

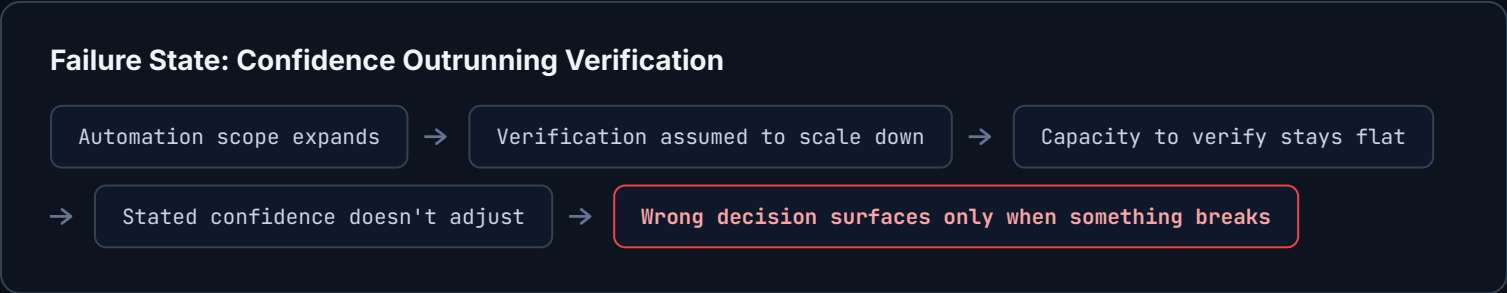
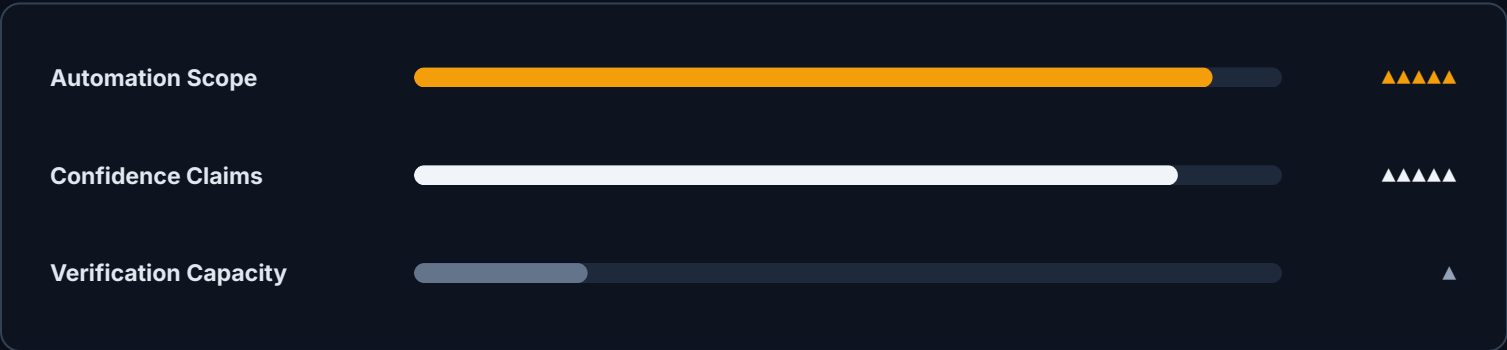
Automation Validation Tax

DEFINITION

The recurring human and operational cost required to confirm automated outputs remain trustworthy, independent of whether the automation itself is well-architected. Distinct from Automation Debt Curve (#139): Debt Curve measures accumulated operating burden that could, in principle, be paid down. Validation Tax measures a continuous toll paid on every automated decision — it cannot be paid down, only paid or silently skipped.

FRAMEWORK FLOW

01 The Condition Automation expands to reduce human effort; verification capacity is assumed to shrink or scale down at the same rate.	02 The Boundary Can verification capacity scale with automation scope, or does asserted confidence outrun what's actually been checked?	03 Failure State Confidence Outrunning Verification.	04 Consequence Approval and review become procedural gestures; a wrong automated decision surfaces only when something downstream finally breaks.
---	--	---	--



THE DIAGNOSTIC SIGNAL

DIAGNOSTIC SIGNAL Approval artifacts continue increasing while actual review depth declines.	VERIFICATION OWNERSHIP Ask any approval step whether it's actually verifying automation's full output. The answer is always yes — confidently, even as review depth has quietly thinned.
CAPACITY OWNERSHIP Ask who owns scaling verification capacity alongside automation scope. The honest answer is usually nobody — no budget line, no headcount tied to it.	REMEDICATION SHAPE Verification-capacity planning, sampling and statistical controls, instrumented confidence claims — architectural, not procedural. The goal is not to verify everything manually. The goal is to make verification capacity scale intentionally rather than accidentally.

ARCHITECTURAL RELATIONSHIPS

#139

Automation Debt Curve

RELATED

STRONG

Extends the Debt Curve's accumulated-burden mechanism into a distinct recurring cost — #139 measures what automation costs to keep running; #172 measures what it costs to keep believing.

"The approval step still exists. It has stopped doing what it was built to do."