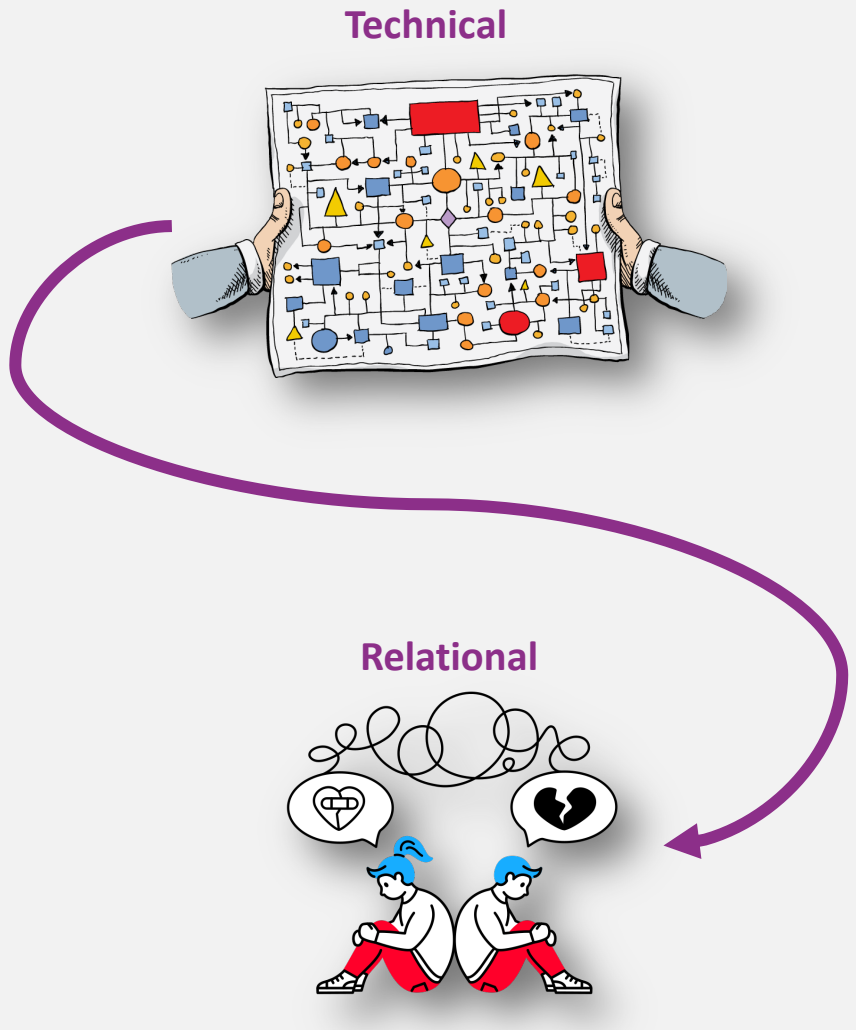
What type of policy impact story are we telling?

SPRE

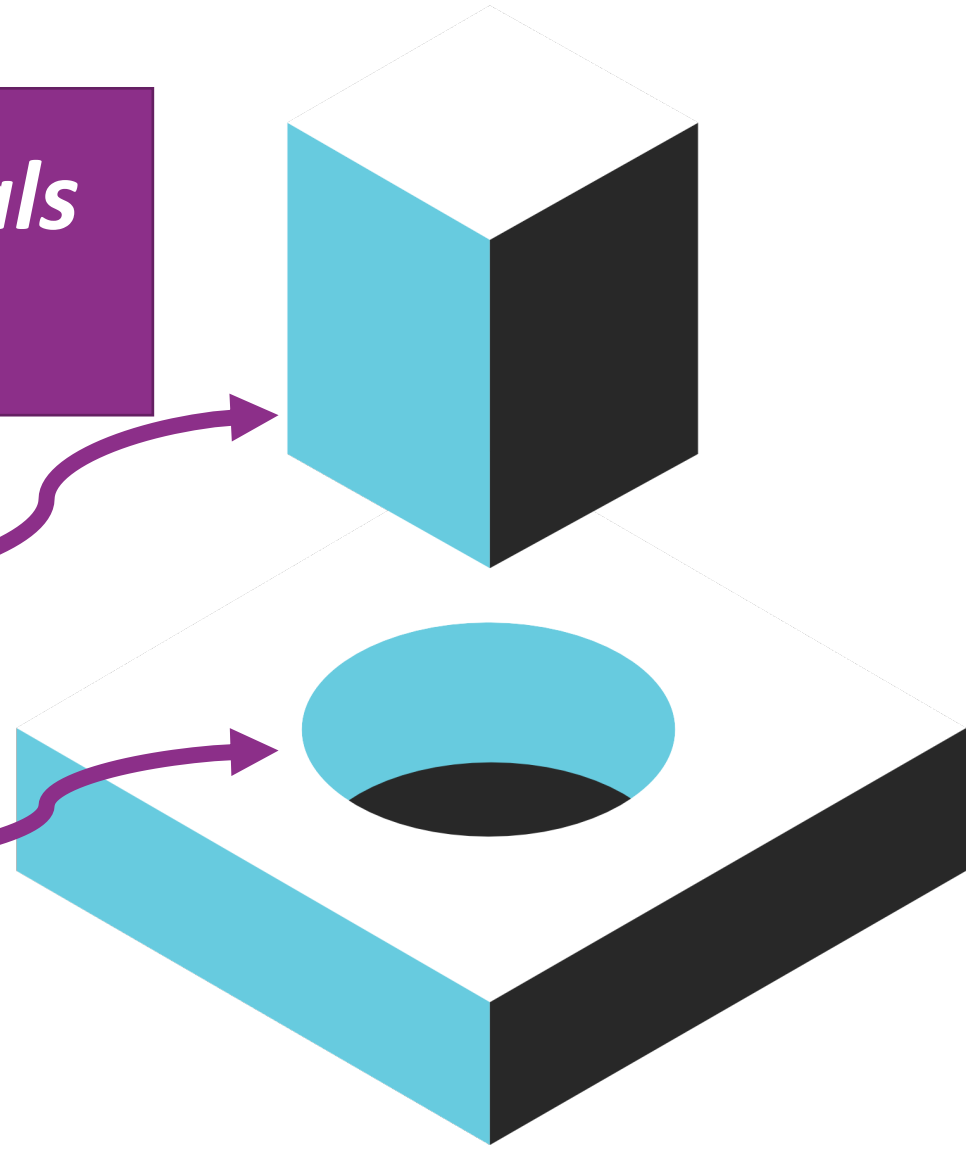
SCOTTISH POLICY & RESEARCH EXCHANGE



What we do about something reveals what we think needs to change

The shape of what we do

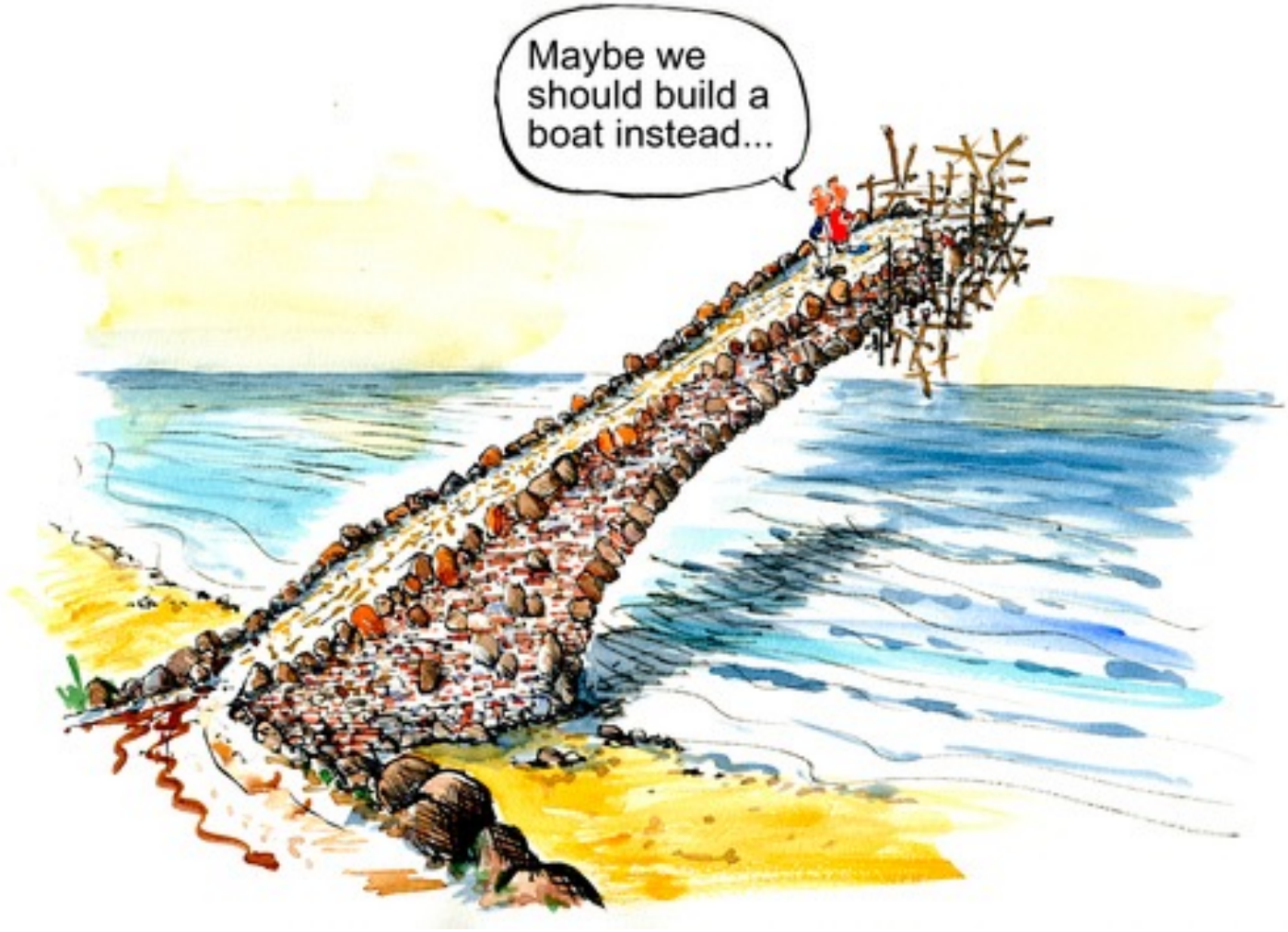
The shape of the problem



Bacchi 2009. ***Analysing policy: What's the problem represented to be?***

Risk of ‘type III’ error…

Trying to solve the ‘wrong’ problem!



For example, see Archibald (2019) **What’s the Problem Represented to Be? Problem Definition Critique as a Tool for Evaluative Thinking**. American Journal of Evaluation, 41 (1) (2019), pp. 6-19, 10.1177/1098214018824043

How are policy problems ‘shaped’?

Some example research:

Lowe et al., 2016 **The Performance Management of complex systems – enabling adaptation**

Cairney et al., 2019 **Making policy in a complex world**

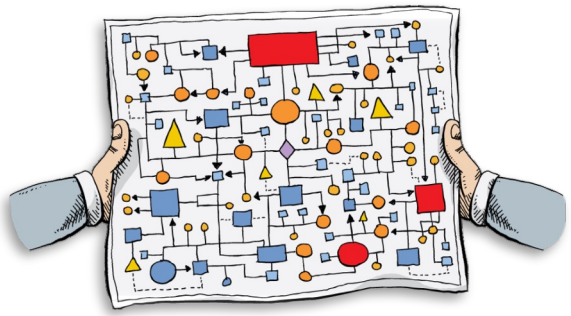
What’s the different that makes a difference?

Facts are facts

Facts are framed

Reduce uncertainty

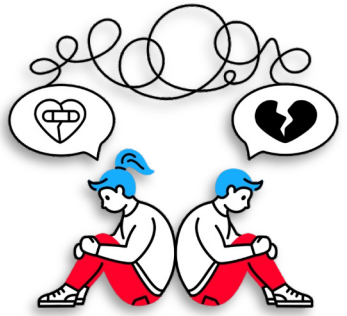
Technical



Efficiency

vs

Relational



Navigate uncertainties

Equity

Logic of control

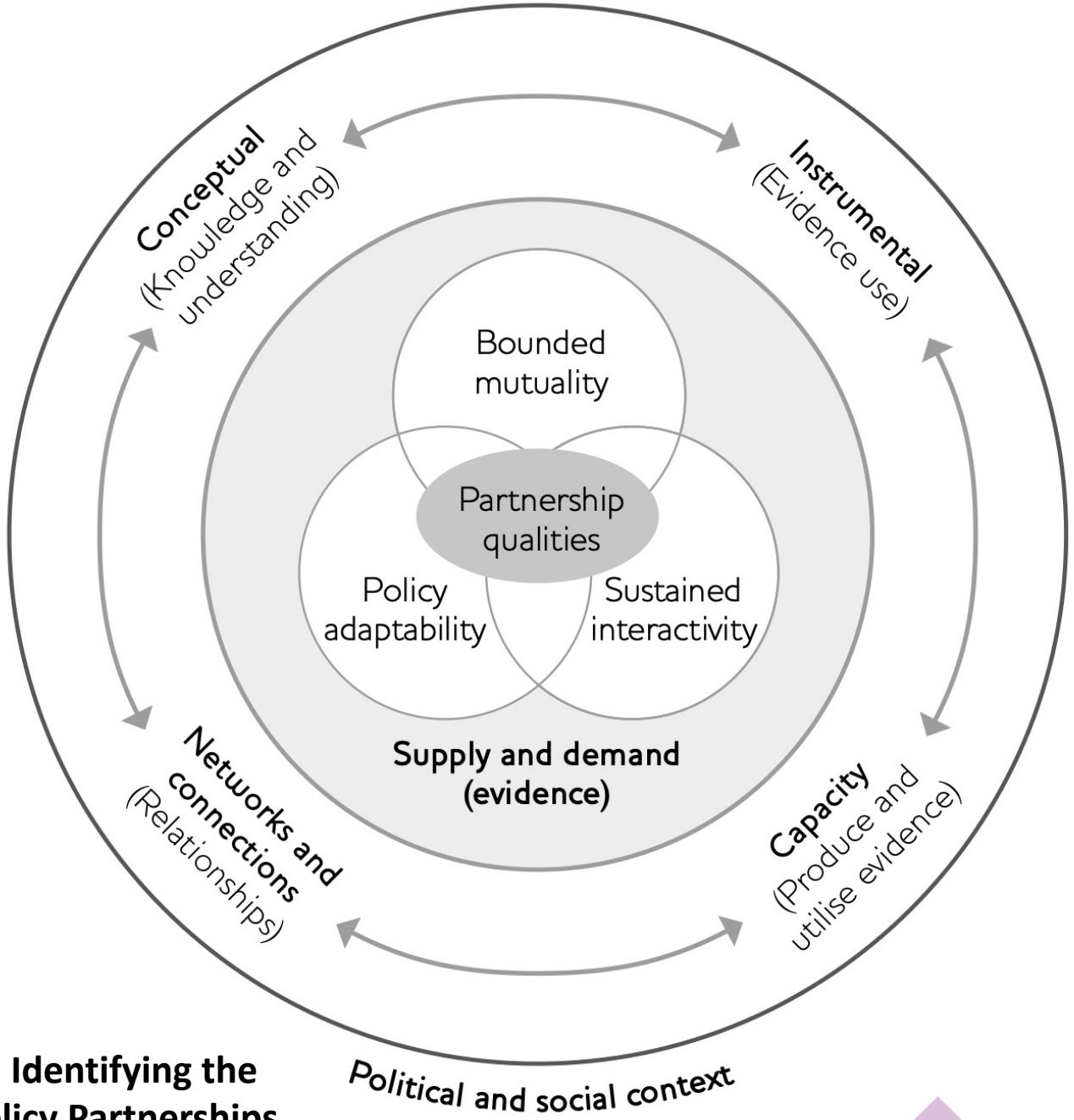
Ethics of care

Singular & definitive

Plural & conditional

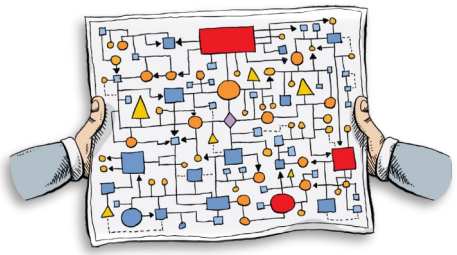
Information deficit

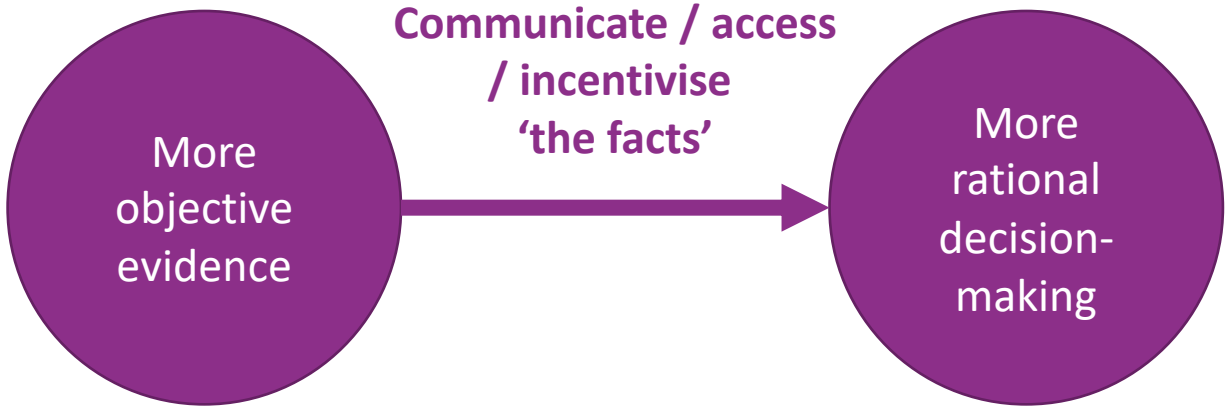
Learning together



Georgalakas & Rose 2019 **Identifying the Qualities of Research–Policy Partnerships**

‘Technical’ approaches





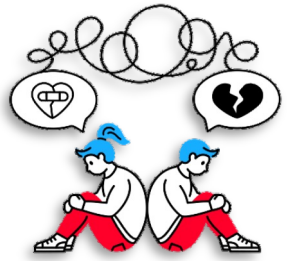
Some example research:

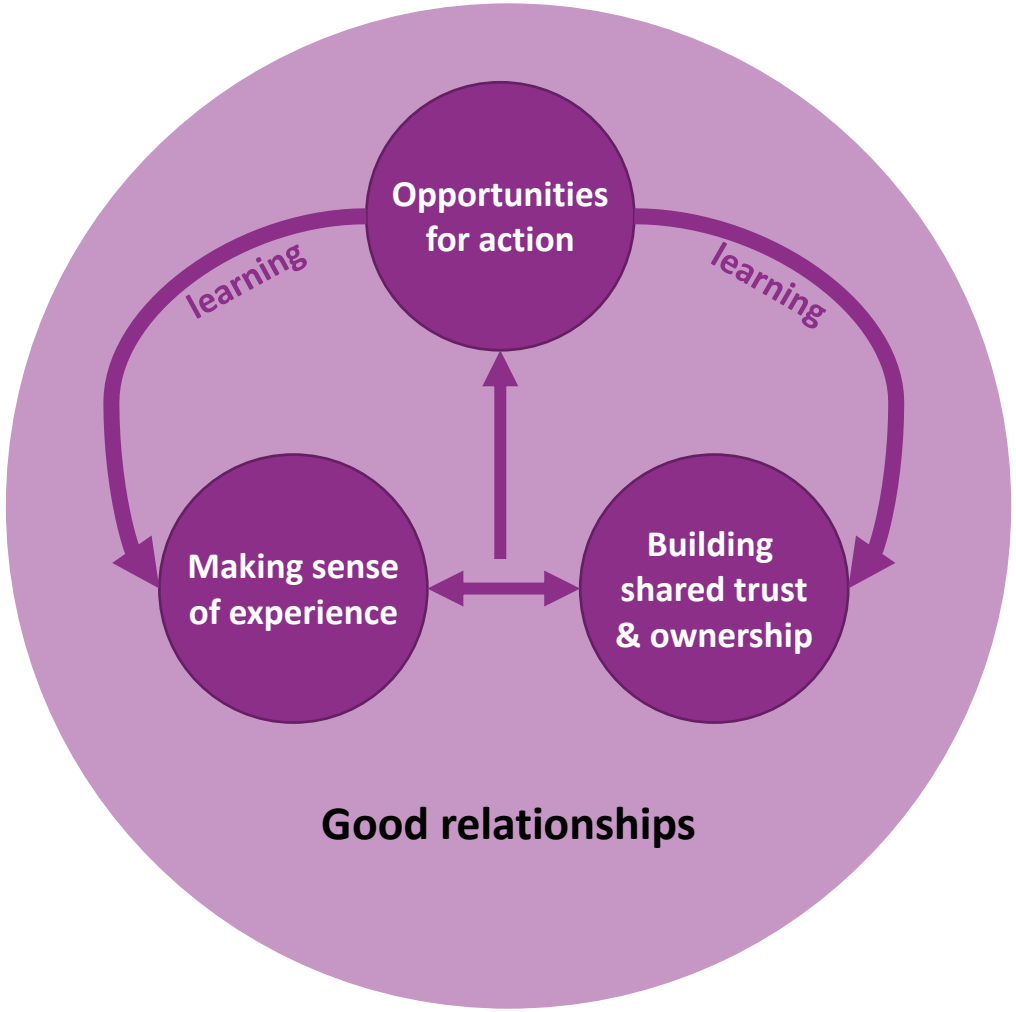
Cairney & Oliver 2020 **How Should Academics Engage in Policymaking to Achieve Impact?**

West et al., 2019 **Beyond “linking knowledge and action”: towards a practice-based approach to…**

Tunrhout et al., 2019 **Environmental Expertise**

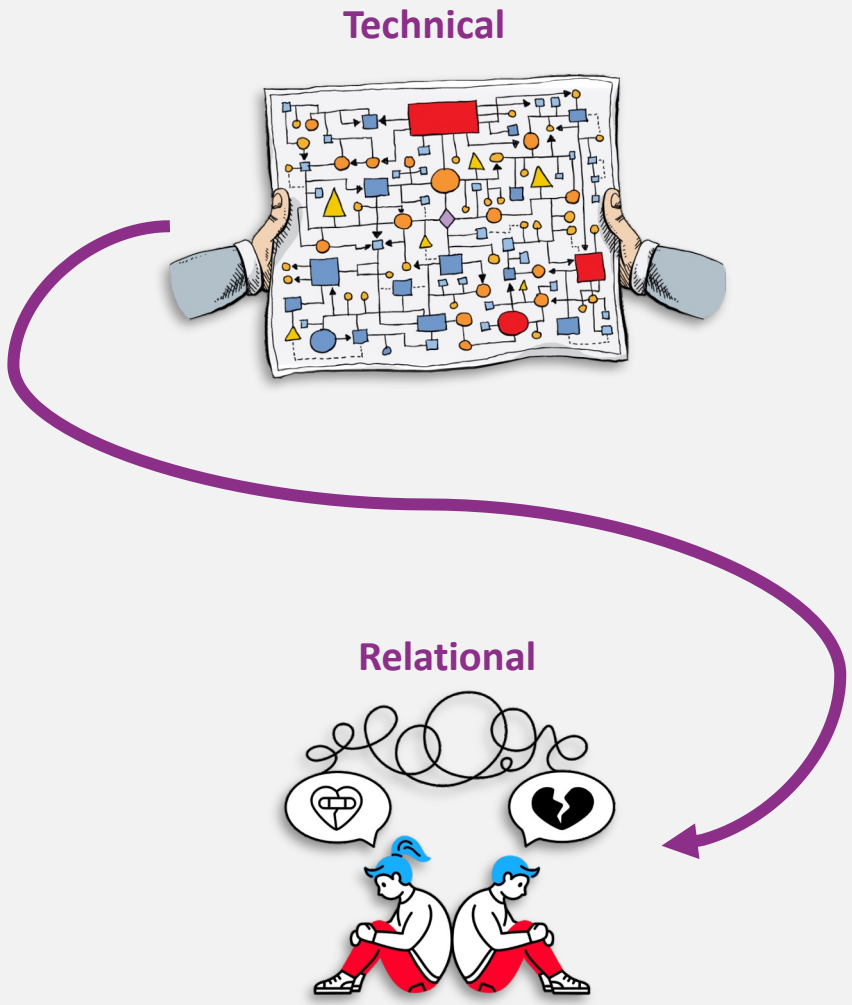
‘Relational’ approaches





Some example research:

Snijder & Apgar 2021 **How Does Participatory Action Research Generate Innovation?**

Knowles et al. 2021 **More than a method: trusting relationships, productive tensions, and two-way learning…**

Learning
[to see]
[to improve]
[through]
relationships