Electionville

A game of democracy
and local governance

Instructions

Game instructions | **SI.** Swedish Institute

ELECTIONVILLE

What is local governance? What really constitutes a democratic process? And who does it serve?

The Electionville floor game is a fun and educative tool to explore the fundamental concepts of local democratic processes. The participants will become the managers of a city and act as council members representing fictional parties. At their disposal, they have a limited set of resources that they need to agree on how to use, within the timespan of one election term.

In order to achieve their set political objectives while at the same time safeguarding public interests, they not only need to use their debate skills with the competing players, but also come to re-evaluate their initial priorities, thus becoming themselves an integral part of the larger democratic process.

The game takes 90–120 minutes and can be played with 3–6 players or in larger teams where every party in the game consists of more than one person. The game consists of a set number of rounds, with each round consisting of one turn for each player (or team of players).

PREPARATIONS

First make sure that you are situated in a room with enough floor space to fit the game board, including possible bystanders, either seated or standing up. Apart from the *printed game board*, you will have a number of *resources* in the shape of small beanbags or similar, and up to six printed *party sheets* with corresponding *party priority cards*. The players will also need *pens* and a mutual *timer* to keep track of time during voting sessions (see 'Playing the game' on page 6).
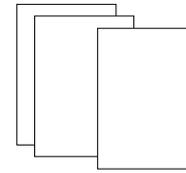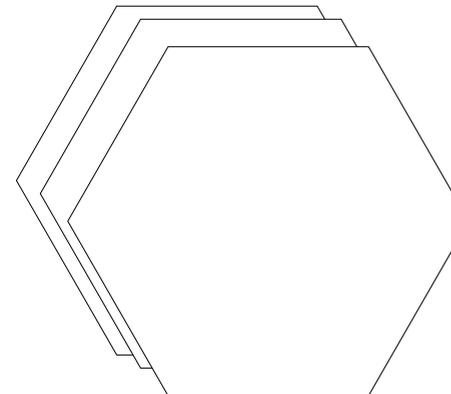

Political party sheets
3–6 depending on number of participants/parties
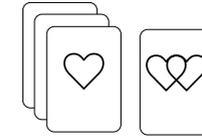
Priority cards
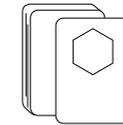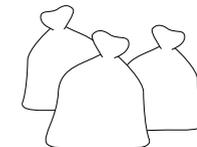3 single heart cards and 1 double heart card per party
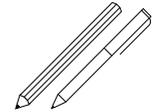
Pens

Hexagonal game board pieces
12 or 20 depending on setup strategy

Timer

Deck with event cards

Resource bags
40 small beanbags or similar

**Multiple games**
If you have a lot of participants and want to play multiple games in parallel, you will need several sets of games. The alternative is to play one game and divide participants into teams. If you choose to play with multiple games, at the end you may also select the overall winner, both the game with the highest overall score and the player with the highest points out of all players.

For this game, one person will be present as a *game master*. The game master guides the players through the game (see 'Player instructions' on page 9). To be successful, the game master will probably have to improvise in some situations and make quick decisions for the group. If necessary, the game can be played without a game master.

SETTING UP THE GAME BOARD

First of all, you need to set up the game board. The board consists of 20 different *political areas* (or hexagons). Out of these you will select the 12 areas that best correspond to the political environment in your country. Go on by putting the 3 most important ones (so-called *core areas*) on the floor in front of you and the other 9 around them, forming a game board cluster consisting of an inner ring and an outer ring. The other 8 political areas will not be used in the game.
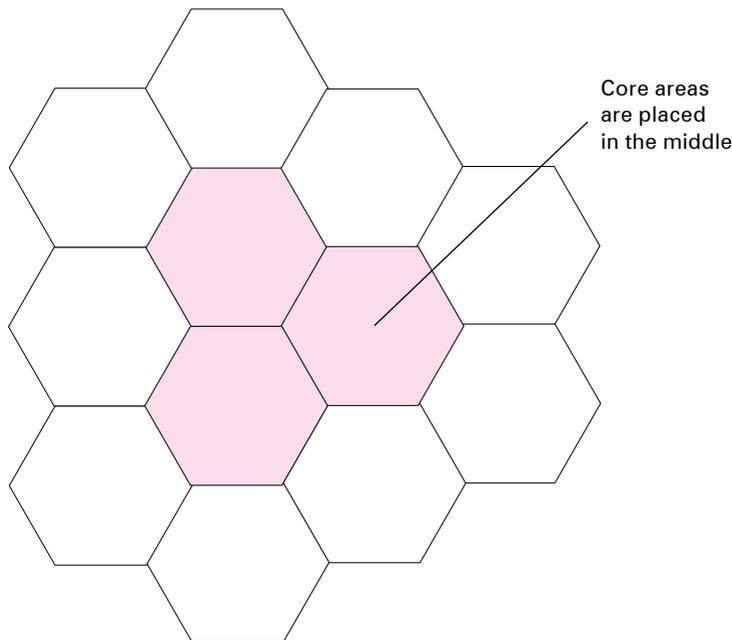
Core areas
are placed
in the middle

Once the game board is set up, the game master puts two resources on each of the selected areas. These resources represent the normal budget for that area. Any changes during the game will reflect that the budget has either increased or decreased. The game master then picks the event cards for the 12 selected political areas. Each area should have two unique event cards and one for budget negotiations – in total 36 event cards.

FORMING THE PARTIES

Now it's time to establish the political parties. Start by letting everyone fill out a *party sheet* with the name they choose for their party. Moving alphabetically from A to Z the players now get to pick one political area as their *main political priority*. This is done by placing the *double heart priority card* with their party colour on either of the hexagons **in the outer ring** of the game board, and double marking the same priority on their party sheet using a pen. No two players can have the same main political priority during the game.
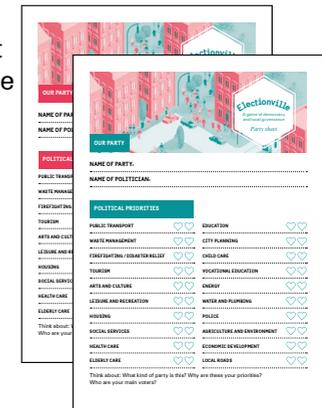
Second, going in the opposite direction, let everyone pick another political priority by placing a *single heart priority card* with their party colour on the hexagons in the **outer or inner ring**.

No two players may pick the same area at this stage. Repeat the process two more times, but this time two players can choose the same area (or up to three players if there are more than four players in the game). Every player should now have identified one main political priority, and three additional priorities, and marked them on their party sheets.

All players will now take a minute to think about their party and which voters they are appealing to. They will then hold a short speech, presenting the party's overall profile and political priorities. If you are playing in teams, each team also needs to elect one person to act as their main council member, while the other players in the team will act as assistant party members, helping out during debates and negotiations. Each team only has one vote, cast by the main council member.

PLAYING THE GAME

The game is played in three, four or five rounds, depending on how many years each election term consists of in your country. For each round, the players have one turn each during which they act as chairperson. The goal is to put as many resources as possible onto one's political priorities, with the main political area giving more points. In the end, the winner will be the player who has formed alliances and persuaded the other players to put resources into her or his priorities. Please note that in addition to individual points, there will also be a score for how well the players managed to rule the city together.

Moving again alphabetically, the first round starts with the game master picking the event card on top of the deck and reading it aloud to the player whose party name is closest to A. After the player has carried out the task stated on the card, the game master goes on to read another event card, this time to the player on the left (going clockwise). When everyone has gotten one card and resolved it, the first year is over.

For the second and subsequent rounds, *the player with the most resources* on her or his main political priority will begin. If there are multiple players with the same amount, the player whose party name is closest to A goes first followed by the player on the left.

If preferred, the procedure of drawing and reading cards can be done by the players themselves. The game master then has a mere supervising role during this stage of the game.


Voting
Many cards are focused on voting, meaning that the majority decides what action will be taken after a short period of presenting and discussing parties' arguments. The player who drew the card is the current chairperson of the city council and thus has the casting vote (an extra, deciding vote in case of an equal vote). For example: if you are four players, two voting YES and two voting NO, the person who drew the card will decide which side wins the vote. Voting is sometimes difficult, since there will be many suggestions and multiple ideas on how to vote. The group will gradually find a system or order for this. You can, if you want to, set a maximum time allowed for voting. Make sure the group is confident what they have voted for before finalising the action.

Midterm polls
After two terms you will hold a midterm poll of how well each party is doing. It's up to the game master to announce the midterm polls. Polling is done by counting the score for each player. The score is just an indication for how well the parties are doing and shows the players how the final score is calculated at the end of the game.

The scoring works as follows:

Each resource on a player's main political priority is worth two points.

 + = 2 points
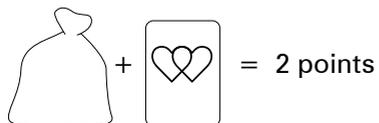
Each resource on a player's other political priorities is worth one point.

 + = 1 point   + = 3 points

For example: The political areas Waste Management, Education and Social Services all have 3 resources. The area Health Care has 2 resources. Party A has Education as their main political priority and the others as priorities. Party A will get 6 points for Education (3 resources x 2 points) and 8 points for the others (3+3+2 resources x 1 point), in total 14 points. Party B has Health Care as their main political priority and the others as priorities. Party B will get 4 points for Health Care (2 resources x 2 points) and 9 points for the others (3+3+3 resources x 1 point), in total 13 points.

After the midterm polls, the game continues as before.

ENDING THE GAME

After the last player has finished the final turn, the game ends and the game master calculates the scores in the same manner as described in the midterm polls. The winner holds a short victory speech. After that, the players will also get a score on how well they have managed to rule the city together.

The scoring of how well the players ruled the city together works as follows:

Each resource on the political areas in the inner circle is worth two points.

Each resource on the political areas in the outer circle is worth one point.

How well did you succeed?

20–25 points
Shame on you! You have neglected so many of the core functions of the city and driven the economy to the brink of bankruptcy.

26–30 points
Thank you for your service. The city's economy has remained stable and very little permanent damage has been done.

31–35 points
God job! You have maintained a high standard and improved many things for the inhabitants.

36+ points
Excellent! You have showed that you are truly worthy caretakers of the city and its citizens.

PLAYER INSTRUCTIONS
– SCRIPT TO BE READ TO THE PLAYERS

Welcome! This is a game of local politics in the fictional city of Electionville in our country. You will all be playing city council members, each representing a party. During the game you will make hard choices on how our joint resources are used and distributed. This council will work for three/four/five (select one) years, represented by as many rounds in the game.

The player who succeeds in allocating most resources to her or his prioritised political areas will win the game. Furthermore, depending on how well you all together have prioritised the core

political areas for the city, you will get a rating on how well you succeeded in ruling the city.

Choosing the board content
(Skip this part if you have already set up the game board.)

Scenario 1 (the players decide on the political areas):
In front of you are 20 different political areas that local govern-ments in cities around the world have power over. Some of them might not be relevant to us, some are crucial to make local municipalities function in our country. First, we want to find the most important areas for us. Which areas are the core functions of local politics in our country? Look at the options and think of two areas that you feel are the most important for a local municipality in our country to govern. When you all have decided, group these in the middle of the room. Two or more people may choose the same area. Keep adding one area at a time until there is a total of twelve political areas in the middle.

In this game, there will be three main areas that are more important than others. You will now decide which three this will be. Discuss for a few minutes and find a way to agree on three core areas. Vote within the group if needed.

Put these three areas in the centre and the remaining areas in a circle around them. Taken together, these twelve political areas constitute our game board. In other words, this is what you as a city council will rule on.

Scenario 2 (the players decide only on the core areas):
In front of you are 12 different political areas that are crucial to make local municipalities function in our country. Your task is now to decide which three areas are more important than the others, so-called core areas. Discuss for a few minutes. Vote within the group if needed.

Put these three areas in the centre and the remaining areas in a circle around them. Taken together, these twelve political areas

constitute our game board. In other words, this is what you as a city council will rule on.

Presenting the resources
So, now we have identified the political areas you will govern in the city of Electionville. Each political area has two resources to start with. This is the city's budget. During the game you will redistribute these resources depending on the needs of the people and the political priorities of the parties.

Forming the parties
You are all representatives of parties in our beautiful city. But what do you stand for? Who do you represent?

First, you will have to choose your main political priority. You can now pick ONE political area from the outer ring, by placing your double heart priority card on the area. Start with the player whose party name is closest to A and go clockwise. No two players can have the same main political priority during the game.

Second, going in the opposite direction, pick another political priority by placing a single heart priority card with your party colour. At this point, no two players may pick the same area; you may, however, pick from either the outer ring or the inner ring.

Now, we will repeat the process by picking two more areas. You may now pick areas where there already is one other single heart priority card. Sharing political areas with other players will make it easier for you to form alliances. (If you are 5–6 players: You may now pick areas where there already are one or two single heart priority cards.)

You now have your political priorities set. Please fill out a party sheet with your name, the name of your political party, and mark out your priority areas (two hearts for the core area and one heart for the other areas). After this, you will all hold a short speech on behalf of your party.

Beginning the game

Congratulations! You are representatives of the municipal council of the city of Electionville. Three/four/five/six parties are represented in the city council and we welcome you as leaders of each party. Since all parties were equally popular in the most recent election, you now have the same number of representatives and no one has the majority in the city council. Each time it is your turn, you will act as chairperson, and you will have the deciding vote. For each turn you will be dealt an event card with an issue that needs to be resolved. Some event cards will be solved through voting. Starting once more with the player whose party name is closest to A, let the political process begin!

Midterm polls

Half the election term has now passed and it's time for our midterm polls. This is done by counting the score for each player. The score is an indication for how well the parties are doing.

Ending the game

That was the end of your election term. It's now time to calculate your individual scores and evaluate how well you have ruled the city together (see page 9).

About this material

The *Electionville* floor game is based on a tabletop developed by Fabel AB for the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions. The tabletop has been used nationwide by Swedish schools to strengthen knowledge about democracy and local governance. As of today, the tabletop has been produced in more than 13,000 copies.

The Swedish Institute (SI) is a public agency that encourages interest and confidence in Sweden around the world. The Swedish Institute operate in the fields of culture, education, science and business in seeking to strengthen ties and promote development.