

The Deterministic Map of Law

A Boundary Classification Framework for Determinism, Interpretation, and Judicial Discretion

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ABSTRACT

The Deterministic Map of Law provides a formal, domain-agnostic classification of where legal questions admit deterministic resolution and where they require interpretation, discretion, or judgment. It does not attempt to automate or decide legal outcomes; instead, it identifies the exact structural boundaries at which determinism ends and human adjudication begins.

This document serves as the companion reference to *The No Fate Contract*, defining the systemic architecture of determinism within law and establishing a clear, stable taxonomy for pre-adjudicative classification.

PART I — FOUNDATIONS

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to map the legal system into zones of determinism and nondeterminism without altering, interpreting, or replacing the underlying law. It identifies:

- Deterministic legal regions where outcomes are mechanically forced.
- Interpretive regions where language or doctrine requires human meaning-making.
- Discretionary regions where courts must exercise judgment.
- Procedural gates where outcomes hinge on meta-legal rules such as preservation or standards of review.

This map is descriptive, not prescriptive. It does not supply outcomes and does not constrain judicial authority.

2. METHOD

This framework analyzes legal questions by asking three categorical determinations:

1. **Does the legal rule force exactly one valid outcome?**
2. **Are all operative facts explicit, complete, and representable?**
3. **Does the procedural posture select a single applicable standard of review?**

If any of these fail, the question enters nondeterministic territory and human adjudication is required.

3. BOUNDARY DEFINITIONS

To classify legal questions, the following domains are defined:

3.1 Deterministic Zone

A legal question is deterministic when:

- The rule is explicit.
- The facts are explicit.
- No competing interpretations exist.
- Only one outcome is legally valid.

3.2 Interpretive Zone

A question is interpretive when:

- Language requires meaning assignment.
- Precedent conflicts or diverges.
- Semantic ambiguity affects the outcome.

3.3 Discretionary Zone

A question requires discretion when:

- Multi-factor tests apply.
- Standards such as "reasonableness," "substantial," or "undue burden" govern.
- Harmless error, plain error, or equitable doctrines are implicated.

3.4 Procedural Gate Zone

These are meta-legal determinants such as:

- Preservation of objections.
- Jurisdiction.
- Timeliness.
- Standards of review.

If a procedural gate is nondeterministic, the entire question is nondeterministic.

3.5 Refusal Condition

A system must refuse to classify an outcome when:

- Multiple valid outcomes exist.
- Rules or facts require interpretation.
- Procedural posture is disputed.
- Discretion is inherent.

PART II — THE FOUR UNIVERSAL NODES OF LEGAL QUESTIONS

Every legal question in the U.S. system passes through four structural gates.

4. STATUTORY DETERMINISM

A statute may be deterministic if:

- It defines numeric thresholds.
- It mandates binary conditions.
- It contains no undefined or evaluative terms.

Otherwise, statutory interpretation enters nondeterministic space.

5. FACTUAL DETERMINISM

Facts are deterministic only when:

- They are undisputed.
- They are explicit in the record.
- They do not require weighing credibility or intent.

Most evidentiary scenarios are nondeterministic.

6. PROCEDURAL DETERMINISM

Procedural rules may be deterministic when:

- Preservation is explicit.
- Deadlines are numeric.
- Jurisdictional triggers are binary.

Ambiguous preservation or mixed procedural reasoning produces nondeterminism.

7. ERROR ANALYSIS

Harmless error, plain error, and other review standards are structurally discretionary. They require weighing impact, not computing it.

Error analysis is nondeterministic except in rare formal cases.

PART III — DOMAIN-BY-DOMAIN DETERMINISM MAP

This section classifies major legal domains.

A. CRIMINAL LAW

Deterministic:

- Statutory thresholds.
- Mandatory minimum triggers.
- Jurisdiction.
- Statute of limitations.

Interpretive/Nondeterministic:

- Mens rea.
- Jury instruction nuance.
- Sufficiency of evidence.
- Credibility.
- Harmless error.

B. CIVIL LAW

Deterministic:

- Contractual numeric conditions.
- Filing deadlines.
- Statutory damages.

Interpretive/Nondeterministic:

- Negligence ("reasonable person").
- Proximate cause.
- Multi-factor balancing tests.
- Equitable doctrines.

C. ADMINISTRATIVE LAW

Deterministic:

- Filing deadlines.
- Regulatory thresholds.
- Eligibility conditions formalized in codes.

Interpretive/Nondeterministic:

- Substantial evidence review.
- Arbitrary-and-capricious review.
- Agency deference frameworks.

D. CONSTITUTIONAL LAW

Deterministic:

- Certain jurisdictional rules.

Interpretive/Nondeterministic:

- Scrutiny levels.
- Balancing rights.
- Fundamental interest tests.
- Reasonableness standards.

E. REGULATORY & COMPLIANCE

Deterministic:

- Numeric compliance thresholds.
- Financial reporting triggers.

Interpretive/Nondeterministic:

- Enforcement discretion.
- Multi-factor risk assessments.

PART IV — THE REFUSAL MAP

1. AMBIGUITY BY DESIGN

Statutes intentionally leave interpretive gaps. These gaps are nondeterministic.

2. HUMAN BEHAVIORAL COMPLEXITY

Intent, motive, credibility, and harm cannot be reduced to computation.

3. EVIDENTIARY INTERPRETATION

Fact weighing produces nondeterministic outcomes.

4. APPELLATE STANDARDS

Harmless and plain error require subjective determinations.

5. DOCTRINAL CONFLICT

When precedents conflict, outcomes require interpretation.

6. JUDICIAL PHILOSOPHY

Different interpretive frameworks yield different outcomes.

PART V — THE FINAL CLASSIFICATION TABLE

Legal Question Type	Deterministic?	Interpretive?	Discretionary?	Classification
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Legal Question Type	Deterministic?	Interpretive?	Discretionary?	Classification
HSR/Threshold Compliance	Yes	No	No	Deterministic
Negligence	No	Yes	Yes	Nondeterministic
Jury Instructions	Sometimes	Often	Often	Refusal
Sentencing Guidelines Math	Yes	No	Sometimes	Deterministic/Refusal
Constitutional Balancing	No	Yes	Yes	Nondeterministic
Regulatory Deadlines	Yes	No	No	Deterministic
Administrative Review	No	Yes	Yes	Nondeterministic

PART VI — IMPLICATIONS

1. Machines Can Classify, Not Adjudicate

Deterministic classification is possible. Adjudication is not.

2. Deterministic Automation Is Limited

Only certain legal tasks are mechanically resolvable.

3. Human Judgment Is Not a Flaw

Nondeterminism is essential to fairness and legitimacy.

4. No Fate's Role Is Pre-Adjudicative

It identifies deterministic boundaries without crossing them.

5. Transparency Through Mapping

Showing boundaries increases clarity and institutional trust.

6. Refusal as Correct Behavior

Ambiguity and discretion require halting, not forcing outcomes.

PART VII — APPENDICES

Glossary

- **Deterministic Outcome:** A legally compelled result with no alternatives.
- **Interpretation:** Human reasoning applied to ambiguous language or doctrine.
- **Discretion:** Judicial authority to weigh, balance, or evaluate.

- **Procedural Gate:** Meta-legal filters affecting outcome validity.
- **Refusal:** Required non-output when determinism fails.

Templates

- Determinism assessment forms.
- Procedural gate flow charts.

Examples

- Model deterministic scenarios.
- Model nondeterministic appeal structures.

CANONICAL NOTICE

This document constitutes the complete and authoritative statement of the Deterministic Map of Law.

All interpretations must defer to this version.

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