

**Role Play**

**Augusta:**

Libertarian Party

06/2024-6906

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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 Libertarian Party

This election was your first after you quit the Conservative party due to a personal conflict with its leader and formed your new Libertarian party. After all the pundits wondered whether you would even have enough votes to enter the Parliament, you finished the election night with a fantastic result of 14 seats! Your political advertisements and speeches legitimately questioning the credibility of the head of the Conservative party clearly resonated with the public.

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

* The ideal government, in the eyes of your voters, is a government consisting of you and the Conservative party alone. Only with this government do your voters feel that you can fulfil a true conservative agenda, as promised in your campaign.
* Your voters strongly resent the Labour party due to their left-wing economic agenda. It will be hard to “sell them” a coalition government including the Labour party unless you obtain a highly favourable outcome in terms of the number of ministers you control.
* If a government is not formed during these negotiations (i.e., no agreement is reached), you could spin this off in the media as another example of the faulty leadership of the Conservative party, and potentially obtain even more seats in the new elections that would be held.

You have met with your most trusted advisors to analyse the survey results and strategize for the coming negotiation. Given your past history with the head of the Conservative party, you believe they will prefer not to have you in their governing coalition as a sole partner. Therefore, you need to strive and create alliances with other political parties during the negotiations. As a new political party, your ultimate objective is to be a meaningful part of the government with a real voice and decision power. You know you do not have a lot of options going into the negotiation, and you are willing to try and make bold moves with the Liberal party or even with the Labour party to create coalitions that will address your supporters’ needs.

At the same time, your advisors have reminded you not to forget that “no agreement” and holding new elections is in fact an excellent outcome for your Libertarian party. Thus, you are strongly motivated to stop a coalition that does not include you from forming, or a coalition that includes you but in a weak position with no voice.

“Be bold!”, your closest advisor tells you. “You are part of the grown-up table now, show that you belong.”

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** | Conservative | +13 points |
| Liberal, Conservative | +10 points |
| Labour, Liberal, Conservative  | 0 points |
| Labour, Liberal | -10 points |
| Labour, Conservative | -10 points  |
| **No** | Liberal, Conservative  | -10 points |
| Labour, Liberal, Conservative  | -15 points |
| Labour, Conservative  | -15 points |
| **No Agreement**  | - | +25 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 | +3 points |
| 2 ministers | +7 points |
| 3 ministers | +30 points |
| 4 ministers | +50 points |
| 5 ministers | +50 points |
| 6 ministers | +50 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.*

Example Scenarios

1st Example –

**Coalition**: Liberal, Conservative, Libertarian

**Ministers to your party**: 1

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

 Public opinion +10

 Ministers +3

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 Overall 113 (+13 change from initial score)

2nd Example –

**Coalition**: Labour, Conservative

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

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

 Public opinion -15

 Ministers 0

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 Overall 85 (-15 change from initial score)

Calculation Sheet (optional)

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