

To Brief or Not to Brief: Using the Same Simulation for Different Learning Goals

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Games and simulations have been an important part of pedagogy in political science, providing experiential learning for large-scale government processes that are difficult for students to participate in directly. As philosopher C. Thi Nguyen has written, games can be thought of as “the artistic crystallizations of everyday practical reasoning and practical action—of the experience of choosing, deciding, and strategizing” (2019, 432). In effect, they create a sense of agency in a particular situation, helping students understand the choices faced by others in contexts beyond their own direct experience.

Insofar as political scientists seek to foster empathy in the classroom, games and simulations can be an effective and surprisingly low-cost way to encourage students to consider what they would do in another person's shoes—even if they may still struggle with the deeper challenge of imagining what they would do as someone with entirely different assumptions and experiences. Nonetheless, as tools for illustrating particular situations, strategic choices, or critical decisions that shape political and social history—or that arise within specific institutional alignments—there is broad agreement that games and simulations are effective. And perhaps even fun.

¹ We are grateful for initial research assistance from our students Aashvi Govind and Hudson Small at Northeastern University

There is an extensive body of literature on active learning and on the effectiveness of games and simulations in the college classroom generally, and in political science specifically. But while we have a sense that debriefings—facilitated conversations to reflect upon the activities undertaken during the simulation—are important, we know much less about how best to run these debriefings. In this paper, we outline the origins of a “low-intensity” (Glazier 2011, Sears 2018) simulation based on coalition bargaining in the context of German politics, and propose to use structured comparisons of its use for different learning outcomes to begin to measure the ways in which the content of a debriefing matters for learning, not merely its presence or absence.

Origins and Conduct of the Simulation

The simulation we are proposing to study is a highly abbreviated and simplified version of the coalition bargaining process that takes place after elections in many European parliamentary, multiparty democracies. One of the authors (Brown) originally developed this simulation in his first semester teaching a comparative politics course as an instructor of record—partially to share his knowledge of German politics and to create an opportunity to teach it more clearly in a comparative context, but also as part of a broader effort to mix lecture and active learning in smaller sections of an introductory course.

The simulation is designed to take one full class session. Students are informed in advance that they will be participating in a simulation and receive a full class-length lecture covering German political history, legislative institutions, and election rules. The importance of coalitions is mentioned briefly but not explored in depth during this lecture. Students also receive short presentations (2 to 3 minutes each) on the history and ideology of each German parliamentary party.

On the day of the simulation, students are given a one-page instruction sheet outlining the rules and a point system for managing the simulation. They have a few minutes to review the rules and ask questions before being randomly assigned to one of the parties. The simulation

ends when parties representing a majority of seats in the Bundestag reach agreement on their positions for seven issue areas, simulating a simplified coalition accord. Students understand that specific issue stances will earn or cost them points and that they must negotiate with other parties to secure the best possible deal.

In addition to the points awarded for specific issue positions in the coalition agreement, several special rules provide additional positive or negative points. The largest party in the coalition receives a bonus to reflect that their leader will almost certainly become the incoming chancellor and head of government. Every party also gets a slight point bonus simply for being part of the coalition.

The inclusion of the populist-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) in a coalition is allowed but costs the involved parties several points to reflect the *cordon sanitaire* or *Brandmauer* that has traditionally—at least until January 2025—prevented them from participating in negotiations due to their potential extremist or anti-democratic stances.

A few additional rules help simulate the challenges of party bargaining. The most significant is that students assigned to the Greens must unanimously agree to join a coalition, while students assigned to the SPD must take a majority vote before approving a coalition agreement. All other parties are asked to designate a leader who will make the final decision on whether to join. This approach, in a very simplified manner, reflects structural differences in how the German parties operate.

After answering questions, students are randomly assigned a two-page “character sheet” that attaches them to one of the parties and outlines that party’s issue positions. For each issue, there is a preferred outcome that earns the most points, while positions farther from that preference receive fewer points—sometimes bottoming out at zero and sometimes resulting in negative points. Each party has one or two issues with extremely high point values due to their importance to the party, and some parties have an issue with no assigned point values due to its low salience among party elites and/or members. Parties with more seats in parliament have

more students assigned character sheets, while smaller parties have fewer students, reflecting the dynamics of larger and smaller parliamentary factions.

From that point on, students are free to discuss, debate, meet with each other, bluff about their positions, share their character sheets, and negotiate in whatever way is appropriate to reach a coalition agreement. The only stipulation is that they cannot trade out-of-class items or favors (in other words, they can't literally give each other money or other incentives). Students negotiate until an agreement is reached and then announce their coalition.

At the end of the simulation, we leave time for students to debrief and reflect on their experience. Depending on how quickly the simulation comes together, the length of this discussion varies, but the instructor ensures that at least 15 to 20 minutes are set aside. Certain themes emerge every year—for example, the isolation of being in a party on the ideological extremes and having fewer potential coalition partners. Occasionally, an unusual coalition forms, prompting unique discussions. Students also sometimes have questions about different policy areas and how they align with the German party system, particularly in ways that differ from their (usually) American experience.

Learning Goals

As stated above, the instructor had several somewhat inchoate learning goals when first designing the simulation. However, after the first couple of iterations, it became clear that there was always some confusion at the beginning, regardless of how the rules were explained. While a few revisions to the instructions improved the likelihood that students would figure things out within the first couple of minutes—or at least be able to process them more quickly—some of the initial confusion actually proved useful for generating discussion later on.

Students noticed how complicated the system was, even though it was a drastically simplified version of the real thing. They realized it wasn't just that they didn't know how to strategize, but that multidimensional bargaining didn't even have a clear starting point. The strategic difficulty of the exercise became a challenge that placed students in the zone of

proximal development (cf. Vygotsky 1978), helping them grasp both the limitations and benefits of rational choice as a model for political behavior. It also underscored why a multiparty system doesn't simply "give more choices" without trade-offs.

The second author on this project (Ostojki) first encountered the simulation as a teaching assistant for the first author's course. As someone with expertise in German politics, she found it easy to incorporate into her comparative politics classes when she became an instructor of record—first as a graduate student, then as a lecturer and visiting professor. However, while the first author placed increasing emphasis in the debriefing on the difficulty of bargaining across multiple issue dimensions, the second author saw an opportunity to help students—especially those with little or no familiarity with other party systems—understand the specific details of the German party system. She focused on giving them key party names and another empirical example they could reference later in the semester. To support this, she simplified the rules slightly while still maintaining some complexity and introduced more tools for reinforcing recall in her debriefing and assessments.

After both authors had used the assignment in several classes, they casually discussed its evolution and realized that while the rules of the game itself had barely changed, their learning outcomes had diverged significantly. The instructional methods they used to complement the simulation were also becoming increasingly different. Despite these variations, both were happy with their respective outcomes!

While both authors had an intuitive sense of how to use debriefings to achieve their desired learning goals, further exploration of the literature on simulation debriefing revealed a strong emphasis on the need for instructors to use debriefings to help students process the events of a simulation or game. This included Victor Asal's now somewhat legendary axiom that "the debriefing is the learning." However, there was less guidance on how to structure debriefings or which methods were more or less effective.

Is there evidence that changes to debriefing content can significantly impact the specific learning outcomes achieved? Or are these outcomes largely embedded in the simulation

experience itself and merely recalled or reinforced through the debriefing process? Given that the two authors now had significantly divergent goals but were using fundamentally the same simulation, they saw an opportunity to conduct a controlled comparison to help answer this question.

Research Question: Does the content of debriefings significantly influence the learning outcomes of games and simulations in a political context, or is the effect primarily due to the presence of a debriefing itself?

Literature Review

There are some helpful guides on how to run a debriefing, but many rely on reflection or received wisdom rather than empirical evidence or controlled comparisons beyond “anecdota.” Many of the suggestions are likely useful, such as Wedig’s (2010) recommendations to conduct debriefings as soon as possible, allow students time to reflect on the group process and/or vent, and close with an explicit connection to course content. Both oral debriefings (Asal 2005, Wedig 2010) and written debriefings (Petranek, Corey, and Black 1992) have been advocated, but whether they have significant effects remains unclear. Several scholars have explicitly called for more research on this topic (Petranek, Corey, and Black 1992; Raymond and Usherwood 2013), even though many instructors find these methods intuitively beneficial.

(This has been studied considerably more in the health sciences but much more rarely outside it; a short section here will cover and translate key insights from these studies and assess their applicability to social science.)

As Baranowski and Weir (2015) point out, measuring the effects of learning in simulations is particularly tricky. Previous studies have assessed direct recall, engagement, and perceived learning, but measuring theoretical learning is more challenging, especially in terms of long-term retention (Asal and Roberts 2023). Another complication is determining whether learning stems from the simulation itself or from the personal interactions and engagements it fosters (Raymond 2012).

(Several more paragraphs here as we dig into measurement issues.)

Because this is a low-intensity simulation, there are limits to how much detail and realism can be incorporated. Instead, the goal is to provide a glimpse of how theories or cases function rather than to explore any particular theory in depth (Sears 2018). For one instructor, experiencing frustration is a desired learning outcome and may be achievable in a low-intensity simulation. However, some studies suggest that frustration can be associated with lower perceived learning (Giovanello, Kirk, and Kromer 2013). For both authors, it is critical to decide *which* learning goal to prioritize, as pursuing multiple objectives may hinder student learning and certainly complicates assessment (Asal and Blake 2006).

(Other sections will map out the terrain of the literature on debriefings in particular.)

Proposed Research Design

Hypotheses:

- H1: Students will recall a greater amount of detail of the German political system when they receive a content-oriented debriefing
- H2a: Students will more accurately describe bargaining theories and the idea of coalition formation when they receive a theory-oriented debriefing
- H2b: Students will describe bargaining theories and the idea of coalition formation in greater detail when they receive a theory-oriented debriefing
- H3: Students who receive either briefing will recall a greater amount of detail and more accurately and comprehensively describe bargaining theories than students who do not
- H4: Students who receive a debriefing will report higher levels of perceived learning
- H5: Students who receive a debriefing will report no difference in their enjoyment of the simulation

Treatment Design:

- Pre-Test
 - Administered after preparatory lecture and before simulation
 - Qs about understanding of content and theories
 - Qs about class enjoyment and perceived learning
 - Not to be graded
- Post Test 1
 - Administered directly after simulation
 - Qs about understanding of content and theories
 - Qs about class enjoyment and perceived learning
 - Not to be graded
- Post Test 2
 - Administered 2 weeks later
 - Qs about understanding of content and theories
 - To be included in a graded assessment
 - Qs about class enjoyment and perceived learning
- End of Semester Reflection
 - Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory Grading
 - No prompting of simulation
 - Qualitative analysis of how much / in what way simulation was mentioned.

Blocking Design:

- Semester 1 Institution 1
 - Section A, Theory Debriefing
- Semester 1 Institution 2
 - Section A, Content Debriefing
- Semester 2 Institution 1
 - Section A, No Debriefing
 - Section B, Content Debriefing
- Semester 2 Institution 2
 - Section A, No Debriefing
- Semester 3 Institution 1
 - Section A, Theory Debriefing
 - Section B, No Debriefing
- Semester 3 Institution 2
 - Section A, Theory Debriefing

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Simulation – Coalition Building in Germany

After reading and studying the German party system, we will attempt to simulate it in class. Students will be assigned to one of the German Parties listed below as represented following the September 2021 elections:

- Social Democrats (SPD) – 206 seats in the Bundestag
- Christian Democratic Union (CDU) – 151 seats
- The Greens (Green) – 118 seats
- Free Democrats (FDP) – 92 seats
- The Alternative (AfD) – 83 seats
- Christian Social Union (CSU) – 45 seats
- The Left (Left) – 39 seats

Once you have your party assignment, you are free to meet with other parties and attempt to create a coalition. The point is to create a majority (368 seats) and then attempt to get as many points as possible for the issues your party finds important. The simulation will end when two or more parties, making up a majority of seats, reach a coalition agreement on how to proceed on each of the issues on your sheet.

To win:

You will add up your game points given on issues that were passed, along with any bonus points. The points you will receive per issue for each party is listed on your individual sheet. All members of parties that receive more than 12 votes will gain a TBD food-based bonus later in the semester.

Bonus Points:

1. The largest party in the coalition gets the chancellorship and 8 game points; any other parties in the coalition get 6 points.
2. If the AfD are in the government, every other party loses 2 points.
3. If the CDU or the CSU joins a government **without** the other, both lose 3 points
4. If the CDU and the SPD both join the government, they both lose 2 points and any other coalition parties lose 1 point.
5. If you have a supermajority parliament (if you have a party you don't need mathematically), every party loses 2 points per "extra" party

Special Rules:

1. Party Organizations
 - a. AfD, CDU, CSU, FDP, Left need to elect a Chairperson by majority at some point; that person should listen to their party members but they get to make final decisions on joining coalitions as they see fit.
 - b. SPD needs to take a vote before approving any deal, must be a majority
 - c. Greens need to take a vote before approving any deal, must be unanimous
2. If no majority coalition is reached by the end of the simulation time, we simply work out the results of party line votes and nobody gets bonus points for being in government.

Christian Democratic Union (CDU)



Senior Partner in Coalitions, 2005-2021

Party Leaders as of Election: Armin Laschet

Ideology: Christian Democracy, Liberal Conservatism

Political Position: Center-right, “catch-all”

Membership in 2018: 425,910

Representation:

- Bundestag (Federal Parliament) : 151/735
- Prime Ministers of States: 6/16 — Hesse, North Rhine-Westphalia, Saarland, Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt, & Schleswig-Holstein
- Junior Partners in State Coalitions: 4/16

Issues:

Refugees

- Many fewer refugees/many more deportations = 0 points
- fewer refugees/more deportations = 1 point
- status quo = 2 points
- more refugees/fewer deportations = 1 point
- many more refugees/many fewer deportations = 0 points

Alternative Energy

- Much less alternative energy = 0 points
- Less alternative energy = 1 point
- Status Quo = 1 point
- More alternative energy = 2 points
- Much more alternative energy = 1 point

European Union - Most important issue for CDU

- Much less involvement with EU = -2 points
- Less involvement with EU = 0 points
- Status Quo = 2 points
- More involvement with EU = 4 points
- Much more involvement with EU = 2 points

Education and Childcare Spending

- Much less childcare spending = 0 points
- Less childcare spending = 1 point
- Status Quo = 2 points
- More childcare spending = 1 point
- Much more childcare spending = 0 points

Pensions & Unemployment

- Much less generous pensions and unemployment benefits = 0 points
- Less generous pensions and unemployment benefits = 1 point
- Status Quo = 2 points
- More generous pensions and unemployment benefits = 1 point
- Much more generous pensions and unemployment benefits = 0 points

Financial Regulations

- Much less financial regulation = 0 points
- Less financial regulation = 1 point
- Status Quo = 2 points
- More financial regulation = 1 point
- Much more financial regulation = 0 points

Same-Sex Marriage and LGBTQ rights

- Abolish same-sex marriage and registered partnerships = 0 points
- Abolish same-sex marriage, go back to registered partnerships only = 1 point
- Status Quo = 2 points
- Keep same-sex marriage and also further expand LGBTQ rights somewhat = 1 point
- Keep same-sex marriage and also further expand LGBTQ rights drastically = 0 points

Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD)



Junior Partner in 2013-2021 Coalitions

Party Leader as of Election: Olaf Scholz

Ideology: Social Democracy

Political Position: Center-left

Membership in 2018: 457,700

Representation:

- Bundestag (Federal Parliament) : 206/735
- Prime Ministers of States: 7/16 – Berlin, Brandenburg, Bremen, Hamburg, Lower Saxony, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Rhineland-Palatinate
- Junior Partners in State Coalitions: 4/16

Issues:

Refugees

- Many fewer refugees/many more deportations = 0 points
- fewer refugees/more deportations = 1 point
- status quo = 2 points
- more refugees/fewer deportations = 1 point
- many more refugees/many fewer deportations = 0 points

Alternative Energy

- Much less alternative energy = -1 point
- Less alternative energy = 0 points
- Status Quo = 1 point
- More alternative energy = 2 points
- Much more alternative energy = 1 point

European Union

- Much less involvement with EU = -2 points
- Less involvement with EU = -1 point
- Status Quo = 0 points
- More involvement with EU (= 1 point
- Much more involvement with EU= 2 points

Education and Childcare Spending

- Much less childcare spending = -2 points
- Less childcare spending = -1 point
- Status Quo = 0 points
- More childcare spending = 1 point
- Much more childcare spending = 2 points

Pensions & Unemployment - Most important issue for SPD

- Much less generous pensions and unemployment benefits = -4 points
- Less generous pensions and unemployment benefits = -2 points
- Status Quo = 0 point
- More generous pensions and unemployment benefits = 2 points
- Much more generous pensions and unemployment benefits = 4 points

Financial Regulations

- Much less financial regulation = -1 point
- Less financial regulation = 0 points
- Status Quo = 1 point
- More financial regulation = 2 points
- Much more financial regulation = 1 point

Same-Sex Marriage and LGBTQ rights

- Abolish same-sex marriage and registered partnerships = -1 point
- Abolish same-sex marriage, go back to registered partnerships only = 0 points
- Status Quo = 1 point
- Keep same-sex marriage and also further expand LGBTQ rights somewhat = 2 points
- Keep same-sex marriage and also further expand LGBTQ rights drastically = 1 point

Alternative for Germany (AfD)



Party Leaders as of Election: Tino Chrupalla & Jörg Meuthen (resigned after the election)

Ideology: German nationalism, Right wing populism

Political Position: Right wing, far right

Membership in 2018: 33,500

Representation:

- Bundestag (Federal Parliament) : 83/735
- Prime Ministers of States: 0/16
- Junior Partners in State Coalitions: 0/16

Issues:

Refugees - Most important issue for AfD

- Many fewer refugees/many more deportations = 4 points
- fewer refugees/more deportations = 2 points
- status quo = 0 points
- more refugees/fewer deportations = -2 points
- many more refugees/many fewer deportations = -4 points

Alternative Energy

- Much less alternative energy = 1 point
- Less alternative energy = 2 points
- Status Quo = 1 point
- More alternative energy = 0 points
- Much more alternative energy = -1 point

European Union

- Much less involvement with EU = 2 points
- Less involvement with EU = 1 point
- Status Quo = 0 points
- More involvement with EU = -1 point
- Much more involvement with EU = -2 points

Education and Childcare Spending

- Much less childcare spending = 1 point
- Less childcare spending = 2 points
- Status Quo = 1 point
- More childcare spending = 0 points
- Much more childcare spending = -1 point

Pensions & Unemployment

- Much less generous pensions and unemployment benefits = 1 point
- Less generous pensions and unemployment benefits = 2 points
- Status Quo = 1 point
- More generous pensions and unemployment benefits = 0 points
- Much more generous pensions and unemployment benefits = -1 point

Financial Regulations

- Much less financial regulation = -1 point
- Less financial regulation = 0 points
- Status Quo = 1 point
- More financial regulation = 2 points
- Much more financial regulation = 1 point

Same-Sex Marriage and LGBTQ rights

- Abolish same-sex marriage and registered partnerships = 1 point
- Abolish same-sex marriage, go back to registered partnerships only = 2 points
- Status Quo = 1 point
- Keep same-sex marriage and also further expand LGBTQ rights somewhat = 0 points
- Keep same-sex marriage and also further expand LGBTQ rights drastically = -1 point

Free Democratic Party (FDP)



Party Leader as of Election: Christian Lindner

Ideology: Liberalism (Classical, Economic, Conservative)

Political Position: Center to center right

Membership in 2018: 65,000

Representation:

- Bundestag (Federal Parliament) : 92/735
- Prime Ministers of States: 0/16
- Junior Partners in State Coalitions: 3/16

Issues:

Refugees

- Many fewer refugees/many more deportations = 1 points
- fewer refugees/more deportations = 2 points
- status quo = 1 point
- more refugees/fewer deportations = 0 points
- many more refugees/many fewer deportations = -1 point

Alternative Energy

- Much less alternative energy = 2 points
- Less alternative energy = 1 point
- Status Quo = 0 points
- More alternative energy = -1 point
- Much more alternative energy = -2 points

European Union

- Much less involvement with EU = 0 points
- Less involvement with EU = 1 point
- Status Quo = 2 points
- More involvement with EU = 1 point
- Much more involvement with EU = 0 points

Education and Childcare Spending

- Much less childcare spending = 1 point
- Less childcare spending = 2 points
- Status Quo = 1 point
- More childcare spending = 0 points
- Much more childcare spending = - 1 point

Pensions & Unemployment

- Much less generous pensions and unemployment benefits = 2 points
- Less generous pensions and unemployment benefits = 1 point
- Status Quo = 0 points
- More generous pensions and unemployment benefits = -1 point
- Much more generous pensions and unemployment benefits = -2 points

Financial Regulations - Most important issue for FDP

- Much less financial regulation = 4 points
- Less financial regulation = 2 points
- Status Quo = 0 points
- More financial regulation = -2 points
- Much more financial regulation = - 4 points

Same-Sex Marriage and LGBTQ rights

- Abolish same-sex marriage and registered partnerships = -1 points
- Abolish same-sex marriage, go back to registered partnerships only = 0 points
- Status Quo = 1 point
- Keep same-sex marriage and also further expand LGBTQ rights somewhat = 2 points
- Keep same-sex marriage and also further expand LGBTQ rights drastically = 1 point

The Left (Left)



Party Leaders as of Election: Dietmar Bartsch & Janine Wissler

Political Position: Left wing to far left

Ideology: Democratic Socialism, Anti-capitalism, left wing populism

Membership in 2018: 62,000

Representation:

- Bundestag (Federal Parliament) : 39/735
- Prime Ministers of States: 1/16 – Thuringia
- Junior Partners in State Coalitions: 2/16

Issues

Refugees

- Many fewer refugees/many more deportations = 1 point
- fewer refugees/more deportations = 2 points
- status quo = 1 point
- more refugees/fewer deportations = 0 points
- many more refugees/many fewer deportations = -1 point

Alternative Energy

- Much less alternative energy = 0 points
- Less alternative energy = 1 point
- Status Quo = 2 points
- More alternative energy = 1 point
- Much more alternative energy = 0 points

European Union

- Much less involvement with EU = 1 point
- Less involvement with EU = 2 points
- Status Quo = 1 point
- More involvement with EU = 0 points
- Much more involvement with EU = -1 point

Education and Childcare Spending - One of two most important issues for Left

- Much less childcare spending = -4 points
- Less childcare spending = -2 points
- Status Quo = 0 points
- More childcare spending = 2 points
- Much more childcare spending = 4 points

Pensions & Unemployment

- Much less generous pensions and unemployment benefits = -2 points
- Less generous pensions and unemployment benefits = -1 point
- Status Quo = 0 points
- More generous pensions and unemployment benefits = 1 point
- Much more generous pensions and unemployment benefits = 2 points

Financial Regulations - One of two most important issues for Left

- Much less financial regulation = -2 points
- Less financial regulation = -1 point
- Status Quo = 0 points
- More financial regulation = 1 point
- Much more financial regulation = 2 points

Same-Sex Marriage and LGBTQ rights

- Abolish same-sex marriage and registered partnerships = 0 points
- Abolish same-sex marriage, go back to registered partnerships only = 1 point
- Status Quo = 2 points
- Keep same-sex marriage and also further expand LGBTQ rights somewhat = 1 point
- Keep same-sex marriage and also further expand LGBTQ rights drastically = 0 points

Alliance '90/The Greens (Greens)



Party Leaders as of Election: Annelena Baerbock

Ideology: Green Politics, Grassroots democracy

Political Position: center left

Membership: 70,000

Representation:

- Bundestag (Federal Parliament) : 118/735
- Prime Ministers of States: 1/16 — Baden-Württemberg
- Junior Partners in State Coalitions: 8/16

Issues

Refugees

- Many fewer refugees/many more deportations = -2 points
- fewer refugees/more deportations = -1 point
- status quo = 0 points
- more refugees/fewer deportations = 1 point
- many more refugees/many fewer deportations = 2 points

Alternative Energy - Most important issue for Greens

- Much less alternative energy = -4 points
- Less alternative energy = -2 points
- Status Quo = 0 points
- More alternative energy = 2 points
- Much more alternative energy = 4 points

European Union

- Much less involvement with EU = -1 point
- Less involvement with EU = 0 points
- Status Quo = 1 point
- More involvement with EU = 2 points
- Much more involvement with EU = 1 point

Education and Childcare Spending

- Much less childcare spending = - 1 point
- Less childcare spending = 0 points
- Status Quo = 1 point
- More childcare spending = 2 points
- Much more childcare spending = 1 point

Pensions & Unemployment

- Much less generous pensions and unemployment benefits = -1 point
- Less generous pensions and unemployment benefits = 0 points
- Status Quo = 1 point
- More generous pensions and unemployment benefits = 2 points
- Much more generous pensions and unemployment benefits = 1 point

Financial Regulations

- Much less financial regulation = 0 points
- Less financial regulation = 1 point
- Status Quo = 2 points
- More financial regulation = 1 point
- Much more financial regulation = 0 points

Same-Sex Marriage and LGBTQ rights

- Abolish same-sex marriage and registered partnerships = -2 points
- Abolish same-sex marriage, go back to registered partnerships only = -1 point
- Status Quo = 0 points
- Keep same-sex marriage and also further expand LGBTQ rights somewhat = 1 point
- Keep same-sex marriage and also further expand LGBTQ rights drastically = 2 points

Christian Social Union (CSU)



Party Leaders as of Election: Markus Söder

Ideology: Christian Democracy

Political Position: Center right

Membership in 2018: 141,000

Representation:

- Bundestag (Federal Parliament): 45/735
- Prime Ministers of States: 1/16 — Bavaria
- Junior Partners in State Coalitions: Does not run in any state except Bavaria

Issues

Refugees- Most important issue for CSU

- Many fewer refugees/many more deportations = 2 points
- fewer refugees/more deportations = 4 points
- status quo = 2 points
- more refugees/fewer deportations = 0 points
- many more refugees/many fewer deportations = -2 points

Alternative Energy

- Much less alternative energy = 0 points
- Less alternative energy = 1 point
- Status Quo = 2 points
- More alternative energy = 1 point
- Much more alternative energy = 0 points

European Union

- Much less involvement with EU = 1 point
- Less involvement with EU = 2 points
- Status Quo = 1 point
- More involvement with EU = 0 points
- Much more involvement with EU = -1 point

Education and Childcare Spending

- Much less childcare spending = 0 points
- Less childcare spending = 0 point
- Status Quo = 2 points
- More childcare spending = 1 point
- Much more childcare spending = 0 points

Pensions & Unemployment

- Much less generous pensions and unemployment benefits = 1 point
- Less generous pensions and unemployment benefits = 2 points
- Status Quo = 1 point
- More generous pensions and unemployment benefits = 0 points
- Much more generous pensions and unemployment benefits = -1 point

Financial Regulations

- Much less financial regulation = 0 points
- Less financial regulation = 1 point
- Status Quo = 2 points
- More financial regulation = 1 point
- Much more financial regulation = 0 points

Same-Sex Marriage and LGBTQ rights

- Abolish same-sex marriage and registered partnerships = 2 points
- Abolish same-sex marriage, go back to registered partnerships only = 1 point
- Status Quo = 0 points
- Keep same-sex marriage and also further expand LGBTQ rights somewhat = -1 point
- Keep same-sex marriage and also further expand LGBTQ rights drastically = -2 points