

Rational Analysis of Political Behavior

Social Welfare - The Community Park Funding Challenge

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Group Dilemma Exercise: “The Community Park Funding Challenge”

Background: The local government has allocated a total of \$10,000 for community development projects. Your group represents the community committee tasked with deciding how to allocate these funds to improve the local park. The park needs several improvements: new playground equipment, landscaping, a walking path, and enhanced security measures, and (probably) others.

Task: In groups of 3 to 5, decide how to allocate the \$10,000 among these four projects. You must reach a unanimous decision within your group. Each member of the group has different priorities based on their personal experiences and needs:

Member 1: Prioritizes playground equipment for children.

Member 2: Advocates for landscaping to beautify the park.

Member 3: Wants a walking path for exercise and accessibility.

Member 4: (If applicable) Emphasizes the need for enhanced security measures.

Member 5: (If applicable) Believes in a balanced approach but has a secret preference they will reveal during the discussion.

Process: Introduction (5 minutes): Each member presents their case for their preferred project and why it should receive funding.

Negotiation (10 minutes): Members discuss and negotiate the allocation of funds. They must consider the social welfare implications of their decisions and how they prioritize community needs.

Decision (5 minutes): Reach a unanimous decision on how to allocate the \$10,000.

Reflection (10 minutes): After reaching a decision, each group (or a sample of groups) explains their decision-making process, the social welfare dilemma they faced, and how they managed to aggregate individual preferences.

Discussion:

1. *Reasons Behind Decisions:*

What were the main reasons behind your group’s decision on how to allocate the community development funds?

How did the reasons for your group’s decision differ from those of other groups?

2. *Aggregation of Preferences:*

How were individual preferences within your group aggregated to reach a final decision?

Did all members feel that their preferences were equally considered? Why or why not?

3. *Role of Negotiation, Persuasion, and Compromise:*

How did negotiation play a role in your group’s decision-making process?

Can you provide examples of how persuasion influenced the final decision?

At what point did compromise become necessary, and how was it achieved?

4. *Reflection on the Social Welfare Dilemma:*

How does this exercise illustrate the essence of a social welfare dilemma?

How were individual and collective interests balanced in your decision-making process?

In what ways did the rules applied affect the outcome?

How did each individual take into account the opinions or actions of others in your group?