foundation – that is, when the instructor is either quietly and imperceptibly or directly monitoring the general process, as well as guiding individuals so they continue to develop in their roles. The great skill of a simulation instructor is to develop a keen sense of when to intervene and when to allow participants to work through problems themselves; when mistakes will throw the process off course and when they will lead to instructive lessons.

In an IN-simulation instructors modify their traditional roles as lecturers or seminar leaders and take on the part of coaches or conductors, guiding the overall process with more or less intervention depending on the direction the negotiation takes, and offering support and feedback to individual

participants when necessary. The more individuals are initially 'coached' to understand and respect their roles, the more effective the experience is for them and for the group as a whole. This is especially the case in simulations that deal with difficult and painful conflicts, and where appropriate instructor intervention can prevent a simulated conflict from turning into a real one. (For more on the role of the instructor in developing and running IN-simulations, see the 'How to Manual').

Role of instructor:
1. Prepare simulation materials
2. Allocate roles carefully, in order to best challenge participants
3. Guide participants during all phases of the process and ensure they maintain 'role integrity'
4. Facilitate debriefing.

1.2   Preparation Phase

In order to be effective, IN-simulations require careful preparation. Unlike some other role-play modules, these types of simulations include detailed and individualized role packs, intricate scenarios and structured background readings, and the process requires that all participants be well prepared.

Priming participants: Leveling through background readings

If an IN-simulation is being held *in a university as part of a semester-long course,* ideally the process begins with several sessions of readings or lectures, where participants learn about some of the background issues in a traditional lecture or discussion format. This usually includes the history of the particular conflict being studied, controversies regarding its causes and evolution, and lessons learned from any past negotiations or diplomatic initiatives that might have taken place. Reading assignments should not aim to be as comprehensive as in a traditional course, because much of the learning will – and should – take place during the simulation itself. In fact, no matter how much reading is assigned beforehand, at the start of the simulation participants will feel somewhat unprepared and lacking a clear idea of how to engage in the process. This is a *positive thing*, an indication that they will be entering a zone of 'learning through process' which gives them an incentive to search for

information, organize their ideas for presentation and argumentation, and retain key points. It usually happens that once they begin the module their learning curve is steep, as their preliminary and tentative research meets the urgent needs of a negotiation.

In the case of *briefer modules for professionals,* where participants are not in a 'class' together over the course of time, materials covering similar issues should still be provided in advance of the exercise (several weeks if possible), and participants should be given an introductory lecture by experts on the conflict. Although participants might come to the IN-simulation with different degrees of knowledge on the topic, pre-simulation materials can help level the playing field, ensuring that when they arrive they share a degree of knowledge and preparedness in relation to some specific topics they will be discussing.

This leveling makes it more likely that participants will be able continually to challenge each other, and is thus key to making the simulation process substantive. One of the most frustrating experiences for participants is to arrive at a simulation well prepared, only to face opponents who cannot meet their level of engagement or respond in kind to their ideas and proposals. Even if there is little time for the simulation itself, pre-simulation materials can prime all participants for the negotiation and ensure they will engage in a substantive series of debates. This is necessary from an intellectual and emotional standpoint, for in cases where participants are taking on roles that are unfamiliar or contrary to their beliefs and perspectives, preparation materials help them get into the mindset of their roles long before the module, giving them a pair of new lenses as soon as they embark on their readings. They begin to see the world from the point of view of the character they are representing – how that person perceives both the long term issues and grievances as well as recent events – and to think actively about what kinds of arguments they will face or make during the negotiation. Finally, pre-simulation literature can ensure that a great deal of learning will have already taken place before participants arrive at the table; this allows instructors running shorter modules to make best use of limited time for the actual negotiation.

Role allocation

Role allocation is a central and underappreciated element in simulation design. Instructors can ensure a productive group dynamic and maximize the learning of individuals if they balance their various talents, personalities and knowledge bases in different groups.

'Role allocation' does *not* mean, as is often interpreted, that 'leader-type' participants should be put in leadership roles and 'shy' participants in secondary roles – something simulation instructors often do in order to ensure that each group is well balanced. In my experience, although it is important to ensure a division between strong/more committed and weaker/less committed participants, in fact participants often *become* leaders in their roles, and one should not assume that those who are traditionally more vocal will do the job best. On the contrary, simulations provide unique opportunities to challenge participants personally and intellectually, bringing them outside their comfort zones and allowing them to make surprising discoveries about their strengths and weaknesses.

Further, *a good IN-simulation should not have any 'secondary roles'.* That is, although some participants will take on the role of 'leaders' and as such will have extra responsibility for delegating and decision-making, this will not mean they have a bigger 'part' to play in the overall process. The best way to ensure that all participants engage is to provide each individual with an equally important portfolio of issues to research and present, and make it clear that their consistent contribution is useful and necessary to the success of the group.

There are several ways to challenge participants through role allocation. Participants should be encouraged to challenge themselves in one or more of the following ways:

- *An opposing view:* the participant takes on a political or ideological position that is unfamiliar, or in direct opposition to his or her own beliefs, background, identity or experience.
- *A different persona:* If a participant is generally shy or retiring, they might take on a leadership role; if they are usually domineering, they might take on a role where they will be a 'second in command' or particularly focused on listening or conforming to someone else's will. If a participant generally has a 'moderate' temperament, is always searching for compromise or is training as a mediator, they might take on a role of an extremist or fundamentalist of sorts. Similarly, participants who tend toward 'black and white' views can take on a role of someone who attempts to understand all sides and seeks compromise, perhaps a third party mediator.
- *A new approach:* participants might be encouraged to adopt a role that focuses on the kind of information they are not usually aware of or interested in: for example, someone who has studied politics and diplomacy might take on a role that focuses on economic or security aspects of a

conflict. A participant who tends to be more comfortable discussing 'soft' or 'existential' questions might take on a detailed 'security' portfolio; and conversely, someone who is always focused on the 'practical' concrete elements might be challenged to delve into the existential quandaries that they tend to avoid.

- *A 'dress rehearsal':* in cases where negotiators, mediators or mediation/ negotiation support teams are making use of a simulation as a practice run to prepare for an actual negotiation, participants can take on the role they plan to take in 'reality'. In this case mediators would represent mediators and negotiators would represent negotiators, so that they may learn to anticipate the way in which issues might present themselves or test out strategies and approaches in an environment that carries few risks. Alternatively, a mediator might choose to take on the role of a negotiator, as this offers an intimate insight into the way in which issues and impasses will be interpreted from the perspective of the parties, and into the potential areas of resistance or friction they are likely to encounter. Similarly, negotiators might take on the role of mediators in order to gain a bird's eye view of the process or anticipate the reactions they might encounter from a third party. It should be noted, however, that if negotiators use a simulation as a dress rehearsal for real talks, great care is needed to avoid caricaturing the other side in the process, and to avoid predetermining the real negotiations through the role descriptions and simulation dynamics.

There is thus no preset formula for role assignment: it should be considered before each module, based on what the instructor knows about the participants, participants' own communication of their preferences and the need for a group dynamic that ensures participants are strategically placed in various factions in order to achieve a productive balance of forces. Instructors might be uncomfortable with this approach, given that it takes time and personal engagement with each individual. But taking some effort to learn about the individuals and reflect on role allocation goes a long way in making the process a success, which ultimately makes the job of the instructor easier.

It is my experience that after explaining to participants the various ways they can challenge themselves, it is valuable to ask them to *request two or three roles* in order of preference, and articulate in one brief paragraph why they wish to represent that role. They are much more likely to 'own' the process and embrace their task if they have chosen it themselves and are aware

of the difficulties it might present. For participants taking on a role that is challenging to their beliefs or identity, it is crucial to have this kind of 'buy in'. Ultimately the instructor must have the final say in role allocation in order to establish a productive equilibrium in the group. However, if participants are asked to convey their choice it makes it more likely that the instructor will be able to assign each person a role that they understand and accept as personally challenging.

Role packets

At the heart of a good IN-simulation is a set of realistic characters with well-defined identities, interests, perspectives and objectives. The difference between a generalized role (where a participant is told that he or she is a member of 'government Y' or 'militant group X', and given a set of broad goals and strategy suggestions) and a specific and personalized one (where the participant is asked to represent a real or realistic person, with a specific background and profile, personal ambitions and fears, the burden of past failures and successes and clashes with his or her team members) can make all the difference in terms of the participant's level of engagement over multiple sessions, and willingness to represent a difficult role with integrity.

The main lesson for me about negotiation in particular in this simulation exercise was that stakes immediately are much higher if you have strong personal involvement. All other exercises and simulations we did were more 'aseptic' role-playing, and it was difficult to identify with the character one played. In this module, because of the very good preparation material, one could actually identify very well with the characters. If there is your home country at stake, the bar for reaching agreement and compromising on important issues is suddenly higher. Where in business negotiations you regularly try to reach an agreement in terms of win-win, this might not be the case when it is about your land, as you might not compromise about the essentialities of life. (N.G., Graduate Institute, Geneva, 2011).[3]

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3   Over the years, many IN-simulation participants have generously shared with me their experiences of the process, and provided some quotes and testimonials. However, a majority of participants have partaken in modules that are sensitive for them in terms of the content or the role they took on, and have asked that their names not be attached to any quote. I have thus in most cases provided fictional initials, and in some instances left out the date and venue of the simulation to ensure anonymity. In a few cases participants were comfortable disclosing their names and titles, and for those I have provided more information under the particular quote.

After receiving their roles, participants should be given time to dive into the material. The detailed role packets should provide the following (for more information on how to structure role packs see 'Sample Role Packet'):

- *Context:* Background information on the particular conflict being studied, including historical context, scholarly debates, conflicting narratives about the nature and causes of the conflict, lessons learned from any past negotiations and the political, diplomatic or regional factors affecting the conflict.

- *Scenario:* In order for an IN-simulation to function smoothly, it needs a well-structured scenario. Participants cannot be privy to the inner workings of the scenario, as the instructor will have set up certain dynamics that unfold only gradually during the process. However, they should have a clear sense of what led to the 'talks' they are engaged in, what they are expected to accomplish and under what conditions, which parties and mediators will be present and why.

- *Biography:* A biography of the character represented: the person's background, most important influences, beliefs, activities and professional offices held.

- *Goals, positions and interests:* Information on that person's political views or ideology, interests, goals, ambitions and general worldview.

- *Portfolio:* A description of the individual's 'portfolio' – the specific issues he or she will be responsible for presenting at the talks.

- *Sources:* A list of sources that will help participants formulate their arguments and strategies in relation to the issues in their portfolio.

- *Obstacles:* A list of potential obstacles, including tensions within delegations and among team members, biased third parties, domestic, regional or international pressures.

- *Strategy and agenda: Negotiators* should be given a strategy advisory providing suggestions on how to behave in the negotiation, how to approach various parties (delegation members, members of the other side, mediators, third parties); a specific agenda for the outcome of the negotiation, including red lines that may have been given by their government, priorities on various issues, points of flexibility, aim and scope of a possible agreement, points to be discussed, or alternatives to a negotiated agreement. Those representing *mediators* should be given a series of options about how to organize the summit, a list of their own interests (whether they are 'neutral' mediators or interested third parties representing a particular country), their best case and worst case outcomes, their relations

with all parties, the kind of leverage (if any) they hold over the parties. Participants should be informed about whether the mediators are to be *impartial* mediators or interested third parties. The former would not have a particular agenda or serve the interest of their country in the process of mediation, and although they might be heavy-handed in directing the process they would leave the content of the agreement in the hands of the parties. The latter would more likely be diplomats serving the interests of their own government, and may be directive both regarding the process and content of the agreement, sometimes even attempting to impose solutions on the parties.

In addition to providing a set of specific sources that address participants' portfolio and agenda, role packets should also include references to further readings that will help individuals and their delegation respond to unexpected challenges that come from the other side. If participants are doing an IN-simulation over an extended period of time, they should engage in a spiral of research over the course of the module, continually searching for information and perspectives that increase and solidify their knowledge and help them put forth their case. Even if they are participating in an intensive two-day module, they will still need to continue looking into issues that come up unexpectedly at the table, although their time for research will be limited to the period of the simulation itself.

This sense of ongoing exploration is particularly important to ensure that debates continually evolve throughout the process. Simulations that do not take into account the need for development during the exercise itself often begin with an exciting bang but soon peter out, as participants do not feel challenged to explore the issues more deeply and begin to recycle the same arguments. The best way to ensure that a substantial amount of information can make its way into a negotiation is to assign common texts to the entire group and to delegations, and then instruct each individual to research different aspects of particular issues (for more on how to set up research assignments to ensure focused debates, see the 'How to Manual' and 'Sample Role Packet'). This allows each participant to specialize and be responsible for his/her own agenda, and at the same time to cooperate with others in order to ensure that a coherent strategy is developed. It also means that while not all participants will have time to research each issue, they will all learn about and engage with almost all issues at least peripherally, as these will be brought to the table and discussed.

The golden rule of IN-simulations: Role integrity

*Participants' primary obligation in an IN-simulation is **role integrity**, and this must be made clear to them from the start. If participants are loyal to their character and objectives (no matter how abhorrent they might find these in real life) and these characters and objectives are laid out in a detailed and authentic manner, the simulation will be productive and evolve along lines that are extraordinarily realistic and instructive.*

Some scholars and simulation designers writing about simulations have expressed skepticism as to whether participants can play a role with this kind of integrity – especially if it is culturally unfamiliar or antagonistic to their beliefs – without caricaturing it, and in the following chapters we will address this issue in depth. Here, what is important to point out is the reason for the heavy insistence on role integrity. Simply put, it is the best way to guarantee that the simulation is not driven by participants' personal knowledge base, desires, experiences, fears, or by their wish to pursue a particular agenda, secure a happy ending or sabotage the proceedings.

However, it must be noted that the emphasis on role integrity is not to be interpreted as an overly compulsive focus on the particularities of a particular *character*: in fact, it can be distracting to participants if they are too concerned with the way their 'real' character would speak or behave, or his or her personal attributes and proclivities. IN-simulations are not about acting out the personalities of living people but about interpreting the motives and understanding the concerns of various individuals and groups, and then presenting these to others. The actual character is merely a useful conduit to help people identify more with the role.

Many role-play exercises overlook this golden rule. They provide participants with short role sheets with only the most basic information about their persona and agenda. Due to time constraints, participants do not have the opportunity to prepare for the requirements of the role, evolve in their positions or experience what it is like to move from ideas to implementation and bear the consequence of their choices. In modules that are designed specifically to sharpen participants' negotiation skills through short skill-building exercises, roles might be thinly constructed and still effective. But in a brief module there is little opportunity for participants to recognize a weakness and modify their approach, test a new method and experience the results of that modification process. In cases where participants stray from the role sheets, they are likely to fulfill their own assumptions about the conflict rather than learn about the predicament that others are facing; and if partic-

ipants are given a role that they feel is threatening or difficult to represent, they have little incentive to engage with it honestly and are more likely to caricature it.

Balancing freedom and constraint

Two caveats should be noted here. First, it is clear that remaining 100% wedded to a role description, if that description defines a character's goals and limits very rigidly, can lead participants to feel that their freedom of action and thought is so constrained that the exploratory and creative element of the exercise is quashed. There is likely to be a moment when, like real negotiators, simulation participants have to make difficult choices that appear to challenge their received wisdom or even raise questions about their 'red lines'. If they feel they must follow the role packet to the letter until the very end, they will find themselves rejecting any compromise and repeating a familiar line of intransigence. Role integrity does not mean there is no room for flexibility.

The error made in many simulations is to allow this moment of potential flexibility to arrive too early in the process, before participants have delved deeply into their roles and grappled with the rationale for the arguments being put forth by their character. As long as this moment of possible compromise comes after participants have made their best effort to represent their role correctly (usually in the last third or quarter of the module) this moment of choice will be enormously challenging and instructive. (For more on this see 'How to Manual'.)

Second, while participants must succeed in representing their role authentically, they should not have to 'succeed' in terms of signing a deal or making peace. Part of the pressure of the experience comes from the element of freedom and uncertainty: while the instructor is responsible for setting up a virtual reality of the conflict, they should allow the participants themselves to determine the outcome of the negotiation. Participants should be made aware that they have the right to fail at 'making peace' and even walk out of the talks, while still succeeding as participants or receiving a good grade as students. For purposes of learning, the struggle with and authenticity of the negotiation and mediation *process* is more important than the *outcome*.

The phenomenon of reluctant identification

It should be noted that there is a somewhat disturbing psychological process at work in many IN-simulations (and other types of simulations) that

instructors should be aware of and prepared for, and which requires more systematic research and discussion. This is that, in a large majority of cases, not long after an individual is given an agenda and a role and faces others in an adversarial scenario, the individual tends to identify with this role, even if the character's behavior seems deeply flawed or if the participant would be antagonistic to him or her in real life. The participants' compulsion to identify, in particular when facing a hostile opponent intent on undermining them, is almost irresistible. Thus, even while they might not believe in the specific arguments they are putting forth, they come to feel compelled either to 'win' and succeed in making the better argument, or to believe in their character's rights and have a strong desire to champion his or her agenda. Often participants want the character to be a force for good, or to succeed because of his or her intelligence or power; even if they strongly dislike the views of their character they still might feel slighted by the response of the other side, or determined that the character should prevail over others within the delegation.

> I was absolutely amazed by the speed in which someone could get into a role emotionally. It actually frightened me, because I became very defensive on certain issues, really feeling like a member of the group I represented even though I definitely lacked knowledge of content to defend my arguments intellectually. I have always been very careful about judging the situation in this conflict, but being in the role of one side, I felt this rage mounting about the others depicting themselves as the victims, forgetting to tell at least half of the whole story when speaking about certain events. I think I realized how mass propaganda tends to work in situations of conflict or acute distress. I was shocked to realize how easily intelligent, educated people could be talked into something. Feeling that this dark force was probably also inside myself was scary. Maybe this is the reason why I let out my 'peace-loving' nature after all and made considerable concessions.
> (B.D., Graduate Institute, Geneva, 2011)

This kind of experience is not always adequately dealt with by instructors who design and run simulations. Although a simulation should have clear boundaries and should not be allowed to take on the features of a psychological experiment, the sensitive aspects of the process must be considered. We will discuss this issue in greater detail in Chapter Four, which addresses various critiques of simulations. As a preliminary note it should here be said

that, despite its hazards, this phenomenon of 'reluctant identification' – identification and even entrenchment in an unfamiliar or hostile position – is a key aspect of the learning process during an IN-simulation in which participants take on a role that does not match their beliefs or dispositions. As such it should not be feared but rather embraced as a part of the experience, and discussed in detail in debrief sessions. *It raises important questions that push participants beyond their focus on one particular conflict and encourages them to reflect on patterns of conflict and human behavior (including their own capacity for rational response and critical thinking) more broadly.* It also highlights a key premise of mediation – that unpalatable violent behavior or transgressions of human rights may be grounded in motivations that can be analyzed and comprehended, even while these are not accepted or legitimized. Thus it is most useful to embrace the phenomenon while at the same time channeling it and setting clear boundaries with regard to the resulting dynamic.

Meeting with external coaches

In this preparatory period it is extremely useful to set up meetings between participants and 'coaches' – external experts who specialize in some of the issues that will be discussed in the simulation, or professional negotiators and mediators who are directly involved in the conflict being studied. These coaches can help participants wade through the issues they are studying, offering specific input on legal, military or security arrangements, or other technical problems. They also may provide some context, including a sense of how players see and feel about various issues, and help participants think through their strategy, giving them pointers regarding negotiation/mediation and references to lessons learned in previous talks. Such meetings at this early stage inspire participants to rise to the level of the 'real' players, and give courage to those who are resistant to articulating some perspectives. These encounters also serve to create a relationship between participants and external coaches, which will be very useful if coaches are able to be present and give input during the course of the module.

1.3   Running the Negotiation

The second phase of a simulation – after the preparatory period – is initiated when participants begin to interact 'in role'. As in real negotiations, there are various arenas of engagement during the process, including plenary sessions,

delegation meetings, committee meetings and off the record, 'back-channel' encounters. It is often the case that the simulated negotiation will follow a rhythm not unlike a real one, with seemingly entrenched positions leading to a sense of possibility, often stymied by resistance near the close of a deal, and with a variety of setbacks provoked by external events or internal factional disagreements.

The 'active learning'[4] element of the process begins in this phase: it requires that participants immediately make use of the information they are learning about in order to prepare their arguments and plan their strategies. This not only leads them to vigorously investigate views they otherwise find unpleasant or might avoid: it also creates a psychological incentive to retain information and make best use of knowledge gathered by colleagues and peers. Knowledge tends to leap off the page and engage them, as they need it in order to make their case. The learning curve is unusually steep.

Preliminary delegation meetings

During the preparatory period, participants meet with their delegation in order to get to know each other, divide their work, plan their collective strategy and share information. If coaches are available, this is a good time to have them meet delegations and offer input on issues and strategy. If possible the instructor should be present at these early meetings, for it is often the case that a simulation can be set off course by the enthusiasm of an elaborately planned strategy very early on, a strategy that does not conform with the role or represents a misunderstanding of the process. *Instructors should not underestimate how difficult it is for even very well-informed participants to adopt and follow the goals set out in their role pack, how often they think they are doing so when in fact they are straying from realistic tensions in order to begin the process on a 'productive' or 'creative' footing.* The effectiveness of an IN-simulation will be enhanced by 'tough love' meted out early on by the instructor: targeted guidance in early meetings where the facilitator or coaches compel participants to be disciplined in their approach to the role, and recognize the difference between their own agendas and those of the people they represent.

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4   Some useful definitions of active learning are provided by Bonwell and Eison, who helped popularize the concept, including the idea that active learning is "anything that involves students in doing things and thinking about the things they are doing." See Bonwell, C. C., and J. A. Eison, (1991), "Active Learning: Creating Excitement in the Classroom", *ASHE-ERIC Higher Education,* Report 1, Washington D.C.: The George Washington University, School of Education and Human Development, p. 2, *http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED336049.pdf*.

The negotiation phase

While participants absorb a great deal of information quickly in the preparatory period and initial factional discussions, the crucial spike in the learning curve (which for some means learning new information, for others means skill-building or confrontation with personal capacities) takes place during the negotiation itself. The interactive process that inspires and sustains this learning will be discussed in subsequent chapters. Here we note that this largely occurs because, as participants relate to their adversaries and third parties, they must think on their feet and make choices under pressure. Reflection and action become intertwined and feed back into each other regularly.

During the negotiation the mediators or third parties (if part of the simulation scenario) are generally in charge of organizing the time and structure of the meetings or summit. It is thus difficult to describe accurately the chronology of an IN-simulation, as it will vary greatly. For example, some groups might be held up on issues of process and 'waste' several hours in separate rooms, unable to agree on terms for coming to the table, or on whether they want to come to the table at all. This is generally not time wasted at all, but rather a very productive experience, as it teaches participants a great deal about why it is so difficult to get parties to the table in the first place, or how internal tensions within a delegation can undermine or prevent a peace process from moving forward. As a general rule, however, it is useful to have the mediator delegation run an initial plenary session – this allows participants to hear each other's views, get a sense of who the characters are, educate each other on various positions, and feel the tension of the adversarial encounter. After the plenary, participants might break up into delegation meetings, and over the course of the next days or weeks they will go back and forth between large plenary sessions, delegation meetings, committee meetings and private 'off-the record' discussions. If they are joined by external coaches, these will listen in on most of their discussions and be available for feedback and input.

The negotiation phase is likely to be the most challenging for participants on a personal level, as it is here that their beliefs about their own strengths and weaknesses may be put into question. They will have to test their tolerance for adversarial encounters; listen to and communicate about difficult issues; deal with rejection of their ideas or proposals; manage internal disagreements and challenges to their beliefs or authority; build and implement strategies in the midst of shifting realities and time pressures. During

this phase many participants will be surprised to learn how others perceive them. Some may come to recognize that their assumptions about their talents were flawed, or that they had stifled their own potential growth in areas where they thought they were incapable but in fact can thrive. This is also a time where they can make the best of the opportunity to test out several new ways of interacting and responding to others in the context of a negotiation.

Coaching and facilitator input

During the simulation one of the most powerful learning experiences may come from the continual communication with external coaches (as long as they have some understanding of the method, and know when to refrain from giving input and allow participants to be left to their own devices). It is here, as participants are grappling with ideas, strategies and confrontations with other parties, that they can make best use of the input from experienced professionals. This heightens the participants' sense of being in a live negotiation, where experts share in the experience and can offer feedback on individuals' negotiation or mediation style.

Regular input and feedback from the instructor can also be extremely useful, helping participants notice certain behavior patterns early on and modify them during the simulation, testing their limits and capacities. Further, instructors can provide a mediating presence if participants feel they are under attack, are unable to 'hear' feedback offered from teammates, or in cases where individuals might like to point out some weakness in a fellow participant but refrain from doing so in order not to be offensive. Instructors can notice and 'intercept' various suggestions, offering the feedback themselves in such a way that is more likely to be perceived as neutral.

Final phases of the negotiation

In the last stages of an IN-simulation process (a few hours if the process is two days, a few weeks if the process takes place over a semester), most participants have in some sense become masters of the issues and their roles. They will feel impassioned and empowered, conscious of how high the stakes are, determined to achieve their goals. Some are deeply disturbed by the obstacles to peacemaking, others have become keenly aware of their own limits as negotiators and mediators. At this point the instructor and coaches can and should let go of trying to influence the direction of the negotiation or giving input to participants. For if a participant makes an 'unrealistic' deal or a *faux pas* in relation to their character (both very likely) *after* days or weeks of good

work, this is acceptable and usually highly edifying. It reveals how difficult it is for participants to fully grasp the frustrations, resistances and strong beliefs of parties in conflict, and provides a realistic learning experience about the heavy responsibilities that decisions-makers have to live with. (For more on the reasons for allowing eleventh hour mistakes, see 'How to Manual').

> *As for my personal mistakes, I think the worst moment was towards the end. I got excited by the agreement that was about to be achieved that I went beyond my red line. In that situation, my personal opinion interfered in my role as I conceded on something that for my character would be totally out of question.* (A.A., Graduate Institute, Geneva, 2011).

In the final phase of the negotiation there is also likely to be a great deal of *action*. There is nothing like a deadline to focus the mind, and participants who have become attached to their proposals will likely be vying with those who resist compromise; sides might be at an impasse or not speaking to each other; the mediators might be intervening aggressively; or a crisis might have appeared, either in the form of an evolving dynamic internal to the simulation or a (fictional or real) external event that the instructor has introduced in order to shift things in one direction or another. It is also likely that participants want 'more time' to refine their deal or prevent the talks from collapsing, but the instructor will have to impose a deadline to ensure time for debrief discussions and to achieve closure. The participants will almost always be reluctant to stop if they have not concluded a deal, but it matters little if they appear still to be in the middle of a process: the lessons learned will be a reflection of the negotiation as a whole.[5]

1.4   Debriefing Simulations

Debriefing is an essential part of an IN-simulation experience. It helps participants pull out individual lessons from the process, reflect together on the direction the negotiation took and hear feedback on their performance. Note

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[5]   It has happened quite often that professionals with whom I have run IN-simulations – people who are extremely busy and strongly resisted taking two days out of their schedules for a training module – commented in the debrief period that the simulation should have been *longer,* because they felt they needed more time in order to be able to work through some of the lessons and problems they encountered. This speaks to the importance of encouraging even busy participants to make time to take part in modules that provide space for development.

that while 'coaching' and feedback can and should take place during an IN-simulation, a debrief – where participants shed their roles and discuss the process from outside the context of the role play – is most productive once the simulation is over. If roles are broken in the middle of the simulation to reflect on the process, this will interfere with participants' engagement. This is especially the case when participants are taking on roles that are difficult for them and where they need full and continuous concentration to faithfully embody the role.

Ideally a debrief should have several stages: an initial discussion with the group immediately after the simulation ends; individual meeting between the instructor and participants; written assessment in relation to 'lessons learned' from the process; and a written evaluation form. Some of these stages will be discussed in more detail in the 'How to Manual'.

The debrief period is the most important counter-weight to the subjective aspect of an IN-simulation, and it has several goals. It allows participants to unwind, and share information about what happened 'behind the scenes' during the course of the exercise. They are gradually able to look from a distance at how the process unfolded, and critically reflect (sometimes with a great deal of surprise) on their own behavior and views as they evolved during the course of the negotiation. It is also an opportunity to set the record straight, analyze anything participants did that was historically, politically or factually inaccurate and bring in new information and ideas to the group, which can be balanced against what was learned during the simulation.

In my experience of extended, multi-session simulations participants can take days, sometimes weeks or months, to fully process the experience. Thus a debrief session is only the beginning of a series of reflections that are extended in time and difficult to monitor. Most participants become attached to the thrill of the negotiation experience, their individual achievements or their particular role within the group. Often they are genuinely shocked at what they have learned about the issues and conflict, or filled with a deep sense of sadness about the conflict or empathy with various parties. But at the same time they will often be extremely excited at having a new type of confidence and knowledge, one that opens new avenues of engagement with the conflict and individuals involved.

Because of this sense of identification, instructors (and coaches, if available) should play an active role in guiding the debrief session. This is an opportunity to draw participants beyond their personal interpretations of

what happened and comment in detail on the process as it was perceived from the outside: the content of the negotiation, the relationships and dynamics between parties, the choices of individual players and delegations. Instructors should point to elements that were particularly realistic, discuss those that strayed from reality, and challenge participants to explain their choices during the simulations and reactions after.

In Chapter Four, however, I discuss why *it is best to avoid using the simulation process or debrief as a way to achieve consensus about the rights and wrongs of a conflict.* An IN-simulation can lead various participants to very different conclusions, and this is one of its strengths: there is no reason why the experience should bring people with otherwise conflicting views to agree on contentious issues. The purpose is rather to have them learn more about the deep context of the conflict, the views of other parties, and to reflect more critically on their perspectives or approach to the conflict.

One useful exercise for the debrief is to look closely at any outcome documents devised by participants and evaluate whether they were convincing or would be considered politically viable, pointing out in detail which words or concepts might have been accepted or rejected by the real parties and why.

The debrief is also a chance to ask some deeper questions about the dynamics of conflict that were revealed through the specific case studied. Often people feel that the experience of having been so swept up in a conflict has taught them something crucial about patterns of conflict, relationships and human behavior beyond the particular case being studied. These can be some of the most surprising yet profound and lasting lessons for participants.

Phases of an integrative simulation:

1. Preparation phase: including role allocation, reading role packets, preparation within delegations, researching the case, mediators designing the process.
2. Negotiation and mediation phase: including plenary and side room meetings, drafting documents, inputs from coaches and instructors where needed.
3. Debriefing phase: Verbal and written debriefing, collective and individual work on lessons learned as related to the actual conflict, general conflict dynamics, negotiation and mediation skills and personal strengths and weaknesses.

1.5 Integrating Simulations Into a Program or Course of Study

Finally, it is important to return to our initial point about the need for simulations to be integrated into a class or course of study. It is at this point – during and after the debrief – that the process provides participants with a chance to engage in a cyclical rather than one-way relationship with 'theory and practice'. After they have worked through a 'practice-based' exercise that challenged their theories and hypotheses, the post simulation phase should allow them to reflect more analytically on the lessons learned through their direct experience with the conflict and negotiation/mediation. In an ideal scenario, a debrief session would be followed by several sessions where the group embarks on a new round of readings and analysis: this would allow them more opportunity to consider the conflict based on the reflective and experiential parts of their learning.

This is where the benefits of traditional learning and simulation learning can be complementary, whether in a university setting or professional training program. In the former, students participating in seminar-like discussions after experiencing a simulation often have a sense of confidence in their own views, feel ownership of their knowledge, and exhibit a willingness to communicate with and challenge each other and the instructor. Thus a simulation, while being only one part of an educational continuum, can ensure that the learning experience in the post-simulation phase is still *active*, even while it is not *practice*-oriented.

When it comes to professional participants, the process tends to offer them an opportunity to slow down, distance themselves from their work experience in the field and reflect on aspects of a conflict that they did not have time or space to consider previously. Lessons learned can be discussed in a context where there is time to reconsider categories and strategies that might have been pre-fabricated or institutionally inherited: individuals thus might find ways to bring more of their own talents, intuitions and wisdom to the work they do.

2   What Participants Learn

One of the most valuable aspects of an IN-simulation is that it can allow different aspects of learning – analytical and affective, theoretical and practical – to take place in one educational space. More specifically, the method is developed with an eye to recognizing and trying to accommodate the intimate connection between skill building (negotiation or mediation 'techniques'), understanding (learning about the nature of a conflict, the perspectives of various parties, the political, cultural, social, emotional and psychological barriers to peacemaking) and personal development (working on individual strengths and weaknesses).

The rationale for integrating these elements is that although it is of course possible to isolate a process in which one studies the nature of a conflict and a process in which one engages in a skill-building exercise, in reality a skill developed in isolation from a 'situation' is merely a technique, one that might or might not be useful when applied. Ultimately that skill needs to be refined through the development of the perceptive qualities that are gained when individuals engage in a live exchange, experience the dynamics of human interaction in a conflict situation and begin to modify their technique in response to wisdom and insights gained about others – their feelings, reactions and resistances. Similarly, one's perspective on a conflict, in isolation from interaction with it, is a hypothesis that might or might not prove to be accurate. It is refined when an individual is compelled to test his or her perspectives through (skilled) interaction with people who are in the grip of that conflict.

These refinements in skill building and understanding take place naturally when an individual moves from an educational setting to a professional environment and undergoes 'on the job' training. Once in a job, however, people do not always have the time or freedom to take risks or engage in the kind of self-reflection that is possible in an educational space. Because an IN-simulation reproduces many of the conditions found in a professional setting, it allows participants to experience that natural interface between skill building, understanding and personal development, and use the lessons learned as effectively as possible in their future work.

Below some of the lessons gained through IN-simulations in the areas of understanding conflict, skill building and personal development are explained in a sequential manner. However, it should be noted that this chronological approach does not reflect the way in which these lessons are

learned during an IN-simulation, where the process is cyclical and one aspect of learning feeds into another.

2.1   Understanding Conflict

IN-simulations attempt to offer participants two different levels of understanding regarding conflict. One is particular, focused on the nitty-gritty details of a single case study. The second is broad and wide-ranging; the vehicle of the case study pushes participants to reflect on how the dynamics revealed there reflect those that take place in many conflicts through time and across cultures.

Avoiding premature resolutionism: Understanding a particular conflict
One advantage of the IN-simulation process is that it often helps participants to recognize and avoid premature resolutionism when studying a particular conflict – a natural inclination felt by many students, analysts and mediators to leap over the impasses and resistances felt by parties to a conflict and reach for immediate solutions or resolutions. This premature resolutionism is sometimes driven by undeclared rationalist assumptions that there are logical and just solutions to every conflict, or that compromise is always desirable and possible. Fictional or brief simulations frequently reinforce the tendency to solve. In particular, those that focus on methodological questions relating to negotiation/mediation, or aim to increase topical expertise, tend to leave the visceral, intractable, emotional elements of a conflict outside the room. Participants encounter a safer, more ordered and sanitized version of a conflict – one that ensures arguments do not get too heated, allows them to practice bargaining or negotiation skills and reach a deal that might break the deadlock.

In contrast, in an IN-simulation it is often the case that a deal might not be possible, but the experience is highly realistic. The process reveals the ways in which the social, political, cultural, economic and historical context of a conflict is intertwined with the emotional and psychological baggage carried by the parties, and how this affects the dynamics of a negotiation process. The high level of detail ensures that participants must confront the perspectives of a wide variety of players (including those who abjure negotiations), the role of regional players and third parties, and the tensions within competing factions on each side. In bringing these realities of the conflict

and human tensions into the room, an IN-simulation requires that participants first and foremost develop a clear and nuanced sense of *why a conflict persists*, before moving toward the 'resolution' phase.

In the context of an IN-simulation, neither participants nor instructors have the luxury of representing individuals, groups or policies they support or approve of. Rather, they are sometimes compelled (and many bitterly complain about this initially) to represent people they do not respect and might even abhor: those who are politically on the far right or far left, radicals or religious extremists, 'collaborators' or 'sell-outs', or groups that advance positions and methods participants may find repugnant or threatening. Participants are confronted with the ideas and experiences of individuals and groups in a way that requires they address these as authentic, rather than dismiss them as erroneous or unethical. Instead of battling straw men, as often happens in polarized debates on a hot political topic, participants take on the most sophisticated version of an idea, tradition or belief, and their own argument must rise to the level of its opposition.

This high-quality engagement appears to have a powerful effect on the group, as it is challenged to confront a multidimensional reality. It is particularly effective when a participant already knows a great deal about the conflict at hand, as his or her *knowledge* can sometimes paradoxically be the obstacle to deeper *understanding*. I have seen this phenomenon most often with journalists, academics or think tank analysts, individuals who possess specialized information about a particular subject but are not always able to empathize with the level of obstinacy or self-destructive behavior they see in one or both sides. This was well articulated by an experienced journalist who, after taking part in a simulation on Israel/Palestine, noted the difference between ideas about conflict resolution and the realities that plague a conflict:

Gradually I became aware of the enormous gulf that separates those of us who view the conflict from afar – whether from our perch on liberal newspapers or in well-meaning think tanks – from those who have actually to solve the problem. From this distance, the solution might seem painfully obvious: any cool-headed moderate can see where the midpoint between the two sides lies. But that is to reckon without the pressures on the negotiators within their own team, from a public opinion always ready to cry sell-out, and from the USA. And that's even before you get to the demands of the other side. (Jonathan Freedland, Journalist, The Guardian, Israel/Palestine simulation, 2011)

One of the purposes of simulating reality in this way is to ensure that new proposals and formulas, such as those regularly put forward by think tanks, independent groups or third parties, are rooted in the experiences and beliefs of the actual parties to a conflict themselves rather than driven by the hopes, perceptions or projections of well-intentioned outsiders. The method questions the value of proliferating 'out of the box' ideas about conflict resolution, ideas that sometimes overlook or underestimate the real gaps between parties or divisions within groups, and are thus un-implementable. It is suggested to participants that before diving into an exploration of creative ideas they first refine their understanding of the perceptions of the key players, and consider the restrictions placed on them from various quarters. After they have done this, their proposals are more likely to be recognized as viable by those who are directly involved in the conflict.

Recognizing patterns: Understanding the dynamics of conflict

While an IN-simulation brings participants deep into the heart of one *particular* conflict, paradoxically their engagement with the details often has the effect of leading them to reflect on what a particular conflict reveals about *patterns* of conflict more broadly. This is so because although the process mires participants in the minutiae of one case study, it is precisely this act of being caught up in specifics that weans them away from preconceived ideas and compels them to dive into a perspective that they might be unfamiliar with or resistant to. As a result, they slowly become attached to a particular narrative, an interpretation of history and current events as seen by their character or faction. This is also one reason why loosely constructed simulations that focus on negotiation/mediation skills, and avoid engagement with detail, sometimes paradoxically fail to give participants a sense of the challenges of negotiation or mediation. If participants' roles do not compel them to become intimately involved in the issues that drive the conflict, they are unlikely to fight for their rights or for their interpretation of various substantive points, and thus are more likely to make unrealistic compromises or deals.

In an IN-simulation, as participants argue with their opponents about the issues, they begin to grow reactive and resistant to compromise in ways that often clash with their self-image as reasonable and fair-minded people open to compromise. This is a particularly powerful experience when participants are representing a role they do not approve of or even find offensive. Their response to opponents and descent into struggle and victimization is

surprising to many, given the fact that they do not believe in the positions they are putting forth. In the debrief period they often reflect with wonder at how they and their peers got carried away by the process and emotions. In the words of one participant:

> *What I realized is that this conflict, which seems to be so specifically about Palestine and Israel, is in reality not exclusively linked to these people and issues ... If we, as individuals who are completely removed from the conflict, in just 48 hours reproduced the dynamics between the parties and became so impassioned, angry and attached to our beliefs, then clearly the conflict is about more than Palestine and Israel. It's about how all human beings respond when put in adversarial positions, and how quickly they begin to believe the narratives being presented to them. It was very disturbing to encounter this.* (D.P., Hamas-Israeli cease-fire simulation, Geneva Center for Security Policy, 2010).

Such responses point to the importance of a debrief and post-simulation discussions, where participants have time to analyze the process from a distance and reflect on their own choices and behavior, as well as that of their colleagues. These kinds of lessons, about how human beings respond in adversarial situations, are vital for conflict practitioners, negotiators and mediators, offering them insight into the kinds of dynamics they are likely to encounter in their work, regardless of the particular conflict they are dealing with.

Understanding conflict:
1.   Before proposing 'creative' solutions, which might lead to proposals that are unrealistic or un-implementable, participants are encouraged to understand a conflict in depth from the perspective of the parties themselves.
2.   Participant experience and learn about patterns of conflict behavior that occur in many conflicts, so as to be better equipped to recognize these in a particular case.

2.2   Negotiation and Mediation Skills

As simulation participants begin to refine their understanding of a particular conflict and examine the issues from deep within the 'box', the path is open

for them to practice and test some basic concepts, skills and techniques of negotiation and mediation. These skills are important for those who hope to take part in or support peace, negotiation and mediation processes, as well as those who deal with various forms of conflict and negotiation in their professional and personal lives. The realistic environment in which they are tested, however, means that the skills have to be internalized and fine-tuned, rather than 'copy pasted' in an artificial manner.

The value of negotiation and mediation skills

It can reasonably be argued that there are limits to the value of skills training with regard to negotiation and mediation. In the case of long-standing conflicts the problem often lies not in the lack of effective negotiators or mediators but in the broader context of power and politics. Breakthroughs in conflicts frequently take place for reasons that are unpredictable, have little to do with 'talking' or diplomacy and are driven by external needs, constraints, fatigue, threat of renewed violence, external supports or pressures, the geo-political context and the willingness or capacity of the parties to choose and maintain peace.

Despite these very real limits, and although there are many factors that affect the success of a negotiation, it is useful from an educational, professional and political standpoint to provide training in conflict, negotiation and mediation. The skills of the negotiator and mediator are factors that can increase the likelihood of parties realizing desired outcomes through dialogue and negotiation rather than violence, and negotiation continues to be a method that many turn to when attempting to end violent and non-violent conflict.

In addition, the kind of negotiation/mediation training provided in IN-simulations is not strictly skills-based or designed only for those who find themselves in these positions in their professional lives. Because most conflicts will at some point involve some form of negotiation, even if these take place outside of – or pose a challenge to – the current processes or 'paradigms', it is vital that wider circles of policy-makers, advocates, activists, journalists and directly affected constituencies gain a better grasp of both their potential and limits. An IN-simulation can help observers and indirect participants understand what is at stake for each side and what might be possible for each to achieve. This increases the likelihood that they will be able to successfully translate the issues to a wider audience, or support or

reject a peace process based not on kneejerk reactions or misinformation but an informed understanding of what is on offer at a given moment.

Finally, negotiation and mediation disciplines (and related skills) are transferable and relevant in a great deal of professional and personal contexts for a large number of participants who are not directly involved in negotiating or mediating inter- or intra-state conflicts.

Developing 'negotiations-think'

So much emphasis has been placed on the benefits that simulations provide in allowing participants to 'walk in the shoes of the other' that a crucial element of simulation learning is often overlooked – the effect of walking in the shoes of a negotiator or mediator. During a negotiation simulation, participants are gradually compelled to shift from the types of arguments they make in their real lives – the academics' objective analysis, the activists' case for absolute justice, the advocates' talking points, the mediators' appeal for impartiality – and they begin to engage in *negotiations-think.*[1]

Engaging in *negotiations-think* does not mean that one is convinced that negotiation/mediation is the best or only way out of a conflict, that communication necessarily leads to viable compromise, or that it is always appropriate to sit at the table with one's adversary. Nor is it a skill only to be deployed in the event of direct talks between parties. Rather, *it is a way of reflecting on a conflict even in the absence of direct engagement: encouraging people to take stock of their options in light of the realities on the ground and in the minds of various players, and to become aware of the alternatives and restrictions faced by parties to a conflict.*

While engaging in *negotiations-think* participants focus less on ideal solutions and reflect more on what is achievable. They learn that without knowing specifically about the perspectives, concerns and interests of the other side – whether they consider these to be justified or not – they will not be able to effectively pursue their own objectives. They come face to face with the clash between the goal of attaining absolute justice and the realities of what is attainable in a negotiated settlement with a group of people who have competing aims or a clashing worldview. The process sharpens their ability to understand the motives of a wide variety of parties, and anticipate

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1   These lessons or thinking patterns described here as *negotiations-think* can of course be acquired by other means and in other learning environments. However, the IN-simulation process and method tends to precipitate confrontations with 'reality', provoking these lessons in ways that traditional courses often do not, for reasons that will be further explained in the following chapter.

their likely actions and responses in the context of a conflict or negotiation. In this way it gives them profound insight into the reasons why certain parties might not be able to respond positively to what appear to be 'reasonable' compromises or 'logical' solutions.

Negotiations-think includes several elements, which are described below.

Functional empathy

The term empathy is used a great deal when discussing the need for parties in conflict to come to understand each other, or recognize each other's suffering and 'narratives'. However, the word is often used casually and mistakenly to indicate something closer to sympathy: it is assumed that if parties learn to commiserate with each other's suffering and experience, they might soften their views of one another.

This assumption is problematic for several reasons. First, it pressures people in conflict prematurely to feel something they might not be ready to feel, or express a feeling in a disingenuous manner. Emphasizing the need for an emotional response to the pain of the 'other' excludes all those (often very influential) parties who do not or cannot have such a response. This also sidelines 'hardline' voices, despite the fact that these often make the best negotiators, as they are trusted by their constituencies and are able to make and implement controversial decisions.

Second, there is little evidence of the presumed link between mutual humanization and political or diplomatic breakthroughs in a conflict. In fact, mutual humanization can sometimes lead to a *deeper* sense of disillusionment on the part of parties to a conflict, as it sets up a series of expectations. For example, one party to a conflict might believe that because the other side has come to understand their experiences, sympathized with the plight of their people and even recognized some of the flaws in their own side's narrative, this will translate into an agreement on the causes of the conflict, further acts of violence or approaches to peacemaking. And yet a deeper understanding of the predicament of the other side rarely leads individuals to modify their core beliefs, or abandon strongly held loyalties. Thus, when parties return to the site of the conflict and it becomes apparent that they are still willing to support or justify the actions of their own people, there can ensue a sense of betrayal that reinforces initial stereotypes – such as the belief that the other side is manipulative, insincere and incapable of true empathy or

compromise. One or both sides might thus become convinced that dialogue is not only useless but misleading and even destructive.[2]

In contrast, the kind of responsiveness induced in an IN-simulation is better described as *functional empathy*. Although one might think that taking on and defending the position of one's enemy (an extreme form of 'walking in the shoes of the other'), would be the ultimate form of enforced sympathy, in fact the process does not pressure participants into *feeling* for the parties they are representing; it requires that they *understand* their perspectives deeply. Whereas in a dialogue group-type exercise it is often the case that individuals are asked to listen to and hear the suffering being expressed by their adversaries (in some sense being pressured to engage emotionally and respond to their words and humanity), in an IN-simulation there is a private, inner dialogue between an individual and him- or herself (and sometimes with likeminded peers within a faction), as he or she evaluates new information, ideas and experiences. Whether individuals come to sympathize with the experiences or feelings of the person they represent is up to them. But they do not need to in order to benefit from the exercise.

This process aims at more than 'knowing your enemies' for the sake of defeating them – a strategy that often leads to a superficial engagement with extreme positions on the other side, positions that are then attacked or undermined by talking points but never fully grasped. At the same time, it also asks participants to move beyond the idea that 'to understand is to forgive' – something many fear, and that is often the reason they resist engaging with their enemies. IN-simulation participants often report that, rather than being drawn into compassion for the 'other', they learned to distinguish between those aspects of the other narrative that they perceive to be 'pure propaganda', those that they recognize might have some validity and need to be addressed in a peace deal, and those they do not accept as valid but recognize the other side will always perceive to be true (the third of these being the most difficult to accommodate). The sense of confidence they gain at being able to parse out elements of another's position and address each with considered arguments (rather than kneejerk reactions or unrestrained passion) is matched by a growing confidence in their ability to argue for their own interests. In other words, they are able to articulate with clarity, and a sense of political and diplomatic acumen, where and why they will not compromise

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2   For an analysis of this phenomenon in the context of the conflict over Northern Ireland, see Mitchell, C.R., (1973), "Conflict Resolution and Controlled Communication: Some Further Comments", *Journal of Peace Research*, 10:1/2, p.126.

on certain matters, and to consider those areas where they reluctantly realize they must offer something.

Finally, the emphasis on functional empathy helps participants develop intellectual habits and skills that have a sobering effect on their approach to social and political problems more broadly, what scholars have called a 'global theory of mind'[3], a 'shift in thinking from *our perception of facts* to what other agents *believe to be fact*'[4] and a capacity to contemplate one's identity in relation to others.[5]

This impact of this form of functional empathy was well articulated to me by one participant who emphatically did *not* come to sympathize with the views articulated in the role he took on. In fact, he considered that what he learned about the positions of the other side on the matter he researched reinforced his view that 1) their stated concerns in this area were not logical or sincere but were manipulated in the interests of achieving other ends, and 2) negotiations with the other side were not productive and were more likely to undermine rather than bolster the aspirations and rights of his own people. More problematically, in private meetings with his delegation members C.M. broke role and did not hide his feelings about the inauthenticity of the positions he was putting forth. This had a disruptive affect on the experience of his colleagues, who found it difficult to resist the temptation to join him in his critique (we will discuss the problem of participants who struggle with role reversal in more detail in Chapter Four).

Despite his inconsistent attitude to role integrity in private delegation meetings, however, C.M. was true to his role in the direct negotiations with the other side and with the mediators, mastered the issues, put forth his case with superb clarity and persevered through the negotiation in the role of 'the enemy'. As a result, he had an experience that he later described as challenging and consequential. In particular, he came to recognize that the options he and his people faced were more limited than he hoped or assumed. His rhetoric in the debrief session was highly charged, and he indicated that he in fact felt more inclined to take a hard line against his adversaries than before. Upon reflection, however, he admitted that he felt forced to re-consider what was possible in the light of the beliefs and interests of these adversaries, whether or not he recognized them as 'legitimate':

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3   Morgan, A.L., (2003), "Toward a Global Theory of Mind; The Potential benefits of Presenting a Range of IR Theories through Active Learning", *International Studies Perspectives*, 4:4, pp. 351–370.

4   Morgan, A.L., (2003), "Toward a Global Theory of Mind", p. 363.

5   Morgan, A.L., (2003), "Toward a Global Theory of Mind", p. 365.

I was challenged in the sense that I was able to grasp, more fully than before, the extent of the problems facing my people and the level of work that will be required for us to move any closer to the realization of our rights and dreams. I am now unsure of my strategy, or my general plan for future activity. I think my first step is to try and spark up more debate amongst my own people, as we need a vision. I don't think I had a grand plan of an approach before entering the simulation, I just got on with whatever I was able to do. I suppose this has shown me that a plan is required. It's also shown me that we need to start working with some of those on the other side who can listen to and consider viable alternatives that don't exclude people from the other side in a solution because of the type of family they were born into. I suppose the need to understand and accommodate the position of your enemy if you want to make peace with them is a pretty useful lesson for life in general. (C. M. Israel/Palestine simulation, London, 2013).

This kind of outcome might sound less than inspiring to those who aim for an exercise that bring adversaries to empathize with each other, or engage in something more closely resembling 'conflict resolution'. My own sense is that it is important to develop learning modules that can be of use precisely for people like C.M., who cannot or will not participate in such projects. C.M. is a young, highly intelligent and engaged person who is likely to be an influential voice in the future of the movement he supports. He agreed to join the simulation because he was not asked to engage directly in conflict resolution with his adversaries. He aimed to understand more about how they think and what they want, so that he could be a more effective actor.

Practicing impartiality

Negotiations-think, an essentially reflective skill, is also extremely useful in helping participants *practice* impartiality, where the mediators aim to treat everyone with fairness even if they have different relations with various sides. While practicing impartiality, participants learn to gain a distance from their own views and sentiments. They develop the habit of thinking about which options are most likely to be the most effective in addressing the concerns of all parties, even if these are not appealing to the mediator him- or herself.

Somewhat paradoxically, it is precisely the presence of the emotional content in the process that, because it is located in a role play and separated from the personal belief of the learner, allows participants to practice pre-

senting arguments and interests without getting carried away by their own frustrations, and while constantly checking their expressions of bias in favor of or against various parties. By contrast, in a traditional class or program where emotions are not generally addressed or are suppressed, students or participants rarely have to confront the difficulty of managing their own passions or those they will face in others. Learning to communicate effectively in the context of a live conflict teaches participants to be self-possessed and to listen and respond to multiple conflicting positions while expressing and channeling, rather than suppressing, feelings of frustration or anger.

In the case of mediators, a great deal can be learned about the tension between their perception of themselves as impartial and parties' perception of them as partial. During debriefing sessions, the negotiators can tell the mediators what specifically triggered this perception. Often it is the result of very simple but important factors such as who sat where, who spoke and when, why the mediator approached one side first, or the background and identity of the mediator. Mediators might also confront the fact that their own inclination toward impartiality can hamper their ability to appreciate the 'intractable' or 'unreasonable' behavior of parties. When playing the role of negotiators in a simulation, they often find they are ensnared by resistances they otherwise would find incomprehensible or frustrating: this helps them anticipate the likely response of various parties, and consider what is needed to adequately deal with them.

This kind of response was highlighted in the experience of a professional mediator who participated in an IN-simulation. An expert in conflict resolution, he was deeply affected by stepping out of his role as an impartial third party and into that of an aggrieved negotiator. In this new role he found himself unable to budge from his position or see his way out of a series of grievances, for reasons that had nothing to do with the 'balanced' nature of the proposals being offered. This experience made him realize how challenging it is to remain impartial when dealing with aggrieved parties, to fully appreciate the reasons for their behavior and choices and understand why negotiators sometimes remain defiant in the face of seemingly equitable proposals. But he also realized that a dedication to impartiality can lead mediators to a hands off type of neutrality, where what is needed is an active understanding of both sides' most implacable behaviors.

I thought the simulation really showed up how difficult we (as an organization) find it to accommodate (let alone express) hardline, 'unreasonable'

views, how inclined we are to compromise and concession in ways that put us in a different universe from those we are seeking to influence. (Laurence Broers, Israel/Palestine simulation, Conciliation Resources, July 2011).

Experiencing and managing emotions [6]

The 'emotional discipline' that participants acquire through an IN-simulation does not mean that emotions are suppressed or disregarded during the process. Nor does *negotiations-think* aim to encourage participants to become 'rational agents' who inhibit their feelings. On the contrary, one purpose of the exercise is to allow difficult emotions and heated exchanges to be part of the module, and to avoid artificially separating out the affective and intellectual elements of a learning experience. As a result participants do not isolate issues from the lived experience of people who come to negotiate with them: rather, they have the opportunity to deal with the substantive issues in their broader human context, as they are experienced by people who have passionate views about them. The process aims to help participants become more aware of how strong emotions affect, undermine or in some cases can be used to facilitate negotiated exchanges; how their own emotions grip them or drive their responses even when they believe they are 'in control'; and how they can help themselves or parties to a conflict remain focused on their ultimate goal even when they feel distracted by anger or resentment.

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6   In my presentation of IN-simulations, I made the point that the various 'learning faculties' should not be considered separate entities, and that intellectual and affective learning can take place simultaneously in the process. And yet I treat 'emotions' here and in other sections as a separate category. This is not intended to suggest that they are experienced in isolation from other modes of perception and understanding. I have separated out emotions in this way because 1) in the absence of a comprehensive scientific or psychological analysis of how emotions function in the human brain or body (which I am not qualified to provide and would not be appropriate here) it is a convenient way to explain one key element of the process that distinguishes it from the kind of objective analysis that is dominant in traditional education; and 2) because so many participants perceive the emotional content of the process to be transformative, and choose to describe the reasons for breakthrough moments as being linked to an 'emotional' experience.

There are two ways that IN-simulations can help participants manage emotions: 1) by allowing them to experience and engage with them more closely, 2) by helping them to take some distance from them.[7]

Experiencing emotions

In debrief sessions, participants often express surprise that in a process which they considered to be intellectually demanding and focused on technical detail, a breakthrough moment of understanding came through what they describe as an 'emotional' response or experience. Suddenly, a familiar idea or problem presented itself to them in an unfamiliar form, largely because in their roles they were themselves inside and part of the problem, and could see and feel its import in new ways and from new angles. For those participants who are usually confident of their ability to remain objective, fair and critical, the process can help them recognize how strong their own feelings (or those of others) can become, even when these are masked as reasonable perspectives or rationally-conceived positions.

Critics have questioned whether role reversal process can be authentic, given the likelihood that participants will stereotype or superficially interpret a role, and whether the emotional elements of the process can be productive rather than distract from the central learning goals. I will address both these issues in Chapter Four. Here, however, an example might shed light on how an intricate range of emotions can impact an individual in a way that is genuine and constructive. I refer to a participant B.T., who took part in an IN-simulation dealing with a conflict she was familiar with. She strongly identified with one side, and before the module related to me that she often found herself entangled in heated arguments on the conflict, arguments where she often noted that the force of her anger and beliefs would intimidate

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7   For some interpretations of the role of emotions in negotiation and mediation, see Jones, T. S., (2006), "Emotion in Mediation: Implications, Applications, Opportunities, and Challenges", in: Herrman, Margaret S., *Handbook of Mediation: Bridging Theory, Research, and Practice,* New Jersey, U.S.A.: Blackwell Publishing, pp.277–300: Van Kleef, G. A., and M. Sinaceur, (2013), "The Demise of the "Rational" Negotiator: Emotional Forces in Conflict Negotiation", in: Olekalns, M., and W. L. Adair, *Handbook on Research on Negotiation,* Cheltenham, U.K.: Edward Elgar Publishers, pp.103–130: Katz Jameson, J., et al, (2009), "Exploring the Role of Emotion in Conflict Transformation", *Conflict Resolution Quarterly,* 27:2, pp.167–192: Gamm, U. and M. Patera, (2010), "Emotions – Blind Spot in Negotiation Training" in: Honeyman, C., J. Coben, and G. De Palo, *Venturing Beyond the Classroom: Volume 2 in the Rethinking Negotiation Teaching Series,* Book 3, Hamline University School of Law, St Paul, MN: DRI Press, pp.336–356: Mason, S.J.A., S. Allen Nan and V. Van de Loe, (2013), "Dancing through Conflict: Developing Intuition for Mediation", in: LeBaron, M., C. MacLeod and A. F. Acland, *The Choreography of Resolution: Conflict, Movement, and Neuroscience,* American Bar Association, pp.121–138: Shapiro, D.L., (2010), "Relational Identity Theory: A systematic Approach for Transforming the Emotional Dimension of Conflict", *American Psychologist,* 65:7, pp.634–645.

or upset her colleagues who argued from the other side. She was not happy with the fact that she had this apparently negative impact on them, but saw it mostly as a result of the connection between her passion and the realities of conflict: in other words, the vigor of her position was justified by the situation on the ground.

In the simulation this participant took on the role not only of the 'other side' but of a hardline member of the other side. Being an extremely conscientious person, she did her job excellently and was so convincing that even her peers in her own delegation did not know where she really stood on the issues. Most of the views she heard herself putting forward, however, she found to be either offensive or illogical. She learned some important things about the way the other side thinks and feels about their predicament, and as a result felt much better able to evaluate their interests, the regional dynamics and prospects for peace. But she did not come to embrace their overall positions any more than before.

However, she did experience something that was startling and disturbing to her on a personal level. During the process she faced strong push back from her opponents and felt sensitive and offended by this; she responded by digging in her heels, and becoming heated in her reactions. Eventually she found herself feeling and being very emotional, but the root of the emotion was not easy to define as it did not correspond to her actual feelings about the conflict, or her belief in what or who was right or wrong. She found herself in the same position as she was often in real life – advancing at her opponents aggressively, so that they felt stifled or intimidated, and failing to turn the discussion in a productive direction. Faced with the reality that her argumentation style was the same regardless of the views she was putting forward, she was no longer able simply to believe that the passion of her approach corresponded to the justice of her cause. This as a powerful and surprising lesson for B.T., one which made her re-evaluate her approach to communication and interaction and made the lessons learned about the conflict less important than lessons learned about herself.

Managing emotions

This does not, however, mean that for all participants the lessons of the module are necessarily learned by experiencing a heightened emotional state. For many participants, in particular those who already have had a great deal of experience with conflict or have been exposed to heated exchanges and situations, the experience can have the opposite effect.

For example, in a simulation I ran on the Israel/Palestine conflict in 2006, many participants were disturbed to find their ideals about conflict resolution were not easily translated into practice, and shocked at the difficulty of suppressing their own emotional responses during the negotiation. In contrast, for one participant who had direct experience of a violent conflict in her own country (Serbia) the module seemed to offer a sanctuary of sanity and reason. A.J. was a journalist from Serbia who had been in that country during some of the worst times in the 1990s. She was a mature and thoughtful individual, and was somewhat traumatized by the spiral into madness that she had witnessed in her home country. But she was also determined to work in a field where she could actively participate in finding ways to de-escalate conflict.

There were certain elements of the Serbian conflict, such as the refugee issue, that A.J. found almost impossible to deal with or discuss, because of the emotions they triggered in her. As a participant in the Israel/Palestine simulation, however, she chose to take on the role of a specialist on the Palestinian refugee issue and found that she was highly effective in this capacity. She was able to tap into what she knew experientially about problems affecting refugees, but because it was not 'her' conflict she could speak about it from an emotional distance, rediscovering a zone of strength and security. She was faced with less experienced colleagues who were falling into the traps of conflicting parties that she had seen in 'real life', but rather than being drawn in herself she saw very clearly what was happening and took a distance from, and tried to calm, the other members of her delegation. Later, she was able to re-insert what she had learned into discussions about Serbia, maintaining that sense of detachment from the 'spiral of madness' she had witnessed.

Although I was not conscious of it at the time, I chose to participate in a simulation on conflict precisely to be able to understand what has happened in my country. In that sense, the simulation worked almost as a therapy for me. It was much easier to examine a foreign conflict, but while working on that conflict similarities with my own were popping up constantly. (A.J. Israel/Palestine simulation, 2006)

Managing ambiguity and embracing complexity

Using IN-simulations to learn about empathy, impartiality and the likely emotional content of an encounter is a delicate matter, one that requires

attention from an instructor, commitment and courage from participants and trust between them. This is especially the case when participants are taking on the role of an adversary, or when those who are aggrieved parties to the conflict are representing an impartial mediator. Inevitably, many participants experience an element of cognitive dissonance that is powerful and even overwhelming at times. They must keep their own ideas and loyalties in their heads and hearts while representing ideas and loyalties that they might object to; they must absorb, process and then work with information in the context of the mirror image world of the simulation and the real world of their own feelings. For people who come to such an exercise with a tendency to have a black and white perspective on a conflict, or to believe in a clear boundary between perpetrator and victim, it can be truly distressing to behold the *complexity* of the enemy or a party to which one is hostile, even though one does not feel sympathy for the party.

These difficulties tend to be the most challenging aspect of the exercise for most participants. They learn to hold various and competing ideas, perspectives and emotions in their minds and hearts at the same time, and perhaps even more crucially, to make choices and risky commitments *despite* the fact that they are unable to resolve these ambiguities. They must use intellectual muscles that stretch them far beyond their 'comfort zone', and in the best of instances they discover new ways of managing complexity and ambiguity. As one participant related the experience to me, having taken on the role of her adversary she found herself having to listen to and support conflicting arguments that came to her simultaneously from within herself and the other side, finding ways to manage and respond to these while keeping her wits about her, not giving away her feelings and making strategic decisions in the interests of her delegation.

Whilst making an argument as a military man, sitting opposite members of the other delegation, I found myself so deep in the role that I completely understood why my character would not compromise on the issue of security in our negotiations. In fact, the very idea we would be asked to compromise on this seemed, for a moment, unthinkable. But more surprising even than having so easily slipped into a role directly opposed to the views I naturally hold was witnessing the people on the other side embody and articulate the very sentiments that I myself hold. This came just at the moment when I had fully embraced my own role as a security specialist, and hearing the arguments from the other side pulled me out of my role for a

brief moment, making me – as my natural self – fully empathize with the counter arguments I was being presented with. Although I was able to slip back into my own role afterwards, this was a palpable moment of discomfort and a challenge to overcome in the simulation process. (M.B., Israel/Palestine simulation, London, 2013).

Although this participant was empowered by her experience and the knowledge she gained, it is also the case that even these kinds of positive experiences within an IN-simulation can lead to problematic outcomes in its aftermath. The reason is that, as we have seen, during the simulation participants gain insights through an *experience* – one that requires time, direct engagement and a gradual release of various resistances. As a result, they find it difficult to convey the lessons learned to their family, friends or community through *words* – a form of indirect communication about a process, detached from involvement. Participants have often told me that they wish to explain to others why and how they moved beyond 'black and white' views to a more nuanced understanding of a conflict, but find that too often people consider their 'evolution' to indicate a softening of their loyalties, and question under whose dubious influence they have come.

Thus, for many participants the 'grey zone' can be as alienating as it is liberating. For this reason it can be useful to:

- Bring in several participants with similar backgrounds into one module. This makes it more likely that individuals will have peers with whom they can share concerns and openly discuss new perspectives, without worrying that they sound like 'sell outs';
- Offer participants more than an enhanced understanding of the conflict. Where possible, a simulation with people involved in conflict should provide them with tools to communicate with their communities and directly address certain aspects of the conflict, either though engagement with the other side or unilateral actions on their own side.

Selling the deal

As an IN-simulation develops, another element comes into play that challenges participants' sense of how a negotiated settlement can or should be made. A central element of *negotiations-think* takes place when participants are compelled not only to consider what various opposing parties believe, but which factors must be in place in order for negotiators or decision-makers from both sides to sell a deal to multiple and often competing constituents.

These considerations give participants profound insight into the reasons why various parties are unable to embrace what appear to be practical proposals, or what kind of language needs to be included in proposals in order for them to be acceptable to a wide variety of constituents back home and potentially implementable.

> *I discovered that it is hard to represent people with different circumstances but a common identity. The fact that many of your own constituents are not present in the room means that you can start to bond with and understand your counterparts in a manner that your own constituency could never accept. I felt that tension all the time.* (M.N., Graduate Institute, Geneva, 2011).

Thus, gradually and over the course of the experiential process of a live negotiation, participants begin to gain a sense of all the moving parts that make up a political or diplomatic process. They are often shocked at how they underestimated all the various pressures that decision-makers face from external and internal players – balancing individual, political and moral considerations, and choosing between expediency and ideology. And even those participants who do not embrace the ideas they are putting forward feel a heavy sense of responsibility if presented with an opportunity to sign a deal. More often than not, although their real persona might believe that compromise is a good thing, when faced with the possibility of making an historic compromise in the simulation, one that will risk their character's career but also require they give up a great deal of what their character believes they deserved and their people hold deeply, they feel quite horrified by the sense of accountability, and often shy away from taking risks. For the idealists in the group this is a particularly important lesson, as they realize why courage is so difficult to come by in politics.

> *The moment when the agreement was to be signed was crucial – it suddenly became real. I had the revelation of how it feels to put your signature and become responsible for the fate of thousands of people. Suddenly, it was not a game anymore.* (A.P., Hamas-Israel ceasefire simulation, Geneva Center for Security Policy, 2010).

Understanding without converting

It is imperative to note that none of these experiences lead participants to 'convert' to or adopt a position to which they were previously hostile, or forsake their own beliefs. (The issue of 'conversion' requires careful consideration and will be discussed at greater length in Chapter Four). If participants who are involved in a conflict believe that the goal of an IN-simulation process is to change their minds, they will (and should) strongly resist participation, as they will feel they are being asked to abandon their loyalties. An IN-simulation is not a dialogue group, where adversities are asked to listen to and understand each other's experience or recognize mutual humanity; *it is a forum where they have the opportunity to become more sophisticated in their approach to a conflict and each other, regardless of whether they develop any empathy for each other.* This often means that they adopt a more critical stance about their own views, helping them focus more on how to modify and improve their own tactics rather than expend all their energies revealing the sins of their enemies.

For example, one participant recently told me how shocked she was, as she sat across the table from other participants who had the task of representing her 'real life' point of view. Their arguments, she said, suddenly sounded weak to her when compared to the positions put forth by the side she was representing in the simulation, and seen in the context of the political forces and pressures at work around the conflict. As she listened to and analyzed the positions of her own people from such an unusual angle, she felt distressed at the disjuncture between what she considered to be their moral power compared to their practical import. This experience did not lead her to change her mind about what she believed was right: on the contrary, in some ways it only reinforced her views and her passion for conveying them. But it did compel a sober reconsideration of what her people needed to do in order to put forward a case that could be *effective*, within the context of the political realities they faced.

Negotiation and mediation skills:

1. 'Negotiations-think' involves assessing options in light of realities on the ground and in the minds of various actors.
2. Functional empathy does not lead participants to sympathize with their adversaries; rather, they learn to grasp the interests of their adversaries in order to better pursue their own.
3. Impartiality is best practiced in emotionally charged contexts that reveal gaps between theory and practice: logistics, sequencing and communication style all affect how far mediators are perceived as impartial.
4. Emotions arise in all conflicts; the question is how to manage them. Practicing negotiation and mediation skills in an true-to-life environment prepares participants to use these skills in real life.
5. Confronting ambiguity in the context of complex human interactions helps mediators and negotiators grasp the intricacies of a conflict.
6. Selling a potential deal to one's constituency can be as difficult as the negotiation itself; participants are challenged to consider conflicting interests as they develop proposals.

2.3   Discovering Personal Strengths and Weaknesses

As participants in an IN-simulation encounter these challenges to their views and approaches to a conflict, they also find that the process raises questions for them about their talents and capacities as communicators, leaders, negotiators or mediators.

This 'personal development' aspect of the learning experience is often missing from educational or training modules. For example, it is rare for people who are being trained in conflict, negotiation and mediation to have the kind of experience that most psychologists have when, as part of their training, they undergo psychological counseling. Ideally, that experience is intended to give future practitioners a form of self-awareness that ensures they can distinguish between their own problems and those of their patients, find a proper balance between empathetic identification and objective distance, encounter the limits of their own 'rationality' or objectivity, and recognize emotional and psychological patterns that their patients are unaware of or cannot express verbally, including emotions directed at the therapist. This is especially important because they are likely to be working with people in

conflict with themselves or others, and who are in the throes of emotions that will often be far beyond the reach of reasoned response. In short, being a therapist requires a form of knowledge and self-consciousness that cannot be gained only through research or objective analysis: it must be experienced directly.

This type of in-depth, reflexive, direct-experience training is rarely available for practitioners in the field of conflict resolution, although in many cases their work will require a similar form of self-awareness and psychological dexterity as therapists. While it is recognized that conflicts are highly charged and emotional, it is not always sufficiently acknowledged that conflict resolution or mediation, whether in the political or social arena, is extremely demanding emotionally on the people who practice it, whether they work in grassroots organizations in conflict zones or as mediators/diplomats/third parties facilitating official or unofficial meetings. In both cases they will likely encounter and have to work with people who can be as traumatized as those seeking psychological counseling – sometimes more, as in the case of survivors of war and atrocities – and are likely to be emotionally sensitive and demanding, often approaching outsiders or mediators with hostility or mistrust. In short, most negotiation or mediation processes will require practitioners to have the poise, confidence and perceptiveness that will allow them to manage a conflict rather than being drawn into it.

In contrast to strictly academic training or skill-building 'practice' modules, an Integrative Simulation can provide participants with an experience that offers something comparable to what psychologists learn by going through therapy: a setting that closely mirrors the dynamic and unpredictable human environment in which they will work, an experience that will put a spotlight on their strengths and weaknesses, help them confront their concerns about conflict mediation or negotiation and allow them to test their skills in a milieu that carries some of the challenges of a real encounter. Here participants have an unusual vantage point from which to view their behavior patterns and the feedback they receive; separated as it is from their private lives or professional roles, it is less likely to provoke resistance. The experience might reveal a clash between participants' sense of themselves as good listeners and their peers' feeling that they are not being 'heard'; their commitment to working in the field of conflict and their personal fears about confrontation or aversion to overly-charged emotional exchanges; the gap between their presumed qualities of leadership and the limits in their ability to build trust or manage relationships; or their capacity to interpret the mo-

tives of parties in a conflict. 'Personality types', such as those identified by some conflict, negotiation and mediation specialists, are quietly revealed in this environment, as participants have a chance to assess whether they believe their approach helps or hinders them.[8] In many cases they discover that while they were pigeonholed as one type by their colleagues, in fact they feel more comfortable with an alternative approach.

Indirect learning

There is of course a fundamental difference between the training psychologists receive when participating in therapy, and the training provided by an IN-simulation. An IN-simulation is not constructed in such a way as to *directly* engage participants emotionally or psychologically. The structure does not require participants to share their personal feelings or opinions with the group (although some are often eager to do this in the debrief session or with the instructor and each other after). In fact, one reason an IN-simulation can be so effective for such a wide variety of people, many of whom do not appreciate engaging in exercises geared toward 'personal growth', is that the lessons that emerge from the aspect of human interaction are an *indirect* result of the process. Because an IN-simulation creates an accurate representation of a conflict, it allows the emotional and psychological realities of a mediation/negotiation to emerge organically during the process rather than being spotlighted in an exercise that focuses specifically on these elements. In fact, it is often the case that people most resistant to exercises that are focused on personal development are most moved by these aspects in an IN-simulation. This is perhaps the case because the process allows participants to notice and reflect on their own capacities privately. They feel free to choose whether and when to examine their own behavior rather than having this examination imposed on them or discussed in a group setting. And they can decide to what extent they wish to receive feedback from the instructor and other participants.

An interesting example of how a simulation can compel a confrontation with a personal limitation is that of Y.D., a woman who took on the role

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8   For example, the five conflict behaviors: competing, collaborating, compromising, avoiding, and accommodating. See Kilmann, R.H and K.W. Thomas, (1977), "Developing a Forced-Choice Measure of Conflict-Handling Behavior: The 'Mode' Instrument', *Educational and Psychological Measurement,* 37:2, pp.309–325. A simpler categorization is related to the negotiation and mediation styles as shaped by personality types such as the "bull" who goes straight into the mess of conflict and causes a lot of mud to fly; or the "swan" who swirls gracefully around problems but is not able to identify or reveal the core of the issues and problem. See Mason, S.J.A., et al, (2013), "Dancing through Conflict".

of a security expert in a Regional Middle East Peace Process simulation I ran for a full semester in a graduate program. After the simulation Y.D. explained to me that she had been certain that, as an excellent student who always outshone her peers, she would be able to 'out-research' other participants and 'win' the game.

Y.D. spent weeks mastering an enormous amount of material about the history and current state of the conflict we were simulating, and yet she found herself 'failing' in her negotiations with the students representing the other side. The latter had a powerful negotiating style; they were stern, used words sparingly, made her feel that she continually had to offer them something. Y.D. tried to address this by doing even more research and presenting more information at each negotiation session, and then offering concessions, but her opponents ignored the information and continued to make demands.

Y.D. at first assumed that one of the reasons she was not able to put forward a convincing argument was that she did not believe in some of the perspectives she had to put forward. But the more the negotiation continued, the more she realized that ultimately the reason she did not confront her opponents was that she was paralyzed by a fear of confrontation, and of expressing her own wishes and demands.

Y.D. was deeply disturbed about this, and in conversations with her I understood that it was not only something she was realizing about her capacities as a student but as a person, spouse, friend and professional. It was only in the last third of a multi-week simulation that she made a series of breakthroughs that allowed her to take a forceful position with her adversaries and recognize how quickly her own behavior affected theirs.

I learned three things during the simulation. First, you don't have to say anything. Sometime you are stronger and can take power in a situation not by coming up with right response but remaining silent. Second, my opponents needed me. I had been acting like they were my clients, and trying to provide peace services to them. I didn't realize till the end that the relationship goes both ways. I didn't realize that power. Third, even though I don't have a personality that would be traditionally conducive to confrontation, I learned that you can be yourself and be in an argument, and be good at arguing. Initially I thought I could be the best student and out-research the other students and win. But I realized that negotiation is 80 percent strategy and 20 percent information; if you don't have a strategy then you

are not going to be an effective negotiator. (Y.D. Middle East Regional Peace Process simulation, New School University, 2006)

For obvious reasons, these kinds of realizations require that individuals are open to seeing themselves in a new light. It is sometimes the case, however, that participants who are courageously willing to take on the role of the 'other' and learn difficult lessons about the politics of a conflict, are resistant to hearing about their own personal weaknesses. I recall one participant who had significant learning experiences in his role, in relation to issues having to do with the conflict being studied. He described these as shocking and somewhat painful realizations. However, he appeared to be utterly unaware of how his delegation struggled with him as a person: they felt he was not listening to or hearing them, was unable to work as a team member and imposed his leadership even though in the simulation he was not in a leadership position. His delegation turned to me several times to intervene, something I could not do directly, although I gave him instructions within his role that led him to modify his approach somewhat. In a personal post-simulation interview with this participant I found that he was resistant to discussing his own limits as a listener and a leader, responded defensively and provided a series of justifications for his behavior rather than engaging with my comments.

This kind of outcome cannot be altogether avoided, even when instructors provide careful guidance and a non-judgmental atmosphere. However, while 'personal growth' is an ideal goal and valuable outcome of the process, some participants learn important lessons about a conflict and gain negotiation or mediation skills even if they are resistant to a deeper level of self reflection. Ultimately, while one can set rules for role integrity and provide clear feedback for skills development, when it comes to the more personal aspects of the learning process each participant has to decide for him or herself how deeply they wish to engage.

Power and powerlessness

In addition to these kinds of personal experiences that are provoked from the process of negotiation itself, participants often recount lessons that are triggered by the obligations and constraints they experience in their role – feeling trapped, marginalized, powerful, accountable. For example, participants often recount that being a weaker party in an asymmetrical conflict gave them a sense of powerlessness in a way that was shocking to them. Whereas

before the simulation they had a host of ideas about how a certain party might manage this asymmetry, during the process they felt paralyzed when faced with pressure to respond to proposals presented as 'compromises', none of which appeared to reflect their needs. Conversely, some participants relate that they reacted in an unexpected manner to being placed in a position of power. Not only did the experience help them demystify people who wield such power and who they might have considered inviolable. In addition, while some were uncomfortable being in a position of dominance over others, others experienced a disturbing attraction to the feeling, or gained a surprising form of confidence by virtue of being freed for several days or weeks from any sense of inferiority or insecurity.

Two interesting examples of this phenomenon are of a female rabbi who played the part of a British commissioner in a historical simulation on the origins of the Israel/Palestine conflict, and a female Egyptian human rights activist who played the part of an Israeli general in an Israel/Palestine real time module. The first reported that, although she has been in a position of 'authority' as a rabbi for many years and with a variety of constituencies, playing the part of a British man in the early part of the century, a man who felt and experienced his authority as indisputable, she became aware of the gap that existed between her perceived confidence as a woman and the areas where she was not expressing herself fully.

> *I very powerfully saw for myself how our real life roles – the ones we are born into – shape who we become, and how limiting this process can be. It was certainly life changing to 'try on' a different role for a couple of days, and to see how people reacted to my character. This enabled me to step out of my own life long role, in my professional and personal life. Although I'm quite experienced at the public speaking/acting side of things, I enjoyed and benefited from the practice of thinking on my feet and trusting my instincts. I was amazed to be reacted to as a voice of authority and that was a fantastic experience for me. It is always difficult to find the right 'voice' when dealing in the public space on this conflict and I saw right away, once I got home, that this process had given me the confidence to speak and take action when I saw the need.* (S.A., 'Struggle for Palestine 1936' historical simulation, 2013)

Similarly, but in a real-time module on the current conflict, the Egyptian activist relayed that she found the disjuncture between her role and her 'real'

life revealing. As a female human rights activist in the Arab world she said she had difficulty making herself heard, and was used to being dismissed on many counts. In the simulation, being in the position of someone who was confident that he would be heard and heeded (and this in the context of expressing views that she in her real self did not find to be logical or virtuous) she became aware of a behavior gap and was inspired to reconsider how she might integrate this strange but enlightening form of confidence into her own choices and approach. Given how easily these kinds of reactions are triggered, however, instructors should be aware that participants might respond quite strongly to a sense of *diminished* power. In the case of participants who are attached to their 'real life' position as leaders, it can helpful to encourage them to *choose*, as a personal challenge, a role that requires that they abdicate control and discover ways to influence their colleagues in new and indirect ways.

Instructors are often uneasy when they hear that simulations can lead to these kinds of personal or emotional responses, as they make the classroom or training module sound like a self-help workshop rather than a rigorous intellectual environment. But in an educational arena where multiple learning faculties are engaged concurrently, intellectual refinements are continually provoked by emotional or personal breakthroughs, and vice versa. Each in their own time, participants recognize that developing 'skills' as a mediator or negotiator requires more than topical expertise, familiarity with the positions of the key parties or knowledge of the root causes of a conflict: it requires concentrated work on oneself.

Shy participants, vocal participants

IN-simulations also create a fertile ground where traditional roles and talents are reshuffled, and with surprising results. There are two main reasons for this shift.

First, in the case of participants who tend to be shy or retiring, unexpected talents often come to the surface. In a traditional course the fear of failure leads many to play it safe and withhold comments and questions. In an IN-simulation there is little option but to engage continually. In addition, because participants are speaking in someone else's voice, they take a certain distance from their own persona. This propels many of the less vocal participants to overcome fears and confront weaknesses, and to their surprise they often discover they have surprising qualities – for example, an ability to gain the trust of various parties, develop clever strategies or build consensus where

others are unable to do so. Once they have become accustomed to speaking in public and gained confidence in their ability to communicate, this confidence is often transferred to their 'real' personalities, and they become more daring about expressing their own views.

A classic example of this phenomenon was R.N., a graduate student in International Affairs who I taught in a semester-long simulation. In the first weeks he was quiet, became increasingly withdrawn and appeared frustrated. When I asked him how things were going he responded: 'Well, clearly I'm not good at this'. He saw his peers becoming eloquently argumentative and representing their roles accurately, while he felt the role-play was awkward and the negotiations altogether too rambunctious.

We discussed his role in detail the various ways that he could put his own abilities to use rather than comparing his skills to those of his peers. Over time, R.N. came to realize that he had special talents – people naturally trusted him, reached out to him when they couldn't speak to others, and began to rely on his character's specialized knowledge on security matters. This gave him a great deal of confidence, and he became the invaluable wing man for some of the more vocal participants in his group, as well as someone who could be counted on to recognize when there were opportunities to reach out to the other side. On the final day, when the two sides sat face-to-face to hammer out the last-minute details of an accord, his demeanor was utterly changed from the earlier sessions: he chose to speak out and engage, his body language leaned into the others, he felt he was master of his issues and part of the team. It required time, communication and a willingness to adapt and test different strategies. But it was just the kind of growth that an IN-simulation can allow for.

Initially, it was discomforting for me to be engaged in aggressive negotiation when I had expected the simulation to be more of a reasoned and intellectual discussion of the issues. After consulting with my professor and reflecting on my own about how I could improve, however, I soon found my niche. I got over my initial timidity and began arguing my positions more confidently. What's more, I realized that negotiating teams need mediators as well as attack dogs, and that my ability to remain calm amid heightened emotions and to retain, and have at my command, large amounts of technical information while under duress made me a valuable asset to my fellow team members. (R.N. Israel/Palestine simulation, New School University, 2005)

Conversely, participants or students (such as A.W, whose experience is described in Chapter Three) who are usually vocal and confident in a class or public speaking forum, are confronted with new and unexpected challenges and are sometimes forced to re-evaluate assumptions about their own strengths. Often they find that while they are comfortable *speaking* in a lecture or seminar, they are not able to *communicate* well with or *persuade* their peers, listen to or *hear* various grievances, or unite team members with conflicting agendas.[9] This gives them a renewed level of learning in regard to their 'leadership' skills, and tests their abilities in other areas.

> *My big weakness was that I was unable to sell my ideas. First of all, I was unable to find a way to persuade my fellows to do something that I wanted them to do, and to make them feel it was their idea. As a result I had to work on my persuasion skills. Second, after I had got my ideas on the agenda I needed support, and most of the time that meant maneuvering people onto the same page and not simply telling them what they ought to do. Much (but not all) of what I had said had merits and was realistic, but the way I presented it rubbed people the wrong way. Third, I should have listened to my fellows' points of view, demonstrated to them how their ideas in fact worked against their strategy and shown them how mine would work more effectively.* (E.N., Graduate Institute, Geneva, 2011)

The role of the instructor in creating a conducive environment

The kind of environment conducive to personal discovery and development is most likely to be created if instructors are aware of and sensitive to the delicate aspects of the process, and set up the roles and scenario in a way that considers the multiple sensitivities of participants. There are several things instructors can do to create such an environment:

- Make it clear to participants that as instructors they are aware of the subtleties of the conflict and the difficulties that might arise in the negotiation: if the instructor is not him or herself 'part' of the conflict being studied, participants will often assume they do not understand how

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9 Mark Carnes has pointed out that one of the key virtues of *Reacting to the Past* games is that students do not merely learn how to deliver a paper or oral presentation: confronted with the need to address and convince others in an environment where the outcome matters, they learn the art of persuasion, and their communication skills tend to improve as a result. See Carnes, M., (2014), *Minds on Fire: How Role-Immersion Games Transform College,* Harvard: Harvard University Press.

serious the tensions are, and will be unable to notice or 'control' any participants who are reluctant to fulfill their mandate.

- Let participants know that before and during the module they are available for private communication with those who wish to ask questions, or air concerns about their roles or the process.
- Be flexible about intervention and feedback, keeping in mind that in some cases participants need quite a bit of hand-holding to get to the point where they can move beyond their resistances and engage in the process; other participants only find they need to communicate during the simulation when they are surprised by a situation or concern they did not anticipate; and still others do not want or appreciate any interaction at all, or only wish to communicate at the end of the module.
- Perhaps an obvious point is that instructors need to remain neutral in terms of their stated views on the different roles. It is difficult for participants to take on very difficult roles if they are aware that the instructor disfavors the person they are representing. There should be a suspension of judgement during the module, where both the participant and instructor accept that each role is valid and important. This will be further discussed in the 'How to Manual'.

2.4   What Instructors Learn

The process of constructing an IN-simulation is not only challenging to an instructor in the sense that it requires some willingness to devise new courses or training modules. It is also highly valuable and exciting in itself for the person designing the module, in a way that they might find relevant to their work dealing with conflict or mediation.

For example, it is usually the case that simulation designers will have to write up elaborate role packets for a variety of roles that contains views they do not themselves appreciate or approve of. Even more than the participant who has to maintain role integrity, instructors are tested in their knowledge and impartiality, as they attempt to portray such a variety of characters as fairly as possible, drawing from the latest supporting evidence and making the role engaging and accessible to participants.

This is sometimes most difficult for those instructors who are very familiar with the issues and the players, as it forces them to confront subtle lingering biases or reconsider arguments they had thoroughly examined pre-

viously but dismissed. This does not mean that the instructor has to construct a role in such a way that he or she *validates* the positions therein: there are ways to write in the complexities or hypocrisies of a character while still allowing a participant to be drawn into the role (see the 'How to Manual' for how to write a role for a particularly distasteful character). But it does mean that the arguments in the role have to be put forward in the best way possible from the perspective of that character, and the person's self image has to be presented approximately as he or she is likely to perceive it.

What makes this even more stimulating is that instructors have to do this for many – sometimes as many as 15 – roles at one time. They must review and reconsider how each of these individuals interprets their story, not only in relation to their 'enemy' but in relation to others within their own camp. This tests the instructor's knowledge of details, perception of individuals and tolerance quite far: they are faced with a psychological puzzle where each piece must fit well alongside others, regardless of its moral appeal.

Finally and crucially, while running the IN-simulation the instructor's biases or approach to conflict will likely be tested. In difficult moments during the module – when for example a participant has to argue for something particularly distasteful and feels unable to do it – an instructor will have to reach deeply within him/herself to help the participant reflect on how that interest can be defended or at least coherently presented.

> **Personal strengths and weaknesses:**
> IN-simulations allow for a safe but challenging environment where negotiators and mediators can reflect on and address their personal strengths and weaknesses.

2.5   Conclusion

The kinds of lessons and experiences described in this chapter clearly do not take place in a few hours. They require a level of engagement and time that allows for gradual growth and development, and therefore stretch the resources and commitment of instructors and participants. When there is such space and time, however, the rewards are great for both. It is not only interesting but highly enjoyable to learn in a context where participants do not only acquire but also build knowledge; where their capacities as learners are enhanced by their ability to think like teachers and contribute to the

understanding of their colleagues; and where they are able to test out, rather than merely hypothesize about, various approaches to conflict and negotiation. In a nutshell:

IN-simulations provide a learning environment where understanding, skill building and personal development are facilitated.

- *Understanding conflict:* A primary goal of IN-simulations is for participants to gain a realistic understanding of conflict dynamics as they play out in a confrontational negotiation environment. By experiencing how real players move through a negotiation and how they feel as they face each other, participants are better able to recognize, anticipate or manage the likely responses and resistances of various parties. Thus, while skill building and personal development are key goals for IN-simulations, these are not built as isolated techniques: rather, they are intimately linked with participants *experiencing and understanding* the conflict and negotiations on a deeper level.
- *Skill building:* A key skill facilitated by IN-simulations is *negotiations-think*. This is less about individual negotiation techniques and more about reflecting on a conflict through a particular lens; in particular, recognizing the perceptions of various parties as 'facts on the ground' that must be contended with, no matter how objectionable they appear; and learning and practicing negotiations skills *within the context* of negotiation dynamics where these skills can be internalized and practiced.
- *Personal development:* IN-simulations offer participants an opportunity to recognize and work on their personal strengths and weaknesses as they manifest in or affect a conflict situation. Participants may not have time to overcome their weaknesses during a brief module, but by becoming aware of the personal characteristics that harm or facilitate negotiations, they may become more effective negotiators and mediators.

3 Why and How Participants Learn

All good instructors know they can have their audience on the edge of their seats with excitement in the most traditional of all settings – a good old-fashioned lecture. What some educational theorists have identified as 'passive education' is experienced as exhilarating by many lovers of learning, who feel transported to other worlds merely by contemplating ideas and reading texts.

So what can a simulation bring to a classroom or training program that an effective lecture or seminar cannot? And are 'experiential learning' and 'active learning' merely catchwords for classroom entertainment, or are they educational concepts pregnant with possibilities?

In the previous chapter I offered some examples of the lessons participants learn through the process of an IN-simulation. In this chapter I focus more on why and how these learning experiences take place. I argue that IN-simulations offer a considered and highly developed version of experiential or active learning, one that incorporates many lessons of traditional education but brings extra dimensions to these, giving participants an opportunity to absorb, retain and engage with these lessons on new and often deeper levels. More broadly, IN-simulations are an example of a learning method that addresses some of the challenges that universities and professional training programs face today. This chapter will look at three of these challenges, and in doing so attempts to highlight those aspects of simulation learning that can be particularly effective in addressing them: namely 1) bridging the theory/practice divide, 2) moving from critical thinking to critical self-awareness, and 3) addressing issues of motivation, including the value of educational modules that are perceived by participants as meaningful, even when they are not strictly 'useful'.

At first glance it might seem that these challenges are only relevant to universities. To take the first point, for example, professional training programs by nature incorporate practice-based learning so do not generally face the problem of courses that are too heavily weighted towards theory. However, the contention here is that in many cases both universities and professional training programs are affected by the traditional *logic of learning* that drives many educational programs, where reflection and action are separated and critical thinking is assumed but not tested. In the case of the latter, the practical is often highlighted at the expense of the reflective, and many skills-based exercises isolate the experiential and subjective engagement from analytical scrutiny and reflection. The discussion below is thus relevant for both

learning environments, although in many cases it will focus more on the experience of students and professors in universities.

3.1 Bridging the Theory/Practice Divide

There is nothing novel in the educator's drive to narrow the gap between what has variously been called theory and practice, reflection and experience, or passive and active learning.[1] Thinkers from Aristotle to Montaigne, Rousseau to Dewey and countless others have denounced the artificial, institutional separation between thinking and doing, and offered a rich array of arguments regarding the benefits of 'experiential learning'.

What is still missing are *the means* of implementing experiential learning in universities and in professional training programs, where 'educational methods' are generally not a popular topic. The problem is particularly noticeable when it comes to education in conflict, negotiation and mediation, subjects that almost by definition require students to engage with the 'real world'. Despite a crescendo of calls for universities to be made more 'relevant' and numerous attempts by scholars, administrators and even entire institutions to bridge the theory/practice divide, the most common approach still appears to be determined by a model of *assembly* rather than *integration* – a course followed by an internship, or a theory class followed by an experiment in 'practice/skills'. This, however, assumes a one-way street between theory and practice.

In universities this generally means that students are first exposed to a set of ideas or theories, and then engage in an activity where they experience how these ideas might be 'implemented' in a professional setting, or how the practice of a discipline might supplement what they have learned in their theory class. However, the relationship between the theoretical and practical aspects of a program is often tenuous, and it is rare that students return from

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1   It is not always clear how the terms theory and practice are understood when discussed in an educational context or in the context of simulation-based learning: for example, if a program intends to bridge the theory/practice divide does that mean that students will engage in the study of 'theories' (such as IR/political science theories) and then find a way to 'test' these in practice (for example, in a conflict simulation)? Or does the concept refer to a broader process whereby educators attempt to discover the proper balance between reflection and action, thinking and doing, creating a type of 'reflective practitioners' as elaborated by Schon, D., (1995), *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action,* Farnham: Ashgate. In this book I am referring to the latter more than the former, a way of testing out various hypotheses and approaches to conflict on an intellectual and personal level.

practice to theory. In other words, they are not given the opportunity to re-flect critically on what they learned from their experience and then integrate this learning in a new round of analysis. *Professional training programs* often face the opposite problem due to the short length of training courses. While a variety of practical skills exercises might be introduced, participants often have little time to reflect on the deeper context of the conflict being studied, test their critical skills or recognize and adjust various behavior patterns they recognize in themselves.

> *The simulation addresses many different things at once – knowledge of issues, cross-conflict empathy/understanding, negotiating skills, leadership – that tend to be compartmentalized among different kinds of NGO/civil society interventions. In that sense it was a real short-cut through to the heart of a variety of issues.* (Laurence Broers, Israel/Palestine simulation, Conciliation Resources, July 2011).

In the end, however, experiential or active learning is more than the sum of theory and practice placed alongside each other in a program, or prac-tice-based exercises and internships that supplement coursework. There is a difference between presenting students with various methods of learning se-quentially or side-by-side, and offering them an *experience* in which theory and practice meet in an integrated and dialectical manner.

Integrative Simulations confront the problem broadly identified as the theory/practice gap by addressing four aspects of this divide.

One learning space

First, IN-simulations address the physical and temporal separation between educational modules that focus on analytical/intellectual learning (traditional academic coursework), and those offering experience-based learning (such as internships, skill-building exercises, 'practicums' or travel abroad[2]). Structural-ly, IN-simulations do this by bringing academic materials/methods and 'prac-tical' experience into one learning space – integrated in both the educational

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2   In this book I do not discuss the issue of travel abroad as part of the practice element of IN-simula-tions, because few programs can afford the time or funds to include this element. But if the modules are taught within a context where this is possible, travel to a particular region during or after the simulation provides an excellent opportunity for participants to deepen their understanding. Because of the knowledge and insights they have built during the simulation, they come with sharp eyes and ears and use these to make the most of what they see and hear; in particular, if they have the opportunity to speak with specialists in the region they will have the tools and confidence to engage in sophisticated discussions rather than merely listen and ask questions.

module and in time. This creates a multi-way rather than one-way street between intellectual analysis and experimentation, or 'theory and practice'.

For example, during the course of an IN-simulation participants analyze a series of issues and problems and test some of their hypotheses or theories in practice, before returning to a more objective mode where they are able to analyze the results of their experience and then test their new reflections through further engagement.[3] Crucially, participants do not have to go 'out' of the classroom in search of practical experience: an IN-simulation brings the experience to them by creating a virtual reality of a conflict negotiation and a replica of a professional environment. This can be further enhanced by creating a revolving door of learning between academia and the 'real world', through the participation of external coaches, which provides for a balance between the knowledge of the instructor and the practitioner throughout the module.

Drawing on multiple learning faculties

Second, IN-simulations attempt to bridge the theory/practice gap by addressing the way that the logic of this gap has infiltrated the manner in which educators think about the learning process itself – the tendency to project the institutional-structural division between thought and action onto the human learning capacity by assuming a separation between thinking-analyzing and feeling-experiencing.

Although many academic disciplines rely on the idea that intellectual and analytical skills are sufficient means for learning in formal educational environments (and for some subjects this is indeed an effective and even essential approach), it is not necessary for some learning faculties to be dormant or shut down while students engage in intellectual work and build critical thinking skills. The IN-simulation method is premised on the idea that rigorous learning does not require a separation between the various learning faculties but rather that in some educational environments the learning faculties can interact and process a multiplicity of ideas and experiences simultaneously, in close collaboration or cyclically. Participants usually find this multi-faculty experience to be very stimulating, as they feel they are engaging in a process with their full being, and it leads to the kind of motivation that we discuss in more detail in section three below.

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3   This last part can only take place in an ideal scenario where instructor and students would have time to move back and forth between simulation module and 'traditional' analysis.

When the learning faculties act together this does not mean merely that affective and analytic capacities cooperate. In many cases it means that participants are encouraged to deploy a variety of different senses and perceptions in order to develop their skills as negotiators or mediators. For example, participants might be struggling to respond to their adversaries and develop a more coherent means of communicating their interests. They might be overly focused on content and information, and even though they have mastered these they repeatedly fail to get their point across and become increasingly frustrated. An instructor can at this point bring their attention to a variety of elements that draw the participant away from an excessive focus on the issues themselves and more on their mode of communication. For example, the instructor might ask them questions such as the following:

- *Body language:* What message is the participant giving to the other side through their physical posture or hand gestures? Are these the messages they want to or intend to convey and are they the most effective in terms of the response they want or expect? What do these physical messages convey about the participant's own sense of confidence or approach to dialogue?

- *Verbal communication:* How does the pace of the participant's speech affect their colleagues or adversaries? Can they get their point across more powerfully if they slow down, use different words or use words more sparingly or with greater precision; what specific terms are they using that might be creating negative reactions in their opponents rather than encouraging them to be more forthcoming? Or conversely, are they using language that is overly conciliatory and perhaps misleading, at the expense of being forthright about their own positions? If so, why might they be doing this?

- *Listening and observing:* To what extent is the participant making use of their powers of observation to sit back and perceive what others at the table are feeling and how they are responding to the process, to them personally or to their delegation? What can they learn by observing the dynamics that might help them modify their own behavior and be better able to reach out to certain individuals? At what point can or should they use silence as a negotiating tool, as a means to slow down the pace, calm tensions or become more self-aware or sensitive to the evolving dynamics?

Sometimes stepping away from concentrated reflection on content and strategy and making a change in other areas has a profound effect on an individual during an IN-simulation. Noticing non-verbal cues in themselves and others and modifying the pace of the interaction can reveal a great deal about how they respond under pressure. I recall one participant (a mediator-in-training) who, when taking on the role of the head mediator in an IN-simulation, was concerned that she would not be able to convey authority or control the proceedings. She was particularly focused on gaps in her knowledge and worried they might be revealed, but I noticed that in a previous simulation her insecurities had been exposed in the excessive speed of her speech and a slight tremor in her voice. Before the simulation we spent some time practicing a pattern of speech that was measured and extremely – even excessively – slow. When she entered her role as mediator the transformation was immediately evident: the change in her voice patterns led to a modification in her posture and facial expressions, making her appear poised and giving an air of confidence to her whole person. As other participants began to perceive her as authoritative and at times even intimidating, this 'apparent' confidence translated for her into a real sense of assuredness. She found this somewhat surprising, but it gave her the opportunity, for the duration of the module, to focus more on mediating rather than being concerned about her authority.

Contextualized learning

Third, information and ideas in an IN-simulation are contextualized as soon as they appear. In other words, 'theoretical' aspects (whether these are strictly 'theories' about conflict or more general principles, hypotheses and arguments) are immediately confronted with practice (the extent to which these ideas or hypotheses hold up under scrutiny, or can be implemented in the context of a real situation or conflict). This is the case because participants are preparing to engage in a negotiation where they must 1) grapple with information in light of opposing interpretations of facts and events and 2) consider how information can be made use of in their strategies and arguments. Thus, they immediately confront the possible clashes between ideas (or ideals) and what happens to these as they encounter the realities of political and diplomatic processes, perceptions of various parties, institutional structures and constraints.

In the simulation universe, mastery of intricate legal, cultural and political issues was an absolute necessity; in order to broker a deal between the Karen people and the military regime of Myanmar, I researched the specific parameters of Israeli/Palestinian, English/Irish and Sri Lankan ceasefire agreements and their political ramifications to determine whether or not the document that we were debating was legitimate. And at the same time, I confronted the strategic dilemma of whether or not I should sign a deal. It was the ultimate juxtaposition of political gamesmanship and hardcore research. (C.L., Burma/Myanmar simulation, New School University, 2005).

A professional environment

Finally, an IN-simulation very closely resembles a professional environment. As a result, not only are participants able to use the module to acquire some professional skills. In some cases, they are also given the chance to leap several years or stages beyond their current professional position and participate in high level diplomatic processes, the kind they would not likely be part of in real life. They are placed in a live negotiation/mediation and given the kinds of tasks and responsibilities that would be shouldered by highly experienced professionals and decision makers. In this context, they gain skills while still having the intellectual space to analyze the process, reflect on their own behavior and that of their colleagues and take risks that have a high value educationally but little consequence for their careers.

For those participants who are already quite experienced, for example mediators who are at an advanced level in their professions, the process can act as a dress rehearsal for a particular encounter, allowing them to test out various approaches to a conflict and set of players. Although mediators may be in close communication with each side, they might not be able to predict how parties will respond to each other in the context of a negotiation, or anticipate the extent to which narrative clashes will manifest during talks or which issues will trigger them (especially if parties are attempting to present themselves to the mediator as open and flexible). If a simulation accurately represents the historical, psychological and political context in which the issues will be discussed, these potential areas of impasse can be revealed in ways that help mediators anticipate how to address them when they appear during the 'real' negotiation.

However, if the simulation is to be used for experienced mediators, negotiators or other individuals who might be part of a real peace process, special care should be taken to ensure all participants share a similar level of

knowledge and expertise. In this case, it would not be useful for some participants to be grappling with content while others are well versed in the conflict and hoping to practice their skills as mediators or negotiators, delve deeply into specific issues and impasses and learn to anticipate problems that might emerge during direct talks.

Why and how participants learn:
1. Bridging the theory-practice divide:
    • Linking theory and practice in time and in one educational space
    • Drawing on multiple learning faculties, i.e. affective, cognitive
    • Offering contextualized learning, where skills are practiced and tested in the context of a real conflict situation.
2. Developing critical self-awareness:
    • Experiencing the feelings and pressures that real players face
    • Identifying with actors in conflict even when these are considered irrational or immoral
    • Interacting with counterparts in a context that highlights patterns of conflict dynamics.
3. Increased motivation to learn:
    • Competition and cooperation with others is driven by a determination to present ideas coherently and achieve role-specific goals
    • Team work is driven by the necessity of negotiating rather than good will or trust
    • Unexpected challenges call for adaptation and immediate decision making.

3.2   A More Critical Approach to Critical Thinking

Critical thinking is perhaps the term most often heard in educational settings. In the literature on critical thinking there is an abundance of debates on the nature and definition of the skill: questions range from whether it should be part of a general course or a skill to be taught separately, how one develops critical thinking and how instructors can evaluate whether they have succeeded in imparting it.[4]

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4   For a useful review of issues related to critical thinking see Lai, E, R., (2011), *Critical Thinking: A Literature Review*, Pearson Research Report, USA: Pearson, *www.pearsonassessments.com/hai/images/tmrs/CriticalThinkingReviewFINAL.pdf*

In theory, it is likely that most instructors would agree that education in critical thinking should focus on qualities such as rationality, fair mindedness, empathy, and 'self-corrective thinking', i.e., the capacity to recognize and address flaws in one's own thinking, and a willingness to put one's ideas and thought patterns to the test. Some might focus on the need to develop a specific set of intellectual tools for critical thinking, which include improving one's methods of analyzing issues and ideas by asking the right questions; learning how to rigorously evaluate information and sources; reflecting on different modes of thought and being able to see the world through the lens of another person or group; and a capacity to communicate effectively with others.[5]

In practice, however, while students in a philosophy class might delve deeply into the concept of critical thinking, defining and analyzing it as well as acquiring a variety of intellectual tools, in fields such as conflict studies, international affairs, history or political science, as well as in the negotiation and mediation sector, the phrase is most often used liberally and in a general manner to indicate various ways that individuals are encouraged to question their assumptions and those of the societies in which they live. In the classroom, however, the concept is not always conveyed in such a way that students are able to transfer the critical thinking they learned in relation to one topic to another context, or turn the critical gaze back on themselves or on those individuals or groups they believe are articulating and representing an accurate or just worldview. The assumption that critical thinking is an educational cure-all might in fact be one of the reasons that educational programs and institutions have avoided crucial questions about the how of learning. Although there is no universally accepted view in academia or in professional training programs as to how critical thinking should be conveyed or transmitted, its effectiveness – both as a learning tool and a bridge between reflection and progressive social or political action in the world – is by and large assumed.[6]

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5   For some interesting definitions and analysis of critical thinking, see Facione, P. A., (1990), *Executive summary: Critical thinking: A statement of expert consensus for purposes of educational assessment and instruction.* Millbrae, CA: The California Academic Press. *http://assessment.aas.duke.edu/documents/Delphi_Report.pdf*.

6   It has also been noted by a number of scholars that teachers themselves struggle to define critical thinking or find methods of teaching it. See Elder, L., *An Interview with Linda Elder: About Critical Thinking and Gifted Education, www.criticalthinking.org/pages/an-interview-with-linda-elder-about-critical-thinking-and-gifted-education/476* and Halx, M.D., and L. E, Reybold, (2005), "A pedagogy of force: Faculty perspectives of critical thinking capacity in undergraduate students", *The Journal of General Education,* 54:5, pp.293–315.

The sometimes unfortunate result is that in many cases lessons in critical thinking produce *critics*; students who have learned to use a pre-packaged toolset of razor-sharp critiques to expose various forms of power and exploitation, rather than individuals with refined analytical skills, deep understanding or an exceptional ability to evaluate problems and discover solutions. Paradoxically, the critical view students adopt often leads them to dehumanize or simplify the motives of various individuals and groups, even as they are attacking the process of dehumanization itself: for example, identifying and judging human beings through categories such as women, men, colonialists, racists, elites, the powerful, the marginalized, the oppressors and the oppressed. This stance does little to prepare analysts or future practitioners in conflict or international affairs to manage the complex world they will confront, or understand the individuals and groups they will encounter, many of whom will not fit into such tidy classifications.

A second obstacle to effective education in critical thinking is that instructors tend to believe that the best way to acquire critical thinking skills is to adopt an objective stance toward and take a personal distance from the subject at hand. Yet it is an error to assume that people learn to be objective or to think rationally only by *practicing* objectivity or thinking rationally, or (in the context of mediation training) learn to be impartial by *practicing* impartiality. In fact, the affective distance that students and practitioners adopt during the course of an educational or training program sometimes negatively affects their ability to grasp the subjective experiences of the individuals and groups they are attempting to understand or work with, recognize the limits of their own rational capacities or develop the kind of self-awareness necessary for success in their work. It is often most effective to experience the pull of strongly-felt emotions by people in conflict, and to feel drawn into a subjective mindset, in order to be able to build the kind of skills in objective thinking and impartial behavior sought by analysts and practitioners.[7]

IN-simulations and the development of critical self-awareness

It is understood and accepted that in many cases academic learning requires a particular type of focus, where analysis and reflection are indeed isolated from direct experience and subjective engagement, and that it takes a great

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7   For other views on the relevance of emotions to critical thinking, see Elder, L., (1996), "Critical Thinking and Emotional Intelligence", *Inquiry: Critical Thinking Across the Disciplines,* 16:2, pp. 35–49, and Halx, M.D., and L. E, Reybold, (2005), "A pedagogy of force".

deal of time and discipline to acquire the intellectual skills required by scholarly disciplines. The argument here is not that this kind of 'ivory tower' learning should be abandoned: it is that a key moment in the development of a critical mind occurs when people *test* their assumptions about certain ideas and about themselves. This applies to university students as well as to practitioners. In the latter case the multiple pressures encountered in the field, and the need to process complex information and make intuitive decisions quickly, can leave little time for individuals to question their basic assumptions or categories.

IN-simulations allow participants to test their intellectual skills by shifting from a traditional concept of how we learn critical thinking to encouraging a form of critical self-reflection and self-awareness. This kind of learning challenges participants to investigate whether or to what extent they have achieved objectivity or impartiality, and how they might further refine their skills in these areas. It is achieved through experience, identification and interaction.

Experiencing, identifying, interacting

Because an IN-simulation creates a mirror image of a conflict, it allows the visceral realities of a mediation/negotiation to emerge organically during the process. These realities cannot be neatly severed from the substantive or technical issues; as a result, the 'facts on the ground' are not learned in isolation from the conflicting perceptions and interpretation of these facts by various parties.

Participants thus have an opportunity to *experience* (rather than observe) how and why people's 'irrational' needs, beliefs, and fears are not easily dissolved. They are compelled to *identify with* – rather than try objectively to analyze – some of the beliefs and behaviors that drive many parties in a conflict, beliefs and behaviors that participants often consider to be immoral or self-destructive. In an IN-simulation, participants do not merely judge actors as 'intractable', but rather understand these actors by *becoming* intractable themselves or seeing others become so – experiencing an attachment to a set of beliefs and fears that they cannot let go of, even when they know they should do or, indeed want to. They often find that, once put in the position of the players, in a very short time (sometimes a mere 24 hours) they themselves are unable to follow the path they believed was right just a few days earlier when they approached the conflict as analysts. Instead, they cling to the very positions that they previously thought could be dissolved through

logic or constructive compromise. (An example of how this experience enhances a participant's capacity for critical self-reflection is provided below under the section 'Competition').

> *By having to defend these views, I learned a lot about how to use arguments that were not part of my usual thinking. It's amazing how my mind accepted positions simply because of the process of reading documents in preparation. That's where my level of tolerance improved: because I really played my role by the rules, I felt very comfortable in defending positions that a few weeks before were totally unknown to me.* (L.T., Graduate Institute, Geneva, 2011).

The *interactive* nature of IN-simulations is the key element that promotes this kind of encounter. The process is relational at its core, and mimics the exchanges participants will face in their professional lives. They cannot succeed in achieving their goals if they are not able to listen to, work with or inspire others. Participants entering a simulation often assume that their life experience with people in personal interactions will naturally translate, in a professional environment, to fruitful exchanges with team members in a negotiation; or they might assume that their personal dedication to solving problems will provide them with the ability to put forward a case convincingly. They are often shocked to find out that in the face of conflicting agendas, time pressures, and personal ambition, their view of their own leadership and team building skills is severely challenged. The simulation process makes it very difficult to avoid this realization, because over time participants are faced with team members who will simply resist them unless they learn to listen and speak in a way that is authentic; or learn how to use incentives and threats to get the results they need.

This can be a very humbling experience for individuals who are accustomed to being in the forefront of debates or leadership roles, and as we saw in the case of the individual cited above, not all participants are able or willing to recognize or confront personal weaknesses. However, the wonder of experiential learning modules is that one can never know which participants will be open to self-reflection, and sometimes those who resist most strongly at first become the most responsive. Over the course of a multi-session IN-simulation I noted how one participant playing the role of a third party mediator took several sessions to recognize that his tactics were not working. Upon entering the simulation he was better versed in the conflict than his col-

leagues, so when the negotiation began he felt certain that he could guide them to the best outcome, and began immediately to craft ideas and strategies for forward movement. Very soon, however, he found that his elaborate peace proposals were not being adopted by either side, and he was convinced that this was because the negotiators had not understood the subtlety and complexity of his approach. He thus continued to re-formulate and re-present the proposals in new ways. Over time he became more and more frustrated with the parties, felt personally slighted and came to believe they were unwilling to make the necessary concessions required.

It was only after several sessions that he noticed that parties were meeting behind his back to hash out their issues without him, and were able to achieve more results than they did in his presence. At this point he began to recognize and accept that there was something amiss with his own approach as a listener and a mediator. He had in some sense tried to bully them into what was best but had not listened to them; he had acted as a high-powered diplomat instead of an impartial mediator; he attempted to bring them together prematurely without appreciating the distance between them; and he tried to lead by taking control rather than sitting back and observing in order to determine what was needed. Once he came to realize this, he shifted his behavior quite quickly, and at the last minute managed to regain the trust of the parties enough to become part of their discussions in a productive manner. Later he commented on what the experience had taught him, mostly about the subtleties of leadership and personal relations in any negotiation process:

> The simulation gave me experience in utilizing leverage and at the same time showed me the value of connecting on a personal level with friends and foes alike...Leverage is the real key, but demeanor, I have learned, can be the difference between getting more or less than one had hoped for. I also realized that what the parties want and need is not static. It changes with the political winds. So I learned the 'when' is as important as the 'who' and more so than the 'how'. And I learned to decipher between critical demands (red lines that the sides cannot and will not cross) and preferences (bargaining chips). (A.W, Middle East Regional simulation, 2006).

3.3　Motivation

The question of motivation has always been at the forefront of discussions regarding the educational process. Theorists have insisted that passion and play are key elements necessary for effective learning, and warned that pain, frustration and boredom are detrimental to the development of the psyche and intellect, inhibiting the mind's ability to absorb and retain information.

It should be noted here that the concept of play in the educational-philosophical sense should not be confused with a more casual understanding of 'play' used by many educators. The latter is sometimes interpreted to mean that learning should be effortless, and leads instructors to resist imposing discipline or standards on students. In contrast, the modern Western concepts of passion and play in education were developed in the early modern period (in particular during the European Enlightenment) under the influence of philosophical and scientific revolutions in our understanding of the nature of the mind – how it functioned, under what conditions it was most agile and which kinds of impressions and experiences it needed to be exposed to in order to thrive.[8] The fairly commonsense (but at the time progressive) conclusion of many theorists was that children are able to focus on a subject to the degree to which they are impassioned by it, are impassioned by it to the extent that they recognize its use or value, and able to recognize that use or value if the subject and method are developmentally appropriate to their age or stage of growth and offer them information or experiences about the world in which they live. The link between passion, play and utility, however, was not one that relied on a definition of *useful* as solely relating to something that was vocationally relevant; rather, things were useful if the mind found them meaningful and valuable for the purposes of learning and growth itself.

But while a variety of schools for young children have considered the problem of motivation from an educational point of view, traditional university and professional programs have given little systematic attention to the issue. One reason is perhaps the commonsense assumption that while children might need to be hoodwinked into focused attention on a subject, young adults and professionals are presumed to be self-motivated: they merely need to be exposed to interesting materials and qualified teachers

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8　For more on this see Gill, N., (2010), *Educational Philosophy in the French Enlightenment: From Nature to Second Nature,* Surrey: Ashgate.

who challenge them to think critically. Another reason is that instructors and administrators focus more on the *results* of coursework than the process of learning itself. They tend to take for granted that course evaluations, student performance or grade point averages are evidence that students were motivated and had meaningful learning experiences. In reality, however, neither grades nor course evaluations offer much information about levels of motivation in students or professionals (both may be determined to achieve good results or receive an 'A' grade for a variety of reasons, even when they are not motivated by or enjoying their work), or whether the learning was effective according to any criteria but those pre-established by the instructor or the program. Most course evaluations sidestep questions about learning altogether, focusing on whether the instructor fulfilled his or her preset goals (such as lecturing coherently, having a strong grasp of the topic, being available for office hours or grading papers in a timely manner) rather than how or what the students learned.

Today there is a great deal of talk about student motivation (or waning motivation) and numerous efforts to make university learning more 'relevant', 'useful', and vocationally or professionally oriented. While this is generally a positive trend, the rush to relevance, or the assumption that students will only be motivated if their demand for utility in their studies is met, carries its own hazards: in particular, a tendency to equate motivation with a narrow and literal definition of utility and practicality, one that insists that each module prove itself to be vocationally relevant or in other ways directly applicable to the lives of students.

There are two problems with this. First, educational institutions should retain their right to engage in what might be labeled as non-useful learning – courses whose 'use value' is not immediately recognizable, or that affect students in abstract ways, teaching them less tangible but equally important skills such as how to think or evaluate information. Second, this reductionist approach to utility might lead to a further divide between courses that are theoretical or philosophical and those that are practical or vocational.

In contrast, the method guiding IN-simulations contends that reflective and active elements of learning can be united in a course in such a way that an educational module is highly motivational, whether or not the content of the course is directly applicable to life or 'practical' in the most utilitarian way. This is because the learning carries a sense of *meaning and purpose* that affects participants deeply as individuals, even when it concerns a topic that is not directly relevant to their work or future careers. Motivation is

linked in part to the practical, in part to the purposeful, and the two are not always the same.[9]

IN-simulation and motivation

Every instructor knows that when their audience is learning something that naturally excites them, they are engaged and focused. IN-simulations attempt to create an environment that maximizes the attentiveness of participants, and where even those who are *not* naturally impassioned by a subject become so, because of the nature of the process.

The motivation induced during an IN-simulation (and many other types of simulation modules) helps explain why these exercises are so effective in helping participants confront intellectual and emotional resistances, and experience such a steep learning curve in a relatively short period of time. Whether they are students or adult professionals, participants in simulations are motivated by an inimitable energy, and they gain a confident voice that does not usually result from their analyses of scholarly debates. IN-simulations allow participants to practice being rigorous thinkers, speakers, advocates, and leaders, without intellectual posturing and while enjoying their work and each other. They are driven to meet outside the class or module, work extra hours, correspond by email and collaborate on research. They often form lasting personal bonds as a result of the process, since it has required them to move through difficult and exciting situations together and over time. Their 'pleasure' (in the educational-philosophical sense[10]) does not take away from their focus. On the contrary, it is intimately linked to their growing confidence and discipline. The natural idealism of some participants is tempered by the 'realism' of the exercise, and at the end of a module they might feel

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9   As we will see in Chapter Four, some studies indicate that while simulations increase levels of motivation, this is not accompanied by a parallel growth in understanding complex ideas or critical thinking skills. This might be the case for a variety of reasons, some having to do with the structure of the modules or lack of integration into the broader course/program. But the kind of motivation described above, where enthusiasm is intimately tied to discipline and focused attention over time, and where meaning is not only tied to direct or vocational applicability but to a sense of purpose that moves a participant internally, is likely to produce corresponding improvements in understanding. For a discussion of the distinctions between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation, see Richard M. Ryan, R. M., and E. L. Deci, (2000), "Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivations: Classic Definitions and New Directions", *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 25:1, pp. 54–67. For a discussion on "Motivation Crowding Effect", which examines whether external incentives undermine intrinsic motivation, see Frey, B, S., and R. Jegen, (2001), "Motivation Crowding Theory", *Journal of Economic Surveys*, 15:5, pp 598–611.

10 Not merely having 'fun' for fun's sake but having an experience in which they are dynamically engaged as learners and actors, absorbing as well as building knowledge, drawing on a multiplicity of learning faculties.

quite deflated in their hopes of conflict resolution, shocked at the depth of the impasses between parties. At the same time, they feel personally empowered, inspired by the sense of personal development that they experienced and the challenge of devising implementable solutions to a variety of problems. They often say they felt they 'owned their knowledge' in a way they did not in other courses, and gained confidence in their ability to understand and discuss issues that before they perceived to be impenetrable or overwhelming.

> *I came to the simulation with scarce knowledge of hard security issues and military strategizing. Once thrown into the simulation, however, the conflict's security geography emerged before me like a three-dimensional map. Feeling confident and eloquent enough to engage on hard security questions – referring to the range of distinct weaponry, mobilization schedules, security topographies, and the military logic behind my arguments – made the simulation's incredible effectiveness as a didactic tool clear to me. I doubt that any other learning tool would have allowed me to acquire such practical knowledge in such a short period of time."* (Sabina Stein, Researcher/Program Officer, Mediation Support Team, Center for Security Studies, CSS ETHZ, 2012).

The process tends to be motivationally addictive even for people who initially resist it, because it simultaneously plucks so many strings in the composite being of an individual. Participants find themselves in a zone of learning that contains a charged mixture of intellectual challenge and personal engagement, where information is contextualized and vital to their goals in the module, debates seem to have a direct impact on real human lives, interactions are deeply human and multi-layered and skills can be tested in a setting that feels realistic. Most participants in an IN-simulation are captivated by the sense that they are being held responsible for the lives, security and sense of well-being not only of their delegation members but millions of people. They experience this responsibility on a very intimate level, one that touches their own personal sense of how and for what purpose they work for a cause, and drives them to passionate engagement in the process.

The process also draws participants in by 1) calling on their competitive spirit, 2) facilitating cooperation and allowing them to engage in a high level of team work, and 3) teaching them the art of adapting. These aspects require special attention and will be discussed individually below.

Competition

One reason IN-simulations induce motivation is that they bring competition into the learning space – a natural and powerful urge that can provoke unexpected forms of individual growth, but one that is often minimized in today's classrooms and training settings in the interests of avoiding excess rivalry and tension between individuals. IN-simulation competition leads participants to aim for much more than impressing the instructor or outdoing their colleagues. It includes an element of play that focuses the mind and induces a disciplined, purposeful and impassioned exchange of ideas between participants. It leads them to work with and against each other in ways mandated by their roles, continually to improve the quality of their arguments and ensure they are using the most reliable sources to support these arguments.

In an IN-simulation, participants compete for several reasons. First, they have a set of objectives that they must fulfill if they are to succeed in the module. But as the simulation progresses, a host of other elements enter into the calculations of participants. They compete to impress their colleagues with their rhetoric or argumentation. After finding themselves stumped by the argument of a peer and unable to refute a point, they frantically scramble to research and find information that will allow them to present a convincing rebuttal in the next session. This creates a spiral of learning that is based on a continual influx of new information. They compete to 'win', which means that they have properly achieved a set of objectives laid out by the instructor. And they compete with themselves, determined to do justice to a person, a position, a movement or an historical reality that they have been assigned to represent – even if they personally disapprove of the views they have to put forward.

The role of competition and the engagement of the ego are of particular relevance when running modules with individuals who are participants in or have a stake in the conflict being studied, and feel various degrees of anger or resistance to direct communication with their adversaries. Here the value and dangers of competition should be recognized and addressed: on the one hand, it would not be productive to induce more competition among people who are already driven by divisions or in conflict. On the other hand, the element of competition that encourages participants to take on and fairly represent an adversarial role can be extremely productive. It often compels participants playing 'against type' to lose their inhibitions about the content of the role. They are not always aware of this at the time, but psychologically the sense of competitive engagement allows them to release some resistances

and explore threatening perspectives almost involuntarily as they begin to present their case. Even if they don't like the task they have been given, they will find themselves in a situation where individuals on the other side might be putting forth a solid and persuasive argument, and they will in turn feel compelled to respond in kind, raising the level of their own arguments. After the simulation they generally become aware of the new ideas they took on board almost effortlessly, and they can now weigh the validity of these privately, removed from the subjective drive of the simulation, in a more objective and critical mode.

Thus, although there are dangers to provoking competition among people engaged in conflict, in a 'role reversal' IN-simulation participants are not in a position where pre-existing animosities will necessarily be increased or emotions boil over, as they are not putting forward their own case. Rather, they face a bizarre alternative universe in which all participants are representing views that are anathema to them. The competitive spirit thus acts mostly to motivate them to investigate these views and present them with integrity, and their hostility to the other side is tempered by the fact that the latter are also struggling to portray individuals and views they do not agree with.

As an example, let us take a participant playing a role that requires he represent views he fiercely rejects – I offer this as a generic case, as the experience laid out here has been conveyed to me by many participants, and I have observed this type of evolution with a variety of individuals.

Initially, the participant reads his role pack and background materials, makes his best attempt to understand the perspectives conveyed therein, but at his core feels a strong resistance to the rationale behind these arguments. Nevertheless, because the information and perspectives are necessary for this participant to succeed in the negotiation – to make a compelling argument and formulate a shrewd strategy – he delves into these otherwise offensive ideas in more depth and with more attentiveness than he would otherwise. In particular, he is forced to move beyond the positions put forth by the role he has been assigned (which could lead him superficially to list a number of talking points without genuinely engaging with the perspectives) to understanding the *rationale* for these positions – the beliefs, interests, pressures and politics that lie behind them. The participant worries that by understanding these rationales he comes perilously close to *legitimizing* them, but the process does not require he does the latter. It requires him to grasp the character's own justification in order to draw on these as he debates the issues.

During the early stages of a negotiation, as the participant puts forth a tentative and sometimes faltering version of these justifications, he will likely find that his ideas are challenged by people within his own delegation, or rejected and dismissed by the other side or by third parties. This is usually an important moment for the participant personally, as it triggers a defensive response that appears to be reactive or uncritical but that in the end opens a pathway to personal insight and deeper learning. For although the participant might not accept the views he is putting forward, he is inevitably frustrated by hearing his concerns or interests dismissed or rejected, having his clever proposals ignored or discovering that the other side is not putting forward a case judiciously. The participant might be emotionally agitated by this, and this often leads him to have a response that is not 'rational' or in line with his actual beliefs – to dig in his heels, investigate his role further, articulate more clearly the arguments that in real life he strongly rejects and – this is the key point – *as a result he begins to consider these views more deeply within himself.*

Unexpectedly, a very subjective, emotional experience or 'ego' reaction in the face of being dismissed by the other side facilitates a deep and genuine intellectual engagement with ideas that before could not be considered with objective distance. Not only does the participant begin to argue more seriously for the views he is putting forth, but he begins to hear, in a new way and from a critical distance, the arguments put forth by his interlocutors – that is, arguments that represent views with which he agrees in his real life. As a result, he is more able to assess the weaknesses in these arguments and begins to consider how they might be more effectively articulated.

These kinds of experiences produce in participants a form of critical self-reflection that we discussed above, and which can evoke difficult and sometimes painful feelings. However, the experiences also tend to refine participants' understanding, analytical skills and ability to reflect critically on their own perspectives or those held by people they support or agree with.

Cooperation and team work: When learners become teachers

At the same time, the process gives participants strong incentives to cooperate. This cooperative spirit, however, does not depend on participants liking each other or having a natural connection. On the contrary, it compels them to unite for the sake of necessity, collaborating on urgent tasks and coming face to face with the benefits and difficulties of having to adapt to working with people they do not always relate to. IN-simulation motivation gains some of its force from the fact that it does not rely on individuals to motivate

themselves in isolation. The group aspect of the process is a powerful incentive for most participants, and it is one that traditional educational environments are not always structured to enable. Seminar discussions can be exciting but often they take the form of a ping-pong match, where each student plays a one-to-one game with the instructor, answering her questions and sidestepping the comments of peers. When dialogues do take off between students, many often feel frustrated at what they consider to be the meandering nature of the discussion. In an attempt to induce a more genuine form of group work and peer learning many instructors try the 'break into small groups and discuss' method. It is hoped that by asking students to work through a specific problem as a team, they will think through the problem collectively, some of the usual dynamics of a class will be shifted, and students who otherwise remain quiet will be engaged.

One reason why these group methods are limited is that they do not create a situation where participants in a group discussion have a clear *reason* to value each other's knowledge or perspective, or where they feel they have something to offer each other. Group projects are most substantive if participants are prepared in such a way that they possess some information or skills that others need access to, and together they are engaged in building knowledge and working toward a particular end – developing an argument, a strategy, a proposal. *When learners become teachers,* developing a level of proficiency on a topic and verbal responsibility to convey their knowledge to others (or role model certain forms of behavior), their understanding of an issue is substantially sharpened.

In an IN-simulation the value of someone else's information or skills becomes apparent and urgently necessary, and individuals must find their place in a group quickly. During the process participants work together under a variety of pressures: they each have their own individual mandates, and thus are able to assert their independence and display their talents, but they always have to work on strategies together and depend on each other for success.

Many participants resist this group-work at first: they believe they are intellectually superior to their peers, and can take control of the group. However, in the environment of a negotiation most encounter a brick wall when pursuing this strategy, as they realize they alone simply do not have all the information or know-how needed to develop a strong strategy and manage the challenges they face. Other participants worry that they are intellectually inferior and resist contributing, but as we saw in the case of participant R.N.

(recounted in Chapter Two) these individuals are often unexpectedly creative and lively in a simulation, surprising themselves and others.

All these shifts create exciting new dynamics, mutual respect between participants, and a great deal of genuine bonding, with participants feeling that they have been through a uniquely challenging experience together.

> *We've all heard that we are supposed to learn as much from other students as we are from our teachers or our own studies, but I think I had unconsciously dismissed this notion in the past. I didn't really understand what it meant until I participated in a simulation, where I realized the connection between my own intellectual development and my ability to work productively with and learn from others.* (R. L. Graduate Student, New School University, 2005).

Adaptation: Challenging expectations

IN-simulations also teach participants something about the art of adapting – a crucial lesson that is difficult to fit into the space of a traditional educational setting. Participants' knowledge and behavior evolve continually in an IN-simulation, based on their readings and analysis, the input of colleagues and outside consultants, and developments within the simulation as well as in the 'real world' (for example, an urgent breaking news story).[11] They are frequently required to make decisions under pressure, redraw alliances, modify strategies, go in search of new sources to support unexpected developments, balance principles and interests and take responsibility for their actions and for the well-being of others.

> *In some circumstances, my choices either did not succeed or backfired, preventing me from achieving my desired goal. In this respect, I have learned that I have to look for ways to be more adaptable without having the*

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11   There is a tendency in simulations to over-use gaming devices such as external crises and breaking news stories, leading to a chaotic experience that teaches participants something about crisis management but spirals so far outside reality that they learn little about the conflict at hand or the perspectives of various parties. What is most useful is for participants to have time and space to reflect on what they are learning about the issues and be allowed gradually to immerse themselves in the process. Only then might it be interesting or relevant to confront the group with an external crisis: this would be most effective if it gives individuals the chance to experience the difficulties of making decisions in the face of multiple pressures and considerations. But an external input can also be useful to insert in order to bring a sense of reality into what might become an overly unrealistic peace making scenario (for example, if they are overlooking the role of 'spoilers' who might not agree with their process, a breaking news story might cover the reaction of those spoilers and force participants to consider them more carefully).

feeling of giving in or losing control. I think there is a fine line between adaptability and flexibility. To me, it will be quite a challenge to be adaptable without losing authority as in that event, people might take advantage of me or the situation. (D.S., Israel/Palestine simulation, Graduate Institute, Geneva, 2011).

Participants are often frustrated by the surprise challenges thrown at them in the middle of an IN-simulation, because this means that they have to shift gears significantly, and a certain amount of their hard work and planning appears to become irrelevant. In the end, however, most identify these moments of unexpected re-adjustment as central to their learning experiences, as they are compelled to find a balance between reflecting on a series of problems and options, and responding to the choices and demands of others. It forces them to work with what they have, even if what they have is not what they want.

Above all, this part of the process teaches them about what 'real' decision makers, politicians and negotiators have to contend with, and this often provides a challenging reality check on participants' judgments of what leaders are capable of. They gain keen and sometimes disturbing insights into the way decisions are made in the political world, often with a lack of adequate information or careful consideration, driven by political exigencies and external pressures, and in defiance of what appears to be just or even effective. As participants make their way through political and diplomatic minefields they are often shocked by their own choices, which appear to conflict with some of their beliefs about how the world should work or responsible actors should behave. But this experience of feeling compelled to choose one path over another for dubious reasons, gives them keen insights into the way things work at the top.

I had the feeling that our head of delegation was not very strong in leading our group, and I was surprised to find myself bypassing her authority. I took the liberty to approach directly other members of my own group as I knew that by doing so I would gain their support to my views. It worked. That's something new to me, as I tend to naturally respect authority. I was happy to see that my strategy to find alliances without always referring to the 'boss' was also working. Lesson learnt: if you see that the authority is weak, and if you feel that your position is the correct one, find alternatives with new partners. (R.R., Israel/Palestine simulation, Graduate Institute, Geneva, 2011).

3.4   Conclusion

IN-simulations can be moving and motivating educational experiences, not only because of the lessons they offer individual participants. They are so in great part because they attempt to address some of the enduring fissures that lie at the heart of modern liberal education. These have been described and decried by many educational thinkers, but in attempting to address them instructors and administrators have often relied too heavily on structural and cosmetic rearrangements – reshuffling courses and programs to combine (but not unite) classes from various disciplines, or adding (but not integrating) practice to theory. What is necessary is to go a step further, re-considering how people learn and what kinds of learning environments can provide them with the ability to thrive as human beings. In creating an atmosphere where reflection and action are intertwined, and where critical thinking is learned through affective as well as analytical engagement, IN-simulations take one tentative step in this direction. In a nutshell:

- IN-simulations help address some aspects of the theory/practice divide by allowing participants to experience both in *one learning space,* and giving them the opportunity to reflect on and adjust their thinking and behavior in real time.
- IN-simulations encourage a form of *critical self-awareness* that allows participants to test their critical thinking skills in a situation that mirrors reality; this often helps them recognize flaws in their own analysis of a conflict, their ability to remain objective or impartial, or their capacity to manage emotionally charged encounters.
- *Motivation* is often touted as the primary benefit of simulations, but many analysts argue that although motivation is high this does not necessarily mean that participants' learning is deepened. In order for the latter to happen, a simulation must have a structure that makes particular use of participants' motivation: in particular, the necessity of learning about issues and presenting them in detail to others; and the requirement to put ideas and strategies into writing in such a way that the information attained is built upon and structured by the participant him or herself. IN-simulations induce forms of *competition, cooperation and adaptation* that are extremely useful in helping resistant participants reach for and retain information they might normally be averse to, and recognizing their own qualities or limitations as team players or leaders.

4 Questions and Critiques: the Potential and Limits of IN-simulations

Instructors who use simulations often become great converts to the method, and make strong claims for their value as 'active learning' tools. It is often said that simulations give participants deeper knowledge of a subject (albeit sometimes at the expense of breadth of knowledge), lead to superior retention of material, produce a more sophisticated understanding of the issues than in traditional courses, induce a powerful mix of intellectual, affective and experiential learning and offer skills-based professional training that is not possible in a traditional setting.

However, while these benefits appear obvious to many simulation instructors and participants, legitimate questions have been raised regarding the method – in particular, whether simulation-based learning is able to meet the standards set by universities and faculty, or the intellectual and professional needs of students and practitioners-in-training. Even the best models of simulations have problems and limits that should be recognized and addressed as the method is refined and adapted to various programs and groups. In this chapter I focus on some of the concerns most frequently raised, and offer responses that attempt to balance the weaknesses and strengths of the method.

It should be noted that in this book I have been discussing a method I call IN-simulations and that I have personally developed, although many of the benefits and limits I have ascribed to these modules are also relevant for other simulations. However, as IN-simulations are not specifically addressed in the literature, the analyses and critiques I mention below refer to a variety of other modules: some of these are categorized by authors generally as simulations or role-plays but with little description of their type or method, while others are described in more detail.

My own view is that some of the weaknesses of the simulations discussed by various authors are due to the nature of the particular module, and thus can be improved with better planning, materials, structure and supervision. This should not, however, be interpreted to mean that I believe the problems associated with simulations can always be avoided, or that the model of IN-simulations can solve them all. My point is that 1) in a rigorous simulation these problems can be minimized, 2) the benefits of the module

often make up for its flaws; and 3) these flaws, while problematic, are sometimes no more problematic than the (often unexamined) imperfections found in traditional educational approaches.

4.1   Is There Convincing Evidence That Simulations are Educationally Effective?

Q: Has there been enough evaluation of simulations to conclude that the method is a reliable educational tool? And given that simulation modules provide such different learning experiences to those encountered in traditional courses, how can the two be effectively compared?

My purpose here and throughout this book has been to discuss how or whether the model of the IN-simulation can be rigorous and substantive enough to merit a place in traditional university courses (retaining key academic goals while integrating practice-based training), and at the same time to consider how the method can be more scrupulously applied in professional training modules (offering more substantive and in-depth modules). I have thus attempted to consider assessments that deal with simulations in negotiation-training programs as well as academic ones. It should be noted, however, that although researchers have analyzed a number of aspects of simulations as a teaching method,[1] the greater part of the research focuses on evaluating modules that are related to negotiation training, rather than those that run within academic programs.[2]

Although a great deal of the literature speaks positively about the effects of 'active' or 'experiential' learning for university students in fields such as

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1   For a general overview of the accumulated analysis on simulations relating to negotiation and mediation training see Druckman, D., and N. Ebner, (2013), "Games, Claims, and New Frames: Rethinking the Use of Simulation in Negotiation Education", *Negotiation Journal,* 29:1, pp. 61–93.

2   One of the more useful articles addressing simulations inside university programs is Raymond, C., (2010), "Do Role-Playing Simulations Generate Measurable and Meaningful Outcomes? A Simulation's Effect on Exam Scores and Teaching Evaluations", *International Studies Perspectives,* 11:1, pp. 51–60.

International Relations and Political Science[3], some studies have shown that when it comes to simulations, there is no substantial difference in terms of outcomes between what students actually learn in traditional classes and in a simulation module.[4] Others reveal that while student motivation and retention of information is greater than in traditional classes, neither their concept learning nor their critical skills are improved.[5] These outcomes are significant, reveal crucial areas of weakness in simulation-based education and are certainly worthy of further research.

Some aspects of these critiques are also problematic, in that they often make little or no attempt to distinguish between outcomes depending on the *type* of simulations analyzed. For example, in their very useful article Druckman and Ebner[6] examine a wide variety of simulation-related problems without discussing what kinds of modules are at issue and how some of the flaws might be related to their structure and method. And yet simulations come in many shapes and sizes – from 30-minute exercises to multi-week units – and the quality of the exercise depends a great deal on how it is constructed and run. It is only when the authors give an example, late in the article, of a colleague suggesting that simulations might improve if 'for example, students can prepare their role plays ahead of time, instead of on the spot in class,'[7] that we become aware that Druckman and Ebner might be referring to modules that are light on detail and preparation (if they can indeed be prepared for 'on the spot in class') and thus bound not to live up to the far-reaching educational claims made by instructors. Thus, while many critiques of simulations are well considered and reflect the reality that statements regarding the method are often inflated, evaluations of the method should be intimately linked to a description of the nature of the module itself: how it is structured, how it intends to achieve its goals, what its various components are.

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3   For example, Barr, R.B., and J. Tagg, (1995), "From Teaching to Learning: A New Paradigm for Under-graduate Education", *Change,* 27:6, pp.12–25: Bonwell, C. C., and J.A. Eison (1991), "Active Learning: Creating Excitement in the Classroom", *ASHE-ERIC Higher Education,* Report 1, Washington D.C.: The George Washington University, School of Education and Human Development, p.2, http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED336049.pdf: Krain, M., (2006), "Starving for Knowledge: An Active Learning Approach to Teaching about World Hunger", *International Studies Perspectives,* 7:1, pp.51–66: Morgan, A.L., (2003), "Toward a Global Theory of Mind; The Potential benefits of Presenting a Range of IR Theories through Active Learning", *International Studies Perspectives,* 4:4, pp.351–370.

4   Raymond, C., (2010), "Do Role-Playing Simulations Generate Measurable and Meaningful Outcomes?"

5   See Druckman, D., and N. Ebner, (2013), "Games, Claims, and New Frames".

6   See Druckman, D., and N. Ebner, (2013), "Games, Claims, and New Frames".

7   Druckman, D., and N. Ebner, (2013), "Games, Claims, and New Frames", p.75.

Another problem with simulation assessment is that there appear to be few if any formal and reliable tools for evaluating the type of knowledge and understanding participants acquire during a simulation process, and no shared educational terminology to describe the kind of educational process that has been outlined in these pages – where the learning faculties act together to induce a form of critical self-reflection, professional skills are built in a context that mirrors real life, affective and analytical learning reinforce each other and participants are challenged to hold and respond to multiple and competing perspectives in 'real time'. As many analysts have pointed out, the evaluations we use for traditional classes are limited, as they tend to ask questions that relate to teaching rather than learning,[8] focusing on the instructor and his or her goals rather than the student's learning capacity or experience.[9]

The lack of formal evaluation tools has been addressed in a useful article by Chad Raymond,[10] who attempts to compare outcomes from a large group of students who followed a general course. Some of these students participated in a simulation during the course, while others followed only the traditional coursework. He describes the type of simulation in some detail, and his two central conclusions are instructive: 1) there was only a very minor improvement in the exam grades of students who engaged in a simulation compared to the outcomes of students who did not, although the simulation students' self assessment indicated that they felt the process was highly instructive; 2) although students showed great enthusiasm for the process, they gave relatively low marks for the teachers on their evaluation forms.

However, although the author himself notes late in the article that the lack of higher marks on exams could indicate that the lessons learned in the module were not addressed in the exam questions or format, this is not a secondary but a central point, and one that is not adequately highlighted. It should be clear to those embarking on simulation teaching that these mod-

8   For example, see Barr, R.B., and J. Tagg, (1995), "From Teaching to Learning: A New Paradigm for Undergraduate Education", *Change*, 27:6, pp. 12–25.

9   Issues of assessment were addressed in depth in Volume 3 of Hamline University's *Rethinking Negotiation Teaching* series, "Assessing Our Students, Assessing Ourselves" (*http://digitalcommons. hamline.edu/dri_press/4*). The volume looked at various problems with assessment, such as the lack of consensus about evaluation tools; different approaches to existing tools; the potential for bias in terms of questions asked or participants' ability or willingness to respond; and the value of peer assessments and interviews.

10 Raymond, C., (2010), "Do Role-Playing Simulations Generate Measurable and Meaningful Outcomes? A Simulation's Effect on Exam Scores and Teaching Evaluations", *International Studies Perspectives*, 11:1, pp. 51–60.

ules often do not convey the same lessons as other classes, although there is some overlap. Indeed, they should not necessarily attempt to convey the same lessons, especially if they are held in conjunction with courses that take a traditional approach. Simulations do, however, offer a host of lessons and experiences that traditional classes do not, and these should be evaluated on their own merits. As for lower teacher evaluations, given that Raymond indicates that the instructor in this case takes no part whatsoever once the module begins (only watching as an observer), it should not be surprising that students do not feel or experience the instructor's educational input or value during the process.

In my own work with simulations, I encountered several difficulties with assessments and evaluations. First, it is not always easy to convince participants to take the requisite time for post-simulation evaluation forms. They often see evaluations as formalities they must complete in order to provide feedback on the quality of the instructor or the module, rather than self-reflective or educative tools. It is thus necessary to clarify at the outset that evaluations are an integral part of the simulation learning experience, and a requirement, not an option.

A second challenge is that participants' personal or social-cultural background may influence the degree to which they believe in or are comfortable with the idea of speaking openly about the personal aspects of their learning experience. Some would rather not go into detail, and as a result their comments will remain too general to be helpful. Others might find it difficult to deal with, let alone admit in writing, some of the lessons they learned about themselves. Participants who are in some way involved directly in the conflict being studied might not want to put anything in writing, even if they are promised anonymity, for fear of saying something that could be used against them. In such cases oral interviews or informal exchanges can be useful, but it is also simply the case that in some instances there will be limitations on how much feedback an instructor can obtain on the more personal aspects of the learning experience.

All this further highlights one of the key requirements for the improvement of simulations – specific assessment tools and evaluation forms that are constructed to address the particular lessons that simulations attempt to convey, and are adaptable for different audiences. Providing traditional evaluation forms to students/participants who have taken part in a simulation might show us some gaps in terms of what they did *not* learn according to what or how we consider

they should learn in a traditional course, but they will not tell us much about what or how they *did* learn in a simulation.[11]

In order for this to happen, first there would need to be an attempt more systematically to identify and acknowledge the many weaknesses in university education. We can only evaluate the relative merits of simulations and traditional education if we begin by recognizing that they both have imperfections. If, on the contrary, we look for defects in simulations while assuming traditional courses are accomplishing their goals in a satisfactory manner (or that the goals and methods are correct but only need to be implemented more rigorously) simulations will of course appear the weaker model.

Second, evaluations for simulations would have to address a new series of questions related to what students experience in a different kind of learning environment – about a particular topic, about themselves, about others or about conflicts and social/cultural/economic/political/diplomatic processes. (Some examples of relevant evaluation questions for IN-simulations are provided in the Annex). These kinds of questions would reveal a great deal about both the values and flaws of simulations, allowing instructors to refine the modules where necessary and argue more effectively for their use. They would also allow instructors and program administrators to re-consider traditional evaluation forms, perhaps finding ways to provide the kinds of questions that would reveal more about the learning experience of students.

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11   In teaching courses on the French Revolution, for example, in both a traditional class and a *Reacting to the Past* game format, I noticed a wide difference in outcomes. Students in the former class learned more about historiographical debates concerning the causes of the Revolution, and were better able to tell a story about the relation between ideas and events leading up to it. The latter learned more closely about the nature of revolution itself, and the tensions that built up to and affected this one as it progressed. More importantly, they experienced what it *felt* like to be caught in spiral of revolution, and were exposed to some of the patterns that have been repeated in various revolutions, from 1917 in Russia to 2011 in the Middle East. They read the ideas of Edmund Burke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau as live political documents rather than historical texts, and thus experienced firsthand how ideas and ideologies were twisted and misused in moments of political turmoil. These were very different but equally important learning experiences, each requiring different questions in order to properly evaluate. For the *Reacting* game on the French Revolution see Carnes, M.C. and G. Kates, (2014) "Rousseau, Burke, and Revolution in France, 1791", *Reacting to the Past*, Barnard College, Columbia University, W W Norton & Co http://reacting.barnard.edu/curriculum/published-games/rousseau.

4.2   Is an IN-Simulation a Psychological Experiment?

Q: Given the 'role-play' aspect and subjective mindset participants adopt during an IN-simulation, where people who are strangers or have no preexisting tensions can become mired in conflict, is the process perilously close to being a psychological experiment?

Whenever I teach a 'traditional' (non-simulation) course on conflict or mass violence, my students and I discuss the results of some psychological experiments (such as the famous Zimbardo experiment and more recent BBC Prison study), which reveal how conflict can be provoked between individuals and groups that have no pre-existing bases for hostility. We also look at works of evolutionary psychology, which address some of the ways human beings behave in the context of conflict and coexistence; and recent findings in brain science, which shed light on some of the ways that the mind reacts in situations of stress, fear and where information is slanted or restricted. I bring these approaches into class because I believe that in addition to analyzing the historical, cultural, socio-economic and political causes of conflict, students should be challenged to ask broader questions about human behavior: in particular, how it is that human beings have, through time, been so susceptible to similar patterns of conflict? Why do these patterns recur in such similar ways in such a wide variety of historical, cultural and political circumstances? How do the mind and emotions function under duress and in the face of 'peer pressure' or incitement to violence? How are conflict and cooperation balanced in the history of human interaction?

It is true that to some extent IN-simulations provide a forum where theories about conflict-related behavior are not only studied but also tested. Participants are put into adversarial roles and begin to live through the beliefs and views that drive the individuals they are representing. It is striking, and indeed disturbing, that once participants are placed in a role and given an agenda, despite their best intentions and within a staggeringly short period of time they begin to fight for a set of beliefs as though they were their own. In IN-simulations where participants take on roles that are in opposition to their own backgrounds or beliefs, even representing views that they find offensive or abhorrent, their passion and determination is often equally strong and genuine.

But while there is indeed an element of passionate and emotional engagement in an IN-simulation that is not present in traditional courses, *a*

well-constructed IN-simulation should have very clear boundaries that prevent it from degenerating into a conflict between participants. Ideally, the intellectual content and negotiation and mediation-oriented goals drive the process: participants approach the learning process with a high degree of conscientiousness and closely follow their role objectives, which are designed to ensure that the exercise moves toward negotiation-related ends rather than spiraling into inter-personal tensions. And crucially, a rigorous IN-simulation should be mediated and monitored by the instructor, who can gauge when participants are moving beyond these boundaries.

In addition, the very fact of participants having been convinced so quickly and adopting unfamiliar positions with such vigor is not a problematic side effect of the simulation: *it is an integral part of the learning experience.* Having strongly identified with a particular position, and by virtue of having tested or compromised their own sense of objectivity, participants often gain a direct and shocking insight into the powerful sway of collective narratives and individual convictions, and a new understanding of the actions of people who are driven by what they previously identified as unreasonable fears and beliefs. They are often humbled about own critical faculties and might recognize elements of their personal beliefs that are more influenced by historical, cultural or social factors than they previously assumed.

I do not mean to imply here that conflicts are driven by illusions or psychological phenomena that are separate from material realities, nor is this the lesson participants absorb through the simulation. On the contrary, the painstaking engagement with 'facts on the ground' and multiple perspectives about those facts usually leads participants to become conflict-literate in a way they were not before, gaining a broad historical and geopolitical perspective on the various elements that impel and sustain a conflict. But the 'psychological-experiment' aspect of the simulation does lead participants to an awareness of how, even when conflicts are deeply grounded in historical and material realties, they are also driven and further escalated by processes that are less tangible, related to the nature of social interaction rather than a particular time-specific set of circumstances. I believe these experiences are as important for participants to dissect and confront as the case study itself, for they challenge them to reach a new form of self-awareness when dealing with themselves and conflicting parties, or when aspiring to objectivity or impartiality.

Some of these aspects of a simulation process may pose concerns for instructors, many of who do not want to be put in a position where they

might have to manage participants having experiences that are psychologically challenging. Instructors who are not comfortable with this might consider running simulations that are less immersive and reality-based than IN-simulations, or running IN-simulations with participants who are not directly involved in the conflict being studied. Another alternative for those who are willing to take the time is to receive training in how to create the kinds of scenarios in such a way that the process has well-defined boundaries. This would also include some training in how to identify and manage sensitivities in participants and mediate potential tensions between them in the context of a simulation.

Having said that, the psychologically challenging aspects of a rigorous IN-simulation should not be exaggerated: my own experience is that as long as an instructor is aware of the possible sensitivities of individuals or the group and remains in contact with them, these sensitivities do not spiral out of control.

4.3   Is the Role-Reversal Aspect Too Hazardous and Open to Abuse?

Q: Is it too much to ask people in a simulation to take on a role that is unfamiliar or antagonistic to them, or people involved in a conflict to represent the views of their adversaries? Even if participants give it their best effort, is it actually possible for them to represent such a role fairly, without consciously or unconsciously stereotyping the character or trying to sabotage the process?

One important aspect of IN-simulations that we have discussed throughout this book is the way in which participants are challenged through role allocation: some take on a role that clashes with their backgrounds and beliefs if they are directly involved in the conflict, while others might not have strong feelings about the conflict but take on a role that is unfamiliar or challenging in other ways described in Chapter One.

In the best of cases, and where participants are being true to their roles and courageous about the challenge, the process of role reversal is delicate. But some commentators have questioned whether a role reversal can indeed be authentic at all, or whether it inevitably results only in exaggeration and stereotyping, even to the point of being 'perceived as disrespectful

and nonsensical' and feeling 'inappropriate and invasive'.[12] They also question whether the artificiality of such role play distracts from the real emotion and conflict context that simulation participants should be learning about.[13]

These concerns are likely to be realized in a simulation that is brief, where the scenario is loosely structured, roles are general and laid out on one or two sheets of paper rather than detailed and constructed in a rigorous manner, communication between instructor and participants is lacking and supervision of the process is minimal. There is simply no reason why participants should represent a role that is inimical to them with integrity unless they:

• Know that this is the fundamental responsibility they carry;
• Are aware of what this entails and agree to it before the module begins;
• Are actively held to it throughout;
• Perceive other participants to be fulfilling their mandates;
• Trust the instructor to be vigilant with all participants to ensure the challenges are equally distributed.

In my experience facilitating a range of academic and professional simulations, when these five factors are in place the process most often does not lead to role stereotyping. There are several reasons for this.

First, although some of the critiques of role reversal assume that the role of the 'other' is likely to cause problems where a participant cannot naturally identify with that role, it is the job of the instructor to give the role resonance for participants and ensure that there is a 'way in' even for those who resist the ideas being put forth. No matter how hardline or difficult to relate to, the role cannot be two-dimensional. It must authentically convey controversial positions held by the person, and give the participant a sense of self with complex motives and goals that are difficult but achievable. Rather than listing fixed or pre-established positions, *the participant must grasp these motives and goals and determine how they might be expressed or modified in response to others in the negotiations.* Whether or not they agree with the positions, they can easily feel that the other side is being over-aggressive towards them, and that experience gives them an incentive to engage in a difficult but recognizably human process of exchange and negotiation. It is through that

12   Alexander, N., and M. LeBaron, (2009), "Death of the Role Play", in: Honeyman, C., Coben, J., and G. De Palo, *Rethinking Negotiation Teaching: Innovations for Context and Culture,* Hamline University School of Law, St Paul, MN: DRI Press, p.182.

13   Alexander, N., and M. LeBaron, (2009), "Death of the Role Play", pp.183–184.

engagement that the role gains meaning and becomes manageable, and it can do so even while its content is not embraced.

Of course this cannot always be fully achieved. As we saw in Chapter Two, participant C.M. was unable or unwilling to adapt to some aspects of 'role integrity'. In the case of C.M. however, the lessons about the conflict and the challenges he perceived his own side faced were powerful, and useful in the 'real world'. For this reason it is imperative that instructors have patience with resistant participants, and remain flexible about what 'lessons learned' will look like for different individuals. Specific points might be resisted or rejected by participants, even while they absorb lessons from the process itself.

Second, while some commentators have cautioned against having participants take on roles involving reversed ethnic or cultural identities,[14] sometimes it is precisely the distance from one's own identity that allows a person to delve into the role and feel liberated to explore a new way of thinking and being, rather than merely setting out different arguments. The burden here is on the simulation designer, to ensure that the role is written with respect, and role instructions do not encourage superficial ethnic and cultural stereotypes. Rather, participants are introduced to subtle nuances of behavior that might elucidate the differences in the way in which groups approach communication or confrontation within the setting of a negotiation or mediation. It can be transformational for them to learn the particular cultural, religious, historical or linguistic sensitivities that might in real life have prevented parties from accepting proposals or conditions of negotiation. They might come to recognize how their own language and approach could create obstacles to forward movement, and learn how to reframe ideas and proposals in such a way that makes them more likely to be heard.

Further, a realistic simulation brings out the complex phenomenon I explained earlier, where the discipline required to hold conflicting views and identities produces surprising results. An IN-simulation should not produce a sanitized environment, stripped of tension, or one that prevents participants from recognizing and working with their own emotional responses. Rather, and paradoxically, the phenomenon of role reversal can facilitate a very direct and authentic encounter with oneself and others. For when participants are separated (through role play) from their own feelings and opinions about a conflict and yet find themselves nevertheless reacting emotion-

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14   Alexander, N., and M. LeBaron, (2009), "Death of the Role Play", p.193.

ally, they are often presented with an unusually clear lens through which to view their own patterns of communication and response.

An example of this phenomenon was provided in the story of B.T., relayed in Chapter Two. In her case, the artificiality of the role reversal did not prevent her from confronting her tendency to get emotional or her weaknesses as a communicator; rather, it facilitated a more honest encounter. It was precisely because she was in a process where the realities of the conflict were authentically reproduced, and yet she was in a *role* that she did not identify with intellectually or emotionally (and thus her real feelings about the conflict were inhibited) that her own personal qualities were isolated, came slowly to the surface and became more visible to her. Finding herself thus in different circumstances and representing different convictions, she was able to recognize that her patterns of behavior were similar.

I have heard countless responses similar to this one, where participants taking on an opposing role told me that the breakthrough in an IN-simulation was provoked by a deep engagement with something foreign, which gave them a sort of bird's eye view of themselves and of the way in which a conflict can be stoked. This may be the case with participants who take roles they are ideologically/politically opposed to, or simply because it can be liberating to explore different aspects of one's personality by taking on a leadership or mediating role.

It should be noted that in order for these experiences to come to the fore some elements of the emotional content should be embedded in the simulation design itself, and filtered carefully in such a way as to limit the extent to which participants project pre-existing feelings about the conflict onto their interaction (this will be discussed in more detail in the 'How to Manual').

However, there will always be participants who have trouble separating their personal feelings or worries, whether or not these are related to the conflict, from those they are experiencing or portraying in their roles. I have worked with several such individuals, who inserted their anxieties onto the process in ways that were inappropriate, out of character and disruptive for themselves and the group. It is often the case that these participants are convinced that in being 'emotive' they are authentically portraying the passion of their role. It is thus difficult for their peers or the instructor to engage with them about the issue without provoking a defensive response. As with most problems related to participant conduct, it is important for other participants to know that the instructor notices the issue and is attempting to address it,

either through direct communication with the particular individual or through gaming devices, such as those described on page 132.

It is important to keep in mind that although role reversal and tension-ridden debates can be productive elements of an IN-simulation, I note below that not all people in conflict should participate in a simulation that requires a role reversal and brings forth these kinds of highly charged encounters. For some participants and in some situations it is simply too inflammatory. I have worked with individuals who simply could neither accept a role nor portray it with integrity, even when they made a sincere effort to do so. In some cases their anger was too intense, the sense that they would be betraying their people too powerful. Instructors have several options when faced with such cases.

- It is helpful if participants are made aware that the instructor has a nuanced understanding of their concerns, and are given several chances to engage with the process. Sometimes participants merely need to know their objections have been registered before accepting the challenge.
- If this does not help, instructors can focus on ensuring that other participants in the delegation are not having their experience undermined by one participant who is resisting the process. This means that if the struggling participant was given a leadership role, another participant might take on that role instead (a rare case where it is valuable to interchange roles during a module). The struggling participant will sometimes be relieved to take a back seat, and even find a way to participate productively while shouldering less responsibility.
- If the struggling participant is not able to get anything out of the module or disrupts the process, instructors can offer him or her a way out: for example, rather than continuing with the simulation, the participant would write a paper analyzing a particular issue relating to the conflict.
- It important to keep in mind that sometimes participants appear to resist the process because of the challenge of role reversal, but in fact simply do not feel comfortable with role plays or group projects. Whether their resistance is based on personal or cultural issues, if a participant finds they cannot overcome their discomfort it is best to allow them to withdraw from the process.

Finally, it is also useful for instructors to keep in mind that one reservation people often have upon entering a module where they are asked to reverse roles is that they all assume that the *other side* will be incapable of or

unwilling to engage in this part of the process honestly. Such modules must therefore be based on strong foundations. Goals are best clarified from the beginning so that participants know what is expected of them. Mechanisms should be in place for noticing and responding to conscious or unconscious acts of sabotage. If participants are aware that one of the goals of the instructor is to keep participants to their role, and if supervision is tight from the start and people are compelled to stick to their role, a cycle of courage ensues. When participants fulfill their mandates their opponents tend to rise to meet the challenge. This creates a phenomenon of mutual audacity, which is the opposite of mutual stereotyping.

> There are very few instances where we are encouraged, even forced, by a situation, to embody the 'other'. In politics it's often the last thing we do. What the simulation did was encourage and force us past fear – my own and my character's – to get to some of the (seemingly illogical) logic, the reasons, the emotions, for why we do/say/feel what we do. What happens is extraordinary and difficult. You begin by just using the facts and information you've learnt, wearing your character like an uncomfortable jacket, and then there is a moment when you cross over, and your adrenaline, nerves, passion fuses with your character's and you find yourself arguing from a real place. It can be very disturbing, hearing the things that come out of your mouth, feeling what you feel, but it is also incredibly liberating. The 'other' is no longer just an incomprehensible, impenetrable threat to be feared or dismissed. The face-less opponent loses its power, and we gain a lot. (T. C., Israel/Palestine simulation, 2013)

4.4 Is the Role-Play Aspect Too Unsettling for Participants, Even When It Does Not Entail a 'Role Reversal'?

Given that for many people questions of self and identity are fragile and malleable, is the role-play aspect in itself potentially too disorienting, even if people are not taking on roles that are ideologically offensive or represent those of their adversaries?

The challenge of the role-play aspect does not only occur when the role is a reversal on ideological, cultural or political grounds. It is also present when

participants take personal risks – for example, representing the role of a leader if they are generally averse to being in the spotlight, or taking on the role of a hardline negotiator if they highly value the disposition of an impartial mediator. A few participants have made this very clear to me, and their experiences point to the importance of recognizing the seriousness of asking anyone to engage in role play in an extended simulation.

One such particular participant was E. R., who participated in a two-day simulation run with a group of professionals. Although he took on the role of a leader of a delegation, he was quite reluctant to do so. He was aware of his many positive qualities as a professional, but had a strong sense that he was not effective as a leader, and unable to communicate adequately in a group setting. To his great surprise, however, he did an outstanding job as a leader and communicator. He developed new skills quickly over the two days, learning about how to deal with and manage his delegation and counterparts on the other side. Although these were surprising and dramatic lessons for him, and he felt he had achieved a great deal personally, the process was disconcerting to him simply because of the act of *being someone else*. In his own words:

The simulation was hugely rewarding and engrossing, and I was very proud of my speaking, persuasion and leadership skills, which took me a little by surprise. I have never done any successful public speaking before. I normally get very nervous – but I realized that the role and emotion pushed nerves to the side. Developing such skills was my primary motivation for taking part, in addition to my fascination with understanding the complexities of the conflict and efforts at resolution.

However, whilst I felt very comfortable and confident in my role, I realized afterwards that much of this confidence was acquired through the mask of the role itself. Once I came out of my role, I realized how psychologically draining 'being someone else' had been, and that when I was me again – rather than my character – I no longer felt as confident as I did during the simulation, which I found quite difficult to deal with. I found this quite shocking and stressful. I have never 'forgotten myself' for such a long period of time. Combined with the exhaustion I felt by the end, becoming myself again was disorientating. This was much less to do with re-gaining my own views on the conflict, and much more to do with shedding an alter ego and coming back to reality.

This kind of response to role challenges is powerful and should be taken very seriously: it speaks to an elementary aspect of role play, which is that it can be disorienting to represent another person, regardless of the content of the views being represented. In my experience many of these discomforts are modified and seen in a new light with time, but they tell us something important about the need to develop a module where there is space for the more intense aspects to be absorbed and given time to settle. In the words of participant E.R.,

> That said, in the many months since, I have begun to develop my speaking and leadership skills 'as me' and am now looking back on the simulation process fondly and as helpful – frequently citing, at work, immersive simulation as an example of how to best encourage people to understand complex situations and the role they play in them. I am sure my experience says as much about me as the process itself, with one of my primary realizations since being that: I need more 'down time' and space for contemplation than a short intense simulation allows for.[15]

Other participants, such as the female rabbi and Egyptian human rights activists described in Chapter Two, experience these 'out of identity' roles as liberating and empowering. However, even when participants experience the outcome as positive or liberating, it can nevertheless be disconcerting. I had one student years ago, H.D., who struggled a great deal while representing the head of a group of victims in a simulation on post-genocide Rwanda. Her 'role pack' indicated to her that she had a painful personal story of survival, and in her role she had to straddle several goals: expressing to the whole group what she had personally experienced, being a political leader of sorts and ensuring that the needs of her constituents were addressed.

H.D. struggled quite a bit in the simulation, but at the time I only knew part of the reason. She mentioned that she felt deeply moved by the experiences of the survivors, and she felt intimidated by the process that was taking place around her, which was nominally about the need to help survivors but in fact was driven by powerful political forces that had little to do with her character's experience:

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15   Note that E.R. is referring to a full two and a half day module (with materials provided three weeks in advance) as 'short'.

In the Rwanda/Gacaca simulation I discovered much about myself as a student and as a potential conflict resolution practitioner. In the role of the Ibuka leader I learned the complexity of keeping memory alive without keeping hate alive, and was gripped by the tension between disillusionment and empowerment as I faced a continual barrage of counterarguments by my peers. I learned about the incredible obstacles to attaining a more peaceful and just world, a lesson I will carry with me in future conflict resolution-related work. (H. D., Rwanda simulation, New School University, 2005).

Years later, however, I learned some of the more profound reasons for H.D.'s trepidation, when she told me that during the experience she came to recognize how a very personal and buried experience of her own victimization in the past had been disturbing her during the simulation, and in her life it prevented her from being an effective leader in conflict-related situations that were emotionally charged. Ultimately, the experience of confronting those in the almost-real world of the simulation appears to have helped her find her voice and level of comfort in her professional life.

Honestly, I would probably still be quiet if I had not gone through this course, always a bit uncomfortable in certain situations. So even if I seemed quiet during the process, the simulation ultimately gave me a voice. Today I stand firmly and strongly, and I am definitely not afraid to be heard.

I relate these examples in depth both as a caution and as an inspiration. The caution is that in a module that requires in-depth role play such experiences can be triggered, whether or not the instructor intends them to be. The inspiration is that they produce powerful experiences that participants usually identify as positive and 'transformative' and that are transferable to other contexts in their lives, both personal and professional. After all, one of the purposes of an IN-simulation is to challenge participants in new ways that will have a significant impact on their future intellectual, personal or professional lives, and there is no reason to assume this can or should be achieved without some difficulty. Instructors should be aware of the possibility that some participants will be open enough to allow the simulation experiences to affect them in ways that reach beyond the content of the module, and prepared to deal with these participants in a professional manner. This might mean that they gently solicit communication from the participant; or, if they

are not comfortable getting too involved, at least they might find a way to let the participant know that having such experiences is natural, and with some self-reflection can provide valuable lessons that will positively affect their personal and professional development.

4.5 Can IN-Simulations Convert, Brainwash or Dangerously Re-Entrench Participants in Their Views?

Q: If participants take on an adversarial role and do their job well – in other words, they fight hard to convince others of their views – are they likely to be 'converted' to a new viewpoint or 'brainwashed'? Or if they take on a familiar perspective or one they already support can they be dangerously entrenched in their beliefs?

Conversion or brainwashing

The discussion in the previous section leads to a related question about whether participants can be 'brainwashed' during the course of an IN-simulation, as they delve into and identify with one particular position from a highly subjective point of view, and with a strong incentive to 'win' or undermine the other side.

There are legitimate concerns about this problem in some simulations, as participants enter a process wherein they have very individualized roles, and gather and absorb material that places emphasis on one limited and often skewed perspective. Naturally, in order for participants to make convincing arguments in a negotiation they must understand a great deal about the perspective of their adversaries, and this acts as somewhat of a counter balance to the one-sided research. Nevertheless, it is true that during an IN-simulation participants focus intensely on one set of ideas and beliefs over the course of several days, weeks or even months. They undertake an enormous amount of research to defend that position, invest emotionally and intellectually in convincing others of it and are sometimes determined to quash opposition even within their own camp.

This immersive approach certainly carries dangers. A substantive, unhurried debrief can address some of the issues raised by the subjective experience aspect of an IN-simulation. Participants are often open to hearing how their peers interpreted them during the exercise, and various patterns

and reactions can be pointed out, as long as the discussion is respectful and does not appear to be singling out particular individuals.

However, it is undeniable that a great many simulations are not structured so as to allot enough time to this part of the learning experience.[16] In my own experience with extended modules, especially when the exercise is run with professionals who have limited time, I have found it difficult to include enough space for a rigorous debriefing. And yet one of the reasons that a debriefing is so important is that in some cases the hazards of simulations overlap with their potential benefits. For example, as we have noted it is often the experiential and emotive elements that allow participants to engage with views and feelings in ways they might not otherwise, and the passionate desire to represent a perspective also enables them to absorb and retain a great deal of information quickly. But precisely because an idea or belief is absorbed very subjectively, it is incorporated in such a way that it might take longer to recognize as flawed. Sometimes participants who have adopted a perspective take it so seriously that they cannot see the traps they fell into for quite some time after the exercise, and one brief 'wrap up' session is not enough to bring them back into a more reflective mindset. Further, because the module can so accurately replicate many elements of a real conflict, minor but significant factual or perceptual errors can be more difficult for participants to identify. For these and other reasons covered earlier, debriefing should be seen as an integral part of a simulation process, rather than merely as afterthought or time to unwind.

Despite these potential drawbacks, conversion is neither the goal nor the result of a good IN-simulation exercise, and there are several factors that mitigate against it. When participants take on roles that are unfamiliar to them, or stand in contrast to their own background or beliefs, the new information will likely challenge but not dissolve their own deeply held views (for their views to be dissolved by such an exercise they would have to be standing on a very weak foundation). Further, rather than being converted, it is more often the case that, having moved beyond the stereotypical views they held of the conflict or various parties, participants are more confident about their core beliefs. They have shed some clichés and are more able to articulate clearly those positions they feel strongly about. They will also often be more critical of their *approach* to the conflict, which is usually a very positive thing

16   For problems of debrief see: Deason, E.E., Y. Efron, R. Howell, S Kaufman, J. Lee & S. Press (2013), "Debriefing the debrief", in Honeyman, C., J. and G. De Palo, *Rethinking Negotiation Teaching: Educating Negotiators for a Connected World,* Hamline University School of Law, St Paul, MN: DRI Press.

as it means that they have understood that in order to achieve their goals they have to consider the beliefs and interests of those with whom they have to contend on the other side. They are thus better equipped to 'meet' their adversaries on the ground and advocate effectively for their own cause. If they are people who in life see themselves as representing a neutral position – mediators or journalists for example – they will often feel that they have experienced a strong reality check with regard to the inner workings of the conflict and the difficulties of bringing parties together or mediating between them.

Re-entrenchment

Of equal concern is the danger of re-entrenchment: this can take place when a participant takes on a role where the beliefs and values they represent in the simulation *match* their own. By verbalizing their views in an adversarial context there is a chance they will become even more set in their beliefs rather than challenged to question them. I have rarely allowed a participant to take on a role that identically matched their own beliefs and background, but in one case it was necessary because of the limited number of participants. A young woman passionate about her cause took on a role of an historical figure impassioned by the same cause. She was emboldened in her beliefs, with an added dose of self-righteousness, based on the sense that through the process she had learned more about why she was 'right'. In the verbal debrief and written evaluation form she grudgingly admitted that in hearing the arguments put forward by the other side she realized she 'had never really listened to or heard her opponents', something she was forced to do here and recognized as important. But this was not an ideal outcome to say the least.

This is a serious concern and should be considered by simulation instructors. The issue can be at least partially addressed by careful role selection, which ensures that participants are challenged in their beliefs or dispositions even if they embrace some of the content of the role. For example, if a participant plays 'to type', the instructor can give her a set of objectives that ensure she must hear and engage with the other side in a way that brings her beyond her knowledge base and understanding.

It should be noted that taking on a role that one embraces can sometimes lead to a surprising outcome. Several participants have related to me that the experience gave them a more critical perspective on their own views because, in the words of the individual quoted below, 'playing yourself in-

tensely shines the light upon you, exposing many flaws'. This participant took on a role that not only aligned with her views but also mirrored her own experience in relation to a particular conflict:

I took on a role very similar to the one I have in real-life – an outsider in the Israel-Palestine conflict who supports and advocates for one side. Far from solidifying my political position, the process forced me to consider my adversary's story in far more depth than I had before. This was due in part to the necessary engagement with the other side during the process – very few people in a conflict get to 'negotiate' as we did, and we engaged more directly than in 'normal life' where you can be involved in a conflict very much from one side without truly encountering the other. In addition, the arguments and choices of the character I played (with which I agreed) were less impressive in this context than I previously believed. This made some of the positions I hold in real-life more difficult to sustain. And playing a character close to my real-life role forced me to deeply consider my place on one side of the conflict – my role as an outsider-advocate in supporting one side, and the impact of the role I play in sustaining a national narrative that is not my own. (R.C.B., Israel/Palestine simulation, 2013).

Responses to critical questions part I:

1. Are simulations educationally effective?
    -   There is mixed evidence on effectiveness: some claim that simulations lead to higher motivation and greater retention of information; others that they do not improve concept learning or critical thinking skills.
    -   Studies tend to analyze simulations as a generic method, with too little attention paid to the type of simulation being examined.
    -   Evaluation tools for the special kind of learning induced by simulation are lacking.
2. Is an IN-simulation akin to a psychological experiment?
    -   No, but it can lead to complex psychological dynamics that need to be recognized and managed.
    -   Boundaries must be clearly set by the role packets and instructors in order to avoid stereotyping or personalized conflict developing between participants.
3. How hazardous is the role reversal aspect?
    -   It can be dangerous if certain guidelines are not followed, e.g.:
        -   Role reversal is voluntary
        -   All participants maintain role integrity
        -   Instructors are attentive and intervene if some participants do not respect the process.
    -   If these guidelines are followed, role reversal can be extremely beneficial for learning and personal development.
4. How far is a role play itself unsettling, even if there is no role reversal?
    -   Taking on another identity can be disconcerting for an individual, but this is often a key aspect of learning and personal development.
    -   The role play tends to trigger only pre-existing discomforts within participants, and allows them to confront these in a safe space.
    -   Instructors can help participants make the best of difficult encounters by guiding and supporting them throughout the process.
5. Can IN-simulations convert, brainwash or dangerously re-entrench participants in their views?
    -   Not if the process is carefully run and monitored. IN-simulations do not change participants' views, but instead help them reconsider and often modify their approach to a conflict.

4.6   How Authentic Can a 'Real-Time'
IN-Simulation Be?

Q: Given the extraordinary complexity of real conflicts and the feelings and experiences of various players, how can a 'pretend' module that takes place far away from the realities on the ground offer an authentic replica or experience of the situation? And if it tries to do so but as a result offers a reductive view of the issues, isn't that worse than not simulating at all?

Simulation skeptics often argue that such modules can only teach participants about the content of a conflict, but the negotiation itself will not be realistic because participants can never understand the *feelings and experiences* of the real players. This is a comment I hear most often from people who are directly involved in a conflict. But when some of these skeptics have visited an IN-simulation they have been struck specifically by the authentic way in which participants appear to be replicating the psychological dynamics between parties, and responding in a way that reveals a nuanced understanding of the fear, anger, emotion and resistances that lead to the key impasses. This has to do not only with the kinds of roles created but also with the simulation materials and process being structured to include key elements of *context*. As many authors have rightly pointed out, without contextual clues many interactions are likely to be unauthentic.[17]

These skeptics also remark on the level of professionalism and topical expertise that is reflected in the module. In particular, they are surprised by the extent to which participants who knew little about certain issues before the simulation have managed not only to learn about the issues, but how to negotiate about them in a way that replicates the contours of a real negotiation.

The most powerful impact of these simulations is their transformative effect; participants have to live their respective roles and historical times, and act accordingly. No amount of academic reading, lecturing or being instructed by 'experts' can substitute for this immediate and intense experience of a conflict situation. I have seen participants move from almost

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17   For example, Elizabeth Stokoe comments that participants "are unlikely to be oriented to the same interactional contingencies as they would be in actual settings, even if they rate role-playing as 'authentic' after the event"; quoted in Druckman, D., and N. Ebner, (2013), "Games, Claims, and New Frames", p. 68.

zero understanding to total immersion within days or even hours. The line between 'simulation' and a 'true' negotiation becomes blurred, as partici-pants seem to acquire the right verbal and technical tools at a rapid and almost disconcerting rate. This transformation is extraordinary; maybe even somewhat disturbing for a 'real' negotiator who must question whether his/her professional expertise is so special after all. (Palestinian coach and former negotiator).

Another political /philosophical aspect of the process, a fascinating – I won't say troubling but thought provoking – aspect is that as a coach you see how readily, with the right coaching and the right surroundings, people who came here disbelieving passionately in one cause can find themselves speaking as passionately about that cause in a mere 24 or 48 hours. You have to sit back and ponder, is our conflict so superficial that it just takes a couple of days for someone to become a passionate advocate of either position in a conflict, and what does that mean for the conflict? (Israeli coach and former negotiator).

Despite these positive responses, the skeptics' question is certainly legitimate. If a simulation is fictional and aimed at skill building, it does not have the burden of remaining true to the beliefs and experiences of real human be-ings. A 'real time' or mirror-image simulation, in contrast, has a great deal of responsibility to the participants, who expect to learn something genuine and relevant about an existing conflict; and to the people being portrayed in the conflict itself, who have a right to have their views expressed accurately, no matter what these views are.

The first point to make is that even in a highly 'realistic' simulation some fictional elements are usually needed in order to accommodate the group or the circumstance. For example, if in reality certain parties are not meeting but the instructor wants to simulate a back channel encounter, they will have to create a fictional premise that explains why parties have been brought together at this time. Or, if a group is much larger or smaller than the real teams negotiating, some fictional characters will need to be created and included. These semi-fictional elements are not problematic so long as the spirit of the negotiation is realistic and the characters represent authentic points of view.

Second, obviously a simulation is just that – a facsimile of reality, not the real thing. It would be disingenuous to pretend there were no gaps be-

tween the actual conflict and the simulated conflict, or that these did not have to be carefully addressed during and after the process, especially during the debriefing.

The argument here is that an IN-simulation:

- Can be highly realistic in the way it portrays multiple layers of a conflict or negotiation/mediation to participants;
- Is useful in as much as it provides participants with sharp insights into what parties think, feel and experience when dealing with a conflict or negotiation;
- Reveals a great deal about the nature of the interactions between players and the possibilities or limits of peacemaking;
- Allows participants to test out new approaches to engagement in an environment that enforces a special kind of discipline – one that demands they consistently refer back to the realities that exist in the minds of individuals involved in a particular conflict and the social, cultural, political and diplomatic context in which they are experiencing a conflict.

A simulation can achieve these results without replicating every element of a conflict, and even if certain individuals stray off course now and again. The presence of outside experts who are directly involved in the conflict is particularly helpful in raising the level of realism, keeping participants honest, and making it more difficult for them to caricature their roles.

Finally, an interesting phenomenon is that for some participants lessons can be transferable precisely because they include elements that in 'reality' are *not* present but they consider should be. For example, the head of a Ramallah-based NGO came to visit a semester-long simulation I ran with graduate students, and sat in on a committee meeting dealing with Palestinian refugees and the right of return. Here, two female American students representing Palestinians were arguing about the issues with others role-playing an Israeli and an American. After a two-hour, very heated and difficult session, our visitor came to me and said:

I don't know a single woman in Palestine who can argue like that. Not because we don't know what the right of return means – of course through direct experience we know it better than your students ever can – but because although I can tell you everything about it from an experiential point of view, I wouldn't know how to discuss it, or fight for it, within the framework of a negotiation: I don't have the language or tools to do so. And

that's part of the reason I'm kept outside the negotiation process and others decide my fate for me... (N.R.,Civil Society Leader, Ramallah).

Here it was only partially the 'realism' of the module that was effective in the mind of this commentator. Most intriguing was the skill that the module provided, in a context that mirrored the real issues and people and could possibly provide her with experience, transferable knowledge and tools that she could not obtain in 'reality'.

In short, while clearly an IN-simulation cannot provide an exact replica of reality, if materials and instructor guidance hold participants closely to their roles the process can be highly realistic, allowing participants to engage with elements of a conflict they would be unlikely to encounter in other educational or training modules.

4.7 Can IN-Simulations Provide Learning Experiences That are Rigorous Enough to Earn Them a Place in Academia and in Professional Training Programs?

Q: Can IN-simulations convey critical thinking skills and other aspects of learning expected in institutions of higher education, or the kind of skills-based training that professional practitioners need and expect? Or are simulations just games that satisfy students' need for active engagement but are lacking in rigor, or quick fix modules that have become a staple of professional conflict and peacebuilding programs but are not able to provide serious negotiation and mediation training?

Simulations in academia: The value and limits of 'gaming' devices

Most simulation processes include some elements that will raise eyebrows on university campuses. Historical modules can include dramatic effects such as students dressing up or using period- or culture-specific forms of speech; and in both historical and real time modules participants engage in a form of 'play' that is combined with a palpable sense of fun and excitement in dialogue and action. There is often an intensity to the process that spills beyond the classroom and leads participants to describe their work as 'obsessive', and of course there is the element of role play, which can (incorrectly) be interpreted as 'acting'.

As far as these 'play' aspects are concerned, it is my experience that, as educational thinkers have so often argued, play and disciplined work are not in contradiction with each other but rather reinforce each other. The 'play' element of simulations focuses participants' minds, releases surprising capabilities and brings out exciting new dynamics in the group.

In historical modules such as *Reacting to the Past* (which their founder Mark Carnes calls games not simulations) the game aspects are thoughtfully considered, allowing students to take action, experience probabilities of outcomes or affect the dynamics of the game. These games also focus a great deal on 'winning' and include dice rolls, points systems and victory objectives, which some instructors believe enhance the competitive spirit and attentiveness of students. Several of these aspects appear frivolous, but in fact teach students a great deal about the very real problems actors face in the world when confronting choices and having to bear the unpredictable consequences of their actions. This is one key and invaluable lesson offered by simulations that is missing in traditional courses, where students tend to make severe judgments about political actors and decision-makers without taking into account the restrictions they face in the real world.

However, it is my experience that in many cases elaborate gaming aspects distract students from the content of the module and undermine the intellectually rigorous elements of the process. While at the outset students engage in an intensive spiral of learning, if they are encouraged to focus too much on strategy and gaming, the second half of the module will often be driven by polemics and bargaining rather than further enhancing their learning about the issues or deeper levels of analysis. While students engaged in an historical module can use gaming devices or 'creative' approaches to their roles to alter the course of history, in doing so their understanding of what happened and why (which in my view is the primary purpose of an historical module) can be severely undermined.

Further, I believe that a number of game designs used in real-time simulations can be counterproductive and misleading: this is the case in simulations run in some universities as well as policy centers. Scenarios often tend to include a series of elaborate and ever spiraling crises such as suicide bombings or high-level mobilization for war. While many of these events might realistically take place at some time, taken together they lead the simulation so far from current reality that the outcomes cannot be productively applied to the current moment of conflict, and the learning experience is not likely to help participants gain a better understanding of the motives and

options available to a variety of players.[18] Finally, some simulations appear to be designed to make 'fun' the center of the process, rather than a naturally occurring outcome of the seriousness and passion with which participants approach their roles, and the exhilarating dynamic that often evolves as a result. These simulations may appear to be frivolous and disrespectful to the people involved in the conflict.

I have found that a simulation with few gaming devices and little reference to points systems or 'winning' can lead participants to be impassioned by the process. The strong gravitational pull in a negotiation toward an agreement (whether it succeeds or not) is a powerful driving force that tends to keep participants focused and engaged. This is especially the case if 1) the scenario has a multilayered architecture, 2) characters have humanity and clear agendas and, 3) the simulation is structured to give priority to intellectual content, so that debates continually evolve throughout.

Simulations in professional training programs

As discussed above, many questions have been posed about the merits of simulations in professional training programs. Although these modules have become so ubiquitous that they are taken for granted as staple parts of the negotiation-training diet, their flaws are increasingly being noted.

One difficulty in running rigorous modules with training programs is that many professionals cannot or will not take the time out of work to participate in such a module. Another is that many negotiation and mediation programs tend to offer participants a wide menu of skills exercises that are popular, in the hope that that they feel they have been given a taste of each. As a result, an overabundance of exercises is provided, while none is engaged in deeply. In such a context a simulation is unlikely to be successful.

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18   This is the case even (sometimes especially) in the increasingly popular simulations held in policy circles on questions of global import. Role instructions are often non-existent, with participants being given a general character (Prime Minister X) without details on the individual's background, views or objectives. The assumption here is that the participants' background, position of responsibility or level of knowledge means they can and will be able to represent the role accurately, and will have exchanges with the 'other side' that will lead to realistic and instructive outcomes. In the end, however, these modules fall somewhere between a war game and crisis simulation, with a variety of extreme situations (terrorist events or threats of violence) that lead participants into urgent action and decision-making, or premature compromise, before they have understood the real beliefs and interests of the roles they represent. For an example of these kinds of modules and a self-assessment by the organizers, see Pollack, K.M., (2010), "Osiraq Redux: A Crisis Simulation of an Israeli Strike on the Iranian Nuclear Program", *Brookings Institute,* Saban Center for Middle East Policy, Middle East Memo, Number 15. For a critique of these types of modules, see Gill, N., (2012), *Happy Endings, Doomsday Prophesies and the Perils of Think Tank Simulations, http://paxsims.wordpress.com/2012/08/29/happy-endings-doomsday-prophesies-and-the-perils-of-think-tank-simulations/#respond.*

These problems are not easy to address, but programs that choose to include one long simulation rather than several brief exercises could result in participants feeling they have learned many of the ideas and skills they expected to acquire in several brief modules.

Concerns for simulations in both academia and training programs: Unserious participants, overzealous participants, and participants who act rather than represent

Another element that can undermine the seriousness of the learning process occurs because simulations must to some extent be participant-run. As a result, they may be undermined by one or more participants who are unprepared, disengaged or absent, or conversely, take their roles too seriously and are unable to separate their own issues from the simulation.

Further, a simulation can be undermined if participants choose to act a part rather than engage with the concepts and agendas outlined in a role pack. This point was mentioned in Chapter One, and it is a problem to which there is no easy solution.

Many people assume that simulations require acting. Some participants are drawn to it precisely for this reason; others avoid it for the same reason. In the end, those predisposed to performance are not the best simulation participants, as they will likely *engage in a process of imitation rather than representation*. Instead of slowly getting into the mindset of the character, or delving deeply into the concepts and problems they face, they might portray the role (as a lawyer might defend a criminal) in a detached manner, with a view to showing intellectual agility. They also might at times become overly involved in their acting, and dominate the group for the purposes of creating drama rather than learning about the conflict at hand. As with many of the issues that can lead to weak simulation modules, the instructor's approach will be paramount: if the process and its goals are clearly stated and introduced and the structure of the simulation as a whole is solid, individual deviations should not be able to undermine it.

Unengaged or overzealous participants are indeed a concern for simulation instructors. The likely problems that result can be at least partially addressed by:

- Preliminary discussions with participants, to make sure they are willing to conform to some of the requirements of the process.
- Emphasis on reading the materials in advance of the simulation, which helps to ensure that participants arrive at the module prepared.

- Instructor supervision during the module.
- Simulation materials that make it difficult for an individual to deviate onto his/her own agenda without encountering resistance from his faction or the mediators who lead the negotiation.
- Mechanisms within the simulation design that allow for individuals to be censured for behavior that strongly deviates from their roles.

If for some reason participants are inexorably drawn away from their agenda, the instructor's intervention may be instrumental. A gentle reminder of the list of goals in the role pack will often bring a participant back on course: a private discussion can challenge them to justify their approach. And as a last option, the participant may be censured within the framework of the game (for example, 'the Prime Minister of your country recalls you home as he feels you were not fulfilling his mandate') or outside it, from the instructor (for example, 'I cannot allow you to continue participating in the simulation as it has become clear that you did not read or will not accept the rules outlined in the role packet').

This is not to deny that some individuals and groups can divert a simulation in a direction that is unproductive, but to note that there are some structures within a simulation that can minimize these problems.

In conclusion, the most important point to make about the efficacy of IN-simulations in both academia and professional training programs is that unless due attention is paid to the factors listed above, which can undermine the seriousness of the process, the modules will likely *not* be rigorous enough to merit a place in either setting. IN-simulations *can* be rigorous if structured in such a way that they aim for and are designed to bring about specific learning objectives. In academia, some of these should correspond to objectives aimed for in traditional classes, while others aim to provide new, engaging and 'practice-based' experiences for students. In professional training programs, the process should bring participants beyond their current level of knowledge about the situation on the ground, or their own patterns of behavior as practitioners.

4.8 Are the Outcomes Predetermined, Limiting the Freedom of Participants?

Q: How far are the outcomes of a simulation predetermined by the guidelines and limits set out in the roles? And if outcomes are predetermined, aren't the debates artificial or participants deceived about their ability to affect the process?

A crucial challenge faced by simulation instructors is how to balance two somewhat contradictory goals: first, one must create a straightjacket of sorts for participants, a tightly organized role packet (see the example in Chapter Six) that compels them to learn about and express the opinions of the real players rather than project their own views onto these players or give in to the urge to compromise. Many participants will be tempted to stray from this almost as soon as they enter the process, and they must be reminded of their goals quite often. At the same time, however, one must allow participants enough freedom so that they are able to develop as negotiators or mediators, affect the outcome of the talks and do not feel they are merely parroting the words and actions of the individuals they represent. Even as the instructor insists they remain faithful to their roles, it is empowering for participants to feel that they have real choices. For example, they can walk out of the negotiation and fail to make peace; they can try to sabotage the process if it does not address their interests; they can make historical and risky compromises if they feel the situation calls for that and if it can be justified to various 'higher powers' (leaders or decision-makers).

However, participants are often frustrated at how limited their field of action is, especially when they realize they and their adversaries are likely to be subject to role guidelines that lock them in intractable positions in a similar way. These are genuine limits that are naturally part of a simulation and often noticed by participants, and they should be addressed in several ways.

First, the roles and materials should be organized in such a way that the learning process – gaining mastery of the issues and developing sophisticated strategies and practices for negotiation and mediation – is the central challenge. Most participants, if provided with thought-provoking materials and goals, spend most of their time struggling to master these before they come to question the extent of their freedom. For participants who already know the issues well, managing these in the context of a negotiation and testing their skills should still be a great challenge.

Second, some flexibility should be included in the scenario and freedom given to participants, so that even if they have 'red lines' these are not set in stone. Participants should come to realize that, like real players, they might have to rethink some of their strategies and even their core principles in response to changing circumstances, external pressures or unexpected developments within the negotiation. These moments of possible compromise usually provide participants with breakthroughs in their understanding of how decision-makers function – burdened by their own ideological beliefs or the pressure of coalitions and constituents, but at the same time needing to consider decisions that will break taboos and yet have no certain positive outcomes.

It is also relevant to note that the limits of a simulation, if carefully crafted, often mirror the limits of life, and that is an *intentional* part of the learning process. If participants are faced with opponents who appear 'intractable', they have to devise even more powerful arguments to sway them, be inventive about thinking through a strategy that would override their intransigence or scout out and find those individuals or third parties that might be more open to compromise. This sense of being trapped by forces beyond their control, facing what appears to be immovable and yet needing to find a way to move it, imitates some of the feelings real parties have when dealing with a conflict and is instructive for most participants.

4.9 Do IN-Simulations Create Tensions Between Participants?

Q: Can simulations cause tensions or even serious conflicts between participants that last beyond the module itself?

A rigorous IN-simulation can be a potentially troubling process: it can affect people's perception of each other in ways that bleed beyond the role-play aspect, and cause interpersonal tensions. And because each individual comes to the process with different 'baggage', it is impossible to predict what the process will trigger.

Interpersonal tensions
It is not possible to monitor all the relations between individuals in a simulation, or to control these. Setting out clear goals in the role packets can limit

the extent to which participants can carry out personal and unrelated attacks on each other. Further, it is often the case that delegations and committee members depend on each other to such a degree that if they perceive one or two participants to be developing personal tensions they are likely to attempt to calm or refocus these. But above all the role of the instructor will be central in limiting conflicts. If instructors are attentive to developing tensions as they arise, they can find various ways to monitor and diffuse them. For example, they might mediate a problem early on through personal meetings with two or more participants; remind individuals of their role objectives and the discipline needed to fulfill them (avoiding leakage between role-positions and real-positions); or speak to the leader of a faction and encourage them to manage their 'delegates' more effectively.

It is useful for instructors to be aware that often those in the role of mediators find themselves in the most difficult position when it comes to absorbing what might appear to be personal attacks. Those playing negotiators expect their opponents to lack trust for and struggle against them, and often they will not take harsh words personally. The participants representing mediators, in contrast, will put a great deal of themselves into the process. Although their role packets will outline a series of goals and interests to which they must conform, they will be less attached to a narrative and set of grievances, and will have the freedom to test various personal mediation techniques and approaches. They will also have more responsibility to construct and lead a process based on their own ideas and strategies, trying to find the best ways to gain the trust of various individuals and help mitigate conflict.

Consequently, it is helpful to provide mediators with special coaching by the instructor to help them prepare for the likely resistances or obstructionism they will encounter from various parties. However, they should also be aware that experiencing attacks on the person of the mediator is an inevitable part of the job – something future mediators have to learn how to manage, and thus an important aspect of mediation training. Participants representing mediators should not be shielded from these potential difficulties but prepared for them.

Simulations with individuals who have pre-existing relations

In my experience the problematic aspects of personal inter-relations in simulations often emerge when the entire group has a pre-existing association. For example, I ran a simulation with the full staff of an organization that

engages in conflict resolution – this included the senior management, program directors and those working in HR, accounting and administration. Although we put the organization 'leaders' in secondary positions and others in leadership roles, it was difficult for individuals to break out of their hierarchical relations and allow each other the space to evolve naturally in their roles, especially in the limited space of the two days that the module was run.

This dynamic can be somewhat mitigated by 1) bringing in outside participants who are not familiar to the group; even one or two in each delegation can reset a dynamic; and 2) including extra instructions in the role. These might feel artificial initially, but ultimately contribute to making the experience effective and more authentic. For example, a role packet might stipulate that participant X must first ask their leader if they can speak; and the role pack of the delegation leader stipulates that they should only allow person X to participate verbally under certain conditions for the first few hours. This is where gaming devices can be very useful and allow for a more productive experience.

Imposing consensus

Other inter-personal tensions may arise if in a debrief session the instructor attempts to bring individuals to a consensus on the conflict. An initial debrief is best used to clarify what happened in the simulation and correct mistakes or analyze negotiation/mediation approaches. As noted in previous chapters, the beauty of simulations is that participants can confront each other in the context of a conflict and learn 1) more about its underlying roots or current impasses and 2) how to better manage it, but without being compelled into agreement about its nature or causes. Any pressure put on participants to agree on the issues themselves will likely alienate them from each other and provoke resistances, at a delicate moment when they are ready to critically question some of their previous assumptions.

4.10 Should IN-Simulations Be Run With Participants Who Are Directly or Indirectly Involved in a Conflict?

Are IN-simulations appropriate for all groups or should they be avoided with people in conflict zones or diaspora communities? And are they useful for wider audiences – for example, groups that have an influence on the conflict beyond academia

and professional programs, such as journalists, diplomats, policy people, civil society leaders or the general public?

Dealing with potential problems

Clearly, IN-simulations are not appropriate for all audiences. If participants are directly involved in a conflict and unlikely to be able to represent their roles with integrity, or tolerate a direct meeting with certain parties, the process will not be productive. Participants must have a sense themselves that they can gain something from the process rather than feeling they have been prematurely coerced into an encounter with an adversary.

However, even if participants feel ready for such encounters, some problems can arise if a group is equally divided among proponents of one side and the other. In this case the result could be mutual stereotyping. Rather than genuinely attempting to embrace the roles and learn new information, each side might engage in a conspirational attempt to caricature what they believe is the worst behavior of their adversaries. Even those who aspire to represent their role with integrity might feel intimidated about attempting to do so in the presence of their faction – individuals they know directly or indirectly and with whom they share a cause, especially if they fear that representing certain positions would be perceived as 'selling out'.

Even more problematic is when participants in such a configuration are making a genuine effort to represent their roles, but do not realize that as a group they are stereotyping or reproducing asymmetries between the sides. I experienced this in a simulation I ran with a group that had been previously formed: in this case I was not able to 'vet' the participants, I did not have adequate time to prepare them and set guidelines with enough clarity before the module, and only a short period was set aside for debriefing. Most of the participants were sophisticated, knew the issues well and were directly involved in addressing the conflict in their professional lives. But precisely because of their knowledge and involvement they were less vigilant about the gaps in their understanding, less open to noticing nuances. Several members on one side exhibited a surprising lack of awareness about how their comments in the debrief session were perceived as condescending by the other side; and because the organizers of the event were themselves unaware of the subtle undercurrents of tension, they did not provide an environment where misperceptions could be addressed.

These are not productive outcomes, and they are difficult to monitor if the instructor is not in close communication with the participants and very

familiar with the issues and dynamics. The likelihood of these kinds of negative outcome may be diminished if some of the following are in place:

- *The presence of 'third parties':* People who are not themselves parties to the conflict but are nevertheless involved (for example, people who work in NGOs, journalists, activists, analysts). Even just a few non-aligned parties strategically placed in various 'factions' helps a great deal to shift the balance within delegations and ensure that participants do not fall into caricaturing.

- *The presence of 'external coaches':* While participants will sometimes find it difficult to represent a hostile role in front of colleagues who might judge them to be 'selling out', when a coach is present they usually feel compelled to be serious and are less likely to engage in stereotyping.

- *Pre-simulation discussions between the instructor and participants:* This can help weed out those who are not ready or able to take part in this kind of exercise, and help prepare those who are.

- *Voluntary role choice:* Someone who is interested in participating in the exercise but unable or unwilling to play the role of their adversary should not be forced to: instead, they can be asked to represent the role of a third party. In this case they will still be challenged to look at their conflict and hear the parties and arguments from a different perspective, but one that is not diametrically opposed to their identity and loyalties.

- *Simulating a different conflict scenario:* This gives participants some emotional distance from their own case – a distance that may be needed to allow for learning and exploration. Here they will be exposed to conflict dynamics broadly, in a situation where they may see their own issues mirrored and presented in an unfamiliar but illuminating example.

Offering an alternative form of engagement

In some cases, however, IN-simulations can be beneficial with groups in conflict, and when used for political or diplomatic purposes, drawing in otherwise resistant participants into communication across enemy lines. The main reason is that the process can offer an alternative to the three main forms of engagement or non-engagement that are often available for people involved in conflicts:

- *A resistance to any form of communication on the grounds that it normalizes relations or legitimizes the enemy.* Because some players resist contact in any form, they often learn only the most propagandistic version of their enemies' beliefs, experiences or concerns. Although they might feel this

unites them as a group, strengthens their resolve and challenges the legitimacy of their adversary, the result is often that they limit their capacity to achieve their goals, as they cannot properly assess the motives of their adversaries or anticipate their responses to various events.

- *Angry, ideologically-driven debates in the media, on campuses or across advocacy organizations.* Advocacy organizations and activist campus groups put immense energy into unearthing the sins of their enemies, and developing a clear party line of talking points that are repeated in various forms and disseminated to constituents, reinforcing a sense of positive group identity and spotlighting the weaknesses of the 'other'. And yet the insular world of advocacy means that the culture is often defined by a superficial understanding of the other side, and a fear of or resistance to engaging more deeply with the views and beliefs of critics. The result is that large groups of constituents, people who could be contributing to more productive engagement by developing their own perspectives on the conflict and coming to their own conclusion about the options they face, are reduced to regurgitating a party line.

- *The model of the 'dialogue group' or 'humanizing exercise', whereby adversaries make an attempt to learn about and understand each other's narratives and experiences.* For many people involved in an intractable conflict, the model of the dialogue group has been the most prominent alternative to non-engagement. However, while such encounters can affect individuals profoundly, their premises can be flawed. You can take people to a safe haven far from the conflict and introduce humanity into their interaction, but when they return to the conflict zone they are not necessarily better equipped to address the core issues that divide them. Their enhanced understanding of the 'other' often makes them objects of suspicion within their own society, and their inability or unwillingness to reach out to the more hardline among their own people can leave them with little influence. *Most problematically, dialogue groups often focus on the human aspect to the exclusion of the political, and therefore fail to prepare adversaries to confront each other effectively within the context of the actual conflict.*

An IN-simulation attempts to address these limits by offering participants another option, between non-engagement and those forms of engagement that are likely to be rejected by crucial parties. *It gives those involved in conflict the knowledge or skills to address each other as adversaries, within the context of the conflict itself, and the ability to develop concrete strategies in pursuit of their*

own interests. The process allows participants to retain their distance from each other but meet on the territory of the conflict, literally or figuratively. The engagement with counter-evidence is challenging, and pushes them to a high level of conscientiousness and self-reflection when articulating their own views as well as those of their adversaries or third parties. Participants often gain an ability to 'translate' their adversaries' position for their peers, family and communities.

For these reasons the exercise can be of great use to communities in conflict, pushing them from grievance, rhetoric and ideological deadlock to active engagement with a peace process, or identifying unilateral actions they might take if they conclude that the time is not ripe for negotiations. They are asked to focus on solutions, but they do this while remaining enemies, mistrusting each other, being wary of 'normalization' or wishing to support their own side unequivocally. Thus, while it is true that simulations create an environment in which people 'walk in each other's shoes', both the method and the goals vary significantly from either traditional dialogue groups or exercises in 'humanizing the other'. The process opens the door to participation for various parties who otherwise would not be comfortable engaging in dialogue groups with their enemy.

'Preparing the public for peace'

When it comes to people involved in or affected by a conflict, it is not only those on the ground and most directly affected that benefit from being educated in the ins and outs of a negotiation process. One way to give life to the overworked concept of 'preparing the public for peace' is to provide ordinary citizens who are involved in a conflict from the peripheries (for example, diaspora communities, advocates for one side or another, journalists) with an insider's view of a peacemaking process. For example, in gaining insights into the kinds of deals that are being discussed by negotiators behind the scenes, they develop the capacity to recognize and support legitimate compromises and challenge those they feel go against their interests. This enables them to partake in a public dialogue that revolves around the realities of a conflict (rather than being potential 'spoilers' who engage in a blame game) and gives them an understanding of what 'painful compromise' will likely resemble.

Some of the most powerful responses I have heard from simulation participants who were part of communities involved in conflict had to do with two aspects of being prepared in this process, both of which correspond to the definition of *negotiations-think* offered in Chapter Two. First, they felt

the impact of being put in a position where they had to face squarely how the 'narratives' of various parties, many of which they previously dismissed as untruthful or propaganda, were as powerful as other 'facts on the ground' and could not be 'wished away' no matter how unreasonable they might appear. Second, participants contend that by engaging in such detailed interactions across the table, including working on the fine points of a negotiated document, they gained a subtle understanding of how the language of any settlement would have to look in order for various parties' interests to be addressed, and in order for them to be able to sell the deal to diverse constituents.

4.11 Conclusion

Is it all just too much work for the instructor?

IN-simulations can be highly valuable learning modules, allowing a variety of talents to thrive, and a variety of lessons to be learned. The method has limits, but some of these can be managed if simulations are well designed and monitored.

Clearly, however, these modules are not simple to run or construct, and require time and effort: advanced preparation, supervision, sensitivity to and a willingness to engage with individual participants. Many instructors are intimidated by the process, and feel they lack the resources to construct and run these modules. However, with training, willingness and institutional support, the modules do not have to be experienced as unwieldy but can be enjoyable and inspirational for both participants and instructors. As mentioned in Chapter Two, the process offers instructors more than a new teaching or training module: it gives them an opportunity to test their own understanding of a conflict, their ability to accurately portray the interest of or relate to various parties, and their capacity to practice impartiality when they communicate or write about the issues.

Answers to critical questions part II:

6. How authentic can a 'real-time' IN-simulation be?
    -   If the details in the role packets reproduce the realities of the conflict and perspectives of the parties, the dynamics of the simulation are likely to replicate reality closely.
7. Can IN-simulations provide learning experiences that are rigorous?
    -   Yes, but only if:
        -   There is careful preparation and active instructor guidance
        -   There is adequate time for 1) preparation, 2) the simulation itself, 3) debriefing. Important lessons can be missed if the preparation or debriefing phases are too short.
8. Are the outcomes predetermined, limiting the freedom of participants?
    -   While participants are bound to role integrity, they should be given the freedom (especially in the latter half of the process) to test out new ideas.
9. Do IN-simulations create tensions between participants?
    -   If well prepared and guided, tensions should be limited to the relations within the roles, which are part of the learning experience. Debriefing is important to identify and diffuse any personal issues between participants that might have arisen.
    -   In simulations with participants who have pre-existing relations, more care is needed in role allocation, for example to minimize the impact of pre-existing institutional hierarchies.
10. Should IN-simulations be run with participants directly or indirectly involved in a conflict?
    -   It depends: if well prepared and guided it can be a uniquely enlightening experience. In order to minimize tensions it often helps to:
        -   Have third parties (participants not involved in the real conflict) take part in the delegations
        -   Use external coaches to keep parties on track
        -   Establish open communication between instructor and participant before the process, to ensure participants can voice concerns and are ready for and committed to the experience
        -   Ensure that participation is voluntary.

5 How to Manual: A Guide to Developing and Running IN-Simulations

In the preceding chapters I have attempted to explain what IN-simulations are, how they reach their goals, and how some of the criticisms leveled against them can be addressed. This chapter provides some more specific guidelines for instructors who wish to design and run an IN-simulation. It can be read together with Chapter One, which offers complementary information, and with the 'Sample Role Packet' provided in Chapter Six, which provides a model of what a typical role might include. Some concepts raised earlier have been repeated here, in order that these may be considered within the context of simulation design, and so that instructors can use the manual as a reference when creating a module, without having to refer back to previous chapters.

5.1 What Resources Do You Need? The Basics

It is often said that simulations require many resources that are difficult for instructors to acquire. Depending on content and context, each simulation is likely to have particular requirements. But for most IN-simulations only two resources are needed: space and external coaches.

The difference between these two resources is that it is possible to run a successful IN-simulation without the coaches. However, the process cannot thrive without the necessary space. In order to replicate a realistic negotiation one needs at least one large plenary conference room where all participants can sit together, and several break-out rooms where delegations can meet privately and committee meetings can be held. Other than that, some flip charts, a computer and printer are all the materials needed to ensure the process works.

5.2 Choosing a Topic: War and Crisis Games Versus Negotiation and Mediation Simulations

It comes as a surprise to some new simulation designers that there is rarely a correspondence between a climactic moment in a conflict and the best topic to

choose for a simulation. An IN-simulation subject should be chosen so that it allows participants to study and learn about the context of a conflict and negotiation: it is not a war game, and an extreme crisis event will rarely be the most revealing from an educational point of view. If participants are immediately thrown into a war, revolution or military emergency, they will have to focus on taking action and making urgent decisions. They will learn something about military tactics and strategies, or the politics of war and diplomacy. But if they have not had the time and space to understand something about the motives or the psychological-cultural background of the major players, and the broader social, political or regional context in which conflicts occur, they might overlook the deeper 'root conflict' issues and the intangible elements that are almost always at play in determining the conduct of major players.

In the middle or final third of an IN-simulation process it is useful for participants to be confronted with some urgent decisions and crises, including unexpected acts of violence to which they must respond. This teaches them something important about accountability, and the unpredictability of outcomes once actions are set in motion. But in its initial stages, the process should help them delve more deeply into the heart of the conflict itself. This will ensure that their response to crises will not be frivolous; rather, having engaged deeply with the realities faced by various parties, they will feel the weight of responsibility for making decisions that affect the lives of people.

Avoiding ideal outcomes

As mentioned previously, the purpose of an IN-simulation is not primarily to craft an ideal or 'out of the box' solution to a conflict. While an interesting or original proposal might emerge during the simulation, the scenario should be designed with the specific intent of allowing participants an insider's view into the heart of a conflict and motives of the relevant players.

This does not mean that IN-simulations should merely reproduce reality or be limited by what people perceive to be possible at the time the exercise takes place. It is useful in the second half or final third of the module to allow participants more creativity and freedom than the real players, to imagine what has not yet been seen, to challenge the common wisdom about what is 'practicable'. But there is a difference between a scenario that is *outside* reality and one that is slightly *ahead of reality*. I suggest the latter is more productive: something that is forward-looking and anticipates likely events, rather than one that leaps above the real people and circumstances of a conflict, assuming they can be other than they are.

Real versus fictional scenarios

It is both convenient and efficient to create a fictional scenario that can be used repeatedly – for example, a simulation based on fictional country X that is at war with fictional country Y. You can recycle the game and play it with a variety of participants, and thus it will save you time and the stress of preparation. If you are a specialist in conflict studies, you will undoubtedly possess a good sense of which issues to bring into the scenario, how to construct roles that carry conflicting agendas and how to create tensions within delegations.

Having said that, my own feeling is that fictional conflict scenarios are limited in several ways, and the most exciting and educationally fruitful simulations are constructed around current conflicts that reproduce a dynamic and set of personalities that are by and large a true reflection of reality. A 'real time' scenario does not have to be an exact replica of reality: it can include a futuristic element (direct talks between countries or actors who refuse to meet currently) or 'composite' characters (roles that represents a variety of individuals and opinions). But by and large the simulation should mirror the possibilities and constrictions of reality in some essential ways: in particular, it should set up a replica of the context in which a conflict or negotiation takes place.

The most exciting thing about this model is that it gives participants the sense that they are close to or even part of a negotiation or peace process – competing with world leaders, diplomats and negotiators. Rather than critiquing these players, participants are challenged to come up with viable proposals that would address the same impasses as those faced by their 'real' counterparts. Participants can literally be running with the news, following, replicating or trying to improve on the latest developments. They see from a micro-perspective the inner workings of politics and diplomacy – where the limits are, why talks have been stalled, where the internal tensions lie within each side. And they also gain a great deal of confidence from being able to interpret news and events with an insider lens and translate the conflict in such an informed way for their peers or colleagues.

5.3   Constructing a Scenario

The most important thing to keep in mind when constructing a scenario is that an IN-simulation is not an elaborate debate, it is a *situation:* a dynamic

and continually-evolving situation in which ideas, plans, personalities and unexpected events all conspire to give participants the opportunity to learn about and experience a conflict negotiation. Simulations can be built around several types of circumstances. The main questions to consider when devising your scenario are: What are the basic ideas, issues, debates or problems that you would like participants to encounter? Which parties – individuals or groups – do you think they should learn about? Which skills can they acquire during the process? These are the essential elements around which the scenario should be built.

The importance of architecture and trajectory

A simulation scenario designed for an exercise that lasts days or weeks must have an *elaborate architecture and an anticipated trajectory*. Without this, the simulation will begin with an exciting bang but will then quickly peter out into an aimless discussion. This means that the first thing to consider and ensure participants are made aware of is context: background materials and role packets should not present goals and objectives in isolation from the realities that actual players face: diplomatic pressures, political exigencies, regional alliances or tensions, historical grievances, religious divisions, personal ambitions, the demands of constituents and the tension between short-term versus long-term goals.

Although simulations are not about acting, setting up a scenario is a little like writing a screenplay: you have to know in depth who the main characters are, imagine how they will encounter one another, which issues they will argue about and from which perspectives, and outline the evolution of scenes between the beginning and the end of the simulation. It is even productive to write out an outline of the debates as you envisage them.

This kind of outline should be as specific as possible, taking the shape of a *Negotiations Family Tree,* with several branches of anticipated discussions and confrontations. This might appear to be excessive planning, but in the end it will save you time and ensure a productive exercise. Although participants might not pursue the paths that you imagine, the more specifically you can envisage the scenario, the more you will gain a global sense of how far the debates can stretch while still remaining realistic, productive and working toward an interesting outcome. Further, if you anticipate the variety of debates and trajectories at the outset you will be able to construct role packets rigorously; and if the role packets have precise instructions/explana-

tions, you will then be able to limit your own interference during the module and give participants more freedom.

Ultimately, however, there are crucial difference between designing a simulation and writing a screenplay.

The first is that once you know how you would like the simulation to unfold and have imagined an ideal version of it (including various possibilities that might emerge depending on which branch of the Negotiations Tree participants follow as a group), you then need to *let go and allow players to evolve* according to their roles and experiences rather than a preset script. This can be stressful, as you have to trust the overall process even when individual participants make mistakes or wander off in unexpected directions. However, if you have constructed the roles well, outlined the goals and objectives clearly and held participants to their roles and goals, the simulation will evolve in the intended direction even if a couple of participants stray. This is one of the wonders of IN-simulations: if participants understand their roles the dynamics usually develop in such a way as to bring out the lessons you intended, even if some specific elements do not 'resemble' reality or the group makes unanticipated choices. Hence, the most important 'interference' of the instructor is to insist participants maintain *role integrity* rather than trying to manipulate the scenario.

The second difference between a simulation and a screenplay is that participants cannot and should not be reading a script during a simulation. Rather, they should slowly be learning how an individual and/or group feels and thinks. In the first few sessions it is likely that they will read from their notes, stumble over their thoughts and shift gears several times. Very soon, however, they will begin to respond naturally according to the *logic of their character*, embodying the role and fielding new questions and challenges without checking their notes or turning to you for advice.

The third point is that, unlike a script, a simulation scenario has no ending. As simulation designer you should have an anticipated trajectory, be ready for a variety of possibilities, and you might even have a preferred ending toward which you can guide participants; for example, you can mandate a menu of options for participants in their role sheets to ensure that they do not stray into an unproductively unrealistic scenario. And you should also create limits – indicating, for example, that they cannot overthrow the positions of the leadership back home or the views of the team leader or a key constituency, or change the situation on the ground without consulting the

simulation instructor. Ultimately, however, it is up to the participants to determine how the negotiations conclude.

Varieties of meetings

A simulation does not merely replicate a set of negotiations taking place in the world; it replicates the enormous difficulty of holding those negotiations in an open and transparent manner. Consequently, if your simulation successfully mirrors a negotiation dynamic it is likely that important 'back-channel' discussions will take place outside the official forum of the simulation, or if it is run on a university campus, outside the 'classroom'. When participants meet privately or informally in small groups, they gain sharp insights into the workings of behind-the-scenes diplomacy, the importance of personality and personal relationships, the frustrating consequences of 'leaks' and misinformation, and the tensions between negotiators (who might feel they are making great progress) and their respective leaderships (who might insist on limiting their freedom of action).

One of the key purposes of the exercise is to teach participants about negotiation and mediation, including aspects of the conflict that might lead them to the conclusion that negotiations are futile. The simulation should therefore include a variety of encounters – plenary and delegation meetings, small committee meetings, secret back-channel negotiations, one-to-one encounters. In this way the process can reflect what one analyst and former negotiator has referred to as the five layers of negotiation: those within a team; between a team and its leader; between one side and its constituency; between each side and the third party; between two sides (as a team or as individuals)[1]. Sometimes the central 'summit' might be interrupted for hours or days due to a glitch in the personal dynamics of parties or a block in the actual content of a treaty. The simulation should be organized in such a way as to absorb and work with this possibility. When participants cannot find a way to get to the table, or to return to the table after a crisis, they are usually learning invaluable lessons about process – for example, how difficult it is merely to bring opposing parties to direct talks, or keep them talking.

Inter-factional struggles

A key component that makes IN-simulations 'realistic' is the presence of inter-factional struggles and conflicting (often secret) agendas within factions.

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1   Mentioned in an IN-simulation 'coaching' session by Ahmad Samih Khalidi.

Participants sometimes assume that key deadlocks in a conflict are primarily between two 'sides'. In debrief sessions they often report being shocked at how difficult it is to make peace while dealing with internal tensions in your own team, or between parties pursuing Track I or Track II (or official and 'back -channel') negotiations. Key lessons often take place when participants learn how even the most hardline negotiators can, over time, build trust within the context of intensive talks, and become attached to and begin to believe strongly in plans and proposals they are setting out together. Then, however, they find that their hard won efforts are stymied by their leadership or those in positions of influence who have not understood some of the concessions that are necessary in order to move forward, are unwilling to risk accepting these publicly, or are simply not strong enough to convince key players to support them.

You should exploit this tension as you create roles. The objectives of various team members should clash, their research should lead them to a conflicting set of findings, and some might have 'secret' as well as open agendas.

Keep in mind, however, that it is best not to create overly complex relations between team members that lead to insurmountable obstacles to negotiation. In a well-constructed IN-simulation there will usually be a great deal of material to master, meaning that a large part of the exercise will be devoted to learning the issues, translating them into a negotiations framework and practicing the art of negotiation and mediation. Too many clashing agendas will lead participants to focus uniquely on strategy and finding ways to outdo their peers, and they will not have the chance to engage in group learning or address substantive issues.

Goals and outcome documents

It is essential for an IN-simulation to have a specific goal – for example, a written document that the mediators or negotiators hope to draft by the end of the talks. Whether this goal is achievable, given the characters and current situation, is immaterial: the point is that a goal helps ensure that the process is not merely a back-and-forth debate but has an objective that is being worked toward from the beginning. This provides an element of tension, a pace and helps mediators and negotiators become aware of what it is like to work under pressure. Without such an agenda, it is likely that negotiators will get trapped in cycles of recrimination.

This end goal can be ambitious (a full and final settlement to a conflict) or modest (one paragraph that outlines a common set of interests and is intended to open the door to future discussion) or you can come up with a more creative and less formal idea for an outcome document. Regardless of which option you chose, however, it is most useful to have participants work toward a common *written* text at some point in the IN-simulation. A draft document can be presented at the beginning of the process and revised throughout; it can be worked on separately by various sides and then shared in the middle; or it can be introduced near the end by a third party intent on getting negotiators to put words to their ideas and find some bridging proposals. For the sake of the rhythm of the simulation, I have found the best options to be to allow participants to argue out the issues for a while, and then begin drafting or commenting on a document near the end of the first day if it is a two day module, or after a few weeks, if it is a multi-week or semester-long module. The point is to 1) have participants gain experience drafting a negotiated document; and 2) learn how their differences are starkly revealed when they try to create a common text, how one word can undermine an entire narrative or why constructive ambiguity, while appearing to be a quick fix, can mask crucial differences or undermine an agreement.

In semester-long simulations at a university, students can produce extraordinarily comprehensive and realistic documents dealing with a wide range of issues.[2] Whether or not they are able to agree on signing the final document, the process of writing it up can give students an enormous sense of accomplishment. In briefer simulations the document aimed at can be a one- or two-page framework agreement that touches on many issues broadly, and in doing so reveals commonalities as well as gaps between parties.

Actions and consequences

A crucial issue in relation to scenario-building concerns the dynamic between reflection and action, or decision making. An IN-simulation should

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2 In one of the first semester-long simulations I ran with graduates on the Israel/Palestine conflict, students came up with a final document that was over 100 pages long. It dealt with everything from how to address the Holy Sites to garbage collecting in east Jerusalem. The students had not intended to go into such detail, but realized, as they attempted to put their ideas into practice, that these were impossible to implement without addressing the more mundane aspects of life on the ground. This compelled them to delve deeper and deeper into the conflict as it was experienced on a daily basis by ordinary people, while still confronting broad narrative and existential disagreements. This convergence between the 'sacred and the profane' is very productive and exciting for simulation participants.

compel participants to make difficult decisions, take action, and deal with the often unexpected consequences of their choices.

As we mentioned at the beginning of this manual, an IN-simulation should not be structured like a war game or crisis-simulation, and in the initial sessions participants need not be faced with crises or forced into premature decision making. In early sessions they should devote their time to becoming familiar with their roles, the issues, the other players and the rhythm of the process, which may feel strange at first. After several sessions, however, they may be confronted with pressures – for example, deciding how to deal with a crisis or external event, or whether to accept a certain compromise proposal and risk the fallout (losing the support of their constituents, or of the leadership, or even losing their job or risking their lives). Time and again participants have told me that their learning experience went from theoretical to 'real' at the moment they had to make a decision about signing an agreement: suddenly, they felt the weight of their responsibility for other human beings – not only for their well-being but for their belief in what they deserved to achieve through any negotiated agreement. Participants often report that they are shocked to see the consequences or 'fallout' from some of their decisions and choices, and note how much they learned about politics and political maneuvering from the unexpected spiral of events that ensued from what they believed was one simple choice.

5.4   Choreographing a Dance of Debates

Without solid choreography a simulation can collapse midway, disintegrate into an unorganized shouting match, or peter out into an aimless discussion. If point and counterpoint are set out precisely, within each role and the scenario as a whole, you will create a self-sustaining exchange of perspectives. When constructing an IN-simulation it is thus crucial to set up a continually evolving 'dance of debates' between participants.[3]

Exchanges between participants in an IN-simulation should not evolve as a loose selection of arbitrarily clashing views. Rather, they should be choreographed to enable a sophisticated set of discussions and disputes

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3   I have coined this term to describe the process, but I learned the method primarily from *Reacting to the Past,* where sources and debates are organized in such a way that students are primed to discuss both 'big ideas' and specific issues from different points of view and with the help of a variety of related but conflicting sources.

on *both* broad/existential and specific/on-the-ground issues. Each participant should make points based on views and interests supported by a set of sources laid out in their role packet, and these points should be met by several counterpoints presented by other participants – contrary views guided by equally detailed source materials, *but ones chosen specifically to ensure that they address the same point from a different angle.* As a result, issues raised at the table will be approached from several perspectives, both within each delegation – where frictions should emerge over the course of the sessions – and between delegations.

If debates are well choreographed, the 'narratives' of various sides are not hurled across the table in the form of high rhetoric or talking points: rather, they come to life in very detailed ways. Each participant is given a first-person view of the realities on the ground and in the diplomatic arena, and their 'brief' explains the ways in which the character they represent has understood or experienced these over the past months, years, decades or longer. The room is thus always filled with the weight of the past – participants sitting at the table do not merely present a broad set of perspectives, but lived experiences: the psychological, cultural, religious and political experiences carried by real players. At the same time, participants are given a specific portfolio – for example, they are responsible for exploring a particular issue in detail, and become 'specialists' on that issue over the course of the process. Under these circumstances, the negotiation will evolve realistically – with participants learning how minor details, major impasses on the ground and broad existential concerns are entwined in a real encounter between adversaries.

The thorny question of 'balance'

Setting up this elaborate 'dance of debates' is not the same thing as claiming that there is 'balance' in terms of who is right and wrong, or arguing that all perspectives are equally valid. It is not about claiming that everyone is *right,* but acknowledging that everyone is *there.* In other words, unless the outcome of a conflict is to be determined by force (which often will be the case and might sometimes be inevitable) real negotiators, mediators and others who wish to be involved in conflict resolution must address the needs and interests of a multiplicity of parties, whether or not they consider these parties to be respectable, legitimate or morally abhorrent. An IN-simulation compels participants to see how the conflict is experienced not only by a variety of leaders/officials/negotiators, but by various constituents whose perspectives

and demands are always present at the table, even if they themselves are absent. By including personal history, moral dilemmas, professional ambition and political posturing in the motivations of players, simulation designers should not worry that they are validating the positions or behavior of all the characters; rather, they are bringing roles to life in such a way that participants acquire a *composite* picture of the beliefs and concerns of various parties. As a result, whether or not they respect their role, they often engage deeply with it.

5.5 Choosing and Developing Roles

How many are at the table?

It is useful to limit the number of participants who take part in a simulation, so that there is an intimacy to the process, each individual has plenty of time to speak and contribute, and each can receive personalized feedback from the instructor. Ideally, 12–15 participants provide for the best dynamic, but an IN-simulation can work with as few as 8 and as many as 25 participants.

Who's at the table?

Choosing which parties will be represented at the table will to a great extent be determined by the conflict you have chosen to simulate, and the situation at the moment you are constructing the module. As a general rule, however, it is useful to choose either 1) a set of trusted representatives that in reality would be sent by their leadership to a negotiation; 2) the leaders themselves, with a set of advisors; or 3) track II actors who meet with or without the knowledge of their leaders. Some scenarios require that non-state actors, who might not be considered to hold legitimate power but without whom an end to violence cannot be negotiated, be at the table. Other scenarios might include civil society or religious leaders. Third parties, again depending on the actual conflict, may be impartial mediators or interested third parties (i.e., diplomats representing a particular government or agenda).

For the sake of a rich encounter, it is often more interesting to stipulate that state leaders have sent their representatives rather than being present themselves. This can lead to a thicker set of debates, as negotiators will discuss and attempt to hammer out details that heads of state would not be likely to address. It also brings out tensions between negotiators, and between negotiators and decision-makers, about which it is useful for partici-

pants to learn. IN-simulation designers should make use of the diversity of potential 'advisors' to create delegation dynamics where a multiplicity of personalities and perspectives will be present, but should also keep in mind that leaders would be cautious about sending representatives that could undermine their authority. If you wish to bring individuals to the table who have strong differences in opinion regarding the issues and the negotiation itself, their role packets should explain the power dynamics between them and any limits to their freedom of action. (For more on how to construct and develop roles, see 'Sample Role Packet').

Including the excluded

It is tempting when devising roles to bring people to the table who in 'real life' would not be there – marginalized groups, non-state actors, militants, etc. – and one can build a good simulation around a back-channel discussion that includes, for example, characters who would not normally be included in a diplomatic process. But this is a delicate operation. If you bring in groups that would never be at the table given the current climate or leadership, the scenario should *reflect* that by being a highly secret meeting with very strict limits and boundaries. Thus, parties would make tentative steps to hear each other and think through possible avenues for forward movement, but they would also be confronted with the reality of how difficult it would be for anything they said in this 'private' setting to make its way into an implementation phase, given the resistance of the public, powerful political groups or the official leadership. Their demeanor, their mandate and their scope for maneuver should reflect the nature of their meeting.

This constraint can work in favor of the simulation, as strict rules of engagement and warnings against 'leaks' can create an exciting framework for the scenario. You can also create parallel worlds, where officials meet in one room while in another area there is an unofficial or secret meeting with a different set of parties. If a productive dynamic ensues and there is an incentive for the two groups to come together, participants should feel the burden of justifying this move to various individuals (or their leaders) who might oppose it.

If, in contrast, you aim to create an official summit or Track I negotiation that, for the sake of inclusiveness or breaking traditional paradigms, includes parties that in real life would not be invited to the table, you will likely end up with an unrealistic scenario that does not help participants understand two central lessons that the simulation can otherwise offer: 1) why,

in reality, these parties are *not* invited to the table; and 2) how these parties influence negotiations processes from behind the scenes.

This does not mean that you need simply to replicate the limits of current reality: you can and should bring in any excluded voices by having them represented, even if they are not physically at the table. You can do this in two ways: bring in a party who is known to have 'ties' to the group, and therefore can convey their views with some legitimacy. Or, bring in outside events that interfere with the process and that symbolize the power and influence of that group: for example, information about an act of violence, a demonstration, news of a meeting, a leaked document or plan of action.

Between the edgy and the racist

The beauty of simulations is that you can allow participants to speak in the authentic voices of real parties to a conflict, and this liberates them from any fears they might have about being too 'politically correct' when discussing difficult issues. They can and should articulate edgy, distasteful or even offensive ideas, in order to learn about a particular conflict and experience the genuine hostility between the players. In a simulation participants do not merely discuss the problem of marginalization but *experience* it, or shock themselves by imposing it on others; they learn what 'fundamentalism' means not by analyzing it but by feeling its lure; they can articulate extremist or radical positions and feel reluctant to compromise; they can be boisterously *pro* and *anti*.

However, while participants may be asked to articulate views that are unsettling to them, they should not be asked to openly advocate for a racist idea or policy. For example, they can be 'associated' with people who are openly racist, and use these connections as bargaining chips at the negotiation table. They can bring to the table a 'memo' written by another party, as evidence of racism on one side or another. They can be a member of an 'extremist' group that in reality advocates racist views or terrorism or violence toward their enemies, and even harbor some of those views themselves. But it is too much to ask a participant to openly articulate a brutally racist position or degrade a group of people based on their race or ethnicity. Further, it is natural that in a real negotiation individuals would mask some of their opinions in the interests of appearing diplomatic or in the presence of third parties whose favor they are courting. Thus, keeping the most offensive of positions as subtext rather than asking participants to articulate them openly does not usually result in a negotiation appearing inauthentic.

It is not always easy to develop roles for characters whose beliefs or behavior appear to be beyond the pale, without artificially softening the roles or putting participants in the difficult position of having to legitimize them. However, there is usually a way to manage such situations. As an example, many years ago I ran a simulation on the situation in Burma/Myanmar. The roles included a variety of local rebel groups and activists, members of the Security Council, human rights advocates and members of the military Junta. For the latter, the role packets were difficult to devise, as it was not appropriate to justify their brutal actions on the ground. And unlike some actors in other conflicts, because these leaders were both elusive and powerful one could not give them a personal story of victimization that contextualized or appeared to rationalize their actions.[4]

What my co-teacher and I chose to do instead was to focus on the kinds of anti-colonial arguments that the Junta might make in response to pressures from the West. The case they made was thus not about justifying their actions – they were told to remain aloof from many of the proceedings, to meet only rarely and privately with select actors, and not to engage in self-defense. Instead, they made a variety of arguments based on the view that the West had no business interfering in their country or dictating their actions.

Because this kind of response is a key area of debate in today's political and diplomatic climate, and it has a powerful intellectual heritage, participants were able to sink their teeth into it without feeling they had to defend the actions of the Junta on the ground. Thus, while those who took on the role of members of the Junta did not gain sympathy for them, they did feel that they had learned a great deal about why it can be ineffective for Western powers to attempt to influence or bully various parties with moral posturing or political pressure. And the participants playing members of the Security Council and human rights activists, who were trying to apply these pressures, learned tough lessons about how difficult it is for international organizations and actors to find effective leverage in situations like these.

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4   It is worth noting that if a participant is playing the role of a particularly distasteful or 'hardline' character, it is often useful for the instructor to let them know that this is a particularly difficult role to play, and even commiserate with them or jest about the fact that the individual they are representing is not very appealing. There is no need for the instructor to pretend that all characters in a simulation are morally upright or their perspectives 'equally valid'. However, there are always ways to help the participant embrace the role and those should be emphasized: for example, the character might be particularly forthright in how he presents his views, in contrast to more 'moderate' but less honest characters; or he may project a level of certainty or leadership that might also be appealing for a participant to try and relate to and experience, even if the content of what he/she argues is distasteful.

Allowing emotions into the room

Throughout this book I have emphasized the powerful role that emotions play in the experiences of IN-simulation participants. I have also tried to explain how emotions are not artificially 'acted out', parachuted into the exercise as 'self-help' exercises or separated from the analytical and reflective elements of the process. Rather, they emerge naturally from the integrative nature of the simulation. However, a simulation can easily exclude most emotional or visceral elements of a conflict by focusing only on technical issues and bargaining opportunities, or by creating roles that are thinly developed. If you want participants to experience the range of feelings that are likely to arise in a real negotiation, and to experience how technical and existential issues are entwined in most exchanges, some of the emotional content must be written into the role packets.

In other words, although in most cases role packets will indicate that negotiators should focus on 'solutions' in the present and future rather than becoming mired in debates about history or playing the 'blame game', participants should nevertheless have a strong sense of their character's historical and current grievances. The issues to be discussed at the table, no matter how technical, will inevitably bring some of these to the fore: negotiators should have a clear sense of how their own people view the causes of the conflict or current tensions, and mediators should either be made aware of the more heated narrative issues beforehand, or 'set up' to encounter them in a surprising manner that means they will have to manage them deftly during the process.

This emotional content should be subtly written into both individual roles and shared factional documents, without caricature or exaggeration. The most productive approach is for simulation designers to consider providing more than a general outline of the various narratives. In addition, they should illustrate for participants how elements of these narratives are manifested in the specific issues that are being discussed during the negotiation. For example:

- How discussions about security or military arrangements provoke existential debates about which party suffers from a greater sense of insecurity or who is responsible for creating such insecurities in the first place;
- How moral questions of justice and rights to land and property manifest in debates regarding how to address the situation of displaced persons, refugees, restitution and compensation; and whether solutions to these

problems should be integrated with, or separated out from, moral questions of ultimate responsibility, admissions of guilt or public apologies;

- How instances of ongoing violence can be addressed through ceasefires or long-term agreements, while recognizing that various parties must 'save face' for their public – i.e., retain their image as strong, fearless and dignified, as not allowing their enemies off the hook or submitting to the latter's interpretation of 'who started it'?
- How cultural, ethnic or religious differences reveal themselves in talks that otherwise might be considered to be about national conflicts;
- How historical asymmetries of power manifest in resentments and insecurities, across or within factions.

Role integrity

As we discussed in previous chapters, roles are the foundation and backbone of an IN-simulation process. It is not enough for a simulation scenario to mirror events taking place on the ground, a likely peace process or back-channel negotiations. *The most fundamental mirror of reality comes because the simulation participants begin to understand the history, perspectives, ambitions, interests, and fears of the individual characters they represent, whether these are negotiators, mediators or excluded parties trying to make their voices heard.* If the problems being negotiated can be agreed upon without considering the broader context – years or decades of war and violence, wounded pride, personal ambition, interpersonal competition, fear of failure, the burden of leadership – participants may learn a great deal about how to bargain but will not necessarily learn how to negotiate or make their way through a conflict. Participants should thus be clearly informed that their first and most important responsibility in a simulation is to faithfully convey the views of their character no matter how they feel about these.

Clear objectives

When you develop roles, it is most effective to outline a set of precise objectives that participants must fulfill. This is the only way they will know how to approach their work, and in the end your only gauge of whether they are fulfilling their 'work requirements'. It may happen that participants accomplish a different set of equally worthy objectives, and that can be acceptable as long as you agree to any shift that has taken place. What is important is that they know what they should accomplish, and when. The more specific you can be on this, the better.

For example, you might tell them that their broad objective is to achieve a peace agreement based on and limited by a series of positions and interests that have been outlined for them in their role packet. But you would also point out more specific objectives, such as to ensure that:

- A discussion about issue X is raised early on in the proceedings and remains a central focus throughout;
- Any agreement contains specific clauses relating to issues Y and Z;
- Points A, B and C can be negotiated, but D and E are red lines that cannot be crossed;
- A certain group is included in or excluded from the deal, except if X, Y or Z happens;
- Delegate X should not be allowed to meet privately with mediator Z, but should always report to the head of delegation.

The role must be realistic in that it represents the views of a real individual or constituency; but once a participant has grasped the logic and rationale of the role, he/she should have some space to stretch the role slightly beyond what the character would or could do or say. You cannot pre-plan the balance between realism/flexibility; you will have to play it by ear. As a general rule it is better to risk over-involvement and rigidity in the early stages – so that participants stay true to their role and you can keep a watch on those having trouble – and let go as the process evolves. During the simulation itself, straying participants can be brought back to role either through private talks with the instructor, or gaming devices integrated into the simulation (such as a participant being sanctioned by their leadership or other parties, or threatened with being removed from the talks).

Group accountability

Participants should be aware that they are not freestanding individuals, as they often are in traditional classes. Each individual should have specific responsibilities within their faction, recognize themselves as a necessary link in the team dynamic, and know that if they do not do their work they will weaken the effectiveness of the entire group. This may help ensure that individual participants do not sit back and observe while their peers or colleagues do all the hard work, and that each is excited about the special issue he/she has to bring to the table or argue for.

How to manual in a nutshell part I:

1. Resources needed:
   - Plenary and 'break-out' rooms
   - Logistics including flip charts, computer, printer
   - External coaches when possible.
2. Choosing a topic:
   - Develop a complex scenario around a conflict negotiation rather than a war or crisis simulation
   - Avoid aiming for out of the box solutions: encourage participants to get into the box and learn the realities of the conflict on the ground and in the minds of various parties
   - Scenarios based on real conflicts are more instructive than fictional ones.
3. Constructing a scenario:
   - Design the architecture and trajectory of the module in detail, but leave the outcome open-ended
   - Allow for a variety of meeting formats – e.g., plenary sessions, delegation and committee meetings, back-channel discussions
   - Reproduce the likely tensions within delegations as well as those between them
   - Focus the work through use of a 'pull' factor, e.g. pressure to achieve a negotiated settlement
   - Create scenarios that compel participants to confront the difficulties faced by decision-makers, including the need to 'sell the deal' to various constituents.
4. Choreography of debates:
   - Design materials that create a mirror image of the information and perspectives of various parties: i.e., divergent sources on the same issue
   - Avoid being 'politically correct' – aim instead to portray the beliefs and interests of all relevant parties in the most realistic way possible.
5. Choosing and developing roles:
   - 10 – 20 participants is ideal to allow for both interesting dynamics and individualized feedback
   - Actors at the table may typically include: delegation heads, topical experts, hard- and soft-liners, mediators or diplomats. Extremists, militants or non-state actors may also be included in 'back channel' scenarios or indirectly through parties speaking on their behalf
   - Provide participants with factual information about their roles, but also include the emotional and psychological baggage that is likely to lead to a realistic encounter
   - Clarify the parties' individual and group objectives in the role descriptions.

5.6   The Role of the Instructor in IN-Simulations

Your pedagogical instincts as professors or instructors will be severely tested when you first organize and run an IN-simulation (or any kind of simulation for that matter). Your notion of intellectual rigor and critical thinking, your assumptions about the potentials of various participants, and most of all, your view of your own role in the learning process – all these may be challenged. In a course where to a great extent participants 'run the show', it might appear that instructors lose their role and their control, or their ability to ensure that the learning experience is of high quality. But in fact simulations offer a wonderful opportunity for instructors to experience new forms of teaching and learning, and create a variety of new environments in which students of all ages and levels can thrive.

As a general rule, taking some agency from the instructor and putting it into the hands of participants is positive for both. University students, as well as professional participants, respond very well to the responsibilities they are given in an IN-simulation. For example, they will have to deal with all aspects of a negotiations process, such as seating arrangements, deadlines, order and respect during debates, fact checking on evidence and discretion. This induces them to take the process and their 'jobs' very seriously.

However, as mentioned in Chapter One, simulations that take the pedagogue out of the pedagogy miss out on a great opportunity for instructors to give input to individual participants, prevent some of the pitfalls of simulations to which critics have rightly pointed and ensure the most effective outcome for individuals and the group. Ideally, there should be a balance between empowering participants and ensuring that the instructor remains an active part of the process. Simulations can very easily run themselves, and those that are specifically designed to do so can indeed best fulfill their goals without (or with very specific and limited) instructor supervision. Others can work well with a form of rigorous supervision that focuses on keeping the game on the correct trajectory (for example, by monitoring student emails, watching student performance closely and giving individuals input when they appear to misread their goals) but without feedback to individual participants relating to their skills or personal development.[5] But in a face-to-face, intimate module such as an IN-simulation, instructor absenteeism will come at a high cost. Most modules develop a strong undertow that can drag

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5   See for example Rex Brynen's "Brynania" peace building simulation at _https://brynania.wordpress.com_

participants in one direction before they have had a chance to notice that they have gone too far off course. This leads to frustration, where some participants feel they have been part of an unrealistic 'game' directed by the interests of their peers, rather than a rigorous learning experience driven by a well-considered set of goals, and that the instructor has failed to notice or reign in participants who were not representing their roles accurately. An instructor who stands back after launching the process thus often misses opportunities to keep the group on course, work with individuals to refine their understanding of the issues and help them move through obstacles in such a way that they learn from their own responses and choices.

When preparing students for a simulation it is useful to offer introductory lectures or inputs (e.g. video clips) on background issues and hold some discussion sessions to set the context for the simulation. An ideal scenario in a university, in which traditional learning and simulations complement each other, would be one in which an instructor and students had a full semester or even a full year for a course. This kind of module allows some of the central flaws of simulations to be remedied. In reality, few professors or trainers can manage anything close to this kind of process. As a result, in most cases introductory material will be covered quickly, and participants will dive into the simulation long before they feel ready.

But this is not merely a necessary evil – it is also a purposeful part of the process. Even if an instructor has the requisite time to introduce the conflict, the introductory sessions will not resemble a traditional course, since they should purposefully avoid presenting a comprehensive overview of the issues. When diving into the simulation participants will often feel unprepared, full of questions and sometimes quite panicked. The advantage of having them enter the simulation before they feel ready is that participants 'learn on the job'; as a result, they absorb information at an extraordinary rate and with a great deal of focus.

Choosing your style of guidance

Your own approach to your role as an organizer of a simulation will have an important impact on the process. You can choose a form of guidance that best suits the type of module you are running, and naturally your method will vary depending on the types of individuals at the table.

My own view is that, as a simulation designer, you should not be a clockmaker god who sets the world in motion and then disappears. The like-

ly result of this approach will be that very soon participants become frustrated with the limits of 'reality' as described in their roles, and want so much to make a deal or compromise their goals that they create their own alternative universe. This will lead to a situation where they are likely to be misled about the conflict at hand or the positions of the players.

I would also advise against being a meddling Greek god who interferes with every participant's thought or action. If you do not trust them or allow them to make mistakes (especially near the end of the module), they will never gain confidence or a sense of owning the process, and the negotiation will not evolve its own dynamic.

However, you will benefit from taking on the role of a somewhat omniscient deity, with a bird's eye view of the whole process – aware of how individual participants are evolving in their roles, able to anticipate how group dynamics might develop, ready and able to give input where necessary and foresee (if not create) crises and obstacles. I often ask participants to copy me into general emails to each other in the early period, or I hold brief meetings with them regularly to find out what they are planning in their strategy. This allows me to make small corrections along the way and avoid having to shift the whole process mid-way.

Finally, sometimes you will have to be an omnipotent and somewhat ruthless orchestrator-monitor who is willing to change the course of a negotiation with one word, without offering explanation, and remaining immune to participants' complaints. If you allow the simulation to go off on tangents because you are worried about upsetting participants who have become invested in an idea or process, in the end you will be depriving them of a solid learning experience. If they are traveling down a road that you know will lead them nowhere, it is best to nip it in the bud, and not waste much time defending your decision.

Five possible means of intervention from the instructor

There are several ways to productively intervene in a simulation, and each instructor will have his or her preferred style. Below I have laid out five that I found to be most useful.

- *Establish a relationship with individuals and factions before the simulation.* Contact with each participant before the simulation ensures that the role they are given is one that they have either chosen or accepted. This allows you to discover where some of their concerns lie, and anticipate areas where they might encounter obstacles. Early contact makes it more likely

that participants will turn to you when there is a problem, thereby avoiding mishaps during the simulation. Finally, it allows you to set up specific goals for individuals; if some want to focus on one issue more than another, you can allow for this by giving them a certain mandate or set of tasks. For example, if they have worries about public presentations/speaking you can give them a few ideas or exercises to practice before and during the module. In the case of the group, meeting with delegations allows you to do the same; notice how their dynamics might evolve, set them on the proper course so that they do not become sidetracked by personal agendas and give them suggestions about how to approach the various issues and the negotiation in general.

- *Intervene during the simulation.* During the simulation itself, you might (although rarely) intervene directly, in two ways. First, by speaking out loud to the whole group, indicating that one or another course of action is not acceptable, pointing out obvious errors that will sidetrack the discussion unnecessarily or offering guidance when a group has questions that they would not have had time to research or learn about in the preparation period. Second, if a delegation is struggling, you might sit at the table and join the negotiation for a few minutes, role modeling what participants might say or do to express their positions or pursue their interests. This allows you to demonstrate the kind of interaction that you think they would benefit from learning about, without interrupting the rhythm of the process. For example, you might sit next to a participant who is struggling to express a point and say 'as my colleague is trying to point out…' and then make the point effectively and in a way that offers useful guidance to the group. Or you might sit next to one of the mediators and role-model some productive mediation techniques that are appropriate for the moment. Too much role-modeling can be disempowering to participants, however, so it is best used rarely and at moments when it can serve as a 'quick fix' to moving the discussion along.

- *Communicate with participants through written notes.* In order not to intervene directly too often, it is useful to give individuals written notes if you notice they are struggling or straying from their agenda. These are private communiqués that might offer general suggestions, such as: 'Look back at Section 3 of your role packet, I think you might need a reminder about your goals'. When an individual or the group needs to be more quickly put on track in order not to waste time, a note might be more specific, for example: 'As a mediator you have done a very good job at

giving parties the sense that you are fair and well-informed. And yet while they relate to you they don't seem to be making progress with each other: how about leaving them to their own devices for a while, either by not speaking or leaving the room? Or is the problem perhaps that the process is not structured enough, and you need to be more directive?'

- *Speak with individuals or factions in person.* In-person meetings are most likely to be useful at the beginning of an IN-simulation, when participants need input on information or process. As the negotiation develops they become less necessary, but can be very helpful when participants are stuck in one pattern or confused about how to proceed. In order to avoid spoon-feeding you might ask some difficult questions that should incite productive conversations between participants; or if they need technical assistance, you could call in one of the coaches to provide input. Such meetings are also helpful if individuals are struggling with their role in deeper ways, reluctant to represent a character with integrity, or feeling they are not performing well. Don't be afraid to take time in these meetings, even if it means that an individual has to absent him or herself from their team for a while. Some individuals or factions will benefit from brief private conversations throughout the module; others will not need any guidance at all.

- *Make use of people who are not at the table, and external events.* Finally, sometimes it will be necessary to bring in the voice of someone who is not at the table: for example, the Prime Minister of one country who insists on hearing updates about the negotiation, or expresses pleasure/displeasure at specific outcomes that have been 'leaked' to him or her (you can play the role of this person, or your coaches can, as it is most effective for participants to be faced with their leaders and have to justify their ideas or choices). Or there may be a breaking news event that can push the group to deal with some important issues they have been neglecting.

5.7 Grading and Evaluation: What They Say, What They Write, What They Do

Grading students in a university setting

In a university setting, grading students in an IN-simulation can be tricky. Due to the engaging nature of the process, even the least involved students will tend to put in more time-and-presence commitment than they might in

other classes. Even those who do not do research or engage with their peers will likely show up for every meeting and express their opinions stridently. It thus becomes difficult to judge them for not having 'participated', even if you know that they have not in fact done their reading or considered their objectives. You will need to find a way to distinguish between those students who are carrying the debates, doing their research and fulfilling the goals laid out in their role packets, and those who are going along for the ride. It is very frustrating to those students who have done a great deal of work and taken the load for the team to feel that the professor has not noticed and they have not been rewarded.

In addition, the workload will be different than in a traditional class, as will the nature of the written work you are grading. For example, you will likely have fewer research-type papers to grade (although if you are running an IN-simulation in a university setting you should ensure that there is clear and continuous written work) and you will sometimes have to base your decision on factors that appear to the students to be subjective. It is thus important to convey clearly from the outset how students will be evaluated.

I usually balance a grade between what students say, what they do, and what they write. There is flexibility on this, because some students will say less than others but provide research to assist their peers or will advise behind the scenes. In cases where the input of participants is less visible, they may inform you of their work by sending you strategy notes or written analyses of their meetings.

If you wait till the end of a simulation to find out how much work students have done you will find yourself having to make judgments that appear (and might indeed be) subjective or 'unfair'. The best approach is to let students know from the beginning that you will be following their progress and need throughout to know that they are:

- *Participating:* Actively participating in plenary sessions, delegation and committee meetings as well as providing input 'behind the scenes'. Participants should make it clear that this verbal input is not just argumentative but based on the information in their role packet and associated research.
- *Reaching objectives:* Attempting to fulfill their specific role objectives, as outlined in their role packets (it is less important whether they have actually achieved these objectives, as the simulation is unlikely to allow all participants to 'win').

- *Creativity:* Taking a creative approach to their role and their negotiation/ mediation style, trying out various strategies and attitudes rather than repeating the same ones over and over.
- *Research:* Continually evolving in their research and bringing new points and evidence to the table. Handing in written work that is of a high quality, shows that they have researched the issues, evaluated various sources and framed their positions clearly.
- *Team work:* Working productively with their team members, being aware of and contributing to the goals shared by the group, which sometimes conflict with and at other times align with the goals of the individual. In cases where they conflict and the individual has a 'hidden agenda', that person can do well by achieving his or her goals even if the teamwork aspect has suffered; the converse is the case if their role emphasizes their objectives as team members.

Evaluating participants taking part in a professional training module

Even when modules are being run as one small part of a longer program with professionals or as an independent initiative, and thus 'grades' or formal evaluations are not involved, instructors need to find ways to clarify their expectations to participants and offer feedback. Individuals of all ages and stages of career tend to appreciate feedback on their efforts, even if informally through private talks with the instructor. Although I do not give 'grades' in professional modules, my approach to evaluating participants is similar: noticing what they say, what they do and how they work on any joint negotiation document. Input on any of these elements during the module can induce more active engagement, and provide useful guidance after it is over.

5.8 Bringing in the 'Real World': Making Use of External Coaches

By bringing external specialists into an IN-simulation you can create a revolving door of learning between the simulation and 'reality'. Real negotiators and issue specialists can lend a degree of realism to the simulation, giving participants a sense of the high stakes and improving the quality of the debates. When I refer to 'coaches' or 'external consultants' I mean:
- Current or former negotiators/diplomats/mediators or persons who have direct experience with the conflict and/or past negotiations.

- Parties to a conflict: civil society leaders, advocates, policy advisers, government officials, representatives of the military or security establishment.
- Issue specialists, journalists or academics who have experience working on specific topics such as legal, cultural, military or economic issues.
- Methodological experts on negotiation or mediation, who can coach the mediators on how to structure and run the meetings or the negotiators on how to devise and implement their strategies.

It is important to choose coaches with care. Many professionals can deliver a thrilling lecture and share exciting and informative personal experiences from their work in the field. This kind of input can be useful for the pre-simulation preparation stage of the process. But there is a difference between an exciting lecturer and someone with an educative spirit, able to act as a simulation coach or adviser. Not all 'important' people can adapt to a process that is educational, and one that puts the process and participants at center stage.

Anyone coming to coach participants in their negotiation must enter into the simulation mode and become part of a process. This requires patience, humility, and a genuine interest in the participants and their experience. If coaches are able to adapt to that framework they can make an enormous contribution to the process, giving participants the sense that they are representing the interests of authentic parties, and that they have at their disposal experienced human resources – people who can respond to their questions about content and strategy, give very specific advice on the kinds of language and concepts that could be crafted in a negotiated document, and provide input on the more elusive but equally important human dimensions of the conflict. Most participants find this to be a thrilling experience. However, if the coaches are unable to give the process precedence, they will likely interfere by inputting too much information at key moments when participants should be left to their own devices.

5.9 Constructive Errors: When to Let Go of the Integrity

In this book I have focused a great deal on the importance of 'role integrity' and keeping a simulation scenario realistic. These are the first conditions for creating a solid learning experience.

However, as an IN-simulation evolves it naturally diverts from reality in some ways. The instructor always has the burden of deciding which deviations are productive and which will set the exercise off course. But near the end of a simulation, the last third or quarter of the process, it is often necessary to allow participants to make constructive errors, for the following reasons.

First, if the simulation has been mostly true to life, a mistake that takes the form of an overly 'creative' but unrealistic solution to a conflict will in all likelihood have been developed after participants have already understood a great deal about the conflict, the context and the players. In my experience, that is a fair point from which to test an inventive if somewhat unrealistic idea. At that point they will be climbing outside the box from inside it rather than imposing preconceived views on reality – something that often happens when a simulation begins from the premise that participants should be experimenting with 'creative' solutions.

Second, this kind of mistake will provide the substance of debrief sessions, paving the way for various stimulating questions and discussions:

- Would or could this plan/idea have worked? If yes, how, and if not, why?
- How is it that, although participants were well versed in the issues and their role, they nevertheless did not realize that this plan would not be acceptable to certain constituencies?
- How did participants become submerged in their own ambitions or agendas, and how did this blind them to what was happening around them, allowing them to make this or that particular choice or error of judgment?
- What does this particular 'mistake' tell us about how real players behave under a variety of pressures?

Third, these kinds of eleventh hour mistakes tend to shock participants, because by this time they are often convinced that they really 'get it' – their roles, the conflict, the issues on the table. At this point their errors reveal just how difficult it is to grasp the forces that drive a conflict, the resistances of the parties and the complexity of the diplomatic process. Lessons learned in these final hours are often the most emotional, the most surprising, the most powerful and the most lasting.

Finally, the 'collective mind' will often correct even potentially big mistakes if the instructor sits back and allows it some space: one or more participants will slowly realize their individual or group objectives have been

transgressed and will likely question a decision that has been made by their peers or leader. This can lead to a fascinating and fiery intra-delegation dispute. As an instructor it is difficult but beneficial to trust the group at key moments, and allow the nature of your guidance to change over time. If you guide and even spoon-feed participants at the beginning of the exercise, this is a form of education. If you do so at the end, however, you are a puppet-master and the participants are your puppets.

Thus, when after days or weeks of engagement in a simulation a participant comes to me at the moment of the greatest challenge and asks: 'Is this the right decision?' or 'Would/could my character agree to this proposal?', my answer is usually total silence. At that point participants experience some of what it is like to have the weight of human lives on their shoulders and their own career on the line. They are usually shocked to discover that decision-makers who appear to be 'in charge' act with uncertainty; they are disturbed to experience the corruption of their own standards in the interests of power and influence; and they begin to feel what risk or compromise really means. These are some of the most powerful lessons, and participants should not be deprived of them in the interests of realism or a rigid concept of rigor.

5.10 Debriefing, Detoxing, Unwinding and Setting the Record Straight

In my experience of multi-session IN-simulations, participants take days, sometimes weeks or months to really unwind from the experience. Thus a debrief session is only the beginning of a process that is in fact extended in time, and difficult to monitor. Often, what students or participants say in a debrief does not correspond to how they feel weeks or months later, and yet a longer-term evaluation of their perceptions should be a key element in determining the strengths and weaknesses of the process.

In most IN-simulations there will be a great deal of role-identification. Even when participants do not like the individual or viewpoints they represent, they tend to identify with the obstacles faced by their character. In my experience, participants initially need to engage in a fairly free-floating discussion about 'what happened'. It is best to give everyone a chance to let off some steam before proceeding to a more organized level of reflection about the process. Despite all that has been said in this book about possible

tensions created through simulation modules, in most cases participants experience the process as enjoyable and thrilling, feel that they have bonded deeply both with their own delegation and sometimes with their opponents, and develop a great deal of mutual respect after having watched individuals articulate sophisticated positions, devise intelligent strategies and make their way through a morass of obstacles.

However, once this kind of unwinding begins it can go on indefinitely and tire everyone out. It can also, as mentioned in Chapter Four, lead to an overly intense discussion about the conflict itself, with participants suddenly reverting back to their 'real' identities and being frustrated that the 'other side' has not learned the proper lesson from the simulation (in other words, converted to 'their' perspective). It is thus important to plan an organized debrief about the *simulation itself* and avoid trying to create consensus about the conflict itself. The focus should be on lessons learned about negotiations, mediation, human interaction in situations of conflict, the particular conflict being studied and the broader context in which it is played out. Some possible questions participants can discuss are the following:

Understanding conflict:
- What were the central lessons learned about this conflict?
- What lessons did you learn about conflict dynamics in general?
- Could your negotiated document be a model for the 'real world' and if not, what about it was 'unrealistic'?

Negotiation and mediation skills and techniques:
- What were the central lessons learned about negotiations and/or mediation?
- How did you and your delegation prepare for the negotiations?
- What actually happened during the negotiation: who achieved their goals, who failed to achieve their goals and why?
- How did participants evolve as a group, was the negotiation 'realistic', why or why not?
- What kind of strategies did you use and how did these evolve over time?
- What obstacles did you encounter and how did you deal with them?
- How did the intra-delegation dynamics evolve?
- What was the intra-delegation decision-making procedure, was it agreed early on, or did it develop as the process developed?

- How, if at all, did basic negotiation and mediation concepts and skills and techniques help? If they didn't help, what were the most effective methods or approaches used?
- Were the beliefs, positions, concerns and interests of the various parties made clear during the process?
- How directive was the third party, and what was its impact?
- Did you find that the mediators were a help or hindrance to your negotiations?
- How effectively did the mediators structure the process?
- How did venue, timing, participation, goal setting, choice of third party and financing of the process affect the dynamic and outcome?

Personal strengths and weaknesses:
- What if anything surprised you about yourself, what did you discover?
- Compared to your predominant behavior in moments of conflict, how did you behave in the simulation, and were you able to try out different approaches?
- Where do you see your personal strengths and weaknesses as a negotiator /mediator, where would you still like to improve?

In addition to these questions, you should try and ascertain how participants experienced the elements of role-play or role-reversal. This is important as it encourages participants to discuss the deeper psychological aspects of both the simulation and the real conflict, and recognize how these affected them and might affect others.

Not all of these issues can be addressed in one debrief, and some participants do not like to speak about their personal experiences within a group setting. But some of these questions can be discussed and others raised and then answered in subsequent sessions, privately with the instructor or in writing.

Written assignments

There is no substitute for written assignments in the post-debrief stage in university settings. In professional training programs there is less time for this, but even here a short written text can encourage self-reflection and improve evaluation. I suggest two different types.

First, it can be useful to distribute a feedback form that asks participants to reflect on their learning experience while it is fresh. This questionnaire can include some basic questions like those listed above, as well as some personal questions about the specific challenges individuals faced, how or whether they overcame them or the obstacles they encountered in their own roles.

Ideally, this should be filled out soon after the simulation as an assignment when participants have time to reflect. I would also suggest that, if possible, a few weeks or months after the course you ask participants to fill out another assessment form. There is no better way for you to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the process and improve it in the future.

Second, I suggest having participants write a more formal paper that deals with 'lessons learned': here, participants would speak less about their personal experience and more about what they learned about the conflict, the issues and the negotiation/mediation process.

Filling in the facts

One of the most problematic aspects of extended IN-simulations is that there is not always time to fill in the facts or engage in proper analysis after the process is over. And yet it is clearly not a good idea for participants to leave the module with a false sense of what happened in history or in a conflict, or of the viewpoints and experiences of various parties. Paradoxically, the more 'realistic' a simulation actually is, the more *difficult* it can be for participants to remain vigilant or aware of those areas where they strayed from reality or misrepresented the perspectives of their role. It is important to find time to correct the record on as many issues as possible in the debrief or post-simulation period.

Finally, the debrief is valuable in order to bring participants back to a more objective mindset. Ideally one would move from an IN-simulation to a more traditional academic discussion or analysis, one that continues from where the simulation left off. Participants would reflect on what they learned in terms of the issues they read about in the pre-simulation period, and the simulation itself. They would then engage in a further round of research that would lead them to reflect anew on what they learned in the simulation.

Personal feedback from coaches and facilitator

Both during the simulation and in the debrief it is essential to offer individual participants feedback on their negotiation/mediation style, especially

when training conflict mediation specialists who are hoping to refine on their negotiation/mediation skills.

If 'external coaches' are still available, their input here can be highly valuable. They can comment on participants' approach to negotiation or mediation, evolution in their roles, strategies and interactions. They can also analyze the outcome document and go through it line by line, revealing which elements were realistic, which were interestingly creative and which strayed too far off course to be useful. But much of the feedback will fall on the shoulders of the instructor who has seen the development of the individuals and the process throughout. I suggest that you keep a log throughout the simulation, noting some key learning moments for participants, as there are so many phases that tend to follow one another quickly and it is often difficult to keep track of how the process and individuals evolved.[6]

5.11   Formal Evaluation and Follow Up

As mentioned previously, it is not easy to provide solid and reliable evaluations for simulations. In part this is because while simulations are increasingly used by individual instructors, their format and structure is not standardized. It is up to us as educators to begin crafting evaluation tools that can offer more than anecdotal evidence of the value of these modules: ones that can help track participants' growth and responses, and compare these to the kind of learning they experience in other educational settings. Further, because the simulation is a powerful emotional and psychological experience, and one that teaches 'life skills' in addition to traditional critical thinking skills, there need to be mechanisms for following through – ways to communicate with participants after the process to find out whether the lessons were transferable to their professional or personal lives, and the extent to which the information or understanding were retained in comparison to other classes or instructional modules.

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6   Video debriefing can be useful to this end, but it may adversely affect the simulation: people are more self-conscious when being filmed and tend to 'act' more or refrain from letting go and fully engaging. Videotaping is especially problematic when participants have concerns about sitting at the table with others or taking part in the module for political/ideological reasons: usually they need to feel that the simulation values privacy and discretion.

How to manual in a nutshell part II:

6. Role of instructor:
    - Prepare material, guide participants and facilitate the debrief
    - Intervene in various ways: 1) build relationships with participants before the simulation, 2) intervene during the simulation, 3) communicate through written notes, 4) use bilateral face-to-face meetings, 5) 'play' a role or bring in external events to influence negotiation dynamics.

7. Evaluating participants:
    - Possible evaluation criteria include: 1) degree of oral participation, 2) personal 'role objectives' reached, 3) creativity in approach to their objectives, 4) research done, 5) team work.

8. Use of real world external coaches:
    - Coaches can include current or former negotiators, political actors, topical experts, analysts
    - Coaches bring a sense of authenticity to the process
    - Participants learn enormously from engaging with real world actors while in the process of negotiating
    - Coaches must understand and respect the nature of the simulation, or they may derail the learning process.

9. Constructive Errors:
    - Toward the end of a simulation instructors may let go of "integrity to role" and allow participants to make mistakes, as these will provoke unexpected insights.

10. Debriefing:
    - Structure debriefing in different formats (verbal, written) and over time (immediate and more long-term)
    - Focus on questions related to understanding conflict, the development of skills and reflection on personal strengths and weaknesses.

6 Sample Role Packet and Background Material

This chapter is intended to give readers a general sense of how to create IN-simulation materials that will produce substantive and continually evolving debates, develop role packets that are likely to engage participants and choose sources to ensure that negotiations are focused and detailed rather than general and diffuse. The 'Sample Role Packet' proposed below envisages a classic negotiation simulation with at least two parties in conflict and a mediator/third party. In other scenarios materials will differ somewhat, depending on the type of encounter and parties at the table.

Note that when possible it is best to offer mirror-image issues and arguments in background materials and role packets. In other words, the same events and issues are mentioned and explained in the materials given to various factions (including the mediators) but from a different perspective and interpretation, and with reference to difference sources. This 'choreography of debates' helps avoid the phenomenon whereby participants study and prepare to discuss one issue that their counterparts have not prepared for, and are frustrated by the lack of substantive feedback and debate.

The detail included below might appear to be excessive or provide too much spoon-feeding to participants (and clearly the nature and extent of the material should differ according to the type of participants, their knowledge base and experience). But as a general rule, priming participants on the main issues and perspectives will mean they come to the talks prepared. Their experience will then be focused on solidifying this knowledge through further research, learning about the way in which it takes form in the context of a negotiation, and engaging in realistic exchanges rather than wasting time with preparation during the actual negotiation.

6.1 A General Model Rather Than a Specific Role Packet

While writing this book it was often suggested to me by colleagues that I include a role packet from a 'real' IN-simulation module that I have designed and run. Readers would then have a concrete model illustrating how many of the ideas covered in the book can be translated into simulation materials.

While I recognize that this would be compelling for the prospective IN-simulation designer, I have decided instead to provide a generic role packet.

The reason I have chosen this approach is that documents written for the purpose of an IN-simulation are often extremely sensitive, controversial and time-specific, reproducing what various parties believe and are doing at the moment the simulation is designed. As written texts, detached from the simulation process, these materials can appear provocative, and are likely to distract the reader with questions of content rather than method. Most IN-simulation participants become absorbed in the materials only once they have committed to the process and have a host of compelling reasons to articulate the (sometimes unappealing) views presented in their role packets. In other words, the interactive and experiential elements of IN-simulations are not just relevant to how participants learn during the module – they are also key to why they engage in the first place, and how they 'read' the materials.

6.2 Background Documents

Several types of background documents can help prime participants for the negotiation:

Documents shared by all participants
- *Origins:* Articles, books or videos that give historical perspective on the origins of the conflict.
- *Lessons learned:* Articles, video documentaries or live debates that cover 'lessons learned' from any previous attempts at negotiations, ceasefires, international diplomacy, including various views on the role of third parties and mediators in the conflict to date.
- *The main issues being discussed at the talks:* A summary brief that gives a general but substantive review of some of the main issues of contention that will be discussed during the negotiation, from multiple perspectives (i.e., different sections on how each side sees the issues). This helps ensure that all factions will read at least once about the issues from the perspective of the other side, and from a 'neutral' third party document, before they get to the table. It also ensures that there is at least one document on the content of the conflict that is produced by the instructor. This is most useful for the process, as the instructor can target the document very specifically to address the issues he or she knows will be prominent in the

simulation, and prime participants to anticipate and consider various likely disagreements.

- *Mini-bios of all participants:* Participants should all know who will be at the table. Short biographies of all characters will help give them a sense of who they are dealing with. These should be quite basic, indicating some of that person's general perspective, background and experience. More detailed or controversial information can be included in private briefings within individual role packets.

'Mirror image' documents for each delegation

- *The year in review:* A general review (a separate one for each delegation/faction and for the mediators) of the news and events relating to the conflict over the preceding months or year, *from the subjective perspective of the particular faction.* This 1) provides each faction with a common narrative and way of interpreting recent events before they are given their individual role packets, which might indicate that they diverge on various points; and 2) helps ensure that the negotiation is given a clear context, and participants are all up to date on recent events, locally, regionally and internationally.

- *Primary sources:* A broad range of primary materials that participants can use to support their narrative of the conflict. Each delegation will receive a different set of sources that consider the same issues and problems from opposing perspectives. These could include: maps (and conflicting maps) of contested areas, economic and social data, conflict specific data (such as numbers of casualties, internally displaced people and refugees), speeches from key leaders, memos, relevant treaties, legal documents or official reports.

6.3   Role Packets for Individual Negotiators

An individual role packet can include several sections. Members of the same delegation should not share their role packets with each other, although they are of course free to discuss the parts they share in common.

Introduction

Background: Basic background on the individual being represented. This includes some information about their past, upbringing or education; key

events in their life that have defined their beliefs or ideology; how this person sees their particular burden or responsibility, both at these talks and in the context of the conflict more generally. There should not be an excessive amount of biographical detail, as it is not useful if participants over-identify with the minutiae of an individual personality. But key characteristics are useful – for example, if the person is known to be difficult and contrarian, diplomatic and compromising, determined or ambitious – and can be highlighted with some direct quotes from the individual or about him/her by others. This also includes any particular elements that define their role at the talks (for example, they do not believe in these talks but will support them while remaining vigilant about any deviations from the perceived interests of the delegation, or they wish to maintain their position as the person most trusted by the leadership etc.).

Relations with members of delegation: Information on how this person relates to their delegation members, leadership, third parties or individuals on the other side, including some information on tensions they might have with any of these players. However, it is useful to keep in mind the point made in Chapter Five about the dangers of overemphasizing tensions between delegating members.

This section should also emphasize to participants that they cannot behave in the negotiation as freestanding individuals who can push through their own agenda. Rather, they depend on and need to work with their faction, and are depended on by the latter to 1) share information on the special issues they have been assigned in their portfolio, and 2) their views on group strategy throughout the talks.

Relations with mediators or third parties, regional/international actors: Information on how the person perceives or has related to a variety of regional or international actors in the context of the conflict.

Portfolio

Key issues: This provides an outline of the issues the participant will be responsible for representing within their faction (for example, issues pertaining to international law, security/military issues, questions of rights, economic or cultural issues).

Key sources: A list of the most useful sources for getting a grasp of these issues. The counterparts on the other side should receive a similar portfolio with different perspectives and conflicting sources.

Conflicting views: Information on some of the conflicting views they are likely to encounter from within their faction, the other side or the mediators/third parties.

Strategy, agenda and objectives

A list of objectives held by the faction as a whole, and by the individual if these objectives are different. Joint objectives can be repeated or cut and paste in each role packet: individual objectives should be listed as private or secret in individual role packets. This might be a list of demands and expectations about the process itself, areas where they know they might have to compromise or will resist compromise, ideas about how they intend to relate to the mediators or the other side or details about what they believe any potential agreement should reflect.

A note on strategy: it is useful to provide some indication of how this person might consider approaching the talks, or other individuals. For example, they might believe that one-to-one talks are more productive and intend to privately seek out someone on the other side. Alternatively, they might want to avoid this and make sure others do not engage in private talks so as to retain the unity of the delegation (or mask internal differences) and avoid giving mixed messages to mediators. They might believe as negotiators or mediators in taking and maintaining a tough line throughout, or in being open to the concerns of the other side and building trust above all.

Risks and choices

It is often useful to highlight some of the challenges the faction or individual is likely to encounter, in order to ensure that the delegation has discussed them before the talks. For example, when attempting to evaluate the risk of compromise on certain issues, how will they balance 1) the short and long term needs of their people 2) their mistrust of the other side and need to take risks in the interest of peace or ending violence, and 3) their desire to assert their freedom to decide what is best for them and a need to please or appease the mediators or third parties?

Who is not in the room

A list of influential players who are not at the table but can influence the process: hardliners who oppose negotiations; people from another party who might undermine specific elements of a deal; constituents who demand or

have been promised certain outcomes, as well as various leaders, regional/international players, donors.

Linkages

If you have several committees discussing different points, they should be made aware of the importance of considering linkages between the issues, assessing when progress in one committee might help induce progress in another (or when deadlock in one should put another on alert). A few basic tips on how to think about these issues will help promote their inter-delegation discussions.

6.4   Role Packets for Mediators

Role packets for mediators/third parties should have a similar structure as those above, with a background analysis of the events of the past year from their perspective, biographical details of their character, and indications of any differences that are likely to arise between mediators. Their role packets should also clearly indicate whether as mediators they are neutral outsiders or third parties representing a particular country or organization, with various biases and a history of relations with one side or another. If the latter, they should know what their country or leadership expects of them, the interests and alliances they have with various parties and previous experience mediating this or any other conflicts.

However, the mediators will likely have less personal investment in their character and will have to focus more on developing a strategy to run the talks successfully. Even if they are mediators representing a particular country, they will likely identify less with a national narrative and more with the role of mediator. Thus, the focus is on helping them think through their strategy as mediators.

Their role packets should include some of the following elements:

- *Extended mini-bios:* An 'insider's view' of who's who in the delegations, and who or what to watch out for (for example, possible spoilers, people who might be more amendable to compromise, tensions between delegates).
- *A summary of some of the main issues being discussed:* Mediators will have less time to read up on all the issues, since they have to try and grasp them from both sides; however, they should be well versed in the main

problems and also understand how each side approaches the issues and impasses. They can be given a detailed brief on the main points, and a selection of the sources each side will be using that reflect their different perspectives.

- *Mandate and objectives:* A possible set of goals and expectations for the talks: a series of outcomes they hope for or expect, and questions about how they intend to achieve these.
- *Strategy:* How do they intend to approach the parties and the talks in general: how will they structure the negotiations? How do they suggest going about establishing an agenda? What ideas do they have about working through the agenda? When will they be active and directive? When will they focus primarily on listening and facilitating discussions between parties? If they are not impartial mediators but third parties intending to suggest or even impose specific solutions, do they have any leverage over one or both sides that they might use if necessary? How do they plan to deal with the media, donors, and regional or international powers?
- *How to organize the talks or summit:* A menu of options or set of suggestions about how to run the talks. These should be sufficiently open-ended that the mediators have to make difficult decisions about how to proceed: for example, do they meet with parties separately, so as to get a sense of where they stand before bringing them together? Do they bring them together right away in a plenary to air general perspectives before engaging in smaller group negotiations or committee meetings? How do they set up the timing of the meetings (will they create a strict schedule, or let the meeting run according to its own dynamic)? How will they organize the rooms (location of table, chairs, and seating plan)? What types of ground rules will they suggest to frame the process?
- *Relations among mediators:* Do the various mediators agree on goals and strategies? Will they present a united front to the parties, or take on different roles, with some adopting a tougher stand and others being more malleable? Do they have any private or secret agendas?

Conclusion

In the preceding chapters I have attempted to illustrate the potential benefits of IN-simulations. These exercises provide a forum where participants can move from analytical investigations to a virtual professional training environment, recognize and anticipate problems they may encounter 'in the field' and confront personal strengths and weaknesses.

Two final points about IN-simulations are worth highlighting in conclusion. The first is that one of the most useful aspects of the process is the way in which it can simultaneously address individual and group needs. For while the group experience can be exhilarating, creating a strong sense of common cause and a forum for substantive post-simulation discussions, the module can also be crafted to suit the specific interests and needs of individual participants: a sort of independent study course or individual training session within a program. One module can thus allow people with different levels of knowledge, professional specialization, age and experience to benefit from the process and each other. This is not only the case in terms of skills, where each participant has the opportunity to work on a set of proficiencies, depending on his or her own background and needs. It is also the case because (ideally) in a simulation there is no central 'narrative' dominating the process. After the module, individual participants often continue to disagree on the lessons learned about both content and process (for example, the causes of the conflict and the outcome or value of negotiation or mediation). And yet despite different views, they usually share the experience of having been challenged to reflect anew on their perspectives and in particular their approach to a conflict, or conflict more broadly

The second point is that IN-simulations allow instructors to combine structure with flexibility. This is not always easy to achieve in educational settings, where curricula and learning 'methods' are most often fixed in order to accommodate institutional needs for continuity over time. In contrast to traditional courses, where the contents might be updated but both the form and method of learning tend to be static, IN-simulations provide educational spaces that are malleable and adaptable. Each exercise must be highly structured and rigorous, but modules may be modified to fit the needs of students and practitioners in an increasingly mutable world. Further, because the method does not depend on a fixed theory of learning it can adapt to new discoveries or hypotheses about how individuals acquire knowledge, wisdom and skills.

However, given all the elements that need to be in place in order to ensure the best outcome, instructors who are interested in developing simulations but who are new to the process often express concerns regarding the time and energy required to design a good module. They also worry that they might struggle to run the module, as they have not been trained in the particular skills required from a simulation instructor.

Three factors should mitigate these concerns. First, as most instructors know, a great deal of preparation goes into creating informative, well-organized and inspiring lectures, or planning how to structure and run seminars or training programs. If instructors were to calculate the time they put into organizing their courses, it would not exceed that required for simulation development. The latter is simply a new and unfamiliar form of preparation, and thus in the beginning requires extra attention.

Second, most instructors, whether in universities or professional programs, have not received training as educators. It is tacitly accepted that they learn on the job, even though their skills vary greatly and although (to the dismay of students) many appear not to be particularly preoccupied with their style of teaching. Thus instructors may feel unprepared for simulations, but they are generally also unprepared for classical education approaches.

Third, although designing an IN-simulation requires planning, this is balanced by the fact that during the module instructors do not have to lecture or lead seminars, and act instead as advisors and guides. This takes as much of the burden off them as the initial preparation puts on them, which most instructors find to be extremely liberating – not only because it breaks the routine of the lecture/seminar, but also because it gives them new ideas about how to create stimulating learning environments.

At the same time, the fact that designing IN-simulations requires time, commitment and fresh thinking about education should be acknowledged and even embraced. The modules challenge instructors as well as participants to modify the structure and goals of a course, overturn some inherited educational habits and create different spaces, physical and intellectual, in which to operate. These elements indicate that in developing and running simulation modules there is a genuine attempt to move beyond the preoccupation with *what* we teach and to consider some fundamental questions about *how* people learn and what kinds of environments and experiences facilitate their learning. This is relevant in universities, where too often students are not challenged to balance theories with the political, social and psychological realities faced by people in conflict, and it is also relevant in

negotiation and mediation training, where a theoretical or 'scientific' approach to concepts and methods is not sufficient for real skill-building. In order to be effectively imparted, the art and skills of negotiation and mediation are best practiced, and practiced under the strains and pressures that mirror real life. If the point is to explore whether and how simulations can be more than exciting-but-flawed exercises and instead become educational modules worthy of being part of university courses or professional training programs, time and effort must be put into discussing, testing and refining the method.

In order for the types of simulations described in this book (face-to-face rather than online, true-to-life rather than fictional, and extended rather than brief) to become reliable educational tools, some basic elements need to be in place:

- *Time:* Time for the gradual evolution of knowledge and skills, proper debriefing and analysis of the process, and integration of the module into a broader course or program.
- *Structure:* A module that has clear learning objectives, detailed background materials, highly-developed roles and intricate scenarios.
- *Instructor engagement:* Supervision by the instructor and coaches early on and throughout the process, to ensure a simulation that remains true to the objectives and roles laid out in the materials; and to offer input and feedback to individuals and factions/delegations on their approach to the talks or negotiation/mediation styles.
- *Limited number of participants:* A small group of 12–15 participants. Up to 20–25 is manageable but might require more than one instructor, or an instructor plus coaches.
- *A live curriculum:* A revolving door of learning between the classroom and 'real world' – the instructor and outside consultants and specialists.
- *Debrief and follow up:* A substantive post-simulation process where participants can return to a more traditional approach to the subject, engaging in reading and discussions that further help them analyze the results of their 'practice' more objectively.
- *Work requirements:* Requirements for preparation and participation that are clearly outlined before the simulation begins.
- *Evaluation:* An evaluation process that attempts to identify the particular nature of the learning, tests the rigor of the method and the transferability of the skills and includes, where possible, follow-through in the months after the simulation has been run.

- *Institutional support:* Instructors will be encouraged to run rigorous simulations if their programs appreciate and reward educational innovation, give instructors time and intellectual and financial support to develop new modules and encourage students to experiment with courses.

If these elements are in place, IN-simulations and related simulation modules can be a valuable part of education in conflict, negotiation and mediation, providing training in these areas for those who seek it for professional or personal reasons.

In a nutshell: Strengths and weaknesses of IN-simulations
Weaknesses:
- *Effort:* the process requires time and effort to run well: for those looking for simple skills-learning it can be 'overkill'
- *Participant selection:* certain individuals may not be willing to engage in the process for personal, cultural or other reasons. Group constellation is more delicate than in other methods
- *Trainer requirements:* requires instructors have in-depth knowledge of case they simulate, as well as familiarity with the simulation process

Strengths:
- *Offers advanced learning:* Provides learning beyond basic negotiation and mediation training: skills and understanding are contextualized and internalized; case study is analyzed in depth
- *Flexibility:* Method can be adapted to various cases, situations and learning requirements
- *Conflict engagement:* Allows for a form of engagement between conflicting parties that focuses on functional understanding, rather than 'humanization of the other'.

Annex

Sample Questions for Evaluating Simulations

As we discussed in Chapter Four, a useful way to begin measuring the merits of simulations would be to create new assessment tools and evaluation questions that allow instructors and participants to gauge the effectiveness of these modules. Below are a series of questions that might be useful for instructors to consider when crafting such evaluations.

Questions related to knowledge or understanding of the conflict being studied
- What did participants learn about the particular conflict being studied, with emphasis on various aspects on the ground, their particular character's 'portfolio' and the broader context (i.e., the diplomatic and social/political processes that influence the conflict)?
- Did participants think that the knowledge they gained due to this 'active learning' factor was different in nature or quality from that they received in other educational settings? And if they previously took a course on a similar topic, how might they compare the learning experiences?
- What did participants learn about how to search for, evaluate and make use of a variety of sources? Did the 'subjective' mindset of the role play make them more or less motivated to explore sources, more or less able to evaluate them objectively?

Questions relating to process
- What did participants learn through a particular case study about patterns or dynamics of conflict more broadly? (This could include insights into how individuals and groups respond under the influence of powerful collective narratives, behave under adversarial conditions, deal with asymmetries of power and react to the sense of being threatened or victimized).
- What did participants learn about negotiation and mediation processes? Did the simulation help them gain insights not only into this particular conflict, but also into the dynamics of a negotiation and mediation more broadly?
- What did participants learn about how to organize and manage a negotiation or summit, the relative effectiveness of mediators, the value or dangers of attempting to write a common negotiated text?

Questions related to negotiation or mediation skills

- Did participants acquire particular skills, and if so what kind (for example, intellectual skills such as critical thinking; or negotiation skills such as communication, listening, managing pressured situations, problem solving, strategy building, leadership or team and relationship building)? If so, how did they acquire them or which experiences triggered their learning? (An important question here, but one difficult to address, is whether it is possible to acquire certain skills in a short module or whether longer modules are necessary to achieve this goal).
- Did participants gain some skills in *negotiations-think or functional empathy?* To what extent were they able to manage their emotions and frustrations and channel these into a disciplined focus on how to attain their goals and assess the range of options and choices faced by a range of players?
- Did those participants representing mediators gain specific knowledge and skills related to this role? In particular, were they challenged in their ability to behave with impartiality, and did other participants perceive them to be impartial?

Questions related to motivation and the interactive aspects of the simulation

- How did the process of learning-by-doing affect the motivation of participants, and their ability to absorb and retain information before, during and after the exercise?
- What did they learn about group work, acting under pressure and stress, managing teams, balancing individually-driven choices and those based on collaboration and cooperation?
- Did the interactive nature of the process lead to lessons that might be missed in a traditional class where participants would reflect on their own rather than have to relate to others throughout (lessons about the conflict, negotiation or about their own behaviors)?
- Were the motivation or skills of the participants enhanced or inhibited through interaction with the group? Did they receive regular feedback from individuals or their faction, and was this helpful?
- Did the process cause real tensions between participants (beyond those expected 'in role')?
- What was more salient in their experience, the competitive or collaborative aspects of the process?

The effect of role-play or role reversal

- If participants took on a role that clashed with their beliefs or background, did this have a particular (positive or negative) effect on their understanding of the 'other', their own side or the conflict itself?
- Did the act of role reversal, role play or direct engagement in such a process challenge their identities or narratives, and if so what was the outcome? If aspects of their core narrative were challenged, did they find the process enlightening, threatening/disturbing or both?
- Was the learning or understanding of participants limited or broadened by the subjective element (i.e., the necessity of digging for information that enhanced their specific goals and undermined those of their opponents)? Did the necessity of knowing their opponents' viewpoints in order to engage with or refute them increase their knowledge of all sides in the conflict? Or did they find they too focused on learning the other point of view simply to refute it?
- Did the subjective experience of taking on a role and living through it for some time offer them insights into the difficulties of being critical, self-critical and objective in their analysis of and approach to conflict? Or did it present problems for them in terms of their ability to assess the knowledge they gained? Did they feel that their critical thinking skills and critical self-awareness increased? If so, how would they explain why, when or how this happened during the course of the simulation or after? If these skills did not increase, what might have inhibited this aspect of learning?

Self-awareness and personal development

- What if anything did participants learn about their own strengths and weaknesses (as communicators, listeners, leaders, mediators) and which experiences triggered this learning?
- Did participants learn how to manage ambiguity or complexity in a way they might have been uncomfortable with previously? In other words, did they learn how to hold competing and conflicting ideas and emotions in their minds and hearts, get deeply into the mindset of another party while retaining their own views or sense of identity, and find a way to behave with impartiality or manage emotions effectively in the face of these kinds of cognitive dissonances?

Transferability

- Were the lessons learned – whether content related, skills related or personal – transferable to other professional or personal contexts, and if so, how? (This question in particular should be asked again several weeks after the module and again in the months following it).

Instructor engagement

- Did participants find the interventions of the instructor and coaches helpful, and if so in what way? If not, what was problematic about this aspect of the process, and how might it be addressed?
- Did participants receive personal feedback from the instructor or coaches during or after the process, and was this helpful to, or did it hinder, their development, understanding or skills building?
- Was participants' knowledge and engagement in the process enhanced or inhibited by the presence of the 'coaches'?

"It wasn't until I experienced Natasha Gill's mediation simulation that I finally understood the power and value of her approach. What I had previously thought of as simple 'role playing' I now recognise as an essential part to any negotiation preparation work. If every prospective negotiator and mediator learned from her work, they would be more nuanced, realistic and effective in negotiating peace agreements." *Andy Carl, Director Conciliation Resources*

"This comprehensive treatment of integrative simulation design, implementation and evaluation addresses important structural limitations in pedagogical use of simulated situations. Seasoned and novice educators alike will find it full of thoughtful insights and field-tested advice." *Michelle LeBaron, Professor and dispute resolution scholar, The University of British Columbia, author of "Death of the Role-Play"*

"In *Inside the Box,* Natasha Gill presents a valuable approach for simulating conflict and negotiation in a way that bridges the theory-practice divide. Her many insights into the challenges and potential pitfalls of negotiation simulations – and the ways these can best be addressed – will be of use both to neophyte simulation moderators and experienced ones alike." *Rex Brynen, Professor of Political Science, McGill University; co-editor of the PAXsims blog*

"Through the simulated Israel-Palestine negotiations, I became aware of the enormous gulf that separates those of us who view the conflict from afar – whether from our perch on liberal newspapers or in well-meaning think tanks – from those who have actually to solve the problem." *Jonathan Freedland, Guardian Journalist*

"Negotiations are a fundamental component of all peace processes, and yet many negotiators and mediators lack training. Inside the box provides an illuminating method to help fill this gap." *Simon Mason, Head of Mediation Support Team, CSS ETH Zurich*