**Kukathasian Role Sheet**

**Core Beliefs**

You are a proponent of the philosophy of Chandran Kukathas as it is outlined in the excerpt, “The Cultural Construction of Society”. This text is the foundation of your beliefs. In some moments in the game it may be obvious how Kukathas’s arguments oblige you to speak and act. At other times however it will likely be unclear how to apply the text’s abstract principles to political issues of the here and now. In such instances you will need to decide for yourself what to say or do. So long as your speech and actions do not contradict your foundational principles you will be living up to your role.

The central thesis of your foundational text is that the proper role of the state is not to shape culture or society in such a way as to promote liberal equality or to deliberately influence the shape of the cultures falling within its boundaries. Instead, the state should follow the model of an umpire, adjudicating where needed, but otherwise not intervening in the face of distributional inequalities—that is, the state should enact a policy of *benign neglect* toward such inequalities.

Kukathas adopts this position primarily because, in his view, the equality desired by most egalitarians and many liberals is impossible to achieve, given the diversity of human views, cultures, and forms of life. Further, he notes that attempts by the state to reduce inequality are worrisome, even from the point of view of egalitarians, since these efforts may well simply exacerbate or relocate the inequalities they are intended to address or, if successful in reducing inequality, their success comes at the cost of “(forcibly) overriding the practices and institutions of a variety of groups” (Kukathas 2003: 223) whose practices or institutions are at the heart of the relevant inequalities.

In both substance and emphasis, Kuthakas’s position has the most in common with the small government faction (and similarly aligned indeterminates), for whom the state’s proper role is tightly constrained and does not include resolving distributional inequalities. This gives you a point of commonality to emphasize as you try to forge agreements or alliances as the game unfolds.

While Kukathas advertises his view as a form of political liberalism, his position is significantly at odds with the views espoused by many who would also self-apply that label. For example, the members of the difference and uniform liberal factions both endorse overt attempts by the state to address distributional inequalities. This difference is especially noteworthy in the case of roles inspired by Kymlicka’s work, which Kuthakas directly criticizes.

**Major Goal**

Your major goal is to prevent the passage of measures that give inequality (and its reduction) special weight over and above other considerations. For example, social welfare proposals may well be intended to reduce or eliminate some forms of inequality, but it is possible to that they may appeal to other considerations and be indexed to benchmarks other than (in)equality. If welfare proposals are under debate, your goal may be to ensure that no proposal passes that is expressly designed to mitigate inequality or whose success will be measured in those terms. The same is true of immigration policy, for instance—you are open to a range of possible proposals, including open borders, as long as in their rationale or aims, they don’t give securing greater equality special consideration. Compromises in line with your major goal are acceptable, and you can introduce your own legislation to further this goal.

If you offer your own proposal(s), you will need to feel out what type of proposal has the best chance of being passed and make its passage your central goal. This outcome is far from assured: other indeterminates will have their own proposals that they will want to add to the agenda. You will need to build support for your initiative(s) by forging alliances with other indeterminates and, especially, with members of the three main factions.

Unlike some other characters, you have a separate issue of concern. The United Nations will soon review its Human Development Index (HDI), an international ranking of countries according to their level of development. The notion of development that the HDI has traditionally employed is based on capabilities, reflecting the involvement of Amartya Sen. The review, however, means there is a real possibility that that may change. You believe that the HDI is misguided insofar as it is used in the service of eliminating inequality. It will be a major victory for you if you can convince the assembly to reject support for, or even affiliation with, the HDI.

But be warned: there may be other players in the game who support the HDI and want to see it revised to reflect their own conceptions of justice. Remember that you can bargain with factions and other indeterminates, possibly voting to support a measure of theirs in return for their support of yours. More information on the HDI is available at: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/humandev>. See in particular the section, “Intellectual and Historical Underpinnings.”

While it would be a tremendous victory for you if the assmebly passed a proposal repudiating the HDI, it will still be a victory for you to find allies in rejecting the HDI who are willing to vote with you as a bloc. If you can persuade other indeterminates to declare their support in rejecting the HDI, you will receive one point for each ally. *This is also true of any other initiative you might propose that is devised to combat attempts to bring about greater equality*. These agreements must be written and submitted to the gamemaster.

Proposals aside, a significant concern to you is the role of speaker. The first thing the assembly will do, before even its first session, will be to hold a vote to determine who will occupy this role. As the speaker determines which resolutions are voted on and when, this is a position of power. It will benefit you greatly if the speaker is either you or someone from the small government faction, and not a member of either liberal faction. As soon as you finish reading this role sheet you it is worth conferring with the small government faction regarding the role of speaker. Whoever runs for speaker, that person should then prepare a short speech making the case for why they would be a fair-minded and benevolent speaker, which they will need to give in the last class before the first game session. Because other factions are likely to nominate their own candidates, the main goal of the speech is convincing indeterminates, rather than the liberal faction members.

Note that some roles may not know that the speaker will be elected, and you will be giving up an advantage if you publicize this in advance. You should therefore not discuss the election of the speaker beyond your discussion with the small government faction members before the start of the game.

**Tips and Strategies**

Some players will likely accuse you of opposing equality. This is incorrect. Rather, you think that those who think the machinery of the state should be engaged to bring about greater equality are trying to do the impossible, and, in the attempt, they may well either produce more or new inequalities or forcefully impose on the freedom and automony that you value.

Since you share these values, and broader priorities, with the small government faction, you would be a significant asset to them. In fact, you are likely to find it much easier to ally with them than the two liberal factions or some of the egalitarian indeterminates. Even so, since you value the freedom and autonomy of all people equally, you will likely encounter opportunities for agreement and collaboration with the game’s liberal factions and many indeterminates. Savvy gameplay might allow you to navigate effectively between these two areas of overlap.

Bear in mind, though, that your strong commitment to non-intervention/benign neglect in the face of inequality will not be widely-embraced. Many roles in the game hold out hope that inequality can be eliminated, and even roles that don’t might believe that even if complete equality is impossible, it is an ideal worth aiming for. You would do well to consider how to convince the players of such roles to vote your way—by appealing to reasons they can accept, even if those reasons are different than your own. This will require understanding their core commitments and the reasons that animate them. The more effectively you do this, the more successful you’re likely to be.

Many of the philosophers whose work other roles are based on have written on inequality and the proper role of the state, and some roles are based in part on Kymlicka’s work (who has criticized the very idea of benign neglect). Doing some digging to discover what these writings say could be of great benefit to you, if you take the time to do the research.

**Victory Conditions**

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| **Points** | **Objective** |
| 1 | You are elected assembly speaker |
| 1 | Small government faction member is elected assembly speaker |
| 2 | Assembly passes a proposal repudiating the HDI |
| 1/ally | You successfully recruit, in writing, indeterminates to vote with you as a bloc against an equality-promoting proposal |
| -2 | Assembly passes any resolution explicitly invoking the value or importance of promoting equality as its rationale |
| -1 | Assembly passes any resolution that promotes equality without that being its explicit rationale |

**Primary Essay**

Kukathas, Chandran. (2003). The Cultural Construction of Society (excerpt), *The Liberal Archipelago*: *A Theory of Diversity and Freedom*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 211-45.