

The Ties That Bind—A Simulation of Domestic and International Politics

Abstract:

Scholarship in the discipline recognizes that there are important links between domestic and international politics. Moreover, whether explicitly or implicitly, the links are taught in undergraduate courses in both international relations and comparative politics classes but are often done so at a fairly theoretical or abstract level. Seeking to help instructors make these links more tangible to students we developed a simulation that is based on Putnam's (1988) two-level game involving an international negotiation. Over the course of the simulation students assume the roles of domestic actors with varying agendas and motives that must attempt to reach a domestic consensus on a particular policy, which they then bargain for during international negotiations. The simulation is designed with actions and constraints for all of the actors at both the domestic and the international levels and is intended to stress the effects and consequences that flow between domestic and international politics in a manner that students can more easily grasp. The simulation was created with flexibility in mind so that instructors in any number of substantive classes can employ it to help teach the broader lessons of the ties between domestic and international politics, while at the same time tailoring the simulation to focus on narrower course goals.

I. Introduction

Scholarship in political science has long recognized the important links between domestic and foreign politics (*see e.g.* Gourevitch 1978; Fearon 1994; Milner 1997; Putnam 1988), so much so that a recent article in the *Annual Review of Political Science* discusses whether traditional subfield boundaries should be dissolved entirely (Reiter 2015)¹. Yet while the ties between domestic and foreign politics seem more and more clear to political science researchers, it has been our experience that the same lesson is not as easily grasped in the undergraduate classroom. This could be due to the structure; Introductory courses in international relations and comparative politics—each its own subfield at our university—often require an instructor to adopt a broad, survey approach to the course in an effort to cover as much material as possible. Conversely, instructors of upper level courses that focus on a more in-depth study of narrow

¹ Reiter (2015) provides a useful summary of work blurring of traditional subfield (international relations and comparative politics) approaches to questions of conflict, political institutions, political economy, and political behavior.

questions (e.g. regional studies courses or topic oriented courses such as International Organization) must balance any time spent on the two-level dynamic against the need to provide contextual and factual information pertinent to their own course. In order to overcome similar challenges in our own classrooms, and seeking to bring the two-level problem to the forefront of our students' minds, we developed a simulation based on Putnam's (1988) two-level negotiation game that we feel is appropriate for introductory courses in international relations and comparative politics as well as upper level courses in both subfields.

Simulations are quickly becoming an integral part of many political science classrooms. Without conducting an exhaustive literature review, suffice it say that many scholars emphasize the importance of active learning exercises in the classroom broadly² and many more scholars also tout the benefits of simulations in particular (*see e.g.* Smith and Boyer 1996; Asal 2005; Shellman and Turan 2006). Indeed, Asal (2005) notes that simulations allow students to learn in a fashion akin to the role that experiments play in the physical sciences. Putting students "in the lab" allows them to work with and against one another while confronting the intricacies of ideas and concepts and learn how they apply in practice as well as theory. Furthermore, while studies find support that simulations help students retain course specific information—a goal of every class—our own anecdotal evidence comports with other studies that find students generally enjoy classes more that make use of simulations. A carefully chosen and well-implemented simulation can have lasting effects on students that lectures alone cannot.

Instructors now have a wealth of resources available to them when it comes to choosing a simulation, and our belief in the need for a new simulation may strike some readers as unfounded. We have run excellent simulations using the International Communications and

² Archer and Miller (2011) contains an overview both of the merits of active learning as well as their uses in political science classrooms.

Negotiations Simulations (ICONS) Project and using Statecraft³, as well as examined numerous other simulations and games that might be appropriate for our purposes—in that they stressed the domestic-international dynamic as the major focal point of the simulation—but found that they were either built for smaller classes or were inflexible in terms of content.⁴ As instructors at a large state university our classes normally have 50 or more students enrolled in them. Rather than trying to expand simulations designed for fewer students or radically altering simulations that are very content-specific, we developed our simulation that can easily accommodate large numbers of students and can be adapted to fit an instructor’s class with relative ease.

In the simulation, groups of students represent various countries and those countries must come together to try and negotiate an agreement regarding some event or topic chosen by the instructor. Those negotiations take place at a formal meeting, which is part of the simulation. Moreover, within each country every student plays a specific role. For instance, one student is the country leader, while another student represents the capital or business interests. Before they can negotiate and attempt to solve a problem at the international level, the students must first come to a consensus as to what their country’s position will be. The simulation is thus structured with one day for domestic politics followed by a day for international politics where the interests, preferences, motivations, and actions of all of the actors are played out at each level and the students gain an understanding of the dynamic and inter-related nature of domestic and international politics.

³ The ICONS Project can be found at <http://www.icons.umd.edu>; likewise Statecraft simulations are available at <http://www.Statecraft.com>, with Cox (2014) providing a review of the basic Statecraft simulation.

⁴ For example, Enterline and Jepsen (2009) introduces a simulation that focuses on the two-level negotiating dynamic but includes two fictitious countries and is limited to a territorial dispute between them.

The rest of the article proceeds as follows: in the next section we review the learning goals of the simulation. We do this in a number of ways. First, we discuss the broad goal of the simulation—emphasizing the domestic-international link—and highlight some of the ways that objective can be taught before discussing some of the narrow goals that can be associated with a particular class. We have run this simulation in a Latin American Politics class, which is an upper level class at our university that consists of mainly juniors and seniors and we present the specific goals for that class as an exemplar. We include as an additional example a set of learning goals for an International Organization class to give instructors an understanding of how flexible the simulation can be. Following the discussion of the learning goals, we delve into the specifics of implementing the simulation by covering the background and setup and then moving to the day-by-day specifics of the simulation. We then provide some suggestions for how to handle the debrief portion of the simulation as well as examining the various opportunities for assessment that the structure presents. Finally, we offer our concluding thoughts as well as some possible extensions or adaptations that instructors may wish to employ.

II. Learning Goals, Objectives, and Outcomes

Before choosing which simulation to run, before choosing to run a simulation at all, instructors must have a clear understanding of their own course's learning goals and objectives and how they want a simulation to connect to the course content (Asal and Blake 2006; Bernstein 2008; Wedig 2010; Asal and Kratoville 2013). Every simulation takes time away from the standard lecture-style classroom, and this particular simulation requires instructors to devote significant portions of instructional time. In addition, instructors might have to spend some time making sure that the simulation is refined to reflect the exact learning outcomes of their own

courses. That said, the importance of connecting student learning to identifiable goals cannot be overstated.

At the outset, simulations provide a number of benefits that can themselves be conceived as outcomes for students. Simulations encourage student participation in class; they can help students gain public speaking skills; simulations can force student interaction in ways that might mirror interactions they will have with others in the future. However, aside from all of these universal goals that instructors might wish to pursue, this simulation is designed for students to begin to understand the complexity of domestic and international politics. Table 1 highlights five important aspects of that dynamic. Each of the learning goals identified in Table 1 are directly related to the overarching point of the simulation, which is of course to introduce students into the ties between domestic and international politics. To provide some clarification to the points in the table, though, a brief discussion of the structure of the simulation is warranted.

Learning Goal/Objective	How Simulation Targets Objective
Students will gain an understanding of the preferences of domestic political actors and how converge/diverge with those of other actors.	Before the simulation begins, all students must complete a research paper that provides the background on their role. This paper should address what issues are important to each constituency as well as how the constituency views particular issues.
Students will experience the coalition-building process.	All of the roles have been designed so that they conflict with others at times, but also make it difficult to achieve any task without cooperation. The Country Leader, for instance, faces re-election at the end of every international day and must ensure that she maintains a large enough domestic coalition to retain power.
Students will see how the preferences of domestic actors translate into state foreign policy preferences.	On the domestic politics day of the simulation, each country is responsible for determining what its policy will be for the international meeting. The students will shape the acceptable range for their country's negotiations, which may or may not reflect

	their own constituents' favored policy.
Students will recognize the difficulty of negotiations in general, as well as within particular issue areas.	The simulation is designed so that each particular session follows lectures based on particular topics. For example, after teaching about human rights in class, the next simulation session involves determining whether a human rights treaty should be modified or a new one adopted. The next simulation session focuses on a new topic.
Students will confront traditional international relations concepts of conflict and cooperation while being constrained by domestic actors.	The topics chosen range from security to economic to other issues such that students will experience the difficulties associated with collective action in a number of settings, all while being accountable to their fellow country members via elections.

As currently designed, the simulation is comprised of three units. Each unit consists of two class days. The first day of each unit is set aside for domestic politics, while the second day focuses on international negotiation. In the Latin American Politics class where we most recently employed the simulation, each unit began after one or more class sessions that discussed a particular topic in detail. For example, one of the prompts asks the students to respond to Venezuela withdrawing from the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (IACtHR) and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR). Thus, prior to beginning the simulation unit, the students had reading assignments regarding human rights more generally, the role of those two particular regional organizations, as well as lecture and discussion in class discussion regarding the same. Then, on the domestic politics day of that particular unit of the simulation, the students met in their country groups and had to determine what their country's policy with respect distinct questions in the prompt. The following class the country leaders met with their counterparts to see if any regional consensus on the issue was possible. Whether that regional consensus, or in even a domestic consensus, exists is determined by the students working with

and against each other at each level to further their own interests and those of their constituencies.

Whether or not a consensus is reached at either the domestic or international levels, two of the objectives identified in Table 1 are met. Students see whether their own domestic interests have any influence over the eventual foreign policy of their country and whether that foreign policy translates to meaningful regional or international action. Spacing out the units and carefully choosing the topics that each unit addresses allows instructors to spend time drawing on particular lessons or highlighting important details for a particular class. If, for instance, an instructor wants to focus on the security dilemma, preparing a short prompt regarding a potential conflict is quite simple. Finally, as mentioned in the table, at the end of every international day—which is the unit of each unit—the country leader faces domestic elections. To stave off potential challengers, the leader must maintain a majority of the domestic votes, which naturally leads to rival coalition building among the domestic representatives.

The five broad learning objectives found in Table 1 are of course by no means exhaustive. As we present the simulation in much more detail below, we imagine that instructors will identify many more objectives that they might wish to emphasize. The important point, however, is that instructors take the time to identify their goals for the course and map them onto the simulation. In Tables 2 and 3 we give further examples for how more narrow class goals can be identified and translated into the simulation for a Latin American Politics class and an International Organization class. These go beyond the broad objectives identified previously and allow instructors to tailor the simulation to their classes.

Latin American Politics Course Goals And Implementation	
Understand the road blocks preventing pan-regional trade	One prompt focuses on reviving the Free Trade Area of the

agreements	Americas; Through negotiation, students uncover the difficulty of protecting domestic interests while establishing free trade zones.
Learn about human rights institutions and their function	One unit focuses on the IACtHR and the controversy surrounding its institutional design; Through negotiations, students learn both the existing structure as well as the reasons for controversy surrounding the institution.
Examine the degree to which the emergence of a “New Left” in Latin America has shaped states’ actions	Throughout the simulation, the inclusion of “New Left” states helps students to understand how their emergence has altered the balance of power in hemispheric politics
Understand modern responses to crises of governance	By including the 2009 Honduran coup as one of the units (and comparing similar past crises in course material), students come to understand the degree to which responses to such crises have changed in recent years, including the increased reliance on international institutions.
Gain substantive knowledge about individual Latin American states and their domestic political structures	By researching their own position and interacting with others, students gain an appreciation for and in-depth knowledge about a sub-set of Latin American states.

International Organization Course Goals And Implementation	
Learn about the agenda setting power in organizations.	Instead of determining the sequence of topics, have the country representatives determine what issues will be discussed by voting on an agenda. Voting rules can be determined by the instructor for emphasis.
Introduce ideas regarding enforcement and compliance issues with international	As many discussions of international cooperation focus on the anarchic system, have the

agreements and within international organizations.	students negotiate as to whether an enforcement provision should be added or removed from a particular agreement.
Learn how the various structures and organizational models of international organizations aid or hinder particular outcomes.	For the international negotiation days, have the students simulate meetings of different organizations. For example, simulation the World Trade Organization for trade, UN Security Council for security issues, etc.
Examine how both formal and informal institutions affect the behavior of states.	On one of the international days, provide the students with no structure for how the day is to proceed. Instead, see how they interact without any particular “rules” associated with the negotiation.

III. Simulation Setup and Background

At its core, our simulation is a series of negotiations at the international and domestic levels. As designed, there are three units that address three different topics or issues and two simulation days in each unit. In order to be prepared for each unit, there is some amount of background and setup that is required on the part of instructors and of the students. Before detailing those items, however, it is worth taking a moment to explicitly outline the decisions we made to structure the simulation itself.

Asal and Blake (2006) extensively discuss the important role of structure in simulations, and how instructors need to be mindful of it when setting up a simulation. Those authors distinguish between training simulations that are designed with carefully controlled environments that focus on developing particular skills and simulations that stress teaching concepts to students, which can more abstract representations of reality (2006, 4). In our simulation students play the roles of real-world actors from real countries and engage in

negotiations at real regional and international meetings, and while no simulation can perfectly reflect reality we encourage students to treat the simulation as if it were so. The scenarios that we create are based on real-world events (or events that might reasonable occur), but we have no fixed outcomes that we expect of the students. We encourage the students to make the simulation world their own, and this is especially important to keep in mind as we stress to the students that all of the actions in their world will carry over from unit to unit.

Moreover, we also want to strike a fair balance between teaching content and process. We teach specific content by having students complete a research paper based on their specific role before the simulation begins and by spending a least one class day before a unit begins with a lecture or discussion on the particular issue for that unit. The domestic and international negotiations, meanwhile, are mostly unconstrained so that the students can focus on the processes of negotiation and coalition building. Of course instructors are free to alter this balance as an International Organization class that is focusing on the United Nations Security Council might want to place an emphasis on the process of that organization's decision-making process. We want to stress again that many of the decisions we made were done with flexibility in mind so that other instructors could adapt the simulation as necessary.

One of the many of the ways instructors can adapt the simulation is through the choice of participants where the first task is to choose which countries will be represented in the simulation. If teaching a regional studies course, the set of available countries might be constrained, but the countries chosen will set the stage for all the negotiations to come, so instructors should take care to identify what sort of regional/international dynamic they want to achieve. If the goal is to present a balanced and ideologically heterogeneous group of countries, too much tilt towards a particular ideological pole might distort balance and hamper the balance

and hamper the effectiveness of the simulation.⁵ For example, the simulation as run in the Latin American Politics course contains the United States and a few of her ideological allies while also including a triumvirate of Latin America's "New Left," so as to give the simulation balance. The remaining countries chosen are not explicitly attached to one or another ideological pole and tend to split on specific issues—Costa Rica might side with the United States when it comes to trade policy, but it might move in the other direction regarding human rights protections. Instructors looking for balance should consider similar country choices as appropriate.

After determining which countries will participate in the simulation the students need to be assigned to them. This should occur early in the semester and the students need to be divided into groups of five and assigned a country to represent as well as a position within that country. The five available positions in each country are: **(1) Country Leader; (2) Opposition Party Leader; (3) Labor Leader; (4) Business Leader; and (5) Military Leader.** The students are given descriptions of their positions as well as specific goals associated with each position and are also tasked with completing a 4-5 page research paper on their real-world counterparts.⁶ Generally, the positions are designed to represent the varying constituencies in a country at a fairly broad level. The Country Leader is the primary negotiator at the international level and is driven by a desire to retain power for her party. The Opposition Leader, meanwhile, is trying to

⁵ That particular decision assumes, of course, that one of the goals or objectives of a particular class is to maintain a relatively stable regional/international order. Instructors may purposefully choose to design the system as they see fit to further certain learning goals.

⁶ Note: While the real-world counterparts for Country Leaders are obvious, students can run into trouble finding their counterparts for other positions. We recommend giving the following advice for students as they research their roles: Opposition party leaders should look into the *most viable* challenger for the presidency (if more than two parties exist). Labor Leaders should look into the country's largest/most influential labor unions and their leadership. Business Leaders are encouraged to see themselves as an owner of a firm in the country's largest industry. Finally, Military Leaders should research their country's cabinet-level position for Secretary of Defense.

become the Country Leader herself. Labor Leaders represent the interests of their country's working class, while the Business Leader represents the wealthy business classes of their country. Finally, the Military Commander is responsible for issues pertaining to the defense and security of their country.

While the Country Leader and the Opposition Party Leader mainly vie for domestic power, every other has a special characteristic that is meant to provide it a bargaining advantage in domestic negotiations. These characteristics—normally a particular action—allow each position to balance against and sanction the others in a fashion that reflects actual events. For instance, real-world labor leaders might organize a strike aimed to cripple an industry or particular sector of the economy as a means to increase their own leverage vis-à-vis other domestic actors. Thus, the simulation allows Labor Leaders to call for strikes, which can over time greatly increase their bargaining power at the domestic level. The power of Labor Leaders to strike is countered by the ability of Military Commanders to break the strike, given the consent of leadership. Finally, Business Leaders can organize mass capital flight if they choose, which greatly hampers the bargaining power of their country on the international stage. These position-specific special characteristics are covered in greater detail in the Appendix, but the important takeaway is that each position has an action available to it that can increase its bargaining power, but is likewise subject to potential sanctions from other actors should they press too far.

The final role to fill is a special class of actor not assigned to a particular country. The Press is responsible for providing coverage of simulation events to the rest of the class and serves a number of useful purposes. From a functional standpoint, if the number of students in the classroom is not evenly divisible by five, then the extra students can be assigned to Press roles. A

class of 53 students would consist of 10 countries with five positions each and three Press actors. Similarly if there are any eccentricities among country assignments (Costa Rica, for instance, has no military and therefore does not need a Military Leader), students will still have roles to play. An additional functional benefit of introducing Press actors is that it brings more “eyes” to events within the simulation, which encourages students to more fully embrace their roles while also allowing the instructor to more easily keep tabs on a larger classroom via news updates. Finally, Press actors also create a written record of events during the simulation that serves as a useful resource during simulation debrief.

More important than functional benefits, however, are the substantive contributions that Press actors provide. News coverage is provided via a Twitter account that is created by the instructor, a running feed of which is displayed on the classroom projector during class.⁷ Thus, students are constantly updated about events in other countries or about events in international meetings and can use that information to help shape their goals and actions. Additionally, though the specific number of Press actors is somewhat determined by the number of students in the class, instructors are encouraged to create the Press actors with multiple perspectives (Left v. Right, North v. South, etc.), so as to help demonstrate the degree to which information is limited and that biases held by media actors can drive opinions and behavior. Moreover, the fact that Press actors can only cover one “meeting” at a time drives home the importance of media coverage, limited information, and biased coverage. If an instructor wanted to emphasize the role of a free press, tailoring the Press actors would be a good way to achieve that learning goal.

A few important and final points regarding the assignment of student roles bear mentioning here. There are a number of ways that students can be assigned to positions including

⁷ If an instructor’s classroom is not equipped with the appropriate technology for this, the Press can instead e-mail the class a news report instead at the end of every simulation day.

random assignment or complete determination by the instructor, and each has its benefits and drawbacks. We prefer and suggest for this simulation that instructors have their students submit a position preference ranking where they list their top three choices. Some roles, like the Country Leader, will favor more outgoing personality types than the others; some countries will need highly motivated students in order to function effectively. Using a preference-ranking system allows the students some freedom to choose their positions, but also leaves instructors with some discretion to ensure that the simulation runs as smoothly and efficiently as possible. No matter the assignment method chosen, instructors should take some care as roles are chosen. Also, with respect to the Press, if a Twitter feed is employed, instructors should make sure that prospective Press actors own a smartphone, which allows them to move around the classroom while they report on events. And finally, the total number of Press actors should be limited to a degree (two students can team up to dually represent one Press actor if need be), as the news feed can become cluttered with too many updates if there are too many Press representatives.

IV. Simulation Implementation

As described previously, the simulation is designed with three units, where each unit consists of two class days.⁸ The ultimate goal of each unit is to pass a “proposal” that addresses (at least broadly) a real-life dilemma of international or regional politics⁹ (distributed beforehand by the instructor in a simulation prompt). Proposals need not “solve” the issue entirely, nor do they absolutely need to be passed in order for the simulation to be successful; one of the interesting takeaways from the simulation is that students come to realize the difficulty of

⁸ Three units were most appropriate for our particular class, but more or fewer units can be used. Note, however, that at least two units should be used so that the Country Leader faces the realistic expectation of removal from office.

⁹ Examples include regional trade agreements, human rights treaties, environmental regulations, etc. Example simulation prompts are included in the Appendix.

achieving binding international agreements. So as to give the proposals focus, we recommend that simulation prompts come with specific “bargaining points” that the instructor wants the students to address. While the simulation is designed to address broad topics such as trade policy, the specific bargaining points keep students from becoming bogged down in mundane or inconsequential aspects of such an expansive topic. These proposals are to be passed (or not) via Country Leaders, who vote amongst each other as their country’s official representatives within an international organization¹⁰ on the final day of the unit.

The first day of each unit is a “domestic day” where students meet as a country and determine their collective position on the assigned issue topic. The second day is an “international day” when the students conduct negotiations over any regional/international agreement that may be reached. Table 4 provides a specific breakdown of the timing and activities on a day-to-day basis.¹¹ Prior to the first day of each unit—at least the night before—the instructor should distribute the unit prompt to the class. The prompt includes some brief background on a particular topic as well as the aforementioned bargain points. In response, the students compose a short written assignment (no more than one page) prior to the first day of each unit that outlines their personal goals for the unit and how they will try to achieve them.. This encourages students to think about the prompt ahead of time, as well as giving students who

¹⁰ The particular organization is dependent upon the subject matter. Instructors may wish to implement organization-specific rules about voting and/or proposals, but in general the thrust of the simulation focuses more on the various incentives and constraints faced during international negotiation than the specific parliamentary procedures of international organizations. As such, the rules presented here are simplified and streamlined versions of real-life procedure rather than a point-for-point adaptation.

¹¹ The Latin American Politics class met twice a week for an hour and fifteen minutes on each occasion. For shorter class periods, instructors should trim time as appropriate.

are less comfortable being vocal in group settings a tangible document from which they can draw during discussion.

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

On the domestic day, students should focus on reaching a consensus about their countries' policies for the international negotiations. While domestic preferences will generally take the forefront here, the conversation should also take place with an eye toward international ramifications. Domestic meetings can take place in the classroom with the students divided into their country groups, and following the initial meeting the students should break away and meet with their counterparts from other countries. Labor Leaders may want to organize strikes in multiple countries, while Business Leaders might want to encourage capital flight from other countries. Students then return to their country groups and finalize a plan for international negotiations. Finally, any domestic events—those unique to each position—are triggered and announced to the class.

The second day of each unit begins with position statements by Country Leaders. Having progressed through the first day, Country Leaders should be able to articulate their preferred course of action to the rest of the class. From there, students meet with their position groups, discussing the content of any specific negotiations. It has been our experience that on international days, actors other than the Country Leaders can feel as though they have little to do and therefore disengage from the simulation. A previous version of the simulation did not stress that all domestic actors meet with their international constituencies, and we have found that this change helps address student disinterest. After 15-20 minutes of negotiation, students are given 10 minutes to submit written proposals that address the unit's associated simulation prompt. Proposals can be submitted by any group of actor, given that they have the votes to support this submission. Proposals submitted by Leaders must have the support of at least one other international Leader, while proposals submitted by non-Leader groups must have the support of at least half of the assembled representatives.

Once proposals have been submitted, there is time for international debate on the proposals before students return to their country groups for a short (5-10 minute) discussion on the submitted proposals. After this negotiation session, the leaders assemble to vote on their preferred proposal. Leaders can vote for any submitted proposal, but can only vote once in total. To pass, a proposal must secure at least 60% of the available votes.¹² Once voting on specific proposals has commenced, students engage in domestic elections, voting either to retain the Country Leader or replace her with the Opposition Party Leader. The result of this election will

¹² Each country starts with 10 votes, but this total can change depending on the actions of Business Leaders: "Capital flight" removes two votes, while incoming capital (fleeing from another country) adds one. This is meant to simulate the increased international power given to countries supported by international capital.

then continue into the next unit of the simulation, so that ousted Country Leaders will now act like Opposition Leaders and vice versa.

Whether domestic actors decide to replace their leader is dependent on their attitudes regarding the results of international negotiations. Students should be encouraged to revisit their short written assignments (completed prior to the first day of each unit) to evaluate whether or not their preferences were realized via international negotiation. Some actors may have wanted to derail the passage of international agreements, while others may have preferred that specific provisions be included in a ratified proposal. Each domestic actor (including both the Country Leader and Opposition Leader) receives one vote, although ongoing strikes by Labor Leaders¹³ can increase their domestic vote share (representing the degree to which strikes can become more politically salient over time). In the event of a tie, Country Leaders remain in place. Here, students feel the weight of domestic political preferences as regards international negotiations: If Country Leaders cannot maintain a domestic coalition they are replaced. Even if their domestic coalition is strong, Country Leaders must pay some heed to minority preferences either to prevent them from engaging in their “special characteristic” (strikes, capital flight, etc.) or to seek their cooperation in future meetings.

As mentioned above, our most recent implementation of the simulation contained three units of two days each. However, the specific number of units is dependent on the time

¹³ A note on labor strikes: Readers may identify that Labor Leaders are incentivized to strike at the outset so as to increase their domestic vote share, regardless of whether their preferences are met. There are two reasons that this tends not to occur in practice: First, labor strikes can be broken by a unified government and/or the acquiescence of the Military Leader to Country Leader demands. Unreasonable strikes are thus more likely to be broken and are thus deterred. Second, students have generally abstained from striking unless totally necessary, which initially confounded us as rational choice-oriented scholars. When asked, students contend that they would rather abstain from striking early, as kept domestic negotiations from becoming acrimonious.

constraints placed upon the instructor, as well as the material he or she wishes to address. We recommend at least two units, so that Leaders can face realistic threats of removal from office. The scheduling of the units is up to the instructor and somewhat dependent on the content of the course. For example, our Latin American Politics course utilized the simulation units as a capstone to various issue areas within the syllabus. Therefore, students negotiated over trade policy after having learned in detail about trade policy in the classes prior, and so on. Should instructors wish to run the simulation units on consecutive days, the simulation should be equally effective.

V. Debriefing

Just as important, if not more so, as successfully setting up and implementing a simulation is the debrief that occurs once it ends (Smith and Boyer 1996; Asal 2005). The debrief allows an instructor to explicitly tie events from the simulation to the course material and to focus the students back to the learning objectives, which instructors may or may not have shared with the class before or during the simulation. As Wedig (2010) notes, the debrief is essentially a bridge between the simulation and the more traditional classroom experience, and there are a number of ways instructors can go about it. We discuss three ways in particular that our simulation is designed to for but, as always, there is plenty of room for flexibility.

The two most common ways to debrief are written and oral, and we employ each. At the conclusion of each unit, we upload a survey for our students to complete that includes questions related to their overall satisfaction with the result of the unit as well as their satisfaction with their particular Country Leader. A full list of the debrief questions that we use is found in Table __. The answers to these questions can also serve as helpful starting points for in-class discussion and debriefing that happens during the next class session following the end of a unit. In addition

to discussing student survey responses, however, instructors should take the opportunity to walk students through any of the concepts that might not have gotten as much attention as an instructor would have liked.

In the Latin American Politics class one debrief focused on the core idea of the simulation, which is to see how domestic preferences translate into international outcomes, as seen through the lens of the particular issue area highlighted by the simulation. A helpful tactic to highlight this dynamic is to work backwards from the results of the simulation unit and ask students how they would “sell” the result to their domestic constituents. For example, one iteration of the simulation (centered on trade policy in Latin America) led to a reduction of agricultural subsidies in the United States. During the debriefing session, the students representing the United States were asked to justify these results to the domestic constituents that might have an affinity to agricultural subsidies. Likewise, we have found it helpful to revisit election results and ask groups of students why particular leaders were or were not voted out of office. 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.

One final aspect of our simulation should be noted with regard to debriefing. In general full debriefs occur once a simulation is complete. Given that our simulation is broken into three parts, however, instructors have the opportunity to essentially debrief as the simulation goes along. Asal (2005) discusses the relative merits of stopping a simulation at certain teachable

moments, and the structure of our simulation allows instructors a similar opportunity without having to break the continuity of a particular unit. No matter when instructors debrief, or how frequently, this is a crucial part of learning that should not be overlooked.

VI. Assessment

Simulations are often considered a fun alternative to a standard lecture, but inevitably we must discuss everyone's (both students and instructors) least favorite part of most classes: student assessment. Much like the debriefing portion of the simulation, student assessment is an opportunity to tie assignments to simulation material, which allows instructors to see what students are learning and how they are applying particular lessons. Assessment is a vitally important part of any simulation, and when designed well can help students focus on learning outcomes, substantive knowledge acquisition, and more (Raymond and Usherwood 2013). We briefly discuss the numerous chances for evaluation and assessment present in our simulation.

The major assignment associated with the simulation is the research paper that we have mentioned previously. One of our learning goals is that students become acquainted in some depth with a particular country and a particular position in that country. Within the structure of the simulation, the research paper allows students to gain that knowledge, while at the same time preparing for their roles. In the Appendix material we include a rubric that we use for the paper for reference. A second method of assessment is in form of the written assignments that students complete at the start of each unit outlining their personal goals. One way to treat these assignments is a dichotomous complete/incomplete, but we also like to make these goals somewhat binding on the students in that in that their completion (or lack thereof) can lead to "performance points" tacked on to the grade. This leads to increased stakes for the actors involved and can spice up the competitiveness of the simulation. Finally, students compose a

short briefing (one page or less) summarizing their activities after each unit, which allows them to reflect on their successes (or lack thereof). This helps the debrief as the discussion tends to be more insightful and thoughtful if given prior consideration.

An option that we have employed that instructors may also want to consider is some kind of participation/performance grade. As we mentioned above, linking students' own goals to their performance is one way to assess their effectiveness in their roles. We generally do not make this a large portion of the overall grade as it might incentivize students to aspire to easy objectives at the expense of more appropriate goals, we do not want to encourage too much cutthroat behavior, and because many results are fully outside of any one student's control penalizing them for failure to meet goals may seem unduly harsh. We also like to couple this performance grade with a participation grade where students get some number of points for being present every day of the simulation. We like to think, and we emphasize with the students, that every position is important and contributes to the simulation and grading them for their attendance is a good way to encourage full participation.

VII. Conclusion

Simulations are incredibly useful tools for instructors so long as they are carefully implemented to fit course objectives and expectations. We believe that this particular simulation can be employed by instructors in a number of comparative politics or international relations courses with relatively minimal adaptation by instructors. Area studies courses where an instructor only needs substitute the countries chosen is likely the easiest, but both comparative and international political economics courses that want to focus on trade, investment, or finance could adapt the simulation as well. Similarly, though all of the applications we have mentioned to this point are for what are generally considered upper level courses, instructors at the

introductory level can also make use of the simulation. Topics might be broader and not require as much in-depth attention, but units are easily adaptable for lessons on the security dilemma, nuclear proliferation, environmental cooperation, and more.

In the end, we believe this simulation serves a number of purposes. In the broadest sense, it is intended to help students understand the links between domestic politics and international interactions. Political scientists know that the two are interdependent, and our simulation helps solidify this for undergraduate students. Moreover, there is enough flexibility within the simulation structure that instructors can tailor it to suit their own needs for introductory and advanced courses in International Relations or Comparative Politics. We think this fills an important gap for instructors looking to add to their courses. Finally, the simulation was designed to increase student engagement, enjoyment, and learning within a framework that stresses learning outcomes and effective opportunities for students assessment.

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