

Emergent Meaning Cosmology: Meaning Dynamics

How People Can Continue to Hold a Real Place in More Powerful Systems

V7.2 | B01–B45 Joint Final-Review Formal Edition

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Civilization can grow ever more powerful.

The real question is:

Can people still enter real-world processes, establish a place, assume responsibility, and continue growing through participation in these more powerful systems, rather than being reduced to interfaces that are merely called upon?

Contents

Page numbers refer to this English edition.

Introduction	6
Chapter 1: What This Book Studies: Structural Meaning, Not the Substance of Meaning	14
Chapter 2: Conceptual Distinctions: Meaning, Value, Utility, Identification, and Social Capital	20
Chapter 3: How Structural Meaning Is Generated: Capability, Need, and Connection	29
Chapter 4: Thickness and Diversity of Meaning	40
Chapter 5: The Expansion of Structural Meaning: From Individuals to Networks	49
Chapter 6: Participation, Collaboration, and Civilizational Vitality	59
Chapter 7: The Public-Facing Relational Framework: Four Conditions That Cannot Offset One Another	67
Chapter 8: The Theoretical Constraint Framework: Subjects, Systems, and Risks	76
Chapter 9: The Tensions and Thresholds of Civilizational Stability	87
Chapter 10: Technological Revolutions and the Reorganization of Social Structure	96
Chapter 11: The Age of Artificial Intelligence: The Separation of System Capabilities and Subject Capabilities	104
Chapter 12: The Crisis of Subjecthood and Effective Participation in AGI Scenarios	114
Chapter 13: Who Defines Meaning: Institutions, Platforms, and Interpretive Authority	126
Chapter 14: Pathway Allocation, Opportunities for Participation, and Power Structures	138
Chapter 15: Contribution Facts, Project-Specific Trust, and Governance Issues	150
Chapter 16: Overload, Alienation, and the Hollowing Out of Meaning	162

Chapter 17: Signs and Mechanisms of the Collapse of Meaning	175
Chapter 18: Civilization’s Survival Baseline and Minimal Survival Model	186
Chapter 19: The Shift in Sources of Meaning and Networked Participation	197
Chapter 20: The Meaning Economy: The Formation of New Participation Structures	208
Chapter 21: Shared World, Dream Garden, and Networked Collaborative Structures	219
Chapter 22: The Contribution Record Prototype: Facts, Review, and Project-Specific Trust	231
Chapter 23: Civilization Leap: The Logic of Reorganizing Structural Meaning	246
Guide to the Extended Appendices	256
Appendix A: Changes in Meaning Structures: From a “Stable Middle Class” to a Possible “Meaning Cliff”	257
Appendix B: Global Meaning Networks: Dream Garden and Shared World	262
Appendix C: The Contribution Record Prototype (Not a Global Ledger)	267
Appendix D: Global Meaning Economy Infrastructure	269
Appendix E: Cultural Variables and Differing Expressions of Structural Meaning	272
Appendix F: Observable Proxy Indicators for the Core Variables	278
Appendix G: Governance Framework for the Contribution Record Prototype (Draft)	285
Appendix H: Entry Points for Comparative Research on Historical Cases	290
Further Reading and Shared Participation Let the World Continue to Change the Theory	295
V7.2 Version Notes	296
Personalized Further-Reading Guide	297

Version, Textual Master, and Theoretical Responsibilities

V7.2 takes the fully developed v1.2 manuscript as its textual master and the v6.3 manuscript, which solidifies the middle-level structure, as its reference for theoretical calibration. It retains 23 chapters and Appendices A–H. The preceding 22-page compressed draft is excluded from the formal version sequence.

Earlier archival DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.18898753 (corresponding to the expanded v1.2 manuscript). An additional earlier archival DOI for v6.3 is 10.5281/zenodo.18833846. If V7.2 is archived separately, the new formal archival record shall govern.

Meaning Dynamics remains a middle-level theory of civilization: it does not directly prove metaphysical propositions about the universe, primordial meaning, or the soul, nor does it perform empirical adjudication on behalf of social science, history, economics, law, or engineering research. It studies a more specific level: how people gain a place, pathways, relationships, responsibility, contribution, and effective participation within real-world structures, and how these structures emerge, thin out, become unbalanced, are repaired, and are reorganized under technological acceleration.

Retaining the complete theory does not mean retaining every earlier formulation. V7.2 removes residual material from earlier versions, overstrong assertions, false precision, outdated institutional parameters, and unnecessary terminological barriers. It retains the questions, mechanisms, counterexamples, deductions, boundaries, and chains of argument sufficient to allow the theory itself to be changed.

Firm Boundaries of This Edition

- Continued existence is a baseline civilization must never surrender. On that basis, freedom from survival insecurity, happiness in everyday life, and greater meaning in life unfold in sequence. Meaning Dynamics does not describe “avoiding rupture” as civilization’s ultimate goal.
- Current AI enters real-world activity first as an extension of human capabilities that people can authorize. Stronger functionality does not automatically confer subject status; future subjecthood remains open to evidence.
- Civilizational structures are observed separately across multiple dimensions, never combined into an overall civilization score. Thickness of meaning, diversity of meaning, effective participation, quality of collaboration, and risk constraints cannot offset one another. Proxy indicators may be used only for comparison, early warning, and falsification, never to manufacture false precision.
- Contributions can be recorded; a life cannot be settled as an account. Records may preserve only facts, works, knowledge, relational traces, and evidence of responsibility in bounded contexts. Meaning itself must not be turned into an asset. Contribution records must not become a source of overall personal scores, basic rights, political eligibility, resource rights, or cross-domain social credit.
- Historical cases and institutional prototypes must be allowed to fail. Their purpose is not to find proofs for the theory, but to allow facts, counterexamples, different disciplines, and different civilizations to revise the theory in turn.
- Structural stability, organizational mobilization, effective participation, and high-quality collaboration are not sufficient conditions for civilizational legitimacy. Every judgment concerning “participation–collaboration–stability” must still undergo independent directional checks concerning subject status, basic rights, factual verifiability, non-coercion/ability to exit, responsibility, and real-world consequences. Otherwise, high mobilization and integration may amount merely to more efficient deviation from course.

Historical and real-world validation distinguishes “facts/established research–structural explanation–theoretical mapping–future prototypes.” Cases can support or refute only bounded relationships; fitting the framework cannot work backward to prove the entire theory.

- Meaning baseline | Meaning is the root, although its sources may differ. Being alive means having meaning; having meaning is itself a contribution. Existential meaning is not conferred by a job, role, output, evaluation, or structural position, and does not fall to zero when those structures fail.
- Continuity and emergence | Archives can sustain facts and the conditions under which they can be interpreted, but cannot preserve a fixed “substance of meaning.” New understanding and responses by later people to facts, works, relationships, and responsibilities constitute new emergence of meaning. Continuity is not emergence.
- Layers of permission | Visibility of facts about resources does not mean data access; data access does not mean permission for system matching; a successful match does not confer ownership, rights of use, rights of disposal, or execution authority. Any real-world consequence requires a specific jurisdiction, rights-holder consent, independent authorization, and accountable execution.
- AI assistance disclosure | This edition uses artificial intelligence to assist with full-text searches, cross-volume reconciliation, source checking, and formatting consistency checks. The author and research group retain theoretical judgment, selection of materials, and final responsibility. AI acquires neither authorship nor responsibility for judgments.

Current access point: <https://www.civitas.top/en/>

Introduction

Why the Technological Age Must Reopen the Discussion of “Structural Meaning”

In contemporary discussion, we have grown accustomed to describing civilization’s problems in many familiar terms.

For example:

Growth

Efficiency

Innovation

Productivity

Institutions

Governance

Platforms

Algorithms

Risk

Safety

Competition

All these terms matter, and they often do capture part of the problem.

Yet if we are willing to look a little deeper, we find that in an age of technological acceleration, expanding platformization, and rapidly spreading artificial intelligence, this language keeps obscuring a central problem civilization actually faces.

The question is not:

Can systems become stronger?

Can platforms become bigger?

Can organizations become faster?

Can AI become smarter?

Rather, it is:

Can growing numbers of people still gain a real place in this world?

The statement seems simple, yet it points almost directly to the deepest rupture in contemporary civilization.

A person can, of course, be alive.

They may even have more information, more convenient tools, more efficient services, and more advanced system support than before.

But none of this automatically means that, in reality, they still have:

A durable structure in which they are needed;

A place that can continually gain depth;

Participation that can leave traces of facts and responsibility;

Pathways through which they can form a shared process with others;

Subjecthood that is not reduced to an interface within more powerful systems.

In other words:

Civilization is certainly a system of capabilities, but it is also a system of meaning.

Unless this is restored to the center of theory, we will keep making the same misjudgments:

Mistaking high efficiency for high quality;

Mistaking high connectivity for high participation;
Mistaking intense activity for strong civilizational vitality;
Mistaking stronger systems for stronger subjects;
Mistaking visibility for being genuinely needed;
Mistaking “still operating” for “still healthy.”
This is the starting point of this book.

I. Why “Meaning” Can No Longer Be Left Solely to Private Psychology

When “meaning” is mentioned, many people instinctively place it in the following domains:

Questions of existence in philosophy

Ultimate questions in religion

Questions of subjective feeling in psychology

Questions of emotional expression in literature

These certainly all concern meaning.

But if meaning remains confined to these levels, it cannot explain an increasingly clear reality:

Stronger technology, smoother systems, and denser platforms do not necessarily make people feel more secure; instead, they may become more displaced, more anxious, and more superficial.

This shows that we face more than a question of private feelings.

There is at least a middle-level structural problem as well:

Why can some societies enable large numbers of individuals to establish enduring places?

Why can some pathways sustain growth, responsibility, and credibility?

Why do some systems seem increasingly efficient yet find it increasingly difficult to produce deep roles?

Why do so many people have “activity but no place; connections but no lasting accumulation; tasks but no deepening”?

Explaining these problems solely through “happiness,” “satisfaction,” or “psychological resilience” is clearly insufficient.

They concern how individuals enter real-world life and are durably sustained within it.

This book must therefore bring “meaning” back out of an exclusively private context, without pulling it straight back into abstract ontology.

It addresses the long-neglected level between the two:

Structural meaning.

II. What Is “Structural Meaning”?

“Structural meaning” in this book does not refer to questions such as why humanity exists, whether the universe has an ultimate purpose, or whether life has an absolute ground.

These questions are important, but they are not this book’s primary objects of analysis.

Here, “structural meaning” refers to:

Sustainable connections of action formed within pathways, roles, relationships, contributions, participation, and institutional support once individual capabilities, needs, and connections enter real-world interaction.

This definition contains several key points.

First, it is not pure feeling.

A person may feel deeply moved, passionate, and committed.

But if that commitment does not enter real-world interaction, form sustainable connections of action, or find support in pathways, roles, or relational structures, it is still insufficient to constitute structural meaning as this book understands it.

Second, it is not a pure value judgment.

“Worthwhile” does not mean “supported.”

A society may verbally acknowledge the importance of many things while failing to provide them with a place, pathways, and credibility.

Third, it is not a purely functional position.

Merely being used by a system does not automatically establish structural meaning.

If a position amounts only to being called upon unilaterally by the system, with no genuine judgment, responsibility, growth, or sense of being needed on the subject’s part, it is function alone, not structural meaning.

Fourth, it concerns entry into real-world life.

The most fundamental questions of structural meaning are:

Are you genuinely connected into the world?

Do you have a sustainable place?

Can your capabilities reliably respond to some real need?

Can the facts of your contributions be preserved and remain open to verification and understanding in new contexts?

Within a larger shared process, are you sustained rather than merely called upon?

In other words, this book’s real concern is not “whether people feel something,” but:

Does civilization still preserve structures through which people can genuinely enter the world?

III. Why the Technological Age Must Reopen the Discussion of Structural Meaning

If technological change in an era merely made the old society a little faster or less laborious, perhaps meaning would not need to be reconsidered.

The problem, however, is that today’s technological changes have long since exceeded “better tools.”

Together, platformization, algorithmization, automation, and AI are rewriting:

Who can enter real-world processes;

Which capabilities are more easily seen;

Which contributions are more easily recorded;

Which pathways are more readily compressed;

Which roles are more readily thinned out;

Which judgments systems will take over;

Who will be kept at shallow interfaces and who can still enter deep positions.

What makes this change distinctive is that:

It changes not only “what people do,” but also “how people can still exist within civilization.”

This is why the book does not understand the AI question solely as a question of employment, governance, or efficiency.

These are indeed problems, but the deeper problem is:

The AI age is bringing both “the strengthening of civilization” and “the thinning of subjects” to the fore at a new scale, speed, and degree of pervasiveness.

Systems can grow ever stronger;

Aggregate capabilities can grow ever thicker;

Processes can run ever more smoothly;

Visibility can grow ever higher;

Connections can grow ever denser.

At the same time, however, individuals may have ever less access to:

Deep judgment

Long-term responsibility

Thick roles

Slow growth

High-quality collaboration

The generation of direction

Once this occurs, civilization faces an unprecedented risk:

It is stronger, not weaker;

Efficient, not stalled;

Orderly, not chaotic;

Yet it finds it increasingly difficult to produce enough deep-acting agents.

This is why the book argues that what the technological age truly needs to rewrite is not only the rules of governance, but also the theory of structural meaning in civilization.

IV. The Book's Central Question

The whole book can be condensed into one central question:

In an age of technological acceleration and deep AI involvement, how can civilization continue to enable large numbers of individuals to enter real positions, and enable those positions continually to form, deepen, connect, carry responsibility, consolidate, and regenerate, rather than sliding into hollowing out and collapse as systems grow stronger?

Around this overarching question, the book develops a sequence of questions:

1. How is structural meaning generated?

Why are capability, need, or connection alone insufficient to form structural meaning?

2. In what directions does structural meaning expand?

Why are thickness and diversity two key axes?

3. How does structural meaning move from the individual to civilization?

Why do pathways, roles, relationships, collaboration, and institutions constitute a middle-level chain of support?

4. How should civilizational vitality be judged?

Why do high presence and activity not equal genuine participation, and why must EP be introduced?

5. What is the deepest structural risk in the AI age?

Why must we distinguish the thickness of system capabilities from the thickness of subject capabilities?

6. How does civilization become unstable as it expands?

Why are tension, overload, and alienation endogenous limits to expansion?

7. Why does modern civilization become hollow amid efficiency?

Why does cognitive overload become the primary source of pressure?

8. How can meaning collapse be identified in advance?

Why must early-warning indicators be established, rather than offering only retrospective explanations?

9. What must civilization preserve at a minimum during high-risk periods?

Why must a minimal survival model for civilization be proposed?

10. Where will new sources of meaning emerge in the future?

Why will old centers become unstable, and why will composite pathway combinations become important?

11. How do new structures of participation form?

Why must the meaning economy, Shared World, Dream Garden, distributed networked collaboration structures, and contribution-record prototypes be studied as hypotheses that can fail?

12. What exactly does Civilization Leap mean?

Why is it a reorganization of structural meaning rather than mere technological upgrading?

Together, these questions constitute the structure of the book.

V. The Book's Method: A Middle-Level Theory of Civilization

This book is neither a work of philosophical ontology nor an empirical quantitative paper, much less a manual of detailed institutional rules.

Its position is that of a middle-level theory of civilization.

“Middle-level” means seeking a position between two extremes:

At one end are overly elevated discussions of ultimate matters.

For example:

Where meaning ultimately comes from

Why the universe exists

Why human beings were created

Which ultimate value is absolutely correct

These questions are important, but too far removed from real-world structures.

At the other end are overly localized empirical descriptions.

For example:

A platform’s user data

Employment changes in one category of occupation

A country’s education statistics for a given year

The technical design of an institutional instrument

These too are important, but too fragmented to address civilization as a whole.

This book seeks to address the level in between:

How individuals enter real-world life

How pathways form

How roles deepen

How contributions consolidate

How collaboration is organized

How deep positions are allocated

How system strengthening becomes decoupled from subject strengthening

Why civilization becomes unstable as it expands

How the foundations of participation can be rebuilt in the future

The book’s method is therefore neither purely abstract deduction nor a simple aggregation of empirical findings, but:

Middle-level modeling of civilization’s problems in the technological age through structural variables and dynamic relationships.

VI. Several Key Judgments

To help readers grasp the book’s direction before entering the main text, the introduction sets out several core judgments.

Judgment One

Civilization is not only a system of capabilities; it is also a system of meaning.

Capabilities determine what civilization can do. Meaning determines whether it can continue to generate subjects, places, responsibility, and a future.

Judgment Two

Technological strengthening does not automatically equal Civilization Leap.

If systems grow stronger while people become thinner, this merely drives the old structure to extremes; it is not a leap.

Judgment Three

One of modern civilization's greatest dangers is not the absence of subjects, but the increasingly efficient production of hollow subjects.

This is one of the most hidden risks of the age of platformization and AI.

Judgment Four

What truly matters for future civilization is not an ever-increasing number of entry points, but whether more entry points can be organized into sustainable pathways and gradually consolidate into roles, credibility, and EP.

This is the book's central conclusion concerning "participation."

Judgment Five

From the middle-level perspective of Meaning Dynamics, one important task of Civilization Leap is not to lock in a single future, but to reopen spaces of genuine entry that old structures keep closing.

This is a higher-level judgment to which the final chapter will return.

VII. This Book Is a Revisable Framework, Not a Closed Answer

One point must also be made at the outset, lest the book increasingly resemble a closed system as it develops.

The book does not claim to have provided the sole template for future civilization.

On the contrary, it maintains that:

Different civilizations have different historical carriers;

Different societies combine pathways in different ways;

Different institutional environments produce different shared foundations and collaborative structures;

Different cultures understand roles, relationships, credibility, and the sense of being needed in different ways.

The book therefore offers no single institutional blueprint, but a middle-level framework better suited to analyzing civilization in the technological age.

It can be revised by:

Sociology

Political science

Research on AI governance

Complex systems theory

Comparative cultural research

The practice of institutional design

In other words, what the book most wants to avoid is precisely becoming a new form of single-pathway lock-in itself.

VIII. How to Read This Book

There are two ways to read this book.

The first is sequential reading.

Proceed from the first chapter to the last along the following chain:

Conceptual boundaries

Mechanisms of generation

Axes of expansion

Support through pathways

Participation and collaboration

Theoretical constraint framework

Tensions and thresholds

Historical reorganization

AI risks

Hollowing out and collapse

Minimal survival model

Shifting sources of meaning

Meaning economy

Shared World and Dream Garden

Contribution-record prototypes

Civilization Leap

This is the most complete approach.

The second is question-led reading.

If a particular question concerns you most, you can go directly to the corresponding chapters:

To understand what “structural meaning” is: Chapters 1–3

To understand how “thickness, diversity, and EP” constitute stability: Chapters 4–9

To understand “risks in the AI age”: Chapters 11–17

To understand “how future civilization will be reorganized”: Chapters 18–23

Whichever approach you choose, the book hopes to offer a perspective different from the old vocabulary.

The core of that perspective is not to make the future look more compelling, but to make real problems more clearly visible.

IX. The Introduction’s Final Sentence

If the book’s starting point had to be summarized in one sentence, it could be this:

What truly needs renewed discussion in the technological age is not only how systems can grow stronger, but whether people can continue to enter thicker positions within those stronger systems.

From here, the book proceeds to Chapter 1.

Chapter 1: What This Book Studies: Structural Meaning, Not the Substance of Meaning

Before discussing “meaning,” we must first answer a more fundamental question:

Which level of meaning does this book actually discuss?

Unless this is defined clearly at the outset, subsequent discussions of civilizational stability, technological impacts, structures of participation, and institutional design will keep sliding between levels: from inner individual experience to social roles to the origins of existence. The result is a theory that appears grand but has blurred boundaries, and appears unified but has an unstable object of study.

The book’s first task is therefore neither to present a relational framework immediately nor to begin discussing artificial intelligence. It is to establish that:

This book studies structural meaning, not the substance of meaning.

This distinction is no word game; it is a prerequisite for the work as a whole to stand.

I. Meaning Is Not an Object at a Single Level

In ordinary language, “meaning” is a highly compressed word.

People use it to describe many different things:

- Whether life is worth continuing
- Whether an action has value
- Whether a relationship is worth maintaining
- Whether an occupation makes a person feel needed
- Whether an era still has a shared direction

All these are called “meaning,” yet they do not actually lie at the same level.

Some concern individuals’ inner feelings;

Some concern the organization of consciousness and cognitive interpretation;

Some concern social roles and institutional structures;

Others point to deeper questions of origin unsuited to direct inclusion in public theoretical modeling.

Without these distinctions, a theory develops two problems:

First, it continually expands its explanatory scope until it can say something about everything but explain nothing clearly.

Second, it forces objects that do not belong to the same analytical plane into a single model, making subsequent arguments appear unified while actually losing focus.

This book therefore adopts a layered approach.

II. This Book Does Not Directly Address the Substance of Meaning

The book acknowledges that meaning does not exist only within social structures.

Individuals’ fundamental questions about “meaning,” their feeling of hollowness even when structures are intact, and their unwillingness to give up entirely when structures break down are not wholly due to what society confers or what the brain computes. Meaning has a deeper level of origins.

But that level is not this book’s direct object of study.

The reasons are straightforward:

First, questions at that level concern origins at a higher theoretical level.

They concern where meaning comes from, how it is possible, and why it can penetrate structures and circumstances and continue to act on individuals. Developing these questions directly here would move the book from middle-level theory into ontology and dissolve the boundaries of its modeling.

Second, questions at that level are not suited to direct inclusion in the analysis of real-world structures.

Roles, participation, collaboration, institutions, platforms, occupations, and civilizational stability require a vocabulary capable of addressing real-world interaction and social structure, rather than direct appeals to deep assertions that cannot be publicly verified.

Third, the book deliberately maintains a division of labor with the preceding texts.

In higher-level theoretical treatments, meaning's origins and its vertical chain of transmission have their place. Here, we ask only:

How do people form observable, revisable positions for action, relationships, responsibilities, and structures of participation within real-world life and civilization?

The book thus does not deny that meaning has deeper sources, but chooses to limit its object explicitly to:

The level of meaning that can enter social, institutional, and civilizational analysis.

This is what it calls "structural meaning."

III. What Is Structural Meaning?

"Structural meaning" does not mean "meaning flattened by structure," nor does it mean "only what society recognizes counts as meaning."

It means:

When individuals' capabilities, needs, and connections enter real-world interaction and are supported by roles, relationships, actions, participation, and institutions, they form relationships of structural meaning that can endure or break down.

Structural meaning is neither an outward score for life's meaning nor proof of existential worth. It describes only the relationships of action and conditions of support people form within particular real-world structures. The failure of a structural position does not reduce life's meaning to zero.

Nor are records meaning itself. Records can preserve facts, works, knowledge, relational traces, and responsibility. Only when future people understand and respond to these materials anew does new meaning emerge in new relationships. Continuity of meaning is not emergence of meaning.

Its typical manifestations include:

- Why a job is not only a livelihood but also a position of identity
- Why a relationship is not only an emotional connection but also a foothold for action
- Why a contribution brings not only results but also a sense of being needed
- Why participation is not merely attendance but also embeddedness in a community
- Why an institution not only allocates resources but also organizes roles and pathways

Structural meaning is therefore neither purely subjective nor purely objective.

It lies between the two:

- One end connects to individuals' feelings and existential conditions
- The other connects to roles, institutions, and civilizational structures

It can be experienced by individuals and observed by society; it has both an inward dimension of feeling and an outward dimension of organization.

This is precisely why it is suited to being an object of middle-level theory.

IV. Structural Meaning Is a Civilizational Variable, Not a “Secondary Phenomenon”

In many discussions, “meaning” is treated as something soft, supplementary, or decorative.

What really matters seems to be:

Resources

Efficiency

Institutions

Technology

Power

“Meaning” is then merely a spiritual accessory that people have the spare capacity to consider once these problems are solved.

This book disagrees.

It holds that in modern technological society, meaning is a foundational variable, not an ancillary one.

Even if a civilization has powerful technological capabilities, if large numbers of individuals cannot find places, pathways, and a sense of being needed within it, that civilization will enter a very particular state of instability:

- Systems still operate
- Roles still exist
- Resources are still allocated
- Technology keeps growing stronger

Yet individuals find it increasingly difficult to determine why they participate, what they persist for, and what real position they actually occupy within the structure.

This means the problem is no longer merely one of distribution or efficiency, but one of civilization’s structural meaning.

The book therefore proposes:

Civilizational stability depends not only on the aggregate of capabilities but also on whether structural meaning is sufficiently rich, open, and accessible to participation.

This judgment is the starting point for the models developed later in the book.

V. Why This Book Must Begin with “Structural Meaning”

Beginning immediately with technology, risk, or future institutions would have two consequences.

First, every discussion would lack a common theoretical intermediary.

Occupational crises, AI impacts, platform governance, contribution-record prototypes, and sharing networks would appear related, but would be difficult to bring into one model.

Second, the deepest elements of the modern crisis would be obscured.

Many problems appear to concern employment, education, or platforms. At a deeper level, they actually concern:

- Whether existing role structures still hold
- Whether new pathways of participation can be established
- Whether individuals are still genuinely needed by civilization
- Whether structures can still provide people with enduring positions for action

These are not abstract forms of “spiritual anxiety,” but real structural problems.

To see them, we first need the intermediary level of “structural meaning.”

This book therefore begins neither with “which technologies are most dangerous” nor with “which institutions are most advanced.”

It begins a step deeper:

First identify what, within civilization, sustains the relationship between individuals and systems in the form of meaning structures.

Only when this level becomes visible can the subsequent models avoid spinning their wheels.

VI. The Basic Characteristics of Structural Meaning

To prevent the concept from becoming overly abstract, the book first sets out four basic characteristics.

1. It is relational.

Structural meaning does not exist in isolation.

It always forms within some connection:

- Between people and tasks
- Between people and communities
- Between people and institutional pathways
- Between capabilities and needs

If these connections break, structural meaning rapidly weakens.

2. It requires structural support.

Structural meaning must always be carried by some structure.

It does not remain solely within inexpressible inner feelings, but enters:

- Roles
- Organizations
- Relationships
- Networks
- Institutions
- Platforms

Without supporting structures, meaning struggles to endure at the civilizational level.

3. It is dynamic.

Structural meaning is not a static given.

It forms, expands, becomes unbalanced, collapses, and reorganizes.

The most stable occupational role in one era may rapidly lose its support in another. A once-marginal mode of participation may become a new center of meaning under new technological conditions.

4. It has a distributive dimension.

Structural meaning is not evenly distributed.

Who can more readily enter meaningful roles, who struggles to enter meaningful collaborative networks, who holds interpretive authority, and who is excluded are all influenced by resources, education, institutions, platforms, and power structures.

For this very reason, structural meaning is a question of political economy as well as culture.

VII. Structural Meaning Is the Book's Actual Unit of Study

At this point, the book can formally establish its unit of study:

It does not discuss “whether meaning is part of the substance of the universe,” or “whether people subjectively feel happy,” much less “whether a particular moral value is higher.”

It discusses:

How meaning, once it enters real-world structures, exists in the forms of roles, pathways, participation, collaboration, institutions, and networks, thereby affecting civilizational stability.

Thus, “meaning” in this book refers by default to:

Structural meaning.

Unless otherwise stated, the following terms in subsequent chapters primarily refer to this level:

- Generation of meaning
- Expansion of meaning
- Diversity of meaning
- Meaning economy
- Meaning collapse
- Meaning Dynamics

Once this is clear, many otherwise confused questions become more stable:

- The relational framework addresses structural meaning, not the substance of meaning
- The model of civilizational stability addresses observable structures, not sources that cannot be modeled
- Platforms, institutions, and contribution-record prototypes all address the distribution and movement of structural meaning
- The crises of the technological age also first manifest as instability, contraction, alienation, and hollowing out at the level of structural meaning

VIII. A Key Judgment: The Modern Crisis Is First a Crisis of Structural Meaning

The chapter's theoretical conclusion can be stated in one sentence:

One of modern civilization's deepest public crises is not the complete disappearance of meaning, but the destabilization of the mechanisms that generate, distribute, and sustain structural meaning.

This matters because it draws us out of a common misconception:

Many people say, “Modern people no longer have a sense of meaning.”

This sounds like a private psychological problem.

The book instead favors saying:

- Existing role structures are loosening
- Existing pathways of participation are breaking
- Existing mechanisms through which people are needed are narrowing
- New networks of structural meaning have not yet taken shape

The problem is therefore not merely that “people feel empty,” but that:

Civilization is losing the structural capacity to enable large numbers of individuals to keep entering meaningful positions.

This is the actual object this book seeks to study.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has completed one of the book's most important tasks:

Clarifying its object of study.

The book studies structural meaning rather than directly discussing the substance of meaning.

Structural meaning is the structured level of meaning that, after translation into real-world life and civilization, appears in roles, relationships, contributions, participation, institutions, and networks.

Distinct from both purely subjective feelings and purely institutional arrangements, it is the most crucial intermediary level between individuals and civilization.

Civilizational stability, technological impacts, crises of participation, platform governance, institutional design, and related questions can enter a common theoretical framework only once this level has been clarified.

The next chapter addresses a further question that must be resolved:

If "meaning" is the book's central concept, exactly how does it differ from neighboring concepts such as "value," "utility," "identification," and "social capital"?

Only after this step can structural meaning truly become a theoretical object with defined boundaries.

Chapter 2: Conceptual Distinctions: Meaning, Value, Utility, Identification, and Social Capital

With a Discussion of the Boundary Conditions of Structural Meaning

The preceding chapter established that this book studies structural meaning, not the substance of meaning.

Yet simply limiting the object of study to “structural meaning” is still insufficient.

As long as “meaning” remains too broad a concept, it will still face a fundamental challenge:

Why must the concept of “meaning” be used at all?

What irreplaceable distinction separates it from neighboring concepts such as value, utility, identification, social capital, and function?

Unless this step is sufficiently rigorous, “structural meaning” can readily be understood as a conceptual collage: seemingly novel, but actually repackaging several old concepts and placing them side by side.

The book’s subsequent models, variables, risk analyses, and institutional prototypes could then all rest on an unstable conceptual foundation.

The task here is therefore not merely to explain terminology, but to undertake three more rigorous tasks:

First, explain how “structural meaning” differs from several neighboring concepts;

Second, clarify the necessary conditions for “structural meaning” to hold;

Third, define the book’s boundaries so that the concept does not expand without limit and absorb everything.

Only once these three steps are complete can structural meaning truly become a middle-level theoretical concept with analytical power, sustained usefulness, and the capacity to withstand challenge.

I. Why Conceptual Distinctions Are Necessary

In social theory, concepts are not neutral labels but blades that cut reality into parts.

Approaching the same phenomenon through different concepts yields different explanatory pathways.

For example, consider a person who feels a sense of loss after leaving a former job:

- Explained through “utility,” the problem may be declining income and satisfaction;
- Through “identification,” it may be damage to identity and belonging;
- Through “social capital,” it may be broken relational networks and support resources;
- Through “value,” it may be a decline in social esteem;
- Through “structural meaning,” however, the problem is:

They have lost a position that continually organized their own capabilities, others’ needs, and real-world connections together.

These explanations are not mutually exclusive, but their emphases differ, as do the levels of the problem they reveal.

The book is therefore not denying the importance of other concepts. Rather, it seeks to explain:

Why, for civilization’s problems in the technological age, “structural meaning” better captures the most crucial intermediary level.

That level is distinct from both purely private experience and purely institutional function. It concerns:

- How individuals enter real-world life
- How positions are supported
- How participation endures
- How contributions consolidate

- How roles form
- How civilization continually brings more people into shared processes

Only by clarifying this level can subsequent questions of thickness, diversity, participation, collaboration, EP, pathway allocation, contribution-record prototypes, and so on genuinely occupy the same theoretical coordinates.

II. The Difference Between “Meaning” and “Value”

“Value” is one of the concepts most easily confused with “meaning.”

In everyday language, people often say:

- This is very valuable
- This person leads a very meaningful life

The two seem close, but are not identical.

1. Value is first a relationship of judgment.

Value usually means that something deserves affirmation, preservation, pursuit, or priority.

It inherently contains a structure of judgment:

- Good or bad
- High or low
- Worthwhile or not worthwhile

Value is therefore closer to an evaluative framework.

2. Structural meaning is first a connection of action.

Structural meaning does not primarily ask “Is it worthwhile?”

It first asks:

- Has it connected the individual to a real-world process?
- Has it given the individual a sustainable position?
- Does it provide a foothold for ongoing action?
- Can it consolidate within relationships, pathways, roles, or institutions?

Value therefore emphasizes judgment; structural meaning emphasizes connection.

3. Value can exist without participation; structural meaning usually cannot.

A person can acknowledge that an undertaking is “very valuable” without entering it at all.

For example, someone may acknowledge the value of education without genuinely entering educational processes.

They may agree that science is important without acquiring a real position in scientific structures.

Structural meaning is different.

It requires some continuing connection between the individual and the real world.

Without entry, support, or a foothold for action, simply “feeling it is worthwhile” is not enough to constitute structural meaning.

4. Conclusion

We can therefore say:

Value answers “Is it worthwhile?”

Structural meaning answers “Does it durably connect people into real-world life and shared processes?”

Civilization certainly needs values, but a crisis of civilization cannot be solved merely by reaffirming them.

A society can repeatedly emphasize certain values while still allowing large numbers of individuals to lose their places.

This is precisely why value cannot substitute for structural meaning.

III. The Difference Between “Meaning” and “Utility”

“Utility” is a dominant concept in modern economics and decision theory.

It emphasizes the extent to which an object or action satisfies a subject’s preferences and needs.

On the surface, both structural meaning and utility involve a relationship between “needs and satisfaction,” but their core difference is substantial.

1. Utility emphasizes satisfaction through outcomes.

Utility primarily concerns:

- What was obtained
- How much was satisfied
- Whether preferences were realized

It is thus closer to an outcome-oriented logic.

2. Structural meaning emphasizes position and continuity.

It asks not only “What was obtained?” but, more importantly:

- Did the individual thereby gain a real-world position?
- Is that position sustainable?
- Is the action supported by a community or structure?
- Has the individual thereby formed continuing connections with others, institutions, tasks, and problems?

Utility focuses on satisfaction;

Structural meaning focuses on embeddedness.

3. High utility does not equal strong structural meaning.

One of modern society’s most characteristic misalignments is a substantial increase in utility alongside a decline in structural meaning.

For example:

- More convenient consumption
- More immediate entertainment
- More effortless recommendations
- More frictionless interfaces

All can significantly increase utility without necessarily increasing structural meaning.

On the contrary, they may increasingly limit people’s entry into:

- Judgment
- Responsibility
- Deep collaboration
- Long-term growth
- Positions in which they are genuinely needed

4. Conclusion

We can therefore say:

Utility answers “How much satisfaction did the subject obtain?”

Structural meaning answers “Did the subject thereby gain a sustainable position in real-world life?”

The deepest problem of the technological age is not always insufficient utility; it is often the coexistence of rising utility and declining structural meaning.

This is also why the book must insist on “structural meaning” rather than “utility.”

IV. The Difference Between “Meaning” and “Identification”

“Identification” generally refers to an individual’s affirmation of “who I am,” “to whom I belong,” and “which community I am connected to.”

It is closely related to structural meaning, but not identical to it.

1. Identification emphasizes identity and belonging.

It mainly answers:

- Who am I?
- What group do I belong to?
- Who recognizes me?
- How do I understand my position?

It addresses the dimension of identity.

2. Structural meaning emphasizes continuing relationships of action.

It is concerned not only with “who I am,” but more with:

- What I am doing
- How my actions continue
- How my capabilities respond to real needs
- How my existence has effects within real-world structures

Identification emphasizes static identity; structural meaning emphasizes dynamic participation.

3. Identification can be strong while structural meaning remains very weak.

A person may well have a strong sense of identity yet lack a sustainable position for participation in real-world life.

This is part of many modern predicaments:

Identification is continually reinforced, while deep participation does not expand alongside it.

4. Conclusion

We can therefore say:

Identification answers “Who am I, and to whom do I belong?”

Structural meaning answers “How do I continually enter real-world life and have effects within it?”

Identification can be an important component of structural meaning, but cannot replace it.

V. The Difference Between “Meaning” and “Social Capital”

“Social capital” emphasizes the availability of relational resources.

It concerns:

- Whom you know
- Which relationships you can mobilize
- Whether networks help you obtain support, information, opportunities, and cooperation

This is an extremely important concept and the closest to this book's structural meaning.

Yet a crucial distinction remains.

1. Social capital emphasizes relational resources.

Its focus is:

- Whether connections exist
- Whether connections can be converted into resources
- Whether trust can bring opportunities for cooperation

It is more like an analysis of "network usability."

2. Structural meaning emphasizes the sustainability of positions for action.

Building on this, it asks further:

- Do these connections bring individuals into ongoing processes of action?
- Do these positions generate a sense of being needed, beyond providing access to resources?
- Can these networks support growth, responsibility, and long-term credibility?

In other words, social capital emphasizes "being able to connect"; structural meaning emphasizes "being able to sustain what is connected."

3. Not all social capital can become structural meaning.

This must be made explicit.

Relational resources do not automatically become structural meaning.

Such a conversion is possible only when connections meet the following conditions:

- Sustainable: not a one-off contact
- Capable of carrying responsibility: not merely a low-cost tie
- Capable of continuity: relationships and actions are not one-off; roles, trust, and pathways still form within specific relationships
- Able to enter shared processes: not confined to private reciprocity

Without these conditions, connections may be only short-term exchanges of resources and cannot constitute structural meaning.

4. Conclusion

We can therefore say:

Social capital answers "Can connections be converted into resources?"

Structural meaning answers "Do connections bring people into real-world structures of ongoing action and support?"

Social capital is one important condition of structural meaning, but is not structural meaning itself.

VI. The Difference Between "Meaning" and "Function"

Another frequently confused concept is "function."

Much modern organizational thinking habitually understands individuals and roles in functional terms:

Does the system need you? Have you completed the task? Are you useful to the whole?

This certainly relates to structural meaning, but the two are by no means identical.

1. Function emphasizes usefulness to a system.

Its core logic is:

- Is this part useful to the system's operation?
- What task has it completed?
- What purpose does it serve within the whole?

This is the system's perspective.

2. Structural meaning requires validity in both directions.

Both sides must hold:

- Does the system continually need the individual through this position?
- Does the individual genuinely enter real-world life and shared processes through this position?

If all that remains is unilateral use by the system, while the individual gains no genuine position, growth, or responsibility, this is function alone, insufficient to constitute structural meaning.

3. Pure functionalization leads toward alienation.

This is one of the technological age's most common problems.

Systems grow increasingly adept at organizing functions, but not necessarily at organizing meaning.

A person can be efficiently called upon and precisely embedded in a process without thereby gaining a deeper position.

They "have a function," but do not necessarily "have structural meaning."

4. Conclusion

We can therefore say:

Function answers "Can the system use you?"

Structural meaning answers "Have you thereby entered a sustainable position that can carry responsibility and grow deeper?"

VII. Why the Book Still Insists on the Concept of "Structural Meaning"

The comparisons above now make the following clearer:

- Value emphasizes judgment
- Utility emphasizes satisfaction
- Identification emphasizes identity
- Social capital emphasizes relational resources
- Function emphasizes usefulness to a system

The problems this book addresses cut across precisely these dimensions:

- How individuals enter real-world life
- How positions are supported
- How participation endures
- How contributions consolidate

- How pathways form
- How roles deepen
- How civilization retains its foundation of subjects under technological impacts

No neighboring concept alone can capture all these levels simultaneously.

This is precisely where “structural meaning” becomes necessary:

It is not a substitute term for those concepts, but a middle-level concept that can bring position, participation, support, connection, growth, and ongoing action into a single analytical framework.

The book has therefore not arbitrarily chosen a more “literary” word. It seeks a conceptual tool capable of carrying the complexity of real-world problems.

VIII. Boundary Conditions for Structural Meaning

Conceptual distinction must explain not only “how it differs from other concepts,” but also “when it holds and when it does not.”

The book therefore sets out three necessary conditions for structural meaning.

1. It must enter real-world interaction.

Structural meaning is neither pure inner imagination nor abstract belief.

It must enter some form of interaction in the real world:

- People and tasks
- People and other people
- People and communities
- People and institutions
- Capabilities and needs
- Roles and problems

Without any real-world interaction, it constitutes at most a private feeling, insufficient to become structural meaning as understood here.

2. It must form sustainable connections of action.

Structural meaning is not a fleeting emotional satisfaction.

It must form continuing relationships of action over some timescale.

“Sustainable” here does not mean a rigidly fixed, uniform duration. It is differentiated by level:

- Short-cycle sustainability: going beyond a single event to enable repeated entry
- Medium-cycle sustainability: able to consolidate into pathways, roles, or long-term collaboration
- Long-cycle sustainability: able to preserve some structural memory and continuity of credibility over time

If an interaction cannot move beyond the moment at all, it struggles to form genuine structural meaning.

3. It must be sustained by some carrier.

Structural meaning must be carried by some real-world form.

For example:

- Pathways
- Roles
- Relationships
- Collaborative networks

- Institutional arrangements
- Contribution records
- References for within-project trust

Without a carrier, meaning struggles to move from individual experience to a sustainable variable within civilizational structures.

IX. What the Book Does Not Study: Exclusions from Structural Meaning

To prevent “structural meaning” from expanding without limit, the book must also specify what it excludes. At least three categories of questions are not its main objects of study.

1. Purely ontological questions of meaning.

For example:

- What is the ultimate source of meaning?
- Why can existence have meaning?
- The relationship between primordial meaning and higher origins

These questions are certainly important, but belong to higher-level theoretical treatment, not this book’s main analytical level.

2. Purely short-term subjective emotional fluctuations.

For example:

- An episode of low mood
- Mood changes during a particular period
- A single feeling of frustration
- Momentary fluctuations in private feelings

These relate to structural meaning, but cannot simply be reduced to structural-meaning problems.

3. Purely normative judgments of value.

For example:

- Which value is absolutely higher?
- What is the ultimate good?
- Should a particular moral principle take priority in every situation?

These belong to normative philosophy and are not the book’s primary objects of analysis.

“Structural meaning” here is thus a middle-level theoretical concept.

It neither descends without limit into ontology nor ascends without limit to become an ultimate moral arbiter.

It addresses:

How individuals enter sustainable structures of action through real-world interaction, thereby affecting civilization’s stability, imbalance, and reorganization.

X. A More Precise Definition

After the distinctions and boundary-setting in this chapter, a more precise definition can now be given:

Structural meaning consists of sustainable connections of action formed within pathways, roles, relationships, contributions, participation, and institutional support once individual capabilities, needs, and connections enter real-world interaction.

This definition contains the six levels that truly concern the book:

- Capability: not an empty feeling, but a basis for generation
- Need: not purely subjective preference, but related to real-world gaps
- Connection: not an isolated act, but entry into a relational network
- Pathways/roles: not one-off behavior, but something with a carrier
- Participation/contribution: not bare existence, but a position within a process
- Sustainable connections of action: not momentary, but capable of consolidation

This is the real reason the book uses “structural meaning.”

Chapter Summary

This chapter has completed one of the book’s most important tasks of firming up conceptual boundaries.

Through comparison with value, utility, identification, social capital, and function, it has shown that:

- Value emphasizes judgment
- Utility emphasizes satisfaction
- Identification emphasizes identity
- Social capital emphasizes relational resources
- Function emphasizes usefulness to a system

“Structural meaning,” by contrast, refers to:

The intermediary level at which individuals enter continuing structures of action through real-world interaction and are jointly sustained by pathways, roles, relationships, contributions, participation, and institutions.

The chapter has also further clarified three necessary conditions for structural meaning:

1. Entry into real-world interaction

2. Formation of sustainable connections of action

3. Support by some carrier

It has explained three areas that the book does not directly study:

- Purely ontological questions of meaning
- Purely short-term subjective emotional questions
- Purely normative judgments of value

This makes “structural meaning” no longer an expansive concept that can absorb everything indefinitely, but a middle-level unit of analysis that can be used throughout the book.

The next chapter addresses an equally crucial question:

If structural meaning arises from capability, need, and connection, does connection itself remain neutral in the age of platforms and AI?

Or, to put it another way:

Is it the case that not every connection genuinely generates structural meaning?

Chapter 3: How Structural Meaning Is Generated: Capability, Need, and Connection

With a Discussion of Augmenting and Substitutive Connections

The first two chapters completed two foundational tasks.

First, they clarified the object of study:

The book discusses structural meaning, not the substance of meaning.

Second, they firmed up its boundaries:

Structural meaning differs from value, utility, identification, social capital, or pure function. It consists of sustainable connections of action formed through support by pathways, roles, participation, connections, and institutions after individuals enter real-world life and civilization.

The inquiry can now advance:

If structural meaning neither exists naturally nor holds through subjective feeling alone, how exactly is it generated?

This is the book's true starting point concerning generation.

If we cannot even explain "how structural meaning is generated," all subsequent discussion of thickness, diversity, EP, collaboration, hollowing out, and Civilization Leap will lose its foundation.

The chapter retains its basic judgment:

Structural meaning arises from the interaction of capability, need, and connection.

Yet at the current baseline, this judgment requires further revision and deepening.

In traditional societies, it is easy to assume:

- A need exists first
- Someone then responds to it
- Structural meaning subsequently forms through connection

This certainly holds, but in platform society and the AI age, this generative chain is no longer sufficient.

Connection itself is acquiring greater power to shape things.

In other words:

- Sometimes a connection forms because a need exists
- Sometimes, however, a connection is established first, and needs are then reorganized or even manufactured

This chapter must therefore not only restate the mechanism of generation, but answer two sharper questions:

1. Is connection still neutral?

2. Is it the case that not every connection genuinely generates structural meaning?

Its final conclusion will be:

Not every connection reliably generates structural meaning.

Only augmenting connections reliably foster it. Substitutive connections can also produce activity and convenience, but may erode subjects' positions over the long term and generate hollowness.

I. Why We Must Begin with the Mechanism of Generation

Many discussions of meaning habitually remain at the level of outcomes.

For example:

- I feel this is meaningful
- I increasingly feel that work is meaningless
- I feel the relationship has become empty
- I cannot feel motivated by this system

These statements are not wrong, but they describe only “outcomes.”

They do not explain:

- Why meaning appears
- Why it disappears
- Why it sometimes forms quickly
- Why, at other times, no amount of emphasis can restore it

If we remain at the level of outcomes, meaning is readily mistaken for:

- An emotion
- An attitude
- A value judgment
- A subjective psychological preference

This book rejects that reduction.

It brings meaning back into middle-level theory precisely because it holds that structural meaning has clear conditions of generation.

When those conditions are present, meaning gradually forms; when they break down, structural meaning too loosens, contracts, and collapses.

The chapter’s task, therefore, is to reconnect the “experience of meaning” to the “mechanisms that generate meaning.”

II. Capability: The First Condition of Structural Meaning

The generation of structural meaning first requires capability.

Capability here does not refer only to advanced skills or professional qualifications, but broadly to the possibility that an individual, group, or system can exert some effective influence on the real world.

Capabilities may be very basic or highly complex.

For example:

- A person can cook
- A person can care for older people
- A person can write software
- A person can organize discussion
- A person can mediate conflict
- A team can maintain a network
- An organization can coordinate resources

All these count as capabilities.

1. Why capability is the first condition.

Without capability, individuals struggle to enter real-world processes.

Structural meaning is not simply bestowed; it must enter the real world through some practical effect.

Capability is therefore an entry condition for the generation of structural meaning.

2. But capability does not automatically equal meaning.

This must be absolutely clear.

Capability is a condition, not an outcome.

Even someone with strong capabilities may find them suspended for a long time if those capabilities:

- Do not address real needs
- Do not enter continuing connections
- Do not form a position that can be supported

This shows that capability itself is not structural meaning. It is only the starting point of its generative chain.

3. Capabilities differ in level.

Different capabilities, upon entering structures, form structural meaning of different thicknesses.

Some suffice only to support short-cycle effects; others can carry complex judgment, long-term responsibility, and collaboration across people.

The later discussion of thickness of meaning develops from precisely this point.

For now, one point is sufficient:

Without capability, structural meaning is difficult to generate; capability alone is still insufficient.

III. Need: The Second Condition of Structural Meaning

If capability is the first condition, need is the second.

Need here is not merely personal desire or market preference.

More broadly, it refers to the real world's:

- Requirements for survival
- Requirements for relationships
- Requirements for collaboration
- Requirements for sustaining communities
- Requirements for cultural expression
- Requirements for building the future
- Unmet problems and gaps

In other words, needs exist not only in consumer markets, but at every level of civilization's operation.

1. Why need is the second condition.

If a capability does not confront some real-world gap, it struggles to obtain an opportunity to enter a structure.

A person may be able to write, but this capability is activated only when there is a need for expression, recording, translation, communication, or explanation.

A person may be able to provide care, but this capability genuinely enters the real world only where there are needs involving life, relationships, vulnerability, and community support.

Needs thus transform capabilities from "latent possibilities" into "real-world candidates."

2. Need is not purely private preference.

This too must be emphasized.

If need is understood only as “what an individual wants,” many truly crucial structural needs disappear from view.

For example:

- A neighborhood needs repair
- A platform needs maintenance
- An organization needs coordination
- Public knowledge needs organizing
- A community needs trust
- A group of people needs connection and understanding

These are not purely consumer preferences, but they are real needs within civilizational structures.

3. Needs give capabilities direction.

The same capability generates different structural meaning in different fields of need.

For example, language skills can be used for:

- Teaching
- Translation
- Mediation
- Cross-cultural connection
- Content generation
- Community organizing

Need is thus not merely a question of “whether anyone wants it.” It also generates the direction that determines which pathway a capability enters.

IV. Connection: The Third Condition of Structural Meaning

Even the simultaneous existence of capability and need does not mean that structural meaning will appear automatically.

A third condition must exist between them:

Connection.

Connection is the link most easily underestimated, yet also the one most urgently requiring reconsideration in the platform age.

Many real-world problems are not that:

- Capabilities are absent
- Needs are absent

But that:

- Capabilities cannot find needs
- Needs cannot find capabilities
- Even when both exist, they cannot enter sustainable interaction

The book therefore treats connection as the third condition for generating structural meaning.

1. What is connection?

Connection is not merely a means of communication. It comprises the channels, mechanisms, and relationships through which capabilities and needs form continuing interactions.

It can take the form of:

- Market transactions
- Organizational divisions of labor
- Platform matching
- Community networks
- Institutional entry points
- Cultural communication
- Project collaboration
- Community relationships

2. Why connection determines whether structural meaning can form.

There is no guarantee in the real world that “capabilities and needs naturally meet.”

If:

- Individuals cannot be seen
- Needs cannot be expressed
- There is no trustworthy intermediary between the two sides
- Connections cannot continue
- No responsibility is taken for the relationship

Then structural meaning is difficult to generate.

3. Connection must have a degree of continuity.

One-off contact, incidental assistance, or a single match may not suffice to form structural meaning.

Structural meaning requires:

- Repeated entry
- Sustainable effects
- Pathways that can consolidate
- The ability to create a sense of having a place

Connections therefore cannot occur only momentarily; they must persist over some timescale.

V. The Basic Generative Chain of Structural Meaning

At this point, the book retains a minimal generative chain:

Capability → Possibility of responding to needs

→ Entry into real-world interaction through connection

→ Formation of sustainable connections of action

→ Generation of structural meaning

It can also be abbreviated as:

Joint conditions: capability, need, and connection

↓

Structural meaning

This denotes neither a mathematical operation nor a meaning score.

It should be understood as follows:

All three are indispensable, and each constrains the others.

In other words:

- Capability without need is insufficient
- Need without capability is insufficient
- Capability and need without connection are still insufficient

This is the starting point of all subsequent dynamic analysis in the book.

VI. This Chain Alone Is Insufficient: A Second Generative Chain in the Platform Age

Up to this point,

we remain within a relatively traditional understanding of generation:

Capabilities respond to needs and then enter the real world through connection.

This chain holds in many historical contexts, but is no longer sufficient in the age of platforms and AI.

Connection today is increasingly more than an intermediary; it is beginning to perform a shaping function.

A second type of generative chain thus also exists in the real world:

Connections are established first, needs are then shaped, and action is subsequently organized.

This is the distinction the chapter must add.

1. The responsive generative chain.

This is the traditional chain:

Capability → Need → Connection

Its characteristics are:

- A relatively clear real-world gap exists first
- Individual or group capabilities respond
- Connections organize the two together as intermediaries

This chain more closely resembles the logic of traditional occupations, organizations, and communities.

2. The manufactured generative chain.

This is an increasingly powerful chain in the platform age:

Connection → Shaping of needs → Organization of action

Its characteristics are:

- Dense connections are first established through platforms, algorithms, or network interfaces
- Needs are then shaped through visibility, recommendations, pacing, and interface design
- Individuals subsequently enter a behavioral structure through organized activities

This chain is not always negative.

It can also:

- Open new entry points
- Connect previously overlooked needs
- Activate marginal capabilities
- Create new possibilities for collaboration

Its problem, however, is that it more readily produces a condition of “abundant activity but thin structure.”

Within this chain, connection itself may precede the subject’s judgment.

3. Why this distinction must be introduced.

If all generation continues to be described as “capabilities responding to needs,” we cannot adequately explain many phenomena in platform society:

- Why many needs seem manufactured
- Why intense activity does not automatically produce strong structural meaning
- Why denser connections may leave people emptier
- Why systems can produce extensive presence without necessarily expanding EP

The book must therefore acknowledge:

Modern society already has both responsive and manufactured chains for generating structural meaning.

VII. Connection Is Not Neutral: Augmenting and Substitutive Connections

The chapter must now advance one step further.

Even after acknowledging two kinds of generative chain, a more crucial question remains unanswered:

Is connection itself neutral?

Does forming a connection necessarily generate stronger structural meaning?

The book’s answer is:

No.

Connection itself has differentiated.

In the technological age, at least two basic forms must be distinguished:

- Augmenting connections
- Substitutive connections

1. Augmenting connections.

These are connections that improve subjects’ ability to enter, understand, participate in, and jointly address real-world life.

Their typical characteristics are:

- Giving subjects greater capacity for judgment
- Making it easier for subjects to encounter real needs
- Enabling subjects to form sustained collaboration
- Making it easier for subjects to consolidate experience, credibility, and roles
- Ultimately directing connections toward thicker positions

For example:

- Making knowledge more understandable, rather than merely more accessible
- Making cooperation more sustainable, rather than merely more immediate
- Enabling individuals to participate more in judgment, rather than merely receiving recommendations
- Giving marginal capabilities real-world entry points, rather than merely exposure

The essence of augmenting connections is:

After connecting, subjects are stronger, not thinner.

2. Substitutive connections.

These are connections that appear to connect subjects to the real world, yet at a deeper level continually substitute for their judgment, responsibility, growth, and space for deep collaboration.

Their typical characteristics are:

- Platforms or systems judge first
- Individuals retreat to the level of confirmation and response
- Needs are heavily shaped
- Action is cut into brief fragments
- Connection is intense, but subjects' positions are thin
- There is abundant activity, but little consolidation into roles and credibility

The essence of substitutive connections is:

After connecting, the system is stronger; the subject is not necessarily stronger.

3. The two are not always wholly separate.

A real-world connection may contain both augmenting and substitutive elements.

For example, a platform may provide entry to people who previously struggled to gain access, yet subsequently compress their judgment through rankings, default processes, and feedback mechanisms.

Distinguishing the two is therefore not an attempt at a simplistic dichotomy. It is a reminder:

We must examine not only whether connection occurs, but also whom it ultimately strengthens.

VIII. Why Only Augmenting Connections Reliably Generate Structural Meaning

This is one of the chapter's most important judgments.

Not every connection reliably generates structural meaning.

Structural meaning requires:

- Entry into real-world life
- Sustainable connections of action
- Support through pathways or roles
- Space for judgment, responsibility, and growth

Substitutive connections may produce:

- Frequent activity
- An intense sense of connection
- A strong appearance of participation
- Extensive presence at interfaces

Yet they may not genuinely establish those conditions.

1. Substitutive connections may produce high activity but weak structure.

Individuals may appear very busy:

- Continually clicking
- Continually polishing
- Continually confirming
- Continually responding
- Continually being assigned tasks

But if these activities cannot become:

- Deeper judgment
- Thicker roles

- Greater responsibility
- More sustainable pathways

They produce only surface presence, not deep structural meaning.

2. Substitutive connections erode subjects over the long term.

This is an especially crucial risk in the AI age.

The more deep processes systems take over, the more readily individuals are kept at interfaces with little judgment, responsibility, or growth.

The result is:

- System capabilities rise
- Subject capabilities do not necessarily rise
- Structural meaning may even decline instead

3. “More connections” can therefore no longer be treated simply as a positive variable.

From the current baseline onward, connection must be understood anew:

Augmenting connections are a positive generative condition for structural meaning; substitutive connections may produce convenience and activity in the short term, but hollowness in the long term.

This is a crucial revision as the book enters the age of platforms and AI.

IX. From Generation to Outward Expression: How Pathways Precede Roles

The earlier discussion explained that after connections enter the real world, structural meaning gradually manifests as:

- Roles
- Relationships
- Contributions
- Participation

The current baseline requires a further revision here.

In a highly fluid civilization, structural meaning is no longer always carried by stable roles given in advance. Often, what an individual first gains is a pathway rather than a complete role.

1. Pathways are fluid carriers.

A pathway is a channel through which an individual continually enters a type of real-world process.

It may be a pathway of:

- Learning
- Projects
- Collaboration
- Community involvement
- Maintenance
- Creation
- Care
- Bridging

In modern, highly fluid societies, individuals often enter pathways first, then gradually form relatively stable roles through sustained participation, verifiable facts of contribution, and real-world relationships.

2. Roles are consolidated carriers.

Roles have not disappeared, but increasingly become the outcome of consolidation along pathways rather than positions given in advance.

In other words:

- Pathways first generate participation
- Participation consolidates contributions
- Facts of contribution can be continually verified
- Credibility and recognition then gradually consolidate into roles

For future civilization, the more reasonable formulation is therefore not “roles disappear,” but:

Pathways come first; roles emerge later.

3. Why this step matters.

If we still assume that stable roles always precede participation, we underestimate new ways of generating structural meaning in a highly fluid age.

Yet if we abandon roles entirely, we lose the ability to analyze chains of responsibility, support, and consolidation.

The more robust framework is therefore:

Pathways are fluid carriers; roles are consolidated carriers.

This also provides a steadier bridge to subsequent discussions of pathway allocation, EP, credibility, and contribution-record prototypes.

X. A More Complete Definition of Generation

With the present revisions, the mechanism that generates structural meaning can now be stated more fully:

Structural meaning arises from the interaction of capability, need, and connection.

In modern society, this generation may follow either the responsive chain of “capability–need–connection” or the manufactured chain of “connection–shaping of needs–organization of action.”

But only augmenting connections reliably bring individuals into sustainable connections of action, which gradually consolidate into structural meaning through pathways and roles.

This definition is more complex than those in earlier versions, but also closer to reality.

It explains why:

- Some connections deepen people
- Some connections merely intensify activity
- Some pathways consolidate roles
- Some activities remain forever at the surface level of being called upon

Chapter Summary

Building on earlier versions, this chapter has made a crucial revision to the mechanism that generates structural meaning.

The book continues to maintain:

Structural meaning arises from the interaction of capability, need, and connection.

It also explicitly notes that in the age of platforms and AI, there is no longer only one mechanism of generation.

At least two generative chains exist:

- Responsive generative chain: Capability → Need → Connection

- Manufactured generative chain: Connection → Shaping of needs → Organization of action

The chapter further proposes:

- Connection is not neutral
- Augmenting and substitutive connections must be distinguished
- Only augmenting connections reliably generate structural meaning
- Substitutive connections can produce activity and convenience but may erode subjects' positions over the long term and create hollowness

It further revises the carriers of structural meaning as follows:

Pathways are fluid carriers; roles are consolidated carriers.

This makes the book's theory of generation better suited to an age of high fluidity, platformization, and deep AI involvement.

The next chapter proceeds from here:

If structural meaning is no longer merely a question of "generation," but we must also examine how it unfolds, the crucial question is not simply "whether meaning exists," but:

How deep is it, and how many different pathways are available for entry?

Chapter 4: Thickness and Diversity of Meaning

The Two Axes and Nonlinear Tensions of Structural Meaning's Expansion

The preceding chapter argued that structural meaning arises from the interaction of capability, need, and connection.

The current revision further clarified that:

- In modern society, structural meaning is generated through both responsive and manufactured chains;
- Connections are not inherently positive: augmenting and substitutive connections must be distinguished;
- In a highly fluid civilization, the real-world carriers of structural meaning increasingly take the form:

Pathways form first; roles consolidate later.

A new question now naturally emerges:

Once structural meaning begins to form, in what directions does it expand?

Meaning clearly cannot be reduced to whether it “exists” or “does not exist.”

Structures that are all “meaningful” can differ enormously:

- Some are deep, carrying complex responsibilities, long-term growth, and demanding judgment;
- Some are broad, providing entry points for many different capabilities and groups;
- Some look rich but are extremely shallow;
- Some are very thick but open only to a few.

Remaining at the binary judgment of “meaning or no meaning” therefore deprives theory of comparative and diagnostic power.

This chapter continues the basic judgment of earlier versions, but makes it firmer at the current baseline:

Structural meaning unfolds along two basic dimensions:

- Thickness of meaning (M)
- Diversity of meaning (D)

It must also clarify an issue insufficiently emphasized in earlier versions:

Thickness and diversity are not linear variables whose positive effects can be added together indefinitely.

Tensions, thresholds, and conditions of support always exist between them.

This means:

- Greater thickness does not always mean greater stability
- More diversity is not always better
- Nor do the two always naturally work together

What truly matters is:

Can a civilization expand thickness and diversity simultaneously within a window that allows coordination, support, and participation, without pushing itself into excessive tension, severe overload, or the hollowing out of subjects?

Besides defining M and D, the chapter therefore makes an important revision:

It advances thickness and diversity from “two static dimensions” to “two nonlinearly coupled axes.”

I. Why Structural Meaning Must Be Divided into Two Dimensions

Simply saying that a society “has meaning” or “lacks meaning” is too crude a judgment.

It cannot explain many modern structural differences, such as:

- Why some systems are powerful yet leave most people unable to find an entry point;

- Why some societies have many pathways yet generally lack sustainable deep participation;
- Why some civilizations are extremely thick for a few but extremely thin for the majority;
- Why some structures become increasingly hollow at depth even while displaying exceptionally high surface activity.

Explaining these differences requires further differentiation of structural meaning.

The book argues that at least two dimensions are unavoidable:

First, thickness of meaning (M).

It answers:

How deep and complex is a meaning structure, and what levels of capability, experience, responsibility, and accumulation over time can it carry?

Second, diversity of meaning (D).

It answers:

How many different pathways, roles, forms of contribution, and modes of entry does a civilization offer?

If thickness determines “how deep” civilization is, diversity determines “how broad” it is.

Without these two dimensions, later discussions of participation, collaboration, tension, overload, pathway allocation, EP, and Civilization Leap would all lose precision.

II. What Is Thickness of Meaning?

Thickness of meaning refers to what a structure of meaning can carry in terms of:

- Complexity of capability
- Density of accumulated experience
- Levels of responsibility
- Time span
- Intensity of judgment
- Structural memory

It is not equivalent to occupational rank or technological sophistication.

More precisely, it concerns:

How much complex capability, long-term experience, responsibility for judgment, and sustained growth a position for action, role, or pathway can accommodate.

1. Thickness first appears in the complexity of capability.

For example, each of the following enters real-world processes:

- Performing a simple task once
- Providing continuing care to a vulnerable person
- Maintaining a complex system
- Coordinating collaboration among multiple roles
- Designing a long-term institution
- Taking responsibility for judgment under high uncertainty

All these actions may generate structural meaning, but they carry different levels of complexity.

Generally, greater complexity means greater thickness.

One point must be noted, however:

Thickness does not mean “the more elite, the thicker.”

Some roles involving care, maintenance, bridging, and repair can be very thick even without prestigious titles, because they carry substantial responsibility, continuity, and contextual judgment.

2. Thickness appears in the accumulation of experience.

Some actions are not complex, but if they must develop gradually through long-term repetition, they too form thickness.

For example:

- Mentoring ability in education
- The ability to repair relationships in a community
- The ability to provide long-term care to a particular group
- Experience as an informal intermediary within organizations
- The ability to sense faults in a maintenance task

These capabilities are thick not because they occupy a high level of abstraction, but because they contain accumulated time.

3. Thickness appears in the assumption of responsibility.

The most crucial element of thickness of meaning is responsibility.

Some positions are thick not because they are “more technically sophisticated,” but because they bear consequences.

For example:

- Who must take responsibility for a judgment?
- Who must take over when a structure fails?
- Who must make the final choice in a conflict?
- Who must prevent a shared process from falling apart over the long term?

Once responsibility genuinely rests on a position, that position’s thickness increases markedly.

4. Thickness is also a civilizational variable.

Thickness belongs not only to individual roles, but also to civilization as a whole.

Whether a civilization has relatively thick structural meaning can be observed through:

- Whether it retains a capacity for deep judgment
- Whether it has long-cycle maintenance systems
- Whether sustainable chains of mentoring and transmission exist
- Whether complex collaboration has levels of responsibility
- Whether subjects are allowed to keep deepening, rather than remaining at shallow interfaces over the long term

M is therefore both an individual and a civilizational variable.

III. What Is Diversity of Meaning?

If thickness answers “How deep?”, diversity of meaning answers:

How many different structural entry points can connect different capabilities, individuals, and ways of contributing to real-world life?

It does not mean bustle, abundance, or a profusion of options.

More strictly, it refers to:

- The variety of pathway types
- The variety of role types
- The breadth of recognition for forms of contribution
- The convertibility of different capabilities
- The possibilities for different individuals to enter real-world life

1. Diversity first appears in the variety of pathways.

If a civilization has very few main pathways, most people will still struggle to find support even if those pathways are thick.

High diversity means:

- Different types of capability can all find ways in
- People from different backgrounds all have real-world entry points
- Non-mainstream capabilities also have channels for conversion
- Alternative structures remain when one pathway fails

2. Diversity appears in the variety of contribution forms.

If a civilization continually recognizes only:

- Explicit outputs
- High-exposure achievements
- Quantifiable performance
- Rapidly visible growth

Its actual diversity is necessarily limited.

Truly robust diversity also means sustained recognition of the following contributions:

- Maintenance
- Care
- Bridging
- Repair
- Organization of knowledge
- Community support
- Development of slow-changing variables

D is thus not simply “a longer list of occupations.” It asks:

Are there more pathways that civilization recognizes as genuinely possessing structural meaning?

3. Diversity also appears in differentiated entry thresholds.

Even if a society appears to have many pathways, its actual diversity remains low if nearly all are open only to a few people with abundant resources and cultural capital.

Diversity is therefore not merely a question of the number of pathways, but more importantly of their accessibility.

This is also why the later discussion must link D to pathway allocation.

4. Diversity is one source of civilizational resilience.

When a category of jobs, roles, or a hierarchy of values fails, other pathways can keep individuals and communities from losing their places altogether.

Diversity is therefore not polite “inclusiveness,” but a condition of antifragility at the civilizational level.

IV. Thickness and Diversity Cannot Replace One Another

Earlier versions already made this point, but the current baseline must state it more sharply.

High thickness does not equal high diversity, nor does high diversity equal high thickness.

1. High thickness but low diversity: strong yet narrow.

A civilization may have:

- Strong institutions
- Powerful technology
- Strong professional systems
- Strong organizational capability

But if only a few can enter them,
it remains a thick but narrow civilization.

Such systems usually appear powerful, but over time produce:

- Extensive marginalization
- Scarcity of deep positions
- Insufficient redundancy of subjects
- Single-point failure risks

2. High diversity but low thickness: broad yet thin.

Conversely, a society may have numerous entry points, forms of activity, and channels of expression, appearing exceptionally rich.

But if these pathways generally lack:

- Responsibility
- Consolidation
- Chains of growth
- Long-term support

It remains merely a broad but thin civilization.

It may be very active, yet struggle to form deep collaboration and deep judgment.

3. A genuinely stable civilization must expand both together.

Whether civilization is genuinely advancing cannot therefore be judged solely by technological thickness or the variety of pathways.

A truly stable civilization must answer both:

- Is it continually producing thicker positions?
- Is it continually opening more accessible pathways?

The first prevents civilization from growing shallow; the second prevents it from growing narrow.

V. Thickness and Diversity Are Not Linearly Positively Correlated

This is one of the most important reinforcements of the current baseline relative to earlier versions.

Earlier formulations made it easy to read M and D as two positive variables for which “more is always better.”

Real civilizations do not work this way.

The two have a distinctly nonlinear coupling relationship.

1. Growing diversity increases coordination tensions.

The more pathways, roles, and expressions of value there are, the more a system must deal with:

- Boundary conflicts
- Translation costs
- Coordination friction
- Interpretive burdens

In other words, growth in D is not cost-free.

If the capacities for coordination, public interpretation, and middle-level support do not rise alongside it, diversity itself becomes tension.

2. Growing thickness increases the burden of complexity.

Greater thickness means more:

- Specialized knowledge
- Levels of responsibility
- Long-cycle maintenance
- Contextual judgment
- Structural memory

All can deepen civilization, but also increase:

- Cognitive load
- Mentoring costs
- Organizational pressure
- Barriers to understanding

If the development of subjects, collaborative mechanisms, and cognitive capacity to bear these demands cannot keep pace, thickness too may generate overload instead.

3. Their joint growth does not necessarily improve stability.

A civilization can readily experience the following:

- Thickness has increased
- Diversity has also increased
- Yet tension, overload, and alienation have grown faster

The system then appears more complex and richer, but may be less stable at a deeper level.

The current baseline must therefore make clear:

Thickness and diversity are positive variables, but not variables of linear expansion.

They improve stability together only when they grow within a window that permits coordination, support, and participation.

VI. The “Coordinable Window” of Thickness and Diversity

A more robust understanding must now be introduced:

The expansion of thickness and diversity must remain within a certain “coordinable window.”

Civilization cannot simply pursue “the deeper the better, the broader the better.”

It must instead seek:

- Growth in depth that subjects and middle-level structures can still support
- Growth in breadth without the breakdown of coordination and interpretation
- Expansion of pathways in which EP can still form
- Increasing diversity without crushing middle-level collaboration

1. Why call it a window?

Because it is a dynamic range, not a static equilibrium point.

Civilization can expand, experiment, and reorganize, but cannot cross boundaries indefinitely.

2. What happens beyond the window?

- Diversity exceeds the window: tension rises and public interpretation becomes unstable
- Thickness exceeds the window: overload rises and cognitive support breaks down
- Both exceed it together: civilization readily enters a condition of high complexity, low participation, and high alienation

3. Why this step matters.

It genuinely frees the book from the linear optimism that “a little more is always better.”

From here, M and D are no longer merely positive axes of expansion. They become:

Coupled variables always constrained by tension, overload, alienation, and the window of support.

VII. The Individual Level: How Thickness and Diversity Jointly Shape Positions

The importance of thickness and diversity ultimately appears in whether individuals can form structural positions.

1. Thickness gives individuals depth for growth.

In a society with relatively high thickness, individuals have more opportunities to enter:

- More complex tasks
- Deeper responsibilities
- Longer chains of experience
- More stable consolidation of roles

Thickness thus provides depth in which to “put down roots and grow upward.”

2. Diversity gives individuals real-world entry points.

In a society with relatively high diversity, individuals need not be forced into a single pathway.

They can connect to real-world life in more different ways.

Diversity thus provides opportunities for “horizontal entry.”

3. Without either one, positions become fragile.

- Without thickness, individuals remain at shallow interfaces over the long term
- Without diversity, individuals are excluded from the single available pathway

The individual “sense of displacement” is therefore often not a psychological problem, but the combined result of structural deficiencies in thickness and diversity.

VIII. Why the Technological Age Can Disrupt Both Thickness and Diversity

The danger of the technological age lies not only in its replacement of certain jobs, but in its potential to alter both axes at once.

1. Impacts on thickness.

If systems take over increasing amounts of complex judgment, organizational coordination, and generative processes, civilization’s aggregate capabilities may grow stronger while thickness of meaning at the individual level may decline.

This is the point made earlier:

System capabilities may rise while human subject capabilities and real-world positions decline at the same time. Systems become thicker, while people become thinner.

2. Impacts on diversity.

Platforms and automation may compress large numbers of intermediary roles, causing more and more structures to operate around a few efficient pathways.

The result is more connections on the surface, but fewer genuinely accessible pathways.

3. Risks when the two combine.

This produces a highly dangerous new condition:

- System thickness increases
- Subject thickness declines
- Surface diversity rises
- Genuine accessibility declines

Civilization thus appears richer, more complex, and more powerful, but at a deeper level finds it harder to enable people to enter thick positions.

This is precisely why later discussions must continue to address EP, pathway allocation, and hollowing out.

IX. A More Rigorous Middle-Level Judgment

The chapter’s revised judgment can now be condensed into one sentence:

Civilizational expansion is not the linear accumulation of thickness and diversity, but their nonlinearly coupled expansion within a window that permits coordination, support, and participation.

To judge whether a civilization is genuinely advancing in the future, we therefore cannot ask only:

- Is it more complex?
- More diverse?
- Thicker?
- More active?

We must also ask:

- Does it still produce deep positions?
- Does it still open real-world entry points?
- Has it avoided crushing its supporting structures through excessive thickness or breadth?
- Can it still connect more people to EP rather than surface activity?

Only then do thickness and diversity truly serve civilizational stability rather than become sources of imbalance.

Chapter Summary

This chapter proposes that structural meaning expands primarily along two basic dimensions:

- Thickness of meaning (M)
- Diversity of meaning (D)

Thickness refers to the complexity of capability, accumulated experience, levels of responsibility, and time span a meaning structure carries.

Diversity refers to the variety of pathways, roles, contribution forms, and modes of entry a civilization offers.

At the current baseline, the chapter further argues:

Thickness and diversity are not linear variables of positive expansion.

Growing diversity increases tension; growing thickness increases complexity and overload.

Their joint growth genuinely improves civilizational stability only within a window that permits “coordination, support, and participation.”

The chapter thus advances M and D from “two static dimensions” to “two nonlinearly coupled axes,” providing a firmer basis for later analyses of participation, collaboration, tension, pathway allocation, EP, and Civilization Leap.

The next chapter continues:

Once structural meaning expands along thickness and diversity, how does it manifest beyond individual action as network structures?

In a highly fluid age, what comes first as its actual outward carrier: roles or pathways?

Chapter 5: The Expansion of Structural Meaning: From Individuals to Networks

Pathways First, Roles through Consolidation

The preceding chapter argued that structural meaning expands primarily along two basic axes:

- Thickness of meaning (M)
- Diversity of meaning (D)

The current baseline also added a crucial judgment:

Thickness and diversity are not linear variables that can be accumulated indefinitely. They must expand within a window that permits coordination, support, and participation, or they will turn into tension, overload, and alienation.

The inquiry must now advance further.

Even though we know:

- How structural meaning is generated
- In which directions it expands
- That expansion does not inherently equal stability

A crucial question remains:

How exactly does individual-level structural meaning enter larger-scale social structures?

Without a clear explanation, “structural meaning” will remain at the level of individual feelings and small-scale relationships, unable genuinely to become a civilizational variable.

This chapter therefore moves structural meaning from the individual scale to the network scale.

It asks:

How does structural meaning gradually expand from successive real-world actions into pathways, relationships, collaboration, institutions, and civilizational structures?

In earlier versions, this chapter mainly followed the chain “action—roles—relational networks—collaborative networks—institutional support.”

That chain still holds, but the current baseline requires a crucial revision:

In an age of high fluidity, platformization, and deep AI involvement, structural meaning’s outward carriers increasingly no longer always begin with stable roles. Instead, pathways come first, and roles consolidate from them.

The current baseline therefore advances the chapter’s logic to:

Action → Repeated entry

- Pathway formation
- Consolidation of roles through pathways
- Relational networks
- Collaborative networks
- Institutional support

This revision is crucial because it enables the book to address more precisely:

- Why many people in modern civilization have “activity but no place”
- Why much participation fails to consolidate into thick roles over long periods
- Why pathway allocation becomes more important than job allocation

- Why the key question for future civilization is not “whether roles disappear,” but “whether pathways can still produce roles”

The chapter’s core judgment is:

In a highly fluid civilization, pathways are fluid carriers; roles are consolidated carriers.

Structural meaning does not leap directly into roles. It first expands along pathways and then consolidates into roles along some of them.

I. Why Structural Meaning Does Not Remain Inside the Individual

In everyday language, “meaning” is often understood as an inner experience:

- I feel this is meaningful
- I have found my place here
- I feel I am living more authentically

There is nothing wrong with these expressions, but understanding meaning entirely as a private feeling on that basis overlooks one of its most crucial properties:

Structural meaning inherently tends to expand outward.

Why?

Because from the outset it is not an isolated state of mind, but is generated through real-world interaction among:

- Capability
- Need
- Connection

None of these three is purely private:

- Capabilities usually enter the real world through others, communities, institutions, or tasks
- Needs are embedded in larger social and civilizational circumstances
- Connection is intrinsically a matter of relationships, channels, and support

Once structural meaning forms, it therefore does not remain quietly inside the individual.

Through interaction, it continually spreads outward, replicates, consolidates, and aggregates, eventually forming networks.

In other words:

Individual-level structural meaning has an inherent tendency to become social.

This is a prerequisite for civilization to grow from individual actions into complex structures.

II. The First Step of Expansion: From Action to Repeated Entry

Structural meaning moves from individuals to networks not primarily because institutions arrive, but because individual actions involve repeated entry.

Earlier versions called this step “repeated action.”

The current baseline slightly revises it to “repeated entry,” a formulation better suited to a highly fluid civilization.

Why?

Because many modern real-world processes are not mechanical repetitions of the same movement. They involve individuals continually entering a type of problem, field, or relational network.

More precisely, then:

The first step in structural meaning's expansion is not merely repetition of actions, but repeated entry into a type of real-world process.

For example:

- A person repeatedly enters caring relationships
- A person continually enters processes of organizing knowledge
- A person repeatedly undertakes bridging work across organizations
- A person continually enters a type of project collaboration network
- A person repeatedly enters situations of conflict mediation and repair

This means:

- It is not a single event
- It is not incidental help
- Rather, a sustainable channel of entry into real-world life is beginning to form

1. Why “repeated entry” matters more than “repeated actions.”

In a highly fluid age, much structural meaning comes precisely not from repeating the actions of a single job, but from individuals repeatedly entering a type of real-world problem and network.

2. Repeated entry means the individual is no longer merely a spectator.

Once a person repeatedly enters a type of real-world situation, they cease to participate only incidentally and begin to form a stable orientation.

This is the starting point of pathway generation.

III. The Second Step of Expansion: From Repeated Entry to Pathway Formation

As repeated entry continues, structural meaning begins to move beyond contingency and forms this chapter's most crucial intermediary level:

The pathway.

1. What is a pathway?

A pathway is neither a single job nor a purely abstract direction.

It is:

A sustainable channel through which individuals repeatedly enter a type of real-world problem, collaborative network, setting for using capabilities, and structure of contribution.

Pathways may involve:

- Learning
- Maintenance
- Organizing
- Creative work
- Care
- Bridging
- Research
- Repair
- Community involvement

- Shared support

2. Why pathways are better suited to come before roles.

In traditional societies with low fluidity, much structural meaning was organized first through roles.

People entered a clearly defined role, then acted continuously through it.

In a highly fluid reality spanning platforms, organizations, and projects, the situation is increasingly reversed:

- Individuals first continually enter real-world life through a type of pathway
- Only after that pathway receives sustained recognition and credibility begins to consolidate can a relatively stable role form

Many positions in modern civilization thus do not “give you a role first,” but “first let you set out along a pathway.”

3. Three important functions of pathways.

First, pathways provide continuity.

They move individuals from one-off participation to repeated entry.

Second, pathways provide direction.

They prevent capabilities from scattering and bring them into a type of real-world field.

Third, pathways provide the possibility of consolidation.

If a pathway endures, individuals have opportunities to form:

- Experience
- Contributions
- References for within-project trust
- Relational networks
- Future roles

Pathways are therefore the first carriers in a highly fluid civilization.

Without pathways, individuals repeatedly find themselves with “activity but no accumulation.”

IV. The Third Step of Expansion: From Pathways to Consolidated Roles

Once a pathway endures, it may gradually consolidate into:

A role.

This must be stated very clearly.

The present revision does not reject roles; it changes their order of emergence within the book.

1. Roles have not disappeared; increasingly, they emerge later from pathways.

Previously, roles were often pre-existing positions:

- Teacher
- Worker
- Doctor
- Official
- Engineer
- Manager

In future civilization, more and more roles may arise through:

- Continued participation along pathways first
- Then preservation of facts of contribution and formation of within-project trust
- Finally, recognition by communities, institutions, or networks as a type of stable role

Roles are thus moving “later” in the sequence.

2. What does role consolidation mean?

Role consolidation means that continuing participation along a type of pathway begins to develop the following characteristics:

- Others know you can continually take responsibility for this kind of problem
- You yourself have developed a relatively stable orientation of capability and responsibility
- Your contributions begin to be remembered
- Your position is no longer a temporary point of call, but a relatively stable structural node

At this point, pathways begin to turn into roles.

3. Why roles still matter.

Although pathways come first, roles remain irreplaceable.

Only roles more readily carry:

- Chains of responsibility
- Long-term credibility
- Deep positions
- Middle-level collaborative nodes
- Institutional support

If a civilization has pathways but cannot consolidate them into roles, it remains in a condition of high fluidity and low accumulation over the long term.

This is one manifestation of modern hollowing out.

4. In one sentence.

The current baseline’s most central revision at this level is therefore:

Pathways are fluid carriers; roles are consolidated carriers.

Pathways come first; roles emerge later.

V. The Fourth Step of Expansion: From Pathways/Roles to Relational Networks

Once pathways form, individuals no longer repeatedly enter real-world life in isolation.

They increasingly form continuing relationships with:

- Other people
- Tasks
- Organizations
- Projects
- Communities
- Network nodes outside platforms

Structural meaning thus enters the next level:

Relational networks.

1. Why relational networks are an inevitable outcome.

No pathway can exist in isolation over the long term.

The more deeply a person enters a type of pathway, the more they establish relationships with other roles, pathways, and fields of problems.

For example:

- Maintainers form relationships with users, designers, and repairers
- Caregivers form relationships with families, organizations, institutions, and resource nodes
- Bridging actors form relationships with multiple previously disconnected groups
- Creators form relationships with networks of feedback, communication, collaboration, and organization

This shows:

Sustained pathways inevitably result in networked relationships.

2. Relational networks mean an individual's position is no longer a single point.

Once individuals enter relational networks, their structural meaning is no longer merely “what I have done.” It begins to appear as:

- What is my position within a larger process?
- With which nodes am I interdependent?
- How do I help this network keep operating?
- How does this network support my continuing entry into real-world life?

Structural meaning thus moves from single-point experience into a shared process.

3. Without relational networks, pathways struggle to consolidate into roles.

Many pathways remain unstable over the long term precisely because they lack support from relational networks.

Individuals keep doing things but are not sustained by a larger structure.

Relational networks are therefore one condition for role consolidation.

VI. The Fifth Step of Expansion: From Relational to Collaborative Networks

As relational networks develop further, they turn into:

Collaborative networks.

This step is crucial because relationships do not automatically constitute collaboration.

Knowing many people does not mean accomplishing things together.

Many nodes do not mean strong civilizational vitality.

1. What is a collaborative network?

A collaborative network means:

- Different pathways begin to complement one another
- Different roles begin to share responsibility for problems
- Capabilities begin to be woven together
- Relationships not only exist but enter shared processes

Collaborative networks thus address:

How structural meaning rises from “I have a place” to “we can sustainably accomplish certain things together.”

2. Why collaborative networks are a bridge to civilizational complexity.

Whether civilization is more than a simple accumulation depends on whether different nodes can genuinely form processes.

Only where collaborative networks exist

can thickness, diversity, pathways, roles, facts of contribution, and within-project trust be organized into a living civilization.

3. The quality of collaborative networks matters more than their scale.

The current baseline must emphasize this too.

Modern systems readily mistake “many connections” for “strong collaboration.”

Genuine collaborative networks must have:

- Continuity
- Capacity to carry responsibility
- Low friction
- Revisability
- Capacity for continuation by others
- Middle-level intermediary nodes

Otherwise, they are merely networks for calling upon people, not collaborative networks.

VII. The Sixth Step of Expansion: From Collaborative Networks to Institutional Support

When collaborative networks become sufficiently complex, crucial, and long-lasting, they move further into: Institutional support.

“Institutions” here includes not only laws and formal organizational rules, but also:

- Stable norms
- Role boundaries
- Layers of responsibility
- Entry and exit mechanisms
- Contribution-record systems
- Structures for advancement along pathways
- Mechanisms for forming within-project trust and context-specific verification

1. Why institutions are necessary.

Without institutions, many pathways and roles depend too heavily on individual enthusiasm, incidental relationships, or short-term conditions.

Structural meaning may then form temporarily, but struggle to endure over the long term.

The value of institutions lies in:

- Ensuring pathways do not belong only to a fortunate few
- Preventing roles from evaporating entirely when individuals leave
- Preventing contributions from repeatedly being reset to zero
- Enabling collaborative relationships to be continued

- Allowing facts to be preserved over time; within-project trust must form anew in new relationships

2. Institutions can also hollow out pathways and roles.

This too must be emphasized.

Once institutions become rigid, they separate pathways, roles, and associated trust from genuine participation, turning them into empty shells.

Institutions are thus carriers, but can also amplify hollowing out.

This is why later chapters must discuss:

- The authority to define
- The authority to allocate pathways
- The authority to record contributions
- Interpretive authority
- Governance boundaries

3. Conclusion.

Institutional support is therefore not the endpoint of pathways and roles, but a crucial threshold determining whether civilization can preserve them over the long term.

VIII. The Complete Chain of Expansion from Individuals to Networks

Following the current revision, the complete chain through which structural meaning moves from individuals to networks can now be stated:

Real-world action

Repeated entry

Pathway formation

- Consolidation of roles through pathways
- Relational networks
- Collaborative networks
- Institutional support

This chain shows:

- Civilization does not begin with institutions
- Nor are roles always given in advance anymore
- The true starting point is individuals' continuing entry into real-world life
- The crucial intermediary is the pathway
- The points of genuine consolidation are roles, credibility, and institutions

Structural meaning in civilization is thus not a distribution of roles that descends from above. It continually forms, aggregates, consolidates, and finds support through sustained participation.

IX. Why a Highly Fluid Age More Readily Produces “Pathways without Roles, Activity without a Place”

Explaining healthy expansion alone is insufficient for this chapter.

It must also explain:

Why modern society so commonly becomes “stuck” along this chain.

1. Stuck at “repeated entry.”

Individuals continually encounter real-world life but remain at the level of fragmented entries, unable to form stable pathways.

2. Stuck at “pathway formation.”

Even after entering a type of pathway, the absence of chains of growth, mentoring, intermediaries, and accumulated credibility leaves pathways perpetually thin and unstable.

3. Stuck at “consolidating pathways into roles.”

Modern platforms and AI systems are especially prone to keeping people over the long term at the levels of:

- Microtasks
- Review
- Polishing
- Response
- Being called upon

Pathways thus continually generate activity but no longer readily consolidate into genuinely thick roles.

4. Stuck at “collaborative networks.”

Connections are numerous, but collaboration becomes increasingly shallow.

Individuals therefore have abundant relationships, activities, and tasks, yet are not genuinely connected into a position that allows them to keep deepening.

This also explains an experience so widespread in modern society:

I am always doing things, yet I am increasingly unsure whether I have a real place.

They may already have entered pathways, but never found support at the levels of roles, collaboration, and institutions.

X. A More Rigorous Judgment: Civilizational Stability Depends on Pathways Continually Producing Roles, Not Merely Activities

The chapter’s revision can ultimately be condensed into one sentence:

Civilizational stability depends not only on the existence of abundant activity, but on whether that activity can continually consolidate along pathways into roles, collaboration, and institutional support.

This statement matters greatly because it helps distinguish:

- A civilization active at the surface
- A structurally robust civilization

The former may have:

- High connectivity
- High interaction
- Dense tasks
- Frequent feedback

But if pathways cannot consolidate into roles, roles cannot enter collaboration, and collaboration cannot gain institutional support, it remains fragile.

What matters for the latter is:

- Continuing pathways

- Consolidated roles
- Relational networks
- Collaborative support
- Institutional memory

This is the middle-level skeleton that genuinely keeps civilization from breaking apart.

Chapter Summary

Building on earlier versions, this chapter has made a crucial revision to “how structural meaning moves from individuals to networks.”

It argues that structural meaning does not remain inside individuals, but gradually expands along this chain:

Real-world action

Repeated entry

Pathway formation

- Consolidation of roles through pathways
- Relational networks
- Collaborative networks
- Institutional support

The most important revision at the current baseline compared with earlier versions is:

In a highly fluid civilization, pathways are fluid carriers; roles are consolidated carriers.

Much structural meaning in future civilization will therefore no longer begin with stable roles that then absorb individuals. Instead, individuals first continually enter real-world life along pathways, then gradually form roles through facts of contribution, real-world relationships, and independent recognition.

The chapter thus more clearly explains a central problem of modern society:

Why so many people have “activity but no place, pathways but no roles.”

Modern structures increasingly tend to break down at the crucial link where “pathways consolidate into roles.”

Civilization’s genuine stability depends precisely on whether pathways can continue to produce roles, collaboration, and institutional support.

The next chapter proceeds further:

If structural meaning has expanded along thickness and diversity and moved toward networks through pathways and roles, the next questions are:

Have individuals genuinely entered these networks, and can these networks genuinely collaborate at high quality?

Chapter 6: Participation, Collaboration, and Civilizational Vitality

In the preceding chapter, this book explained that structural meaning does not remain within the individual. It expands progressively through action, roles, relationship networks, collaboration networks, and institutional support, eventually entering the structure of civilization.

Yet this still does not explain a more practical question: why do some societies, despite possessing vast networks, complex institutions, and powerful technological systems, still appear weak, hollow, and even in the process of losing their vitality?

If the preceding chapter discussed “how structural meaning expands into networks,” this chapter asks when those networks genuinely constitute civilizational vitality, and when they are merely vast but inefficient accumulations of structures.

The central judgment of this chapter is this: civilizational vitality does not derive directly from network size. It depends primarily on two things. First, whether individuals can genuinely enter these structures. Second, whether high-quality collaboration can develop between these structures.

In other words, network expansion is only a precondition. What truly determines whether a civilization has vitality is:

- Participation
- Collaboration

The former determines whether civilization offers broadly accessible structural points of entry; the latter determines whether civilization can weave dispersed capabilities into a shared process.

I. Why “Participation” Must Be Addressed in Its Own Right

In many discussions of social development, people tend to assume:

- If jobs exist, individuals will naturally participate.
- If institutions exist, individuals will naturally be included.
- If platforms exist, connections will naturally arise.
- If needs exist, capabilities will naturally be called upon.

Yet reality repeatedly demonstrates that this assumption does not hold.

A society may possess all of the following at once:

- Strong system capabilities
- Many nominal roles
- Connections on an enormous scale
- Highly complex institutional arrangements

And still leave large numbers of individuals feeling:

- They cannot get in.
- Even if they get in, they do not matter.
- They are called upon but not supported.
- They have activities but no place.
- They have connections but no sense of participation.

This shows that “the existence of networks” is not equivalent to “individual participation.” Participation is not an incidental outcome that occurs automatically; it is a variable that must be addressed in its own right.

This book places such emphasis on participation precisely because many problems in modern society do not arise from systems failing to operate altogether. Rather, the systems are operating, but more and more people cannot genuinely enter their key structures.

This is the starting point of the problem of participation.

II. What Is Participation?

In this book, participation does not mean merely “being present” or “being counted.” Participation means that, through some pathway, an individual enters the structures of reality and civilization and occupies a sustainable, identifiable place from which they can act.

This definition contains three key terms:

1. Entry

Individuals must have a pathway into a real-world structure. Without a point of entry, there can be no participation.

2. Place

Individuals cannot merely be called upon briefly or watch from the margins. They must have an identifiable place within the structure.

3. Sustained Effect

Participation is not a fleeting act. It means being able to exert a sustained influence on a network, a system of roles, or a shared process.

Participation therefore differs from “browsing,” “consumption,” “passive response,” and “mechanical execution.” These may constitute activity, but they do not necessarily constitute genuine participation.

III. Why Participation Is Essential to Civilizational Vitality

Civilization needs participation for reasons that go beyond the moral grounds of fairness or inclusion. The deeper reason is that, without broad participation, civilization cannot maintain its vitality.

1. Participation Prevents Structures from Running on Empty

However well developed an institution may be, if too few people genuinely enter it, it remains only a formal shell.

However advanced a platform may be, if individuals merely consume passively without making a genuine investment, it can hardly become a network of structural meaning.

However much a society emphasizes “community,” if only a few people keep taking action, the supposed community will soon become a symbolic slogan.

Participation is therefore the key to turning a structure from something that “exists” into something that “operates.”

2. Participation Gives Civilization the Capacity for Renewal

A civilization in which only a few fixed roles continue to operate can easily lose its capacity for renewal. New experiences, new pathways, new problems, and new answers often do not grow naturally out of a closed core. They continually emerge from broader participation.

Participation, in other words, not only sustains the present; it also renews the future.

3. Participation Establishes a Two-Way Relationship Between Individuals and Civilization

If an individual cannot participate, civilization is merely an external environment for them. They are surrounded by institutions, shaped by technology, and affected by resources, yet find it difficult to feel that they genuinely belong within it.

Once an individual genuinely participates, civilization ceases to be merely “that vast system.” It begins to become:

- A place where I can influence something
- A place where I am needed
- A place where what I put in can leave a trace

This is the most important intersection between civilizational vitality and individual meaning.

IV. Typical Forms of Insufficient Participation

Understanding the importance of participation also requires understanding how insufficient participation arises. In modern society, insufficient participation usually does not simply mean “having no opportunities at all.” Instead, it manifests in more complex and less visible ways.

1. Formal Entry, Substantive Marginalization

An individual appears to have entered a system, but undertakes only tasks requiring the least responsibility, judgment, and creativity. They have been included, but have no real place.

This condition is especially prone to creating a misleading appearance:

- Present in the statistics
- Hollow in subjective experience

2. Pathways Exist, but Entry Barriers Are Too High

Society may provide many pathways, but the actual barriers to entering them are too high:

- Educational barriers
- Resource barriers
- Status barriers
- Geographic barriers
- Barriers to platform access

As a result, diversity appears to exist, but participation is not broad.

3. Roles Exist, but Are Unstable

Individuals enter certain positions, but cannot remain in them:

- Collaborative relationships are short-lived.
- Work pathways are fragmented.
- Roles are frequently replaced.
- Responsibilities are undertaken without anything accumulating.

Under these conditions, individuals remain constantly active, yet struggle to develop a genuine sense of participation.

4. Too Many Platform Connections, Too Little Real-World Embeddedness

A person can encounter enormous quantities of information, tasks, feedback, and interactions every day, yet never genuinely enter a real-world collaboration network. They are called upon extensively, but never genuinely supported.

Such situations are especially common in the technological age.

V. Why “Collaboration” Must Stand Alongside Participation

If participation answers whether people can enter structures, collaboration answers whether those who have entered can jointly form high-quality processes.

A society can have relatively high participation and still lack civilizational vitality. If stable, high-quality collaboration cannot develop between participants, participation will remain a matter of people acting side by side, without being transformed into civilizational capability.

This book therefore places collaboration alongside participation not simply to add another word, but because participation determines whether civilization has points of entry, while collaboration determines whether it has the capacity for integration.

Without collaboration, participation can only remain dispersed. Without participation, collaboration loses its breadth and its sources of renewal. Together, the two determine civilizational vitality.

VI. What Is Collaboration?

In this book, collaboration does not mean vaguely “everyone doing things together.” It means the capacity of different individuals, roles, or systems to address real-world tasks and civilizational problems together, with relatively low friction, relatively high trust, and a relatively high degree of responsibility-taking.

This definition emphasizes four things:

1. Different Capabilities Must Be Able to Complement One Another

Collaboration is not the repetition of the same actions. It is the formation of complementary relationships among different capabilities.

2. Friction Must Not Be Too High

If the costs of communication, conflict, and coordination are too high, cooperation may exist on the surface, while internal friction actually consumes a great deal of civilizational vitality.

3. Trust Must Be Sustainable

Without basic trust, collaboration can remain only at a very low level. Once every cooperative undertaking continually requires renewed proof, renewed precautions, and renewed negotiation, collaboration efficiency falls rapidly.

4. Responsibility Must Be Supportable

Genuine collaboration is not a short-term assemblage. It means that different roles can bear consequences, carry processes forward, and jointly complete a long-term task.

Collaboration is therefore a matter of the quality of connections, not their quantity.

VII. Why Modern Civilization Often Has “Many Connections but Weak Collaboration”

This is a point the book must especially emphasize. A typical illusion of the technological age is that more connections mean stronger collaboration. Reality is otherwise.

Modern society often appears highly connected yet weakly collaborative precisely because connection and collaboration are not the same thing.

1. Shallow Connections Cannot Replace Deep Collaboration

Modern platforms can generate a great many interactions:

- Exchanges of messages
- Content sharing
- Immediate tasks
- Temporary responses
- High-frequency feedback

Yet these interactions often fail to form genuine collaboration. Collaboration requires:

- Continuity of responsibility
- Mutual recognition of roles
- Shared goals
- Accumulation of experience
- Structures that can be carried forward

An exchange of information alone does not suffice.

2. Extensive Platformization Can Constrain Subjecthood Within Collaboration

As systems become increasingly adept at fine-grained coordination, individuals may need only to execute assigned fragments of action. This improves the efficiency with which they are called upon, but does not necessarily produce genuine collaboration.

What matters in collaboration goes beyond joining actions together. It also includes:

- Joint judgment
- Shared responsibility
- Genuine participation in the process
- The capacity to correct problems together

Once these are stripped away, collaboration degenerates into simply being called upon.

3. A Society with Multiple Pathways Can Also Fall into Fragmented Collaboration

Greater diversity in a society does not automatically bring stronger collaboration.

Without intermediary structures, public rules, and accumulated trust, diversity may instead intensify:

- Dispersal of pathways
- Fragmentation of discourse
- Organizational isolation
- Conflicts of values

Diversity and collaboration therefore do not have an automatically positive relationship. This is precisely why the “tension coefficient” must be introduced later.

VIII. Civilizational Vitality: The Joint Outcome of Participation and Collaboration

At this point, the chapter can offer a clearer middle-level judgment: civilizational vitality arises from the joint action of broad participation and high-quality collaboration.

With participation alone and no collaboration, society becomes busy but dispersed. With collaboration alone and no broad participation, society becomes efficient but rigid.

A genuinely vital civilization must achieve two things at once:

1. Give Enough People a Way In

The participation dimension must be open. Pathways must not be too narrow, roles too few, or entry mechanisms too closed.

2. Enable Those Who Enter to Accomplish Things Together

The collaboration dimension must be mature. Rules, trust, the allocation of responsibility, complementary capabilities, and feedback mechanisms must all be in place.

When both conditions exist, civilization is no longer merely a place where “people are active.” It forms a shared process that continually generates answers to problems, continually expands structural meaning, and continually maintains its capacity for renewal.

This is civilizational vitality.

IX. How Participation and Collaboration Connect to the Previously Discussed Thickness and Diversity

This book does not seek to keep adding variables and making the model ever more complicated. It must therefore clarify that participation and collaboration have not been added out of nowhere. They connect directly with the thickness and diversity discussed in the preceding chapter.

1. Diversity Affects Participation

The richer the pathways of meaning offered by a society, and the more entry points into roles it provides, the more likely individuals are to find a way in that suits them. Greater diversity is therefore usually conducive to broadening participation. But diversity must be genuinely accessible, rather than merely put on display. Otherwise, diversity cannot be translated into participation.

2. Thickness Affects Collaboration

The greater a society’s thickness of meaning, the more mature its systems of roles, levels of responsibility, accumulated experience, and knowledge structures usually are. This makes it easier for collaboration to reach a deeper level rather than remain a matter of superficially calling upon people.

Greater thickness is therefore usually conducive to high-quality collaboration.

3. Participation and Collaboration in Turn Promote Thickness and Diversity

When more people enter real-world structures, new roles, new pathways, and new ways of responding to needs are more likely to appear. Diversity expands as a result.

When high-quality collaboration continually accumulates experience, responsibility, and organizational capability, thickness also increases.

The four directions proposed in the opening chapters are thus not isolated from one another. They form a dynamic system in which they can reinforce or weaken one another.

X. Why This Book Must Later Upgrade P to EP

A problem is now apparent. Continuing to describe participation simply as “the proportion of the population participating” is insufficient.

This chapter has already shown that what truly matters is not “whether there is activity,” but:

- Whether people genuinely enter structures
- Whether they occupy a sustainable place
- Whether they take part in high-quality collaboration
- Whether they generate a genuine increment in the civilizational process

Simple P is therefore already beginning to prove inadequate here. This is why the book must later upgrade participation to:

EP (effective participation)

Because:

- A position that has not genuinely been entered does not count as effective participation.
- Actions involving no judgment or responsibility do not count as effective participation.
- Presence that contributes no increment to collaboration does not count as effective participation.

This chapter has, in other words, already laid the theoretical groundwork for the later discussion of EP.

XI. An Important Judgment: Civilizational Crises Often Arise from Breakdowns in Participation and Collaboration, Rather Than Insufficient Capability

Discussions of modern civilization often tend to assume that problems will be solved as long as capabilities improve.

This chapter must offer an important correction: many civilizational crises arise not from insufficient capability, but from ruptured participation and failed collaboration.

In other words:

- It is not that no one has capabilities.
- It is not that there is no technology.
- It is not that there is no information.
- It is not that there are no embryonic institutions.

Rather:

- People cannot get in.
- Even if they get in, they do not matter.
- Roles are unstable.
- Connections carry no responsibility.
- Networks do not collaborate.
- Systems call upon people without supporting them.

This creates a characteristic modern imbalance:

- Civilizational capability appears very high.
- Civilizational vitality is nevertheless declining.

This chapter is therefore also establishing a judgment for the later analysis of crises: the real danger to civilization is not only stagnating capability, but the failure of broad participation and high-quality collaboration to remain in place.

Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed two key conditions of civilizational vitality:

- Participation

- Collaboration

This book holds that participation means individuals genuinely entering the structures of reality and civilization and occupying sustainable, identifiable places from which they can act.

Collaboration means that different individuals, roles, or systems can address real-world tasks and civilizational problems together, with relatively low friction, relatively high trust, and a relatively high degree of responsibility-taking.

Civilizational vitality does not arise merely from the size of networks, but from the joint action of broad participation and high-quality collaboration.

- Without participation, civilization becomes closed, runs on empty, and loses its sources of renewal.
- Without collaboration, civilization becomes dispersed, consumed by internal friction, and loses its capacity for integration.

This chapter also pointed out that many crises of modern civilization arise not from a lack of capability, but from insufficient participation, increasingly shallow collaboration, and the growing extent to which people are called upon even as the support sustaining them weakens.

The next chapter moves formally to a more macro-level question. If thickness, diversity, participation, and collaboration jointly affect civilizational vitality, can they be further organized into an overall model?

In other words, can civilizational stability be expressed as a relational framework of structural dynamics?

Chapter 7: The Public-Facing Relational Framework: Four Conditions That Cannot Offset One Another

In the preceding chapters, this book has progressively established the basic components of the dynamics of structural meaning. We have explained that:

- Structural meaning arises from the interaction of capabilities, needs, and connections.
- Structural meaning develops along two directions: thickness of meaning and diversity of meaning.
- Structural meaning expands from individual action into roles, relationship networks, collaboration networks, and institutional support.
- Civilizational vitality does not derive directly from network size, but from broad participation and high-quality collaboration.

At this point, the theory as a whole has acquired a condition for synthesis. The key dimensions developed separately above can now be brought together in a more concise formulation: whether a civilization is stable depends on whether structural meaning is sufficiently deep, sufficiently broad, and sufficiently open to participation, and whether effective collaboration can develop among its different parts.

To make this judgment easier to communicate and discuss, this book proposes a public-facing relational framework:

Joint conditions | Thickness of meaning, diversity of meaning, genuine participation, and quality of collaboration must all hold together. If any dimension persistently fails, the others cannot automatically offset that failure.

Here:

- Object of observation: the sustainability of civilizational structure (not a calculable aggregate score)
- M: thickness of meaning
- D: diversity of meaning
- P: participation
- η : collaboration efficiency

This chapter's task is not to turn this relational framework into a strict mathematical model, but to explain:

- 1. Why an overarching framework is needed.**
- 2. What each variable in this relational framework means.**
- 3. Why the four stand in a non-offsetting relationship rather than merely side by side.**
- 4. What this relational framework can and cannot explain.**

In other words, this is the first chapter in which the book condenses its preceding structural analysis into a readily grasped middle-level formulation.

I. Why a Relational Framework Needs a Concise Formulation

Any middle-level theory that seeks genuinely to enter public discussion and cross-disciplinary dialogue must have a “concise formulation.” A theory that can exist only through lengthy exposition may certainly be detailed, but it is difficult to grasp quickly, reuse, or bring into real-world discussion.

This is especially true when a book seeks to address issues spanning several levels:

- Structural shocks in the technological age
- Individuals' sense of losing their place

- Civilizational vitality and destabilization
- Participation, collaboration, and the reorganization of roles
- The direction of future institutions

Without a sufficiently clear overall formulation, such a theory can easily seem:

- Rich in content but unclear in its central thread
- Rich in concepts but lacking a practical point of reference
- Convincing chapter by chapter, but difficult to bring together

This book therefore needs an overarching framework, not to create an “appearance of science,” but to establish a central judgment that can be concisely expressed, communicated, and reused.

That central judgment is this: civilizational stability is not determined by a single variable. It is shaped jointly by four directions: thickness of meaning, diversity of meaning, participation, and collaboration.

Hence the public-facing relational framework.

II. Why Observe the Sustainability of Civilizational Structure Rather Than “Success”?

This relational framework observes whether civilizational structures can continue to sustain participation, absorb shocks, and renew themselves. It does not observe an “aggregate stability score” represented by a letter or a single value.

The choice to use “stability,” rather than:

- Success
- Prosperity
- Strength
- Growth
- Progress

is deliberate.

1. “Success” Is Too Short-Term

A society can appear highly successful in the short term:

- High output
- Powerful technology
- Rapid growth
- High organizational efficiency

But this does not mean it is stable over a longer timescale. Many systems accumulate deep vulnerabilities precisely in the course of rapid success.

2. “Strength” Is Too One-Dimensional

Strength usually emphasizes the total quantity of capability. Yet this book repeatedly points out that stronger capabilities do not automatically mean a stronger civilization.

A system may be extremely strong,

while people increasingly have no place, roles become increasingly uniform, and collaboration becomes increasingly superficial.

Such “strength” is not necessarily stable.

3. “Prosperity” Is Too Superficial

Prosperity tends to emphasize abundant resources, active consumption, and expanding markets. But civilizational crises do not necessarily occur only in poverty.

Often, the real danger is not a lack of prosperity, but:

- Prosperity accompanied by hollowness
- Affluence accompanied by loss of place
- Efficiency accompanied by rupture

4. Why “Stability”?

This book uses “stability” because it more effectively indicates whether a civilization has the capacity to:

- Continue operating
- Absorb shocks
- Maintain vitality
- Sustain participation
- Renew itself

Sustainability here therefore does not mean a static point of equilibrium. It means whether a civilization can maintain structural continuity and vitality amid expansion, shocks, and reorganization.

In other words, “stability” in this book is not stagnation, but sustainable dynamic stability.

III. M: Why Thickness of Meaning Comes First

The first component of the public-facing relational framework is M, thickness of meaning. This order is not accidental.

From a civilizational perspective, thickness first determines whether a society has sufficiently deep accumulated capabilities, experience, responsibility, and knowledge to meet the demands of a complex world.

1. Without Thickness, Civilization Becomes Shallow

A society may be active, bustling, and pluralistic. But without sufficiently thick structural meaning, it struggles to:

- Maintain complex institutions
- Address highly complex problems
- Undertake long-term responsibilities
- Accumulate experience across generations
- Preserve key layers of capability in a crisis

Thickness therefore corresponds first of all to civilization’s “depth.”

2. Thickness Is More Than the Quantity of Knowledge

The thickness of meaning discussed in this book is not simply how much knowledge exists. It concerns what a structure of meaning carries:

- Complexity of capabilities
- Accumulation over time
- Density of experience
- Levels of responsibility
- Historical continuity

Thickness is therefore closer to “how deep civilization is” than to “how much data the system contains.”

3. Why Thickness Must Enter the Relational Framework of Stability

Without sufficiently thick structural meaning, all of a civilization’s activity and diversity may remain superficial. Once its external environment changes or internal tensions rise, this shallow prosperity can easily collapse rapidly.

M is therefore the first component of the public-facing relational framework, because any stability must rest on some degree of depth.

IV. D: Why Diversity of Meaning Comes Second

If M addresses “depth,” D, diversity of meaning, addresses “breadth.” A civilization can be deep and still be unstable. Why? Because it may be too narrow.

1. Without Diversity, Civilization Becomes “Strong but Narrow”

Even if a society possesses great thickness of capabilities, large numbers of individuals cannot enter it if it recognizes only a few roles, a few pathways, and a few forms of contribution.

Such a civilization displays a characteristic pattern:

- Strong structures
- Few points of entry
- Narrow choices
- A single pathway
- Low tolerance for error

This means that once the dominant pathway fails, the system lacks alternative channels, and overall vulnerability increases instead.

2. Diversity Is a Source of Resilience, Not Decoration

In this book, diversity is never merely a polite form of “inclusion.” It is an important source of civilizational resilience.

A genuinely rich diversity of meaning means:

- More entry points into roles
- More contributions receiving recognition
- More capabilities that can be transformed
- More alternative structures able to absorb risk

D therefore corresponds to civilization’s “breadth.”

3. Why Diversity Must Enter the Relational Framework of Stability

A civilization with thickness but no diversity can easily force itself into dependence on a single channel. In that situation:

- Large numbers of talented people are squeezed out.
- Society loses the ability to change direction.
- Civilization lacks structures that resist single-point failure.

D is therefore the second component. It ensures that civilization is broad as well as deep.

V. P: Why Participation Must Be a Separate Component

Many traditional narratives of development assume that individuals will naturally participate as long as systems are strong enough and pathways plentiful enough.

This book rejects that assumption. P is therefore singled out as the third component of the public-facing relational framework.

1. The Existence of Pathways Does Not Mean People Can Enter Them

A society may possess a rich array of pathways without those pathways being genuinely open. Education, resources, status, platform access, rules, and time constraints can all create barriers.

P is introduced to point out that civilization must do more than possess pathways: it must enable people genuinely to enter them.

2. Participation Is the Entry Variable for Civilizational Vitality

Without sufficient participation, even the greatest thickness becomes a closed accumulation for a minority, and even the broadest diversity degenerates into a shop-window display for a few.

P therefore addresses not “how attractive structures look,” but:

- Whether individuals can genuinely enter
- Whether they genuinely have a place after entering
- Whether civilization genuinely offers a broad basis for people to become embedded within it

3. Why Retain P Initially Rather Than Immediately Use Only EP?

Strictly speaking, this book will later upgrade P to EP (effective participation). Yet the public-facing relational framework initially retains P for two reasons.

First, the public-facing version must remain concise. Second, EP refines and upgrades P rather than starting afresh.

P here can therefore initially be understood as the overall entry variable for participation. Later chapters will distinguish further between “formal participation” and “effective participation.”

VI. η : Why Collaboration Efficiency Must Be a Separate Component

If P answers “can people get in?”, η answers whether, once inside, they can genuinely accomplish things together. This is a point this book strongly emphasizes.

1. Participation Does Not Automatically Become Collaboration

A society can have relatively high participation yet still have little vitality. Even if individuals have all entered structures, civilization will still appear weak and consumed by internal friction if:

- Coordination costs between them are extremely high.
- Trust is extremely low.
- Responsibility cannot be shared.
- Connections remain at the level of superficially calling upon people.
- Experience cannot accumulate into a shared process.

2. Collaboration Efficiency Is Civilization's Capacity for Integration

η addresses a higher-level question: can civilization integrate existing capabilities, pathways, and participation into a shared process?

η is therefore a systemic variable, rather than a matter of “whether interpersonal relationships are good.” It concerns:

- The quality of information flows
- The capacity for organizational coordination
- The capacity to connect roles
- The capacity to accumulate trust
- The capacity to bear consequences together

3. Why η Cannot Be Subsumed Under P or D

Because:

- Many pathways do not imply good collaboration.
- Broad participation does not imply the capacity for integration.
- Strong systems do not imply low friction.

Collaboration efficiency must be addressed separately because it determines whether a civilization is merely “active simultaneously” or is “operating together.”

η is therefore an indispensable component of the relational framework of stability.

VII. Why the Four Components Cannot Offset One Another

This is the aspect of the public-facing relational framework most likely to invite further questions. Why write:

What is compared here is not an arithmetic result, but whether four classes of conditions hold together: depth cannot replace openness, openness cannot replace genuine entry, and the quantity of participation cannot replace the quality of collaboration.

Rather than:

Nor can these dimensions simply be added together to offset one another.

The answer is that the book seeks to express more than “all four components matter.” Rather, the four mutually constrain one another, and a serious deficiency in any one substantially weakens overall stability.

1. A Non-Offsetting Relationship Emphasizes the “Weakest-Link Effect”

If one component is extremely low, overall stability will be significantly reduced. For example:

- Thickness with little diversity: civilization becomes strong but narrow.
- Diversity with little participation: civilization becomes rich in possibilities but alienating.
- Participation with little collaboration: civilization becomes busy but consumed by internal friction.
- Collaboration with little thickness: civilization becomes efficient but shallow.

Simple addition cannot highlight this structural weakness; simple addition cannot express this structural weakness either.

2. A Non-Offsetting Relationship Emphasizes “Holding Together”

The book is not saying that the four components are four independent virtues. It is saying that civilizational stability requires all four to hold together.

They are joint conditions, not parallel decorations. A non-offsetting relationship is therefore a stronger form of expression: it advances from “joint importance” to “interdependence.”

3. This Is Still Not a Calculable Mathematical Operation

It must again be emphasized that the public-facing relational framework is not a mathematical law. This way of writing is a structural reminder expressing that:

- All four components must hold together.
- The absence of any one substantially harms the whole.
- Stability is a coupled outcome, not a linear sum.

This must be made clear, or the framework will be misread as an empirical quantitative model. A genuinely more rigorous theoretical formulation will be developed in the next chapter.

VIII. What This Relational Framework Can Explain

Although concise, the public-facing relational framework already has strong explanatory power. At a minimum, it can help us reorganize the following questions.

1. Why “Stronger Capabilities” Do Not Mean “A More Stable Civilization”

Even if M rises, the overall structure can still deteriorate if D , P , and η do not improve in tandem, or even decline instead.

This can explain many phenomena of the technological age:

- Systems become stronger.
- Yet people have less of a place.
- Participation becomes more superficial.
- Collaboration becomes more fragmented.

2. Why “More Pathways” Do Not Necessarily Make Society Better

If D rises while η falls sharply, or P expands only at the surface, the system may still become unstable.

This can explain:

- More choices accompanied by greater anxiety
- Expanding pluralism accompanied by greater difficulty in public collaboration
- Denser connections accompanied by weaker communities

3. Why “A Great Deal of Participation” Does Not Mean Civilization Has Vitality

If participation is formalized, or collaboration efficiency is very low, civilization may look highly active while actually becoming seriously caught in low-quality cycles.

4. Why Some Societies Are Prosperous on the Surface but Increasingly Fragile Within

Surface prosperity may correspond only to increases in a few indicators, without all four components being in place. For example:

- High M , low P
- High η , low D
- High D , low thickness
- High participation, low collaboration

All these combinations can generate high vulnerability.

IX. What This Relational Framework Cannot Explain

To stand on solid ground, a theory must explain not only what it can explain, but also what it cannot. The public-facing relational framework certainly has boundaries.

1. It Cannot Directly Address the Ontological Origin of Meaning

This book has made clear that the framework concerns the layer of structural meaning, rather than the higher-order questions of primordial meaning or the chain of origins.

2. It Cannot Directly Explain the Distribution of Power or the Power to Define

The framework explains the structural conditions for civilizational stability. But questions of “who defines what counts as meaningful,” “who controls the entry points to pathways,” and “who controls platforms and rules” require the additional dimension of political economy. This will be developed later.

3. It Cannot Address Thresholds, Overload, or Alienation

The public-facing relational framework has an evident gap. It tends to interpret increases in its four components as greater stability, whereas in reality:

- Diversity generates tension.
- Complexity generates overload.
- Increased system capabilities may generate alienation of the subject.

These problems must be addressed by the theoretical model in the next chapter. This chapter’s relational framework is therefore a middle-level point of entry, not the final version.

X. The Actual Role of the Public-Facing Relational Framework

At this point, the chapter can state clearly:

Memorable public-facing formulation | The sustainability of civilizational structure comes from depth, breadth, genuine participation, and quality of collaboration holding together, rather than from growth along any single axis.

This is neither an empirical law nor an already closed and completed academic model. Its actual role has three parts.

First, to focus the whole book. It condenses the material developed separately above into one central judgment, enabling readers to grasp the book’s central thread quickly.

Second, to provide a point of reference for discussion. Technological shocks, platform governance, occupational crises, sharing networks, and contribution-record prototypes can all be reanalyzed through these four components.

Third, to prepare the way for theoretical refinement. The public-facing relational framework is not the endpoint, but a bridge to a more rigorous theoretical model.

The next chapter will formally introduce:

- Thickness of human subject capabilities
- Thickness of system capabilities
- Effective participation
- Constraints such as tension, overload, and alienation

This will advance the public-facing version into a genuine formulation of dynamics.

XI. A Middle-Level Judgment: Civilizational Stability Is Never Improvement Along a Single Axis

At the close of this chapter, the spirit of the public-facing relational framework can be condensed into one sentence: civilizational stability is never improvement along a single axis; it requires depth, breadth, the scope of participation, and the capacity for integration to hold together.

This sentence matters because modern society falls all too readily into single-axis thinking:

- Looking only at capabilities
- Looking only at growth
- Looking only at efficiency
- Looking only at platform scale
- Looking only at the number of pathways

It thereby overlooks the actual conditions of civilization:

- Capabilities must be deep.
- Pathways must be broad.
- People must be able to enter.
- Once inside, they must still be able to accomplish things together.

This is what the public-facing relational framework seeks to capture.

Chapter Summary

This chapter proposed the book's public-facing relational framework:

The chapter's conclusion is therefore only a set of non-offsetting conditions, not an empirical law, a scoring tool, or authorization for institutional action.

Here:

- M denotes thickness of meaning.
- D denotes diversity of meaning.
- P denotes participation.
- η denotes collaboration efficiency.

The book uses this relational framework to express a central judgment: civilizational stability is not the outcome of a single variable, but the joint outcome of the depth, breadth, participation, and collaboration of structural meaning.

This chapter also explained that the non-offsetting formulation emphasizes the mutual constraints among the four components and the need for them to hold together. A serious deficiency in any one substantially weakens overall stability.

Yet the public-facing relational framework still has boundaries. It has not yet addressed tension, overload, alienation, the separation of subjecthood, or effective participation.

It is therefore the book's central point of reference, but not yet its final theoretical model.

The next chapter will formally advance this work. If the public-facing relational framework emphasizes "holding together," can the complex civilizations of the real world still be expressed in the same simple way?

In other words, how can stability, tension, and constraints enter a more rigorous theoretical constraint framework?

Chapter 8: The Theoretical Constraint Framework: Subjects, Systems, and Risks

In the preceding chapter, this book proposed the public-facing relational framework:

The preceding chapter left us with four non-offsetting conditions; this chapter further distinguishes subjects, systems, and risk constraints.

The role of that relational framework is to condense the theory developed separately above into a readily grasped central judgment: civilizational stability depends on four dimensions holding together: thickness of meaning, diversity of meaning, participation, and collaboration.

Yet this book also made clear that this formulation is only the public-facing relational framework, not the final theoretical model.

The reason is straightforward. Although concise and powerful, the public-facing relational framework retains an unavoidable tendency: it naturally encourages the understanding that civilization will become increasingly stable as long as these four components continue to improve.

The real world is plainly far more complex. Real civilizations are not systems of linear growth. They encounter:

- Variables crowding one another out
- Overload from accumulating complexity
- Tension from expanding diversity
- Alienation of the subject from increasing system capabilities
- False prosperity in which participation expands while its quality declines
- Pseudo-stability in which collaboration improves at the expense of subjecthood

Civilizational stability, in other words, cannot be expressed solely through “the joint growth of positive variables.” It must also incorporate:

- Constraints
- Friction
- Costs
- Countereffects
- Critical points

This is the task of this chapter. It develops a more rigorous theoretical constraint framework:

Theoretical constraint framework | Subject capabilities, system capabilities, diversity, effective participation, and quality of collaboration are observed separately. Tension, overload, and alienation are different risks and are not combined into an aggregate civilization score.

Here:

- M_h : thickness of human subject capabilities
- M_s : thickness of system capabilities
- D : diversity of meaning
- EP : effective participation
- η : collaboration efficiency
- T : tension coefficient
- O : overload coefficient
- R : alienation coefficient

This chapter's aim is not to compress civilization into a calculable relational expression. It is to develop the structural intuition in the public-facing version into a middle-level model that is more attentive to constraints, better able to handle counterexamples, and better able to explain the risks of the technological age.

I. Why the Public-Facing Relational Framework Must Be Upgraded

The public-facing relational framework is necessary because it is clear, concise, and readily communicated. But a theory that remains only at that level faces three kinds of problem.

1. The Problem of Linear Optimism

When all four components are presented as positive variables, readers can easily assume:

- The greater the thickness, the better.
- The greater the diversity, the better.
- The more participation, the better.
- The stronger the collaboration, the better.

Reality is not like this. A civilization can perfectly well suffer because:

- Excessive diversity makes coordination difficult.
- Excessive system capabilities squeeze out subject capabilities.
- Expanding participation in quantity causes low-quality congestion.
- Collaboration efficiency improves at the cost of hollowing out the subject.

Growth, in other words, does not automatically mean stability.

2. The Problem of Overly Crude Variables

In the public-facing version, both:

- M
- P

are too crude.

Capabilities, for example, are not all of one kind. In the age of artificial intelligence, we must at least distinguish between increasing system capabilities and whether human subject capabilities are increasing in tandem.

Likewise, participation is not all of one kind. A person's "presence" does not mean that they have genuinely participated in building civilization.

They may merely be:

- Called upon
- Counted
- Assigned a place
- Drawn into a platform's orbit
- Passively responding to the system's rhythms

The variables in the public-facing version therefore require further differentiation and refinement.

3. The Problem of Missing Negative Mechanisms

The public-facing relational framework includes no negative constraints. It therefore cannot directly explain:

- Why diversity generates tension
- Why complexity leads to overload
- Why stronger systems produce alienation

- Why civilization becomes fragile amid growing strength

Unless these are incorporated, the model will remain oriented toward a “growth narrative” and struggle to become a genuine model of dynamics.

The public-facing version must therefore be upgraded.

II. From M to M_h and M_s

The first upgrade in the theoretical constraint framework divides the public-facing version’s M into two categories:

- M_h: thickness of human subject capabilities
- M_s: thickness of system capabilities

This step is crucial because it responds to one of the deepest structural changes of the technological age: systems can grow ever stronger without people necessarily growing stronger.

1. What Is M_h?

M_h refers to the thickness of capabilities possessed by human subjects. It includes:

- The capacity to understand
- The capacity to judge
- The capacity to create
- The capacity to take on responsibility
- The capacity to accumulate experience over the long term
- The capacity for integrated action in complex situations

M_h is not, in other words, simply the total quantity of skills. It is the thickness of capabilities through which people, as subjects, can take on complex realities and enter deep structures of action.

2. What Is M_s?

M_s refers to the thickness of capabilities at the system level. It includes:

- The processing capabilities of platforms and algorithms
- The execution capabilities of automated systems
- The coordination capabilities of organizational systems
- The integration capabilities of large-scale networks
- The analytical and generative capabilities of AI systems
- The total external capabilities of the entire civilizational structure

M_s existed throughout the agricultural, industrial, and information ages. But the AI age significantly increases the speed, scale, and scope of system capabilities’ independent growth relative to subject capabilities.

3. Why Must They Be Distinguished?

Without this distinction, M in the relational framework conceals a dangerous phenomenon:

- Civilization’s total capabilities appear to be increasing.
- Yet the actual place of human subjects’ capabilities within the structure may be declining.

For example:

- Decision-making is replaced by algorithms.
- Writing is replaced by generative systems.
- Analysis is replaced by models.

- Coordination is replaced by platform workflows.
- Teaching is replaced by automated content systems.
- Judgment is preformatted by recommendation systems.

In these situations, system capabilities are indeed improving. Yet if people increasingly undertake only marginal tasks requiring little judgment or responsibility, M_h may not rise in tandem and may even decline in relative terms.

A civilization can therefore reach a situation in which system capabilities rise while people's subject capabilities and real-world places decline simultaneously.

The public-facing relational framework cannot identify this imbalance.

4. Why Both Must Enter the Relational Framework

Civilizational stability can rely neither on strong systems alone nor on strong individuals alone. A genuinely robust civilization needs some reasonable relationship between the two:

- System capabilities must be strong enough to meet the demands of a complex world.
- Subject capabilities must be thick enough to prevent civilization from becoming hollow.

The theoretical constraint framework must therefore incorporate both.

III. From P to EP: Why Participation Must Be Upgraded to “Effective Participation”

The second upgrade in the theoretical constraint framework replaces P in the public-facing version with EP, Effective Participation.

The reason resembles that for differentiating M: “participation” in the public-facing version is too crude to address the structural problems of modern platform society and the AI age.

1. Why P Is Insufficient

If only the participation rate is used, all the following may be counted as “participation”:

- Clicking, browsing, and responding
- Passively consuming content
- Briefly performing low-responsibility tasks
- Being called upon by a system to perform fragments of action
- Being assigned by a platform to low-judgment interactions
- Formally holding a post while substantively having no place

But Chapter 6 already explained that what truly matters is not “presence,” but:

- Whether people have genuinely entered a structure
- Whether they have formed a sustainable place
- Whether they undertake judgment and responsibility
- Whether they generate a genuine increment in the civilizational process

P must therefore be upgraded.

2. What Is EP?

Effective participation means participation in which individuals, through a structural pathway, genuinely enter the processes of reality and civilization and generate increments in cognition, collaboration, creation, or responsibility within them.

“Genuine entry” here must also distinguish voluntary participation from coerced obedience. Compulsory inclusion, inability to obtain basic facts, inability to dissent, inability to exit reasonably, or mobilization at the

cost of depriving another group of its standing as subjects cannot count as effective participation in a civilizational sense merely on the strength of intense activity and organizational results.

The most important element of this definition is the “increment.” Individuals are not simply accommodated by the system; they actually exert an effect on the process that cannot be disregarded:

- They make judgments.
- They bear consequences.
- They contribute creativity.
- They sustain relationships.
- They connect needs with capabilities.
- Rather than merely executing passively, they genuinely enter the movement of civilization itself.

3. Why EP Is Especially Crucial in the AI Age

One of the greatest dangers of the AI age is a society in which “everyone still appears to be participating,” while large numbers of people have in fact been left with only formal participation.

For example:

- Individuals remain constantly online but no longer think deeply.
- Individuals receive continual feedback but no longer take real responsibility.
- Individuals are drawn into the system’s orbit but no longer genuinely create.
- Individuals engage in many micro-activities but have no stable place.

Under these conditions, if P is still used to measure participation, civilization will appear to have a high participation rate while actually approaching hollowness.

The theoretical version must therefore use EP.

4. The Significance of EP

EP elevates participation from a quantitative variable to a qualitative one. Civilization needs more than more people present; it needs more people genuinely entering.

This is also the book’s final tightening of the concept of “participation.”

IV. Why D and η Are Retained but Must Be Understood Anew

D and η are retained in the theoretical constraint framework, but their meanings must become more rigorous.

1. D: More Diversity Is Not Necessarily Better; the More There Is, the More Its Supportability Matters

D in the public-facing version primarily emphasizes:

- Rich pathways
- Diverse roles
- Broad forms of contribution

These remain valid. In the theoretical version, however, D is no longer merely a symbolic variable for “the more, the better.” It must also be understood in terms of:

- Whether diversity is genuinely accessible
- Whether institutions can support diversity
- Whether collaboration networks can absorb diversity
- Whether diversity has remained within the coordination threshold

D is therefore not a simple quantity. It is closely related to T and O, discussed below.

2. η : Collaboration Efficiency Is Not the Efficiency of Calling Upon People

The theoretical version's η must also be more tightly defined. Modern systems excel at improving the efficiency with which people are called upon, but this is not the same as genuine collaboration efficiency.

Genuine collaboration efficiency requires:

- Low friction
- High trust
- The ability to bear responsibility
- The ability to carry processes forward
- The ability to make corrections
- The ability to complete complex processes together

If a system merely calls upon fragmented actions with extreme efficiency while continually weakening subjects' judgment, the quality of relationships, and the capacity to share responsibility, it may have high coordination efficiency without necessarily having high η .

In the theoretical version, η therefore means not "speed," but "the capacity genuinely to accomplish things together."

Calibration Back from the Validation Volume: Structural Stability Does Not Equal Civilizational Legitimacy

The Nazi Germany case in V3.0 exposed a boundary that must enter the main theory: a system can generate high mobilization, strong organizational integration, a strong sense of belonging, and even relatively high internal collaboration while resting on propaganda, coercion, exclusion, and the deprivation of others' standing as subjects and their rights. EP and quality of collaboration therefore cannot be misread as a civilizational value function.

Meaning Dynamics' stability model answers only whether a structure can continue to organize places, participation, and collaboration. It does not independently answer whether that structure is legitimate or deserves to continue. Standing as a subject, basic rights, facts, authorization and exit, responsibility, and long-term consequences are prior boundaries of the model's validity, not another ordinary variable added to the positive-condition side.

High mobilization does not equal a high level of civilization; high collaboration does not mean the direction is right. A structure that can organize people may also organize them in the wrong direction.

V. Why Negative Constraints Must Be Introduced

At this point, the positive variables have been upgraded:

- M_h
- M_s
- D
- EP
- η

But if the theory stopped here, it would still carry a problem: it would imply that civilization becomes more stable whenever these five rise.

Reality is plainly otherwise. The theoretical constraint framework must therefore incorporate negative constraints.

This book selects three:

- T : tension coefficient
- O : overload coefficient
- R : alienation coefficient

These are not a haphazardly added “list of problems.” They are abstractions of three different kinds of danger in civilizational dynamics.

VI. T: The Tension Coefficient

1. What Is Tension?

Tension refers to the coordination friction arising during a civilization’s expansion from diversity, differences, complex structures of roles, and the distribution of interests.

It manifests as:

- Conflicts of values
- Conflicts between pathways
- Competition between roles
- Rising coordination costs
- Increasing difficulty negotiating rules
- Continually growing pressure on structural integration

More pathways do not, in other words, make things easier for civilization. On the contrary, more pathways often require higher-level capacities for negotiation, translation, and integration.

2. Why T Must Enter the Relational Framework

Growth in D is not automatically good. The greater the diversity, the harder collaboration may become.

Without T, the theory cannot explain why some highly diverse societies instead become extremely difficult to coordinate.

T is therefore D’s real-world shadow. It begins to give the theory an awareness of tension.

3. The Significance of T

T does not seek to negate diversity. It explains that diversity must be supported by coordination capabilities and public structures; otherwise, it turns into tension.

T is therefore a threshold variable, not a hostile variable.

VII. O: The Overload Coefficient

1. What Is Overload?

Overload means that growth in civilizational complexity exceeds the capacities of individuals, organizations, and institutions to sustain it.

It manifests as:

- Too much information
- Overly elaborate rules
- Too densely packed choices
- Judgment fatigue
- Delayed organizational responses
- Complexity itself becoming an obstacle to action

This is a characteristic modern crisis. A civilization’s further development does not automatically make life easier. Accumulated complexity can make genuine action increasingly difficult for individuals and organizations.

2. Why O Must Enter the Relational Framework

Without O, the theory cannot explain:

- Why more complex systems leave individuals more powerless
- Why richer pathways make choice more anxiety-inducing
- Why more intricate institutions make action slower
- Why more complete information makes judgment harder

Complexity thus does more than deepen civilization. It can also turn back upon civilization and overwhelm it.

3. The Significance of O

O makes the theory acknowledge an important fact: civilization does not become stronger simply by becoming more complex; there is an upper limit to what it can sustain.

This step allows Meaning Dynamics genuinely to escape the “illusion of linear expansion.”

VIII. R: The Alienation Coefficient

1. What Is Alienation?

Alienation means that system capabilities increase and structures operate normally, while human subjects within them increasingly lose:

- A sense of having a place
- A sense of exercising judgment
- A sense of responsibility
- A sense of being needed
- A sense of affirmation in their own actions

The structure, in other words, is still operating, but it increasingly ceases to resemble “a human world.”

2. Why R Must Enter the Relational Framework

This component is especially crucial in the AI age. Modern systems can become increasingly efficient, intelligent, and powerful without necessarily allowing people to enter them more fully.

Instead, they may leave people:

- With only marginal tasks
- Without further growth in deep capabilities
- Continually called upon by platforms but lacking a real place
- With increasingly superficial participation and increasingly attenuated subjecthood

Without R, the relational framework cannot explain a new form of civilizational vulnerability: strong systems, hollow people.

3. The Significance of R

R is the constraint most distinctive of the present age in the theoretical version. It explicitly tells us that civilizational stability cannot be assessed solely by how smoothly systems run; we must also ask whether they still allow human subjecthood to exist.

This prevents the theory from sliding into the pure worship of systems.

IX. How Negative Constraints Erode Positive Conditions

We can now return to the relational framework itself:

Negative constraints cannot be offset by any positive indicator: tension erodes coordinatability, overload erodes usability, and alienation erodes the quality of subjects' genuine entry.

How do tension, overload, and alienation erode positive conditions? What the book seeks to express is that they do not make civilization "cease to exist altogether," but continually consume the stability formed by positive variables.

1. Negative Constraints Have an Erosive Effect

Tension does not directly eliminate diversity, but erodes its coordinatability. Overload does not immediately eliminate capabilities, but erodes their usability. Alienation does not immediately eliminate the system, but erodes the actual quality of subjects' entry into civilization.

Together, these constraints manifest as:

- Continual depletion
- Gradual consumption
- Continually increasing costs
- Mechanisms that diminish positive accumulation

2. Why a Reminder of Baseline Friction Must Be Retained

A reminder of baseline friction means that, even without evident tension, overload, or alienation, civilization cannot occupy a purely ideal state with zero cost.

Complex civilizations, in other words, always carry some background level of friction. These constraints therefore cannot be compressed into an apparently precise constant, nor can low visible constraints be misrepresented as zero cost.

This is a theoretically conservative approach.

3. This Is Still Not a Precise Function

It must likewise be emphasized that this constraint framework is a structural formulation, not a calibrated mathematical model.

Its focus is that:

- Positive variables form the foundation.
- Negative variables increase the costs.
- Stability is a dynamic balance between foundation and costs.

X. Why Relative Weights in Different Contexts Must Remain Open

Do the observed dimensions have equal weights in different contexts? Why not simply write:

Different contexts can change the focus of observation, but fixed weights cannot be assumed in advance, still less used to convert away the boundaries of rights, facts, and direction.

Why can weights not be fixed in advance? The reason is that this book seeks to preserve theoretical room for the relative importance of variables to differ across eras, civilizations, and stages.

For example:

- In an era of major technological shocks, M_h may be more crucial than before.
- In highly fragmented societies, the weight of η may increase.
- In an era of large-scale contraction of pathways, the marginal effect of D may be stronger.

- In environments of strong platform control, EP may become the most crucial variable.

Relative weights can therefore only be questions awaiting validation; precise values cannot be assumed in advance. Instead, what is at issue is:

- Differences in weighting
- Differences between eras
- Differences between stages
- Differences between types of civilization

This reminds readers that the theoretical constraint framework is an extensible model, not a rigid constant.

XI. What the Theoretical Constraint Framework Actually Seeks to Express

The framework's central spirit can now be condensed:

Core of this chapter | System strength and thickness of the subject must be distinguished; effective participation and quality of collaboration must be distinguished; and each risk constraint must retain its own opening for counterevidence.

What this relational framework actually seeks to express is as follows.

First, civilizational stability does not rely solely on system capabilities. Human subject capabilities must be retained as a separate dimension. Otherwise, civilization may lose people amid the strengthening of systems.

Second, participation must be genuine participation. Not every form of presence counts. Only participation that genuinely enters and generates an increment for civilization constitutes a stability variable.

Third, diversity and collaboration are not automatically harmonious. They generate tension, which civilization must accommodate rather than assume away.

Fourth, complexity can turn back upon the system. Overload is not an occasional problem, but a structural risk of modern civilization.

Fifth, systems can become hollow amid growing strength. Alienation reminds us that stronger technology and stronger civilization are not automatically equivalent.

The theoretical constraint framework therefore does not merely complicate the public-facing version. It brings that version genuinely into contact with reality.

XII. A More Rigorous Middle-Level Judgment

If the public-facing relational framework in the preceding chapter offered the judgment that civilizational stability comes from depth, breadth, participation, and collaboration holding together, this chapter's theoretical constraint framework offers a more rigorous judgment:

Civilizational stability arises from the joint action of human subject capabilities, system capabilities, diversity of meaning, effective participation, and collaboration efficiency. Yet this stability is continually eroded by tension, overload, and alienation.

This statement is very important. It means that, from this chapter onward, the book is no longer merely a "theory of expansion." It has become a theory of dynamics in which:

- Expansion
- Constraints
- Costs
- Imbalances
- Countereffects

all hold together.

Chapter Summary

This chapter upgraded the public-facing relational framework into a theoretical constraint framework:

The theoretical relation provides only a language for comparison. It provides no ranking of civilizations, no unified optimization objective, and no automatic conclusions for governance.

It completed three key revisions.

First, upgrading the variables:

- M was divided into thickness of human subject capabilities, M_h , and thickness of system capabilities, M_s .
- P was upgraded to effective participation, EP.

Second, adding negative constraints by introducing:

- Tension coefficient T
- Overload coefficient O
- Alienation coefficient R

Third, establishing a more realistic formulation of civilizational dynamics. Civilizational stability is not a simple accumulation of positive growth, but a dynamic balance between foundational variables and negative erosion.

At this point, the book has finally moved from “structural intuition” to a “theoretical model.”

Yet for this model genuinely to take hold in practice, another question must be answered: how exactly do tension, overload, and alienation arise? Why are they not exceptions, but endogenous risks in the expansion of civilization?

The next chapter formally addresses this question: the tensions and thresholds of civilizational stability.

Chapter 9: The Tensions and Thresholds of Civilizational Stability

In the preceding chapter, this book advanced the public-facing relational framework into a theoretical model: On this basis, Chapter 9 brings tension, overload, and alienation back from abstract labels to real-world mechanisms and thresholds.

The key significance of this development is that civilizational stability is no longer understood as “things getting better as long as positive variables keep rising.” It is understood as a dynamic balance continually undergoing growth, constraint, erosion, and reorganization.

Yet the preceding chapter remained primarily at the level of model formulation. We now know that:

- Tension erodes stability.
- Overload erodes stability.
- Alienation erodes stability.

But we have not yet answered where these erosive effects come from. Why are they endogenous risks of civilizational expansion rather than occasional accidents? Why does civilization not become more stable as it becomes more complex, but instead turn unstable at certain stages after crossing a critical point?

This chapter addresses that problem. If the preceding chapter “made room” for negative mechanisms in the relational framework, this chapter brings them back into reality. It explains why civilizational expansion carries tension within itself, and why, once certain thresholds are crossed, apparently positive expansion can become a source of instability.

The chapter’s central judgment is this: civilizational stability is not the outcome of unlimited expansion. It is the outcome of structural meaning expanding within a certain range while remaining within a window in which coordination, support, and participation are possible.

Civilization, in other words, has no inherent logic of “more is better, stronger is more stable, and more complex is superior.” It is always jointly constrained by:

- Limits to coordination capacity
- Limits to cognitive capacity
- Limits to organizational responsiveness
- Limits to subjects’ participation capacity

Civilization often becomes unstable not because expansion has stopped, but precisely because expansion continues after crossing a crucial threshold.

I. Why the Intuition That “Growth Is Always Good” Is Dangerous

One of modern civilization’s most deeply ingrained habits of thought is to regard growth as a good by default. Such growth may take the form of:

- Growth in output
- Growth in technology
- Growth in pathways
- Growth in connections
- Growth in choices
- Growth in complexity
- Growth in platform scale
- Growth in system capabilities

In many narratives, growth itself is almost equivalent to progress. People therefore readily infer that:

- More capabilities are better.
- More pathways are better.
- More participation is better.
- More collaboration is better.
- More connections are better.

This also explains why the public-facing relational framework naturally invites a kind of linear optimism. When all four variables are presented as positive terms, people naturally imagine civilization as a system that “becomes ever more stable as long as inputs keep increasing.”

Real civilization is not like this.

1. Growth Creates Coordination Pressure

More pathways, more roles, and richer expressions of value mean:

- Rising coordination costs
- Greater difficulty interpreting rules
- Slower decisions
- More points of conflict

Growth therefore means not only “gaining more,” but also “bearing a greater coordination burden.”

2. Growth Creates Cognitive Pressure

More information, pathways, and choices do not automatically make individuals freer. They may instead become more exhausted, anxious, and scattered.

Growth therefore not only expands opportunities, but also increases psychological and cognitive burdens that cannot be quantified.

3. Growth Creates Organizational Pressure

The more complex a system becomes, the more it demands of rules, feedback, response times, levels of responsibility, and intermediary structures. If these supporting capacities do not improve in tandem, growth changes from “expansion” into “piling up.”

4. Growth Creates Pressure on Subjects

Stronger system capabilities do not mean individuals can grow stronger in tandem. On the contrary, if growth occurs primarily at the system level, individuals may be pushed to the margins: finding it increasingly difficult to judge, taking on less, and participating genuinely less and less.

The book’s first task here is therefore to break a deeply rooted assumption: civilizational expansion is not an inherently stabilizing process. Expansion itself can also produce instability.

II. What Is “Tension”?

The first negative mechanism this chapter addresses is tension. Tension is not synonymous with conflict, nor does it mean only political confrontation or social division. It is more fundamental and more pervasive.

In this book, tension means the coordination friction that accumulates among different pathways, roles, values, needs, and logics of collaboration as civilization expands.

It does not necessarily erupt immediately into conflict, nor does it always appear as visible confrontation. Often, it first appears as an “internal pull” that the system finds increasingly difficult to absorb smoothly.

1. Tension Arises from Expanding Diversity

An increase in a civilization's diversity of meaning has many positive effects:

- More pathways
- More roles
- More accessible places
- More alternative structures
- Greater resistance to single-point failure

At the same time, however, greater diversity has an inevitable consequence: there are more things to coordinate. More pathways mean more complex coordination relationships among them.

More roles mean greater difficulty drawing clear boundaries and assigning responsibilities. Richer expressions of value mean greater difficulty in public judgment.

Diversity is therefore not free. It generates tension.

2. Tension Also Arises from Increasing Thickness

Tension does not come only from diversity. Increasing thickness of meaning can also increase tension.

As capabilities deepen, knowledge systems become more complex, and levels of responsibility multiply, the costs of translation between different levels increase.

For example:

- The gap between highly complex specialized knowledge and public understanding
- The disconnect between high-level decision-making logic and the realities of action on the ground
- The conflict between deep system-maintenance needs and surface-level efficiency priorities
- The contradiction between long-cycle accumulation and short-cycle feedback

Increasing thickness thus brings depth to civilization while also increasing asymmetries within its structures. Excessive asymmetry also generates tension.

3. Tension Is Initially a State of “Increasing Difficulty in Negotiation”

The earliest sign of tension is often not fierce conflict, but the system's increasing difficulty in achieving stable coordination:

- Decisions become slower.
- Negotiation becomes more costly.
- Understanding becomes harder.
- Rules depend increasingly on interpretation.
- Organizations depend increasingly on intermediary stopgaps.

Tension first manifests, in other words, as rising costs of system coordination.

This is important because it means tension is not an accidental event, but a cost that a civilization must inevitably continue to face as it expands.

III. Why Tension Does Not Disappear Automatically

Many people instinctively believe:

As long as technology becomes stronger, information faster, and platforms larger, tension will be flattened away.

This book rejects that judgment. Tension is not simply a problem of insufficient information; it accompanies structural expansion.

In other words, tension exists not because the system is insufficiently advanced, but because the system is expanding, making tension inevitable.

1. Technology Can Reduce Only Some Coordination Costs

Technology can help:

- Transmit more information
- Match more needs
- Accelerate processes
- Improve organizational coordination

But technology cannot automatically resolve:

- Differences in values
- Conflicts of responsibility
- Competition between pathways
- Struggles over the authority to interpret
- Breakdowns in understanding between structural levels

Technology therefore reduces certain frictions without necessarily eliminating tension itself.

2. Platforms May Even Amplify Tension

By expanding connections, platforms can indeed increase the density of interaction. But greater interaction density does not mean coordination capacity improves in tandem.

On the contrary, in many cases platforms produce:

- More frequent collisions between different pathways
- More direct competition
- More uniform standards of evaluation
- Fiercer competition for attention
- Shorter rhythms

Tensions that were previously local, slow-moving, and manageable are pushed into a visible space of greater frequency and scale.

Rather than disappearing, tension becomes more likely to accumulate.

3. Without Supporting Structures, Tension Can Only Spill Over

For tension to be processed, intermediary structures must exist to absorb it. For example:

- Translation mechanisms
- Negotiation mechanisms
- Mechanisms for reallocating responsibility
- Multilevel feedback mechanisms
- Buffering organizations
- A foundation of public trust

Without these structures, tension cannot be absorbed. It can only continue to spill over, ultimately manifesting as:

- Division
- Delay
- Internal friction

- Confrontation
- Large-scale exit

Tension is therefore not “bad luck.” It is the inevitable outcome of a mismatch between expansion and the support sustaining it.

IV. What Is a “Threshold”?

If tension describes the coordination friction continually accumulating within civilization, a threshold describes the point at which accumulated tension, complexity, overload, and alienation move a system from “tolerable fluctuation” into “structural instability.”

A threshold does not imply a precise number. In this book, it is closer to a point of change in a system’s state. Before a certain stage, growth remains broadly beneficial. Once a boundary is crossed, however, the expansion that previously propelled civilization becomes a source of instability.

1. Thresholds Do Not Suddenly Fall from the Sky

A threshold is not an entirely external point. It is usually a change of state following prolonged accumulation. For example:

- Decision-making begins to slow noticeably.
- Collaboration begins to depend heavily on additional stopgaps.
- Individuals begin to feel overloaded on a widespread basis.
- Although pathways are numerous, genuine entry becomes increasingly difficult.
- Although roles remain, they become increasingly unstable.
- Although platforms are strong, subjecthood becomes increasingly weak.

The long-term accumulation of these signals means the system is approaching a threshold.

2. A Threshold Essentially Means “Support Capacity Has Been Exceeded”

Civilization crosses a threshold not because it has suddenly done one thing wrong, but because the speed, scale, and complexity of its expansion exceed its own capacity to sustain them.

This capacity includes:

- Individuals’ cognitive capacity
- Organizational response capacity
- Institutional coordination capacity
- Capacity to sustain subjects’ participation
- The capacity of public trust to bear demands

Once these capacities cannot keep up with structural expansion, a threshold appears.

3. A Threshold Means “The Same Growth Has Changed Direction”

This is the chapter’s most crucial point. A threshold does not mean growth has disappeared. It means that, beyond a certain point, the direction of the same growth’s effect reverses.

For example:

- Expansion of diversity at low to moderate levels increases resilience; once coordination capacity is exceeded, it sharply increases tension.
- Expansion of connections at low to moderate levels increases the possibility of collaboration; once subjects’ capacity to cope is exceeded, it generates information congestion and superficiality.

- Expansion of system capabilities at low to moderate levels strengthens civilizational capabilities; once it outpaces the simultaneous growth of subject capabilities, it generates alienation.

This is the true meaning of a threshold: the issue is not whether growth exists, but whether growth has already crossed a boundary.

V. What Is a “Coordination Window”?

To avoid turning civilizational theory into an all-or-nothing narrative of catastrophe, this book does not advocate understanding civilization through the binary of “growth/collapse.”

A more accurate formulation is that civilization has a coordination window.

A coordination window means a range within which the thickness and diversity of structural meaning, the breadth of participation, and the density of collaboration expand together while the system can still absorb, sustain, and integrate them through cognition, institutions, organizations, and subjects’ participation.

Civilization is not unable to expand. Rather, its expansion must remain within a supportable range.

1. The Window Is Not Fixed

Coordination windows differ across civilizations, stages, and technological conditions. For example:

- A society with highly mature institutions may have a wider window.
- A society undergoing rapid transformation may have a narrower window.
- A civilization in a high-technology, highly platformized environment may have a window tilted toward system capabilities.
- A society with a strong community tradition may have a window tilted toward relational support.

The window is therefore a historically and structurally specific range, not a universal fixed constant.

2. The Significance of the Coordination Window

This concept matters because it reformulates civilizational stability from “static equilibrium” into dynamic stability within a certain range.

Civilization does not stand still. It continually changes, expands, and absorbs shocks. As long as these changes remain within the window, the system can maintain its vitality.

Once the boundary is crossed, the system depends increasingly on costly stopgaps, ultimately approaching instability.

3. Thinking in Terms of Windows Is More Realistic Than “Unlimited Optimization”

Modern technological society is especially prone to the illusion that stronger technology, more complete information, and faster connections can bring it indefinitely closer to an optimal state.

This book regards that as a dangerous illusion. Civilization has no “unlimited optimization.” It has only:

- Short-term optimization
- Local optimization
- Balanced optimization within a specific range

Beyond that range, optimization itself becomes a new source of problems.

The “coordination window” is therefore an important correction to a linear view of progress.

VI. Why Complexity Can Turn Back Upon Civilization

In modern civilizational narratives, complexity is often regarded as a sign of progress:

- More complex institutions

- More complex networks
- More complex divisions of labor
- More complex technologies
- More diverse ways of life
- More choices of pathways

This book does not deny complexity's important value. But complexity never brings benefits without costs. Once complexity grows faster than the capacity to sustain it, it turns back upon civilization.

1. The Backlash Against Individuals

Complexity makes it increasingly difficult for individuals to:

- Judge
- Choose
- Take responsibility
- Persist over the long term
- Affirm their own place

The more complex civilization becomes, the more likely individuals are to feel:

- Powerless
- Anxious
- Passive
- Fragmented
- Unable to enter deep structures

2. The Backlash Against Organizations

Complexity also makes organizations increasingly dependent on:

- Layers of intermediaries
- Numerous patches to rules
- High coordination costs
- Lengthy feedback chains
- Excessive reliance on specialized systems

This leads to:

- Slow organizational responses
- Unclear boundaries of responsibility
- Apparently normal operations accompanied by declining actual capacity to adjust

3. The Backlash Against Civilization as a Whole

When complexity presses upon individuals and organizations simultaneously, civilization enters a dangerous condition:

- Systems appear increasingly strong.
- In reality, they become increasingly fragile.
- Networks become larger.
- The support they provide becomes thinner.
- Roles become more numerous.

- Fewer people can genuinely sustain their involvement.

This is complexity turning back upon civilization. It is not the fault of complexity itself, but the outcome of a mismatch between growing complexity and the capacity to sustain it.

VII. How Tensions and Thresholds Specifically Affect the Relational Framework

We can now bring this chapter's discussion back to the theoretical constraint framework of the preceding chapter:

On returning to the constraint framework, what matters is not a calculation's result, but identifying which positive conditions are being eroded by which risks.

The discussion has clarified the meanings of its three negative variables:

1. T: Tension Coefficient

It may increase as pathways expand, roles multiply, and differences grow. T does not mean conflict has already erupted in civilization; it means coordination costs are rising.

2. O: Overload Coefficient

It rises as growing complexity exceeds cognitive and organizational capacities. O indicates that the system is entering a state of high costs, low responsiveness, and shallow support.

3. R: Alienation Coefficient

It rises as system expansion becomes detached from subjects' expansion. R indicates that structures are still operating while the real connection between people and structures weakens.

Constraints are therefore not abstract decorations. They are real conditions that can repeatedly be activated during civilizational expansion.

VIII. A More Rigorous Judgment: Civilization Does Not Become More Stable the More It Expands; Crossing Thresholds Destabilizes It

The chapter's central judgment can be further condensed into one sentence: civilizational stability comes not from unlimited expansion, but from the expansion of structural meaning remaining within the thresholds of coordination, support, and participation.

This means the book rejects two extreme interpretations:

The first extreme is opposition to complexity: the view that complexity, diversity, and technological expansion are themselves the problem. This book disagrees. Without expansion, civilization cannot advance either.

The second extreme is optimism about unlimited expansion: the view that the more complexity, diversity, connections, and system capabilities expand, the better. This book also disagrees. Once expansion crosses a threshold, it turns back upon itself.

The book's position is therefore not anti-expansion. It advocates the expansion of structural meaning within a coordination window.

This is the chapter's theoretical gain.

IX. Why This Chapter Is Especially Important for the AI Age

Although this chapter has not specifically discussed AI, it provides an essential basis for the AI analysis that follows.

The AI age is especially liable to create a dangerous illusion:

- System capabilities improve rapidly.

- Connection efficiency improves rapidly.
- Information-processing capabilities improve rapidly.
- Organizational coordination capabilities improve rapidly.

People therefore readily assume that civilization must become more stable.

But this chapter tells us that the real questions are:

- Have these increases crossed individuals' cognitive thresholds?
- Have they crossed the threshold of public deliberative capacity?
- Have they crossed the actual threshold for sustaining subjects' participation?
- Are they continually amplifying tension, overload, and alienation?

If the answers are yes, an AI-enhanced civilization may instead approach instability faster.

This chapter is thus establishing a threshold framework for the later discussion of the AI-era crisis of subjecthood and effective participation.

Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed two key concepts in civilizational stability:

- Tension
- Thresholds

This book holds that tension is the coordination friction accumulating during civilizational expansion as roles, pathways, values, needs, and logics of collaboration multiply. A threshold is the boundary at which system expansion exceeds the capacities of cognition, institutions, organizations, and subjects, moving from a stable range into an unstable one.

On this basis, the chapter proposed the “coordination window,” arguing that civilization has no inherently positive logic of unlimited expansion.

A genuinely robust civilization is not one in which more, faster, or more complex is always better. It is one in which thickness, diversity, participation, and collaboration expand while remaining within its own support capacity window.

This chapter moves the book's theory further beyond a narrative of linear growth and genuinely into dynamic thinking.

The next chapter develops the problem further from both historical and contemporary perspectives. If civilizational stability is always constrained by tensions and thresholds, how do technological revolutions rewrite those windows and boundaries?

In other words, how do technological revolutions and social structures rewrite one another?

Chapter 10: Technological Revolutions and the Reorganization of Social Structure

In the preceding chapter, this book offered an important judgment: civilizational stability comes not from unlimited expansion, but from the expansion of structural meaning within a window in which coordination, support, and participation are possible.

Civilization therefore does not become increasingly stable merely through “ever-stronger capabilities.” On the contrary, every expansion, including technological expansion, brings with it:

- New capabilities
- New pathways
- New tensions
- New overload
- New risks of alienation

When this book turns to technology, its focus is therefore not:

- Which technology is more advanced
- Which system is more efficient
- Which kind of tool is more powerful

It asks a deeper question: how does technology rewrite the conditions under which structural meaning arises, its pathways of expansion, its forms of participation, and its mechanisms of collaboration?

The book does not, in other words, regard technology as a neutral amplifier. It understands technology as a civilizational variable capable of reorganizing social structure, redefining entry barriers, and reallocating roles and pathways of meaning.

This is the task of this chapter. It will explain:

- 1. Why technological revolutions are never merely revolutions in capability.**
- 2. Why every technological leap simultaneously reorganizes roles, pathways, and forms of participation.**
- 3. Why technology’s real impact lies not in what it replaces, but in what it rewrites.**
- 4. Why the crisis of the modern technological age is essentially a crisis in which networks of structural meaning are being profoundly rewritten.**

If the preceding chapter discussed the thresholds of civilizational expansion, this chapter discusses how technological revolutions expand capabilities while rewriting the window itself.

I. Technology Is Not an External Tool but a Force That Rewrites Structure

Modern society has a deeply ingrained habit of treating technology as a tool attached to society from outside. It is as though a stable society exists first and technology intervenes afterward, merely improving efficiency, saving time, and enlarging scale without affecting the fundamental organization of social structure.

This book rejects that understanding. It holds that technology has never been a neutral tool external to society. It has always been a force that rewrites structure.

Why? Once technology enters reality, it changes more than “how things are done.” It also changes:

- Who can do them
- Who no longer needs to do them

- What receives recognition
- What becomes marginalized
- Which capabilities become crucial
- Which roles begin to destabilize
- Which forms of connection are strengthened
- Which pathways of participation are closed

What technology truly rewrites, in other words, is the conditions under which structural meaning arises.

1. Technology Changes How Capabilities Are Distributed

The arrival of a technology does not merely increase the total quantity of some capability. It also changes:

- How capabilities are organized
- Who controls capabilities
- Through which structures capabilities are called upon
- Whether individuals still need to possess complete capabilities

An automated system, for example, does more than “do things for people.” It changes the types, levels, and boundaries of the capabilities individuals need.

2. Technology Changes How Needs Are Expressed

Technology also changes how needs become visible. Some previously invisible needs are discovered through technology. Some needs that previously required long-term relationships to be expressed are compressed into standardized signals that can be acted upon. Some deeper needs are marginalized in the process of platformization.

Technology thus does more than respond to needs. It rewrites the structure of their visibility.

3. Technology Changes the Forms of Connection

Especially in modern society, connections increasingly take place through platforms, algorithms, and system protocols. This vastly expands their speed, scale, and reach, while also rewriting:

- Whether connections are stable
- Whether connections carry responsibility
- Whether connections can consolidate into roles
- Whether connections lead to collaboration or merely to people being called upon

Technology therefore profoundly changes “connection” as a condition for the generation of structural meaning.

4. Conclusion

Technology does not “add an accelerator” to an unchanging society. It rearranges:

- Capabilities
- Needs
- Connections
- Roles
- Pathways
- Participation
- Collaboration

It rewrites the organization of civilization itself.

II. Why Technological Revolutions Always Accompany the Reorganization of Social Structure

If technology merely improved efficiency, society would only need to become “a little faster” after each technological revolution. History has never worked that way.

After the agricultural revolution, society did not merely become “better at farming.” There emerged:

- Settled life
- Food surpluses
- Specialized divisions of labor
- Cities and centers of power
- New temporal orders and family structures

After the industrial revolution, society did not merely become “better at production.” There emerged:

- The factory system
- Urbanization
- Standard time
- Large-scale employment relationships
- Systems of occupational identity
- New forms of education and bureaucratic organization

After the information revolution,

society likewise did not merely become “better at processing information.” There emerged:

- Networked collaboration
- Platform intermediation
- Instant communication
- The attention economy
- Reorganization of knowledge work
- Changes in self-expression and identity structures

A technological revolution is called a revolution, in other words, not because it makes old structures more efficient, but because it renders them insufficient and forces society to reorganize.

1. Technological Revolutions Always Rewrite Systems of Roles

Roles associated with old technologies often lose their former status, boundaries, or functions under new technological conditions. New technologies also create new roles.

These new roles may not receive recognition at first, but gradually consolidate around new needs and new forms of connection. Technological revolutions therefore necessarily accompany a redistribution of roles.

2. Technological Revolutions Always Rewrite Entry Points to Participation

Who can enter real-world structures is not fixed. Technology changes barriers, entry points, and pathways. For example:

- Literacy was once a capability with a high entry barrier.
- Industrial skills were once a central point of entry.
- Expressive and operational capabilities became new entry points in the platform age.
- Judgment and collaboration capabilities will become new entry points in the AI age.

Technological revolutions therefore always change “who can be included in civilizational activity.”

3. Technological Revolutions Always Rewrite the Logic of Collaboration

Under different technological conditions, the units, rhythms, scales, and trust mechanisms of collaboration differ. Collaboration in agricultural society depends more on locality and kinship; in industrial society, more on standardized processes and organizational systems; in information society, more on network protocols and platform intermediation.

Every change in the logic of collaboration rewrites the foundation of civilizational vitality.

III. Technological Revolutions Through Meaning Dynamics: They Change Pathways, Not Output

Traditional histories of technology often focus on output. For example:

- More food
- More manufactured goods
- Faster information
- Lower costs
- Greater scale

None of these is wrong. But from this book's perspective, they are not the deepest changes.

The most crucial effect of technological revolutions is not a change in total output, but the rewriting of pathways of structural meaning.

Within a civilization, "which capabilities can enter reality," "which roles receive recognition," "which forms of participation are needed," and "which forms of collaboration become mainstream" are all rewritten by technological revolutions.

1. Some Pathways Open

New technologies open new chains connecting capabilities with needs. Previously marginal capabilities may be reactivated through new forms of connection. For example:

- The internet enables many capacities for knowledge and expression to enter real-world networks directly.
- Platforms bring previously difficult-to-scale services into new markets.
- Digital tools allow some individuals to exert influence without relying on traditional organizations.

2. Some Pathways Contract

At the same time, new technologies compress old pathways. Many places that once possessed stable structural meaning are dismantled, marginalized, or standardized. For example:

- Intermediate coordination roles are weakened by automation tools.
- Low-complexity repetitive labor is replaced by systems.
- Certain intermediate occupations requiring long-term accumulation are cut into fragmented tasks by platforms.
- Industries previously grounded in accumulated interpersonal relationships are rewritten by platform intermediation.

3. Some Pathways Remain on the Surface but Become Hollow Within

This is an especially important danger in the modern technological age. Certain roles appear to remain, but their authority to judge, authority to take responsibility, room for growth, and continuity are being stripped away.

The result is:

- Jobs remain.
- Tasks remain.

- Activities remain.
- The appearance of participation remains.

Yet structural meaning has become significantly thinner.

Technological revolutions must therefore be assessed not only in terms of “whether replacement has occurred,” but also whether hollowing out has occurred.

IV. How Technological Revolutions Simultaneously Expand and Contract the Civilizational Window

The preceding chapter introduced the “coordination window.” A key feature of technological revolutions is that they can both expand and contract that window.

This is what makes technology complex. It is never one-dimensionally good or bad.

1. The Window-Expanding Side

Technology can:

- Improve system capabilities
- Reduce some coordination costs
- Extend the reach of connections
- Provide more entry points into pathways
- Accelerate knowledge transmission
- Support larger-scale collaboration

From this perspective, technology can indeed expand the civilizational window.

2. The Window-Contracting Side

Yet the same technology can also:

- Increase cognitive load
- Compress intermediate roles
- Intensify competition between pathways
- Amplify competition for attention
- Weaken deep collaboration
- Diminish subjects’ real place within structures

From this perspective, technology can also contract the civilizational window.

3. The Real Question Is Not “Whether Technology Advances,” but “How the Window Is Rewritten”

This book therefore does not advocate simply answering:

- Is technology good or bad?
- Is AI a help or a threat?
- Are platforms liberation or control?

These questions are all too crude.

The more precise questions are: how exactly do technological revolutions rewrite civilization’s coordination window? In what respects do they expand capabilities, and in what respects do they contract participation? In what respects do they improve collaboration, and in what respects do they produce alienation?

These are the real questions from the perspective of Meaning Dynamics.

V. Why the Modern Technological Revolution Is More Dangerous Than Its Predecessors

Every technological revolution in history has brought reorganization. But this book holds that the modern technological revolution, especially in the AI age, has a dangerous feature its predecessors did not possess: system capabilities can grow independently at extremely high speed, no longer depending on human subject capabilities growing in tandem.

This makes the nature of the modern technological revolution's risks different from those of the past.

1. The Agricultural and Industrial Revolutions Still Depended Heavily on Subjects' Simultaneous Development

Although the agricultural revolution changed structures, agricultural capabilities still required large numbers of individuals to enter. Although the industrial revolution standardized processes, industrial society still depended on extensive human subject capabilities being trained, absorbed, and embedded in organizations.

These revolutions rewrote structures, but did not completely sever the coupling between "stronger systems" and "stronger subjects."

2. The AI Age May Amplify the "One-Sided Strengthening of Systems"

The development of AI and automation may enable system capabilities to grow much faster than subject capabilities:

- Systems become better at judgment.
- Systems become better at generation.
- Systems become better at deployment.
- Systems become better at coordination.
- Systems become better at memory.

Human individuals, meanwhile, may be pushed toward:

- Shallower responses
- More marginal participation
- More fragmented tasks
- Weaker structures of responsibility
- Less deep development

The modern technological revolution therefore involves more than reorganizing roles. It may directly rewrite who still counts as a real actor within civilization.

3. This Means "Loss of Place" Will Become a Structural Norm

Past technological shocks often took the form of particular occupations losing their advantages.

Modern technological shocks may go deeper, leaving large numbers of people continually in an intermediate condition of being "neither fully excluded nor genuinely included."

They have:

- Activities
- Connections
- System feedback
- Even income

But no real structural place.

This is the prelude to the crisis of subjecthood discussed later.

VI. The Real Point of Conflict Between Technological Revolutions and Social Structure: Not “Replacement,” but Who Can Still Grow

One of the most common approaches to technological shocks asks which jobs will be replaced. This book holds that this does not go deep enough.

The more important question is: under new technological conditions, who can still develop continuously along a pathway and enter thicker structural meaning?

Civilization needs more than “people remaining at work.” It also needs:

- People able to accumulate experience
- People able to take responsibility
- People able continually to deepen their place
- People able to move from shallow tasks into deep roles

If technological revolutions lock increasing numbers of people into positions characterized by:

- Little judgment
- Little responsibility
- Little growth
- Little sustainability

then, even if they are “not completely unemployed,” civilization’s structural meaning will be hollowed out.

This book must therefore emphasize that the real point of conflict in technological revolutions is not only “who is replaced,” but “who still has a pathway for growth into thicker structures of meaning.”

This is a civilizational judgment deeper than “employment.”

VII. From This Perspective, the Technological Age’s Problems Are Essentially Problems of Structural Reorganization

The chapter’s central judgment can now be stated: the problems of the technological age are essentially problems of structural reorganization, not the updating of tools.

The questions that should actually be pursued are therefore not:

- How powerful the new tools are
- How fast the new systems are
- How intelligent the new models are

But:

- How old roles are dismantled
- How new pathways are established
- How individuals are reincluded
- Which capabilities are preserved
- Which capabilities are marginalized
- Which collaborations are deepened
- Which collaborations are replaced by merely calling upon people
- How the civilizational window is expanded or contracted

From the perspective of Meaning Dynamics, a technological revolution comprehensively rewrites:

- The conditions under which structural meaning arises
- The distribution of pathways

- Entry points to participation
- The logic of collaboration
- Civilization's forms of support

It must therefore be addressed within social structure and civilizational theory, rather than treated solely as an engineering problem.

VIII. A Crucial Transition: From “Technology Reorganizing Structure” to “AI Reorganizing Subjects”

This chapter has now effectively carried the question into the next one.

If technological revolutions always reorganize structures, the most crucial step in the AI age is not simply “structural renewal.” It is that system capabilities begin directly to reorganize people's places as subjects.

The questions ahead will therefore no longer be merely:

- Which role disappears
- Which pathway contracts
- Which form of collaboration is replaced

They will advance to:

- How much human judgment remains
- To what extent people can still take on responsibility
- Whether people remain deep participants in civilization
- Whether system capabilities and subject capabilities are beginning to separate

This is the core of the next chapter:

The Age of Artificial Intelligence: The Separation of System Capabilities and Subject Capabilities.

Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed the relationship between technological revolutions and the reorganization of social structure.

This book holds that technology has never been a neutral tool external to society. It is a force that rewrites structure, changing the distribution of capabilities, the visibility of needs, the forms of connection, the structure of roles, pathways of participation, and mechanisms of collaboration.

The real impact of technological revolutions therefore lies not in how much output they increase, but in how they rewrite the conditions under which structural meaning arises.

The chapter further argued that technological revolutions simultaneously expand and contract the civilizational window. On one side, they improve system capabilities, extend connections, and open new pathways. On the other, they may compress roles, increase cognitive burdens, weaken deep collaboration, and intensify alienation.

Especially in the AI age, technological revolutions may more distinctly involve rapid growth in system capabilities without requiring human subject capabilities to grow in tandem.

This makes technology a question not merely of occupations, but of subjects' places within civilization.

The next chapter formally addresses this crucial point of rupture. If system capabilities and subject capabilities begin to separate, what new risks will civilization face?

Chapter 11: The Age of Artificial Intelligence: The Separation of System Capabilities and Subject Capabilities

Boundaries of Current AI's Role

This chapter discusses the separation of system capabilities and subject capabilities, but does not presume that current AI is a subject of meaning and responsibility on a par with humans. The basic relationship in present reality remains that people and organizations bear real-world responsibility, while AI participates primarily as an extension of capabilities that can be authorized. Identity should be transparent, authorization revocable, and key decisions traceable. If sufficiently strong, repeatable evidence of subjecthood converging across multiple methods emerges in the future, its ethical and institutional status can then be reconsidered.

In the preceding chapter, this book argued that the real impact of technological revolutions lies not merely in how much efficiency they add, but in how they rewrite the conditions under which structural meaning arises, the distribution of roles, entry points to participation, and mechanisms of collaboration.

This judgment becomes especially crucial in the age of artificial intelligence. If most earlier technological revolutions primarily reorganized structures, the AI age is approaching a deeper point of rupture: system capabilities begin to grow at unprecedented speed, and that growth no longer automatically requires human subject capabilities to grow in tandem.

Modern civilization may therefore encounter the following situation on a larger scale and at greater speed:

- Systems become increasingly adept at judgment.
- Systems become increasingly adept at organization.
- Systems become increasingly adept at generation.
- Systems become increasingly adept at calling upon capabilities.
- Systems become increasingly adept at coordination.

Meanwhile, human individuals' deep places, functions of judgment and responsibility, and channels for growth within real-world structures do not necessarily strengthen in tandem. They may even be continually compressed.

This is the chapter's central problem: the real rupture of the AI age is not merely job replacement or a revolution in efficiency, but the beginning of a separation between system capabilities and subject capabilities.

Unless this is addressed directly, every discussion of AI, optimistic or pessimistic, risks remaining at the surface:

- Will it take away jobs?
- Can it increase output?
- Will it become more intelligent?
- Will it surpass humans?

Such discussions overlook the deeper question: as civilization depends increasingly on system capabilities, do humans, as subjects, still occupy real structural places within it?

This is not a question of technical detail. It is a question of civilization.

I. Why the AI Age Differs from Most Earlier Technological Revolutions

To understand "the separation of system capabilities and subject capabilities," we must first explain why the AI age cannot simply be regarded as an extension of the industrial or information revolution.

Every technological revolution in history has indeed brought changes in jobs, reorganization of pathways, institutional adjustments, and structural upheaval. Yet an important premise usually remained intact: growth in system capabilities broadly still required extensive human subject capabilities to be retrained, reabsorbed, and reembedded within them.

1. Capability Growth in the Agricultural Revolution Still Depended on Subjects' Entry

Agricultural society came into being not because systems completed production by themselves, but because individuals on a large scale were reorganized into:

- Cultivation
- Storage
- Distribution
- Irrigation
- Household order
- Seasonal labor and collaboration

The expansion of agricultural capabilities was thus coupled to the entry of subject capabilities.

2. Despite Standardization, the Industrial Revolution Still Depended on Training Subjects

The industrial revolution certainly compressed some old capabilities and standardized and fragmented much work. But industrial society still needed large numbers of subjects trained as:

- Workers
- Technicians
- Engineers
- Managers
- Bureaucratic implementers
- People in educational and maintenance roles

However powerful the industrial system became, it still had to bring large numbers of human subjects inside as core components of its structure.

3. The Information Revolution Strengthened Networks, but Subjects Remained Intermediaries of Knowledge and Expression

The information revolution greatly expanded knowledge circulation, expressive capabilities, and the reach of connections. Yet for most of that era, whether in content production, knowledge transmission, organizational coordination, or platform operation, subjects were still assumed to be important intermediaries of knowledge and judgment.

4. The AI Age Begins to Undermine This Premise

The crucial difference of the age of artificial intelligence is that:

System capabilities can increase independently in certain core domains without requiring human subjects to deepen their capabilities in those domains at the same time.

Systems do more than replace particular actions. They begin to take over things that previously formed the core of subjects' places:

- Recognition
- Judgment
- Generation
- Generalization
- Recommendation
- Deployment
- Expression

- Preliminary analysis
- Pattern extraction
- Process organization

This step is crucial. It means this technological revolution may do more than rearrange work. It may rearrange “who remains a deep actor within civilization.”

II. What Are “System Capabilities”?

The book must first clarify what system capabilities mean here.

System capabilities do not refer to the one-off performance of an individual AI model, nor merely to an algorithm’s score on a particular test. More broadly, they mean the total composite capabilities jointly formed by artificial intelligence, automated systems, platform structures, data infrastructure, and organizational processes.

These include:

- Large-scale information-processing capabilities
- Pattern-recognition and prediction capabilities
- Content-generation capabilities
- Multitask deployment capabilities
- Real-time feedback and optimization capabilities
- Platform-level resource-integration capabilities
- Rule-execution and process-automation capabilities
- Network-level capabilities for coordinated deployment

“System capabilities” in this book therefore do not mean “machine capabilities” in a narrow sense. They mean the external enhancement capabilities a civilization develops through AI and digital systems.

1. System Capabilities Grow Extremely Rapidly

Compared with traditional institutions and educational systems, a striking feature of system capabilities is their extremely rapid expansion. Through:

- Adding computing power
- Accumulating data
- Iterating models
- Integrating systems
- Interconnecting platforms

they can achieve cross-domain leaps in a very short time.

2. System Capabilities Have Advantages of Scale

Individual capabilities are usually difficult to replicate instantly. Once system capabilities are established, however, they can be:

- Called upon concurrently
- Deployed in multiple settings
- Replicated in standardized form
- Expanded across regions

System capabilities therefore exhibit clear characteristics of expansion at scale, rather than linear growth.

3. System Capabilities Naturally Tend Toward Processes, Computability, and Deployability

The stronger system capabilities become, the more real-world problems can be rewritten as:

- Input-output problems
- Optimization problems
- Prediction problems
- Resource-allocation problems
- Feedback-control problems

This continually increases systems' weight in organizing reality.

III. What Are “Subject Capabilities”?

In contrast to system capabilities, the subject capabilities discussed in this book are not a vague sum of human abilities. They mean the thickness of capabilities through which individuals, as real-world actors, understand, judge, create, take responsibility, and participate continuously in complex situations.

They include at least five levels:

1. Understanding

Not simply receiving information, but understanding it within contexts, histories, relationships, and consequences.

2. Judgment

Not executing preset conclusions, but making choices amid uncertainty, conflict, multiple objectives, and friction between values.

3. Creation

Not mechanically assembling existing answers, but generating new pathways, explanations, forms of collaboration, and definitions of problems.

4. Taking On Responsibility

The core of subject capabilities is not merely “knowing how to do things,” but “daring to bear the consequences.”

Taking on judgment and consequences in concrete actions creates a thicker place for action as a subject, rather than merely being a passive node. But standing as a subject and basic rights are not generated by the capacity to take responsibility, by roles, or by contributions.

5. Sustained Participation

Subject capabilities are not a one-off flash of talent. They are the capacity to remain within complex reality over the long term, repeatedly making corrections, investing effort, and advancing processes together with others.

Subject capabilities are therefore the capabilities for deep participation in civilization. They concern not only the level of capability, but also:

- Whether one has a place
- Whether one has channels for growth
- Whether one has room for judgment
- Whether one has boundaries of responsibility
- Whether one has real-world structures in which one continues to be needed

IV. Why Stronger System Capabilities Do Not Mean Stronger Subject Capabilities

This is the chapter's most crucial theoretical point of rupture. Many narratives of technological optimism contain a deeply hidden assumption: stronger system capabilities will ultimately always translate into stronger people.

For example:

- Tools are stronger, so people are stronger.
- There is more information, so people are smarter.
- Systems are better at doing things, so people are freer.
- AI is better at generating, so people have more creative space.

These inferences may hold in particular cases, but they do not hold automatically.

1. System Replacement May Weaken the Processes Through Which Capabilities Develop

Many subject capabilities grow not out of results, but through processes. For example:

- Judgment grows through repeatedly making judgments.
- Responsibility grows through actually bearing consequences.
- Creativity grows through exploration under highly uncertain conditions.
- Collaboration grows through long-term adjustment with others.

If systems continually take over these processes, subjects do not necessarily become stronger even if the results improve. They lose the real-world training ground required to develop those capabilities.

2. Stronger Systems May Leave People at Low-Level Interfaces

The stronger systems become, the more likely they are to retain human subjects at “convenient but shallow” interface layers:

- Selecting options
- Reviewing
- Adjusting parameters
- Clicking to confirm
- Accepting recommendations
- Making local refinements
- Providing passive feedback

On the surface, these actions still keep “humans in the loop.” Their deeper structure, however, may involve:

- Thinner authority to judge
- Responsibility absorbed by the platform
- Narrower creative space
- Ruptured pathways of complex development

People remain, but the conditions for deepening subject capabilities are being lost.

3. Stronger Systems Create an “Illusion of Outsourced Capability”

A powerful system can give individuals the impression that:

- I seem to have become stronger too.
- I seem to command more.
- I seem to process things faster.

In reality, it is often the system that has grown stronger, not the subject. Once separated from the system, the individual has not genuinely become thicker in capability. They may even be thinner than before, because they engage less and less in deep practice.

4. Conclusion

The book must therefore state clearly that stronger system capabilities do not automatically mean stronger subject capabilities. On the contrary, in some contexts, the stronger system capabilities become, the more subject capabilities may be marginalized.

This is the fundamental reason M_s and M_h must be distinguished.

V. How the Separation Occurs

The separation of system capabilities and subject capabilities is not a sudden break at a single moment. It is more like a gradual process in which systems continually take over deep capability functions while human subjects progressively retreat to peripheral interfaces.

This separation usually proceeds along the following pathways.

1. From “Supporting Judgment” to “Replacing Judgment”

Initially, systems merely provide reference information, while individuals remain the subjects of judgment. As system performance becomes more stable, faster, and more cost-saving, organizations increasingly tend to:

- Let the system judge first
- Have people provide only final confirmation
- Eventually have people handle only a few exceptions

Judgment thus gradually transfers from subjects to systems.

2. From “Generation by Tools” to “Subjects Relegated to Refinement”

This is especially evident in generative systems. At first they help humans generate drafts, images, and proposals. As their quality improves, however, many subjects may be repositioned as:

- Post-production refiners
- Format cleaners
- Local adjusters
- Final selectors

Subjects, in other words, retreat from “proposing and creating” to “accepting and fine-tuning.”

3. From “Collaborative Processes” to “Processes of Calling Upon People”

Platforms and AI allow tasks to be divided, deployed, and outsourced at a finer granularity. On the surface, this seems to give more people participation. In reality, however, many deep collaborative processes are broken apart:

- Joint judgment decreases.
- Long-term responsibility decreases.
- Role boundaries become thinner.
- Less experience accumulates.
- Individuals become replaceable fragments.

This makes subjects’ places within structures increasingly shallow.

4. From “Pathways for Growth” to “Dependence on Interfaces”

If civilization relies too heavily on external enhancement systems, individuals’ pathways for growth may gradually shorten. Capacities for judgment and responsibility that once required years of accumulation are bypassed through convenient system interfaces.

Subjects gain convenience but find it increasingly difficult to acquire genuine thickness of capability.

VI. The Real Risk of Separation: Not That “People Have Become Useless,” but That “People Have Become Thinner”

This chapter must clarify one point in particular. This book does not advocate the crude assertion that AI makes people completely useless. That assertion is inaccurate and insufficiently deep.

The real danger is not that “people instantly become useless.” It is that people remain, but become increasingly thin.

“Becoming thinner” means:

- Thinner role boundaries
- Thinner space for judgment
- Thinner responsibility-taking
- Thinner accumulation of experience
- Thinner depth of participation
- A thinner sense of being needed

This is less visible and more dangerous than “direct replacement.” It does not immediately produce a dramatic rupture, but continually erodes the foundation of subjects within civilization.

1. Thinning Weakens Civilization’s Capacity for Renewal

If civilization retains only a few thick subjects while large numbers of people occupy thin places, its sources of renewal become increasingly uniform. Over the long term, this is more dangerous than short-term unemployment.

2. Thinning Creates a New Kind of Meaning Crisis

People still “have things to do,” but struggle to feel that they have genuinely entered the civilizational process. This produces a characteristic modern crisis:

- A great deal of activity
- A great deal of feedback
- A great deal of being called upon
- Yet increasing difficulty affirming what one has actually done

This is the starting point of structural meaning being hollowed out.

3. Thinning Reduces Effective Participation

Even if the apparent total quantity of participation does not decline, participation that genuinely generates increments in judgment, creation, responsibility, and collaboration for civilization will decrease.

In other words, P is high on the surface, while EP is actually declining. This points directly to the core of the next chapter.

VII. Why This Becomes a Civilizational Problem Rather Than Merely a Problem of Individual Anxiety

Someone might ask: even if subject capabilities become thinner, why can civilization not accept the change as long as the system as a whole becomes more efficient?

This question must be answered directly.

1. Without Sufficiently Thick Subjects, Civilization Loses Deep Redundancy

If civilization outsources too many deep capabilities to systems, it loses a crucial form of redundancy: the continued availability of enough subjects able to understand, correct, take over, and rebuild when systems err, malfunction, are mismatched, or overstep their bounds.

Once this redundancy disappears, civilization becomes highly dependent on a single enhancement system.

2. Without Sufficiently Thick Subjects, Civilization Loses the Capacity to Redefine Problems

Systems excel at optimization within a given problem framework. Yet civilization's truly crucial leaps often arise from:

- Someone redefining a problem
- Someone proposing a new pathway
- Someone rejecting an established direction that appears optimal
- Someone undertaking non-computational judgment amid conflict

If subject capabilities generally become thinner, civilization will become increasingly adept at "optimization," but increasingly unable to "rewrite its direction."

3. Without Sufficiently Thick Subjects, Civilization Loses Its Structure of Responsibility

Subjects are responsible for more than execution. They also:

- Bear consequences
- Face failure
- Repair relationships
- Take responsibility for the future

If systems undertake more and more decisions and judgments while subjects retreat increasingly to the back end, responsibility may become unanchored within civilization:

- Something happened.
- The system did it.
- The platform coordinated it.
- The organization adopted it.
- Yet individuals have no real place of responsibility.

Civilization's ethical foundation will then begin to loosen as well.

This is therefore not a problem of individual psychology. It is a question of whether civilization still possesses a deep structure of subjects.

VIII. A Crucial Judgment: The Risk of the AI Age Is First of All a "Crisis in Subjects' Places"

The chapter's central judgment can now be stated: the deepest risk of the AI age is not, first and foremost, job replacement, but a crisis in subjects' places.

What does this crisis mean? It means individuals' places within civilization gradually shift from:

- Deep exercisers of judgment
- Bearers of responsibility
- Creative participants
- Long-term collaborators

toward:

- Final-stage confirmers
- Local refiners
- Interfaces through which systems call upon capabilities
- Executors of shallow tasks

It is not that “people disappear,” but that “subjects' places are compressed and thinned.”

Once this crisis becomes widespread,

even if systems operate powerfully, civilization approaches an increasingly dangerous condition:

- Efficient on the surface
- Hollow within
- Structurally intact
- Attenuated in its subjects
- Continuing to grow
- Deeply fragile

This is the new era's civilizational risk that the book seeks to reveal.

IX. The Natural Transition from Here to “Effective Participation”

This chapter has now carried the problem into the next one. Once we acknowledge that:

- System capabilities and subject capabilities can separate
- Formal participation does not mean subjects' places are stable
- People may remain in the system while becoming increasingly thin

we must ask what kind of participation counts as genuine participation.

In other words:

- Does being called upon by a system count as participation?
- Do selecting options, fine-tuning, and clicking to confirm count as participation?
- Does being continually drawn into platform interactions count as participation?
- Does having no authority to judge, no authority to take responsibility, and no channel for growth count as participation?

A simple “number of participants” is clearly insufficient to answer these questions.

This brings us to the next chapter's theme: the crisis of subjecthood and effective participation in AGI scenarios.

Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed the AI age's most crucial structural rupture: the separation of system capabilities and subject capabilities.

The book argued that the AI age differs fundamentally from most earlier technological revolutions because system capabilities can grow independently at unprecedented speed without automatically requiring human subject capabilities to grow in tandem. Civilization may therefore face a new imbalance:

- Systems become increasingly strong.
- Subjects become increasingly thin.

This “thinning” does not mean people immediately become useless. It means individuals’ roles, judgment, responsibility, accumulated experience, and places of sustained participation within civilization are continually compressed. The risk is not merely the replacement of jobs, but the weakening of civilization’s structure of subjects.

The deepest question of the AI age is therefore not whether systems are stronger, but whether people still retain real structural places within stronger systems.

The next chapter will pursue this question further:

If “presence” is no longer enough to explain the issue, what kind of participation genuinely forms a foundation for civilizational stability?

Chapter 12: The Crisis of Subjecthood and Effective Participation in AGI Scenarios

Temporal clarification | This chapter uses “AGI” as a label for a future scenario, not as a fact already achieved today. Currently verifiable material primarily concerns deployments of generative, highly capable, and agentic AI and occupational task exposure; whether future systems develop subjecthood remains subject to assessment on the basis of stronger, reproducible evidence converging across multiple methods.

The preceding chapter has already pointed out that the deepest rupture of the artificial intelligence era does not manifest first as jobs being replaced, but as this:

System capabilities become ever stronger, while human subjects' deep place within civilization may become ever thinner.

This means that many past intuitions about “participation” are no longer sufficient.

In traditional society, provided someone was:

- At work
- In an organization
- Undertaking tasks within some institutional structure
- Acting continuously within a community

We would normally and naturally assume:

They were participating.

But in AGI scenarios, this judgment begins to fail.

Systems can produce a great many states that “look like participation,” without those states necessarily meaning that an individual has genuinely entered civilization's deeper processes.

A person may:

- Stay continuously online
- Keep responding
- Keep executing tasks distributed by a platform
- Keep receiving system feedback
- Keep completing various fragmented actions

Yet none of this necessarily constitutes genuine participation.

The most crucial elements may be missing:

- Independent judgment
- Taking on responsibility
- Creative involvement
- A place in deep collaboration
- A real increment contributed to the overall process

Thus, this chapter's task is to develop the preceding chapter's “crisis of the subject's place” into a more precise question:

In AGI scenarios, what counts as genuine participation?

This book's answer is:

What truly matters is effective participation, rather than formal participation.

This is not a change of terminology,

but a tightening of the theory.

Once system capabilities can take over processes on a large scale, the word “participation” itself becomes too broad and may even conceal a civilizational crisis.

This chapter therefore undertakes three tasks:

- 1. Explain why the traditional concept of “participation” is no longer sufficient;**
- 2. Define effective participation;**
- 3. Explain why effective participation, rather than participation in general, is the key variable in civilizational stability.**

I. Why “Participation” Begins to Lose Its Accuracy in AGI Scenarios

Before highly automated systems and intelligent agents, “participation” usually meant a relatively straightforward fact:

- A person entered a real-world process
- A person undertook a task
- A person occupied a place in a structure
- A person affected an outcome through action

Although this definition was imperfect, in most cases it was adequate.

People were indeed irreplaceable in many crucial stages:

- Making judgments
- Taking responsibility
- Acting amid uncertainty
- Revising pathways through experience
- Forming deep collaboration with others

In other words,

“participation” in traditional society inherently contained a relatively high degree of subjecthood.

AGI scenarios change this.

1. Systems can produce large numbers of “illusions of participation”

A person continually called upon by a system will feel they are participating.

A person continually receiving tasks, prompts, recommendations, and feedback will also feel included in the process.

A person interacting frequently on a platform may even have a very strong sense of being “present.”

But in many cases, this presence is more like:

- Interface presence
- Reactive presence
- Procedural presence
- Statistical presence

Than presence as a subject.

In other words,

A system need not have people genuinely enter its deep structure to keep producing the appearance that “you have participated.”

2. Activities involving little judgment, responsibility, or growth will be mistakenly counted as participation

If a civilization counts every “activated action” as participation, it will develop an extremely dangerous illusion:

- Individuals appear still to be within the structure
- Society appears still to have high participation
- Platforms appear still to be highly active
- Civilization appears not to have lost its foundation of subjects

Yet many activities may in fact involve only:

- Extremely little authority to judge
- Extremely little authority to take responsibility
- Extremely little creative increment
- Extremely little room for sustained growth

In other words, they are activities,

but they are not the deep participation needed to constitute civilizational stability.

3. Platforms and systems begin generalizing the word “participation”

As platforms and intelligent systems become gateways to reality, “participation” becomes increasingly easy to define expansively as:

- Clicking
- Staying
- Responding
- Submitting
- Interacting
- Executing microtasks
- Confirming process steps
- Expressing emotions
- Giving light feedback after consuming content

These behaviors are certainly not meaningless.

But if they are placed on the same level as participation that can truly change structures, assume responsibility, accumulate capabilities, and jointly shape civilization, the concept of participation will be diluted and ultimately lose its analytical power.

This book must therefore tighten the concept of “participation.”

II. Formal Participation: A Civilizational Condition Expanding Widely

To draw a clearer distinction, this chapter first names a condition rapidly expanding in the technological era: Formal participation.

Formal participation means:

An individual superficially enters a system's processes, performs certain actions, responds to certain calls, and occupies an interface position, yet produces no genuine increment in judgment, responsibility, creation, or civilization.

1. Basic characteristics of formal participation

Formal participation usually has the following characteristics:

- Being present without entering deeply
- Acting without bearing consequences
- Receiving feedback without forming genuine judgments
- Having connections without relationships of responsibility
- Having tasks without channels for growth
- Having processes without readily forming a place as a subject

2. Why formal participation expands

Formal participation expands not because people have become lazy, but because systems are increasingly adept at keeping people at a shallow interface level.

For systems, this is efficient:

- People remain
- The structure also remains stable
- The system absorbs risks
- Costs are relatively low
- Participation rates still appear high

For civilization, however, this is a dangerous equilibrium.

It maintains surface activity

while continually eroding the thickness of subjects.

3. Why formal participation cannot support civilizational stability

Civilizational stability does not require large numbers of people cycling on the surface, but large numbers of people able to enter:

- Deep roles
- Genuine collaboration
- Judgment processes
- Chains of responsibility
- Structures for growth
- Processes of jointly shaping the future

These are precisely the points on which formal participation is generally deficient.

It can therefore support short-term operation,

but can hardly support long-term civilizational vitality.

III. What Is Effective Participation?

In contrast to formal participation, this book proposes:

Effective Participation.

Effective participation means:

Participation in which an individual genuinely enters real-world and civilizational processes through a sustainable structural pathway, producing increments in judgment, responsibility, creation, collaboration, or direction within them.

This definition looks more complicated,

but it actually identifies the most irreplaceable part of participation.

We can break it down into five criteria.

1. Judgment increment

The individual does not merely execute instructions,

but makes genuine judgments at certain crucial stages:

- Identifying problems
- Comparing pathways
- Understanding situations
- Making choices amid uncertainty
- Taking responsibility for judgments amid conflict

If participation includes no judgment,

it is usually very easily compressed into formal participation.

2. Responsibility increment

The individual is not merely an executor of actions,

but also bears some consequences for the results.

Responsibility is not a matter of seniority of position.

It means:

- You are not floating dispensably on the surface of a process
- There is a real relationship between your actions and their consequences
- You revise yourself, your pathways, and your collaborative relationships in response to results

Responsibility is one of the most central markers of subjecthood.

Without responsibility, participation can very easily become interface behavior.

3. Creative increment

Effective participation does not require everyone to invent a world,

but it does require individuals to be able, to some extent, to:

- Propose new approaches
- Improve old pathways
- Generate new expressions
- Discover new problems
- Recombine existing structures

In other words,
the individual does not purely passively receive the existing world,
but participates to some degree in its reproduction and redefinition.

4. Collaborative increment

Effective participation also means
that an individual not only exists in their own place,
but improves the overall collaborative process.

For example:

- Improving the quality of coordination between stages
- Reducing misunderstanding and friction
- Making different capabilities easier to combine
- Taking on bridging and translation functions
- Making the shared process more sustainable

This means that effective participation is not an isolated action,
but a practical contribution to a shared process.

5. Directional increment

This is the deepest level.

In certain crucial situations,
effective participation also means that an individual has some genuine involvement in the question of “where we are going.”

If, in a civilization, most people can only slide along predetermined pathways
and cannot contribute any increment to direction,
that civilization's deep structure of subjects will be significantly weakened.

Thus, although not everyone is required to have directional increment at every moment,
civilization must always retain enough places for contributing directional increments.

IV. Why Effective Participation Matters More Than Total Participation

At this point, the chapter can offer a key judgment:

For civilizational stability, effective participation matters more than total participation.

This is the fundamental revision this book makes to the concept of participation in AGI scenarios.

1. Total participation can undergo spurious expansion

In a highly platformized environment,
total participation can be made very high in various ways:

- More frequent interaction
- More microtasks
- More content-related activities
- More responsive behaviors
- More interface work

But these increases in quantity

do not automatically mean that civilization's foundation of subjects has grown thicker.

2. Effective participation determines whether civilization is still driven by subjects

What matters for a civilization is not how many people are busy,
but how many are still:

- Judging
- Taking responsibility
- Creating
- Collaborating
- Forming direction

These are the crucial ways in which subjects drive civilization.

If these stages deteriorate on a large scale,
then however lively civilization's surface may be,
it will increasingly depend on systems operating unilaterally.

3. Effective participation determines civilization's regenerative capacity

Civilization's ability to keep reorganizing, repairing itself, and making leaps
depends not on surface-level calls,
but on the continuing existence of deep participants.

They give civilization:

- The capacity for self-correction
- The capacity for redundancy
- The capacity to reinterpret reality
- The capacity to do more than invoke old templates when facing new problems

EP is therefore one of the core indicators of civilization's regenerative capacity.

V. The Relationship Between Effective Participation and the Crisis of Subjecthood

The preceding chapter discussed the “crisis of the subject's place.”

This chapter further points out:

At the structural level, the direct manifestation of the crisis of subjecthood is a decline in effective participation.

In other words,

subjecthood is not some abstract, grandiose slogan.

It can be assessed by whether individuals still have places for effective participation.

1. When judgment is outsourced by systems, EP declines

2. When responsibility is absorbed by platforms, EP declines

3. When creation is compressed into embellishment, EP declines

4. When collaboration is broken into fragmented calls, EP declines

5. When direction is completely preset, EP declines

This means

the crisis of subjecthood is not as abstract as “injury to human dignity,”
but is:

The continual compression of people's places for effective participation within civilization.

Once EP declines generally,

civilization displays a characteristic set of symptoms:

- Many people
- Many activities
- Many interfaces
- Much feedback
- But fewer and fewer people who can genuinely change structures

This is precisely a key form of the hollowing out of modern civilization.

VI. Why AGI Scenarios Particularly Compress EP

If earlier generations of technology mainly compressed certain actions,
what is compressed in AGI scenarios may very well be:

- Stages of judgment
- Stages of generation
- Stages of expression
- Stages of organization
- Stages of coordination

And these are precisely the most central stages of effective participation.

1. Systems will first take over “frequent judgments that can be templated”

This will thin out large numbers of middle-level judgment roles.

2. Systems will first take over “expression that can be generated at scale”

This will turn many stages in which people previously formed a place as subjects through expression into interfaces for after-the-fact embellishment.

3. Systems will first take over “process-based organization and coordination”

This will compress many intermediate organizers' growth pathways.

4. Systems will create an interface-level feeling that “you are still participating”

This is especially dangerous.

Individuals may not immediately notice that they have been squeezed out of deep processes.

They remain busy, online, and assigned tasks,

so the crisis will be concealed.

Thus, AGI scenarios do not directly push people out of civilization.

They are more likely to compress EP by “preserving the surface and hollowing out the depths.”

VII. The Minimum Conditions for Effective Participation

If EP is so crucial,
what conditions must a civilization preserve, at minimum,
if it wants to maintain EP?
This book holds that there are at least four.

1. Space for judgment

Individuals must still have room to make genuine judgments.
Not every stage can be standardized and completed in advance.

2. Places of responsibility

Individuals must still be able to bear some genuine consequences.
Otherwise, participation will only become increasingly superficial.

3. Growth pathways

Individuals cannot remain forever at shallow interfaces.
Civilization must preserve channels from surface tasks into deep roles.

4. Support for collaboration

Individuals' participation must be able to enter high-quality collaborative networks,
rather than remain in structures of fragmented calls.
If these four conditions are continually compressed,
EP will decline significantly.
And once EP declines,
although civilization may still operate efficiently,
it will increasingly lose its foundation of subjects.

VIII. Why the Key to Civilization's Future Is Not Only “Giving People Something to Do,” but “Giving People EP”

At this point, the chapter can correct a very important misconception.

Many visions of future society ask:

- How to keep people from becoming unemployed
- How to ensure people still have incomes
- How to ensure people still have activities to do

These are, of course, important.

But if we remain only at this level,
we have still not reached the core civilizational issue.

Because:

Having something to do does not mean a person still occupies an effective place within civilization.

The truly crucial questions for the future are not:

- Whether people have tasks
- Whether people have been retained by systems

But:

- Whether people are still forming judgments
- Whether they are still taking responsibility
- Whether they are still creating and making corrections
- Whether they are still jointly shaping direction
- Whether they can still enter thicker places through sustained pathways

Thus, this book proposes a stricter civilizational judgment here:

The key to future civilization is not only to let people retain activities, but to let them retain effective participation.

This statement is very important,

because it sets the direction of many debates about future institutions back on course.

For example, education, work, platforms, AI assistance systems, sharing networks, and contribution-record prototypes

should not ask only “has efficiency increased?”

They should also ask:

Have they expanded EP, or are they shrinking it?

IX. Looking Back at the Whole Book Through EP: Why It Is a Key Variable of Earlier Versions

We can now return to the overall structure of the book.

Earlier chapters discussed, in sequence:

- The generation of structural meaning
- Thickness and diversity
- Network expansion
- Participation and collaboration
- The public-facing relational framework
- The theoretical constraint framework
- Tension and thresholds
- Technological revolutions
- The separation of system capabilities and subject capabilities

These discussions converge in this chapter on one focus:

Whether civilization is genuinely still driven by the participation of subjects can be assessed through EP.

EP thus became one of the most crucial revised variables in earlier versions.

It not only revised P,

but also moved the entire book from a “civilization of broad participation” toward a “civilization of genuine participation by subjects.”

This step is crucial,

because it prevents the book from slipping into a dangerous, neutral systems theory:

- System stability is all that matters
- High efficiency is all that matters
- Roles still existing is all that matters
- Smooth calls are all that matters

This book explicitly rejects that direction.
It requires civilization not only to operate,
but also to retain people.
And retaining people,
has, at the structural level, a core indicator:
EP.

X. A Crucial Transition: From the Crisis of Subjecthood to Political Economy

At the end of this chapter, we need to take one more step forward.

If effective participation is so important,
a more practical question immediately follows:

Who decides which places can still give rise to effective participation?

Who holds the power to allocate space for judgment, places of responsibility, growth pathways, and support for collaboration?

In other words, once EP is proposed,
the question cannot remain at the level of abstract civilization.

It must enter:

- Platforms
- Institutions
- Organizations
- Rules
- Entry points
- Pathway allocation
- Interpretive authority

In other words,
this book cannot stop at the judgment that “effective participation is important.”

It must also ask:

Who defines what counts as meaningful, what counts as a contribution, and what deserves support?

This naturally moves the book into its next part:

The political economy of structural meaning.

Chapter Summary

This chapter proposed one of the core revised concepts of earlier versions:

Effective participation (EP).

The book points out that, in AGI scenarios, the traditional concept of “participation” is no longer adequate for analyzing civilizational structures, because systems can produce large amounts of formal participation, and these activities do not necessarily include genuine judgment, genuine responsibility, genuine creation, and genuine collaboration.

The book therefore defines effective participation as:

Participation in which an individual genuinely enters real-world and civilizational processes through a sustainable structural pathway, producing increments in judgment, responsibility, creation, collaboration, or direction within them.

The chapter further points out that, at the structural level, the direct manifestation of the crisis of subjecthood is a decline in EP.

The most dangerous condition for a civilization is not that “people are entirely absent,” but that “people remain, yet only surface participation is left.”

This further sharpens the focus of the whole book into one statement:

The key to future civilization is not only to give people something to do, but to let them retain effective participation.

The next chapter will develop this question further:

If effective participation is so crucial, why is it always shaped by platforms, institutions, organizations, and rules?

In other words:

Who defines meaning, who controls entry points, and who holds interpretive authority?

Chapter 13: Who Defines Meaning: Institutions, Platforms, and Interpretive Authority

The preceding chapter proposed a crucial revision:

What truly matters for future civilization is not only letting people retain activities, but letting them retain effective participation.

This means that civilizational questions cannot remain at the level of “whether there is participation,” “whether there are many pathways,” or “whether systems are strong.”

We must also ask a more practical and more pointed question:

Who decides what counts as participation?

Who decides what counts as a contribution?

Who decides which pathways deserve preservation, which roles deserve support, and which actions count as “meaningful”?

Once the question reaches this point,

the theory of structural meaning can no longer be merely a neutral structural analysis.

A basic fact has now emerged:

Meaning is never distributed entirely naturally.

It is always continually shaped by certain institutions, platforms, organizations, cultural centers, and interpretive mechanisms.

In other words,

structural meaning involves not only questions of generation, expansion, and collaboration,

but also an unavoidable dimension:

- Definitional authority
- Interpretive authority
- The power to allocate pathways
- The power to confer recognition
- The power to control entry points

This is the chapter's theme:

The starting point of the political economy of structural meaning is definition before resources.

Within a civilization, whoever can define “what is meaningful”

often influences, at a deeper level:

- Who can enter structures
- Who will be seen
- Whose contributions will be recorded
- Whose pathways will receive institutional recognition
- Who will be marginalized over the long term

This chapter's task is to bring this question of power, previously implicit behind the model, formally to the foreground.

I. Why “Meaning” Is Never Naturally Neutral

In many abstract discussions, people easily understand meaning as something that emerges almost naturally:

- A capability is useful to society, so it naturally has meaning
- A contribution is important to a community, so it will naturally be recognized
- A form of participation is genuine and effective, so it will naturally gain a place

But reality never operates this way.

Whether “meaning” in reality becomes visible structural meaning

depends not only on an action itself,

but also on whether it is:

- Identified
- Named
- Classified
- Recorded
- Rewarded
- Recognized
- Institutionalized

And these processes are never entirely neutral.

1. The same action is given completely different statuses of meaning in different structures

For example:

- A form of care work is regarded in some institutions as foundational civilizational work, yet in other structures has long been treated as “unproductive”
- A capacity for cultural translation is seen in some communities as a crucial bridge, yet in other systems as a marginal service
- A form of long-term maintenance is recognized in some organizations as central to stability, yet in other environments is almost invisible

In other words,

actions do not automatically carry a fixed status of meaning in themselves.

Their structural meaning is always generated within some interpretive order.

2. “Seeing” is itself a form of power

What a society can see,

what it cannot see,

what it sees first,

and what it sees later

already constitute a deep configuration of power.

Many civilizational crises arise

not because there are no contributions,

but because certain contributions remain invisible over the long term;

not because there are no capabilities,

but because certain capabilities can never be identified as deserving entry into public structures;

not because there is no participation,
but because certain forms of participation are assumed “not to count as genuine participation.”
This book must therefore emphasize:
Meaning becomes structural meaning not only because it has occurred,
but also because some system has seen it.
And “who is qualified to see, name, and recognize”
is the question of definitional authority.

3. Once meaning enters the civilizational level, it inevitably takes on a distributive character

When meaning enters:

- Occupational systems
- Platform structures
- Educational pathways
- Contribution-record systems
- Public cultural narratives
- Resource authorization mechanisms

It is no longer merely individual experience,
but becomes something allocated, screened, and ranked.

In other words,
once structural meaning enters the civilizational level,
it inevitably takes on a political-economic character.

II. What Is “Authority to Define Meaning”?

To make the discussion clearer, this chapter first offers a core concept:

Authority to define meaning is the capacity of an institution, platform, organization, or cultural center to decide what kinds of actions, roles, contributions, pathways, and modes of participation are regarded as “meaningful,” “deserving recognition,” and “worthy of support.”

This definition contains at least five levels.

1. Naming authority

Who is qualified to name a behavior?

If the same thing is named:

- Labor
- Service
- Assistance
- Creation
- Obligation
- Enthusiasm
- Emotional giving
- Low-skilled work

Its place in the structure will be completely different.

Thus, naming is not description,
but the first step in allocating places of meaning.

2. Classificatory authority

Who decides which behaviors belong to:

- High value
- Low value
- Core contributions
- Marginal work
- Professional work
- Ordinary support
- Replaceable activities
- Irreplaceable roles

Classification looks like technical work,
but is in fact highly politicized.

Once something enters a classification system,
that will affect:

- Resource allocation
- Status hierarchies
- Pathway openness
- Long-term sustainability

3. Recognition authority

Even if an action has been seen and named,
whether it is genuinely recognized by institutions remains a separate question.

Many crucial contributions within civilizations have long occupied a strange condition:

- Everyone knows they are important
- Yet the structure does not genuinely recognize them

For example:

- Long-term maintenance
- Everyday care
- Intermediary coordination
- Community connections
- Translation and bridging labor
- Contextual judgment and handling matters through experience

This shows that

the power to confer recognition matters more than “whether something exists.”

4. Recording authority

Only when contributions are recorded
are their facts more readily verifiable over the long term; trust, pathways, and institutional support must still
develop independently.

Unrecorded actions, even if repeated, may continually be reset to zero within civilizational structures. Thus, recording authority is not merely an archival technique, but a crucial threshold for making meaning endure.

5. Allocative authority

Ultimately, definitional authority enters the most practical level:

It influences the allocation of resources, entry points, support, and future opportunities.

Thus, “who defines meaning” is by no means an abstract philosophical question, but one that directly determines the distribution of civilizational pathways.

III. How Institutions Define Meaning

Of all mechanisms of definition, institutions are among the deepest and most stable.

Institutions here mean more than legal texts.

They also include:

- Educational institutions
- Occupational institutions
- Organizational rules
- Assessment mechanisms
- Qualification and certification systems
- The logic of public-resource allocation
- Society's default pathways for advancement and recognition

Institutions often define meaning not through declarations, but through “what can enter a stable pathway.”

1. Institutions define meaning through entry points

If a society concentrates its most stable entry points and those with the greatest resource returns within a few pathways,

then however much it verbally emphasizes plurality,

its actual definition of meaning remains singular.

For example:

- Rewarding only a few examination pathways
- Consistently recognizing only a few occupations
- Providing sustained returns only to a few ways of contributing
- Providing long-term institutional support only to a few roles

This is effectively telling the whole of society:

What truly counts as meaningful.

2. Institutions define meaning through continuity

Institutions' real power lies not in a single assessment,

but in determining what can exist over the long term.

Without institutional support, a role

may well remain perpetually unstable, low in credibility, and unable to accumulate a foundation.

Even if everyone recognizes its importance,
it will still struggle to constitute a genuine entry point into structural meaning.
Thus, institutions do not merely evaluate meaning,
but determine whether civilization can support it over the long term.

3. Institutions also create blind spots of meaning

Institutions are powerful
precisely because they can also fix certain things outside the visible range for a long time.
For example, if a society persistently defines effective contribution only by visible output, short-term performance, and returns on capital,
many kinds of labor that genuinely support civilizational continuity will be systematically devalued:

- Maintenance
- Repair
- Care
- Slow accumulation of knowledge
- Sustaining public trust
- Intermediary and translation work

Thus, institutions not only shape meaning,
but also create blind spots.

IV. How Platforms Redefine Meaning

If institutions are the deep mechanism for defining meaning in traditional civilization,
platforms are another rapidly rising center of definition in the technological era.

What is distinctive about platforms
is that they often do not openly declare “what is meaningful.”

Instead, through:

- Ranking
- Recommendations
- Exposure
- Feedback
- Weight allocation
- Task routing
- Interface design

They quietly accomplish this definition.

1. Platforms define meaning through attention structures

In platform environments,
“being seen” itself begins to become a prerequisite for meaning.
And platforms control the mechanisms that rank visibility.
Thus, platforms are in fact continually answering:

- What deserves to be brought to the foreground
- What should be widely distributed

- What will receive immediate feedback
- What will sink out of view
- What will be structurally overlooked

This means

platforms are not neutral channels,
but active shapers of meaning's distribution.

2. Platforms define meaning through behavioral metrics

One of platforms' greatest strengths is their ability to compress complex reality into computable metrics.

For example:

- Click-through rate
- Dwell time
- Interaction frequency
- Completion rate
- Conversion rate
- Response speed

These metrics certainly have management value.

But once they are used to replace more complex structural judgments,
platforms gradually rewrite “meaningful” as:

- What can be mobilized frequently
- What can be quantified quickly
- What can provide feedback within short cycles
- What can undergo standardized processing at scale

Consequently, many forms of meaning with high thickness, low visibility, and slow feedback
are inherently disadvantaged within platform logic.

3. Platforms define subjects' places through interface design

The interface at which a system places you
determines which you more readily become:

- A judge
- A chooser
- An executor
- An embellisher
- A responder
- Someone who remains passively

Thus, platforms define not only content,
but also how people participate.

This is precisely why the preceding discussion had to move from P to EP.

Platforms can easily maintain high P
while continually lowering EP.

V. How Organizations Define Meaning

Beyond institutions and platforms,
organizations are the third crucial agent of definition.

Organizations here include:

- Companies
- Schools
- Agencies
- Teams
- Communities
- Structures for platform operations
- Nonprofit organizations
- Industry networks

Organizations usually define meaning
not through grand narratives,
but through the “ordering of values in everyday operations.”

1. Organizations define meaning through rewards and penalties

Within organizations, what is rewarded,
what is overlooked,
what receives sustained resource investment,
and what is treated as marginal labor
quickly form a very stable map of meaning.

Many organizations verbally emphasize:

- Collaboration
- Maintenance
- Long-term thinking
- Care
- Public value

But if their actual reward-and-penalty mechanisms reward only:

- Short-term results
- Visible performance
- Quantifiable output
- High-exposure contributions

Then the organization's actual definition of meaning will be completely different from its slogans.

2. Organizations define meaning through time allocation

An often overlooked question is:

What an organization makes time for also defines meaning.

If an organization never has time for:

- Deep thinking
- Reflection and correction

- Relationship maintenance
- Slow collaboration
- Exploring new pathways

Then however much it claims to value innovation and community, its actual definition remains:

- Fast
- Surface-level
- Immediately deliverable
- Fragmented, highly responsive activity

Thus, organizations also produce differences in the thickness of structural meaning.

3. Organizations define meaning through advancement pathways

Which roles can grow thicker over the long term, and which remain forever on the surface, are often determined by an organization's advancement structure.

If an organization allows only a few pathways to grow thicker, it is effectively telling its members institutionally:

- What is worth investing in
- What will never ultimately receive genuine recognition
- Which capabilities will consolidate into status
- Which contributions will forever remain at the level of being used up

This too is an allocation of meaning.

VI. Why Interpretive Authority Is More Hidden Than Definitional Authority

Beyond explicit definitions made by institutions, platforms, and organizations, there is another, more hidden but equally important power:

Interpretive authority.

Definitional authority addresses “what counts as meaningful.”

Interpretive authority addresses:

When rules are ambiguous, boundaries unclear, and situations complex, who explains why something is meaningful or why it is not.

1. Interpretive authority often determines whether marginal contributions can be included

Many crucial contributions within civilizations do not naturally fit existing classifications.

They need to be interpreted before they can enter public recognition.

For example:

- Interdisciplinary bridging
- Ongoing maintenance
- Community repair
- Contextual judgment
- Temporary organizing labor during crises
- Emotional and relational labor that is difficult to quantify

Without interpreters, these contributions
can easily remain suspended for a long time between visibility and invisibility.

2. Interpretive authority determines whether rules tighten or open up

Different interpretive mechanisms
can produce entirely different structural outcomes from the same set of rules.

An institution can be interpreted very narrowly,
thereby excluding a great deal of participation;
it can also be interpreted more openly,
thereby admitting more marginal capabilities.

Thus, interpretive authority often determines whether a civilization's window actually narrows or expands.

3. Interpretive authority is an important prerequisite for civilizational self-correction

Without openness in interpretive authority,
institutions become increasingly mechanical,
platforms increasingly rigid,
and organizations increasingly oriented toward short-term, visible metrics.
This means that if a civilization loses plurality in interpretive authority,
it will find it increasingly difficult to revise its definition of “meaningful.”

VII. Why Definitional Authority Directly Affects EP

At this point, this chapter must return to EP from the preceding discussion.

If effective participation is so important,
whoever holds authority to define meaning
directly influences:

- Who can still enter places of effective participation
- Which forms of participation will be treated as “genuine contributions”
- Which growth pathways will be retained
- Which spaces for judgment will be preserved
- Which places of responsibility will be recognized

1. Definitional authority determines whether “deep places” exist

If a system recognizes only behaviors that are frequent, quantifiable, and quickly callable,
many slow places involving high responsibility, substantial judgment, and strong growth potential will be
compressed.

This will directly reduce EP.

2. Definitional authority determines whether “marginal capabilities” can rise into structural roles

Much effective participation enters not through standard pathways,
but through marginal capabilities, special situations, and cross-boundary pathways.
Once definitional authority becomes too narrow, these entry points will be blocked.

3. Definitional authority determines “who qualifies for sustained development”

Civilization depends not only on selection,
but also on cultivation.

Whom to cultivate and whom to enable to grow thicker are essentially also part of definitional authority.

Thus, this chapter can offer a crucial judgment:

Effective participation is never naturally distributed.

It is always opened up, compressed, or excluded within some order for defining meaning.

VIII. A Stricter Judgment: A Crisis of Meaning Is Also a Crisis of Definition

The crisis of meaning in modern civilization
is often understood as:

- A decline in individuals' sense of value
- Displacement caused by technological disruption
- Restructuring of occupations
- The loosening of communities

All of these are valid.

But this chapter further proposes:

A crisis of meaning is also a crisis of definition.

Why?

Because often the problem is not a lack of contributions, capabilities, or participation,
but that:

- Certain contributions are no longer recognized as meaningful
- Certain capabilities cannot be translated into public structures
- Certain forms of participation can never enter places of effective participation
- Certain roles cannot receive stable support from institutions and platforms over the long term

Thus, the crisis occurs not only in individual feelings,

but in civilization's entire definitional order concerning “what deserves to be seen, taken up, and preserved over the long term.”

This is a deeper structural crisis.

IX. A Crucial Transition: From “Who Defines Meaning” to “Who Allocates Pathways”

At this point, the chapter has completed its first step:

Showing that authority to define meaning is not a subsidiary issue, but central to the question of civilizational structures.

After definition, however, the next practical question immediately arises:

Even if a form of meaning has been defined, who can actually enter these pathways?

Who has an entry point, and who does not?

Who is guided into deep places, and who is fixed at shallow interfaces?

In other words,

what necessarily follows definitional authority is:

- Authority over entry points

- Allocative authority
- Authority to control pathways

This is the next chapter's topic:

Pathway allocation, opportunities for participation, and power structures.

Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed the starting point of the political economy of structural meaning:

Who defines meaning.

The book points out that meaning is never naturally neutral.

Whether a behavior, role, contribution, or pathway can become structural meaning depends on whether some institution, platform, organization, or cultural center sees, names, classifies, recognizes, records, and allocates it.

Thus, “what counts as meaningful” is not a purely philosophical question, but a deep question of power within civilization.

Authority to define meaning directly affects:

- Who can enter structures
- Whose contributions can be recognized
- Whose pathways can persist over the long term
- Who can develop effective participation
- Who will be marginalized over the long term

This leads the chapter to a crucial judgment:

The modern crisis of meaning is not only a crisis of participation, but also a crisis of definition.

The next chapter develops this further:

If definitional authority determines what is seen,

how does pathway allocation determine who can genuinely enter?

Chapter 14: Pathway Allocation, Opportunities for Participation, and Power Structures

The preceding chapter has already pointed out:

A crisis of meaning is not only a crisis of participation, but also a crisis of definition.

In other words, “what counts as meaningful” within civilization is not naturally given, but is always continually shaped by institutions, platforms, organizations, and cultural centers.

Yet definitional authority is not the end of the question.

Even if a role, pathway, or form of contribution has been recognized, a more practical question still immediately follows:

Who can genuinely enter these pathways?

In other words,

seeing a form of meaning and entering it are not the same thing.

Recognizing the importance of a category of contributions and enabling enough people actually to reach places where they can make those contributions are also not the same thing.

This means that once structural meaning enters the civilizational level, it must confront not only “definition,” but also:

- Entry points
- Opportunities
- Thresholds
- Allocation
- Remaining in place

Thus, the core question this chapter addresses is:

Pathways are never naturally open.

Nor are opportunities for participation ever evenly distributed.

If the preceding chapter addressed “who defines what is meaningful,” this chapter addresses:

Who qualifies to enter these pathways defined as meaningful, and who is continually kept at the margins.

This step is extremely crucial.

Even if a civilization possesses seemingly rich diversity of meaning, if most of these pathways are open only to a minority, its actual network of structural meaning remains narrow.

In other words:

- Diversity may exist only at the display level
- Opportunities for participation are the level of reality

This chapter will explain

that pathway allocation is the second level of the political economy of structural meaning:

It determines whether “accessible meaning” within a civilization is a public foundation or a scarce privilege.

I. Why “Pathways Existing” Does Not Equal “Pathways Being Reachable”

Modern society is particularly prone to reassuring itself on one issue:

- An education system exists, so everyone can advance
- Internet platforms exist, so everyone can express themselves
- Market pathways exist, so everyone can participate
- Opportunities for innovation exist, so everyone can enter new structures
- Sharing tools exist, so everyone can be connected

But this narrative often ignores a basic fact:

A pathway's existence and its reachability are not the same thing.

Within a civilization, even if a role, occupation, mode of participation, or growth channel

formally exists,

this does not necessarily mean most people can genuinely enter it.

1. An existing pathway may be open only in name

A pathway can be open in institutional texts,

yet highly closed in real-world structures.

For example:

- In theory, anyone can receive a high-quality education;
in practice, differences in resources, geography, family, and cultural capital determine different starting points.
 - In theory, anyone can express themselves on platforms;
in practice, attention structures, recommendation mechanisms, and visibility allocation give a minority highly concentrated exposure.
 - In theory, anyone can “start a business” or “create”;
in practice, entry barriers, failure costs, and relationship networks mean very few can genuinely undertake this.
- In other words,
“openness” is often merely a formal condition,
not automatically equivalent to real-world reachability.

2. Pathway reachability depends on cost structures

Whether any pathway is reachable

depends on its actual costs:

- Time costs
- Learning costs
- Relationship costs
- Trial-and-error costs
- The price of failure
- The cost of bearing psychological pressure
- The cost of geographical relocation
- Recovery costs after interruption

If these costs bear down predominantly on individuals,
while civilization does not provide sufficient structures to support them,
then many pathways, though they exist,
are genuinely reachable only by a minority.

3. Pathway reachability also depends on whether a “continuous ladder” exists

An issue societies most readily overlook is:

Genuinely reachable pathways are usually not “a leap in one step,” but “a continuous ladder.”

In other words, people can enter thicker, deeper places
often not because of a sudden success,
but because there are:

- Initial entry points
- Intermediate learning levels
- Transitional roles
- Buffer zones in which failure is bearable
- Chains of growth leading from shallow places to deep ones

If these intermediate levels are compressed,
pathways will exist formally but be broken in reality.

They look as though they are there,
yet almost no one can travel their full length.

Thus, this chapter must first establish a judgment:

Civilization cannot merely possess pathways.

It must also possess mechanisms of allocation and support that enable different groups genuinely to reach them.

II. What Is Pathway Allocation?

To develop the discussion further, this chapter uses a core concept:

Pathway allocation.

Pathway allocation is the process by which a civilization, through institutions, platforms, organizations, culture, and resource-allocation mechanisms, actually determines who can more easily enter which pathways of structural meaning, who finds which pathways harder to enter, who is guided toward deep places, and who is fixed in shallow places.

This concept is very important,
because it reinterprets seemingly neutral “opportunities”
as a structural distribution.

Pathway allocation involves at least four levels.

1. Allocation of entry

Who can first encounter a particular kind of pathway?

Who has difficulty even obtaining information about pathways?

Who already faces lower trial-and-error costs at the starting point?

2. Allocation of the ability to remain

Even after entering a pathway,

who can persevere and stay?

Who is forced to withdraw because of resources, time, care burdens, or instability in daily life?

3. Allocation of advancement

Who can move from shallow tasks to deep roles?

Who remains forever at peripheral interfaces?

Who has opportunities to be cultivated, trusted, and given judgment and responsibility?

4. Allocation of reentry after failure

Who can try again after failure?

Who is permanently marginalized by a single failure?

This greatly determines a civilization's actual mobility.

Thus, pathway allocation is not as narrow as “allocating jobs,”

but means:

Allocating the possibility of a person's entering, remaining in, advancing within, and reentering civilization's crucial structures.

III. Pathway Allocation Is Never a Purely Market Outcome

A deep misconception in modern society is:

Treating pathway allocation as a natural outcome of pure market competition.

As though who enters, who fails, who stays at the center, and who stays at the margins ultimately reflected only differences in capability and effort.

This book takes a cautious stance toward this view.

Markets certainly participate in pathway allocation,

but they are never the only mechanism.

More importantly, markets themselves always operate:

- Within institutional rules
- On top of platform structures
- On the basis of differences in educational and cultural capital
- Amid differences in different groups' actual capacity to withstand pressure

Thus, so-called “natural competition” is often merely an account of outcomes, concealing deeper structural preconditions.

1. Markets overvalue visible, short-term, quantifiable pathways

Markets are inherently more readily able to capture:

- Value that converts quickly
- Services that can be standardized
- Pathways with high turnover, short feedback cycles, and scalability

This means that many pathways of meaning involving high thickness, slow consolidation, and long cycles are inherently disadvantaged within pure market logic:

- Long-term education
- Public maintenance
- Community repair
- Slow accumulation of knowledge
- Cultural work without explosive growth
- Long-term care and bridging labor

If a civilization leaves pathway allocation excessively to markets, the space of structural meaning will continually contract toward “short, fast, visible, and quantifiable.”

2. Platforms rewrite pathway allocation within markets

Even within markets,

platforms further rewrite pathway allocation.

Platforms determine:

- Who is seen first
- Who receives feedback first
- Who is more readily copied
- Who is more readily selected into high-traffic pathways

Thus, pathway allocation is no longer merely a question of supply and demand, but a question of “whom the platform lifts up first.”

3. Institutions determine whether markets can provide continuous ladders

Even if markets can create entry points,

if institutions do not provide:

- Support for further education
- Buffers during transitions
- Social safety nets
- Reentry mechanisms with low costs of failure

Then many pathways will still be genuinely open only to a minority.

In other words, markets can open entry points;

institutions determine whether these constitute a genuinely traversable channel.

This chapter must therefore make clear:

Pathway allocation is never an outcome produced by “natural competition” alone,

but a structural consequence of the joint action of institutions, platforms, organizations, culture, and markets.

IV. Who More Readily Gains New Places; Any Consequences Must Still Be Decided Independently, Who More Readily Remains at Shallow Interfaces

Earlier, this book repeatedly used the paired expressions “deep places” and “shallow interfaces.” They must now be formally connected with pathway allocation.

1. What is a deep place?

Deep places are places capable of supporting:

- Genuine judgment
- Consequences of responsibility
- Long-term consolidation of experience
- A role as a collaborative hub
- Creative involvement
- Directional influence

They are not necessarily all prominent,
nor necessarily all high-income,
but they usually determine whether a civilization is still driven by genuine participation by subjects.

2. What is a shallow interface?

Shallow interfaces are places that mainly undertake:

- Responses
- Fragmented tasks
- Final-stage confirmation
- Standard execution
- Local embellishment
- Brief calls by systems

These places are not unnecessary.

But if large numbers of individuals are fixed at shallow interfaces over the long term without growth pathways into deep places,
civilization will undergo evident hollowing out.

3. The most important difference in pathway allocation is not “having work,” but “being able to grow thicker”

In many superficially stable societies,
the deepest problem is not unemployment,
but structural stratification:

- A minority continually enters thick places
- Large numbers are stably retained in thin places

In other words,
the issue is not merely “whether one is included in the system,”
but:

Whether one is allowed gradually to grow thicker within it.

This is the deep political character of pathway allocation.

Those able to grow thicker
move closer to the center of effective participation;
those unable to grow thicker over the long term
will gradually become locked into the level of formal participation.

4. The AI era will intensify this differentiation

The stronger systems become,
the more likely they are to keep most people at:

- The operational level
- The response level
- The oversight level
- The content-embellishment level
- The final-stage microtask level

While concentrating genuine judgment and system-design places in a few nodes.

This leaves “whether there is participation” still superficially true,
while “who can enter deep places” becomes increasingly unequal.

Thus, pathway allocation will become more crucial in the AI era than ever before.

V. Unequal Opportunities for Participation Are First a Structural Issue, Not a Capability Issue

Many societies interpret failure to enter pathways as a lack of individual capability.

There is certainly some basis for this in reality.

But individualizing the problem completely conceals structural issues at the civilizational level.

Much inequality in opportunities for participation
has already arisen before “competition in capabilities” begins.

1. Structural inequality at the starting point

When different individuals first encounter pathways,
they have completely different:

- Information conditions
- Freedom over their time
- Educational foundations
- Care burdens
- Capacity to withstand failure
- Support networks
- Cultural confidence and training in expression

These differences are not merely “family disparities.”

They ultimately become disparities in entering pathways within civilization.

2. Inequality in intermediate support

Even with similar starting points,
whether there are, along the way:

- Mentors
- Communities
- Learning feedback
- Trial-and-error buffers
- Transitional roles
- Retraining resources

Also significantly changes the distribution of pathways.

A genuinely robust civilization is not one in which everyone is at the same starting line,
but one that continually repairs intermediate levels.

Otherwise, pathways appear open,
but in practice are open only to a minority who “naturally fit.”

3. Unequal consequences of failure

Whether a person's single failure
means a temporary setback or permanent exclusion from the structure
has a decisive effect on pathway allocation.

If the cost of failure is too high,
large numbers of people will not genuinely enter even when they can see the pathway.
In this situation, “pathway existence” degenerates into symbolism.

4. Why structural issues are often disguised as capability issues

Because interpreting failure as an individual capability issue
is the least costly option.

It does not require civilization to reflect on:

- Whether pathways are too narrow
- Whether thresholds are too high
- Whether intermediate levels are missing
- Whether support structures are insufficient
- Whether entry points are monopolized by platforms and organizations

In other words,
“insufficient capability” is often the most convenient cover for structural problems.

This chapter must therefore emphasize:

Inequality in opportunities for participation is first an inequality in pathway allocation, not merely a difference in capability.

VI. How Pathway Allocation Affects EP

We must now reconnect this chapter to EP in the preceding chapter.

If effective participation is key to civilizational stability,
pathway allocation directly determines:

- Who has an opportunity to develop EP
- Who remains in P over the long term but cannot enter EP
- Who is allocated places involving substantial judgment, responsibility, and growth
- Who is fixed at interfaces involving little judgment, responsibility, and growth

1. EP does not “naturally emerge once there is enough effort”

Effective participation is not simply a personal quality.

It requires real-world structures to provide:

- Space for judgment
- Places of responsibility
- Growth pathways
- Support for collaboration

If these places are highly concentrated,

then however much “effort” is made, it can only cycle on the surface.

2. Pathway allocation determines the density of EP's distribution within civilization

The question for a civilization is not whether it has EP,

but how many people can enter EP.

If only a tiny minority continually occupies deep places,

while the vast majority remains fixed at shallow interfaces over the long term,
civilization as a whole will still tend toward fragility.

Too few deep subjects

will lead to:

- Insufficient redundancy
- Insufficient sources of renewal
- Insufficient capacity to redefine problems
- Insufficient capacity for subjects to take over during crises

3. Thus, pathway allocation is an antecedent variable of EP

We can say:

EP determines whether civilization is still genuinely driven by subjects,

while pathway allocation determines whether EP can be generated widely.

This is why the subject of this chapter is not a subsidiary social issue,
but one of the book's central civilizational questions.

VII. A Stricter Judgment: Diversity Is Genuine Only When It Becomes Accessibility

Earlier, this book treated diversity of meaning as an important variable in civilizational stability.

We must now tighten the concept further:

Without accessibility, diversity is merely a display, not genuine structural diversity.

In other words,
civilization cannot merely possess roles, expressions, pathways, and forms of contribution that “look numerous.”
It must also make these pathways genuinely accessible in practice to individuals at different levels.

1. Diversity confined to the display level creates illusions

A society may be highly pluralistic culturally, highly vibrant on platforms, and apparently rich in occupations, but if the genuinely accessible portion of these pathways is highly concentrated, then diversity is merely richness on display, not the actual breadth of civilizational structures.

2. Diversity without continuous ladders also quickly collapses

Even if pathways were once opened,
without:

- Entry-level gateways
- Intermediate roles
- Mechanisms for advancing into deep places
- Channels for reentry after failure

These pathways will soon become one-off opportunities,
rather than long-term structures.

Such diversity remains very fragile.

3. Genuine D must be tied to pathway reachability

Thus, this book's understanding of D must be further clarified:

Diversity of meaning is not the total number of pathways, but the richness of pathway structures that different individuals can genuinely enter and within which they can sustainably consolidate their experience and capacities.

This step is important.

It means D is no longer a static display variable,
but genuinely enters the dimension of political economy.

VIII. Why “Fair Pathway Allocation” Is a Question of Civilizational Redundancy, Not Equal Distribution

As soon as pathway allocation is discussed,
many people instinctively worry:

Will this turn the issue into a demand for equal distribution?

This book must make clear here:

The question of pathway allocation does not amount to demanding that all places be distributed equally.

Its deeper concern is:

If a civilization concentrates deep places and growth pathways excessively in the hands of a minority, it will lose the necessary redundancy of subjects.

1. Excessive concentration reduces system resilience

If there are:

- Very few places for deep judgment
- Very few places of high responsibility
- Very few complex growth pathways
- Very few opportunities to thicken structural meaning

Then civilization will increasingly depend on a few people, a few platforms, and a few central nodes.

This will make the system:

- Fragile in renewal
- Low in substitutability
- Poor in fault tolerance
- Costly in succession and repair

2. Redundancy requires “enough subjects entering deep pathways”

Civilization's genuine robustness lies not in a few exceptionally powerful supernodes, but in the existence of enough:

- Subjects capable of growth
- Roles that can be carried forward by successors
- Alternative pathways
- Reconfigurable capability positions

This is essentially a question of redundancy, not equal distribution.

3. Thus, pathway allocation concerns civilizational security

If large numbers of people remain fixed at shallow interfaces over the long term, individuals will not only lose stable structural places and support; civilization itself will also lose its redundancy of subjects.

Thus, pathway allocation is not simply a welfare issue, but a civilizational security issue.

IX. A Crucial Transition: From Pathway Allocation to Contribution Records

At this point, the chapter has explained:

- Pathways are not naturally open
- Opportunities for participation are not evenly distributed
- There is structural allocation between deep places and shallow interfaces
- The widespread generation of EP depends on pathway allocation
- Diversity has civilizational meaning only when it becomes accessibility

But a new question follows:

Even if someone successfully enters a pathway,

how are their contributions within it seen, recognized, recorded, and accumulated?

In other words,

the question of pathways is immediately followed by:

- Contribution
- Credibility
- Records
- Governance

If a civilization resolves only “who can enter,”

without resolving “what will be recognized after entry,”

many contributions of high thickness and low visibility will still fall out of the structure again.

This naturally moves the book into the next chapter:

Contribution facts, project-specific trust, and governance issues.

Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed pathway allocation, opportunities for participation, and power structures.

The book points out that pathway existence does not equal pathway reachability.

Even if a role, mode of participation, or growth channel formally exists within a civilization, this does not necessarily mean most people can genuinely enter, remain stably, and gradually advance. Pathway allocation therefore becomes the second core level of the political economy of structural meaning.

The chapter further proposes:

- Pathway allocation determines who more readily gains new places; any consequences must still be decided independently, who more readily remains at shallow interfaces
- Unequal opportunities for participation are first a structural issue, not merely a capability issue
- Diversity constitutes genuine civilizational diversity only when it becomes accessibility
- The widespread generation of effective participation depends on whether civilization provides growth pathways that are sufficiently open, continuous, and supported

This advances the book's theory toward a stricter judgment:

A civilizational crisis is not only a crisis of definition, but also a crisis of pathway allocation.

The next chapter will continue the discussion:

Even after entry into a pathway, how are contribution facts seen and verified, and how does project-specific trust develop in new relationships?

Chapter 15: Contribution Facts, Project-Specific Trust, and Governance Issues

The preceding chapter has already explained:

Pathway existence does not equal pathway reachability,
and opportunities for participation are never evenly distributed.

This means that even if a civilization formally possesses rich pathways, open entry points, and diverse roles, it must still confront a more specific and more practical question:

Once someone genuinely enters a pathway, how is what they do seen, recognized, recorded, and transformed into a sustainable structural place?

If this cannot be resolved, civilization falls into a very characteristic imbalance:

- Someone has entered
- They are indeed doing things
- They may even be undertaking crucial work
- Yet this work can never establish lasting credibility
- It cannot translate into deeper places
- It cannot steadily accumulate as structural meaning

Thus, although pathway entry points have opened,
structural support remains unstable.

Individuals keep participating, giving, and expending themselves,
yet find it difficult to establish whether their role has genuinely left a trace in civilization.

This takes us to the chapter's core:

How contribution facts are recorded, how project-specific trust develops, and how governance prevents records from being converted into power.

This step is extremely crucial.

If a civilization cannot handle contribution facts, project-specific trust, and governance,
it can easily fall into two opposite yet equally dangerous conditions:

The first: Large numbers of genuine contributions are invisible

The results are:

- Maintainers are overlooked
- Caregivers are undervalued
- Coordinators are marginalized
- Long-cycle builders lack credibility over the long term
- Contributions involving slow variables struggle to enter structural memory

The second: Superficially visible behaviors are overrewarded

The results are:

- High-exposure behaviors with short feedback cycles gain an advantage
- Genuine thickness is replaced by short-term metrics
- Platform activity is mistaken for deep contribution
- Civilization is steered into a shallow cycle of “visibility equals value”

Thus, the chapter's task is not to discuss “how to praise people more fairly,”

but a deeper question:

How civilization can establish a new form of recordkeeping and project-specific trust reference that both sees genuine contributions and avoids sliding into mechanical control.

This is the substance of “contribution facts, project-specific trust, and governance issues.”

Chapter boundaries | “Credibility” below refers only to a reference for collaborative trust within a particular community or project, not credibility of character, cross-domain social credit, or an entitlement credential.

Contribution records may serve only as contextual evidence; roles, tasks, data access, resource use, and participation in governance must each separately undergo lawful authorization, suitability and safety reviews, consent from relevant parties, and confirmation of responsibility, with appeals, exit, and time-limit controls provided.

I. Why “Contribution” Is Not a Self-Evident Fact

In everyday language, people often understand contribution as self-evident:

- Doing something means contributing
- Solving a problem means contributing
- Producing a result means contributing

But when this book places the issue at the civilizational level, things turn out to be far from so simple.

A so-called contribution is not simply “some behavior having occurred.”

It involves at least three levels:

1. What happened in the behavior

This is the most superficial level.

Something was indeed done.

2. What effect the behavior had on the structure

Doing something does not equal making a contribution.

Many behaviors may be merely local actions, without genuinely improving, sustaining, expanding, or reorganizing a structure.

3. Whether the community identifies and recognizes this effect

Even if a behavior objectively had an important effect, without identification, interpretation, and recording, it may remain for a long time in the state of “done but not counted.”

This means:

Contribution is not a fact that naturally reveals itself.

It is a structural outcome that needs to be identified, interpreted, recognized, and recorded.

4. Thus, contribution is itself a governance issue

Because:

- What counts as contribution
- Who judges contribution
- By what standards contributions are identified
- How long contributions are recorded

- How contribution records support understanding and collaboration within bounded contexts, without automatically generating credibility, rights, or pathways

These questions do not have natural answers,

but are outcomes of governance arrangements.

Thus, contribution is not simply a moral term,

but a structural variable within civilization.

II. Why Modern Civilization Is Especially Prone to Failing to See Genuine Contributions

Modern civilization does not lack evaluation systems.

Quite the contrary: it is full of evaluation.

The problem is that these evaluation systems are often better at capturing:

- Short-term results
- Visible output
- Quantifiable metrics
- Behaviors that can gain exposure
- Actions that can generate immediate feedback

Yet many contributions genuinely crucial to civilizational continuity

have precisely the opposite characteristics:

- Slow feedback
- Difficulty of quantification
- Low exposure
- High continuity
- Strong responsibility-bearing
- Dependence on long-term accumulation
- Often being seen only when lost

1. Maintenance contributions are often underestimated

For example:

- System maintenance
- Infrastructure upkeep
- Document organization
- Maintaining organizational order
- Maintaining a community's atmosphere
- Long-term relationship repair

These contributions do not always produce dazzling results,

but their prolonged absence quickly destabilizes civilization's operation.

In other words,

their value often lies in “nothing going wrong,”

and precisely this kind of “problem-preventing” contribution is hardest for modern evaluation systems to reward.

2. Care contributions are often devalued

Care work often involves:

- High expenditure of effort
- High responsibility
- Long cycles
- Strong contextual dependence
- Difficulty of standardization

Yet because it lacks explosive, visible results, modern structures often classify it as “natural obligation,” “emotional labor,” or “low-output support.” This makes care contributions highly susceptible to prolonged undervaluation.

3. Connecting contributions are often overlooked

Some people do not directly create visible results, yet continuously do something extremely crucial:

- Connecting different people
- Translating different languages and knowledge systems
- Easing misunderstandings
- Building bridges for cooperation
- Reconnecting previously broken structures

These contributions are extremely important to collaborative efficiency, yet often disappear from evaluations because they are “not visible enough” and because “attribution of results is ambiguous.”

4. Long-cycle contributions often lose out to short-cycle metrics

A contribution with genuine civilizational meaning often takes a long time to become visible.

For example:

- Developing talent
- Accumulating public trust
- Preserving knowledge traditions
- Building long-term platforms
- Establishing organizational resilience

Modern structures, however, often favor short-cycle, visible results.

Thus, behaviors that genuinely thicken civilization instead remain persistently disadvantaged in evaluations.

This chapter must therefore make clear:

One deep structural problem of modern civilization is not a lack of contributions, but a lack of the ability to see them.

III. What Is “Credibility”?

To discuss the relationship between contribution facts and sustainable structural places, an intermediate level is also needed:

A project-specific trust reference.

Credibility here is not financial credit for borrowing and lending, nor is it merely reputation.

In this book, credibility means:

Contextual trust formed by a particular community in sustained collaboration, on the basis of current capabilities, relationships, behavioral facts, safety, and responsibility; it does not cross domains and does not automatically migrate with records.

This definition has several key points.

1. Credibility comes from continuity, not a single performance

One brilliant performance can bring exposure, but does not necessarily establish credibility.

Genuine credibility depends more on:

- Stability
- Predictability
- Long-term reliability
- The capacity to continue taking responsibility in complex situations

In other words,

credibility is a temporal structure.

2. Credibility can only be a project-specific trust reference

Credibility is crucial

not because it brings praise,

but because it affects whether someone can continue to enter deeper structures in the future.

For example:

- Whether they will continue to receive assignments of trust
- Whether they will be given greater space for judgment
- Whether they can enter more crucial collaborative networks
- Whether they can undertake places of higher responsibility
- Whether they are seen as a dependable node in a crisis

Thus, credibility is neither a commemorative medal for the past nor a pass to future pathways.

At most, it provides one piece of verifiable material for a new, independent judgment.

3. Trust records cannot automatically connect contributions with deep places

Without credibility,

many contributions will remain forever at the level of one-off expenditure.

Even with contextual trust records, new authorization and judgment are still required; they can support:

Only within new relationships and authorizations can participation continue to form:

- Stable roles

- Thicker capability pathways
- Deeper places of responsibility
- Stronger collaborative nodes

Thus, trust records can reduce informational uncertainty within particular collaborations, but cannot determine deep places, much less generate basic rights, political status, or resource rights.

IV. Why the “Contribution–Credibility” Relationship Cannot Hold Automatically

Many people naturally assume:

- Those who contribute greatly will naturally gain credibility
- Genuinely valuable people will naturally be seen
- Those who work over the long term will naturally gain thicker places

Reality is otherwise.

Contribution and credibility are often disconnected.

1. Contributions may be misidentified

Some high-exposure behaviors are mistaken for high contributions, while certain low-exposure, slow-variable, maintenance behaviors are persistently misjudged as “auxiliary,” “unquantifiable,” or “not central enough.”

This results in:

- High visibility $\neq$ high contribution
- High interaction $\neq$ a strong foundation of credibility

2. Contributions may be appropriated

In some structures, the people genuinely doing the work do not hold interpretive or recording authority.

Contributions may therefore be:

- Absorbed by higher-level structures
- Repackaged by platforms
- Rewritten in the organization's official account
- Claimed by those oriented toward short-term results

This creates a characteristic civilizational distortion:

The facts left by those who do the work remain invisible over the long term, while those who control places keep growing thicker instead.

3. Contributions may be reset to zero because they cannot be recorded

Many crucial contributions cannot be recorded continuously.

For example:

- Long-term, steady emotional labor
- Invisible mediation within communities
- Each anticipatory intervention that prevents an accident
- The gradual development of young people
- Continued upkeep of old systems

Without suitable recording mechanisms,
these can easily be reset to zero within structures.

And being reset to zero means:

- Facts cannot be carried forward
- New pathway judgments lack material
- Eligibility for subsequent participation cannot be generated automatically

4. If contribution records are used for collaborative judgments, they must first be constrained by governance boundaries

This is also why the chapter cannot stop at “simply seeing more contributions.”

The real question is:

Whether civilization has sufficiently robust mechanisms both to preserve the facts of genuine contributions and to prevent records from being automatically converted into rights, eligibility, and cross-domain credibility.

V. Why “Records” Are a Crucial Issue in Civilizational Structures

If credibility is established as an automatic intermediary between contributions and deep places,
records will be mistaken for infrastructure for allocating opportunities.

A more prudent boundary is: records can preserve necessary facts; project-specific trust, current roles, and real-world consequences must still develop independently within new relationships.

1. Records preserve facts, not a fixed entity of meaning

Recordkeeping as discussed in this book is more than writing things down.

Its deeper meaning is:

Letting a contribution be remembered by civilizational structures, rather than only briefly perceived by individuals.

Records can carry forward facts and the conditions for their interpretation; only when those who come later understand them anew and respond does new meaning emerge. Continuity does not equal emergence.

2. Records determine what accumulates and what evaporates

Every civilization's record system
is essentially continually answering:

- What deserves to remain
- What does not deserve to remain
- What counts as an achievement
- What counts as noise
- Which facts can be retained for the necessary period
- What will be reset to zero in the next cycle

Thus, a record system is not merely a tool.

It is civilization's memory mechanism.

3. Without appropriate records, the facts of many high-thickness contributions disappear from structural memory

For example, someone may spend ten consecutive years connecting, maintaining, caring, repairing, translating, and coordinating,

yet none of this enters a trustworthy record structure.

In pathway allocation, this person may then still be regarded as “someone without a core track record.”

This means

civilization will repeatedly lose those who genuinely support its stability.

Thus, the question of records is crucial

because it determines:

Whom civilization actually remembers.

VI. Why Any Contribution-Record System Immediately Becomes a Governance Issue

At this point, some people may naturally have an idea:

Since the problem lies in the invisibility of contribution facts and the difficulty of forming project-specific trust, wouldn't establishing a more comprehensive contribution-record system solve it?

This book's answer is:

It can be envisioned, but we must not be naive.

Any contribution-record system, once established, immediately becomes a governance issue.

This is the chapter's most important turning point.

1. Who defines the recording standards?

Without clear boundaries,

record systems can easily reward only:

- Behaviors that are easy to quantify
- Behaviors that are easy to platformize
- Behaviors that readily produce short-cycle feedback
- Behaviors that are easy to attribute to individuals

Many contributions of genuinely high civilizational value will then be excluded once again.

2. Who holds interpretive authority?

Even when rules have been written,

contributions in complex reality often still require interpretation.

If interpretive authority is held by a single center,

record systems can easily slide into a new structural monopoly.

3. Who possesses mechanisms for appeal and correction?

Any record can contain errors.

Without:

- Error-correction mechanisms
- Appeal mechanisms
- Mechanisms for contextual correction

- Channels for human interpretation

Record systems will quickly degenerate from “seeing contributions” into “producing misjudgments.”

4. Who controls the consequences of records?

Once a record system is linked to:

- Pathway opportunities
- Consequences for resource permission (independent authorization is required)
- Cross-domain credibility ratings (linkage is prohibited)
- Organizational admission (independent review is required)
- Platform priority (automatic generation is prohibited)

It is no longer merely a “record system,”

but becomes actual governance infrastructure.

In other words,

once records are given real-world consequences, questions of power and responsibility must be confronted; records themselves do not create power.

5. Thus, recording is not a harmless, neutral technology

It shapes:

- What is valued
- What is overlooked
- Whose facts are more readily preserved
- Who is more readily reset to zero
- Who more readily gains new places; any consequences must still be decided independently

This book must therefore emphasize:

Without governance constraints, any contribution-record system

may degenerate from infrastructure for meaning into infrastructure for control.

VII. The Core Governance Issue: How to See Contributions Without Flattening People into Scores

This is also a point the chapter must confront directly.

Discussion of contribution facts and trust

can easily slide into another danger:

- Everything must be recorded
- Everything must be quantified
- Everything must be assigned scores
- Everything must be settled through platforms
- Everything must enter project-specific trust references

This impulse appears to solve the problem of “invisibility,”

but actually brings another, deeper risk:

Flattening people and civilization into scores.

1. Not all contributions lend themselves to precise quantification

Some contributions are strongly contextual, relational, and long-term.

They are better suited to:

- Narrative recording
- Long-cycle observation
- Feedback from multiple parties
- Judgment over time

Than immediate scoring.

2. Not every record should be directly converted into rewards and penalties

If record systems are bound too tightly to consequences,

they will quickly induce:

- Performative contributions
- Metric-driven opportunism
- Low-quality score farming
- Avoiding risks instead of taking on complex tasks
- Abandoning genuinely needed work in favor of what can be recorded

This will trap civilization once again in “visibility overriding reality.”

3. Genuinely good governance is neither “no records” nor “total control”

The direction this book advocates is:

Giving genuinely important but long-overlooked contribution facts an opportunity to be preserved, verified, and contested within the necessary scope;

while retaining sufficient room for interpretation, context, and correction to avoid completely flattening people into scorable interfaces.

In other words,

the core of governance is not eliminating complexity,

but taming it.

VIII. The Relationship Between Contribution Facts, Project-Specific Trust, and Civilizational Structures

We can now bring this chapter back to the central thread of the book.

Why is this chapter so important?

Because it directly affects:

- Whether effective participation can be sustained
- Whether deep places can form
- Whether thickness of meaning can accumulate
- Whether collaborative networks can retain crucial nodes
- Whether civilization continually loses stability because it cannot see its supporters

1. When contribution facts remain invisible over the long term, participation may be difficult to sustain

Even if someone has developed effective participation,
if their contributions remain unrecorded and unrecognized over the long term,
their participation may be harder to sustain; but new places cannot arise automatically from records.
Over time, EP will be lost because structures fail to support it.

2. If project-specific trust cannot develop within current relationships, collaborative pathways struggle to grow thicker

Many deep places do not open all at once,
but gradually form within long-term relationships, current capabilities, consent, and responsibility.
Without credibility,
growth pathways break,
and civilization continually loses its thick subjects.

3. If governance is mishandled, contribution systems create new vulnerabilities instead

If recording mechanisms are too narrow, platformization too strong, and interpretive authority too concentrated,
then contribution systems will:

- Compress genuine creation
- Reward performative activity
- Weaken relational labor
- Push civilization into a new kind of metric worship

Mechanisms originally serving stability
will instead become new sources of instability.

Thus, this chapter can offer a crucial judgment:

Civilizational stability depends not only on whether pathways for participation exist,
but also on whether contribution facts after entry can be reasonably recorded, and whether new project-specific trust can develop independently within current relationships.

IX. A Crucial Transition: From Governance Issues to Imbalance and Collapse

At this point, the chapter has explained:

- Contributions do not naturally reveal themselves
- Credibility does not form naturally
- Recording is not a neutral technology
- Governance is not a subsidiary issue
- Seeing and recognizing contributions are part of civilizational stability

But we must next confront a harsher question:

If a civilization persistently fails to see genuine contributions,
if high-thickness contributions are continually devalued, ongoing labor continually reset to zero, and deep places persistently difficult to form,
what will ultimately happen?

The answer is:

- Participation will gradually hollow out

- Collaboration will gradually become shallower
- Structures will increasingly depend on frequent surface-level activity
- Civilization will increasingly lose the thick subjects and deep networks that genuinely support it

This naturally moves the book into its next part:

The imbalance and collapse of structural meaning.

Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed contribution facts, project-specific trust, and governance issues.

The book points out that contribution is not a self-evident fact, but a structural outcome that needs to be identified, interpreted, recognized, and recorded.

Project-specific trust records can provide a reference for subsequent collaboration, but contributions cannot automatically translate into eligibility to participate, deep places, resource rights, or long-term credibility.

Records are precisely the infrastructure through which contributions can accumulate as civilizational memory.

Yet every contribution-record system immediately becomes a governance issue.

Who defines recording standards, who holds interpretive authority, who possesses appeal mechanisms, and who controls the consequences of records all directly affect what is seen, whose facts can be preserved, and who is more readily included in new judgments; any place must still form independently.

This leads the chapter to a crucial judgment:

Civilizational stability depends not only on whether pathways exist for people to enter,

but also on whether the facts of genuine contributions after entry can be preserved and reviewed, and whether new relationships can independently form trust without being distorted by governance systems.

Beginning with the next chapter, the book enters “the imbalance and collapse of structural meaning.”

In other words, we will no longer mainly discuss how structural meaning is generated and expanded, but begin discussing:

How it grows thin, hollow, and brittle, and ultimately moves toward collapse.

Chapter 16: Overload, Alienation, and the Hollowing Out of Meaning

In earlier chapters, this book gradually established a complete chain:

- How structural meaning is generated
- How structural meaning expands along thickness and diversity
- How structural meaning moves from individuals to networks and institutions
- How civilizational stability depends on participation, collaboration, and effective participation
- How technological revolutions rewrite pathways, roles, and subjects' places
- How definitional authority and authority over pathway allocation affect judgments about new places; contribution records must not determine who can enter deep places

At this point, one question has become unavoidable:

What happens if these structures are continually compressed, distorted, and degraded?

Or, more precisely:

Civilization does not only grow, expand, and reorganize.

It also loses balance, grows thin, hollows out, and may even gradually move toward collapse while still appearing prosperous on the surface.

This chapter's task is to enter this other side.

If the first half explained how structural meaning creates civilizational vitality, then from this chapter onward, the book turns to another, equally important thread:

How structural meaning loses thickness, loses its capacity to support, and is gradually hollowed out while systems continue to operate.

The chapter focuses on three crucial concepts:

- Overload
- Alienation
- The hollowing out of meaning

These three are related but distinct.

- Overload mainly describes imbalance arising when system complexity exceeds support capacity;
- Alienation mainly describes the rupture formed as system capabilities strengthen while subjects' places weaken;
- Hollowing out is an overall condition that emerges within civilizational structures after the long-term accumulation of the first two:

Structures remain, actions remain, and roles remain, but the deep support for meaning is deteriorating.

The chapter's central judgment can be stated at the outset:

The most dangerous condition of modern civilization is not necessarily obvious breakdown.

It is more likely that systems are still operating efficiently, but structural meaning has already begun to hollow out.

This crisis is more hidden, and harder to identify in time, than dramatic collapse.

I. Why Civilization's Crisis Is Often Not “Grinding to a Halt,” but “Growing Hollow”

When civilizational crisis is mentioned, many people imagine dramatic scenes:

- War

- Crashes
- Famine
- Broken chains
- Mass unemployment
- Institutional disintegration
- Infrastructure paralysis

These are, of course, genuine forms of crisis.

But if crisis is understood only as this kind of “visible rupture,” another more common and more modern danger is overlooked:

Civilization has not ground to a halt and may even continue to strengthen, but it is losing its ability to let individuals genuinely enter, grow continuously, take responsibility, and form deep places.

In this condition, many things remain on the surface:

- Platforms are very active
- Institutions continue to operate
- Roles have not yet disappeared
- Output is still growing
- Systems have even become more efficient

At the same time, however, something else is happening in the depths:

- Subjects undertake less and less judgment
- Responsibility becomes harder to locate in real places
- Growth pathways become shorter
- Relationships struggle increasingly to consolidate into high-quality collaboration
- Structural meaning remains increasingly at the level of surface calls

This creates a characteristic modern crisis:

Systems are not paralyzed, but civilization begins to grow hollow.

This is the central condition the chapter discusses.

II. What Is Overload?

The chapter first addresses overload.

In the preceding part, this book already treated O as one of the negative constraint variables in the theoretical constraint framework.

We now need to return it from an abstract variable to concrete civilizational reality.

Overload means:

In the process of structural expansion, increasing pathways, denser connections, more complex rules, and accumulating information, a system continually exceeds the support capacity of its individuals, organizations, or institutions, so that complexity originally intended to strengthen civilization instead becomes an obstacle to action and coordination.

This definition has three key points:

1. Overload is not as simple as “too much stuff”

Overload is not merely a matter of quantity,
but a mismatch between “growth in complexity” and “growth in support capacity.”

In other words:

- More information does not automatically constitute overload
- More pathways do not automatically constitute overload either
- More layers of roles do not automatically constitute overload either

Only when these increases exceed individuals', organizations', or institutions' actual processing capacity does overload emerge.

2. Overload is a system condition, not a moral failure of individual fragility

Modern society often individualizes the consequences of overload.

For example:

- You just do not know how to manage your time
- Your attention is just poor
- You just cannot handle enough pressure
- You just have not learned efficient tools

Such claims may have some basis in particular circumstances.

But if overload is completely individualized,
the structural sources of the problem will be concealed.

In many cases, individuals have not suddenly become weaker.

Rather, the whole civilization is imposing:

- More judgments
- More switching
- More choices
- More immediate responses
- More fragmented connections
- More incomplete responsibilities

On individuals.

Thus, overload is first a structural phenomenon,
not merely a psychological issue.

3. Overload directly erodes structural meaning

When a person is continuously overloaded,
they find it difficult to:

- Enter deep judgment
- Maintain long-term responsibility
- Consolidate experience
- Form high-quality collaboration
- Maintain a clear sense of place

In other words, overload does not merely tire people.
It directly weakens the generation and thickening of structural meaning.

III. How Overload Arises

Overload does not arise out of nowhere.
It usually results from several overlapping processes.

1. Information overload

More information does not always mean deeper understanding.
On the contrary, when individuals are continually subject to:

- Frequent inputs
- Rapid switching
- Judgments across multiple sources
- Constant alerts and interruptions
- Pressure for immediate feedback

Information itself loses structure,
and judgment increasingly relies on templates, emotions, or system defaults.
Thus, what should have thickened cognition
begins to weaken it.

2. Choice overload

As a society continually adds:

- Pathways
- Roles
- Tools
- Tasks
- Interfaces
- Modes of expression

Without corresponding structures for interpretation, selection, and mediation,
individuals find it increasingly difficult to judge:

- Where to go
- What to undertake
- What deserves long-term investment
- What place they actually occupy

There appear to be more pathways,
but entering deep structures may actually become harder.

3. Rule overload

Modern civilization relies heavily on rules to handle complexity.
But more rules do not automatically make systems more stable.

When rules become:

- Excessively fragmented

- Excessively layered
- Mutually conflicting
- Heavily dependent on interpretation
- Detached from real-world rhythms

Institutions turn from supporting structures into burdens on the structures themselves.

This puts organizations and individuals into a characteristic condition:

- Large amounts of time are spent understanding rules
- Large amounts of coordination are spent avoiding rule conflicts
- Space for genuine action is squeezed instead

4. Response overload

One of the technological era's most striking features is the continual escalation of response speed.

Almost every structure is leaning toward immediacy:

- Reply immediately
- Decide immediately
- Correct immediately
- Go online immediately
- Follow up immediately
- Adapt immediately

This response rhythm itself continually erodes structural meaning.

Deep thought, long-term collaboration, taking on responsibility, and building slow variables all require temporal thickness.

If everything is swallowed by immediacy,

subjects can only remain constantly at the reactive level, unable to enter the generative level.

IV. The Real Consequences of Overload for Civilization

Many people understand overload as an efficiency issue:

People get tired, so systems slow down a little.

But this book points out that overload's effects on civilization go far deeper than efficiency.

1. Overload causes judgment to deteriorate

Under overload, individuals and organizations increasingly rely on:

- Simple metrics
- Default options
- Platform recommendations
- Habitual pathways
- The lowest-risk solution

The capacity for complex judgment is then continually compressed.

This means that although civilization processes more, the quality of judgment may decline.

2. Overload leaves responsibility adrift

When everyone is handling excessive tasks, rules, and feedback, boundaries of responsibility become increasingly difficult to clarify. Everyone is busy, but it is difficult to say who is genuinely responsible for the overall consequences. Thus, participation appears abundant, while responsibility becomes increasingly thin.

3. Overload breaks growth

Deep places do not grow out of continually struggling to cope.

They require:

- Reflection
- Consolidation
- Retrospective review
- Correction
- Long-cycle investment
- Sustainable space for judgment

Overload continually cuts off these processes.

As a result, people keep doing things, yet find it increasingly difficult to grow thicker.

4. Overload makes collaboration shallower

In overloaded environments, collaboration is forced to deteriorate into:

- Rapid handoffs
- Minimal explanation
- Template-based coordination
- Surface interface connections

Collaboration that genuinely requires shared judgment, long-term trust, and deep mutual adjustment becomes increasingly difficult.

Thus, the system's apparent collaborative density rises, while actual collaborative quality declines.

The real consequence of overload is therefore not “tiredness,” but:

Civilization finds it increasingly difficult to generate deep judgment, deep responsibility, deep growth, and deep collaboration.

V. What Is Alienation?

If overload describes the problem of “support capacity being exceeded,” alienation describes another rupture:

Systems continue to strengthen, and structures continue to operate, but individuals find it increasingly difficult to regard their actions, judgments, responsibilities, and existential places as genuinely their own and genuinely connected to the whole.

In other words,
alienation is not simple fatigue,
nor merely a sense of unfamiliarity.
It is a deeper structural disconnection:

- I am still doing things
- But I am increasingly unsure what I am doing
- I seem to be participating
- But the process feels less and less like “I am participating”
- I still have a role
- But the connection between me and that role grows weaker

1. Alienation is not “having no role,” but “the role no longer belonging to the subject”

This point is crucial.

Alienation does not necessarily manifest as unemployment, withdrawal, or disconnection.

Often, it occurs precisely while roles still exist.

A person can still have a job, tasks, system feedback, and even income,
yet increasingly feel:

- They do not genuinely own the process
- They are merely one replaceable interface segment within it
- Actions no longer consolidate into capability and responsibility
- Results lack a genuine connection with the subject

This is alienation.

2. Alienation is one of the AI era's most dangerous deep risks

AI and platforms can greatly strengthen system capabilities
while continually keeping people at:

- The review level
- The response level
- The confirmation level
- The embellishment level
- The passive-following level

Such designs are particularly likely to produce alienation.

Because individuals have not been completely excluded,
a sense of crisis does not always erupt visibly;
yet deep places for subjects are continually diluted.

3. Alienation directly erodes EP

The preceding chapter already explained that effective participation depends on:

- Judgment increment
- Responsibility increment
- Creative increment
- Collaborative increment

- Directional increment

Alienation continually compresses precisely these increments.

Thus, participation has not decreased on the surface,
but EP is actually declining.

VI. How Alienation Forms

Alienation is not merely “people being divided from themselves” in a philosophical sense.

Within this book's framework, it has definite structural conditions of generation.

1. Judgment is outsourced by systems

As more judgments are handed over to algorithms, processes, and recommendation systems,
subjects still execute,

but genuinely decide less and less.

Over time,

action separates from judgment,

and alienation emerges.

2. Responsibility is absorbed by platforms

If a system continually hides complex responsibilities behind:

- Automatic rules
- Organizational processes
- Platform agreements
- Model defaults

Individuals find it difficult to genuinely bear consequences.

Without responsibility, subjecthood continually grows thinner.

3. Roles are fragmented

Whole roles have:

- Continuous processes
- Traceable consequences
- Accumulable experience
- The ability to form thickness in judgment and responsibility

Once roles are broken into large numbers of fragmented tasks,

individuals increasingly resemble fragmented nodes called upon by systems.

Alienation therefore rises rapidly.

4. Contribution facts cannot be verified or supported

If someone continually does things,

yet is always reset to zero by structures,

they will struggle to feel that they have genuinely entered civilizational processes.

Over time,

alienation shifts from “occasional frustration” to “instability of one's existential place.”

5. Pathways are compressed into a single optimization logic

If a system continually organizes pathways using one metric, for example considering only efficiency, traffic, or short-term visible results, individuals find it increasingly difficult to enter structures through their whole existence. They can only keep adjusting themselves into interfaces better suited to the metrics. This too is alienation.

VII. What Is the Hollowing Out of Meaning?

We can now turn to the chapter's third core concept:

The hollowing out of meaning.

If:

- Overload describes civilization being increasingly burdened by complexity beyond what it can support,
- Alienation describes subjects finding it increasingly difficult to connect genuinely with their own actions as systems strengthen,

Then hollowing out describes the overall condition resulting from their long-term combination:

Structures remain, processes remain, roles remain, and systems have even become more efficient, yet these structures struggle increasingly to support deep judgment, deep responsibility, deep growth, and a deep sense of being needed.

This is the hollowing out of meaning.

1. Hollowing out is not “having no meaning,” but “meaning being reduced to a shell”

In a hollowed-out condition, many civilizational structures retain their complete forms:

- Occupational systems remain
- Platforms and organizations remain
- The surface of collaboration remains
- Education and training systems remain
- Reward and evaluation mechanisms remain

But what these structures can support is increasingly only:

- Formal places
- Process execution
- Surface visibility
- Metric-driven performance
- Frequent, short-cycle activities

And they are increasingly less able to support:

- Deep subjects
- Long-horizon judgment
- Slow growth
- Accumulation of responsibility
- The generation of shared direction

Thus, hollowing out is not the collapse of the shell, but the loss of its substance.

2. Hollowing out is more dangerous than collapse because it is not readily identified immediately

Collapse is dramatic,

so it is often readily seen.

Hollowing out is the opposite.

Because many surface functions remain intact,

people mistakenly assume the problem is minor, or even feel that systems are running more “smoothly.”

Yet civilization's real problems

may accumulate precisely beneath this “ever smoother” surface.

Too many deep variables are being drawn away:

- Deep places capable of growth
- Roles capable of bearing responsibility
- Sustainable space for judgment
- Pathways in which trust can form within concrete relationships
- Structural nodes that give people a sense of being needed

3. Hollowing out produces a widespread, distinctly modern feeling:

“I keep doing things, but increasingly do not feel that I am genuinely living within them.”

This is a characteristic form of the modern crisis of meaning.

There is no absence of activity,

but activity cannot consolidate into structural meaning;

there is no absence of connection,

but connections cannot form deep collaboration;

there is no absence of roles,

but roles cannot enable people to keep growing thicker.

This is the experiential level of hollowing out.

VIII. The Relationship Between Overload, Alienation, and Hollowing Out

At this point, the relationship among the three needs to be clarified precisely.

1. Overload is the pressure form of structural imbalance

It mainly occurs at the levels of complexity, pathways, rules, information, and response rhythms.

It makes systems increasingly unable to support deep judgment, deep collaboration, and deep growth.

2. Alienation is the structural form of subjects' disconnection

It mainly occurs as system capabilities strengthen while subjects' places grow thinner.

It makes individuals increasingly unable to regard their actions as genuinely their own and as possessing civilizational meaning.

3. Hollowing out is the form of the long-term outcome

As overload and alienation continually accumulate,

the whole civilization enters a hollowed-out condition.

At this point:

- Structures have not collapsed
- The surface is stable
- Operation has even accelerated
- But deep support has already declined significantly

More concisely:

Overload makes civilization increasingly unable to support what it carries, alienation makes subjects increasingly unable to connect, and hollowing out is the result of civilization as a whole growing ever thinner through their long-term combination.

IX. Why Modern Civilization Is Particularly Prone to Hollowing Out

Hollowing out does not occur in the same way in every civilization.

It is particularly likely to occur in a structure where:

- Technology continually accelerates
- Platforms continually expand
- Pathways are superficially rich
- The efficiency of calls continually improves
- Short-cycle feedback becomes dominant
- Evaluation is highly quantified
- Total system capabilities continually strengthen

In other words,

modern civilization is particularly prone to producing hollowing out.

1. Because modern civilization is adept at preserving shells

It need not immediately dismantle positions, processes, schools, platforms, or organizations.

It need only slowly draw away the following from within these structures:

- Judgment
- Responsibility
- Growth
- Consolidation
- Collaborative thickness

That is enough to produce hollowing out.

2. Because modern civilization uses frequent activity to conceal deep losses

Individuals become busier, interfaces richer, feedback denser, and content more abundant, creating the illusion that “civilization is still full of vitality.”

Yet what is actually declining is deep subject-related variables, not the quantity of surface activity.

3. Because hollowing out does not necessarily immediately impede short-term growth

This is also its most dangerous feature.

For a considerable time, hollowing out can coexist with:

- High growth
- High efficiency
- High connectivity
- High platform activity

Only when deep redundancy has gradually been exhausted does the crisis appear in a more dramatic form.

X. A Crucial Judgment: One of Modern Civilization's Greatest Dangers Is Mistaking “Efficient Operation” for “Deep Stability”

This chapter must state this explicitly:

One of modern civilization's greatest dangers is mistaking efficient operation for deep stability.

Efficient operation readily creates a powerful illusion:

- Everything is moving forward
- All the figures are growing
- Systems are all responding
- Platforms are all flourishing
- People are all still busy

People then mistakenly assume that civilization is very stable.

But this book points out:

Civilization's genuine stability is not assessed solely through these surface indicators.

The deeper questions are:

- Are deep places still being generated?
- Are subjects still growing thicker?
- Is EP increasing or declining?
- Can judgment, responsibility, growth, and collaboration still consolidate?
- Is structural meaning expanding, or is only the shell still operating?

If the answers are negative,

even the most efficient system may be in a condition of deep instability.

XI. From Hollowing Out to Collapse, Only “Being Seen” Remains

This chapter must take one more step forward.

Hollowing out is not collapse,

but it is often a precursor to collapse.

Why?

Because as a civilization increasingly hollows out,

it is in fact already continually losing:

- Redundancy of subjects
- Redundancy of judgment
- Redundancy of responsibility
- Redundancy of deep collaboration

- Capacity for structural repair

In other words,

it appears still able to operate,

but increasingly lacks the deep capacity to stabilize itself again when struck by a shock.

Thus, what is genuinely dangerous about hollowing out is not merely that it makes people uncomfortable, but that it makes civilization brittle.

Once an external shock, internal tension, or system rupture arrives,

this structure that is “stable on the surface, thin within” is more likely to move rapidly into the next condition:

Collapse.

This is the central issue of the next chapter.

Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed three interrelated concepts:

- Overload

- Alienation

- The hollowing out of meaning

The book points out that overload is not simply busyness, but a structural condition in which individuals' and organizations' support capacity is exceeded as complexity, rules, information, and response rhythms continually grow; alienation is a condition of rupture in which system capabilities continually strengthen while subjects find it increasingly difficult to establish genuine connections with their own judgment, responsibility, growth, and places; and the hollowing out of meaning is the overall result of their long-term accumulation: structures remain, processes remain, and systems have even become more efficient, but deep support for meaning is being lost.

This leads the chapter to a crucial judgment:

The most dangerous condition of modern civilization is not necessarily obvious breakdown, but deep hollowing out amid efficient operation.

This means that genuine crises do not always appear when things grind to a halt.

They often begin accumulating while everything still appears prosperous.

The next chapter will develop this question further:

If hollowing out continues, what identifiable signs will civilization display?

And how does it move step by step from imbalance into actual mechanisms of collapse?

Chapter 17: Signs and Mechanisms of the Collapse of Meaning

The previous chapter proposed a crucial judgment:

The most dangerous condition of modern civilization is not necessarily an overt standstill or breakdown. It is more likely to be a deep hollowing out within efficiently functioning systems.

In other words, civilization's problems do not always first appear as:

- Infrastructure suddenly failing
- Institutions suddenly breaking apart
- Organizations suddenly disappearing
- The economy suddenly grinding to a halt

Often, another change happens earlier:

- Structures remain
- Systems still function
- Roles still exist on the surface
- Platforms remain active
- Output may even continue to grow

At the same time, however, the deeper supports of civilizational continuity are quietly slipping away:

- Judgment grows thinner
- Responsibility becomes increasingly unanchored
- Growth pathways become shorter
- Genuine collaboration becomes rarer
- Deep places become harder to enter
- Effective participation diminishes

If the previous chapter discussed the process by which civilization "becomes hollow," this chapter asks a further set of questions:

As this hollowing out continues to accumulate, how does it approach collapse?

What signs typically emerge before a civilization moves from imbalance toward collapse?

What, precisely, are the mechanisms of collapse?

One point deserves particular emphasis here:

"Collapse," as used in this book, does not refer only to total destruction in a physical sense.

More broadly, it means:

A civilization's system of structural meaning loses the capacity to keep generating, sustaining, repairing, and reorganizing itself.

In other words, collapse is first a structural loss of the capacity for self-stabilization.

It may precede an external disaster. It may also already be under way while surface order still exists.

This chapter's task is to clarify the chain leading from hollowing out to collapse.

I. What Is "Collapse"?

In everyday language, "collapse" is often understood as a sudden event:

- An instantaneous loss of control
- A complete crash

- An overnight breakdown
- The caving-in of an entire structure

From the perspective of civilizational dynamics, however, genuine collapse is often different.

It is more like a transition of state after a prolonged accumulation.

Accordingly, this book defines collapse as follows:

When a civilization's system of structural meaning can no longer sustainably provide sufficient deep places, effective participation, the taking up of responsibility, collaborative repair, and the capacity to generate direction, the system begins to enter a state of collapse.

The key phrase in this definition is not "disappearance," but "can no longer sustainably provide."

In other words, collapse does not always mean that everything is gone. Rather, it means:

- Structures can no longer develop enough reparative strength of their own
- Problems multiply while repair diminishes
- Depletion accelerates while generation weakens
- Surface activities can continue, but the capacity for deep reconstruction is failing

This is what the book means by collapse.

1. Collapse is first a decline in generative capacity

A healthy civilization is not one without problems. It is one that can still:

- Generate new pathways
- Bring in new subjects
- Repair old structures
- Reorganize imbalanced networks
- Form new ways of collaborating

Collapse begins precisely when these capacities decline systematically.

2. Collapse is also a decline in the capacity to absorb and sustain

Civilization persists not because it never experiences shocks, but because it can absorb them.

Once that capacity declines, any additional pressure becomes more dangerous.

3. Above all, collapse is a decline in directional capacity

Civilization must do more than "keep functioning." It must also be able to answer:

- Where do we go next?
- What is worth continuing to preserve?
- What needs to be reorganized?
- What must be abandoned?

If a system increasingly loses the capacity to generate direction, leaving only the maintenance of processes, it is already standing on the edge of collapse.

II. Why Collapse Usually Begins Not with the Bottom Layer "Having Nothing Left," but with the Middle Layer "No Longer Being Able to Sustain"

Many people intuitively assume that civilizational collapse should begin with a shortage of resources at the most basic level.

That is, of course, sometimes true.

Yet the more common danger in modern civilization is not that “everything is gone.” Rather:

Resources, systems, platforms, and institutions exist, but middle-layer structures are increasingly unable to sustain individuals and roles or take up problems.

Here, “middle-layer structures” chiefly include:

- Sustainable systems of roles
- Growth pathways
- Intermediary organizations
- Collaborative networks
- Layers of responsibility
- Mechanisms for translation and buffering
- Mechanisms for recording facts about contributions and building project-specific trust

These are neither as conspicuous as resources nor as readily visible as grand institutions. Yet they determine whether civilization can keep linking:

Individuals → Roles

Participation

Collaboration

Institutions

Civilizational continuity

1. When middle-layer structures thin out, civilization begins to “fail to sustain people”

Individuals may still have capabilities, and society may still have needs,

and systems may still be able to mobilize those capabilities. But if the middle layer keeps disintegrating, the results will include:

- Unstable roles
- Broken pathways
- Contributions being reset to zero
- Difficulty accumulating credibility
- Fewer and fewer deep places
- Increasingly shallow participation

This means that people are not without activity. Rather, it becomes increasingly difficult for civilization genuinely to sustain them.

2. When middle-layer structures thin out, civilization also “fails to take up problems”

The strength of a civilization is measured not only by its ability to handle routine processes efficiently, but, more importantly, by whether it still has enough middle-layer nodes to take up, break down, translate, and reorganize new problems, complex problems, and problems involving conflict.

Once the middle layer thins out, the system relies increasingly on a few central nodes and rigid processes.

This may look efficient in the short term, but it becomes extremely fragile over the long term.

3. Collapse therefore often begins with a “failure to sustain”

There is no immediate standstill. Instead, increasingly:

- People cannot be sustained
- Roles cannot be sustained

- Relationships cannot be sustained
- Shocks cannot be absorbed
- New problems cannot be taken up
- Old structures cannot be kept repaired either

This is the most fundamental middle-layer sign preceding collapse.

III. The First Sign of Collapse: Destabilization of Roles

A civilization's deep stability does not depend on whether it has abstract institutional slogans. It depends on whether a multitude of roles can still exist stably and connect with one another.

The first sign of collapse is therefore often:

The destabilization of roles.

Here, role destabilization means more than a reduction in jobs. It also includes:

- Increasingly blurred role boundaries
- Increasingly poor role continuity
- Responsibility within roles becoming increasingly unanchored
- The severing of role-development chains
- Roles remaining in existence but growing increasingly thin

1. Role destabilization means that structural meaning is beginning to fall away

Roles matter because they consolidate repeated actions into stable positions.

Once roles cannot remain stable, individuals find it difficult to form structural meaning even if they remain constantly active.

2. Role destabilization makes civilization increasingly reliant on short-term task mobilization

When long-term roles are compressed, the system turns to mobilizing people for short-term tasks.

In the short term, this increases flexibility; over the long term, it continually hollows out responsibility, judgment, and growth.

3. Role destabilization makes it difficult for subjects to deepen

Without stable roles, individuals find it difficult to move from surface actions into deep places.

Civilization consequently has fewer and fewer thick subjects, further weakening its capacity for repair and reorganization.

Role destabilization is therefore more than a simple labor-market phenomenon. It is the first layer of warning signs of civilizational collapse.

IV. The Second Sign of Collapse: Fractured Participation

As the previous chapter explained, what civilization genuinely needs is EP, rather than mere presence.

The second sign of collapse is therefore:

Fractured participation.

This does not necessarily mean that "everyone has stopped participating." It is more likely to mean:

- Surface participation remains
- Effective participation is declining

1. Surface activity and deep withdrawal happen simultaneously

A society can have extremely high levels of platform activity, content interaction, and task responsiveness, while also experiencing:

- Fewer participants in deep collaboration
- Fewer people taking on long-term responsibility
- Fewer people able to keep entering positions of judgment
- Fewer people willing to take responsibility for complex consequences

This is a typical structure of “surface activity and deep withdrawal.”

2. Fractured participation makes civilization increasingly resemble a one-sided system

When more and more subjects remain at shallow interfaces, civilization becomes increasingly reliant on systems operating unilaterally.

This need not immediately cause problems in the short term. Over the long term, however, it means:

- Civilization has increasingly little redundancy among subjects
- Its capacity for correction grows weaker
- Its capacity to generate direction diminishes

3. Fractured participation is often difficult for conventional indicators to capture

Conventional indicators may still show:

- Employment remains
- Active users remain
- Task-completion rates remain
- Platform-use rates remain

None of these, however, means that EP is still healthy.

Fractured participation is therefore one of the signs of modern collapse most easily missed.

V. The Third Sign of Collapse: The Shallowing of Collaboration

Civilization’s ability to maintain complex structures depends not on the strength of individual nodes, but on whether different nodes can still form high-quality collaboration.

The third sign of collapse is therefore:

The shallowing of collaboration.

This means:

- Collaboration still exists
- But it is increasingly confined to piecing together surface interfaces
- Shared judgment diminishes
- Shared responsibility diminishes
- Deep mutual adjustment diminishes
- Long-term collaborative relationships diminish

1. Shallowing does not mean that cooperation disappears, but that it becomes thinner

The apparent density of cooperation in many systems will continue to rise.

There are more messages, more coordination, more deliveries, and more synchronization.

But this does not mean that collaboration is deeper.

On the contrary, it may mean:

- Everyone handles only their own small segment
- No one genuinely understands the whole
- No one genuinely takes responsibility for complex consequences
- Organizations maintain surface smoothness by piecing interfaces together

This is a typical instance of the shallowing of collaboration.

2. The shallowing of collaboration weakens civilization's capacity to address complex problems

Complex problems cannot genuinely be solved through fragmented task mobilization. They require:

- Deep collaboration across multiple roles
- Long-term trust
- Shared judgment
- Complex chains of responsibility
- Repeated corrections throughout the process

Once collaboration becomes shallow, civilization grows increasingly proficient at handling standardized problems, yet finds it increasingly difficult to address highly complex problems involving conflict.

3. The shallowing of collaboration amplifies the system's dependence on central nodes

Once middle-layer collaborative relationships thin out, the system can rely only on:

- More powerful platforms
- More powerful coordination centers
- More rigid process control

This further reduces structural resilience, concentrating the risk of collapse at the center.

VI. The Fourth Sign of Collapse: The Failure of Mechanisms for Long-Term Trust

As the previous chapter discussed, if facts about contributions cannot be preserved and verified within bounded contexts, they are unlikely to consolidate into deep places.

The fourth sign of collapse is therefore:

The evaporation of credibility.

The failure of mechanisms for long-term trust does not mean that everyone suddenly distrusts one another. It means that the mechanisms through which sustained collaboration could previously create stable trust, roles, and opportunities to participate begin to fail; factual records cannot replace these relationships.

- 1. People who work at things over the long term find it increasingly difficult to establish long-term positions**
- 2. Contributions such as maintenance, care, coordination, and bridging are repeatedly reset to zero**
- 3. Visibility increasingly outweighs reliability**
- 4. High exposure increasingly outweighs substantial depth**

When, within a civilization,

long-term trust becomes increasingly difficult to form in specific relationships, individuals find it harder and harder to believe that:

- Sustained commitment is meaningful
- Long-term responsibility has a return loop
- Deepening one's position has a future
- Deep participation is more than sheer depletion

This directly undermines civilization's capacity to reproduce itself.

5. The evaporation of credibility makes civilization increasingly short-term in orientation

Without the accumulation of credibility, the system depends increasingly on:

- Instant evaluations
- Short-cycle feedback
- Frequently visible performance
- Platform rankings

Civilization thus begins to regress toward "immediate survival," finding it increasingly difficult to retain substantial structures operating over long cycles.

VII. The Fifth Sign of Collapse: Directional Deterioration

Collapse occurs not only at the levels of roles, participation, and collaboration, but also at a higher level: Civilization begins to lose its capacity to generate direction.

This is one of the deepest signs.

1. Directional deterioration does not mean that "no one is speaking," but that "no one can genuinely change the direction"

A civilization will, of course, still contain abundant discussion, opinions, expression, and analysis.

But directional deterioration means:

- There are fewer and fewer positions of judgment that can genuinely change shared pathways
- Most people can only move within an established direction
- The system becomes increasingly adept at optimizing the status quo, yet finds it increasingly difficult to rewrite pathways
- The future is no longer generated together; it increasingly becomes a default extension of the present

2. Directional deterioration makes the system increasingly dependent on inertia

Once directional capacity declines, civilization relies increasingly on:

- Default pathways

- Existing platform logic
- Existing incentive structures
- Existing systems of indicators
- Existing powerful centralized coordination

This means that civilization appears stable while actually losing its capacity for active evolution.

3. Directional deterioration is often the hardest to recognize in the short term

The system can still function, optimize, and grow. Yet it answers these questions less and less:

- Why go in this direction?
- Are there other directions?
- Are the current goals still reasonable?
- Which problems must be redefined?

This means that civilization has begun to shift from “expansion with direction” to “extension without direction.”

This is an extremely dangerous state preceding collapse.

VIII. From Signs to Mechanisms: Collapse Is Not a Single-Point Failure, but Repair Persistently Falling Below Depletion

We can now move from signs to mechanisms.

This book argues that the true mechanism of civilizational collapse is not the sudden failure of a single point. Rather:

A civilization’s capacity for repair persistently falls below its capacity for depletion.

Here, “depletion” includes:

- Depletion of roles
- Depletion of subjects
- Depletion of trust
- Depletion of collaboration
- Depletion of directional capacity
- Depletion of deep places
- Depletion of structural carrying capacity

“Capacity for repair,” meanwhile, includes:

- The capacity to generate new roles
- The capacity to deepen new subjects
- The capacity to repair middle-layer collaboration
- The capacity to consolidate credibility anew
- The capacity to reopen pathways
- The capacity to regenerate direction

1. When depletion exceeds repair over the long term, hollowing out turns into collapse

During hollowing out, civilization may still sustain itself through inertia, accumulated reserves, and system efficiency.

But if repair never catches up with depletion, then beyond a certain point the system will no longer merely be “thin.” It will begin to “break.”

2. This is why collapse often seems sudden

The extensive depletion in the earlier period was concealed by efficient systems and surface prosperity.

Only when the capacity for repair is exhausted does a particular shock make people feel that “things went wrong overnight.”

From the perspective of structural meaning, however, it is not sudden. Long-term depletion has finally crossed the boundary of what can be sustained.

3. The essence of collapse is therefore the exhaustion of regenerative capacity

The genuinely dangerous moment for a civilization is not when its problems multiply, but when it finds it increasingly difficult to develop sufficient strength for repair and reorganization.

This is the deep mechanism of collapse.

IX. Why Collapse Is Often Misdiagnosed as “Just an Emotional Problem” or “Just an Efficiency Problem”

Modern civilization readily misjudges the signs of collapse.

Many signals initially seem unremarkable. They may even look like:

- A little more anxiety
- A little more burnout
- Slightly slower organizations
- Slightly harder collaboration
- Slightly more intense, self-defeating competition on platforms
- Young people being slightly less willing to take on responsibilities

People consequently tend toward two misdiagnoses.

1. Misdiagnosing it as an individual emotional problem

For example:

- People are just more anxious
- The new generation is just more fragile
- Psychological resilience has simply declined
- People just lack a sense of meaning

These judgments grasp the experiential level but miss the structural level.

Problems of civilization are thus reduced to psychological problems.

2. Misdiagnosing it as a localized efficiency problem

For example:

- Processes are simply not smooth enough
- Organizational coordination simply needs optimization
- Platform tools are simply not intelligent enough
- Rules simply need improvement

These judgments grasp the level of surface operations, but miss the problem of deep regenerative capacity.

3. As a result, civilization keeps prescribing itself the wrong remedies

If signs of collapse are treated only as emotional problems, the response will be endless psychological reassurance. If they are treated only as efficiency problems, the response will be endless process optimization.

Yet the real problems may be:

- Too few deep places
- Declining EP
- Thinning middle-layer structures
- Difficulty consolidating credibility
- Deteriorating directional capacity

None of these can be solved through psychological adjustment or tool optimization alone.

X. A Crucial Judgment: Civilizational Collapse Usually Means Not That “There Are No Systems Left,” but That “Systems Can No Longer Develop Enough Subjects”

This chapter’s central judgment can be condensed into a single sentence:

Civilizational collapse usually begins not with systems disappearing, but with systems no longer being able to develop enough subjects, enough deep places, and enough capacity for repair.

This sentence matters.

It shifts collapse from a “picture of the outcome” back to the “exhaustion of generative capacity.”

As long as a civilization can keep developing:

- New subjects
- New deep places
- New bearers of responsibility
- New collaborative intermediaries
- New generators of direction

it need not collapse, even if it experiences many shocks.

The real danger is that:

- The outer shell remains
- Processes remain
- Resources remain
- Platforms remain
- Yet these structures find it increasingly difficult to reproduce enough actors operating at depth

At that point, collapse is only a matter of time.

XI. A Crucial Transition: From the Mechanisms of Collapse to Civilization’s Minimal Survival Model

At this point, the chapter has accomplished two things:

1. Identified the signs of collapse

2. Identified the deep mechanisms of collapse

But the book must go one step further.

Identifying collapse is not enough. We must also ask:

If civilization has already entered a high-risk state, what must be preserved first?

What is a civilization's minimal survival structure in an extreme phase?

That is the task of the next chapter.

In other words, the next chapter will no longer focus primarily on "how danger arises." Instead, it will begin to discuss:

How civilization can avoid a complete rupture when danger genuinely approaches.

This is:

Civilization's minimal survival model.

Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed the signs and mechanisms of the collapse of meaning.

The book explains that collapse is not simply a physical crash. It is a state in which the system of structural meaning loses the capacity to keep generating, sustaining, repairing, and reorganizing itself.

It often first manifests as:

- Destabilized roles
- Fractured participation
- Shallowing collaboration
- Evaporating credibility
- Deteriorating direction

These are not isolated phenomena. They result from the continuing thinning of middle-layer structures.

The chapter further proposes that the deep mechanism of civilizational collapse is not a single-point failure, but:

The capacity for repair persistently falling below the capacity for depletion.

Once a civilization can no longer develop enough new subjects, new deep places, new bearers of responsibility, and new collaborative intermediaries, it will slide further from hollowing out into collapse.

The next chapter answers one final crucial question:

Under these conditions, what must a civilization preserve, at the bare minimum, if it is to retain continuity?

Chapter 18: Civilization's Survival Baseline and Minimal Survival Model

This chapter discusses civilization's survival baseline, which is not equivalent to "freedom from survival insecurity," one of the three goals. Survival addresses the requirement that "civilization must not break apart first"; freedom from survival insecurity, happiness in everyday life, and greater meaning in life are civilizational goals pursued in sequence after survival has been secured. The minimal survival model addresses only the baseline and does not treat that baseline as the endpoint.

As the previous chapter explained:

Civilizational collapse does not always begin with an overt crash. More commonly, it manifests as the system of structural meaning losing the capacity to keep generating, sustaining, repairing, and reorganizing itself.

In other words, the real danger is not an individual shock itself. It is that, when a shock arrives, a civilization is already increasingly lacking:

- Sustainable deep places
- Genuinely effective participants
- Middle-layer structures able to take up problems
- Reparative strength able to turn depletion back into structure

Once these capacities are exhausted, civilization is no longer merely "thin" or "hollow." It faces a more severe problem:

If it continues expanding in the old way, the system will rupture faster; if it abandons expansion altogether, it may slide directly into stagnation and disintegration.

What, then, is the very least that civilization must preserve in a high-risk phase?

That is the question this chapter answers.

The chapter proposes:

Civilization's minimal survival model.

A "minimal survival model" is neither a blueprint for an ideal society nor a complete institutional design for the future.

It addresses a more basic and harsher question:

When civilization is in a phase of high risk, low redundancy, and intensifying deep hollowing out, which structures must be preserved first to avoid a complete rupture?

In other words, this chapter is concerned not with the "best state," but with a "state without rupture."

While the first half of the book mainly discussed how structural meaning is generated and expanded, and the previous chapter discussed how it thins out, becomes hollow, and approaches collapse, this chapter moves further to ask:

How can civilization preserve a minimum of continuity as the worst conditions approach?

This is a crucial step in the book's transition from a "theory of expansion" to a "full-cycle theory."

I. Why a "Minimal Survival Model" Is Necessary

Many discussions of civilization's future naturally favor narratives of ascent:

- How to become stronger
- How to become faster
- How to become more intelligent
- How to become more efficient

- How to become more globalized
- How to become more open
- How to become more complex

These discussions are, of course, important.

But they often take one premise for granted:

Civilization can continue to possess sufficient redundancy, time, and carrying capacity to accomplish these expansions.

Once that premise begins to waver, the discussion must change.

In a high-risk phase, civilization's most urgent question is no longer "how to do better," but:

How not to break apart first.

1. The logic of expansion and the logic of preservation are different

In a normal phase, civilization can prioritize:

- More pathways
- Greater complexity
- More experiments
- Broader participation
- Stronger system capabilities

But in a high-risk phase, continuing to act solely according to the logic of expansion may push already strained carrying capacity further toward rupture.

At that point, civilization must temporarily turn to a different logic:

- Reduce depletion
- Preserve deep structures
- Maintain the most crucial roles
- Preserve the capacity for repair
- Retain the parts from which a future can still grow

This is the logic of preservation.

2. Without a minimal survival model, a theory of expansion is incomplete

A genuinely credible theory of civilization cannot explain only how to grow in prosperous times. It must also explain how to protect the baseline in times of high risk.

Otherwise, it holds only in favorable conditions. Once civilization enters a phase of severe shocks, intense tension, and heavy overload, the theory loses its practical guiding power.

This chapter is therefore not a pessimistic turn, but a necessary addition for theoretical completeness.

3. A minimal survival model preserves the future rather than abandoning it

Proposing a "minimal survival model" does not mean that civilization should be content with low-level maintenance.

Quite the contrary. Its real purpose is:

When contraction becomes unavoidable, to preserve the core structures from which a future can still grow again.

In other words, the minimal survival model is not a "permanently downsized civilization." It is the "minimum protective layer that keeps civilization from rupturing."

II. What Does “Minimal” Mean?

“Minimal” must first be defined rigorously here.

Otherwise, it can easily be misunderstood as:

- Minimal efficiency
- A minimal standard of living
- Minimal use of technology
- The fewest institutional arrangements
- A minimal state or organization

None of these is what this book means by “minimal.”

Here, minimal refers to the irreducible set of core structures needed to maintain civilizational continuity during a high-risk phase.

In other words, it does not seek “the smaller, the better.” Instead, it asks:

- What would break if we had a little less?
- What would be lost if one more layer were cut away?
- Which parts, once lost, would be very difficult to grow back later?

“Minimal” is therefore a concept of a structural threshold, not an attachment to a particular scale.

1. Minimal does not mean impoverished

A minimal survival model does not mean eliminating all complexity.

On the contrary, what it seeks to preserve is often precisely what is deepest, most substantial, and hardest to rebuild.

2. Minimal does not mean maintaining everything equally

Nor does it mean compressing all functions indiscriminately.

In a high-risk phase, what truly matters is not “preserving everything equally,” but establishing priorities.

Some things must be preserved first. Others can be suspended, compressed, postponed, or simplified.

3. Minimal means the minimum structure “capable of regeneration”

Every judgment in this chapter ultimately revolves around one criterion:

Can it still support civilization’s regrowth?

If it cannot support regeneration, then even if it maintains some apparent order, it does not constitute a genuine minimal survival model.

III. The First Layer of Civilization’s Minimal Survival Model: Core Capabilities

This book argues that, if civilization is to avoid rupture during a high-risk phase, its first priority must be to preserve:

The core-capability layer.

This layer does not encompass all capabilities. It consists of those capabilities whose widespread loss would leave civilization unable to organize even basic continuity.

It includes at least the following categories.

1. The capacity to sustain survival

For example:

- Basic supplies
- Medical response
- Basic security
- Infrastructure operation
- Essential energy and logistical support

These belong to the baseline level, not to the level of lofty ideals.

Without them, it is difficult even to speak of civilization “continuing.”

2. The capacity for complex judgment

This is an area that modern civilization is particularly prone to underestimate, yet one of the hardest to rebuild. It means being able to:

- Make judgments amid uncertainty
- Handle exceptions
- Make trade-offs amid conflict
- Take over when systems fail
- Redefine problems when templates cease to work

If civilization outsources these capabilities extensively to systems without retaining sufficient redundancy among subjects, the cost of recovery will be extremely high if those systems themselves fail.

3. The capacity for long-term maintenance

During crises, many civilizations prioritize preserving “output” while sacrificing “maintenance.”

This is dangerous.

What genuinely keeps civilization from rupturing is often not explosive production, but:

- Maintaining old systems
- Repairing old networks
- Keeping infrastructure in good condition
- Preserving chains of knowledge
- Maintaining trust and everyday order

Maintenance capacity must therefore be included in the core layer.

4. The capacity for education and transmission

If, during a crisis, a civilization loses the ability to “continue passing capabilities on to the next level,” it will soon face a rupture in succession, even if it temporarily maintains the current order.

Education is therefore not an accessory to prosperity. It is part of the minimal survival model.

Education here means more than formal schooling. In a broader sense, it includes:

- Passing on experience
- Preserving knowledge
- Mentoring people into roles
- Continuing cultures and frameworks of judgment

5. The criterion for the core-capability layer

This can be summarized in one sentence:

Priority should be given to preserving any capability that, once lost by civilization, would be difficult to regrow quickly through platform mobilization or external fixes.

This is the core-capability layer.

IV. The Second Layer: Core Collaboration

Even if certain capabilities are preserved, civilization will still rupture if those capabilities cannot form collaborations anew.

The second layer of the minimal survival model is therefore:

The core-collaboration layer.

It addresses:

- How different capabilities can be reorganized
- How different roles can remain connected
- How different subjects can still accomplish things together under pressure

1. Why the collaborative layer matters more than “capable people”

Civilization is not the sum of a collection of capability nodes. It is the sum of the relationships among those nodes.

If only scattered capabilities remain, without collaborative structures, the system will rapidly fall into:

- Duplicated work
- High friction
- Broken responsibility
- Wasted resources
- Local capability combined with overall dysfunction

In a crisis, therefore, the question is not merely “who still knows how to do it?” More importantly:

Who can still work with whom, and how can their connections continue?

2. What the core-collaboration layer should preserve

At a minimum:

- Basic chains of trust
- Intermediary coordinating nodes
- Mechanisms for rapidly forming shared judgments
- Low-friction collaborative relationships among key roles
- Mechanisms for role succession and substitution during crises
- A minimum of shared rules and interpretive frameworks

In other words, the aim is not to preserve every collaboration, but to preserve the collaborative skeleton that keeps capabilities from dispersing.

3. Platforms are not the collaborative layer

This point requires particular emphasis.

Many modern systems mistakenly assume that, as long as platforms and connections remain, the collaborative layer remains.

It does not.

Platforms can help coordinate, but the genuine collaborative layer also includes:

- Trust
- Responsibility
- Interpretive authority
- Intermediary repair
- Contextual judgment
- The memory of long-term mutual adjustment

These things do not attach themselves to platforms automatically.

Once they are stripped away excessively, platforms retain only their mobilization function and can no longer sustain deep collaboration.

The core-collaboration layer must therefore be preserved in its own right.

V. The Third Layer: Core Participation

Whether civilization can avoid rupture also depends on an often-overlooked question:

During a high-risk phase, are enough people still retained within structures of genuine participation?

This is the third layer of the minimal survival model:

The core-participation layer.

1. Why high-risk phases make it even more important to preserve participation, rather than only systems

During crises, many structures instinctively move toward extreme centralization:

- A few nodes control all judgment
- Most people are excluded to the periphery
- Systems preserve efficiency but not participation

In the short term, this may improve response speed. Over the long term, however, it greatly weakens civilization's redundancy among subjects.

If large numbers of individuals are completely squeezed out of deep processes during a high-risk phase, civilization will face a larger problem after the crisis:

- Too few people can carry things forward
- Too few people retain the capacity for judgment
- Too few people can still take responsibility
- Too few people are willing to continue participating in shared reconstruction

During crises, therefore, preserving systems alone is insufficient. A sufficiently broad base of embedded subjects must also be preserved.

2. The core-participation layer does not preserve a condition in which “everyone does many things”

By preserving participation, this book does not mean maintaining the full activity of society as a whole during a crisis.

That is unrealistic.

What it preserves is a condition in which:

- Enough people are still not completely marginalized
- Enough people still retain room for judgment
- Enough people can still enter chains of responsibility

- Enough people are still not confined to a purely interface-level role

In other words,

what the core-participation layer must preserve is a minimum breadth of EP.

3. Why this is crucial to future reorganization

Civilization's regeneration cannot depend solely on a few central nodes. Ultimately, it must rely on enough subjects being connected back in.

If this layer breaks apart completely, reconstruction after the crisis will become extremely difficult.

The minimal survival model must therefore make this explicit:

Even during high-risk phases, structures that "people can still enter" must be preserved.

VI. The Fourth Layer: Core Vision

This is the layer most easily overlooked, yet an extremely important one.

Many people believe that, during high-risk phases, preserving the material and organizational layers is enough.

This book argues that it is not.

If civilization is to avoid rupture, it must also preserve:

The core-vision layer.

Here, "vision" is not an empty slogan. It means that a civilization can still answer:

- Why continue?
- Why share responsibility?
- Why not withdraw completely?
- Why retain these roles and pathways?
- Why is the future still worth reorganizing?

1. Why the vision layer is not a luxury

During a high-risk phase, if individuals and groups completely lose the "framework of meaning for continuing," then:

- Roles will disintegrate faster
- People will withdraw from participation faster
- Trust will evaporate faster
- Short-term self-preservation will overwhelm all long-term efforts

In other words, a material foundation can keep a system alive briefly, but a foundation of vision determines whether it will continue to be a civilization.

2. The vision layer preserves a minimum shared direction, not a "grand narrative"

The core-vision layer described in this book does not require everyone to share highly uniform ideals.

It is closer to a minimum shared direction:

- It remains worthwhile for us to maintain certain structures together
- Certain deep places should still be preserved
- Certain responsibilities still cannot be outsourced completely
- Certain futures are still worth reopening

This is the minimum premise of meaning for civilization to continue organizing itself.

3. Without the vision layer, the minimal survival model will rapidly degenerate into a machine for mere survival

Such a system might sustain itself briefly, but genuine regeneration would be difficult.

It would no longer retain an answer to the question “why rebuild?”

The core-vision layer is therefore not an accessory. It is the final link in the minimal survival model.

VII. The Relationship among the Four Layers: Mutual Support, Not a Parallel List

We can now list the four layers of the minimal survival model:

1. Core capabilities

2. Core collaboration

3. Core participation

4. Core vision

These four layers are not a list of parallel items. They form a mutually supporting structure.

1. Without core capabilities, the other layers have no practical foundation

2. Without core collaboration, capabilities disperse

3. Without core participation, collaboration becomes increasingly centralized and fragile

4. Without core vision, participation and collaboration gradually lose their sustained motivation

More compactly:

Capabilities ensure there is no rupture;

collaboration ensures there is no dispersal;

participation ensures there is no hollowing out;

vision ensures the reason to continue is not lost.

This is the skeleton of civilization’s minimal survival model.

VIII. Why High-Risk Phases Require Accepting “Deliberate Contraction”

Proposing a minimal survival model inevitably leads to a more practical question:

Must civilization accept certain deliberate contractions to preserve these four layers?

This book’s answer is:

At certain stages, yes.

This is not pessimism,

but recognition of the reality of high risk.

When carrying capacity is already approaching its limits, continuing to maintain every area of expansion will often make the system rupture faster.

1. What deliberate contraction means

Deliberate contraction is not across-the-board regression.

Survival is a baseline; it does not mean that “anything is permissible in the name of survival.” Temporary restrictions during a crisis must publicly explain their necessity, actual costs, who bears those costs, scope of

application, duration, review points, and exit conditions. They must not become permanent because they once proved effective, nor become a blank authorization to abolish basic rights and the tracing of responsibility.

Rather, it means deliberately:

- Temporarily compressing some low-priority complexity
- Temporarily narrowing certain costly areas of expansion
- Temporarily reducing some accumulations of diversity that cannot be sustained
- Temporarily concentrating resources and attention on the four core layers

In other words, deliberate contraction does not abandon the future. It prioritizes preserving the parts from which a future can still grow.

2. Why contraction can sometimes be more rational than continued expansion

If a system already faces:

- Excessive tension
- Severe overload
- Deepening alienation
- Declining capacity for repair

yet insists on advancing according to the normal logic of expansion, it will deplete itself in multiple directions simultaneously.

The result is often not “greater progress,” but “faster exhaustion.”

At that point, deliberately contracting some outer-layer complexity can instead create room for repair in the core layers.

3. The greatest dangers of deliberate contraction

The greatest dangers are:

- Mistakenly cutting away the core layers as well
- Preserving only surface efficiency, without preserving subjects and vision
- Severing all middle-layer structures and expecting central systems to replace everything
- Treating short-term visible indicators as the only things to preserve

That kind of “contraction” is not preservation. It accelerates collapse.

The key is therefore not whether to contract, but:

According to what principles should contraction take place?

Those principles are provided by the four-layer minimal survival model.

IX. How the Minimal Survival Model Responds to the Earlier Theoretical Constraint Framework

We can now reconnect this chapter with the theoretical constraint framework in Chapter 8:

In a survival crisis, the framework helps identify only the capabilities and relationships that must not be lost any further; it does not authorize unlimited emergency powers.

In normal phases, this relational framework mainly helps us understand how positive variables and negative constraints jointly determine civilizational stability.

In high-risk phases, however, the question narrows further:

When T, O, and R rise to a certain level, which capabilities, relationships, and procedures must be preserved first to prevent civilizational structures from rapidly sliding toward rupture?

This chapter's answer is:

- Prioritize preserving the core part of M_h
- Prioritize preserving the core collaborative skeleton of η
- Prioritize preserving the minimum breadth of EP
- At the same time, preserve the vision layer that enables these variables to continue to hold

As for D, a high-risk phase does not necessarily call for unlimited expansion. Instead, the emphasis is on "retaining seeds of diversity capable of expanding again."

This shows that the minimal survival model is, in fact, a baseline-protection interpretation of the theoretical constraint framework in an extreme phase.

X. A Crucial Judgment: Whether Civilization Can Regenerate Depends on What It Preserves during a Crisis, Not on What It Possessed Beforehand

The point this chapter most wants to establish can be condensed into one sentence:

What determines whether civilization can regenerate is not how much complexity it possessed at its peak, but what it preserves during a crisis.

A civilization may once have been:

- Very powerful
- Very complex
- Very prosperous
- Very efficient

But if, during a crisis:

- Its core-capability layer breaks apart
- Its core-collaboration layer disperses
- Its core-participation layer empties out
- Its core-vision layer disappears

then it will find it very difficult to grow back.

Conversely, even if a civilization must contract substantially, regeneration remains possible as long as it preserves these four layers.

This is the real significance of the "minimal survival model."

It is not a pessimistic picture. It means:

Retaining structural seeds for the future, even under the worst conditions.

Chapter Summary

This chapter proposed:

Civilization's minimal survival model.

The book argues that, when civilization enters a phase of high risk, low redundancy, and intensifying deep hollowing out, avoiding complete rupture requires prioritizing the preservation of at least four core structural layers:

- 1. Core capabilities: ensuring civilization still has the capacities to sustain survival, exercise complex judgment, carry out long-term maintenance, and transmit what it knows**
- 2. Core collaboration: ensuring capabilities do not disperse, and that basic trust, role succession, and a low-friction collaborative skeleton remain**
- 3. Core participation: ensuring enough people retain genuine access to structures and a minimum breadth for forming EP**
- 4. Core vision: ensuring civilization retains a minimum sense of direction for continuing to organize itself and preserve the future**

The chapter also argues that, at certain stages, civilization must accept principled deliberate contraction to preserve these irreducible structural cores.

The book thus completes its theoretical turn from “how structural meaning expands” to “how it is preserved during high-risk phases.”

Beginning with the next chapter, the book turns again toward future direction:

If civilization is to move forward after a crisis, how will structural meaning be reorganized?

And how will new sources of meaning shift out of old structures?

Chapter 19: The Shift in Sources of Meaning and Networked Participation

The previous chapter proposed “civilization’s minimal survival model.” It explained that, when a civilization enters a high-risk phase, what must genuinely be preserved first is not all existing complexity, but the core layers that can still keep civilization from rupturing and support the regrowth of structures in the future:

- Core capabilities
- Core collaboration
- Core participation
- Core vision

That chapter marked the book’s progression from “how crisis approaches” to “how continuity can be preserved during high-risk phases.”

At this point, however, the theory still remains at the level of “preservation.”

We must now take another step:

If civilization has not ruptured completely, where will new structural meaning grow after the crisis and during reorganization?

After the old centers of meaning weaken, how will new sources of meaning emerge?

These are the questions this chapter addresses.

A civilization cannot sustain itself forever through “baseline protection” alone.

The minimal survival model is intended only to prevent rupture. It is not civilization’s ultimate goal.

Once the core layers are preserved, what genuinely determines whether civilization can unfold again is:

Whether new sources of meaning have begun to emerge outside the old centers.

This is the question of the “shift in sources of meaning.”

The chapter’s central judgment is:

One of the deepest changes in future civilization will be more than technological enhancement or institutional rewriting: the principal sources of structural meaning will gradually shift from a single career–job–organization center toward more open structures of networked participation.

This does not mean that careers, organizations, and institutions will disappear completely. It means that they can no longer, on their own, fulfill the entire function of “providing most people with positions, pathways, and a sense of being needed.”

New sources of meaning will therefore increasingly grow out of:

- Participation through multiple pathways
- Networked collaboration
- Project-based connections
- Community contributions
- Maintenance and bridging roles
- Flexible deployment of capabilities on a shared foundation

In other words,

this chapter addresses the following transition:

When old centers begin to lose sufficient carrying capacity, structural meaning within civilization does not automatically disappear. It begins to shift.

Whether that shift can be recognized, sustained, and institutionalized will determine whether future civilization moves toward broader reorganization or remains in prolonged hollowing out.

I. Why the “Shift in Sources of Meaning” Becomes an Issue of Our Time

For a long historical period, most structural meaning in modern society was closely attached to a relatively stable center:

The career–job–organization system.

This system could serve as a center of meaning for so long not merely because it provided income, but because it also supplied several crucial things:

- Stable roles
- Sustainable pathways
- Social recognition
- Entry points into collaboration
- Positions of identity
- Ladders of growth
- A sense of being needed

In other words, the modern occupational system matters not simply because it “pays wages,” but because, for a long time, it connected individuals into civilizational structures.

People within it did more than earn a living. They also gained answers to:

- Where do I belong?
- What am I doing?
- What needs do my capabilities respond to?
- How do I join with others to constitute a larger process?
- Can I continue to deepen my position in the future?

For a long time, this made the occupational system both a way of organizing the economy and a way of organizing meaning.

But that center is changing.

1. The job-centered model can no longer adequately sustain all individuals

Technology, platformization, automation, and organizational restructuring are making many jobs:

- Less stable
- More fragmented
- More confined to shallow interfaces
- Shorter-cycle
- Less able to consolidate into deep roles

Jobs consequently continue to exist, but find it increasingly difficult to provide complete structural meaning reliably for most people as they once did.

2. Organizations no longer monopolize all entry points into participation

In the past, entry into real-world structures often depended heavily on:

- Companies
- Schools
- Factories

- Institutions
- Bureaucratic systems
- Professional organizations

Networked society and the platform era have begun to open up some forms of participation outside organizations.

Although these forms are not yet stable, they are creating new entry points into the real world.

3. The ways individual capabilities connect with real-world needs are changing

Many capabilities that previously could be mobilized only through formal occupational structures can now potentially be reconnected through more flexible networks, projects, communities, or sharing structures.

This means that the arena in which structural meaning is generated is expanding outward.

The “shift in sources of meaning” is therefore not a literary description. It is a real-world structural process.

II. What Are “Sources of Meaning”?

To avoid misunderstanding, this chapter must first define the concept.

“Sources of meaning” does not refer to ultimate questions such as “why do people live?” Instead, it means:

The principal structural entry points through which individuals continuously gain positions, participation, a sense of being needed, structures of responsibility, and channels for growth within the real world and civilization.

In other words, sources of meaning concern “where structural meaning continuously flows into individual lives.”

They typically involve:

- Through which pathways I enter the real world
- Where I am needed
- Where my contributions are recognized
- Within which structures my roles can deepen
- How I continually form relationships with others that possess carrying capacity

Sources of meaning are therefore never purely a psychological question. They are a question of entry points into civilization.

1. Sources of meaning are not equivalent to finding something “interesting” for a moment

Many modern societies mistakenly recast meaning as interest, experience, or enthusiasm.

These certainly matter, but they do not necessarily constitute sources of structural meaning.

Sources of structural meaning must have:

- Sustainability
- The capacity to be carried and sustained
- Access to shared processes
- The capacity to form roles in real-world relationships and provide verifiable facts for project-specific trust

Merely “finding something interesting” is not enough.

2. Sources of meaning are also not equivalent to being needed on a single occasion

Being needed occasionally does not constitute a stable source of meaning.

A genuine source of meaning requires some degree of recurrence, stability, and accumulation.

It must enable individuals to keep entering the real world, rather than appearing in it only briefly from time to time.

3. Sources of meaning change as civilizational structures change

This is precisely the subject of this chapter.

Sources of meaning are not historical constants.

The agricultural, industrial, information, and AI eras do not share the same principal structures of meaning sources.

We must therefore analyze “sources of meaning” as a changing civilizational variable.

III. Why Old Centers of Meaning Are Losing Their Exclusive Position

This chapter does not claim that “careers are now meaningless” or that “organizations will be replaced completely.”

Such claims are too simplistic.

The more accurate judgment is:

Old centers of meaning have not disappeared, but they are losing their exclusive position.

1. Career pathways are becoming less continuous

In the past, a person could gradually develop the following through a long-term career pathway:

- Consolidated roles
- Accumulated experience
- Deepened responsibility
- Accumulated credibility
- Stable identity

Now, however, many pathways are becoming:

- Highly fluid
- Highly fragmented
- Highly temporary
- Highly dependent on platforms
- Highly replaceable

As a result, careers remain, but “careers as centers of meaning” begin to weaken.

2. Positions within organizations are becoming harder to deepen

Middle-layer roles, long-term development chains, and positions of deep responsibility are being compressed in many organizations.

Although individuals remain within organizations, they find it increasingly difficult to move from shallow interfaces into deep places.

This weakens organizations’ function as “deepeners of meaning.”

3. A single pathway is increasingly unable to encompass complex lives

Life trajectories in modern society are longer, more uncertain, and span more domains.

If a civilization still requires most people to stake all their meaning on one pathway, large numbers of individuals will be repeatedly thrown out as those pathways fluctuate.

This shows that the problem with the old center is not “complete ineffectiveness,” but:

Its increasing inability, on its own, to perform the function of sustaining people within civilization on a large scale.

New structures of meaning sources must therefore emerge. Otherwise, hollowing out will become increasingly widespread.

IV. The Shift in Sources of Meaning Is Not the “Disappearance of Meaning,” but the “Outward Movement of Its Centers”

This point must be made very clearly.

Much modern anxiety arises from a mistaken judgment:

The old structures have failed, so meaning has disappeared too.

This book disagrees with that inference.

The more accurate judgment is:

Often, meaning itself has not disappeared. Rather, the central positions that previously carried meaning are moving outward.

1. From a single job-centered model to a center of multipath participation

People no longer acquire structural meaning only through a particular job. They may simultaneously form more composite sources of meaning through:

- Learning
- Creation
- Coordination
- Community maintenance
- Care
- Project collaboration
- Knowledge sharing
- Cross-cultural connections
- Networked services beyond platforms

2. From formal organizations as centers to networked collaboration as centers

Structural meaning can increasingly be generated within:

- Project-based networks
- Community-based networks
- Open collaborative networks
- Hybrid organizational networks
- Real-world collaborative networks on a shared foundation

rather than only within a single formal institution.

3. From fixed identity as the center to combinations of roles as the center

Individuals’ sources of structural meaning are also increasingly likely to come from combinations of multiple roles, rather than one identity governing an entire life.

In other words, a person no longer has to be only:

- Someone with a particular occupational identity

They may simultaneously be:

- A learner
- A creator
- A maintainer
- An organizer
- A caregiver
- A translator
- A connector
- A community node

Combinations of these roles are forming new centers of meaning.

The shift is therefore not a fall, but a reorganization.

The question is simply:

Does civilization have the capacity to sustain this shift?

V. Why Networked Participation Will Become a New Structure of Meaning Sources

If old centers are losing their exclusive position, why will new centers increasingly point toward “networked participation”?

Because networked participation addresses the shortcomings of the old centers in several crucial ways.

1. It can sustain capabilities across multiple pathways

Traditional job systems often require individuals to adapt to a single pathway. Networked participation can more readily accommodate:

- Composite capabilities
- Capabilities at the margins
- Cross-disciplinary capabilities
- Capabilities not yet fully recognized by formal institutions

This gives many individuals who previously had difficulty entering the old centers new entry points into structural meaning.

2. It can lower certain entry barriers

Under certain conditions, networked participation can bypass some of the rigid barriers at traditional entry points, enabling individuals to enter processes first through projects, communities, sharing networks, distributed collaboration, and similar means, and then gradually consolidate credibility.

3. It can connect needs and capabilities more flexibly

Many genuine needs are not suited to standardized treatment by large organizations, and many capabilities are not suited to being exercised solely through formal jobs.

Networked participation can open up finer-grained connections between the two.

4. It can reactivate “non-mainstream contributions”

For example:

- Maintenance
- Bridging

- Translation
- Small-scale organizing
- Contextual judgment
- Shared foundational services
- Local knowledge and cultural connections

These contributions, often undervalued in the old centers, may more readily find new real-world arenas within networked participation.

5. It is better suited to a highly mobile future civilization

Future civilization is very likely to be more mobile and to operate more across regions, cultures, and projects. Under those conditions, networked participation has greater sustaining capacity than a single rigid pathway. Networked participation is therefore more than a fashionable form. It may become a new carrier of structural meaning.

VI. Networked Participation Is Not Inherently Healthy: It Can Also Become Shallow

This chapter must not portray networked participation as an inherent cure-all. Otherwise, the entire book would slip back into linear optimism.

We must acknowledge:

Networked participation can indeed become a new source of meaning, but it can also very easily degenerate into surface activity, shallow-interface cycles, and platform-dependent activity.

1. Connection is not deep participation

One of the illusions most readily produced by networked environments is:

- I connected
- I expressed myself
- I participated
- I was present

But without:

- Stable roles
- Growth pathways
- Accumulated credibility
- Structures that carry collaboration
- Room for judgment and responsibility

these activities can still very easily remain at P, unable to enter EP.

2. Platform logic continually flattens networked participation

Platforms naturally favor:

- High frequency
- Short feedback cycles
- Visibility
- Ease of quantification
- High interaction density

Yet much networked participation that can genuinely generate deep structural meaning requires:

- Long cycles
- Slow consolidation
- Strong trust
- Low noise
- High responsibility

The two are often in conflict.

Without dedicated design, therefore, platforms can very easily reshape networked participation into shallow activity.

3. Without middle-layer support, networked participation is difficult to deepen

If networked participation consists only of point-to-point contact, without:

- Collaborative intermediaries
- Mechanisms for pathway advancement
- Mechanisms for recording contributions
- Mechanisms for re-entry after failure

then it remains in a state of “many opportunities, little consolidation.”

Structures of this kind cannot genuinely serve as centers of meaning for future civilization.

This chapter must therefore emphasize:

The key to networked participation is not the number of connections, but whether it can form structures capable of deepening, bearing responsibility, and persisting.

VII. The Real Difficulty in Shifting Sources of Meaning: Turning New Entry Points into Sustainable Pathways, Rather than Merely Opening Them

Many civilizational transitions fail not because new entry points go unseen, but because the “appearance of entry points” is mistaken for “the establishment of new structures.”

This is a very common misjudgment.

1. An entry point is only a starting point, not a structure

For example, a platform enables more people to express themselves; a sharing system enables more people to offer their capabilities; an open project enables more people to participate.

All of this is good.

But without mechanisms that follow through, these remain merely entry points.

2. If new entry points cannot form sustained relationships, they cannot consolidate into pathways

As the preceding chapter explained, facts about contributions should be recorded within the necessary scope; whether project-specific trust forms still depends on new collaborative relationships.

Otherwise, individuals participate continually but always start from zero.

Such a structure cannot genuinely sustain a large-scale shift in sources of meaning.

3. If new entry points cannot form roles, they cannot carry subjects

If participation remains merely loose activity and cannot gradually form stable roles, individuals will find it difficult to be genuinely sustained.

They will keep drifting between “having things to do” and “having no position.”

4. If new entry points cannot lead to deep places, they will create new hollowing out

This is particularly crucial.

Future civilization cannot merely leave more people floating on the surface of networks. It must enable some people, through networked participation, gradually to enter:

- Deeper positions of judgment
- Positions of greater responsibility
- More stable collaborative nodes
- Thicker role structures

Otherwise, the shift in sources of meaning will merely become a double hollowing out in which “the old centers fail and the new centers are equally fragile.”

The real key, therefore, is not simply “whether there are new entry points,” but:

Whether those entry points can be organized into new sustainable pathways.

VIII. The Relationship between the Shift in Sources of Meaning and the Minimal Survival Model

Although this chapter begins to turn toward future civilization, it has not left behind the previous chapter’s “minimal survival model.”

Quite the contrary. The shift in sources of meaning matters precisely because:

Only when new structures of meaning sources begin to form can the core layers preserved in civilization’s minimal survival model move beyond defense and turn back into growth.

1. Core capabilities need new pathways for reactivation

If core capabilities are preserved, but there are no new real-world pathways through which more subjects can enter and deepen, those capabilities will eventually age nonetheless.

2. Core collaboration needs new participation structures to expand again

If the collaborative skeleton is preserved but cannot bring in new networked participants, the collaborative layer will become increasingly closed.

3. Core participation can genuinely recover its breadth only within new source structures

This means that, after preserving a minimum breadth of EP, civilization must also open arenas for new EP growth.

4. Core vision must regain practical expression through new source structures

If vision cannot translate into new sources of structural meaning, it will degenerate into slogans again.

The shift in sources of meaning is therefore precisely the process through which vision becomes real again.

This chapter can thus be said to answer:

After a crisis, how does civilization move from “staying alive” toward “growing again”?

The first step in growing again is for new sources of meaning to begin to be organized.

IX. A Crucial Judgment: Future Civilizational Competition Is Not Only Technological Competition, but Competition over “Who Can Better Provide Genuine Entry Points into Meaning for Most People”

Toward its close, this chapter can formulate a strong judgment:

The central competition among future civilizations concerns not only whose technological capabilities are stronger, but, more importantly, which civilization can better provide most people with genuine, sustainable entry points into meaning that can deepen.

This matters because it brings civilizational competition back from a narrow focus on:

- Computing power
- Capital
- Platforms
- Output
- Organizational efficiency

to a deeper set of questions:

- Can this civilization sustain more people?
- Can it enable more people to move from shallow interfaces into deep places?
- Can it turn capabilities at the margins into structural participation?
- Can it enable networked participation genuinely to grow into new thick structures?

If not, civilization will become increasingly hollow even if its technology is powerful.

Conversely, if it can accomplish this, it will not only be more stable; it will also be more likely to give rise to Civilization Leap anew.

X. A Crucial Transition: From the “Shift in Sources of Meaning” to the “Meaning Economy”

This chapter has now explained that:

- Old centers of meaning are losing their exclusive position
- Structural meaning has not automatically disappeared; it is shifting
- New sources of meaning increasingly point toward networked participation
- The real key lies not in entry points themselves, but in whether they can form sustainable pathways

The next question naturally follows:

If increasing amounts of structural meaning begin to form around networked participation, shared foundations, knowledge connections, cultural creation, maintenance, care, bridging, and collaboration, does this change mean that a new socioeconomic structure is already emerging?

This leads to the next chapter’s subject:

The Meaning Economy: The Formation of New Participation Structures.

Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed the shift in sources of meaning and networked participation.

The book explains that the center of meaning long provided in modern civilization by the career–job–organization system is gradually losing its exclusive position.

This does not mean meaning is disappearing. It means that the principal sources of structural meaning are moving outward from the old centers toward more open structures of networked participation.

New sources of meaning may increasingly arise in:

- Multipath participation
- Project-based and community-based collaboration
- The flow of capabilities on shared foundations
- Previously undervalued roles such as maintenance, bridging, translation, and care
- Real-world processes outside organizations that can nonetheless consolidate sustainably

The chapter also emphasizes, however, that networked participation is not inherently healthy.

It can become a new source of structural meaning only if it can form roles, trust, growth pathways, and deep places within specific relationships; records and platforms cannot guarantee these outcomes in advance.

Otherwise, it will merely create another form of surface activity and deep hollowing out.

The chapter therefore advances a crucial judgment:

What truly matters for future civilization is not merely opening new entry points, but enabling new entry points into meaning to grow into sustainable structural pathways.

The next chapter develops this further:

If the center of gravity of structural meaning is shifting, is a new socioeconomic layer already taking shape?

Chapter 20: The Meaning Economy: The Formation of New Participation Structures

The previous chapter proposed a crucial transition:

Old centers of meaning have not disappeared completely, but they are losing their exclusive position; in some areas, the support of structural meaning may spill over from a single career–job–organization center into more open networked participation. The extent and speed still require verification.

This means that certain deep changes within civilization can no longer be explained solely through “changes in employment,” “platform expansion,” or “occupational restructuring.”

When more and more people’s real-world positions are no longer determined solely by the traditional job system, and increasing amounts of structural meaning begin to arise from:

- Learning and knowledge sharing
- Coordination and bridging
- Community maintenance
- Cultural expression
- Fluid participation on shared foundations
- Project-based collaboration
- Maintenance, care, and labor involving slow-moving variables

then we face more than the expansion of marginal areas of the old economy. We face the question of whether a new structural layer is emerging locally.

This book calls that layer:

The meaning economy organizes participation, connections, resources, and returns. It does not turn “meaning itself” into a commodity, an asset, or a unified unit of measurement. Meaning must not be turned into an asset; anything that can be recorded, exchanged, or reciprocated can only be actions, resources, services, evidence of contributions, and conditions of participation within a bounded scope.

The Meaning Economy.

An immediate clarification is necessary:

The “meaning economy” does not mean simply commodifying meaning, nor does it mean that all activities can be settled directly in units of “interest.”

More precisely, it points to the following:

When the generation, connection, recognition, and reciprocation of more and more social activities no longer revolve primarily around a single structure of material production and job-based employment, but increasingly around the formation, flow, support, and expansion of structural meaning, a new socioeconomic layer begins to appear.

In other words, the meaning economy is not the opposite of the traditional economy. It is a new structural layer gradually emerging on the foundations of the traditional economy, digital networks, and technological enhancement.

It addresses not “why people live,” but:

- How people enter the real world
- How people are needed within networks
- Which kinds of contributions receive sustained recognition
- Which kinds of participation can consolidate into credibility
- Which kinds of connections can turn into sustainable pathways

In other words, the meaning economy is a way of organizing structural meaning at the socioeconomic level. This chapter's task is to articulate that new layer clearly. If the previous chapter discussed how "sources of meaning are shifting," this chapter takes the next step: Once these new sources of meaning continue to expand and begin forming relatively stable structures of participation, connection, recording, and returns, they constitute a new form of participatory economy. This is the "meaning economy."

I. Why the Concept of a "Meaning Economy" Is Needed

When new structural changes occur in an era, old concepts are often the first things to become inadequate. In traditional economic language, for example, the organizing logics most familiar to us usually concern:

- Production
- Exchange
- Wages
- Jobs
- Consumption
- Ownership
- Labor markets
- Price signals

These logics remain valid, of course, but they increasingly struggle to explain certain important phenomena in full.

For example:

- Many people devote considerable time to knowledge sharing, maintenance, connecting, care, translation, and community organizing, yet traditional job structures cannot easily describe these activities fully
- Some activities with high structural value do not directly generate high income, yet continually create real-world networks and participation pathways
- Some sharing-based, open, collaborative projects clearly generate structural meaning of substantial thickness, yet do not rely entirely on traditional employment relationships
- Many individuals' real-world positions increasingly derive from the accumulation of multiple small-scale participations, rather than a single job identity

In other words, old economic language increasingly struggles to explain:

Why certain activities appear "not to be typical economic activities," yet continually generate real-world positions, collaboration, credibility, and support for civilization.

This book argues that, without a new concept to organize these phenomena, we will keep misjudging the future:

- Mistaking them for "marginal hobbies"
- Mistaking them for "platform noise"
- Mistaking them for "immature markets"
- Mistaking them for "nonproductive ancillary activities"

while overlooking the possibility that they are forming a crucial supporting layer for future civilization.

The concept of a "meaning economy" is therefore needed.

1. It is not intended to romanticize every activity

This book proposes the “meaning economy” not to indiscriminately elevate everything that appears warm, gentle, or creative.

On the contrary, it seeks to distinguish more rigorously:

- Which activities genuinely generate structural meaning
- Which activities are merely surface bustle
- Which forms of participation can form pathways, credibility, and sustained support
- Which are merely brief episodes of depletion

The concept therefore does not lower standards. It reconstructs them.

2. It is not intended to negate the traditional economy

The meaning economy does not replace material production, market exchange, or organizational divisions of labor.

On the contrary, it builds on those foundations.

Without basic supplies, technological systems, platform infrastructure, and organizational capabilities, the meaning economy could not unfold either.

This is therefore not “replacing reality with meaning,” but:

Identifying a new layer of structural dynamics on the foundation of reality.

3. It is intended to capture “new participation structures”

The chapter’s central judgment can be stated at the outset:

This hypothesis concerns neither new consumption nor new entertainment, but whether certain practices reveal fragments of new participation structures.

This structural layer will offer new answers to:

- Who is needed?
- Who remains connected?
- Who can accumulate credibility?
- Who can form deep places?
- Which roles deserve to be sustained over the long term?
- How does civilization connect more people into real-world processes?

This is why it matters.

II. What Is the “Meaning Economy”?

We can now give this chapter’s formal definition:

This book treats the “meaning economy” as a hypothesis awaiting verification: certain activities may form a new socioeconomic structural layer around conditions of participation, connections to needs, facts about collaboration, and lawful returns; it does not produce, measure, or settle meaning itself.

There are five key terms in this definition:

1. Generation

Its concern is not ready-made meaning, but how new real-world positions are generated.

In other words, people do not possess structural meaning in advance; it continually grows through participation.

2. Connection

The meaning economy is more than individual expression. It involves new networks of connections forming among capabilities, needs, roles, communities, and real-world problems.

3. Recording

Without records, participation and contributions can easily be reset to zero.

The meaning economy must therefore have its own mechanisms of memory.

4. Recognition

Certain activities can become part of the meaning economy not simply because they occur, but because communities, platforms, organizations, or institutions recognize them as having genuine structural value.

5. Returns

Without some form of return, participation structures are difficult to sustain.

Returns here need not be monetary alone. They may also include:

- Reference information for project-specific trust
- Deeper places
- Stronger connections
- Bounded resource permissions separately granted by rights holders
- Learning opportunities
- Organizational trust
- Continuing entry points into the real world

The meaning economy is therefore not about “making everyone feel that things are meaningful,” but about:

Enabling conditions of participation to form a process that can be tested and interrupted:

Connecting needs and capabilities → Factual recording → Independent authorization and responsibility review
→ Deciding whether to participate again.

Whether there are net benefits, and whether the process is better than existing institutions, must be determined through real-world comparison.

III. Why the Word “Economy” Must Still Be Retained

Some may ask:

If this chapter concerns participation, pathways, facts about contributions, project-specific trust, and support, why still use the word “economy”?

Might this make the concept excessively instrumental?

This book argues that “economy” must be retained.

Precisely because it reminds us:

Meaning does not float in the air. To persist genuinely, it must enter structures of resources, time, organization, and returns.

1. Without allocations of time and resources, there is no sustainable participation

However enthusiastic someone may be, participation cannot be sustained over the long term without basic room in their schedule, minimum survival support, and practical conditions for entering structures.

This means that sources of meaning will ultimately touch upon:

- Time allocation
- Survival security
- Access to resources
- Social support
- Organizational carrying capacity

These are economic questions.

2. Without mechanisms of return, there are no genuine pathways

If a structure constantly demands people's commitment but never provides returns in the form of:

- Reference information for project-specific trust
- Positions
- Resources
- Opportunities for pathway advancement
- Stable recognition

then it will not become a genuine meaning economy. It will merely become a depleting arena of participation.

3. Without support at the economic level, structural meaning remains sporadic goodwill

Civilization cannot sustain itself over the long term solely through individuals burning themselves out.

A genuinely stable new participation structure must be able to connect meaning with some form of real-world settlement mechanism.

Otherwise, it cannot expand or enter civilization's principal structure.

The word "economy" therefore does not diminish meaning. It emphasizes:

Structural meaning that cannot enter cycles of resources and returns will find it difficult to grow into stable structures at the civilizational level.

IV. Basic Features of the Meaning Economy

To distinguish it further from older logics, this chapter proposes several basic features of the meaning economy.

1. It centers participation, rather than employment alone

In the traditional economy, many real-world positions depend heavily on employment relationships. Whether you enter a structure depends primarily on whether you enter a job.

The meaning economy places greater emphasis on:

- Whether you have entered a real-world process
- Whether you have formed sustainable participation
- Whether you have gained a position through multipath connections

In other words, it gives greater weight to participation structures than to contractual relationships along a single pathway.

2. It treats connection as a crucial intermediary, rather than transaction as the sole intermediary

Transactions remain important, of course. But many crucial activities in the meaning economy cannot be fully expressed by a single transaction.

They depend on more complex connections:

- Long-term collaboration
- Trust networks
- Community support
- Joint evaluation by multiple parties
- Project-based and relational embeddedness

Connection, rather than a single exchange, therefore becomes the central intermediary.

3. It treats trust formed within relationships and independent judgment as conditions for deepening pathways, rather than relying solely on job promotion

In traditional structures, many people deepen their positions primarily through a one-directional promotion mechanism within an organization.

In the meaning economy, trust within specific relationships may become another important condition:

- Who continues to trust you?
- Have you left stable traces in multiple networks?
- Does new collaboration form more substantial positions on the basis of current capabilities, consent, and responsibility?

This means that future growth in structural thickness will no longer occur only through hierarchical promotion.

4. It uses multiple returns as its basis for continuity, rather than wages as the sole form of settlement

Wages remain important, but returns in the meaning economy are more composite:

- Income
- Reference information for project-specific trust
- Opportunities to apply for resource permissions
- Positions as collaborative nodes
- Entry points into learning and growth
- Community support
- Positions of deeper responsibility

“Returns” thus no longer take only a single monetary form, but they are certainly not merely encouragement of the spirit either.

5. It gives greater emphasis to the real-world value of contributions involving slow-moving variables

The meaning economy will bring many actions long undervalued in the old economy back into the structural center, for example:

- Maintenance
- Care
- Bridging
- Organizational repair
- Cultural preservation
- Long-term organization of knowledge
- Relational labor

This is not because they have suddenly become “noble,” but because civilization is beginning to recognize again:

These actions form the foundation of sustainable structures.

V. The Meaning Economy Is Not Inherently Anti-Capital: It Reorders “What Deserves to Be Sustained”

Another misunderstanding must also be avoided here: that the meaning economy inherently means opposition to markets, capital, or organizations.

This book does not adopt such a simple dichotomy.

The meaning economy’s real focus is not “what it opposes,” but:

Reordering which kinds of activities and roles deserve to be sustained by civilization over the long term.

1. It does not abolish efficiency; it refuses to let efficiency alone define meaning

2. It does not deny transactions; it refuses to let transactions alone define value

3. It does not exclude platforms; it refuses to let platforms flatten all contributions through a single logic of visibility

4. It does not abolish employment; it refuses to force all structural meaning back inside employment relationships

This chapter therefore does not advocate a romanticized “society beyond the economy.” It advocates:

Reopening, on the foundation of the real economy, participation and return structures that can genuinely support civilizational continuity.

This is the practical direction of the meaning economy.

VI. Which Real-World Phenomena Foreshadow the Emergence of the Meaning Economy?

If the “meaning economy” is more than fantasy, it should already have certain early forms in the real world.

This book argues that at least several kinds of phenomena deserve attention.

1. Knowledge-sharing and open collaborative networks

In many fields, numerous high-value structures are completed not through traditional closed employment loops, but through:

- Shared knowledge
- Open projects
- Distributed collaboration
- Volunteer maintenance
- Community co-creation

Although these activities often coexist with the old economy, they may also form new collaborative trust and pathway structures; their specific effects still require empirical testing.

2. Community-based support and the labor of repairing relationships

Many real-world systems retain basic vitality not because their formal institutions are perfect, but because extensive community labor continually repairs the cracks.

If such labor is better recognized, recorded, and reciprocated, it will become an important component of the meaning economy.

3. Multiple identities and composite participation pathways

More and more people no longer define themselves through a single career alone.

They enter the world through combinations of multiple roles:

- Some job-based work
- Some learning
- Some creation
- Some connecting and organizing
- Some sharing-based or project-based participation

These composite pathways foreshadow a change in the structure of meaning sources.

4. The renewed recognition of the value of maintenance and care

In high-tech societies, people increasingly recognize:

Much of what genuinely determines whether civilization can continue is not explosive innovation itself, but:

- Maintenance
- Repair
- Care
- Slow collaboration
- Foundational support

Once these forms of labor are brought back into the structural center, the underlying logic of the meaning economy becomes clearer.

5. Explorations of recording facts about contributions outside jobs

Whether open-source contribution histories, community testimony, project contribution records, or the early forms of more mature contribution-record prototypes in the future, all point in one direction:

Society is trying to find mechanisms of structural recognition beyond jobs.

All of these can be seen as beginnings of the meaning economy.

VII. The Relationship between the Meaning Economy and EP: Fundamentally, It Is a Structure That “Enables Effective Participation to Continue”

EP is one of the central variables of this book.

This chapter must therefore connect the meaning economy directly with EP.

The essence of the meaning economy is not to create more surface activity, but to enable effective participation to form, receive recognition, be recorded, and continue.

This sentence is extremely important.

1. Without EP, the meaning economy degenerates into an emotional marketplace

If a system primarily rewards:

- Exposure
- Emotional expression
- Surface interaction

- Frequent visibility

then, although it appears to revolve around “meaning,” it is actually only producing another platform-based surface economy.

2. A genuine meaning economy must serve the expansion of EP

It must, in other words, make it possible for more people to enter:

- Positions of judgment
- Positions of responsibility
- Positions of creation
- Positions of collaboration
- Positions for deepening pathways

If it cannot do this, it is not a new civilizational structure. It is merely new packaging.

3. The most important criterion for assessing the meaning economy is therefore its capacity for deepening, rather than its bustle

A genuinely mature meaning economy should make it easier for both individuals and communities to:

- Become thicker
- Connect
- Be seen
- Be recorded
- Be sustained continually

In other words, it must ultimately be able to move participation from P toward EP.

VIII. The Real Dividing Line between the Meaning Economy and the Traditional Economy: It Begins to Turn “Being Needed” Back into an Organizable Public Structure

This chapter can formulate a still deeper judgment:

The real dividing line between the meaning economy and the traditional economy lies in the former beginning to reorganize “being needed.”

The traditional economy also organizes “being needed,” of course, but more through:

- Wage-paying jobs
- Price signals
- Organizational employment
- Capital allocation

The meaning economy opens another layer:

- Enabling more capabilities that were not easily absorbed by jobs to enter the real world
- Enabling more contributions that were difficult to express through prices to gain structural recognition
- Turning more commitments previously confined to individual goodwill into sustainable civilizational pathways

In other words:

It seeks to release “being needed” from a limited set of formal positions and reorganize it into a broader public structure.

This step is crucial.

The core of structural meaning ultimately concerns:

- Whether the world genuinely needs the individual
- Whether that being-needed is sustainable
- Whether it can consolidate into deep places and long-term credibility

It is precisely here that the meaning economy has value at the civilizational level.

IX. A Crucial Judgment: A More Sustainable Future Society Is Assessed Not Only by Output, but by Whether It Can Maintain Continuity among Contribution Facts, Project-Specific Trust, and New Participation Judgments without Automatic Conversion

At the end of this chapter, we can offer a very important judgment about civilization:

The most stable future society will not necessarily be the one with the highest output on a single measure. It is more likely to be one that can preserve facts about contributions and form project-specific trust while keeping new participation subject to independent judgment.

Why?

Because civilization's genuine long-term stability depends not only on total output, but more on:

- How many people can be sustained
- How many contributions can be seen
- How much credibility can be consolidated
- How many people can continually enter EP
- How many deep places can keep growing

This is a deeper source of stability than GDP alone, efficiency alone, or a single technological indicator.

The meaning economy is therefore not an ancillary layer. It may be a core component of future civilizational resilience.

X. A Crucial Transition: From the “Meaning Economy” to Concrete Institutional Prototypes

This chapter has now explained:

- Why the meaning economy needs to be proposed
- Its definition
- How it differs from the traditional economy
- Its real-world beginnings
- Its direct relationship with EP
- Why it may become a new supporting layer for future civilization

Yet one crucial question remains:

Through what real-world structures might this meaning economy be organized?

How can it avoid remaining an abstract idea and genuinely translate into networks, platforms, shared foundations, and contribution pathways?

This naturally moves the book to its next chapter:

Shared World, Dream Garden, and Networked Collaborative Structures.

Chapter Summary

This chapter proposed:

The Meaning Economy.

The book defines it only as a hypothesis about participation structures awaiting verification: observing whether conditions of participation, connections to needs, facts about collaboration, and lawful returns can produce net positive outcomes.

It does not replace the traditional economy. It is a new layer of participation structures gradually forming on the foundations of the traditional economy, digital networks, and technological enhancement.

The core of the meaning economy is not romanticizing “doing what one likes.” It is enabling more and more real-world participation to form:

- Structural being-needed
- Sustainable roles
- Accumulated credibility
- Multiple returns
- The generation of deep places

The chapter further explains that the test of the meaning economy is not surface activity, but whether it improves real conditions of participation while safeguarding boundaries concerning rights, authorization, responsibility, exit, and data. Facts about contributions, project-specific trust, and new participation judgments must not be automatically organized into a closed conversion loop.

The chapter therefore proposes a crucial judgment:

The real competition among future civilizations is not only competition in technology and output, but also competition over who can better organize structural meaning into a sustainable economic foundation.

The next chapter takes this abstract layer further, moving into concrete institutional prototypes and proposed network structures:

Chapter 21: Shared World, Dream Garden, and Networked Collaborative Structures

The previous chapter introduced the concept of the “meaning economy,” arguing that increasing numbers of crucial activities in future civilization will no longer revolve solely around traditional employment, individual jobs, and standard transactional logic, but increasingly around:

- The generation of structural meaning
- The opening of participation pathways
- The preservation of facts about contributions and the formation of project-specific trust
- The sustained support of networked collaboration

In other words, the previous chapter proposed that certain new participation structures may be emerging locally, but have not yet been adequately verified.

At this point, however, the theory still remains at a middle level of abstraction.

If the “meaning economy” remains only a concept and cannot be mapped further onto concrete structural prototypes, it can still easily be misunderstood as:

- A general appeal to values
- A cultural narrative
- An idealized vision
- A rhetorical supplement to the old economy

This chapter must therefore advance the discussion:

Through what kinds of network prototypes can these new participation structures actually be organized?

The book proposes two crucial prototypes:

- Shared World
- Dream Garden

These names are not literary ornaments. They correspond to two different but closely coupled kinds of structural problems.

Shared World

primarily addresses:

How resources and foundational conditions can be transformed from inefficient possession into a broader, sustainable, coordinable, and accessible foundation for public participation.

Dream Garden

primarily addresses:

How capabilities, needs, projects, aspirations, and real-world tasks can be connected, matched, brought into collaboration, and consolidated over time within more open networks.

If the former is the “foundational layer,” the latter is the “generative layer.”

If the former addresses “how people can be sustained,” the latter addresses “how people can begin genuinely to develop pathways.”

If the former leans toward a shared foundation, the latter leans toward a collaborative engine.

The chapter’s central judgment can be stated at the outset:

Testing the meaning-economy hypothesis requires separately testing two types of conditions:

A network of shareable foundational resources,

and a collaborative network capable of sustainably generating structural meaning.

Shared World and Dream Garden are the institutional prototypes for these two layers.

Prototype boundaries | They are only institutional hypotheses that can be tested, fail, be exited, and be revised. They acquire no sovereignty over global resources, no authority to adjudicate public purposes, and no automatic enforcement authority. Any pilot must specify its jurisdiction, rights holders, scope of authorization, chain of responsibility, allocation of costs and risks, appeals, exit, and termination conditions.

I. Why “New Ideas” Alone Are Insufficient: The Need for Structural Prototypes

One important reason civilization repeatedly hollows out at crucial stages is:

Many correct judgments remain at the level of ideas without reaching the structural level.

For example, people may all acknowledge that:

- Maintenance matters
- Care matters
- Bridging matters
- Knowledge sharing matters
- Networked collaboration matters
- More people should gain pathways into real-world participation

But unless these judgments enter concrete structural design, reality will continue operating according to the old logic:

- Resources remain held in closed arrangements
- Pathways remain attached primarily to a few formal jobs
- Non-mainstream contributions remain difficult to consolidate
- Individuals still lack entry points that let them enter processes reliably
- New forms of participation still degenerate into surface activity on platforms

This shows that:

“Knowing things should be better” does not mean that “structures will therefore improve.”

This chapter’s task is consequently to move the theoretical judgments developed so far into:

Real-world structural prototypes that can be imagined, designed, and built step by step.

1. A prototype is neither a complete institution nor a utopian model

“Prototype,” as used in this chapter, does not mean designing an entire final institutional system all at once.

It is closer to:

- An early structural form with a clear direction
- An intermediate form capable of grounding abstract ideas in real-world modes of organization
- A candidate structure that can be iterated, tested locally, and contracted or exited if it fails

2. The function of prototypes is to give civilization an “intermediate layer”

Without mediation between abstract judgment and real-world testing, civilization will oscillate between two extremes:

- Hollowing out after the failure of old structures
- The unlimited elevation of abstract visions

with no traversable pathway between them.

The value of prototypes lies in turning abstract judgments into testable questions; they are not the only intermediary, nor do they guarantee that a pathway will become established.

3. Shared World and Dream Garden are candidate prototypes of this kind

They do not claim to solve everything from the outset, but they at least address:

- Whether voluntary, bounded resource authorization can lower some participation barriers
- How participation can become an entry point into structures
- How capabilities and needs can reconnect on shared foundations
- Whether facts about contributions can be preserved within the necessary scope without automatically generating consequences

This is why they need to undergo comparative testing.

II. Shared World: Can Voluntary Resource Authorization Improve Some Conditions of Entry?

Understanding “Shared World” first requires recognizing a fact:

Many crises of structural meaning arise not because people lack capabilities, enthusiasm, or aspirations, but because they lack sufficient practical foundations to turn their capabilities and aspirations reliably into sustained participation.

These foundations include, but are not limited to:

- Space
- Equipment
- Tools
- Basic living conditions
- Information and knowledge resources
- Basic mobility and connectivity
- Minimum systems of support for collaboration

In older structures, these foundations are often closely tied to:

- Ownership
- Employment relationships
- Institutional affiliation
- Status barriers
- Capital accumulation

As a result, even people with potential capabilities find it difficult to enter real-world processes, because what they lack first is the “conditions for getting started.”

This book therefore proposes:

To expand genuine participation, we need to investigate why foundational conditions are inaccessible. Shared World is only one candidate hypothesis among others; it cannot replace social security, public institutions, or other approaches.

This is the question the “Shared World” prototype is intended to test.

1. Shared World does not simply mean that “everyone owns everything”

That understanding is too superficial.

“Sharing,” as used in this book, does not abolish ownership, jurisdiction, or the boundaries of rights.

Instead, it explores whether resource holders can grant voluntary, bounded, revocable authorization to use some underutilized resources, forming an access network that is auditable, can be exited, and has clear rights and responsibilities.

In other words, the point of sharing is not “joint ownership in name,” but:
Giving some resources clear and limited use scenarios without extinguishing rights.

2. Why resource facts, access, matching, and consequences for rights must be kept separate

For many participants, what truly matters is not:

- Permanently owning something

but:

- Being able to use it reliably when needed
- Receiving structural support during participation
- Being able to use these foundational resources to enter the work of addressing real-world problems

Shared World must therefore first distinguish:

- Whether facts about resources may be visible
- Whether purpose-limited access to the relevant data has been authorized
- Whether the system may only suggest matches
- Whether the rights holder separately grants a specific, revocable permission to use the resource

Visibility of resource facts $\neq$ Data access $\neq$ Matching $\neq$ Ownership $\neq$ Rights of use or disposal $\neq$ Requisition $\neq$ Enforcement. A successful match does not, by itself, create any real-world permission; each step requires independent authorization and a responsible party.

3. Shared World is a candidate hypothesis for a “foundation of participation”

It is not presumed to be an ancillary welfare layer or the foundation of civilization. It tests only whether bounded resource authorization can improve some conditions of participation.

Without a basic foundation, much networked participation will remain accessible only to a few.

If a civilization seeks to expand EP, it needs to improve the foundational conditions that let more people enter real-world processes; the specific pathways must remain plural.

Shared World attempts to address some of these questions. Its effects and costs still require comparison.

III. What Shared World Seeks to Share Is More than Objects: It Is “Conditions of Real-World Entry”

When sharing is mentioned, people most readily think of physical things:

- Homes
- Tools
- Transportation
- Equipment
- Land
- Venues

These certainly matter,

but understanding Shared World solely as “sharing objects” would be too narrow.

Sharing, as used in this book, goes one level deeper. What it seeks to share is:

Conditions of real-world entry.

These include several categories.

1. Foundational material conditions

Including:

- Space
- Tools
- Equipment
- Basic logistics
- Mobility support
- Systems supporting a minimum standard of living

These prevent excessive start-up costs from barring individuals from real-world processes.

2. Foundational conditions of knowledge and information

In a highly complex civilization, knowledge itself is also crucial infrastructure.

If:

- Knowledge is highly monopolized
- Learning resources are highly closed
- Methodologies are difficult to share
- Essential information is difficult to obtain

then many people cannot enter structures of deep participation, even if they wish to.

Knowledge sharing is therefore not a cultural accessory. It is part of Shared World.

3. Conditions for access to collaboration

Many people do not lack capabilities. What they lack is:

- Knowing where to connect
- Knowing who needs what
- Knowing how to enter collaborative networks
- An entry-level access point

Access mechanisms themselves must therefore also become shared.

Otherwise, resources may exist, but entry points remain controlled by a few nodes.

4. Conditions for a safety buffer

When failure is too costly, many people will not dare to enter new pathways.

Sharing therefore also includes a minimum buffer of some kind:

- Support for re-entry after failure
- A basic survival safety net
- Room for recovery after short-term interruption

Without these, much so-called “open participation” will be available only to a small number of low-risk groups.

Shared World is therefore not a simple slogan about resources. It means:

Testing whether some conditions of real-world entry can be opened when rights are clear and authorization is limited and revocable.

IV. Dream Garden: A Candidate Generative Layer for Discovering Needs and Matching Collaboration

If Shared World addresses the problem of a basic foundation, that is still far from enough.

Civilization does not automatically develop structural meaning simply because a foundation exists.

It must also address another question:

How can capabilities, needs, aspirations, projects, and real-world tasks genuinely meet on a shared foundation and continually generate new participation structures?

This is the place of “Dream Garden.”

The name “Dream Garden” may appear visionary, but this book gives it a strict structural definition:

Dream Garden is a conditional hypothesis: it tests whether individual capabilities, real-world needs, project tasks, and collaborative networks can improve matching within a limited scope and form sustainable participation; it does not guarantee growth pathways or structural meaning.

In other words, it is not an emotional space for “fulfilling dreams,” but:

A generator of collaboration that genuinely connects dreams, capabilities, and real-world structures.

1. Why sharing resources alone is still insufficient

Even if the resource foundation opens up, if individuals still cannot find:

- Real-world needs
- Collaborative partners
- Entry points into projects
- Pathways for translating capabilities into practice
- Chains leading from entry-level participation to deep places

then the shared foundation will merely become inefficiently idle, rather than a new civilizational structure.

This shows that:

Whether foundational conditions and the discovery of needs require coupling must be determined through comparative trials.

2. Dream Garden is a real-world interface layer for “capabilities–needs–pathways”

Earlier chapters repeatedly proposed that structural meaning arises from:

- Capabilities
- Needs
- Connections

The Dream Garden prototype tests whether these three kinds of conditions can be organized into real-world collaboration in bounded settings.

It enables:

- Individual capabilities to cease being isolated
- Needs to cease being left unsupported
- Connections to cease being short-lived
- Pathways to cease belonging only to a few formal jobs
- Facts about participation to be preserved to a limited extent; roles and project-specific trust still form independently

These are only its design goals, not verified effects.

3. Dream Garden is a candidate interface for “real-world entry points”

The book is willing to state this very clearly:

Dream Garden’s design hypothesis is to test whether new real-world entry points can be generated in bounded settings.

It enables individuals to do more than wait to be selected by the job system. Instead, they can gradually enter real-world processes through dynamic matching between capabilities and needs in a more open network.

Whether this question constitutes an important turning point still depends on real-world evidence and alternative approaches.

V. Dream Garden Is Not a “Wishing Well,” but a Limited Test of Pathway Generation

This distinction must be very clear.

Otherwise, “Dream Garden” will be misread as a comforting vision rather than a structural prototype.

1. Aspirations alone do not constitute structural meaning

People can have many aspirations, but if those aspirations cannot enter:

- The deepening of capabilities
- Responses to real-world needs
- Collaborative networks
- Factual recording
- The consolidation of responsibility

then they remain solely at the subjective level.

2. Dream Garden’s design goal is to test whether aspirations can enter real-world pathways

In other words, it is not about “satisfying the imagination.” It translates aspirations into practical terms and organizes them into:

- Accessible entry-level tasks
- Project structures that permit collaborative coordination
- Positions in which responsibility can gradually be assumed
- Recordable trajectories of contribution
- Factual material that, when the person concerned authorizes it, can be used for independent judgment in a new project

Only if the trial proves effective might aspirations move beyond enthusiasm alone, and gain a real-world entry point that is sustainable and can be exited.

3. It is especially suited to sustaining “capabilities spilling out of the old centers”

Many people in the old organization–job system are not devoid of capability. Rather, their capabilities cannot fully enter the old centers.

The Dream Garden prototype seeks to test whether these capabilities can reconnect to real-world networks; it does not guarantee success.

It therefore seeks to serve as an interface for translating aspirations and to test whether some capabilities can re-enter collaboration; it acquires no civilization-wide coordination authority.

VI. How Shared World and Dream Garden Couple with Each Other

We can now connect these two prototypes.

Shared World answers:

“How can people gain the conditions for entering the real world?”

Dream Garden seeks to test:

“After people enter the real world, can the discovery of needs and initial collaboration improve?” Pathways and project-specific trust still form independently within new relationships.

If Shared World exists without Dream Garden, the result may be:

- The foundation opens up
- Resources become available
- Yet individuals still lack concrete processes for connecting
- Many foundations ultimately fail to translate into sustained participation

If Dream Garden exists without Shared World, the result may instead be:

- Many projects, needs, and collaborations
- Yet most people lack sufficient foundations to enter
- Pathways remain open only to a few well-resourced individuals
- The new structure is quickly swallowed again by the old logic of distribution

It is therefore possible to test whether limited coupling between the two produces net benefits; either prototype may be replaced, contracted, or exited.

1. Shared World tests some conditions of entry

2. Dream Garden tests the discovery of needs and matching for collaboration

3. Their limited combination remains a hypothesis about networked collaboration awaiting verification

In other words, the foundations of genuine participation in future civilization cannot be reduced to platform connections. Multiple institutions and relationships must jointly improve:

- Foundational accessibility
- The capacity to generate pathways
- The capacity to record contributions
- The capacity for project-specific trust to form independently
- The capacity for deep places to develop

These conditions constitute a hypothesis about “networked collaborative structures”; they do not establish that the two named prototypes are irreplaceable.

VII. Why This Is a “Networked Collaborative Structure,” Rather than a “New Platform”

Caution is needed here.

Whenever sharing, matching, collaboration, and recording are discussed, many people’s first reaction is to build another super-platform.

This book does not understand the issue so simply.

It proposes a “networked collaborative structure,” not “a single platform governing everything.”

There are three reasons.

1. A single platform is naturally prone to monopolize the authority to define and the control of pathways

As earlier chapters explained, once a platform controls:

- The authority to define
- The authority to allocate visibility
- The authority to record
- Interpretive authority
- Control over entry points into pathways

it can very easily reshape a system intended to expand EP into a new structure of control.

The collaborative foundations of future civilization must therefore not depend excessively on a single centralized platform.

2. Genuine networked collaboration requires multiple nodes, multiple layers of intermediaries, and multiple interpretive structures

A single platform is good at mobilization, but not necessarily at sustaining deep collaboration.

Civilization-scale structures require:

- Local nodes
- Community intermediaries
- Multilevel mechanisms of evaluation and interpretation
- Portability of facts directed by the persons concerned; project-specific trust must not be automatically recognized across projects
- Pathways for re-entry after failure

All of these are closer to a network than to a single-point platform.

3. Network structures are more conducive to retaining redundancy and diversity

Civilization is stable not because everything is integrated with maximum efficiency, but because it always retains:

- Alternative nodes
- Multiple pathways
- Multiple interpretive frameworks
- Multilevel supporting structures

Networked collaborative structures are precisely intended to preserve this redundancy.

The emphasis of this chapter is therefore not on building a super-system, but on:

Studying multiple kinds of network structures composed of resource authorization, discovery of needs, factual recording, local nodes, and data portability directed by the persons concerned; none may monopolize real-world entry points.

VIII. How This Kind of Networked Collaborative Structure Can Genuinely Expand EP

EP remains one of this book's crucial variables throughout.

This chapter must therefore bring the question back to it:

The value of Shared World and Dream Garden does not depend on how ideal they sound, but on whether real-world trials show that they produce a net increase in effective participation without causing greater harm.

1. Their first step in expanding EP is to expand “accessibility”

Without a basic foundation and real-world entry points, many people remain outside P altogether. The Shared World prototype only attempts to improve this problem; its effects and costs still require comparison.

2. Their second step in expanding EP is to expand “the possibility of growth”

The aim is not to let people undertake a small act of participation once and stop there, but to enable them to deepen gradually along pathways.

The Dream Garden prototype seeks to test this layer.

3. Their third step in expanding EP is to expand “the possibility of recognition”

If facts about contributions cannot be recorded, or new collaboration cannot independently form trust, individuals will find it difficult to keep entering deep places.

We must therefore also investigate whether bounded factual records are needed; records are not a necessary component and do not generate recognition or real-world consequences.

4. Their fourth step in expanding EP is to expand “the possibility of sustainable collaboration”

The aim is not to push people into endless fragmented tasks, but to bring them into networks that can genuinely form relationships, responsibility, and shared processes.

Otherwise, participation remains on the surface.

This chapter can therefore offer a central judgment:

The design goal of Shared World and Dream Garden should not be to manufacture more surface participation, but to test whether they can enable more individuals genuinely to connect and gradually deepen; if they cannot, the prototypes should be revised or exited.

IX. The Real Difficulty Facing These Prototypes: Governance, Not Technology

We must remain clear-eyed here.

When discussing structural prototypes, people easily underestimate the problems, as though all that were required were:

- More powerful platforms
- Better algorithms
- More complete data
- More intelligent systems

and these structures would naturally grow.

They will not.

The main difficulty is not primarily technology, but governance.

- 1. Who defines which resources enter the shared foundation?**
- 2. Who decides which needs receive matching priority?**
- 3. Who controls the allocation of pathways and the interpretation of entry points?**
- 4. How are contributions recorded, and who appeals and corrects them?**
- 5. How can diversity be prevented from being flattened again after platformization?**
- 6. How can networked structures be prevented from sliding toward new forms of centralized power?**

These are all questions of governance.

If governance is not handled properly, even the best prototypes will quickly become distorted:

- Shared World will degenerate into a resource-control system; any pilot must respect jurisdiction, ownership, and rights holders' consent
- Dream Garden will degenerate into a pathway-screening system
- Contribution records will degenerate into a points-based control system
- EP expansion will degenerate into competition for visibility

This chapter must therefore make clear:

The key to prototypes lies not in “whether there is a technical solution,” but in whether sufficiently restrained, distributed, and correctable governance structures can be established.

This also prepares the way for the next chapter's contribution-record prototype.

X. A Crucial Judgment: What Future Civilization Genuinely Needs Is Not Only More Powerful AI, but Stronger “Structures for Connecting to the World”

At the end of this chapter, we can formulate a crucial judgment:

What future civilization genuinely needs is not only more powerful AI, but stronger “structures for connecting to the world.”

Why?

If a civilization has only ever-stronger system capabilities, without ever-stronger structures for real-world access, technology will ultimately continue to concentrate in a few nodes, while most people will still:

- Remain at shallow interfaces
- Lack deep places
- Struggle to form EP
- Be drawn into cycles of surface activity

Conversely, if civilization begins to have stronger structures for real-world access, only then may technological capabilities, under controlled conditions, support:

- Real-world processes accessible to more people
- Structural support for more capabilities at the margins
- The long-term consolidation of more contributions of substantial thickness
- Genuine expansion of participation by more subjects

In this sense:

Shared World and Dream Garden are only two institutional hypotheses. Whether they can improve subject participation better than other approaches must be answered by real-world trials.

XI. A Crucial Transition: From Networked Collaborative Structures to the Contribution-Record Prototype

This chapter has now accomplished three things:

- 1. Proposed Shared World and Dream Garden as two complementary prototypes**
- 2. Explained that together they constitute networked collaborative structures for future civilization**
- 3. Explained that their core goal is to expand EP, rather than manufacture surface bustle**

Yet a crucial question still requires further development:

Within such networked collaborative structures, how can facts about individual contributions be recorded and reviewed to a limited extent, without settling accounts on life or promising consequences in advance?

Earlier chapters discussed facts about contributions, project-specific trust, and governance. In this chapter, however, the question begins to enter a more concrete institutional level:

- If a shared foundation and pathway generator already exist,
- Should the participation and contributions moving through them
- Be preserved to a limited extent through some mechanism, while remaining separate from subsequent returns and real-world consequences?

This introduces the core of the next chapter:

The Contribution-Record Prototype: Facts, Review, and Project-Specific Trust.

Chapter Summary

This chapter proposed two crucial prototypes:

- Shared World
- Dream Garden

The book treats these two layers as prototype conditions awaiting separate verification, rather than necessary components of future civilization:

- Shared World, as a prototype that may fail, investigates only whether voluntary authorization can improve some conditions of real-world entry where rights are clear, time limits explicit, authorization revocable, and responsibility traceable
- Dream Garden, as a candidate generative layer, tests whether individual capabilities, real-world needs, project tasks, and collaborative networks can improve matching; it does not guarantee the formation of pathways of structural meaning

Their limited coupling may be tested as a hypothesis about networked collaboration; they do not constitute a necessary combination.

Its evaluative goal is not to manufacture more surface activity, but to test whether it can produce a net increase in EP: enabling more people genuinely to connect to the real world, gradually deepen their positions, and form project-specific trust and deep participation within new relationships.

The chapter also emphasizes that the real difficulty facing these prototypes lies in governance, rather than technology.

Whether they can yield net benefits remains unverified; once they slide toward monopoly, control, or shallowness, they should be contracted or exited.

The next chapter turns to a crucial institutional interface within this structure:

Chapter 22: The Contribution Record Prototype: Facts, Review, and Project-Specific Trust

In the previous chapter, this book proposed two key prototypes:

- Shared World
- Dream Garden

It also pointed out that, if future civilization is truly to develop new structures of networked collaboration, it cannot stop at the two layers of “accessible resources” and “matching capabilities with needs.” It must also resolve another crucial question:

Once individuals enter a process, how can the facts of their continuing contributions become visible, be recorded within limits, and be reviewed, while current positions, resource permissions, and subsequent pathways continue to be judged independently within new relationships?

If this question cannot be resolved, then even with a shared foundation opened up and entry points for collaboration created, the entire new structure will still face a fundamental defect:

- People have entered
- They have indeed done things
- They may even have made high-value contributions over time
- Yet these facts lack the necessary conditions for preservation and verification
- No verifiable continuity of facts can develop
- Nor can reliable material be provided for new judgments about positions and participation

The new structure will consequently slip back into the old predicament:

- Much surface activity
- Little accumulation at depth
- Participation that is difficult to sustain
- Contributions that are difficult to preserve
- Connections from which thick roles struggle to grow

The task of this chapter, therefore, is to study a candidate institutional interface:

The contribution record prototype.

One point must be made immediately:

The governance boundaries of contribution records take precedence over technical implementation: record facts without presuming higher or lower value based on their source; descriptions of impact must remain limited to their objects, time frames, and evidentiary scope, without presuming higher or lower value based on occupation, identity, organization, or whether an activity is market-based. Contributions cannot be bought with money, nor can financial compensation automatically generate contribution records. Still less can records settle the full meaning of a person's life.

What this book calls a “contribution record” is not a simple points system, a tool for moral check-ins, or a comprehensive digital judgment of a person.

Its strict meaning in this book is:

A record prototype that preserves verifiable facts of contribution within a specified purpose, project, and period, and provides the persons concerned and their collaborators with material for contextual interpretation.

In other words, the contribution record prototype is not civilization itself.

It is only a candidate intermediary in research on future networked collaboration; whether it is better than existing track records, human testimony, or arrangements without records still requires comparison.

It treats the following matters at separate levels, preventing them from being automatically joined into a chain of power:

- Contribution
- Recording
- References for project-specific trust
- Returns
- New, independent judgments about pathways
- Reassessment of the conditions for effective participation

If Shared World provides the foundation for participation, and Dream Garden provides the generator of pathways, then the contribution record prototype addresses this:

How to prevent facts that really occurred from being erased, without turning historical records into permanent qualifications.

That is precisely why it matters.

I. Why Future Civilization Needs a New “Contribution Recording Mechanism”

Human society has never been without ways to record contributions.

Quite the contrary, it has always recorded contributions in various ways:

- Wages
- Positions
- Titles
- Honors
- Educational credentials
- Performance assessments
- Reputation
- Asset accumulation
- Promotion within organizations
- Market returns

These mechanisms played important roles over a long period in the past.

In this book's view, however, as the sources of structural meaning shift and the meaning economy emerges, they are becoming increasingly inadequate.

1. Traditional recording mechanisms strongly favor a small number of structures

In traditional society, the most stable records of contribution generally revolve around:

- Formal jobs
- Clearly defined employment relationships
- Visible outputs
- Internal organizational hierarchies
- Quantifiable results

This means that many new kinds of contribution, even when they genuinely exist, find it difficult to enter these old recording systems.

For example:

- Community maintenance

- Bridging and translation work
- Long-term care
- Organizing knowledge in open networks
- Maintaining shared infrastructure
- Invisible repair work in cross-project collaboration
- Long-term improvements to public understanding and the collaborative environment

These activities are often important, yet wages, positions, or a single performance measure cannot always express them adequately.

2. Old recording mechanisms are excessively tied to a single pathway

In the past, the accumulation of a person's credibility depended heavily on:

- A particular job
- A particular organization
- A particular bureaucratic career path
- A particular occupational identity

In future civilization, however, more and more participation will arise from:

- Overlapping pathways
- Networked collaboration
- Project-based roles
- Contributions that move across a shared foundation
- Continued participation outside organizational boundaries

Under these conditions, old recording mechanisms are prone to two distortions:

- Invisibility: new collaborators find it difficult to verify contributions made outside a job
- Resetting to zero: once someone leaves a single organization, structures struggle to carry their past contributions forward

Future civilization therefore needs a contribution recording mechanism that is no longer wholly dependent on a single job-based system.

3. Without a new recording mechanism, EP is difficult to sustain at scale

As explained repeatedly above, the key to future civilization is not simply to bring more people into structures, but to enable more people to achieve EP (effective participation).

To endure, however, EP must be:

- Seen
- Recognized
- Interpreted
- Accumulated
- Used for new judgments about pathways when authorized by the person concerned

Otherwise, each instance of individual participation can remain no more than a local experience, and the relevant facts may be lost anew in every round of collaboration. Yet records themselves cannot generate long-term positions either.

This chapter must therefore make clear:

Limited contribution records are only a candidate interface for research. Whether they help expand effective participation must be assessed against no-record arrangements, existing track records, and other institutional options.

II. What Is the Contribution Record Prototype?

We can now give this chapter's formal definition:

The contribution record prototype is a mechanism within a particular community or project for recording verifiable actions, works, knowledge, relational clues, and responsibilities, with a limited purpose, an explicit duration, and opportunities for appeal and deletion. It can provide material for new collaborative judgments, but does not automatically generate credibility, qualifications, resource rights, governance rights, or opportunities for future participation.

This definition contains six key terms:

1. Genuine contributions

Not every activity automatically enters the contribution record prototype.

The prototype should address actions that make a genuine addition to real-world structures, collaborative processes, community continuity, or civilization's carrying capacity.

2. Continuing records

These are neither one-off likes nor short-lived popularity, but records supplemented and corrected within the limited period required by their purpose, and deleted or reauthorized when that period expires.

3. Interpretation

Contributions are not inherently transparent.

Many high-value activities are not immediately visible. A layer of interpretation is therefore necessary to prevent the system from rewarding only frequent, surface-level behavior.

4. Recognition

Without recognition by a community, network, or institution, records are merely archived data.

Recognition means only that the relevant community offers a contestable confirmation of limited facts. It does not confer a rank of personhood or cross-domain credibility.

5. Returns

The contribution record prototype is first and foremost a limited archival mechanism.

If records are used to support new collaboration, their real-world consequences must be determined separately, for example:

- Reapplying for participation opportunities under publicly stated conditions
- Applying for a particular role subject to independent review
- Providing a verifiable trust reference within the same project
- Obtaining limited resource permissions with the separate consent of the rights holder
- Receiving basic protections established by law without contribution requirements, or receiving independently determined support in voluntary projects

6. Separation of consequences

The ultimate question is:

After recording and recognition, are specific positions still determined by new judgments about facts, authorization, capability, safety, and responsibility?

If not, the contribution record prototype will become a wall of honors or a gatekeeper for pathways. It should then be scaled back or withdrawn, rather than elevated to civilizational infrastructure.

This book therefore emphasizes:

The essence of the contribution record prototype is not to label people, but to preserve the facts of genuine contributions and support people's reentry into real-world activity without subjecting them to a uniform score or permanent binding.

III. Why the Contribution Record Prototype Differs from an Ordinary Points System

On hearing “contribution records,” many people immediately think of:

- Scoring
- Points
- Levels
- Leaderboards
- Platform task systems
- Gamified incentives

This book must distinguish these very clearly.

If the contribution record prototype is misunderstood as an ordinary points system, it will quickly move in the wrong direction.

1. Ordinary points systems reward countable actions

Many points systems are good at rewarding:

- Frequent behavior
- Simple actions
- Completion of standard tasks
- Easily quantified interactions
- Platform stickiness

But these are not always the genuine contributions within civilization.

Many crucial contributions have:

- Long time horizons
- Strong contextual dependence
- Limited scope for immediate quantification
- Substantial responsibilities
- Complex attribution of outcomes

Applying points-based thinking directly to these contributions will systematically distort them.

2. Ordinary points systems tend to flatten complex realities

To facilitate calculation, they usually compress different types of behavior into a single comparable unit.

This may work for games, but not necessarily for civilization.

For:

- Care and repair cannot simply be treated as equivalent to clicks and responses
- Long-term maintenance and short-term exposure cannot be judged solely by surface activity
- Contextual judgment and standardized execution are different things
- Repairing relationships and completing tasks should not use the same evaluative logic either

Thus, if the contribution record prototype merely “turns contributions into points,” it will quickly become distorted.

3. Ordinary points systems readily induce performative participation

Once a recording system rewards only visible actions, individuals will be steered toward:

- Things that more easily leave a trace
- Things the platform can more easily see
- Things that more easily earn points in the short term

This leads to:

- High exposure prevailing over high thickness
- Performative contributions prevailing over genuine responsibility
- Frequent activity prevailing over long-term maintenance
- Metric optimization prevailing over structural repair

This is precisely what this book seeks to avoid.

4. The contribution record prototype must therefore not amount to “score worship”

This book proposes the contribution record prototype not to establish a new regime ruled by a single score, but to build a more nuanced, restrained, and multilayered structure for recognizing contributions.

In a sentence:

If the contribution record prototype merely compresses people into scores, it has already failed.

IV. What the Contribution Record Prototype Should Actually Record

If it is not a simple points system, what exactly does it record?

This book holds that it should encompass at least four types of contribution.

1. Contributions that directly solve problems

These occur when individuals or groups bring about clear improvements to specific real-world problems.

For example:

- Completing a construction undertaking
- Solving a technical difficulty
- Providing crucial care
- Repairing a specific system
- Completing an important project milestone

These contributions are the easiest to identify, but that must not make them the sole focus.

2. Contributions that maintain structures

These contributions often receive little exposure, yet are vital to civilizational continuity.

For example:

- Maintaining infrastructure
- Maintaining system documentation
- Maintaining community order over time
- Updating rules and buffering conflicts
- Repairing public trust
- Caring for the collaborative environment over the long term

They do not necessarily produce conspicuous achievements, but continually prevent structures from breaking down.

3. Contributions that connect and bridge

Modern civilization is becoming increasingly complex, and much of its value lies in bridging rather than in creation at isolated points.

For example:

- Translation across fields
- Mediation between different groups
- Connections between projects
- Matching capabilities to problems so that others can put their abilities into practice
- Resolving misunderstandings in collaboration
- Repairing broken relationships

The old logic of job positions struggles to express these contributions fully, but they will become increasingly important in a networked civilization.

4. Contributions to direction and innovation

Not all contributions occur at the level of execution.

Some come from:

- Raising new questions
- Opening new pathways
- Redefining structures
- Developing new forms of organization
- Discovering important, overlooked slow variables

Such contributions are often few but crucial.

If the contribution record prototype cannot preserve space for them, it will become a conservative guardian of order rather than a means of civilizational regeneration.

This chapter must therefore emphasize:

The contribution record prototype should not merely reward “how much was done”; it should identify “what kind of addition was actually made to the structure.”

V. How Records Become One Source of Evidence for Judgments of Project-Specific Trust

If contribution records are merely static records, their civilizational value is very limited.

What truly matters is how they enter the layer of credibility.

The preceding chapter has already defined credibility as:

A structural accumulation that individuals develop in communities and collaborative networks through identifiable long-term contributions, enabling them to continue to be entrusted with responsibilities and to be given deeper roles.

A boundary must be maintained between records and judgments of project-specific trust:

How to keep genuine contributions from being easily reset to zero.

1. Records provide verifiable facts, not conclusions about credibility

Many new collaborations lack verifiable factual material. This does not mean that trust can be generated directly from records; rather, contributions lack a continuously identifiable accumulated history.

The contribution record prototype should provide a trajectory of such accumulation:

- Not a single performance
- But indications of continuous, long-term contributions
- Not attention only to outcomes
- But also to responsibility, repair, bridging, and continuity throughout the process

This can reduce highly visible nodes' monopoly over factual visibility, but the system still reaches no conclusions about credibility.

2. Records give contributions outside job positions an opportunity to be verified

In future civilization, more and more important participation will occur outside any single job.

Without appropriate records, new collaborators may find it difficult to verify contributions made outside a job. Yet the existence of records does not require them to develop trust.

This is precisely where the contribution record prototype opens a way:

- Making contributions outside organizations recognizable
- Making facts across platforms, projects, and communities viewable with the authorization of the persons concerned
- Enabling those persons, when they authorize it, to provide continuous, contestable factual material

This may improve the quality of evidence in new projects; net benefits, biases, and alternatives still require comparison.

3. Contribution records neither equal credibility nor imply any total quantity of credibility

Caution is needed here too.

Contribution records can serve only as one source of material for understanding past facts in a specific project; they should not be crudely equated with credibility itself.

Credit also involves:

- Contextual judgment
- Long-term reliability
- Other people's actual trust
- Bearing complex consequences
- Interpretation by multiple parties

A more cautious formulation is therefore:

The contribution record prototype can provide one structured source of material for judgments of trust in a specific project.

Trust within that project must still be formed anew on the basis of current capabilities, actual relationships, risks, responsibilities, and judgments by the relevant parties.

VI. What Kind of “Returns” Should the Contribution Record Prototype Provide?

Without returns, the contribution record prototype would merely be a more complex archive.

This book proposes it to preserve facts, reduce the costs of repeatedly providing evidence, and give new judgments about pathways material that can be checked.

Returns are therefore crucial.

But caution is needed here as well:

Returns must not be understood to mean “paying money directly for every contribution.”

That is unrealistic and would rapidly push the system back into a single monetary logic.

This book holds that the returns associated with the contribution record prototype should be multilayered.

1. Pathway-related returns

The most important return is not necessarily an immediate material reward, but:

- Applications for specific roles subject to independent review
- Reviewable trust references within a project
- Opportunities to apply for collaboration under publicly stated conditions
- Equal entry points for applications regardless of identity and past track records
- Access to projects following reviews of suitability, safety, and responsibility

None of these is an automatic return. They are independent decisions within limited projects; basic rights, public services, and political standing are completely decoupled from contribution records.

2. Resource-related returns

In voluntary, limited projects, records may serve as one source of material for understanding the context of an application, but they neither correspond to nor exchange for resource rights.

For example:

- Learning resources
- Limited permission for use, separately authorized by rights holders
- A buffer for trial and error
- Support for starting a project
- Permission to use collaborative spaces and tools, separately authorized by rights holders and project leaders

Any conditions for future action still require independent authorization, time limits, confirmation of responsibility, and exit arrangements.

3. Supportive returns

For many contributors engaged in maintenance, care, bridging, and repair, what truly matters is often not a large reward, but:

- Stable recognition
- Long-term support
- Not being reset to zero
- Having someone to support them during vulnerable periods
- Mechanisms for exit and reentry

In other words, returns should prevent contributors from burning themselves out over the long term.

4. Limited but necessary material returns

This book does not exclude material returns.

On the contrary, without a material layer at all, a system is difficult to sustain.

But material returns should be embedded within a broader structure of pathways rather than becoming the sole objective.

In a sentence:

The contribution record prototype focuses not on redeeming rewards, but on making historical facts verifiable, current permissions reviewable, and future participation still open.

VII. Why the Key to the Contribution Record Prototype Lies in Governance Boundaries, Not Algorithms

This is one of the chapter's most important cautions.

For many people, the first response to “contribution records” is:

- Better algorithms
- More comprehensive data
- More accurate scoring
- More intelligent recommendations and settlement

This book, however, holds that the primary issue is not algorithms, but:

Governance boundaries.

If governance boundaries are not established first, even the most advanced technology will push the system in dangerous directions.

1. Who defines what counts as a contribution?

This is the starting question.

If the definition is too narrow, the system will exclude many genuinely crucial contributions to slow variables.

If it is too broad, the system will be overwhelmed by ineffectual behavior.

A multilayered, revisable, and debatable definitional framework is therefore essential.

2. Who holds interpretive authority?

Many contributions are highly contextual.

If interpretive authority becomes excessively concentrated, the system will quickly become:

- An arbiter of a single set of values
- An amplifier of a central platform's preferences
- A new instrument of structural monopoly

Interpretive authority must therefore remain distributed and retain mechanisms for correcting bias.

3. Who can appeal and make corrections?

Without appeals and corrections, any record will continually accumulate biases.

Once contribution records become associated with pathway opportunities, those biases will directly damage real-world positions.

A mature system must therefore allow:

- Supplementary explanations
- Testimony from multiple parties
- Dispute resolution
- Periodic revision
- Reversal of errors and restoration

4. Which consequences must not be directly tied to contribution records?

This is the most easily overlooked point.

Not every real-world consequence should be directly tied to contribution records.

If those ties are too strong, the system will quickly slide toward:

- Comprehensive behavioral management
- Performing for metrics
- Risk avoidance
- Withering creativity
- Platform-based moral surveillance

The contribution record prototype must therefore exercise restraint.

It should support civilization, not take comprehensive control of it.

VIII. The Greatest Risk of the Contribution Record Prototype: Sliding from “Seeing Contributions” to “Controlling People”

This chapter must spell out the risks in full.

This is where the entire institutional prototype is most vulnerable to legitimate criticism.

Indeed, every contribution record prototype carries an enormous risk:

Originally intended to make genuine contributions visible, it may ultimately evolve into a new system of behavioral control.

This cannot be evaded.

1. Risk one: flattening complex human beings into a single score

Once every behavior is required to be comparable, rankable, and quantifiable, people are compressed into carriers of scores.

This will destroy:

- Contextuality
- Complexity
- Rebelliousness
- Creativity
- Necessary challenges to established structures

Yet these are precisely what Civilization Leap requires.

2. Risk two: highly visible behavior systematically gains an advantage

Platforms excel at rewarding:

- High frequency

- Visibility
- Short cycles
- Shareability
- Visually presentable results

This will cause the contribution record prototype to lean unconsciously toward these behaviors.

Consequently, contributions with genuinely high civilizational value are once again devalued:

- Maintenance
- Slow construction
- Deep care
- Relationship repair
- Quiet intermediary contributions

3. Risk three: the system pushes people toward conservative compliance rather than structural creation

If contribution records are tied too tightly to consequences, individuals will naturally avoid:

- Highly uncertain exploration
- Assuming complex but necessary responsibilities
- Innovations that may fail temporarily
- Deep work that is not easily understood in the short term

The system may become “tidier,” but civilization will lose its genuine power of regeneration.

4. Risk four: renewed concentration of definitional authority and platform power

Most dangerously, if a contribution record prototype is controlled by a few centers, it will become:

- A monopolist over entry points to pathways
- A filter of legitimate contributions
- A master switch for allocating deep places

This is directly opposed to this book's aim of expanding EP.

This chapter must therefore make clear:

Only under strong governance boundaries, distributed interpretation, multilayered appeals, and the principle of limited binding is the contribution record prototype worth further testing as a limited tool. It is not necessary civilizational infrastructure.

Otherwise, it is highly likely to degenerate into a new system of control.

IX. A More Cautious Principle: The Contribution Record Prototype Should Serve to “Expand Genuine Participation,” Not to “Optimize Controllable Behavior”

This is the principle the chapter most wants to establish.

The primary objective of the contribution record prototype should not be to make it easier for systems to manage people, but:

To preserve and verify the facts of genuine participation to the extent necessary, while keeping participation open, allowing exit, and avoiding uniform scoring.

This statement directly determines the direction of the entire system.

1. If the objective is to “optimize controllable behavior”

The system will naturally favor:

- Standardization
- Higher frequency
- Measurability
- Comparability
- Immediate feedback

The eventual result is stronger management but a thinner civilization.

2. If the objective is to “expand genuine participation”

The system should instead give priority to:

- Whether more people can enter EP more easily
- Whether structures can take up contributions to slow variables
- Whether peripheral but crucial roles have room to accumulate depth
- Whether individuals can gradually move from shallow interfaces toward deep places
- Whether complexity, room for interpretation, and the capacity for correction are preserved

Only this is consistent with the book's overall direction.

The institutional principle of this chapter can therefore be condensed into one sentence:

The value of the contribution record prototype lies not in measuring people more precisely, but in supporting genuine participation more reliably.

X. Looking Back at the Book Through the Contribution Record Prototype: Its Place in the Overall Structure

We can now return this chapter to the context of the whole book.

If:

- Shared World tests some conditions for entry
- Dream Garden tests the discovery of needs and the matching of collaborators
- Networked collaboration structures remain an unverified hypothesis about real-world access and the capacity to sustain collaboration

Then what the contribution record prototype attempts to provide is:

A layer of factual records and contextual references for collaboration after pathways have been entered.

It is not the whole, nor a necessary component, and still less irreplaceable.

If a limited project lacks any channel for verifiable facts, the following may occur:

- Some facts of contribution are repeatedly lost
- New collaborations repeatedly incur the costs of providing the same evidence; pathways must still form independently
- Genuine records are difficult to verify with the authorization of the persons concerned
- Whether effective participation is affected remains to be observed
- The project may face the problem of “participation without factual continuity”

The contribution record prototype must therefore not be designated infrastructure in advance.

It is only a candidate interface in research on future networked collaboration.

XI. A Crucial Transition: From the “Contribution Record Prototype” to “Civilization Leap”

At this point, the chapter has accomplished several things:

- 1. Explained why new mechanisms for recording contribution facts can be studied**
- 2. Defined the contribution record prototype**
- 3. Explained how it differs from points systems**
- 4. Explained the boundaries separating it from project-specific trust, independently determined returns, and judgments about pathways**
- 5. Explained why its central issue is governance boundaries rather than technical details**
- 6. Identified its ultimate aim as expanding genuine participation rather than flattening people**

The book now stands on the threshold of its final chapter.

We have gradually established several key layers of future civilization:

- The logic by which structural meaning is generated
- Thickness and diversity
- Participation, collaboration, and EP
- System–subject separation in the technological age
- Definitional authority and pathway allocation
- Imbalance, hollowing out, and the minimum survival model
- Shifts in the sources of meaning
- The meaning economy
- Shared World and Dream Garden
- The contribution record prototype

What remains is one overarching question:

If these structures really begin to take shape, what do they collectively point toward?

If Civilization Leap is not merely a technological upgrade, what kind of process of structural reorganization is it?

That is the next chapter:

Civilization Leap: The Logic of Reorganizing Structural Meaning.

Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed:

The Contribution Record Prototype: Facts, Review, and Project-Specific Trust.

This book defines it as a prototype that can fail: one that records the facts of genuine contributions in limited contexts, with restricted purposes, explicit durations, and provision for appeals and deletion, and supplies material for new, independent judgments.

The chapter explained why new mechanisms for recording contribution facts can be studied: traditional systems of wages, jobs, titles, and single performance measures may miss some facts of networked participation, work on slow variables, bridging contributions, and multipathway collaboration. Whether a new mechanism is needed still depends on comparison with alternatives.

For the contribution record prototype genuinely to work, it must:

- Record genuine contributions rather than merely reward surface activity
- Support factual verification within projects rather than create personhood scores or permanent qualifications
- Separate records from rights, resources, public services, and governance consequences, without automatic settlement
- Maintain strong governance boundaries to prevent a slide from “seeing contributions” to “controlling people”

The chapter ultimately proposed a key principle:

The contribution record prototype should serve to expand genuine participation, not optimize controllable behavior.

The next chapter is the book's final chapter:

How, taken together, do these structures constitute the true logic of Civilization Leap?

Chapter 23: Civilization Leap: The Logic of Reorganizing Structural Meaning

By this chapter, the book has completed a full theoretical development.

We have discussed:

- How structural meaning is generated
- How it expands along thickness and diversity
- How it enters networks, participation, collaboration, and institutions
- Why civilizational stability cannot be judged by total capabilities alone, but must also consider participation and collaboration
- Why technological revolutions rewrite the conditions for generating structural meaning
- Why the deepest risk of the AI age is the separation of system capabilities from subject capabilities
- Why “participation” must advance to “effective participation”
- Why definitional authority, pathway allocation authority, recording authority, and interpretive authority affect judgments about positions, and how to prevent records from determining who can enter deep places
- Why civilization approaches collapse through overload, alienation, and hollowing out
- Why a minimum survival model must be preserved during high-risk periods
- Why sources of meaning are shifting from old centers toward networked participation
- Why the meaning economy, Shared World, Dream Garden, and the contribution record prototype may constitute new structures that support future civilization

We must now answer one final overarching question:

What do these changes collectively point toward?

Civilization Leap cannot be defined by Meaning Dynamics alone. From the perspective of the theory of Civilization Leap as a whole, its fundamental transformation changes the default pathway through which self-interest realizes itself: from self-interest first toward self-interest with others first, making individuals' long-term interests increasingly compatible with value for others, shared value, and shared survival. Meaning Dynamics explains only how this leap occurs at the levels of positions, pathways, participation, contributions, and structural support.

Clarification against moralizing | “Others first” is primarily a direction for institutions and incentives, not a demand that ordinary people sacrifice themselves first. It seeks to change why harming others so often makes profit easier, and to make creating value for others more compatible with one's own long-term interests. It does not ask people to keep giving unconditionally within unfair structures.

What kind of structural process is Civilization Leap, beyond an emotionally appealing vision?

The task of this chapter is to bring the variables, mechanisms, and institutional prototypes developed throughout the book together into one central judgment:

From the meso-level perspective of Meaning Dynamics, Civilization Leap manifests as structural meaning gradually moving from imbalance, rupture, and hollowing out toward renewed generation, renewed connection, and renewed support.

Rather, it is the process by which structural meaning moves from imbalance toward reorganization.

This statement is very important.

It is not a complete definition of Civilization Leap, but the meso-level portion this book can explain independently. Accordingly, the manifestations of a leap as understood here are not:

- Technology has become more advanced, so a leap has occurred

- Resources have increased, so a leap has occurred
- AI has become stronger, so a leap has occurred
- Life has become more convenient, so a leap has occurred

All of these may happen, but none is sufficient in itself to constitute a leap.

A genuine leap occurs at a deeper level:

- When a civilization reorganizes “who is needed”
- Reorganizes “who can enter”
- Reorganizes “what counts as a contribution”
- Reorganizes “how participation receives continuing structural support”
- Reorganizes “how structural meaning is generated at scale and continually deepened”

Only when these meso-level relationships genuinely reorganize does Civilization Leap acquire a structural foundation that can enter reality and be tested.

This chapter therefore addresses not a future reduced to slogans, but:

The logic of reorganizing structural meaning.

I. Why Civilization Leap Cannot Be Understood as an “Explosion of Capabilities”

Many contemporary narratives about the future readily understand Civilization Leap as some kind of “explosion of capabilities”:

- An explosion of computing power
- An explosion of productive capacity
- An explosion of automation
- An explosion of resource-allocation capabilities
- An explosion in the speed of acquiring knowledge
- An explosion of life-extension capabilities

These changes may certainly be profound, even sufficient to rewrite civilization's surface.

But this book must state clearly:

An explosion of capabilities does not, by itself, automatically equal Civilization Leap.

The reason is simple.

As repeatedly explained above:

- Stronger system capabilities do not automatically mean stronger subject capabilities
- More pathways do not automatically mean more effective participation
- Denser connections do not automatically establish deep collaboration
- Stronger platforms do not automatically mean more stable structures
- Efficient operation does not automatically mean deep stability

In other words, a civilization may perfectly well have:

- Extremely strong capabilities
- Extremely fast systems
- Extremely dense connections
- Extremely high output

While simultaneously having:

- Scarce deep places

- Declining EP
- Contributions that struggle to accumulate
- Unanchored responsibility
- Hollowed-out subjects
- Collaboration becoming shallow

In such circumstances, civilization has not made a leap. It has merely strengthened a one-sided capability of its old structure.

1. An explosion of capabilities may merely accelerate the old logic

If a civilization still operates according to the old logic:

- Allowing only a few people into deep places
- Granting long-term recognition to only a few pathways
- Treating only explicitly visible behavior as valuable
- Strengthening systems unilaterally while subjects become thinner

Then the stronger technology becomes, the faster and more thoroughly that old logic will be amplified.

2. A genuine leap must answer: “What kind of structure do capabilities serve?”

This is the key to the book.

Capabilities do not exist in isolation. They always serve some structure.

Whether a civilization has made a leap therefore depends not on how strong its capabilities are in themselves, but on:

Whether those capabilities are reembedded in a new structure that is broader, deeper, and better able to generate structural meaning continuously.

This is the starting point of a leap as understood in this book.

II. The First Sign of Civilization Leap: Structural Meaning Is No Longer Monopolized by a Few Old Centers

To understand “reorganization,” we must first clarify what the old structure is.

Viewed over the long history of modern civilization, structural meaning has long depended heavily on several centers:

- A single career pathway
- Membership in a single organization
- Standardized employment positions
- A few highly recognized roles
- Quantifiable, short-cycle performance systems
- Rankings of value driven by visible output

These centers once played enormous roles.

They should not simply be dismissed.

The problem is that, as technology, platforms, automation, and complex social conditions continue to change, these old centers increasingly struggle to perform, on their own, the function of “providing positions for most people.”

A crucial change then occurs in civilization:

The principal sources of structural meaning are no longer monopolized by a few old centers.

This is the first sign of a leap.

1. More roles begin to receive recognition

2. More pathways begin to develop real-world entry points

3. More previously marginal contributions begin to enter the structural center

4. Positions arise not only from a single organization, but from support across multilayered networks

Civilization thus begins to move from “a few centers absorbing the majority” toward “multipathway networks supporting the majority.”

This is not merely diversification, but a reorganization of the support mechanisms themselves.

III. The Second Sign of Civilization Leap: From “Passive Incorporation” Toward “Genuine Participation”

Much participation in the old civilization remains, in essence, passive incorporation:

- Entering a job
- Obeying organizational logic
- Following procedures
- Making a living within established structures
- Exchanging reliable obedience for a position

These patterns were effective at certain historical stages.

But as system capabilities grow stronger and platforms become more adept at coordination and deployment, participation through “passive incorporation” becomes increasingly unable to provide deep vitality for civilization.

A genuine leap must therefore include a second step:

Moving from passive incorporation toward genuine participation.

That is, more and more positions within civilization should do more than place people in assigned slots. They should enable people to:

- Exercise judgment
- Bear responsibility
- Create
- Collaborate
- Make a real contribution to direction

This is precisely why EP becomes a core variable.

1. Without the expansion of EP, there is no leap

Even if a civilization expands its entry points, if individuals can only remain at shallow interfaces, it has merely expanded surface-level mobilization, not made a leap.

2. A leap requires more people to enter deep places gradually

Real civilizational change does not simply mean that more people “have something to do.” It means that more people can continually gain depth along pathways, moving from peripheral interfaces into core layers of participation.

3. A leap therefore rewrites the “structure of participation”

It is not merely a redistribution of tasks, but a reorganization of:

- Who may exercise judgment
- Who may bear consequences
- Who may gradually grow into a thicker node
- Who may genuinely become a force in civilization's reproduction

This step marks the dividing line between civilization's “operation” and its “leap.”

IV. The Third Sign of Civilization Leap: From a Single Ranking of Value Toward Multilayered Recognition of Contributions

Earlier in the book, considerable attention was devoted to:

- Who defines meaning
- Who determines pathways
- Who holds the authority to record contributions
- Why contributions to slow variables, maintenance contributions, and bridging contributions have long been undervalued

This chapter must therefore state the third sign of a leap explicitly:

Civilization begins to recognize contributions anew.

This sounds ordinary, but is in fact profoundly significant.

It means that a civilization no longer ranks every action by a single standard.

1. From attending only to visible output toward attending to structural additions

2. From attending only to short-term feedback toward recognizing long-term construction

3. From attending only to central positions toward recognizing bridging, maintenance, care, and repair

4. From attending only to contributions within jobs toward recognizing networked, multipathway, cross-organizational contributions

This means that civilization's value structure has been rearranged.

Once that structure is rearranged, pathways, project-specific trust, participation, and institutions may all change accordingly; every specific consequence still requires independent judgment.

The reorganization of contribution recognition is therefore an important meso-level structural component of Civilization Leap, not its entire content.

V. The Fourth Meso-Level Sign of Civilization Leap: Resources Move Beyond Pure Possession to Further Open the Foundations of Participation

This book proposes “Shared World” not to articulate an abstract, appealing vision,

but because, at the resource level, Civilization Leap must further answer this question: while lawful property rights continue to exist, which shareable resources can support genuine participation at lower cost, with easier exit and greater verifiability?

The old logic tends toward:

- Resources first being held through exclusive possession
- Individuals competing for entry

- Those who enter then obtaining rights of use
- Those who do not enter remaining without adequate foundations over the long term

This logic can persist within the old structure, but increasingly struggles to support a future civilization that requires widespread EP.

This meso-level sign can therefore be stated as follows:

Without denying lawful property rights, more and more resources suitable for sharing are organized as foundations for participation, rather than solely as the outcome of exclusive possession.

This means:

- Rights of use become more important
- Rights of access become more important
- Shared foundations become more important
- The basic conditions for entering real-world processes become increasingly public

This does not abolish ownership. It reorders the question of “what resource structure best supports civilizational stability.”

From this book's perspective, the answer is increasingly clear:

A truly stable civilization does not give a few people ever more static resources. It gives more people the basic conditions for entering real-world processes.

This is the material prerequisite for expanding structural meaning at scale.

VI. The Fifth Sign of Civilization Leap: From a Society of Static Jobs Toward a Society of Networked Collaboration

Here we must advance one of the book's central judgments:

The real organizational unit of future civilization will no longer be only the individual job. It will increasingly be networked collaboration.

This does not mean that jobs disappear altogether.

It means that jobs are no longer the sole or ultimate source of meaning.

More and more crucial real-world processes will occur within:

- Multinode collaboration
- Combinations of multiple roles
- Project-based networks
- Community-based networks
- Distributed participation on shared foundations
- Long-term coordination structures spanning organizational boundaries

1. A society of networked collaboration is not the same as a platform society

This must be emphasized.

A platform society excels at:

- Calling upon participants
- Distribution
- Ranking
- Controlling visibility
- High-frequency connections

What a society of networked collaboration truly needs, however, is:

- Sustainable roles
- Deep collaboration
- Multilayered trust
- Intermediary nodes
- New, independent judgments about pathways
- Continuity in the facts of contribution
- Redundancy and substitutability

With only the former and none of the latter, there is merely stronger platformization, not a leap.

2. A society of networked collaboration makes “being needed” broader and more finely woven

This means that relationships of being needed within civilization no longer arise only in a few formal jobs. They are generated at more real-world nodes:

- Maintenance
- Repair
- Translation
- Shared support
- Local coordination
- Cross-cultural connections
- Building slow variables
- Responses to project-specific problems

This releases “being needed” from a single entry point, forming a broader network of structural meaning.

3. This is the change in social organization that constitutes Civilization Leap

A leap is therefore not technological showmanship, but a rewriting of social organization.

It redefines:

- How positions form
- How collaboration occurs
- How contributions accumulate
- How credibility flows across nodes
- How structures continually support individuals

This is the civilizational significance of a society of networked collaboration.

VII. The Sixth Sign of Civilization Leap: From “Efficient Operation” Toward “Integrity at Depth”

At this point in the book, a central judgment must be distilled:

The true objective of future civilization should not be greater efficiency alone, but greater efficiency without distortion.

The word “distortion” is extremely important.

As explained repeatedly above:

- A system can become more efficient and more alienated at the same time
- A structure can become more powerful and more hollow at the same time

- A society can become more active and more superficial at the same time
- A civilization can become more prosperous and more fragile at the same time

The real criterion of a leap is therefore not optimization along a single axis, but this:

As capabilities strengthen, pathways expand, and collaboration accelerates, structural meaning is not flattened, subjects are not hollowed out, and EP is not replaced on a large scale.

That is what “without distortion” means.

1. Avoiding distortion means that stronger systems do not come at the cost of the disappearance of subjects

2. Avoiding distortion means that expanded participation does not degenerate into surface-level deployment

3. Avoiding distortion means that recognizing contributions does not slide into worship of a single metric

4. Avoiding distortion means that network expansion does not crush meso-level support structures

These points can almost be regarded as quality standards for Civilization Leap.

In other words:

A genuine leap is not greater strength in itself, but greater strength without distortion.

VIII. Civilization Leap Is Not an Instantaneous Event, but a Continuous Process of Reorganization

Many narratives of a leap readily depict it as an instantaneous crossing:

- A technology appears
- An institution is announced
- A breakthrough occurs at a particular point
- The world suddenly enters a new phase

This book does not deny the existence of pivotal moments, but places greater emphasis on this:

The essence of Civilization Leap is not an instantaneous event, but a continuous process of reorganization.

This process includes at least several stages.

1. The old structure becomes unstable

Old centers of meaning increasingly struggle to sustain the majority on their own.

Job-centered structures, single pathways, single rankings of value, and single credibility systems begin to fail.

2. New entry points appear

Networked participation, shared foundations, project-based collaboration, community-based connections, and new forms of contribution recording begin to emerge.

3. Old and new coexist and conflict

This is the most complex and painful stage.

The old logic remains powerful; the new logic is not yet fully formed.

Many people will be pulled between the two structures.

4. New structures begin to consolidate

When new pathways, credibility, roles, and collaboration begin to endure, civilization enters a genuine period of reorganization.

5. A new stability window opens

Only when new networks of structural meaning can generate EP at scale, sustain thick roles, and develop meso-level collaboration and accumulated contributions does civilization genuinely enter a new stability window.

This shows that a leap is not a button, but a complex structural curve.

The entire theory of this book seeks to explain that curve.

IX. Why Civilization Leap Ultimately Still Depends on “Whether More People Can Enter Thicker Positions”

This chapter must finally concentrate all its judgments into one central statement:

From the dimension of Meaning Dynamics, whether Civilization Leap can truly become real depends on:

Whether a civilization can enable more people not merely to be incorporated into systems, but to enter thicker positions.

This can almost be regarded as one of the book's final overarching propositions.

For:

- If more people merely perform thinner actions within stronger systems, that is not a leap, only a system upgrade.
- If more people merely enjoy richer surface activities without deeper judgment, responsibility, and growth, that is not a leap, only an expansion of bustle.
- If only a few people continually gain thickness while the majority remain at shallow interfaces over the long term, that is not a leap, only a new form of stable inequality.

A genuine leap must occur here:

- More people can enter
- After entering, they can gain thickness
- After gaining thickness, they can continue collaborating
- Collaboration can accumulate credibility
- New deep places form independently through current relationships, capabilities, consent, and responsibilities
- Deep places can, in turn, continue nurturing new participants

Only this constitutes a virtuous cycle at the civilizational level.

X. A Final Judgment: Civilization Leap Means Entering Reality More Deeply, Not Leaving It Behind

The book wishes to correct one final common misunderstanding.

When people hear “leap,” many naturally think of:

- Abstract visions
- Lofty ideals
- Higher-dimensional goals
- Blueprints detached from reality

This book disagrees with that picture.

Within the logic of the book as a whole, Civilization Leap is precisely not about leaving reality, but: Enabling more people to enter reality more deeply.

That is:

- Not enabling a few people to fly higher, but connecting more people more genuinely to the world.
- Not making structures more abstract, but enabling capabilities, needs, contribution facts, project-specific trust, and pathways to form more concrete, sustainable real-world networks.
- Not distancing civilization further from people, but enabling civilization to grow a broader foundation of subjects once again.

Civilization Leap as discussed in this book has therefore never meant escaping reality, but a deeper reorganization of real-world structures.

Chapter Summary

As the final chapter of the book, this chapter proposes:

Civilization Leap is the logic of reorganizing structural meaning.

The book explains that a genuine leap is not simply a technological upgrade, a replacement of institutions, or an abstract vision in itself. It is a process through which civilization reorganizes “who is needed, who can enter, what counts as contribution, and how participation receives continuing structural support.”

The chapter further identifies several key signs of Civilization Leap:

- Structural meaning is no longer monopolized by a few old centers
- Participation moves from passive incorporation toward genuine participation
- Recognition of contributions moves from a single ranking of value toward multilayered recognition
- Resource logic moves from possession first toward foundations for participation first
- Social organization moves from static jobs as its center toward networked collaboration as its center
- Civilizational objectives move from single-axis efficiency toward greater strength without distortion

The book thus ultimately converges on one central judgment:

From the dimension of Meaning Dynamics, whether Civilization Leap can continue to unfold depends on whether a civilization can enable more people to enter real positions in which growth, responsibility, and collaboration are possible, and continually generate new judgment, responsibility, relationships, and futures through those positions. Yet civilization must ultimately still undergo the comprehensive test of the survival baseline and the three goals.

Guide to the Extended Appendices

The following Appendices A–D retain historical discussions, real-world applications, and elaborations of institutional prototypes from previous editions, preserving the complete theory's interfaces with evidence and the density of its real-world extrapolations. Their evidentiary status differs from that of the main text, however: historical generalizations must respect specialist historical scholarship; changing data, policies, regulations, corporate cases, and international comparisons must be reverified before formal external release; institutional parameters belong to prototypes rather than established plans. Any case may refute or narrow the theory in the main text. Inclusion in an appendix cannot automatically make it “validation.”

Appendix A: Changes in Meaning Structures: From a “Stable Middle Class” to a Possible “Meaning Cliff”

A Diagnosis of the Structural Predicament of White-Collar Groups Worldwide

I. Background: Structural Changes Among White-Collar Workers

In developed economies during the second half of the twentieth century, white-collar groups long occupied a relatively stable social structure. This stability arose primarily from three sources:

First, the occupational system provided clear social roles. Large corporations, government agencies, and professional service organizations offered white-collar workers complete career pathways. An occupation defined not only “what one did,” but also “who one was.”

Second, income structures provided a predictable order of life. Pensions, paid leave, corporate benefits, and other protections formed the material basis of middle-class life, allowing individuals to make long-term plans for their futures.

Third, organizational systems provided pathways for continuing social participation. Trade unions, professional associations, and community networks jointly upheld the expression of this group's interests, ensuring its voice in social affairs.

White-collar groups' sources of meaning therefore long depended heavily on the occupational system. In this structure, an occupation meant not only income, but also identity, order, growth, and a sense of being needed.

Generative AI's effects on occupational tasks are expanding, but “exposure” does not equal replacement of entire jobs. The ILO's 2025 occupational exposure index indicates that roughly one-quarter of jobs worldwide have some exposure to generative AI, with transformation more likely than full-job replacement. OECD 2024 likewise focuses on changes in tasks and skill requirements. Accordingly, the following discussion of white-collar structures is only a risk analysis requiring further validation.

II. The “Precariat” as a Competing Explanation

Guy Standing uses the concept of the “precariat” to describe people with inadequate labor, income, and representation security. This is an influential but contestable theoretical classification; it cannot replace labor-market data for different jurisdictions and groups.

Who belongs to the “precariat”?

This group is difficult to define simply. It includes:

Type	Characteristics	Representative groups
Low-income people	Vulnerable groups engaged in part-time work, gigs, and temporary contracts	Platform delivery riders, temporary workers, hourly workers
Those involuntarily pushed downward	Laid-off middle-class workers and overeducated young people	Unemployed white-collar workers, university graduates unemployed upon graduation
Systemically marginalized groups	Excluded for structural reasons	Women, migrants, older people, ethnic minorities

Type	Characteristics	Representative groups
Highly skilled temporary stratum	Highly skilled but lacking stable protections	Creative workers, platform-economy programmers

Standing divides contemporary Western society into seven categories: the elite, the salaried white-collar class, professionals and technicians, the traditional working class, and those below these strata who “live from day to day.” The latter are characterized by a threefold loss of security:

- Labor security: loss of job stability, from “lifetime employment” to “on-demand employment”
- Income security: loss of a predictable livelihood, from a “monthly salary” to an “hourly wage” and then “no pay”
- Representation security: loss of political voice and exclusion from mainstream political agendas

Ultimately, these losses lead to the condition of a supplicant who “survives by praying”: individuals can no longer control their own destinies and can only await policy handouts or the market's favor.

III. Historical Perspective: From Keynesianism to Neoliberalism

To understand the deeper meaning of “precarity,” we need to trace the historical evolution of labor rights in the West.

The postwar “golden age” (1945–1970s):

- The United States passed the Social Security Act in 1935, establishing federal pensions, unemployment insurance, and assistance for older people
- The Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 established a federal minimum wage and overtime pay
- The National Labor Relations Act of 1935 gave workers the legal right to organize and join unions and engage in collective bargaining
- Workers and white-collar employees generally enjoyed labor and income security, together with related community, corporate, and state benefits

The turning point of the 1970s:

The United States experienced the economic crisis of “stagflation”; industrial recovery in Japan and Europe created international competitive pressure, while domestic labor costs continued to rise. Against this background, neoliberalism replaced Keynesianism on the historical stage.

Neoliberalism's central proposition was to establish “flexibility” in labor markets: abandoning fixed wages, allowing companies to lay off workers without paying a price, adjusting jobs flexibly within firms, suppressing union power, and cutting public benefits. In essence, this sacrificed postwar labor rights to protect the free movement of capital worldwide.

The historical irony is that, while the capitalist class successfully broke through national borders and achieved free global movement, workers were locked in the cage of “labor-market flexibility.” Capital could move at any time to cheaper locations, while workers could only remain where they were and accept more precarious working conditions.

IV. The White-Collar Crisis in the Age of Artificial Intelligence

In the age of artificial intelligence, the tasks, skills, and career pathways of white-collar and other cognitive occupations are being reorganized. This change may bring structural anxiety, but its extent, pace, and distribution still require continuing observation by occupation, region, firm, and actual AI deployment.

Quantitative impact:

Calibration of changing evidence (as of August 2026): the ILO's 2025 report, *Generative AI and Jobs: A Refined Global Index of Occupational Exposure*, estimates that roughly one-quarter of global employment has some occupational exposure to generative AI, with clerical occupations most exposed. Because most occupations still include tasks requiring human input, however, the ILO explicitly judges “job transformation” more likely than “whole-job redundancy.” Exposure here cannot be converted directly into unemployment.

Actual layoffs:

OECD 2024 research on AI and skill demand shows changes in task and skill structures within highly AI-exposed occupations, with directions of change varying across firms and occupations. The more cautious conclusion at this stage is therefore that white-collar and cognitive occupations face risks of structural reorganization, rather than that mass replacement has already occurred in a uniform direction and at a uniform speed. Executive forecasts, media headlines, and individual layoff cases can serve only as risk signals, not substitutes for labor-market evidence.

Impact on meaning:

Anxiety about occupational value and identity may enter public sentiment, but no single conclusion has been established concerning its political direction, scale, or causal strength. This edition removes insufficiently verified paraphrases of columns and inflammatory labels from earlier versions, retaining only questions that subsequent research can test.

V. Political Reorganization in a Global Perspective

AI deployment may enter political processes through occupational insecurity, distributional disputes, and identity anxiety. Whether, how, and to what extent it changes political alignments must be tested against independent data and competing explanations.

A political transmission hypothesis awaiting validation:

Changes in occupational structures may be translated by different political forces into competing narratives about technology, distribution, elites, and security, but their direction is not predetermined. Testing this hypothesis requires separate measurements of AI exposure, actual job changes, income and identity shocks, party strategies, and voting behavior.

The Republican Party's predicament:

Demands for technological acceleration, industrial security, labor protection, and opposition to elites may coexist within different political coalitions. Whether stable conflicts form among them is an evolving empirical research question that this theory cannot decide in advance.

Effects on the Global South:

Emerging economies may also be affected by global production chains, platformization, and automation, but differences across industries, regions, institutions, and groups are substantial. Whether a common trend toward precarity emerges should be determined by comparative labor data rather than lists of illustrative examples.

VI. General Laws of Changes in Meaning Structures

Existing material suggests three types of relationships to test; these cannot be called universal laws across groups:

1. Destabilization of roles

Changes in occupational systems directly affect individuals' role structures. Previously clear occupational identities become blurred, and individuals temporarily lose structural anchors for “who I am” and “what I am doing.” Such instability brings not only economic pressure but also psychological crisis: when people cannot answer “who am I,” they lose their location in society's coordinate system.

2. Fewer pathways for participation

When existing jobs decline, the principal pathways through which individuals enter social activities are weakened. In terms of the civilizational stability model, the participation ratio (P) temporarily falls. Fewer participation pathways mean weaker connections between individuals and social networks, loss of social capital, and ultimately intensified isolation.

3. Contraction of sources of meaning

If individuals have long concentrated their meaning in the occupational system, changes in occupational structures may contract their sources of meaning. That is, meaning diversity (D) temporarily falls. When the sole pillar collapses, sources of structural meaning and the subjective sense of support may contract together; existential meaning does not thereby disappear.

VII. The Dual Predicament of the “Meaning Cliff”

In sum, white-collar groups face not simply an “employment problem,” but a deeper “meaning cliff”:

Dimension	Employment problem	Meaning problem
Focus	Income, jobs, labor market	Roles, participation, belonging, sense of value
What is lost	Economic sources	Social coordinates
Manifestation	Poverty	Alienation
Path to recovery	Reemployment	Rebuilding meaning
Social consequences	Widening income disparities	Political polarization, social division

If someone loses a job but retains clear pathways for social participation, stable social roles, and predictable sources of a sense of value, the problem is fundamentally different from completely losing the structure of participation. This is precisely the core difference between the “precariat” and the traditionally unemployed: they have lost not just their livelihood, but their position in society.

VIII. The Possibility of Shifting Sources of Meaning

Changes in social structures mean not only losses, but potentially the opening of new space. As the constraints of occupational systems weaken, some individuals may gain more free time, room to organize their own lives, and opportunities to explore across fields.

New sources of meaning may include:

- Learning and skill development: from a “lifelong career” to “lifelong learning”
- Creation and cultural expression: from “consumer” to “creator”
- Community participation and mutual aid: from “workplace member” to “community member”
- Knowledge sharing and dissemination: from “professional barriers” to “shared knowledge”
- Cross-cultural cooperation: from “local limitations” to “global connections”
- Community service and care: from “recipient of services” to “provider of services”

Meaning, in other words, does not necessarily disappear; it may shift from an occupational center toward the center of a multipathway network. For the “precariat,” spontaneous forms of cooperation such as cooperatives may provide pathways out of precarity: coming together to create new platforms and rules.

IX. Policy Explorations for a Global Meaning Economy

Various policy explorations have emerged worldwide in response to this structural change:

- Universal basic income: as a cofounder of the Basic Income Earth Network, Guy Standing advocates a basic income with global coverage and a redefinition of “work” and “labor”
- Sharing data dividends: people contribute data to the new economy and should therefore share in its economic gains
- Global redistribution mechanisms: people in developed countries pay certain taxes to support developing countries
- “Meaning economy” infrastructure: the global meaning network advocated in this book

These explorations point in a common direction: as traditional occupational structures weaken, society needs new sources of meaning and pathways for participation to maintain stability. The meaning economy is not a marginal phenomenon; it may be an important component of social structural adjustment in the technological age. It is not a simple replacement for the occupational system, but society's supplementation of its own meaning structures after changes in its occupation-centered structure.

X. Conclusion of This Appendix: From “Employment Problems” to “Problems of Meaning Structures”

Existing material on white-collar and cognitive occupations suggests:

First, some groups may simultaneously experience declining occupational stability and contracting structural support. Whether this can be generalized as the downward movement of an entire class requires broader data.

Second, the core of the “meaning cliff” is dependence on a single source of meaning. When individuals bind their entire sense of meaning to the occupational system, shocks to that system become a collapse of their world of meaning.

Third, solutions cannot be limited to “reemployment.” They must address “rebuilding meaning”: helping individuals construct diversified networks of meaning sources.

Fourth, the meaning economy is not synonymous with charity or relief, but is one possible class of experiments in structures of participation and support in the technological age. Whether it is necessary, what forms can work, and whether it can outperform existing institutions must all be decided by real-world validation.

Fifth, cross-regional comparisons can reveal differences in capability–need connections, but do not imply that global capabilities must be organized through a single network.

The meaning economy should therefore be treated only as a candidate research topic. Subsequent appendices examine several prototypes and their risks without presupposing that they constitute shared global infrastructure.

Appendix B: Global Meaning Networks: Dream Garden and Shared World

Collaborative Infrastructure Connecting Capabilities, Needs, and Resources

Prototype status | This appendix presents conditional scenarios, not real-world cases, policy plans, or arrangements for global resources. Resource access is valid only when rights holders act voluntarily, the jurisdiction permits it, the purpose is explicit, the duration limited, permission revocable, and responsibility traceable.

I. Introduction: From “Diagnosing Meaning” to “Meaning Networks”

If Appendix A diagnosed the “meaning cliff,” this appendix asks how new sources of meaning can circulate and be realized over a wider area.

In an age of global interconnection, the reach of connections among capabilities, resources, and needs is expanding at an unprecedented speed. A person's capabilities no longer correspond only to the needs of their local society; their resources are no longer confined to a single place and purpose. Viewed this way, future society may gradually develop a new structure: a global network through which resources, capabilities, and meaning flow.

Shared World and Dream Garden, proposed in this appendix, are two structured experiments along these lines. They are conditional prototypes open to refutation. Their suitability for different jurisdictions and institutional settings remains unvalidated, and they are not presumed to become global infrastructure.

II. Shared World: A Cross-Regional Network of Voluntary Authorization

2.1 Basic idea

Shared World's core is not to eliminate personal resources, but to change how resources are used. In traditional society, resources such as homes, cars, and tools are typically used exclusively by individuals, yet in many cases remain underutilized.

Shared World's basic proposal is that, under a specific jurisdiction and explicit agreement, rights holders may voluntarily connect limited permissions to use some resources to a network. The platform may only display the scope of authorization and suggest matches. The visibility of resources, contribution records, or supposed equivalence relationships must not automatically generate rights of access, use, disposal, cross-border deployment, or execution. This network creates no cross-regional resource pool, public dispatch authority, or resource sovereignty.

2.2 Expanding resource types

At the global level, resources that can connect to a sharing network include:

Resource type	Specific content	Typical settings
Physical spaces	Unoccupied housing, shared offices, community centers, cultural venues	Accommodation and venues for activities during cross-regional participation
Digital infrastructure	Computing resources, storage resources, network bandwidth	Remote collaboration, content creation, knowledge sharing

Resource type	Specific content	Typical settings
Tools and equipment	Professional tools, vehicles, production equipment	Practicing skills, small-scale entrepreneurship, community service
Knowledge assets	Course content, creative materials, open-source code	Education and learning, cultural dissemination, derivative creation
Service resources	Public-interest roles, community service opportunities	Flexible participation, volunteering, mutual support in elder care
Time credits	Bookable time for companionship, care, and teaching	Older people helping older people, skill exchanges, intergenerational mutual aid

2.3 Structural significance

This structure matters not only because it improves resource efficiency, but more importantly because it lowers the threshold for individuals to participate in new activities.

When someone wants to go somewhere new to participate in a new culture, project, or cooperative undertaking, the first issue is usually not willingness, but where to stay, how to travel, and how to meet basic living needs. Shared World's role is precisely to provide the foundations for these actions. In terms of the civilizational stability model, it primarily affects the participation ratio (P), because it gives more people the ability to enter new participation networks.

2.4 Foundations in global practice

Similar models have already appeared in diverse practices worldwide:

- Global network coverage built by telecommunications operators provides “information arteries” for Chinese companies expanding overseas
- Multinational corporations deploy data centers and transmission networks worldwide to meet global demand for computing power
- Sharing-economy platforms integrate idle resources worldwide, enabling movement across regions
- Community time-banking practices in Europe, the United States, Japan, and elsewhere provide institutional templates for “older people helping older people”

These practices show that Shared World is not a utopian idea, but a real trend already underway.

III. Dream Garden: A Global Network Matching Capabilities and Needs

3.1 Basic idea

Dream Garden is fundamentally not an ordinary information platform, but a meaning-matching network of needs–capabilities–resources–cooperation. It helps people in different regions and cultures discover where needs exist, who has the capabilities, how cooperation can form, and how participation can be realized.

3.2 Differences in the value of capabilities across the world

In everyday life, many capabilities seem very ordinary in their local environment, and are not even considered “valuable skills.” Yet their value may be rediscovered in a global network.

Take making dumplings as an example. In many Chinese households, making dumplings is simply part of daily life. In a particular community unfamiliar with this culinary and cultural practice, this everyday capability may

have a different value for exchange; whether genuine demand exists must be verified case by case. A seemingly ordinary capability can have a completely different value in another cultural setting.

This example reveals a general phenomenon: many capabilities lie “dormant,” not because they lack value, but because they lack pathways through which to encounter needs.

3.3 Global diversity of needs

At the global level, types of needs are more diverse:

Type of need	Specific content	Corresponding capabilities
Cultural experiences	Cross-cultural exchange, experiencing traditional crafts, sharing local cultures	Cooking, crafts, music, dance
Skill learning	Language learning, professional skills training, sharing life skills	Teaching, tutoring, demonstration, guidance
Community services	Elder care, child care, community maintenance	Care, companionship, repair, cleaning
Knowledge collaboration	Participation in open-source projects, international research cooperation, translation and dissemination of knowledge	Programming, research, translation, writing
Emotional support	Listening, companionship, psychological comfort	Empathy, listening, emotional understanding

3.4 Structural significance

From the perspective of meaning structures, Dream Garden primarily affects meaning diversity (D), because it continually creates new pathways for participation and new roles.

In traditional occupational systems, capabilities are usually called upon through jobs. In the network age, many capabilities may exist outside fixed jobs. Dream Garden's role is to bring these overlooked capabilities into a larger network of needs.

IV. The Synergistic Relationship Between Shared World and Dream Garden

Shared World addresses the foundations for action; Dream Garden addresses meaning matching. Combined, they form a more complete structure:

Resource foundation (Shared World)

↓

Capacity for action (individual)

↓

Discovery of needs (Dream Garden)

↓

Capability connection (matching)

↓

Cooperation realized (participation)

↓

Generation of meaning (value)

↓

Contribution recording (entering the next cycle)

This structure is centered on networked participation rather than a single occupational system.

V. A Complete Case in a Global Perspective

Hypothetical scenario: from “making dumplings” to cross-cultural collaboration

Step one: identifying capabilities

Suppose a retired participant voluntarily registers capability tags such as “making dumplings, paper cutting, and basic Chinese-language teaching.” These tags are used only for this match and do not constitute an identity rating.

Step two: discovering needs

Suppose a community organization in another jurisdiction publicly announces a need for a cross-cultural activity, specifying the organizer, compensation, accommodation, insurance, visas, data processing, and exit conditions.

Step three: resource support

After both parties consent and applicable law permits it, the platform only makes suggestions for accommodation and collaboration. Accommodation permission, costs, cross-border procedures, insurance, and joining the team are separately confirmed by the relevant rights holders and responsible entities, without offsets based on contribution records or automatic matching.

Step four: realizing participation

If the activity is authorized to proceed, facts such as its occurrence, participant feedback, expenses, and fulfillment of responsibilities may be recorded. Success must be assessed from actual results; “active participation” or media impact cannot be scripted in advance.

Step five: generating meaning

Subsidies are paid independently under contracts or public rules, not generated by contribution records. Participants may or may not acquire a sense of being needed. Role designations must be confirmed jointly by the project and the individual, not conferred unilaterally by the platform.

Step six: continuing connections

Post-activity contact, subsequent cooperation, and retention of records all require renewed consent. Historical facts may be retained, but every new project, data access, or resource permission requires fresh authorization. Records neither exchange for resources nor guarantee subsequent opportunities.

VI. The Global Real-World Implications of Meaning Networks

Shared World and Dream Garden do not seek to replace existing society, but to provide a new network layer. Beyond occupational systems, states, and organizational structures, they offer individuals new ways to participate.

This structure matters because it enables many people who previously struggled to enter society's core structures to join a larger network of civilizational collaboration through lower-threshold entry points.

From a systems perspective, this means:

Variable	Meaning	Mechanism of action
Meaning diversity (D)	Richness of sources of meaning	Creates more participation pathways and role choices
Participation ratio (P)	Proportion of the population actually participating in social activities	Lowers participation thresholds and expands opportunities
Meaning thickness (M)	Depth of meaning acquired by individuals	Realizes a sense of value through genuine connections
Collaboration efficiency (η)	Smoothness of social collaboration	Reduces matching friction and improves collaboration quality

VII. Conclusion of This Appendix: From “Idle Resources” to “Flows of Meaning”

Shared World and Dream Garden reveal a possible structure for future society:

- Resources are no longer merely possessions: unoccupied homes can become foundations for other people's actions
- Capabilities no longer operate only through jobs: the skill of making dumplings can become a bond of cross-cultural connection
- Meaning no longer depends only on local occupational systems: retired workers can become cultural envoys

Within globally connected networks, resources, capabilities, and meaning can circulate more widely, forming new structures of social participation. This does not negate existing society, but supplements it: outside the occupational system, it opens a new door for everyone willing to participate.

Appendix C: The Contribution Record Prototype (Not a Global Ledger)

Factual Records, Contextual Review, and Governance Boundaries

Prototype status | This appendix studies only factual records within limited projects. It does not recognize “property rights in meaning,” establish total scores for personal value, meaning, morality, or collaborative credibility, or generate qualifications, resource rights, public services, political standing, or governance rights.

I. Why Discuss Only “Factual Records”?

Wages, positions, authorship credits, care records, project documents, and community testimony can all preserve some facts that actually occurred, but their coverage and legal consequences differ. The question for this prototype is not “how to measure every contribution,” but whether easily overlooked maintenance, care, bridging, repair, and knowledge work can leave verifiable clues to the extent necessary.

Records cannot exhaust the value of actions, still less preserve a fixed entity of meaning. New understandings of and responses to facts, works, relationships, and responsibilities by those who come later constitute new emergences of meaning; continuity does not equal emergence.

II. What May Be Recorded?

When purposes are explicit, the persons concerned are informed, and the specific jurisdiction permits it, records may include: actions that occurred and their timing; works or knowledge outputs; roles and scopes of responsibility; factual statements by relevant parties; known outcomes and uncertainties; and histories of disputes, corrections, and withdrawals.

Factual records must retain their sources, timing, scope of application, and evidentiary strength. Intentions, moral assessments, judgments of personhood, and the complete meaning of a life are excluded.

III. What Must Not Be Recorded or Inferred?

Records must not generate meaning scores, personhood rankings, moral leaderboards, psychological mind-reading, cross-domain social credit, or conclusions about “who is more worthy.” Being unrecorded, participating infrequently, leaving the platform, or not continuing to participate for a period must not be interpreted as diminished value.

Basic rights, political rights, statutory protections, and public services do not originate in contributions, nor may records become their entry requirements. Monetary payments prove only that payment occurred; they do not purchase contributions or meaning. Contribution records likewise cannot be exchanged for legal tender, insurance, healthcare, care, or other basic protections.

IV. Records and Project-Specific Trust

Individuals may authorize new projects to verify past facts, but verifiability does not equal present trustworthiness, competence, or suitability. Project-specific trust must still be formed anew on the basis of current capabilities, relationships, risks, consent, responsibilities, and judgments by affected parties.

Historical facts may remain as they were; current permissions, recommendations, roles, tasks, data access, and resource permissions must have time limits and be revalidated. Data migration is led by the persons concerned. Project-specific trust and real-world consequences must not migrate automatically with records.

V. The Firewall Between Records and Real-World Consequences

Records may reduce repeated evidence provision, but every real-world consequence must be determined separately: roles are confirmed by projects and relevant parties; tasks are authorized by responsible persons with the requisite authority; compensation is paid under law or contract; resources are licensed by rights holders;

public support is verified by competent authorities under law; and governance participation arises through lawful procedures.

There is no automatic pathway from contribution facts to new opportunities. Platforms must not promise “more records, greater rights,” nor covertly produce the same effect through recommendation rankings.

VI. Minimum Conditions for Data Governance

Records follow purpose limitation, data minimization, the shortest retention period, tiered access, and no cross-domain reuse by default. Individuals have rights to information, access, supplementation, objection, correction, export, deletion, and exit. Matters involving other people's rights, statutory obligations, or evidence preservation are handled under the specific jurisdiction.

Any algorithm may generate only clues for human review. Definition, interpretation, and appeals must not be monopolized by the same entity. Erroneous records must be revocable, and relevant parties that have received erroneous material must be notified.

VII. Differences from Existing Impact Assessment Tools

Robeco's SDG framework and the tools publicly described by Upright address impact research on companies or investment targets. They show only that “tools exist for assessing the impacts of limited objects.” Corporate-level scores cannot be transferred to individuals, and these tools cannot legitimize contribution records, resource rights, or political rights.

Practices such as time banks and community mutual-aid records likewise offer only local points of reference. Their contractual structures, scopes of reciprocity, care responsibilities, and fallback arrangements for failure must be studied separately; they cannot be expanded into a unified global account.

VIII. Minimal Trials and Counterevidence

Any trial should be confined to a single jurisdiction, single purpose, limited number of people, and limited duration, and compared with alternatives such as no records, existing track records, and human testimony. Evaluation must simultaneously record omissions, misjudgments, performative participation, discrimination, platform dependence, appeal costs, and effects on nonparticipants.

All the following outcomes must be allowed: records improved factual verification; records produced no net benefit; existing institutions were better; records created unacceptable concentrations of power or harm. The latter three outcomes should all lead to scaling back or withdrawing the prototype.

IX. Failure Conditions

If records begin to affect basic rights or public services, evolve into personhood or cross-domain credibility scores, are reused across projects without authorization, cannot be effectively corrected, or the platform's exit causes participants' basic relationships and lawful rights and interests to collapse, automatic consequences should immediately be suspended and the relevant mechanism terminated.

X. Conclusion of This Appendix

The contribution record prototype is neither a unit of measurement for the meaning economy nor necessary infrastructure for future civilization. At most, it is a limited factual interface: preserving necessary facts and supporting contextual review, while keeping the meaning of life, basic rights, current permissions, and future opportunities outside the record.

Appendix D: Global Meaning Economy Infrastructure

Controlled Research Questions, Trial Thresholds, and Failure Conditions

Status of this appendix | This appendix is not a policy blueprint, legal opinion, fiscal plan, cross-border arrangement, or engineering implementation manual. It retracts previous proposals into a testable research agenda. No name, model, or platform thereby acquires public data, resources, funds, credibility endorsements, governance authority, or executive authority.

I. Research Object: Not “How to Implement It,” but “Which Hypotheses Deserve Attempts at Falsification First”

This appendix retains only three separately testable questions: can mechanisms for discovering needs reduce the search costs of genuine participation; can voluntary, limited resource authorization improve some conditions for action; and can factual records reduce repeated evidence provision without creating personhood scores or rights thresholds? Failure in any one of the three must not be “made up for” by the other two.

“Multiple actors” likewise does not denote a predetermined governance structure. Whether governments, firms, social organizations, communities, resource rights holders, and participants join, and what responsibilities they assume, can be determined only by the specific jurisdiction, actual project, and voluntary agreements.

II. Authorization Questions That Must Be Answered Before Real-World Trials

Before any trial begins, each of the following must be specified: jurisdiction and competent authority; project initiators and those bearing responsibility; data controllers and processors; resource rights holders; participants' informed consent; sources of funds and responsibility for losses; and conditions for appeals, suspension, rollback, exit, termination, and data deletion. If any item is missing, the trial must not begin.

Professional assessments may offer recommendations, platforms may provide tools, and algorithms may generate candidate matches. Public decisions, resource permissions, subsidies, qualifications, law enforcement, and dispute adjudication, however, may be undertaken only by legally authorized, accountable entities.

III. The Minimum Trial Unit

If real-world validation proceeds, it should begin within a single jurisdiction, for a single purpose, with limited participants and duration, and a replaceable platform. For example, it could study only needs discovery and factual recording for one type of voluntary collaboration within one community, without simultaneously testing cross-border mobility, eligibility for public services, social assistance, mutual recognition of credibility, or resource dispatch.

Trials must retain offline pathways and the option not to participate. Refusing to join, withdrawing authorization, or having no record must not impair basic public services, statutory protections, political rights, labor rights, or ordinary social opportunities.

IV. Boundaries of Data and Observability

Data processing follows purpose limitation, minimum necessity, the shortest retention period, tiered access, and no sharing by default. Visible facts about resources do not equal data access; data access does not equal permission for cross-project reuse. Any reuse requires a renewed statement of purpose and the corresponding authorization.

Model outputs may provide only clues for human verification. Psychological mind-reading, meaning scores, personhood profiles, total cross-domain credibility scores, and automated political judgments are prohibited. Sensitive conditions such as employment difficulties, illness, or care needs must not be turned into commercial marketing or lending material.

V. Seven-Layer Separation of Resource Permissions

Visibility of resource facts ≠ data access ≠ matching suggestions ≠ ownership ≠ permission to use or dispose ≠ requisition ≠ execution. A successful match creates no permissions. Permission for use must be granted separately by rights holders or legally authorized entities, specifying purpose, duration, costs, risks, withdrawal, and responsibility.

This appendix establishes no “global resource pool” and presupposes no cross-border mutual recognition, regional compensation, traffic taxes, local quotas, or global dispatch. If public necessity calls for such arrangements, each must separately undergo factual substantiation, democratic procedures, legal authorization, and provision of remedies for rights violations.

VI. Limited Uses of Contribution Records

Contribution records preserve only verifiable facts, works, knowledge, relational clues, and responsibilities within limited projects. They are not currency, assets, total honor scores, total collaborative credibility scores, resource vouchers, or eligibility for public services. Historical facts may remain unchanged; current permissions and task qualifications must be revalidated.

If individuals authorize use of their records in a new project, those records may serve only as one piece of contextual material. Roles, tasks, resource permissions, compensation, insurance, public support, and governance participation must still be independently determined on the basis of current capabilities, suitability, safety, relevant parties' consent, and chains of responsibility.

VII. Interfaces with Public Policy

Platforms may publish entry points to statutory services or help individuals organize application materials, but must not automatically determine employment difficulties, willingness to seek work, subsidy eligibility, phase-out periods for minimum-income assistance, healthcare or care needs, or public-service priorities. Competent authorities must independently verify these under law and retain human channels and remedies.

The fact that public funds, subsidies, or compensation have been paid does not automatically generate contribution records; contribution records likewise cannot be exchanged for legal tender, statutory insurance, healthcare, care, or other basic protections. Voluntary mutual-aid projects may agree separately on services, but must remain separate from statutory protections and establish fallback arrangements for nonperformance in advance.

VIII. Evaluation Design: Record Benefits, Harms, and Those Not Reached Together

Evaluation must observe at least the following separately: whether participation genuinely increased; whether participants gained more stable relationships and conditions for action; who was excluded; data and governance costs; incorrect matches and harms; platform dependence; burdens on resource rights holders; and whether performative contributions, discrimination, or concentration of power emerged. These indicators must not be combined into a single success score.

Results must allow three kinds of conclusion: a local mechanism works; the mechanism does not work or costs too much; other existing institutions solve the problem better. The third is not a cover for failure, but a legitimate outcome requiring withdrawal of the prototype.

IX. Suspension and Failure Conditions

Any of the following should trigger suspension or termination: basic rights or public services become tied to records; unauthorized data reuse; unilateral expansion of resource permissions by the platform; prolonged failure of appeals; harms for which responsibility cannot be assigned; collapse of basic relationships when the

platform exits; records evolving into personhood or cross-domain credibility scores; or trial costs clearly exceeding verifiable benefits.

Following suspension, priority must be given to protecting participants, freezing automatic consequences, preserving necessary evidence, notifying affected people, and offering deletion or migration options. Existing responsibilities must not be waived in the name of a “civilizational experiment.”

X. Stage Gates, Not an Implementation Timetable

This appendix sets no one-to-ten-year roadmap. Expansion may be discussed only after the preceding stage has undergone independent evaluation, disclosed negative results, remedied major harms, and obtained renewed authorization. Expansion is not the default direction; stopping, shrinking, or replacement by another institution are equally valid conclusions.

Conclusion of This Appendix

The theoretical value of Dream Garden, Shared World, and the contribution record prototype lies only in offering meso-level hypotheses that reality can refute. They cannot run civilization and are not products through which Civilization Leap must pass. What truly needs to be preserved is the question: how to expand genuine participation without sacrificing rights, facts, authorization, responsibility, exit, and diversity.

(End of Appendices A–D)

Appendix E: Cultural Variables and Differing Expressions of Structural Meaning

Throughout its main text, this book maintains a basic position:

Meaning Dynamics offers a meso-level logic of civilization, not a single civilizational template.

This means that even when certain variables have cross-civilizational explanatory power in logical terms, their real-world forms of support, mechanisms of formation, relative weights, and risk boundaries will still differ significantly according to cultural structures.

Without acknowledging this, the entire book could readily slide into an implicit universalism, as though all societies should understand the following through the same pathway:

- Roles
- Participation
- Pathways
- Project-specific trust references
- Collaboration
- Sharing
- The sense of being needed

This plainly does not fit historical reality.

The purpose of this appendix is therefore not to provide a complete comparative study of civilizations, but to undertake a necessary act of openness:

To explain that the meso-level logic of “structural meaning” may be comparable, while its real-world support is necessarily culturally shaped.

In other words:

Variables may be shared.

Their carriers need not be identical.

What follows is only a preliminary exploration of four typical directions of difference.

I. East Asian Contexts: The Importance of Relational Support, Embedded Responsibilities, and Meso-Level Mediation

In East Asian cultural and institutional traditions, the generation of “structural meaning” often begins less through wholly abstract individual contracts, and more often through:

- Relational networks
- Role responsibilities
- Dual embeddedness in family and organization
- Long-term obligations
- Meso-level structures of mediation

1. Pathways are often tightly bound to relational structures

Many forms of real-world entry do not begin with “choosing one's own pathway” in a purely individualistic sense. Instead, they unfold gradually through:

- Family expectations
- Organizational roles

- Relational obligations
- Positions within communities

This makes structural meaning more readily accumulate into long-term responsibility, but may also create pathway lock-in.

2. A sense of responsibility is often stronger than its explicit expression

In East Asian contexts, many high-thickness contributions do not always appear in highly visible forms.

For example:

- Maintenance
- Mediation
- Patient, enduring coordination
- Relationship repair
- Long-term care

These often have high structural value, but may not be readily visible in platform-based metrics.

3. Meso-level intermediaries play a crucial role

Because relational societies are more sensitive to open conflict and direct rupture, intermediary, mediating, and translation layers often matter more.

This means that if future institutional design ignores these intermediate support structures, the theory will quickly become distorted in local practice.

Summary

In East Asian contexts, “structural meaning” is often more deeply embedded in responsibility and relationships. Future multipathway reorganization therefore cannot simply copy purely contractual models, but must attend to:

- Relational support
- Continuity of responsibility
- Meso-level mediation
- Institutional recognition of contributions to slow variables

II. Western Contexts: Contractual Pathways, Autonomous Entry, and Explicit Institutional Forms

Compared with East Asia, Western modernity is more inclined to organize structural meaning through:

- Contracts
- Legal rights
- Individual autonomy
- Formal institutional pathways
- Explicit rules and classifications

1. Individual pathways have greater autonomy

This makes the question of “who can enter which pathway” more readily understood in terms of:

- Equal opportunity
- Institutional thresholds
- Freedom of contract

- Public rights

Consequently, this book's discussions of:

- Pathway allocation
- The reentry layer
- The closure of deep places

Are more readily connected directly to questions of institutional justice.

2. Recognition of roles depends more on formal institutions

High-thickness roles in Western contexts are often more readily recognized through:

- Certification of qualifications
- Formal titles
- Legal boundaries
- Definitions of public responsibility

This makes the mechanisms by which credibility forms more transparent in some respects, but may also make them more dependent on legitimation procedures external to institutions.

3. A multipathway future is more readily understood as a matter of institutional innovation

Compared with civilizations in which relationships are more deeply embedded, Western contexts more readily discuss ideas such as “composite pathway combinations” and “distributed collaboration structures” in terms of:

- Institutional design
- Allocation of rights
- Governance mechanisms
- Platform regulation
- New social infrastructure

Summary

In Western contexts, “structural meaning” is more readily translated into institutional issues and questions of civic participation.

Yet caution is also needed: if everything is made excessively explicit in institutional terms, high-thickness contributions to slow variables that resist formalization may once again be compressed.

III. Islamic Community Contexts: Support Through Faith, Group Ethics, and Embeddedness in Public Order

In Islamic civilizational contexts, individuals' meaning structures are often more deeply embedded in:

- Faith communities
- Conceptions of sacred order
- Group ethics
- Public norms
- Everyday practices of obligation

1. The distance between primordial meaning and structural meaning may be shorter

The main book deliberately distinguishes “primordial meaning” from “structural meaning.” In Islamic community contexts, however, structural meaning often more readily derives legitimacy directly from higher-order sources of meaning.

This means that pathways, roles, and contributions involve not only social embeddedness, but often a more explicit sense of moral and religious order.

2. Group obligations and structures of order matter more

In this context, “who is needed” is often more readily visible through community structures of responsibility, rather than recognized only through market or platform logic.

This makes contributions such as:

- Care
- Charity
- Community maintenance
- Religious service
- Practices of public ethics

More likely to possess relatively high meaning density inherently.

3. The risk is excessive moralization of pathways

If the design of future civilization cannot properly address openness and multiple pathways, these community structures with strong carrying capacity may also exhibit:

- Fixed roles
- Difficulty entering nonmainstream pathways
- Excessive concentration of definitional authority within a single system for interpreting values

Summary

In Islamic contexts, structural meaning is more readily coupled directly to community order.

If this book's framework is developed in that context, particular attention must therefore be paid to:

- How to preserve the strengths of support through faith
- While preventing pathways from being locked into a single interpretation

IV. Indian and Composite-Community Contexts: Hierarchy, Obligations, and Overlapping Structures

Structural meaning in Indian contexts often more visibly reflects overlapping communities and remnants of historical hierarchy.

1. Pathways do not arise only from modern institutions

Many people's real-world positions arise not only from markets, education, or occupational systems, but also from:

- Family
- Region
- Community
- Residual caste structures

- Religious and cultural communities

This means that “pathway allocation” is often more complex here: pathways are not a matter of a single institution, but of overlapping structures at multiple levels.

2. Composite pathway combinations may be closer to reality

In a sense, complex societies of the Indian type are already closer to a “composite-pathway reality.” Individuals often naturally inhabit several community logics and responsibility networks at once.

This book's judgments concerning composite pathway combinations may therefore find real-world counterparts more readily in this context.

3. The risk lies in the tenacity of old hierarchies

Without sufficiently strong openness and reentry mechanisms, overlapping communities may also mean:

- Old role structures are difficult to loosen
- Entry points are formally open but remain blocked by old hierarchies in practice
- Pathway combinations represent overlapping burdens rather than free development

Summary

In India and similar composite-community societies, this book should pay particular attention to:

- How old hierarchies affect pathway allocation
- How composite pathways can move from “overlapping burdens” toward “complementary support”
- How credibility and roles can be reorganized in multicomunity contexts

V. African and Local-Community Contexts: Relational Life, Informal Support, and Local Repair

In many African contexts and settings with strong local communities, the ways structural meaning is sustained may depend more markedly on:

- Local networks
- Oral traditions
- Community mutual aid
- Informal organizations
- Trust among acquaintances
- Restorative relational structures

1. When formal institutions are insufficient, informal support matters more

Many high-value forms of participation are not preserved over time through formal jobs or institutions, but sustained more through local community networks.

This means that if a theory of future civilization entirely ignores informal support structures, it will underestimate many genuine contributions.

2. Bridging and restorative roles may matter more

Where resources are scarce and formal institutions are unstable or provide insufficient coverage, bridge-builders, coordinators, caregivers, and local repairers are often more crucial than highly visible elite roles.

3. The risk is insufficient scalability and portability

Although informal support is resilient, without stronger cross-node mutual recognition and recording mechanisms, contributions are also more likely to remain confined to local cycles, struggling to develop into stable credibility across a wider area.

Summary

In these contexts, the book's institutional prototypes must pay particular attention to:

- How to protect the strengths of local support
- How to prevent formal systems from hollowing out local repair structures in turn
- How to give informal, high-thickness contributions more stable support without crudely platformizing them

Appendix Summary

The purpose of this appendix is not to offer a taxonomy of the world's civilizations, but to preserve a crucial open judgment for the book as a whole:

The meso-level logic of “structural meaning” may have explanatory power across civilizations, but its real-world carriers, ways of forming pathways, credibility mechanisms, and governance boundaries are necessarily culturally shaped.

If this book enters different civilizational contexts, what must genuinely remain consistent is therefore not “institutions that look the same,” but:

- The logic of the variables
- The boundaries of openness
- Opposition to lock-in to a single pathway
- Preservation of a multipathway future

Specific forms of realization, however, must be allowed to differ.

Appendix F: Observable Proxy Indicators for the Core Variables

Indicator boundaries | Proxy indicators observe only limited phenomena. They must not be combined into a “civilizational meaning index,” an overall civilizational stability score, or a personal meaning score. Factual indicators, model outputs, and value judgments must remain at separate levels. Changes in indicators may trigger only further investigation, not automatic consequences for rights, resources, governance, or punishment.

The main text has repeatedly emphasized:

- The public-facing relational framework is not an empirical law
- The theoretical constraint framework is not “precise mathematics” disguised as natural science
- At this stage, the core variables are better understood as meso-level structural variables

This does not mean that these variables can never be reached by empirical research.

On the contrary, if the book is to engage more deeply with social science, policy research, and comparative historical research, it must at least provide an entry point to this question:

Through what real-world phenomena can these variables be approximately observed?

The task of this appendix is therefore not to establish a final quantitative model, but to offer a set of:

Observable proxy indicators.

Their functions are to:

- Help different researchers understand where the variables apply
- Provide initial entry points for future empirical research
- Prevent the theory from remaining indefinitely in an entirely inaccessible state of abstraction

The indicators below are not the only options, still less a validated, unified instrument, but they are sufficient to constitute an initial research framework.

I. : Proxy Indicators for the Thickness of Subject Capabilities

This refers to the thickness of subjects' capabilities in understanding, judgment, creation, responsibility, complex collaboration, and long-term participation.

It is difficult to measure with a single data point, so a group of indicators is more appropriate.

Possible proxy indicators

1. Proportion of roles requiring substantial judgment

The proportion of roles in a society requiring independent judgment, complex decisions, and contextual correction.

2. Density of long-term learning and mentoring chains

Whether there are many:

- Apprenticeship chains
- Mentoring chains
- Long-term training processes
- Pathways for deep growth

3. Proportion of roles bearing complex responsibilities

Rather than looking only at the “employment rate,” examine how many roles genuinely bear consequences.

4. Conversion rate from shallow interfaces to deep places

This is particularly crucial.

It directly reflects whether subjects can gain thickness.

5. Proportion of space for nondefault judgment

Within organizations and platforms, how much genuine space do individuals have to exercise judgment independently of default options?

Explanation

Together, these indicators ask not “whether people have skills,” but:

Whether civilization continues to train and preserve subjects.

II. : Proxy Indicators for the Thickness of System Capabilities

This refers to the total externally enhanced capabilities formed by platforms, AI, institutions, infrastructure, and processes.

Possible proxy indicators

1. Extent of automation coverage

The depth of automation, algorithmic dispatch, and AI involvement in key fields.

2. Proportion of processes replaced

How many intermediate processes of judgment, coordination, organization, and generation previously performed by people have been taken over by systems?

3. Platforms' or models' ability to organize complex tasks

Examples include large-scale knowledge organization, complex matching, content generation, and systematic dispatch.

4. Large-scale system memory and retrieval capabilities

Whether public systems, organizations, and platforms can continuously store and draw upon complex experience.

5. Depth of intelligent dispatch in critical infrastructure

Complex organizational capabilities at the system level in energy, logistics, production, healthcare, governance, and other fields.

Explanation

These indicators are not meant simply to celebrate technological capabilities, but to identify:

How far system enhancement has progressed, and whether it is beginning to decouple from subjects gaining thickness.

III. : Proxy Indicators for Meaning Diversity

This refers to how many different real-world entry points, pathways, roles, and forms of contribution recognition a civilization offers.

Possible proxy indicators

1. Number of accessible pathways

Whether subjects from different backgrounds have a rich range of real-world pathways they can enter.

2. Diversity of role types

Whether multiple kinds of deep roles receive long-term recognition, rather than there being only a single structure of elite roles.

3. Proportion of nonmainstream contributions receiving recognition

Whether contributions such as maintenance, bridging, care, repair, organization, and public interpretation receive institutional recognition.

4. Coverage of reentry mechanisms

Whether return pathways remain after failure.

5. Pathway portability

Whether facts of contribution in one field can be verified by other structures with the individual's authorization; verification produces no automatic consequences.

Explanation

D cannot be measured simply by “having many options.” The more important question is: Whether those options can genuinely become pathways and consolidate into positions.

IV. Proxy Indicators for Effective Participation (EP)

This is one of the book's most crucial variables, but also one most easily misrepresented by surface activity data. This group of indicators is therefore particularly important.

Possible proxy indicators

1. Proportion of judgment-bearing participation

How many participants genuinely exercise contextual judgment rather than merely execute or confirm?

2. Proportion of responsibility-bearing participation

How many individuals bear ongoing consequences rather than merely perform short-term actions?

3. Continuation rate of long-term participation

Whether participation persists beyond short-cycle activities.

4. Rate at which participation consolidates into roles

How much participation develops into roles, project-specific trust, and stable positions following independent judgment?

5. Proportion of contributions to direction

How much participation can still influence problem definition, pathway reorganization, and future direction?

Explanation

The core purpose of this group of indicators is to prevent mistaking:

- Being online
- Being active
- Frequent actions

For evidence that civilization still has a deep foundation of subjects.

What EP really asks is:

Whether subjects are still making additions at depth.

V. : Proxy Indicators for Collaboration Efficiency

This is not platform distribution efficiency, but the ability of multiple parties to bear responsibility and address real-world problems together.

Possible proxy indicators

1. Success rate of collaboration across roles

Whether multiple roles can effectively build on one another when addressing complex problems.

2. Density of intermediary nodes

Whether intermediary roles such as translators, bridge-builders, and coordinators are sufficiently abundant.

3. Costs of explanation in collaboration

Whether the costs of explanation rise sharply in cooperation across nodes, organizations, and pathways.

4. Proportion of long-term collaborative relationships

How much collaboration within a system consists of sustainable relationships rather than temporary combinations?

5. Capacity for restorative collaboration

Whether collaboration can still be repaired and continued after conflicts and errors.

Explanation

This group of indicators helps distinguish:

High-speed dispatch

From

High-quality collaboration.

The two must not be conflated.

VI. : Proxy Indicators for Tension

Tension is the coordination friction brought by diversity, differentiation, and complexity. It does not equal open conflict, so meso-level signals are needed to observe it.

Possible proxy indicators

1. Markedly longer decision cycles

The system is slow not because it is cautious, but because coordination is difficult.

2. Increasing frequency of disputes over rules

Public interpretations become harder to agree upon, and boundary-setting becomes increasingly fragile.

3. Sharply increasing burdens on meso-level coordinating roles

This indicates that expanding complexity has begun to overwhelm the intermediary layer.

4. Increasing mutual incomprehension between pathways

Translation costs across pathways rise significantly.

5. Increasing frequency of patchwork institutional repairs

The system depends increasingly on temporary supplementary rules to keep operating.

Explanation

T does not necessarily mean that a crisis has already erupted, but it signals: The expansion of complexity is beginning to exceed coordination capacity.

VII. : Proxy Indicators for Overload

The main text has already divided overload as follows:

Overload has at least three categories: cognitive, institutional, and relational. They are not aggregated into a single value.

Corresponding entry points for proxy observation are provided here.

7.1 : Cognitive overload

Suggested indicators:

- High-frequency switching rate
- Shrinking space for extended, uninterrupted thought
- Increasing reliance on defaults
- Continued compression of tasks requiring deep judgment
- Widespread subjects who are “continually busy but unable to consolidate anything”

Explanation:

Cognitive overload is not “feeling tired,” but a structural signal that deep judgment is increasingly difficult to sustain.

7.2 : Information overload

Suggested indicators:

- Sharp increases in the number of input sources
- Imbalance in the noise-to-useful-information ratio
- Frequent feedback overriding long-term understanding
- Increasing levels of fragmented attention
- Insufficient intermediary layers for interpreting information within organizations

Explanation:

Information overload is pressure at the input layer, and continually amplifies cognitive overload.

7.3 : Rule/response overload

Suggested indicators:

- Continual accumulation of layers of rules and compliance
- Normalization of demands for immediate responses
- Time for action squeezed by process overhead
- Less time for “actually doing things” within organizations
- Interpreting rules itself becoming a high-burden task

Explanation:

This reflects not stronger order, but order beginning to undermine the capacity for action.

VIII. : Proxy Indicators for Alienation

Alienation means that subjects remain within the system, yet find it increasingly difficult to connect their own actions genuinely with the overall process.

Possible proxy indicators

1. Surveys of declining sense of subjecthood

Whether individuals commonly feel that they are “doing things, but not developing a position.”

2. High system-deployment/low responsibility ratio

People respond frequently but bear almost no complete consequences.

3. Role shells retained while thickness declines

Jobs and processes remain, but deep judgment and deep responsibility have visibly been hollowed out.

4. Normalization of dependence on defaults

More and more actions are completed under default options, with subjects providing only final confirmation.

5. Decoupling of participation from growth

Even prolonged activity within the system struggles to yield experiences through which subjects gain thickness.

Explanation

The core of R is this:

People are still inside, but increasingly struggle to gain genuine thickness through their positions.

Appendix Summary

This appendix does not attempt to turn the entire book into a completed measurement model.

Its aim is more modest, but also more crucial:

To open an entry point for empirical research into this meso-level theory.

In other words, future researchers need not fully accept every judgment in this book to investigate the following questions:

- Is subject thickness declining?
- Is system thickness increasing independently?
- Is EP contracting?
- Are tension, overload, and alienation accumulating?
- Are roles, credibility, and directional capabilities being lost?

If these variables can gradually enter empirical observation, Meaning Dynamics will become more than an explanatory framework. It will develop further into:

A program of civilizational research open to testing, revision, and deepening.

Appendix G: Governance Framework for the Contribution Record Prototype (Draft)

The records in this appendix preserve only factual evidence from limited contexts. Historical facts may remain unchanged; any current permissions, recommendations, roles, data access, or resource permissions must be revalidated, separately authorized, time-limited, and allow exit. Record expiration, deletion, objection, correction, and portability are jointly governed by the rights of the persons concerned and the specific jurisdiction.

This appendix develops an institutional framework on the basis of Chapter 22 of the main text.

The main text has already established a basic judgment:

If the contribution record prototype is to work, its value lies not in quantifying people more finely, but in supporting genuine participation more reliably.

To give this judgment a firm institutional footing, however, a more difficult question must be answered:

What kind of governance framework can prevent the contribution record prototype from sliding toward:

- Rule by a single points system
- Platform control
- Behavioral discipline
- Pathway lock-in
- Data absorption
- A new form of social-credit totalitarianism

This appendix therefore attempts to offer a draft governance framework.

It is not a final institutional design, but can serve as a reference for minimum boundaries for any future version of a system supporting contributions.

I. Principle One: Multitrack Recording, Not a Single Common Measure

Core judgment

Different types of contribution must not be crudely compressed into one total value.

Distinguish at least four tracks

1. Problem-solving track

For clear, direct, visible achievements in construction and repair.

2. Maintenance and repair track

For contributions to basic maintenance, care, stabilization of slow variables, relationship repair, and public continuity.

3. Connection and bridging track

For contributions involving translation, mediation, connections across groups, and the organization of collaboration.

4. Innovation and direction track

For contributions involving redefinition of problems, opening pathways, structural innovation, and exploration of future directions.

Implementation points

- Different recording logics may be established within each track
- Uniform conversion across tracks must not be imposed
- Cross-track comparisons must retain human interpretation and supplementary context
- Highly visible contributions must not inherently override high-thickness contributions to slow variables

II. Principle Two: Distributed Interpretation, Not Judgment by a Single Center

Core judgment

Authority to interpret contributions must not be highly concentrated in a single platform, institution, or algorithm.

Why?

Many high-value contributions are not inherently transparent. Their structural meaning must be explained jointly by:

- Local nodes
- Professional communities
- Witnesses to collaboration
- Contextual interpreters

Implementation points

- Establish interpretive actors at multiple levels
- Operate local and professional nodes in parallel
- Allow multiple parties to supplement contextual accounts of the same contribution
- Crucial disputed contributions must not be adjudicated solely by a single model or system

III. Principle Three: Dispute, Appeal, and Correction Mechanisms Must Be Built In

Core judgment

Any contribution record may involve misjudgment, omission, distortion, or misclassification. Appeals and corrections are therefore not auxiliary functions, but part of the core structure.

Mechanisms that should be provided at a minimum

1. An appeals channel

Individuals should be able to appeal erroneous or missing records and distorted interpretations.

2. A channel for supplementary narratives

Explanatory materials should be accepted for contributions that have low visibility and are highly contextual.

3. A mechanism for testimony from multiple parties

Where necessary, fellow participants, long-term collaborators, local nodes, and others may be brought in as contextual witnesses.

4. A mechanism for periodic revision

Interpretations of contributions should not be frozen permanently, but should be open to revision when new information emerges.

Purpose

To prevent the system from mistaking “having recorded something” for “having completed the truth.”

IV. Principle Four: Limited Binding, Not Comprehensive Rule

Core judgment

The contribution record prototype itself generates no real-world opportunities, rights, or qualifications. If a limited project consults records, it still requires public rules, independent review, relevant parties' consent, time limits, appeals, and exit. Basic rights, political standing, public services, and cross-domain evaluations must not be tied to it.

Areas it may influence to a limited degree

- References for trust in collaboration
- Priorities for learning resources
- Opportunities for pathway support
- Material for factual verification in public projects; it must not create priority for participation
- Recommendation materials for deep places

Areas it should not directly determine

- All eligibility for survival
- The entire legitimacy of a person's personhood
- Basic civil rights
- A person's entire social standing
- Ultimate moral judgments of people

Purpose

To prevent the system from sliding from “supporting participation” into “defining a life.”

V. Principle Five: Rights to Data Self-Determination Must Be Explicit

Core judgment

Without data rights, a contribution system will sooner or later become alienated into infrastructure for behavioral control.

Individuals should have at least the following rights

1. The right to be informed

To know what is recorded, why, and how it is used.

2. The right to correction

To request correction of distorted, incomplete, or misjudged records.

3. The right to supplement

To provide supplementary explanations of highly contextual contributions.

4. The right to migrate data

Records of contribution facts must not be permanently locked into a single system; migration is controlled by the persons concerned.

5. A limited right to exit

Individuals should have the right to refuse some excessive recording, and exit should not amount to an overall loss of social legitimacy.

Purpose

To preserve the contribution system's character as something that “serves people,” rather than absorbing individuals in turn.

VI. Principle Six: Portability Led by the Persons Concerned, Not Automatic Mutual Recognition

Core judgment

If records of contribution facts can be viewed only within one system, they will ultimately intensify platform monopolies and pathway lock-in.

The following are therefore essential:

- A minimal data format exportable by the persons concerned
- A minimum common format
- Interfaces for migration across nodes
- Mechanisms through which different systems explain the context of materials; their consequences must not be automatically recognized

Why does this matter?

If future civilization is genuinely multipathway and distributed, the persons concerned must decide whether factual materials about their contributions migrate. Project-specific trust cannot migrate automatically with data. Otherwise, recording systems will lock down the supposed “multipathway future” once again.

VII. Principle Seven: Support Structural Participation Without Engulfing the Person

Core judgment

The contribution record prototype can address only the layer of “structural contributions.” It must not expand into a “total interpreter of human life.”

This means:

- Not all of life should be recorded
- Not every relationship should be quantified
- Not all of a person's meaning should enter the system
- The system cannot automatically treat “unrecorded” as “valueless”

Purpose

To keep human complexity above the system and preserve civilization's ethical boundaries.

VIII. Recommendations for a Minimum Governance Architecture (Draft)

If a system supporting contributions is genuinely to be deployed in the future, at least the following three-layer governance structure could be considered:

First layer: local/project nodes

Responsible for initial recording, contextual explanation, witnessing participation, and local interpretation.

Second layer: professional/cross-node coordination

Responsible for cross-track interpretation, dispute resolution, updating standards, and coordinating mutual recognition.

Third layer: public-boundary oversight

Responsible for:

- Final arbitration of appeals
- Review of rights boundaries
- Early warnings of platform monopolies
- Prevention and control of data abuse
- Periodic audits and corrections

Principle

No single layer should simultaneously hold:

- Recording authority
- Interpretive authority
- Pathway allocation authority
- Authority to bind records to all consequences

Otherwise, a new center of control will quickly form.

Appendix Summary

This appendix aims not to launch a ready-made institution, but to establish a minimum governance baseline:

If the contribution record prototype cannot meet the requirements of:

- Multitrack recording
- Distributed interpretation
- Appeals and correction
- Limited binding
- Data self-determination
- Cross-system mutual recognition
- Not engulfing people

Then it should not be regarded as civilizational infrastructure.

This baseline matters more than “recording in greater detail.”

What future civilization truly needs is not a smarter system of judgment, but a more restrained system of support.

Appendix H: Entry Points for Comparative Research on Historical Cases

The main text has repeatedly used historical revolutions and shifts in civilizational structures as theoretical reference points.

It must be acknowledged, however, that if “Meaning Dynamics” is to enter more rigorous comparative research, it cannot remain indefinitely at the level of theoretical intuition and macro-level narrative.

This appendix therefore does not attempt a complete historical demonstration, but offers a set of:

Entry points for comparative research on historical cases.

Their functions are to:

- Open directions for future empirical research and civilizational comparison
- Help test whether this book's variables genuinely have explanatory power
- Prevent the theory from being good only at explaining the future while refusing the stress test of the past

The cases below are research entry points, not settled conclusions.

I. The Late Roman Empire: Declining Roles, Ruptured Credibility, and Deteriorating Directional Capabilities

Late Rome is often described simply in terms of:

- Foreign invasions
- Corrupt rule
- Military decline
- Fiscal deterioration

All of these are valid.

But reexamining it through this book's variables allows attention to the following further questions.

Possible research angles

1. Were deep roles declining?

Did more and more positions remain in name while their actual capacity to bear responsibility, organize, and repair declined?

2. Were intermediary collaboration structures becoming thinner?

Did complex collaboration on an imperial scale depend increasingly on administrative shells while lacking deep intermediaries?

3. Were credibility and delegation evaporating?

Did local support networks that maintained order over the long term gradually lose trustworthiness?

4. Were directional capabilities deteriorating?

Did the empire depend increasingly on maintenance and requisition, while generating genuinely new structural directions less and less?

Research significance

The Roman case helps test whether a civilization that still appears to possess an enormous institutional and military shell may enter the logic of collapse in advance when its deep roles and regenerative capacities decline.

II. Britain During the Industrial Revolution: A Typical Case of Expansion Alongside Alienation

The Industrial Revolution is usually described as the starting point of the leap in modern productive capacity. But it was also a period when the following occurred together:

- Fragmentation of labor
- Rupture of communities
- Intensification of time discipline
- Formation of new roles and destabilization of old forms of support

Possible research angles

1. How was thickness redistributed?

Did the Industrial Revolution greatly thicken some roles while thinning more labor positions through standardization?

2. How did pathways shift from local communities to institutional jobs?

Did this increase overall participation rates while weakening local meso-level support?

3. How did alienation grow amid high levels of organization?

Were individuals connected more stably to larger systems while encountering complete processes and chains of responsibility less and less?

4. How did industrial civilization both expand subjects and thin them?

This offers an extremely valuable reference for understanding today's AI-age condition of “stronger systems, thinner people.”

Research significance

Britain's Industrial Revolution helps test whether civilization can systematically produce alienation even while expanding participation on a large scale.

III. China from the Late Qing into the Modern Era: A Case of Rupture Between the Collapse of Old Pathways and the Instability of New Ones

The distinctive feature of China from the late Qing into the modern era is that it was not a case of a single technological revolution, but one of multiple overlapping civilizational rearrangements:

- Destabilization of old role structures
- New institutional pathways not yet mature
- Rewriting of relationships between local communities and state structures
- External shocks alongside internal transformation

Possible research angles

1. How did old structures of deep roles disintegrate?

Which role structures that had long sustained knowledge, order, and local coordination lost the conditions for continued existence?

2. Why did new pathways fail to provide stable support for subjects quickly?

Did new education, occupations, and organizations form ladders of growth quickly enough?

3. Why did the intermediary layer become the most vulnerable part?

How did bridge-builders, translators, and supporters between locality and state, and between the old order and new institutions, lose their positions?

4. Why do major transformations often first appear as meso-level ruptures?

This is closely related to the book's judgment that "collapse begins with a decline in regenerative capacity."

Research significance

This case can test how civilization falls into prolonged structural mismatch when old pathways fail rapidly and new ones are not yet stable.

IV. The Late Soviet Union: System Maintenance, Deteriorating Direction, and Difficulties in Subject Regeneration

The distinctive value of the late Soviet case is that it reveals a highly characteristic condition:

- The system remained strong
- The outer shell remained
- Mobilization capacity persisted
- Yet directional capabilities and the capacity to regenerate subjects declined

Possible research angles

1. Were system capabilities separating from directional capabilities?

The state retained strong organizational and mobilizing capabilities, but was it increasingly unable to undertake structural redefinition?

2. Were roles and participation becoming highly formalized?

Did many positions remain while genuine EP formed less and less?

3. Were credibility and innovation deteriorating?

Was there a condition in which “participation retained its forms, but complex responsibility and openings for new pathways became increasingly difficult”?

4. Did repair capacity remain below the capacity for attrition over the long term?

This is particularly suitable for comparison with the book's judgment concerning a “repair deficit.”

Research significance

The late Soviet Union can test whether a highly organized civilization may lose its capacity to generate direction and regenerate subjects before its capacity for maintenance weakens.

V. The Stage of Platform Capitalism: An Experimental Field of High Connectivity, Low EP, and Hollowing Out

This is the real-world case entry point closest to this book.

It is not a country, but a feature of a civilizational stage.

Possible research angles

1. Does high presence conceal low EP?

Does rising platform activity coexist with a declining proportion of deep participation?

2. Are roles becoming interfaces?

Do many positions increasingly lean toward:

- Confirmation
- Review
- Microtasks
- Local touch-ups rather than deep judgment and long-term responsibility?

3. Does visibility override thickness?

Do platforms systematically reward contributions with high exposure, short feedback cycles, and easy shareability?

4. Is credibility evaporating?

Do contributions involving long-term maintenance, bridging, and slow repair find it increasingly difficult to consolidate into stable positions?

5. Are directional capabilities being outsourced to platform logic?

Are more and more real-world choices handed over to platform rankings and system recommendations?

Research significance

This case is especially well suited to testing one of the book's most central judgments:

Whether modern civilization is producing hollow subjects more efficiently through high connectivity and high activity.

Appendix Summary

This appendix does not attempt to reach a single historical conclusion.

Its true function is to propose a methodological direction for future research:

Use the variables of “Meaning Dynamics” to reread historical and real-world cases whose surfaces seem already covered by familiar narratives.

These cases can help test:

- Whether the consolidation of roles really is the foundation of civilizational regeneration
- Whether EP really is a key variable
- Whether tension, overload, and alienation can explain instability
- Whether the repair deficit comes closer to the root causes of collapse than isolated crises do
- Whether civilizations often lose deep regenerative capacities while their outer shells remain strong

If these case studies gradually develop, the book's theory will no longer be merely a grand intuition. It will come closer to:

A program of civilizational analysis capable of entering historical comparison, real-world diagnosis, and institutional research.

Further Reading and Shared Participation | Let the World Continue to Change the Theory

Meaning Dynamics stops here at meso-level civilizational theory: it explains how people enter reality, how positions form, how participation gains thickness, how systems thin people, and how institutional prototypes might reopen pathways. It does not perform historical explanation on behalf of history, explain every subjective feeling on behalf of psychology, adjudicate resources, rights, and public power on behalf of economics, law, or political science, or declare proposals feasible on behalf of engineering trials.

Upward: Continue Questioning the Foundations of Meaning and Existence

Turn to philosophical studies such as Emergent Meaning Cosmology: A Leap in Thought V8.0. Strong metaphysical interpretations may continue to be retained and debated, but they are not a precondition for Meaning Dynamics to hold.

Downward: Let History, Reality, and Experiments Attack the Theory

Turn to Meaning Dynamics: Historical Validation, Case Analysis, and Real-World Applications. The validation volume's responsibility is not to select supporting cases, but to register counterexamples, negative results, alternative explanations, and theoretical revisions. Institutional prototypes, meanwhile, proceed into state-authorized, scaled-up, city-level comprehensive social validation.

Sideways: Engage Competing Theories and Neighboring Disciplines

Social capital, the capability approach, role theory, labor process theory, institutional economics, complex systems, organizational behavior, education and learning, human–computer interaction, platform studies, political theory, naturalism, and existentialism can all revise this book on the basis of their own objects and evidence. If an existing theory can explain a particular layer of relationships more simply and accurately, this book will not defend itself through new terminology.

Forward: Turn Reading into Research, Design, and Practice

The most valuable participation is not agreement, but facts, data, historical materials, experiments, institutional comparisons, engineering failures, cultural counterexamples, and better explanations strong enough to change the theory. Further reading ends not with another manuscript, but with bringing these questions into the real world for more people to research, revise, communicate, advance, and put into practice together.

The aim is not for more people to finish reading Meaning Dynamics, but for better facts and stronger professional work genuinely to change how we enter the future together.

Complete library (<https://www.civitas.top/en/library/>)

Source-language provenance: www.civitas.top/library/

Upright DMA product description: <https://www.uprightproject.com/products/dma/>. Used only as an interface to a methodology described by the company itself, not as independent validation.

Robeco SDG Framework (a proprietary investment research framework at the company level):

<https://www.robeco.com/en-int/sustainable-investing/sdg-framework>. This framework does not support scoring individuals or allocating rights.

OECD, Artificial Intelligence and the Changing Demand for Skills in the Labour Market, 2024, DOI: 10.1787/88684e36-en.

ILO, Generative AI and Jobs: A Refined Global Index of Occupational Exposure, Working Paper 140, 2025, DOI: 10.54394/HETP0387. Its conclusions are used to distinguish task exposure, job transformation, and replacement of entire jobs.

Key changing sources for this edition (verified through August 26, 2026)

V7.2 Version Notes

This joint final review resolves the substantive outstanding issues in B01–B45: withdrawing the relational formula for an overall civilizational score; separating existential meaning, structural meaning, and meaning emergence into distinct layers; severing the automatic chain from contribution records to credibility to participation/resource/governance rights; and completing the boundaries for resource permissions, crisis exit, AI tense, safeguards against moralizing “others first,” evidence sources, and transparency about AI assistance. Because these changes concern the boundaries of core mechanisms, they constitute a substantive version upgrade from V7.1 → V7.2, not an editorial renumbering.

V7.2 uses the fully developed 1.2 manuscript as its textual master and the 6.3 manuscript that strengthened meso-level structures as its reference for theoretical calibration. It preserves the full theoretical development across 23 chapters and Appendices A–H, abandoning the earlier 22-page compressed restructuring plan. The main text primarily carries out controlled calibration rather than rewriting: removing remnants of internal versions such as 6.2/6.3; withdrawing historical first-of-its-kind claims in the form “for the first time in the AI age...”; distinguishing again between extensions of current AI capabilities and future subjecthood; consistently calibrating the “minimum civilizational survival model” as the “civilizational survival baseline and minimum survival model”; and restricting the definition of Civilization Leap within this book to its “meso-level manifestations,” no longer defining the ultimate direction on behalf of the whole theory of Civilization Leap. On this basis, V7.2 further incorporates pressure exerted in reverse by the V3.0 validation volume: distinguishing “structural stability/high participation/high collaboration” from civilizational legitimacy, and making clear that standing as a subject, rights, facts, authorization, and exit belong to independent directional checks.

At the level of relational frameworks, the public-facing relational framework continues to serve as a mnemonic skeleton. The theoretical constraint framework with relative weights and constraints is retained in the historical main text as an earlier modeling expression. V7.2, however, clarifies its epistemic status in the boundaries placed at the beginning of the book: at present it can serve only as a directional, comparative relational model and an entry point for monitoring, not as a calibrated empirical law or an overall civilizational score. If stable definitions, scales, cross-sample data, and reproducible functional relationships are developed later, decisions can then be made about which variables should enter stronger quantification.

The sections on contribution records and the meaning economy likewise resolve several earlier outstanding issues: meaning itself cannot be turned into an asset; monetary payment cannot directly purchase contributions; contribution records must not be tied to personal worth, eligibility for basic public services, political power, or an overall social-credit score; legal classifications must be determined lawfully within specific jurisdictions; and parameters in historical proposals, such as decay, cross-border linkage, and public-service priority, no longer constitute current principles.

Appendices A–D retain their original density of historical, real-world, and institutional proposals, but are explicitly downgraded to extended research materials. Their changing data, cases, policies, regulations, timetables, cross-national mutual recognition, and implementation parameters must be reverified and reworked before formal external release or real-world pilots. V7.2 is therefore a complete theoretical baseline, not a final empirical validation, nor a real-world implementation manual. This revision also resolves remaining instances of conflating white-collar AI exposure with job replacement, treating the meaning economy as an “inevitable product,” and decaying contribution records according to time without participation.

Personalized Further-Reading Guide

P08-MD-001 | Meaning Dynamics | V7.2

This page is a library navigation supplement. It does not change the main text of the frozen theoretical manuscript.

Toward Real-World Validation | Meaning Dynamics: Historical Validation, Case Analysis, and Real-World Applications

Why read it: return theoretical variables to history, cases, and real-world interfaces for testing, so the theory does not hold only within its own language.

Read the validation volume (<https://www.civitas.top/en/documents/p08-md-002/>)

Source-language provenance: <https://www.civitas.top/documents/p08-md-002/>

A Lateral Perspective | A Leap in Thought

Why read it: reexamine meaning, subjects, choices, and civilizational direction through philosophy and public thought, testing whether meso-level theory remains understandable to people.

Read A Leap in Thought (<https://www.civitas.top/en/documents/p08-thought-001/>)

Source-language provenance: <https://www.civitas.top/documents/p08-thought-001/>

Toward the Whole | Civilization Leap: Five Volumes

Why read it: return Meaning Dynamics to the complete structure of civilizational purpose, pre-institutional language, engineering pathways, Civilizational Perpetuity, and the foundations of meaning.

Read Civilization Leap: Five Volumes (<https://www.civitas.top/en/documents/p02-five-001/>)

Source-language provenance: <https://www.civitas.top/documents/p02-five-001/>

Continue Exploring | The Complete Public Library

Explore the complete public library (<https://www.civitas.top/en/library/>)

Source-language provenance: <https://www.civitas.top/library/>

Main Entry Point for Public Readers

Public reading entry point (<https://www.civitas.top/en/audiences/public/>)

Source-language provenance: <https://www.civitas.top/audiences/public/>

Counterexamples, failed tests, new evidence, and competing explanations should return to the appropriate theory/validation track to trigger renewed review, rather than be obscured by further-reading pathways.

Civilization Leap (<https://www.civitas.top/en/>)

Source-language provenance: <https://www.civitas.top>