From Here to Utopia

By: Leah Zaidi
@leah_zaidi

STORY ONE:
THE TOYNBEE CONVECTOR

Utopia:
A Speculative
Good Place/No Place

@leah_zaidi

Utopian Authoritarianism

Whose vision of the future are we talking about?

@leah_zaidi

WHEN OUR VISIONS ERODE OTHER CULTURES WE'RE COLONIZING THE FUTURE

@leah_zaidi

STORY TWO:
THE ONES WHO WALK AWAY FROM OMELAS

@leah_zaidi

SUNNY BUT SINISTER

@leah_zaidi

NO ONE THINKS THEY'RE THE BAD GUY IN SOMEONE ELSE'S STORY

@leah_zaidi

ARE WE DESIGNING FOR A VERSION OF HUMANITY THAT DOESN'T EXIST?

@leah_zaidi

STORY THREE:
STAR TREK

Nichelle Nichols

Jeff Bezos

UTOPIAS HAVE UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES

@leah_zaidi

WHAT ELSE?

WE'RE TRAPPED IN A BINARY CONVERSATION

@leah_zaidi

NOT ONLY ARE DYSTOPIAS REAL, THEY HAVE VALUE

We're not experiencing a crisis of imagination.

We're experiencing a crisis of entrenched power and systems.

@leah_zaidi

WHAT SHOULD WE DO?

@leah_zaidi

THE ANSWER LIES IN SYSTEMS-THINKING

@leah_zaidi

Systems-Thinking:

Understanding the relationships between the parts to better understand the whole, especially wicked problems.

@leah_zaidi

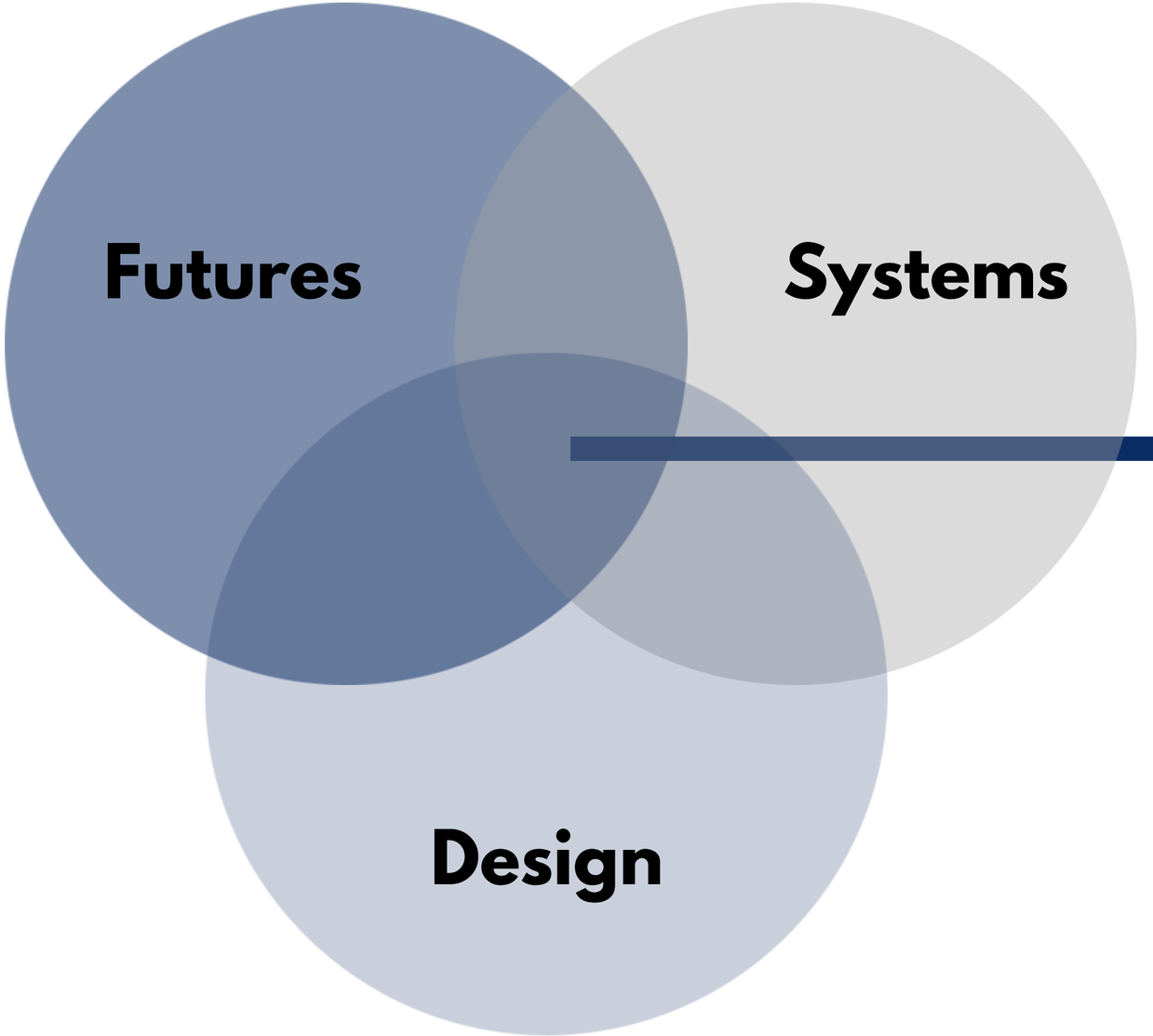
FORESIGHT WITHOUT SYSTEMS LACKS DEPTH

SYSTEMS WITHOUT FORESIGHT LACKS HOPE

Objective Reality
(Exists in Real World)

Legalized Fictions/
Mass Mythologies

@leah_zaidi



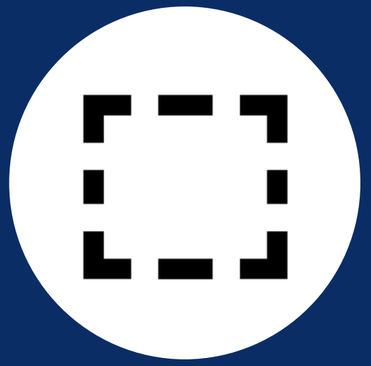
Good Sci-Fi

Design Systemic Visions

Design for Multiple Levels

Design the Change

Focus on Systems-Fit



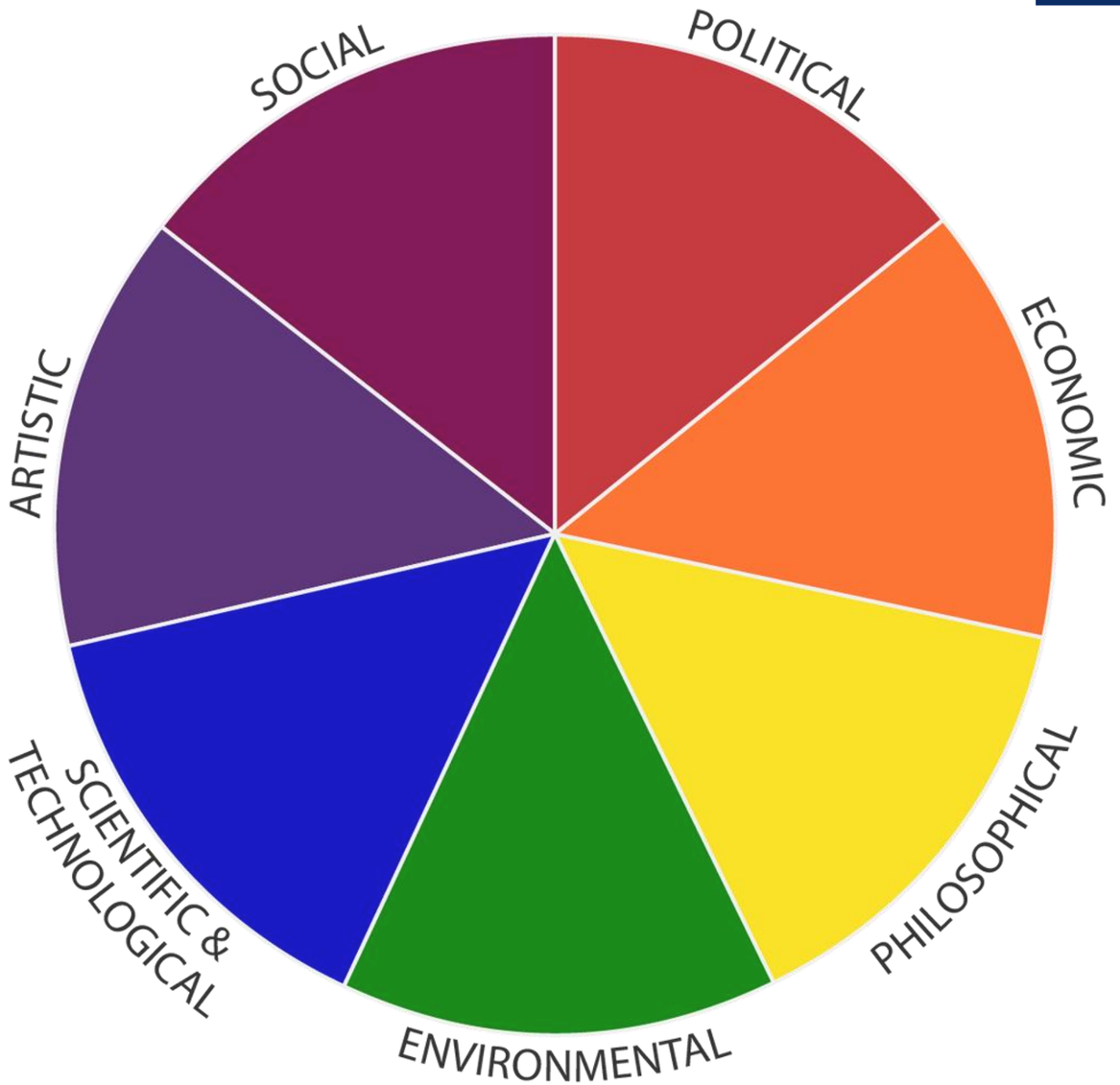
Identify Boundaries, Not States

Use Archetypes

DESIGN SYSTEMIC VISIONS

SEVEN FOUNDATIONS

What signals and parts of the system do we often miss?



THE HUGO AWARDS

Supported by disgruntled group that has historically held privilege and power.

Angry group of conservatives (Sad Puppies) paving the way for a more dangerous and vicious group (Rabid Puppies).

Leader with derogatory views, possibly playing a character that is willing to incite chaos for attention.

A flawed electoral process that allows for disproportionate representation: anyone with forty dollars can vote, making it easy to form a bloc.

Electoral hijacking through vote manipulation by the Puppies.

2016 U.S. ELECTIONS

Supported by disgruntled group that has historically held privilege and power.

Angry group of conservatives (The Tea Party) paving the way for a more dangerous and vicious group (Alt-Right).

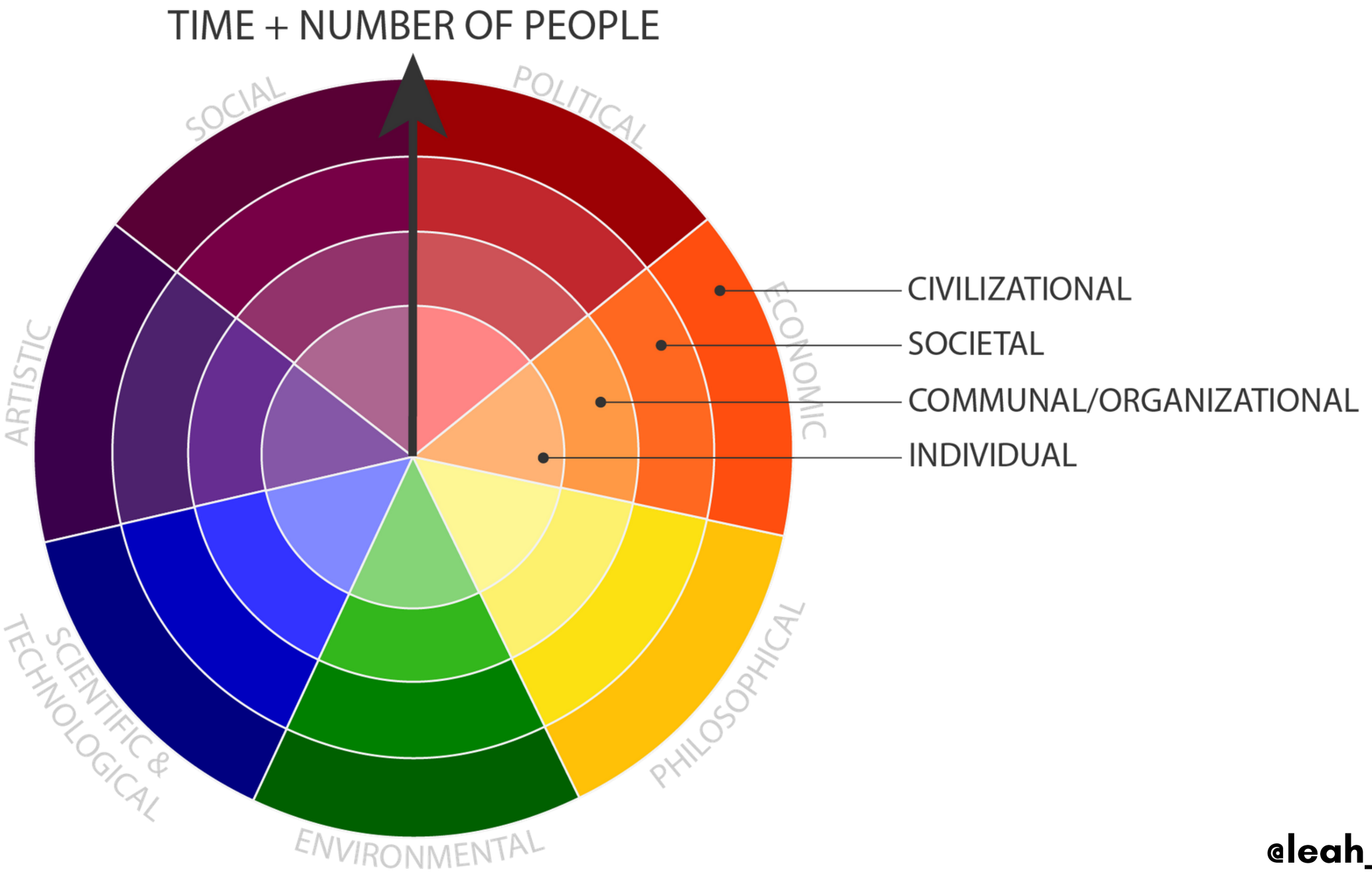
Leader with derogatory views, possibly playing a character that is willing to incite chaos for attention.

A flawed electoral process that allows for disproportionate representation: the Electoral College determines the winner, not the popular vote.

Electoral hijacking through vote manipulation by Russia.

@leah_zaidi

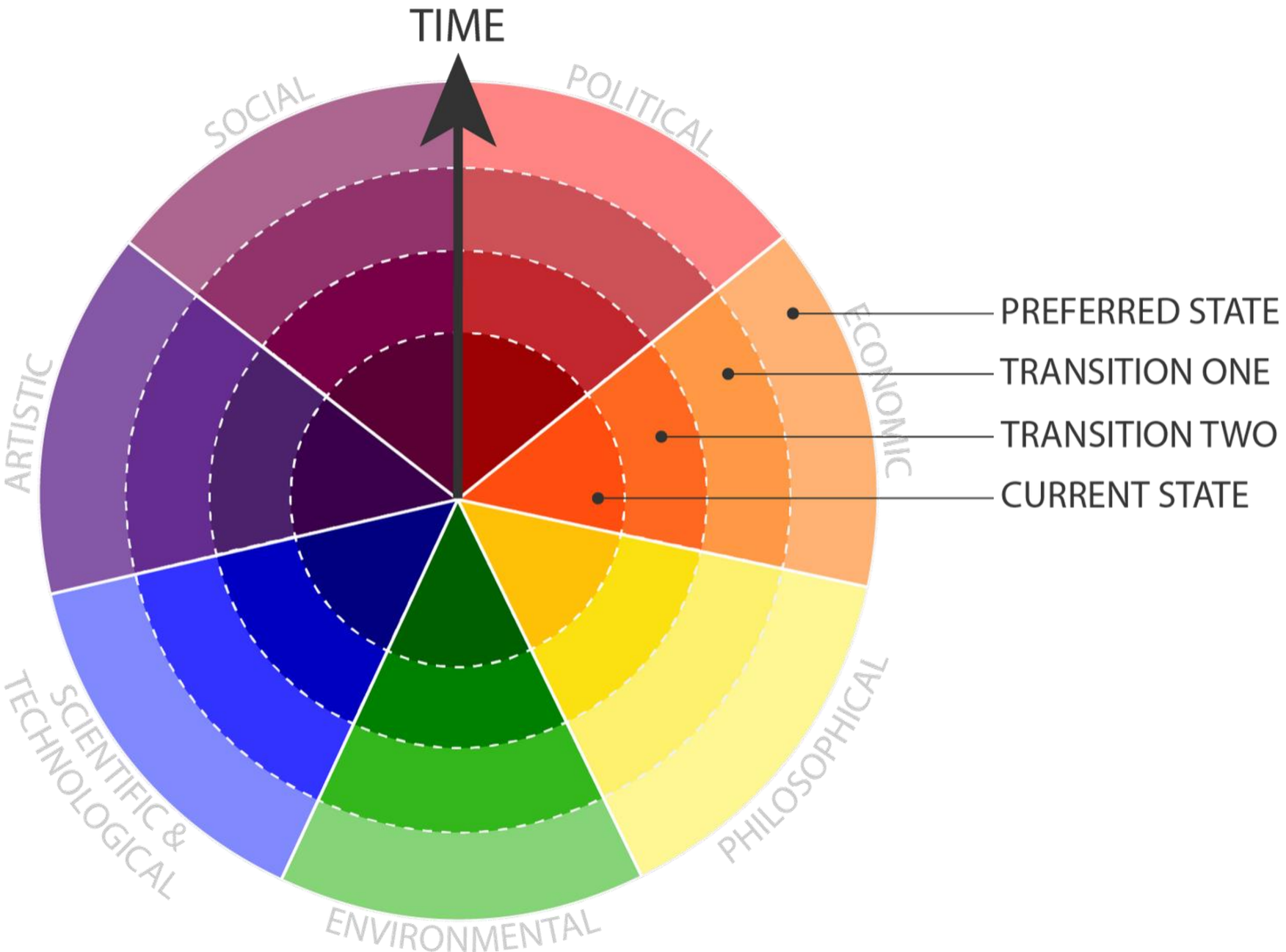
DESIGN FOR MULTIPLE LEVELS


TIME + NUMBER OF PEOPLE
SOCIAL
POLITICAL
ECONOMIC
PHILOSOPHICAL
ENVIRONMENTAL
SCIENTIFIC & TECHNOLOGICAL
ARTISTIC
CIVILIZATIONAL
SOCIETAL
COMMUNAL/ORGANIZATIONAL
INDIVIDUAL

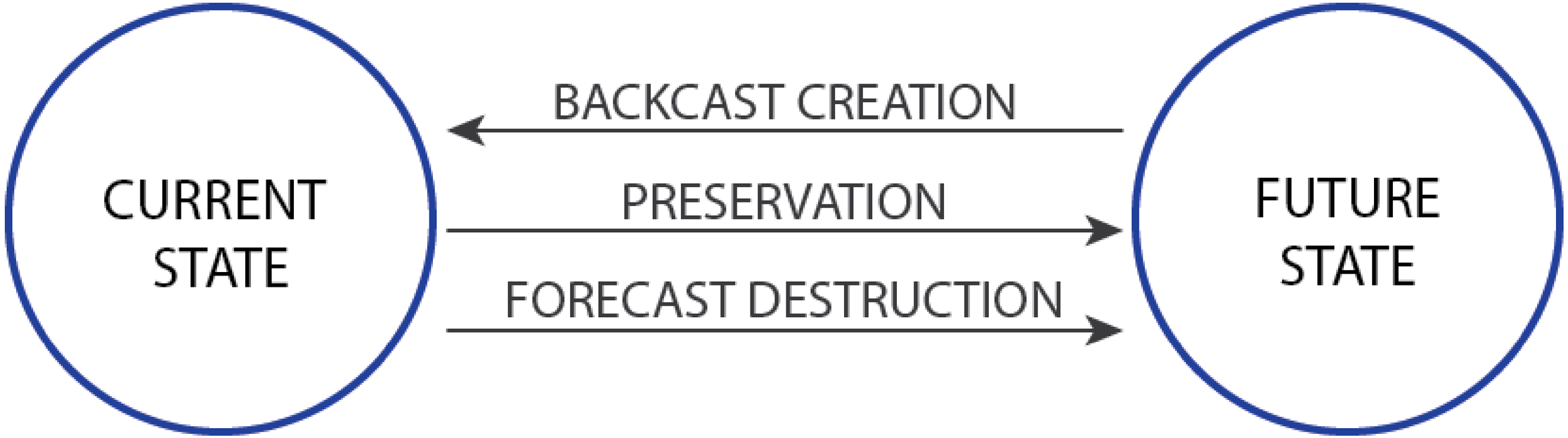
@leah_zaidi

DESIGN THE CHANGE

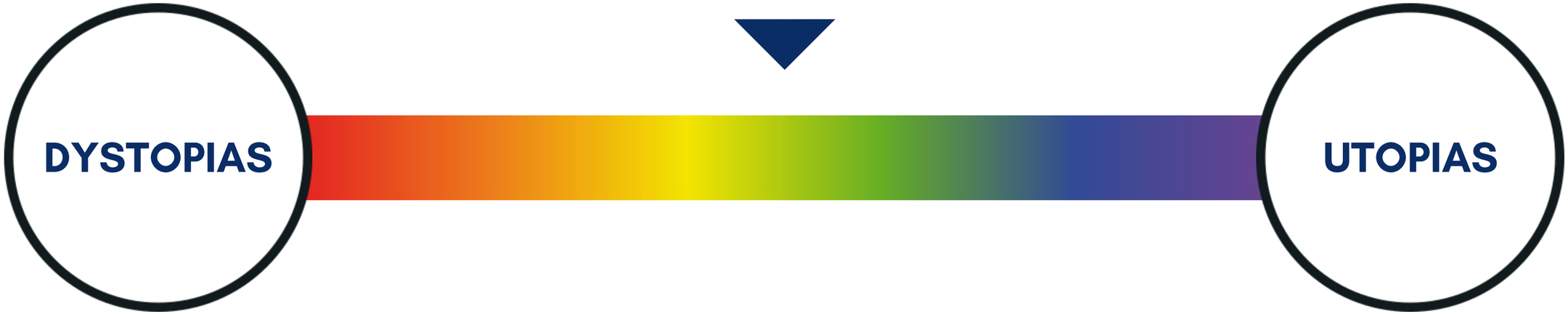
@leah_zaidi


TIME
SOCIAL
POLITICAL
ECONOMIC
PHILOSOPHICAL
ENVIRONMENTAL
SCIENTIFIC & TECHNOLOGICAL
ARTISTIC
PREFERRED STATE
TRANSITION ONE
TRANSITION TWO
CURRENT STATE

@leah_zaidi


CURRENT STATE
BACKCAST CREATION
PRESERVATION
FORECAST DESTRUCTION
FUTURE STATE

What happens here?



POLYTOPIAS SHOW CHANGE

MANY PEOPLE

MANY PLACES

MANY POINTS IN TIME

@leah_zaidi

FOCUS ON SYSTEMS-FIT

MIN SPEC FOR FUTURE-PROOFING

1) How does it support long-term environmental sustainability?

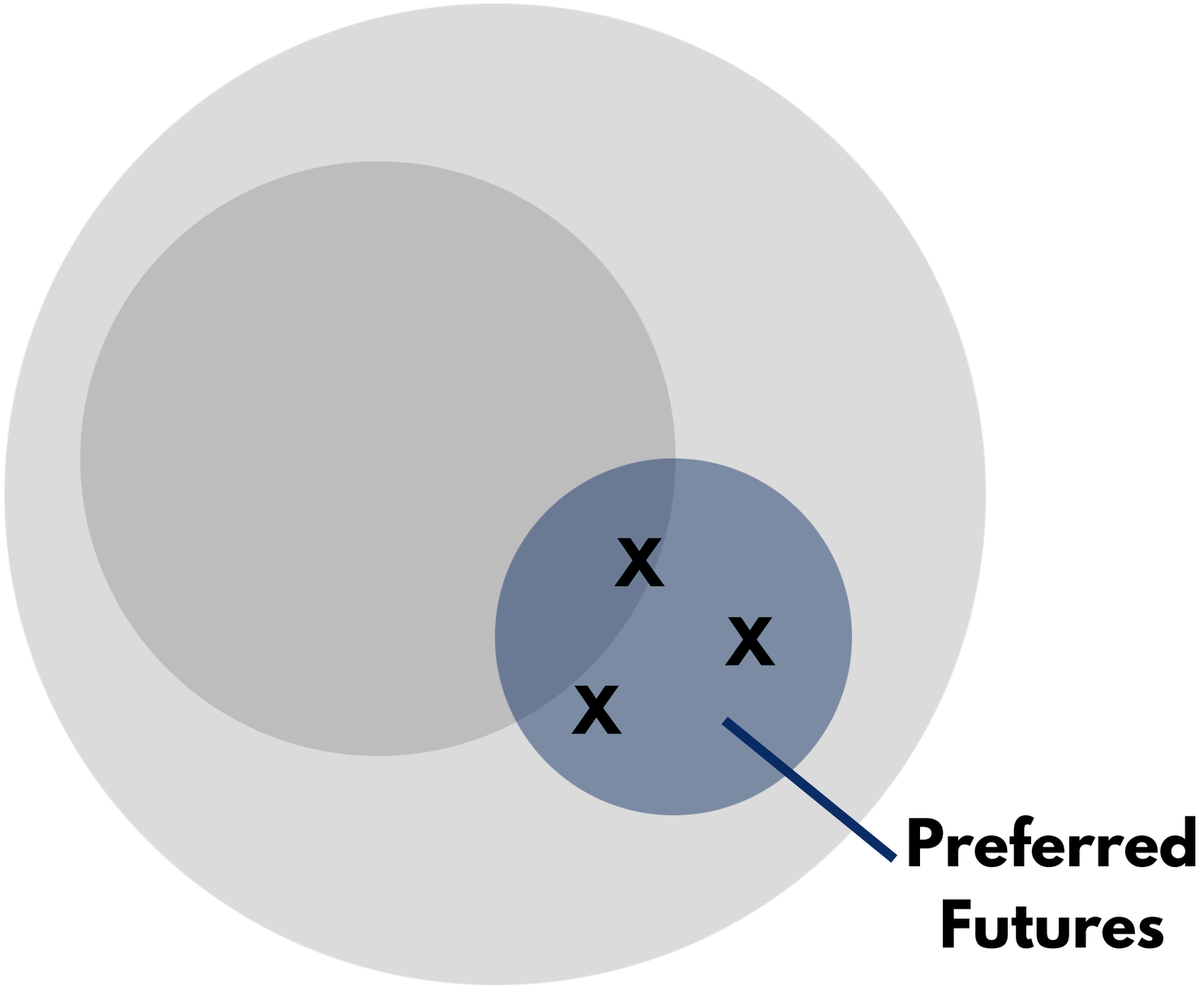
2) How does it enable justice, equality, and democracy?

3) How is it helped or hindered by AI, and what are the underlying ethics and assumptions?

@leah_zaidi

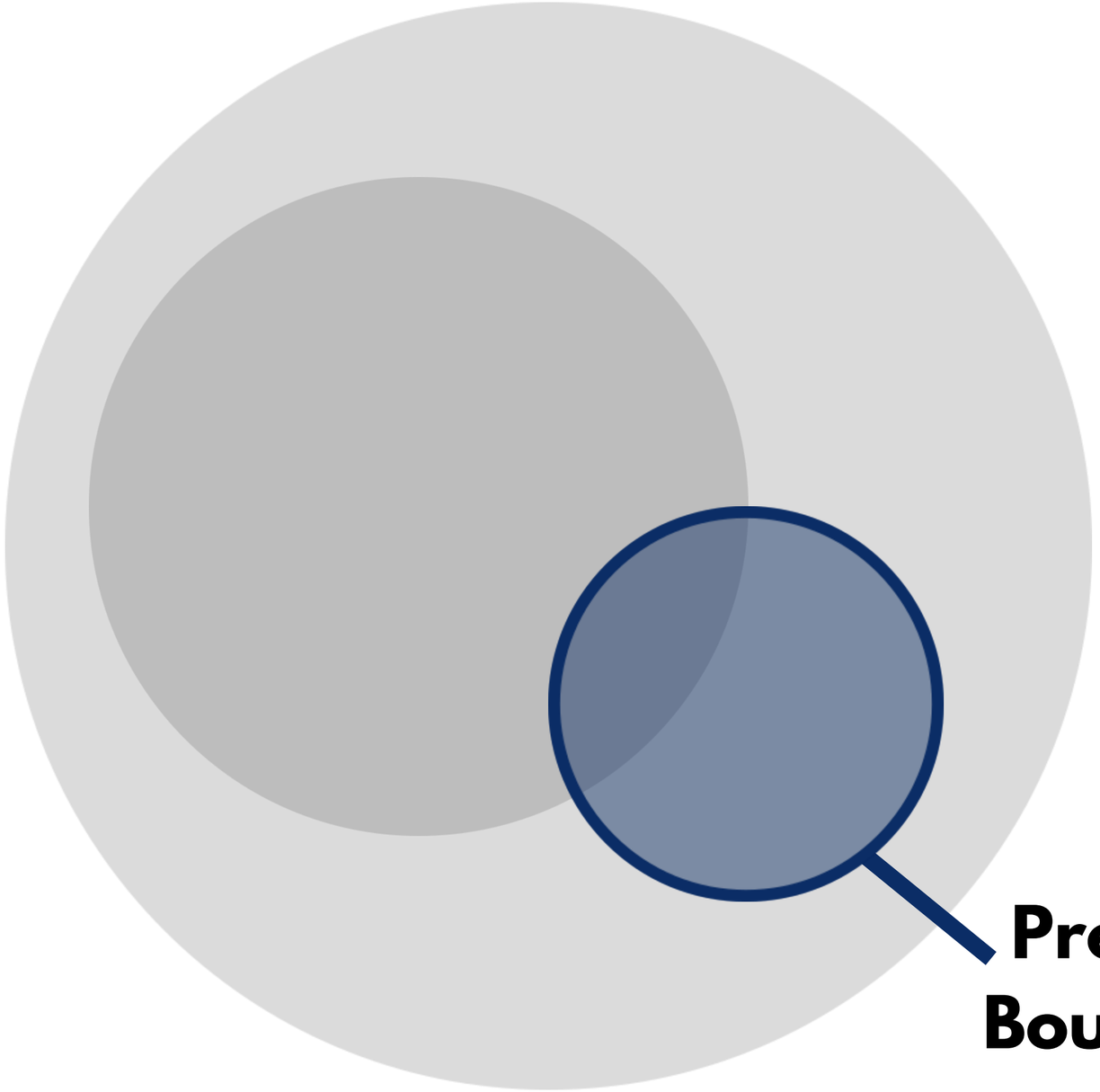
IDENTIFY BOUNDARIES

A CROSS-SECTION OF THE FUTURES CONE



@leah_zaidi

DESIGN THE PARAMETERS INSTEAD OF THE VISION



@leah_zaidi

USE ARCHETYPES

ARCHETYPES:

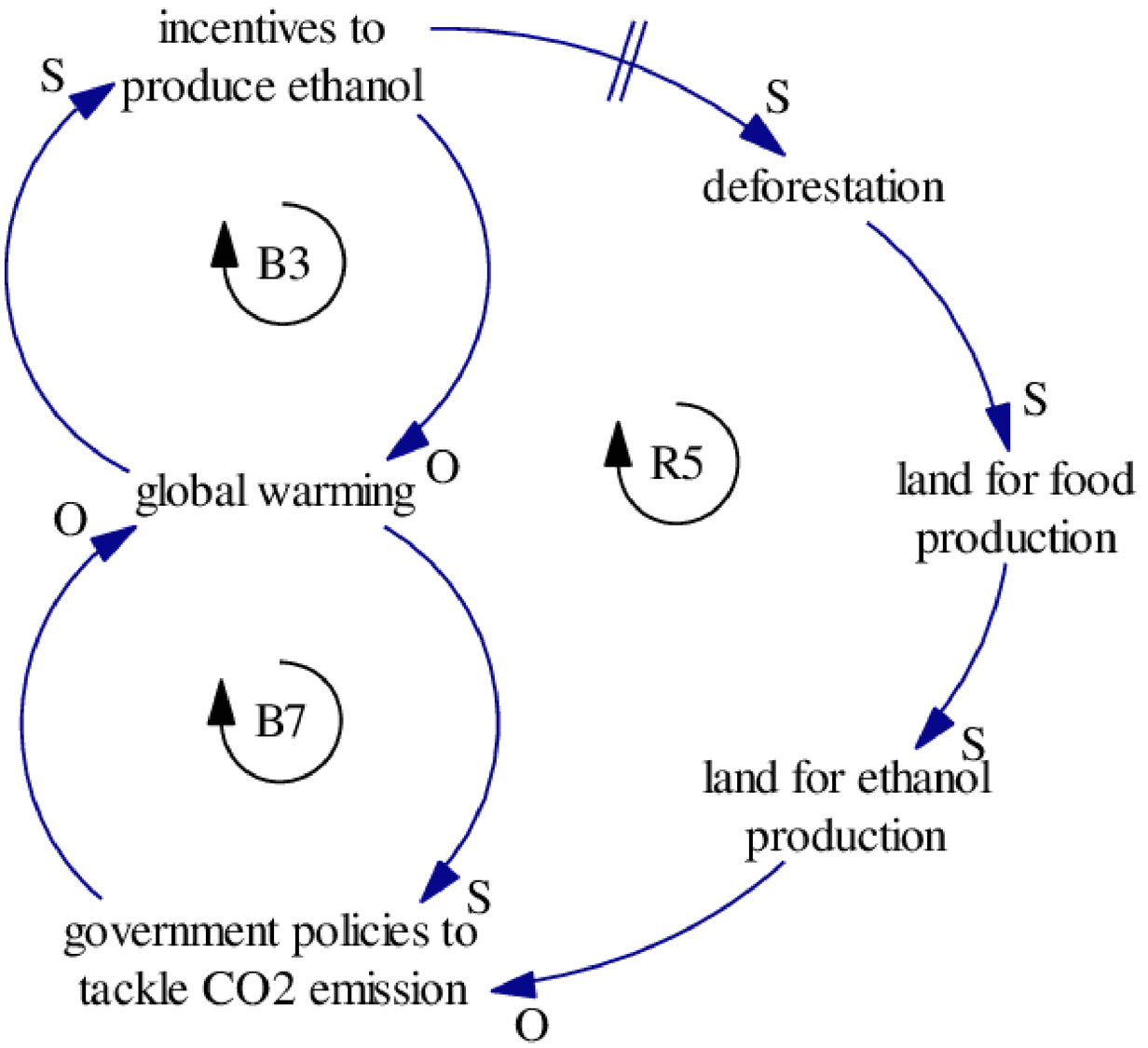
PATTERNS OF BEHAVIOUR IN A SYSTEM, OFTEN A PROBLEM

THE ARCHETYPES

- SHIFTING THE BURDEN
- ERODING GOALS
- FIXES THAT FAIL
- TRAGEDY OF THE COMMONS
- LIMITS TO GROWTH
- ESCALATION
- SUCCESS TO THE SUCCESSFUL

@leah_zaidi

SHIFTING THE BURDEN



Ethanol and food competition for land in Brazil, Julio Vargas

@leah_zaidi

MEET THE ANTI-ARCHETYPES

@leah_zaidi

SHIFTING THE BURDEN

TAKING RESPONSIBILITY

SUCCESS TO THE SUCCESSFUL

POWER TO THE MARGINALIZED

@leah_zaidi

ESCALATION

DESCALATION

THE VALUE OF INFORMED HOPE

THANKS!

LEAH ZAIDI

@leah_zaidi