High-Stakes Conflicts and The Link Between Theory and Practice: Celebrating The Work of

Ellen Giebels

Miriam S. D. Oostinga[1], Sonja Rispens[2], Paul J. Taylor[1,3], & Elze G. Ufkes[1]

1 University of Twente, The Netherlands

2 Eindhoven University of Technology, The Netherlands

3 Lancaster University, United Kingdom

Author Note

Abstract

In this tribute to the 2012 recipient of the IACM's Jeffrey Rubin's Theory-to-Practice Award, we celebrate the work of Ellen Giebels. We highlight her ground-breaking research on influence tactics in crisis negotiations and other high-stakes conflict situations, showing how her focus on theoretical foundations and careful design has made delivered contributions of practical relevance. We then hear from two early career researchers who share how Ellen's research and mentorship fostered their own desire to deliver impactful research. We conclude by inviting Ellen to reflect on future research questions and to underscore her vision on the use of technology in conflict and negotiations research.

*Keywords*: high-stakes conflict, crisis negotiations, applied research, multi method

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Ellen Giebels was awarded the Jeffrey Z. Rubin Award in 2012 because of her tireless efforts to conduct field-relevant, high quality research, which she then applies to complex, life-saving crisis situations and the management of vulnerable victims and witnesses. She is a leading researcher in the field of crisis negotiations and interventions in high-stakes, high-risk conflicts whose success stems from iterating between high quality research and translating the findings into European policing.

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High-stakes conflicts are characterized by a high degree of uncertainty in both development and outcome of the conflict, what is at stake is of high value above and beyond the scope of those involved, and the conflict is considered very intense, troublesome, or urgent by ate least one of the involved parties (Giebels, Ufkes, & Van Erp, 2014). A crisis negotiation is a clear example of a high-stakes conflict. Crisis negotiations are communicative interactions in which human lives are at stake. In these situations, which include hostage sieges, kidnappings, piracy and extortions, people use a threat to life (their own or another) as a bargaining chip to negotiate for what they want (cf., Giebels & Noelanders, 2004). These situations are stressful, unpredictable, tense, and emotionally driven not only for the perpetrators and the victims but also for those who engage in negotiations with the perpetrators. Ellen's research helps these negotiators to become better prepared and she helps them to gain influence in those high-stakes

situations (Giebels, 2002; Giebels & Taylor, 2009; Oostinga, Giebels, & Taylor, 2018). For example, one area where Ellen has made important contributions is in helping negotiators and police interrogators deal with the increasing cultural diversity of the perpetrators they encounter (Giebels, 1999a; Taylor & Donohue, 2006). Combining experimental and field studies of police interviews with suspects of high- and low-context cultural backgrounds (Beune, Giebels, & Sanders, 2009; Beune, Giebels, & Taylor, 2010), Ellen and colleagues have shown that high-context suspects (who are accustomed to indirect, contextual communication) are more responsive to being kind tactics, such as engaging in active listening or rewarding cooperative behavior with offering a drink. By contrast, low-context suspects (who are accustomed to more direct and content-oriented communication) tend to respond more positively to rational persuasion, offering up more confessions than their high-context counterparts (Beune et al., 2009).

The relevance of Ellen's work is underscored by the fact that it has been incorporated in specialized police trainings. In 1996, Ellen was invited to contribute to the Dutch national hostage negotiation course at the Police Academy of the Netherlands. At first, she focused on the actual translation of research findings of negotiations in a training program for professional Dutch hostage negotiators. Throughout the years, she has established her success as an adviser, and now she regularly lectures and advises on negotiation strategies in complex investigative situations all over the world. For example, professionals in Germany have been so inspired by her work that they decided to translate her crises negotiation articles into the German language, thereby making them accessible to all German crisis negotiators and their commanders. Similarly, Ellen has been the recipient of numerous grants, including large-scale funding for the investigation of crisis conflict situations from The Dutch National Police, the Belgian Federal

Police, The Dutch Legal Aid Board, and the US High-Value Detainee Interrogation Group. Her research on the effective management of witnesses is supported by funding from the Dutch Ministry of Safety and Justice, the national Public Prosecution Service, and the National Police Force. Furthermore, Ellen was the first academic to be invited by the Danish army to conduct the training on negotiations in hostage and siege situation. She has also contributed to several high-profile public investigation committees on safety issues, such as the evaluation of the Dutch government's crisis response to the MH17 disaster in 2014.

Although crisis negotiations are Ellen's main research focus, we would like to argue that her work is broader than that. In fact, we would like to characterize Ellen as a construct researcher. A construct researcher is someone who studies a certain phenomenon (in Ellen's case high-stakes conflict) in different settings through multiple means (K. A. Jehn, personal communication, April 20th 2004). In fact, as a Ph.D. student she studied negotiator behaviors in a business setting under the supervision of Professors Evert van de Vliert and Carsten de Dreu. In her early work she investigated the interactive effects of alternatives and social motive in dyadic negotiation settings. In a series of experimental studies, she found that having exit options directs the negotiating parties away from problem-solving behaviors and more towards forcing tactics (Giebels, 1999; De Dreu, Giebels, & Van de Vliert, 1998; Giebels, De Dreu, & Van de Vliert, 1998; Giebels, De Dreu & Van de Vliert, 2000; Giebels, De Dreu & Van de Vliert, 2003). But that was not the last time Ellen studied conflict in an organizational setting. Recently she published on the role of conflict among employees and how it relates to innovative behavior (Giebels, De Reuver, Rispens, & Ufkes, 2016). Conflict is not only something we experience in places where we work, we also tend to have arguments with those close to us, for example with our families or partner. Under Ellen's supervision, Kim van Erp studied the role of conflict in

expatriate relationships (e.g., Van Erp, Giebels, van der Zee, & Van Duijn, 2011). And what about the places in which we live? Because social conflicts can be a major problem in deteriorated neighborhoods, Elze Ufkes studied social categorization, negative emotions, behavioral intentions of residents, and mediation in neighbor-to-neighbor conflict (Ufkes, Otten, van der Zee, & Giebels, 2012; Ufkes, Giebels, Otten, & Van der Zee, 2012). Together with PhD student Marian van Dijk, Ellen studies conflicts in a legal setting, and how conflict and dependence asymmetry affect the preferred type of support people prefer in legal conflicts (Van Dijk, Giebels, & Zebel, 2016). These few examples make clear that Ellen studies high-stakes conflicts across different settings. But a reading of these papers also make clear the different methodologies Ellen uses to pursue her research questions. Ellen's use of field and laboratory research, survey research, observational methods, and qualitative methods has delivered a deep understanding of how people react, and how social interactions develop in sensitive conflict contexts.

Ellen's work has been published in over 20 books and over 50 articles in journals such as *Journal of Applied Psychology, Law and Human Behavior, Frontiers in Psychology, Journal of Organizational Behavior,* and, of course, *Negotiation and Conflict Management Research.* We believe her research output is impressive, because working as a researcher on police and security issues requires discretion and sacrifice. It requires discretion because one cannot always parade one's findings in the media or at conferences. It requires sacrifice because innovative applied research (as Ellen's is) takes years to organize, does not fit well with institutional pressure for quick wins, and, on some occasions, may never appear in the public domain due to confidentiality.

In addition to her contributions to research and practice, another impact of Ellen on the field can be seen through the work of her students. In the following sections of this article, two of her PhD students—Miriam S. D. Oostinga who is about to finish her PhD and dr. Elze G. Ufkes who graduated 5 years ago—give an account of what they have learned from working closely with Ellen.

**Working with Ellen: The Interaction between Theory and Practice, the Victim, and Technological Gadgets – Miriam S. D. Oostinga**

In the summer of 2013, I had the privilege to meet Ellen for my job interview at her group Psychology of Conflict, Risk and Safety at the University of Twente. I applied for a position there as research associate, as the focus of the group very much aligns with my strong belief of what science should look like: providing hands-on solutions to societal problems. My first impression of Ellen was that she is a very sympathetic person, who knows how to make you feel at ease right away, but also enforces a non-imposed respect by her well-considered opinions on matters. Now, four years later and having switched to the position of PhD student under her supervision, this impression has not changed a bit and it is genuinely a pleasure to work with her. If you would ask me "Who is Ellen?", there are three topics that directly come to mind: practice, the victim, and technical gadgets. In the following three paragraphs, I will elaborate on why and how these topics relate to Ellen.

**Theory to Practice or Practice to Theory?**

In applied research the usual cycle is theory to practice, as the name of the Jeffrey Z. Rubin Theory-to-Practice Award already suggests. You study literature, perform your studies and go to practice to explain what you have found. In 2013, I had the opportunity to observe this skill

of Ellen from a first-hand perspective, as she had asked me to help her with a one-day training

for crisis negotiators in the Netherlands. The topics of that day were the Table of Ten and culture.

The Table of Ten is an empirically driven framework developed by Ellen, which is also well

grounded in theory and research on influence (e.g., Cialdini, 2001) and in organizational contexts

(e.g., Kipnis, Schmidt, & Wilkinson, 1980). By working with practitioners and hearing heir

reflections on how influence transpires in real settings, Ellen distilled ten influence strategies that

can classify different tactics used in interactions, and in crisis encounters in particular. Three

tactics have a more relational character (e.g., being kind, being equal), while the other seven

focus more on the content of the message (e.g., direct pressure, legitimizing; Giebels, 2002). The

framework helps negotiators become more aware of the strategy they enact, but it also enables

them to move to other strategies when they experience a negotiation that does not unfold as

expected. This strategic use can be alternated during the interaction when moving between

relational and rational strategies. Strategic use can also be specified beforehand based on the

background information of the perpetrator. Ellen's work on the influence of culture, for example,

show that the cultural background of the perpetrator determines to a great extent whether or not

the use of certain tactics are effective (Beune, Giebels, Adair, Fennis, & Van der Zee, 2011;

Giebels & Taylor, 2009; Giebels, Oostinga, Taylor, & Curtis, 2017).

During the training day, we focused on the cultural dimension of uncertainty avoidance,

which may be defined briefly as the extent to which people are tolerant for unknown or uncertain

situations (Hofstede, 2001). Recent research that Ellen and I performed together shows that

formal language and messages that emphasize law and regulations (i.e. the legitimizing tactic of

the Table of Ten) appear to be more effective when addressing a perpetrator from a high-

uncertainty avoidant country (Giebels et al., 2017). Yet, when addressing perpetrators originating

from a low uncertainty avoidant country, this approach seems not as effective. We argued that that procedures provide pseudo-structure and therefore make people from an uncertainty avoidant country feel more at ease. This topic was highly relevant to the negotiators within the training because they often were tasked with conducting cross-border negotiations between Germany (uncertainty avoidant country) and the Netherlands (uncertainty tolerant country). To unravel what strategies the negotiators were inclined to use, Ellen first let the crisis negotiators practice with the Table of Ten in a simple role-playing exercise. She then asked them to determine which strategies they used most frequently and asked fellow negotiators whether they agreed with this self-reflection or not. She later compared these self-reflections to an overview of the strategies they had enacted in two negotiation exercises in which they had participated before this training-day, how this related to the use of the strategies among the group, and how this differed across culture.

Using these simple steps, Ellen demonstrated to the negotiators how general theories that explain international effects of the use of influence strategies, could be translated to personal use in practice. Yet, Ellen does not always adhere to the order of theory-to-practice. She argues that you can learn from practitioners as much as they can learn from you. This was very evident at the start of my PhD project in 2014. The topic of my project was brought up by a crisis negotiator from the UK, Simon Wells. He really enjoyed the interesting studies raised during different training sessions he participated in, but they all focused on how a negotiator should act to convince the perpetrator to stop. He then started to wonder about the other side of the coin: what should I say if, for example, I use the wrong name, or approach someone in the wrong manner? Should I say sorry, shift the blame to someone else, or deny that I made a mistake? A simple question we thought, so we explored the literature to find the solution. Yet, there was no clear

answer. Following the strong assertion that you have to go to the practitioner and learn, I started my research by interviewing crisis negotiators, where it became clear that there was a division of different type of errors and response strategies that people used.

This laid the groundwork of two subsequent studies of my PhD project by the US High-Value Detainee Interrogation Group, that focus on communication error management in suspect interviews and crisis negotiations. We focused on the error receiver and explored the impact of receiving different type of communication errors and the response strategies raised by the interviewed crisis negotiators. Specifically, we made a distinction between factual and judgment errors and tested what the subsequent effect was of contradicting, apologizing or accepting the error (for the classification, see Oostinga, Giebels, & Taylor, 2018). We found that the consequences of these errors on the cooperation of the receiving suspect can be both positive and negative. That is, the making of a (judgment) error is detrimental for affective trust and rapport in the suspect interview, while no such effect is found in the crisis negotiation setting. Unexpectedly, the errors did lead to more information provision in both settings. It is the ultimate response to these errors, however, that determines its overall effect. In both interactions, accepting was effective for establishing a positive and trusting relationship, while contradicting lowers it. Accepting seems more effective for the willingness to provide information in a suspect interview, while apologizing seems more effective for affective trust and rapport in a crisis negotiation (Oostinga, Giebels, & Taylor, in press).

Taking it all together, if you look at the extent to which these studies are intertwined with practice, the question that emerges is: theory to practice or practice to theory? If you assess Ellen's work and consequently the work of her PhD students, there is no sharp division between the two.

**The Aftermath of Conflict: But What About the Victim?**

Most crisis negotiation research has paid attention to the relationship between the negotiator and the hostage-taker. But what about the hostage? In Giebels, Noelanders, and Vervaeke (2005), Ellen interviewed the hostages themselves. She concluded that the psychological impact of being taken hostage should not be underestimated. Feelings of sadness, excessive stress, and hopelessness are common after extensive captivation. She argued that negotiators have a social responsibility to focus on the hostage. Victims have their fears for the hostage taker, the uncertainty of what is going to happen next, and the possibility of an intervention. By a simple step of communicating with the victim or asking how the victim is doing, the negotiator can already improve their condition as the victim experiences that they are important and not forgotten. To take this knowledge to practice, she dedicates two entire days of the crisis negotiation course on which she contributes to discussion of the victim. During my visits to the police academy, I had the chance to speak to two negotiators who had taken this course. They were astonished by how easy it is to just forget about the victim, as that is usually not the person who can stop the (hostage) situation. However, Ellen's work is not only a wake-up-call to Dutch practitioners. On the 4th of July 2013, the United Nations referred to her work in their General Assembly Report on human rights and issues related to terrorist hostage-taking stressing that "a typical hostage-taking incident not only threatens the physical but also the psychological well-being and integrity of the hostage both throughout and after the duration of the incident, and therefore it generates multiple infringements of their human rights" (p.10).

Her knowledge on the victim's perspective is not only visible in the crisis negotiation domain. In 2015, Ellen was invited to evaluate the family-of-the-victim's perspective of the communication and after-care received in the aftermath of the MH17 disaster on the 17th of July

2014. A Kuala-Lumpur-bound airplane from Malaysia Airlines that departed from Amsterdam, the Netherlands, was shot down while flying over Ukraine. In total, 283 passengers (of which 193 Dutch) and 15 crew members did not survive the crash. Her conclusions and recommendations based on questionnaires and in-depth interviews with next of kin and the professionals guiding them led to a nationally influential report (e.g., it received so much media attention that it received the 2016 *UT in the media award* (Torenvlied, Giebels, Wessel, Gutteling, Moorkamp, & Broekema, 2015). It also served as one of the pillars of the new Governmental Handbook for crisis management. All in all, her academic work on the victim inspires individuals across domains not only at a national, but also at an international level. So how does she achieve this impact?

**Technology as a Solution to Problems in Traditional Psychological Research**

Ellen advocates for field work over more traditional psychological research. Survey studies, controlled lab experiments, and interviews with students are interesting, but she argues that these are less suitable for the safety and security field. That is, self-reports are often distorted (people not willing or able to accurately evaluate), it is difficult to integrate low-trust, high-stakes circumstances in a lab situation, and the behavioral patterns under study are usually complex. Consequently, she has worked in close collaboration with many organizations to stay connected to practice as much as possible, such as the police (Beune, Giebels, & Sanders, 2009), the military (De Graaff, Giebels, Meijer & Verweij, 2016), and the council of legal aid (Van Dijk, Giebels, & Zebel, 2016). When assessing these studies, you can see that she has found solutions to integrate experimental set-ups in practice, which underlines her argument that field work and experimental rigor are not antithetical. This is also visible in the last two studies of my PhD project that focuses on the law enforcement officer who makes a communication error in a crisis

negotiation or suspect interview setting. Specifically, we explored what the effect is of making a factual or judgment error on law enforcement officers' cognition, affect and behavior. We designed a prototypical role-playing exercise in which we let professional law enforcement officers unwittingly make an error. Police and prison negotiators, as well as police interrogators, participated in this exercise so that we could explore how they experienced the making of errors. Moreover, we were able to classify the different responses used after making the error. Some preliminary results show that in the crisis negotiation domain they used: apology, exploration, deflect and no alignment. The use of these responses can be explained by internal processes experienced by the law enforcement officer, such as stress, distraction, self-oriented anger and guilt (Oostinga, Giebels, & Taylor, in preparation). In this study, we used the Empatica E4, which is a wristband that unobtrusively tracks electrodermal activity and can be used to measure stress. Using these wristbands allowed us to measure their direct stress response when they had made an error and received a cooperative or non-cooperative response from the suspect (Oostinga et al., in preparation). This strengthens the validity of our measures, but it is also attractive for practice as you can easily provide personal feedback. With that statement, I would like to conclude my reflections on Ellen and how she has inspired me and many others, both nationally and internationally. I have highlighted some important parts of her outstanding research of the past and unraveled some inspirations for her current work. But I am curiously looking forward to what Ellen will bring to science and practice next, as I am sure many of you do too.

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**Innovation by collaboration: the marriage between academia and practice in**

**conflict research**

**Elze G. Ufkes**

I vividly remember following Ellen's Group Dynamics class as a master student in 2004/2005 at the University of Groningen, the Netherlands. The engaging way in which she managed to explain theory using her first account practical examples inspired many students, including me. How could we not? Using knowledge from hostage negotiation research in a roleplaying exercise wherein you have to convince a toddler to go to bed and sleep, did the trick. Although the stakes between the two situations obviously differ, the exercise demonstrated in an engaging and humorous way how—even when negotiating with a toddler—people already use, and alternate between, many of the strategies that Ellen formulated in her Table of Ten (Giebels, 2002)—for instance, when do you decide to switch from being kind to using intimidation?

A year later, in 2006, I started my Ph.D. research at that same university on the topic of neighbor disputes in multicultural neighborhoods. Ellen was one of my advisors (together with Sabine Otten and Karen van der Zee; see e.g., Ufkes, Giebels, Otten & van der Zee, 2012). I was honestly a bit disappointed to learn that Ellen would move from Groningen to the University of Twente just before I started. Lucky for me, Ellen always remained involved. Especially, because—in hindsight—I knew little about the gap between academia and "the real world out there". For my Ph.D. project, we collaborated with local agencies (such as the city government, the housing agencies, and the local police) involved in managing and reducing social problems in multicultural neighborhoods. Notwithstanding the fact that the (intergroup) conflict literature could provide a lot of new insights for these professionals, "translating" knowledge to practical

knowledge proved to be quite a challenge. Ellen's experience and contributions on how to bridge this gap was absolutely vital for finishing my Ph.D. successfully.

About another year later, during my post doc at Yale university, I received an email of Ellen informing whether I would know anybody who would be interested in applying for a staff position in a recently created research group, which she would lead. I did not have to look far and—fortunately enough also successfully—applied myself.

**Science may learn from practice**

Over recent years in the Netherlands there has been a heated debate about the necessity of valorization in (social) sciences. The concept of 'valorization' (which literally means enhancing or adding value) is used to refer to the challenge of generating economic or societal value out of research. The fact that research valorization is seen as a challenge highlights the gap between science and practice. I believe that Ellen is one of the front runners in bridging this gap. Part of the reason for her efforts here may lay in the fact that Ellen is well grounded in the field of her research on high-stakes negotiations herself. During her Postdoc on crisis negotiations and work at the Behavioural Science Unit of the Federal Police, Brussels, Belgium (1998 – 2000), she had first-hand experience with hostage negotiations. Based on this work she developed new theoretical models, such as the already mentioned Table of Ten describing the main influencing behavior used by police negotiators (Giebels, 2002; Giebels & Noelanders, 2004). By grouping behaviors used by negotiators in the field (such as being kind, emotional appeal, or rational persuasion) and connecting them to more fundamental theoretical principles (such as sympathy, self-image preservation, or cognitive consistency), Ellen explicitly bridged practice and science (Giebels & Taylor, 2009). For practice, this approach may help in choosing those negotiation strategies that are most likely to succeed based on the underlying theory. For science, this

approach helps in "translating" abstract knowledge in such a way that it's actually useful in the real world. The approach of starting with observations in the field and then generating new theory from those observations is illustrative of Ellen's work and the need for science to learn from practice.

**Importance of research in (realistic) contexts**

One of the characteristics of Ellen's work is its foundation in realistic field contexts. Much research on conflict processes and conflict management is largely based on laboratory experiments or survey studies (see Giebels, Ufkes, & van Erp, 2014 for an overview). A central principle in Ellen's work is that to truly appreciate and understand reactions in conflict settings, it is necessary to study these processes as they naturally occur—or at a minimum closely mimic a realistic setting—while maintaining scientific rigor.

An example of how important realistic settings are for discovering new theoretical insights is our field study on neighborhood conflict mediation (Ufkes et al., 2012). Much conflict research assumes that both parties are equally invested when in conflict with each other. However, in reality, this is often not the case: one party often experiences more conflict then the other (see also Jehn, Rispens, & Thatcher, 2010). In a study on mediation in neighborhood disputes (Ufkes et al., 2012), we tested how asymmetry in conflict perceptions affected the process and outcomes of neighborhood mediation interventions. For this study, we content coded the files of 261 neighbourhood conflict cases handled by a neighbourhood mediation project in one year. As such, we were able to study the process of conflict mediation in its actual context. The results showed that these cases were more often about asymmetrical than symmetrical conflicts. The level of conflict asymmetry in turn proved to be an important predictor of neighborhood mediation outcomes: Parties were less likely to join a joint mediation session

when conflicts were asymmetric. At the same time, however, we found that, in asymmetric conflicts, the intake session with the mediator was sufficient to improve the relation between the conflict parties three months later. We discussed these findings in line with the idea that, especially in asymmetric conflicts, third parties can help by providing the opportunity to vent, and acknowledging the seriousness of the situation. Studying these processes in naturalistic settings is the only way to discover such new insights. This paper was awarded with the best empirical paper award of the International Association of Conflict Management in 2012 and inspired other academics and practitioners working on mediation in different countries (e.g., https://adrresearch.net/2016/05/13/researcher-profile-meet-frances-richards/ and http://www.sherpamediation.com/2012/09/mediation-comment-negocier-quand-une.html).

**Research methods should serve the research question**

Another noteworthy aspect of Ellen's work is the use of a wide range of research and data collection methods. They range from content analyzing audio recordings of hostage negotiations (Giebels & Taylor, 2009), realistic simulations of police negotiations (Giebels et al., 2017), content analyses of paper files of neighborhood conflict mediators (Ufkes, et al., 2012), and physiological electrodermal activity measures (EDA: a measure of skin conductance as an indicator for arousal) during deceptive attempts when being interview by a computer avatar (Ströfer, Ufkes, Bruijnes, Giebels, & Noordzij, 2016). The breadth of methodologies used by Ellen instantiates the belief that the research question should dictate which method is used for a particular problem and not the other way around. Ellen's choices of methodology also illustrate her desire to study real situations in a non-obtrusive way. A potential problem of studying high-stakes settings, such as conflict mediation or hostage negotiation, is that as a researcher you can

dilute or interfere in the core process. Getting the chance to analyze recordings, files, or other data being collected as part of the core process often forms the perfect solution.

**Innovate behavioral research**

Being the driving force behind innovation does not occur without struggle. Indeed, increased conflict experiences may in fact be one of the mechanisms trough which proactivity may "translate" to innovation (Giebels et al., 2016). As discussed before, much of Ellen's research is innovative. But also, as a department head and lately as vice-dean, Ellen is a main driving force behind new innovations such as our new *Tech4people* laboratory at the school for behavioral management and social sciences (see: https://bmslab.utwente.nl). In her roles as department head and vice-dean stumbling upon struggles in the organization is inevitable, but with her knowledge and experience in conflict handling and effective negotiations Ellen often succeeds in finding integrative resolutions. For instance, being based at a traditionally technical university provides our Social Science department with a unique opportunity to use the expertise and knowledge present in the STEM sciences. Ellen played a key role in developing a new lab wherein this idea was successfully implemented, providing social scientists new opportunities to use various types of sensors to collect data in high-stakes settings also within the field.

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An example project from this lab is our work using GPS-data as behavioral measures (de Vries, Ziepert, & Ufkes, 2016). For this project, we set-up a field experiment wherein students participated in a "smugglers game". Most participants played the role of smugglers and six other students assumed the role of custom officials. The goal of the smugglers was to "smuggle" as much "cocaine" (a little bag of baking flower) over the border within a given time limit. Smugglers could choose to attempt to cross the border with or without cocaine but they were

only able to score points for bringing cocaine across the border. When a smuggler was caught by a custom's official (that is, when they were tagged by an official) the smuggler would lose and customs officer would win points. Conversely, customs officers would lose points for tagging a smuggler who did not possess cocaine. Thus, for customs officers it was critical to assess accurately whether someone crossing the border was in possession. By tracking smugglers movements with GPS-sensors we could analyze their trajectories. Our expectation was that smugglers with malicious intent (carrying cocaine) would move differently, for instance, they would deviate more often in speed or course direction than persons who did not smuggle. Overall, we could clearly see differences in trajectories depending on the distance to the border: for instance, when smugglers got closer to the border we observed more variation in directions. Unfortunately, as it sometimes goes with such pioneering projects, we did not find reliable differences in trajectories between smugglers with or without cocaine.

Another illustrative example is Ellen and colleagues' involvement in a Dutch reality tv-show called "Hunted", broadcasted in the fall of 2016 on Dutch national television (and in many other countries around the world; https://www.utwente.nl/en/news/!/2016/10/250711/hunted-the-psychology-of-fugitives). In this show participants had to go off the grid and stay out of the hands of a team of expert hunters (detectives) for 21 days. Mobile skin conductance sensors (in the form of a bracelet) and GPS trackers enabled Ellen and her colleagues to closely investigate the behavioral and physiological responses of the candidates. Data from the skin conductance sensors for instance revealed a difference in participants' stress-levels. Whereas some participants continuously experienced high levels of stress, others experienced much less stress.

**Practice what you preach**

Finally, Ellen's link between theory and practice becomes apparent in how she uses theory in her work herself. Whether it is in acquiring new research grants, in designing and organizing new ambitious research project, or in her administrative work for the department and research group, Ellen's talent for thinking of and realizing integrative outcomes is impressive. Practice what you preach is something that often comes back in these situations. I remember multiple times Ellen quoting strategies from her own Table of Ten (e.g., using rational persuasion addressing the cognitive consistency) in these situations. Or, an explanation of cultural differences in communication in terms of high and low context communication styles after interviewing a job candidate with a non-western cultural background. These are all examples of Ellen's enthusiasm and belief in how theory can be used for a better understanding of and approach in practice.

Finally, also in my own work, I'm very much inspired by Ellen's touch on research. Research in the field of intergroup relations and conflict traditionally is based on experimental lab research. In my own work, I try to further develop these theories outside of the laboratory. As with the sensitive topics Ellen is working on, this sometimes is a challenge: people generally do not like to think about whether they are prejudiced or whether they discriminate others based on group membership. Ellen's ideas and strategies on how to involve practitioners to learn from practice, to design realistic yet rigorous studies, and to use new, innovative research methods to achieve these goals therefore are and will be a continuous source of inspiration.

**A Lesson for Us All**

Arguably the theme that dominates these personal accounts, above all other themes, is that Ellen insists on a synergy between practice and theory. When designing a coding scheme to

examine negotiators use of influence, Ellen did not simply rely on a grounded theory examination of behavior, but worked with practitioners to derive something that is 'of their language' (Giebels, 1999). When seeking to test the effects of a cultural dimension on negotiation outcomes, Ellen did not run a 20 minute laboratory experiment, she enlists actors, trained them for a day, and then had real professional negotiators undertake a task with far more realism (Giebels et al., 2017). When investigating the effects of negotiation on a third-party, Ellen relied not on self-responses to a questionnaire but on rich, in-depth interviews that explored the true consequences of the event (Giebels et al., 2005). When wishing to capture participants experience within a field study, Ellen relied not on post-hoc measures but on modern technology to provide real-time data capture through virtual reality and measures such as EEG (Ströfer et al., 2016a, 2016b).

It is easy to conclude that Ellen's contributions suggest the field may benefit from moving away from the experimental paradigms that have served it so well. But this conclusion would be a mistake. At the foundation of all of the examples we describe in this article are traditional experimental designs. Ellen's ethos is not to throw out the rigor of the experimental method for the fidelity of the field. Rather, it is that, with careful planning, one can bring ecological fidelity to an experiment, through selecting relevant participants, paradigms and methods. The result is true bridging of theory to practice. As the pressures to publish and obtain tenure grow, so does the attractiveness of running standard studies devoid of the innovation and extra effort that characterizes Ellen's work. It is clear that such a direction of travel will leave the field poorer. In the next section, we solicit Ellen's thoughts about how the field of negotiation and conflict management research may fruitfully develop.

**The Final words go to Ellen**

We asked Ellen two questions to give her vision on future research directions and the role of technology in negotiations and conflict management research.

1. What future directions do you see for your research?

Many! I feel very fortunate to work in academia where we are permitted a great deal of freedom to pursue our curiosity. Yet, for long, our research has been valued with an emphasis on output quantity and rewarded us for doing the same thing over and over again, making many researchers risk aversive. Both my PhD mentors, Evert van de Vliert and Carsten de Dreu, have been a great source of inspiration of how to follow your own path and not to be too afraid to let go of certainties. The same applies to many of my PhD students, such as Miriam, who cherish their curiosity and who have not yet been (entirely) socialized into our traditional academic models. My experience is that if you let go and open up, new opportunities keep coming up for doing research that matters, often through interaction with practice. That is why I firmly believe in close collaboration with practitioners and working together with like-minded researchers such as Sonja and Paul. Such collaboration goes far beyond the two dominant approaches: translating research outcomes to practice (research->practice) or doing contract research (question from practice->research). Yet, it implies co-designing by research *and* practice, as well as a more central position for the process of doing research (instead of a sole focus on the outcomes). I liked what Elze said about the advantage of analyzing recordings of conflict interactions, as you don't interfere. On the other hand, I

also believe that research sometimes serves as a valuable intervention, often unwittingly and even with minimal intrusions such as merely by asking questions. For example, when I did the interviews with former hostages I soon found out that my questions helped them rethink the situation and their own reactions and as such were beneficial. On a higher level, it helped them to recover as they felt that sharing their experiences would help future victims. What I have personally learned from these interactions is that we may want to rethink the label "victims". Many indicated that it implied a weakness or vulnerability that didn't help their recovery. All in all, I realize this answer is more about the context of doing research than the content of research I'd like to pursue, but I feel the importance of the context of doing research cannot be overestimated. Content wise, I would like to continue my work on cooperation in high-stakes conflict interactions, where a special challenge would lie in how to measure true dyadic process constructs, such as escalation or rapport on a dyad or group level instead of asking individual parties about their perception of it (as we mostly do now).

2. What (future) role do you think technology can play in conflict and negotiations research?

Of course, new technology changes the way in which we communicate and interact (i.e., social media, email) and thus affects conflict dynamics. Yet, I think the biggest advances in conflict and negotiations research in particular and social sciences research in general can be made by using technology as a means of doing research. With technology, we are increasingly able to register to what extent they are aroused, how they move, how they interact, where people look, without interfering with their naturalistic contexts, and record it for many people at the same time. As such, I think technology allows for much richer

research, both in terms of capturing interaction dynamics as well as moving from two-party constellations to large group research, such as Elze conducts.

When doing research with technology there is one consistent finding that intrigues me. That is, we find no, or only weak, correlations between self-report measures and more unobtrusive ones. For example, in our research on deceptive intentions (Ströfer, Ufkes, Noordzij & Giebels, 2016) we only find weak associations between self-reported stress and the stress we measure with tech tools. Other research points at this phenomenon too, for example when studying self-control or cognitive load. This evokes an array of questions: first - and given that we have relied heavily on self-reports in the social sciences-: what does this discrepancy mean? Does it undermine the validity of the previous findings? Or are they really different constructs (if so - what -then- does each exactly capture)? Which one has a stronger effect on (which) outcome measures? Or, would it be more important to look at the magnitude of the discrepancy between subjective and objective measures? Thus, the inclusion of technology might not only be able to answer questions and contribute to theory development but it also raises new ones. Finally, and as already pointed out by Miriam, technology could serve as a valuable basis for an intervention. What if we provide people with feedback about their physiological reaction and thus make a possible discrepancy with how they experience it themselves salient? Would that change (one of) the two measures or possibly even their self-image? Alternatively, what if smart sensors would signal early signs of conflict escalation and perform an appropriate intervention? Taken together, I feel we have only seen a glimpse of the future yet.

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Figure 1. Ellen Giebels during a hike after the IACM conference in South Africa (July, 2012).
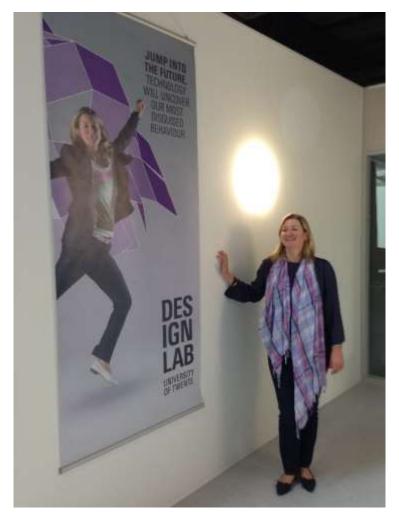
Figure 2. Ellen and her group of researchers heading to the summerschool at Lancaster University (Summer 2016).



Top row from left to right: Sven Zebel, Peter de Vries, Marco van Bommel, Stijn de Laat, Ellen Giebels.

Bottom row from left to right: Elze Ufkes, Miriam Oostinga, Miriam de Graaff, Marije Bakker, Lisanne van den Berg.

Figure 3. The new lab at Twente University (Spring 2016).



Ellen Giebels.