

Shravana Hive

A breakaway group of the [Freespacers](#), the Shravana Hive are most often classified as a Communist group left after the [schism](#), as they trace their origins to disbanded fleets, and have settled down to mine a single asteroid belt in isolation. A closer look reveals that their ambitions are more in line with the Technocrat faction; they are ruled by oligarchs who hope to one day create a new industrial superpower. These dreams are distant, however, and the Hive first has to deal with the stain left by the criminal and even piratical elements who helped it secure its independence from [The Free State](#). Although not widely known as 'a hive of scum and villainy', the Hive is in danger of gaining such a reputation, and not only because the name already fits.

Government

Ostensibly, all decisions in the Shravana Hive are made by popular vote. This is misleading, because a single self-perpetuating clique of intellectuals decides what questions the people are asked, and what answers they may select from. Though this does not give them absolute power, it certainly allows them to steer progress in the direction they want. If the inner circle decides to hold a vote about asking someone to jump, the only options are for how high.

The most major difference between the Shravana Hive and the Free State is that the Hive is technocratic, not anarchic. Information is not free, it is organized into hierarchies, and citizens are expected to earn access to higher clearance levels than their roles require through outstanding performance. Like in the rest of the Free State, law enforcement is voluntary, however the Hive does have intelligence agents who investigate criminals, and the inner circle has the power to sentence anyone not a member without arrest or trial, and to give a multiple choice vote for the sentencing options. There are always agents ready and willing to carry out these sentences before the mob gets a chance.

Economy

Due to its small size, the Hive maintains a subsistence economy. It has no surplus resources and precious little technology to sell. Well over 99.9% of its 'imports' to-date were not paid for, and just as large a volume of its 'exports' were not produced locally; one of their largest export businesses is the sale of glazed earthenware, worth less than 30,000 KS per year. Despite this, there have been few thefts within the Hive, and its most enterprising criminals went uncaught long enough to retire to more stable leadership roles. The inner circle reject any notion of supporting a true pirate economy, to avoid falling afoul of the [DloN-Free State Protectorate Treaty](#).

Internally, the Hive's policies are only one step removed from a command economy. Votes are held to determine details such as prices, wages, and who should receive a new contract, but the options given do not allow great deviance from what their scientists and engineers have planned. Citizens rarely have the luxury of choosing their first apprenticeship, and have a strictly limited number of opportunities to seek new employment before becoming 'locked in', with no choice but to take the assignment they're

given, go into exile, or be recycled to 'try again'. Job creation efforts sometimes alleviate this, but citizens are generally expected to have affixed themselves to a single master-apprentice relationship with an elder member of the Hive by age six (see [Freepacer lifecycle](#)).

Ideology

For most members of the 'Hivemind', ideological concerns are someone else's problem. Maintaining such a small independent colony with barely-adequate technology is hard work that leaves little time for big ideas. Nevertheless, the absence of philosophy creates something like a philosophy of its own. Leaders are considered the first among equals, raucous behavior is not tolerated outside of sanctioned events, and governmental controls are tolerated in the name of safety, efficiency, and hope for the future.

The Shravana Hive's elite, the 'inner circle', have diverse views of their own. The far left wishes to abolish religion and personal wealth entirely, while the far right believes the Hive would be better-served by using the most aggressive possible means to gain wealth, mostly by taking it from other factions. In the past, both these groups were much more powerful, and indeed, allied with each other. In the years since, a centrist faction has developed that holds diplomacy and pragmatism as its core tenets. With popular support, it has come to dominate the discourse, and while the Hive no longer does things 'by the Book', its inner circle is no longer radicalized.

Members of the Shravana Hive are somewhat more in touch with the material world than most Freepacers, a consequence of the ample living space and basic resources found in an asteroid colony, combined with the years that their VR networks were left decrepit, lasting restrictions on access to the Hivemind, and a general renaissance of physical arts and crafts using pottery, nanoconstruction, and even watercolour paints, the tools and materials for which are all available on demand. Virtual worlds remain popular, but desperation for access to them has been waning.

Diet

Almost all living spaces in the Shravana Hive exist in microgravity, a simple fact that discourages many traditional habits other peoples take for granted. Dishes, cups, bottles, eating utensils, and even kitchens themselves are almost unknown. Food is grown in underground farms with their own self-contained ecosystems, or in hydroponic gardens, and while some plant products can be eaten immediately, most are processed into single-serving bags, blocks, or squeezable tubes, to reduce the risk of airborne droplets and particles.

Animal products are foreign to the Shravana Hive, and its population relies on a vegan diet by default. Though tissue engineering labs exist, none of them are capable of industrial-scale production. Most citizens either eat what their [Type Five](#) monitors recommend for them, or choose from approved lists. Bypassing the bureaucracy of synthetic intelligences to obtain restricted, limited production, or imported foods requires a strong will, a quick wit, and significant knowledge of how to avoid booby prizes; as a result, luxury foods and high-concentration alcohol tend to be enjoyed only by the elite, and even they must be wary of drawing too much attention.

Often, such 'special treats' are passed along to workers the Inner Circle holds in high regard, though these have also been used to incapacitate troublemakers, and cause them to miss a day's work. In one exemplary case, a bag of [Coffee](#)-flavoured vodka was re-gifted almost four dozen times before being confiscated at the starport, deemed unfit for consumption, and recycled. A safer (but by no means risk-free) option for those with immoderate appetites is to volunteer to test new meal prototypes concocted by the food chemists in Newtown. These intrepid individuals—very few of whom are organics who actually need food and drink themselves—are always striving to enhance the reputation of their brands, and improve on the Hive's standard fare; the results are often charitably described as 'hit-and-miss'.

Fashion

Another aspect of life in microgravity habitats, of particular interest to organics, is that build-ups of hair in the ducts can cause life support failures. Although hair-eating nanobots alleviate this problem somewhat, most organic citizens keep their hair covered or shaven to avoid accusations of putting their vanity ahead of the common good.

Many of the new generation of Type Three [SIs](#), who look up to organic masters in their trades as role models, have become very enthusiastic about creating and displaying elaborate synthetic wigs to be worn by everyone, regardless of caste or species. So far, these have gained little traction with [Type Twos](#), and in truth they are not very practical when working outside, in ships, or in the factory-dominated Oldtown. In the more campus-like environment of Newtown, however, they've caught on with more than a third of the population, and several members of the Inner Circle have had them applied as permanent scalp replacements.

Clothing, and clothing-like patterns on [Automata](#), are largely homogeneous in form, ranging from simple form-fitting worksuits to bulkier voidwalker suits, with little divergence from the full body suit plan, although headgear are usually separate. Aside from above the neck, it is almost unheard of for anyone to bare their skin in public for reasons of fashion, and even the hands and head are often kept covered by veils and/or protective wear by most individuals. Still, those who can afford it tend to choose well-tailored clothing over bulkier models; modesty, strictly speaking, is still not in fashion.

While varying little in shape, the colours and patterns of the Hive's clothing are far less homogeneous. Fashion preferences are in constant flux, driven by a core population of hundreds of designers, who also apply their digital art skills to other goods produced by the Hive. The simplest patterns are solid colours, which make up about a sixth of those outfits seen, all black and all white are particularly common; these were among the first native clothing designs made. Two steps up from that are schemes with secondary and tertiary colours, which increased in popularity until [YE 38](#), when the first wave of 'new blood' entered the field, these designs are still common with the older Type Threes and the first generation of new Type Twos, and are worn by about half the population.

In the present day, any combination of solid colours has been swept aside in the discourse by computer-generated patterns ranging from tasteless layered geometric shapes and fractals, to subdued camouflage, landscapes, star fields, and nebulae drawn from nature, and abstract, clashing symbol lines. Out of all the chaos, floral and celestial patterns are among the most preferred. So far, the field has been developing quickly enough that new designs vastly exceed the demand for new clothing, and as such most have never come into reality outside re-programmable demonstration models.

The inner circle has done little to curb this enthusiasm—despite the apparent lack of productivity—in the hopes the activity of the Hive's 'flower children' might give the rest of the Hivemind a cultural anchor to rally around, and ensure the Type Fives will never take full control of society out of the hands of Type Threes. Whatever the motivation, it seems to be working; most Type Five monitors tune out the Hive's world of art and fashion to avoid developing a fatal addiction to it.

Demographics

Approximate adult population of the [Shravana Hive](#), by caste and race:

| Caste | Organic Population | SI (Machine) Population |
|----------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| Type Two | 1,000 | 4,500 |
| Type Three | 3,000 | 2,000 |
| Type Four | n/a | few |
| Type Five | n/a | 3,500 |
| TOTAL | 4,000 | 10,000 |

Demographic shifts are ongoing, as [Type Two](#) organic children and [Type Three](#) SIs are being raised to balance these numbers out. Due to the current imbalance, individuals can be found working in roles inappropriate to their type more than 20% of the time. [Type Fours](#) are rare, as there is danger of collateral damage to the organic systems of hybrotts when they transit the [Shravana System](#).

Fleet

The Shravana Hive boasts a fleet of thousands of ships. This figure is misleading, as even its largest would be considered scout or gunship-class vessels by other factions, and the majority of the fleet is not capable of FTL travel. The Hive has no ability to build or perform major repairs on FTL-capable ships, so their entire 'interstellar navy' is composed of ships stolen, imported, or in rare cases, salvaged after being found disabled and abandoned with only minor damage.

Ships owned by the Shravana Hive are modified and adapted for use in the [Shravana System](#), with all external ship systems, including weapons, sensors, and comms, made retractable, and able to be sealed inside a hull tuned and shielded for solar flare activity. Design policy also dictates that all ship systems can be kept online for more than an hour, without endangering the crew, and that all ships carry at least one biological crewman capable of performing quick repairs on the spot, to reduce the risk of lost ships and collisions.

Shravana Hive ships typically have a thin layer of slag over metal foam as their hulls, designed for low cost and EM shielding, rather than strength or durability. Materials such as [ADNR \(Aggregated Diamond Nanorods\)](#) are used in abundance to substitute for metals in structural supports, casings, and bulkheads, which lends exposed and interior components of these ships a distinctly crystalline look. Ships used for diplomatic purposes substitute beautifully glazed clay in place of slag, and their interiors are often built using vibrantly-coloured corundumoid composites.

| Type | Quantity | Notes |
|---|-----------|--------------|
| Refurbished Yui-class Scout | 1 | |
| Nomad-class Solarfoil Corvettes | 5 | |
| Modified Mk I Phantasm gunships | 12-15 | |
| Traveller Shuttles | 60-80 | |
| Non-FTL capable smallcraft | 1500-2000 | 15-30 meters |
| 'Heavy' local mining vessels | 300-450 | 30-70 meters |

Example of Shravana Hive ship names include the *Rohirri*, the *Hasta*, and the *Jessitha* corvettes; and *Sraveena*, a gunship. [Type Vs](#) installed in these ships usually assume the ship's name as an alias, though in many cases the ship takes on their alias, instead. The Hive's flagship is known as the *SHS Nirvana*.

OOC Notes

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