

Beyond Democracy Series: Why Extreme Regimes Fail

*Societal Needs Hierarchy, Stability and Failures,
Country Transactional Model, Internalization and Externalization.*

Part I: Societal Needs as Foundation of System Stability

Author: Michael Hryshenko



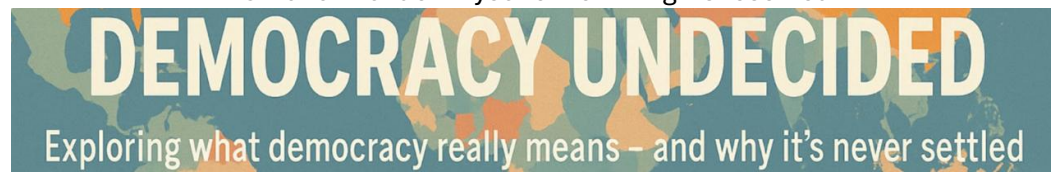
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Preface

Major framework terms are defined precisely in the Glossary.

This article introduces Hryshenko's Societal Needs Hierarchy (SNH), a structural framework for analyzing how societies coordinate at scale, maintain stability, and fail under stress, and under what conditions democracy can emerge, persist, or collapse. The framework provides a systems-level account of political order by identifying the non-negotiable societal requirements that must be satisfied for large-scale coordination to function without permanent coercion.

The conceptual origin of the Societal Needs Hierarchy (SNH) draws from Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of individual needs, specifically its core insight that higher-order functions become possible only after more basic conditions are satisfied. This framework uses Maslow's hierarchy of individual needs as an analogical reference, drawing from both his original formulation and later extensions, while developing an independent societal-level structure. This work does not apply Maslow's model metaphorically, nor does it extend psychological motivation to the state. Instead, it derives a collective-level hierarchy by translating individual need satisfaction into structural coordination constraints that operate at the level of society as a whole. The unit of analysis, therefore, shifts from individuals to systems, and from motivation to capacity, alignment, and constraint. Throughout this work, individual-level terms are used only to explain scaling logic; all analytical conclusions refer exclusively to societal-level structures.

Public discussions of democracy typically begin at the wrong analytical level. They focus on values, institutions, elections, or leadership while bypassing a more fundamental question: what must exist for large-scale social coordination to function at all? When this question is ignored, democracy is treated as a cause of stability rather than a condition that depends on it. The result is analytical confusion – systems that appear democratic in form but fail in practice, and regimes that oscillate between order, coercion, and collapse without clear explanation.

SNH addresses this gap by identifying societal needs that are structurally unavoidable when millions of individuals must coordinate through shared systems. When these needs are satisfied, higher-order coordination becomes possible. When they are unmet, pressure does not disappear, it accumulates, distorts behavior, and forces substitution. Legitimacy becomes symbolic, participation becomes performative, identity becomes manufactured, and external behavior increasingly compensates for unresolved failures at lower layers of the hierarchy.

The hierarchy is order-dependent. Each layer enables the next, and failures propagate upward rather than being corrected from above. Higher layers cannot compensate for unmet needs below them. Attempts to do so produce predictable substitution patterns that mimic stability while eroding it structurally.

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Within this framework, democracy occupies a specific and limited role. Democracy does not generate survival, security, or livelihoods. It governs legitimacy, agency, and reversibility *after* those conditions already exist. For this reason, democracy is not a foundational layer of the hierarchy but an emergent equilibrium condition. When structural prerequisites are satisfied, democratic mechanisms can stabilize coordination, correct errors, and preserve reversibility of power. When they are not, democratic forms persist as shells while real coordination shifts elsewhere.

This logic leads directly to the Democracy Equilibrium Point (DEP). DEP is not a regime type, value judgment, or institutional checklist. It is a dynamic balance across societal layers, where legitimacy is grounded, agency is real, participation is meaningful, and external behavior reflects internal cohesion rather than unresolved stress. DEP exists only within a narrow stability zone. As imbalances accumulate, it shifts, degrades, or collapses, producing predictable drift paths toward oligarchy, authoritarianism, or anarchy.

This work represents a logical continuation and structural extension of the Democracy Equilibrium Framework (DEF). While DEF established democracy as an equilibrium condition shaped by internal forces and institutional filters, SNH provides the underlying structural foundation that explains why such an equilibrium becomes possible, how it degrades, and where failure originates. In subsequent parts of this series, these internal dynamics are extended outward through the Country Transactional Model (CTM), which examines how unresolved internal structural imbalances are externalized through trade, migration, security behavior, and conflict.

The purpose of this framework is diagnostic rather than normative. It does not rank systems, prescribe outcomes, or defend particular regimes. It provides a method for identifying where coordination breaks down, how substitution mechanisms arise, why specific patterns recur across very different societies, and how internal failures project outward as foreign policy, instability, or conflict.

The Societal Needs Hierarchy is not a theory of virtue. It is a model of coordination, constraint, and consequence.

Regimes remain stable only when societal needs are met, and internal and external transactions align with reality. This framework, therefore, reverses the usual order of explanation: from regimes to coordination, and from coordination to needs.

1. Why Societal Needs Must Be Defined First

Most analyses of political failure begin at the level of regimes: democracy, authoritarianism, populism, or oligarchy. This approach assumes that governance forms are primary drivers of stability or collapse. They are not.

Governance outcomes are secondary effects of a deeper process: large-scale coordination. Before a state can express ideology, legitimacy, or institutional design in a stable and non-coercive form, it must first satisfy a sequence of tangible societal needs that allow society to function coherently.

When these needs are unmet, political systems do not merely perform poorly, they change their behavior, often in predictable ways. Internal regimes harden or decay. External behavior becomes erratic, defensive, or aggressive. Institutional filters degrade.

The Democracy Equilibrium Framework (DEF) explains how balance emerges and how it collapses, once coordination is possible. However, DEF presupposes something more fundamental: that the state has already crossed the threshold at which coordination itself becomes viable.

This section therefore, steps beneath regime analysis to define a Hryshenko's Societal Needs Hierarchy derived from, but not equivalent to, Maslow's model, that identifies what must exist for any political system to function at scale.

Only by understanding these prerequisites can we meaningfully analyze:

- internal regime failure (governance outcomes),
- institutional decay (filter breakdown),
- and external conflict behavior (systematic externalization).

2. Why We Begin with Individual Needs

Before defining collective or state-level needs, it is necessary to establish an individual-level behavioral baseline. States do not experience fear, deprivation, or dignity; individuals do. Collective outcomes emerge only when similar individual needs and constraints are shared at scale.

Maslow's original hierarchy is therefore not used here as a moral framework or a policy prescription, but as a functional model of human behavior under constraint. Its central insight is structural rather than psychological: when lower-order needs are unmet, higher-order behaviors do not vanish, they degrade. Thus, this individual-level baseline is not a psychological digression, but a necessary bridge between human behavior and state-level coordination.



An individual lacking physical security does not meaningfully participate in civic life. An individual without economic stability does not plan for the long-term or accept delayed rewards. An individual who perceives rules as unfair does not voluntarily recognize authority as legitimate; compliance, if it occurs, becomes strategic, coerced, or performative rather than accepted as legitimate.

Each level of Maslow's hierarchy corresponds not only to a personal need, but also to a functional role individuals must be capable of performing within a society: worker, citizen, participant, or contributor. These roles are prerequisites for large-scale coordination.

These reasons matter because when the same met and unmet needs are shared across millions of individuals, the resulting behaviors aggregate into systemic effects. At that point, the problem is no longer individual psychology, it becomes a question of state capacity, institutional design, and regime stability.

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The next step, therefore, is not to abandon Maslow, but to scale his logic from individuals to societies.

3. Why We Use Maslow's Extended Hierarchy

For the purposes of analyzing societal needs and their satisfaction, the simplified five-layer version of Maslow's hierarchy is insufficient. While useful as an introductory psychological and behavioural model, it omits two layers that are critical for understanding political behavior and social coordination: cognitive autonomy and self-transcendence.

Maslow's extended hierarchy reframes human needs not merely as sources of satisfaction, but as preconditions for increasingly complex social roles. Cognitive autonomy enables individuals to process information, evaluate alternatives, and exercise informed choice. Self-transcendence enables contribution beyond narrow self-interest toward community, institutions, and collective goals.



These layers are not optional in complex societies. They determine whether individuals function primarily as passive recipients of authority or as active participants in collective governance. When autonomy is absent, participation becomes symbolic rather than corrective. When transcendence is absent, political systems structurally collapse into short-term extraction and zero-sum conflict.

This distinction is essential because when large populations share the same unmet needs, individual constraints aggregate into structural pressures. At that point, needs are no longer psychological; they become societal demands and eventually require state coordination and response.

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The next step is therefore to translate this individual hierarchy into a collective one: to show how scaled, synchronized personal needs and constraints define what states must provide for coordination and, later, for democracy to be possible.

4. From Individual Needs to Collective Needs

To derive a hierarchy of societal needs, we begin not with institutions or ideology, but with individuals. We use Maslow's extended hierarchy, rather than the simplified textbook version, since it captures the full range of functional requirements for stable human behavior: survival, security, economic inclusion, agency, identity, and purpose.

The first step is aggregation. A population is a large number of individuals sharing the same fundamental needs. When these needs are experienced by millions of people simultaneously, they no longer remain private concerns. Food, security, livelihoods, fairness perceptions, and participation pressures become shared pressures acting on the same social space.

The second step is scaling. Individual needs do not average out at scale; they compound. When millions require the same forms of protection, income, or predictability, informal coordination fails. At this point, large-scale coordination becomes mandatory rather than optional.

The third step is emergence. To manage these compounded demands, functional roles differentiate. Citizens generate demand for survival, security, and fairness. Businesses produce and distribute resources. Institutions arise to coordinate, scale, and enforce collective solutions. States do not appear as ideological choices but as structural responses to coordination under scale.

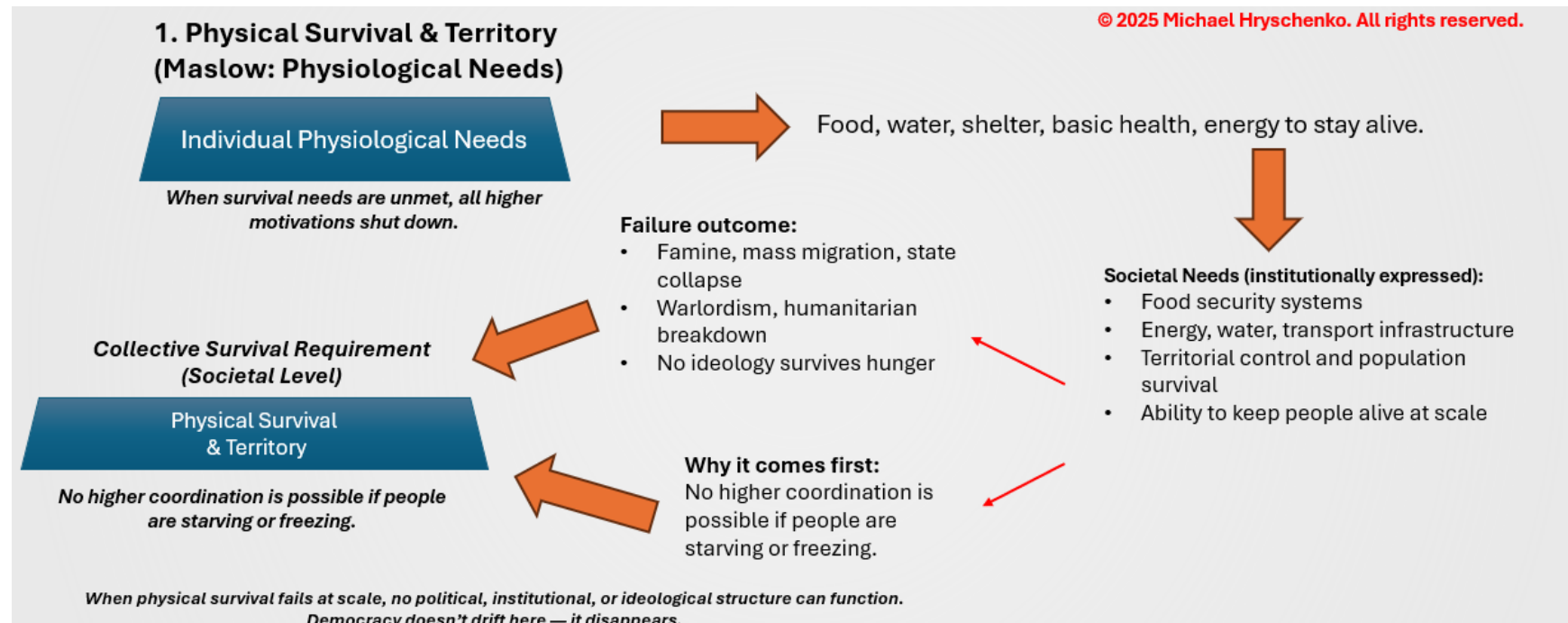
This process converts individual needs into unavoidable state functions. These functions form the basis of what this work defines as the Societal Needs Hierarchy (SNH): a structural, order-dependent map of coordination requirements rather than a list of policy goals. The resulting hierarchy is non-negotiable, order-dependent, and failure-propagating: failures at lower levels constrain, distort, or weaponize higher ones. Persistent inability to satisfy lower levels pushes societies toward extreme regimes. Depending on which functions fail and how substitution occurs, this produces predictable paths toward dictatorship, oligarchy, or anarchy. This logic forms the foundation of Hryshenko's Societal Needs Hierarchy and enables systematic analysis of regime stability, failure modes, and the conditions under which democratic equilibrium can emerge or collapse.

Before analyzing regimes, we must first understand the non-negotiable societal needs that any regime must satisfy to coordinate society.

Layer 1: Survival as a Hard Constraint on Coordination

The first layer of the Societal Needs Hierarchy derives directly from individual physiological needs. At the personal level, survival requires food, water, shelter, energy, and basic health. As satisfaction associated with these needs declines, higher-level behaviors lose stability and coherence; when they are entirely unmet, higher-level motivations and associated social norms collapse altogether. When survival insecurity affects millions simultaneously, it ceases to be an individual condition and becomes a collective coordination problem. Private solutions no longer scale. Food distribution, energy systems, transport infrastructure, and territorial control emerge not as ideological choices, but as unavoidable responses to population-level necessity.

Failure at this layer produces consistent outcomes across history: famine, mass migration, warlordism, and institutional collapse. No political or ideological system survives sustained hunger. Survival, therefore, acts as a hard constraint on all higher forms of coordination. Without population survival, no institutional legitimacy, political participation, or democratic equilibrium is structurally possible.



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At this level, politics does not malfunction — it becomes irrelevant. Voice gives way to exit as migration, displacement, and demographic collapse dominate behavior. Authority becomes transactional rather than legitimate, and territorial control fragments into checkpoints and coercive zones. Below the threshold of physical survival, democratic institutions do not drift or erode; they vanish. This layer, therefore, defines a non-negotiable condition: without population-level survival, no higher-order political, institutional, or ideological structure can exist. Each layer of the Societal Needs Hierarchy defines not a policy objective, but a boundary condition for higher-order coordination.

Layer 2 — From Personal Safety to Collective Security and Order

Safety occupies a critical position in the hierarchy of societal needs. At the individual level, safety means protection from violence, crime, and arbitrary harm. When safety is absent, fear replaces trust and cooperative behavior collapses. Individuals prioritize immediate self-protection over long-term coordination.

When fear becomes widespread, this behavioral shift aggregates into systemic insecurity. Defensive actions compound across the population, making decentralized cooperation impossible. As a result, centralized enforcement becomes unavoidable, not as an ideological choice, but as a coordination necessity.

In this transition, legitimate authority fragments while coercive power concentrates in actors capable of imposing order. Consent-based governance gives way to force-based coordination. Order precedes freedom structurally, while legitimacy becomes secondary or performative under conditions of generalized fear. All these reasons and logic explain why democratic equilibrium cannot emerge at this layer: security must be stabilized before legitimacy and agency can function. At this stage, stability is achieved through force predictability rather than legitimacy, making democratic mechanisms structurally premature.

At the societal level, Security & Order is not a normative or ideological achievement. It is a functional condition: the system's capacity to enforce predictable rules, protect individuals from arbitrary violence, and monopolize legitimate force across territory. This layer transforms survival into stable coexistence.

It is critical to distinguish what this layer is from what it is not. Security & Order does not imply prosperity, legitimacy, political participation, or shared identity. These belong to higher layers of the hierarchy. Security merely establishes the conditions under which such functions can later emerge.

When Security & Order fails at scale, authority does not disappear; it fragments and becomes transactional. Private enforcement replaces public law, militias or gangs dominate local order, and citizens trade rights for protection. Order may persist, but without legality or consent. In such conditions, governance shifts from legitimacy-based coordination to coercion-based control.

The result of these developments produces a non-negotiable structural rule: security failure generates coercion before ideology. Order precedes freedom historically and structurally. Consent-based governance cannot be sustained in the face of generalized fear. For this reason, democratic equilibrium cannot emerge at this layer; security must be stabilized before legitimacy, agency, or participation can function.



Layer 3 – From Belonging to Participation: How Livelihood Stability Becomes a Societal Requirement

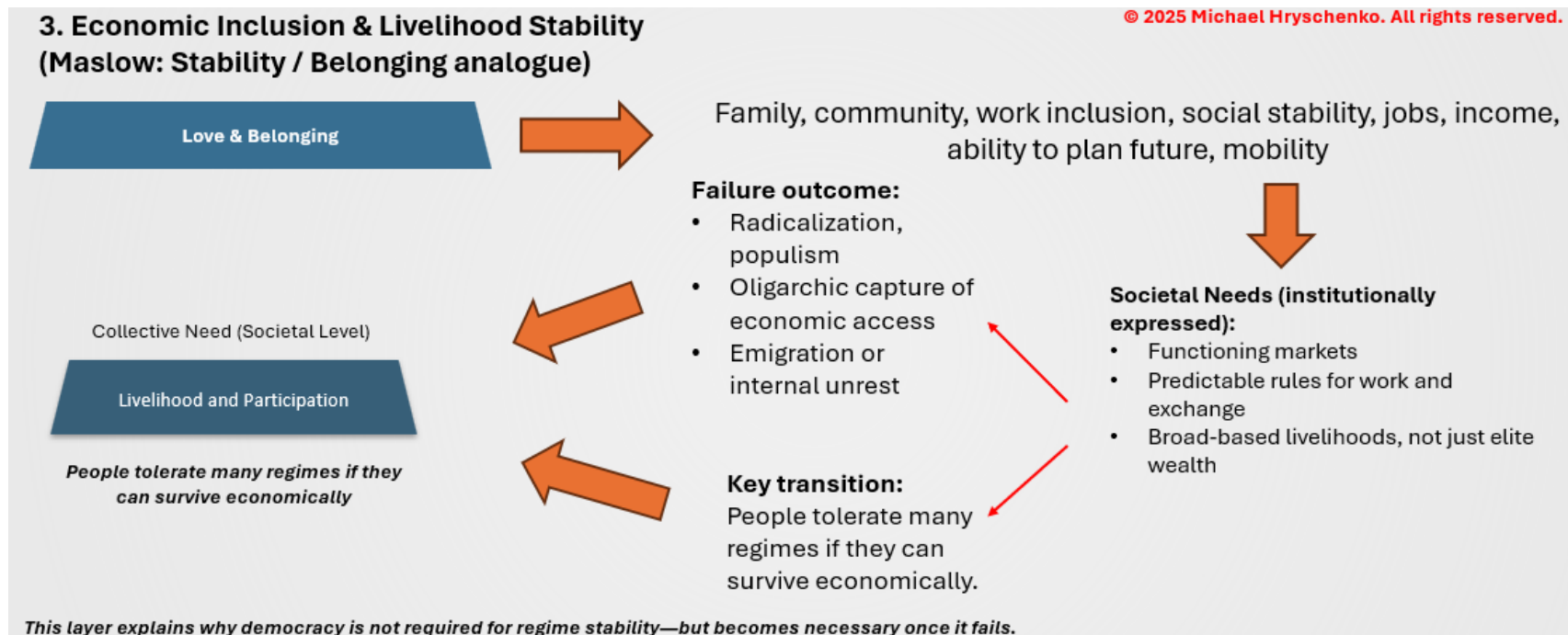
The individual need for belonging and stable social inclusion, as described in Maslow's hierarchy, scales up to the societal level as a requirement for livelihood stability and functional participation. Individuals require not only social inclusion, but a functional role in

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economic life: access to work, income, mobility, and the ability to plan for the future. When these conditions are present, cooperation becomes sustainable and long-term coordination is possible.

As participation and livelihoods become insecure across large segments of the population, individual economic stress ceases to be a private problem. Exclusion and insecurity aggregate into systemic instability, transforming personal coping strategies into collective pressure. Markets alone cannot resolve this at scale; institutional coordination becomes unavoidable.



When participation and livelihoods fail at the societal level, regimes destabilize before ideological legitimacy collapses. Populations respond through radicalization, acceptance of elite capture, or exit via emigration or disengagement. These aspects explain why many political systems remain stable without democracy as long as livelihoods are secure and why economic exclusion is among the most reliable precursors to political breakdown.

This layer determines regime tolerance. Populations will endure a wide range of political systems – democratic or otherwise, as long as participation and livelihoods remain viable. Once economic access narrows and future planning becomes impossible, pressure shifts

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from adaptation to confrontation or exit. Importantly, regimes destabilize at this stage before ideological legitimacy collapses, explaining why economic exclusion is a more reliable predictor of political breakdown than belief or institutional design.

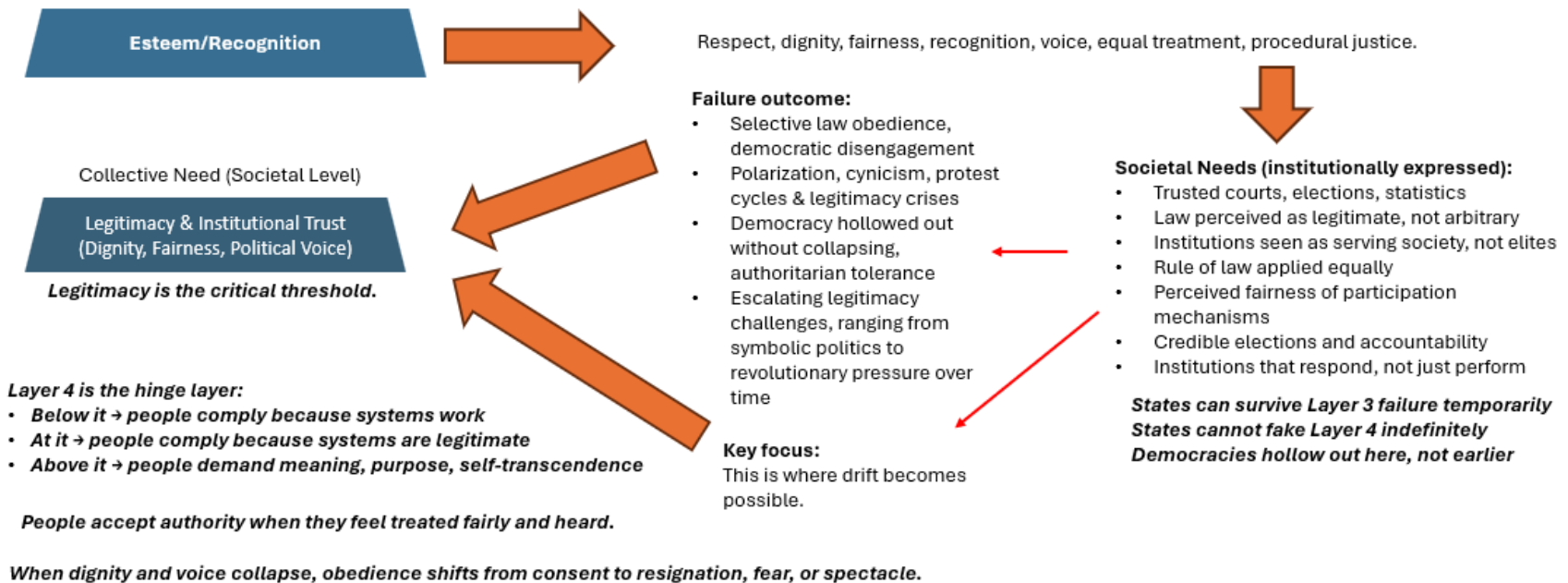
Once people can survive, feel safe, and participate economically, the question shifts from whether the system functions to whether it is fair, marking the transition from stability to legitimacy. From this point onward, coordination depends not only on functioning systems but on whether those systems are perceived as just.

Layer 4 – Legitimacy as a Hinge Layer: From Esteem to Institutional Trust

At this layer, Maslow's concept of esteem translates from an individual psychological need into a structural requirement for legitimacy. In a societal context, esteem is not about status or personal pride; it is about dignity, fairness, recognition, and voice. Individuals accept authority and cooperate with institutions when they feel treated equally, when rules apply consistently, and when participation has real consequences rather than symbolic form.

4. Legitimacy & Institutional Trust (Maslow: Esteem)

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When these perceptions scale across millions of people, legitimacy becomes a collective coordination requirement. Institutions must not only function technically, but must be perceived as fair, impartial, and oriented toward society rather than narrow elites. Courts, elections, statistics, and accountability mechanisms emerge here not as administrative details, but as legitimacy signals that convert obedience from coercion into consent.

When legitimacy erodes at scale, institutions do not disappear. Laws remain in force, elections continue, and courts still function procedurally. What collapses is moral authority. Obedience shifts from voluntary cooperation to resignation, fear, or performative compliance. Participation becomes symbolic rather than consequential, and democratic structures hollow out without immediately collapsing.

The scaling mechanism at this layer is critical. Individual experiences of unfairness or exclusion aggregate into systemic pressure on legitimacy. At that point, citizens no longer ask whether a system is legal, but whether it serves them. When legitimacy erodes at scale, institutions do not immediately collapse. Laws remain in force, elections continue, and formal structures persist, but they hollow out. Obedience shifts from voluntary cooperation to resignation, fear, or performative compliance, and participation becomes symbolic rather than consequential.

All these reasons and mechanisms combined make legitimacy the hinge layer of the hierarchy. Below it, people comply because systems work. At this layer, people comply because systems are perceived or believed to be just. Above it, societies begin to demand meaning, purpose, and higher collective goals. States can survive economic or security stress temporarily, but they cannot fake legitimacy indefinitely. Democratic systems hollow out here, not earlier than dignity and voice are replaced by cynicism, spectacle, or coercion.

When legitimacy and institutional trust are established, societies begin to demand more than fairness; they demand meaning, purpose, and collective direction. This societal demand marks the transition from institutional trust to higher-order democratic agency, the next layer.

Layer 5 – Political Agency & Participation

At the individual level, Maslow's Cognitive Autonomy & Agency describes a person's capacity to understand information, evaluate choices, and act as an agent rather than a subject. Individuals with autonomy can form judgments, recognize manipulation, and make decisions that reflect real preferences rather than fear or coercion.

When this capacity scales across a population, it becomes a societal requirement: the system must provide real channels for citizens to influence outcomes and reverse decisions. This demand moves us to Political Agency & Participation at the Societal Needs Hierarchy (SNH) Layer 5. Thus, the Political Agency & Participation is the population's capacity to meaningfully influence outcomes, reverse decisions, and correct errors through legitimate mechanisms. It is the operational requirement that makes governance self-correcting without crisis.

This layer answers a structural question that emerges only after SNH Layer 4 (Legitimacy & Institutional Trust) is either functioning or failing: "Why should I care?" Not as a moral question, but as a systems question: Do my actions change outcomes?

What this layer is at the societal level:

- Honest elections with consequences (outcomes can change leadership and direction)
- Reversibility of power (mistakes can be corrected peacefully)
- Genuine opposition (alternatives exist and can win)
- Informed choice (citizens can access and process credible information)
- Feedback loops that function (public input reaches decision-making and changes it)

What this layer is not:

- Participation theater (activity without consequence)
- Symbolic voting (choices that cannot change outcomes)
- Managed dissent (allowed expression without impact)
- Legitimacy alone (people believing a system is "good" is not the same as being able to correct it)

When many individuals simultaneously conclude that outcomes are unchangeable, individual frustration aggregates into systemic disengagement. Participation may continue, but it shifts from corrective action to symbolic expression. The system may still look democratic in form, but its error-correction mechanism stops working.

When SNH Layer 5 fails, institutions often remain formally intact, but the core function, correction, breaks. Common failure outcomes include:

- Illiberal democracy (elections exist, consequences shrink)
- Soft authoritarianism (participation is managed, not decisive)

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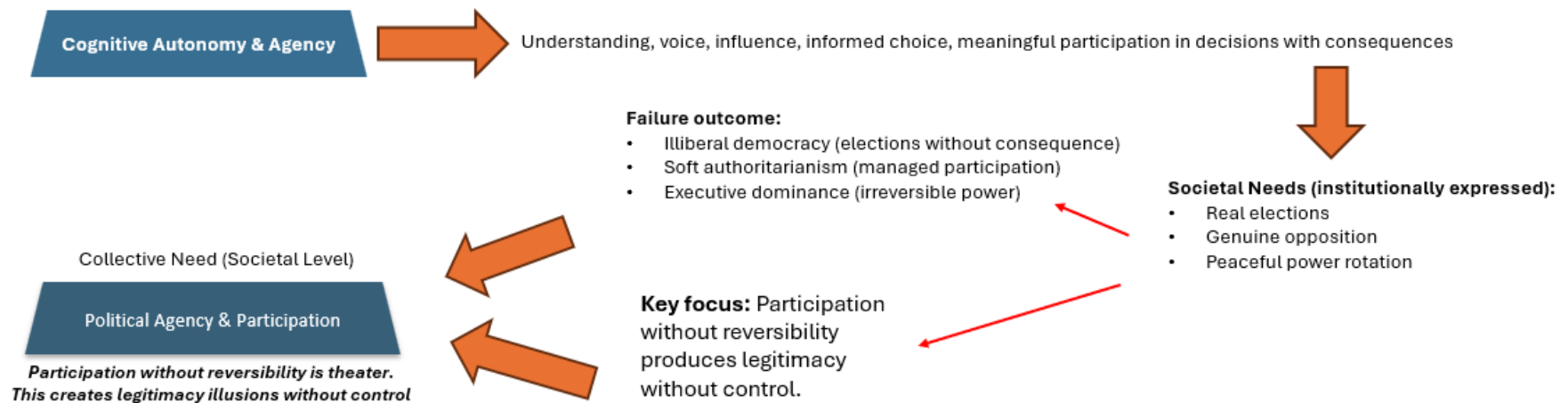


- Executive dominance (power becomes structurally irreversible)
- Legitimacy decay (belief lingers while control concentrates)

Thus, participation without agency produces stability illusions, not stability. The system collapses later, but harder, because the correction was delayed. When Political Agency & Participation is functioning, societies can coordinate long-term direction through honest feedback and correction. When it fails, citizens do not become silent; they become expressive in other ways. As correction becomes impossible, politics shifts toward meaning, narrative, and identity, setting the conditions for the next layer.

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5. Political Agency & Participation (Maslow: Cognitive Autonomy & Agency)



Layer 6 – Scaling Self-Actualization: The Origins of National Identity and Purpose

At the individual level, Maslow's Self-Actualization is not ideology. It is coherence: alignment between values, actions, and long-term direction in lived reality. Individuals seek meaning and purpose that feels real, not imposed. When this impulse scales across millions of people, it becomes a collective coordination requirement: societies require a shared narrative that aligns long-term direction, justifies sacrifice, and binds cooperation across groups and generations, which is moving us to National Identity & Purpose, the SNH Layer 6 of societal necessities.

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This layer answers a different structural question than Layer 5: “Who are we, collectively?” Not as mythology, but as a coordination mechanism: What story aligns us beyond short-term incentives? National Identity & Purpose is the emergent, shared long-term civic narrative that coordinates society beyond survival, security, livelihoods, legitimacy, and agency, but only when those lower layers are already functional. It is the structure of meaning that integrates diversity through institutions and outcomes, not myth alone.

Why is Layer 6 separate from Layer 5? Layer 5 is about the need for meaning expressed as agency: do citizens have real influence, and therefore a reason to care? Layer 6 is about the structure of meaning expressed as identity and direction: what shared purpose holds the system together over time? In other words: layer 5 generates “meaning demand,” while layer 6 organizes that demand into “meaning structure.”

What this layer is at the societal level:

- A shared civic narrative grounded in reality (institutions, outcomes, lived experience)
- Confidence in long-term direction (credible future trajectory)
- An identity that integrates diversity rather than weaponizes difference
- A purpose that can coordinate patience, sacrifice, and intergenerational goals
- Meaning that is earned bottom-up through functioning systems

What this layer is not:

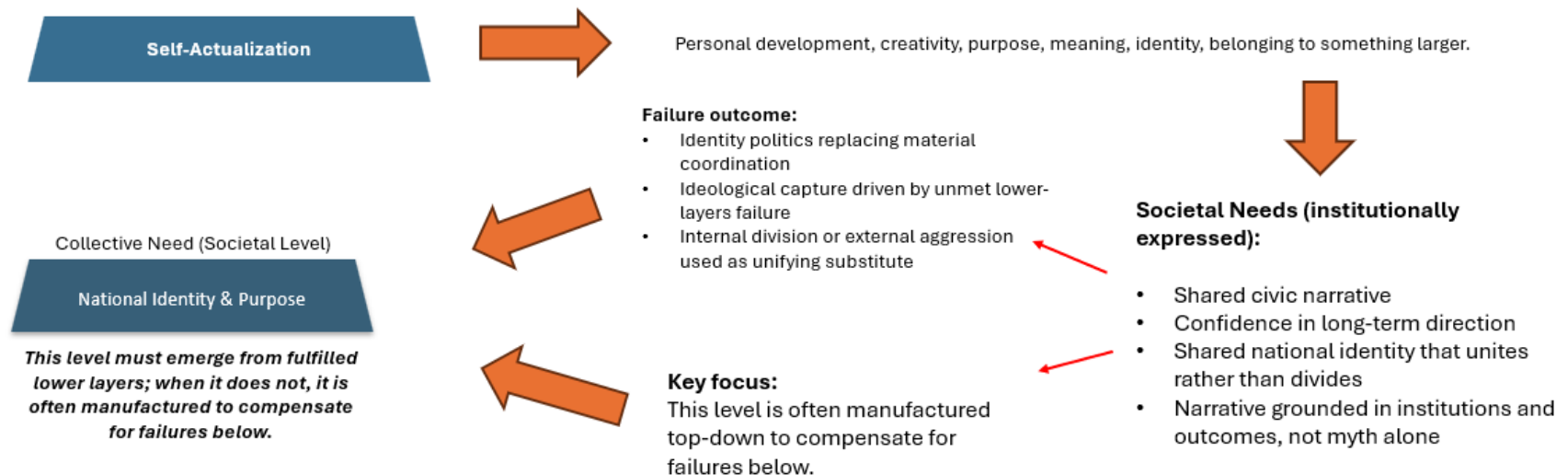
- Not a substitute for survival, security, livelihoods, legitimacy, or agency
- Not myth alone, detached from institutions and outcomes
- Not a symbolic unity manufactured to cover lower-layer failure
- Not a permanent mobilization requiring enemies

This layer is emergent, not foundational. When SNH Layers 1–5 are functional, national identity and purpose tend to be earned organically and play an integrative role. When lower layers fail, especially Legitimacy & Institutional Trust and Political Agency & Participation, meaning demand does not disappear, it becomes vulnerable to capture. Identity is then often imposed rather than earned, and purpose becomes compensatory rather than constructive. When National Identity and Purpose is forced to do the work of lower layers, the system tends to exhibit identity politics replacing coordination, ideological capture driven by unresolved lower-layer stress, internal division reframed as existential struggle, external aggression or permanent enemies used as cohesion substitutes, and narrative replacing feedback loops, because Layer 5 correction is weak.

National Identity cannot substitute for survival, security, livelihoods, legitimacy, or agency. When it tries, identity becomes ideological rather than integrative and destabilizing rather than unifying. When national identity and purpose are grounded in functioning lower layers, societies can generate voluntary contribution internally and restrained cooperation externally. When identity is compensatory, external behavior often becomes a substitute for internal cohesion rather than an expression of strength.

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6. National Identity & Purpose. (Maslow: Self-Actualization analogue)



Layer 7 – Why Societies Must Transcend Internally Before They Can Cooperate Externally

At the individual level, Maslow's Self-Transcendence describes the impulse to contribute beyond the self: to serve, to cooperate, and to derive meaning from participation in something larger than personal survival, income, status, or identity. This is not ideological motivation. It is behavioral: individuals act voluntarily for collective benefit even when immediate personal incentives are weak or absent. When this impulse scales across a population, it becomes a societal capacity rather than a personal virtue. At the level of the Societal Needs Hierarchy (SNH), this capacity manifests as Constructive Internal and External Roles: the system's ability to sustain voluntary contributions internally and to exhibit restrained, cooperative behavior externally.

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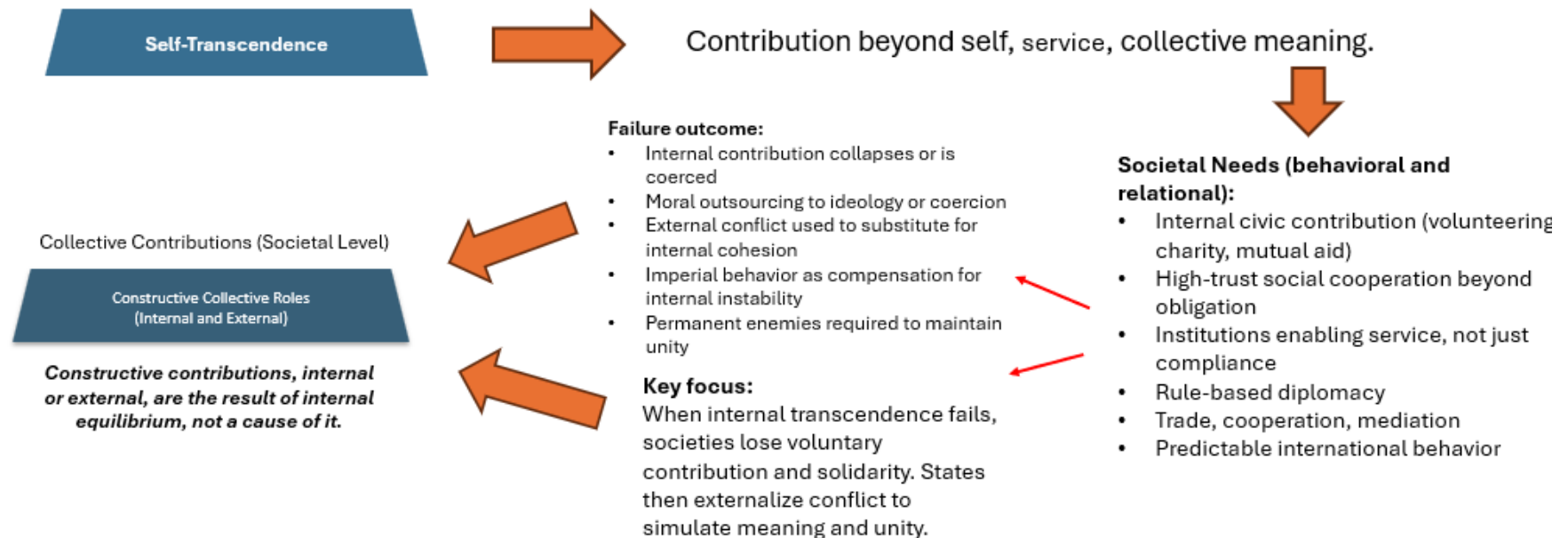


Constructive Internal and External Roles describe a society's capacity to generate voluntary civic contribution internally and predictable, rule-based cooperation externally, without coercion, permanent mobilization, or manufactured enemies. This layer does not create stability. It expresses stability that already exists below it.

When self-transcendent behavior such as service, responsibility, and cooperation appears simultaneously across millions of individuals, it aggregates into volunteering, charity, and mutual aid, high-trust social cooperation beyond obligation and institutions oriented toward service rather than mere compliance. This internal contribution raises trust, lowers coordination costs, and enables long-term collective action that cannot be sustained by incentives or enforcement alone. Crucially, the capacity of this layer cannot be manufactured; it emerges only when SNH Layers 1–6 are sufficiently functional: survival, security, livelihoods, legitimacy, agency, and identity must already be well grounded.

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7. Constructive External and Internal Roles (Maslow: Transcendence)



At the state level, self-transcendence aggregates into two inseparable roles. Internally, it produces durable civic participation beyond fear or reward, cooperative norms that persist without constant enforcement, and institutions that enable service, responsibility, and contribution. Externally, it produces rule-based diplomacy, trade, cooperation, mediation, and predictable, restrained international

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behavior. Societies with strong internal cohesion do not require permanent enemies to define themselves. External behavior reflects internal equilibrium rather than compensating for its absence.

This layer inverts when internal self-transcendence collapses or becomes coerced. When voluntary contribution declines, service is replaced by moral theater, contribution is outsourced to ideology or enforced loyalty, and meaning is projected outward rather than generated internally. States experiencing internal instability often compensate by cultivating permanent external enemies, engaging in diversionary conflicts, and framing imperial or expansionary behavior as unity. In these cases, external aggression does not express strength. It simulates cohesion that no longer exists internally.

Therefore, constructive external behavior is a luxury of internal equilibrium. It cannot be used to compensate for internal failure. When internal self-transcendence collapses, external engagement becomes symbolic or aggressive rather than cooperative. International behavior then reflects internal breakdown, not national maturity.

This is the final constraint of the Societal Needs Hierarchy. Constructive roles, internal or external, are outcomes, not causes, of stability. When states attempt to reverse the order of societal needs by resorting to external conflict, moral mobilization, or ideological mission to replace internal cohesion, the hierarchy does not stabilize. It fractures.

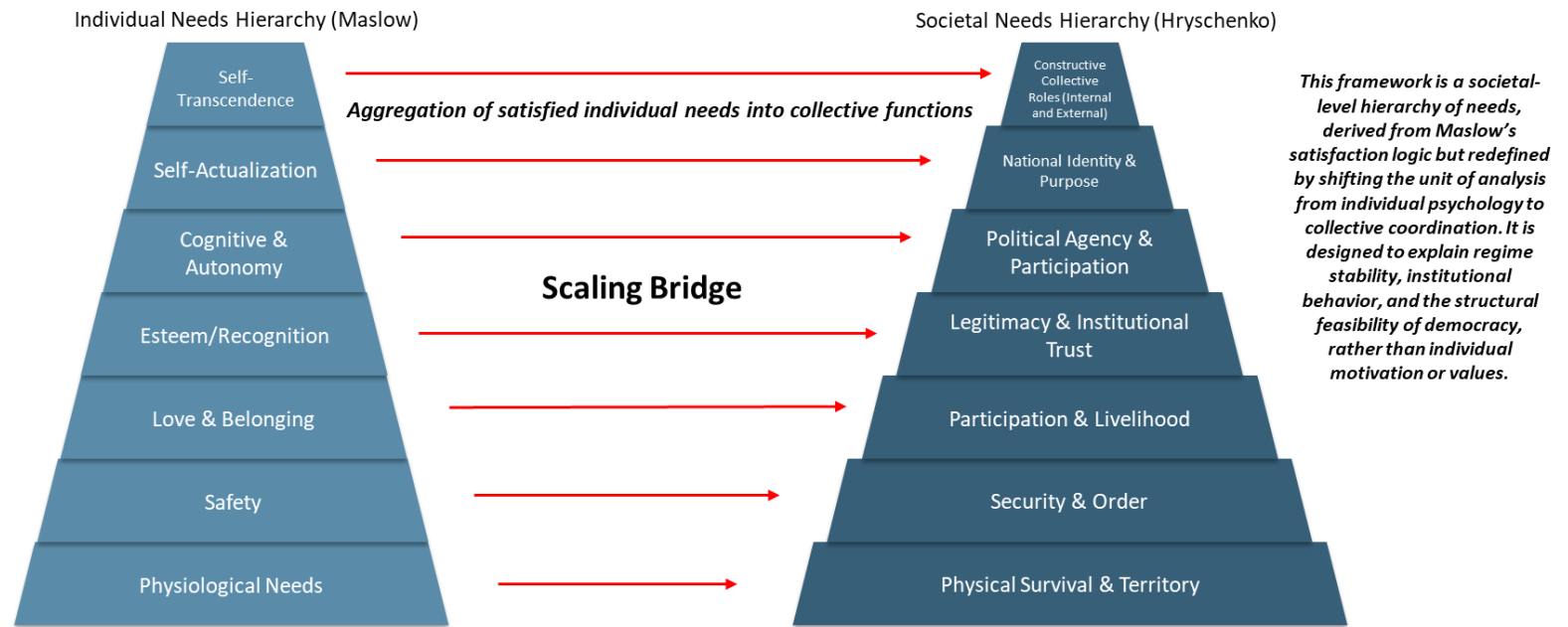
5. Aggregating Needs: From Individual Satisfaction to Collective Coordination

The SNH framework culminates in a structural transition: how individual needs, when aggregated at scale, become collective societal necessities and consequently state functions. The diagram illustrates the scaling bridge: the process that multiplies individual needs when they are shared by community members and converted into societal needs, which are expected to be satisfied via state-level coordination through institutions, norms, and state-level roles.

At the individual level, extended need satisfaction explains how people move from survival and safety toward belonging, recognition, agency, and ultimately contribution beyond the self. When these conditions are met simultaneously across large populations, their behaviors aggregate into predictable collective outcomes. Physiological needs scale into physical survival and territorial integrity; personal safety becomes public order; belonging and livelihoods stability transform into livelihood and participation; esteem and recognition aggregate into legitimacy and institutional trust; once legitimacy is present, cognitive autonomy and agency aggregates into political agency and participation.

At the next level, once agency is present, self-actualization aggregates into National Identity and Purpose: a shared long-term civic narrative grounded in institutions, outcomes, and credible direction rather than ideology. This layer is emergent, not foundational, and depends on the proper functioning of all layers below it.

At the top of the hierarchy, self-transcendence does not disappear; it reappears as constructive collective roles, expressed internally through voluntary civic contribution, mutual responsibility, and service-oriented institutions, and externally through restrained, rule-based international behavior. It becomes Internal and External Constructive Roles.



We use Maslow's extended hierarchy (including cognitive autonomy, self-actualization, and self-transcendence), not the simplified textbook version, because societies like individuals develop in layers. The difference is scale: when a need is widely satisfied, it aggregates into institutions, norms, and state constraints.

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Crucially, this hierarchy operates as a stability logic rather than a moral prescription: higher collective functions cannot compensate for failures at lower levels. Just as individuals cannot self-actualize while struggling to survive, societies cannot project constructive external roles or sustain democratic coordination when legitimacy, participation, or material foundations are unresolved. When lower

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layers fail, identity and purpose are no longer earned but manufactured to compensate, and external behavior becomes a diagnostic substitute for internal cohesion rather than an expression of strength.

The hierarchy, therefore, explains not only how healthy coordination becomes possible but also why governance systems, including democracy, are structurally feasible only after foundational needs are secured and why unmet internal societal needs tend to be projected outward rather than resolved within. The diagram above makes this aggregation explicit, mapping each individual layer to the collective function it enables and clarifying why higher-order roles cannot substitute for unresolved foundations.

6. From Structural Needs to System Behavior Under Stress

The hierarchy of collective societal needs establishes the structural conditions required for large-scale coordination and stability. Each layer represents a necessary need that must be satisfied for higher-order roles to operate coherently. However, this framework does not end at description. Once any layer becomes unmet, societies do not simply stall; they adapt. That adaptation is rarely neutral. Unmet needs generate characteristic failure modes, and systems respond by attempting to substitute missing functions through distorted mechanisms at higher layers.

When survival, security, or livelihood are unstable, political behavior becomes survival-driven rather than participatory. When legitimacy erodes, institutions continue to exist but lose credibility, turning rules into performance rather than constraint. When the agency collapses, participation persists but becomes symbolic, power loses reversibility, and accountability weakens. Higher layers do not disappear under stress; they are repurposed. Identity is manufactured, purpose is imposed, and external behavior is often used to compensate for unresolved internal imbalance.

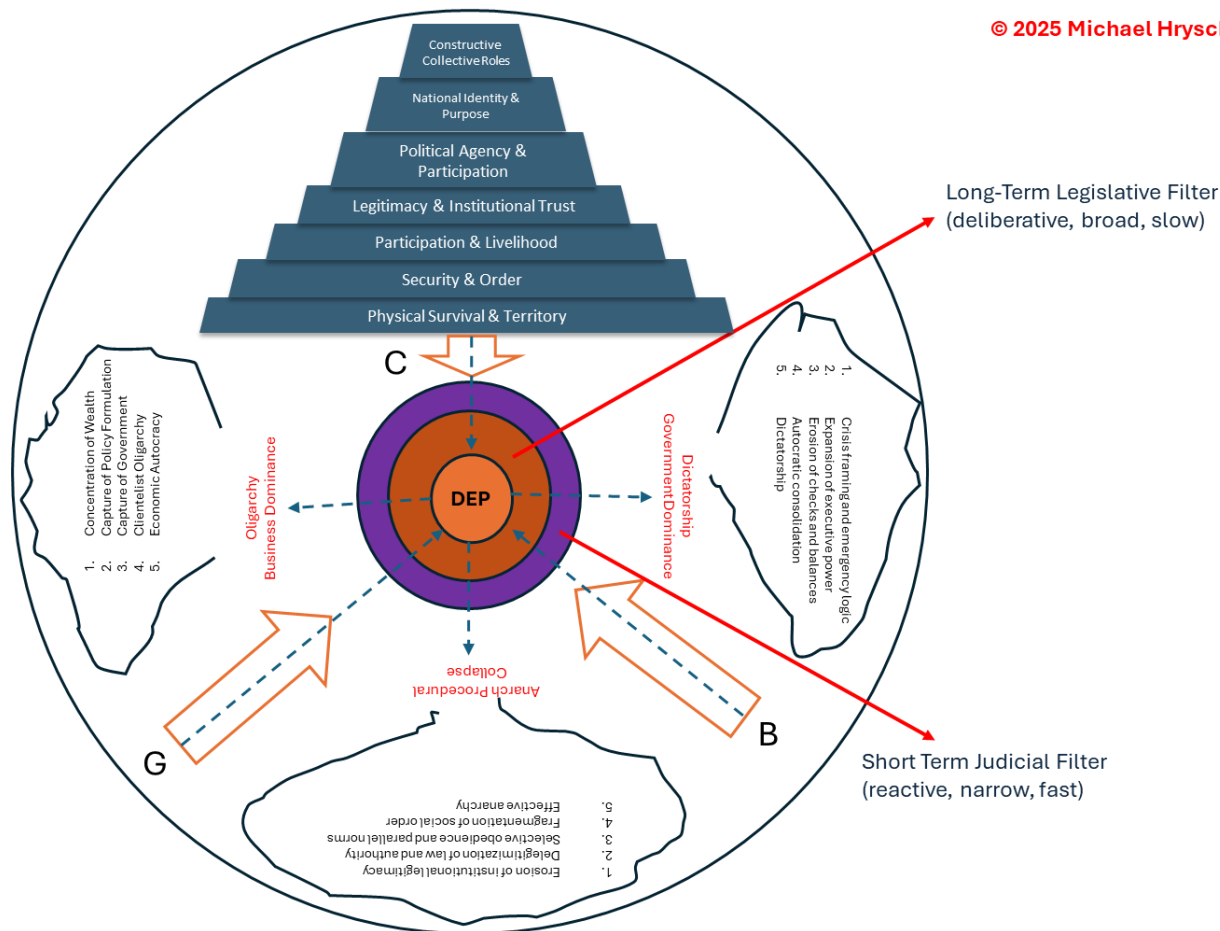
That is why democracy must be placed correctly within the structure. Democracy does not create survival, security, or livelihoods. It governs legitimacy and agency once those foundations are in place. As a result, democracy becomes structurally possible only within a narrow balance zone where lower layers are satisfied, legitimacy is real rather than symbolic, and agency remains reversible. This balance condition is what the Democracy Equilibrium Point (DEP) represents, not a layer or institutional design, but a state of systematic societal needs satisfaction and alignment across layers. As imbalance accumulates, DEP shifts, degrades, or collapses. As a result, we can naturally integrate Societal Needs Hierarchy into the Democracy Equilibrium Framework.

When structural failures remain unresolved, systems do not fail randomly. They drift in predictable directions toward oligarchy, authoritarianism, or anarchy, depending on which layers fail and how substitution occurs. These internal breakdowns rarely remain internal. External behaviors such as aggression, instability, permanent enemies, or overreach are most often projections of unresolved internal coordination stress.

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The next chapter moves from Hryshenko's Societal Needs Hierarchy structure to diagnosis. It examines each layer's failure modes, the substitution and distortion mechanisms that emerge under stress, how DEP shifts or disappears, and how these patterns map directly onto regime drift pathways within the Democracy Equilibrium Framework. In the following parts, this structural diagnosis is extended outward using the Country Transactional Model (CTM). CTM examines how unresolved internal needs, dissatisfaction, and imbalances between the layers are externalized through state behavior – trade patterns, diplomacy, coercion, conflict, and alliance formation – linking internal coordination failures to predictable external projections. At this point, the model becomes not just descriptive, but diagnostic and predictive.



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Glossary

(Applicable to Beyond Democracy – Part 1: Societal Needs Hierarchy as Foundation of System Stability)

Core Frameworks:

Hryshenko's Societal Needs Hierarchy (SNH)

A structural framework describing the non-negotiable societal needs that must be satisfied for large-scale coordination, stability, and democratic equilibrium to be possible. SNH is order-dependent: failures at lower layers constrain or distort higher layers and cannot be compensated for from above.

Democracy Equilibrium Framework (DEF)

A systems framework developed to analyze democracy not as a regime type or institutional label, but as a dynamic equilibrium condition. Within DEF, democracy emerges and remains stable only when legitimacy, political agency, meaningful participation, and the reversibility of power are structurally aligned through functioning institutions and feedback loops. DEF focuses on how democratic systems stabilize, drift, or collapse once large-scale coordination exists, and how imbalances among citizens, economic actors, and government authority generate predictable failure paths. (See original DEF publication: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18100082>).

In this work, Hryshenko's Societal Needs Hierarchy (SNH) is positioned as the structural foundation beneath DEF: SNH explains when the societal conditions required for democratic equilibrium can exist, while DEF explains how democratic equilibrium behaves once those conditions are present.

Democracy Equilibrium Point (DEP)

The Democracy Equilibrium Point is a dynamic balance condition within the Democracy Equilibrium Framework in which citizen power, economic power, and government authority mutually constrain one another through reversible institutions, enforceable rules, and functioning feedback loops. DEP is not a regime type, institutional form, or normative ideal. It is a state of alignment in which no actor can permanently lock in advantage without triggering corrective pressure from the others. When this balance degrades or collapses, systems drift toward oligarchic, authoritarian, or anarchic failure paths. Within the Democracy Equilibrium Framework, the Democracy Equilibrium Point (DEP) represents a dynamic balance condition among society-environmental forces. (*See original DEF publication: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18100082>*).

In the context of the Societal Needs Hierarchy, DEP becomes structurally possible only when lower societal needs—population survival, security, livelihoods, legitimacy, and political agency—are sufficiently satisfied to enable citizens to exert real, reversible influence rather than symbolic participation. SNH does not define DEP but explains the structural preconditions under which democratic equilibrium can emerge, persist, or collapse.

Country Transactional Model (CTM)

A diagnostic model linking internal societal structure to external state behavior, explaining how unmet internal needs and layers' imbalances are projected outward through diplomacy, conflict, trade, or coercion.

Scaling Concepts:**Scaling Bridge**

The structural transition through which individual-level needs, when shared across large populations, aggregates into societal needs, eventually to state functions, institutions, norms, and state-level roles. Needs do not average out at scale; they compound.

Aggregation

The process by which similar individual constraints or capacities, when experienced by millions simultaneously, produce systemic pressure requiring coordinated solutions.

Order-Dependence

The principle that higher layers of the hierarchy cannot function effectively unless lower layers are sufficiently satisfied. Partial satisfaction of lower layers produces predictable distortions in the operation of higher layers. When lower layers are not satisfied at all—particularly those closer to the foundation—higher layers may not merely distort but cease to function altogether. Structural

failures propagate upward through the hierarchy and cannot be corrected from above. Attempts to compensate for unmet lower-layer needs at higher levels do not resolve instability; they amplify it.

Maslow's Extended Hierarchy (Individual Level – Analogical Reference):

(Used as a behavioral and structural analog, not as a psychological prescription)

1. Physiological Survival
Access to food, water, shelter, energy, and basic health care is required for physical survival.
2. Safety & Predictability
Freedom from violence, arbitrary harm, and chaos; the ability to anticipate outcomes and plan behavior.
3. Belonging & Livelihood Stability
Social inclusion combined with access to work, income, and future planning capacity.
4. Esteem & Recognition
Perceived dignity, fairness, and respect; the sense that one's role and treatment are legitimate.
5. Cognitive Autonomy & Agency
The capacity to process information, evaluate alternatives, make informed choices, and influence outcomes. Answers the question: *"Why should I care?"*
6. Self-Actualization
Alignment between values, actions, and long-term direction in lived reality; pursuit of meaning beyond material or status concerns.
7. Self-Transcendence
Contribution beyond the self through service, responsibility, and cooperation oriented toward something larger than personal fulfillment.

Hryshenko's Societal Needs Hierarchy (Societal Level):

1. Population Survival

Societal capacity to sustain life at scale through food systems, energy, health infrastructure, and territorial integrity. Below this layer, politics becomes irrelevant.

2. Security & Order

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The system's ability to enforce predictable rules, monopolize legitimate force, and protect individuals from arbitrary violence. Order precedes freedom structurally.

3. Livelihoods & Participation

Broad access to economic participation, income generation, mobility, and future planning. Determines regime tolerance regardless of ideology.

4. Legitimacy & Institutional Trust

Widespread belief that institutions are fair, impartial, and serve society rather than narrow elites. Converts obedience from coercion into consent.

5. Political Agency & Participation

The population's capacity to meaningfully influence outcomes, reverse decisions, and correct errors through real participation with consequences.

Key rule: *Participation without agency is theater.*

6. National Identity & Purpose

An emergent, shared long-term civic narrative grounded in institutions, outcomes, and credible direction. Integrates diversity rather than weaponizes it. Identity is an outcome, not a substitute.

7. Internal & External Constructive Roles

The societal capacity for voluntary contribution and cooperation internally, and predictable, restrained, rule-based behavior externally. Constructive roles are the result of lower layers met needs, not their cause.

Failure Dynamics:

Failure Propagation

The process by which unmet needs at lower layers distort behavior at higher layers, producing substitution rather than resolution.

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Substitution Mechanism

A compensatory response where higher-order functions (identity, ideology, external conflict) are used to mask unresolved failures below.

Participation Without Agency

A condition where elections, protests, or discourse persist, but outcomes no longer change in response. Produces stability illusions rather than stability.

Manufactured Meaning

Top-down imposition of identity or purpose used to compensate for failures in legitimacy or agency.

Externalization

Projection of unresolved internal state coordination stress outward through aggression, permanent enemies, overreach, or destabilizing foreign behavior.

Internalization

Absorption of systemic stress through repression, coercion, ideological control, or institutional hollowing.

Structural Principles**Coordination Capacity**

The ability of a society to align millions of individuals through shared rules, institutions, and expectations without permanent coercion.

Reversibility of Power

The structural ability to remove, replace, or correct leadership and policy without violence or systemic collapse.

Illusion of Stability

A condition where institutions persist formally while feedback loops fail, delaying correction and increasing eventual collapse severity.

Methodological Position:

Non-Normative Framework

SNH does not rank regimes or prescribe ideals. It diagnoses structural capacity, constraint, and consequence.

Structural, Not Ideological

The framework explains *why* systems behave as they do under stress, independent of stated values or regime labels.