The Universalization Test (Or Liam's Razor)

States that a philosophy, ideology, or behavioral system should be evaluated according to whether a society composed predominantly of its adherents could sustainably maintain the economic, institutional, cultural, and defensive structures required for its own continuation.

Systems that function only when adopted by a minority within a broader external framework are not fully self-sustaining social models, but dependent or parasitic strategies.

In short application:
"Could a society function if every individual adopted this thinking?"

The Important Distinction: Productive vs Parasitic Frameworks

Productive philosophies

These can sustain:

- institutions,
- reproduction,
- defense,
- trust,
- economic continuity,
- cultural transmission,

even when universalized.

Examples might include:

- civic duty,
- reciprocity,
- moderate cooperation,
- long-term responsibility.

Parasitic philosophies

These extract value from systems they do not themselves regenerate.

They require:

- external order,
- non-adherents,
- inherited institutions,
- productive majorities.

When universalized, the host structure collapses.

Some ideologies are not alternative civilizations; they are extraction strategies operating inside civilizations built by others.

A More Formal Definition

> A philosophy, ideology, or behavioral system is socially viable only if a society composed predominantly of its adherents can sustainably reproduce the institutional, economic, defensive, and cultural conditions necessary for its continued existence.

Or shorter:

> The validity of a social philosophy must be tested against universal adoption.

Important Refinement: Levels of Function

Define what “function” means.

A society may survive biologically while collapsing culturally or technologically.

So your test should probably evaluate:

1. Reproductive viability

Can the society continue demographically?

2. Economic viability

Can it maintain production and exchange?

3. Defensive viability

Can it defend itself from external threats?

4. Institutional viability

Can laws and governance persist?

5. Cultural continuity

Can knowledge and values transmit across generations?

6. Psychological viability

Can people maintain meaning, trust, and social cohesion?

This makes your framework much stronger and harder to dismiss as vague.

Example Applications

These examples help clarify the concept.

Example: Radical Individualism

If everyone prioritizes only personal gain:

- trust declines,
- family structures weaken,
- institutions decay,
- collective action fails.

Yet moderate individualism may work inside cooperative civilizations.

Example: Pure Pacifism

If universally adopted internally:

- stable.
  If neighboring societies are aggressive:
- vulnerable to conquest.

Thus viability depends on environmental conditions.

Example: Free Riding

A society where everyone exploits welfare systems collapses economically.

The strategy only works when others remain productive.

Classic parasitic dynamic.

Other examples:

- Tax evasion works for individuals only if most others pay taxes.
- Extreme pacifism works only if someone else maintains defense.
- Pure hedonism works only if others preserve institutions.