
Offside report by Stephen Aguilar-Millan

Mike Young's games are always worthy of attention. I have to admit that I am a bit familiar with the Dilemma Analysis format, having played a number of games using the technique over the years. I easily found myself in familiar territory. The subject of the exercise - the course of Brexit between July and October 2019 - is one that commanded attention because it is one in which a bit of insight could be of real help.

Robert Eagling and I were cast as 'Europe'. We had a preliminary conversation about what that meant and how we should go about playing the game. We decided that Robert would take the perspective of the President of the ECB and that I would take the perspective of the President of the European Commission. It is not often that I play Jean Claude Juncker to Robert's Mario Draghi!

It would surprise many to learn that in some circles in Brussels, M. Barnier is excoriated for being too lenient on Britain in the negotiations over the Withdrawal Agreement. We thought that it would be interesting to play the game from the perspective of the hard Federalists in the EU. What that meant in practical terms was that Mrs May's deal would be the absolute best that Britain could expect from Europe, that there would be no further extension of the Article 50 period beyond 31st October 2019, and that full spectrum planning would be undertaken for a departure of the UK from the EU without an accompanying agreement. What in game terms we would think of as a hard Brexit.

Having defined the approach to the game, we looked at achieving two specific objectives. The first was to diminish the importance of the City of London as a European financial centre. We could achieve this in the event of a hard Brexit by not agreeing to the free movement of capital and services between the EU and a third party country, as the UK would then be. If the UK were to rescind Article 50, then the same effect could be reached by inserting a Financial Transaction Tax into the next EU Budget, which is due to be agreed in December 2019.

The second objective would be to lay the foundations for the development of the Common Security and Defence Policy (what in the UK is known as 'The European Army'). In the event of a hard Brexit, this could be achieved more easily with the removal of a major dissenting voice in the decision framework. It would be more problematic in the event of Article 50 being rescinded. We were left to hope that the internal political turmoil in the UK that could result from Article 50 being rescinded would create the space to tuck the financial framework of the CSDP into the next EU Budget. This could prove to be a risky strategy.

How did the game go? The European team didn't really have much to do other than to sit back and allow the UK players to duke it out between themselves. The Remainers were looking for a little encouragement but found none. The Hard Brexiteers had little contact with us, but served to play our game for us. The Soft Brexiteers tried to patch together an accommodation which we were able to scupper by placing an impossible pre-condition to our understanding (a General Election held before October 31st). For our part, we removed our opening dilemmas by preparing for a hard Brexit.

In the event, the whole process became binary - either rescind Article 50 or accept a hard Brexit. We would have preferred a hard Brexit in order to secure a smooth passage for the next Budget at the December 2019 Council of Ministers meeting. In the event, UK politics led to Article 50 being rescinded. Our only hope, in that event, would be that the British political class would tear itself to pieces, that British civil society would be characterised by violent disorder, and that the confidence in the British economy would severely diminish. In that case, the UK would be too preoccupied with its own internal worries to notice the Financial Transaction Tax and CSDP. As I said, this would be a high risk result.

Mike Young delivered an excellent game involving the decision frame around Brexit. I

admit to being a convert to the technique and I have to say that we generated an interesting result that I find both persuasive and compelling. I shall be using this thinking in my work because I find that events after the game are following a broadly similar trajectory. I

would like to end finally by saying that the gaming technique is fully outlined in an excellent book 'The Confrontation Analysis Handbook' by John Curry and Mike Young. That would be the first port of call for those wishing to learn more about the technique.

Offside report by Jim Roche

I wandered into Michael Young's Brexit game on Saturday afternoon and observed the final discussions on the issue.

This had teams of UK players, those who supported Theresa May's deal, those opposed as Remainers, those as opposed as Leavers.

And the EU negotiators (a tough team of Stephen A-M and R-E.

Each Team had a detailed briefing...For Example, the A4 Leavers' briefing I found on

the table was clear that 'BREXIT means BREXIT' and that the EU is near to collapse.

Michael's design appeared to combine a spreadsheet of options and negotiations using decisions and outcomes.

The graphic below shows the options pursued by the players.

In the end, the House of Commons voted to Revoke the Article 50 legislation and cancel Brexit

Stated intention	Who does action	Decision Explorer	Theresa May's position	Parliament's position	Remainers' position	Leavers' position	EU's position				
X	Parliament	accept Theresa May's deal	✓	X	X	X	-				
✓	Parliament	block a "no deal" Brexit	✓	✓	-	✓	✓				
X	Parliament	revoke article 50	X	-	X	✓	-				
X	EU	be willing to accept a new deal	-	✓	✓	-	X				

Brexit: Deal Or No Deal

by John Armatys

Everyone knows that the European Union can, traditionally, only solve a crisis at the last moment. Deal or No Deal Brexit is a trivial game about the United Kingdom's exit from the EU on 31st October 2019. It bears no relation to the TV game of the same name, although it does have more than a passing resemblance to the card games Black Jack and Pontoon.

Game equipment - a pack of playing cards with the jokers and bridge score cards removed. Court cards count as 10, Aces count as 1 or 11 to the player's choice.

The dealer (who may also play) shuffles the deck and deals two cards face down to each player. The players may look at their own cards but should not show them to the other players.