

MINIMAL FACTION SYSTEM

This system provides a **rules-light, procedure-driven faction engine** for sandbox and solo play. It is designed to create motion, consequences, and political pressure without turning into a separate minigame. It is heavily inspired by the system from **Worlds Without Number** by Kevin Crawford.

Faction Sheet

Each faction has:

- **Name**
- **Nature** (cult / noble house / mercenary band / guild / faith / cabal)
- **Goal** (one sentence, concrete and actionable)
- **Method** (subtle / violent / legal / mystical / economic; flavor only)
- **Attributes**
 - **Force** (0–5)
 - **Cunning** (0–5)
 - **Wealth** (0–5)
- **Disposition** (Force, Cunning, or Wealth)
- **Pressure** (Cautious / Strained / Desperate)
- **Relationships** (Hostile / Neutral / Allied; optionally graded)
- **Honor** (fixed behavioral code)

Starting Values

Each faction starts with **5 points total** distributed among Force, Cunning, and Wealth. Each value must start at **1 or higher**. Maximum value is **5**. If a value reaches **0**:

- The faction is **non-operational** in that field.
- That value **cannot be used or targeted**.
- Zeroing a value triggers **Political Fallout**.

Disposition

Each faction has one **Disposition**: Force, Cunning, or Wealth. When a faction invests in its Disposition, it gains gains **+2** instead of +1 (to a maximum of 5). Disposition does not affect attacks directly.

Pressure States

Each faction is always in one Pressure state: **Cautious** (default), **Strained** or **Desperate**.

Pressure worsens when a faction suffers loss to an Attribute, or something diplomatic (such as an allied faction having a value reduced to 0). Pressure improves by scoring a clean Success in an attack, or if a faction is left alone (does not attack/is not attacked) for a round.

Honor

Honor represents a faction's **fixed institutional behavior**. It never changes and does not give numeric bonuses.

- **Principled.** Power must be justified
- **Pragmatic.** Results justify methods
- **Ruthless.** Power is taken

Faction Turn

Each faction takes **one action** per turn:

1. **Invest:** Increase one value by +1 (or +2 if disposition)
2. **Attack:** Clash with another faction
3. **Diplomacy:** Shift relationships

Attacks

A clash targets **one defender value** using **one attacker value**. For instance:

“ *Faction A attacks Faction B. Faction A uses their Cunning to attack Faction B's Wealth.* ”

From the attacker's perspective, we tally their Disadvantages and Advantages. The outcome of the clash is determined by rolling a d6. By default, no modifiers, the outcomes are as follows:

Result	Outcome
1	Failure
2–5	Partial Success
6	Success

Each **Advantage** 'increases' the Success bracket; from 6 to 5-6 to 4-6, 'shrinking' the Partial Success bracket.

Each **Disadvantage** 'increases' the Failure bracket; from 1 to 1-2 to 1-3, 'shrinking' the Partial Success bracket.

The difference between the respective Attributes of attacker and defender becomes the Advantage modifier for the attacker:

“ *Faction A has 4 Cunning. Faction B has 2 Wealth. Faction A has a +2 Advantage.* ”

Attributes interact with each other in a rock-paper-scissors manner:

- **Force** beats **Cunning**
- **Cunning** beats **Wealth**
- **Wealth** beats **Force**

+1 Advantage for the attacker if their Attributes beats the defender's. -1 Advantage if the attacker's attribute is beaten by the defender.

“ *Faction A uses Cunning to attack Faction B's Wealth. Faction A gains an additional +1 Advantage.* ”

The defender's **Pressure** adds **Disadvantage** for the attacker; +1 Disadvantage for Strained, +2 Disadvantage for Desperate. Finally, if the same attacker uses the same method against the same defender value, they lose **1 Advantage** for each round they do so.

Attack Outcomes

- **Success:** The defender's targeted Attribute is lowered by 1.
- **Partial Success (choose one):**
 - **Mutual Attrition:** Defender -1, Attacker -1
 - **Complication:** No value loss; introduce fallout
 - **Limited Gain:** Defender -1; attacker gains Pressure or worsens relations
- **Failure:**
 - Attacker's used value -1
 - Defender may gain leverage or reduce Pressure

Values never go below 0.

Politics

When a value is reduced to 0, allies check relations, allies may retaliate, cut ties, or demand concessions. Neutral factions may shift relations or invest defensively. Zeroing a value is always a **major escalation**.

Invest can also mean 'donating' one's efforts to an ally.

A defender might broker peace with an attacker, promising to not raise certain values above certain caps, or 'donating' their production to their overlord.

Interpreting Attacks

Attacker	Defender	Interpretation
Force	Force	Open confrontation between organized power structures: armed clashes, crackdowns, sieges, raids, or enforcement actions. Outcomes hinge on preparation, scale, and morale rather than surprise.
Force	Cunning	Brute action against covert operations: raids on safehouses, arrests of operatives, disruption through intimidation or overwhelming presence. Effective at exposing or destroying fragile networks.
Force	Wealth	Coercive pressure against material power: blockades, seizures, extortion, forced nationalization, or destruction of infrastructure. Often costly and inefficient unless backed by legitimacy or logistics.

Attacker	Defender	Interpretation
Cunning	Force	Subversion of overt power: misinformation, infiltration, false orders, sabotage, or turning commanders against each other. Risky; failure often provokes severe retaliation.
Cunning	Cunning	Shadow conflict: espionage, counter-espionage, disinformation wars, purges, and intelligence coups. Results are rarely visible but reshape the balance behind the scenes.
Cunning	Wealth	Manipulation of material systems: fraud, embezzlement, market manipulation, forged documents, blackmail, or exposure of corruption. Highly effective when oversight is weak.
Wealth	Force	Economic pressure on coercive power: supply denial, pay disruptions, bribery, sanctions, or privatization of violence. Can neutralize strength without a fight, but rarely fast.
Wealth	Cunning	Attempted monetization or co-option of influence: buying loyalty, funding fronts, patronage, or legal pressure. Often inefficient against decentralized or ideologically driven networks.
Wealth	Wealth	Economic competition and leverage: trade wars, monopolization, price manipulation, credit denial, or resource hoarding. Usually slow-burn, with consequences spreading beyond the target.