Using simulation in situations of inter-group contact: a case study from Northern Ireland
26 February 2016
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unionist</th>
<th>Republican</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Loyalist</td>
<td>Nationalist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>Catholic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Want to stay in the UK</td>
<td>Want to join the Republic of Ireland</td>
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<tr>
<td>UVF, UDR, LVF</td>
<td>IRA, INLA</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The Good Friday Agreement

- Eventually, in 1998, both sides signed what is called the ‘Good Friday Agreement’ which brought most hostilities to an end.
Parallel Education System

• Since the foundation of the state education has been separated along ethno-religious lines

• The divided nature of the education system has come under considerable scrutiny
  — Right to a faith based education
  — Separate schools as a source of social division

• All agree that schools can play a pivotal role in building social cohesion
Context

• Following IRA and Loyalist ceasefires in 1994 annual marches held by the Orange Order became a focus for major civil unrest across Northern Ireland

• Simulation activity developed by “Speak Your Piece” peer educators

• For use of with adults and older teens

• Age appropriate versions developed
Evolution

• Evolved with time and varied with audience

• Social, Civic and Political Education Project, Ulster University

• Israel

• Integrated into a Parades Commission education pack, “Taking Strides”
Requirements

• At least 1 hour 10 minutes available

• More than 15 participants

• Ample space with (private) breakout rooms available

• Participants are willing to engage actively with controversial issues
Role of the facilitator

• Select participants for key roles
• Introduce and explain the simulation
• Keep time (maintain a sense of urgency)
• Monitor progress
• Intervene to maintain or reduce tension (eg adopt role)
• “De-role” participants
• Facilitate discussion and learning
Phase 1: Introduction

1. The fictional town of Ballymillis
2. Recent history of marching in the area
3. Legal framework for dealing with contentious parades
4. Human Rights framework for dealing with parades
Ballymillis

- Loyalist Flags
- Irish Flags

Church of Ireland Church

Loyalist Estate

Town

Orange Hall

Catholic Church
Phase 2: The Briefing

1. Divide participants into groups:

- Parades Commission
- RUC / PSNI
- Mediators
- BBC / RTÉ
- Orange Order
- Resident’s Group
Phase 2: The Briefing

2. Distribute group cards to each group

Resident’s Group is concerned about:

— Perceived triumphalism in previous 2 years
— Failure of Orange Order to consult or enter negotiations
— Being kept away from town centre on the day
— Lack of confidence in the police
— Damage to property and the economic life of the town
Phase 2: The Briefing

3. Distribute **individual** briefing cards to selected individuals

   Individuals representative of a range of viewpoints within each community e.g.

   Orange Lodge Member:

   – Elder in the Free Presbyterian Church
   – Cousin was killed by the IRA
   – His shop on the main street was recently damaged causing it to close, hopefully temporarily
Phase 3: The Simulation

1. Parades Commission agrees & announces determination

2. The remaining time is divided into 5 days

3. BBC & RTÉ present a news bulletin each evening

4. At the end of day 5 the Parades Commission determination will stand unless agreement is reached
Debrief and Evaluation

• Clearly signal the end and “de-role” participants
  – Likely that intransigence will have been emphasised
  – Emotions may be high
  – Some may need space to put the exercise in perspective

• Sit in a circle and consider:
  – Thoughts, feelings & insights during the exercise
  – Factors that promoted / hindered resolution
  – Possible strategies & approaches to resolve the marching issue
Value of the simulation

- Powerful, memorable, emotional
- Does **not** allow participants to understand what it is like to be a...
- Helpful in relation to:
  - Learning about specific policies / legal processes
  - Reflecting on intergroup dynamics and complexity
  - Insights into the emotional dimensions of conflict
  - Insights into aspects of own views / views of others
  - Values clarification