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Playing Politics

On the Non-Instrumental Value of Democracy in Virtual Game Worlds

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The Question

Does **democracy**
in **virtual game worlds**
have **non-instrumental value**?

?

Democracy

One or more collective **decision-making procedures** that are based on the idea of **equality of participants** in the decision-making process.

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Virtual Game Worlds

We are looking at online **multiplayer games** where players directly interact with each other and **democracy is not a built-in game mechanism** but emerges as a way of coordination between players.

Examples

EVE Online

World of Warcraft

Minecraft

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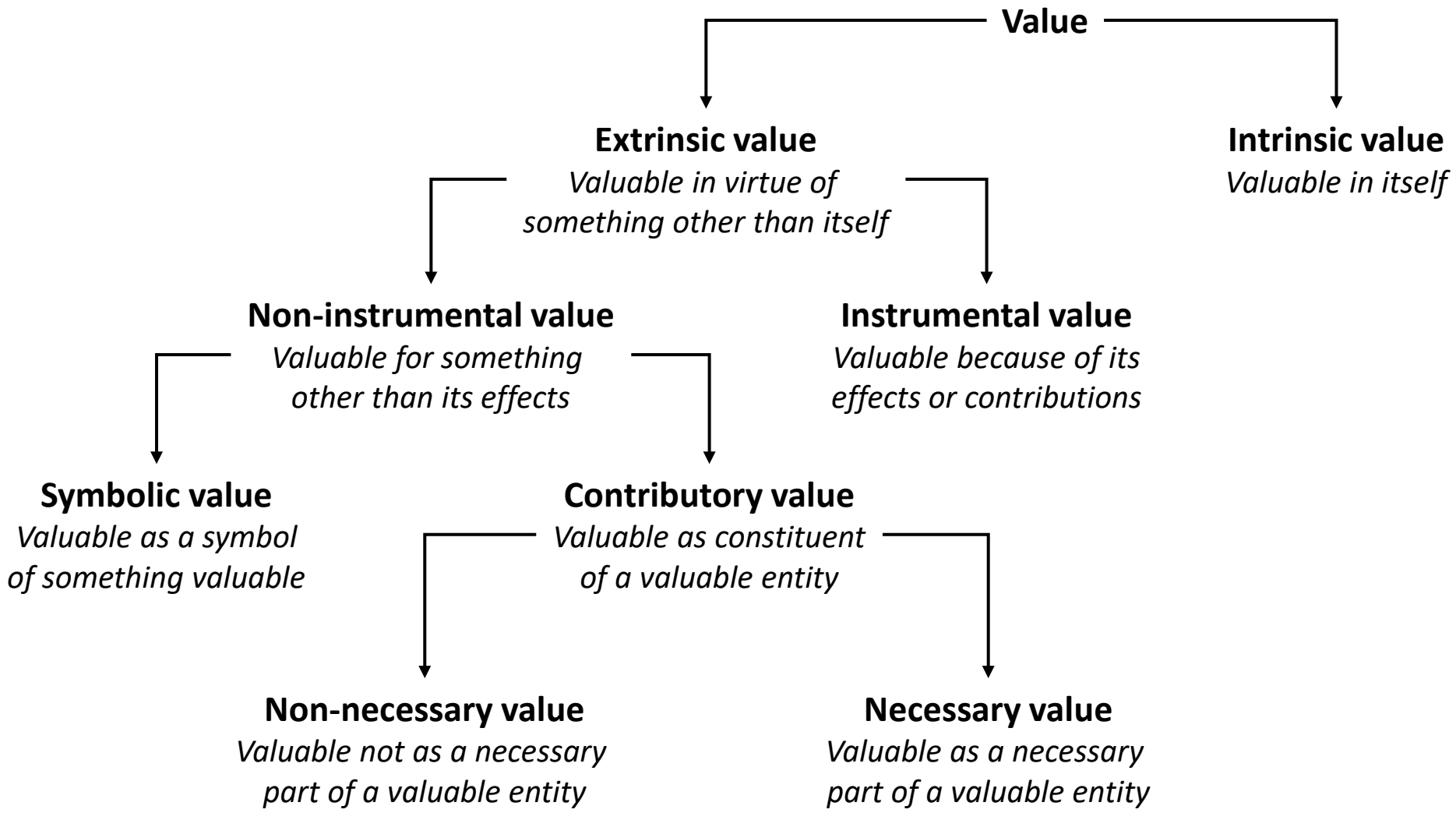
Non-Instrumental Value



Source: Ziliotti, Elena. 2019. 'Democracy's Value: A Conceptual Map'. *The Journal of Value Inquiry* 54 (3): 407–27, p. 412

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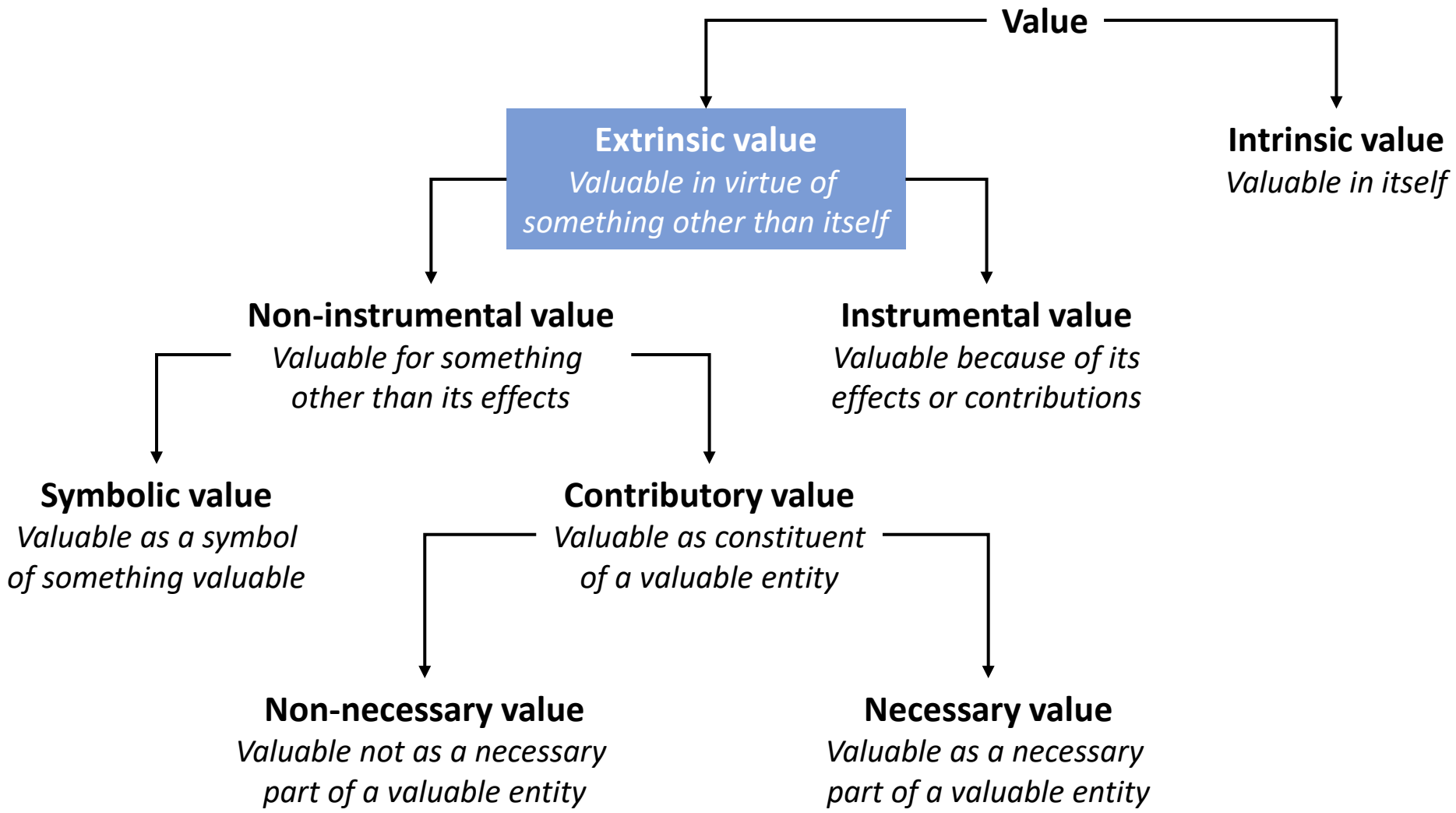

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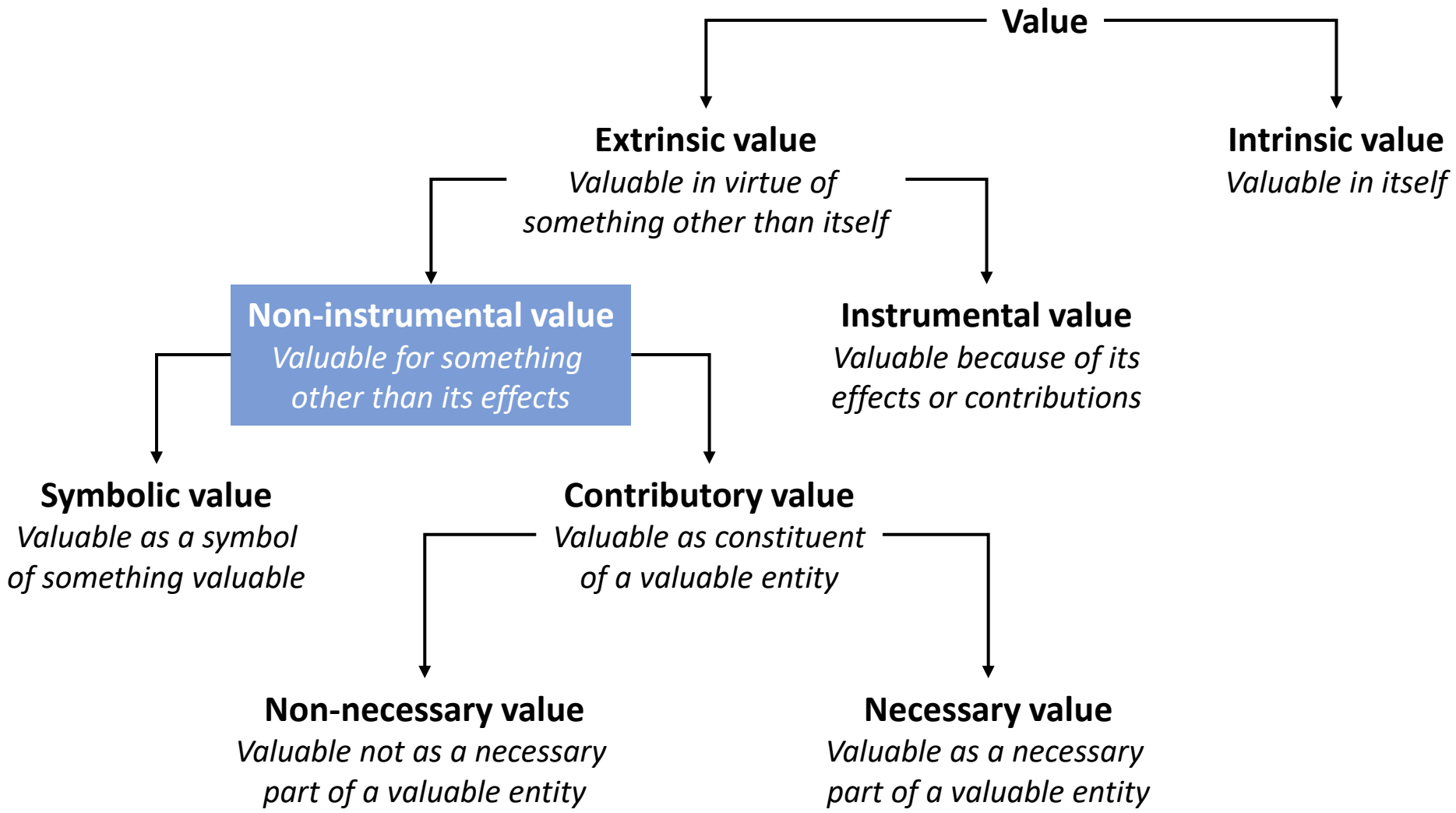

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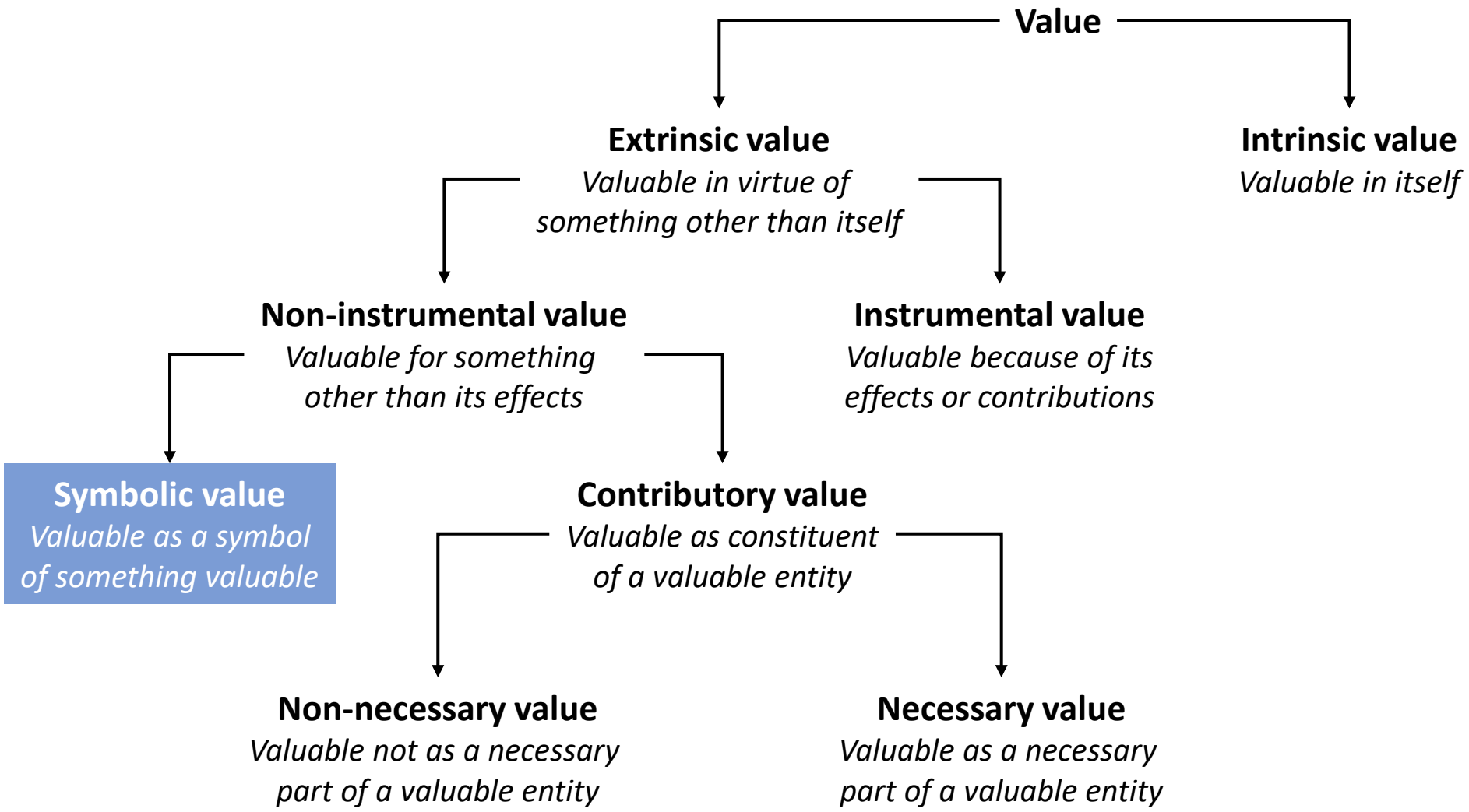

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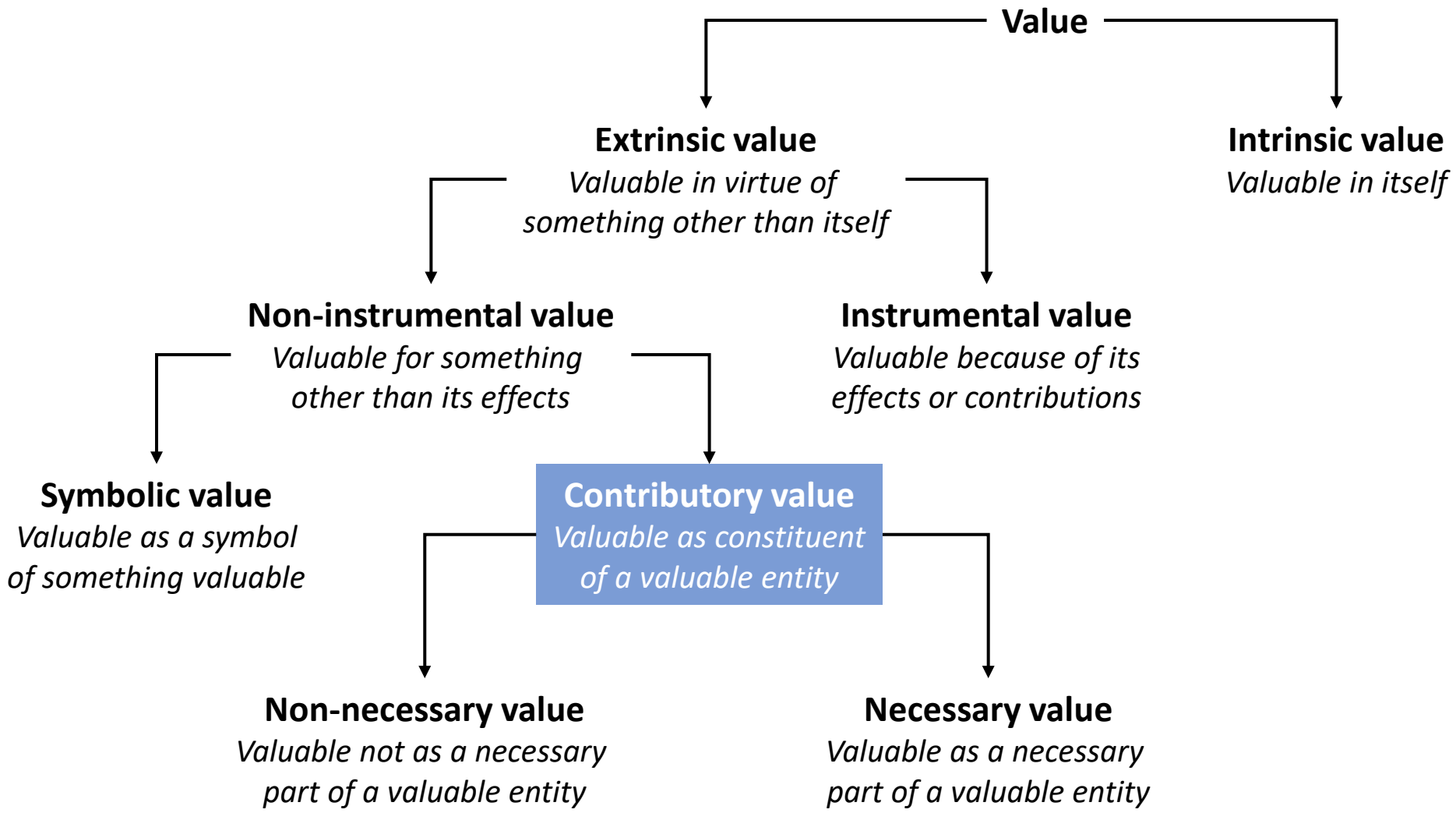

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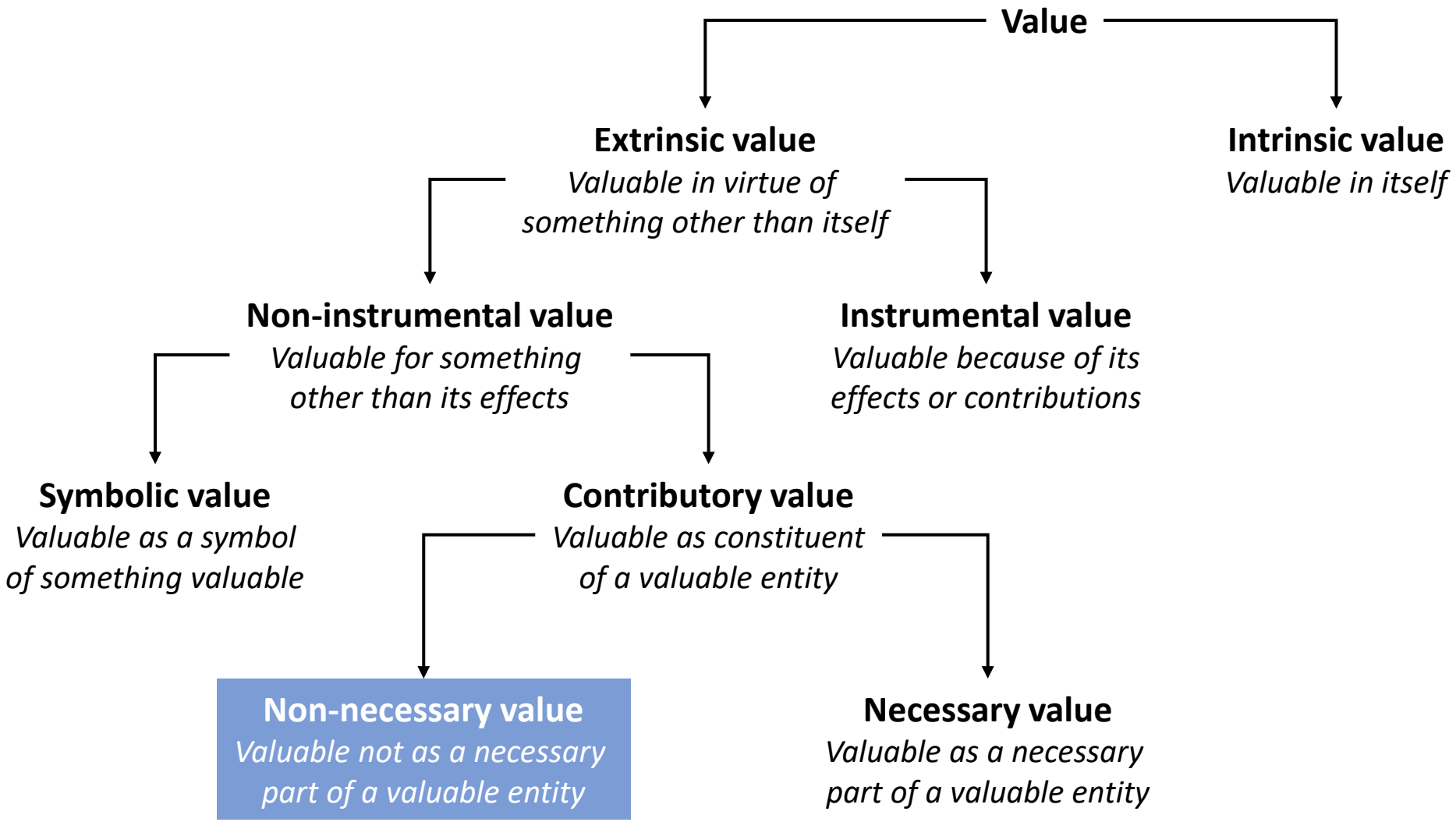

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The Argument

1. Replicates democratic processes and structures
2. Reinforces the visibility of democracy
3. Sustains ideas about democratic practices, environments to experiment

➡ Therefore, contributorily valuable

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The Argument

1. Democracy in virtual game worlds **replicates democratic processes and structures** from the 'real' world in virtual worlds.

2. Reinforces the visibility of democracy

3. Sustains ideas about democratic practices, environments to experiment

➡ Therefore, contributorily valuable

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The Argument

1. Replicates democratic processes and structures

2. This replication **reinforces the visibility of democracy** to the participants in these game worlds and has some special features:
   - it is **often not geographically restricted** but has potentially global reach (with plenty of caveats, however)
   - it applies in a less spectacular fashion than historical events but **semi-continuously**

3. Sustains ideas about democratic practices, environments to experiment

➡ Therefore, contributorily valuable

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The Argument

1. Replicates democratic processes and structures
2. Reinforces the visibility of democracy
3. In this way, in-game democracy **sustains ideas about democratic practices** and also **offers environments to experiment** with variants of democratic procedures.

➡ Therefore, contributorily valuable

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The Argument

1. Replicates democratic processes and structures
2. Reinforces the visibility of democracy
3. Sustains ideas about democratic practices, environments to experiment

Therefore, in-game democracy qualifies as **contributorily valuable**.

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The End