on a much smaller scale for any level of study, even in undergraduate courses. For example, simulation participants may compare their encounters with real cases to highlight similarities and differences. Though “a game is only a game,” as your students write their papers they will realize that the simulation is a source of insights gained by stepping into the shoes of decision-makers to practice policy formation and engage in world politics activities. Above all, your students will recognize the meaning of a complex international system, where no single actor can impose its will on others.

The information posted on social networks, like the Facebook groups, serves as a vast database for research on theoretical or empirical topics that you have raised in your course. The gradual buildup, from solitary learning and lectures, via simulation interactions to debriefing and research, covers a progressive learning cycle that suits the demands of college graduates of the current era. It is designed to help them develop from the academic point of view, prepare for the requirements of the professional world, or send them off to a successful academic career in the future.

Simulations as part of hybrid learning facilitate an in-depth learning process. Simulations enable you, the educator, to bring together many concerns that were part of world politics in the past, or are the major dilemmas of current events. They demonstrate the complexities of (1) multiactor decision-making; (2) threats and escalation management; (3) linkage among issues, actors, and activities; (4) media involvement and its impact on politics; and (5) character, motivation, creativity, and emotions that shape political outcomes. These and other topics practiced in simulations are addressed in the second part of the book on implementation.

Simulations offer an innovative approach to the study of world politics nowadays. They build on traditional and novel resources and combine multiple learning platforms. The integration of different simulation types and topics into the curriculum provides your students with a personal experience and enriched perspectives. The use of friendly, free, easily accessible, and well-known cyber tools, the specifics of simulation you run, and the relative weight of the simulation experience in the overall learning cycle are all up to you. Whatever your choice, simulations are likely to gain a competitive advantage over traditional study modes of world politics.

The conceptual framework, summarized in table 1.2, identifies the main components of a simulation and characterizes its core attributes. Why does one need a conceptual framework? What is it good for? Each simulation has a story of its own that can be described in detail. What does the framework add?

We believe that if simulations are to expand considerably beyond experimental exercises by some faculty and comprehensive use by a few others, there must be a systematic way to address simulations and to encapsulate their essence in a few useful terms that are common to all simulations. We define four such components below and explain their contributions to goal achievement.

Once scholars compare and classify simulations in a scientific manner, it becomes possible to (1) identify the differences among simulations; (2) uncover the range of options on what to include in a simulation; and (3) pinpoint cost-benefit tradeoffs. A fruitful dialogue can then emerge among simulation users on the assessment of simulations as a teaching tool in academe and on the adoption of more rigorous practices in the future, as discussed in chapters 10 and 11.

You can envision the conceptual framework presented herein, together with the typology outlined in chapter 3, as a theoretical toolbox and linguistic building blocks. You can apply them to the analysis of any simulation and keep them handy as you proceed to the second part of the book on implementation. After you are familiar with this toolbox you can use it to describe and compare all simulations addressed in this book and others you encounter elsewhere.