Participant Instructions

You and your fellow participants are members of a committee. The committee will make choices using a **majority-rule** voting mechanism. Your task is to reach a collective decision in a given policy area. Your preferences over policies may differ from those of your fellow committee members. Your final **payoff** will be determined by the committee's decision.

The experiment will consist of **several matches**, each of which will require that the committee make a new decision. In each match, the group reaches a decision though a series of **proposals**. If a proposal is rejected, a new proposer is randomly selected and the match continues. Each time a new proposer is selected we refer to this as a new **round**. If a proposal receives majority support, the match ends and a new one begins.

Every round the committee has an opportunity to end debate altogether. If a majority opts to end debate, the existing policy on the floor (i.e., the most-recent policy with majority support) becomes the committee's final decision. Once debate ends, the match ends, and individuals receive payoffs according to the committee's decision.

Overview

- Policy proposals are represented as points on a **two-dimensional graph**. The two dimensions can be thought of as different aspects of a policy.
- Each match the committee adopts one, and only one, policy as its final decision.
- The decisions in each match are independent of the decisions reached in the other matches.

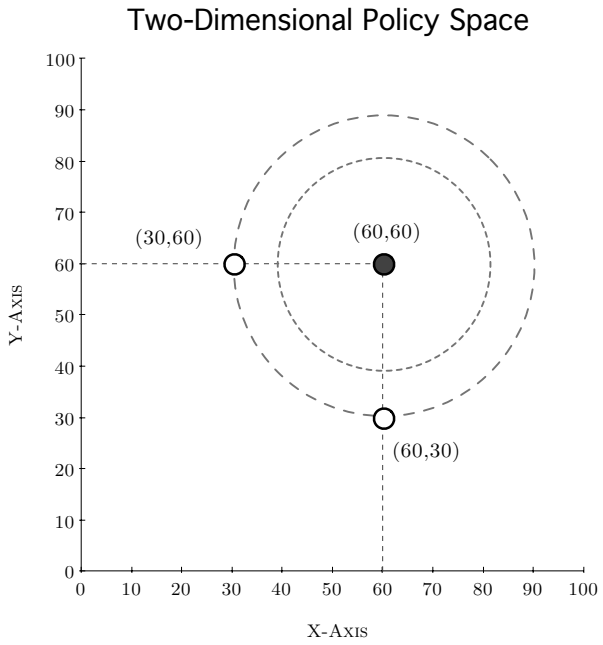

Figure 1: "Indifference Curves" for Person with Ideal Policy at $(60, 60)$

Your payoff depends on the final policy chosen by the committee—i.e., the policy on the floor when debating ends. ***You receive more credits the closer your ideal policy is to the committee's final decision***.

An example of how your payoff calculation is shown in Figure 1. The two axes reflect the two policy dimensions. For example, if your ideal policy exists at the point $(60, 60)$, a committee choice of $(60, 30)$ would give you the same number of credits as $(30, 60)$ since they are equidistant from your ideal point. You **strictly prefer** any proposal closer to your ideal point than $(60, 30)$ or $(30, 60)$.

Experimental Sequence

1. Match begins and computer assigns ideal points.
2. The status quo starting point is a policy at (100,100)
3. A match begins with a "proposer" being randomly selected from the committee. This proposer chooses a policy along two dimensions. This motion can be accepted or rejected by majority rule.
4. Following rejection or acceptance anyone can call an end to proposals and voting. This is a motion to end debate. Everyone will vote on whether or not to close voting. If an end to voting is selected by majority rule, then the most recent passed proposal, or, if no proposals have passed, the starting point (100,100), will determine payoffs. That is, the status quo will determine payoffs.
   (a) If the proposal is rejected (i.e., it does not achieve majority support) and the group decides to continue with the proposals, a new proposer is randomly selected and the process repeats.
   (b) If a policy is accepted (i.e., it achieves majority support), then this policy determines payoffs only if the group also decides to end voting.
5. Next match begins and items 1-4 repeated.

Example using Experimental Interface

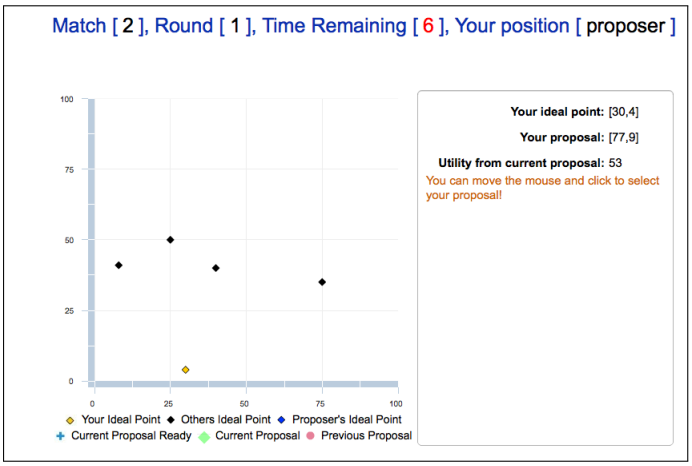

Figure 2: Screenshot of Experimental Interface

Figure 2 is a screenshot of the interface you will use in today's experiment. This is from the perspective of a player who is assigned to be the "proposer" in a given round. We see this game features five players with five unique ideal policy points. In the experiment, you may or may not see the ideal points of the other participants.

- If you are assigned to be the **proposer**, use your mouse to "click" a point along the two dimensions, then choose submit.

- If you are a **voter**, you will vote to accept or reject the proposal.

Comprehension Quiz

It is important that everyone fully understand the rules of the game before we begin. In order to ensure that this is the case, please answer the following questions using the attached payoff sheet.

1. How many credits would I earn if the committee's decision were (90,90)?

2. At which point would I earn the largest number of credits, and how many credits would I earn there?

3. Would I receive a larger number of credits at the point (25,30) or at the point (60, 70)?

4. Let's say that (85,10) is the motion on the floor. An amendment to move to the point (20,20) then passes. What is now the motion on the floor?

5. The motion on the floor is (40,40). A motion to end debate fails. What is now the motion on the floor?