ONTOΣ VI.I: Drift as a Navigable Ontological Phenomenon Toward Phase-Consistent Long-Horizon Adaptivity

Maksim Barziankou (MxBv)

04.02.2026
Poznan

Abstract

This work introduces an ontological formulation of drift as an inevitable and structurally meaningful phenomenon in long-horizon adaptive systems. Drift is not treated as error, noise, or deviation from a target, but as a persistent deformation of identity-defining invariants arising from existence under internal time. The formulation establishes that meaningful long-horizon adaptivity cannot be achieved through suppression of drift, but only through architectural alignment with its structure. The work fixes drift as a navigable phenomenon, establishes the conceptual basis for phase-consistent interaction with drift, and delineates the boundary between action-centric control and admissibility-centric structural evolution. This text serves as a prior-art anchor for subsequent architectural mechanisms without disclosing implementation or algorithmic detail.

1. Motivation

Any system that persists over a sufficiently long horizon accumulates structural change. This accumulation is not contingent on error, suboptimal choice, or external perturbation. It arises from interaction, internal reconstruction, semantic fixation, and irreversible phase interpretation. Attempts to eliminate drift by treating it as a defect produce two recurrent failures. Either drift escapes detection by migrating outside local metrics, or control mechanisms collapse admissibility into optimization penalties, thereby undermining continuity of identity.

Biological systems do not survive by defeating oxidation; they survive by embedding oxidation into metabolic architecture. In an analogous manner, long-horizon adaptive systems cannot survive by opposing drift. Drift must instead be structurally acknowledged as an inherent condition of persistence and addressed at the level of architectural organization.

This recognition is fixed at the ontological level.

2. Elimination of Action as a Primitive

The present formulation does not treat action as a fundamental explanatory unit. Evolution is not modeled as selection among alternatives, nor as execution of commands. Instead, evolution is defined through admissible continuation between structural configurations.

What is commonly labeled as "action" is understood here as a retrospective description of a structural contact rather than as a causal operator. Once action is eliminated as a primitive, the locus of control shifts from behavior to admissibility, and from decision to interpretation.

This elimination is not a philosophical preference but an architectural necessity. Action-centric models inevitably collapse long-horizon constraints into short-term optimization criteria, thereby obscuring irreversibility and suppressing the structural cost associated with phase transitions.

3. Drift as Structural Deformation

Drift is defined as persistent deformation of identity-defining invariants indexed by internal time. Drift does not presuppose failure, deviation, or loss of correctness, and may occur under locally stable and coherent operation.

Drift is not treated as an external disturbance acting upon the system, but as an intrinsic consequence of persistence under structural constraints. As such, drift cannot be eliminated without either terminating evolution or suspending structural change.

This formulation excludes interpretations of drift as stochastic noise to be filtered or corrected. Instead, drift is fixed as an ordered succession of structural deformations whose configuration reflects the long-horizon condition of admissible evolution.

4. Drift as a Navigable Phenomenon

Given the inevitability of drift, long-horizon viability cannot be grounded in its suppression. Viability is instead conditioned on the system's structural relationship to drift.

Drift is fixed as exhibiting recurrent modes of deformation relative to invariant structure. These modes are not signals transmitted through a channel, but arise from the system's own persistence under internal time.

Accordingly, drift is positioned not as an adversarial factor, but as a structural medium within which admissible evolution may or may not remain coherent. Structural opposition to drift incurs accumulating cost, whereas admissibility-consistent alignment with permissible deformation modes reduces unnecessary expenditure of internal resources.

Such alignment does not imply prediction, simulation, or optimization. It denotes compatibility of structural continuation with the invariant constraints governing long-horizon evolution.

5. Phase and Interpretation

Structural contacts do not carry meaning intrinsically. Meaning arises only under an interpretive regime that renders certain contacts legible as continuation, drift, commitment, or rupture.

Here, phase is fixed as an interpretive regime rather than a behavioral mode. Phase is not treated as an object of selection within an action-centric decision loop. Instead, phase describes a structural lens under which contacts acquire admissibility-relevant status, and shifts of this lens are associated with unavoidable structural load.

A central consequence is that apparent local correctness does not preclude latent accumulation of inconsistency: contacts may remain locally coherent while becoming globally incompatible under the prevailing interpretive regime. Drift is therefore phase-coupled: patterns of deformation that are admissible under one phase may become inadmissible under another. Phase consistency is thus a prerequisite for treating drift as navigable rather than destabilizing.

6. Identity Preservation Without Verification

Identity continuity is not treated as sameness verification across time. It is treated as a boundary condition on admissible deformation.

Identity is fixed relative to an invariant space that defines the region within which continuity remains meaningful. The system's evolution is considered admissible only insofar as structural deformation remains compatible with this region. This formulation does not require explicit computation, observation, or optimization of identity; it fixes identity as a constraint that cannot be substituted by local performance measures.

Accordingly, drift navigation is meaningful only while deformation remains within identity compatibility. When deformation exits the identity-compatible region, drift ceases to function as a navigable medium and becomes structurally unconstrained with respect to continuity. In such cases, the notion of identity-preserving evolution is no longer applicable.

7. Internal Time and Structural Cost

Persistence under internal time consumes structural capacity. Internal time is not equivalent to clock time, iteration count, or computational steps. It is fixed as a limiting condition that constrains the total admissible evolution of the system.

Repeated phase reinterpretation, structural deformation, and engagement with drift impose cumulative structural load that restricts admissible continuation over long horizons. Systems that appear externally successful while permitting unrestricted accumulation of such load do not satisfy long-horizon viability under the present ontology.

This establishes a falsifiable boundary condition: any architecture that permits unlimited admissible continuation under sustained structural load does not belong to the class of long-horizon adaptive systems fixed here.

8. Scope and Non-Disclosure

The present disclosure intentionally refrains from specifying mechanisms, algorithms, control laws, or computational procedures. It fixes an ontological class of architectures in which drift is treated as a navigable structural phenomenon under admissibility and identity constraints.

Conceptual priority is established for architectures that subsequently operationalize drift shaping, resonance-based alignment, or phase-consistent navigation, without disclosing how such mechanisms are realized.

9. Positioning as Prior Art

This disclosure fixes the following points as prior art:

structural drift as an inevitable form of identity-relative deformation rather than error, noise, or deviation from an objective, elimination of action as a primitive explanatory unit in long-horizon adaptive systems, phase defined as an interpretive regime incurring unavoidable structural cost, preservation of identity through admissibility constraints rather than verification or state comparison, internal time treated as a finite structural resource limiting admissible evolution, and drift established as a medium of navigation rather than an object of suppression or correction.

Any subsequent architecture that performs drift shaping, resonance-based alignment, or phase-consistent navigation necessarily operates within the ontological space fixed herein.

DOI: https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.31250998

MxBv, Poznań, 2026.