

Ethnic Conflict Simulation

Module 1: Mobilization

Simulation Goal: During this first module of the simulation, students will examine the reasons why some people choose to join a resistance while others do not. Specifically they will explore the effect of resources, grievances, ethnic and non-ethnic frames, and government repression on the ability to mobilize resistance. They will also decide whether to pursue violent or nonviolent strategies and learn how this decision impacts their ability to mobilize participants and avoid repression. These dynamics will be explored from the perspectives of citizens, opposition groups, and the government.

Simulation Description: This simulation will take part in three phases: 1) Planning and Strategy Choice, 2) Mobilization/Demobilization, and 3) Debriefing. Each opposition group, citizen, and the government will start out with a set of resources that they can use during the mobilization/demobilization phase. They will also each start out with a set list of characteristics or attributes (e.g. ethnicity). There will be three potential opposition groups (5-7 ppl), one government group (5ppl), and citizens (~25 ppl).

During the first phase, opposition groups will decide whether or not to use ethnicity as a frame for their resistance, what strategy they will use (violent vs nonviolent), and how to allocate their resources. The government, meanwhile will decide whether they plan to use an indiscriminate strategy or a targeted strategy of arrest/repression. Citizens during this phase will receive some inside knowledge about how best to navigate the appeals of opposition groups and the government.

During the second phase, opposition groups will attempt to mobilize citizens to join their movement. They will also have to work to avoid arrest and accrue more resources. Resources can be obtained from either local NGOs (instructor) or through getting more participants. The government will attempt to demobilize people by making arrests of organizers or citizens and by making bribes to citizens. Citizens can choose to either wait for an appeal to be made to them, or identify a potential opposition group with whom they share ties and ask to join them. Citizens also have to be careful to avoid arrest by the government during the mobilization phase. They can negotiate with government forces to induce a bribe as opposed to an arrest. Citizens with a low risk aversion threshold may decide to unite and form their own group during the mobilization phase if they decide they don't like the strategies of any of the existing groups. If they do this, they must visit the local NGO [instructor] first.

During the third phase, opposition groups and the government will tally up how many people they mobilized or demobilized, as well as how many remaining resources they have. Points will

be awarded based on these tallies and a key will be provided to teams to help them with their decision making. Teams will then discuss what worked and what didn't. Remaining citizens will act as a single team and discuss why they didn't join a particular group.

Items Needed:

- Resources - These are like money but proxy for a group's needs (money, troops, arms, etc) depending on their chosen strategy.
- Bribe/Arrest Cards - Only for the government.
- Instruction Cards - One for each group with a description of that group's starting attributes.
- Score Cards - Used to track mobilization and resources.

Steps:

1. Students are randomly assigned to be part of the government, one of three opposition groups, or citizens. (3 min)
2. Students group up based on their assigned team designation and briefly go over their instruction sheets. (3 min)
3. Phase One - Planning (8 min)
 - a. **Groups** decide whether to make ethnicity a salient part of their movement.
 - b. **Groups** choose whether to use violence or nonviolence.
 - c. **Groups** choose how to allocate their resources. They can allocate resources towards mobilization, avoiding arrest, or saving for conflict phase.
 - d. **Government** will decide if they want to use a targeted repression strategy (only going after people who have already mobilized) or an indiscriminate repression strategy (choosing who to arrest at random).
 - e. **Citizens** will meet with instructor to go over their choices. They have inside knowledge about their likelihood to join. They can decide what level of commitment they will accept to either join or not join.
4. Phase Two - Mobilization (20 min)
 - a. **Groups** will attempt to mobilize participants to join their movement through use of persuasion, or offering of resources.
 - b. **Groups** also have to attempt to avoid arrest.
 - c. **Groups** can also seek the assistance of local NGOs (i.e. the instructor) during this phase.
 - d. **Government** will attempt to arrest individuals based on their chosen repression strategy.
 - e. **Government** can also attempt to bribe citizens with resources to not be mobilized.
 - f. **Citizens** will make decisions about whether or not to join a movement.

- g. **Citizens** can also decide to offer to join a movement. They do not need to wait to be approached.
- 5. Phase Three - Debriefing (10 min)
 - a. Everyone will break off into their group (including government and citizens who didn't join). Each will tally up their points and record them on their score sheet, to be submitted to instructor after discussion.
 - b. In groups, students will discuss what worked, what didn't, and what they might have done differently. Then they will each share their thoughts with the class.
- 6. Final scores will be handed in and documented by instructor to be used during Module 2 - Conflict and Bargaining.