



The Third Tier

Above the regional and national governments tower the Megacorps, the Transnationals, Metanationals and Orbital Corporations, calling the shots and telling the governments what is to be and what shall not be.

But above the Megacorps, Transnats, Metanats and Orbitals there reside even darker overlords, the Secret Societies. Like the corps, these societies spheres of influence cross national and regional boundaries, but they also cross corporate boundaries. Membership in some societies include executives in both Arasaka and Militech. Other societies claim members of Merrill, Akusaga and Finch as well as several other corps that receive "inflated" ratings from same. Not all these societies are all that secret (the masons for example) but membership roles are always kept securely. Nor are all the societies sinister, unless of course you try to break into an industry controlled by one...

While corporations exist purely to make money (no car company actually wants to make a safer car except as a marketing device, just as Arasaka has no interest in making the world a safer place for it's clients because that would reduce their need for Arasaka's services). The societies exist to procure more power through their membership. The societies (through their membership) have access to nearly limitless euro, lobby groups, politicians, operations teams, intelligence and even raw computing power for their own uses.

Although some of these societies are entirely comprised of these active members from various corporate boardrooms and government bureaus who essentially work to help each other, most have an additional membership (usually founding members, members retired from their legitimate employment or persons hand-picked by the previous leadership) who act as its leadership and who also reap the most benefits from the membership who remain subservient in the hopes that they will join the leadership in time.

Loyalty to the order is expected above all else. There are occasions where a member works directly to remove another member, but if caught the end is usually slow and painful. And you can't expect Trauma Team to save you when the guy doing the torture is one of their V.P.s.

What this means to your Games

The most obvious use is for a corporate campaign where a corporate character can discover that one of his superiors or a competing V.P. is involved in a secret society and is using corporate resources for the benefit of the society instead of the benefit of the corporation. The real problem, though, is doing anything about it. Perhaps even after presenting evidence of this embezzlement to their superior, the society member gets a promotion and the player gets snubbed, leading him to delve deeper and discover that their superior is also a member of the same conspiracy...



Or, perhaps another employee pulls a nearly impossible contract deal with another corp that the player has been working on but unable to complete. Of course, the reason your competition succeeded is because he knows an executive in the other corporation who is a member of the same society.

The other side of the same coin is a PC that is offered sponsorship into one of the orders and has to pass their tests and initiation and then juggle his loyalties between his home corporation, the order, and members of the order who work for a competing corporation.

For a less corporate-oriented campaign, the societies provide yet one more way to give the players the shaft. Own a module that pits a corporation normally friendly to the players against them? Perhaps the local V.P. owes favors through a society to an executive from the players' usual enemy corporation. Want to foil their well-laid efforts to hide themselves from a corporation? Maybe their fixer or Mr Johnson for the corp they are friendly with is also in cahoots with someone from the hostile corp..

A freakier game could begin with the players witnessing a ritual murder and then become the target of one of the more sinister societies in a theatric and exciting run for their lives, encountering people from all walks of life who are part of the conspiracy - ranging from members of the local police force who chase them out of town, the trucker who gives them a lift, the workers at a mega farm along the road that they take shelter at, the main PC's father, and so on...