Chapter 12. Periodic table of overall governance processes

Introduction

The Governance Periodic Table is the first full application of a more general method. The method starts from a surprisingly simple observation: when human beings organise themselves to do something, the same underlying work tends to recur even as the scale and form of the system changes.

A family, a tribe, a kingdom, an elite democracy, a pluralistic democracy and a global institution look very different. Yet each still has to answer recurring questions. What are we for? Who belongs? How are we protected? Who leads? How do we settle differences? What rules apply? How do we respond when rules are broken? How do we create and distribute resources? How do we pass on knowledge? How do we hold identity and custom? How do we change when reality changes?

These recurring matters are the invariant nouns of governance. Once we identify them, and combine them with holonic levels, we can make the development of governance visible noun by noun rather than compressing an entire country into one label.

The same method is not limited to governance. It can be used wherever human beings are trying to do something. We can apply it to deliberative processes, truth-seeking processes, violence, corporations, functions within corporations, AI labs, and the function of alignment within AI labs.

Violence is an important example. It is a human problem-solving domain in its own right, with recurring work that can be expressed as invariant nouns and then described by level. That gives us a Periodic Table of Violence: a way of seeing how the organisation, restraint, legitimacy, means and control of violence change as human systems become larger and more complex. Later we should also bring violence into the Abacus, because the use and restraint of violence contain paradoxes as well as levels. We do not develop that second instrument here.

The standard process

1. **Set the aim and domain.** Be clear about what human work we are trying to understand.
2. **Set the level of the question.** The nouns depend partly on the level at which the problem is framed. A Level III question and a Level VI or VII question may produce

different nouns. In this book we normally start high — Level VI or VII — so the aim is broad enough to capture the whole domain.

3. Find the invariant nouns. Identify the smallest useful set of nouns that is mutually exclusive and collectively exhaustive for that domain.

4. Describe each noun by level. Show how the same underlying work changes as the holon becomes larger, more complex and more interdependent.

5. Back-sight the evidence. Start with what is actually happening, compare it with the level descriptions, and place each noun independently.

6. Plot the pattern. The periodic table makes position, mismatch and horizontal coherence visible without forcing the whole system into one score.

7. Add comparison and time. Compare systems using the same nouns, then repeat the exercise through time to show climb, fall, drift and trajectory.

8. Use the visibility to choose the next move. The point is not classification. The point is to see where the system is, where it has been, and what the next credible move may be at the relevant level.

Visibility is shared

The aim of the periodic table is shared visibility. Visibility is not one-way.

You are visible. I am visible. We are visible to each other.

A government becomes more visible to citizens, but citizens and their needs also become more visible to government. A company becomes more visible to its people, while the behaviour and constraints of those people become more visible to the company. An AI lab can become more visible to the outside world, while the demands, risks and trade-offs it faces become more visible to those judging it. Humans become more visible to AI, and AI becomes more visible to humans.

That distinction matters. Shared visibility is different from surveillance. Surveillance makes one side visible to another while the observer remains hidden or weakly accountable. The tools developed here are intended to increase reciprocal visibility: the system can see itself, the parts can see the whole, the whole can see the parts, and the evidence behind a judgement can itself be seen and challenged.

The periodic table therefore creates a common object between us. We can look at the same nouns, the same levels, the same evidence and the same pattern. We may still disagree about the placement or the next move, but we can see more clearly what we are disagreeing about.

These are MVPs

The tables in this part of the book are minimum viable products. They are working instruments, not finished measurement systems. A usable version can already sit on

a phone and be applied to a country, organisation, function, AI lab, alignment problem or domain such as violence. That is enough to demonstrate the method and learn from using it.

Their quality, however, depends heavily on the quality of the information available. If the evidence on the internet is incomplete, distorted, politically selected, commercially shaped or simply false, the placement can be wrong. AI increases reach and speed; it does not automatically turn poor information into truth.

That dependency is why a later pilot will deal directly with truth verification: how we assess the veracity, source quality, independence, relevance and usefulness of the information being used. As that capability improves, the quality of back-sighting and the quality of the periodic tables should improve with it.

For now, the right standard is disciplined provisionality. Make the nouns explicit. Make the level descriptions explicit. Show the evidence. State confidence. Allow challenge. Correct the placement when better information appears.

With the method established, we can now apply it to governance. The surprising starting point is that the invariant nouns remain recognisable from family through tribe, city-state, kingdom, elite democracy, pluralistic democracy and global governance. What changes is how each noun is performed. That gives us the Y-axis of development and the X-axis of recurring work. The result is the Governance Periodic Table.

How This Chapter Unfolds

1. The Governance Periodic Table as the first application — Applies the universal method to governance and explains why this first table is an MVP rather than a finished measurement system.

2. The nouns of Governance — Identifies the recurring governance work that remains visible from family through tribe, kingdom, democracy and global governance.

3. Describing each noun by Level — Shows how the same governance noun changes as scale, complexity and interdependence rise through the seven levels.

4. Backsighting: How we place evidence into the table — Starts with observable evidence and works backward to the level that best matches how each governance function actually operates.

5. Backsighting Russia — Applies the method noun by noun to Russia and makes internal mismatches between technical capability and political correction visible.

6. Backsighting Denmark — Applies the same method independently to Denmark and shows a more horizontally coherent Level 6 pattern.

7. Russia and Denmark together — Places both countries on one table so similarities, differences, mixed levels and future trajectory can be seen directly.

8. What this means for humans — Shows how shared visibility helps people see level, mismatch, direction and the next best move without reducing a system to one label.

9. What this means for AI — Shows how AI can make this diagnostic method practical at scale while remaining dependent on visible evidence, challenge and human judgement.

1. The Governance Periodic Table as the first application

The Governance Periodic Table applies the method to one of the broadest human domains: governance. Instead of asking whether a country is simply a democracy, an autocracy or something else, it asks a more useful question: at what level is each important part of governance actually operating?

This first governance version is an MVP. It is deliberately provisional. We will not always have complete information, some evidence will be contested, and some governance functions may sit between levels. The nouns, level descriptions and country placements should therefore be treated as hypotheses to be tested and improved, not as final scores.

Its value is that it gives us a disciplined structure for shared visibility. We can state the nouns, describe how each noun changes by level, gather evidence, place each noun independently, show the pattern, and then compare systems without collapsing everything into one political label.

2. The nouns of Governance

The horizontal axis of the table is made up of the recurring nouns of governance. The form of governance changes greatly from family to tribe, kingdom, democracy and global institutions, but these underlying matters remain remarkably persistent.

1. **Purpose & meaning.** Why the entity exists, what it is for, and what gives membership meaning.
2. **Boundary & membership.** Who is inside or outside the entity, and how membership is gained or lost.
3. **Defence of the entity.** How the entity, its members and its boundary are protected from external threats.
4. **Leadership: coming & going.** How leaders enter authority and how they are replaced, removed or succeeded.
5. **Deliberation & differences.** How disagreement and competing interests are expressed, considered and reconciled.

6. Rules for running institution. What rules govern behaviour and define what members, leaders and institutions may or may not do.

7. Legal deliberation after rule-breaking. How alleged rule-breaking is examined, evidenced and judged.

8. Punishment or forgiveness. What follows established wrongdoing: punishment, correction, rehabilitation, forgiveness or restoration.

9. Wealth creation. How the community creates the resources and capabilities needed for survival, security and improvement.

10. Wealth distribution. How resources, benefits, obligations and burdens are distributed.

11. Education & historical knowledge. How knowledge, skills, history and institutional memory are transmitted and contested.

12. Ritual & custom. How ceremonies, symbols, customs and repeated practices reinforce belonging, legitimacy and expected behaviour.

13. Adjustment to changes in reality. How the institution detects change, learns and alters itself when existing arrangements no longer fit reality.

These nouns form the X-axis. The levels form the Y-axis. The table asks, cell by cell, how each noun is actually performed at each level of institutional complexity.

3. Describing each noun by level

The vertical axis runs from Level II, the family, through Level VII, global governance. (Level I, the individual is not described here.) The point is not that higher is automatically morally better. Higher levels are institutional responses to larger scale and greater complexity. A modern country can also contain functions operating at different levels at the same time.

The full table below is transposed into the required diagnostic form: levels on the Y-axis and nouns on the X-axis. It is shown in two panels only so that the text remains readable on the page; the two panels together are one periodic table.

Governance Periodic Table - nouns 1-7. Exhibit 12.1A

Level	Purpose & meaning	Boundary & membership	Defence of the entity	Leadership: coming & going	Deliberation & differences	Rules for running institution	Legal deliberation after rule-breaking
VII Global governance	Enable sovereign states to cooperate on problems crossing national boundaries while preserving substantial national autonomy.	States remain principal members; individuals have limited direct membership or political standing within global institutions.	Collective security, alliances, treaties, sanctions and international institutions manage threats, but enforcement depends heavily on states.	Leaders of global institutions are largely appointed or negotiated by states; no universal global electorate directly selects or removes them.	Diplomacy, international assemblies, treaties, negotiations and specialist bodies seek agreement among states with radically different interests and power.	Treaties, conventions, international law and institutional rules establish obligations, but authority remains dependent on state consent and compliance.	International courts, tribunals and arbitration exist, but jurisdiction and enforceability remain incomplete and uneven.
VI Pluralistic democracy	Enable citizens with diverse interests and values to coexist, choose governments and pursue individual and collective wellbeing.	Citizenship, immigration and naturalisation are legally codified; political membership approaches universal adult participation.	Professional defence institutions operate under civilian constitutional control, budgets, law and public accountability.	Universal franchise, competitive parties, constitutional terms, elections, confidence procedures and law determine entry to and removal from leadership.	Elections, parliaments, parties, media, civil society, consultation and public debate continuously process large-scale disagreement.	Extensive constitutional, legislative, regulatory and administrative systems specify powers, rights, duties and institutional constraints.	Independent judiciary, due process, evidence standards, appeals and constitutional protections institutionalise adjudication.
V Nation state / Elite democracy	Govern through institutions controlled substantially by property-owning, educated or otherwise enfranchised elites.	Citizenship is legally defined, but political participation may be restricted by property, sex, class, race or status.	Professional armed forces operate under state authority, increasingly constrained by parliamentary or constitutional oversight.	Political elites compete through restricted electoral and parliamentary processes; office becomes constitutionally transferable.	Parliaments, parties, press and elite institutions organise competing interests, although participation remains restricted.	Constitutions, statutes, administrative rules and precedent constrain citizens and increasingly government itself.	More independent courts, professional judges, lawyers, evidence rules and procedural protections develop.
IV Kingdom	Maintain territorial order and continuity under a sovereign; legitimacy commonly derives from dynasty, religion and tradition.	Sovereign territory becomes clearer; subjecthood is determined by birth, allegiance, conquest and royal authority.	Sovereign controls professional or feudal forces, fortifications and taxation; defence becomes a specialised state function.	Leadership is predominantly hereditary or dynastic; succession rules and appointed offices organise authority and limit competition.	Courts, advisers, nobles, assemblies and religious institutions process differences, with final authority concentrated near the ruler.	Royal decrees, religious and customary law, written codes and bureaucratic procedures govern large territories.	Royal, local and religious courts use increasingly explicit procedures to determine wrongdoing under sovereign authority.
III Tribe	Maintain group, identity, territory and ancestry; shared stories establish belonging and obligations.	Kinship, ancestry, initiation, marriage and accepted affiliation establish membership; territory becomes increasingly important.	Warriors collectively defend people, resources and territory; alliances extend defensive capacity.	Chiefs, elders or councils emerge through kinship, reputation, achievement, inheritance or group acceptance.	Councils, elders and custom manage disagreement and seek consensus to preserve cohesion.	Custom, taboo, oral law and collective memory establish acceptable behaviour and obligations.	Elders hear disputes, assess evidence and apply customary traditions.
II Family	Sustain the household, raise children, protect members and preserve family continuity.	Birth, partnership, adoption and caregiving define membership; household boundaries are personal.	Adults protect children, dependants, home and resources; wider kin may assist.	Parents or senior caregivers lead; authority rests on responsibility, age and dependence.	Family members discuss needs and differences; parents or caregivers make final decisions.	Household routines, parental rules and shared expectations govern everyday behaviour.	Parents or caregivers hear disputes, establish facts and decide consequences.

Governance Periodic Table - nouns 8-13. Exhibit 12.1B.

Level	Punishment or forgiveness	Wealth creation	Wealth distribution	Education & historical knowledge	Ritual & custom	Adjustment to changes in reality
VII Global governance	Sanctions, international prosecution, reparations and reconciliation mechanisms exist, but implementation depends substantially on national institutions.	Trade rules, global capital, multinational production, technology and international standards connect national wealth-creation systems without a single global economy-government.	Aid, development finance, trade, remittances and international institutions redistribute some resources, but no comprehensive global fiscal system exists.	International science, universities, digital networks and educational institutions exchange knowledge globally, but no unified global educational architecture exists.	Diplomatic protocols, summits, international ceremonies and global commemorations exist, but emotional identification remains much weaker than national identity.	Global institutions collect information and coordinate responses, but weak authority, sovereignty constraints and slow consensus make correction difficult when rapid collective action is required.
VI Pluralistic democracy	Rights-constrained punishment balances deterrence, protection, proportionality, rehabilitation, restitution and forgiveness.	Competitive markets, corporations, public infrastructure, education, science, finance and regulation support complex high-productivity economies.	Progressive taxation, transfers, public services, pensions, healthcare and education redistribute resources alongside market outcomes.	Near-universal schooling, universities, research institutions, libraries, media and digital systems transmit and continuously expand knowledge.	Elections, citizenship ceremonies, commemorations, sport, national symbols and diverse cultural traditions sustain overlapping identities.	Elections, independent institutions, science, markets, media, courts and civil society provide multiple feedback loops, although they can conflict or become dysfunctional.
V Nation State / Elite democracy	Punishment becomes increasingly rule-bound and proportionate; rehabilitation and formal pardon mechanisms expand.	Property rights, industrialisation, capital accumulation, corporations, markets and technological innovation dramatically expand production.	Market income dominates, supplemented gradually by taxation and limited public provision; distribution remains politically restricted.	Mass literacy and schooling expand, although access initially reflects class and status; universities and professional institutions grow.	Parliamentary ceremony, national symbols, elections and civic traditions supplement inherited religious and national rituals.	Elections, markets, scientific institutions, parliamentary inquiry and public debate create stronger feedback and correction mechanisms.
IV Kingdom	Sovereign justice includes imprisonment, confiscation, exile, corporal or capital punishment, pardon and mercy.	Agriculture, trade, specialisation, infrastructure, taxation and territorial markets expand production and support the kingdom.	Land, taxation, tribute and privileges distribute wealth hierarchically, while rulers finance defence, administration and public works.	Religious institutions, courts, schools, scholars and bureaucracies preserve history, literacy and specialised knowledge for restricted groups.	Monarchy, religion, coronations, military ceremonies, symbols and national traditions reinforce hierarchy and legitimacy.	Sovereigns and bureaucracies adapt law, administration and military practice in response to war, technology, economic change and instability.
III Tribe	Compensation, restitution, shame, exclusion, reconciliation, retaliation or ritual settlement maintain group order.	Hunting, agriculture, herding, craft, exchange and labour create collective resources.	Customary reciprocity distributes resources; chiefs or elders support vulnerable members.	Elders, storytelling, apprenticeship and ritual transmit collective history, identity, survival knowledge and social rules.	Initiation, ceremony, religion, storytelling, festivals and collective rituals make group membership emotionally real.	Collective experience, elders and customary learning modify practices, although tradition can constrain adaptation.
II Family	Correction uses explanation, restitution, loss of privileges, reconciliation and forgiveness.	Adults combine paid work, domestic labour and caregiving to sustain the household.	Income and resources are pooled and allocated according to household needs.	Parents and caregivers transmit language, values, skills, stories and practical knowledge.	Meals, celebrations, routines and family traditions reinforce belonging and identity.	Families learn from experience and adapt roles, routines and resources as circumstances change.

4. Backsighting: How We Place Evidence into the Table

Backsighting is the discipline of starting with what can actually be observed and then working backwards to a level placement. We do not begin by saying, for example, 'Russia is authoritarian' or 'Denmark is democratic' and then colour the cells to fit the label.

For each noun, we first describe the operating mechanism in neutral institutional language. We then compare that description with the seven level descriptions and assign it to the closest structural match. If the evidence genuinely spans two levels, we show the split. Only after every noun has been assessed independently do we look at the whole-country pattern.

- Evidence: what is actually happening in the governance function?
- Neutral description: describe the mechanism without a country-level political label.
- Structural match: compare the description with the seven level cells for that noun.
- Placement: assign the nearest level, or an adjacent-level split where necessary.
- Confidence: distinguish a strong placement from one resting on incomplete or contested evidence.
- Pattern: only then inspect vertical level, horizontal coherence and trajectory through time.

This MVP does not yet contain a complete citation trail behind every cell. The country worksheets below therefore record provisional institutional assessments. A mature version would allow every ball on the table to be opened to reveal its evidence trail, source quality, date and confidence.

5. Backsighting Russia

Russia is assessed noun by noun rather than as a single regime type. The resulting pattern is dispersed: modern and sophisticated state capacity in defence, administration, education, social provision and the economy coexists with lower-level mechanisms in leadership, deliberation, adjudication, information and political correction.

Exhibit 12.2

Governance noun	Neutral operating description	Placement
1. Purpose & meaning	Strong emphasis on sovereignty, national unity, state continuity, traditional values and historical memory, articulated substantially from the centre.	LIV
2. Boundary & membership	Modern legally codified citizenship, but political inclusion and practical rights are more constrained.	LV

Governance noun	Neutral operating description	Placement
3. Defence	Highly sophisticated professional military and security apparatus with concentrated executive control and weaker open accountability.	LV
4. Leadership: coming & going	Formal elections and constitutional offices coexist with constrained genuine competition and highly concentrated presidential authority.	LIV–V, weighted LIV.
5. Deliberation & differences	Formal legislature and parties exist, but opposition, protest, media and civil-society channels are heavily constrained and authority concentrated.	LIV.
6. Rules for running institution	Highly developed constitution, statutory system and bureaucracy, but executive power can dominate practical application.	LV.
7. Legal deliberation after rule-breaking	Professional courts and detailed procedures exist, but judicial independence and due process are materially impaired, especially in politically sensitive cases.	LIV–V, weighted LIV.
8. Punishment or forgiveness	Modern formal criminal-justice machinery exists, but selective prosecution, coercion and weaker protections lower the operating level.	LIV–V.
9. Wealth creation	Large modern industrial, corporate, financial and technological economy, with substantial state direction, resource dependence and patronage.	LV–VI, weighted LV.
10. Wealth distribution	Extensive pensions, social insurance, benefits and public services constitute a substantial modern redistribution apparatus.	LV.
11. Education & historical knowledge	Mass schooling, universities, science and technical education are highly developed, while politically important historical interpretation is more centrally directed.	LV overall; education LVI, historical knowledge LIV.
12. Ritual & custom	State, military, religious, patriotic and historical symbolism strongly reinforces national unity, hierarchy and legitimacy.	LIV.
13. Adjustment to changes in reality	Strong technical and administrative feedback exists, but political correction is weakened by restricted information, opposition and media.	LIV–V.

Russia plotted on the Governance Periodic Table. Exhibit 12.3

Level	Purpose & meaning	Boundary & membership	Defence of the entity	Leadership: coming & going	Deliberation & differences	Rules for running institution	Legal deliberation after rule-breaking	Punishment or forgiveness	Wealth creation	Wealth distribution	Education & historical knowledge	Ritual & custom	Adjustment to changes in reality
VII Global governance													
VI Pluralistic democracy									●				
V Nation state / Elite democracy		●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●		●
IV Kingdom	●			●	●		●	●				●	●
III Tribe													
II Family													

● Russia

Russia: commentary

The Russian pattern is not simply 'lower governance'. Its distinctive feature is internal mismatch. Technical, military, administrative and economic systems can operate with considerable sophistication, while some of the mechanisms that distribute political authority, process dissent, adjudicate sensitive disputes and correct the governing system sit nearer Levels IV and V.

That horizontal tension is diagnostically important. It means the system cannot be understood well by attaching one label to the whole country. The table shows where complexity has risen and where institutional control remains more concentrated. It also identifies the functions in which change would have the greatest effect on the coherence of the system.

Two nouns should be read with particular care. Education and historical knowledge may split internally: technical education can sit high while historical interpretation is more centrally controlled. Adjustment to changes in reality can also split between strong technical adaptation and weaker political correction. For the MVP, we preserve those tensions rather than redesigning the nouns around them.

6. Backsighting Denmark

Denmark is assessed by exactly the same method and without using Russia as the reference point. The independent placements cluster strongly around Level VI, with some Level V inheritance in ritual and membership and some Level VII interface in defence and collective-security arrangements.

Exhibit 12.4

Governance noun	Neutral operating description	Placement
1. Purpose & meaning	State purpose expressed through constitutional democracy, welfare, citizenship, rights and collective provision.	LVI
2. Boundary & membership	Citizenship and migration extensively codified; adult political membership broadly universal, with qualifications around immigrant/minority inclusion.	LVI, with LV features.
3. Defence	Professional armed forces under constitutional civilian authority and embedded in collective security arrangements.	LVI, with LVII interface.
4. Leadership: coming & going	Competitive elections, proportional representation, coalition formation and constitutional transfer or removal.	LVI
5. Deliberation & differences	Multiple parties, parliament, independent media, civil society and coalition bargaining process disagreement.	LVI

Governance noun	Neutral operating description	Placement
6. Rules for running institution	Constitutional, legislative, administrative and regulatory rules substantially bind citizens and government.	LVI
7. Legal deliberation after rule-breaking	Independent courts, professional judiciary, due process and appeal mechanisms.	LVI
8. Punishment or forgiveness	Rule-bound criminal justice, proportionality, rights protection and rehabilitation within judicial constraints.	LVI
9. Wealth creation	Competitive markets, corporations, finance, science, regulation and highly educated labour support a high-productivity economy.	LVI
10. Wealth distribution	Broad welfare, progressive taxation, pensions, health, education and transfers operate alongside markets.	LVI
11. Education & historical knowledge	Universal schooling, universities, research and relatively open information systems transmit and contest knowledge.	LVI
12. Ritual & custom	Monarchy, national ceremonies, elections and civic traditions coexist with plural identities and democratic legitimacy.	LV–VI
13. Adjustment to changes in reality	Elections, markets, courts, science, media, public administration and policy review provide multiple correction loops.	LVI

Denmark plotted on the Governance Periodic Table, Exhibit 12.5

Level	Purpose & meaning	Boundary & membership	Defence of the entity	Leadership: coming & going	Deliberation & differences	Rules for running institution	Legal deliberation after rule-breaking	Punishment or forgiveness	Wealth creation	Wealth distribution	Education & historical knowledge	Ritual & custom	Adjustment to changes in reality
VII Global governance			●										
VI Pluralistic democracy	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
V Nation state / Elite democracy		●										●	
IV Kingdom													
III Tribe													
II Family													

● Denmark

Denmark: commentary

Denmark is notable for horizontal coherence. Most governance nouns sit close to Level VI and are supported by mutually reinforcing institutions: competitive elections, coalition government, independent courts, public administration, media, civil society, education, markets and multiple mechanisms of review and correction.

The table also prevents us from presenting Denmark as a perfect Level VI system. Boundary and membership retain qualifications and inherited tensions; ritual and custom naturally contain older institutional forms; and defence reaches upward into Level VII because it is embedded in collective-security arrangements beyond the nation state. These are not defects in the method. They are precisely the kinds of mixed-level features the periodic table is designed to reveal.

7. Russia and Denmark Together

Putting the two countries on the same table makes the comparison visible without reducing either country to a single score. Denmark's placements cluster tightly around Level VI. Russia's placements spread mainly across Levels IV to VI, with the strongest downward movement in functions concerned with political competition, deliberation, legal independence and correction.

Russia and Denmark together. Exhibit 12.6

Level	Purpose & meaning	Boundary & membership	Defence of the entity	Leadership: coming & going	Deliberation & differences	Rules for running institution	Legal deliberation after rule-breaking	Punishment or forgiveness	Wealth creation	Wealth distribution	Education & historical knowledge	Ritual & custom	Adjustment to changes in reality
VII Global governance			●										
VI Pluralistic democracy	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	● ●	●	●	●	●
V Nation state / Elite democracy		● ●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
IV Kingdom	●			●	●		●	●				●	●
III Tribe													
II Family													

● Russia ● Denmark

Comparative commentary

The most important difference is therefore not simply that Denmark is 'higher' than Russia. It is that Denmark is more horizontally coherent. Its governance functions tend to operate at similar levels and reinforce one another. Russia combines high technical and administrative capability with lower-level political and corrective mechanisms, producing a more internally uneven architecture.

The comparison also demonstrates why the periodic-table approach is useful. A conventional country label compresses complexity into one word. The plotted table preserves the internal structure. It shows where two countries are similar, where they differ, where one noun spans levels, and where change in a single function could alter the performance of the wider system.

Repeated through time, the same exhibit would add a third dimension: trajectory. We could see not only where each function sits, but whether it is moving upward, remaining static or moving backward.

8. What this means for humans

The Periodic Table gives humans a new kind of visibility. Instead of applying one label to a country, organisation or domain, we can see the recurring work separately, see the level at which each part is operating, and see where the parts fit or do not fit.

That matters because human systems rarely move as one block. One part can climb while another remains stuck. Technical capability can rise while deliberation or correction remains at a lower level. A country can have sophisticated defence, education or administration while the way it handles power, disagreement or law remains much less developed. The table makes those mismatches visible.

The same method can be used well beyond governance. If humans are trying to do something, we can define the domain, set the level of the question, identify the invariant MECE nouns, describe how those nouns change by level, and then back-sight the evidence. That applies to deliberation, truth-seeking, violence, corporations, corporate functions, AI labs and alignment.

The deeper human gain is shared visibility. I can see you. You can see me. We can see the same structure between us. The evidence behind a placement can be opened, challenged and improved. That does not remove disagreement. It makes the disagreement more visible and therefore more workable.

The aim is not classification. The aim is correction. Once we can see where a system is, where it has been and where the mismatches sit, we can ask: what is the next best move at this level?

9. What this means for AI

AI makes this method practical at a scale that was previously difficult. It can help identify candidate nouns, compare level descriptions, gather evidence, back-sight placements, preserve previous states and show movement through time. It can turn a conceptual framework into a working diagnostic instrument.

But AI does not remove the dependence on evidence. If the available information is incomplete, corrupted, politically selected or false, the diagnosis can be wrong. AI increases reach and speed; it does not automatically create truth. That is why the later information-judgement pilot is part of the same architecture.

AI also becomes part of the visibility relationship. Humans can use these tools to see AI labs and alignment systems more clearly. AI can help humans see themselves and their institutions more clearly. The useful condition is reciprocal visibility: neither side becomes an invisible observer of the other.

The same method can also be turned onto AI itself. Rather than asking whether an AI system is simply safe, aligned or well governed, we can identify the recurring functions around its operation, describe the level at which each function is actually being performed, back-sight the evidence and expose mismatches. The result is not an AI verdict about itself. It is a visible, contestable diagnostic that humans and AI can inspect together.

That is the larger promise of the Periodic Table. AI helps make the parts, the levels, the evidence, the mismatches and the trajectory visible. Humans retain the responsibility to judge the aim, challenge the evidence and decide what move should follow.