

Factions

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Keystone (Socorro)

Keystone is an Oligarchical Police State formed when the city's corporate elite splintered from Las Cruces during the era of systemic federal abandonment, relocating to Socorro to preserve their wealth and influence. Governed like a corporation, Keystone operates with a strict focus on meritocracy and resource control, prioritizing efficiency, long-term stability, and the monetization of the region's waste stream. The Oligarchy controls all major decisions, with key sectors like logistics, trade, and private security overseen by a unified board of directors. Keystone views itself as a pragmatic beacon of order amid a neglected landscape, but its elitist, exclusionary policies and aggressive domination of external trade foster intense resentment among outsiders. The faction's ultimate strategic goal is to leverage its economic dominance, strategic alliances, and covert regional influence to amass enough capital and institutional leverage to formally apply for and be recognized as a sovereign Mega City by the federal government.

Keystone Overview

Origins

Keystone was founded by a group of **elite politicians, business leaders, and technologists** who fled **Las Cruces** as growing **egalitarian sentiment** threatened their influence. Seeking refuge in the abandoned city of **Socorro**, they established an enclave governed by **corporate-style efficiency**, prioritizing **survival** and **control**. Their first major success was the creation of a **biodiesel-powered fleet**, which allowed them to secure **vital resources** that others could not reach. Over time, they expanded their power through **bio-tech innovations, strategic trade leverage**, and **covert operations**, becoming a **dominant force** in the region.

Region

Keystone controls **Socorro** and its surrounding territories, extending its reach through **resource-gathering expeditions** as far as **Albuquerque**. These expeditions focus on salvaging valuable materials from **civic centers** and **industrial zones**. **Keystone** holds a **strategic position** in regional **trade**, providing rare and highly sought-after goods like **designer drugs, medications**, and **biodiesel**. Their trade is especially vital with **Las Cruces** and **Los Chingones**, where these products are in **high demand**.

Faction Type

Keystone is an **Oligarchical Police State**, where a small **elite** controls society through **subtle manipulation**, a **militarized security force**, and a sophisticated **technological infrastructure** that manages trade, resources, and state functions. The general population is constantly monitored, with **advancement** dependent on **loyalty**, **skill**, and **connections** to the regime. Technology and surveillance are central to maintaining order and ensuring compliance, as the **Oligarchy** subtly steers behavior, prioritizing **stability** and **efficiency**. While there are no formal rules, the implicit expectation of loyalty to the state governs social life, and those who rise through the hierarchy experience greater autonomy and **privileges**, with those closest to the regime gaining access to the most resources and liberties.

Leadership and Structure

Governance

Keystone is led by the **Board of Directors**, a small elite that holds **absolute control** over the faction's operations and strategic future. Viewing themselves as the practical architects of the region's stabilization, the Board governs society like a corporation. Their rule is maintained through a **militarized security force** and a sophisticated **surveillance infrastructure** that constantly monitors the population, manages state functions, and subtly steers public behavior to prioritize stability and efficiency.

While there are no formal rules, the implicit expectation of absolute loyalty to the state governs all social life. **Advancement** within Keystone's hierarchy is strictly meritocratic but dependent on a combination of **proven skill**, **loyalty**, and **connections to the regime**. Those who rise through the ranks are granted greater autonomy, distinct lifestyle **privileges**, and direct control over the faction's localized resources.

Hierarchy

Keystone's governance model is a rigid system where authority is concentrated at the top, with the **Board of Directors** and CEO holding ultimate power.

- **Board of Directors:** The ruling elite of Keystone, a select group of individuals who control all political and economic decision-making. They are the true power behind the aspiring state and maintain ultimate control over its governance, economy, and military strategy.
- **CEO:** The public face of Keystone, responsible for executing the will of the Oligarchy and overseeing the daily functioning of the city. While they hold significant executive power, their authority is derived from the Oligarchy and is aligned with their directives. They do not possess independent political power.
- **CEO's Inner Circle:** close group of top executives (such as CFO, CTO, and CIO) who manage key sectors like technology, trade, and security. These individuals hold significant

operational power within their areas but ultimately answer to the CEO and the Oligarchy, providing the necessary logistical and strategic support to maintain Keystone's systems.

- **Vice Presidents (VPs):** VPs manage the day-to-day operations within specific sectors (e.g., bio-tech, security, resource management). They are tasked with implementing the C-suite directives and managing the workforce under them, often through highly controlled and hierarchical structures within their respective divisions.
- **Skilled Laborers and Technicians:** Skilled professionals like engineers, doctors, and tech specialists who form the backbone of Keystone's functioning. They hold more respect and higher status than general workers but are still beholden to the Oligarchy's will, with limited opportunities for advancement unless they prove their value to the ruling class.
- **General Workers** "The working poor who perform basic services and manual labor necessary for the functioning of Keystone. They are tightly controlled and have minimal opportunities for advancement, living in a system that keeps them subjugated to the demands of the ruling elite.
- **Outsiders and Transients:** The outskirts of Keystone are filled with outsiders and transients hoping to gain access to the city. The state operates behind the scenes, acting as third-party facilitators to control who enters. Only those deemed desperate enough to comply or skilled enough to be of value are allowed in. This system ensures a workforce that is both dependent and tightly monitored, while preventing dissent from taking root within the city.

Leadership Conflict

While the **leadership** of **Keystone** is united in its core mission of **attaining statehood**, internal **rivalries** constantly bubble beneath the surface. The **Board of Directors**, though outwardly cohesive, is rife with **tension** regarding control over **day-to-day operations**. The **CEO** is bound to execute the **Board's directives**, but their **inner circle**, including the **CFO**, **CIO**, and **CTO**, wields considerable operational sway that frequently rivals the Board's authority.

VPs are routinely caught in these power struggles, serving as mid-level pawns whose loyalties shift alongside the **political landscape**. These fragile **alliances** fracture over **resource allocation**, the **management of external threats**, and control over vital assets like **technology**, **trade routes**, or **military initiatives**.

This continuous jockeying for position is masked by the enclave's cold, **utilitarian philosophy**. Outwardly presenting a unified front, **Keystone's governance** remains an undercurrent of subtle **manipulation** and hidden rifts.

Infrastructure

Technology

Keystone's **technological infrastructure** is built on a foundation of **salvaged legacy systems** and **recycled state refuse**, combined with targeted, **self-developed innovations**. Central to their hardware development are specialized **bio-tech laboratories** capable of synthesizing complex chemical compounds, **anesthesia**, and tailored **designer drugs**. For governance and security, the corporate enclave relies on dense **silicon compute nodes** running advanced **algorithmic processing** and **machine learning** matrices to optimize **resource allocation**, automate **surveillance**, and drive **predictive tracking** systems. Logistical mobility is maintained through a highly durable mechanical fleet specifically retrofitted to run on locally processed **biodiesel**.

Economy

Keystone's economy converts its industrial and technical capabilities into **regional market dominance** and **trade leverage** to fund its pursuit of statehood. The enclave functions as a massive processing hub, extracting raw value from **recycled state refuse** and converting it into highly sought-after medical goods, fuel, and luxury items. By maintaining a strict monopoly over the regional distribution of **biodiesel** and advanced pharmaceuticals, Keystone forces neighboring factions like **Las Cruces** and **Los Chingones** into an asymmetric trade dependency. This export-driven wealth fuels internal corporate development, funds their private security forces, and allows the Oligarchy to accumulate the massive capital reserves required to petition the federal government for official recognition.

Faction Culture

Core Philosophy

Keystone's core philosophy holds that **corporate governance and the state structure are the only correct vehicles for human progress**, seeing their model as the essential framework required to tame the Outlands. They believe that only those who **contribute meaningfully** to this structure, through technical skill, labor, or capital, deserve a place within it, while others are deemed an expendable drain on efficiency.

The Oligarchy does not see themselves as the sole architects of civilization on the continent, as they recognize and emulate the immense power of the actual Federated States. Rather, they view themselves as the **rightful, indispensable leaders of their territory**, explicitly mirroring the systems of the true states to prove they are worthy of joining them. Their dedication to strict meritocracy, stability, and resource control is designed to validate their right to rule and ultimately secure their own legitimate seat at the federal table.

Daily Life

Daily life in **Keystone** is sharply divided by **class**. The **elite** live in **luxurious districts** with **advanced technology**, **ample resources**, and **high living standards**. Their world is one of **comfort**, **security**, and **convenience**, far removed from the struggles of the **lower classes**.

Skilled workers and **middle managers** enjoy a relatively higher standard of living than others in the **Rio Grande Valley**. While their neighborhoods are **functional** rather than lavish, they have access to basic comforts such as reliable **healthcare** and **education**. These individuals are valued for their **skills** and contribute to **Keystone's infrastructure** and **economy**, but they are also under pressure to maintain **productivity** and **loyalty** to the **Oligarchy**.

In contrast, the **working poor** reside in **overcrowded**, under-resourced **outer districts**, where living conditions are harsh. While not destitute, these areas suffer from constant **shortages**, **poor infrastructure**, and **limited opportunities** for upward mobility. Many of the **poorest** work in low-wage, **labor-intensive jobs**, subject to the demands of the **Oligarchy**, and are kept in check by the constant presence of **security forces**.

Values and Customs

Keystone's culture is built around a core set of values that emphasize **loyalty**, **connections**, and **merit**, but these principles are often selectively applied. **Loyalty** to the **Oligarchy**, and particularly to the ruling factions, is paramount. The city projects a narrative of **meritocracy**, claiming that **hard work** and **skill** are the keys to success, but in reality, the ability to navigate the **political** and **social networks** of **Keystone** often holds more weight. Success is often determined by the **connections** you maintain rather than purely by individual effort, leading to a culture that rewards those who can demonstrate **allegiance** to the right factions or people. There is also a heavy emphasis on **technological advancement** and **innovation**, especially in the **elite districts**, where high-tech industries thrive. **Corporate pragmatism** governs the daily operations of **Keystone**, where decisions are made with an eye toward **efficiency**, **profit**, and the **preservation of power**. Those who embrace this pragmatic mindset are often rewarded with **prestige**, **power**, or **wealth**, while those who challenge the system are **marginalized** or **suppressed**.

Role of Women and Minorities

In **Keystone**, **gender** and **race** do not define one's place in society. The **Oligarchy's meritocratic system** values **loyalty**, **skill**, and **connections**, allowing individuals of any background to rise based on their abilities. **Women** and **minorities** hold prominent roles across the city, from **leadership** to **technical fields**, and opportunities for **advancement** are open to anyone who proves their worth.

However, while **Keystone** is driven by performance and **merit**, its **religious influence** creates taboos surrounding **sexual orientation** and **gender identity**. These aspects of identity are often met with **social stigma**; however, as individuals ascend into higher circles of power, there is generally less emphasis on these factors. Though there are no institutional barriers based on these

aspects of identity, the **societal norms** rooted in **religious doctrine** discourage open expression of diverse **sexuality** or **gender identities**. As a result, individuals who deviate from traditional norms may face subtle forms of **exclusion** or pressure to **conform**, even if they are otherwise highly capable.

Religion and Beliefs

Keystone's dominant religious belief is a form of **Christianity**, similar to **Southern Baptist traditions**, which emphasizes **sacrifice**, **submission to higher authorities**, and **family values**. This faith is widely practiced, particularly among the **working class**, where it provides a framework for enduring hardship and aligning individual **duty** with the needs of the **city**. The faith teaches the importance of **loyalty**, **obedience**, and **fairness**, which align well with the **Oligarchy's** focus on **order** and **control**.

While religious practice is genuine for many, it is also strategically encouraged by the **Oligarchy** as a tool to instill **submission** and a sense of **collective purpose**. The faith's emphasis on **loyalty** to higher powers mirrors the societal structure of **Keystone**, where **loyalty to the Oligarchy** is paramount.

Morality

Keystone's moral framework is **pragmatic** and **utilitarian**, prioritizing **survival** above all else. Decisions are made with **efficiency** in mind, often at the expense of outsiders or the less fortunate, and **class divisions** are rigid, with little room for social mobility unless someone proves their value to the faction.

Aesthetic and Design

Visual Style

Keystone's visual style highlights its **rigid class divisions**. The **elite districts** feature **refined, classical architecture**, with **polished facades**, **elegant materials**, and **high-tech amenities** that evoke power and privilege. These areas exude sophistication, with **grand structures**, **luxurious finishes**, and **pristine surfaces**, reflecting the Oligarchy's desire to transcend their status as an Outland enclave. In contrast, the **middle-class districts** are marked by **well-maintained infrastructure** that shows signs of **practical repair**. Existing structures are **cleaned up** and **mended**, with **repaired facades** and **reworked interiors** that speak to a focus on **functionality** and **sustainability**. **Solar panels** and **community gardens** integrate seamlessly into daily life, underscoring a blend of **comfort** and **resourcefulness**.

The **worker class districts** are the epitome of **utilitarianism**, built from **scavenged materials** and **pre-consolidation tech**. These areas are overcrowded, poorly maintained, and lack the luxury or creativity seen in the elite and middle-class zones. The emphasis here is purely on **survival**, narrow, cluttered streets, **makeshift homes**, and **basic infrastructure** define the worker class's environment. The **contrast** between the high-tech, pristine **elite districts** and the **cramped, resource-scarce worker areas** underscores the deep inequality in Keystone, with the aesthetic of each district reflecting its residents' role in the city's rigid social order.

Symbolism and Colors

Keystone's fashion and color choices reflect its **social hierarchy** and its obsession with institutional legitimacy. **Elite members** of Keystone dress to closely emulate the citizens of the **federated States**, wearing **tailored suits** or **custom corporate-military uniforms**, often in shades of **charcoal**, **black**, and **dark blue** to symbolize authority, executive power, and professionalism. Their clothing is sleek, immaculate, and designed to mirror modern state sophistication rather than Outland ruggedness. **Stylized accessories** like high-tier **silicon compute wearables**, **augmented reality glasses**, or proprietary **corporate wristbands** are common, emphasizing their wealth and access to advanced imported technology. These individuals pride themselves on presenting a polished, state-ready image, aligning with Keystone's drive to prove it belongs among the federated powers.

The **middle class**, in contrast, opts for more **practical and functional clothing**. They wear **modular outfits** like **utility jackets**, **reinforced work boots**, and **cargo pants**, often in **muted earth tones**: **grays**, **browns**, and **deep greens**. This reflects their balance between **efficiency** and **comfort**, highlighting their relative prosperity without the extravagance of the elite. Clothing in these areas is often **durable** and **designed for utility**, with many individuals sporting **tool belts** or **gear holsters** as part of their everyday attire.

For the **working class**, the emphasis is on **industrial endurance and practicality**. They wear **basic, worn clothing**, usually **overalls**, **tattered shirts**, and **sturdy boots**; often in **faded blues**, **rusty oranges**, or **grays** that reflect the industrial, labor-intensive nature of their jobs. Clothing here is often **secondhand** or **scavenged from pre-consolidation tech lines**, with many residents opting to wear anything that offers durability. While not particularly fashionable, there's a certain **resourcefulness** to the way the working class adapts their clothing, often **patching up** or **reinventing** worn-out garments. These individuals may also personalize their outfits with **makeshift accessories** or **homemade insignia**, marking their status within the worker community.

Unique Features

Keystone's design reflects a blend of frontier pragmatism and an ambition to mirror the federated States. The **elite districts** are an artificial vision of modernity, with **polished streets**, **clean lines**, and **high-tech infrastructure** designed to evoke a sense of corporate luxury. These areas are filled with **well-maintained buildings** that are heavily fortified but designed to look sleek and

executive, featuring **digital displays** that advertise everything from city-wide updates to corporate-sponsored propaganda. **Data streams** and **interactive screens** are embedded in the architecture, constantly feeding information to those who live in these areas. At street level, **commercial districts** are carefully curated to appeal to visiting traders and federal officials, with **shops, restaurants, and public spaces** designed to look prosperous and organized, offering a glimpse of a state-ready metropolis, albeit one carefully manufactured for appearance.

In contrast, the **lower districts** are a far cry from the gleaming upper levels. These areas are marked by **scrappy, utilitarian housing** and **functional public infrastructure**, with heavily industrialized zones that are barely maintained. The streets are congested with **sparse lighting, broken signage, and pre-consolidation tech**, which gives the area a rough, worn-in aesthetic. The **biomes** and **hydroponic farms** that dot the city are functional but utilitarian, designed entirely to serve the practical needs of the industrial workforce rather than beauty. Keystone's overall design reflects the sharp **contrast between the high-tech veneer** of the elite and the rough, industrial reality of the lower classes, with a constant tension between the institutional legitimacy they seek to project and the frontier reality they are forced to endure.

Keystone History

The Exodus to Socorro

After escalating tensions between municipal workers and elites in Las Cruces, a group of elite leaders, business figures, and technocrats fled to Socorro. This marked the beginning of Keystone's formation as an oligarchic enclave with a focus on stability and corporate-style governance, driven by a long-term ambition to pacify the territory and petition the federal government for official statehood.

Arrival and Rebuilding Efforts

When Keystone's leadership arrived in Socorro, the city lay in stagnation, choked by crumbling pre-consolidation structures, toxic industrial runoff, and scattered debris from the sudden municipal retreat. With limited internal personnel, Keystone turned to external labor, recruiting workers from nearby independent settlements in the surrounding region. These desperate laborers, many displaced locals or refugees from abandoned territory, were tasked with clearing hazardous chemical spill zones, removing structural hazards, and helping restore basic infrastructure like **power** and **water**. Their efforts were vital to the city's immediate stabilization, and while the work was grueling and dangerous, it provided them with a chance to secure food, shelter, and a small degree of stability.

Attracting A Workforce

When Keystone first established its presence in Socorro, the leadership faced the challenge of reclaiming an abandoned city with limited resources. To attract labor, they offered a **golden handshake**: workers who joined the reclamation effort were promised **middle-management roles** after a set period of service, but with a catch; **advancement** depended on recruiting more workers into the fold, creating a **pyramid scheme** structure. Those who brought in the most recruits earned higher status and better living conditions, while failure to meet quotas resulted in demotion or loss of privileges. This system not only fueled rapid growth but also bound workers to the city through **loyalty** and **competition**, setting the foundation for Keystone's rigid, **corporate hierarchy**.

Formation of the Lower Class

As Socorro stabilized, the external laborers who helped rebuild the city became Keystone's **working class**. Those who had recruited others were rewarded with **middle management** roles, overseeing the new arrivals. However, the last wave of recruits, the **bottom-level workers** who had no connections or recruits of their own, were relegated to the **lower class**. While their labor was vital to Keystone's recovery, their opportunities for advancement were minimal. They remained in the most grueling, menial jobs, with no access to the rewards of loyalty and recruitment, and their status was locked at the very bottom of the city's rigid social hierarchy.

Establishment of Resource-Gathering Fleet

Keystone established a fleet of **retrofit diesel vehicles** powered by **biodiesel**, enabling long-range resource-gathering expeditions. Initially, they scavenged used cooking oil and **corn whiskey** for biodiesel. As they set up farms, Keystone began growing both **corn** and **sunflowers**, using the crops for both **food** and **fuel**. This approach ensured a steady supply of resources, boosting Keystone's self-sufficiency while supporting vital operations like **scrap metal** recovery and **scavenged technology** acquisition.

Consolidation of Power in the Region

As Keystone's infrastructure began to stabilize, its leaders quickly turned their attention to consolidating power through the control of critical resources, particularly **biodiesel** and **advanced medical supplies**. The arrival of **retrofit diesel vehicles**, powered by their own biodiesel, and **anesthesia** sparked confusion and suspicion in neighboring settlements. How had this elite enclave, once fleeing the growing egalitarian sentiment of Las Cruces, suddenly returned as a dominant trade player? With these valuable resources in hand, Keystone leveraged their control over fuel and medical supplies to gain influence in trade negotiations, positioning themselves as a powerful force in the region. The speed and success of their economic resurgence only deepened the mystery of how they had managed such a dramatic turnaround, and what they truly intended for the future.

Keystone's Internal Class Divides Solidify

The **Upper Class** in Keystone emerged from the **golden handshakes** given to early workers, who were elevated to managerial roles as part of the city reconstruction. As the city grew more prosperous, these middle managers began to distance themselves from the **working class**, adopting a more elite status and increasingly mirroring the **Oligarchs** they served. In doing so, they sought to differentiate themselves through **status**, privileges, and authority, effectively sealing off access to the upper tiers of society. The original workers, now viewed as “**less than**” by the new Upper Class, found it increasingly difficult to rise, even if they demonstrated merit. The divide deepened as the **Upper Class** reinforced their position, making the idea of **meritocracy** a tool to justify inequality while trapping the **lower classes** in a rigid social structure.

Keystone's Expanding Security Forces

As **Keystone** grew, so did its divisions, and to protect the city resources, the security forces expanded rapidly. Initially relying on **brutal tactics** and **high-casualty operations**, the force evolved into a mix of **militarized aggression** and more calculated methods to maintain order. This fusion of raw force and systemic control deepened the divide between the **Upper Class** and the **Lower Class**, fueling unrest as the latter endured increasingly oppressive measures to keep the elite's dominance intact.

The Strain on Security Forces

In response, the **security apparatus** grew **increasingly brutal**, with **enhanced drugs** and **psychological conditioning** used to control and suppress the rising unrest. Officers were pushed to their limits, required to **quell protests** and enforce loyalty, even as the strain of their duties took a toll on their mental well-being. The force became **highly efficient**, but their psychological stability began to fray. **Depersonalized** by their use of **drugs** and increasingly **isolated** from the broader community, security officers became more volatile and unpredictable, reflecting the growing **tensions** that simmered in the city.

Keystone Internal Divisions

Keystone's governance model is an oligarchical police state, with power concentrated in the hands of a small elite, the Board of Directors, who make all political, economic, and military decisions. The CEO, as the public face, executes the Board's directives but lacks independent authority. The leadership structure extends through various layers, including the CEO's Inner Circle and Vice Presidents who manage specific sectors. Governance is maintained through a militarized security force, surveillance, and a rigid hierarchy where advancement depends on loyalty, skills, and connections to the ruling class. This system is designed to prioritize stability and control, using coercion and manipulation to suppress dissent and ensure the dominance of the elite. The society is highly stratified, with the general population living under constant surveillance and limited freedoms, while the elite enjoy considerable autonomy and privilege.

Enforcers

- Division: Security
- Head of Department: Chief Security Officer (CSO)

The **Enforcers** are Keystone Corporation's **security and operations division**, tasked with maintaining strict order through **direct action**. They manage the **detention system**, overseeing citizens who have committed **minor infractions** or crimes, particularly those **too valuable to expel**. In **Enforcer-run facilities**, these individuals face **re-education**, with their movements and behaviors tightly controlled until they are either reintegrated or permanently excluded.

For **serious offenses**, such as **treason**, **rebellion**, or **insurrection**, the **Enforcers** act with immediate and **brutal force**, employing **violent suppression** and **execution** to eliminate the threat. Their tactics focus on **instant neutralization**, ensuring no challenge to the Oligarchy's control goes unpunished. The **Enforcers** are the **muscle** of Keystone, carrying out swift **enforcement** and **elimination** as necessary.

To enhance their performance, the **Enforcers** rely on **stimulants** and **pain suppressants**, boosting their **speed**, **aggression**, and **resilience** during high-risk operations. However, these substances take a toll on their **long-term health** and **mental stability**, leading to **physical deterioration** and **psychological strain** over time.

Patriot Network

- Division: Human Resources
- Head of Department: Chief Compliance Officer (CCO)

The **Patriot Network** is a covert agency that combines **intelligence gathering**, **loyalty enforcement**, and **labor management** within Keystone. Operating seamlessly across the city, it monitors **citizen loyalty** across all classes, including the **Upper Class**, **Working Class**, and the outer **transient camps**, through **covert surveillance** and **subtle manipulation**. The Network continuously evaluates individuals for their **workforce potential**, integrating the compliant while **screening out threats** to the regime.

In the outer **transient camps**, the **Patriot Network** deploys **covert operatives** posing as independent, third-party labor brokers, offering **food**, **shelter**, and pathways to employment. Through these predatory interactions, they secretly **monitor** desperate outsiders, selecting those who are either thoroughly broken into compliance or possess **useful skills** for the corporate hierarchy. These selected recruits are absorbed into the **workforce**, while the unviable majority remains trapped in **controlled poverty**, their chances of formal incorporation kept deliberately out of reach.

The **Patriot Network** also conducts **external espionage** and **influence campaigns**, manipulating rival factions and destabilizing potential threats to Keystone's interests. Through a combination of **intelligence operations** and **economic influence**, the Network ensures the

Oligarchy's supremacy both within Keystone and across the regional territory.

The Imaginists

- Division: Marketing & Branding
- Head of Department: Chief Marketing Officer (CMO)

The **Marketing & Branding Division** shapes both the public perception and internal culture of Keystone Corporation. Externally, they craft the image of a **meritocratic** and **stable society**, promoting the idea that success is earned through **hard work** and **individual effort**. This narrative emphasizes the **prosperity** and **security** provided by the Oligarchy, ensuring citizens believe in opportunities for **advancement** and **personal achievement**.

Internally, the division controls **propaganda** through **psychological operations (PsyOps)**, reinforcing loyalty to the Oligarchy. They run **loyalty campaigns** that stress the idea that **obedience** and **efficiency** lead to success, creating a **compliant workforce** where advancement is tied to alignment with the regime. Through **advertisements**, **slogans**, and **mass media**, they embed the Oligarchy's **meritocratic ideals** in the hearts and minds of every citizen.

Logistics

- Division: Logistics Division
- Head of Department: Chief Operating Officer (COO)

The **Logistics Division** is Keystone's powerhouse for economic control, tasked with managing both **legal** and **illicit** trade to ensure the Oligarchy's dominance in all markets. It regulates the flow of **resources**, **contraband**, and **goods**, overseeing **supply chains**, **inventory**, and **trade routes**. The division operates with the goal of maintaining absolute control over all forms of commerce, ensuring both legitimate and black-market activities are monitored and regulated. Through covert operations, **Supply Chain Controllers** suppress any unauthorized distribution of goods and maintain the Oligarchy's monopoly.

In addition to its core trade responsibilities, the **Logistics Division** is heavily involved in **resource extraction** and raw harvest. This includes overseeing the **farming** of essential crops and the reclamation of raw chemical components, ensuring the population remains supplied with basic sustenance while reinforcing the Oligarchy's control over critical inputs. Additionally, the division is tasked with the raw **scavenging and transport** of both **pre-consolidation tech** and **recycled state refuse**, hauling valuable bulk scrap from regional waste streams back to the city to secure a strategic advantage.

The division also facilitates **quasi-legal trade** with external factions like **Los Chingones**, ensuring Keystone's strategic economic interests are safeguarded. By controlling every aspect of distribution and intake management, **Logistics** consolidates the Oligarchy's economic power, securing its hold over both the **public** and **private sectors**, and further reinforcing the regime's stability.

The Foundry

- Division: Manufacturing & Product Development
- Head of Department: Chief Product Officer (CPO)

The Foundry oversees the entire life-cycle of product creation and engineering at Keystone Corporation, taking the raw inputs secured by Logistics and transforming them into finished assets. The division is responsible for a wide range of output, including **everyday consumer goods**, **biodiesel creation**, **designer drugs**, **advanced pharmaceuticals**, and **weapons innovation**. By refining **pre-consolidation tech** and processing **recycled state refuse** alongside their own scientific advancements, The Foundry ensures Keystone remains at the forefront of both essential and specialized product lines that reinforce the Oligarchy's control.

Among its primary responsibilities, **The Foundry** processes **performance enhancers**, **mood regulators**, and **mind-altering substances** that maintain **social compliance** and **economic productivity** within the workforce. The division also develops **advanced medical drugs** like **anesthesia** and leads **weapons innovation**, re-engineering salvaged military components and security systems that uphold Keystone's power. With complete oversight over product fabrication, **The Foundry** ensures that every manufactured asset serves the regime's interests, whether controlling the populace or enhancing the Oligarchy's technological superiority.

Urban Builders

- Division: Infrastructure & Construction
- Head of Department: Chief Infrastructure Officer (CIO)

The **Urban Builders** division is responsible for the **construction**, **maintenance**, and **monitoring** of all **city infrastructure** within Keystone. This includes managing the **design**, **construction**, and **repair** of the city's **transportation networks**, **energy grids**, **water systems**, and **sanitation facilities**. They ensure the city's **physical framework** is constantly maintained, updated, and expanded to support the **Oligarchy's vision** of control and productivity.

Additionally, the division oversees large-scale **urban development projects** that shape the growth of residential, industrial, and commercial zones. These projects are strategically planned to reinforce the **class system**, with areas designated for the **elite**, **upper-class**, and **lower-class** populations. By utilizing **advanced construction techniques**, including **repurposed Old World technologies**, the **Urban Builders** ensure that Keystone is a self-sustaining, **efficient** city, with a focus on **strategic profitability** and **class segregation**. Their oversight extends to **construction standards**, managing **urban sprawl**, and maintaining the **Oligarchy's control** over urban expansion.

Internal Politics

In Keystone, achieving goals is a political game played within a highly compartmentalized corporate structure. Each division operates autonomously, with its own internal power dynamics, strict gatekeepers, and isolated budgets. To get anything done, an individual must first identify the correct division and navigate its unique bureaucracy, aligning the request directly with that department's specific corporate priorities. Success depends entirely on building tactical alliances, framing requests to fit the division's localized goals, and offering reciprocal operational benefits. Divisions routinely hoard resources and resist lateral cooperation, creating constant bureaucratic hurdles and protective turf wars. If blocked, an individual must strategically escalate the issue or leverage internal allies to force the request through. Within Keystone, corporate influence and strategic maneuvering entirely replace traditional civic politics, and fierce loyalty within individual divisions is the primary key to survival and progress.

The Disillusioned

The **Disillusioned** are working class laborers who once believed that absolute institutional loyalty would lead to a better life, but now find themselves permanently trapped at the bottom of Keystone's exploitative social hierarchy. Seeing no legal pathway to advancement, many turn to the regional **black market** for survival and economic autonomy, believing that their defiance is a direct blow against the Oligarchy.

Unknowingly, their subterranean activities, including smuggling, supply chain disruption, and covert deals with rival Outland factions, are routinely monitored and manipulated by the **Patriot Network**. The Chief Compliance Officer's agents deliberately use these underground operations as controlled traps to identify hidden liabilities, gather external intelligence, and further tighten Keystone's regional control.

While the general working class feels deep empathy toward their plight, the increasingly radical methods of the Disillusioned, including violent sabotage against corporate assets, deeply alienate more moderate laborers who fear losing their precarious lifestyles. Though their uncoordinated rebellions are systematically crushed by the **Enforcers** using overwhelming, drug-fueled kinetic force, the Disillusioned remain a persistent source of internal friction, constantly testing the limits of the city's corporate surveillance grid.

Autarkic Nationalists

The **Autarkic Nationalists** are a more **reactionary** faction that sees Keystone's **reliance on external trade** and **Outland connections** as a dangerous structural vulnerability. They argue that the fastest, most infallible path to **attaining statehood** is for the enclave to become **completely self-sufficient in food, fuel, and critical resources** before petitioning the federal government. They believe that **focusing inward, building domestic infrastructure, and severing dependencies on untrustworthy outside factions** like Los Chingones would protect the city from external shocks and allow the Oligarchy to **consolidate control** more effectively.

To prove to the Bureau of Land Management and the Treasury that Keystone possesses a perfectly stable, autonomous tax and resource base, this faction pushes for the **militarization of agriculture, aggressive local resource extraction**, and the **development of closed-loop systems**. They champion a **fortress mentality** where Keystone produces everything it needs internally, arguing that presenting the federal government with a flawless, completely self-reliant territory is the ultimate way to force the United States to grant them official statehood.

Technosophists

This faction advocates for fully embracing absolute **technology and automation** across all sectors, believing that mirroring the technological order of the federated States is the definitive pathway to progress and institutional legitimacy. They envision a future where Keystone achieves statehood by systematically replicating the advanced infrastructure of the existing states, deploying extensive **algorithmic processing, automated logistics networks, and biotechnological enhancements** to maximize systemic output.

Their goal is to use imported and reverse-engineered state tech to **optimize human assets**, drastically improving labor productivity, industrial yield, and overall municipal efficiency. By integrating these advanced systems into daily operations, they believe Keystone can eliminate frontier chaos and present the federal government with a flawlessly synchronized, highly advanced economy. Their vision is one of total **technological integration**, where the enclave abandons crude Outland mechanics to operate completely in tandem with the established, automated standards of the federated States.

Stability-Centric Conservatives

This faction is focused on maintaining the **existing power structures** in Keystone, prioritizing **social stability** and **preserving the established order** at all costs. They argue that **Keystone's internal system of control is fragile** and must be **shielded from any destabilizing forces**, whether from internal labor discontent or external pressures. Crucially, they believe that the preservation of Keystone's current corporate hierarchy is more important than even the pursuit of statehood. They fear that mutating the enclave's laws or opening their borders to meet federal compliance criteria will dilute the Oligarchy's absolute power and introduce catastrophic external vulnerabilities.

Rather than gamble their security on a push for statehood, they advocate for a **conservative approach**, shoring up **internal social control mechanisms** to permanently lock down the existing framework. They push for more **rigorous policing, tighter surveillance**, and **increased military presence** to suppress any signs of unrest. The key principle here is **order above all else**, ensuring that the **Oligarchy's rule** remains unchallenged through a **network of repression** that ensures **complete conformity**. They emphasize **loyalty** to the local regime as the ultimate value, viewing external federal entanglements and internal dissent as equal threats to their survival.

Internal Prospectus

Strengths

Keystone's leadership structure combines strategic oversight with decentralized execution. The **CEO** and the **Board of Directors** work together to establish long-term goals and strategic direction, ensuring all divisions align with the corporation's overarching vision. Each division is given significant autonomy to develop its own methods for achieving these goals, fostering innovation and adaptability. However, this autonomy is carefully monitored through rigorous performance checks, with regular reviews and **KPIs** ensuring that even the most independent divisions stay on track and remain accountable to the larger corporate vision. This balance of freedom and oversight drives both creativity and efficiency, allowing Keystone to maintain control while encouraging experimentation.

Internal competition among divisions is a key strength that drives innovation and efficiency. With each faction vying for resources and influence, divisions are highly motivated to excel. The CEO and Board encourage this competition as a way to maximize Keystone's potential. Divisions that outperform others are often rewarded with greater resources, creating a meritocratic system where the best ideas and strategies rise to the top. This dynamic fuels creativity within each division and pushes them to outdo one another, resulting in an environment of continuous improvement.

Finally, Keystone's bureaucratic structure provides a sense of order and clarity. With well-defined hierarchical layers and clear lines of communication, Keystone ensures that decision-making is streamlined, and authority is unambiguous. The **Board** plays an active role in overseeing the performance of all divisions, and this robust system of checks and balances helps mitigate potential issues. While the system can be rigid at times, it also serves to maintain a degree of consistency and control over Keystone's operations.

Weaknesses

Despite its strengths, Keystone's structure does have its drawbacks, particularly when it comes to cohesion between divisions. The autonomy granted to each division can sometimes lead to fragmentation and internal misalignment. While the CEO and Board work to ensure strategic alignment, the independent nature of each division means that their goals and methods may sometimes conflict. For instance, the **Enforcers'** aggressive tactics could directly clash with the **Imaginists'** more subtle and manipulative marketing approach, creating structural tensions that affect Keystone's overall cohesion and ability to execute a unified vision.

Another significant issue for Keystone is the internal power struggles that arise due to the intense competition between divisions. Each faction is vying not just for resources but for status and influence within the hierarchy, leading to power struggles that can sometimes hinder operational progress. Divisional heads routinely attempt to sabotage each other or manipulate KPIs to gain favor with the CEO or Board, resulting in severe inefficiencies and a lack of collaboration. These

internal conflicts drain resources and lead to divisions working at cross-purposes, undermining the overall effectiveness of the corporate state.

There's also the matter of **substance abuse**, particularly within the **Enforcers**, who engage in heavy drug use to fuel their aggressive and violent deployment strategies. While this provides temporary boosts in tactical speed and focus, it frequently leads to erratic behavior and reduces operational effectiveness over time. This chemical dependency not only creates potential for violent incidents within the division, but it also jeopardizes Keystone's manufactured public image of absolute stability. The CEO and Board work to manage these systemic problems, but the risk of an catastrophic internal meltdown always looms, creating additional tension within the organization.

Keystone's over reliance on **KPIs** and regular performance reviews, while vital for maintaining vertical accountability, creates significant bottlenecks in decision-making. The need for constant approvals and data reporting slows down the company's organizational agility, particularly during fast-moving crises or frontier shifts. Additionally, the corporate focus on meeting short-term targets encourages divisions to prioritize immediate metrics over sustainable, long-term impact. This intense pressure leads to systematic metric manipulation, where divisions present inflated success figures, severely undermining the integrity of the data relied upon by the CEO and Board to make informed strategic decisions.

Keystone's strict control over internal operations may mask a growing vulnerability outside the corporate perimeter. The deep social and economic divide between the elite Oligarchy and the marginalized working class or transient camp populations fosters a boiling resentment. This rage could easily be exploited by organized crime, rival external forces, or radicalized laborers. Despite Keystone's efforts to maintain total control, these class divisions remain an ever-present systemic risk, and they could become an explosive powder keg if manipulated by outside actors looking to disrupt their infrastructure.

Finally, the extreme autonomy given to each division introduces the risk of severe reputational damage if one faction's actions format an open contradiction to Keystone's broader marketing image. A rogue, sloppy operation by the **Patriot Network**; such as an exposed labor entrapment scandal or a leaked internal surveillance memo; could completely compromise Keystone's standing with visiting federal officials. Despite the CEO's ability to mitigate immediate fallout, such corporate exposure risks permanently derailing their petition for official statehood.

Tensions

Keystone's reliance on external trade and contraband generates friction with factions like the Autarkic Nationalists, who view such dependencies as a betrayal of the city's self-reliant ideals. This ideological divide threatens to polarize public opinion and destabilize support for Keystone's current direction.

The clash between the Technosophists' push for advanced automation and the Foundry's focus on practical, incremental solutions reflects deeper philosophical rifts about Keystone's future. These

debates fuel innovation but also exacerbate factional divisions, delaying consensus on critical projects.

Keystone External Relations

Keystone's external relations are characterized by a complex web of alliances, rivalries, and economic dependencies that reflect the broader geopolitical instability of the region. As a powerful oligarchy, Keystone's primary concern is securing its statehood through strategic trade, technological superiority, and military advancements. However, rising tensions with key allies, increasing autonomy of strategic partners, and intensifying competition from regional factions are placing its position of power at significant risk. While Keystone maintains a strong central position, these external pressures are eroding its ability to shape the region's future.

Las Cruces

Keystone's relationship with **Las Cruces** has been mutually beneficial, but the faction's growing **autonomy** is eroding Keystone's traditional leverage. As Las Cruces builds its **self-sufficiency** and strengthens its **external trade networks**, its reliance on Keystone's **advanced pharmaceuticals, recycled state refuse, and biodiesel** continues to decrease, weakening Keystone's influence.

In response, Keystone has shifted its tactics to a more **subtle, indirect form of control**. Keystone leverages the **Patriot Network** to subtly infiltrate key sectors of Las Cruces' economy, such as its **trade councils, labor cooperatives, and resource management groups**. Through operatives planted in these sectors, Keystone fosters **frivolous debates** and **internal conflicts**, often over inconsequential issues or **overly complex trade terms**, effectively stalling progress and delaying decisions within Las Cruces' consensus-driven framework.

While these distractions play out, Keystone paints itself as the **patient, benevolent partner**, offering its support without forcing an agenda. Meanwhile, **Las Cruces' internal cohesion** begins to fray as Keystone's operatives continue to subtly push the rival into a state of **political indecision**, ensuring that the enclave remains tethered to Keystone's economic influence. However, this tactic is high-risk; if Las Cruces' leaders become aware of the manipulation, the fragile alliance could collapse, leaving Keystone vulnerable to a shift in power.

Meanwhile, Keystone subtly inflates the threat of lawlessness through **media broadcasts** and **expert commentary**, promoting the idea that the Rio Grande Valley region must strengthen its **defense**. While the open frontier threat has diminished due to **Los Chingones** consolidating power, Keystone fosters a sense of vulnerability, subtly encouraging the region to invest in **military readiness**.

This push for militarization serves Keystone's interests by creating a **defensive buffer** against potential **Los Chingones** aggression. However, the risk is that a more **militarized** region could

eventually become a stronger, more independent force, potentially shifting the balance of power. For now, Keystone tolerates this risk, seeing a well-armed frontier neighbor as preferable to the threat of a cartel-driven **Los Chingones** expansion.

Los Chingones

Keystone's relationship with **Los Chingones** is a covert, strategically driven alliance. While Keystone doesn't require the cartel's luxury goods, intelligence, or illicit products for its own operations, these resources serve a larger purpose; keeping **Los Chingones** within Keystone's sphere of influence. In exchange, Keystone supplies **biodiesel**, **medical supplies**, and **weapons**; weapons more advanced than what the cartel could acquire elsewhere, though still below Keystone's own front line technology.

The true value of this arrangement lies in the **leverage** it gives Keystone. By ensuring **Los Chingones** remain dependent on Keystone's critical supplies, Keystone maintains subtle control, preventing the cartel from becoming a direct threat. However, as **Los Chingones** expand their reach through **extortion** and **exploitation** of local settlements, they begin encroaching on areas Keystone once sought to influence. Their growing control over these territories challenges Keystone's long-term strategy.

As **Los Chingones** extract more from these towns and frontier enclaves, their influence grows, and with it, the risk to Keystone's delicate control over the region. While the cartel's tactics may not pose an immediate military threat, their expanding economic power shifts the balance, making it harder for Keystone to reclaim influence without drawing unwanted federal or regional attention.

The biggest risk to this covert arrangement, however, lies in the potential **exposure** of Keystone's dealings. If **Las Cruces** or visiting federal officials were to uncover the nature of Keystone's support for the cartel, it could provoke a severe backlash. Such exposure would instantly jeopardize Keystone's carefully curated image of absolute stability and permanently derail their petition for statehood.

Thus, while the alliance with **Los Chingones** serves Keystone's immediate strategic goals, the cartel's growing power is becoming a significant complication. If **Los Chingones** continue to expand their influence unchecked, their ambitions may soon undermine Keystone's own regional control, forcing Keystone to confront a rival it never intended to empower.

The Independent Towns

As independent towns along the **Rio Grande Valley** reclaim abandoned settlements, Keystone sees an opportunity to exert economic dominance without directly occupying these communities. The city's strategy involves explicitly trying to mimic the **Resource Vertical camps** operated by the actual States, establishing their own crude, inferior imitations of these corporate-run outposts to dominate essential localized markets. By deploying these knock-off vertical footprints, Keystone subtly undermines local commerce and creates a profound structural dependency, ensuring that raw material profits flow directly back to the city while maintaining a false veneer of independence

in the towns.

To secure these investments, the **Patriot Network** works behind the scenes, using covert surveillance and psychological manipulation to monitor the loyalty of these communities. The Network's agents infiltrate local council structures and labor pools, ensuring that any anti-corporate dissent or attempts at genuine autonomy are quickly neutralized. By gathering actionable intelligence and subtly shaping local trade policies, the Patriot Network helps maintain Keystone's grip without overt military intervention, ensuring that these towns stay economically tethered to the city's vertical supply lines.

However, this strategy carries significant risks. If Keystone pushes its vertical integration too aggressively, it could completely alienate these communities, pushing them directly toward alternatives like **Los Chingones**, who offer protection without imposing corporate governance. Keystone must carefully balance its predatory vertical approach with the towns' desire for independence to avoid driving them into rival hands. The enclave must ensure the town economies remain locked into Keystone's dominance, while the Patriot Network ensures that these connections stay secure.

External Prospectus

Keystone's external relations are strengthened by strategic alliances with Las Cruces and Los Chingones, leveraging subtle control through the Patriot Network, technological superiority, and economic influence to maintain regional dominance. However, growing autonomy in Las Cruces, the risk of exposure in its dealings with Los Chingones, and the potential alienation of independent towns all threaten the stability of Keystone's influence in the region.

Strengths

Keystone's external relations benefit from calculated alliances with key regional players like **Las Cruces** and **Los Chingones**. Despite Las Cruces growing more autonomous, it remains a critical partner for trade and technological distribution. Keystone maintains subtle control through the **Patriot Network**, which systematically influences Las Cruces' internal politics without overt military interference. This allows Keystone to keep its neighbor economically and politically tethered to its sphere while appearing as a patient, supportive ally.

The alliance with **Los Chingones**, though covert, also provides valuable strategic leverage. By supplying the cartel with essential resources, including **biodiesel**, **medical supplies**, and **weapons**, Keystone ensures Los Chingones remain structurally dependent, preventing them from gaining full autonomy. This subtle control reduces the risk of the cartel becoming a direct threat to Keystone's regional interests.

Keystone's **economic influence** over independent towns in the Rio Grande Valley strengthens its position without direct territorial control. Through crude imitations of the States' **Resource**

Vertical camps, Keystone creates profound dependencies, ensuring that profits flow back to the city while these communities appear independent. The **Patriot Network** supports this by monitoring local governance, neutralizing dissent, and maintaining Keystone's influence from behind the scenes.

Additionally, Keystone's **technological and military superiority** ensures it remains the dominant player in regional security. By trading out advanced weaponry and refined chemical assets while keeping its own front line technology entirely proprietary, Keystone strengthens its partnerships and prevents rivals from gaining matching capabilities, solidifying its central role in the frontier's power dynamics.

Weaknesses

Keystone's regional influence is increasingly threatened by the **growing autonomy of Las Cruces**. As Las Cruces builds its own trade networks and reduces its reliance on Keystone, the city risks losing critical economic leverage. The subtle manipulation via the Patriot Network could backfire catastrophically if Las Cruces' leadership discovers it, leading to a total breakdown in the alliance and a loss of strategic influence.

The **covert relationship** with **Los Chingones** also presents severe risks. If Keystone's material and weapons support of the cartel were exposed to visiting federal officials, it could instantly derail their petition for statehood and destroy their reputation for absolute stability. Furthermore, as Los Chingones expand their territorial control and economic power through extortion, their growing strength could directly undermine Keystone's long-term strategy, forcing Keystone into a confrontation with a rival it actively helped empower.

Keystone's reliance on the **Patriot Network** for covert control introduces immense fragility into its strategy. While effective in the short term, these indirect tactics are vulnerable to exposure. If local leaders or rival factions discover Keystone's systemic interference, it could erode its credibility, provoke regional resistance, and ruin its standing with the federal government.

Finally, Keystone's **economic dominance** over independent towns via its crude imitations of Resource Verticals risks alienating local populations. If these communities perceive Keystone's tactics as overly exploitative, they may shift their allegiance entirely to rivals like Los Chingones, who offer protection without imposing direct corporate control. This delicate balance leaves Keystone's entire outer trade framework vulnerable to sudden regional shifts.

Keystone Goals

Short-Term Goals

In the short term, Keystone's primary focus is on stabilizing its internal systems and maintaining its dominance in the region amid rising external tensions. There is an urgent need to ensure the stability of key resource flows, particularly from **Las Cruces** and **Los Chingones**, while also consolidating power through internal divisions such as the **Patriot Network**, **Imaginists**, and **The Foundry**.

Strengthen Leverage Over Las Cruces

Keystone must take swift action to reinforce its control over the supply of essential resources like **food** and **raw materials** from **Las Cruces**. As Las Cruces becomes more self-sufficient, the faction poses a growing challenge to Keystone's regional dominance. In response, Keystone will offer targeted incentives, including access to advanced **medical technology**, **designer drugs**, and **biodiesel**, to keep Las Cruces dependent. These economic ties will ensure that Las Cruces remains reliant on Keystone for its continued stability.

To further cement control, the **Patriot Network** will deepen its influence within Las Cruces by manipulating the local trade councils and leadership circles. With their presence embedded in these key groups, they can ensure that any alliances formed with rival factions or movements that threaten Keystone's power are quickly neutralized. Simultaneously, the **Imaginists** will engage in a subtle campaign of public persuasion, using media broadcasts and propaganda to portray Keystone as the protector of **Las Cruces' prosperity**. This media influence will be crucial in suppressing any localized unrest or movements seeking absolute independence from their trade loop.

Maintaining Market Share

As **Los Chingones** expands, **Keystone** faces a critical **opportunity loss** that directly threatens its long-term political survival. The cartel's increasing control over independent towns and settlements redirects value away from Keystone, depriving it of the economic benefits it once extracted from these regions. With the cartel siphoning off the wealth that would have bolstered Keystone's economy, the enclave's strategic position weakens, directly making **attaining statehood** far more difficult. To satisfy federal requirements, Keystone must prove it can maintain a wealthy, stable, and autonomous territory; a metric that becomes impossible to hit if Los Chingones dominates the regional market share.

Keystone cannot afford direct military conflict with **Los Chingones**, as a messy frontier war would signal chaos to federal observers and permanently ruin their image of absolute stability. The cartel's influence grows without overt confrontation, forcing Keystone to rely on subtle tactics to retain its economic foothold. By using the **Patriot Network** to discreetly support local leadership and communities, through measures like providing cheap arms, bolstering defenses, or spreading propaganda to promote self-reliance, Keystone can slow the cartel's encroachment, preserving its vital share of regional value without drawing unwanted attention.

However, this delicate approach is fraught with severe risks. Too much interference could expose Keystone's hand, provoking both **Los Chingones** and the very towns it seeks to manipulate. Keystone must carefully balance its covert efforts to prevent catastrophic opportunity loss, knowing that a single misstep could trigger a confrontation that would destabilize the entire region.

and instantly derail their petition for statehood.

Address Internal Unrest

Internally, Keystone faces rising tensions between the **working class** and the **Enforcers**, as disparities in wealth and power threaten the stability of the state. Economic inequality and rising social unrest could trigger large-scale uprisings if left unchecked. To quell these tensions, Keystone will implement economic redistribution strategies and bolster its surveillance network to ensure that dissent is identified and suppressed early. The goal is to strike a delicate balance between addressing the needs of the working class and maintaining the loyalty of the Enforcers, without allowing either faction to become powerful enough to challenge Keystone's authority.

The **Patriot Network** will play a pivotal role in this effort, ramping up surveillance and intervention against any movements that could spark unrest. By infiltrating grassroots organizations and political movements, they can ensure that any seeds of rebellion are nipped in the bud. Meanwhile, the **Imaginists** will use their influence over the media to shift public opinion in Keystone's favor. Through strategic narratives, they will portray Keystone as a benevolent protector of the working class, framing the ruling government as a force for good that safeguards the people's welfare.

Long-Term Goals

Looking ahead, Keystone's long-term strategy is centered entirely on **attaining official statehood** from the federal government, converting its frontier dominance into permanent, legitimate sovereignty. To satisfy federal requirements, Keystone aims to achieve total political and economic consolidation over the **Rio Grande Valley**, reducing **Las Cruces**, **Los Chingones**, and neighboring independent towns into compliant, taxable dependencies. By expanding its territorial assets and solidifying its position as the region's sole stable authority, the corporation plans to present the United States with a fully pacified frontier territory ready for integration. Crucially, ensuring internal stability through its core corporate divisions; the **Patriot Network**, **Imaginists**, and **The Foundry**; remains vital to projecting the flawless image of order required to secure their seat in the union.

Turn Las Cruces into a Vassal

Over the long term, Keystone plans to transform **Las Cruces** into a **vassal** that relies heavily on Keystone for both economic and political stability. By manipulating trade routes and creating economic dependencies, Keystone will ensure that Las Cruces becomes increasingly tied to its larger regional agenda. The gradual erosion of Las Cruces' autonomy will be facilitated through a combination of economic pressure and political maneuvering, effectively making it an extension of Keystone's influence.

The **Patriot Network** will continue its role in embedding agents within key positions of power in Las Cruces, ensuring that any movements towards independence or rebellion are swiftly crushed. Their reach will help prevent any shift away from Keystone's control. Meanwhile, the **Imaginists** will work to solidify Keystone's cultural dominance, ensuring that the people of Las Cruces feel

more aligned with Keystone's vision than ever before, even if they are technically a semi-autonomous state.

Regional Technological and Military Superiority

Keystone is determined to become the **technological powerhouse** of the local frontier, focusing on **biotech**, **military innovations**, and **medical advancements** to solidify its regional dominance. Because the city is not a recognized State and entirely lacks the sovereign direct-access procurement pipelines of the actual federated powers, its technological advancements are built strictly from aggressive local development and reverse-engineered scrap. By staying at the absolute forefront of regional innovation within the Outlands, Keystone can secure exclusive access to frontier resources and gain a strategic edge over rival local factions.

The **Foundry** will lead the charge in engineering these localized technologies, including custom security innovations and bio-chemical assets, ensuring that Keystone remains the most advanced and powerful force in the Valley. Meanwhile, the **Imaginists** will play their part by launching an internal **propaganda campaign** to present Keystone as the territory's savior, positioning this technological progress as a force for collective prosperity and ensuring that the working class supports the Oligarchy's vision of stability and progress.

Expand the Network of Independent Towns

As Keystone expands its reach across the **Rio Grande Valley**, it will continue to establish **commercial outposts** in independent towns. Because the city lacks the absolute resource abundance and legal authorization of the actual States, these outposts are strictly crude, inferior imitations of the States' Resource Verticals. This strategy ensures the economic dependence of these towns on Keystone, helping expand its political influence in the region without the ability to annex them. By establishing a network of interconnected towns, Keystone can build a dependent base of support and ensure its influence remains unchallenged within the limits of the Valley.

The **Patriot Network** will oversee this expansion by continuing its surveillance of these towns, preventing any threats from rival factions or dissidents. Meanwhile, the **Imaginists** will work to integrate these towns culturally, ensuring that their identities are aligned with Keystone's overarching goals. Through media manipulation and propaganda, they will continue to shape the narrative, ensuring that loyalty to Keystone becomes an ingrained part of the local culture.

City of Las Cruces

The City of Las Cruces is a cooperative enclave born from the great consolidation, built on the ideals of mutual aid, democratic governance, and self-sufficiency. While the city thrives on its participatory model and community-driven economy, it has also developed a military to protect its perimeter from external threats like lawless Outland raiders and the highly organized forces of Los Chingones. Internally, the city faces ongoing strains over resources, power, and the management of its heavily isolated infirmity zones, where the influx of broken, non-productive Outlanders tests the limits of a society founded on first-responder principles.

Las Cruces Overview

Origins

Las Cruces was founded during the early decades of the great consolidation as a sanctuary for those left behind, particularly refugees fleeing neighboring cities like **Roswell**, **Artesia**, and **Carlsbad** as capital and infrastructure were systematically pulled into the rising Mega-City States. The initial community was small and decentralized, focused entirely on mutual survival and resource sharing. The founding principles were shaped by a core group of **municipal workers**, including **first responders**, **teachers**, and **civil engineers**, who applied their experience in public service to create a cooperative, self-sustaining model. As the enclave grew, this cooperative framework helped it weather the early chaos of systemic abandonment, severe resource shortages, and the constant influx of displaced people.

As external threats, such as roving **raiders**, became more pronounced, Las Cruces began to militarize and establish more structured defense systems, like the **Defense Sector Cooperative**. Tensions also emerged within the community over governance, resource distribution, and the treatment of the **chronically ill and physically broken**, who were isolated in dedicated infirmity zones but ultimately neglected as internal resource struggles took precedence. Over time, the city moved away from remnants of the old U.S. government systems, transitioning to a more decentralized, **participatory democracy** paired with **cooperative economics**. However, deep-rooted conflicts, particularly over the burden of the **non-productive sick** and the lingering influence of former elites, continue to test the city's unity and stability.

Region

Situated in the arid Rio Grande Valley of southern New Mexico, the Las Cruces region is defined by its rugged desert terrain, irrigated agricultural zones, and sparse, scattered settlements. The climate is harsh, with scorching summers and cold winters, making survival a constant challenge.

Historically, the area has been shaped by a mix of indigenous, Spanish, and American influences, with a strong agricultural legacy that persists in the region's scattered farms and irrigation systems. Today, the landscape is a blend of resilient communities, some remaining tied to Las Cruces through trade and mutual aid, while others have carved out more isolated existences, maintaining their independence. The region's diversity is reflected in its range of governance models, from collaborative, city-linked settlements to more autonomous and self-sustaining ones that have distanced themselves from the central hub.

Faction Type

Las Cruces is a cooperative and decentralized faction, centered around mutual aid, collective responsibility, and the autonomy of its people. Its core values include democratic participation, self-sufficiency, and a commitment to communal welfare. The city is a hub for those seeking refuge or a fresh start, offering not just protection, but a way to rebuild and govern themselves outside the constraints of new State system. Las Cruces thrives on a culture of voluntary cooperation, where work, resources, and defense are shared, and power remains distributed among its people. While it remains a beacon for those who align with its ideals of autonomy and collective action, it also faces ongoing challenges related to resource allocation, security, and maintaining unity across its diverse, ever-evolving communities.

Leadership and Structure

Governance

Las Cruces is governed by a **Participatory-Cooperative** model, with power resting in the hands of the people. At the heart of this system is the **City Charter**, which outlines citizens' rights and responsibilities and defines the principles of governance, transparency, and accountability. It serves as the foundation for all decision-making, ensuring that power is distributed fairly and that the community remains committed to collective welfare.

The **City Council** makes legislative decisions based on community input, in alignment with the Charter. A **formal judiciary** issues rulings that must be ratified by the City Council for implementation. Defense is coordinated by the **Defense Sector Cooperative**, while local militias handle internal security. Public life is organized through **autonomous cooperatives**, where workers control their labor and resources.

This decentralized structure promotes flexibility but requires constant effort to uphold the principles of the Charter, prevent abuses of power, and resolve conflicts. The **Charter** is the touchstone for maintaining a stable, transparent society, guiding the balance between individual freedom and collective responsibility.

Hierarchy

The governance of Las Cruces is a decentralized system in which legislative power rests with the City Council, legal authority is held by a worker-controlled judiciary, and defense is managed by the democratically-led Defense Sector and borough militias—ensuring that all aspects of governance and security remain accountable to the people.

- **City Council:** Holds legislative power, but all decisions are subject to direct community involvement, ensuring governance reflects the collective will.
- **Judiciary:** A worker-controlled body that provides rulings and dispute resolution. Its decisions lack executive enforcement power but rely on community cooperation or may result in updates to the city charter that compel action or policy changes.
- **Defense Sector :** Overseen by democratic leadership, with authority delegated to self-governed defense units, ensuring military power is both accountable and decentralized.
- **Militias:** Local defense groups with varying allegiances and influence, serving as the primary internal security mechanism for the city.

Leadership Conflict

Leadership conflict in Las Cruces stems from the interactions between the City Council, the judiciary, and the militias, each of which holds distinct powers but often operates in parallel or in tension. The City Council holds legislative authority, but militias, as the primary security force, sometimes act independently when they believe the Council's actions don't adequately address community needs or safety. The judiciary, which is responsible for resolving disputes, may find its rulings challenged if they conflict with the actions of either the Council or militias, especially since its decisions rely on community cooperation rather than executive enforcement.

The Defense Sector's leadership can also face friction from militias, who see themselves as the true protectors of the city and sometimes act in opposition to central defense strategies. With competing priorities and varying interpretations of justice, these bodies frequently navigate a delicate balance of power, where ongoing dialogue and community input are crucial to resolving conflicts and maintaining stability in the city.

Infrastructure

Technology

Las Cruces' technology is a mix of aging pre-consolidation infrastructure and locally adapted solutions, shaped by the harsh desert environment and decades of systemic abandonment. Much of the enclave's infrastructure relies on old equipment left behind when capital shifted to the Mega-City States, requiring constant maintenance, ingenuity, and resourcefulness.

Agriculture depends on old farming equipment like automated irrigation systems and high-efficiency tractors. While these were once state-of-the-art corporate assets, they are now difficult to repair and maintain without access to proprietary corporate supply chains. The city also uses hydroponic and aeroponic farming methods to supplement food production, though these systems, like all technology in Las Cruces, require both technical skill and a reliable energy source.

Medical technology is similarly limited, with the city relying on pre-consolidation stockpiles, salvaged equipment, and supplies smuggled out of corporate resource verticals. Basic treatments, such as antibiotics and wound care, are available, but advanced procedures, life-extension therapies, and specialized drugs are completely locked behind Mega-City employment tiers. Local healthcare integrates rudimentary medical knowledge with natural remedies from regional plants to stretch their limited resources across the general population and the isolated infirmary zones.

Silicon compute infrastructure is highly fragmented and unreliable. Lacking the predictive algorithms and quantum encryption networks that run the automated urban matrices of the Mega-Cities, the enclave relies on salvaged, air-gapped processors. Security and resource tracking are primarily managed through manual oversight by local militias and community groups, who fill in the gaps where tech networks fail.

Energy in Las Cruces is sourced from solar power, wind, and biomass, operating entirely outside the advanced Molten Salt Reactors of the corporate world. The city's local grid is inefficient and prone to outages, with power being a scarce and fluctuating resource. Small-scale renewable energy projects, such as home solar panels and local wind turbines, help fill the gaps, but the overall energy supply remains unreliable.

Overall, Las Cruces relies on a combination of salvaged technology, local resources, and community cooperation to survive. While its technological systems are far from perfect, the city's resilience and adaptability allow it to function in a challenging, unincorporated world.

Economy

Las Cruces' economy strikes a balance between **self-sufficiency** and **regional trade**. The city is heavily dependent on **agriculture**, particularly drought-resistant crops like **chile peppers** and **onions**, supported by solar-powered irrigation and modern farming techniques. Despite this, there are ongoing shortages, especially in **specialized goods** and **advanced technology**, making trade essential for survival.

As a central trade hub, Las Cruces connects with **resource-poor towns** along the Rio Grande and into **Chihuahua**. These towns exchange **raw materials**, **handmade goods**, and **specialized items** for Las Cruces' agricultural surplus and basic medical supplies.

While **barter** remains the primary method of exchange, with goods and labor directly traded within **community-run cooperatives**, **old-world currency** is used regionally as a **value mediator** in more complex transactions. It's not universally accepted, but it plays a role in facilitating trade, particularly with neighboring settlements. In Las Cruces, **barter** continues to dominate, especially for everyday needs. Farmers might trade produce for **household goods**, while artisans barter

skills for food or medical supplies. This system reflects the city's reliance on mutual aid and community cooperation.

The economy of Las Cruces remains vulnerable, dependent on **reclaimed technologies**, **scavenged materials**, and **small-scale manufacturing**. Resource scarcity, political tensions, and the ever-present pressure of limited resources leave the city exposed to potential instability.

Faction Culture

Core Philosophy

Las Cruces was founded on the principles of **mutual aid** and **self-reliance** during the height of the great consolidation, where individuals came together out of necessity. Over time, as the city stabilized and grew, these early ideals evolved into a more pragmatic approach, recognizing that survival required not just individual autonomy, but also **organized collaboration**.

As the city prospered, new challenges arose, particularly the need for **clearer value exchanges** and more **defined roles**. While cooperation remains at the heart of Las Cruces, the growing complexity of life has exposed a range of perspectives on how best to structure relationships and manage resources. **Diverging views** on how to organize society, as well as **differing expectations** about cooperation, are common, but they contribute to the city's **adaptability** and ongoing evolution, helping to refine the system to better serve its people.

Daily Life

Daily life in Las Cruces is rooted in **self-sufficiency**, **mutual aid**, and **collective action**. With limited resources, residents contribute to communal efforts ranging from **farming** and **local manufacturing** to the upkeep of infrastructure. The principles of different cooperatives shape daily interactions, where some emphasize **egalitarianism** and **worker-controlled enterprises**, while others focus on **resource optimization** and the **structural organization of trade**, ensuring the smooth flow of goods and services across the city. While regular participation in **community meetings** is expected, the process can be slow, with debates over governance and resource distribution often becoming drawn out.

The economy remains largely based on **barter** and **local trade**, though some groups are pushing for greater external commerce to supplement the city's resources. Despite this, the **Isolated Infirmary Zones** serve as a visible and divisive reminder of the city's ongoing struggle to balance survival with social ethics. While some residents volunteer within these zones, offering precious medical care and supplies, others argue that devoting scarce communal wealth to a non-productive population is an unsustainable drain that threatens the enclave's survival. The existence of the infirmaries and the debate over their treatment reflect deeper tensions about **compassion**, **security**, and the **limits of inclusion**.

Values and Customs

Cooperative economics, military service, and grassroots participation are key cultural values in Las Cruces. The city's system of **cooperative economics** means that work and resources are often organized around mutual aid groups, cooperatives, or shared ownership.

Grassroots participation is considered vital to the survival of the community. Town meetings, cooperative assemblies, and open forums are regular parts of life, with residents contributing to debates on governance, resource distribution, and local defense. However, the nature of these processes can often lead to slow decision-making and frustration among those who favor more decisive action, who feel that urgent issues, such as external threats and technological progress, demand quicker responses.

The treatment of the **chronically ill** continues to be a deeply debated issue within the city's moral framework. While some factions champion a compassionate approach, advocating for significant resource allocation and protective care, others argue that spending limited communal wealth on non-productive individuals directly compromises the city's survival. This ongoing debate over the practical limits of mutual aid influences much of Las Cruces' social interactions and governance.

Role of Women and Minorities

In Las Cruces, leadership roles are open to all, regardless of gender, ethnicity, or background. The city's founding principles of **mutual aid** and **self-governance** emphasize inclusivity, meaning women, non-binary individuals, and people from historically marginalized groups are integral to the community's governance and decision-making structures.

While formal barriers to leadership do not exist, the limits of the city's egalitarian ideals are constantly tested by the burden of the **chronically ill**. Because these broken and non-productive individuals require significant communal resources without contributing to the economy, they face profound social prejudice. They are frequently stigmatized as an unsustainable drain on the enclave's survival. Despite efforts by compassionate factions to advocate for their dignity and care, those in the infirmary zones experience a form of social ostracism that exposes a sharp rift between the city's high moral ideals and the harsh material realities of life in the Outlands.

In this environment, these ongoing social and economic divides frequently complicate efforts toward true community integration and cohesion.

Religion and Beliefs

Las Cruces has no state religion, but religion plays a role in the community. With no centralized faith, belief systems are diverse, reflecting the enclave's fractured past and practical survival needs. Many citizens follow forms of **Christianity**, particularly pre-consolidation denominations like **Catholicism** or **Evangelical Protestantism**, but these beliefs are often more about tradition and community than spiritual hierarchy. Religious practice is generally accepted, though rarely

idealized, and tensions sometimes arise between differing interpretations of faith, especially when communities struggle over resources or governance.

Beyond traditional religion, some groups in Las Cruces have adopted more secular or survival-focused belief systems. Central to many of these is the idea of the **City of Survival**, a philosophy built on resilience, mutual aid, and community solidarity. Celebrations and rituals often revolve around these themes, including seasonal festivals and memorials honoring the fallen.

In contrast, others hold beliefs centered around **ecological preservation** or **technological reverence**. These ideologies view survival as intertwined with either sustainable farming or the upkeep of pre-consolidation machinery and salvaged processors. While not formally organized religions, these belief systems carry strong cultural weight and influence how people approach life in the city.

Religious practices in Las Cruces, regardless of the tradition, are mostly decentralized and community-driven. However, conflict can arise, particularly when different groups vie for influence, resources, or control over how the city's future is shaped.

Morality

The moral outlook of Las Cruces is shaped by a balance of individual freedom and mutual responsibility. The city values personal autonomy, where people are free to choose their roles and affiliations, but this freedom comes with an understanding that survival requires cooperation. Those who choose to join the city are bound by a moral obligation to contribute to the collective well-being, whether through cooperation, taxation, or other means, as outlined in the city's charter.

Ethical debates inherently mirror this balance, specifically through the ongoing community divisions over resource distribution to the infirmity zones. These tensions highlight the enclave's core moral dilemma: balancing the foundational values of equality and fairness with the pragmatic need for survival and security in an abandoned world. At its core, Las Cruces operates on a philosophy of compassion tempered by caution, where the rights of individuals are respected, but the survival of the community must come first.

Aesthetic and Design

Las Cruces presents a rugged, survivalist aesthetic that draws on its Southwestern heritage, but with a more **functional, weathered** feel. The city's architecture is primarily **stucco, cinderblock, and metal**, with a mix of older **ranch-style** houses and modern, practical buildings adapted for survival in a resource-scarce world. Many structures are **self-built or repurposed**, with a heavy reliance on **salvaged materials** and **makeshift additions** to adapt to the changing needs of the population.

The **Mexican-American influence** is visible in vibrant, **handmade textiles** and **brightly colored accents** like **tiles** or **mosaic patterns** that add character to otherwise utilitarian buildings. **Native American** elements can be seen in smaller details, such as **woven baskets**, **symbolic art**, and **earth-toned** colors that reflect respect for the land. The **use of metal**, found in **corrugated steel**, **iron structures**, and **rusted signage**, is common, as residents repurpose any available resources to build their homes and defenses.

Clothing and personal items are marked by **patchwork**, **denim**, and **leather**, worn and weathered from constant use. People take pride in their ability to **reuse and recycle**, with clothing reflecting both necessity and a sense of cultural pride. The **colors of the city** are muted, with lots of **dusty browns**, **grays**, and **olive greens**, punctuated by vibrant hues of **red**, **turquoise**, and **yellow** that nod to the city's multicultural roots.

Las Cruces' **Isolated Infirmary Zones** and **militia camps** feature **makeshift barricades**, **scrawled signs**, and **borough markers**, outlining the strict physical boundaries of the enclave's resource divides. These areas are much rougher and entirely utilitarian in appearance, standing in stark contrast to the more vibrant and communal spaces that celebrate **art**, **ritual**, and **shared resilience**.

Las Cruces History

The Call for Unity

In the early days, Las Cruces called on surrounding cities to unite, leading to a gradual influx of refugees from areas like **Roswell** and **Carlsbad**. Las Cruces became a **key survival point** for southern New Mexico. However, initial responses were slow as many neighboring towns were unsure if relocating was their best option. Only when it became undeniable that no city could stand alone did the floodgates open, and **Las Cruces grew significantly**—but not without strain. **Basic services** were put under pressure, and infrastructure buckled under the weight of the population surge.

The Sick and Abandoned Controversy

The arrival of the **chronically ill and physically broken** fleeing the recently abandoned **Roswell** region—a territory once heavily populated with major hospitals and medical infrastructure before capital shifted to the States—ignited a fierce debate. **Doctors and reformers** pushed for their **inclusion**, arguing that human dignity and mutual aid demanded collective effort, while others saw them as a **dangerous liability**, fearing the unsustainable resource drain they posed to the enclave. The situation was further complicated by the constant influx of completely destitute, un-bonded Outlanders who packed into the outskirts of the city seeking aid. The clash of opinions over how to distribute limited food and medicine to these refugees revealed deep divisions within Las Cruces, challenging the fragile unity the city had worked so hard to build.

The Debate on the Future of Governance

In the face of growing **external threats** and **internal discord**, Las Cruces found itself at a crossroads. The debate over the future of governance (**centralized authority** versus **egalitarian principles**) intensified. While most factions agreed that unity was essential, they were deeply divided on how it should be achieved. Informal governance could no longer withstand the rising pressures, and the lack of a unified decision-making body left the city vulnerable. This period of uncertainty became the catalyst for the formation of a new, more structured and accountable system that balanced **egalitarian ideals** with the practical needs of survival.

The Exile of the Elite

As Las Cruces embraced a more egalitarian system, a significant portion of the population, now forced to work for the barest necessities in a world where survival was paramount, demanded direct control over their work and lives. This demand was not just rooted in idealism but in the harsh reality that, with the collapse of the old system, resources like food, water, and land were no longer the exclusive domain of the elite. The new system called for these resources to be shared more equitably, making the old hierarchies obsolete.

The elite class (corporate moguls, former politicians, and military leaders) viewed this as a direct threat to their authority. Unwilling to submit to the authority of those they had once governed, especially in a world where they too would be asked to work for survival, many of them, along with their supporters who feared the egalitarian ideals, fled to Socorro. Their departure not only stripped Las Cruces of its power brokers but also caused a drain of skilled manpower and expertise, further weakening the city.

The elite's exodus created a power vacuum, leaving Las Cruces vulnerable to internal struggles for control. This also gave rise to Keystone, a faction that would later challenge Las Cruces' vision and push for a return to hierarchical structures.

Transition to the Participatory-Cooperative Model

Amid growing challenges, a group of **community leaders** (former **municipal workers**, **union leaders**, and **educators**) formed a coalition to create a more organized framework for governance. Their goal was clear: preserve Las Cruces cooperative ethos while introducing enough structure to ensure the city's survival.

The City Charter emerged as a pivotal document, establishing citizens' rights, creating the City Council, and defining roles for key cooperative sectors. This Charter laid the foundation for the **Participatory-Cooperative model**, ensuring decisions would be made through **community input** but within a more accountable, structured system.

Though not without controversy, the Charter became the accepted path forward, transitioning the city from a loose network of communities into a more coherent governance structure. It balanced **egalitarian ideals** with the realities of survival, grounding the new system in **autonomy**, **cooperative economics**, and **participatory democracy**.

The Rise of Militarization

As the external threats, primarily from **roaming Outland Raiders**, grew, Las Cruces formed the **Defense Sector Cooperative** to defend the city. However, this militarization came at a cost. Factions that had advocated for a **more peaceful, cooperative society** began to **clash** with those who wanted more militarized control. A particularly contentious moment occurred when the **military sector** clashed with **local civilian groups** during a major raid on the outskirts. Las Cruces found itself at a crossroads—**order at the cost of freedom**, or **chaos with peacekeeping at the core**?

Mob Rule

With the police force effectively dismantled, the City Council directed the defense sector to step in and maintain order, despite their charter prohibiting direct involvement in civil matters. The decision, though made in the interest of stability, sparked conflict among the more staunch egalitarians, who saw it as a dangerous concentration of power. They filed a grievance with the Judiciary, which ruled that the City Council had overstepped its authority and must cease its enforcement efforts immediately. This ruling left a second power vacuum, and in the absence of a centralized force, self-organized militias began to form across the city's regions, each group taking security into their own hands, with mixed results.

The Formation of Militias

With the collapse of centralized authority and the absence of formal law enforcement, **self-organized militias** formed to maintain order. Some sought to restore stability, while others pursued agendas to control different sectors of the city. Initially, these militias were seen as necessary, but their lack of coordination and constant rivalries led to **lawlessness** and further fractures. As the militias clashed and tensions mounted, it became increasingly clear that Las Cruces could no longer sustain itself without a more formalized structure for governance and security.

The Return of the Elite

Keystone's return to Las Cruces was met with a mixture of apprehension and intrigue, as the city's populace grappled with the implications of their sudden reappearance. While the faction's arrival, marked by retrofitted diesel vehicles, biodiesel, and advanced medical supplies, initially appeared as a potential boon, offering much-needed resources and technological advancements, its deeper motivations remained a source of concern.

For many within the city, Keystone's presence was not seen as an altruistic gesture but rather as a calculated maneuver to regain influence. The faction sought to integrate itself into Las Cruces' vital trade networks, leveraging commerce and subtle manipulation to assert economic control. However, beyond immediate material gains, their long-term objectives appeared to be more insidious: the gradual erosion of the egalitarian values that had come to define the city.

While some viewed Keystone's return as a pragmatic opportunity to stabilize and prosper, others feared it represented the reassertion of hierarchical structures; a stark reminder that the struggle for equality was ongoing and that the forces of entrenched power remained ever-present.

The Capture of El Paso

In a brutal display of tactical efficiency, **Los Chingones** captured **El Paso** to secure the international crossing corridors and regional black markets. Rather than engaging the federal military directly, the cartel concentrated its forces along the Juárez metroplex and the New Mexico border, leaving the vast interior stretch toward Fort Bliss as a burned, completely un-liveable no-man's-land.

This event deeply shocked southern New Mexico, forcing Las Cruces to rapidly reevaluate its security measures. A frantic reassessment of alliances, military readiness, and **defensive capabilities** followed, with the city's **leadership** engaging in drawn-out **deliberations** on whether to form alliances with smaller neighboring enclaves or stand alone. The **Capture of El Paso** served as a stark, realistic reminder that the Outlands had become an apex-predator environment, and Las Cruces could no longer afford to remain passive.

Las Cruces Internal Divisions

Las Cruces' **Participatory-Cooperative** governance model is a decentralized system where power is distributed among several bodies to ensure collective decision-making. The **City Council** holds legislative power, with decisions guided by community input. A **worker-controlled judiciary** handles legal disputes. Defense is managed by the **Defense Sector Cooperative**, which delegates authority to self-governed defense units, while local **militias** ensure internal security. At the heart of the model are **autonomous cooperatives**, where groups of workers control their labor, resources, and decision-making, emphasizing collective responsibility and mutual aid in everyday life. This structure promotes direct participation, shared governance, and decentralized power.

City Council

The City Council, elected through direct democracy, represents the collective interests of Las Cruces' citizens by legislating community-focused laws and ensuring accountability through mechanisms like recall elections and cooperative charters. While primarily reactive, it addresses

public needs, oversees the Judiciary, coordinates defense operations when necessary, and facilitates the formation of cooperatives to meet unmet services. Rooted in engagement and transparency, the Council balances its role within the city's participatory governance system.

Judiciary

The **Judiciary** is a worker-controlled cooperative responsible for maintaining legal integrity within the city by enforcing the **City Charter**. It resolves disputes, ensures laws align with the Charter, and holds cooperatives and individuals accountable for violations. The Judiciary has the authority to strike down unconstitutional laws, disband cooperatives or Defense Sector units that overstep their bounds. Independent and transparent, the Judiciary operates democratically, ensuring that all entities remain bound by the same legal framework. While it cannot create laws, it serves as a crucial check on power, maintaining the balance and fairness of the city's governance.

Military

The Defense Sector is a highly structured, democratic military force designed to protect the city's values while remaining firmly accountable to civilian governance. While each unit is self-governing and elects its leadership, it operates within a clearly defined chain of command during active duty, ensuring both flexibility and coordinated strategy. Units are responsible for their internal organization, training, and leadership development, but once deployed, they follow orders from higher-ranking officers and the General Commander, who is selected by the City Council from a pool of top-level Commanding Officers. This hierarchical structure ensures that military operations are always in alignment with the public interest, as directed by the City Council, while maintaining operational efficiency and responsiveness. The system of checks and balances, alongside regular leadership elections, prevents the concentration of power and upholds democratic principles throughout the sector.

Internal Divisions

Workers Cooperatives

The Independent Traders' Guild

The Independent Traders' Guild is a cooperative that facilitates trade within Las Cruces and manages external commerce with powers like Keystone. Acting as neutral brokers, they mediate agreements between local cooperatives and advocate for sustainable, equitable trade practices that bolster the city's resilience. While most members focus on fostering transparent and mutually beneficial exchanges, a covert minority secretly collaborates with Keystone's Patriot Network, using trade negotiations to discreetly advance external interests. Despite this hidden agenda, the Guild remains a cornerstone of Las Cruces' economic stability.

University of Southern New Mexico (USNM)

The University of Southern New Mexico (USNM) has been a central force in Las Cruces since its founding, playing a key role in the city's recovery after the call for survivors. Operating as a cooperative, USNM remains independent yet collaborates with the City Council when needed, providing research and expertise to address the city's challenges. Though apolitical, its focus on community progress and innovation often aligns with the ideals of the Radical Workers and Civic Moderates. Today, USNM stands as a symbol of Las Cruces' intellectual resilience, driving both academic and practical advancements for the city's future.

The Militias

The Militias are a network of self-organized, borough-level defense cooperatives, each with its own mandate and methods. Drawing legitimacy from Las Cruces' cooperative governance model, they handle internal security within their respective boroughs. While each militia operates autonomously to address local concerns and maintain order, they remain united by their commitment to community defense. Their federated council helps ensure coordination when necessary, but each militia retains its distinct identity and operational style. This decentralized structure allows for responsive, borough-specific solutions to local security issues, without encroaching on the broader city's defense, which is the responsibility of the **Defense Sector**.

The Cooperative Landscape

While the major factions shape Las Cruces' political and social dynamics, the city's decentralized cooperative model supports **dozens, if not hundreds** of smaller cooperatives. These groups manage everything from healthcare to trade and contribute to the city's day-to-day functioning. Some operate independently, others align with larger factions, but many remain in the background, quietly influencing events. This complex web of cooperatives forms the fabric of Las Cruces, with their interactions subtly shaping the city's ongoing evolution.

Political Cooperatives

Radical Workers' Collective

The Radical Workers' Collective traces its roots to the early founders of Las Cruces—educators, municipal workers, and first responders who were central to establishing the city's cooperative framework. They continue to advocate for a system where worker control is central, prioritizing decentralized decision-making and the autonomy of cooperatives in every sector. Unwavering in their commitment to deepening the principles of worker governance, they are a driving force behind the ongoing evolution of the city's cooperative systems. Their steadfast adherence to these ideals has cemented their role as a cornerstone of Las Cruces' political landscape.

Civic Moderates

The Civic Moderates take a balanced, pragmatic approach to governance, supporting the cooperative system while allowing for some structure and organization to adapt to changing

circumstances. Advocating for gradual reforms, they prioritize controlled growth and stability, recognizing the importance of economic partnerships with external powers like **Keystone** for the city's long-term survival. Often seen as the "cooling saucer" of Las Cruces' politics, they act as mediators, helping to defuse tensions and push for practical solutions. Though their willingness to compromise frustrates more radical factions, their steady, stabilizing role is crucial in maintaining balance within the city.

Security Coalition

The Security Coalition is made up of Defense Sector personnel, self-organized defense groups, and individuals focused on security and military preparedness. They argue that defense and internal security require a more hierarchical and centralized structure to ensure swift, coordinated action in times of crisis. While they support the cooperative system in civilian sectors, they believe that a disciplined, structured approach is essential for protecting the city from both internal and external threats. In their view, efficiency and rapid response can only be achieved through centralization, even if it contrasts with the city's broader decentralized governance.

Infirmity Advocacy Movement

The Infirmity Advocacy Movement is a cooperative dedicated to advocating for the rights, dignity, and care of the chronically ill and infirm who have been cast out by the corporate world. They call for the full recognition of these broken populations as human personas deserving of mutual aid, demanding safe, self-governed living conditions that respect their remaining autonomy. While acknowledging the practical need for isolated infirmity zones, the Movement challenges their isolating and neglectful nature, proposing more inclusive solutions where the sick can be looked after with dignity and contribute to the enclave's well-being through light tasks. Their efforts focus on reshaping public perception and creating policies that ensure the infirm population's rights and food allocations are protected within the cooperative system of Las Cruces.

Keystone Loyalists

The Keystone Loyalists are a secretive network within Las Cruces, covertly advancing the interests of Keystone's Patriot Network. Operating within the city's cooperative framework, they influence governance and policy through subtle persuasion and behind-the-scenes actions. Comprising influential cooperative members, mediators, and respected council voices, the Loyalists outwardly appear dedicated to Las Cruces' participatory model. However, their hidden allegiance drives efforts that prioritize Keystone's long-term influence, all while maintaining the facade of ordinary, committed contributors to the city's cooperative system. Their activities remain largely undetected, making them a silent yet strategic presence in the city's politics.

Internal Prospectus

Strengths

The **City Council**, as the governing body, stands out for its representational capacity and responsiveness to the needs of the people, drawing legitimacy from direct democratic elections. It ensures accountability through mechanisms like recall elections and maintains a balance of power by overseeing the Judiciary and coordinating defense operations. This ensures that the council retains a broad, public-oriented mandate, reflecting the core principles of the Participatory-Cooperative model.

The **Judiciary** is a robust mechanism for safeguarding the City Charter and enforcing the legal framework within the cooperative system. Its worker-controlled structure ensures that it remains rooted in the community while also acting as a check on the power of other entities. The ability to strike down unconstitutional laws and disband cooperatives or defense units that overstep is a powerful tool for maintaining balance and fairness within the system. Its independence and transparent operations further enhance its credibility and the trust placed in it by the public.

The **Defense Sector**, with its democratic and self-governed units, successfully balances operational efficiency with democratic principles. The decentralized structure allows for flexibility and responsiveness at the unit level, while the overall chain of command ensures coordination during active duty. This checks-and-balances system allows for defense strategies that are both efficient and aligned with civilian oversight, avoiding the centralization of power that could undermine the city's participatory model.

Workers' Cooperatives, including the **Independent Traders' Guild**, **USNM**, and **The Militias**, contribute vital roles to the economic, intellectual, and security fabric of Las Cruses. These cooperatives ensure the decentralized and diversified nature of the city's economy and daily functioning. For example, the Guild ensures stable trade and commerce, while the University offers essential intellectual leadership, both of which are instrumental to the resilience and adaptability of the cooperative model. The Militias, acting as borough-specific defense groups, offer a critical layer of internal security while maintaining local autonomy. This decentralized approach helps mitigate the risks associated with over-centralized control.

Finally, the **Cooperative Landscape**, with its web of smaller cooperatives, is a testament to the city's decentralized and organic approach to governance. These cooperatives, though often operating behind the scenes, shape the everyday functioning of Las Cruses. This system fosters a high degree of adaptability and resilience, ensuring that local needs are met without the need for top-down intervention.

Weaknesses

Despite its democratic structure, the **City Council** can struggle with decision-making efficiency due to its reactive nature and reliance on public input. While designed to be responsive, this can lead to slow legislative processes, especially in urgent situations where swift decisions are needed. Moreover, the Council's limited direct control over the internal workings of cooperatives and militias may result in occasional friction or lack of coordination between different factions, undermining cohesive governance.

The **Judiciary**, while independent, faces the challenge of ensuring consistent and fair enforcement of laws across a diverse range of cooperatives and entities. The risk lies in potential overreach or underenforcement, especially when dealing with powerful cooperatives or covert interests like the **Keystone Loyalists**. Its authority, while strong, does not extend to creating laws, leaving it in a position where it must navigate a potentially disjointed and evolving legal landscape without the ability to proactively address systemic issues or anticipate future challenges.

The **Defense Sector's** reliance on a hierarchical structure once deployed may present issues of rigidity, especially in situations requiring localized, rapid responses. While the hierarchical system is designed to ensure operational efficiency, it could lead to inefficiencies or misunderstandings between different self-governed units and the central command, potentially diluting the broader democratic ethos when operational clarity is paramount. This tension between centralized command and decentralized defense autonomy can create internal conflicts or delays in decision-making during crises.

Workers' Cooperatives such as the **Independent Traders' Guild** and **USNM** are not immune to internal fragmentation. The Guild, for example, harbors a covert faction that works against the city's interests by advancing the goals of Keystone's Patriot Network. This hidden agenda poses a significant risk to the city's autonomy and its trade stability, potentially undermining trust between cooperatives. Likewise, **USNM's** apolitical stance, while valuable for intellectual neutrality, could limit its ability to engage in politically charged issues, especially when radical factions like the **Radical Workers' Collective** push for more direct interventions in city governance.

The **Militias**, despite their essential role in maintaining local order, may also experience coordination challenges. Their federated council helps facilitate collaboration, but the decentralized nature of each militia's operations could lead to fragmented or contradictory security practices, particularly when different militias interpret their mandate differently. This decentralized approach to defense, while generally advantageous, could lead to uncoordinated efforts in times of citywide emergency.

Synergy and Tensions

Synergy

The internal entities of the **Participatory-Cooperative** system of Las Cruces demonstrate significant synergy, particularly in the way they collaborate to sustain the city's democratic and decentralized model. The **City Council** and the **Judiciary** form a critical partnership, with the former shaping laws and the latter ensuring these laws adhere to the city's founding principles. Both bodies work within a system that maintains checks and balances, ensuring that no one entity has undue influence. This collaboration strengthens the city's legal and legislative integrity, reinforcing the participatory framework through transparent governance.

Within the **workers' cooperatives**, entities like the **Independent Traders' Guild** and **USNM** foster complementary relationships. While the Traders' Guild ensures the economic resilience of the city through trade and sustainable commerce, USNM provides the intellectual and research-based support that aids in long-term planning and innovation. Their shared commitment to the stability and growth of the city aligns their operations, allowing them to provide resources and expertise to solve communal challenges.

The **militias** also operate in a way that complements the **Defense Sector**. Although the militias maintain autonomy within their boroughs, their federated council allows them to coordinate when needed. This decentralized approach to security works in tandem with the more structured, hierarchical model of the **Defense Sector**, ensuring that both the internal security and external defense needs of the city are met without duplicating efforts. Both entities share a commitment to the protection of the city, and this collaboration helps maintain peace while respecting local autonomy.

Furthermore, the **Civic Moderates** and the **Radical Workers' Collective** function as balancing forces. While they often differ in their approaches—pragmatic governance versus radical reform—they share a commitment to the principles of worker control and decentralized governance. This dynamic enables the city to adapt and evolve, as the Moderates push for stability while the Radical Workers drive deeper systemic changes. Their relationship exemplifies how differing ideologies can work together within a larger framework of shared values.

Tension

Despite the synergy, significant tensions exist between various entities, particularly when differing ideological priorities clash. One of the most pronounced tensions lies between the **Security Coalition** and the broader cooperative framework. The Security Coalition advocates for a more hierarchical and centralized defense system, believing that effective coordination in times of crisis can only be achieved through centralization. This stands in stark contrast to the decentralized nature of the **Defense Sector** and **militias**, which value autonomy and local decision-making. The Security Coalition's push for a stronger, centralized structure threatens the decentralized principles at the heart of Las Cruces' governance, causing friction within the military and defense sectors.

Another key source of tension exists within the **workers' cooperatives**, particularly in the relationship between the **Independent Traders' Guild** and the **Radical Workers' Collective**. While the Guild seeks pragmatic economic strategies that include trade with external powers like Keystone, the Radical Workers' Collective is deeply suspicious of external influence, particularly when it involves capitalist entities such as Keystone. This ideological rift over the role of external trade partners and economic collaboration reflects broader conflicts about how much the city should engage with outside forces. The Guild's secretive dealings with Keystone Loyalists further exacerbates this tension, as it undermines the transparency and collective trust upon which the cooperative system is built.

The **Keystone Loyalists** pose a unique and covert challenge to the integrity of Las Cruces' governance. While outwardly integrated within the cooperative system, they work towards

advancing Keystone's interests, often at odds with the city's autonomy and self-sufficiency. Their hidden influence undermines the trust that is essential for the collaborative system to function, creating internal divisions. This underground network's presence stirs suspicion and breeds distrust between factions that are ideologically committed to the city's independence, particularly the **Infirmity Advocacy Movement** and the **Radical Workers' Collective**.

Finally, the **Infirmity Advocacy Movement** presents another source of tension, particularly with the **Civic Moderates** and more pragmatic sectors of society. The Movement's call for the resource preservation and dignity of the chronically ill challenges the more cautious approach of the Civic Moderates, who are wary of disrupting the delicate economic balance that the current isolation measures maintain. The potential for conflict between ensuring the care of a non-productive group and maintaining the survival of the general population creates an ongoing tension, with neither side fully yielding to the other's viewpoint.

Las Cruces External Relations

Keystone

Keystone is a faction known for its advanced technology and medical resources, which play a critical role in the region. Their technological edge, particularly in medical supplies and pre-consolidation technology, has made them an essential trade partner for Las Cruces, providing resources that the enclave otherwise cannot access. However, as **Keystone** expands its influence in neighboring regions, concerns grow about the implications for Las Cruces' autonomy. While trade agreements remain intact, the city faces a delicate balance, maintaining these crucial ties while safeguarding against growing dependencies on **Keystone**.

Keystone's influence extends far beyond basic trade. Using its technological superiority, the faction has begun to systematically expand its strategic reach, subtly swaying independent towns and factions with the promise of vital resources, diesel machinery, and medical support.

This predatory behavior fosters deep economic dependencies, directly challenging the mutual aid model that has long characterized Las Cruces' regional networks. Rather than seeking blunt territorial conquest, **Keystone** leverages these trade relationships to slowly erode Las Cruces' alliances and pressure its cooperative system from the inside. This subtle manipulation forces the enclave to navigate a highly precarious path, testing its ability to retain control over its future while simultaneously contending with the external threat of **Los Chingones**.

In addition to external pressures, **Keystone** has cultivated a network of sympathizers within Las Cruces; individuals who had once aligned with the faction before its self-exile. These **Keystone Loyalists**, who remained behind when **Keystone** withdrew, now work covertly, gathering intelligence and influencing internal politics. Embedded within the **Independent Trader's Guild**, they use their positions to subtly manipulate decision-making processes, stalling key actions or creating distractions during Council meetings. Though these efforts may seem minor, they weaken

the city's ability to act decisively, eroding the unity and coherence of Las Cruces' governance.

Further complicating matters, **Keystone** has entered into covert trade agreements with **Los Chingones**, supplying the cartel with critical medical supplies and weaponry. This dual strategy allows **Keystone** to maintain leverage over **Los Chingones**, while also preparing for the potential risks posed by the cartel's rising power. Simultaneously, **Keystone Loyalists** within Las Cruces support the **Security Coalition's** efforts to bolster the city's defenses, strengthening the city's resistance to a potential **Los Chingones** threat. This careful balancing act, trading with a rising cartel while fortifying defenses against them, demonstrates **Keystone's** calculated influence and multi-layered strategy. If Las Cruces were to uncover these covert actions, it would reveal a complex web of influence, positioning **Keystone** as both a strategic ally and a hidden power player in the region's shifting political landscape.

Los Chingones and Raider Groups

Las Cruces faces an ongoing external threat from hostile factions, including **Los Chingones** and various raider groups in the Outlands. Historically, the city struggled with roaming raider bands that disrupted trade and security. In response, Las Cruces implemented solutions such as militias, fortifications, and strategic alliances, which seemed to mitigate the issue over time. As these scattered groups dwindled, the perception grew that the raider threat was diminishing.

However, the rise of **Los Chingones** shattered this illusion. The cartel quickly gained power by absorbing or eliminating rival factions, consolidating control over the region. What had appeared to be a decline in raider activity was, in fact, the emergence of a far more organized and dangerous force. With their expanded resources, **Los Chingones** rapidly became a direct threat not only to Las Cruces but to the entire Rio Grande Valley. Their violent expansion culminated in the sacking of El Paso, marking a significant turning point in the region's conflict. This development has forced Las Cruces to enter a new phase of defense, where the stakes are much higher.

As a cartel, **Los Chingones** is primarily driven by extortion, violence, and domination, rather than trade or commerce. Their brutal tactics and insatiable drive for control make them a looming external threat. While their influence has not yet reached the Las Cruces region itself, the threat remains palpable. **Los Chingones'** intentions are clear: to seize power and impose submission on anyone who resists. Las Cruces remains on high alert, with the **Defense Sector** and local militias bracing for a potential escalation that could bring the cartel's violent tactics to their doorstep.

Following the sacking of El Paso, **Los Chingones'** leader has emerged as a figure of growing influence. Their speeches, which mix harsh commands with soothing reassurances, have begun to air on local radio and TV stations in the region. The leader's emotional intensity, oscillating between a fatherly tone of command and a maternal promise of safety, is both magnetic and unsettling. These broadcasts, delivered with an urgency that pulls listeners in, promise a new world order built on the "family" of **Los Chingones**—a family that will not hesitate to crush anyone who threatens it.

The leader's rhetoric is carefully designed to foster loyalty and a sense of belonging, blurring the lines between care and control. Though their identity remains hidden behind digital masking, their voice and message have already begun to leave an indelible mark. Las Cruces remains wary of this growing influence, knowing little of the true power dynamics at play. For now, the city can only observe as **Los Chingones** continues to captivate and control their followers, who are becoming an increasingly loyal and fanatical force. As the broadcasts spread, Las Cruces can only wonder how long it will be before this emotional pull reaches their own borders.

Independent Towns and Settlements

The independent towns and settlements surrounding Las Cruces exhibit a wide range of attitudes toward the city, each shaped by its own priorities and circumstances. For some, Las Cruces serves as an ideal; a model of mutual aid and decentralized organization that they aim to emulate. These settlements, drawn to the egalitarian principles and cooperative spirit of Las Cruces, seek to strengthen their ties with the city. They endeavor to adopt similar systems of governance, sharing knowledge and resources with Las Cruces in the hope of creating self-sustaining, community-driven societies of their own.

In contrast, other towns view Las Cruces primarily through a pragmatic lens, valuing its role as a critical trading hub. For these settlements, the connection to Las Cruces is transactional, driven by the exchange of goods and services rather than ideological alignment. They rely on the city's resources, particularly in times of scarcity, but are wary of fully embracing its ideals. These towns prefer to maintain their autonomy, engaging with Las Cruces when necessary but remaining neutral and self-reliant in other matters.

There are also settlements that actively seek to distance themselves from Las Cruces. Motivated by ideological differences, distrust of the city's increasing influence, or a desire for total independence, these towns refuse to engage with Las Cruces on any meaningful level. Some even turn to external powers like **Keystone** or **Los Chingones**, perceiving these factions as better suited to their needs. For these communities, the intensifying external pressures only reinforce their desire to remain isolated from Las Cruces' sphere of influence.

As **Keystone** and **Los Chingones** expand their influence, the relationships between Las Cruces and its neighboring towns become more precarious. **Keystone** offers critical economic resources, advanced technology and medical supplies, that could sway the loyalty of settlements in need of such support. By leveraging its economic power, **Keystone** positions itself as an attractive alternative to Las Cruces' idealistic yet resource-strapped model. As more towns are drawn to **Keystone's** promises of stability and security, the mutual aid networks Las Cruces has worked to establish may begin to fray. Settlements that once saw Las Cruces as an ally might find it more pragmatic to align with **Keystone**, weakening the broader cooperative framework the city has cultivated.

Meanwhile, **Los Chingones** presents a more coercive challenge. Though the Cartel has yet to expand beyond El Paso since its capture, its growing influence casts a long shadow over the region. **Los Chingones** does not seek territorial control in the traditional sense; instead, they exert

pressure through extortion and fear, manipulating trade routes and threatening violence to force towns into submission. The mere threat of **Los Chingones'** brutality pushes some settlements to consider aligning with the Cartel for self-preservation. While Las Cruces' alliances were once forged through cooperation, these new pressures risk fracturing that unity, as towns are forced to choose between the protection of the Cartel and their ties with the city.

In this shifting landscape, Las Cruces finds itself navigating a delicate balance. Its commitment to mutual aid and cooperation is increasingly tested by external forces seeking to disrupt its influence. **Keystone**, using its economic leverage, seeks to weaken the city's alliances, while **Los Chingones**, through fear and extortion, threatens to fracture the region's stability. The network of mutual aid that Las Cruces has built is vulnerable to manipulation from both sides, leaving the city struggling to maintain its role as a beacon of cooperation in a region increasingly defined by power struggles and competing self-interests.

External Prospectus

Strengths

Las Cruces benefits significantly from its strategic partnerships and ideological appeal in the Rio Grande Valley. Its cooperative model and mutual aid systems resonate with like-minded settlements, fostering strong alliances based on shared values rather than coercion. These ideological bonds are a key strength, creating a network of support that encourages trade, security cooperation, and the exchange of knowledge and resources. Settlements drawn to Las Cruces' decentralized and egalitarian principles amplify its influence, creating an environment of collaboration that strengthens the region as a whole.

The city's role as a critical trading hub is another pillar of its strength. Its well-organized economic systems and geographic positioning make it indispensable for settlements needing access to goods and services. Even those towns that engage with Las Cruces on a purely transactional basis contribute to the city's economic vitality. This pragmatic aspect of its external relations ensures a diverse portfolio of connections, minimizing over-reliance on any single faction or settlement.

In its dealings with **Keystone**, Las Cruces has managed to maintain trade agreements that provide access to essential medical supplies and advanced technology. While this relationship is fraught with challenges, the resources gained through it enhance the city's resilience. Additionally, Las Cruces' militia systems and defense strategies, developed in response to historical raider threats, have positioned the city as a relatively secure stronghold in a volatile region. Its defensive capabilities are further bolstered by local militias and the **Security Coalition**, ensuring preparedness against external threats like **Los Chingones**.

The ideological diversity of surrounding settlements also plays to Las Cruces' advantage. While not every town aligns with its ideals, the spectrum of relationships (ranging from partnerships to

transactional arrangements) provides stability. This flexibility allows Las Cruces to adapt its approach, ensuring a measure of influence even among communities that prioritize autonomy over alliance.

Weaknesses

Despite its strengths, Las Cruces faces significant challenges in maintaining its standing in the region. The expanding influence of **Keystone** poses a direct threat to its ideological and economic alliances. As **Keystone** sways independent settlements with promises of advanced resources, Las Cruces' mutual aid model struggles to compete. This erosion of alliances weakens the cooperative networks that underpin the city's strength, leaving it increasingly isolated in critical regions.

The covert activities of **Keystone Loyalists** within Las Cruces further complicate matters. These sympathizers undermine the city's governance from within, delaying critical decisions and weakening its unity. By leveraging their positions in key institutions like the **Independent Traders' Guild**, these loyalists create friction that hampers the city's ability to respond effectively to external pressures, particularly those stemming from **Keystone** and **Los Chingones**.

Los Chingones represents an existential threat that Las Cruces is ill-equipped to fully counter. The cartel's brutal tactics challenge the city's defensive capabilities. While its militia and fortifications provide a measure of protection, the cartel's potential to destabilize trade routes and impose extortion threatens the city's economic lifelines. Additionally, **Los Chingones'** broadcasts, with their emotionally manipulative rhetoric, risk influencing vulnerable populations both within Las Cruces and in nearby settlements, creating fissures in the city's ideological cohesion.

The fractured nature of relationships with independent towns also creates vulnerabilities. While some settlements align with Las Cruces' ideals, others remain skeptical or outright hostile. This lack of uniform support makes it difficult for Las Cruces to build a unified front against external threats. Towns swayed by **Keystone's** economic power or **Los Chingones'** coercive tactics could tip the balance of regional power, leaving Las Cruces isolated.

Finally, the delicate balancing act of engaging with **Keystone** while resisting its influence leaves Las Cruces in a precarious position. Its dependence on **Keystone** for critical resources exposes the city to manipulation, while its defensive focus on **Los Chingones** diverts attention from the long-term risks posed by **Keystone's** economic and strategic expansion. These dual pressures strain the city's governance and threaten to erode its autonomy, creating a multifaceted challenge that demands careful navigation.

Las Cruces Goals

Short-Term Goals

In the short term, Las Cruces must focus on enhancing its defense systems against immediate threats from Los Chingones and other destabilizing factions, while also diversifying its supply sources to reduce reliance on Keystone. Strengthening regional alliances is critical to building a unified front against external pressures, while combating cartel propaganda will help maintain ideological unity within the city. Additionally, improving internal governance and transparency will ensure Las Cruces can effectively navigate these challenges with a united, resilient leadership.

Enhance Defense and Security

The escalating threat posed by **Los Chingones** necessitates an urgent strengthening of Las Cruces' defense systems. The cartel's violent tactics, including overwhelming tactical capabilities, present a dire security challenge. In response, the city must immediately reinforce existing fortifications and increase militia readiness through intensive training and coordination. Additionally, the development of comprehensive emergency response plans will ensure quick and organized action in the event of an attack. Strengthening intelligence networks to detect and neutralize emerging threats is critical to stay ahead of both **Los Chingones** and **Keystone Loyalists**, ensuring Las Cruces can safeguard its citizens and preserve regional stability.

Reduce Over-Reliance on Keystone

Las Cruces seeks to maintain its trade agreements with **Keystone**, especially for critical medical supplies and advanced technology. However, given the growing risks of over-reliance on **Keystone**, it is essential for the city to explore alternative sources for key resources. This approach will help mitigate potential economic and political manipulation through dependency, while still ensuring access to necessary supplies. By reinforcing local production capabilities and building supply alternatives, Las Cruces can enhance its self-sufficiency and reduce vulnerability to external disruptions.

Strengthen Regional Alliances

To counteract growing external threats, **Las Cruces** must bolster its alliances with neighboring independent settlements. These alliances are vital for the city's security and economic stability, serving as a buffer against external pressures and destabilizing forces. Strengthening ideological and economic ties with settlements that share Las Cruces' principles of cooperation will ensure their continued support. Additionally, the city must offer direct support to settlements at risk of shifting allegiance to **Keystone** or other factions, reinforcing their commitment through shared resources and defense cooperation.

Combat Cartel Propaganda

The emotional and divisive rhetoric of **Los Chingones** poses a significant threat to the unity of Las Cruces. To address this, the city must initiate public engagement campaigns and broadcasts that emphasize its foundational values of cooperation, mutual aid, and collective strength. These efforts will present an alternative to the cartel's rhetoric and help maintain ideological cohesion within the city. By fostering a dialogue centered around unity, Las Cruces can counteract the destabilizing influence of the cartel's propaganda.

Unity in Governance

Internal divisions within the governing Council of Las Cruces threaten the stability of the city during periods of external pressure. To mitigate this, the city must take immediate steps to improve transparency within decision-making processes and promote more inclusive dialogue among factions. Open forums and platforms for citizens to voice concerns will foster trust and ensure that diverse viewpoints are considered in shaping the city's future. By improving internal unity, Las Cruces can better navigate external challenges and remain resilient in the face of rising threats.

Long-Term Goals

Long-term, Las Cruces aims to strengthen its position as a central regional force by fostering enduring alliances and enhancing self-sufficiency in key areas such as technology and local industries. Economic diversification will reduce dependency on external trade, while strengthening governance rooted in cooperation will ensure political stability. The city will focus on developing a robust defense and intelligence network to anticipate and respond to emerging threats, and actively resist the expansion of **Keystone's** influence. Building a strong cultural identity and crisis management systems will ensure Las Cruces remains resilient and unified for the future.

Achieve Greater Self-Sufficiency

Las Cruces faces the challenge of balancing its dependence on **Keystone's** advanced technology with the need for long-term autonomy. Over-reliance on external sources could undermine the city's independence. To address this, Las Cruces must invest in developing local technological capabilities, focusing on areas like sustainable energy, medical advancements, and other critical sectors. Encouraging local innovation and fostering research within the city will gradually reduce its dependence on **Keystone**, ensuring the city's self-sufficiency without sacrificing access to necessary resources.

Diversify the Economy

The city's economic reliance on external trade, especially from **Keystone**, leaves Las Cruces vulnerable to disruptions. To strengthen economic resilience, Las Cruces must focus on diversifying its economy. This includes investing in agriculture, renewable energy, and local manufacturing sectors. By cultivating local resources and building sustainable industries, the city will reduce its reliance on volatile external markets. Strengthening local industries will foster long-term economic stability and self-sufficiency, ensuring Las Cruces remains resilient in the face of external challenges.

Strengthen and Solidify Ideological Governance

The ideological cohesion of Las Cruces is key to its stability, especially when faced with external pressures from factions like **Keystone** and **Los Chingones**. In the long term, the city must work to address internal divisions and strengthen its cooperative governance model. By reinforcing principles of mutual aid, decentralization, and community-based decision-making, Las Cruces can create a more unified and resilient governance system. Promoting collaboration among diverse

factions within the city will ensure that the city remains politically stable and aligned with its core values, allowing it to resist external influence and manipulation.

Build a Robust Military and Intelligence Network

Las Cruces must continue to develop its military and intelligence infrastructure to prepare for ongoing and future threats. The danger posed by **Los Chingones'** violent tactics and the potential covert operations by **Keystone** require a comprehensive defense strategy. In addition to enhancing military readiness, the city must invest in long-term intelligence capabilities to detect, assess, and neutralize threats early. This network will be crucial for Las Cruces' security, enabling the city to anticipate and respond to a wide range of potential dangers, safeguarding its autonomy and stability in an increasingly volatile region.

Foster Cultural Cohesion and Social Unity

To safeguard its ideological integrity, Las Cruces must invest in cultural and community-building initiatives that reinforce a shared sense of identity and collective responsibility. Education, local projects, and social initiatives that emphasize Las Cruces' core values of cooperation, solidarity, and mutual support will strengthen social cohesion and protect the city from external ideological manipulation. Cultivating a strong cultural identity is essential for ensuring Las Cruces remains resilient to the pressures exerted by both **Keystone** and **Los Chingones**.

Establish Crisis Management Systems

Las Cruces must develop a robust system for resource distribution and crisis management to ensure the city's long-term resilience. In the event of resource shortages due to cartel violence, economic instability, or infrastructure breakdown, the city must ensure that resources are distributed equitably. By investing in contingency planning, stockpiling essential goods, and forming community-led response teams, Las Cruces will build a framework for sustainable crisis management. This approach will enhance the city's capacity to protect its citizens and maintain alliances in volatile circumstances, ensuring long-term stability and security.

Los Chingones (El Paso/Juarez)

Los Chingones are a ruthless cartel led by a charismatic and enigmatic leader who sees themselves as both protector and punisher, driven by survival and the empowerment of their loyal "family." Operating in a systemically abandoned border region, they fill the local vacuum with resource control, military might, and psychological manipulation, ruling through coercion, extortion, and theatrical propaganda that mixes telenovela flair with a dictator's authority. As municipal funding slowly dissolved and the federal government systematically consolidated its resources into the hyper-dense Mega Cities, the historic northern Mexican cartels underwent their own ruthless consolidation. Unifying under a single absolute commander, this newly forged syndicate stepped into the widening regional void. Rather than trying to build a traditional sovereign state, they established an absolute monopoly over local survival, transforming the remnants of the borderplex into a highly organized criminal engine that operates right alongside the federal government's remaining territorial footprint.

Los Chingones Overview

Origins

The cartel's roots lie in Chihuahua, where its leader, once a localized gang figure, seized on the region's steady economic abandonment to rise to power. As the federal government gradually pulled its funding and infrastructure out of the interior to concentrate on the rising Mega Cities, access to critical resources like water, fuel, food, and weapons became increasingly scarce. The leader took control of these vital supply lines, building a loyal following through both tactical force and psychological manipulation. By establishing a rigid, family-like structure, they offered localized stability and protection in exchange for absolute loyalty, enforced by a strict code of silence and submission.

Over time, the leader became more than a strategic ruler, evolving into a central figure of absolute authority for those left behind by the state. The cartel transformed from a loose alliance of outlaws into a highly disciplined community united by economic dependency and devotion to their commander. This loyalty was cemented through targeted violence and the leader's omnipresent influence. In live-streamed broadcasts, they oscillated between harsh command and soothing comfort, projecting a highly calculated telenovela archetype. These performances deepened the enclave's commitment, promising protection and unity while warning that any threat to the family would be met with immediate destruction. Within their territory, an individual was either an integrated part of the family or entirely non-existent.

Region/Presence

Los Chingones maintain absolute dominance over the El Paso and Juárez metroplex, transforming this vital transit hub into their primary regional stronghold. Their early territorial expansion was marked by a failed, rogue raid against Fort Bliss, which the Department of Defense answered with immediate kinetic force. This severe response created a permanent, burned-out no man's land between downtown El Paso and the military installation. While the institutional boundary between the cartel and the DoD remains lethal, a complex human connection thrives on the ground. Off-duty federal soldiers, many of whom share deep cultural and family ties with the local population, regularly cross the checkpoints to frequent cartel-controlled cantinas and markets. The syndicate's leadership actively capitalizes on this unique border dynamic, utilizing the social hubs as a massive intelligence-gathering network while systematically channeling the remaining civilian population into forced labor operations to secure total economic control over the valley.

Faction Type

Los Chingones are a **militarized cartel** with cult-like characteristics, blending traditional gang violence with psychological warfare. Functioning as a hybrid of a **family-based organization** and a **warlord faction**, they operate under a strict hierarchy where the leader holds absolute power, commanding loyalty through coercion, psychological manipulation, and military force. Rather than rebuilding an empire, they aim to create a self-sustaining, insulated community outside the remnants of the old world order. Their operations rely on exploitation of labor, media manipulation, and framing their brutal actions as necessary for survival and protection, fostering both fear and loyalty among their followers. This internal architecture weaponizes the concept of family, functioning like a deeply distorted domestic patriarchy where the absolute leader demands the submissive devotion of a child while maintaining the lethal authority of a sovereign warlord.

Leadership and Structure

Governance

Los Chingones is governed by a **dictatorship**, with the **Leader** (El Patrón) holding absolute authority. The **El Consejo** advises the Leader but has limited independent power. While the Leader's word is final, the faction operates with **broad discretion** at lower levels. **Captains** have the autonomy to manage their territories and carry out the Leader's will, making decisions on tactics and methods as long as they achieve the Leader's objectives.

This autonomy is a key part of the cartel's **social contract**: members are allowed to shape their own destiny within the framework of loyalty to the Leader. They are free to pursue power, control, and success, but must deliver results. This balance of freedom and loyalty fosters personal ambition and strengthens the **tribal family bond**, ensuring members remain loyal while securing their own position in the hierarchy. Failure to serve the Leader's will, however, is met with brutal consequences.

Hierarchy

- **Leader:** At the top of Los Chingones is the **Leader** (El Patrón), an absolute figurehead who commands both reverence and fear, controlling all major decisions. Below them is **El Consejo**, a small group of high-ranking loyalists, including former gang members, military officers, and key resource managers. The dynamic of this council is highly specific: within their respective domains, these individuals hold sweeping operational authority to do whatever it takes to bring the leader's plans to fruition. However, they possess no mandate to directly dictate or implement cartel-wide policy, meaning they must rely on political influence and jockeying to shape grand strategy. This inner circle is bound by loyalty and charisma, with its members often at odds but united in protecting the family.
- **Elite Forces:** A specialized subset, the **Elites** (Los Pesados), are crack teams trained for covert operations, counter-intelligence, and **psychological warfare**. These operatives are used for high-risk tasks like silencing dissidents, infiltrating enemy factions, and ensuring ideological purity. They enforce the leader's vision with ruthless precision, punishing disloyalty with extreme measures.
- **Mid-Level Command:** Beneath the council, **Captains** (Los Capitanes) oversee territories or operations such as Juarez, El Paso, and the Rio Grande Valley. These figures maintain local order, collect tribute, expand influence, and enforce the cartel's laws. They act as extensions of the leader's will and often operate with autonomy in their regions, reporting directly to the council.
- **Enforcers and Operatives:** The **Soldiers** (Los Soldados), comprising hardened criminals, mercenaries, and conscripts, are the muscle of the cartel, tasked with enforcing its will through violence and intimidation. Soldiers are organized in units under **Captains**, managing zones like **Juarez** or securing territorial boundaries. They handle public executions, coercion, and direct the labor camps, managing the human prisoners and ensuring the cartel's dominance through brute force and fear.

Leadership Conflict

The **Leader** (El Patrón) is the absolute figurehead of Los Chingones, but internal tensions arise within the **El Consejo**, where members clash over strategy. Some favor a brutal, fear-driven approach, while others push for expansion through alliances and psychological manipulation. These differences create friction, especially over key territories like **Juarez** and **El Paso**, where control and chaos constantly collide. As council members vie for influence, each seeks to align with a strategy that gains the Leader's favor, using territorial control as a way to secure power within the cartel.

At the **Captain** level, tensions arise as their authority clashes with the **Soldiers**, whose forceful methods conflict with the more calculated approaches of their superiors. While these internal conflicts rarely threaten the Leader's position, the involvement of the **Elites** (Los Pesados) is seen as a **loss of face** when brought in for issues that could be handled by regular leadership. Their appearance signals that the leadership has failed to maintain control in a more subtle or strategic way, weakening their authority and stirring **resentment**. This leads to **internal power struggles**

as **Captains** and **Soldiers** vie for favor with the **Leader** to maintain or restore their standing within the cartel.

Infrastructure

Technology

Los Chingones are highly resourceful, relying on a mix of **scavenged** and **repurposed** equipment to maintain and expand their power across the systemically abandoned borderplex. With limited access to cutting-edge corporate technology networks, they focus on acquiring and modifying whatever rugged machinery they can secure. Their arsenal includes specialized surveillance **drones**, tactical **armored vehicles**, like salvaged military MRAPs and custom-plated transport trucks, and decentralized **communications gear**. Much of this high-grade equipment was gathered during their ruthless consolidation of northern Mexico, where they absorbed or stripped abandoned federal military outposts and deserting border units. Specialized teams from the **Elites** continuously scout old municipal facilities and decommissioned security sites, bringing back valuable assets to be repaired and put to immediate tactical use.

A key edge for the cartel is its **drone program**. Small, highly advanced drones, referred to as the cartel's **secret weapon**, are used for surveillance, targeted strikes, and tactical support. These drones are their most powerful military asset and are tightly controlled, with only the most trusted members allowed to operate them, making them a potent symbol of power and intimidation along the valley corridors.

Beyond military tech, the cartel has a strong **propaganda machinery**. The **Leader** (El Patrón) uses **old-world broadcasting equipment**, like hijacked local radio and television stations left behind during the federal retreat, to solidify their mythos and control the population. These broadcasts are crucial for shaping public perception, ensuring loyalty, and maintaining dominance over the local populace. Though utilizing legacy technology, the methods remain highly effective.

For **communications**, the cartel relies on **low-tech, decentralized systems**. In a fractured territory, they use **encrypted radio networks**, **courier systems**, and **underground hubs** to maintain coordination and protect against threats. These networks are vital to their operations across their vast territory, spanning from **El Paso** to the **Mexican Rio Grande Valley**.

Economy

The economy of Los Chingones thrives on **exploitation**, targeted asset procurement, and systemic **extortion** across their territory. Rather than investing in large-scale infrastructure or traditional industrial manufacturing, the cartel focuses entirely on extracting resources from the populations and routes left behind by the federal government. One of the cartel's primary methods of economic gain is strategic intercept operations. Specialized squads frequently venture into neighboring

sectors of the Outlands, seizing valuable, mobile items such as refined fuel, medical supplies, hardware components, weapons, and human capital. These tactical operations not only secure essential materials but also serve to project the cartel's power, discouraging any regional resistance to their operations.

The cartel also maintains absolute control over key regional corridors, including **El Paso, Juarez**, and the **Mexican Rio Grande Valley**. Within these areas, they operate highly organized **protection rackets**, demanding regular **tribute** from remaining local communities, independent agricultural hubs, and transport operators in exchange for safety and access to vital trade routes. This economic structure is built entirely on coercion, with fees strictly imposed for **passage, safe zones**, and **resource extraction**, all reinforcing the cartel's grip on regional commerce.

In addition to extortion, the cartel relies heavily on **prison labor** from its highly organized enclaves. Non-compliant residents and captured rivals are forced to work in harsh, tightly managed conditions to produce immediate, vital resources, including food crops, basic ammunition components, and salvaged building materials. These goods directly sustain the cartel's active operations and are leveraged when bartering with other regional entities. For a select few who display absolute, submissive loyalty through years of hard labor, the syndicate dangling the rare opportunity to rise into lower-tier enforcer ranks serves as a psychological tool to maintain compliance within the forced labor system.

While Los Chingones operates primarily through subjugation, they also engage in selective **trade** with external Outland factions. Bartering high-value goods like **medicine, fuel, food**, and **ammunition** helps sustain their network, but all external economic transactions are framed within the context of absolute **dominance**. The cartel deliberately uses its chokehold on regional bottlenecks to extract **exorbitant tolls** from those passing through their territories, further cementing their economic and political power over the valley.

This dominance is subtly balanced by a highly specific, post-conflict arrangement located safely away from the military perimeter. Within downtown El Paso, the cartel intentionally operates a single, heavily monitored entertainment district of cantinas and markets. Off-duty federal soldiers deliberately cross through the checkpoints of the burned-out no man's land to frequent this isolated oasis, transforming it into a roaring secondary economy. Because these soldiers are off-base, they spend physical polymer cash. For Los Chingones, keeping this venue centered downtown allows them to thoroughly monitor federal personnel for intelligence while securing physical Polymer currency for their Outland operations, all while keeping a respectful, calculated distance from the lethal boundaries of Fort Bliss.

Faction Culture

Core Philosophy

The cartel's core philosophy centers on the **survival of the fittest**, framed within a distorted **family** structure that emphasizes **dominance through loyalty**. At its core, the cartel operates as a **cult of personality**, where blind obedience to the central leader is paramount. The "family" is about unity through fear and subjugation, not care or affection. They view the remnants of the old system as corrupt and failing, but instead of aiming to build a new society, they promise immediate protection and stability within their own hierarchy. The survival of the cartel is **everything**, and all actions, whether violent or covert, are justified to maintain and expand their power.

This rigid, **militaristic hierarchy** demands loyalty above all else, where everyone serves a purpose, whether they realize it or not. Personal freedom is secondary to the cartel's control, and the strength of unity is reinforced through public displays of power and severe punishments for traitors. **Revenge** is a key tool for legitimizing their rule, and the family ideal is weaponized to justify systemic exploitation. Beneath the surface, however, a **culture of ambition** thrives. While outward loyalty is crucial, personal ambition is encouraged as long as it ultimately serves the **Leader's** interests. This internal drive for power creates constant competition, fueling localized power struggles. Yet, all ambition remains strictly bound by the cartel's hierarchy, where any hint of genuine disloyalty is met with swift and absolute erasure.

Morality

Morality within Los Chingones is defined entirely by loyalty to the **family** and the leader, completely rejecting any traditional or rigid ethical code. The world is viewed as a **zero-sum game**, where survival demands brutal decisions and the historical scars of generational exploitation justify their methods. **Betrayal is unforgivable**, and punishment, often public **violence** or **exile** to the forced labor channels of Juarez, reinforces the absolute importance of conformity. While individual ambition is tolerated, the cartel's strength lies in its **unity**.

Loyalty to the leader is elevated to the highest moral act, with every directive justified by the **greater good** of the family. Violence and regional exploitation are deemed entirely acceptable if they secure the cartel's survival and expansion against a state that historically discarded them. The cartel does not aim to uplift the weak but to **force submission**, binding members through shared survival and mutual dependency. In this system, questioning the leader or the family is the ultimate betrayal. For followers, morality is distilled down to absolute **devotion** to the group, where the **ends justify the means**, no matter the human cost.

Daily Life

For the vast majority of ordinary people living under the cartel's footprint, daily life maintains a familiar rhythm deeply rooted in the historic traditions of the rural borderplex. For the local population and lower-tier Soldiers (Los Soldados), daily life is not an relentless gauntlet of chaos, but rather a predictable routine centered on work, communal ties, and localized leisure. Soldiers focus on maintaining **territorial control**, manning regional **checkpoints**, and ensuring **key areas** like the urban neighborhoods of **El Paso** and **Juarez** remain stable. Their day-to-day tasks are typically low-key, consisting of casual surveillance, conversing with neighbors, and spending

extensive downtime at the local cantina. Life is defined by a slow, **complacent** pace, with most understanding that as long as the family's authority is respected, the neighborhood stays peaceful. The status quo is rarely disrupted, and overt violence is reserved almost entirely for direct challenges to the cartel's dominance.

Those assigned to **resource extraction**, small-scale farming, and infrastructure upkeep experience a similarly grounded existence. Tasks like cultivating crops, tending to livestock, and salvaging legacy technology dictate the daylight hours, echoing the agricultural and trades-based lifestyle that has sustained the valley for over a century. Between these shifts, daily life centers around **community**, family gatherings, and shared **downtime**. For these workers, survival is bound to keeping localized revenue and agricultural streams flowing, leaving them to live with little daily threat from the syndicate ruling them. The lords of the valley have simply changed, but the fundamental structure of life remains the same.

For the **prisoners**, however, those captured from rival factions or deemed non-compliant by the hierarchy, life is stripped of this cultural rhythm and reduced to a brutal grind. Forced to work in the **labor camps** of Juarez, they endure **grueling hours**, **poor conditions**, and **harsh treatment** from overseers. Whether forced into labor to extract resources or to physically construct cartel fortifications, these individuals live in constant **fear** and **exploitation**. Each day for a prisoner is a sharp, desperate **struggle for survival** where any deviation from absolute submission is met with swift, disciplinary force.

Values and Customs

At the core of **Los Chingones'** culture is **pragmatic loyalty** to **El Patrón** and the cartel's hierarchical structure, serving as a survival mechanism against generations of systemic neglect. Loyalty to the group is everything, emphasized through **solidarity** in commercial operations and neighborhood control. Personal relationships are shaped by mutual interests, such as keeping supply lines flowing, protecting turf, or upholding the cartel's rule. **Honor** and **respect** are tied to social rank, but loyalty to the leader always comes first. Betrayal is the ultimate sin, and infractions are decisively punished, leading to a culture of **compliance** and defensive **silence**.

Social interactions revolve around **business dealings**, **family loyalty**, and **trust**. Informal alliances and intelligence loops form naturally in **cantinas** and **markets**, where deals are made over drinks and food. While **men** dominate the public, militarized roles, women exert profound influence behind the scenes, managing the community infrastructure and familial networks that keep the territory stable. The culture is driven by a **pragmatic hierarchy**, where survival is about following the cartel's rules and maintaining a predictable balance. Whether working **trade routes**, running localized **protection rackets**, or guarding **territory**, the focus for the average resident remains squarely on **making a living** without upsetting the established order.

Role of Women and Minorities

In **Los Chingones**, women primarily occupy **supportive** or **domestic** roles, often as **wives**, **mothers**, or **partners** of higher-ranking members. However, women are not entirely excluded

from power; some rise to influential positions in **media**, **intelligence**, or **enforcement**. A few carve out active roles as **spies**, **informants**, or **operatives** in the cartel's **psychological warfare** operations, though leadership roles remain rare and are typically reserved for those with direct ties to the **Leader** or top members. While traditional **patriarchal** values dominate, women of high status may influence **public perception** and the cartel's narrative, often through **propaganda** or **networking**.

The cartel, grounded in **Mexican** and **Catholic** values, is generally conservative when it comes to sexual morality and gender roles. **Homosexuality** is tolerated as long as it is discreet and does not disrupt the group's cohesion or respect for authority. Similarly, **gender identities** can be fluid, but overt displays of non-conformity are frowned upon. There is room for personal expression, but it is expected that individual choices will not challenge the cartel's traditional, patriarchal structure.

As for **minorities**, the cartel's **working-class** roots mean that **indigenous** people or those from **poorer backgrounds** often occupy **subordinate** roles, primarily **manual labor**, **security**, or **lower-tier combat** positions. However, loyalty, skill, and merit can provide upward mobility within the organization. While **class distinctions** exist, **loyalty** to the cartel is the most valued trait, and **efficiency** in carrying out orders determines advancement more than ethnic or racial background. The cartel's pragmatic structure allows for some fluidity in the ranks, but social hierarchies rooted in class still play a significant role.

Religion and Beliefs

In **Los Chingones**, religion blends **Catholic** and **indigenous** values, acting as both a cultural anchor and a unifying force. Catholicism is woven into daily life through **holy days**, reverence for **patron saints**, and prayers for **protection**, all centered around **survival** and **honor**. The **Leader** is not seen as a god but as a **divinely chosen** figure, a **savior** guiding the people through a world of systemic abandonment. Indigenous beliefs, particularly those honoring the earth and ancestors, are respected, merging with the cartel's focus on **strength** and **resilience**. These practices maintain **social order** and **family unity**, reinforcing the cartel's control and localized stability.

Jesús Malverde is revered by the cartel's **enforcers**, representing **outlaw justice** and protection for those living outside the law. Malverde is invoked before missions, with his image serving as a **talisman** for **strength** and **protection**. His devotion to **loyalty** and **bravery** makes him the symbol of the cartel's enforcers, justifying their violence through a legacy of popular resistance against an indifferent state.

Santa Muerte has a more **mystical** role within Los Chingones, offering **protection** and **insight** into the **future** and hidden truths. Believers turn to her for **guidance** in decision-making and to navigate the cartel's inner workings. While her favor is sought for success in dangerous missions, she provides **spiritual revelations** to the **leaders** and **inner circle**, helping them make decisions with a sense of divine clarity.

Visual Style

Los Chingones' aesthetic is an **urban, gritty** fusion of regional border culture, military surplus, and the harsh realities of the systemically abandoned Outlands. Their clothing combines traditional local streetwear with rugged utility gear, featuring **tactical vests, patched leather jackets, bandanas**, and durable **cargo pants** built to survive the dusty borderplex terrain. Higher-ranking members wear **stylized armored gear** or tailored **black leather coats**, visually marking their authority and elevated status over the rank-and-file militia forces.

The architecture in their strongholds, like **El Paso** and **Juarez**, is a mix of **decaying urban structures** and **salvaged materials**. Buildings are **ramshackle** and **reinforced** with scrap metal and rusted iron. Streets are lined with **graffiti, damaged vehicles**, and **makeshift barriers**, creating an environment ruled by **violence** and **dominance** amidst the chaos.

Symbolism and Colors

The cartel's primary symbol is a **stylized skull**, often crowned, representing both **death** and **dominance**. This image is widespread, appearing in **graffiti**, on **weapons**, and as **patches** on clothing, embodying the **Leader's absolute authority** and the group's sovereign claim over the region.

Their colors, **black, red**, and **silver**, represent **rebellion, violence**, and **authority**. Black reflects their **defiance** and **fear-inducing** nature, red signifies **blood** and **sacrifice**, while silver conveys **cold efficiency** and **control**. These colors dominate in **flags, banners, artwork**, and the **decor** of their strongholds.

Unique Features

The faction's visual identity is defined by a landscape of systemic neglect mixed with militarized territory control. Members extensively use repurposed materials for both localized infrastructure and defensive architecture. The streets feature tactical **modified vehicles**, such as heavy transport trucks retrofitted with welded steel plating and salvaged border-patrol units, engineered for cross-terrain utility and immediate combat readiness.

Graffiti and **murals** play a central role in asserting **territorial dominance** and reinforcing the **Leader's image** across the urban core. Highly organized propaganda posters portray him as a protective, larger-than-life figure, blending traditional **Catholic** imagery with a calculated projection of ultimate authority. **Tactical gear** and rugged personal armor are standard issue for the enforcers, while **fortified buildings** and checkpoint **guard posts** are built from heavy industrial steel and salvaged security infrastructure, reflecting their resourcefulness and reliance on visible **force**.

A defining visual anchor of this territory is the scorched perimeter separating downtown El Paso from the federal installation at Fort Bliss. This expansive buffer zone consists of the charred remains of residential neighborhoods and light commercial infrastructure, left completely hollowed out by federal kinetic weaponry. Abandoned streets choked with dust and wind-blown debris slice

through the blackened foundations, creating a silent, desolate expanse that underscores the absolute boundary between the cartel's domain and the military base.

Los Chingones History

Rise of the Cartel in Chihuahua

As the compaction and structural collapse of the central aquifer rendered Mexico City increasingly uninhabitable, the hollowed-out federal government pulled its security forces and financial assets southward in a desperate bid to preserve the capital basin. In the resulting northern vacuum, the leader, once a localized gang figure, stepped forward to orchestrate a ruthless consolidation of power across **Chihuahua**. With the state systematically abandoned by the central government, access to vital local resources like **water**, **food**, and **fuel** became scarce. The leader aggressively seized control of these vital supply lines while simultaneously dominating the remaining regional transit routes. Through targeted violence, strategic alliances, and brutal tactics, the leader systematically eliminated rival gangs and absorbed deserting federal personnel looking for a means of survival. By providing localized stability and access to resources in exchange for absolute loyalty, the leader transformed a fractured criminal underworld into a highly organized, **militarized cartel** capable of exploiting the newly abandoned territory through sophisticated **racketeering** and **extortion**.

The Leader's Transformation

Surviving the brutal reality of the Outlands came at a heavy physical price. Having contracted a severe, flesh-eating facial tissue infection during their youth, an affliction easily cured with basic antibiotics in a Mega City, the leader was left permanently disfigured due to the region's complete lack of medical infrastructure. The untreated infection ravaged the face before the leader's own immune system miraculously fought it off and healed on its own, a medical anomaly that should have been fatal. Rather than hiding this trauma as a vulnerability, the leader adopted a masked, bandaged persona, transforming their appearance into a potent **symbol of power** rather than just a person. This physical transformation and spontaneous survival are interpreted by the enclave as an absolute mark of divine selection and resilience, cementing their status as both an **anointed** savior and a fearsome warlord. The image of an unrecognizable, masked commander feeds a growing mythos, turning the leader into an almost supernatural force feared equally by followers and enemies along the valley.

A New Perspective

With **Chihuahua** secured, the leader shifts focus; **Chihuahua's** dwindling resources can't sustain their growing cartel. To expand, they look northward toward the **Rio Grande Valley**, particularly the strategic corridor between **El Paso** and **Juárez**. This region offers abundant **labor** for

exploitation and control over **trade**. The leader realizes that to truly consolidate power, they need not just territory but **self-sufficiency** and a base from which to expand their empire. The **Rio Grande Valley** becomes the next prize to secure for long-term survival.

The Need for Security and Military Power

To secure their growing territory, the leader understands that localized enforcement alone will not be enough. **Military strength** is now essential. With the systematic retreat of official government structures, the leader seeks out **military-grade weapons**, targeting abandoned Mexican federal installations and rural border garrisons left behind during the central state's withdrawal. With their vast arsenals of hardware and tactical gear, these fortified outposts offer a key advantage in both **defense** and **offensive capability**. Acquiring this heavy, rugged weaponry allows the cartel to securely defend its territory and deter potential challengers, solidifying their control over their side of the **Rio Grande Valley** and beyond.

The Expansion

The cartel begins its push toward the borderplex by first consolidating power in the **lower river cities** of **Chihuahua**, systematically eliminating localized rivals through **extortion** and **violence**. As they advance toward **Juárez**, they focus on capturing vital transit bottlenecks and agricultural assets rather than fighting pitched battles. This calculated advance is used to stabilize their supply lines, terrorize local holdouts, and assert absolute control, all while further strengthening the cartel's grip on the area. With their **growing military** capabilities and newly absorbed personnel, the cartel escalates regional dominance, employing sophisticated **psychological warfare** and **sabotage** to prepare for the final push into the **Rio Grande Valley**. Their ultimate goal centers on occupying **Juárez** and dominating **El Paso**, securing the entire border junction through fear, structural leverage, and sheer force.

Juarez Consolidation and Recruitment

The cartel enters Juarez, offering protection to the remaining residents in exchange for absolute loyalty, utilizing highly organized, traditional tactical maneuvers. They immediately initiate vital infrastructure clean-up work and construct heavy fortifications around the city's perimeter, with the leader presenting these efforts as a good-faith gesture to prove the syndicate can restore predictable stability to the local streets. In reality, these defensive structures and cleared corridors are engineered to secure their absolute chokehold over the international transit bottleneck and insulate their newly acquired stronghold. As the cartel consolidates power, they begin recruiting, offering enhanced rations and survival security to those willing to formally join their cause. Few take the offer initially, however, as most remain skeptical or prefer to stay neutral, unsure of the cartel's long-term intentions for the borderplex.

The Failed Assault on Fort Bliss

As the cartel orchestrated its aggressive occupation of the borderplex, an undisciplined and overly ambitious element of their vanguard forces attempted a direct assault on Fort Bliss to seize its vast strategic arsenal. Miscalculating the resolve and technological superiority of the centralized military presence, the cartel's conventional guerrilla forces advanced across the perimeter. The response from the Department of Defense was instantaneous, precise, and completely catastrophic for the attackers.

Rather than engaging in drawn-out urban warfare, the military garrison deployed overwhelming kinetic weaponry to decisively eliminate the threat. This severe retaliation flattened the advancing cartel units, inflicting massive casualties and flatly defeating the objective. The sheer thermal force of the defensive strikes completely scorched the surrounding landscape, leaving behind a permanent, burned-out swath of hallowed foundations and ash. This failed assault immediately halted any further aggression toward federal assets. The resulting no man's land now serves as a stark, silent boundary line between downtown El Paso and the untouchable military base, forcing the cartel leadership to permanently abandon their ambitions for federal hardware and pivot entirely toward civilian subjugation.

A New Face

After the fall of El Paso, the leader retreats into a digital persona, using **voice modulation** and a **digital emotionally expressive mask** to communicate with their followers. They seize control of local **TV and radio stations**, broadcasting propaganda that blends **charismatic authority** with **irreverent mockery**. Positioning themselves as the head of the cartel's "family," they craft calculated speeches to stir loyalty and manipulate the masses. By controlling the airwaves, they create an omnipresent voice that resonates throughout the region, tapping into the hopes and fears of the people. This **broadcasted persona** becomes the symbol of the cartel's power, guiding the population while keeping the leader's true identity hidden, maintaining an almost mythical aura.

Family and the Old World

In a series of live-streamed broadcasts, the leader switches between paternal authority and maternal comfort with the kind of emotional intensity seen in telenovelas, delivering a performance that is loud, dramatic, and full of sweeping, unpredictable shifts. One moment, the leader speaks with a harsh and commanding presence, railing against the systemic failures of the old federal system and promising to protect the territory. The next moment, the leader switches gears, softening the delivery to a nurturing, soothing tone, as though cradling the followers in a promise of safety and absolute belonging. It is raw, emotional, and unrelenting, creating a cyclical broadcast loop where every word is designed to resonate and compel compliance.

This rapid delivery laces the leader's words with a constant sense of regional urgency. The sharp reprimands about the failing world fade seamlessly into reassuring promises, all wrapped in a rhythmic and hypnotic cadence. The leader speaks as if guiding and controlling simultaneously, but the speaker's true physical identity remains entirely obscured behind a digital mask displaying

pixelated emojis and heavy voice modulation. This transformation turns the leader into an inhuman, blank canvas, allowing followers to project whatever authority figure they need most, whether it is the reassurance of a parent or the raw energy of collective defiance. The audience is left caught in the flow of a continuous broadcast centered on loyalty, family, and survival.

The leader's broadcast functions as a highly effective psychological loop, where the audience is never quite sure whether they are receiving parental care or hard-edged command. Ultimately, the mechanical nature of the delivery ensures the underlying message remains identical: the family will survive, and anyone who threatens it will face absolute erasure. The followers subconsciously fill in the gaps, investing heavily in this vision until they are completely integrated into the system. In the leader's world, an individual is either entirely with the family or they are nothing at all.

The Return to Juarez

After taking El Paso, the leader turns Juarez into a symbolic prison for those who fail to submit to the family. The captured elites of El Paso are forced into labor camps in Juarez, serving as a clear message that the old world's privileges no longer matter. Meanwhile, Juarez residents who prove their loyalty are offered a chance to live in El Paso, where the family's power is centered.

In the leader's broadcasts, Juarez is framed not just as punishment but as a test of loyalty. The people of Juarez are told they must choose: embrace the family and become part of the new world, or remain outside, condemned to work in the harsh conditions of the city. This choice is presented as an opportunity for redemption, making the people feel as though they have agency even as they are coerced. The dividing line between the two cities (one prosperous, the other a prison) reinforces the family's control, ensuring the people remain divided, always uncertain of their place, but always under the influence of the family's message.

The New Order in El Paso

With El Paso as the center of the cartel's power, the city becomes a place of privilege for those who align with the family. The loyalists, whether former civilians or those who've risen through the ranks, are given key roles in maintaining the cartel's operations, from resource management to military duties. They enjoy a relatively comfortable existence compared to the rest of the region, with access to resources, security, and a semblance of peace. In exchange for their compliance, these individuals support the cartel's new order, their loyalty ensuring their place in El Paso's structured society.

Los Chingones Internal Divisions

Los Chingones is a dictatorship led by **El Patrón**, who holds absolute power, with the **El Consejo** offering advice but little authority. **Captains** manage territories with autonomy, balancing personal ambition with loyalty to the Leader. This system encourages loyalty and rewards success, but disloyalty is met with harsh punishment. The hierarchy includes **Elites** for covert operations and

Soldiers for enforcement, ensuring the cartel's control through fear, loyalty, and efficiency.

Governmental

El Patrón (The Leader)

At the top of **Los Chingones** is **El Patrón**, the unquestionable ruler. **El Patrón** holds absolute power, making final decisions on all matters related to the cartel's operations, strategy, and direction. **El Patrón**'s authority is supreme, and their word is final, commanding both fear and loyalty. While rarely seen publicly, **El Patrón**'s influence permeates the organization, with their presence felt in every corner of the cartel's operations. **El Patrón** is the embodiment of the cartel's power, dictating its fate through force and cunning.

El Comandante (The Commander)

El Comandante is in charge of the cartel's military operations and enforcement efforts. This role includes commanding soldiers, mercenaries, and enforcers to execute offensive and defensive military strategies. **El Comandante** ensures that the cartel's territories are protected, enemies are neutralized, and internal discipline is maintained through force. They are responsible for territorial expansion, rival faction elimination, and the implementation of military campaigns to strengthen **Los Chingones**' power and influence.

El Comerciante (The Merchant)

El Comerciante is responsible for the cartel's external economic activities, ensuring that **Los Chingones** remains prosperous and well-supplied through strategic dealings with external factions. This includes managing extortion payments, clandestine trade, and negotiation of crucial deals for food, weapons, and other resources with other groups who wish to remain anonymous. **El Comerciante** is also tasked with establishing supply routes and securing external sources of income, such as tribute from other factions. They ensure that the cartel's influence extends beyond its own borders, maintaining the flow of goods and wealth to support its expansion and power.

El Supervisor (The Overseer)

El Supervisor is responsible for managing the production and gathering of essential resources within the cartel's controlled territories. They oversee the cultivation of food, production of goods, and extraction of natural resources, ensuring that the cartel is self-sufficient. **El Supervisor** also manages labor camps and the local workforce, enforcing control and ensuring that the necessary goods are produced for internal use and to sustain the cartel's power. While **El Comerciante** handles external trade and deals, the **Supervisor** is focused on internal production, logistics, and maintaining territorial control through resource management.

La Mensajera (The Messenger)

La Mensajera is responsible for the cartel's communication, propaganda, and psychological warfare. This role involves shaping the public perception of **Los Chingones** and controlling the

narrative through media manipulation, speeches, and the dissemination of ideological messaging. **La Mensajera** runs the cartel's media outlets, uses psychological operations to inspire loyalty or fear, and ensures that the cartel's influence spreads through information control. They also handle negotiations with external factions, using their expertise in communication to advance **Los Chingones'** interests while maintaining a strong and unified front.

Internal Divisions

Military

At the heart of Los Chingones' military footprint are their **Soldiers** (Los Soldados), a formidable blend of experienced defensive personnel, specialized security details, and local conscripts drawn from the general borderplex population. Rather than functioning as a disorganized criminal element, this force operates with the structured predictability of a regional militia. The ranks are heavily populated by ordinary residents of the valley who stepped into the syndicate's service out of sheer economic necessity and localized survival.

These fighters are highly effective in both **combat** and **territorial control**, typically deploying in small, fast-moving units perfectly adapted to the local geography. Their primary function is to serve as the structural backbone of the cartel, enforcing the Leader's directives, safeguarding critical transport bottlenecks, and maintaining internal discipline. By grounding their operations in visible presence rather than mindless violence, the Soldiers secure the cartel's power while ensuring the day-to-day rhythm of the valley remains stable.

The **Elites** (Los Pesados) are the cartel's secretive and lethal **special operations** unit, specializing in **covert warfare** and **psychological manipulation**. These operatives are the **brains** behind strategic operations, skilled in **sabotage**, **infiltration**, and **assassination**. They're trained to not only neutralize rivals and dissidents within the cartel, but also to manipulate the **minds** of enemies and allies alike, ensuring unwavering loyalty to the cartel's leadership. Their focus on **psychological warfare** ensures they strike fear deep into the hearts of their enemies while maintaining tight control over their own ranks.

To maintain absolute dominance over their territories, Los Chingones rely on a vast, formidable arsenal of hardware, ranging from standard **firearms** and **explosives** to custom **armored vehicles**. Much of this equipment was acquired through the tactical absorption of abandoned Mexican federal installations and deserting border security units. Their transport fleet features heavily **modified vehicles**, such as rugged commercial trucks retrofitted with welded steel plating and salvaged military MRAPs, keeping their mobile forces heavily protected without requiring a corporate federal supply line. Additionally, surveillance **drones** and tactical **recon systems**, repurposed from legacy security arrays, are heavily utilized for **surveillance** and **precision strikes** against high-value targets, giving the cartel a massive asymmetric edge in regional warfare.

Defensively, Los Chingones maintain a stronghold in key territories, particularly in cities like **El Paso** and **Juarez**, which are fortified with **walls**, **barbed wire**, and **guard towers**. Key routes are

secured with **checkpoints** and **minefields**, creating a nearly impenetrable barrier against enemy advances.

Los Viejos Guerreros (The Old Warriors)

Los Viejos Guerreros are the **veterans** of the cartel, the **old guard** who have been with the cartel since its early days, and who view themselves as the protectors of the **cartel's traditions** and its **military legacy**. They are dedicated to keeping the cartel's operations **brutally efficient**, with an emphasis on **military might** and **territorial control**. They often see the more intellectual or strategic factions as weak and believe the cartel's survival relies on maintaining a **strong military** and instilling fear. These **hardline traditionalists** hold significant sway in the **war councils** and are responsible for major military campaigns and punishments within the cartel. However, their loyalty is also rooted in **personal pride**, and they believe they are the true embodiment of the cartel's will.

Los Iluminados (The Enlightened Ones)

Los Iluminados are a secret faction within **Los Chingones**, made up of intellectuals and occultists who practice a secret, esoteric form of **Santa Muerte** worship. Unlike the more widespread reverence of **Santa Muerte**, their practices are occult in nature, involving rituals designed to **prognosticate** the future and provide guidance on key cartel decisions. Led by the **Messenger**, the only woman in the **El Consejo**, this group interprets visions and signs to steer the cartel's strategy. Many **Iluminados** also operate in covert roles, including **spying** and **influence**, using their arcane practices to strengthen the cartel's power while keeping their true beliefs hidden from all but the highest leadership.

Los Herederos (The Heirs)

Los Herederos are the faction of **younger** and **ambitious members**, often second- and third-tier **Captains** and **family members** of the cartel leadership, who view themselves as the **future** of Los Chingones. They seek to position themselves as the next in line for leadership and often work to build their own personal **alliances** and **influence** within the cartel. While they profess loyalty to the Leader, they often push their own agendas, sometimes attempting to challenge the status quo in subtle ways. Their vision is one of **expansion**, **influence**, and **control**, but they recognize that, to secure their future, they must operate both within and outside the cartel's rigid hierarchy. Some might be seen as potential **successors** to the Leader if the cartel's power were to shift in the future.

Internal Prospectus

Strengths

Los Chingones thrive on a **highly centralized and efficient power structure**. **El Patrón's** absolute control ensures clear direction and unwavering stability within the organization. The leader's word is law, and this singular focus on decision-making minimizes the possibility of internal friction or indecision. **El Consejo**, though strictly advisory, provides a highly focused layer of administrative support without overwhelming the leadership with conflicting opinions. The cartel's **military strength** is formidable, thanks to **El Comandante**, who ensures that both internal discipline and external threats are swiftly and decisively managed. This clear chain of command enables Los Chingones to maintain absolute control over critical regional choke points while successfully expanding their reach, ensuring that local rivals are subdued before they can pose a significant threat.

The cartel is also deeply self-sufficient, particularly due to **El Supervisor's** ability to rigidly manage resource extraction, agriculture, and labor within their controlled areas. This internal pipeline drastically reduces dependency on outside corporate forces and keeps the syndicate stable despite federal abandonment. **El Comerciante** ensures the cartel's ongoing prosperity through external trade, maintaining a tightly run network of transport checkpoints and black-market tribute that feeds the syndicate's need for both essential resources and physical Polymer currency. Additionally, the **Elites**, highly skilled in covert operations, further strengthen the cartel's grip by executing precise information control, espionage, and regional sabotage. With **Los Viejos Guerreros** and **Los Herederos** providing tactical continuity, heavy physical might, and aggressive frontline drive, the cartel remains both resilient and forward-looking, possessing the power to adapt dynamically to shifting regional pressures.

Finally, **Los Iluminados** provide the cartel with a **unique advantage** through their specialized ability to analyze regional variables and quietly steer the organization using psychological insights and traditional mysticism. Their insular practices offer a deep layer of strategic guidance that, while hidden from the rank-and-file soldiers, provides the inner circle with invaluable clarity when navigating complex geopolitical landscape choices.

Weaknesses

While **Los Chingones** benefit from a rigid hierarchy, this same structure creates significant **internal tensions**. The absolute power of **El Patrón** is undeniably a strength, but it creates a dangerous **bottleneck** in decision-making. In times of rapid regional change, this extreme concentration of authority can lead to critical delays or a lack of operational flexibility. This problem is compounded by the **autonomy of the Captains**, who must constantly balance personal ambition with outward loyalty to the Leader. While compliance is rewarded, **disloyalty** is met with absolute erasure. Any perceived weakness or failure inside the command structure can trigger severe retribution, building hidden resentment and stoking quiet internal conflict.

Los Viejos Guerreros, while loyal and capable, are steeped in hardline traditionalism, which functions as a double-edged sword. Their strict preference for brute military force over more strategic or analytical approaches limits the cartel's ability to adapt to complex economic realities or engage in nuanced diplomacy across the river. They openly view intellectual currents like **Los Iluminados** as weak or impractical, and their military-first mindset can sometimes blind them to

the immense value of **psychological warfare** or subtle structural influence.

The **Herederos** present an ongoing systemic challenge, as their raw ambitions constantly push them to build **personal power bases** within the syndicate. While they contribute to the cartel's expansion and provide aggressive frontline drive, their **subtle machinations** actively undermine the unity of Los Chingones. Their **competing ambitions** create constant factionalism beneath the surface, threatening a catastrophic fracture at the top if the illusion of **El Patrón's** absolute control were ever to slip.

Lastly, **Los Iluminados**, despite their secretive power, represent a **potential vulnerability**. Their private, esoteric practices surrounding Santa Muerte provide strategic guidance, but their isolation makes them highly **susceptible to manipulation** or targeted **sabotage** from rival council members. Because reverence for Santa Muerte is deeply woven into the daily lives of the ordinary soldiers, any exposure of **Los Iluminados** using the faith as a cynical, rigged tool for political subversion would instantly alienate the rank-and-file, shattering the cartel's internal legitimacy. Furthermore, their **psychological warfare** techniques can backfire if over-leveraged, leading to a profound loss of trust among internal units and external trading partners alike.

Synergies

Within **Los Chingones**, a highly effective network of operational synergies sustains the organization's regional power and influence. At the heart of this cooperative dynamic is the relationship between **El Patrón** and the various branches of the cartel, each fulfilling distinct yet complementary roles. The leader's supreme authority ensures that the cartel operates as a single unified entity, with each division working toward a common strategic goal. This centralization allows for streamlined decision-making, especially when paired with the localized expertise of **El Consejo**, which offers sharp strategic insight. The council's members ensure that the cartel's military, economic, and logistical operations remain synchronized to perfection.

One of the most powerful synergies within **Los Chingones** is the relationship between **El Comerciante** and **El Supervisor**. While **El Comerciante** manages external border dealings, trade routes, and the collection of physical Polymer cash, **El Supervisor** rigidly coordinates the internal resources needed to sustain that power. The smooth acquisition of goods, fuel, and equipment from external avenues is perfectly balanced by the stable, reliable resource extraction and agricultural production managed internally by **El Supervisor**. This structural alignment ensures that the cartel not only maintains absolute control over its territories but can also aggressively extend its influence through regional trade and extortion rackets, reinforcing the cartel's economic strength along the entire valley corridor.

Another vital synergy exists between **La Mensajera** and **Los Iluminados**. The Messenger, with absolute control over communication, propaganda, and psychological warfare, works hand-in-hand with the **Iluminados**, who analyze regional variables through their insular practices. **La Mensajera's** media influence and public broadcast strategies are heavily enhanced by the calculated foresight offered by the **Iluminados**, allowing the syndicate to project an artificial narrative of invincibility. By masterfully shaping public perception and utilizing strategic guidance,

La Mensajera ensures that **Los Chingones** constantly projects an image of both military dominance and inescapable destiny, binding the population to the leader with a potent mix of communal security and fear.

Furthermore, **Los Viejos Guerreros** and **Los Herederos**, despite their deep generational differences, find a functional equilibrium in their shared dependency on the cartel's survival. **Los Viejos Guerreros**, with their hardline focus on military might, provide the necessary tactical experience and muscle to secure checkpoints, manage laborers, and enforce absolute discipline. Concurrently, **Los Herederos** inject aggressive ambition and a vision for territorial expansion, pushing the cartel's influence along the riverbanks. While the old guard ensures immediate structural stability and defensive strength, the younger generation drives regional growth and adaptation, ensuring the cartel remains a dominant force in an evolving Outland environment.

Tensions

Despite their strong operational synergies, **Los Chingones** are divided by deep internal tensions. One of the most notable sources of friction lies between **Los Viejos Guerreros** and the more analytical factions, specifically **Los Iluminados**. The **Viejos Guerreros**, steeped in hardline military tradition, view the mystical, psychological, and information-based approaches of the **Iluminados** with deep disdain. They firmly believe that the cartel's success is rooted entirely in brute force, physical checkpoints, and raw territorial control, tending to see anything other than direct kinetic action as weak or ineffective. This creates a bitter **clash of ideologies**, with the **Iluminados** advocating for subtle regional manipulation through calculated foresight, while the **Viejos Guerreros** insist on decisive, often violent action. This friction constantly threatens a dangerous standoff, with each side questioning the efficacy of the other's methods.

Another major point of contention within the cartel lies between **El Patrón** and **Los Herederos**. The younger, highly ambitious members of **Los Herederos** constantly seek to expand their personal influence and position themselves as the next leaders of **Los Chingones**. While they outwardly maintain strict compliance to **El Patrón**, their strategic maneuvers signal a ruthless desire for ultimate power. This ambition creates massive friction at the top, as the council must carefully guard the secret of the leader's digital mask. **El Patrón** views the **Herederos'** ambitions with absolute suspicion, creating a volatile environment where any overt push for advancement could shatter the syndicate's undying illusion. This dynamic also stirs discontent among the **Captains** who, despite holding significant autonomy over their territories, feel their localized authority is being actively undermined by the **Herederos'** aggressive power grabs.

Lastly, the relationship between **Los Viejos Guerreros** and **Los Herederos** also presents a fierce generational divide. The **Viejos Guerreros'** strict traditionalism and military-first mindset are at complete odds with the expansionist, high-stakes strategies of the **Herederos**. While the old guard views localized territorial consolidation and ironclad defense of existing choke points as paramount, the younger **Herederos** focus entirely on long-term regional growth, often pursuing reckless operations that disrupt the predictable status quo of the valley. This divide serves as a constant battleground for structural control, with the younger generation pushing to modernize operations while the old guard holds tightly to a fear-based, heavy-handed strategy.

External Relations

Keystone

Keystone, already a notable player in the region, initiated a calculated parley with Los Chingones after establishing a biodiesel-powered fleet. Their presence in El Paso was not a debut, but an assertion of their dominance. Long before the cartel's siege of El Paso, Keystone's operations had captured the attention of Los Chingones' network of spies. As the fog of war enveloped the region, the cartel's understanding of local dynamics remained incomplete. They knew that whoever controlled the area could exert influence, but the identities of the key players remained obscured.

When Keystone made contact, they initially offered high-tech weaponry, biodiesel, and medical supplies as a calculated gesture of goodwill, a gift presented upon their initial meeting to soften their introduction into the valley. This offering was cynically framed as a mere taste of the vast resources Keystone could regularly provide. However, the underlying message remained razor-sharp: if Los Chingones wanted to secure a reliable supply pipeline, they would be required to travel directly to Keystone's headquarters. This calculated move subtly positioned Keystone as the superior party, leveraging their technological bounty to assert authority from the very first interaction.

Reluctantly, Los Chingones agreed to meet. When they arrived, however, they were subjected to a significant affront. Instead of being ushered into the heart of the city, they were relegated to Keystone's sprawling slums—a stark reminder of their outsider status. Though the supplies offered were invaluable, the humiliation of the gesture was not lost on Los Chingones. While the cartel's leadership remained measured, the insult was noted. This was not forgotten; humiliation, in the eyes of Los Chingones, would always be repaid.

Yet the encounter, despite its indignities, revealed a key insight for Los Chingones: the treatment of the people in Keystone's slums. The harsh conditions exposed cracks in Keystone's facade, raising questions about the city's internal weaknesses and how they might be exploited. For the cartel, this was more than a mere slap in the face; it provided a glimpse into the dynamics of Keystone's governance and potential avenues for leverage. While Los Chingones remained outwardly compliant, they kept their eyes open, knowing that a moment would come to turn this understanding into an advantage.

Moreover, the treatment of the slum residents served as a reminder of Keystone's roots—an echo of the old world that had long oppressed the Mexican people, giving rise to the very conditions that allowed the cartel's power to flourish. Los Chingones recognized that, while they would adhere to Keystone's terms for now, the system it represented was one that needed to fall. They would bide their time, knowing that the opportunity would eventually arise to dismantle this vestige of the past.

In the end, while Los Chingones suffered the indignities of Keystone's power plays, their patience and strategic mindset endured. They knew the value of time, and how important it would be to bide their time until the opportunity to strike arrived. Keystone, for all its might, had tipped its hand—and that knowledge would one day prove invaluable.

Las Cruces

Las Cruces presents both an **ideological challenge** and an **opportunity** for Los Chingones. The **egalitarian** values of Las Cruces stand in stark contrast to the cartel's **hierarchical** and **authoritarian** structure. While Las Cruces' focus on **individualism** and **self-management** threatens the cartel's vision of control, it also reveals **vulnerabilities** that Los Chingones can strategically exploit.

The cartel's relationship with Las Cruces is primarily **opportunistic**. Los Chingones does not seek **partnership** or **ideological alignment**, but instead views the **lack of centralized authority** and **internal divisions** in Las Cruces as weaknesses to be exploited. Without a strong central power structure, Las Cruces is prone to **fractures** that can be manipulated—whether through **economic pressure**, **corruption**, or by using external factors to destabilize the region further.

Los Chingones' extensive experience in **exploitation** and **extortion** gives them a clear advantage in recognizing and capitalizing on these vulnerabilities. If Las Cruces' internal cohesion weakens, the cartel is prepared to take advantage; be it by **sowing discord**, leveraging **discontent**, or undermining the city's decentralized governance to gain influence and control.

While Los Chingones will not **initiate dialogue** or formal negotiations with Las Cruces, they remain **watchful**, knowing that any instability within the city could open the door to **manipulation**. When that moment comes, the cartel will be ready to exploit it for **strategic gain**.

For now, Los Chingones bide their time, understanding that Las Cruces' **egalitarian** ideals, while offering a semblance of unity, may be the very thing that will cause it to unravel—leaving Los Chingones with the opportunity to capitalize on the chaos.

Independent Towns

The Rio Grande Valley, a region of independent towns scattered along the river, has become a **critical point of interest** for Los Chingones, particularly due to its proximity to the **influence** of both **Las Cruces** and **Keystone**. While these towns operate independently, their survival and growth have been shaped by the external forces surrounding them. **Las Cruces**, as a **regional trade hub**, has provided a stabilizing presence, and its **egalitarian** culture has drawn settlers seeking relative safety and opportunity. Similarly, **Keystone**, with its resources and **biodiesel-driven economy**, has made inroads into the region, offering trade and stability at the price of submission to their terms.

For Los Chingones, the independent towns present a **unique opportunity**. These settlements, though small and seemingly insignificant, sit at the crossroads of two powerful external forces.

Keystone's commercial empire and Las Cruces' ideological influence both shape the towns' economies and governance. Yet, the people of the Rio Grande Valley remain wary of either faction's growing influence, preferring their independence—at least for now.

Los Chingones, with their extensive network and experience in **exploitation**, see these towns not as allies but as **territories to be controlled**. The cartel is well aware that their presence in the Rio Grande Valley could disrupt the balance between Keystone and Las Cruces. By capitalizing on the towns' **autonomy**, and their **susceptibility** to outside pressure, Los Chingones can effectively **manipulate trade routes, undermine local governance**, and **extort** the small settlements. The cartel's strategy would not be to absorb the towns directly but to **weaken their independence**, pushing them into a vulnerable position where they must either **submit** to cartel demands or face destabilization.

Moreover, Los Chingones recognizes that these towns, though independent, are still **interdependent** on the larger trade flows from Las Cruces and Keystone. They are **bargaining chips** in the larger game; **valuable for control** over local resources and trade networks. If one of the factions, particularly Keystone or Las Cruces, is seen as **overstepping** or imposing too harshly on the towns, Los Chingones can exploit the situation to gain **favorable terms** or push the towns into compliance with their demands.

At present, the cartel remains in the **background**, keeping its influence covert. They are **patient**, observing the delicate balance between Keystone and Las Cruces, waiting for the right moment to exert leverage. The independent towns are ripe for **coercion**, and Los Chingones knows that their future influence will depend largely on **undermining the stability** of the region—breaking the ties between the towns and the larger powers while positioning themselves as the ultimate **power broker** in the area.

In the end, the Rio Grande Valley stands as a **volatile theater** for Los Chingones' broader ambitions. The cartel's intervention in the area is not about open conflict with Las Cruces or Keystone, but about quietly **shaping** the region's future, slowly dismantling its autonomy, and positioning Los Chingones as the **primary force** in the valley.

External Prospectus

Strengths

One of the primary strengths of Los Chingones' external relationships is their ability to capitalize on the **internal divisions** and **vulnerabilities** of the factions they interact with, even if these weaknesses aren't always rooted in direct exploitation.

With **Keystone**, Los Chingones see an opportunity to **exploit the systemic inequalities** that plague the city, particularly the harsh treatment of the **slum residents**. This provides the cartel with a way to **manipulate perceptions**, sowing discontent and eroding public support for Keystone's leadership. Through **strategic moves**, such as encouraging unrest or fostering dissent, Los Chingones can potentially turn Keystone's own citizens against them over time. The cartel's

patience and long-term thinking give them the ability to quietly gather intelligence, allowing them to exploit cracks in Keystone's governance without needing to engage in direct, open conflict. This passive yet effective approach allows Los Chingones to **weaken Keystone's power** from the inside out, positioning themselves as an alternative power broker if the opportunity arises.

When it comes to **Las Cruces**, Los Chingones doesn't view the region through the lens of exploitation but more as an **opportunistic** strategy. While the egalitarian system of Las Cruces poses a **direct ideological challenge**, it also provides openings. The **decentralized structure** of Las Cruces, though idealistic, means there are **no strong centralized authorities**, and the potential for **internal divisions** remains. Los Chingones doesn't need to **exploit** Las Cruces per se; they simply need to **monitor** the stability of the system. If **internal tensions** emerge, particularly if the **lack of hierarchy** leads to decision-making deadlocks or unaddressed grievances, Los Chingones could subtly **sow discord** or leverage external pressures to cause instability, potentially creating an opening for themselves to gain influence. The **chaos** that could come from within Las Cruces is something the cartel can harness—whether through **economic pressures, strategic alliances, or subtle manipulation**—without ever needing to directly confront Las Cruces head-on.

The **independent towns** in the **Rio Grande Valley** provide perhaps the clearest example of Los Chingones' ability to **exploit vulnerabilities** in a way that suits their operations. These towns may consider themselves **autonomous** but are deeply influenced by the surrounding forces of Keystone and Las Cruces. While the cartel doesn't seek to directly absorb these towns, their **autonomy is fragile**, making them ripe for **manipulation**. By **controlling trade routes**, undermining local governance, and using **economic pressure**, Los Chingones can gradually weaken the independence of these towns, pushing them into a position where they must **comply** with cartel demands or risk destabilization. The key here is **patience**—Los Chingones aren't looking for a quick win but rather an opportunity to **gradually dismantle** the autonomy of these towns and bring them under their **influence**.

In all of these relationships, Los Chingones' greatest strength is their **strategic patience**. Instead of pursuing direct confrontation, they are masters of **waiting for the right moment**; watching for weaknesses to appear and seizing on opportunities when their adversaries falter or overreach. This approach allows them to gather intelligence, observe shifting power dynamics, and capitalize on moments of instability, positioning themselves as **key players** without drawing attention to their maneuvers.

Weaknesses

While Los Chingones' approach to external relationships provides ample opportunities, it also comes with inherent risks and weaknesses that could jeopardize their long-term stability. Their **patient, opportunistic nature** means they must be **reactive** rather than proactive, which can leave them vulnerable to **unpredictable shifts** in power dynamics, particularly in volatile regions like the Rio Grande Valley.

For example, the cartel's **underestimation of Keystone's resources** in the region could pose a significant problem if Keystone consolidates its power and becomes a **more formidable**

adversary. While Los Chingones are adept at exploiting Keystone's internal weaknesses, the **strength of Keystone's biodiesel economy**, coupled with their **military technology and trade dominance**, could create a scenario where Los Chingones find themselves outmatched should a direct conflict occur. Keystone's ability to maintain a strong supply chain and logistics infrastructure is a formidable challenge to the cartel's strategy, which primarily relies on destabilization and **indirect leverage**. If Keystone becomes aware of the cartel's manipulations, they could begin to preemptively shut down those vulnerabilities, leaving Los Chingones with fewer opportunities to exploit.

Similarly, Los Chingones' relationship with **Las Cruces** is fraught with **uncertainty**. While the cartel may view the egalitarian system as ripe for exploitation, the **ideological cohesion** and **strong community bonds** in Las Cruces may prove more resilient than expected. The decentralized system might actually allow for quicker response times to threats, making it harder for Los Chingones to exploit internal divisions without facing swift backlash. The cartel's strategy of waiting for instability could lead to missed opportunities if Las Cruces successfully manages internal tensions, ultimately leaving Los Chingones unable to capitalize on the weaknesses they've identified. Additionally, if Las Cruces becomes aware of the cartel's intentions, it could **unite its citizens** in opposition to external threats, further complicating Los Chingones' plans.

The independent towns of the **Rio Grande Valley**, while presenting a strategic advantage, also expose Los Chingones to the risk of **overreach**. The cartel's focus on undermining the towns' autonomy may result in unintended consequences, such as **pushing the towns into the arms of Keystone or Las Cruces** if they perceive Los Chingones' influence as too destabilizing. If the cartel's manipulation of trade routes or economic pressure becomes too harsh, these towns could rally behind the larger factions for protection, resulting in a net loss of influence for the cartel. This risk is especially high if Los Chingones miscalculates the towns' **desire for independence**, potentially causing backlash from local populations who value their autonomy over the cartel's heavy-handed tactics.

Finally, the cartel's **reliance on external factions' mistakes** or weaknesses means that Los Chingones' strategy is vulnerable to changes beyond their control. If Keystone or Las Cruces take proactive steps to shore up their own weaknesses or **forge alliances with other factions**, the cartel could find itself in a much weaker position. Their entire approach hinges on waiting for the right opportunities, which leaves them exposed if their adversaries adjust to counter their tactics.

In conclusion, while Los Chingones is skilled in identifying and exploiting weaknesses in the external relationships they maintain, their **patience and opportunism** come with a set of **inherent risks**. Their reliance on external instability, rather than proactive control, makes them vulnerable to shifts in the political landscape. If their adversaries grow more cohesive, united, or aware of the cartel's manipulations, the carefully crafted web Los Chingones has set may unravel, leaving them exposed to new threats.

Los Chingones Goals

Short-Term Goals

Territorial Consolidation and Defense

In the immediate future, **Los Chingones** will focus on consolidating **territorial control** over crucial regions, specifically **El Paso** and **Juarez**. This includes fortifying key locations with **strong defenses** to ensure they can withstand potential threats, particularly from **Keystone** and **Las Cruces**. Strengthening **fortifications** and securing borders are essential for maintaining dominance and preventing enemy infiltration.

Internal Stability and Control

The cartel's immediate priority is to **neutralize internal threats** and maintain a unified front. **El Patrón** must ensure that factions like **Los Herederos** and ambitious Captains do not challenge his leadership. Steps will be taken to **monitor loyalty**, and any signs of dissent will be swiftly dealt with to maintain unity within the cartel. This includes addressing **internal rebellion** and **discord** among the ranks to prevent a splintering of power.

Resource Acquisition and Management

Los Chingones will prioritize the **scavenging of essential resources** such as **fuel, weapons, and medical supplies**. Ensuring a steady flow of these resources is critical for the cartel's **self-sufficiency** and operational readiness. **El Supervisor** will oversee resource management, working to streamline supply chains and prevent any disruptions in the cartel's critical infrastructure.

Psychological Warfare and Propaganda

Another key area of focus will be strengthening the **propaganda machinery** that reinforces the **cult of personality** around the **Leader**. **La Mensajera** will play a crucial role in maintaining control over the narrative, ensuring that the **Leader's divine authority** is unchallenged. The goal is to manipulate public perception both within the cartel and the territories they control, suppressing dissent and reinforcing loyalty through **psychological tactics**.

External Opportunism

In their external dealings, **Los Chingones** will look for weaknesses in **Keystone** and **Las Cruces** to exploit for strategic gain. The cartel will focus on **Keystone's internal divisions**, particularly the harsh treatment of slum residents, which can be manipulated to weaken Keystone's influence in the region. **Las Cruces'** decentralized governance and moments of **instability** will also be monitored for opportunities to exploit.

Long-Term Goals

Dominance in the Southwest

Los Chingones do not aim to rebuild a formal state apparatus or a traditional civic economy, but rather to permanently **solidify their position** as the **dominant force** across their sector of the Outlands. Over the long term, they intend to continuously expand their de-facto **territorial control** across the **Southwest** border corridors using heavy **military might**, highly effective **propaganda**, and sweeping **extortion** rackets. The **Leader's absolute authority** will continue to be aggressively reinforced across the airwaves, ensuring unbreakable loyalty and structural cohesion within the cartel family.

Sustaining Resource Control

Rather than focusing on rebuilding the broader economy, **Los Chingones** will work to **preserve the status quo**, ensuring that they maintain control of essential resources such as **fuel, weapons**, and **medical supplies**. The cartel's economic model will remain heavily reliant on **extortion, forced labor**, and the manipulation of resources to maintain power and independence from external forces.

Adapting to the Post-Collapse World

In the long term, **Los Chingones** will not seek to change the societal structure; instead, they will **exploit** it for their own gain. Their **methods** (looting, manipulation, and fear) will remain their most reliable tools. Their goal is to **adapt to the shifting landscape** while maintaining their hold on power, ensuring that their tactics remain effective regardless of external changes.

Strategic Manipulation of External Threats

Los Chingones will remain **patient** in dealing with external threats, carefully monitoring **Keystone** and **Las Cruces** for **weaknesses**. Over time, they will look for ways to **exploit internal problems** within **Keystone**, leveraging **divisions** and **discontent** to destabilize the region. **Las Cruces**, with its decentralized governance, will continue to be monitored for **opportunities to manipulate**, ensuring that any **instability** can be exploited when the time is right.

Expansion into New Territories

The **Rio Grande Valley's independent towns** will become a key target in the long term. Positioned strategically between **Keystone** and **Las Cruces**, these towns are ripe for **exploitation**. **Los Chingones** will work to **undermine** their independence, using **economic manipulation** and **coercion** to gradually extend their influence and eventually **gain control** over these towns.

Succession and Internal Power Structure

Los Herederos will continue to position themselves as future leaders, but **El Patrón** must maintain a tight grip on power, ensuring no internal faction challenges the line of succession. **El Comandante** will play a key role in expanding the cartel's military influence, while **El Comerciante** will continue to secure new trade routes and alliances. **La Mensajera** will maintain her psychological influence, and **Los Iluminados** will quietly increase their power, positioning themselves as key advisors for future military and strategic decisions.

Dallas-Fort Worth (DFW)

The Dallas-Fort Worth Mega-City State is a sovereign corporate-chartered municipal republic defined by its relentless optimization of space, energy, and human labor. Consolidated over decades of natural resource depletion and suburban infrastructure collapse, the metroplex operates as a horizontal command economy running on state-sanctioned statutory monopolies that treat all commerce as a series of rigid inter-corporate contracts. Driven by a vertical supply chain of automated heavy manufacturing, synthetic energy refinement, and mass-scale human AI data validation, the city-state maintains a strict compliance matrix that locks its multi-million population into highly stratified socio-economic tiers. This creates a permanent internal gridlock, pitting rival corporate-municipal factions against one another in intense, bloodless legal lawfare on the city council, while forcing a ruthless enforcement gradient against the resource-starved vacancy of the surrounding Texas Outlands.

DFW Overview

Origins

The creation of the Dallas-Fort Worth Mega-City State was driven by a slow, multi-decade economic squeeze that fundamentally broke the old-world model of independent living. As the global supply chain for vital agricultural inputs and synthetic fuels climbed an increasingly cost-prohibitive curve, the financial baseline required to maintain decentralized communities skyrocketed. Independent family farms and rural agricultural operations, crippled by escalating up-front costs and the sudden withdrawal of historical federal safety nets, fell into a massive debt trap. Unable to balance their ledgers, these outer networks suffered a cascading wave of financial foreclosures, allowing hyper-capitalized corporate conglomerates and private banking networks to quietly absorb the regional infrastructure through standard bankruptcy channels.

This corporate integration of raw resources triggered a brutal, systemic domino effect that marched steadily inward toward the metroplex. Stripped of their traditional middle-man economies, peripheral municipal towns and independent suburbs saw their local tax bases dissolve, sending civil services, public grids, and emergency networks into an irreversible death spiral. As the infrastructure of independent suburbs collapsed under the weight of unfunded mandates, generations of displaced populations executed a steady, generational migration inward along the primary highway corridors. Unable to afford the hyper-inflated cost of independent survival, these suburban and rural communities surrendered their local autonomy in exchange for access to a centralized, closed-loop utility matrix—formally dissolving their civil charters and permanently consolidating the region into a hyper-managed, horizontal corporate city-state.

Region

The region of the Dallas-Fort Worth Mega-City State is defined by its massive, asphalt-paved horizontal sprawl that stretches relentlessly across thousands of square miles of flat North Texas terrain under a heavy sky. It operates not as a single uniform urban stack, but as a continuous territorial gradient where infrastructure, wealth, and density are strictly dictated by proximity to major highway arteries. This horizontal layout creates a stark contrast to traditional vertical city structures, utilizing sheer geographical footprint to project corporate power and manage millions of registered inhabitants across a sprawling concrete sea.

At the very center of this geographic matrix lies the Core, the dense and high-stakes interior basin completely bounded by the Interstate 635 loop. Within this central ring, historic transportation corridors like Interstate 75, Interstate 30, and the Dallas North Tollway have been retrofitted into deep, multi-tiered concrete trenches packed with automated freight and electric traffic. Flanking these choked trenches are soaring reflective-glass corporate monoliths that provide a vertical, neon-lit edge to the highway canyons. Yet, carved directly into this high-density core are low-density, hyper-manicured sanctuaries like Highland Park and Turtle Creek. Protected by advanced acoustic sound-walls and automated security vectors, these historic neighborhoods function as quiet, green, aristocratic time-capsules of 1920s estates where the corporate elite live in absolute silence, completely insulated from the surrounding concrete noise.

Radiating outward beyond the primary loop are the Sprawl Sectors, comprised of absorbed municipal suburbs that form the heavy-duty engine room of the Mega-City. Sectors like Carrollton, Richardson, and Plano to the north have been transformed into high-density tech-hives packed with modular apartment stacks, fiber-optic distribution nodes, and automated server farms. To the east, Garland and Mesquite serve as a massive logistics throat defined by miles of automated warehousing and heavy freight-rail corridors. The southern and southeastern rims, encompassing areas like Balch Springs, Hutchins, and Lancaster, act as industrial labor sinks dominated by water-treatment facilities, chemical recycling plants, and heavily policed corporate penal complexes. Meanwhile, the Arlington sector to the west operates as a massive transit and entertainment buffer, using hyper-dense stadium arenas and corporate-vice districts to pacify and distract the working-class masses as they move through the metroplex.

Beyond the outermost logistics belts and secondary highway bands, the Mega-City reaches its absolute territorial limit. Dallas features no physical perimeter walls; instead, the concrete landscape undergoes a natural, brutal decay. The high-density sprawl thins into tracts of abandoned commercial infrastructure, rusting transit skeletons, and forgotten service roads. Eventually, the automated municipal grid drops off entirely, the streetlights stop humming, and the cracked asphalt blacktops simply dissolve into the vast, indifferent, and resource-starved vacancy of the Texas Outlands.

Fort Worth

The interior landscape of Fort Worth is a roaring, smog-blanketed metropolis of heavy industrial pipelines and manufacturing compounds held tightly within the primary loop of Interstate 20 and Interstate 820. This central industrial zone acts as a massive super-cluster of intersecting corporate

interests, housing vast facilities dedicated to advanced robotics assembly, vehicular creation, and high-performance personal VTOL jets. Cutting directly through this heavily fortified mechanical landscape are massive high-speed corporate logistics rail lines. This infrastructure serves as the iron spine of the entire region, constantly funneling heavy freight and manufactured goods eastward across the Outland gap and straight into the Dallas Core.

Outside the immediate industrial loop, the geography rapidly disintegrates into stark zones of abandonment and systemic decay. To the north of the industrial core, former suburban developments like Watauga and Saginaw have been left entirely behind. These areas exist as silent, expanding stretches of unused and rotting old-world infrastructure, completely stripped of investment and left to the elements.

Directly to the south, following the path of the Interstate 35W corridor, the territory previously known as Crowley and Everman has been fundamentally transformed to serve the needs of the machine. The entire area has been carved into a colossal, toxic open-pit landfill. This massive trench operates day and night, swallowing the vast amounts of physical waste, industrial byproducts, and scrapped machinery generated by the surrounding factories.

To the southeast of the industrial loop, the hollowed-out infrastructure of Mansfield serves a different, more utilitarian purpose as a massive, Outlander containment zone. The crumbling neighborhoods and abandoned commercial spaces of this sector house the desperate underclass of unregistered laborers. From these ruins, thousands of workers make a daily commute, venturing out to perform the most hazardous, bottom-tier physical jobs across both the Dallas sprawl and the Fort Worth manufacturing sectors.

DFW Spaceport

Sitting as a massive, sky-shaking wedge of concrete and tarmac directly between the Dallas Core and the Fort Worth Industrial Super-Cluster, the DFW Spaceport functions as a sovereign geographic barrier dedicated entirely to trans-atmospheric transit. Because the advent of fully reusable flight eliminated the old-world necessity of launching over coastal waters, this immense facility was constructed entirely inland to sit at the immediate physical center of the region. While its eastern border remains rigidly fixed against the high-density corporate real estate of Irving and Coppell, the spaceport has expanded ruthlessly westward to accommodate its colossal operational footprint. This aggressive expansion completely swallowed the former municipalities of North Euless, Bedford, Colleyville, Grapevine, Southlake, and Keller, converting thousands of square miles into a heavily fortified, restricted exclusion zone.

The physical landscape of the spaceport is defined by the absolute scale of its concrete runways, launch complexes, and the deafening acoustic violence of its operations. Because the continuous roar of incoming and departing craft generates an unimaginable amount of noise pollution, the spaceport acts as a geographic dead-zone for civilian life, effectively choking out the surrounding territory and turning northern Fort Worth suburbs like Watauga and Saginaw into abandoned ghost towns. To sustain the extreme utility and servicing needs of the entire complex, Grapevine Lake has been entirely retrofitted into a dedicated, corporate-controlled industrial reservoir. The lake serves as the primary water resource and utility basin for the complex, connected to massive

pipeline networks that snake through the tarmac to service the sprawling launch fields that dominate the horizon.

This strategically positioned mega-hub is carved directly into the regional transit network, serving as a massive physical bottleneck between the two halves of the metroplex. The high-speed corporate logistics rail lines that form the iron spine of the region slice directly into the eastern and western flanks of the spaceport, linking the cargo directly to the tarmac. Secured by its own private checkpoints and automated defensive perimeters along the Highway 360 boundary, the spaceport functions as a massive, independent territory that physically divides Dallas and Fort Worth while keeping their transit networks locked together.

McKinney Exclave

The McKinney Exclave is a highly fortified, precision-engineered residential sanctuary dropped deep into the resource-starved vacancy of the northern Outlands to serve the city's Aspirant class. Constructed on territorial tracts won through competitive federal auctions, this master-planned development is meticulously zoned to provide upper-middle-class managers and specialists with the luxury of sprawling, custom-built estates without wasting the enclave's closed-loop municipal utilities. Every residential plot is explicitly allocated a vast amount of physical spacing and dedicated open airspace. This intentional footprint gives each household the exact clearance required to safely operate and launch an individual, automated VTOL pod, balancing personal status with rigid structural efficiency.

While the McKinney Exclave features its own internal utility matrix and heavily secured, automated retail complexes to handle day-to-day consumption, it is structurally and culturally starved by design to maintain absolute corporate dependency. The gated island contains no stadium arenas, high-end commercial districts, or institutions for high art. To access any form of significant cultural entertainment or regional sporting events, the resident workforce is forced to plug directly into the high-volume sky-corridors. This design choice funnels the entire population via automated transit loops directly back into the Dallas Core or the Arlington transit buffer, optimizing the corporate state's geographic control by keeping its most valuable human assets trapped in a sterile pipeline between their protected northern bubble and the city's central matrix.

Faction Type

The Dallas-Fort Worth Mega-City State is a Sovereign Corporate-Chartered Municipal Republic governed by a constitutional city council that manages the territory through a legal matrix of state-sanctioned statutory monopolies. Under this framework, the municipal government holds ultimate sovereign authority, issuing exclusive corporate charters that treat companies as self-owning legal persons responsible for the city's civil infrastructure, commerce, and public logistics.

Leadership and Structure

Governance

The model of power inside the Dallas-Fort Worth Mega-City State is defined by its foundational municipal charter, which establishes the city as a sovereign, hyper-dense constitutional authority. Rights and institutional powers are allocated entirely through state-issued corporate charters rather than traditional civic legislation. Under this framework, the legal and operational foundations are structured as follows:

- **Sovereign Foundation:** Traditional state governments have been replaced by sovereign, hyper-dense Mega Cities holding the ultimate constitutional authority. This authority includes the power to grant, regulate, and execute legal charters.
- **Corporations as State-Chartered Persons:** Corporations function as state-chartered, self-owning legal persons created to fulfill specific administrative, logistical, and civic mandates. They do not operate as private property owned by traditional individuals or companies.
- **State-Sanctioned Monopolies:** Because charters are exclusive grants from the sovereign municipal government, competition is heavily restricted, forcing the entire economy to operate as a system of highly protected monopolies.
- **Inter-Corporate Treaties Over Mergers:** Because corporate persons cannot be bought or sold like private assets, separate entities must interact through rigid, highly negotiated bilateral treaties and supply-chain contracts. Every interaction is locked into an unyielding inter-corporate contract audited by municipal magistrates and logged into central ledgers.
- **Multi-Vector Lawfare:** Corporate entities do not fight with private armies or open violence; their conflicts are entirely institutional, legal, and administrative.
- **The Identity-Blind State:** The sovereign Mega City and its legal framework record the population purely as identity-blind consumption and tax-yielding units bound to specific employment bundles. The system does not discriminate race, gender, heritage, or subcultural dogma.
- **The Commercialization of Culture:** Because the state washes its hands of cultural stigma, corporations step in to fill the void. Corporations do not suppress counter-cultures or niche identities; they franchise them. So long as a lifestyle choice does not disrupt corporate logistics, a corporation will spin up a specialized charter or brand to convert that identity expression into just another subscription-tier product.

Hierarchy

Authority within the republic is split across three distinct operational branches that interact through the interlocking charter system:

- **The Legislative Machinery (The Municipal Council):** Composed of seats funded and heavily influenced by corporate Political Action Committees (PACs), the council acts as the central legislative body and a permanent stalemate machine.
- **The Legal System (The Municipal Arbitration Courts):** Governed by corporate magistrates, this branch audits all inter-corporate contracts and bilateral treaties. It holds

the exclusive judicial authority to judge *Ultra Vires* lawsuits and execute the ultimate corporate death penalty: charter revocation.

- **The Enforcement Vectors (The Security Gradients):** Composed of corporate security proxies and municipal enforcement agencies, this branch maintains absolute stability. Its operations follow a strict wealth-to-violence ratio. The upper tiers and *Aspirant* class operate entirely in clean, frictionless administrative law, while the lower tiers, un-chartered zones (such as BLM squatters), and Outland labor pools absorb 100% of the raw, kinetic, unrecorded physical enforcement of the state.

Leadership Conflict

The primary friction inside the governing structure is an intense, systemic gridlock driven by the **Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD)** doctrine and the design of the **Populist Buffer**:

- **Institutional Gridlock:** Because every major corporate-municipal faction has locked-in zoning exemptions, inter-corporate supply contracts, and entrenched legal safety nets, no single faction or insurgent vote can unilaterally upend the system. Major policy or industrial shifts are structurally blocked by the sheer weight of interlocking corporate charters.
- **Ultra Vires Attacks:** Rivals attack one another by proving in the municipal arbitration courts that an opponent is operating outside its authorized charter scope. Factions funnel money into municipal PACs to buy city council seats, stack arbitration boards, and weaponize the threat of charter revocation. However, because all major entities are bound by interlocking contracts and PAC-backed gridlock, a direct strike against a rival risks triggering a multi-vector legal counter-strike that destroys everyone involved, resulting in total systemic stasis.
- **The Populist Buffer:** When populist figures or reform-minded insurgents (such as an anti-pollution or pro-labor council member) manage to win a seat, the system absorbs them smoothly. A lone populist vote is rendered mathematically powerless against the PAC-funded majority. The council structure acts as a buffer, creating the comforting illusion of democratic representation and political friction while ensuring that the underlying command economy, corporate monopolies, and structural extraction protocols remain completely untouched.
- **Deflecting Systemic Rage:** Instead of systemic anger translating into structural reform or a direct challenge to the corporate-municipal state, it gets funneled into the harmless, dead-end theater of council debates, minority dissenting votes, and performative gridlock.

Infrastructure

Technology

[Detail the faction's technological landscape, contrasting legacy or salvaged tech with advanced systems. Group by key sectors: production/agriculture, information/compute/networks, and energy grid/power sources.]

Economy

[Outline the primary economic drivers, industries, or commodities that sustain the entity. Detail its internal and regional trade networks, and describe how transactions are handled (e.g., digital currencies, physical cash, barter).]

Faction Culture

Core Philosophy

[Detail the foundational ideology, worldview, and mindset that binds the faction together. Explain how this philosophy evolved over time to deal with practical realities.]

Daily Life

[Describe the everyday routines, social expectations, labor demands, and systemic pressures experienced by different classes or tiers of the population.]

Values and Customs

[Outline the key cultural values, traditions, rituals, and community expectations that define social standing and group identity.]

Role of Women and Minorities

[Explain the inclusivity or division within leadership roles and social structures. Detail any systemic prejudices, social barriers, or marginalization tied to specific groups or tiers.]

Religion and Beliefs

[Describe the religious landscape, traditional faiths, secular philosophies, or technological/survivalist belief systems that hold cultural weight within the population.]

Morality

[Detail the moral framework and ethical outlook of the community. Highlight the core moral dilemmas that divide the population, particularly regarding resource allocation and survival.]

Aesthetic and Design

[Describe the visual identity of the entity. Detail the architecture, construction materials, colors, textures, clothing styles, and personal items, highlighting how distinct zones or classes visually contrast.]

History

[Provide a chronological breakdown of major historical turning points. Cover eras such as foundational unity, formative controversies, shifts in governance models, the rise of militarization, and major external conflicts.]

Internal Divisions

[Describe the decentralized or centralized sub-framework that defines how power is distributed everyday. Detail how specific legislative, judicial, or administrative bodies function to maintain operational balance.]

Internal Divisions

[Provide a grouped list of the distinct sub-factions, socio-economic organizations, guilds, institutions, militias, or political collectives that operate within the entity, outlining their specific agendas and influence.]

Internal Prospectus

Strengths

[Analyze the internal advantages of the faction's structural design, governance, sub-groups, and civic landscape that enhance its overall resilience.]

Weaknesses

[Identify the internal vulnerabilities, coordination failures, systemic risks, or fragmentation within the faction's structure that threaten its stability.]

Synergy and Tensions

Synergy

[Describe how different internal entities, cooperatives, or political factions complement each other, work together, and reinforce the shared values of the system.]

Tension

[Detail the friction, ideological rifts, covert saboteurs, or structural conflicts that pit different internal groups against one another.]

External Relations

[Analyze the faction's relationships with surrounding superpowers, hostile groups, trade partners, and independent settlements. Detail how external economic dependencies or coercive threats alter these dynamics.]

External Prospectus

Strengths

[Detail the external advantages the faction possesses, such as strategic geographic positioning, ideological appeal to neighbors, trade monopolies, or defensive military capabilities.]

Weaknesses

[Outline the external vulnerabilities threatening the faction, including erosion of alliances, covert subversion by outside agents, vulnerabilities in supply lines, or existential military threats.]

Faction Goals

Short-Term Goals

[List the immediate, urgent objectives the faction must achieve regarding defense reinforcement, resource supply diversification, strengthening alliances, counteracting propaganda, or stabilizing internal governance.]

Long-Term Goals

[List the long-term, strategic targets for the faction, such as establishing greater self-sufficiency, diversifying the economy, solidifying ideological governance, expanding intelligence networks, or building long-term crisis management systems.]