

Chinazambia & Boliviafranca:  
A Simulation of Domestic Politics & Foreign Policy

Andrew J. Enterline  
University of North Texas  
Department of Political Science  
Box 305340  
Denton, TX 76203-5340  
[ajenter@unt.edu](mailto:ajenter@unt.edu)

Eric M. Jepsen  
University of South Dakota  
Political Science Department  
414 E. Clark St.  
Vermillion, SD 57069  
[eric.jepsen@usd.edu](mailto:eric.jepsen@usd.edu)

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## Facilitator's Guide

This simulation of a territorial dispute between two fictitious states, Chinazambia and Boliviafranca, is very flexible, and therefore can be tailored to fit many time and participation constraints imposed on the simulation facilitator. To date, the authors implemented this simulation successfully under several time and participant conditions, ranging from upper-level undergraduate seminars of three hours in length, to three 50 minute lecture periods per week lecture periods. Additionally, the authors implemented this simulation under various enrollment constraints, ranging from 20 to 60 total students participating in the simulation.

1. Prior to implementing the simulation, duplicates should be made of the following information:
  - (a) The *Participants' Guide*;
  - (b) The *Confidential Information* for each Chinazambia and Boliviafranca state-team;
2. For the purposes of sample size and comparison, it is fruitful to run at least *two simultaneous simulations* of the territorial dispute between the states Chinazambia and Boliviafranca. To this end, subdivide the group of students in a course into four (or six, etc.) equally-sized groups. Groups should have between 5-8 students, and students should be randomly distributed, such there is an equal mix of gender and other student attributes;
3. Direct the students within each group to move their chairs to the corners of the classroom and introduce themselves with their fellow state members. Students should be reminded at this time that they should take care in guarding their strategy-making discussion from

members of counterpart states (i.e., that information is valuable, the basis of power in politics);

4. Identify two groups of students as representing two separate states named Chinazambia, and the two remaining groups as representing two separate states named Boliviafranca. In turn, each Chinazambia state should be paired off with one Boliviafranca state to form two distinct Chinazambia–Boliviafranca dyads for two separate simulations (or 3 dyads, etc., depending on the number of students available for the simulation and preferred group size);
5. Next, instruct each state to design a basic decision making institution for a democratic political system in their respective states (e.g., pure democracy via majority vote, supermajority). Have the students record this decision making design on paper in the form of a state constitution, and then formalize the ratification of the constitution by individual state members via signature;
6. Identify the “minority factions” within the respective Chinazambia and Boliviafranca states. For each state Chinazambia, designate 30 to 40 percent of the student participants in the state as representatives of a political group, the “Hoodooos.” For each state Boliviafranca, designate 30 to 40 percent of the student participants in the state as representatives of an ethnic group, the “Farmers.” Inform the remaining 60 to 70 percent of the group that they represent the majority faction within the respective state. Inform each group that their group’s size relative to the total population is their domestic power ratio and that they represent the corresponding percentage of people in the population as a whole. Stress to the students the need to protect the interests of their respective political

group when it comes to representing their sub-national political grouping during the policymaking process;

7. Distribute a single copy of the *Participants' Guide* to each state Chinazambia and Boliviafranca. Distributing a single copy requires students to communicate within the group, as opposed to atomized reading of simulation instructions. In turn, work through the scenario verbally, answering student questions where necessary;
8. Distribute the *Confidential Information* to each Chinazambia and Boliviafranca team. Again, in order to encourage intra-group communication within each state, it is recommended that the facilitator distribute a single copy of the *Confidential Information* to each group, so that one member of the group is compelled to communicate the information to the remaining group members;
9. Set and announce a time limit on the end of the simulation, and post the passage of time. The termination point is somewhat flexible, such that it can be extended, with this extension being explained to students as an example of chance or serendipity in international relations;<sup>1</sup> and
10. Upon the expiration of time, ask each state to report its final policy decision. If a state decides to engage in interstate war, then decide the outcome by requiring a representative

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<sup>1</sup>If you are running the simulation in a three-hour seminar, the seminar setup (i.e., distribution of materials and establishment of democratic decision making rules) will require approximate 35-45 minutes, the remainder of the simulation can be carried out in one hour and a half, excluding debriefing and discussion. If the simulation is implemented across two, one hour and 20 minute periods, then the simulation can commence on the first day and continue through half of the second day, with the remaining time devoted to debriefing. Finally, if you are running the simulation across the three 50 minute periods, the simulation can be setup and commence on the first day, continue on the second and part of the third days, followed by debriefing on the third day. In our experience, allowing for a greater simulation run time enhances student experience by giving rise to a greater range of political behavior, such as trustworthiness, guarantees, reputation, for example.

of each state in a dyad play the game “rock, paper, scissors,” with the representative achieving “victory” by winning a certain number of rounds of this decision tool for its state. It is suggested that due to the “power” disparities between the two states, that Chinazambia needs to reach 6 rock, paper, scissors “victories” before Boliviafranca reaches 3 victories. This standard for war victory reflects a ratio just under the perceived 70 percent–30 percent chance of military advantage that Boliviafranca has over Chinazambia.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Clearly, the method and details by which a facilitator determines the outcome of a war are flexible. Herein, we merely outline one viable method for rendering an outcome. Additionally, one might also want to make more significant alterations to the victory odds-ratios on the fly in order to stimulate variations in outcomes across simulation groups.

# Participants' Guide

## Simulation Scenario

The border between the countries Chinazambia and Boliviafranca remains disputed despite repeated attempts to resolve this issue during the past fifty years. Prior efforts at resolution range from bilateral negotiations to several attempts at third party mediation via the good offices of the United Nations. The failure of these efforts is most apparent in the costly wars between the two states in 1960 and 1985, respectively, each of which resulted in considerable human and material losses to the two countries, and no decisive winner. These past failures notwithstanding, recent developments in international and local politics have pushed this border issue to the top of each nation's foreign policy agenda, and political leaders in each country are eager to reach a resolution. Specifically, these developments include:

### 1. *International Influences.*

- (a) An increase in the value of natural resources (oil and diamonds) on the global market in response to the collapse of technology stocks; and
- (b) An increase in pressure by the international community to cease destruction of the rainforests, particularly the slash and burn methods often employed by farmers in the region.

### 2. *Local Influences.*

- (a) Depletion of fish stocks in "Fish Lake," as a result of over fishing and pollution (in part, from deforestation and slash and burn methods);
- (b) Encroachment by migrant Farmers from Boliviafranca west into forests claimed by Chinazambia, and resulting deforestation;

(c) Movement by ethnic Hoodoos from Chinazambia east across the Curvy River into territories claimed by Boliviafranca and proximate to newly discovered diamond mines; and

(d) The recent democratization of the political systems in each state.

You may pursue any strategy when negotiating this issue with representatives of your counterpart state. The outcomes of stalemate (i.e., continued hostility and the presence of a non-recognized border) or war are possible, in addition to any number of agreements in between these two outcomes. If your negotiations end in the decision to engage in war each state's fate (i.e., victory or defeat) will be decided through an impartial mechanism employed by the simulation facilitator. Finally, your state will be issued confidential information at the start of the simulation. You may use this information any way that you wish, although you are reminded that sharing this information with citizens of your counterpart state will obviously make said information less confidential, and perhaps, less valuable to you.

### **Map of Disputed Territory**

The map (appended) illustrates the disputed border area between Chinazambia and Boliviafranca. Chinazambia lies to the west and Boliviafranca to the east. Shapes and ovals in the figure represent the location and relative size of a given natural resource (e.g., oil) or geographic features (e.g., Fish Lake). Numbers along horizontal and vertical axis represent geographic increments (50 miles between each increment) and are included as points of reference for negotiating. Note the dashed, gray "Cease-fire Line" representing the location at which the armies of the two countries fought to a stalemate and a case-fire in 1985, a line that is not recognized by the international community as the legal boundary between Chinazambia and Boliviafranca, but rather is the de facto border. The "Curvy River" represents the lower portion

of the Cease-fire Line. Despite this stalemate and cease-fire, the armies of Chinazambia and Boliviafranca remain active along this de factor border, and therefore the probability of renewal of armed conflict remains significantly greater than zero.

# Confidential Information

## State Chinazambia

As an active participant in the diplomacy of the democratic state of Chinazambia in the negotiations with Boliviafranca over the territory detailed in Figure 1, you confront several issues, incentives, and constraints bearing on your decision-making calculus. Therefore it is important that you keep the following in mind when devising your policy:

1. Your intelligence services estimate your chances of winning a renewed war with Boliviafranca as distinctly *less than even*. Additionally, the prevailing mood in your state is anti-war;
2. Although the ethnic Hoodoos have migrated in a pattern such that they are straddling the Curvy River, you cannot leave them unprotected, as their leaders are critical to the sustainability of your coalition in the fledgling national legislature;
3. You are aware that Boliviafranca is in need of oil in order to expand their profitable farming industry, because petroleum is essential for the production of fertilizer;
4. The slash and burn methods of the Boliviafrancan farmers that have moved into the forests is fouling the waters of Fish Lake and reducing the size of your catch per annum; and
5. You desperately need to import food, as a string of prior governments failed to develop the agricultural sector of your economy, despite the fact that your population is growing steadily.

# Confidential Information

## Boliviafranca

As an active participant in the democratic state of Boliviafranca in the negotiations with Chinazambia over the territory detailed in Figure 1, you confront several issues, incentives, and constraints bearing on your decision-making calculus. Therefore it is important that you keep the following in mind when devising your policy:

1. Your intelligence services report that Boliviafranca has a military advantage over Chinazambia, and therefore you see war as a potentially viable route to achieving your policy goals with regard to the issues at hand. Specifically, your intelligence services place your odds of victory in war at *roughly 70 percent*;
2. While the agricultural sector in Boliviafranca is profitable, the supply of land is decreasing at the same time that the number of Farmers is increasing, and therefore land prices have soared. As a result, Farmers are migrating westward and are cultivating new farmland in the forests along, and to the west of, the Cease-fire Line;
3. The Farmers are potentially very powerful politically, so you must be very careful with how you accommodate their preferences during the negotiation;
4. You believe that Chinazambia is recklessly overfishing Fish Lake;
5. You believe that the Hoodoos have designs on your newly discovered diamond mines to the east of Curvy River; and
6. You are dependent on oil for machinery and fertilizer in your agricultural sector, but the current dispute has led Chinazambia to limit selling its high-grade, geographically proximate crude oil to you, thereby making the oil you do import more expensive.

## Debriefing

This simulation is intended to focus student attention on several important concepts in international relations and comparative foreign policy:

1. The choices that states must make in light of the security dilemma facing all participants;
2. The adoption, or at least recognition, of participants' strategies based on both liberal and realist perspectives on security. Participants will often voice opinions on their perceived beneficial strategy in light of international relations theory;
3. Experience with the two-level game "pulls" of intra-state politics and inter-state politics; and
4. Student reliance on the "jargon" of international politics (e.g., zero-sum behavior, reciprocity) when discussing the simulation.

After the simulation concludes, there should be 30 to 45 minutes devoted to discussion and evaluation of the simulation proceedings. Some questions for discussion are as follows:

1. How did your state's democratic decision making processes affect your negotiation strategy?
2. How did the different subgroups within the states interact over the course of the simulation? Did inter-group tensions arise? If so, why?
3. What were the major issues of contention within your state?
4. How does the "security dilemma" relate to your experiences in the simulation?
5. Did your state follow an explicitly realist or liberal-based strategy, or some alternative, for engaging the other state?

6. Did the actions or strategy of negotiation on the part of your diplomat affect the negotiations with the other state? Did they affect the outcome of the simulation?
7. Describe concretely some of the tensions between what was politically viable domestically and what the other state desired during the negotiations. It helps to think of this utilizing a two-level game framework.
8. Did the “tragedy of the commons,” the notion of scarce economic resources interacting with collective action dynamics, and the prospects for future economic growth, affect your decision-making? How so?
9. What explains variation in the outcomes of negotiation across the set of two-state teams participating in the simulation? Why did one pair of states conclude the simulation in war, while other pair of states conclude the simulation with the status quo ante or a negotiated outcome. If variation is absent, what explains the uniformity of outcomes?

Finally, the simulation provides ample experience (i.e., data) that can be explored in the context of post-simulation student papers.<sup>3</sup> Some ideas for student papers are as follows:

1. Analyze the dynamics of the “security dilemma,” and identify actions by states that exacerbated or alleviated this dilemma;
2. Analyze the simulation through the lens of a basic “two-level game” framework. Give specific examples of how the simulation evolved from the perspective of this conceptual framework;
3. Discuss how the simulation would might have evolved differently had the Hoodoos and/or Farmers represented 50 percent of the respective state’s populations; and

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<sup>3</sup>Making participants aware prior to the simulation that a simulation-related paper assignment will follow the simulation might result in increased rates of participation during the simulation.

4. Discuss how the simulation was influenced by the odds of success in war, and whether and how a modification of these odds might influence state behavior in the simulation.

