

Political Divide & Conquer 2020

In the game of political chicken, there is no middle of the road.

Political Divide & Conquer is a light party game with a dark sense of humor. Opponents compete for the most influence in right-wing or left-wing groups, taking over allies and destroying enemies.

Requires

- The deck
- A pair of six-sided dice
- 4-8 players
- About 45 minutes

The Deck

There are four types of cards:

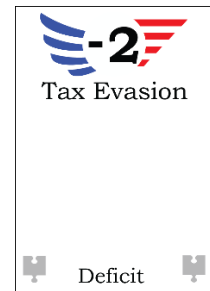
1. **Groups** – you will collect these cards to win the game. They are numbered at the top to indicate their blue, left-wing, or red, right-wing, influential power. Most range from 1 to 3, though there are two of each of the 4, 5 and 6 value cards.



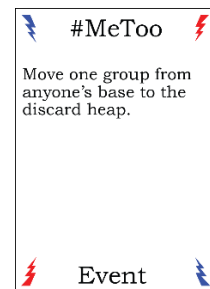
2. **Assets** –these cards can be added to a group card to increase its influence or grant other, long-term powers. They can be applied to either left-wing or right-wing groups.



3. **Deficits** – these cards can be added to a group card to decrease its influence. They can be applied to either left-wing or right-wing groups.



4. **Events** – these have a one-time effect, either on you, an opponent, or everyone at the table. These can be played any time before rolling dice, not just on your turn.



The Goal

Accumulate as much left-wing **or** right-wing influence as possible. Over the course of the game, you will build your “base,” a collection of face-up cards consisting of groups and their associated assets and deficits.

The game ends when the final card is drawn. That player takes one final turn. Discard whatever cards remain in your hand.

Add up the influence from the right-wing cards, as well as their associated assets and deficits, in your base. Do the same for the left-wing cards, as well as their associated assets and deficits. Subtract the smaller total from the larger. The net result is your total influence.

A group can be pushed to a negative total influence due to deficits. For example, if you have “Sandal-Wearing, Patchouli-Scented Pacifists” with their influence of 1, but they have been “Smearred” for -2, their total is -1 influence. This will subtract one point from your total left-wing influence – or add one to your total right-wing influence.

The player with the highest right-wing or left-wing total wins.

In the event of a tie, the player with the higher number of cards in his or her base wins. If there is still a tie, just play again.

Deal

Shuffle and then deal each player 6 cards, face down. Players can look at their cards but keep them hidden. Draw an extra card and place it face up in the center of the table. If it is not a group, pick until you get one, replacing the events, assets and deficits back in the deck randomly. This group is “unaffiliated” and open to attack from anyone.

Roll a die to see who goes first.

Play

On your turn, draw two cards from the deck. Pick one to add one to your hand. Return the other to the deck either on top or bottom, your choice.

If you had no cards in hand, you can opt to keep both.

Once you decide what card to add to your hand, you have four choices:

A. Reject: place one group from your hand in the unaffiliated cards, the face-up collection of cards in the center of the table available for anyone to attack, and end your turn.

B. Add to your Base: place one group from your hand in your base, the face-up collection of cards in front of you, and end your turn.

C. Add an asset or deficit to a group: stack an asset or deficit card from your hand face-up on to any group on the table and end your turn.

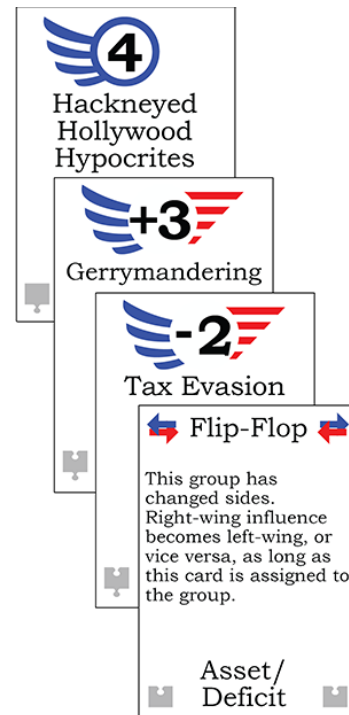
You can add an asset to one of your own groups to increase your overall points, or you could add a deficit to your opponents to decrease theirs. You could even add a deficit to one of your groups to help swing your net left-wing or right-wing totals, or as a bluff to fool your opponents.

A group can have multiple asset and/or deficit cards placed on it throughout the game. They must remain in the order in which they were assigned, i.e. the newest card on top. The group's influence is the total of its original influence, plus assets, minus deficits, so you should display the stack in a way so that you and the other players can see each of the cards. You cannot stack cards atop assets with long-term game effects, the ones without mathematical bonuses on them.

There are puzzle piece icons at the bottom of every card to help indicate how things stack.

For example, you might end up with:

- The left-wing group Hackneyed Hollywood Hypocrites with an influence of 4.
- An asset of Gerrymandering with influence +3.
- A deficit of Tax Evasion with influence -2.
- Another asset, Flip-Flop, that adds no influence points but reverses the type of group, making the left-wing into right-wing.



The net result $4 + 3 - 2 = 5$ points of right-wing influence.

D. Attack! You should almost always take this route. There is no penalty for failing and you are adding cards to your base.

Attacks are attempts to either take over or destroy other groups on the table. You need to accumulate influence, either right-wing or left-wing. You also need to thwart the other players on the board from accumulating influence, either by taking groups from them, destroying their groups, or even destroying unaffiliated groups so that they can't be taken over by your opponents.

In summary, you will add your attacking group(s) total power to a die roll. The defender adds their power to a die roll. The highest total wins.

1. **Declare** what face-up group on the table you want to attack. Announce whether you intend to take over, i.e. move the group to your base, or destroy, i.e. move the group to the discard heap and out of the game.
2. **Build your attack team** by laying down any number of groups from your hand. You can also add assets and deficits to the group(s), stacking them as in C above. Note that you start with six cards, but usually add only one per turn. If you use multiple cards in an attack, you may deplete the number of cards you have in hand for the future. Then again, you can

only make one attack per turn and the cards you are left with in hand at the end of the game do not count toward your total. There are also a few cards in the deck that will allow you to restore your hand.

You may use a combination of left-wing and right-wing cards in your attack team. They will join – that is, **add** their influence – to attack opponents. However, this may not be to your long-term advantage as their influence will count **against** each other at the end of the game. Only the cards you have just laid out are involved in the attack. Only the one group (and any assets and/or deficits it has) you have targeted is affected by the attack.

You can play an event cards in advance of any dice roll. See the Event Cards section for details.

Whether you win or lose, the card(s) used by you in the attack will be added to your base after the attack. You have now revealed your connection to these groups, and they are open to attack by other players on their turns. Groups in your base cannot be used in further attacks by you in the future (the lone exception being a group with the Conspiracy Theorist asset), so you may want to save some heavy hitters for later.

If you are attacking a group in an opponent's base:

- 3. The defender may opt to “raise,”** adding more groups from their hand to come to the aid of the group under attack. The defender may also play assets or deficits, either on the groups under attack, on another group in the defense team, or even on one of the cards in the *attack* team. The defender may want to strengthen his or her defense with an asset or hamstring the attacker by adding a deficit to the group he or she is using in the attack. The defender might even play a deficit on his own card under attack, just to make it less valuable for the attacker. The defender only gets this **one** chance to add to the defense. Keep in mind that you usually only add one card to your hand per turn. If you use multiple cards in a defense, you will deplete the number cards you have in hand for the rest of the game. However, the cards you add to the defense are not victims of the attack and remain in your base after this exchange. You can play event cards before the dice roll.
- 4. The defender can opt to ‘call,’** taking on the attack team as they stand. If so, skip to “Roll!” below.
- 5. If the defender raises,** the attacker can also up the ante and add *more* groups, assets or deficits. The defender does not get another chance to raise again.
- 6. Roll!** The attacker and defender each roll a die and add their respective total power from the newly assembled attack/defense teams.

For example, if your attack team consists of Hackneyed Hollywood Hypocrites with an influence of 4, an asset of Gerrymandering with influence +3, but they were hit by the defender with a deficit of Tax Evasion with influence -2, the net result $4 + 3 - 2 = 5$ points to add to the die roll.

If the attack total is highest the one group under attack is either taken by the attacker and moved to his/her base, or destroyed and moved to the discard heap, depending on what the attacker declared. All stacked assets and deficits go with the group. Any allied defending groups remain in the defender's base.

If the defense total is highest or tied the group and any allied defenders stay in the defender's base.

Attacks against unaffiliated groups follow the method above, but the defending group cannot raise. The attacker can assemble as large an attack team as he/she desires, but the unaffiliated group only has its own power. Someone at the table roll for the defense.

If you fail, the group and any associated Assets or Deficits remain in the unaffiliated section.

If you win, the group under attack is either taken by the attacker and moved to his/her base, or destroyed and moved to the discard heap, depending on what the attacker declared.

Attacks against your own groups follow the method above, but the defending group cannot raise. The attacker can assemble as large an attack team as he/she desires, but the defending group only has its own power. Someone at the table roll for the defense.

If you fail, the group and any associated Assets or Deficits remain in your base.

If you win, the group and any associated Assets or Deficits are moved to the discard heap.

Credits

- Concept, design, and writing: Frederick Noble
- Proofing and play-testing: Chuck DeRosier, Doug Powers, Ron Moore Dennis Arkwright, Dale Norris, Tony Weaver, William Weaver, and countless others.

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