

**Role Play**

**Augusta:**

Liberal Party

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The country of Augusta just held its national elections. **Four political parties attempted to win the votes of the public – the Labour party, the Liberal party, the Conservative party, and the Libertarian party.**

Here is some necessary background about the political system in Augusta:

* **The Parliament in Augusta is made up of 120 seats**
* **To form a coalition government, a 61-vote majority is required**
* **The government is formed by the parties in the coalition and consists of 6 ministers**
* **The 6 ministers are divided among the coalition parties as agreed by them in the coalition agreement**

**The policy decisions in the government are made by the ministers by way of majority voting**. If a party has 4 ministers it means it has complete control over the acts of the government. If a party has 3 ministers it has veto power over the decisions of the government. If a party has 1 minister it has a “voice” at the table, but limited power over the decisions made.

The previous government was led by the Conservative party, which has been the governing party in Augusta for the last three elections. The Liberal party also took part in the previous coalition, led by one of the most respected leaders in Augusta’s history – a real elder statesperson. The government was formed by 61 seats of the Conservative party and 35 seats of the Liberal party, and the Conservative party controlled 5 out of 6 ministers of the government. The Libertarian party is a new party, created by the former deputy and now political enemy of the head of the Conservative party in the last days of the previous coalition, due to a personal conflict among the two. The Labour party has not been in government for a long time, and is now led by a young, less experienced, but charismatic leader. The Labour party is the most left-wing party, the Liberal party is more in the centre-left of the political map, and the Conservative and Libertarian parties are more to the right of the centre.

New Election Results

The Election Results For The Augusta Parliament Are As Follows:

**The Conservative party**

**51 seats**

**The Liberal party**

**15 seats**

**The Labour party**

 **40 seats**

**The Libertarian party - 14 seats**

The day after the elections, the pundits summarize the key insights from the election results:

* The Conservative party is the only party who can form a coalition with just one additional party.
* The poor relationship between the head of the Conservative party and the Libertarian party may lead to difficulties in forming a coalition.
* The Liberal and Labour parties, although unable to form a government alone, are in a good position to affect the composition of the final coalition.
* Even though the Liberal party was reduced to the 3rd biggest political party, their leader is still a force that many voters respect and want to see in future coalition governments.

Although the most likely coalition is one led by the Conservative party, all pundits agree that there are various possible outcomes. The potential coalition governments are highly dependent on the alliances between the individual parties and the relationships their heads of party create during the negotiation process.

The Negotiation Process

At the end of the negotiation process, either the parties sign a coalition agreement, which ends the negotiation, or don’t sign, in which case new elections are announced immediately. Importantly, an agreement does not need to be signed by all 4 parties, only by parties that among themselves hold 61 or more seats in the Augusta Parliament. In other words, individual parties do not hold a veto power over the agreement and can be excluded from the governing coalition entirely.

**The four parties negotiate over the following two issues:**

1. **Who will be the members of the new coalition**
	* To have a viable agreement, parties that together represent a majority of seats in the Parliament (61) need to agree on a new governing coalition
	* If no agreement is achieved by the end of the time given, then a new election will be held
2. **How the 6 ministers of the government will be divided among the members of the coalition**

**One outcome form for the negotiation group should be filled out by the leader of the Libertarian party.**

Role of the Liberal Party

The last election results were poor for your Liberal party, which suffered a big fall in public support leading to an all-time low of only 15 seats in Parliament. Given the extensive polling you have done, you link the voter dissatisfaction with the Liberal party with the fact that you were in the previous government with the Conservative party yet they controlled 5 of 6 ministers, allowing them to drive decision making and enforce a clear Conservative policy. Still, you personally remain respected among all players in the political system, and are considered to be an elder statesperson of Augusta.

Following the elections, you conducted a survey among your voters and obtained the following insights:

* Due to your moderate political views and your unifying political persona, your voters will very much prefer if you are part of a wide coalition that includes many parties.
* You would potentially benefit from a “no agreement” scenario in which no government (i.e., coalition of parties holding at least 61 seats) is formed. The latest polls indicate you will probably get a much better result if a new election were to take place, since the Labour and Conservative parties are perceived by many as too extreme to govern the great country of Augusta.
* Given the loss of seats you suffered because of the previous, Conservative-dominated coalition government, your voters prefer a scenario that has you in the government together with the Labour party. This is to avoid being bullied for the entire term of the next coalition.
* It is important to take into consideration that if a coalition government is formed with all the other parties and you are left outside, your voters will be very upset.
* If a coalition government is formed without the Conservative party, your voters believe that you will have the upper hand because of your greater experience than the leaders of the Labour and Libertarian parties.

Discussing with your trusted advisors, you realize that although you obtained only 15 seats in the election, you are in quite a unique position going into this negotiation. The known animosity between the leaders of the Conservative and the Libertarian parties, the desire of the Labour party to be part of the government, and your centric position on the political board, makes your 15 seats a desired asset to any government. Although you are a small party who may not be able to dictate terms openly, you could be the queen or king maker, having points of connection with every party in the negotiation.

Also, your advisors remind you, don’t forget that a “no agreement” outcome is also a desirable outcome. New elections will likely lead to gains for your party, improving your political and negotiation position.

Your advisors urge you to leverage your position, understand the needs of the other parties coming into the negotiation, and form alliances starting from the first round of negotiations. “Don’t be afraid to play with various options to reach an optimal solution” your most trusted advisor told you before you left the room, “be the queen or king maker.”

Point System

As a professional politician, your success or failure in the negotiation is determined by public opinion of the actions you have taken and results you have obtained. Each party conducted a poll among their voters to gauge their opinions regarding possible results of the negotiation.

Your voters’ opinions are based on two factors:

1. Composition of the coalition formed (or not formed)
2. Number of ministers obtained by your party in the negotiation

The points below reflect changes in public opinion due to results achieved in the negotiation and are added or subtracted from your initial public opinion score of 100 points.

Composition Of The Coalition Formed

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Are you in the coalition**  | **Other parties in the coalition**  | **Points change due to public opinion**  |
| **Yes** | Labour, Libertarian  | +20 points |
| Labour, Conservative, Libertarian  | +20 points |
| Labour, Conservative  | +15 points |
| Conservative, Libertarian  | +3 points |
| Conservative  | 0 points |
| **No** | Labour, Conservative  | -5 points |
| Conservative, Libertarian  | -10 points |
| Labour, Conservative, Libertarian  | -30 points  |
| **No Agreement**  | - | +15 points |

Number Of Ministers Obtained In The Negotiation

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Negotiation outcome** | **Points** |
| You are not in the coalition / no agreement achieved  | 0 points |
| 0 ministers | -10 points |
| 1 minister | 0 points |
| 2 ministers | +8 points |
| 3 ministers | +15 points |
| 4 ministers | +45 points |
| 5 ministers | +50 points |
| 6 ministers | +60 points |

*\*\*\* Points awarded reflect changes from your initial score of 100 points.*

*\*\*\* The points accurately reflect all voter sentiments and political support. No factors contribute to your final score in the exercise beyond the points-payoffs in the two scoring tables listed above.*

Examples Scenarios

1st Example –

**Coalition**: Liberal, Conservative, Libertarian

**Ministers to your party**: 5

**Points** **calculation**- Initial points 100

 Public opinion +3

 Ministers +50

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 Overall 153 (+53 change from initial)

2nd Example –

**Coalition**: Conservative, Libertarian

**Ministers to your party**: You are not in the coalition

**Points** **calculation**- Initial points 100

 Public opinion -10

 Ministers 0

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 Overall 90 (-10 change from initial)

Calculation Sheet (optional)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Coalition**  | **# of ministers**  | **Points** |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
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