

GEOG 316 - Political Geography - Final Project - Fall 2018

Constitutional Convention

Reports due: Monday, November 26, 2018 at 11:59 PM (by email)

Posters and Presentations: November 27 & November 29

Your task is to design a governmental and electoral system for what has become known as the **Four Nations**, where a war has ended recently. Each of you is assigned a role based on both an ethnicity and region, and your own gender. This government system will be incorporated into this new state's constitution.

In assigned groups of four or five, you will prepare a brief presentation, poster, and report to be submitted to your course instructor outlining the justification for your proposed governmental structure and electoral design.

The position of a group should correspond to the interests and incentives of its members as defined by their roles: ethnicity, region, and gender. Note that these different dimensions of identity may be in conflict, e.g., a system that gives your ethnicity an advantage may be bad for your region. Your task is to balance and overcome (when possible) such conflicts.

Your proposal should also (arguably) lead to a peaceful, stable, and democratic state.

In short, the major challenge is designing a system that is both good for you in particular, AND that will lead to peace, stability, and democracy. Balance, above all else, is key.

Where you'll get your background information

Lectures 3 & 15 - What goes into state formation

Lectures 7 & 8 - How to address/consider nations and nationalism

Lectures 16 & 17 - Federalism

Lectures 18 & 19 - Creating electoral systems

Lecture 20 - How to ensure voting rights are secured

Lecture 21 - Reflecting on the identities of representatives

Lecture 22 - How to form city governments

The following resources are among some that will be particularly helpful:

- Bird, Karen. 2014. Ethnic quotas and ethnic representation worldwide. *International Political Science Review* 35 (1): 12-26.

- Forest, B. (2008) The Territorial Politics of Representation. In *The Handbook of Political Geography*, ed. K. Cox, M. Low, and J. Robinson. SAGE Publications: 375-388.
- Horowitz, D. L. 2003. Electoral systems: A primer for decision makers. *Journal of Democracy* 14 (4): 115-127.
- Smith, G. 1995. Mapping the Federal Condition: Ideology, Political Practice and Social Justice. In *Federalism: The Multiethnic Challenge*, ed. G. Smith. New York: Longman Publishing: 1-28. (from Lecture 17)

What is required

Report

Due Monday, November 26, 2018 at 11:59 PM (by email)

Your group will be responsible for the production of a report, outlining your reasoning for designing this state's system of government. This report will be 5-7 pages, not including title pages, bibliographies, the appendix, or the statement of contributions.

It will include the following:

Section 1: Who is in your group and how you managed discussions around your given identities (i.e. was there debate over which groups should have more power?)

Section 2: Here, you will answer broad questions about the state overall. These are:

1. Will the Four Nations be a federation or a unitary state?
2. Will the Head of State be democratically-elected, elected indirectly, or be a hereditary monarch?
3. What will the powers of the Head of State be?
4. What will the powers of the Head of Government be?

NOTE: This new state will be organized democratically, so the adoption of an absolutist monarchy is forbidden.

Section 3: Here, you will discuss the electoral system of the Four Nations. You will answer the following questions:

5. Will the Four Nations have a bicameral or unicameral legislature?

6. How many seats will be in the legislature (and in each chamber if bicameral)?
7. What electoral system will the Four Nations use?
8. How will minority groups and women be assured some level of representation?

Section 4: Here, you will discuss the other levels of government and answer the following questions:

9. If the Four Nations is to be a federation, what will the sub-national governments look like? If it will be a unitary state, how will regional issues be addressed?
10. What will the governance of cities look like and what powers will they have?

Groups must specify necessary details regarding each of these choices. For example, if you choose a federation with a unicameral legislature using proportional representation, you would need to identify the composition of the federal units (Will there be provinces, territories, states? What powers will these units have?), whether the proportional representation system will use an open or closed list, a single national list or several regional lists, the minimum threshold for representation, etc. Alternatively, if you choose a plurality system, you need to describe the basic rules that will be used to draw electoral districts (population equality, etc.)

Appendix: Here, you'll include any maps, graphs, or other illustrative content you've created. Be detailed and creative! I can't stress how important it is to not hold back on your creativity.

Statement of Contributions: This is important, as it is a way for groups to keep track of who participated in what way. In this section, you'll simply list which group member did what for the project. It can look something like this -

- Group Member 1: Section 1 & 2 of report, proofreading poster
- Group Member 2: Section 3 of report, responsible for printing of poster
- Group Member 3: Section 4 and Appendix of report, layout of poster
- Group Member 4: Prepared presentation, collected poster

This is a way to ensure everyone has assigned tasks and there is a careful recording of them to maintain fairness.

Poster

To be brought to presentations: November 27 & November 29

Your poster is meant to be a creative, well-designed, easy-to-understand briefing on your proposal. It will include what you deem to be the most important and interesting information, such as maps of the federal units you propose, what the legislatures will look like, key bullet points on what is explained in greater detail in the report.

The poster will be **no larger** than 48 inches X 36 inches or 121.92 cm X 91.44 cm. The preferred size is closer to 17" x 22" (two 11" x 17" sheets). It can be printed on regular glossy poster paper or mounted onto foamcore.

Posters can be designed using Adobe Photoshop, Illustrator, or InDesign (all of these are available on the computers in the Humanities and Social Sciences Library), or using PowerPoint or any open-source graphic design software.

Posters can be printed at any print shop, but here are four that are close and accessible:

- CopiEUS - 3480 Rue University, McConnell Engineering Building, Room 6 (*On Campus*) - <https://www.copieus.mcgilleus.ca/posters>
- Copie Nova - 1015 Sherbrooke Ouest (*Adjacent to campus*) - <https://www.copienova.com/en>
- Rubiks - 2148 Mackay (*Close to Guy-Concordia Metro*) - <https://rubiks.ca/EN/products-services/large-format.html>
- Staples/Bureau en Gros - 895 Rue de la Gauchetière O (*in the Central Train Station/Bonaventure Metro*) - <https://stores.staples.ca/qc/montreal/895-rue-de-la-gauchetiere>

Presentation

Presentations: November 27 & November 29

Your presentation is an opportunity to share your proposal with the class. You'll bring your poster and try and convince the class and your course instructor of the merits of your selected electoral system, distribution of powers, and management of minority interests. The presentation will be 5 to 10 minutes.

Roles

Students are randomly assigned an ethnicity and region, but will "play" their own gender, e.g., female students will be females in the simulation. In your role, you should seek to advance the interest(s) of your ethnicity, region, and gender. Keep in mind, however, that

the proposal also needs to satisfy the goal of the assignment: the creation of a peaceful, stable, and democratic state.

Ground Rules

1. There are four ethnic groups in the Four Nations:
 - Water
 - Earth
 - Fire
 - Air

2. There are five regions in the Four Nations:
 - North
 - South
 - East
 - West
 - Capital Region

3. The level of trust among the ethnic groups and among the regions is very low.

4. Over the past 50 years, the different nations have evolved considerably on the issue of minority rights. Many local leaders are women and spiritual leaders are members of the LGBTQ community. Despite this, there is still low women's participation in prestigious occupations, such as in the military, and rural areas still have some hesitation regarding minority groups. You will have to address how to ensure women and minority groups will be included and represented in the state and government.

5. Any of the regions may be combined if you wish, e.g., the North and East can be put together. If you choose to divide any of the regions, you must assume that the divisions are homogeneous. For example, if you divide the South into two or more regions, each would have the same population ratio of the South as a whole.

6. Similarly, you must assume that ethnic groups are distributed uniformly within each region. Consequently, if you create geographic constituencies (electoral districts) within a region, they will have the same proportion of groups as the region as a whole. In short, you cannot create minority-plurality districts within regions.

7. You cannot justify your design on information that is not in the assignment, e.g., the relative wealth of different regions. (Adding details for fun in the presentation, is fine - and encouraged.)

Some Important Tips and Notes:

1. Remember that the democratic system in the Four Nations is relatively new and fragile. Your electoral system should reflect the fact that many people have competing interests and an unfamiliarity with many democratic processes. Simplicity is a virtue.
2. Solutions must be rooted in the Four Nations. Outsiders cannot be called upon to manage conflict (the Arbitrator, of course, is an exception).
3. Similarly, judicial systems in post-conflict societies are often weak. You will not be able to rely on the court system to resolve political conflicts.
4. Electoral designs that use quotas to assign seats to particular ethnic groups, or that have formally separate voter lists for different ethnic groups, can be as complicated as they are rewarding. Such designs can harden ethnic differences and conflicts. If you use them, you should justify them carefully and show why they will not lead to further conflict.

Grading Scheme:

This assignment will constitute 30% of your grade. A grade will be assigned to the group based on the quality, thoroughness, creativity, and timeliness of their total project.

I will be considering the following:

Report:

- Is the report within the page limit?
- Does it address all the questions?
- How well is the report cited?
- How strong are the justifications?
- Were the course concepts engaged with?

Poster:

- Is the design legible? (i.e. is the poster cluttered or ascetically pleasing?)

- Does it cover key issues?
- How creative are the visuals?
- How creative is the overall design?
- Does it help to advance the proposal you're advocating?

Presentation:

- Are the key points addressed?
- Are the points articulated well?
- Are the group members prepared and engaged?

The Four Nations Census of Population - 106 AG

World Census Profile

The Four Nations		
Population	8,584,250	
Age Characteristics	#	%
0 - 14	1,365,494	15.91
15 - 29	1,694,000	19.73
30 - 44	1,933,128	22.52
45 - 59	1,662,075	19.36
60 - 74	1,283,763	14.95
75 +	645,791	7.52
Ethnicity		
Air	842,500	9.81
Fire	2,516,750	29.32
Water	1,270,000	14.79
Earth	3,955,000	46.07
Gender		
Male	4,163,361	48.50
Female	4,377,968	51.00
Non-Binary	42,921	0.50
Education		
No Education	1,713,781	19.96
High School	2,582,938	30.09
College or Trades	2,505,163	29.18
University	1,782,369	20.76
Partnership		
Single	2,132,607	24.84
Divorced	780,735	9.09
Married (Opposite Sex)	3,477,772	40.51
Married (Same Sex)	642,813	7.49
Common-Law	858,508	10.00
Widowed	691,815	8.06

Census Profile: The North

	The North	
Population	2,157,500	25.13
Age Characteristics	#	%
0 - 14	280,475	13.00
15 - 29	258,900	12.00
30 - 44	431,500	20.00
45 - 59	431,500	20.00
60 - 74	431,500	20.00
75 +	323,625	15.00
Ethnicity		
Air	225,000	10.43
Fire	157,500	7.30
Water	525,000	24.33
Earth	1,250,000	57.94
Gender		
Male	1,022,842	47.41
Female	1,131,010	52.42
Non-Binary	3,648	0.17
Education		
No Education	323,625	15.00
High School	539,375	25.00
College or Trades	755,125	35.00
University	539,375	25.00
Partnership		
Single	450,918	20.90
Divorced	215,750	10.00
Married (Opposite Sex)	755,125	35.00
Married (Same Sex)	88,458	4.10
Common-Law	431,500	20.00
Widowed	215,750	10.00

Relevant Information:

The North is the location of the historical Northern Water Tribe, Northern Air Temple Islands, and the northerly most territories of the former Earth Kingdom. This region has the third highest population of all the regions with a census profile similar to the world average, with slightly more college graduates and a slightly older population. The fire nation is in the minority here.

This area has one traditional monarchical family; the Northern Water Tribe maintained a hereditary monarchy until the end of the war. The Northern Air Temple Islands were previously governed by a small council, while regionally-appointed governors oversaw the Earth Kingdom territories.

This region, given its history, is moderate, open to change, and generally middle-class.

Census Profile: The West

	The West	
Population	1,452,500	16.92
Age Characteristics	#	%
0 - 14	203,350	14.00
15 - 29	261,450	18.00
30 - 44	290,500	20.00
45 - 59	392,175	27.00
60 - 74	217,875	15.00
75 +	87,150	6.00
Ethnicity		
Air	32,500	2.24
Fire	1,250,000	86.06
Water	45,000	3.10
Earth	125,000	8.61
Gender		
Male	703,819	48.46
Female	748,038	51.50
Non-Binary	644	0.04
Education		
No Education	217,875	15.00
High School	581,000	40.00
College or Trades	508,375	35.00
University	145,250	10.00
Partnership		
Single	383,460	26.40
Divorced	17,430	1.20
Married (Opposite Sex)	755,300	52.00
Married (Same Sex)	75,530	5.20
Common-Law	119,105	8.20
Widowed	101,675	7.00

Relevant Information:

Though the second smallest region in terms of population, this is a contested and important area. This region is home to the entirety of what was the Fire Nation's homelands. As the instigators of the war, there is still a considerable stigma toward members of that group, though a plurality (49.67%) of all Fire Nation members still reside here. This area is also home to some of the southern Air Temple Islands and parts of the former Earth Kingdom around the geographical formation known as the Great Divide. These were lands occupied by the Fire Nation during the war.

This area was previously ruled by the absolutist monarchy of the Fire Nation. The Air Temple Islands were previously governed by a small council.

This area has obvious minority/majority conflict, is less educated, and more traditional.

As such, it is important to remember that this region, given its history, is more conservative, not used to democracy, is poorer, and more hostile to minorities.

Census Profile: The South

	The South	
Population	534,250	6.22
Age Characteristics	#	%
0 - 14	93,494	17.50
15 - 29	106,850	20.00
30 - 44	122,878	23.00
45 - 59	106,850	20.00
60 - 74	80,138	15.00
75 +	24,041	4.50
Ethnicity		
Air	115,000	21.53
Fire	14,250	2.67
Water	325,000	60.83
Earth	80,000	14.97
Gender		
Male	268,175	50.20
Female	261,783	49.00
Non-Binary	4,292	0.80
Education		
No Education	66,781	12.50
High School	133,563	25.00
College or Trades	240,413	45.00
University	93,494	17.50
Partnership		
Single	108,859	20.38
Divorced	21,370	4.00
Married (Opposite Sex)	347,797	65.10
Married (Same Sex)	8,142	1.52
Common-Law	5,343	1.00
Widowed	42,740	8.00

Relevant Information:

This is the smallest region in terms of population. The notable majority group here are the water nation, whose second traditional homeland, the Southern Water Tribe, is located here. Also here are some of the islands previously held by the Earth Kingdom and some of the Southern Air Temple Islands.

This area is unique, as it has the longest history of democracy in the world. The Southern Water Tribe's chiefs and tribal councils have been elected since the southern group's formal separation from their northern cousins. The Air Temple Islands were governed by local councils and the Earth Kingdom's island holdings were overseen by royally-appointed governors.

This region is rather conservative in some respects, such as their emphasis on encouraging marriage, but is also moderately well-educated and generally younger in age.

As such, this area will be well-prepared for democracy, though the rights of minorities will be of top concern here.

Census Profile: The East

	The East	
Population	2,205,000	25.69
Age Characteristics	#	%
0 - 14	507,150	23.00
15 - 29	496,125	22.50
30 - 44	485,100	22.00
45 - 59	396,900	18.00
60 - 74	220,500	10.00
75 +	99,225	4.50
Ethnicity		
Air	85,000	3.85
Fire	345,000	15.65
Water	25,000	1.13
Earth	1,750,000	79.37
Gender		
Male	1,127,916	51.15
Female	1,074,938	48.75
Non-Binary	2,146	0.10
Education		
No Education	882,000	40.00
High School	882,000	40.00
College or Trades	330,750	15.00
University	110,250	5.00
Partnership		
Single	545,691	24.75
Divorced	257,985	11.70
Married (Opposite Sex)	882,000	40.00
Married (Same Sex)	135,433	6.14
Common-Law	119,291	5.41
Widowed	264,600	12.00

Relevant Information:

This is the largest region by geographic size and is a close second (behind the capital) in population. Unlike the capital, though, this area is predominantly occupied by members of the Earth Nation, as this area of mostly their ancestral homeland, the Earth Kingdom. Only two small Air Temple Islands are included in this area. The high Fire Nation population is due to the presence here of many Fire Nation Colonies, which were the source of much of the conflict in the world before and during the war.

This area was governed by the absolutist hereditary monarchy of the Earth Kingdom. The current monarch, a young King, still holds considerable power, though has expressed an interest in the democratic project we are embarking upon.

This region experienced a population boom after the war, which will see a large number of people enter the workforce and become eligible to vote soon. While the area is presently poorly educated and traditional, this is expected to change.

Top of mind here will be concerns about young people's political involvement (they'll expect a robust, fair democracy) and how to accommodate Fire Nation members.

Census Profile: The Capital

	The Capital	
Population	2,235,000	26.04
Age Characteristics	#	%
0 - 14	402,300	18.00
15 - 29	625,800	28.00
30 - 44	581,100	26.00
45 - 59	290,550	13.00
60 - 74	223,500	10.00
75 +	111,750	5.00
Ethnicity		
Air	385,000	17.23
Fire	750,000	33.56
Water	350,000	15.66
Earth	750,000	33.56
Gender		
Male	1,040,609	46.56
Female	1,162,200	52.00
Non-Binary	32,191	1.44
Education		
No Education	223,500	10.00
High School	447,000	20.00
College or Trades	670,500	30.00
University	894,000	40.00
Partnership		
Single	643,680	28.80
Divorced	268,200	12.00
Married (Opposite Sex)	737,550	33.00
Married (Same Sex)	335,250	15.00
Common-Law	183,270	8.20
Widowed	67,050	3.00

Relevant Information:

The capital is the largest region by population. This area is a multicultural mosaic of members of all four nations.

The capital (which some have taken to calling "Republic City", but don't let that impact your decision on state structure) is a younger area, populated with young professionals who are well-educated and progressive in their outlook.

The entire capital region is an urban area, constituting a city-state, aside from the inclusion of Air Temple Island, located a few kilometres offshore in Yue Bay. Though presently managed by a supervisory board made up of appointed representatives from each nation, the young people of this area expect a quick transition to democracy.

There will be resistance to this region being amalgamated with others, though this should not dissuade any group from considering this.

Ultimately, this region is progressive, young, and eager for a chance to express themselves democratically.