

Simulation Instructions: The Parliament of Europa

PSCI 2012: Introduction to Comparative Politics

Andy Baker

Spring 2012

Recitation sections of February 20 to 24 will be devoted to a group-based, roleplaying scenario in which students form and conduct negotiations in a simulated parliamentary system. The goal of the simulation will be to introduce students to the rules of a parliamentary system and to give students a feel for what it is like to be a politician.

Scenario

The scenario is as follows. A parliament will be meeting for the first time following a national election in the hypothetical country of Europa. The *Social Democrat Party* will have about 35% of the seats, the *Conservative Party* will have about 35% of the seats, the *National Party* will have about 10% of the seats, the *Green Party* will have about 10% of the seats, and the *Center Party* will have about 10% of the seats. (Actual sizes will be determined by the number of students present at the time of voting.) The parties in Europa are stereotypes of actual parties throughout Europe. Three hypothetical issues hang before Europa, and the parliament must attempt to negotiate and pass policy on these.

- A. *The 35-hour work week*: Labor unions are clamoring to have the workweek lowered from 40 to 35 hours. This would require overtime pay for anyone working more than 35 hours per week. The policy options for this issue are the following:
 - (1) require business to pay twice a worker's wages above 35 hours per week
 - (2) require business to pay 1.5 times a worker's wages above 35 hours per week
 - (3) keep overtime pay at 1.5 times a worker's wage above 40 hours per week (this is *status quo*)
 - (4) require business to pay 1.5 times a worker's wage above 44 hours per week
 - (5) eliminate overtime pay altogether.
- B. *Relations with the United States*: The US recently invaded Iran because of concerns that Iran possesses and might use nuclear weapons. Should Europa also commit troops to help out its NATO ally or not? Should it censure (meaning to formally criticize and reprimand) the US through the UN and other international channels, or should it keep its mouth shut? The policy options for this issue are the following:
 - (1) try to get the UN to formally censure and implement sanctions against the US
 - (2) try to get the UN simply to formally censure the US
 - (3) neither censure nor assist the US (*status quo*)
 - (4) allow the US to use military bases in Europa but do not commit troops
 - (5) allow the US to use European military bases and commit European troops to the effort.
- C. *Immigration*: Immigrants, largely from poorer and often Muslim countries, now comprise 7% of the population of Europa. These immigrants tend to take lower paying jobs and, it is believed, may provide willing participants for domestic terrorist networks. Should immigration from Muslim countries be made more restrictive, less restrictive, or remain the same? Should illegal immigrants be deported? The policy options for this issue are the following:
 - (1) offer asylum to more foreigners and more social benefits to poor immigrants.
 - (2) offer asylum to more foreigners but do not increase social benefits
 - (3) allow the flow of immigration to continue as its is (*status quo*)
 - (4) tighten asylum rules and lower social benefits to poor immigrants
 - (5) refuse asylum to anyone and deport as many illegal immigrants as possible

Writing Assignment

Students will be assigned to one of the five political parties randomly by their TAs. Once assigned, you are a Member of Parliament and a representative of that party throughout the simulation; you may not switch parties at any time. Your initial task is to research and write a short paper that describes (1) the basic beliefs/ideology of your party and (2) the stance on each of these three issues that you think a party like this would take. The paper should be well-written with formal citations of consulted works. It should be based on what real-world parties with the same ideology believe about these issues. (See below for research help.) **THE PAPER SHOULD BE BETWEEN 1.5 AND 2.5 DOUBLE-SPACED PAGES AND IT SHOULD CITE AT LEAST THREE SOURCES. (Wikipedia is not allowed as a citation.) IT IS DUE ON FEBRUARY 20 AT 10:50AM. (NOTE CHANGE FROM SYLLABUS!!) YOU MUST HAND A HARD COPY TO YOUR TA AFTER CLASS AND SUBMIT AN ELECTRONIC COPY TO WWW.TURNITIN.COM.** Instructions on submitting to turnitin will come from your TA. Hard copies submitted after these due dates are docked 10 percentage points per day, and you will not receive a grade until you submit to turnitin.

Simulation Day

In your sections of February 13 to 17 (one week preceding the simulation), you will meet with your “co-partisans” to discuss and coordinate strategy, particularly the issue stances you think you will take and any deals you might pursue with other parties. You may also share ideas from research you have conducted to that point, but each paper must be individually written. The entire parliament will meet in your section of February 20 to 24. The session will begin with each party declaring its position (corresponding to the 1 through 5 numbers above) on each issue. These positions must be similar to those of the real-world party stereotypes. Then negotiations over the formation of a government and the three issues will occur. At the end of class, voting will take place, and any government can be dissolved through the passage of a no-confidence motion. At no time, once the simulation has begun, can a party change its issue position, and students must vote with their party.

Grades

Grades for the simulation (10% of your final grade) will be distributed as follows:

9% paper score

1% party performance score: based on how well your party “performs” in the parliament.

The party performance grade is based on the status at the end of the simulation of two factors: (1) how close the enacted laws or final state of affairs is to your party’s stated issue position and (2) how well your party does in landing important political positions. Parties will be awarded points according to the following scheme:

Laws:

3 points for a law passed that matches your party’s stance

2 points for a law passed that is one notch away from your party’s stance

1 points for a law passed that is two notches away from your party’s stance

0 points for a law passed that is three or more notches away from your party’s stance

(Note that if no law is passed on a given issue, the status quo is used to calculate these points.)

Political positions:

4 points if the prime minister at the end of the simulation is from your party

2 points for each ministry (3 total: Labor, Foreign, and Home) your party has at the end

The grading scale for this performance score is as follows:

- A 11 points or more
- A- 10 points
- B+ 9 points
- B 7-8 points
- B- 6 points
- C+ 5 points
- C 4 points or fewer

HOWEVER, EVERYONE GETS A "B" IF NO GOVERNMENT EXISTS AT THE END OF THE SESSION (A TIME SPECIFIED BY THE TA).

Students who do not attend section on the day of parliamentary session will receive a zero for the group score, but they can write a two-page paper about what happened in the simulation to recover these points.

Research Help

To research the various parties, you might check out the following examples. You may also want to do a little research on the issues.

1. Social Democratic Party (Center-Left)

[about 35%] (sometimes called Socialist)

Australia Labour Party
Canada New Democratic
France Socialist Party
Germany SPD (Social Democrats)
Italy PSI (Italian Socialist)
New Zealand Labour Party
Spain PSOE (Socialist Workers)
Sweden SAP (Social Democrats)
United Kingdom Labour Party
United States Democratic Party

2. Conservative Party (Center-Right)

[about 35%] (sometimes called Christian Democrat)

Australia Liberal Party
France UDF (Union for French Democracy, Gaullist)
Germany CDU (Christian Dem.Union)
Italy Forza Italia
New Zealand National Party
Spain Popular Party (PP)
United Kingdom Conservative Party
United States Republican Party

3. Center Party [about 10%]

Australia Democrats
Germany Free Democrats
United Kingdom Liberal Democrats

4. National Party (Far-Right) [about 10%]

Austria Freedom Party
Belgium Vlaams Belang
Denmark People's Party
France National Front
Germany National Dem. Party (NDP)
Switzerland People's Party
United Kingdom British National Party

5. Green Party (Left) [about 10%]

Most European countries, along with the US, have "Green Parties" by that very name. See <http://www.europeangreens.org>