

Crossing the Divide: Simulating Domestic—International Interactions

Abstract:

Both theoretically and empirically, scholars have demonstrated that domestic politics and International relations are inherently related. The causes and effects of various political phenomena operate at each level but also between levels such that explanations that ignore either do so at the risk of presenting an incomplete picture of politics. And yet, this relationship is not always translated in a meaningful manner to undergraduates taking courses in Comparative Politics or International Relations. This paper presents a new simulation that focuses on the interplay between domestic politics and foreign affairs using the setup of a two-level game developed by Putnam (1988). We ask students to simulate both domestic political processes and international negotiations, which helps students understand the complex issues that cross over the Comparative Politics and International Relations sub-field boundary. We present the simulation in full and include all the materials necessary to run the simulation in the future.

Keywords: Simulation; International Relations; Comparative Politics

1. **Crossing the Comparative Politics – International Relations Boundary**

The notion that there is an inextricable link between domestic politics and international outcomes and vice versa is widely accepted throughout political science. Both theoretic and empirical work over the decades have examined the dynamics in a variety of contexts (see e.g. Gourevetich 1978; Fearon 1994; Milner 1997; Bueno de Mesquita, et al 2003), with one of the foundational pieces being Putnam's (1988) two-level game approach, which stresses the interplay between the domestic and international political arenas. While Putnam focuses on the negotiation of an international agreement and identifies the domestic constraints that affect the terms of that agreement, more broadly he highlights the role that domestic and international forces contemporaneously play in producing outcomes. Other work explores similar dynamics. Domestic political structures have been shown to be a determinant of inter-state conflict (see e.g. Small and Singer 1976; Doyle 1983; Russett 1993) while international networks of actors have become crucial cogs in curbing human rights abuse or civil war (see e.g. Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998; Gent and Shannon 2010) And yet, despite the degree to which this notion has become accepted within research circles, we worry that political science instruction at the undergraduate level sometimes struggles to emphasize the interplay between the domestic and international levels.

An introductory course in Comparative Politics or International Relations, each their own defined sub-field at our own university, are necessarily broad survey courses that require an instructor to cover large amounts of material. Thus, while an International Relations course might mention the distinction between democracies and autocracies, an in-depth examination of the role of regime type in international interactions might not be possible. There is simply too much other information to cover. Meanwhile, advanced courses can potentially suffer from a related constraint as instructors go into greater depth and detail about a particular topic. A Latin American Politics class, which rightfully delves into the politics and history of the region, might not address the broader systemic forces that affect the region. Even if students hear the message, however, there is no certainty that they will grasp what can be an abstract argument that requires them to synthesize multiple ideas and concepts. The dynamic can be overlooked as instructors work to cover required material and are perhaps hesitant to address a topic that students might not immediately understand. However, from a pedagogical perspective it seems that as we teach students about politics we should strive to present as full and complete a picture as possible. To that end, we developed a simulation that facilitates this task and brings the concepts to life for the students.

Our simulation uses of the two-level dichotomy described by Putnam (1988) and focuses on the tensions that develop as state leaders negotiate an international agreement while being beholden to an electorate. In the Latin American context, we simulate a meeting of the Organization of American States where states leaders must negotiate a policy on an assigned topic. The remaining students, who are not state leaders, are assigned various roles within the states being represented at the meeting. Below, we detail the system of rules and constraints we developed in order to mimic real-life political situations.

2. Domestic Politics and Foreign Policy: A Simulation

2.1 Background and Setup

Simulations are an excellent way to engage students in a manner that lectures alone cannot. As Asal (2005) argues, simulations and games allow students to learn in a fashion akin to the role experiments fulfill in the physical sciences. Working with, and at times against, each other students confront the intricacies of ideas and concepts and learn how they apply in practice as well as theory. To maximize their affect, though, simulations must be well constructed with consideration placed on each the various stages (setup, implementation, debriefing, assessment) and how they fit into the larger class structure (Asal and Blake 2006). We address each of these in turn.

Early in the semester, students are assigned (according to their preferences) a country to represent as well as a position within that country that they would like to occupy during the simulation. The five positions in each country are: (1) Country Leader; (2) Opposition Party Leader; (3) Labor Leader; (4) Business Leader; and (5) Military Commander. The students are given general descriptions of the positions so that they can have some idea as to the roles they are expected to play.¹

Generally, the positions represent the varying constituencies in a country. The Country Leader is the primary negotiator at the international level and is driven by a desire to retain power for the Leader's party. The Opposition Leader, meanwhile, is trying to unseat the Country Leader and become the Country Leader herself. Labor Leaders represent the interests of the working class, while the Business Leader represents the wealthy business classes of society. Finally, the Military Commander is responsible for issues related to the defense and security of a country. Each student is required to write a "Country Report" that provides relevant background on both the student's country and the student's position within that country as it relates to the upcoming simulation.

The simulation is designed as a number of units, where each unit consists of two class days. The first day of each unit is a domestic day where the students meet as a

¹ The full descriptions can be found in the Appendix in the document titled "Simulation Overview".

country and determine their collective position on the assigned issue topic. Having bargained and negotiated among themselves, the second day of each unit is the international day where the Country Leaders gather to negotiate an international agreement based on their respective domestic preferences. At the end of the international day, any proposed agreement is voted on by the Country Leaders, and then domestic elections are held where each country decides if they want to re-elect the Country Leader or the Opposition Party Leader. Each representative has one vote for Leader, subject to conditions described below.

While the units can be run on/in consecutive days/weeks or at different points in the semester, it is important to note that results of elections and other events that occur in one unit carry over to the next. That is, once the simulation begins, the students depart from reality and their new narrative becomes the reality for the class.

Related to the timing of the units, instructors might find it useful to hold some traditional classes in between the units. This serves a dual purpose. First, it prevents the students from burning out of the simulation. Second, and perhaps more importantly, spacing the units out allows for instructors to focus on the particular topic that will be addressed by the next unit. For instance, knowing that Unit 2 will focus on negotiations surrounding a human rights treaty, an instructor can lecture on the broad

topic and provide the necessary background and context that will make the simulation a more enriching experience.

2.2 Position Characteristics

The simulation is designed around the domestic-international dynamic and is structured to show that effects at either level can stem from causes at the other and vice versa. The domestic leadership vote that takes place at the end of each unit is one way to ensure that the domestic preferences have a voice, but threats of elections are not the only mechanism in place to empower domestic constituencies.

Each position has a special characteristic that provides it a bargaining advantage on the domestic day. For instance, in the real world, labor leaders might organize a strike aimed to cripple an industry or a particular sector of the economy as a means to increase their own leverage vis-à-vis other domestic actors. In the simulation, any Labor Leader can call for a general strike, which will increase its domestic vote share for each session that they are on strike. That is, if Labor strikes in Unit 1 and continues the strike to Unit 2, then at the end of Unit 2 Labor will have two votes in that election. A strike can continue unless it is broken, which occurs when the Country Leader and Military Commander agree to so, or if the Country Leader and the Opposition Party Leader agree to break it, in which case the Military Commander must break the strike.

Aside from breaking strikes, the Military Commander can also launch a coup d'état to depose the current Country Leader. Given the support of two other country representatives, the Military Commander can remove the Leader and install the Opposition Party Leader, but not without consequences. If a coup takes place, the country loses its vote during international negotiations reflecting the condemnation many international organizations associate with coups.

The final characteristic that provides tension in the domestic-international relationship is the ability of the Business Leader to organize mass capital flight from a country. Again, in the real world this would be an organized action on the part of business interests to severely limit the ability of a government to operate. In the simulation, once capital flight is announced, the Business Leader chooses a country where it will relocate. The receiving country gains an additional vote on the international day, while the losing country's vote share decreases by two. Business Leaders in new countries, however, do not vote in domestic elections.

The total effect of all the individual characteristics will be a strategic environment wherein parties can bargain, leverage, and punish one another at both the domestic and international levels. Moreover, the students will have to build coalitions with various domestic and international actors.

2.3 Concepts and Implementation

The main concept that is being reinforced throughout the simulation is the inseparability of domestic and international politics. However, there are potentially limitless opportunities to modify the scenarios that they use and even some of the basic rules that we have established to emphasize different concepts or topics of interest. Tables 1 and 2 show some of the basic objectives of the simulation and how they were implemented and assessed.

{TABLES 1 AND 2 ABOUT HERE}

In the Latin American class, we included a unit that focused on trade, one that focused on a coup in Guatemala, and one that examined the withdrawal of Venezuela from the Inter-American Court of Human Rights.² The class met on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and the prompt was distributed at least one day prior to the first session of a particular unit. Included with each prompt are two or three “major issues” that the students will be expected to resolve on the international day. Knowing those major issues, the students work together on the domestic day to try and achieve a domestic consensus of their country’s position. Table 3 shows a proposed schedule for each day.

{TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE}

Students prepare and turn in a brief written assignment in class on the first day of each unit. The assignment asks the students to outline their goals for the unit, which

² Full text of the prompts can be found in the Appendix.

should include the personal goals of the individual that they are playing in the simulation, what that person's goals for the state are, and what that person's goals for the international day are. Moreover, the students describe how they intend to go about achieving those goals over the course of the simulation days. This is a key aspect of the simulation as it puts students in a strategic mindset that will help them "play the game" and provide a more fulfilling experience for the entire class. In order to facilitate this mode of thinking and once all roles have been assigned the instructor should distribute position-specific goals to the students. These should not be distributed to the class as a whole as the objectives of many of the positions will clash, and the students should work through them as they arise in the simulation. An example of these goals/objectives can be found in the Appendix. It is also important to note that the individual debriefing survey at the end of each unit will ask the student questions related to their objectives and strategies.

2.4 Debriefing

A key component of any simulation is debriefing the students. After each unit of the simulation, we recommend spending a portion of the next class time working with students in order to cement the lessons highlighted by the simulation. These debriefing sessions are structured around the core concept of translating domestic preferences into international outcomes, as seen through the lens of the particular issue area highlighted

by the simulation. We have found it helpful to work backwards from the eventual policy results and question students on how they would “sell” the policy to their domestic constituents. For example, the eventual policy result of our simulation on expanding regional trade agreements included a reduction of agricultural subsidies in the United States. During the debriefing session, the United States’ Opposition Party Leader was asked to justify these results in light of the fact that her constituency held a special affinity for agricultural subsidies. This line of questioning helps to highlight the ways in which international outcomes can affect domestic actors and vice versa. Along similar lines, we have found it helpful to revisit the election results and ask groups of students why particular leaders were or were not voted out of office.

In addition to class discussion, we upload a survey for the students to take that will help guide the debriefing session. Figure 1 contains some example questions from the survey.

{FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE}

Students rate both their satisfaction with the eventual policy results as well as their satisfaction with the performance of their country’s leader during international negotiations. If students are particularly pleased or displeased with the results of negotiations, this provides a starting point for a debriefing discussion. Discussion can also visit the perspectives of different actors as regards various issue areas. As in life,

not every issue will be equally pressing to every actor; Business Leaders will intuitively have stronger preferences over trade than Military Leaders, for example. However, this provides an opportunity to explore concepts such as issue linkage and logrolling—students who are indifferent over a particular policy might use the opportunity to put themselves in a beneficial position to see their preferences reflected in future agreements.

2.5 Assessment

The simulation provides numerous opportunities for the evaluation of student participation. Presenting the simulation units as the culmination of an issue section within the syllabus can help to ensure that students incorporate class material into the simulations. Insofar as graded assignments, students are given a guided writing assignment asking them to research their assigned position and stake out their preferred policy on a number of issue areas. Additionally, students compose brief writing assignments prior to the first day of each unit outlining their personal goals for the two sessions. Moreover, students compose a short briefing summarizing their activities on the domestic day and their country's general position on the issue addressed during the given simulation unit. Lastly, students can be assessed a general participation grade for their role in the simulation, the mechanics of which can be determined by the instructor.

2.6 Extensions

One of the great strengths of the simulation presented here is that it can be adapted to fit the specific learning goals of instructors in a number of courses. As mentioned above, we ran the simulation in a Latin American Politics course, but the simulation can be adapted to fit the needs of any area studies course simply by choosing a different set of countries to be involved. Instructors should select the countries to be represented carefully, as the choice of countries is important to the overall thrust of the simulation. We found it helpful to create two ideological poles around which countries can coalesce. For example, our Latin American Politics simulation included a number of countries historically aligned with the United States, as well as a number of countries representing the Bolivarian bloc, in order to create some conflict and tension within the negotiations. Additionally, we included a number of countries that are not intrinsically aligned with either ideological pole in order to make negotiations more interesting and stress the need to cultivate the support of more moderate states.

Beyond offering an in-depth simulation for area studies courses, the exercises presented here help to highlight the connections between domestic preferences and international outcomes, making it a productive simulation for any course in International Relations or Comparative Politics. Since the simulation is robust to a number of issue areas, the central topic of negotiations can be changed to fit any lesson

plan within these two major fields. For example, the simulation could fit within the lesson plan of a class on International Organizations; although in this case the simulation centered on the Organization of American States, it could likewise be structured to represent any international organization that instructors wish to highlight.

3. Conclusion

The simulation described in this paper serves a number of purposes. In the broadest sense, it is intended to help students understand the links between domestic politics and international interactions. And yet, there is enough flexibility within the simulation that instructors can tailor it to suit their own needs for introductory and advanced courses in International Relations or Comparative Politics. As with all simulations, the ultimate goal is to increase student interest and learning, and we believe that by simulating the domestic and international processes of cooperation and division does just that.

Table 1: Domestic Politics—Simulation Objectives, Goals, and Evaluation.

Day 1: Domestic Politics Simulation		
Learning Objective	How Simulation Targets Objective	Evaluation
Gain an understanding of the preferences of domestic political actors	Students role play and interact in a situation where the actors have divergent preferences, but must cooperate to avoid negative outcomes.	Research essay, simulation participation, written daily summaries.
Understand the importance of coalition-building	Students are forced to build coalitions amongst their fellow domestic actors in order to achieve their objectives.	Research essay, simulation participation, written daily summaries.
Understand the pathways through which domestic preferences shape international outcomes.	Students representing various domestic actors work to shape the acceptable range within which Leaders may operate.	Research essay, simulation participation, written daily summaries.

Table 2. International Politics—Simulation Objectives, Goals, and Evaluation.

Day 2: International Politics		
Learning Objective	How Simulation Targets Objective	Evaluation
Recognize the difficulty of negotiations at the international level as regards various issue areas.	Simulations were designed to focus on a specific topic, following three sessions of lectures. After learning about a topic, students then engage in role-play and interaction designed to provide solutions to the problems uncovered in lectures.	Research essay, simulation participation, written daily summaries, final paper.
Engage with traditional IR concepts of conflict and cooperation while being constrained by domestic actors	While negotiating with their international counterparts, students are held accountable to their domestic constituents via elections.	Research essay, simulation participation, written daily summaries.

Table 3. Proposed Daily Schedule

Domestic Politics Day (Day 1)	International Politics Day (Day 2)
<p>Introductory remarks by instructor (5 minutes)</p>	<p>Position statements by Country Leaders (5-10 minutes)</p>
<p>Informal meeting within country groups (30 minutes)</p>	<p>Leader negotiations (20 minutes)</p>
<p>International discussions (15 minutes)</p>	<p>Proposal submissions (10 minutes)</p>
<p>Final domestic negotiations (20 minutes)</p>	<p>Proposal discussion and vote (25 minutes)</p>
<p>Announcement of domestic events (5 minutes)</p>	<p>Domestic Elections (10 minutes)</p>

Figure 1. Sample Questions from Debriefing Survey

Sample Questions from Debriefing Survey
From the standpoint of your position, rate your satisfaction with the eventual policy results.
Rate your leader's performance/effectiveness at the international level in terms of representing the interests of your country.
Do you think you were effective in representing your constituents?

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Appendix Materials

Policy Simulation Overview

The policy simulation will consist of three sessions, with two class periods comprising each session. In each session, participants will negotiate with others at both the international and domestic levels in an attempt to win the best deal for themselves and their constituents. The instructor will set the stated objectives of each session, and participants are to make these objectives a focal point of each session's negotiations. For example, if the topic of the session is trade policy, negotiations should stay within the realm of trade policy.

While positions vary, the simulation rules have been constructed in a way so as to give each participant a degree of political power. As such, no one participant can accomplish his or her goals alone. Instead, participants will be forced to build coalitions among a diverse group in order to see their preferred policies adopted. The detailed simulation rules follow below. Lastly, a note: The policy simulation is in some ways based in reality, but in others a departure from it. I encourage you all to be creative in your negotiations with others. However, I reserve the right to intervene where I see necessary in order to keep the overall simulation on track.

Simulation Structure

Each session (consisting of two class days) will unfold according to the same schedule.

On Day One, participants will negotiate their preferred policies at the domestic level. After these domestic negotiations, leaders will move to negotiate policy on the international stage. As such, the domestic negotiations should focus on establishing an acceptable range of agreements that the leader can agree to on the international stage. At the end of Day One, the instructor will adjust the simulation to account for any coups, strikes, or capital flight that participants may have engaged in (further details contained within the simulation position descriptions).

On Day Two, participants will negotiate their preferred policies at the international level. While the primary negotiations will take place between the leaders of countries, their domestic constituents are encouraged to give their leaders feedback on the negotiations, as well as to negotiate with the domestic constituents of other countries.

For example, a labor leader in Ecuador may be able to increase their political power by building a cross-national coalition of labor leaders in other countries.

Voting will occur during the final twenty minutes of Day Two. First, leaders will vote on the policies that have been brought to the stage during the international round. At the beginning, each country has 10 votes to cast towards their preferred policy on the international stage, although this number can change depending on domestic developments. Adoption of a policy on the international stage requires the approval of 60% of the voting members, and applies to all of the countries in the simulation.

Elections will occur immediately after the international voting stage has commenced. In some ways, this should be viewed as a referendum on the leader: were they able to accomplish the goals set forth for them during the domestic negotiations? Did they stray outside the acceptable boundaries established by their domestic constituents? Each participant in each country is allowed to vote, and a simple majority determines the winner, with tie votes going to the leader currently in power.

Position Descriptions

Leaders can be presumed to be motivated by their desire to retain power. While leaders will have stated policy positions of their own (as you have researched and described in your Country Reports), these positions are often reflective of their domestic constituents. In order to retain power, leaders must pay heed to the preferences of their domestic audience, lest they be voted out of power. Leaders are the primary negotiators on the international stage.

Opposition Party Members are similar to Leaders, in that their primary motivation is attaining power. Accordingly, opposition parties must pay close attention to the needs and desires of domestic constituents. Should they come to find your potential leadership to be more promising than that of the leader in power, Opposition Party Members can become leaders during domestic elections. However, the desire to depose the current leader should be balanced with the need to govern. While the Opposition Party may not be the head of government, it is still a part of the government, and thus has a responsibility to work with the leader in power to the degree that it is possible/preferable to do so.

Labor Leaders represent the interests of the working classes within their home countries. Issues that pertain to the welfare of the poor and lower class employment

should be at the forefront for Labor Leaders. When necessary, labor leaders can organize a general strike in order to increase their domestic bargaining power. When organized labor goes on strike, it affects the voting power held by Labor Leaders in domestic elections. If Labor is currently on strike, Labor Leaders' domestic vote share is n , where n = the number of sessions Labor has been on strike continuously.

Business Leader represents the interests of the wealthy business classes within its home country. Issues pertaining to business regulations, capital mobility, and the size of government should be at the forefront for the Chamber of Commerce. When necessary, the Chamber can induce "capital flight," wherein the accumulated business interests move their capital into another country where it can be more profitably utilized. An IMF representative must first approve this flight, but when capital flight occurs, the Chamber of Commerce adds to the international voting power of the receiving country (giving it one extra vote on the international stage). Meanwhile, the "sending" country (the country from which Capital has flown) loses two votes internationally. The Chamber cannot cast a domestic vote at their new destinations or in their home country if they no longer reside there. The Chamber can choose to return to its home country at any time, but is forced to do so if their home country adopts an IMF structural adjustment program. However, adoption of an IMF structural adjustment program will increase the leverage held by the Chamber of Commerce domestically; Once such a program has been adopted, the Chamber of Commerce's domestic vote share doubles (two votes) for the rest of the simulation.

Military leaders represent the interests of the military within their home countries. Issues pertaining to human rights, domestic stability, and the size of government should be at the forefront for Military Leaders. When Military Leaders have the support of at least two non-leader participants within their country, they can engage in a coup to depose the leader in power, replacing him or her with the Opposition Party Leader. However, such undemocratic transitions of power have consequences. Since our international body (sort of a simplified OAS) frowns upon such undemocratic methods, countries undergoing a coup will lose their entire international vote share for the current session. Domestic elections will be suspended until the next session. Military leaders can also choose to break labor strikes when asked to do so by the country's Leader. If both the Leader and Opposition Party Leader order it to do so, Military Leaders are forced to break labor strikes.

The IMF represents the financial interests of countries around the world. As per the organization's mission statement, the IMF works "to foster global monetary cooperation,

secure financial stability, facilitate international trade, promote high employment and sustainable economic growth, and reduce poverty around the world,” (IMF, 2010). Accordingly, economic interests should be at the forefront for the IMF. When necessary, the IMF coordinates the movement of capital among the countries involved in the simulation. When a Chamber of Commerce attempts to engage in capital flight, the IMF can choose to allow or deny the flight, based on the particular situation. Once approved, the IMF can help to direct this capital into countries where it will be more profitably utilized. Additionally, states can petition the IMF for a structural adjustment program. Once this program is offered and ratified by the country in question, the Chamber of Commerce is forced to return, but is allotted an extra domestic vote.

Policy Simulation Prompt

Session One

In recent years, Latin America has seen the creation and expansion of a number of regional trade blocs. Such agreements are not without controversy, but economists and policymakers on both sides of the debate acknowledge that abolishing barriers to trade can provide concrete benefits to all states involved. Despite this, efforts to expand the existing multitudes of regional trade agreements into a unified hemispheric bloc (the Free Trade Area of the Americas) have thus far proven unsuccessful. The wake of the global financial crisis provides somewhat of an opportunity for a revival of the FTAA, as countries experiencing economic stagnation could benefit from increased trading opportunities.

Your task as delegates is to revisit the idea of the FTAA, and make an attempt to expand the numerous existing regional trade blocs into one single hemispheric entity. This is far from a simple task, as the issues preventing previous agreements must be resolved in order to establish the FTAA. In particular, delegates are expected to resolve the following issues as they negotiate a hemispheric expansion of free trade:

Industrial subsidies and tariffs: Ideally, any free trade agreement would abolish all industrial subsidies and tariffs. However, countries often make exceptions for industries of substantial importance to their domestic political goals. For example, the United States has carved out exemptions for its agricultural subsidies in many trade agreements, arguing that the subsidies are essential for national security/economic goals. Meanwhile, Brazil protects its domestic industries through a number of tariffs on industrial and service goods. A successful trade agreement will specify whether such tariffs and subsidies are allowed to continue.

Funding for Structural Endowment Inequities: Some resistance to international trade agreements stems out of fears that underdeveloped states will lack the competitiveness necessary to stay afloat after trade barriers have been abolished. International funding for infrastructure/education investments may be a key cog in overcoming this dilemma. Accordingly, a successful trade agreement will specify whether such international funding will be available for states entering into the FTAA, and if so, from where said funding will originate.

Dispute Resolution Mechanisms: Since trade agreements are outlining the boundaries of acceptable behavior, international dispute resolution mechanisms must be

outlined in order to enforce said boundaries. How will FTAA provisions be upheld? How can one country file a grievance against another? How will the case be decided? A successful trade agreement will establish dispute resolution mechanisms.

Policy Simulation Prompt
Session Two

Delegates:

The following dispatch is from the New York Times:

“President Manuel Zelaya of Honduras was ousted by the army on Sunday, capping months of tensions over his efforts to lift presidential term limits.

In the first military coup in Central America since the end of the cold war, soldiers stormed the presidential palace in the capital, Tegucigalpa, early in the morning, disarming the presidential guard, waking Mr. Zelaya and putting him on a plane to Costa Rica.

Mr. Zelaya, a leftist aligned with President Hugo Chávez of Venezuela, angrily denounced the coup as illegal. “I am the president of Honduras,” he insisted at the airport in San José, Costa Rica, still wearing his pajamas.

Later Sunday the Honduran Congress voted him out of office, replacing him with the president of Congress, Roberto Micheletti.

The military offered no public explanation for its actions, but the Supreme Court issued a statement saying that the military had acted to defend the law against “those who had publicly spoken out and acted against the Constitution’s provisions.”

Despite the complicated nature of Honduras’ internal political divides, such an action on the part of the Honduran military constitutes a breach of the [Inter-American Democratic Charter](#), adopted by the OAS in 2001. Specifically, Article 19 of the Charter states that:

Based on the principles of the Charter of the OAS and subject to its norms, and in accordance with the democracy clause contained in the Declaration of Quebec City, an unconstitutional interruption of the democratic order or an unconstitutional alteration of the constitutional regime that seriously impairs the democratic order in a member state, constitutes, while it persists, an

insurmountable obstacle to its government's participation in sessions of the General Assembly, the Meeting of Consultation, the Councils of the Organization, the specialized conferences, the commissions, working groups, and other bodies of the Organization.

The OAS Secretary General has already issued a statement condemning the action as undemocratic and a violation of the Charter. However, this is but the first step in a larger process of returning Honduras to democracy. Your task as delegates is to attempt to draw a road map for this return. There are a number of issues to be resolved, which are elucidated below:

- To what degree will the newly installed Honduran government be punished for their subversion of the democratic process? Potential punishments can be as light as a public condemnation and a temporary suspension from the OAS, or as heavy as economic/military sanctions and removal from the OAS.
- Should Zelaya be reinstated as Honduras' president, or should a new president be chosen to lead the country? How would such a process unfold?
- Given the fragile political situation on the ground, should member countries contribute any sort of personnel to Honduras in order to ensure a smooth transition into democracy?

Policy Simulation Prompt

Session #3

Delegates: As many of you are aware, Venezuela has recently withdrawn from the human rights bodies of the Organization of American States (OAS). As a consequence, the country will no longer recognize the jurisdiction of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (IACtHR) or the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR).

Venezuelan foreign minister Elias Jaua has confirmed the decision, stating that “the Commission and the Inter-American Court of Justice have never been guarantors of justice, but protectors of the powerful,” adding that “the Venezuelan people never had protection under the international guardianship of human rights [bodies].” Speaking to Venezuelan media, he argued that the two bodies have “overreached” during both the presidency of Chavez and current Maduro government. By contrast, according to Jaua, the IACHR failed to condemn the numerous human rights violations committed under Venezuelan governments prior to that of Chavez, including the alleged killing of around 50 students by Caracas police in 1990.

The IACHR has condemned the decision, stating the decision “comes at the expense of the protection of rights to the people of Venezuela, who are stripped of a mechanism to protect their human rights. The Inter-American Commission calls on Venezuela to reconsider this decision.”

Your task as delegates is to determine how the OAS and its affiliated human rights bodies should respond to Venezuela’s withdrawal. Since the effectiveness of human rights institutions is directly related to their perceived legitimacy, the withdrawal of another state from the jurisdiction of these bodies (Trinidad and Tobago was the first, in 1999) could potentially damage their ability to enforce human rights norms. Should the OAS seek to reform these bodies? If so, how?

Your eventual agreement should address two major issues:

- First, should the IACHR be reformed to respond to criticisms?
- Second, how should these reforms proceed? As currently conceived, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights litigates most of the human rights cases that come before it. This Commission is composed of seven Commissioners, elected by the general body of the OAS. When states fail to abide by the

recommendations of the Commission (or if the case is of specific importance), the case is forwarded to the Court for a ruling. In what way(s) should this process be reformed in order to respond to criticisms?