DT-08 Cities without kings: collective rule in the first large settlements

The transition from small, kin-based foraging bands to densely populated urban settlements has traditionally been cast through a neo-evolutionary lens. In this paradigm, as populations cross specific demographic thresholds, egalitarianism inevitably collapses under the weight of administrative complexity, yielding to hierarchy, chiefdoms, and ultimately states governed by coercive elites. However, a rigorous analysis of the archaeological and historical record reveals that the human journey toward urbanization was neither strictly linear nor inherently autocratic. For millennia, substantial populations engineered and maintained sophisticated governance arrangements devoid of visible kings, palatial monuments, or dynastic cults.

This foundation document for *GOVERNING after the FALL* assesses the endurance, mechanics, and eventual failure of collective rule in early large-scale settlements. It applies the frameworks of collective action theory to determine which principles of self-governance hold across deep time, how they manifest at varying scales, and how they are inevitably tested—and frequently captured—by individuals possessing dark-triad traits (narcissism, Machiavellianism, psychopathy). By dissecting the fiscal, architectural, and biological realities of these ancient cities, we establish the baseline parameters for reconstructing stateless governance.

The Theoretical Engine of Collective Governance

Modern scholarship investigating stateless urbanization relies on collective action theory, prominently advanced by Richard Blanton and Lane Fargher in their 2008 work, *Collective Action in the Formation of Pre-Modern States*[1]. Building upon Margaret Levi's "predatory theory of rule" (1981, 1988), Blanton and Fargher reverse-engineered the fiscal mechanics of 30 pre-modern polities[1]. Their causal model demonstrates that the origin of a settlement's revenue strictly dictates its position on a governance scale. This scale quantifies three variables: public goods provision, bureaucratization, and control of the ruler. The scores range from a highly autocratic 23.5 (observed in the Bakitara, Nupe, and 12th-century England) to a highly collective 52 (observed in Classical Athens, Republican Rome, and Ming China)[1].

The primary dynamic driving collective action is the distinction between internal and external revenues. When coordinating councils or leaders rely on internal revenues—taxes on local labor and localized agrarian production—they are forced to bargain with their citizenry[1]. To ensure compliance, reduce transaction costs, and prevent defection, leadership must provide public goods (infrastructure, water supply, security) and submit to bureaucratic checks[1]. Conversely, when governance is funded by external revenues—monopolized long-distance trade, war booty, or isolated resource extraction—leaders operate independently of the populace. External funding leads to autocratic coercion, steep inequality, and the withdrawal of public goods because the leadership possesses no fiscal incentive to negotiate with the population[1].

David Carballo's subsequent research, including *Cooperation and Collective Action in the Cultural Evolution of Complex Societies* (2014), refines this framework by examining the physical architecture of governance[7]. Carballo separates public goods (non-excludable

benefits like defensive walls, open plazas, or shared water catchments) from toll goods (excludable benefits like specialized knowledge, restricted elite architecture, or localized water access)[8]. By quantifying Gini coefficients derived from house-size distributions across regions, Carballo and colleagues illustrate that collective action reliably correlates with lower spatial inequality and the proliferation of shared infrastructural investments[10]. Bootstrapping these Gini distributions (often using 1,000 resamples to generate robust confidence intervals) reveals that deeply collective societies actively restrict the physical footprint of elite accumulation[10].

Case 1: Çatalhöyük (Anatolia, 7100–5950 BCE)

The Crowded Egalitarian Village

Located in modern-day Turkey, Çatalhöyük represents one of the earliest known attempts at dense human aggregation, peaking at 5,000 to 8,000 inhabitants within a 13.5-hectare footprint[13]. The settlement was characterized by a distinct lack of streets or public plazas; houses were built tightly against one another, with access gained through roof hatches.
In terms of the three perspectives of analysis, the physical display of Çatalhöyük projected an ideology of absolute household equality[15]. Standardized house sizes, ubiquitous domestic shrines, and the total lack of central administrative or palatial buildings communicated a society that violently rejected overt hierarchy. However, what the record shows is a grim biological reality. Clark Spencer Larsen's 2019 comprehensive bioarchaeological study of 470 complete and 272 partial individuals revealed severe overcrowding penalties[14]. The population suffered high rates of infectious disease, stunted growth, and heavy biomechanical stress[14]. Most critically, cranial trauma was prevalent. Larsen documented that 13% of assessed individuals exhibited non-lethal, recurrent injuries (12 of 93 individuals were "injury recidivists," mostly adult females), indicating endemic, likely ritualized or domestic, interpersonal violence[17]. Modern scholarship, led by Ian Hodder (2014), infers a constant, grinding tension between an egalitarian ethos and emerging hierarchical impulses[15]. Social differentiation was attempted not through physical wealth, but through "history houses"—specific dwellings that accumulated multi-generational burials (sometimes dozens beneath the floor) and complex ritual installations to build spiritual capital[15].

Scale Ledger: Çatalhöyük	Status	Rationale for Success or Failure
Household (4–10)	Worked	Kin-based production units functioned efficiently with absolute architectural standardization.
Hamlet (30–50)	Worked	Immediate neighbor clusters coordinated wall-building and

		roof-access logistics effectively.
Village (150–500)	Failed	Biological stress overwhelmed the architecture. Lack of sanitation and streets spiked disease.
Parish/District (1,500–5k+)	Failed	The physical agglomeration reached 8,000, but governance technology failed to scale, leading to endemic interpersonal violence and eventual abandonment.

Capture Test: Çatalhöyük	**Dynamics and Outcomes**
Dark-Triad Strategy	A Machiavellian actor could not hoard grain, as storage was strictly domestic and visible. Capture was attempted via *ritual capital* and ancestral dominance.
Historical Evidence	The emergence of "history houses." Certain lineages accumulated the skulls of ancestors to claim deeper spiritual authority, attempting to subvert egalitarian norms[15].
Resistance Features	Strict architectural conformity. The community physically restricted the expansion of any single dwelling; when a house aged, it was collapsed and rebuilt on the exact same footprint.

Case 2: The Trypillia Mega-Sites (Ukraine, 4100–3600

BCE)

The Concentric Agrarian Republics

The Trypillia culture produced massive, planned settlements on the Pontic forest-steppe. Sites like Nebelivka (235 ha) and Maidanetske (200 ha) housed between 10,000 and 15,000 people for several centuries without any evidence of coercive state apparatus[22].

The ideological display of Trypillia projected radical unity and integration. Houses were arranged in massive concentric rings around a central, empty plaza, with no royal tombs, centralized storage, or defensive citadels. What the record shows is a highly complex subsistence regime relying on intensive pulse and cereal cultivation. This agriculture was heavily manured by livestock, proven by elevated nitrogen-15 isotopes in crop residues (e.g., peas from Maidanetske showing 4.2 to 7.0‰ δ15N against a natural baseline of 2.5‰, indicating labor-intensive garden-plot manuring)[25]. Johannes Müller, Robert Hofmann, and Nils Müller-Scheeßel (2024) calculated Gini coefficients across 7,000 houses from 38 Trypillia sites, discovering a remarkably low overall Gini coefficient of 0.2295 (ranging from 0.13 to 0.31), indicating extreme material equality sustained for generations[27]. Modern scholarship infers that governance was achieved through nested councils operating out of "mega-structures"—large, multifunctional assembly houses strategically embedded within neighborhoods (low-level) and central plazas (high-level)[27]. Scholars conclude this was a deeply negotiated, bottom-up decision-making process that deliberately suppressed social stratification[26].

Scale Ledger: Trypillia	**Status**	**Rationale for Success or Failure**
Household (4–10)	Worked	Highly productive agricultural units capable of intensive manuring and surplus generation.
Hamlet (30–50)	Worked	Neighborhood clusters surrounding low-level mega-structures successfully localized dispute resolution.
Parish/District (1,500–5k)	Worked	Ring-corridors integrated multiple neighborhoods into a cohesive defensive and agricultural layout.
Town (15k–50k)	Worked	Scaled up to 15,000 people

		via high-level central assembly houses managing broad consensus.
Region (0.5M–5M)	Failed	The mega-sites collapsed entirely around 3600 BCE, dispersing populations back into small villages.

Capture Test: Trypillia	Dynamics and Outcomes
Dark-Triad Strategy	A narcissistic or psychopathic faction could seize control of the coordination nodes (the assembly houses) to restrict access to decision-making and control agricultural surplus.
Historical Evidence	Around 3800–3600 BCE, the Gini coefficients of house sizes began to rise[27]. Smaller, neighborhood-level assembly houses disappeared, replaced by exclusive, restricted central mega-structures[26].
Resistance Features	The ultimate resistance: voting with their feet. When the assembly system was captured, the populace intentionally burned the settlements and abandoned the mega-sites, rejecting the emerging hierarchy[24].

Case 3: Indus Valley Cities (2600–1900 BCE)

Bureaucracy without a King

At its peak, the Indus Valley Civilization encompassed an area the size of Western Europe, anchored by massive cities like Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa. Mohenjo-Daro housed upwards of 40,000 people and featured the most advanced urban engineering of the ancient world[30]. The ideological display of the Indus was heavily standardized and aggressively impersonal. They produced identical stamp seals featuring mythical beasts (primarily the unicorn) and an undeciphered script, projecting an image of unified, orderly commerce rather than the glory of

individual rulers[32]. What the record shows is a society built on monumental investments in public goods. Mohenjo-Daro featured grid-patterned streets, baked-brick architecture utilizing a strict 1:2:4 ratio across the entire watershed, hundreds of public and private wells, and highly engineered covered sewage drains[31]. The Great Bath at Mohenjo-Daro (12x7x2.4 meters, waterproofed with bitumen) served as a massive public ritual space[31]. There are no identifiable palaces or royal burials. The famous 17.5-cm "Priest-King" steatite statue, once assumed to prove monarchical rule, is now viewed by scholars as a minor artefact, likely representing a deity or clan leader rather than a coercive central monarch[34]. Modern scholarship, articulated by Adam Green (2021), directly challenges the presumption of a ruling class, arguing for a robust, egalitarian citizenry managing a complex urban environment[35]. Jonathan Mark Kenoyer infers that power was horizontally distributed among competing merchant guilds, religious leaders, and kin groups who coordinated through corporate governance[32].

Scale Ledger: Indus Cities	Status	Rationale for Success or Failure
Parish/District (1,500–5k)	Worked	Sophisticated baked-brick sanitation systems eliminated the biological penalties of density.
Town (15k–50k)	Worked	Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa sustained 40,000+ populations through standardized civic engineering.
Region (0.5M–5M)	Worked	Standardized weights, measures, and 1:2:4 bricks synchronized a vast commercial watershed.
Nation (50M–500M)	Failed	Decentralized around 1900 BCE due to shifting monsoons, river course changes, and the breakdown of the ideological consensus maintaining the trade network[33].

Capture Test: Indus Cities	Dynamics and Outcomes
Dark-Triad Strategy	A Machiavellian cartel could capture the system by monopolizing the production of standardized seals and chert weights, effectively locking competitors out of the market[32].
Historical Evidence	Wealth inequality eventually inscribed itself biologically. Bioarchaeological studies reveal that marginalized groups in lower towns suffered higher rates of violence and malnutrition, indicating structural violence replaced overt coercion[38].
Resistance Features	Decentralized infrastructure. Because almost every house had its own well and drainage[31], aspiring elites could not use access to water (a primary toll good) to extort the populace.

Case 4: Jenne-Jeno (Mali, 3rd c. BCE – 14th c. CE)

The Heterarchical Clustering

Located in the Inland Niger Delta of Mali, Jenne-Jeno challenges traditional Eurasian definitions of urbanism. Excavated extensively by Roderick McIntosh and Susan Keech McIntosh (1981, 2005), the site reached populations of 10,000 to 27,000 at its apogee in the late first millennium CE[39].

The ideological display of Jenne-Jeno, echoed in regional oral traditions, suggested an ideology of strict occupational segregation paired with mutual interdependence. Distinct Mande progenitors (Bozo fishermen, farmers, ironworkers) maintained fierce localized identities while pooling resources[39]. What the record shows is that the city was not a single monolithic block but a central 33-hectare tell surrounded by 69 smaller, tightly clustered occupation mounds[39]. There is no central palace, no coercive administrative center, and no evidence of stark elite burials or wealth hoarding[43]. Modern scholarship, pioneered by R. McIntosh, defines this spatial and political arrangement as "heterarchy"—a system in which elements are unranked or possess the potential to be ranked in a multitude of different, non-permanent ways[43]. Power was horizontal, dispersed among specialized craft and ethnic guilds that regulated themselves through consensus and cross-cutting religious affiliations[39].

Scale Ledger: Jenne-Jeno	Status	Rationale for Success or

		Failure
Hamlet (30–50)	Worked	Individual occupation mounds functioned as distinct, highly specialized kin/craft groups.
Village (150–500)	Worked	Trade between immediate mounds facilitated diverse diets and tool access without central markets.
Town (15k–50k)	Worked	The clustered mounds scaled to 27,000 people via heterarchical guild consensus rather than top-down decree.
Region (0.5M–5M)	Failed	The system was absorbed by hierarchical Islamic trading empires (Mali Empire) pursuing external trans-Saharan wealth.

Capture Test: Jenne-Jeno	Dynamics and Outcomes
Dark-Triad Strategy	A sociopathic leader within a vital guild (e.g., iron-smelting) could weaponize their monopoly, withholding vital tools or food to extort political concessions from other mounds.
Historical Evidence	Capture occurred when external revenue eclipsed internal reliance. The influx of trans-Saharan gold and salt trade enriched specific factions, destroying the heterarchical balance and leading to site

	abandonment[39].
Resistance Features	Spatial plurality. Because different guilds lived on physically separated mounds, it was logistically impossible for any single faction's militia to physically subjugate the entire urban complex[39].

Case 5: Teotihuacan (Mexico, 100 BCE – 550 CE)

The Collective Turn

In the early first millennium CE, Teotihuacan in the Basin of Mexico became the primate city of the Americas, reaching a population of approximately 100,000[45]. Its trajectory provides the clearest archaeological evidence of a deliberate revolution toward collective rule.

The ideological display of early Teotihuacan celebrated martial kingship, culminating in the construction of the Temple of the Feathered Serpent, which was consecrated with the sacrifice of hundreds of warriors. However, around 300 CE, the ideology abruptly changed. Art shifted away from glorifying individuals to depicting anonymous priests, nature deities, and communal rituals[45]. What the record shows is a physical manifestation of this ideological shift. Sometime around 300 CE, the Temple of the Feathered Serpent was desecrated, its facade intentionally covered by an *Adosada* platform to mute its dynastic symbolism[45]. Concurrently, the city embarked on a massive urban renewal project, constructing over 2,000 multi-family apartment compounds (ranging from 400 to 7,000 square meters) that provided spacious, lime-plastered, highly robust housing for nearly the entire population, regardless of extreme wealth[49]. Modern scholarship, driven by Linda Manzanilla (2017) and David Carballo, interprets this as a "collective turn." Elites were stripped of absolute power, and the city was reorganized into corporate neighborhoods governed by local administrative centers[50]. Feinman and Carballo (2022) assign Teotihuacan a perfect "Collectivity Score" of 3, noting its low Gini coefficient (calculated at 0.41, remarkably low for a primate city of its scale)[7].

Scale Ledger: Teotihuacan	Status	Rationale for Success or Failure
Village (150–500)	Worked	The apartment compound functioned as a sub-village (60-100 people), pooling craft labor and domestic rituals[51].
Parish/District (1,500–5k)	Worked	Neighborhood centers coordinated the output and

		civic duties of multiple apartment compounds.
Town (15k–50k)	Worked	The grid plan and Avenue of the Dead efficiently moved massive populations for civic rituals.
Region (0.5M–5M)	Worked	Scaled to 100,000 as a primate city, integrating populations across the Basin of Mexico.
Nation (50M–500M)	Failed	State overreach and extreme climatic volatility (ca. 375–400 CE) strained the collective consensus[11].

Capture Test: Teotihuacan	Dynamics and Outcomes
Dark-Triad Strategy	While the central state was collective, ambitious intermediate elites (neighborhood administrators) could exploit their positions to hoard imported luxury goods and monopolize local craft production.
Historical Evidence	Between 550 and 650 CE, the system broke down. Deepening social stratification and power struggles between the central collective state and wealthy intermediate neighborhood elites led to civil strife. The major temples and elite compounds were systematically burned by internal dissidents[45].
Resistance Features	The apartment compounds themselves. Their standardized, robust stone construction ensured a high baseline standard of living, preventing elites from

	using shelter as extortionate leverage[49].

Case 6: Tlaxcallan (Mexico, 14th c. – 1521 CE)

The Republic Surrounded by Empire

Tlaxcallan was a densely populated, 4.5-square-kilometer urban complex that fiercely maintained its independence despite being completely encircled and embargoed by the hostile Aztec Triple Alliance[53].

The ideological display of Tlaxcallan was explicit: they identified as a free republic of warriors. According to Spanish chroniclers like Alonso de Zorita (1560s), who documented their pre-Hispanic structures and legal codes, they vehemently rejected the concept of vassalage to a single sovereign[55]. What the record shows, via Lane Fargher's archaeological mapping, is that Tlaxcallan lacked a central palace. Instead, it was divided into four main *cabeceras* (Tizatlan, Ocotelulco, Quiahuiztlan, and Tepeticpac), each possessing its own civic-ceremonial plaza[53]. The population lived on modified, terraced hillsides designed for both agriculture and dense urban defense. Modern scholarship infers that Tlaxcallan operated as a highly integrated collective state governed by a ruling council of 50 to 200 lords (*teuctli*). Participation required rigorous military and civic service, heavily influenced by the egalitarian and anti-tyrannical morals of their patron deity, Tezcatlipoca, which actively promoted *isegoria* (freedom of speech) among citizens[58].

Scale Ledger: Tlaxcallan	Status	Rationale for Success or Failure
Town (15k–50k)	Worked	The confederacy of four *cabeceras* operated efficiently as a decentralized urban core.
Region (0.5M–5M)	Worked	Successfully organized hundreds of thousands of people across the Tlaxcalan territory to resist Aztec hegemony through mass military mobilization[57].
Nation (50M–500M)	Failed	The republic only yielded to the Spanish Empire, pragmatically using the alliance with Cortés as a political tool to destroy

		their Aztec rivals before ultimately being subsumed[57].

Capture Test: Tlaxcallan	Dynamics and Outcomes
Dark-Triad Strategy	A highly charismatic, narcissistic general could use the constant wartime panic of the Aztec embargo to suspend the ruling council and declare a military dictatorship.
Historical Evidence	Averting capture required intense psychological conditioning. Before a leader could join the ruling council, they were subjected to severe beatings, starvation, and public humiliation to strip them of ego and instill the reality that they were servants of the state—a highly effective mechanism for weeding out narcissists[58].
Resistance Features	Dispersed civic architecture. Because each *cabecera* had its own plaza and assembly space, no single tyrant could physically command the political geography of the city[53].

The Strongest Case Against: The Neo-Evolutionary Critique

The prevailing critique against the viability of large-scale collective governance stems from neo-evolutionary archaeologists and anthropologists, most notably Kent Flannery and Joyce Marcus (e.g., *The Creation of Inequality*, 2012). Their primary argument is that collective systems at scale are inherently unstable, representing brief historical anomalies rather than sustainable models for human organization.

The Critics' Arguments:

1. **The Information Processing Limit:** Flannery and Marcus argue that as populations grow, horizontal consensus-building becomes paralyzed by transaction costs. Coercive hierarchy and the centralization of power are viewed as necessary evolutionary adaptations to process information, manage logistics, and make rapid decisions in complex environments.
2. **The "Hidden Elite" Hypothesis:** Critics argue that cities like Mohenjo-Daro and

Teotihuacan *did* have kings, but their ideological display simply masked their power. A lack of royal tombs does not equal a lack of royalty; it may just reflect different burial customs (e.g., cremation, river scattering, or hidden caches).

3. **The Violence of the Collective:** Critics warn against the *romance of the primitive* and the naturalistic fallacy (assuming old or stateless equates to peaceful). Collective societies were frequently brutally oppressive to the individual. Tlaxcallan required human sacrifice and engaged in aggressive imperialism; Çatalhöyük suffered from intense domestic violence as a byproduct of forced density[17]; and Teotihuacan achieved its "collective" apartments through what was likely a violent internal revolution followed by a rigid, heavily policed state apparatus[45].

While these critiques correctly dismantle utopian visions of ancient egalitarianism, the extensive data compiled by Blanton, Fargher, and Carballo demonstrate that the *mechanisms* of collective rule—taxation bargaining, public goods provision, and nested councils—functioned effectively for centuries, actively and successfully preventing the consolidation of autocratic, monarchical power[1].

Summary of Robust Findings

Massive populations ranging from 10,000 to 100,000 successfully self-governed for centuries without the presence of kings or coercive dynastic elites. Collective governance correlates directly with a reliance on an internal revenue base, such as agrarian taxation and local labor, rather than external revenues like monopolized trade or war booty. The provision of broad public goods, including standardized housing, civic plazas, and shared water infrastructure, serves as the primary stabilizing mechanism of collective rule. Physical architecture dictates political reality; dispersed plazas and uniform housing actively suppress hierarchical consolidation by denying elites the physical space to hoard wealth. Large-scale collective action is highly fragile; when external wealth floods a system, intermediate elites inevitably attempt to capture the state apparatus. The transition to agriculture and dense packing initially caused catastrophic biological stress, forcing populations to invent sanitation and spatial technologies to survive. Nested councils, operating from the neighborhood level up to city-wide assemblies, are the only historically proven method for scaling egalitarian decision-making past the village level. Collective societies are not inherently peaceful; they are capable of extreme coordinated violence and require intense psychological conditioning to maintain social cohesion. Dark-triad traits are naturally drawn to systemic bottlenecks, specifically ritual hubs, trade seals, and administrative centers. The ultimate defense against elite capture in stateless societies remains the physical dispersal of the population, often manifesting as the deliberate abandonment of the city.

Contested or Open Questions

- **The Indus Enigma:** Did the Indus Valley truly lack a ruling class, or is our inability to decipher their script blinding us to a deeply entrenched, silent oligarchy that ruled through corporate monopolies rather than martial force?
- **The Cause of Trypillia's Collapse:** Was the sudden shift to massive central mega-structures the result of internal political usurpation by dark-triad actors, or was it a

desperate, failed administrative response to external climatic pressures on their agricultural yields?

- **The Scope of Tlaxcallan's Equality:** Did the vaunted "republican" governance and *isegoria* (freedom of speech) of Tlaxcala extend to the commoners (*macehuales*), or was it strictly an egalitarian non-aggression pact among the nobility (*teuctli*) designed to pool military resources against the Aztecs?

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Implementability after the Fall

To engineer collective governance after the permanent loss of industrial supply chains, digital grids, and the state apparatus, survivors must rely on physical architecture, spatial planning, and analog auditing.

Scale	Minimum Viable Version	What it Needs to Start	First Failure to Expect
Household (4 to 10)	**The Çatalhöyük Unit:** A robust, standardized physical structure ensuring equal shelter and domestic storage.	A shared hearth, physical defense from the elements, and consensus on the division of basic caloric labor.	**Patriarchal/Matriarchal Capture:** Dominance by the most physically imposing or socially manipulative member who claims exceptional status through coercion.

Village (300)	**The Trypillia Ring:** A circular arrangement of houses centered around a single, easily accessible, multi-purpose assembly structure.	A physical meeting place fitting one representative per household, a shared calendar to synchronize harvests, and a physical token system for voting.	**Biological Stress:** Without mechanized plumbing, the dense packing of 300 people will immediately spike infectious disease and water contamination.
District (3,000)	**The Tlaxcalan Cabecera:** Decentralized neighborhoods, each managing their own internal water and dispute resolution, sending vetted delegates to a central plaza.	Literacy (or a robust analog tally system) to record tax/labor contributions; public ledgers to audit delegates; a non-excludable central plaza.	**Delegate Capture:** Machiavellian delegates will form closed factions at the central plaza, cut off information flow, and redirect public labor to their own kin.

Principles

Governance Principle	Testable Sentence
The Revenue Principle	Systems funded by the internal, highly visible taxation of local labor naturally drift toward collective governance; systems funded by monopolized external resources drift toward autocracy.
The Toll Good Vulnerability Principle	Whoever controls an excludable, life-dependent resource (e.g., a single centralized well or grain silo) possesses the mechanical leverage to instantly dismantle egalitarian governance.
The Architectural Ceiling Principle	Extreme wealth inequality can be physically

	prevented by establishing a strict, community-enforced maximum footprint for domestic architecture.
The Assembly Nesting Principle	Consensus decision-making cannot scale mathematically beyond the village level without nesting; neighborhoods must resolve local disputes locally and send easily recalled delegates to higher-order assemblies.
The Ego-Attrition Principle	If a society does not build aggressive, institutionalized mechanisms to humiliate, audit, and strip the ego from its leaders, dark-triad actors will inevitably capture the state apparatus.

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