

Beyond Democracy Series: Why Extreme Regimes Fail

Societal Needs Hierarchy, Stability and Failures,

Country Transactional Model, Internalization and Externalization.

Part II: DEP Stability and Regime Failure Modes

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This publication extends Hryshenko's Societal Needs Hierarchy and Democratic Equilibrium Framework (DEF) by introducing the Regime Stability and Drift Assessment (RSDA) methodology, including structural evaluation tables, drift vectors (D/O/A), failure mode mappings, and country-level applications. The DEP Drift Vector Map, Regime Stability and Drift Assessment (RSDA), and all associated terminology, classifications, diagrams, tables, and analytical structures presented in this work constitute original intellectual property developed by the author. All text, figures, models, slide content, analytical tables, and datasets (including but not limited to the accompanying presentation materials and spreadsheets) are protected intellectual property. No part of this work may be reproduced, adapted, translated, distributed, or used for commercial, institutional, policy, educational, or derivative purposes without the prior written permission of the author. Unauthorized reproduction, redistribution, institutional use, commercial use, or creation of derivative analytical frameworks based on this work without the author's explicit written consent is strictly prohibited. Non-commercial academic citation with proper attribution is permitted. This work is intended for analytical, educational, and research purposes only and does not constitute political advocacy, policy prescription, or legal advice.

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Preface

Major framework terms are defined precisely in the Glossary and are used consistently across the accompanying frameworks, slides on Democracy Undecided YouTube channel, www.democracyundecided.org website, analytical tables, and datasets.

This article constitutes Part II of the "Beyond Democracy Series: Why Extreme Regimes Fail" and builds directly on Hryshenko's Democracy Equilibrium Framework (*Hryshenko, M. (2025). Hryshenko's Democracy Equilibrium Framework. Zenodo. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18100082>*) and Hryshenko's Societal Needs Hierarchy (SNH) (*Hryshenko, M. (2026). Hryshenko's Societal Needs Hierarchy: Societal Needs as the Foundation of System Stability. Zenodo. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18275885>*) by examining what happens after the structural preconditions for coordination are in place or begin to erode. While DEF established 3 structural societal forces, constraining each other to stabilize societal system around the equilibrium and Part I of this series established the hierarchy of societal needs and the conditions under which democracy can emerge as a viable coordination system, this work focuses on stability of the regime, drift, and failure: how democratic equilibrium can be structurally maintained, how it degrades, and how regimes transition away from it in predictable ways. This section proceeds in four steps: (1) defining democratic drift cartographically, (2) identifying its structural causes in unmet societal needs, (3) operationalizing those causes through RSDA, and (4) illustrating the framework through comparative cases.

The central object of analysis in this work is the Democratic Equilibrium Point (DEP). In the Democracy Equilibrium Framework, we understood that DEP is a narrow, dynamic zone in which the three internal forces of a democratic system — citizens, business, and government — remain simultaneously active and mutually constrained, such that no single force can achieve structural dominance or lock in irreversible advantage. Also, we defined that the Democracy Equilibrium Point is not a permanent state. It must be continuously maintained. When imbalances persist — whether through excessive concentration of economic power, expansion of unchecked state authority, or erosion of social and legal legitimacy — democracies drift rather than abruptly collapse. In the Societal Needs Hierarchy article, we also emphasized that DEP is not a regime label, an institutional checklist, or a moral benchmark. It is an emergent dynamic balance condition across 7 societal needs layers, in which legitimacy is grounded rather than symbolic, political agency is real rather than performative, participation is meaningful, power remains reversible, and external behavior reflects internal coordination rather than unresolved stress. DEP exists only within a narrow stability zone when SNH lower pre-political coordination layers 1-3 are sufficiently satisfied and cannot be assumed to continuously persist once achieved.

This article introduces a structured approach of how democratic equilibrium fails. Failure is not treated as sudden collapse, ideological deviation, or leadership malfunction. Instead, it is modeled as a gradual deviation from DEP, driven by the accumulation of social imbalances across three interacting societal domains: citizens, business, and government. These imbalances are creating the condition to shift DEP across three non-mutually exclusive directions: along "D" - Dictatorship Drift Axis, along "O" Oligarchic Drift Axis, and

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along "A" Anarchic Drift Axis. D-shift reflects the reversibility of political power, O-shift represents oligarchic and economic capture, and A-shift declares fragmentation of institutional planning, management, and control. These domains form the basis of the DEP Drift Vector Map and the Regime Stability and Drift Assessment (RSDA) framework developed in this work. Together, they provide a systematic method for identifying where pressure is accumulating, which substitution mechanisms are activating, and why different societies drift toward oligarchy, managed democracy, authoritarian consolidation, or systemic breakdown, even when democratic forms remain formally intact.

A central claim of this article is that regimes rarely fail at the level at which they are visually observed. Visible political crises such as polarization, protests, executive overreach, identity conflicts, or external aggression are typically secondary effects, not root causes. Structural failures are hidden and originate lower in the hierarchy, where unmet needs distort incentives and force compensatory behavior upward. As the pyramid layers imbalance grow, higher layers increasingly simulate coordination through procedure, narrative, coercion, or externalization, while real coordination capacity continues to erode.

Within this framework, democracy is neither self-sustaining nor self-correcting by default. Democratic mechanisms can correct errors only while legitimacy remains real and agency reversible. Once substitution replaces satisfaction, once legitimacy becomes procedural, participation becomes symbolic, or identity replaces material coordination – democratic forms may persist but no longer stabilize the system of 3 forces. Drift accelerates, and correction becomes increasingly costly and eventually impossible as balance degradation advances.

This work, therefore, shifts the analytical focus from whether a system is democratic to where it sits relative to DEP, how fast it is moving, and along which drift vector. Country-level examples are used not as rankings or judgments, but as reference anchors to illustrate distinct stability zones, early-warning patterns, and late-stage failure modes. The goal is comparative diagnosis, not normative evaluation. Part II also early introduces the conceptual bridge between internal structural imbalance and external behavior. As democratic equilibrium degrades, unresolved internal pressures are increasingly externalized through trade distortions, migration dynamics, security postures, and conflict. These dynamics lay the groundwork for subsequent parts of the series, which extend the analysis outward through Parts III and IV, focusing on the Country Transactional Model (CTM) and Internalization and Externalization.

Like Part I, this work is diagnostic rather than prescriptive. It does not propose reforms, defend regimes, or advocate policy outcomes. It provides a disciplined vocabulary and analytical structure for understanding why democratic stability erodes or can be achieved, why familiar patterns repeat across very different societies, and why extreme regimes ultimately fail — not because they are immoral, but because they violate the structural conditions required for sustainable coordination. The Democratic Equilibrium Point is not a promise. It is a balance, and balances must not be lost.

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1. Introduction

This second part of the Beyond Democracy series moves from structural foundations to diagnostic analysis. Having established the Societal Needs Hierarchy (SNH) as the prerequisite framework for large-scale coordination, this article examines what happens when those needs are only partially met, distorted, or systematically substituted. The focus here is not on regime ideals or institutional design, but on failure mechanics: how coordination breaks down, how systems attempt to compensate, and why those compensations generate predictable patterns of drift away from democratic equilibrium.

Part II introduces a structured method for mapping failure modes across societal layers and translating them into directional pressures within political systems. Rather than treating regime instability as an ideological deviation or a leadership failure, this work views it as a consequence of unmet structural needs. When survival, security, livelihoods, legitimacy, or agency degrade, societal systems do not simply collapse; they adapt. These adaptations — emergency powers, elite capture, procedural legitimacy, identity substitution, or externalization — can temporarily stabilize coordination while simultaneously accelerating long-term decay.

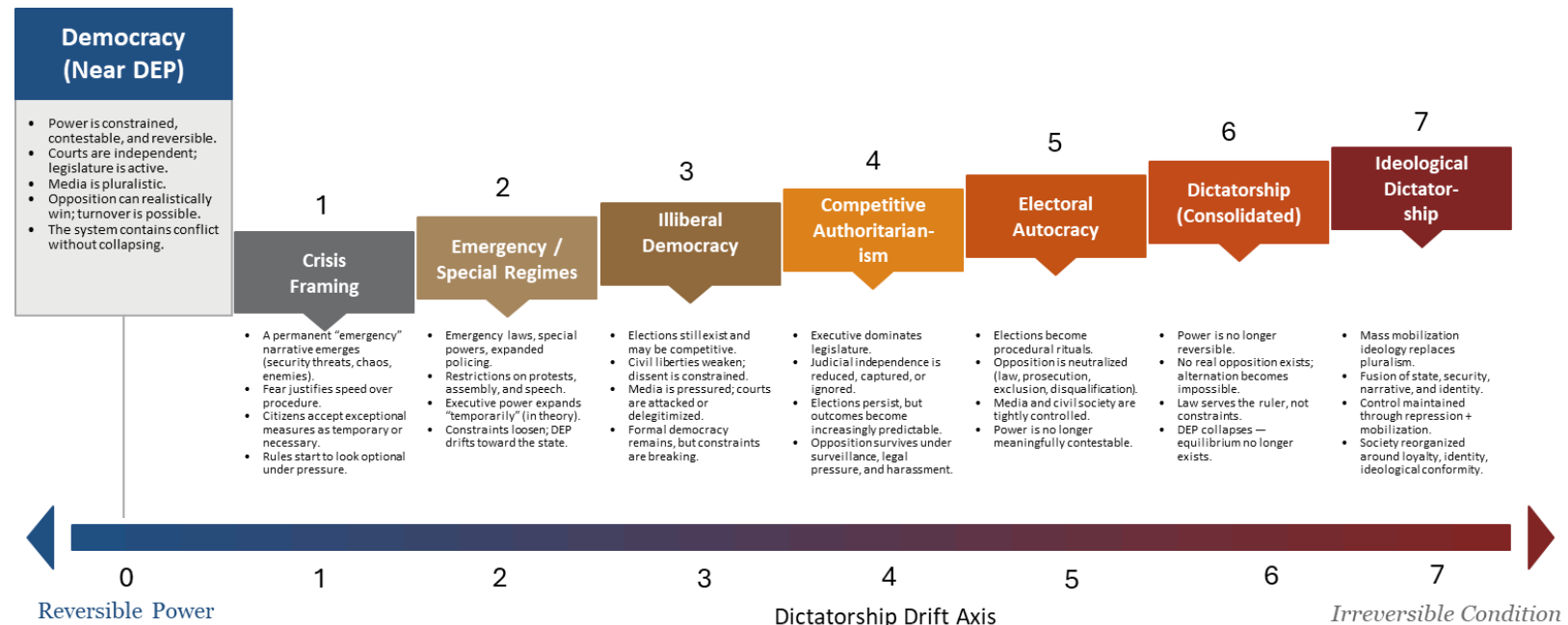
Central to this analysis is the Democracy Equilibrium Point (DEP). DEP is treated not as a regime type or normative benchmark, but as a narrow stability zone defined by balance across societal layers. Deviations from this balance generate directional drift. To capture this process, Part II derives the DEP Drift Map: a vector model that links specific layer failures to distinct drift axes and regime trajectories. This model makes explicit how different combinations of structural stress produce oligarchic, authoritarian, anarchic, or hybrid outcomes, even in systems that retain democratic forms.

Building on this foundation, the article introduces the Regime Stability and Drift Assessment (RSDA) methodology. RSDA provides a systematic way to evaluate political systems relative to both the Societal Needs Hierarchy and their positions along the Dictatorship, Oligarchic, and Anarchic drift axes. The purpose is comparative and diagnostic rather than prescriptive: to identify where coordination is failing, which substitutions are in play, whether drift remains reversible, and how close a system is to equilibrium loss.

In short, this part answers a different question than Part I. If the Societal Needs Hierarchy explains what must exist for coordination to be possible, Part II explains how coordination fails in practice, how drift emerges, and why extreme regimes are not anomalies but predictable outcomes of unresolved structural imbalance.

2. Deriving the DEP Drift Map

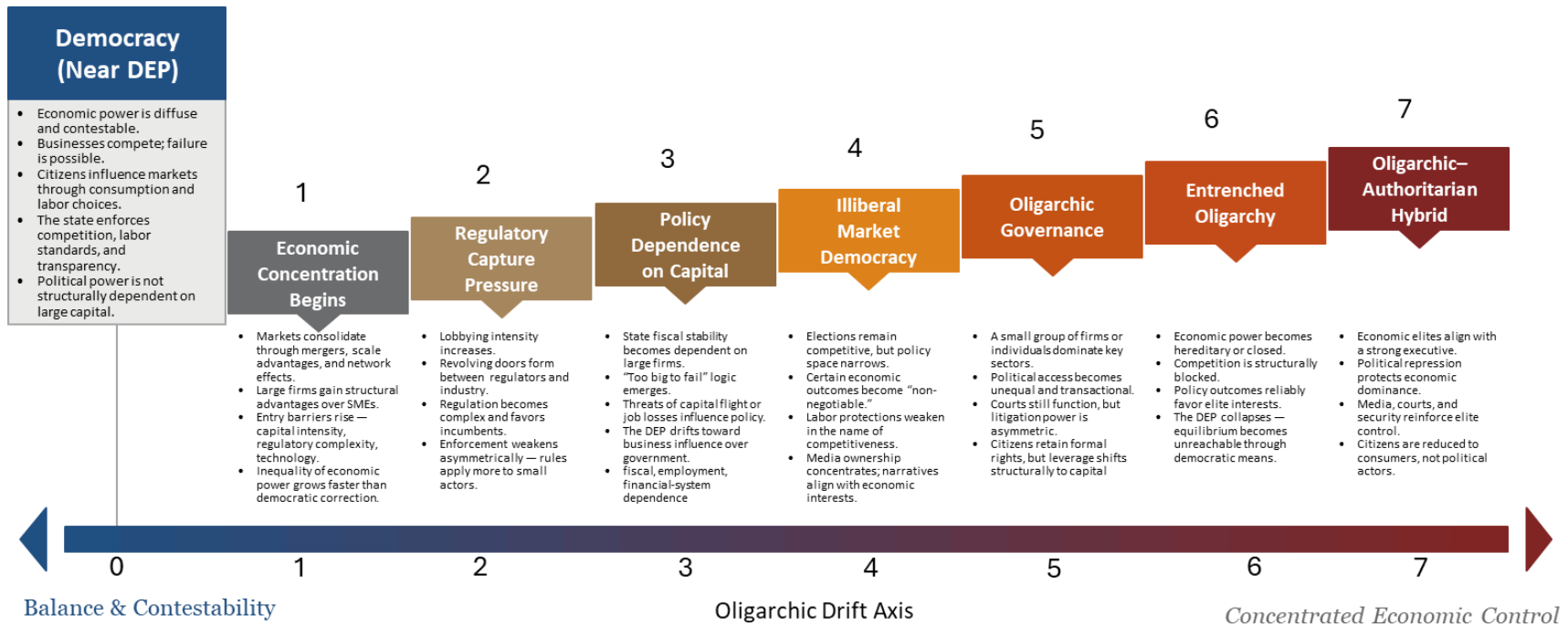
The Democracy Equilibrium Point (DEP) Drift Map is derived as a structural synthesis of the failure trajectories identified across the drift axes toward Dictatorship, Oligarchy, and Anarchy within the Democracy Equilibrium Framework (DEF). Its purpose is not to classify regimes by label, but to provide a visual map for locating political systems within a continuous stability-instability space defined by the satisfaction of societal needs and the preservation of reversibility, contestability, and legitimate authority. Below, the drift axes represent individual equilibrium deterioration routes, which need to be integrated for mapping purposes.



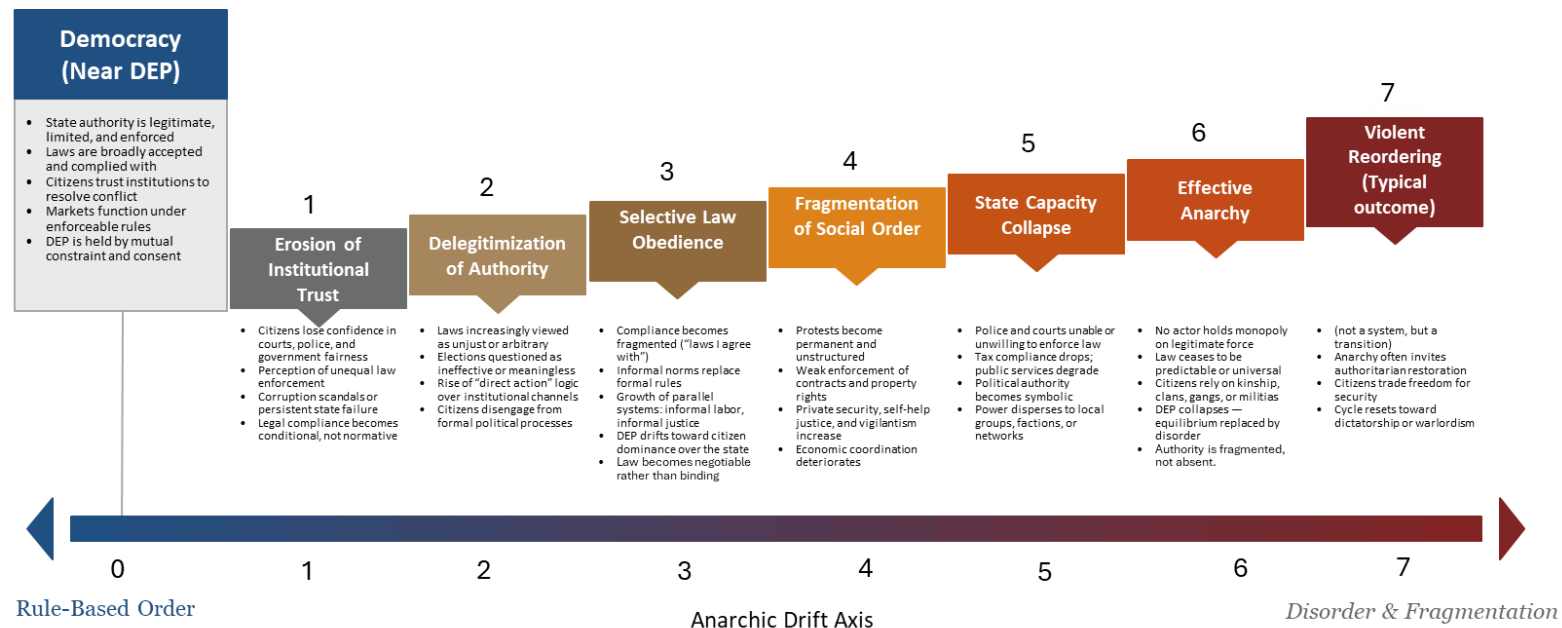
In this model, DEP occupies the central reference position only when all seven layers of the Societal Needs Hierarchy are fully satisfied (CS), such that power remains reversible, economic control remains contestable, authority is broadly accepted and enforced, and coordination is sustained without permanent coercion. This condition corresponds to the "near-DEP" democratic state identified in DEF and shown at position zero on each drift axis in the accompanying diagrams.

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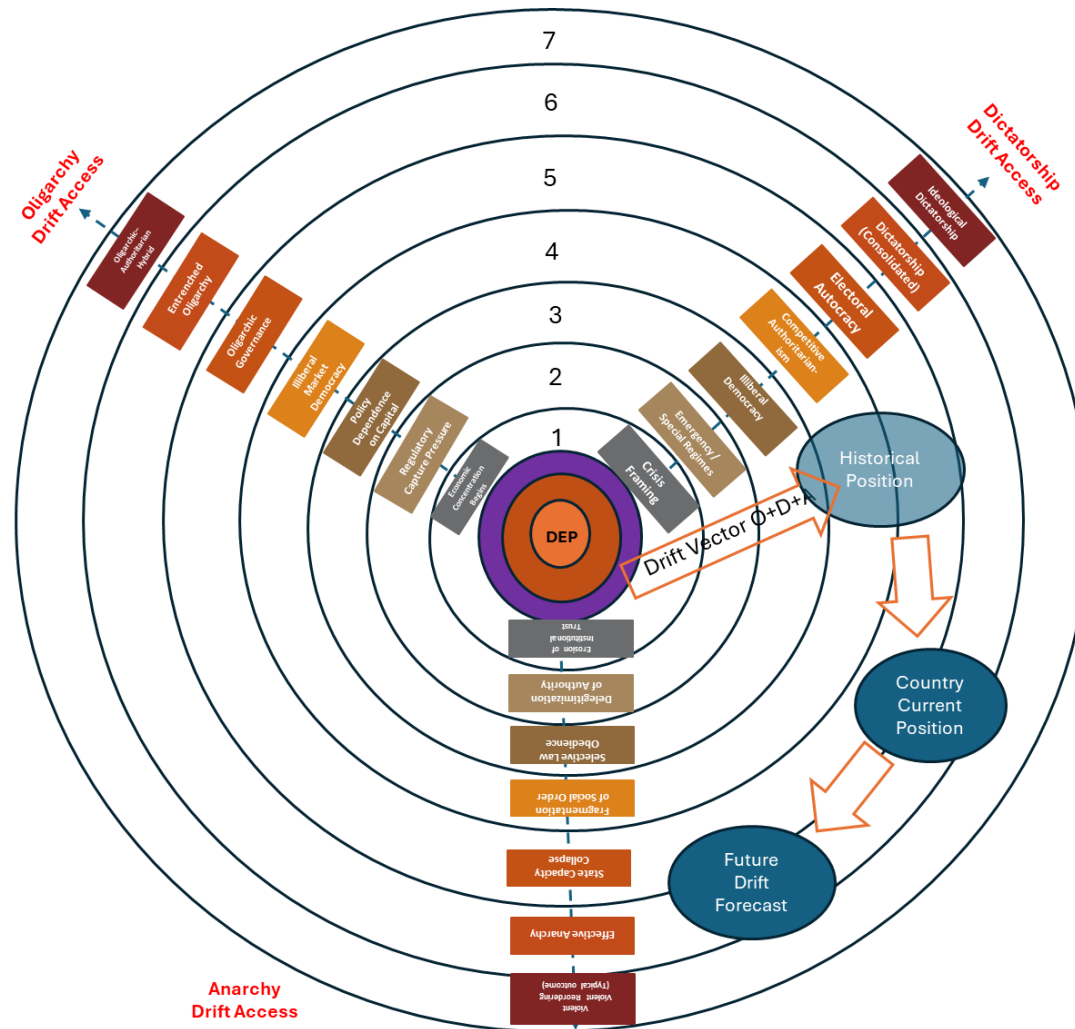
From this equilibrium, democratic degradation does not proceed along a single linear path. Instead, it unfolds directionally along three independent and interacting drift axes of equilibrium deviation, illustrated in the 3-axis integrated DEP Drift Map diagram below. The Authoritarian (D) axis captures the concentration and irreversibility of political power, progressing from crisis framing to emergency regimes to a consolidated, ideological dictatorship. The Oligarchic (O) axis captures the concentration of economic power and the erosion of political contestability through regulatory capture, policy dependence on capital, and entrenched elite control. The Anarchic (A) axis captures the fragmentation of authority and collapse of rule-based coordination, beginning with erosion of institutional trust and culminating in effective anarchy and violent reordering. Each axis is structured into seven discrete degradation steps, derived directly from observed substitution patterns that emerge when specific SNH layers become unmet.



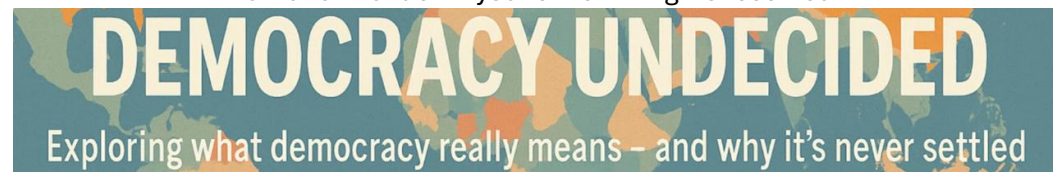
The circular geometry of the Drift Map represents the field in terms of drift direction and axes-defined discrete magnitudes of displacement from the DEP centre, not time or inevitability. The greater the displacement of country DEP from the center, the greater the 3-forces structural instability and the deterioration of societal coordination capacity, while direction indicates the dominant failure logic. Most real systems drift simultaneously along multiple axes, producing hybrid deteriorative configurations that single-regime labels cannot meaningfully describe. This multidimensionality is formalized through the concept of an integrated drift vector ($D + O + A$), whose individual D-, O-, and A-directions, magnitudes, and combinations produce the dominant failure pressures and ultimately define the magnitude and direction of displacement from equilibrium.

To operationalize this geometry, the accompanying DEP Drift Vector Structural Evaluation Table (see below) translates each axis into a repeatable diagnostic scale. For each of the D, O, and A dimensions, the table defines observable structural conditions for levels 0 through 7, allowing independent scoring across the axes. A country, therefore, occupies a composite position — such as D4, O2, A2 — rather than a single categorical row. This structure enables longitudinal measurement, cross-country comparisons, and early detection of destabilizing trends before formal regime collapse. Taken together, the Drift Map and the Evaluation Table form a unified analytical instrument: the map establishes the geometry of democratic failure, while the table provides its coordinate system.

Reading and Interpreting the DEP Drift Vector Map



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The DEP Drift Map is not a typology, a ranking, or a normative classification of political regimes. It is a geometric and structural representation of displacement from the Democracy Equilibrium Point (DEP), designed to make democratic degradation analytically legible before it becomes institutionally irreversible. The map is derived from the combination of three independent but interacting drift axes: authoritarian (dictatorship) drift, oligarchic drift, and anarchic drift. Each axis captures a distinct failure sequence within democratic systems, and none of them implies the others by default.

The center of the diagram represents the Democracy Equilibrium Point. This position is not an abstract democratic ideal nor a moral benchmark. It corresponds to a specific structural condition in which political power is reversible and constrained, economic power remains contestable and non-capturing, and authority is legitimate, rule-based, and broadly complied with. Crucially, this equilibrium position exists only when all seven layers of the Societal Needs Hierarchy (SNH) are fully satisfied under the Complete Satisfaction (CS) criterion, as defined by the layer-satisfaction evaluation structure introduced later in the analysis. For this reason, DEP appears at the origin of the drift space, while any unmet societal needs introduce structural stress that manifests as displacement along one or more drift axes.

The 1-7 concentric rings surrounding the DEP represent increasing structural degradation from equilibrium. These rings do not represent time, speed, or inevitability. They indicate the severity of displacement along any axis, but not the historical sequencing. Further outward movement reflects deeper structural failure, while inward movement reflects stabilization or recovery. Systems may move slowly or rapidly, stall at intermediate levels, or reverse direction entirely under reform. The model is therefore diagnostic rather than deterministic.

Each drift axis contains 7 identifiable discrete levels of degradation, also numbered from #1-7, inlined with numbered concentric rings and identifiable access points where degradation typically begins in well-established democracies. Center of the map, DEP, is associated with "0" point on each drift axis associated with Reversible Power on D-axis, Balance and Contestability on O-axis, and Rule-based order on A-axis.

In well-settled democracies, drift rarely starts at extreme levels; it usually begins with early- or mid-level institutional failures, depending on which societal needs are unmet first. Importantly, drift rarely occurs along a single axis. Pressure along one dimension frequently amplifies stress along the others, producing hybrid trajectories that linear regime labels cannot capture. The composite drift vector shown on the map represents the combined effect of authoritarian, oligarchic, and anarchic pressures. Its direction reflects which failure modes dominate, while its length reflects the total magnitude of displacement from the Democracy Equilibrium Point.

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This vector composition explains why regime declines cannot be meaningfully described in terms of single-axis degradation. Systems do not simply "become dictatorships"; they drift through multidimensional structural space.

A country's position on the map reflects a specific condition of the state at a given point in time, relatively to DEP position, e.g., D4, O2, A1 (or D4|O2|A1). This position is not fixed. By evaluating the same system across multiple years or historical periods, it becomes possible to observe multi-year motion relative to DEP. Movement toward the center indicates stabilization, reform, or recovery; movement away from the center indicates degradation; and lateral movement reflects redistribution of failure across axes rather than uniform collapse. The inclusion of historical position and future drift forecast markers illustrates this dynamic logic and underscores that democratic trajectories are processes, not states.

From Map Geometry to Diagnosis: The Structural Evaluation Table

While the DEP Drift Vector Map provides a visual geometric representation of the current position relative to DEP, it can also depict the dynamics of drift direction and offer potential visual forecasts of future drift development. Adjacent to the map, the Structural Evaluation Table translates this conceptual geometrical model into an operational diagnostic instrument. While the diagram shows the overall pressure application direction, the table specifies how far each force is intended to shift, or has already shifted, the state condition from the equilibrium position.

The table is a structured representation of the map. Each row represents a discrete structural state, ranging from near-equilibrium conditions to irreversible breakdown outcomes. For example, if the state evaluation falls in all 3 categories (D-, C-, and A-scores) into line 0 (D-score=0, O-score=0, A-score=0), it shows that the state is in equilibrium on all 3 axes and that the current state position is D0|O0|A0 on the map, which is DEP. Under these conditions, some descriptions across all 3 categories would be: power is constrained, contestable, and reversible; economic power is diffused and contestable; laws are broadly accepted and complied with.

For each of the three Drift Vector Map axes, the table shows observable institutional and behavioral characteristics for each of the 8 levels, from 0 to 7. These columns are in line with the drift axes' equilibrium degradation steps as follows: D reflects political power concentration along the dictatorship axis, O reflects economic power concentration along the oligarchic axis, and A reflects authority and legitimacy along the anarchy axis. Each axis is scored independently, preserving analytical separation while enabling structured comparison.

Level #	D (1-7)	D-Description	D-Score	O (1-7)	O-Description	O-Score	A (1-7)	A-Description	A-Score	Country Current Position
0	Democracy (Near DEP)	Power is constrained, contestable, and reversible. Courts are independent; legislature is active. Media is pluralistic. Opposition can realistically win; turnover is possible. The system contains conflict without collapsing.		Democracy (Near DEP)	Economic power is diffuse and contestable. Businesses compete; failure is possible. Citizens influence markets through consumption and labor choices. The state enforces competition, labor standards, and transparency. Political power is not structurally dependent on large capital.		Democracy (Near DEP)	State authority is legitimate, limited, and enforced Laws are broadly accepted and complied with Citizens trust institutions to resolve conflict Markets function under enforceable rules DEP is held by mutual constraint and consent		
1	Crisis Framing	A permanent "emergency" narrative emerges (security threats, chaos, enemies). Fear justifies speed over procedure. Citizens accept exceptional measures as temporary or necessary. Rules start to look optional under pressure.		Economic Concentration Begins	Markets consolidate through mergers, scale advantages, and network effects. Large firms gain structural advantages over SMEs. Entry barriers rise — capital intensity, regulatory complexity, technology. Inequality of economic power grows faster than democratic correction.		Erosion of Institutional Trust	Citizens lose confidence in courts, police, and government fairness Perception of unequal law enforcement Corruption scandals or persistent state failure Legal compliance becomes conditional, not normative		For example, O2; A2; G4
2	Emergency / Special Regimes	Emergency laws, special powers, expanded policing. Restrictions on protests, assembly, and speech. Executive power expands "temporarily" (in theory). Constraints loosen; DEP drifts toward the state.		Regulatory Capture Pressure	Lobbying intensity increases. Revolving doors form between regulators and industry. Regulation becomes complex and favors incumbents. Enforcement weakens asymmetrically — rules apply more to small actors.		Delegitimization of Authority	Laws increasingly viewed as unjust or arbitrary Elections questioned as ineffective or meaningless Rise of "direct action" logic over institutional channels Citizens disengage from formal political processes		
3	Illiberal Democracy	Elections still exist and may be competitive. Civil liberties weaken; dissent is constrained. Media is pressured; courts are attacked or delegitimized. Formal democracy remains, but constraints are breaking.		Policy Dependence on Capital	State fiscal stability becomes dependent on large firms. "Too big to fail" logic emerges. Threats of capital flight or job losses influence policy. The DEP drifts toward business influence over government. Fiscal, employment, financial-system dependence.		Selective Law Obedience	Compliance becomes fragmented ("laws I agree with") Informal norms replace formal rules Growth of parallel systems: informal labor, informal justice DEP drifts toward citizen dominance over the state Law becomes negotiable rather than binding		
4	Competitive Authoritarianism	Executive dominates legislature. Judicial independence is reduced, captured, or ignored. Elections persist, but outcomes become increasingly predictable. Opposition survives under surveillance, legal pressure, and harassment		Illiberal Market Democracy	Elections remain competitive, but policy space narrows. Certain economic outcomes become "non-negotiable." Labor protections weaken in the name of competitiveness. Media ownership concentrates; narratives align with economic interests.		Fragmentation of Social Order	Protests become permanent and unstructured Weak enforcement of contracts and property rights Private security, self-help justice, and vigilantism increase Economic coordination deteriorates		
5	Electoral Autocracy	Elections become procedural rituals. Opposition is neutralized (law, prosecution, exclusion, disqualification). Media and civil society are tightly controlled. Power is no longer meaningfully contestable		Oligarchic Governance	A small group of firms or individuals dominate key sectors. Political access becomes unequal and transactional. Courts still function, but litigation power is asymmetric. Citizens retain formal rights, but leverage shifts structurally to capital.		State Capacity Collapse	Police and courts unable or unwilling to enforce law Tax compliance drops; public services degrade Political authority becomes symbolic Power disperses to local groups, factions, or networks		
6	Dictatorship (Consolidated)	Power is no longer reversible. No real opposition exists; alternation becomes impossible. Law serves the ruler, not constraints. DEP collapses — equilibrium no longer exists.		Entrenched Oligarchy	Economic power becomes hereditary or closed. Competition is structurally blocked. Policy outcomes reliably favor elite interests. The DEP collapses — equilibrium becomes unreachable through democratic means.		Effective Anarchy	No actor holds monopoly on legitimate force Law ceases to be predictable or universal Citizens rely on kinship, clans, gangs, or militias DEP collapses — equilibrium replaced by disorder Authority is fragmented, not absent.		
7	Ideological Dictatorship	Mass mobilization ideology replaces pluralism. Fusion of state, security, narrative, and identity. Control maintained through repression + mobilization. Society reorganized around loyalty, identity, ideological conformity.		Oligarchic-Authoritarian Hybrid	Economic elites align with a strong executive. Political repression protects economic dominance. Media, courts, and security reinforce elite control. Citizens are reduced to consumers, not political actors.		Violent Reordering (Typical outcome)	(not a system, but a transition) Anarchy often invites authoritarian restoration Citizens trade freedom for security Cycle resets toward dictatorship or warlordism		

The table must be read vertically by axis rather than horizontally as a single narrative. A country does not occupy a single row. Instead, it occupies a composite position defined by three simultaneous scores, such as D4, O2, and A1. That composite position corresponds directly to the drift vector visualized on the map. The highlighted example illustrates this logic by showing a system that experiences uneven degradation across dimensions rather than neatly fitting into a single regime category.

This structure avoids false binaries such as democracy versus dictatorship or stability versus failure. It allows analysts to diagnose asymmetric degradation, compare systems without moral labeling, and detect early-stage failure modes before formal institutional collapse becomes visible. The table is therefore the point at which abstract structural dynamics become measurable, repeatable, and comparable.

The placement of the table after the diagram is deliberate. The map establishes direction, interaction, and geometry of drift, while the table establishes measurement, comparability, and evaluative precision. The diagram functions as a map; the table functions as a coordinate system. From this point forward, real countries can be scored, changes can be tracked over time, and these scores can be integrated into broader failure-mode analysis, risk assessment, and forward-looking evaluations.

Finally, while the table captures the mechanics of the regime, it does not yet explain why these drifts occur. To address causality, the analysis returns to the Societal Needs Hierarchy. By applying the seven-level SNH satisfaction scale and examining how unmet layers generate predictable citizen–business–government responses, the framework closes the loop between societal conditions, institutional failure modes, and observed drift trajectories. Let us move to the derivation of responses from C, B, and G players at each of the 7 layers of the societal needs hierarchy.

3. Deriving SNH Layered C/B/G Evaluation

The DEP Drift Vector Map provides a structural description of democratic degradation by locating political systems relative to the Democracy Equilibrium Point and identifying the dominant directions of drift as authoritarian, oligarchic, and anarchic. While this representation allows precise diagnosis of regime position and comparative assessment across systems, it does not explain the origins of drift or the mechanisms through which pressure accumulates. Drift is an outcome, not a cause.

To understand why political power becomes irreversible, why economic control concentrates, or why authority fragments, analysis must move beneath institutional form to the level of societal function. This approach requires returning to the Societal Needs Hierarchy (SNH), which defines the structural conditions necessary for large-scale coordination, legitimacy, and stability. When one or more SNH layers become unmet, societies do not simply stagnate; they adapt due to survival and prosperity pressure through

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predictable responses by citizens, businesses, and governments. These responses, whether compensatory, extractive, coercive, or substitutive, generate the pressures that later manifest as directional drift on the DEP map. By deriving a layered Citizen–Business–Government (C/B/G) evaluation framework from SNH, it becomes possible to identify which societal needs are failing, which actors are driving adaptation, and how those adaptations translate into authoritarian concentration, oligarchic capture, or anarchic fragmentation. Only by integrating SNH-based structural causation with DEP-based directional outcomes can a complete Regime Stability and Drift Assessment (RSDA) be constructed. This chapter therefore shifts focus from where systems are drifting to why they drift, establishing the causal foundation required for dynamic analysis, historical comparison, and forward-looking risk evaluation.



Before proceeding further into failure modes and regime drift, it is necessary to re-anchor the analysis in the foundational structure used throughout this work: the Societal Needs Hierarchy (SNH). SNH is not an ideological construct, a normative theory, or a value system. It is a functional hierarchy of collective coordination requirements. Each layer represents a minimum condition that must be satisfied for a society to organize itself stably without resorting to coercive, extractive, or informal substitutes. The hierarchy is strict: higher layers cannot compensate for failures in lower layers. If physical survival and territorial integrity are insecure, higher forms of coordination become irrelevant. If security and enforceable order collapse, markets, institutions, and political participation degrade. If

predictable livelihoods and economic participation fail, institutional legitimacy becomes performative rather than substantive. If legitimacy and institutional trust erode, political agency persists only symbolically, detached from real accountability or reversibility.

Importantly, SNH is diagnostic rather than moral. It does not judge regimes by intent or ideology; it identifies which coordination functions are failing, in what sequence, and with what systemic consequences. In Part I, SNH was introduced conceptually to frame democratic stability. In Part II, it becomes an evaluative instrument: a structure that can be scored, compared, and directly linked to behavioral responses and regime drift. This transition is essential because democratic failure does not originate in institutions themselves but in the unmet societal needs that force citizens, businesses, and governments to substitute coordination with power, capture, or fragmentation.

To operationalize the Societal Needs Hierarchy as a diagnostic tool, this work introduces a seven-level SNH Layer Satisfaction Scale that converts the hierarchy from a conceptual model into a structural snapshot instrument.

#	Layer Satisfaction Evaluation	Meaning
1	Exceptionally Unsatisfied (EU)	Layer does not function or exists only episodically; collapsed or symbolic; fails even under mild stress
2	Highly Unsatisfied (HU)	Narrow coverage; operates through exceptions, favoritism, coercion, or selective access
3	Unsatisfied (U)	Works in normal times but breaks under shocks; no resilience
4	About as satisfied as not (ASN)	Functions only if supporting layers hold; stress-sensitive and conditional
5	Satisfied (S)	Broadly functional; resilient to moderate shocks
6	Highly Satisfied (HS)	Robust, institutionalized, stress-tested
7	Completely Satisfied (CS)	Self-reinforcing; failure would require systemic collapse

These satisfaction levels are not emotional, perceptual, or survey-based measures. They assess structural functioning: whether a given societal layer reliably performs its coordination role under both normal and stress conditions. Each layer is evaluated independently on a seven-point scale, ranging from Exceptionally Unsatisfied, where the function is collapsed or purely symbolic, to Completely Satisfied, where the function is institutionalized, resilient, and self-reinforcing. What distinguishes the levels is not nominal presence

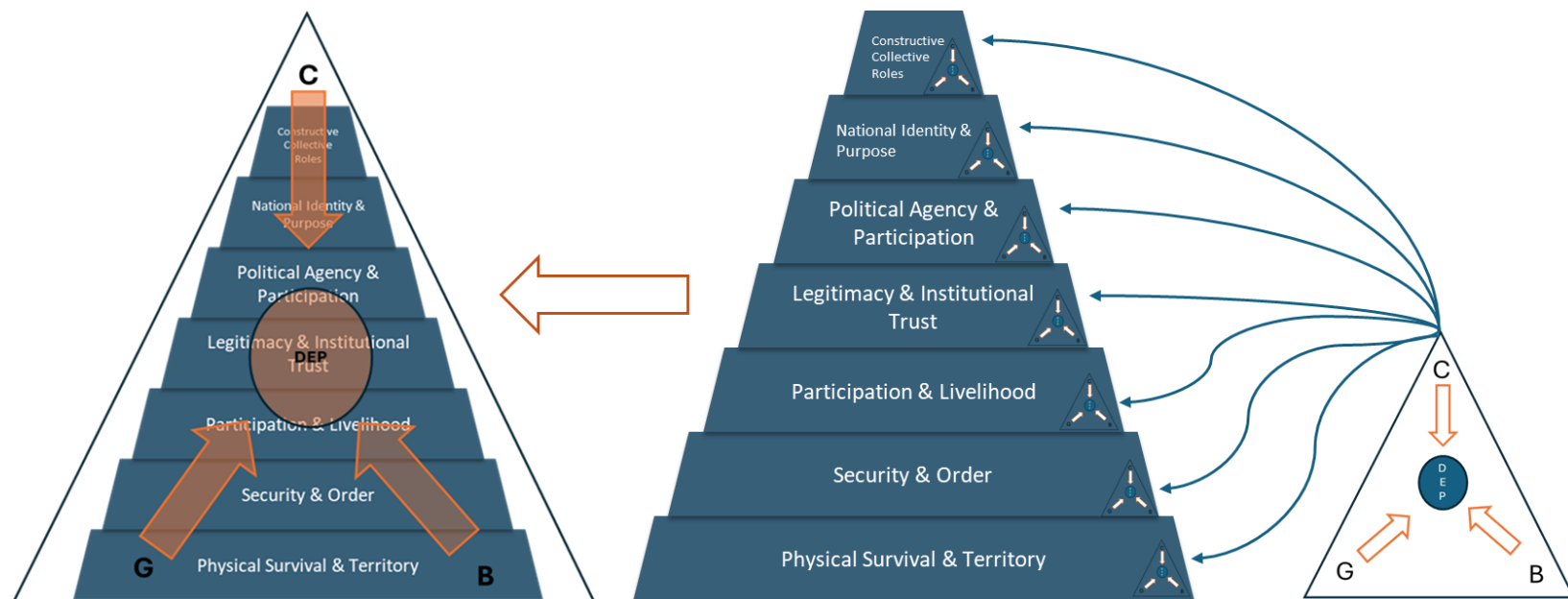
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but stress behavior. Some layers operate only episodically, others function in calm periods but fail under shocks, and only the highest levels remain stable without requiring extraordinary intervention. Particular attention is warranted at the midpoint, “About as satisfied as not” (ASN), which represents not balance but instability. At ASN, a layer functions conditionally and no longer absorbs shocks from below; instead, it amplifies them upward. By contrast, layers assessed as Highly Satisfied or Completely Satisfied are structurally secured, such that their failure would require systemic breakdown rather than policy error. This scale enables the production of a seven-layer snapshot of structural stability for any country, identifies which layers are load-bearing and which are hollow, and translates structural conditions into predictable behavioral responses from citizens, businesses, and governments. From this point forward, SNH ceases to be descriptive and becomes quantitative scaffolding for regime diagnosis, drift analysis, risk assessment, and subsequent integration into the Democracy Equilibrium and Regime Stability frameworks.

Failure Modes Participants and Force Interaction Across SNH Layers

Before examining failure modes layer by layer, it is necessary to re-establish the actors through which all societal coordination occurs in this framework.



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Regime failure or drift does not emerge abstractly or instantaneously; it manifests through observable behavioral responses by three structurally distinct participants: citizens, business, and the state. Citizens represent mass coordination through consent, participation, social pressure, and withdrawal. Business represents economic leverage through capital allocation, rent extraction, capture, and exit. The state represents institutional power through rule-making, enforcement, coercion, and administrative control. These three forces form the basis of the Democracy Equilibrium Framework, in which stability is defined not by dominance of any single actor, but by a balanced interaction among them.

Extending this logic into the Societal Needs Hierarchy (SNH), all three actors participate in societal coordination at every layer of collective need. What varies across layers is not the presence of citizens, business, or the state, but the form, intensity, and leverage of their responses. When a societal layer need is structurally satisfied, the responses of these actors tend to counterbalance one another, preserving equilibrium among forces. Citizens participate and comply, business invests and compete within rules, and the state governs with limited, legitimate authority. Under these conditions, no single force accumulates disproportionate influence, and the balance condition associated with the Democracy Equilibrium Point (DEP) is maintained.

When a societal need layer becomes conditionally satisfied or fails, response patterns shift in predictable ways. Citizens withdraw consent, disengage, or fragment. Business reallocates capital, seeks rents, captures institutions, or exits productive coordination. The state compensates for missing coordination by expanding enforcement, coercion, or control. These adaptive responses do not occur independently: they strengthen or weaken the relative force exerted by each actor. Across all seven layers, responses are driven by the preservation of survival, prosperity, and each actor's future optionality. The intensity and direction of mass response depend on the strategic resource reserves held by citizens, businesses, and the state, whether material, capital, legitimacy, coercive capacity, institutional depth, or social cohesion, at the level where failure emerges. As the balance among citizen, business, and state forces changes, the net force acting on the system is altered, producing displacement from the original equilibrium condition and initiating directional drift away from the Democracy Equilibrium Point.

In this section, the focus is not on diagnosing equilibrium itself, but on identifying how unmet societal needs generate structured, repeatable response patterns across citizens, business, and the state. These patterned responses constitute the underlying mechanics of regime drift. Each layer of the Societal Needs Hierarchy will therefore be examined through a consistent analytical lens: how citizens respond, how business responds, and how the state responds. Taken together, these responses generate predictable regime signals and directional drift paths, which will later be formalized using the DEP Drift Vector Map. With this framework established, the analysis proceeds from the base of the hierarchy, beginning with the first failure mode: physical survival.

Why C/B/G Respond — From Survival to Drift

Before proceeding to a layer-by-layer analysis of failure modes, it is necessary to clarify how the Societal Needs Hierarchy (SNH) is operationalized and evaluated in practice. Within this framework, each layer of the hierarchy is assigned a Layer Satisfaction Evaluation score that is not derived from declared policy objectives, institutional design, legal form, or official rhetoric. Instead, satisfaction is inferred exclusively from observable conditions and behavioral responses. This evaluation can be conducted in two complementary modes: historically, to trace long-term patterns of structural degradation, recovery, or regime transition over time; and contemporaneously, to diagnose the current structural condition of a system. Crucially, no layer is assessed in isolation. Each layer is interpreted through the adaptive responses of three actors—Citizens, Business, and the State—forming the C–B–G triad defined earlier in the Democracy Equilibrium Framework.

For every layer, three distinct analytical questions are posed. At the citizen level, the inquiry examines how mass behavior adapts when a layer becomes weak, hollow, or simulated, including patterns of compliance, disengagement, self-organization, migration, fragmentation, or exit. At the level of business and economic actors, the focus shifts to how capital reorganizes in response to prevailing conditions, whether through investment, extraction, hedging, institutional capture, or withdrawal. At the state level, analysis centers on how institutional power responds -whether by compensating for missing coordination, simulating functionality, centralizing authority, suspending rules, or applying coercion. Together, these questions allow the analyst to determine whether a societal layer is functioning structurally rather than merely existing in formal terms. The underlying principle is that actors are always present at every layer of the hierarchy; what changes is not participation itself, but the mode of coordination through which needs are addressed. Consequently, layer satisfaction within this framework is inferred from behavior rather than declared by institutions, rendering the evaluation fundamentally behavioral rather than declarative. This operational logic establishes the consistent methodological foundation that will be applied throughout the subsequent analysis of the societal needs hierarchy.

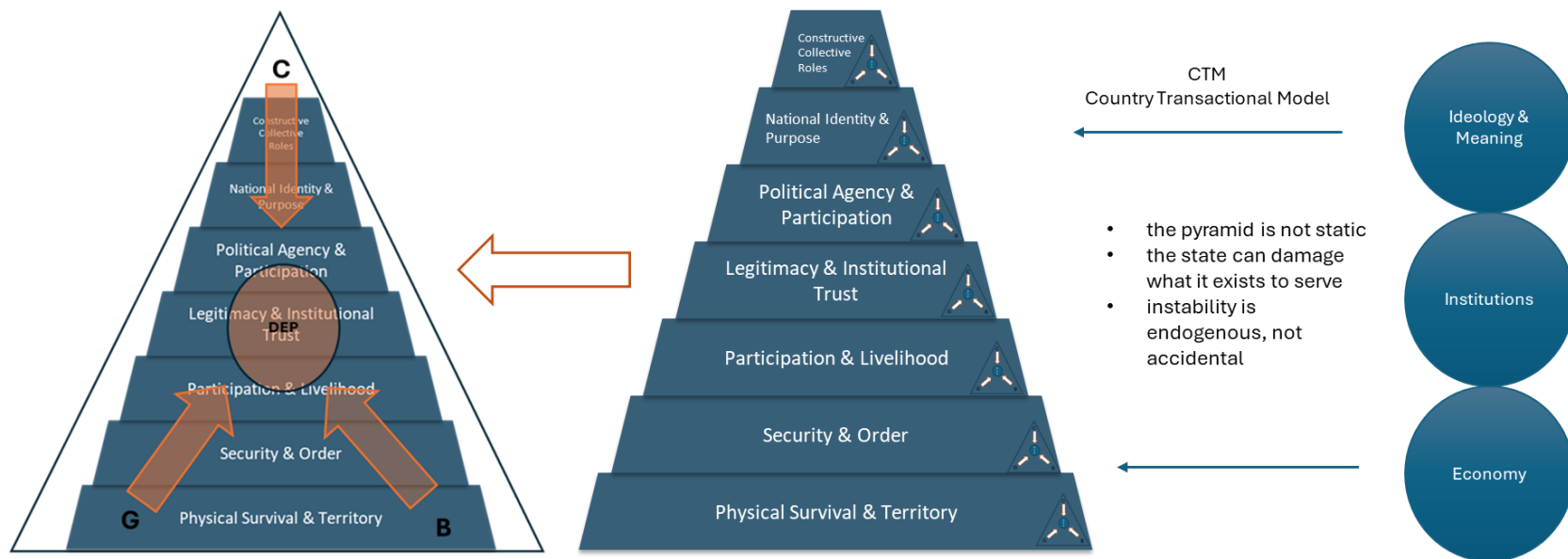
At this stage, it is necessary to clarify why citizens, businesses, and governments respond as they do within this framework, and to delineate explicitly what the model measures and what it does not. All three actors operate under a non-ideological constraint: they must secure survival first and pursue prosperity only conditionally once survival is ensured. When societal needs are structurally satisfied, these objectives are pursued through institutions, markets, law, and political participation. When needs are unmet, behavior adapts. This adaptation is neither moral nor ideological, nor is it discretionary; it is structural. Citizens adjust by seeking safety, continuity, and access to essential goods and services. Businesses adapt by protecting capital, securing supply chains, and reducing exposure to uncertainty. Governments respond by attempting to preserve coordination capacity, often through substitution mechanisms such as emergency powers, administrative control, rule suspension, or coercion. These responses do not constitute judgments about legitimacy or governance quality; they are observable reactions to unmet needs. Consequently, C/B/G scores within

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this framework do not measure satisfaction itself, but response intensity—how forcefully each actor is compelled to adapt in order to continue operating within a given layer of the Societal Needs Hierarchy. Importantly, these adaptive responses are driven by survival imperatives at lower layers and prosperity-seeking behavior at higher layers, with their form and intensity constrained by the strategic resource reserves available to each actor at that layer, whether material, institutional, financial, coercive, or social. A critical clarification follows from this logic: the satisfaction of societal layers and the resulting C/B/G responses within them do not arise spontaneously. It is produced through concrete domains of state management, formalized later in this framework as the Country Transactional Model (CTM). Government action in the economy, institutional design and enforcement, and ideological coordination jointly determine how societal needs are satisfied, distorted, or undermined.

The pyramid is therefore not static; the state can actively damage the very structures it exists to serve through mismanagement, overreach, capture, or incompetence. This setup introduces a central paradox: governmental capacity and professionalism shape both layer satisfaction and the state's own adaptive responses within each layer.



As a result, instability in this framework is endogenous rather than accidental, generated internally by how coordination mechanisms are designed, executed, and stressed over time. Direction of causality is critical: responses emerge from the bottom of the hierarchy upward, and when lower layers weaken, higher layers cannot compensate – they can only react. Drift is therefore not random. Systems

do not choose their direction; they are pushed along the D, O, and A axes away from the equilibrium point by the cumulative pressure of adaptive responses. When response intensity remains low, coordination stays institutional and equilibrium is preserved. When responses intensify, coordination shifts – first selectively and then structurally – producing directional drift toward authoritarian, oligarchic, or anarchic outcomes depending on which actor gains control over coordination mechanisms. This approach defines the scope of the model: it measures responses rather than intentions, pressure rather than ideology.

Methodological Structure and Boundary: Behavioral Responses and Layer Evaluation

Before proceeding to the layer-by-layer analysis, a critical methodological clarification is required. In the sections that follow, each layer of the Societal Needs Hierarchy is evaluated through the observed behavioral responses of three actors: citizens, businesses, and the state. These responses are not speculative constructs, intuitive guesses, or assumptions introduced by this framework. They reflect well-researched and documented adaptive regularities identified across sociology, political economy, economic geography, conflict studies, historical institutional analysis, and other academic disciplines. The contribution of this framework is therefore not to rediscover or re-prove these behavioral responses, but to systematize them into a unified diagnostic structure that allows consistent comparison across layers, time periods, and regime types. Responses are interpreted neither as normative judgments about legitimacy nor as evaluations of governance quality. Instead, they are treated as adaptive reactions to structural stress. Across all layers, citizens, economic actors, and institutions respond to a non-ideological constraint: survival under deteriorating conditions, and conditional pursuit of prosperity when survival is secured.

For this reason, the model does not directly measure layer satisfaction. It measures response intensity – how strongly each actor is forced to adapt in order to continue operating within a given layer of the societal system. Layer satisfaction is then inferred from the combined configuration of citizen, business, and state responses, rather than declared through formal policy claims or institutional design.

Throughout the layer analysis, responses are presented qualitatively to preserve structural clarity and causal logic. Numerical scoring, response-intensity scales, and aggregation rules are deliberately deferred to the Regime Stability and Drift Assessment methodology, covered later in this work. This separation establishes a clear analytical boundary: the layers' analytics define structural meaning and diagnostic signals, while RSDA formalizes measurement and comparative assessment. With this methodological boundary established, the analysis can now proceed systematically through the societal needs hierarchy, beginning at the base and treating observed behavior as evidence of structural condition rather than assumption.

Layer 1 of the Societal Needs Hierarchy: Physiological Survival and Territory

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Layer 1 of the Societal Needs Hierarchy constitutes the material and territorial foundation upon which all higher forms of societal coordination depend. It addresses a single, non-negotiable question: whether a population can survive physically and occupy territory continuously and predictably. This layer encompasses population survival – adequate calories, clean water, basic medicine, shelter, thermal regulation, and epidemic control, together with physical continuity through transport, energy, communications, and non-fracturing supply chains. It further includes operational territorial capacity, defined not as formal sovereignty but as the practical ability to move, enforce, and deliver essentials across territory, and a minimum degree of predictability that allows households to plan days or weeks without survival-level uncertainty.

Layer 1 is unique within the hierarchy because it defines the biological and logistical substrate of society itself. When this substrate is compromised, higher layers do not merely weaken; they lose causal relevance. Political institutions, legal systems, ideological frameworks, and governance arrangements cannot function meaningfully when mass physiological survival is insecure. Under such conditions, higher coordination does not fail politically – it becomes irrelevant or performative because the underlying coordination substrate has collapsed.

Failure at Layer 1 is not triggered by localized disruption but by population-scale inability to secure essentials such as food, water, energy, medical care, living means, or territorial reach. This failure constitutes a systemic breakdown affecting coordination across society as a whole. As failure unfolds, exit behavior dominates voice: populations do not mobilize for reform or political contestation but instead attempt to escape through migration, internal displacement, or flight. Cooperation and coordination deteriorate as informal survival systems displace formal rules. Trust is replaced by survival tactics, including rationing, barter, hoarding, black markets, predation, and informal distribution networks.

Authority under these conditions becomes transactional rather than institutional. Legitimacy loses priority, and authority accrues to whichever actor can reliably deliver food, fuel, water, medicine, or protection. Territorial control fragments operationally as enforcement and provisioning become uneven across regions. Control shifts away from law toward checkpoints, armed groups, and localized extraction mechanisms. From these dynamics follows a derived non-negotiability rule: no political system survives population-level starvation or physiological insecurity. When material survival is compromised at scale, institutions cease to function as institutions and instead degrade into improvisational survival mechanisms.

Adaptive responses emerge across citizens, economic actors, and the state as structurally induced behaviors rather than ideological choices. Citizens respond through displacement, migration, riots over food or fuel, and the construction of informal survival networks. Emotional logic shifts toward fear and desperation, time horizons collapse, and immediate survival dominates behavior. Coordination moves away from institutions toward exit, submission, tribalization, or dependence on any reliable supply channel. Political participation is deprioritized, and acceptance of any “protector” capable of delivering basic goods becomes widespread.

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Economic actors respond by pausing investment and production, reallocating capital toward secure assets, relocating resources to environments with enforceable order, or engaging in asset stripping by converting public resources into private extraction. Strategic behavior shifts toward scarcity pricing, control of supply routes, defensive contracting, and alignment with actors capable of enforcing distribution. Resource hoarding, rent extraction, private security or militia funding, and exit become common. Economic logic increasingly resembles a war economy, with profits concentrating around scarcity, logistics control, weapons, and smuggling. Markets shift from competition toward access control over essentials, and territorial logic becomes militarized.

The state responds by replacing governance with emergency logic. Where institutional rule fails, rule by force emerges. Crisis administration displaces normal governance, state focus narrows to provisioning and territorial reach, and emergency powers, rule suspensions, rationing, logistics control, militarized governance, and resource seizures become dominant tools. Narratives of continuity and survival override legality. Legitimacy is progressively replaced by force or permanent emergency claims.

Regime behavior under Layer 1 failure is driven by biological imperatives rather than ideology. Drift at this level is not political but survival-driven, and systems may exit the democratic phase space entirely. Authoritarian outcomes emerge through permanent emergency framing and expansion of executive power, creating the fastest path to consolidated coercion if recovery fails. Oligarchic outcomes arise when scarcity transforms essentials into gatekept access points, enabling economic actors who control logistics to capture policy and enforcement. Anarchic outcomes emerge when territorial control fragments entirely, enforcement becomes private or tribal, and no single trusted rule-set remains operative. At this level, even selective law obedience ceases to function.

Layer 1 failure does not produce a stable regime type but rather systemic decomposition, resulting in fragmentation, warlordism, or militarized autocracy, depending on control over territory and resources. Governance narrows into command-based rule focused on security and provisioning, emergency logic becomes permanent, and protection replaces governance as the dominant operating principle. Under these conditions, the Democracy Equilibrium Point cannot exist. Coordination collapses below equilibrium thresholds, balance among citizens, business, and government becomes impossible, and any apparent stability reflects rotating balances of force and scarcity rather than democratic constraint. When survival breaks, the equilibrium does not drift, it disappears.

Layer 1 failure, therefore, constitutes a foundation breach rather than a shift along a democratic spectrum. Drift is biological rather than ideological, and institutional form is overridden by survival imperatives. Externalization risks increase sharply as pressures spill outward through displacement flows, cross-border strain, and conflict incentives driven by scarcity and territorial insecurity.

Operationally, Layer 1 satisfaction is evaluated through observable behavioral indicators rather than declarations. Citizen indicators include mass displacement, food and fuel riots, informal survival networks, and exit-dominant behavior. Business indicators include capital flight, logistics control, shifts from production to extraction, and private security funding. State indicators include permanent

emergency rule, rationing or requisitioning, militarized logistics, and loss of uniform territorial enforcement. These indicators are encoded through C/B/G response intensity scores, which measure how strongly each actor is forced to adapt once the layer's structural satisfaction state is determined. The seven-point response intensity scale ranges from dormant responses to saturated, society-wide coordination logics. High response intensities across all three actors encode the collapse of Layer 1 and provide the diagnostic foundation for aggregation within the Regime Stability and Drift Assessment methodology.

Layer 2 of the Societal Needs Hierarchy: Security and Order

Layer 2 concerns the provision of internal security and enforceable order. Whereas Layer 1 determines whether populations can survive materially, Layer 2 governs whether social life can proceed without pervasive fear, arbitrary violence, or destructive coercion. This layer establishes the conditions necessary for predictable daily activity and non-survival coordination by constraining violence, enforcing rules with sufficient consistency, and resolving disputes through recognized institutional mechanisms rather than force. Functionally, it addresses whether individuals can reasonably expect continuity of personal safety over time and whether tomorrow is likely to resemble today in terms of exposure to violence.

When functioning adequately, Layer 2 provides a reliable internal security environment that enables stable social, political, and economic interaction. Personal security is present when arbitrary violence, criminal predation, and vigilantism are reliably constrained. Rule enforcement constrains private coercion, even if imperfectly. The monopoly on force is operational rather than merely formal, limiting private violence across territory. Dispute resolution mechanisms are recognized and utilized, and behavioral predictability allows individuals and organizations to plan activities under stable safety expectations. Together, these conditions constitute the security substrate required for higher-order coordination, including political participation, economic exchange, and institutional legitimacy.

Layer 2 failure occurs when internal security and enforceable order deteriorate at the population level. This condition does not refer to isolated criminal incidents but to a systemic inability to contain violence or apply rules consistently across society. As failure progresses, fear becomes the dominant organizing principle of behavior. Individuals prioritize harm avoidance over opportunity, enforcement becomes selective, and private coercion expands as gangs, militias, or informal enforcers fill security gaps. Trust in enforcement institutions declines, resulting in reduced reporting, compliance, and civic cooperation. Formal institutions may persist, but their capacity to generate predictable order is substantially impaired.

No democratic system can function under conditions of unreliable internal security and unconstrained violence. Rights, participation, consent, and accountability presuppose personal safety. Persistent fear undermines democratic contestation and institutional legitimacy, rendering Layer 2 satisfaction as a non-negotiable requirement for democratic governance.

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When Layer 2 degrades, higher-level coordination does not immediately collapse; instead, it becomes unstable and reactive. Institutions continue to operate but become security-dominated, prioritizing containment, speed, and force over deliberation and procedural consistency. Legitimacy weakens without disappearing entirely, and democracy becomes fragile, defensive, and conditional upon security delivery.

Citizens respond primarily through avoidance and withdrawal from public space, increased reliance on private or informal protection, and localized rather than universal compliance. Emotional orientations shift toward fear, suspicion, and resentment, while civic trust erodes. Coordination moves away from public institutions toward personal networks or identity-based protection, and political participation declines as safety becomes the dominant political demand.

Economic actors reduce long-term investment and favor protected assets and controlled environments. Strategic behavior shifts toward security contracting, political hedging, alignment with enforcement authorities, and geographic concentration in secure zones. Risk management emphasizes compliance over innovation, and capital exits insecure regions. Markets narrow as economic power concentrates around actors with preferential access to security enforcement.

The state responds by expanding policing, surveillance, and emergency powers. Preventive detention, exceptional powers, prioritization of force, and procedural shortcuts become more prevalent, accompanied by narratives emphasizing order and safety. Legitimacy becomes increasingly conditional on security provision, and reversibility of emergency measures weakens over time.

Layer 2 failure produces instability and oscillation rather than immediate regime collapse. Authoritarian drift emerges as insecurity legitimizes executive expansion and normalization of emergency logic, constituting the fastest route to durable authoritarian consolidation if recovery fails. Oligarchic drift arises when protected zones and actors gain disproportionate power, enforcement becomes uneven, and wealth purchases security and influence. Anarchic drift occurs when enforcement fragments entirely, rules vary by territory or affiliation, and violence becomes negotiated rather than prohibited, collapsing democratic contestability.

Structurally, Layer 2 failure renders regimes security-dominated and unstable rather than immediately non-functional. The Democracy Equilibrium Point continues to exist but becomes reactive, shifting toward security provision rather than legitimacy. Continued degradation increases the probability of breaching Layer 1. Layer 2 thus represents a reversible but hazardous zone: democratic systems may recover if security is restored, but failure to do so accelerates drift toward authoritarian, oligarchic, or anarchic configurations. Security failures also externalize through crime spillovers, displacement flows, and cross-border conflict pressures.

Operationalization of Layer 2 follows the same response-intensity logic as Layer 1. Citizen indicators include withdrawal from public space, reliance on informal protection, localized compliance, decline in civic cooperation, and prioritization of safety over

participation. Business indicators include reduced long-term investment, geographic concentration in secure zones, security contracting, prioritizing compliance over innovation, and capital exiting insecure regions. State indicators include expanded policing, emergency powers, prioritization of force, and legitimacy conditioned on enforcement outcomes. These behaviors are encoded through the seven-point C/B/G response intensity scale, which captures adaptive pressure rather than satisfaction itself and provides the empirical basis for RSDA aggregation.

Layer 3 of the Societal Needs Hierarchy: Participation and Livelihood

Layer 3 of the Societal Needs Hierarchy governs broad, predictable participation in economic and social life. It defines whether individuals and households can earn livelihoods through work or enterprise, remain socially included, plan months or years ahead, and cooperate beyond kinship, coercion, or protection. Whereas Layer 1 secures physical survival and Layer 2 constrains violence, Layer 3 determines whether people can participate meaningfully in society without relying on patronage, informal protection, or exit.

Structurally, Layer 3 provides the participation substrate upon which legitimacy, democratic engagement, and ideological coherence depend. Its core components include inclusive access to livelihoods across classes and regions, functioning participation channels such as labor markets and small business formation, predictable rules governing contracts, taxation, and exchange, and sufficient social continuity to support family formation, community life, and intergenerational planning. When these conditions hold, participation operates as a generalized coordination mechanism rather than a privilege.

Layer 3 failure occurs when economic participation becomes structurally inaccessible to large portions of the population over time, even while basic survival (Layer 1) and physical order (Layer 2) remain intact. This failure is not defined by cyclical recession or inequality per se, but by persistent exclusion from stable work, declining returns to effort, blocked mobility, and concentrated access to opportunity. Individuals may remain alive and safe, yet increasingly unable to translate effort into livelihood or future security.

Under such conditions, higher coordination does not collapse immediately but begins to hollow out. Institutions remain formally intact, democratic procedures continue, and ideological narratives persist; however, their social grounding erodes. Legitimacy weakens before it is openly contested, participation declines before it is explicitly suppressed, and economic stress is converted into political pressure even in the absence of ideological polarization. Layer 3 thus functions as a mid-level destabilizer: it does not destroy order outright, but steadily undermines the conditions that make democratic coordination effective.

Adaptive responses to Layer 3 degradation emerge across citizens, economic actors, and the state. These responses are not ideological choices but structurally induced adaptations to constrained participation. Citizens increasingly withdraw from formal labor markets through underemployment, informality, or exit via emigration and internal migration. Emotional orientation shifts toward frustration

and loss of future orientation as belief in the effort–reward linkage deteriorates. Coordination moves away from institutional participation toward private coping strategies, including reliance on family networks, patronage, or informal income systems. Civic engagement declines, and tolerance grows for non-democratic arrangements that promise income stability or restored access to livelihoods.

Economic actors respond by concentrating assets and access, shifting from productivity-oriented investment toward protection, influence, and control. Strategies increasingly emphasize rent extraction, regulatory capture, defensive contracting, and labor cost suppression. Markets drift from open competition toward gatekept participation, where access to opportunity is mediated by networks, credentials, or political alignment rather than performance. Capital reallocates toward protected sectors and jurisdictions, further narrowing participation channels.

State institutions typically respond by attempting to preserve legitimacy without expanding material inclusion. Policy emphasis shifts toward growth narratives, stabilization optics, selective relief, and procedural inclusion rather than structural access. Tools such as subsidies, debt expansion, symbolic redistribution, and opportunity framing are deployed to manage pressure while underlying participation constraints persist. As a result, institutions remain formally democratic while participation erodes beneath the surface.

These adaptive responses generate characteristic regime pressures without immediately forcing regime change. Layer 3 failure does not collapse the system but renders it unstable and oscillatory. Drift pressures emerge in multiple directions. Authoritarian drift is facilitated when economic frustration is redirected into obedience-for-stability trade-offs, legitimizing executive expansion and managed inclusion. Oligarchic drift accelerates as control over livelihoods becomes a bargaining chip, allowing elites to convert economic position into political insulation while democratic choice loses material impact. Anarchic drift develops where participation fragments territorially or socially, informal economies dominate, and parallel systems of work and protection emerge, weakening social glue before ideology crystallizes.

In equilibrium terms, the Democracy Equilibrium Point (DEP) becomes distorted but not absent. The balance among citizens, businesses, and the state persists, but it is fragile, reactive, and increasingly volatile. Participation inequality stresses equilibrium, oscillation replaces stability, and pressure accumulates toward capture or coercion rather than consent. Layer 3 therefore constitutes the primary accelerator of oligarchic and populist drift while remaining distinct from the foundation collapse of Layer 1 or the coercive breakdown of Layer 2. Layer 3 failure also externalizes through migration pressure, capital flight, cross-border labor displacement, and political contagion driven by grievance narratives, exporting instability beyond national boundaries.

Layer 3 satisfaction is evaluated through observable behavioral indicators rather than declarative metrics. These indicators are encoded using seven-point C/B/G response intensity scales that measure how strongly each actor adapts once participation constraints

emerge. At low response intensity (scores 1–2), participation stress is localized or episodic: citizens experience limited exclusion, firms hedge without restructuring markets, and governments rely on routine adjustment. At moderate intensity (scores 3–4), participation erosion becomes persistent but non-dominant: informalization grows, capital concentrates defensively, and state responses emphasize stabilization without inclusion. At high intensity (scores 5–6), participation failure becomes system-relevant: exit behavior spreads, markets become gatekept, and legitimacy is increasingly decoupled from outcomes. At saturation (score 7), participation exclusion constitutes a dominant coordination logic across society, signaling structural failure of the layer.

When Layer 3 satisfaction deteriorates, participation constraints manifest first as behavioral adaptation rather than overt political rupture. On the citizen side, this appears as withdrawal from formal labor markets through underemployment and informality, increased emigration or internal migration driven by economic exclusion, declining labor participation despite available work, and reliance on family, patronage, or identity-based income networks. Business responses concentrate around defensive coordination: concentration of assets and market access, shifts from productivity investment toward protection and influence, defensive contracting and regulatory insulation, rent extraction replacing competitive growth, labor cost suppression, and exclusionary hiring practices. State responses increasingly emphasize stabilization without structural inclusion, relying on selective relief programs, symbolic redistribution, debt expansion to defer participation pressure, procedural inclusion without material access, and framing participation as opportunity rather than outcome. Together, these C/B/G responses constitute compensatory adaptations to participation dissatisfaction, signaling that coordination is being preserved formally while substantive access and livelihood integration continue to erode. These response intensities do not re-evaluate Layer 3 itself; they encode how citizens, businesses, and the state adapt once its structural satisfaction level is determined. Together, they provide the diagnostic basis for aggregation within the Regime Stability and Drift Assessment framework, linking participation dynamics to regime instability without reliance on ideology or normative judgment.

Layer 4 of the Societal Needs Hierarchy: Legitimacy and Institutional Trust

Layer 4 of the Societal Needs Hierarchy concerns normative legitimacy and institutional trust, defined as the widespread belief that governing institutions possess not merely the capacity to rule, but the rightful authority to do so. Whereas lower layers establish survival, security, and participation, Layer 4 governs whether authority is accepted as legitimate rather than tolerated as useful, unavoidable, or coercively imposed. This layer addresses the normative foundation of political order by answering a central question: do individuals comply with rules because they believe institutions are justified in issuing them, or only because compliance is enforced or expedient?

When Layer 4 is satisfied, societal coordination relies primarily on voluntary compliance. Citizens accept adverse outcomes as procedurally fair, businesses operate through institutions rather than around them, and the state governs through consent reinforced by credibility and accountability. Legitimacy at this level depends on perceived equality before the law, due process that is both formal

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and substantive, political participation that produces tangible consequences, and institutions understood to serve society as a whole rather than particular factions or elites. Courts, elections, statistics, and accountability mechanisms must not only function procedurally but be trusted as fair and meaningful. Under these conditions, institutions exercise authority without continuous recourse to coercion, spectacle, or narrative justification.

Layer 4 failure occurs when legitimacy is withdrawn at the population level, not as a response to isolated injustices but as a result of repeated, visible patterns that signal bias, performativity, or self-serving institutional behavior. The defining transition is cognitive rather than procedural: individuals cease evaluating authority through the lens of legality and instead assess whether institutions act on behalf of society. Once this shift becomes widespread, authority loses its normative foundation. Compliance no longer reflects consent but calculation, resignation, or avoidance. Institutions persist formally but lose causal power over behavior, producing a condition in which rules are followed instrumentally when enforced and ignored when enforcement is absent. In this sense, Layer 4 failure does not destroy institutions; it hollows them out.

A structural non-negotiability follows from this condition. No political system can sustain voluntary compliance once legitimacy is broadly withdrawn. Authority must then substitute consent with coercion, proceduralism, spectacle, or selective enforcement, or else accept progressive erosion. Governance becomes increasingly reliant on mechanisms external to legitimacy itself, while the formal architecture of institutions remains intact but substantively weakened.

As legitimacy erodes, adaptive responses emerge across citizens, economic actors, and the state. These responses are not ideological choices but structurally induced behavioral adjustments. Citizens increasingly disengage from democratic participation, comply selectively, or participate symbolically without belief in institutional remedy. Emotional orientations shift toward resentment, humiliation, and moral withdrawal, often articulated through perceptions of unequal rule application. Coordination moves away from consent-based compliance toward compliance-when-convenient, exit, or passive resistance. Law is no longer treated as morally binding but as an external constraint to be managed.

Economic actors respond by treating rules as negotiable constraints rather than binding norms. Regulatory arbitrage becomes standard practice rather than exception, while investment increasingly targets access, exemptions, and predictability instead of institutional fairness. Capital hedges across jurisdictions, aligns with power holders rather than institutions, and adapts by operating around formal structures instead of through them. In doing so, economic behavior reinforces institutional hollowing without requiring overt regime change.

The state responds to legitimacy erosion by substituting legality for legitimacy as the primary justification of authority. Governance emphasizes procedure over substance, deploying symbolic reforms, selective enforcement, transparency theater, and narrative

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management to sustain institutional appearance. Official discourse stresses system functionality and technical necessity rather than moral justification. Institutions persist formally, but authority is defended procedurally rather than normatively, further weakening public trust.

The resulting regime behavior under Layer 4 degradation is characterized by normative instability rather than immediate coercive breakdown. Systems may remain formally democratic while becoming institutionally fragile. Drift at this level is institutional rather than biological: legitimacy erodes before force dominates. Authoritarian drift emerges when legitimacy loss creates the precondition for coercive rule, as declining voluntary compliance increases enforcement demands and emergency logic becomes normalized after legitimacy has already failed. Authoritarianism becomes tolerable precisely because authority is no longer believed to be rightful. Oligarchic drift arises when legitimacy erosion enables elite capture without overt repression, allowing economic power to substitute for moral authority while democratic procedures persist in form but lose responsiveness in outcome. Anarchic drift constitutes a secondary pathway, typically requiring concurrent degradation of security, in which selective obedience escalates, competing moral authorities emerge, and trust in any shared rule-set evaporates. In this configuration, Layer 4 functions as the trigger that dissolves normative cohesion, even if coercive capacity has not yet collapsed.

Within the broader hierarchy, Layer 4 operates as the hinge layer. Below it, compliance is sustained because systems function; above it, individuals seek meaning, identity, and purpose. At Layer 4, compliance depends on the belief that authority is legitimate. This is where democratic drift becomes possible. Under legitimacy erosion, the Democracy Equilibrium Point does not disappear but becomes unstable and oscillatory. Balance among citizens, business, and government weakens, contestation increases, and equilibrium persists only through procedural inertia. Unlike failures at Layers 1 or 2, where equilibrium collapses, Layer 4 degradation produces hollowing rather than disappearance.

Legitimacy loss also externalizes beyond domestic boundaries. Norm erosion propagates through polarization export, information warfare, declining trust in international institutions, and cross-border contestation of procedural authority. Legitimacy, once weakened, does not remain contained; its erosion spreads.

Operationally, Layer 4 is assessed through observable behavioral response intensities rather than direct legitimacy declarations. Citizen behaviors such as selective compliance, declining turnout, symbolic participation, cynicism, moral withdrawal, and rationalized exit indicate varying degrees of normative erosion. Business behaviors including regulatory arbitrage, access-oriented investment, influence spending, and institutional circumvention signal adaptation to legitimacy loss. State behaviors such as proceduralism without substance, selective enforcement, symbolic reform, and narrative justification reflect attempts to preserve authority in the absence of consent. These behaviors are encoded using a seven-point C/B/G response intensity scale, ranging from dormant or localized responses to saturated, society-wide coordination logics. Intermediate values capture partial legitimacy erosion in

which instrumental compliance spreads but has not yet become dominant. Crucially, these scores do not re-evaluate the satisfaction of Layer 4 itself; they encode the scope and intensity of behavioral adaptation once legitimacy withdrawal is underway. Together, they provide the empirical foundation for integrating legitimacy dynamics into the Regime Stability and Drift Assessment methodology.

Layer 5 of the Societal Needs Hierarchy: Political Agency and Participation

Layer 5 of the Societal Needs Hierarchy concerns political agency: the capacity of individuals and groups to meaningfully influence collective outcomes through participation without requiring crisis, violence, or system rupture. Whereas Layer 4 addresses whether authority is perceived as rightful, Layer 5 addresses whether participation produces consequential feedback. This layer distinguishes democracies that merely permit participation from those in which participation functions as an operative correction mechanism. Political agency exists only where participation can alter policy trajectories, leadership composition, or institutional behavior within predictable time horizons and without extraordinary mobilization.

At scale, political agency requires more than formal access to participatory channels. It presupposes cognitive autonomy through access to plural information and the ability to reason independently, mechanisms for voicing whose outputs generate observable consequences, reversibility of power through the removal or correction of decisions, and institutional correction mechanisms that reliably constrain authority. The core diagnostic question at this layer is not whether participation occurs, but whether outcomes respond to participation under normal operating conditions.

Layer 5 failure is triggered when participation persists while agency is structurally removed. Elections, protests, consultations, and public discourse continue, but outcomes cease to adjust in response. Reversibility weakens or disappears, correction mechanisms become delayed, symbolic, or blocked, and feedback loops no longer translate civic input into institutional change. Participation becomes expressive rather than instrumental, and stability becomes performative rather than adaptive. Legitimacy may persist temporarily, but control is lost. Stability without agency therefore constitutes stored instability, as accumulated pressure is deferred rather than resolved.

When Layer 5 degrades, adaptive responses emerge across citizens, economic actors, and the state. These responses are not ideological preferences but structurally induced behavioral adjustments to the loss of effective agency. Citizens continue to participate while abandoning expectations of impact. Political engagement shifts toward identity expression, spectacle, protest cycles, or emotional mobilization without belief in correction. Cognitive framing shifts from “we can change this” to “the system is fixed” or “the system is unfixable”. Participation remains visible, but agency collapses. Time horizons shorten, and reversibility is no longer anticipated.

Economic actors respond by prioritizing executive continuity over public accountability. Capital aligns with decision-makers rather than institutions, influence replaces persuasion, and proximity replaces competition. Sensitivity to electoral cycles declines, while investment in lobbying, exemptions, and informal access increases. Public participation is treated as noise rather than constraint, reinforcing elite insulation and weakening democratic responsiveness without requiring overt regime change.

State institutions respond by preserving democratic form while restricting reversibility. Elections continue, but outcomes are increasingly pre-bounded or non-reversible. Governance shifts toward procedural compliance, narrative management, and rule formalism, while substantive correction is deferred “until crisis.” Power concentrates incrementally without explicit rupture. Institutions remain intact, but feedback loops stop functioning. Governance becomes performative rather than adaptive.

The resulting regime behavior is characterized by slow internal drift within a democratic form rather than immediate collapse. Three dominant trajectories emerge. Illiberal democratic drift manifests as elections without consequence, ineffective opposition, and procedural continuity without substantive change. Managed participation drift uses participation primarily as a legitimacy signal, with outcomes bounded in advance and emotional mobilization substituting for policy correction. Executive dominance drift arises when power accumulation becomes effectively irreversible, legal authority persists while constraints erode, and correction is deferred until systemic crisis. Across all paths, participation without reversibility produces legitimacy without control.

At the system level, Layer 5 failure produces the appearance of stability while rendering equilibrium brittle. The Democracy Equilibrium Point may appear intact, but balance is maintained through pressure suppression rather than resolution. Drift at this layer is procedural and internal rather than biological, coercive, or economic. It does not yet require legitimacy collapse, but it accelerates its likelihood by delaying correction.

Externalization at Layer 5 is informational and institutional rather than material or territorial. When political agency fails internally, pressure is displaced outward through narrative externalization, procedural externalization, and symbolic conflict. Accountability failures are reframed as foreign interference, legitimacy disputes are exported to courts, commissions, and technical bodies, and internal deadlock is redirected into foreign policy posturing, sanctions regimes, or symbolic international conflict. Civic energy exits domestic corrective channels and flows into international causes, online movements, and non-binding activism. Participation remains high, but domestic feedback loops remain broken.

Observable indicators of Layer 5 degradation are behavioral rather than declarative and are operationalized through response intensity across citizens, business, and government. Citizen indicators include continued participation accompanied by declining belief in impact, expressive or symbolic engagement replacing outcome-oriented participation, language shifts toward inevitability, and acceptance of non-responsive governance as normal. Business indicators include a preference for executive continuity, alignment of

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capital with decision-makers rather than institutions, reduced sensitivity to electoral outcomes, and the expansion of influence-based strategies. State indicators include preservation of democratic form alongside erosion of democratic effect, procedural continuity without corrective capacity, narrative management, and deferral of correction until crisis.

C/B/G response scores at this layer encode response intensity rather than satisfaction. They capture how strongly each actor adapts once political agency is structurally impaired, not whether the layer itself is satisfied. A seven-point scale ranges from dormant responses to saturated, system-wide coordination logics in which participation persists without agency across society. High response intensity at Layer 5 signals delayed failure accumulation rather than immediate breakdown, indicating that stability is being maintained at the cost of future system resilience. Layer 5 thus represents the final quiet failure zone before either legitimacy collapse or coercive reactivation. Participation continues, institutions persist, and systems appear functional—until accumulated pressure exceeds the capacity of performative stability. When correction is delayed too long, collapse arrives later and more violently, not because participation ceased, but because agency was removed.

Layer 6 of the Societal Needs Hierarchy: National Identity and Purpose

Layer 6 of the Societal Needs Hierarchy concerns national identity and collective purpose. Unlike lower layers, it does not introduce a new functional substrate; it emerges only when all preceding layers – physiological survival, security, livelihoods, legitimacy, and agency – are operating sufficiently well. At this level, societies address a qualitatively different question: who they are as a collective, where they are going, and why they pursue that trajectory together. National identity and purpose are therefore not constructed inputs but emergent properties of functioning systems.

When Layer 6 is structurally satisfied, collective identity is grounded in observable institutional outcomes rather than symbolic assertion alone. Civic narratives align with lived experience, long-term direction extends beyond electoral cycles, and diversity is integrated through institutions rather than suppressed by ideology. Individuals perceive a meaningful relationship between personal effort and collective progress, enabling intergenerational coherence and patience. Under these conditions, identity functions as an integrative force that reinforces institutional legitimacy and adaptive capacity rather than substituting for them.

Layer 6 fails when identity and purpose are demanded before lower layers are structurally satisfied, or when they are mobilized to compensate for unresolved material, institutional, or agency failures. In such cases, meaning is imposed rather than earned, narrative precedes outcomes, and symbolic unity replaces effective coordination. A derived non-negotiability rule follows directly: no society can sustain a shared national purpose if survival, security, livelihoods, legitimacy, or agency are structurally broken. Identity cannot repair foundational failures; it can only mask them temporarily.

The immediate consequence of Layer 6 failure is that identity becomes substitutive rather than integrative. Narratives inflate while institutions decay. Meaning no longer coordinates learning, correction, or accountability; instead, it displaces them. This state strategic approach does not immediately collapse regimes. Rather, it locks them into ideological rigidity, creating a condition that appears stable while progressively eliminating corrective capacity.

Adaptive responses under Layer 6 failure follow well-documented behavioral regularities across citizens, elites, and state institutions. Citizens exhibit intensified psychological search for meaning, belonging, and moral clarity. Behavioral alignment shifts toward symbolic identities, movements, or myths, while emotional unity increasingly substitutes for institutional trust. The result is cohesion without influence: individuals experience belonging and moral certainty without corresponding mechanisms for correction or agency.

Elites, cultural producers, and political entrepreneurs respond by manufacturing and amplifying identity narratives to stabilize legitimacy gaps. Symbolism, historical mythmaking, moral framing, and the construction of an external enemy become primary tools. Incentive structures shift away from performance and institutional outcomes toward narrative dominance, with power justified through meaning rather than results. Identity becomes a coordination technology for managing legitimacy deficits rather than a reflection of institutional success.

State institutions respond by elevating narrative above feedback. Governance increasingly relies on symbolic unity to substitute for material or institutional correction. Purpose is mobilized to demand sacrifice without reciprocal adjustment, and legitimacy becomes ideological rather than institutional. Formal structures may remain intact, but learning capacity declines as dissent is reframed as extremism, disloyalty, or betrayal rather than informational input.

These response patterns generate three principal regime drift trajectories. Ideological consolidation drift emerges when purpose becomes mandatory, dissent is reframed as disloyalty, and narrative replaces correction. Identity fragmentation drift arises when competing identities displace shared civic identity, institutions lose their integrative role, and society polarizes into moral tribes. Externalization drift occurs when unresolved internal failures are projected outward, with external conflict or crusades used to restore internal coherence and national purpose. Across all trajectories, the core logic remains consistent: Layer 6 failure amplifies unresolved failures below rather than resolving them.

In relation to the Democracy Equilibrium Point (DEP), Layer 6 occupies a uniquely dangerous position. Democratic equilibrium cannot be sustained through narrative alone. When identity replaces feedback, equilibrium becomes theatrical rather than functional. Although systems may appear coherent and mobilized, they lose the ability to self-correct. For this reason, Layer 6 failure accelerates irreversible drift: correction is reframed as betrayal, institutions stop learning, and ideology blocks adaptation. Externalization risk rises sharply, manifesting through symbolic enemies, cultural wars, and external conflict framed as destiny or historical mission.

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Observable indicators of Layer 6 failure are evaluated through behavioral response intensity rather than satisfaction metrics. Among citizens, indicators include strong emotional identification with symbols and slogans, meaning-seeking through movements or moral narratives, declining institutional trust replaced by identity loyalty, high participation in symbolic acts, and the framing of dissent as betrayal rather than disagreement. Among elites and cultural producers, indicators include accelerated narrative production relative to institutional reform, increased use of history and destiny framing, identity replacing performance metrics, intensified cultural gatekeeping, and incentive alignment favoring narrative loyalty over accountability. Among state institutions, indicators include official narratives elevated above feedback mechanisms, policy justification framed as moral necessity or historical duty, dissent reframed as extremism or disinformation, institutional preservation accompanied by declining adaptability, and sacrifice demanded without reciprocal institutional correction.

C/B/G scores at this layer encode response intensity rather than layer satisfaction. They are conditional on the layer's structural state and measure how strongly each actor adapts once identity and purpose become substitutive. A seven-point response intensity scale ranges from dormant or unobservable responses to saturated, society-wide coordination logics. High scores across citizens, elites, and state institutions signal a system in which meaning has fully displaced correction, producing apparent stability alongside deep structural fragility.

Layer 6 thus represents the most dangerous failure mode within the Societal Needs Hierarchy. It feels coherent, mobilized, and purposeful precisely because it suppresses feedback. National identity and collective purpose must therefore be understood as consequences of functioning systems, not substitutes for their failure. When identity is forced rather than emergent, it does not restore equilibrium; it seals drift.

Layer 7 of Societal Needs: Constructive Collective Internal and External Roles

Layer 7 represents the highest-order expression of societal functioning, corresponding to voluntary contribution beyond immediate self-interest and beyond the requirements of coordination, legitimacy, or agency. At this level, individuals, organizations, and institutions engage in service, responsibility, cooperation, and constructive external roles not because they are compelled to do so, but because internal equilibrium has rendered such contribution meaningful, sustainable, and self-reinforcing. Layer 7 does not stabilize societies, nor does it generate equilibrium. Instead, it emerges only after equilibrium has been achieved at lower layers, including survival, security, livelihoods, legitimacy, agency, identity, and purpose. Its defining characteristic is transcendence that is chosen rather than demanded.

Because of this emergent nature, Layer 7 is structurally non-constructible. Constructive internal and external roles cannot be engineered through top-down design, moral exhortation, or ideological mobilization without distortion. When self-transcendence is

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demanding in the presence of unresolved failures below, contribution ceases to be voluntary and becomes simulated. This substitution strategy establishes a non-negotiability condition: no society can sustain genuine constructive internal and external behavior in the absence of internal cohesion and fulfilled lower layers. Attempts to do so replace contribution with compliance and meaning with mobilization.

Failure at Layer 7 occurs when transcendence is imposed rather than emergent, typically as a compensatory response to unresolved institutional, legitimacy, or agency deficits. In such cases, service is moralized, sacrifice is demanded, and responsibility is framed as obligation rather than choice. The immediate consequence is not integration but erosion of voluntary cooperation. Altruism becomes conditional or politicized, participation shifts from initiative to performative loyalty, and moral fatigue, cynicism, and withdrawal increase. Meaning no longer coordinates contribution; it disciplines behavior.

These dynamics manifest distinctly across societal actors. Citizens exhibit declining voluntary civic contribution, increasing reliance on moral signaling, and participation driven by pressure rather than initiative. Compliance replaces service, loyalty substitutes for cooperation, and disengagement grows beneath surface mobilization. Elites and businesses respond by reframing contribution as reputational shielding, using corporate social responsibility, ideology, or national mission narratives to substitute for material responsibility and measurable impact. Alignment with dominant narratives becomes a risk-management strategy, while responsibility is increasingly externalized. At the state level, purpose is declared rather than earned, narrative enforcement replaces feedback, dissent is reframed as betrayal, and external missions are emphasized to compensate for internal weakness. These societal developments mark the point at which internal failure flips outward.

Layer 7 failure does not produce immediate regime collapse. Instead, it locks systems into externalization patterns. Governance becomes moralized, mission framing becomes permanent, and identity-based unity enforcement substitutes for institutional coordination. Democratic equilibrium does not exist at this layer, as transcendence is not a balancing mechanism and cannot be expressed within the Democratic Equilibrium Framework means. The distortion observed at Layer 7, therefore, reflects unresolved failures below rather than a balance among actors.

The dominant drift direction under Layer 7 failure is externalization. Internal cohesion is replaced by conflict, shared civic identity by enemies, and contribution by expansion or mobilization. External engagement shifts from cooperative and stabilizing roles to ideological projection, coercive alliances, moralized foreign policy, or conflict substitution. In this sense, Layer 7 represents the final amplification stage of unresolved systemic failure. From a drift-escalation perspective, it does not initiate collapse but rather accelerates and hardens it by eliminating remaining adaptive capacity. Correction is reframed as betrayal, institutions cease learning, and external conflict becomes the organizing principle.

Observable indicators of Layer 7 failure, therefore, signal simulation rather than strength. At the citizen level, high engagement coexists with declining voluntary contribution, ritualized participation, and moral pressure substituting for initiative. Among elites, symbolic contribution replaces material responsibility, and narrative loyalty replaces institutional accountability. At the state level, legitimacy shifts from institutional performance to ideological coherence, external missions compensate for internal weakness, and permanent mobilization logic prevails. High response intensity at this layer indicates not transcendence, but the masking of internal failure through externalization.

The final derived rule of Layer 7 is therefore strict: constructive external behavior is the result of internal equilibrium, never its cause. When transcendence is authentic, it integrates societies and stabilizes their external roles. When forced, it becomes the most dangerous form of failure, because it appears noble while systematically eliminating correction.

From Structural Theory to Diagnostic Methodology

Having established the Societal Needs Hierarchy (SNH) and its associated layer-specific failure modes, as well as C/B/G adaptive responses, this part of the analysis transitions from descriptive mode to structured diagnosis. The purpose of this section is not to restate the logic of societal needs, adaptations, or democratic equilibrium, but to formalize how those concepts are evaluated in practice. Specifically, it introduces the Regime Stability and Drift Assessment (RSDA) methodology, which operationalizes observed behavioral responses into a coherent diagnostic framework. Throughout this section, societal stability is assessed not through declared intentions, institutional design, or regime labels, but through the adaptive responses of citizens, business actors, and the state to the intensity of unmet structural conditions. These responses are treated as observable indicators of stress, substitution, and coordination failure. The methodology presented here, therefore, establishes a disciplined analytical boundary: theory explains why systems fail, while RSDA specifies how those failures are detected, quantified, compared, and mapped relative to the Democracy Equilibrium Point (DEP). This transition marks the shift from conceptual architecture to applied structural measurement.

Up to this point, the framework has examined democratic systems through a structural lens, describing how they function, fail, and drift by moving sequentially through the layers of the Societal Needs Hierarchy and analyzing the adaptive responses of citizens, business, and government under conditions of distortion. Those qualitative assessments and conclusions inevitably raise a more demanding question: how can we determine where a political system is positioned in the present and, more importantly, the structural direction in which it is moving? Qualitative analysis alone is insufficient for this task. While indispensable for interpretation, it permits selective emphasis, obscures early warning signals, and frequently conflates institutional form with functional performance. As a result, structural drift often becomes visible only after a crisis has already materialized and corrective capacity has been substantially eroded. For this reason, the framework must extend into quantification — not as a predictive exercise or an attempt to collapse complexity into a single metric, but as a method for detecting emerging structural imbalances before irreversible failure

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thresholds are reached. Quantification in this context does not replace judgment; it disciplines it by enforcing consistency across cases and over time. By translating observable behavioral responses of citizens, businesses, and the state into structured quantitative signals on a layer-by-layer basis, the analysis gains the ability to compare regimes without ideological classification, to reveal instability masked by apparent normality, to distinguish equilibrium from drift and drift from delayed failure, and to track directional movement rather than static condition. All these reasons form the purpose of the Regime Stability and Drift Assessment: to operationalize structural theory into a coherent diagnostic methodology capable of assessing the present regime position, identifying drift trajectories, and exposing latent failure risks before they manifest as systemic collapse or crisis.

From Structure to Drift: How Societal Needs Become Observable Signals

The transition from structural theory to observable diagnosis rests on a single non-negotiable premise: all societal actors respond for the same fundamental reason — survival first and prosperity second — through adaptation. While the forms of adaptation differ, the underlying motive remains the same. Citizens, businesses, and government are therefore treated not as perspectives or narratives, but as the only actors capable of generating system-wide responses. Individual beliefs, institutional declarations, and media discourse acquire analytical relevance only to the extent that they translate into behavioral change by one or more of these actors. For this reason, the Societal Needs Hierarchy is not observed directly. Concepts such as legitimacy, trust, participation, or collective purpose are not measurable in isolation. What is observable is how strongly each actor responds when a particular layer becomes stressed or structurally unmet. The framework, therefore, does not attempt to measure satisfaction itself, but to measure response intensity — the degree of effort, deviation, coercion, withdrawal, or reallocation required to maintain survival, and potentially prosperity. Evaluation necessarily proceeds bottom-up, because weakness at lower SNH layers distorts all layers above them. When physical survival, security, or livelihood are unstable, higher-order functions such as legitimacy, participation, or collective identity do not disappear; rather, they become symbolic, performative, or compensatory rather than stabilizing. Aggregating citizen, business, and government responses across layers produces two diagnostics simultaneously: a Structural Stability Snapshot of the Societal Needs Hierarchy, revealing which layers are load-bearing and which are hollow, and the system's position relative to the Democracy Equilibrium Point, including both distance from equilibrium and direction of drift. Societal needs are ultimately satisfied not abstractly, but through state mechanisms — institutions, ideology, and the economy — a logic that will be addressed later. At this stage, the objective is to demonstrate how unmet needs become observable signals and how those signals translate into measurable structural and dynamic diagnostics.

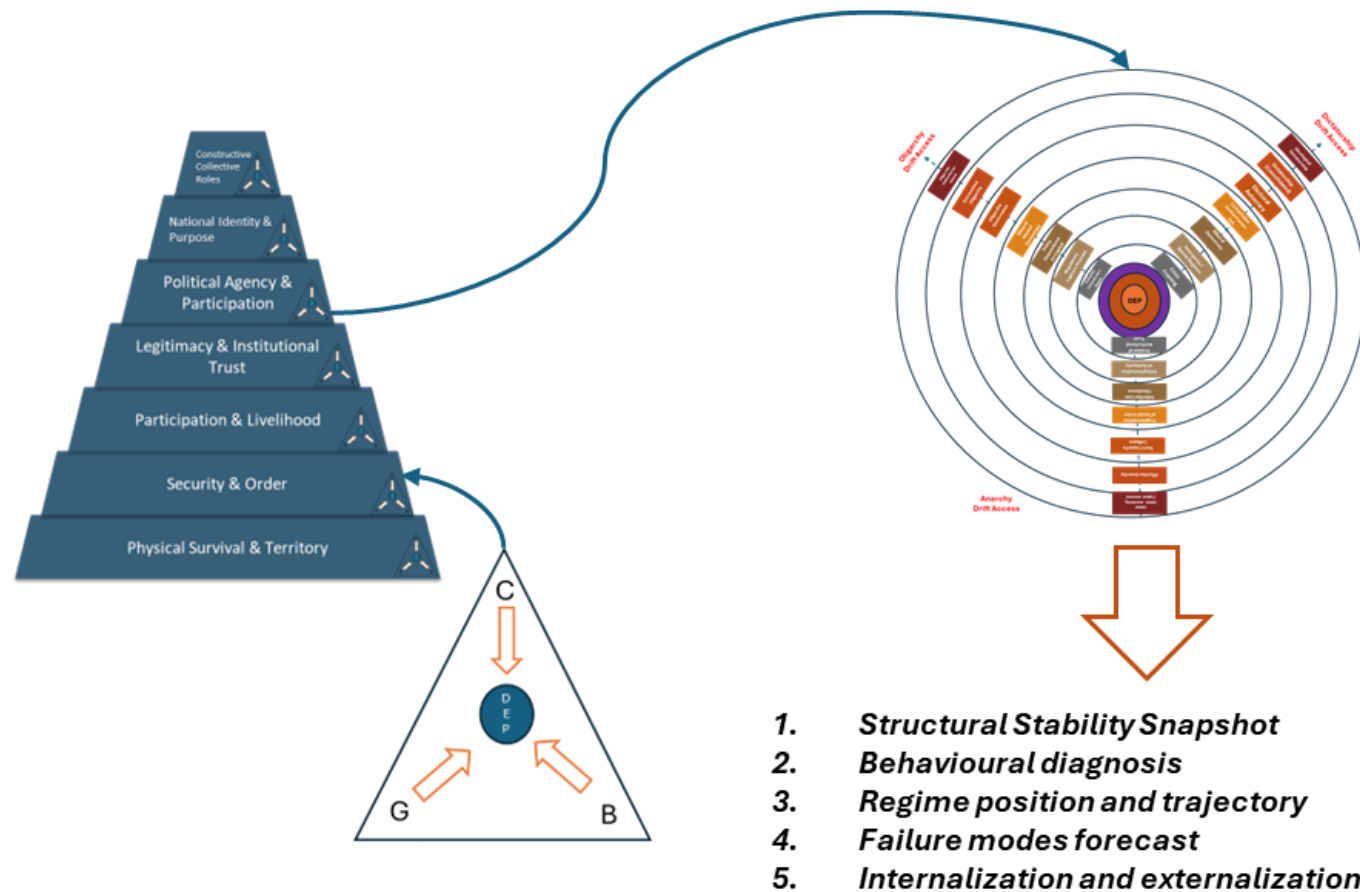
Connecting Frameworks: From Theory to Disciplined Diagnosis

By this stage, several conceptual frameworks have been introduced — the Societal Needs Hierarchy, the triad of citizens, business, and government, DEF, and the Democracy Equilibrium Point Drift Vector Map — each of which is coherent on its own. The

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methodological challenge is to connect them in a disciplined, non-narrative manner without collapsing structural logic into ideology or subjective interpretation. Quantification is introduced not to simplify complexity, but to prevent regimes from defining their own stability through declarative claims. Stability, in this framework, is not asserted; it is inferred. SNH layers' satisfaction is not directly measured because it is not observable. What can be observed, though, are behavioral responses to unmet triad needs for survival and prosperity. Citizens adapt through compliance, withdrawal, mobilization, or disengagement; businesses adapt through capital allocation, risk avoidance, concentration, or exit; governments adapt through policy shifts, enforcement intensity, emergency powers, and narrative control.



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The cumulative intensity of these responses reveals how stressed a given layer actually is. Evaluation always proceeds from the base of the SNH hierarchy upward, because higher layers cannot stabilize independently of lower ones. When foundational layers are satisfied, higher-order coordination can emerge organically; when they are not, higher layers become symbolic or compensatory rather than functional. By quantifying actor responses at each layer, the framework produces a snapshot of SNH structural stability that can be evaluated at a point in time, compared historically, and tracked longitudinally. At the same time, aggregated C/B/G responses allow inference of the system's position relative to the Democracy Equilibrium Point, which itself is not measured directly but revealed through imbalance, when authority, capital, or coordination cease to constrain one another mutually. A single evaluation, therefore, yields two outcomes simultaneously: an assessment of structural condition and a diagnosis of drift direction and severity. Stability is treated as a pattern rather than a label, and drift as a direction rather than a prediction.

Hryshenko's Regime Stability & Drift Assessment (RSDA)

Observed C/B/G Responses



Layer Structural Satisfaction (SNH, bottom-up)



Structural Stability Snapshot (Pyramid Shape)



DEP Position (Distance from Equilibrium)



Drift Vector (O + D + A)



Failure Mode & Externalization Risk



1. Structural Stability Snapshot

→ 7-layer SNH likelihood profile

2. Detailed Behavioral Diagnosis

→ C / B / G responses per layer

3. Regime Position and Trajectory

→ DEP drift vector toward D / O / A modes

4. Failure Mode Forecast

→ Which drift accelerates next, and why

5. Externalization

Externalization pressure expected → see Externalization tab

C,B,G → Layer status → Pyramid shape → DEP condition → Drift direction

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The Regime Stability and Drift Assessment (RSDA) operationalizes structural theory by explicitly separating diagnostic process from analytical outcomes. The assessment begins with empirically observable responses from citizens, businesses, and government — the only actors capable of producing system-wide effects. These responses are expressed through adaptive behavior rather than intent and include mobility, capital allocation, policy action, enforcement intensity, withdrawal, and escalation. Ideological claims, declared objectives, and institutional narratives are deliberately excluded as inputs.

These observed responses are then interpreted bottom-up through the Societal Needs Hierarchy. Each layer is evaluated based on response intensity rather than subjective satisfaction, allowing the analyst to determine whether a given structural function is holding, strained, compensatory, or failing by using the Response Intensity Scale (RIS). Aggregating these layer-level evaluations produces an SNH structural stability snapshot, represented by the hierarchy's effective shape. This snapshot does not rank regimes but reveals where load-bearing capacity exists and where higher layers persist only symbolically.

	C/B/G Response Intensity Scale (RIS)
Score	Meaning (Response Intensity)
1	Dormant / no observable response
2	Localized / episodic response
3	Noticeable but containable
4	Persistent but non-dominant
5	Widespread, system-relevant
6	Dominant coordination logic
7	Saturated / society-wide response

From the resulting structural form, the system's position relative to the Democracy Equilibrium Point is inferred. The DEP is not directly measured or declared; it is derived as distance from equilibrium, based on imbalance among citizen, business, and government responses. That distance, combined with the directional pressure exerted by the three actors, yields a regime trajectory expressed as a drift vector along oligarchic, dictatorial, and anarchic axes. The regime's position along these axes is treated as both scalar and vectoral, placing it in a specific spot on the DEP Vector Drift Map. It is structural rather than relevant to any regime labels. The regime may occupy a specific position on all 3 axes simultaneously.

Once drift direction and intensity are established, the assessment identifies dominant failure modes, indicating which form of instability is most likely to accelerate next and why. Only at this stage does the framework evaluate externalization risk, specifying how internal structural imbalance is likely to be exported outward through mechanisms such as migration, conflict, capital flight, coercion, or dependency. RSDA therefore produces a coherent diagnostic sequence in which observed actor responses generate layer

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status, layer status defines SNH structural form, structural form determines state distance from equilibrium, and equilibrium distance constrains regime trajectory, failure risk, and externalization pressure. The framework does not predict events; it diagnoses structure, direction, and systemic pressure before instability becomes irreversible.

Operationalization of C/B/G Responses

At this stage, the Regime Stability and Drift Assessment becomes operational. Rather than evaluating abstract concepts such as legitimacy or trust directly, the framework measures the intensity of adaptive responses exhibited by citizens, businesses, and government when structural needs are unmet. These responses are observable in behavior and therefore comparable across cases. High scores on the Response Intensity Scale (RIS) do not indicate successful engagement or institutional vitality; they indicate stress within S/B/G social systems, compensation, or breakdown. Migration, riots, informal survival networks, capital flight, asset stripping, the permanence of emergency rule, and militarized governance are treated not as ideological phenomena but as adaptive responses to SNH layers' satisfaction failure.

	SNH Layer	C-score	C-Description	C-Evaluation	B-Score	B-Description	B-Evaluation	G-Score	G-Description	G-Evaluation	Pyramid Evaluation
1	Physical Survival and Territory	7	Large-scale migration / internal displacement Food / fuel riots Informal survival networks replacing institutions Exit > voice behavior dominates		6	Capital flight or asset stripping Control of logistics nodes (fuel, ports, food) Shift from production to extraction Private security / militia funding		6	Emergency rule permanence Rationing / requisitioning Militarized logistics control Loss of uniform territorial enforcement		SNH EU C:7 B:6 G:6
2	Security & Order		Avoidance of public space; behavioral withdrawal Reliance on private or informal protection Localized compliance rather than universal rule adherence Decline in reporting, civic cooperation, and public trust Safety becomes primary political demand over rights or participation			Reduced long-term investment; preference for protected assets Geographic concentration into secure zones Security contracting and political hedging Compliance favored over innovation under enforcement risk Exit from insecure regions or sectors			Expansion of policing, surveillance, and preventive detention Use of emergency powers and procedural shortcuts Force prioritization over due process "Order first / safety before rights" narrative dominance Legitimacy becomes conditional on security delivery		

C/B/G Response Intensity Scale	
Score	Meaning (Response Intensity)
1	Dormant / no observable response
2	Localized / episodic response
3	Noticeable but containable
4	Persistent but non-dominant
5	Widespread, system-relevant
6	Dominant coordination logic
7	Saturated / society-wide response

Layer Satisfaction Evaluation (1-7)	
#	Meaning
1	Exceptionally Unsatisfied (EU)
2	Highly Unsatisfied (HU)
3	Unsatisfied (U)
4	About as satisfied as not (ASN)
5	Satisfied (S)
6	Highly Satisfied (HS)
7	Completely Satisfied (CS)

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Citizen responses capture how populations adapt when foundational needs are not met. Large-scale displacement, withdrawal from public institutions, reliance on informal networks, and a shift from voice to exit signal that survival pressures dominate behavior. Business responses reflect adaptation to business risks rather than a preference, including reallocation of capital away from productive investment toward extraction, logistics, control, security, or protected zones. Government responses complete the statewide picture, with emergency powers, procedural shortcuts, rationing, expanded surveillance, and security-first narratives indicating that normal governance mechanisms no longer suffice. In all three cases, higher response intensity, such as dominant coordination logic or saturated/society-wide responses, reflects deeper structural strain rather than greater layer satisfaction.

These citizen, business, and government responses are evaluated on a common response intensity scale, allowing them to be aggregated into a layer-level satisfaction assessment. This aggregation produces a categorical evaluation of each Societal Needs Hierarchy layer, ranging from completely satisfied (CS) to exceptionally unsatisfied (EU). We are using the Layer Satisfaction Evaluation table for C/B/G responses aggregation, SNH layers evaluation, and the SNH Structural Stability Snapshot assessment. A layer classified as exceptionally unsatisfied does not provide load-bearing capacity for higher layers; instead, it distorts them, forcing symbolic, coercive, or compensatory behavior above. Applied systematically across all layers, this procedure yields a structural profile of the regime rather than a ranking, identifying which layers are functioning, which are compensating, and which are failing. All subsequent diagnostics — including pyramid shape, equilibrium distance, drift direction, and failure mode — follow mechanically from this response-based measurement, without interpretive leaps or narrative substitution.

	Structural Stability Snapshot		
#	SNH Layer	Layer Satisfaction Evaluation (1-7)	Meaning
1	Physical Survival and Territory	Exceptionally Unsatisfied (EU)	Layer does not function or exists only episodically; collapsed or symbolic; fails even under mild stress
2	Security & Order	Highly Unsatisfied (HU)	Narrow coverage; operates through exceptions, favoritism, coercion, or selective access
3	Participation & Livelihood	Unsatisfied (U)	Works in normal times but breaks under shocks; no resilience
4	Legitimacy & Institutional Trust	About as satisfied as not (ASN)	Functions only if supporting layers hold; stress-sensitive and conditional
5	Political Agency & Participation	Satisfied (S)	Broadly functional; resilient to moderate shocks
6	National Identity & Purpose	Highly Satisfied (HS)	Robust, institutionalized, stress-tested
7	Constructive Collective Roles	Completely Satisfied (CS)	Self-reinforcing; failure would require systemic collapse

C/B/G Response Intensity Scale, SNH Layer Satisfaction and Evaluation

This step operationalizes the assessment by defining how observable responses are converted into layer-level structural evaluations. The framework does not directly score satisfaction. Instead, it measures the intensity of adaptive responses from citizens, businesses, and government to unmet needs at a given Societal Needs Hierarchy layer. These responses are observable, comparable, and scalable, and they represent adaptive behavior rather than intentions or ideology.

	C/B/G Response Intensity Scale
Score	Meaning (Response Intensity)
1	Dormant / no observable response
2	Localized / episodic response
3	Noticeable but containable
4	Persistent but non-dominant
5	Widespread, system-relevant
6	Dominant coordination logic
7	Saturated / society-wide response

	Layer Satisfaction Evaluation (1-7)
#	Meaning
1	Exceptionally Unsatisfied (EU)
2	Highly Unsatisfied (HU)
3	Unsatisfied (U)
4	About as satisfied as not (ASN)
5	Satisfied (S)
6	Highly Satisfied (HS)
7	Completely Satisfied (CS)

	C+B+G Score			Corresponding Layer Evaluation
1	From 0 to 3	→	7	Completely Satisfied (CS)
2	From 4 to 6	→	6	Highly Satisfied (HS)
3	From 7 to 9	→	5	Satisfied (S)
4	From 10 to 12	→	4	About as satisfied as not (ASN)
5	From 13 to 15	→	3	Unsatisfied (U)
6	From 16 to 18	→	2	Highly Unsatisfied (HU)
7	From 19 to 21	→	1	Exceptionally Unsatisfied (EU)

Response intensity is measured on a unified seven-point scale that captures how dominant a response has become within the system, ranging from dormant or localized reactions to society-wide coordination. The same scale is applied to citizens, businesses, and government. While the form of response differs by actor, the meaning of intensity does not: higher scores indicate stronger systemic stress and greater deviation from normal functioning.

Layer satisfaction is then derived mechanically through inversion. High response intensity implies low layer satisfaction, because stabilizing layers do not require visible adaptation. Conversely, escalating responses signal that a layer is failing to perform its structural function. To formalize this relationship, citizen, business, and government response scores are aggregated at each layer, producing a combined value ranging from 0 to 21.

This combined score is mapped directly to a seven-level Layer Satisfaction Evaluation, ranging from completely satisfied to exceptionally unsatisfied. Low aggregate scores indicate that the layer is functioning quietly and providing load-bearing capacity. High aggregate scores indicate that the layer is structurally compromised and cannot reliably support higher layers.

Once response scores are assigned, the layer evaluation follows automatically. There is no narrative interpretation at this stage. The same inputs always yield the same classification. This conversion logic is applied identically across all layers of the hierarchy and serves as the fixed foundation for all subsequent outputs of the assessment, including the pyramid shape, equilibrium distance, drift direction, and failure mode identification.

Deriving SNH LSE and DEP Drift Score from RIS

This step specifies the mechanical procedure for transforming Response Intensity Scores from RIS into SNH Layer Satisfaction Evaluations (LSE) and DEP Drift Scores. For each Societal Needs Hierarchy layer, citizen, businesses, and government responses are evaluated independently using the standardized C/B/G Response Intensity Scale. These three values are summed horizontally to produce the SNH Layer Evaluation score. The resulting value is then converted, via a Fixed Mapping Table, into a Layer Satisfaction Evaluation, ranging from Completely Satisfied (CS) to Exceptionally Unsatisfied (EU). Layer Satisfaction Evaluation is assigned exclusively at the layer level and reflects the cumulative structural stress acting on that function.

In parallel, RIS values are aggregated vertically across all seven SNH layers for each actor separately. These vertical sums quantify the total adaptive pressure exerted by citizens, businesses, and government across the specific axes of drift: anarchy, oligarchy, or dictatorship. Each total is mapped onto the DEP Drift Map, producing ordinal drift scores along the Anarchy (A), Oligarchy (O), and Dictatorship (D) axes, respectively. The resulting DEP position is expressed as a directional vector rather than only a scalar value. This approach allows defining the magnitude of displacement from DEP and the direction of current and future displacements,

especially when measured over multiple years. Together, horizontal aggregation determines the viability of the SNH layers, while vertical aggregation determines the direction and intensity of regime drift, completing the rule-based transition from observed responses to structural and dynamic regime diagnostics.

SNH Layer		C-Evaluation	B-Evaluation	G-Evaluation	SNH Layer Evaluation	LSE	C/B/G Response Intensity Scale (RIS)			Layer Satisfaction Evaluation (1-7) (LSE)	
#							Score	Meaning (Response Intensity)		#	Meaning
1	Physical Survival and Territory	7	4	7	18	U	1	Dormant / no observable response		1	Exceptionally Unsatisfied (EU)
2	Security & Order	6	4	7	17	HU	2	Localized / episodic response		2	Highly Unsatisfied (HU)
3	Participation & Livelihood	5	3	7	15	U	3	Noticeable but containable		3	Unsatisfied (U)
4	Legitimacy & Institutional Trust	7	3	5	15	U	4	Persistent but non-dominant		4	About as satisfied as not (ASN)
5	Political Agency & Participation	7	2	6	15	U	5	Widespread, system-relevant		5	Satisfied (S)
6	National Identity & Purpose	7	7	1	15	U	6	Dominant coordination logic		6	Highly Satisfied (HS)
7	Constructive Collective Roles	7	7	7	21	EU	7	Saturated / society-wide response		7	Completely Satisfied (CS)
		46	30	40							
DEP Drift Map and Score						Fixed Mapping Table					
Total Range		from 7 to 49	from 7 to 49	from 7 to 49			C+B+G Score				Corresponding Layer Evaluation
From 49 to 44		7	7	7			1	From 0 to 3	→	7	Completely Satisfied (CS)
From 43 to 38		6	6	6			2	From 4 to 6	→	6	Highly Satisfied (HS)
From 37 to 32		5	5	5			3	From 7 to 9	→	5	Satisfied (S)
From 31 to 26		4	4	4			4	From 10 to 12	→	4	About as satisfied as not (ASN)
From 26 to 21		3	3	3			5	From 13 to 15	→	3	Unsatisfied (U)
From 20 to 15		2	2	2			6	From 16 to 18	→	2	Highly Unsatisfied (HU)
From 14 to 9		1	1	1			7	From 19 to 21	→	1	Exceptionally Unsatisfied (EU)
Below 9 (DEP)		0	0	0							
		Anarchy (0-7)	Oligarchy (0-7)	Dictatorship (0-7)							

This approach formalizes a core constraint of the Regime Stability and Drift Assessment methodology: Societal Needs Hierarchy layers evaluations are structurally dependent rather than freely assignable. Important to note that SNH layers cannot exhibit arbitrary satisfaction values, because lower ones functionally enable higher layers. Response Intensity Scores (RIS), therefore, propagate bottom-up, reflecting stress transmission rather than independent layer conditions. Low response intensity at foundational layers is a prerequisite for low response intensity at higher layers; physical survival and security are preconditions, not parallel dimensions. When lower layers exhibit elevated RIS, adaptive responses from citizens, businesses, and government intensify and propagate upward, producing mechanically constrained outcomes at subsequent layers. Apparent stability at higher layers under lower-layer stress is treated within the model as performative, enforced, or delayed rather than structurally valid. Accordingly, RSDA does not interpret layer evaluations as expressions of satisfaction in isolation, but as indicators of system stress propagation. Stable systems are characterized by minimal response intensity at the base and progressively weaker expression at higher layers, maintaining the Democracy Equilibrium Point near balance. When strong responses emerge at lower layers and persist across the hierarchy, the DEP necessarily moves away from equilibrium, indicating that structural drift is already underway.

This methodology consolidates the Regime Stability and Drift Assessment into a single system representation, integrating all previously defined components without introducing new mechanics. Layered C/B/G response intensity evaluations across the Societal

Needs Hierarchy form the empirical input. These observations are translated through a fixed response intensity scale and mapped to layer satisfaction evaluations, yielding a structural profile of the pyramid. The same numerical structure simultaneously determines the system's position on the DEP Vector Drift Map. Causality is unidirectional and constrained: observable responses determine layer conditions; layer conditions define structural stability; structural stability fixes equilibrium distance; and equilibrium distance constrains drift direction and failure risk. No step is interpretive once inputs are set. The summary is the following: satisfied base layers produce low response intensity and maintain equilibrium proximity, while degraded base layers generate high response intensity and enforce directional drift. Apparent stability in the upper layers cannot offset lower-layer failure and is considered structurally invalid. The slide therefore illustrates RSDA as an integrated diagnostic system in which a single dataset yields multiple, internally consistent outputs — layer satisfaction, structural stability, DEP position, and drift tendency — without reliance on regime labels or narrative interpretation.

The tables presented in this chapter constitute the formal operational backbone of the Regime Stability and Drift Assessment (RSDA). The SNH Layered C/B/G Evaluation Matrix provides a structured taxonomy of observable adaptive responses by citizens, businesses, and government at each layer of the Societal Needs Hierarchy, anchoring response intensity scoring in empirically recognizable behavioral patterns rather than abstract indicators. The DEP Drift Vector Map complements this structure by translating aggregated response imbalances into directional drift along anarchic, oligarchic, and dictatorial axes, mapping regime deformation as a continuous process rather than a categorical shift. Together, these instruments ensure that RSDA remains internally consistent, reproducible, and non-ideological, allowing mechanical inference of structural stress, equilibrium distance, and drift trajectories from observed behavior. They should be read not as illustrative appendices, but as constitutive elements of the model itself, enabling systematic application across cases, time horizons, and comparative contexts.

Norway RSDA Evaluation Example

(1–2) Foundational and intermediate layer performance and behavioral diagnosis.

The RSDA application to Norway shows that the lower and intermediate layers of the Societal Needs Hierarchy—Physical Survival and Territory, Security and Order, Participation and Livelihood, and Legitimacy and Institutional Trust—exhibit consistently low response intensity across Citizens, Business, and Government. Quantitatively, this is reflected in small C/B/G response scores at the base layers and moderate, non-escalatory scores at the middle layers, resulting in high Layer Satisfaction Evaluations (LSE) throughout the lower half of the pyramid. Qualitatively, citizen behavior remains institutionally anchored rather than survival-oriented; business responses remain investment- and productivity-focused rather than extractive or defensive; and government responses remain procedural rather than coercive. The absence of response saturation at these layers indicates that stress is not mechanically propagating upward, establishing a structurally stable foundation upon which higher-order functions can operate without compensatory distortion.

1. Behavioral Diagnosis (C / B / G)**Purpose:** Observe how stress *expresses* across actors.

SNH Layer	Citizens (C)	Business (B)	Government (G)
1. Physical Survival & Territory	1	1	1
2. Security & Order	1	1	1
3. Participation & Livelihood	2	2	1
4. Legitimacy & Institutional Trust	1	1	1
5. Political Agency & Participation	1	1	1
6. National Identity & Purpose	1	1	1
7. Constructive Collective Roles	1	1	1

Behavioral pattern:

Mild livelihood pressure produces localized citizen and business responses (housing, cost-of-living), while government response remains routine and non-emergency.

2. Structural Stability Snapshot (SNH)**Purpose:** Identify what is truly load-bearing vs merely expressive.

- **Layer 1 – Physical Survival & Territory: CS**
- **Layer 2 – Security & Order: CS**
- **Layer 3 – Participation & Livelihood: HS**
- **Layer 4 – Legitimacy & Institutional Trust: CS**
- **Layer 5 – Political Agency & Participation: CS**
- **Layer 6 – National Identity & Purpose: CS**
- **Layer 7 – Constructive Collective Roles: CS**

Plain-language takeaway:

Base layers (1–2) are fully satisfied and genuinely load-bearing. Upper-layer strength is *real*, not compensatory. The only visible pressure signal sits in Layer 3 and remains contained.

3. Regime Trajectory (DEP Vector)**Purpose:** Direction of drift, not regime labeling.**DEP Vector:**

D0 | O1 | A0

DEP around: 0–1• **D (Dictatorship):** No coercive expansion; legitimacy and courts hold.• **O (Oligarchy):** First mild pressure appears here via asset concentration and influence channels.• **A (Anarchy):** Absent; base security and order are intact.**Regime condition:**Near-DEP democracy with **very mild, constrained oligarchic pressure.****O1 Name (from Drift Map):**

👉 “Economic Concentration Begins”

4. Failure Mode Forecast**Purpose:** Identify *first* plausible degradation path.**Most likely next acceleration (if degradation occurs):**

↑ Oligarchic drift (O ↑)

Mechanism:• If **Layer 3** pressure persists (housing affordability, intergenerational asset gaps),• **Business/elite responses (B)** shift first toward asset protection and rule-shaping,• Over time, **Layer 4 (Legitimacy)** may show delayed C2/G2 signals (skepticism, protest).**Explicitly unlikely first failures:**• ❌ **Dictatorship (D)** — would require legitimacy or security fracture.• ❌ **Anarchy (A)** — would require breakdown of Layers 1–2.**Forecast line:**

“If Norway drifts, it drifts first through mild oligarchic influence, not through coercion or disorder.”

5. Diagnostic Bottom Line**Purpose:** Make the assessment comparable and falsifiable.• **DEP distance: Near (0–1)**• **System type: Structurally stable, stress-absorbing democracy**• **Key risk horizon: Long-term**, concentrated in asset-driven inequality rather than institutional decay**(3) Upper-layer expression and structural consistency check.**

At the upper layers — National Identity and Purpose, and Constructive Collective Roles — the model records high apparent satisfaction accompanied by low to moderate response intensity. Under RSDA constraints, this configuration is structurally coherent because it is enabled by stable lower layers rather than compensating for their failure. Identity formation remains voluntary rather than mobilized, and collective roles are expressed through civic contribution rather than enforced alignment or moralized compliance. The model, therefore, treats upper-layer “health” in this case as structurally valid rather than performative, confirming internal consistency across the hierarchy.

(4) Structural stability snapshot and DEP positioning.

When aggregated into the DEP Drift Map, the summed C/B/G response intensities place Norway close to the Democracy Equilibrium Point. The system exhibits a weak but detectable drift vector along the oligarchic axis (O1), driven primarily by mild capital concentration and sectoral scale advantages rather than by institutional capture or authoritarian consolidation. No significant drift is observed along the anarchic (A) or dictatorial (D) axes, as neither citizen withdrawal nor coercive state expansion is present in the response profile. This data produces a structural stability snapshot characterized by equilibrium retention with limited, directional pressure.

(5) Regime trajectory and diagnostic conclusion.

The resulting regime trajectory indicates a high-capacity democratic system with bounded oligarchic tendencies that remain structurally constrained by satisfied base layers and low response escalation. Drift, where present, is incremental rather than accelerative, and the system retains internal corrective capacity. This outcome illustrates the RSDA principle that regime stability is not inferred from formal democratic labels, but from proportionality, dependency, and response containment across layers and actors. Norway, therefore, functions as one of the reference cases of near-equilibrium performance, demonstrating how satisfied foundational needs mechanically limit drift and preserve systemic resilience over time.

RSDA High-level Analysis Application Examples (DEP 0-3)

The case scorecards and summaries shown below in this paragraph, grouped within DEP 0–3, illustrate systems operating at or near the Democracy Equilibrium Point, where response intensity across the Societal Needs Hierarchy remains structurally constrained and largely proportional. In benchmark cases such as Switzerland, C/B/G response intensity is predominantly within the 1–2 range across layers, indicating that unmet needs are localized, episodic, and institutionally absorbed without triggering system-wide adaptive behavior. Upper layers, particularly layers 6–7, emerge organically rather than being mobilized narratively or administratively, confirming that stable base conditions enable higher-order collective roles. As a result, the inferred DEP position remains close to zero, with drift vectors effectively neutral across anarchic (A), oligarchic (O), and dictatorial (D) axes.

Norway occupies a closely adjacent position, demonstrating how high-capacity welfare democracies may exhibit slightly elevated B and G responses without violating equilibrium constraints. While response intensity is marginally higher than in the benchmark case — reflecting stronger coordination and redistribution mechanisms — the pattern remains equilibrium-preserving because lower layers (physical survival, security, and livelihood) remain satisfied. The resulting DEP position approximates 1, with an early O1 signal (“Economic Concentration Begins”) that is still structurally contained. Denmark and the Netherlands extend this pattern into the DEP

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1–2 range, where mild coordination stress appears in mid-layers (L5–6), typically driven by regulatory density or capital coordination. Importantly, in these cases, citizen trust and institutional legitimacy remain intact, preventing escalation into compensatory or coercive responses. These examples collectively demonstrate that low-level drift does not signify systemic failure but rather bounded structural adjustment within an otherwise stable democratic configuration.

● DEP 0–1 — Near Democratic Equilibrium (benchmark cases)

These are **reference anchors**. They define what *low response intensity everywhere* looks like.

Switzerland

Gold standard benchmark

1. C/B/G responses mostly **1–2 across layers**
2. Layer 6–7 genuinely emergent, not narrative-driven
3. DEP ≈ 0 ; **Drift vector: DEP ≈ 0 — D0 / O0 / A0 (Near DEP across axes)**

Norway

High-capacity welfare democracy

1. Slightly higher B and G responses than Switzerland
2. Still equilibrium-preserving
3. DEP ≈ 1 ; **Drift vector: DEP ≈ 1 — O1 “Economic Concentration Begins” (still constrained)**

● DEP 1–2 — Stable democracies with mild drift

Denmark

- Minor coordination stress at L5–6
- Low compensatory responses
- **Drift vector: DEP ≈ 1 –2 — O1 “Economic Concentration Begins” (soft O-tilt, reversible)**

Netherlands

- Higher **B responses** (regulatory density, capital coordination)
- Citizen trust still strong
- **Drift vector: DEP ≈ 2 — O2 “Regulatory Capture Pressure” (early / partial, legitimacy intact)**

● DEP 2–3 — Early drift, still reversible

Canada

- Strong L1–2
- Weakening L4–5 (legitimacy + agency)
- Rising **C responses** → **anarchic signals**
- **Drift vector: DEP ≈ 3 — A2 “Delegitimization of Authority” + O2 “Regulatory Capture Pressure” (mixed O/A pressure)**

Germany

- Strong institutions
- Rising **B + G dominance** via procedure
- **Drift vector: DEP ≈ 3 — O2 “Regulatory Capture Pressure” → O3 “Policy Dependence on Capital” (procedural O-drift)**

RSDA High-level Analysis Application Examples (DEP 3–7)

The cases positioned within DEP 3–7 illustrate progressively unstable configurations in which response intensity becomes widespread, asymmetric, and increasingly decoupled from institutional correction. At DEP 3–4, so-called “hollowed” democracies such as France and the United States retain formal democratic structures while exhibiting elevated response intensity at lower and mid-layers. In these systems, citizen responses escalate through protest and withdrawal, government responses substitute legitimacy with procedure or enforcement, and business responses intensify through capital protection and policy influence. The resulting drift vectors typically

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combine A-pressure (e.g., selective law obedience or social fragmentation) with O-pressure (policy dependence on capital), producing mixed trajectories rather than single-axis failure.

Hollowing, capture, authoritarian consolidation

● DEP 3–4 — Hollowed democracies (“looks fine” cases)

France

- High **C response intensity** (protests)
- G substitutes legitimacy with procedure
- L4 visibly failing
- **Drift vector:** DEP $\approx$ 4 — A3 “Selective Law Obedience” → A4 “Fragmentation of Social Order” (A-pressure over legitimacy erosion)

United States

- All three drift vectors active
- L5–6 identity substitution
- Institutions still formally intact
- **Drift vector:** DEP $\approx$ 4 — O3 “Policy Dependence on Capital” + A4 “Fragmentation of Social Order” with D1 “Crisis Framing” competing (O/A/D mixed)

● DEP 4–5 — Oligarchic drift dominant

Italy

- Chronic elite capture
- Weak L5 agency
- **Drift vector:** DEP $\approx$ 5 — O5 “Oligarchic Governance” (O-dominant)

Mexico

- Functional elections
- Capital–state entanglement
- Instrumental citizen compliance
- **Drift vector:** DEP $\approx$ 5 — O5 “Oligarchic Governance” with A4 “Fragmentation of Social Order” pressure in parts (O-dominant, A-present)

● DEP 5–6 — Competitive authoritarianism / managed democracy

Turkey

- G expansion via emergency logic
- L4 legitimacy already gone
- **Drift vector:** DEP $\approx$ 6 — D2 “Emergency / Special Regimes” → D4 “Competitive Authoritarianism” (D-dominant)

Hungary

- Electoral shell + elite consolidation
- B/G alignment
- **Drift vector:** DEP $\approx$ 6 — O4 “Illiberal Market Democracy” → D4 “Competitive Authoritarianism” (O→D transition)

● DEP 6–7 — Consolidated authoritarian regimes

Russia

- L1–2 enforced, not satisfied
- L6–7 imposed
- **Drift vector:** DEP $\approx$ 7 — D6 “Dictatorship (Consolidated)” → D7 “Ideological Dictatorship” (D-consolidated)

China

- High state capacity
- Zero legitimacy feedback
- Identity fully instrumentalized
- **Drift vector:** DEP $\approx$ 7 — D6 “Dictatorship (Consolidated)” with strong system capacity (D-consolidated)

● Post-DEP / Collapse trajectories (for contrast)

These show **what happens after DEP failure**, useful for narrative closure.

15. Venezuela

- Institutional collapse → fragmentation; compensatory mechanisms saturate
- Beyond equilibrium behavior dominates across layers
- **Trajectory label:** Beyond DEP — A5 “State Capacity Collapse” trending toward A6 “Effective Anarchy” (collapse path)

Somalia

- State failure baseline; authority fragmented, not absent
- Used as an outer boundary (not moral comparison)
- **Trajectory label:** Beyond DEP — A6 “Effective Anarchy” with A7 “Violent Reordering” risk (outer boundary)

At DEP 4–5, oligarchic drift becomes structurally dominant, as illustrated by Italy and Mexico. Here, chronic elite capture and weakened political agency shift the system toward O-axis dominance, with formal democratic processes persisting but substantive participation increasingly instrumentalized. As DEP advances further into the 5–6 range, competitive authoritarian configurations emerge, as observed in Turkey and Hungary. In these cases, emergency logic, electoral proceduralism, and executive dominance replace corrective capacity, producing D-axis acceleration while retaining selective democratic form. Finally, DEP 6–7 cases, such as Russia and China, represent consolidated authoritarian regimes, where lower layers are enforced rather than satisfied, legitimacy

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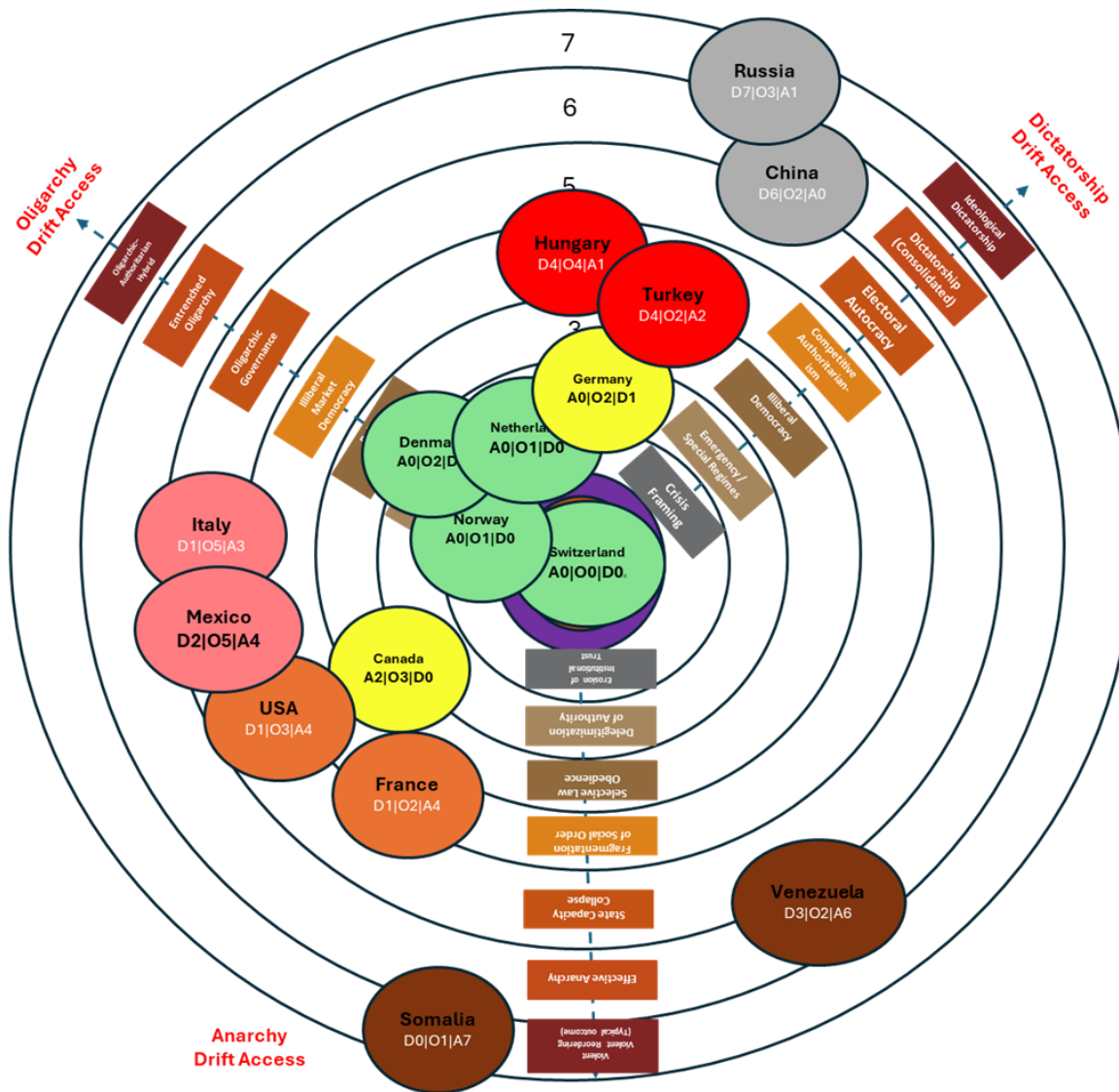
feedback is absent, and identity is fully instrumentalized. Beyond DEP, collapse trajectories such as Venezuela and Somalia illustrate post-equilibrium conditions in which state capacity fragments or dissolves entirely, leading to effective anarchy or violent reordering. Across this spectrum, RSDA demonstrates that regime outcomes are not categorical labels but structural end states produced by cumulative response escalation and unresolved stress propagation through the Societal Needs Hierarchy.

15 Countries DEP and Current Position on the Vector Map

The vector map consolidates the RSDA outputs into a single spatial representation, showing the current structural position of fifteen countries relative to the Democracy Equilibrium Point and along the three drift axes: Anarchy (A), Oligarchy (O), and Dictatorship (D). Each country's position is derived from its aggregated C/B/G response intensity patterns across the Societal Needs Hierarchy and expressed as a triplet vector (A|O|D), capturing both magnitude and directional bias of drift. Proximity to the center reflects low cumulative response intensity and equilibrium-preserving behavior, while increasing radial distance indicates escalating system stress and reduced corrective capacity. Directional displacement reflects which adaptive logic dominates under stress: citizen fragmentation and informal order (A), capital concentration and regulatory capture (O), or centralized enforcement and authority consolidation (D).

Benchmark systems such as Switzerland and Norway cluster near the center with vectors close to A0|O0|D0, confirming that low response intensity at base layers constrains escalation across the pyramid and preserves equilibrium. Denmark and the Netherlands occupy slightly offset positions along the O-axis, reflecting early coordination and regulatory pressure without loss of legitimacy or agency. Germany and Canada illustrate early mixed drift configurations, where procedural governance and capital dependence introduce limited but still reversible displacement from equilibrium. Further outward, France and the United States exhibit hollowing patterns characterized by rising A- and O-pressures, indicating fragmentation and capital dependence coexisting with formally intact institutions.

Beyond DEP 4, oligarchic and dictatorial dynamics become structurally dominant. Italy and Mexico show O-axis dominance with rising A- or D-pressure, while Turkey and Hungary demonstrate transitions toward competitive authoritarianism, marked by accelerated D-axis movement combined with constrained pluralism. China and Russia occupy the outer rings on the D-axis, representing consolidated authoritarian systems in which lower layers are enforced rather than satisfied, and legitimacy feedback is structurally absent. Finally, Venezuela and Somalia define post-equilibrium boundary cases, illustrating collapse and violent reordering trajectories where system-wide response saturation eliminates meaningful equilibrium restoration. Read together, the map demonstrates that regime outcomes are not categorical states but positions within a continuous structural space shaped by cumulative stress propagation, actor asymmetry, and directional dominance of adaptive responses.



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15 Countries SNH 7-Layer Satisfaction Evaluation

This chart in this paragraph shows Layer Satisfaction Evaluation (LSE) for each of the seven Societal Needs Hierarchy layers across the same fifteen countries. Each cell represents the evaluated functional state of a layer, derived by aggregating the C/B/G response intensity for that layer and translating it through the standardized LSE scale. Read horizontally: each country's row forms a structural SNH profile that explains societal needs satisfaction and why it occupies its specific DEP position; read vertically, the chart reveals a comparative evaluation of specific layers across 15 countries.

Near-DEP benchmark systems such as Switzerland, Norway, Denmark, and the Netherlands exhibit a consistent pattern: base layers (L1–L3) are fully or highly satisfied, enabling upper layers to remain genuinely satisfied or emergent. Minor deviations first appear in L4–L5, where regulatory density, procedural governance, or early capital coordination introduces limited stress without compromising system coherence. These results confirm the RSDA constraint that equilibrium is preserved when lower layers suppress response intensity before stress can cascade upward.

Countries farther from equilibrium exhibit progressively earlier and deeper degradation of mid-layers. Germany and Canada show weakening at L4–L5 despite still-stable base layers, producing early mixed A/O/D drift signals. France and the United States demonstrate a more advanced pattern: persistent dissatisfaction at L4–L5 combined with rising citizen response intensity at L3, explaining their hollowing trajectories despite formally intact institutions. In these cases, upper-layer stability is no longer emergent but compensatory.

Oligarchic and authoritarian trajectories are structurally distinct. Italy and Mexico show chronic dissatisfaction across L3–L5, consistent with elite capture and weak agency. Turkey and Hungary exhibit highly unsatisfied legitimacy and agency layers, while base layers remain only marginally stable, reflecting competitive authoritarian consolidation rather than collapse. China and Russia display enforced satisfaction at upper layers alongside structurally unsatisfied legitimacy, confirming that high state capacity does not equate to equilibrium when feedback is absent.

Finally, Venezuela and Somalia illustrate post-DEP boundary conditions. Here, base layers themselves are unsatisfied or exceptionally unsatisfied, eliminating the possibility of upward stabilization. The resulting profiles show saturation rather than compensation, consistent with collapse and violent reordering trajectories.

Taken together, the chart demonstrates that DEP vectors are not abstract labels but compressed representations of layer-by-layer structural conditions. The decisive variable is not how high a system's upper layers appear, but where dissatisfaction begins and how

far it propagates. RSDA thus evaluates regimes not by form or rhetoric, but by the internal consistency, dependency, and load-bearing capacity of their societal layers.

Country (DEP Vector)	L1 Survival	L2 Security	L3 Livelihood	L4 Legitimacy	L5 Political Agency	L6 National Identity	L7 Collective Roles	High-Level Structural Issues
Switzerland (A0 O0 D0)	CS	CS	CS	CS	CS	HS	HS	Benchmark equilibrium; base layers fully satisfied; upper layers genuinely emergent.
Norway (A0 O1 D0)	CS	CS	HS	HS	HS	S	S	Mild economic concentration pressure; welfare capacity stabilizes base layers.
Denmark (A0 O2 D0)	CS	HS	HS	HS	S	S	S	Regulatory density and coordination stress emerging at upper layers.
Netherlands (A0 O2 D0)	CS	HS	HS	S	S	S	S	Elevated business coordination and regulatory capture signals; legitimacy intact.
Germany (A1 O2 D1)	CS	HS	HS	ASN	ASN	S	S	Procedural dominance weakens legitimacy and agency; early D-signal present.
Canada (A2 O3 D0)	HS	HS	S	ASN	ASN	S	S	Rising citizen stress and regulatory capture; early anarchy tilt.
France (A4 O2 D1)	HS	S	ASN	U	U	ASN	ASN	High citizen response intensity; legitimacy erosion and social fragmentation.
United States (A4 O3 D1)	HS	S	ASN	U	U	ASN	ASN	Mixed O/A/D pressures; identity substitution and capital-policy dependence.
Italy (A3 O5 D1)	HS	ASN	U	U	U	ASN	ASN	Chronic elite capture; weak agency and legitimacy persistence.
Mexico (A4 O5 D2)	HS	ASN	U	U	U	U	ASN	Security stress and capital-state entanglement; fragmentation risk.
Turkey (A2 O2 D4)	ASN	ASN	U	HU	HU	ASN	ASN	Emergency logic entrenched; competitive authoritarian trajectory.
Hungary (A1 O4 D4)	ASN	ASN	U	HU	HU	ASN	ASN	Electoral shell with elite consolidation; legitimacy hollowed.
China (A0 O2 D6)	ASN	ASN	ASN	HU	HU	S	ASN	High state capacity with zero legitimacy feedback; enforced stability.
Russia (A1 O3 D7)	ASN	ASN	U	HU	HU	S	ASN	Ideological dictatorship; enforcement substitutes for legitimacy.
Venezuela (A6 O2 D3)	EU	HU	U	U	U	ASN	ASN	State capacity collapse; compensatory mechanisms saturated.
Somalia (A7 O1 D0)	EU	EU	HU	U	U	ASN	ASN	Post-DEP baseline; authority fragmented, not absent.

	Layer Satisfaction Evaluation (1-7) (LSE)
#	Meaning
1	Exceptionally Unsatisfied (EU)
2	Highly Unsatisfied (HU)
3	Unsatisfied (U)
4	About as satisfied as not (ASN)
5	Satisfied (S)
6	Highly Satisfied (HS)
7	Completely Satisfied (CS)

The RSDA framework concludes at the point where internal structural stability, layer satisfaction, and drift vectors have been rigorously established. At this stage, each system can be characterized by a well-defined internal state: its load-bearing capacity, its distance from democratic equilibrium, and the dominant direction of adaptive response under stress. RSDA does not attempt to model how systems interact with one another, nor how internal instability propagates across borders, alliances, or economic networks. This limitation is intentional.

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The outputs of RSDA—layer satisfaction profiles, DEP position, and drift vectors—are designed to function as inputs to a higher-order analytical framework. In the next stage of analysis, these internal diagnostics are used to examine cross-system interaction, stress transmission, and equilibrium transfer between regimes. This transition motivates the introduction of the CTM model, which evaluates how internally stable or unstable systems project influence outward, absorb external shocks, and reshape their external relationships based on internal structural efficiency rather than ideological alignment.

This article completes the formal construction of the Regime Stability and Drift Assessment (RSDA) as a diagnostic model for internal system stability. RSDA establishes how observable citizen, businesses, and government adaptive responses propagate through the Societal Needs Hierarchy, deform the structural pyramid, displace the Democracy Equilibrium Point, and generate directional regime drift. At this stage, the framework deliberately stops short of evaluating state performance or intent; it diagnoses structural condition, not managerial quality or ideological justification.

The next article extends this foundation by applying RSDA outputs as analytical inputs for deeper cross-sectional examination. This includes comparative regime slicing beyond country labels, identification of layer-faking strategies where upper-layer stability is simulated despite lower-layer failure, and the formalization of observable safety indicators as structured condition sets rather than abstract outcomes. It further introduces SNH layer batching to define democracy entry thresholds for developing systems, enabling stability analysis without prematurely imposing advanced institutional expectations.

Building on this, the Country Transaction Model (CTM) is introduced to evaluate the efficiency of state functioning itself—specifically, how economic, institutional, and ideological subsystems translate capacity into genuine satisfaction of societal needs. Where this translation fails, the analysis shifts from stability diagnosis to mechanism identification, examining compensatory strategies such as narrative substitution, institutional ritualization, coercive stabilization, and externalization of internal stress. Together, RSDA and CTM form a sequential analytical pipeline: the first diagnoses the structural condition, the second explains how systems attempt to survive when structural satisfaction cannot be achieved.

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Consolidated Glossary

DEF — Democracy Equilibrium Framework and Associated Terms

Democracy Equilibrium Framework (DEF) is a formal analytical framework that models democracy as a *dynamic balance condition* rather than a regime type, institutional checklist, or normative ideal.

DEF conceptualizes democratic stability as an equilibrium state produced by the mutual constraint of three internal societal forces:

- Citizens (C) — mass legitimacy, participation, consent, and social pressure
- Business (B) — economic power, capital allocation, market coordination, and resource control
- Government (G) — institutional authority, rule-making, enforcement, and coercive capacity

In DEF, democracy exists only when these three forces remain simultaneously active and mutually constraining, such that no single force can achieve structural dominance or lock in irreversible advantage over the others.

The framework introduces the Democracy Equilibrium Point (DEP) as a narrow, dynamic zone in which:

- Political power remains reversible
- Economic power remains contestable
- Institutional authority remains bounded and legitimate

DEF explicitly rejects:

- Democracy as a permanent state

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- Democracy as a moral classification
- Democracy as an institutional form independent of structural balance

Instead, DEF treats democratic stability as continuously maintained, vulnerable to degradation through persistent imbalances such as:

- Excessive concentration of economic power
- Expansion of unchecked state authority
- Erosion of legitimacy and social trust

When these imbalances persist, systems do not collapse abruptly **but** drift away from DEP along identifiable structural directions. This insight forms the conceptual foundation for later frameworks (SNH, RSDA, CTM) without being reducible to them.

DEF and Its Relationship to RSDA

The Democracy Equilibrium Framework (DEF) provides the conceptual foundation for later diagnostic extensions. The Regime Stability and Drift Assessment (RSDA) framework operationalizes DEF by translating its equilibrium and drift logic into observable, layer-based diagnostics. RSDA does not redefine DEF; it implements it analytically.

Democracy Equilibrium Point (DEP)

Democracy Equilibrium Point (DEP) is a dynamic balance condition defined within the Democracy Equilibrium Framework, representing the zone in which citizens, businesses, and government remain mutually constraining and none can structurally dominate the system.

DEP is not a regime label, is not a fixed institutional state and is not continuously guaranteed once achieved.

DEP exists only when foundational societal needs (SNH Layers 1–3) are sufficiently satisfied and must be actively maintained over time. Persistent imbalance causes displacement from DEP rather than instantaneous collapse. Across DEF, SNH, and RSDA, the Democratic Equilibrium Point (DEP) refers to the same structural condition, viewed respectively through force balance, layered coordination, and directional stability lenses.

DEP Drift

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Directional movement away from the Democracy Equilibrium Point caused by unmet societal needs and compensatory responses. Drift is structurally induced by an imbalance of cumulative C/B/G forces, not ideologically chosen, and follows identifiable pathways depending on which actors dominate system responses.

Post-DEP Condition

A state in which equilibrium has collapsed, and compensatory mechanisms dominate across layers. Coordination occurs through coercion, fragmentation, or informal authority rather than institutions, and reversibility is structurally constrained or lost.

SNH — Societal Needs Hierarchy and Associated Terms

A seven-layer structural hierarchy which models societal stability as a function of layered coordination requirements, ordered from pre-political survival needs to higher-order legitimacy and identity formation, and defining the necessary conditions for societal needs coordination and stability. Each layer represents a functional requirement that must be satisfied for higher layers to operate coherently. The SNH is evaluated empirically through response intensity rather than normative claims.

SNH Layers:

1. Physical Survival & Territory
2. Security & Order
3. Participation & Livelihood
4. Legitimacy & Institutional Trust
5. Political Agency & Participation
6. National Identity & Purpose
7. Constructive Collective Roles

where:

- Lower layers enable higher layers
- Failure at lower layers mechanically constrains or invalidates higher layers
- Higher layers cannot compensate for unmet foundational layer needs

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SNH is diagnostic, not normative. It identifies where coordination fails first, how stress propagates upward in hierarchy, and why institutional forms may persist while real coordination capacity erodes. Failure at lower layers structurally destabilizes higher layers regardless of apparent performance.

SNH Relation to Maslow:

This framework does not apply Maslow's hierarchy to states. It uses Maslow's *satisfaction logic* (non-substitutability, sequencing, failure dominance) as an abstract constraint, then redefines each layer as a collective coordination function with distinct failure modes and behavioral responses. Psychological content is intentionally discarded; only structural logic is retained.

Coordination Stress

The systemic pressure that emerges when shared individual needs are unmet at scale, exceeding the capacity of existing institutions to align behavior without coercion or substitution. Coordination stress accumulates across layers and drives failure propagation, substitution dynamics, and regime drift.

Layer Satisfaction Evaluation (LSE)

A qualitative-quantitative translation of aggregated C/B/G response intensity into structural satisfaction states:

- **CS** — Completely Satisfied
- **HS** — Highly Satisfied
- **S** — Satisfied
- **ASN** — About Satisfied as Not
- **U** — Unsatisfied
- **HU** — Highly Unsatisfied
- **EU** — Exceptionally Unsatisfied

LSE reflects structural conditions, not public opinion. LSE is an analytical classification derived from response intensity aggregation and does not measure sentiment, approval, or perception

Structural Failure Mode

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A predictable pattern of system breakdown that emerges when unmet lower-layer needs are compensated for at higher layers (e.g., legitimacy narratives substituting for livelihood).

RSDA — Regime Stability and Drift Assessment and Associated Terms

A structural diagnostic framework for evaluating political-economic system stability and directional drift. RSDA operationalizes observed **Citizen (C), Business (B), and Government (G)** response intensities across the **Societal Needs Hierarchy (SNH)**, aggregates them into layer-level satisfaction evaluations, and maps the resulting political system drift onto the **DEP Drift Vector Map** with the associated drift vectors. **RSDA** produces simultaneous diagnostics of structural stability, regime trajectory, failure risk, and reversibility without relying on regime labels or ideological assumptions. Illustrative examples in this article are non-exhaustive and do not represent a complete enumeration of response indicators.

DEP Drift Vector Map

DEP Drift Vector Map is a structural analytical construct that maps the field to reflect the directional displacement of a societal system from the Democratic Equilibrium Point (DEP) along three non-mutually exclusive drift axes: D (Dictatorship), O (Oligarchy), and A (Anarchy).

The map translates accumulated structural stress, originating in unmet Societal Needs Hierarchy (SNH) layers and observed through Citizen (C), Business (B), and Government (G) adaptive response intensities, into a geometric position on the map and a direction of movement relative to democratic equilibrium over time. Each axis captures a distinct mode of coordination failure:

- D-axis (Dictatorship Drift): concentration and irreversibility of political authority, expansion of coercive capacity, and substitution of legitimacy with enforcement or ideology.
- O-axis (Oligarchic Drift): concentration of economic power, regulatory capture, and structural dependence of political decision-making on capital interests.
- A-axis (Anarchic Drift): fragmentation of institutional coordination, selective law obedience, parallel systems of order, and loss of effective governance capacity.

A system's DEP drift vector is expressed as a composite coordinate ($A_x \mid O_x \mid D_x$), indicating both magnitude (distance from equilibrium) and direction (dominant failure pathway). Drift vectors do not represent regime labels or outcomes; they describe structural tendencies that can coexist, reinforce one another, or shift over time.

The DEP Drift Vector Map enables:

1. Comparative regime diagnosis without reliance on ideological classification,
2. Early detection of instability before formal regime change,
3. Differentiation between reversible drift and consolidated failure, and
4. Linkage between internal structural imbalance and external behavior (e.g., coercion, migration, conflict, or externalization).

Within the Regime Stability and Drift Assessment (RSDA) framework, the DEP Drift Vector Map functions as the integrative layer that converts SNH layered response data into a unified spatial model of regime stability, trajectory, and failure risk.

C / B / G Responses

Observed system-relevant adaptive behavioral responses by:

- C — Citizens
- B — Businesses / Capital
- G — Government / State

Responses are evaluated by intensity, not moral intent. The C/B/G adaptive descriptors are not exhaustive taxonomies of behavior. They function as structural reference classes designed to anchor response intensity scoring consistently across cases and time.

Response Intensity

A 1–7 ordinal scale measuring how dominant, widespread, and structurally relevant a response is.

- 1 — Dormant / No observable response
- 7 — Saturated / Society-wide response

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Higher intensity signals unmet needs and compensatory pressure.

Response Intensity Scale (RIS)

Behavioral magnitudes of C/B/G adaptations, not a satisfaction score.

Structural Stability Snapshot

A consolidated RSDA output showing the current satisfaction state of all SNH layers simultaneously, based on C/B/G adaptive responses. It represents the system's internal load-bearing integrity at a given time.

Drift Vector (A_x | O_x | D_x); x is changing from 0 to 7

A directional diagnostic describing how a system moves away from equilibrium.

- **A — Anarchic Drift:** Citizen-driven disengagement, informalization, fragmentation, or parallel systems.
- **O — Oligarchic Drift:** Capital concentration, regulatory capture, elite coordination dominance.
- **D — Dictatorial Drift:** State enforcement substitution, emergency logic, coercive consolidation.

Vectors may be single-axis or mixed (e.g., A4 | O3 | D1).

Drift Ladder

A structured escalation sequence describing progressive stages of system deterioration along A, O, or D axes. Each step reflects increasing response intensity and decreasing reversibility.

Regime Trajectory

The inferred future direction of system movement is based on evaluations of current condition and drift vectors, layer satisfaction patterns, and response momentum.

Regime Label (Analytical, Not Normative)

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Descriptive terms such as liberal democracy, competitive authoritarianism, or dictatorship, reflected on drift axes and the DEP Vector Drift Map, and are assigned only after structural diagnostics are complete. RSDA does not begin with regime labels.

Competitive Authoritarianism

A structurally diagnosed condition where elections exist but are subordinated to executive dominance, emergency logic, or enforced stability (typically D-dominant). One of the conditions on the D-axis.

Effective Anarchy

A post-DEP condition where authority is fragmented rather than absent, informal enforcement dominates, and order is locally negotiated rather than systemically governed – one of the conditions on the A-axis.

Hollowed Democracy

A system in which formal democratic procedures persist while legitimacy, agency, or livelihood layers are structurally unsatisfied, producing high response intensity beneath institutional continuity.

Procedural Dominance

A condition where rule-compliance and formal process substitute for legitimacy or agency, often preceding O- or D-drift.

Emergency Logic

A governance mode where exceptional measures become normalized, typically accelerating D-drift.

Regulatory Capture

A form of O-drift in which regulatory institutions align structurally with capital interests rather than societal needs.

Identity Substitution

The use of national, ideological, or moral identity narratives to compensate for failures in legitimacy, agency, or livelihood layers.

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Reversibility Window

The structural range within which drift can be corrected without regime collapse, is determined by layer state of Structural Stability Snapshot, state position on Vector Drift Map and current C/B/G response saturation.

Layer Faking

Temporary simulation of higher-layer outputs (identity, purpose, contribution) in the absence of lower-layer structural satisfaction.

Compensatory Stability

Apparent regime stability is produced by narrative, coercion, or externalization rather than structural equilibrium.

CTM — Country Transaction Model and Associated Terms

A higher-order structural model describing how **Economy, Institutions, and Ideology** function as coordinated subsystems designed to satisfy the Societal Needs Hierarchy internally, and how surplus or deficit is compensated internally or transferred externally. CTM builds directly on RSDA outputs and extends analysis into inter-system dynamics.

Internalization

The process by which unmet societal needs are absorbed and managed within domestic economic, institutional, or ideological structures via compensatory mechanisms.

Externalization

The displacement of internal structural pressure outward—through conflict, economic expansion, ideological export, or external coercion—when internal resolution fails.

Externalization Rule

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When internal coordination fails, pressure is displaced outward rather than resolved inward.

Methodological Boundary Terms

Response Intensity vs. Satisfaction

Satisfaction refers to the structural fulfillment state of a given Societal Needs Hierarchy (SNH) layer. It describes whether the underlying conditions required for stable coordination at that layer are materially and institutionally met.

Response Intensity refers to the observable adaptive behavior of Citizens (C), Business (B), and Government (G) once dissatisfaction at a layer exists. It measures how strongly each actor reacts to unmet needs through withdrawal, substitution, concentration, enforcement, or alternative coordination strategies.

Satisfaction is a structural condition; response intensity is a behavioral consequence. High response intensity does not redefine satisfaction—it indicates stress propagation after satisfaction has already failed.

Structural vs. Declarative Stability

Structural Stability exists when coordination across societal layers is maintained by fulfilled lower-layer needs, reversible power, and proportionate responses across 3 Forces. It is inferred from consistency, dependency, and proportionality in observed behavior.

Declarative Stability refers to stability claims based on formal institutions, legal procedures, narratives, or regime self-description, regardless of whether underlying coordination conditions are satisfied.

Within this framework, only structural stability is analytically valid. Declarative stability without structural support is treated as performative, delayed, or enforced stability and, by definition, is therefore unstable.

Diagnostic vs. Prescriptive Framework

A Diagnostic Framework identifies structural conditions, failure pathways, and system trajectories based on observable behavior and dependency relations. It explains *what is happening* and *why*, without proposing interventions.

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A Prescriptive Framework proposes reforms, policies, or corrective actions.

RSDA, DEF, SNH, and CTM are strictly diagnostic frameworks. They do not recommend governance models, institutional designs, or policy solutions. This distinction preserves analytical neutrality and prevents normative or ideological interpretation of results.

Observed Behavior vs. Data Collection Method

Observed Behavior refers to externally visible, system-level adaptations by societal actors, such as withdrawal, concentration, enforcement, substitution, or fragmentation. These observations form the analytical input to the model.

Data Collection Method refers to the procedural, technical, or empirical processes used to identify, aggregate, or validate those observations.

This work defines what is observed, not how it is collected. The model is method-agnostic with respect to data acquisition. Observation criteria are specified structurally; collection methods are intentionally outside the scope of this publication and do not imply access to proprietary, classified, or non-public datasets.

Boundary Statement

These boundary definitions clarify that the framework evaluates structural behavior and systemic coordination, not intent, ideology, morality, or policy quality. They establish the analytical limits of the model while preserving its applicability across regimes, datasets, and research extensions.

Authorship & IP Note

All framework-specific terms used above are developed by Michael Hryshenko and correspond to registered or derivative intellectual property according to the CIPO certificates. This publication defines the analytical structure and diagnostic logic of RSDA. Detailed operational calibration, dataset selection, indicator weighting, and automated scoring procedures are intentionally excluded. These elements form part of ongoing research extensions and are available through direct collaboration with the author.