

One State Space, Many Myths

The Generative Parsimony of CAMS Compared with Kaminski’s Structural-Gradient Theory

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Abstract

Alen Kaminski’s *Anatomy of Chaos* and *The Dynamics of Expansion* propose an ambitious psychohistorical architecture in which biological constants, inherited archetypes and socio-cultural paradigms interact through named channels, thresholds and phase transitions. The framework contains valuable insights, particularly the ideas that crisis creates structurally prepared leadership roles and that internal pressure may be redirected either inward or outward depending on external resistance. Its explanatory reach, however, is purchased through a progressive multiplication of theoretical entities: Hardware, BIOS and Operating System; Ascent, Catalysis and Mnemonic channels; the Cross-System Equilibration Loop; the Instability Coefficient, Archetypal Activation Index and Structural Gradient; the Crisis Triad, Empty Throne, Agent of Singularity, Horror Vacui, Historical Conductivity and several projection regimes.

This paper argues that the Complex Adaptive Model of Societies (CAMS) provides a more parsimonious generative account of much of the same phenomenology. CAMS does not necessarily contain fewer numerical observations: it represents eight recurrent social functions through four common dimensions—Coherence, Capacity, Stress and Abstraction—and may additionally model their coupling. Its advantage is instead *ontological and generative parsimony*. The same fixed functional state space is used to describe ordinary operation, crisis, mythology, leadership selection, mobilisation, expansion, fragmentation and recovery. Mythological states are not introduced as a separate psychic layer but emerge from differing levels of coherent abstraction, activation and available energy refracted through Helm, Shield, Lore, Stewards, Craft, Hands, Archive and Flow. Kaminski’s Hero, Shadow, Lawgiver and Golden Age can consequently be treated as recognisable phase states of a distributed social-cognitive system. His “Empty Throne” becomes a particular Helm-centred coordination vacancy; his expansion mechanism becomes an inter-systemic gradient in node capacity, mobilisation and resistance.

The comparison does not establish that CAMS is empirically superior. It establishes the narrower claim that CAMS can potentially explain a wider range of phenomena with fewer kinds of causal entity and fewer phenomenon-specific mechanisms. A programme of blinded model comparison, ablation and out-of-sample prediction is proposed to test whether this theoretical economy translates into scientific advantage.

Keywords: CAMS; Kaminski; parsimony; archetypes; social cognition; cliodynamics; complex

adaptive systems; mythology; structural gradients; historical morphology

1 Introduction

Macrohistorical theory faces a recurring dilemma. A model must be rich enough to recognise the qualitative differences among institutions, myths, wars, revolutions and social classes, but economical enough to avoid explaining each historical phenomenon with a newly named mechanism.

Kaminski’s work sits directly within this dilemma. His original framework divides social reality into three levels: bio-evolutionary “Hardware”, archetypal “BIOS”, and a historically variable socio-cultural “Operating System”. Crisis begins when the surface paradigm can no longer contain biological pressure channelled through archetypal forms (Kaminski, 2025a). His subsequent theory of expansion extends this architecture beyond the state by introducing a Cross-System Equilibration Loop and a Structural Gradient between an internally pressurised core and a comparatively weak periphery (Kaminski, 2025b).

The attraction of this framework is clear. It joins biological inheritance, mass psychology, political symbolism, institutional collapse, leadership and geopolitical expansion within one historical narrative. It also captures a legitimate intuition: societies under stress do not merely become “more unstable”. They begin to perceive themselves through particular symbolic configurations—betrayal, rebirth, purification, salvation, vengeance, restoration or conquest.

The difficulty is that the theory increasingly treats each explanatory step as a distinct ontological object. The expanded nomenclature includes three tiers, three principal channels, two modes of the Ascent Channel, multiple metaphorical translations, two principal indicators and an additional equilibration mechanism. More concepts are then added to handle leadership selection, failed expansions, historical acceleration and nuclear deterrence.

CAMS begins elsewhere. It postulates a stable mesoscale anatomy of eight social functions:

$$\mathcal{N} = \{\text{Helm, Shield, Lore, Stewards, Craft, Hands, Archive, Flow}\}.$$

Every node is assessed using the same four dimensions:

$$X_i(t) = (C_i, K_i, S_i, A_i),$$

where C is coherence, K capacity, S stress and A abstraction. Helm directs; Shield processes threat; Lore produces legitimacy and meaning; Stewards hold and deploy accumulated resources; Craft preserves transformative competence; Hands performs embodied labour; Archive carries institutional memory; and Flow circulates goods, people, capital, energy and information (McKern, 2026a,b).

The central argument of this paper is that this fixed architecture can generate many of the

phenomena for which Kaminski requires separate layers, channels and archetypal mechanisms. The claim is not that CAMS is “simpler” because it contains fewer numbers. It does not. Eight functions scored across four dimensions already produce a substantial state space. The stronger claim is that CAMS exhibits *generative parsimony*:

The same small set of functional distinctions and operators can produce multiple historical morphologies without introducing a new causal vocabulary for each one.

2 What Kind of Parsimony Is at Issue?

Parsimony has several meanings that must not be confused.

2.1 Numerical parsimony

A model is numerically parsimonious when it estimates relatively few parameters. CAMS does not automatically dominate by this criterion. Its annual social state contains at least 32 primary values before network coupling is considered.

Kaminski can sometimes represent an event using only a few composites: systemic stress, systemic resilience, archetypal mobilisation and an external gradient.

A simple parameter count therefore cannot establish CAMS’s superiority.

2.2 Ontological parsimony

A model is ontologically parsimonious when it requires fewer distinct kinds of entity to explain its domain.

CAMS uses:

1. recurrent social functions;
2. four shared dimensions of functional condition;
3. relations among functions;
4. changes through time.

Kaminski’s architecture distinguishes biological drives, archetypal structures, cultural paradigms, channels connecting the levels, specific crisis archetypes, leadership vessels, internal and external modes, gradients, vacuums and mechanisms of equilibration.

The CAMS claim is that many of these entities can be represented as configurations or transformations of one functional network rather than as independently existing causal layers.

2.3 Generative parsimony

A theory is generatively parsimonious when the same mechanism can produce many outcomes.

CAMS applies the same functional grammar in peace and war, stability and rupture, expansion and contraction. Kaminski's theory increasingly introduces event-specific mechanisms: one channel for historical ascent, another for memory, another for catalysis, a phase transition for expansion, a friction zone for abortive expansion and Historical Conductivity for changing temporal velocity.

These additions may be individually plausible. The question is whether they are necessary.

2.4 Evidential parsimony

A parsimonious explanation should also reduce interpretive freedom. A theory does not become scientifically economical merely by compressing many claims into evocative metaphors.

CAMS's fixed nodes and common scoring dimensions constrain interpretation across cases. The same eight functions must be assessed even where no obvious crisis or dramatic leader is present. Its distinctive proposition is that an invariant eight-function decomposition, scored using four common variables, preserves recoverable historical morphology ([McKern, 2026b](#)).

Kaminski's archetypal categories are more elastic. Hero, Shadow, Warrior, Savior and Lawgiver can often be identified retrospectively in political discourse, but the interpretive boundaries among them remain difficult to fix independently of historical outcome.

3 Kaminski's Expanding Theoretical Architecture

Kaminski's original Three-Tiered model begins with an intuitively powerful hierarchy:

Biological constants → archetypal structures → socio-cultural paradigm.

The biological level contains instincts associated with survival, reproduction, hierarchy, belonging and hostility towards outsiders. Archetypal structures give symbolic form to those drives. The socio-cultural paradigm converts them into historically specific institutions, laws, ideologies and practices ([Kaminski, 2025a](#)).

Crisis is initially measured through the Systemic Stress Index, covering economic, military, demographic, political and ideological stress. Archetypal Activation is then assessed through the presence of motifs such as the Shadow, Hero-Savior, Golden Age and Rebel-Trickster.

The expansion paper adds an inter-systemic directionality problem. Why does one highly stressed society collapse inward while another expands outward? Kaminski proposes three

jointly necessary conditions:

$$E = (K_I \geq 2.4) \wedge (A_{\text{mob}} = 1) \wedge (G \geq 2.5),$$

where K_I is the Instability Coefficient, A_{mob} represents dominance of the Hero-Savior, Warrior and Shadow “Crisis Triad”, and G is the Structural Gradient between the pressurised core and a weaker external environment. Archetypal mobilisation is deemed present when the Crisis Triad reaches at least 70 per cent and the Wise Old Man falls below 5 per cent ([Kaminski, 2025b](#)).

The conceptual architecture now includes:

- Hardware, BIOS and Operating System;
- Systemic Stress and Systemic Resilience;
- the Instability Coefficient;
- the Archetypal Activation Index;
- the Ascent, Catalysis and Mnemonic channels;
- Standard and Expansion modes;
- the Cross-System Equilibration Loop;
- the Structural Gradient;
- the Crisis Triad;
- the Empty Throne;
- the Agent of Singularity;
- the Horror Vacui;
- Implosion and Explosion regimes;
- Symbiotic, Synthetic and Unitary Projection;
- the Zone of Friction;
- Historical Conductivity;
- nuclear inhibition of equilibration.

This is not simply a problem of terminology. Every additional entity creates new questions about measurement, causal independence and interaction.

For example, is the Archetypal Activation Index an independent causal variable, or is it itself produced by institutional stress and mobilisation? Is the Cross-System Equilibration Loop distinct from the Ascent Channel? Kaminski explicitly clarifies that CSEL is not a fourth channel but another operational state of Ascent ([Kaminski, 2025b](#)). That clarification prevents one redundancy, but it also reveals the pressure created by the accumulating nomenclature.

Similarly, the original Boolean distinction between expansion and internal crisis is later supplemented by a Zone of Friction in which the gradient is neither absent nor sufficient. Partial CSEL activation then produces “venting”, border conflict or attritional war rather than either full implosion or expansion. This may accurately describe historical continua, but it illustrates a recurrent modelling tendency: anomalous or intermediate outcomes are accommodated by adding another named regime.

Kaminski openly acknowledges that his numerical thresholds are heuristic approximations calibrated from paradigmatic cases and that large- N validation remains future work (Kaminski, 2025b). The empirical section uses three successful expansion vignettes and one blocked case rather than a held-out comparative test.

The present criticism is therefore not that Kaminski lacks insight. It is that his insights have not yet been compressed into a minimal operational grammar.

4 The CAMS Alternative: One Recurrent Functional Anatomy

CAMS locates biological, symbolic and institutional processes within the same distributed system.

It does not require an autonomous biological chamber beneath an archetypal layer beneath a cultural surface. Each node is simultaneously:

- materially instantiated;
- institutionally organised;
- cognitively selective;
- affectively energised;
- symbolically represented.

Shield, for example, is neither merely a military institution nor merely the Warrior archetype. It is the recurrent social function that detects, constructs and responds to threat. It may be instantiated by armies, police, border agencies, militias, intelligence services, security narratives and sacrificial myths.

Lore is simultaneously a social institution and a meaning-producing process. Archive is both material memory infrastructure and the source from which societies retrieve law, precedent, ancestry and authorised history.

The central CAMS transformations can be stated economically.

4.1 Coherent abstraction

$$T_i = A_i C_i$$

represents the extent to which node i can form symbolically elaborate and internally coherent representations.

4.2 Available energy

$$H_i = K_i - S_i$$

represents the node's available operational or affective surplus.

4.3 Signed activation

$$P_i = (A_i C_i)(K_i - S_i)$$

represents the conjunction of coherent symbolic cognition and available energy.

A node can therefore display:

- low cognition and low energy;
- high cognition but depleted energy;
- abundant energy but low coherence;
- coherent cognition with sufficient energy to organise action.

Systemic outcomes depend not only on each node but also on the configuration across nodes and the bonds connecting them.

This allows CAMS to treat myths, institutions and collective actions as different expressions of the same functional state rather than as separate levels of reality.

5 Mythological States as Emergent CAMS Configurations

Kaminski places archetypes in a pre-existing psychic BIOS. CAMS can make a more economical claim:

Mythological states emerge when differing levels of activation, coherent abstraction and available energy are refracted through the eight recurrent functions of social organisation.

Let the social state at time t be:

$$X(t) = \{T_i(t), H_i(t)\}_{i=1}^8,$$

with coupling matrix $B(t)$. The society's mythological state can be expressed as:

$$\mathcal{M}(t) = F[X(t), B(t)].$$

The mythology is not an additional causal substance. It is a socially recognisable projection of the functional network's condition.

5.1 Hero-Savior

A Hero-Savior state may emerge where:

- Helm is highly salient or institutionally vacant;
- Shield has strong mobilisation energy;
- Lore compresses complexity into a unified moral narrative;
- Archive supplies historical legitimacy;
- Flow propagates the resulting image.

$$\text{Helm} + \text{Shield} + \text{Lore} + \text{Archive} + \text{Flow} \rightarrow \text{Hero-Savior state.}$$

No independent Hero archetype is required to cause this configuration. “The Hero” is the personified representation of a network in which executive direction, threat mobilisation, moral meaning and remembered destiny have become tightly coupled.

5.2 Shadow

The Shadow state arises where:

- Shield is strongly activated;
- Lore identifies moral pollution or betrayal;
- Archive retrieves selected injuries;
- Helm benefits from threat consolidation;
- Flow amplifies enemy signals faster than disconfirming information.

The Enemy is thus not merely released from an inherited psychic fault line. It is produced by a specific coordination among threat processing, meaning production, memory selection, command and communication.

5.3 Golden Age

The Golden Age state may arise where:

- Archive is highly activated but selectively coherent;
- Lore idealises retrieved history;
- Helm converts restoration into programme;
- Hands or Flow experience deteriorating present conditions;
- Stewards associate order with a prior distribution of property or status.

The past becomes a symbolic control signal for reorganising the present.

5.4 Rebel-Trickster

The Rebel-Trickster state may arise through:

- strong Flow and Craft activation;
- alienated or newly cognitive Hands;
- declining Helm legitimacy;
- fragmented Lore;
- weakening Archive authority.

Mockery, inversion, carnival and institutional boundary-breaking are not evidence of a separately activated Trickster module. They are the symbolic morphology of a network in which circulation and improvisation outrun authority and inherited meaning.

5.5 Lawgiver

A Lawgiver state may arise where:

- Archive retains capacity;
- Lore translates precedent into common meaning;
- Helm can institutionalise it;
- Shield remains subordinated to legal constraint;
- Flow disseminates rather than fragments the settlement.

These examples show CAMS's generative economy. Hero, Shadow, Trickster and Lawgiver remain valid phenomenological descriptions, but they need not be treated as independent causal mechanisms.

6 The Empty Throne Without an Additional Ontology

Kaminski’s “Empty Throne” is one of his most useful concepts. A crisis prepares a social role before a particular leader occupies it. The political environment selects for actors whose performances fit the archetypal demand.

CAMS can retain this insight while reducing its ontology.

An Empty Throne can be represented as a configuration involving:

$$V_{\text{Helm}} \downarrow, \quad B_{\text{Helm,Archive}} \downarrow, \quad B_{\text{Helm,Hands}} \downarrow,$$

combined with:

$$P_{\text{Shield}} \uparrow, \quad T_{\text{Lore}} \uparrow, \quad P_{\text{Flow}} \uparrow.$$

In plain language:

- executive direction loses legitimacy or competence;
- relations between command, memory and labour weaken;
- threat processing remains energised;
- meaning production remains capable of constructing large narratives;
- communications systems can rapidly propagate them.

A political vacancy is then not simply the absence of a leader. It is a *coordination deficit with a determinate functional shape*.

Candidates compete to repair—or exploit—that deficit. A successful candidate may couple:

- Helm to Shield through command;
- Helm to Lore through ideology;
- Helm to Archive through historical destiny;
- Helm to Hands through promises of protection or restoration;
- Helm to Flow through spectacle and direct communication.

The Empty Throne is therefore reducible to a measurable network condition. The leader is selected not by an autonomous archetype but by the fit between personal performance and a distributed functional vacancy.

7 Recasting Systemic Stress

Kaminski’s Systemic Stress Index aggregates economic, military, demographic, political and ideological disturbance. This offers a useful overview, but it does not specify where stress resides

in the social organism.

CAMS decomposes the signal:

Table 1: Approximate mapping from Kaminski’s stress domains to CAMS functions

Kaminski stress domain	Principal CAMS locations
Military	Shield, Helm, Craft, Hands
Political	Helm, Lore, Archive, Flow
Economic	Stewards, Flow, Craft, Hands
Demographic	Hands, Flow, Stewards, Archive
Ideological	Lore, Archive, Helm, Flow

Two societies could possess similar aggregate systemic stress while having radically different morphologies.

One might have:

- strong Archive and Lore;
- exhausted Hands;
- highly capable Shield;
- coherent Helm.

Another might have:

- collapsing Archive;
- polarised Lore;
- predatory Stewards;
- energetic but incoherent Flow.

An aggregate instability coefficient may assign them similar values even though their adaptive possibilities differ substantially.

CAMS’s functional differentiation consequently reduces the need to add archetypal mobilisation as a separate explanatory variable. The mythic response is partly generated by the *location and coupling of stress*, not simply by total pressure.

8 Expansion Without a Separate Cross-System Equilibration Loop

Kaminski’s fundamental directionality insight should be retained: internal mobilisation does not determine whether energy is released domestically or externally. The condition of neighbouring systems matters.

His theory describes expansion as the conjunction of internal overload, archetypal mobilisation and an external structural gradient ([Kaminski, 2025b](#)).

CAMS can express this without creating a distinct expansion channel.

Let societies a and b possess CAMS states X^a and X^b . The opportunity for coercive projection depends especially on differences involving:

- Shield capacity and activation;
- Helm coherence;
- Craft’s logistical and technological competence;
- Hands’ mobilisable energy;
- Stewards’ extractable resources;
- Flow’s transport and communication reach;
- Lore’s ability to legitimate sacrifice;
- Archive’s capacity to sustain strategic identity.

A directional projection potential might be represented schematically as:

$$G_{a \rightarrow b} = \frac{P_{\text{Shield}}^a \cdot C_{\text{Helm}}^a \cdot K_{\text{Craft}}^a \cdot K_{\text{Flow}}^a}{R_{\text{Shield}}^b + R_{\text{Helm}}^b + R_{\text{Archive}}^b + R_{\text{Flow}}^b},$$

where the denominator represents the target’s relevant resistance and coordination.

The exact formula would require calibration. The conceptual point is that no new kind of causal process has been introduced. Expansion is an interaction between two systems represented in the same state space.

Domestic implosion and external projection become alternative pathways through an existing network:

$$\text{mobilised internal energy} \rightarrow \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{internal bond rupture,} \\ \text{external coercive coupling,} \\ \text{partial venting,} \\ \text{institutional reform,} \\ \text{continued containment.} \end{array} \right.$$

These outcomes need not be separate modes of a named Ascent Channel. They are competing trajectories made available by the topology and relative resistance of connected systems.

9 Why CAMS Is More Parsimonious

9.1 It retains one ontology across domains

Kaminski moves from biological energy to psychic archetype to social institution and then adds channels to connect them.

CAMS places material capacity, stress, cognition, symbolism and institutional organisation within each function. The distinction is analytical rather than ontological.

Shield has bodies, weapons, institutions, doctrines, fears, myths and abstractions. Lore has institutions, specialists, narratives, cognitive coherence, energy and stress. There is no need to explain how a non-symbolic biological layer passes through a symbolic BIOS before becoming institutional action.

9.2 Mythology is generated rather than inserted

Kaminski's BIOS supplies a menu of archetypal responses. CAMS asks whether recognisable mythological states can be derived from measurable functional configurations.

This turns archetypes from unexplained explainers into emergent outcomes.

The theoretical direction changes from:

archetype $\rightarrow$ political configuration

to:

functional configuration $\rightarrow$ archetypal representation $\rightarrow$ feedback on functional configuration.

Mythology still becomes causally consequential once stabilised. A Savior narrative can concentrate Helm, mobilise Shield, discipline Lore, rewrite Archive and demand sacrifice from Hands. But it begins as an emergent representation rather than a separate inherited mechanism.

9.3 Ordinary and exceptional history use the same grammar

Kaminski's framework is organised around rupture, reboot and expansion.

CAMS can be applied to:

- an ordinary administrative year;
- gradual institutional improvement;
- chronic labour exclusion;
- technological transformation;

- war mobilisation;
- imperial expansion;
- ideological polarisation;
- recovery after defeat.

No emergency ontology is required when the system enters crisis. Crisis is a region of the same state space occupied during normal operation.

9.4 It reduces phenomenon-specific repair

Kaminski's binary expansion formula is supplemented by False Starts, a Zone of Friction, partial activation, equilibrium, negative return and nuclear blockage.

CAMS can represent these as continuous changes in relative capacity, stress, coupling and resistance. Failed expansion need not constitute a new regime. It can be a trajectory in which:

- Shield activation remains high;
- Craft and Flow capacity decline;
- Stewards' resources are depleted;
- Hands becomes exhausted;
- Lore loses coherence;
- external resistance rises.

The outcome follows from changing node conditions rather than an additional taxonomic category.

9.5 It constrains retrospective interpretation

Kaminski's empirical examples are historically compelling, but the thresholds are calibrated using paradigmatic cases and the validation consists principally of analytical vignettes.

CAMS has at least begun testing whether anonymised state trajectories retain identifying structural information. In the reported 24-society blind exercise, 13 exact identities were recovered, alongside historically coherent confusions and openly reported failures ([McKern, 2026b](#)).

That result does not prove CAMS. It does indicate a methodological advantage: the model can be challenged without first revealing the historical story that its concepts are expected to explain.

10 A Formal Statement of the Reduction

Kaminski's architecture may be summarised as:

$$\mathcal{K} = \{H, B, O, SSI, AAI, K_I, SRI, G, C_A, C_C, C_M, CSEL, M, L, R\},$$

where the symbols denote Hardware, BIOS, Operating System, indices, gradients, channels, modes, leadership roles and regimes.

CAMS proposes a base architecture:

$$\mathcal{C} = \{N_i, C_i, K_i, S_i, A_i, B_{ij}, t\},$$

where N_i denotes one of eight functions and B_{ij} their relations.

The key reduction claims are:

$$SSI \subseteq \text{distribution of } S_i, \Delta S_i, K_i - S_i;$$

$$AAI \approx F(A_i C_i, K_i - S_i, B_{ij});$$

Empty Throne $\approx$ Helm vacancy plus compensatory node activation;

Crisis Triad $\approx$ Helm–Shield–Lore/Flow mobilisation;

$G \approx$ difference between source projection capacity and target resistance;

$CSEL \approx$ changing inter-systemic coupling under G ;

Historical Conductivity $\approx$ Flow and Craft capacity affecting coupling velocity;

nuclear barrier $\approx$ extreme Shield deterrence raising projected resistance.

If these reductions hold empirically, then Kaminski's higher-level constructs remain useful descriptions but cease to be indispensable causal primitives.

11 Empirical Tests of the Parsimony Claim

Theoretical elegance is insufficient. CAMS should be required to demonstrate that its compressed architecture preserves or improves explanatory performance.

11.1 Mythological-state prediction

Construct a preregistered corpus of political speeches, propaganda, legal texts and cultural products. Human coders, blind to CAMS values, classify the prevalence of Hero-Savior, Shadow, Golden Age, Lawgiver and Trickster states.

Test whether prior CAMS configurations predict those classifications.

The core hypothesis is:

$$P(\mathcal{M}_{t+1} \mid X_t, B_t) > P(\mathcal{M}_{t+1} \mid SSI_t).$$

11.2 Empty-Throne prediction

Identify leadership discontinuities, personalist consolidations and savior-style movements without using leader names during scoring.

Test whether low Helm viability combined with high Shield, Lore and Flow activation precedes such events more reliably than a general instability coefficient.

11.3 Expansion-direction test

Assemble high-stress episodes involving both expansion and internal rupture. Compare:

1. Kaminski's threshold model;
2. a CAMS inter-systemic model;
3. a conventional baseline using military capacity and neighbour weakness;
4. a hybrid model.

Evaluate out-of-sample log loss, calibration and classification accuracy rather than retrospective narrative fit.

11.4 Minimum-description-length comparison

Parsimony can be quantified through minimum description length or information criteria.

A more complex model is justified only where its additional concepts improve predictive compression. Kaminski's archetypal indices, thresholds and named regimes should therefore be penalised as added degrees of freedom unless they improve held-out performance.

11.5 Ablation

Remove components from CAMS:

- collapse the eight nodes into one aggregate;
- remove Abstraction;
- remove Coherence;
- remove network bonds;
- merge Archive and Lore;
- merge Craft and Hands.

If the full eight-function architecture does not outperform these simpler alternatives, CAMS's own parsimony claim weakens.

This is important. Parsimony does not mean defending the number eight by intuition alone. It means demonstrating that eight functions provide the smallest adequate representation.

12 Limitations of the CAMS Claim

CAMS's ontological economy should not be confused with established empirical superiority.

First, its primary values remain historically interpreted measurements. Their reliability depends on scoring protocols, source quality and independence among scorers.

Second, CAMS's four dimensions and eight-node decomposition may themselves contain redundancy. Archive and Lore, or Craft and Hands, may prove empirically inseparable in some periods.

Third, the functional reduction of mythology remains a hypothesis. It is possible that archetypal structures contain regularities not recoverable from institutional morphology alone.

Fourth, Kaminski's framework may sometimes outperform CAMS precisely because it includes direct narrative-content measures. A society can undergo a rapid symbolic shift before institutional indicators change appreciably.

Fifth, Kaminski and CAMS may ultimately prove complementary. CAMS may describe the social-cognitive physiology, while archetypal content analysis measures the particular images through which that physiology becomes conscious and politically actionable.

The current CAMS epistemic position appropriately treats the framework as a diagnostic instrument with operational plausibility and partial construct validity, not as a completed science of civilisation ([McKern, 2026a](#)).

13 Conclusion

Kaminski has identified several important macrohistorical problems: crises prepare particular kinds of leadership demand; symbolic mobilisation affects political direction; internal pressure can be exported; and the resistance of surrounding systems helps determine whether crisis becomes civil war, reform or conquest.

The weakness is architectural accumulation. Biological constants, archetypal structures and cultural institutions are separated into layers. Channels must connect the layers. Expansion then requires a phase transition within one channel. Leadership requires the Empty Throne and Agent of Singularity. Intermediate wars require a Zone of Friction. Technological acceleration requires Historical Conductivity. Nuclear deterrence requires an artificial barrier to equilibration.

CAMS offers a potentially more economical construction.

Its eight functions are not merely institutions and not merely mythical characters. They are recurrent coordination problems with material, cognitive, affective and symbolic dimensions. Their changing levels of coherent abstraction and available energy produce emergent mythological states. Their coupling produces legitimacy, mobilisation, memory, command, exchange and collective action. Their decoupling produces fragmentation, exhaustion, scapegoating and compensatory dominance.

Under this formulation:

- the Hero is a Helm-centred mobilisation morphology;
- the Shadow is a Shield–Lore–Archive threat configuration;
- the Golden Age is an Archive-mediated temporal control state;
- the Lawgiver is an Archive–Lore–Helm settlement;
- the Trickster is a Flow–Craft configuration escaping inherited constraint;
- the Empty Throne is a measurable vacancy in executive coordination;
- expansion is a directional relation between two CAMS systems;
- imperial exhaustion is a redistribution of capacity, stress and coupling.

CAMS therefore does not abolish Kaminski’s insights. It *compresses them*.

Its advantage is not that it tells a smaller story. Its advantage is that one recurrent anatomy may generate many stories:

one functional state space $\rightarrow$ many institutional, geopolitical and mythological morphologies

That is the relevant form of parsimony. Kaminski provides a proliferating vocabulary of historical phenomena. CAMS offers the possibility that those phenomena are surface states of a single distributed social organism.

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