



Methods for Politics as well as Policy

culturing progressive transformations in
(and so for) innovation democracies

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www.sussex.ac.uk/spru/people/peoplelists/person/7513

for EU-SPRI Winter School,
SPRU, Sussex University
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The Story so Far: Emancipating Transformations?



look at
alternatives

use Trojan
horses

balance
needs bias

knowledge is action

toad not (only)
eagle view

talk about
power

challenge
incumbency

political
judo

'risk' is
fairness

avoid misplaced
concreteness

play the ball
not the player

try for
edge balls

relations not
categories

understanding as
well as explanation

ends not
means

keep it
complex

toads not
birds

complement deterministic
control, with mutualistic care

Practical Methodological Challenges

How the world looks depends quite radically on how it is **framed**

Agreement cannot be assumed on “positive” values or actions

Power is imprinted in knowledge as well as asserted in action

Scope and detail of “**transformation**” is **shaped by incumbency**

Remedy relies more on **subaltern struggle** than policy privilege

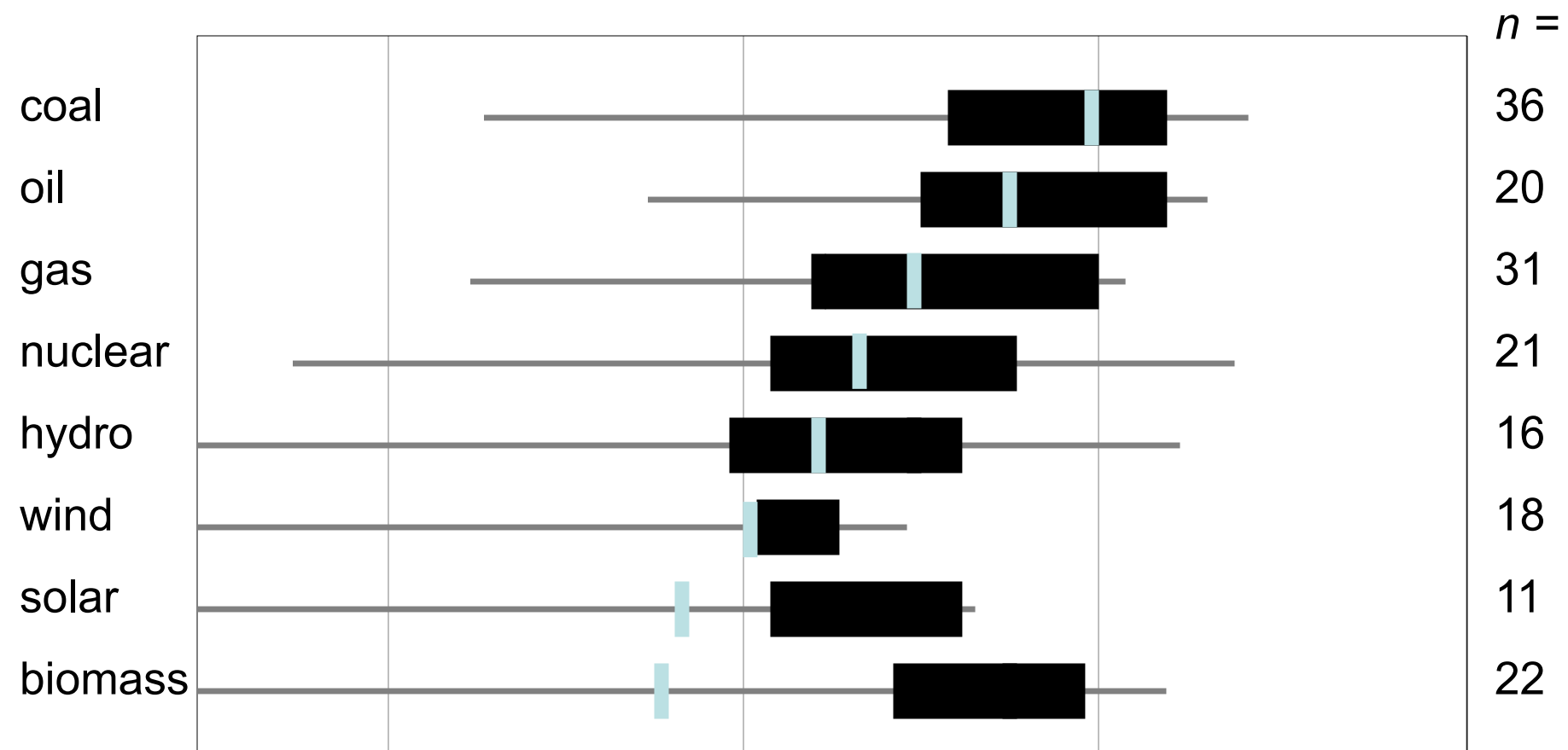
So progressive transformation is **politics more than just ‘policy’**

Methods with this aim, are about **enabling democratic struggle**

Counterbalancing (not totally rejecting) **hierarchy and control**

No Single Evidence-Based Optimal Transition

For example, singular aggregated notions of ‘sound scientific decisions’ or ‘evidence based policy’ – eg: most mature field of energy regulation



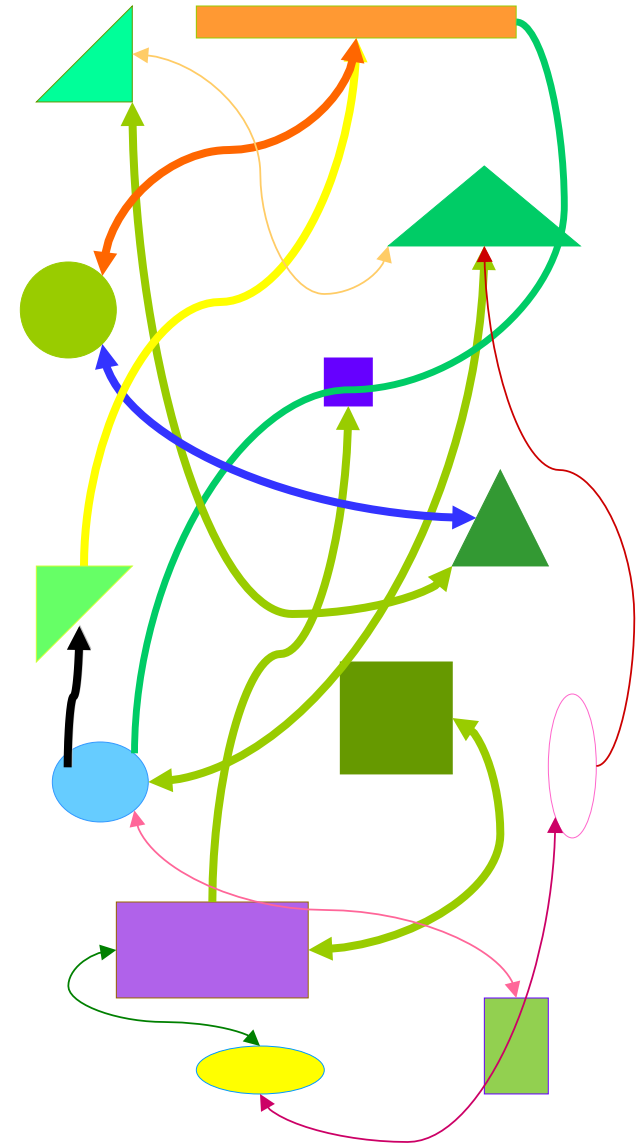
...‘science based’ quantification can be used to justify any choice

Knowledge: the reality of 'framing'

Reminding the '**real world**'
of policy...

...about the '**real real world**'
of the World

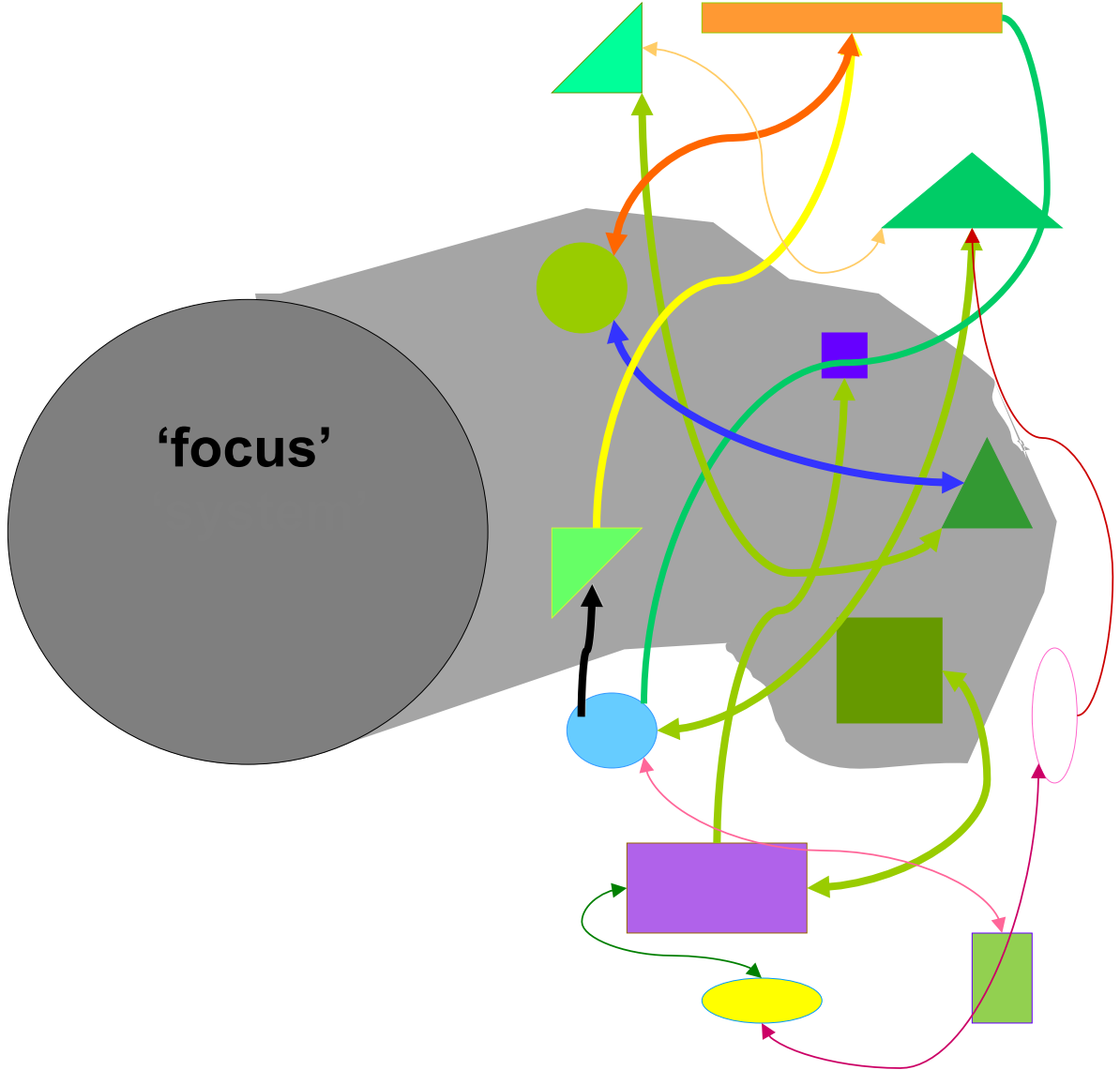
under-determined realities



Knowledge: the reality of 'framing'

stylised representation

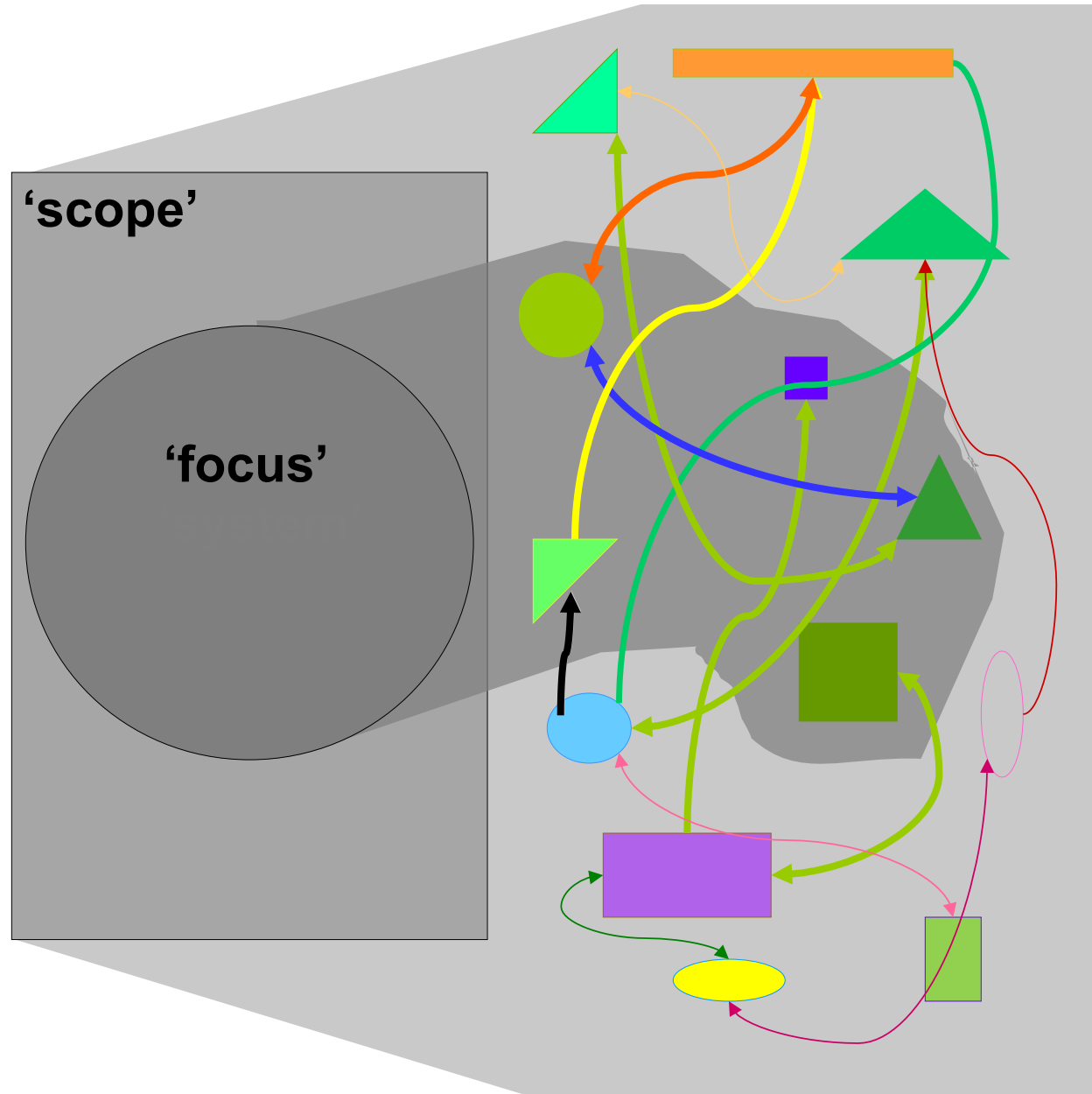
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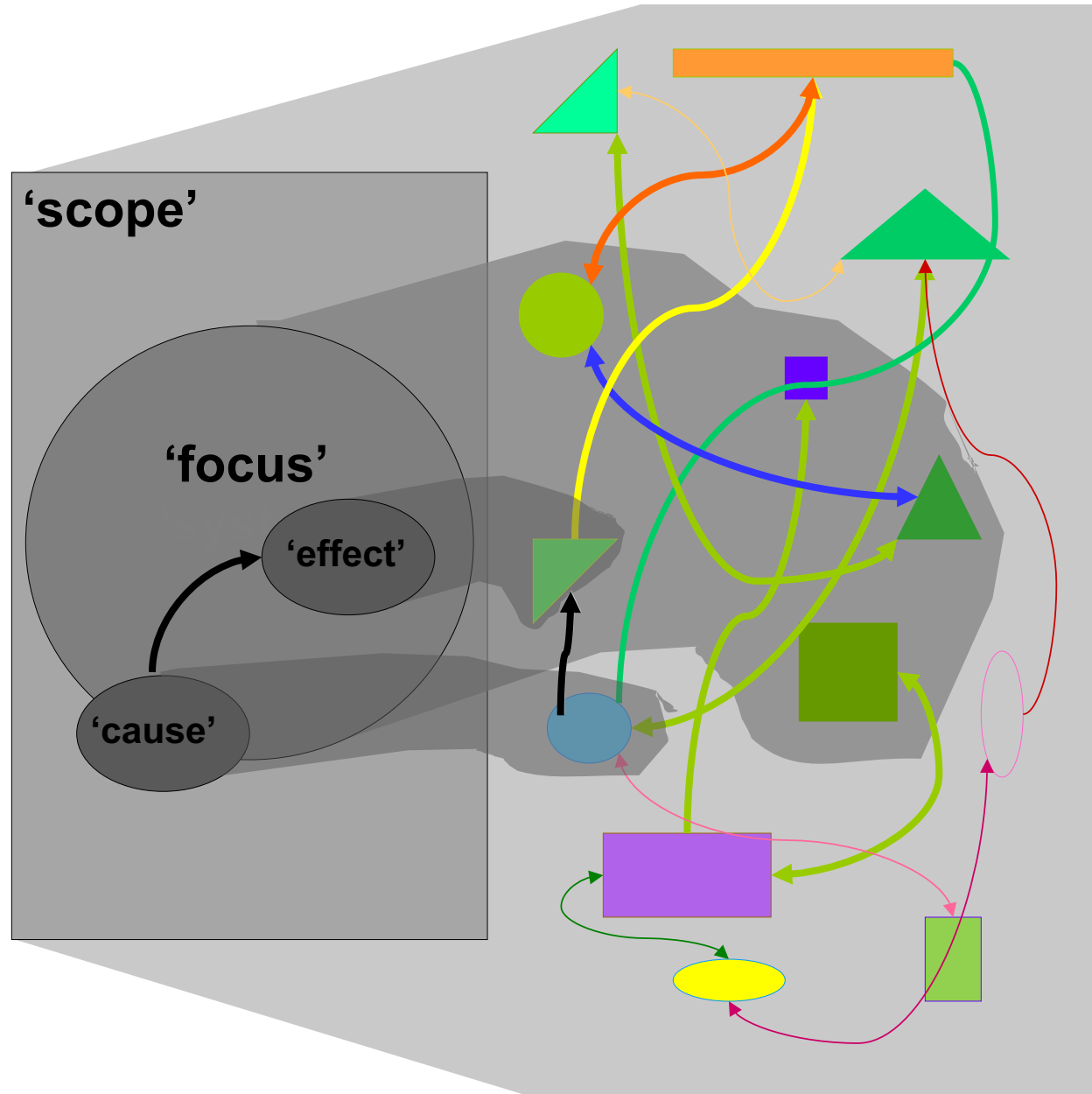
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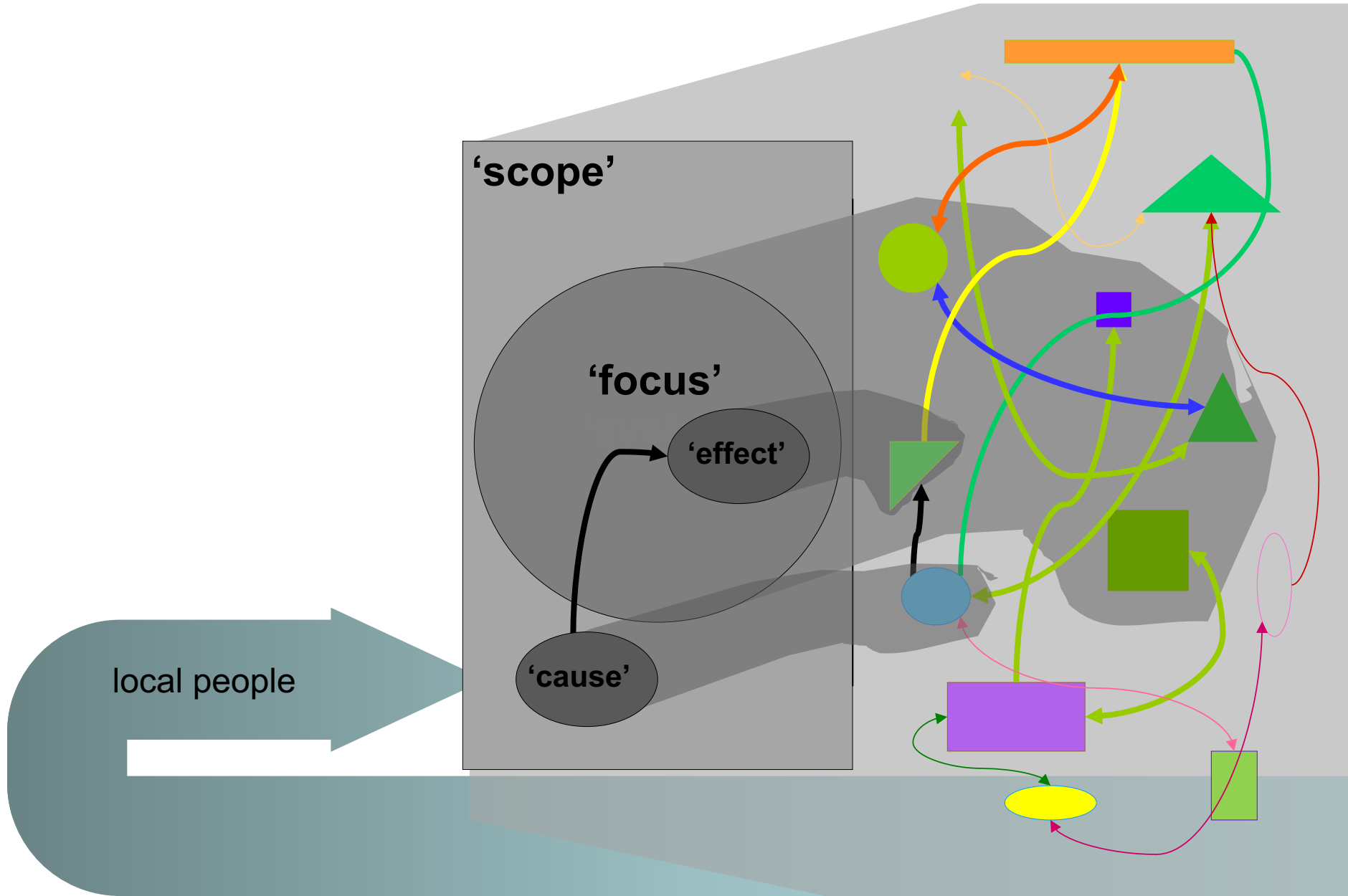


Knowledge: the reality of 'framing'

subjective framing

picture of the world

under-determined realities



Knowledge: the challenge of plurality

plural frames

diverse pictures

under-determined realities

contending
knowledges
and values

government

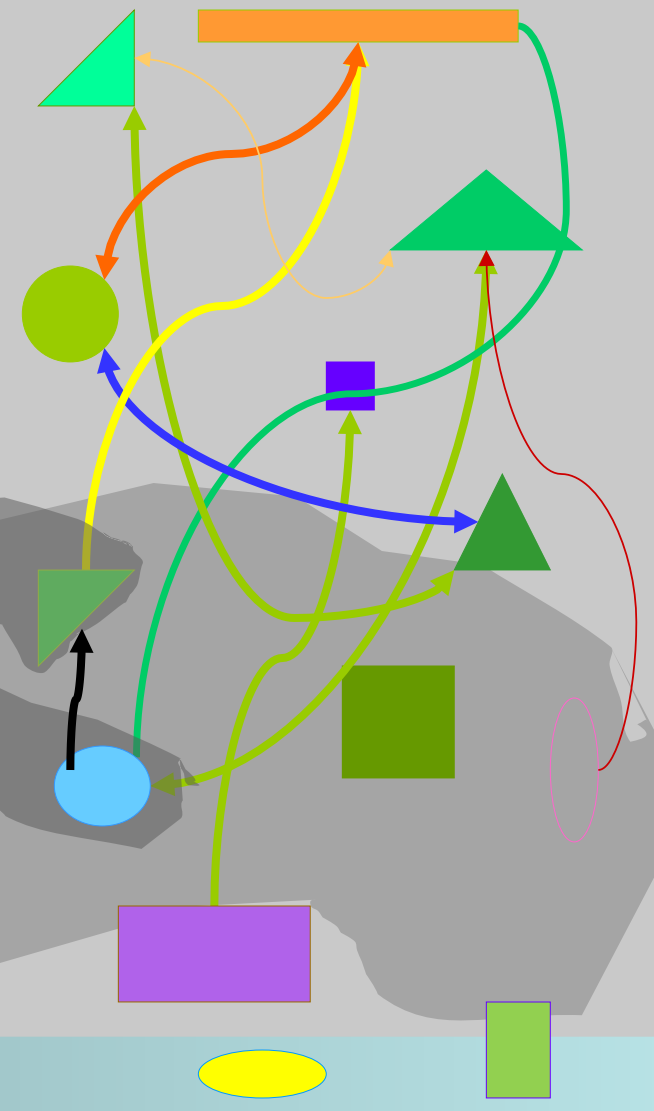
local people

'scope'

'focus'

'effect'

'cause'

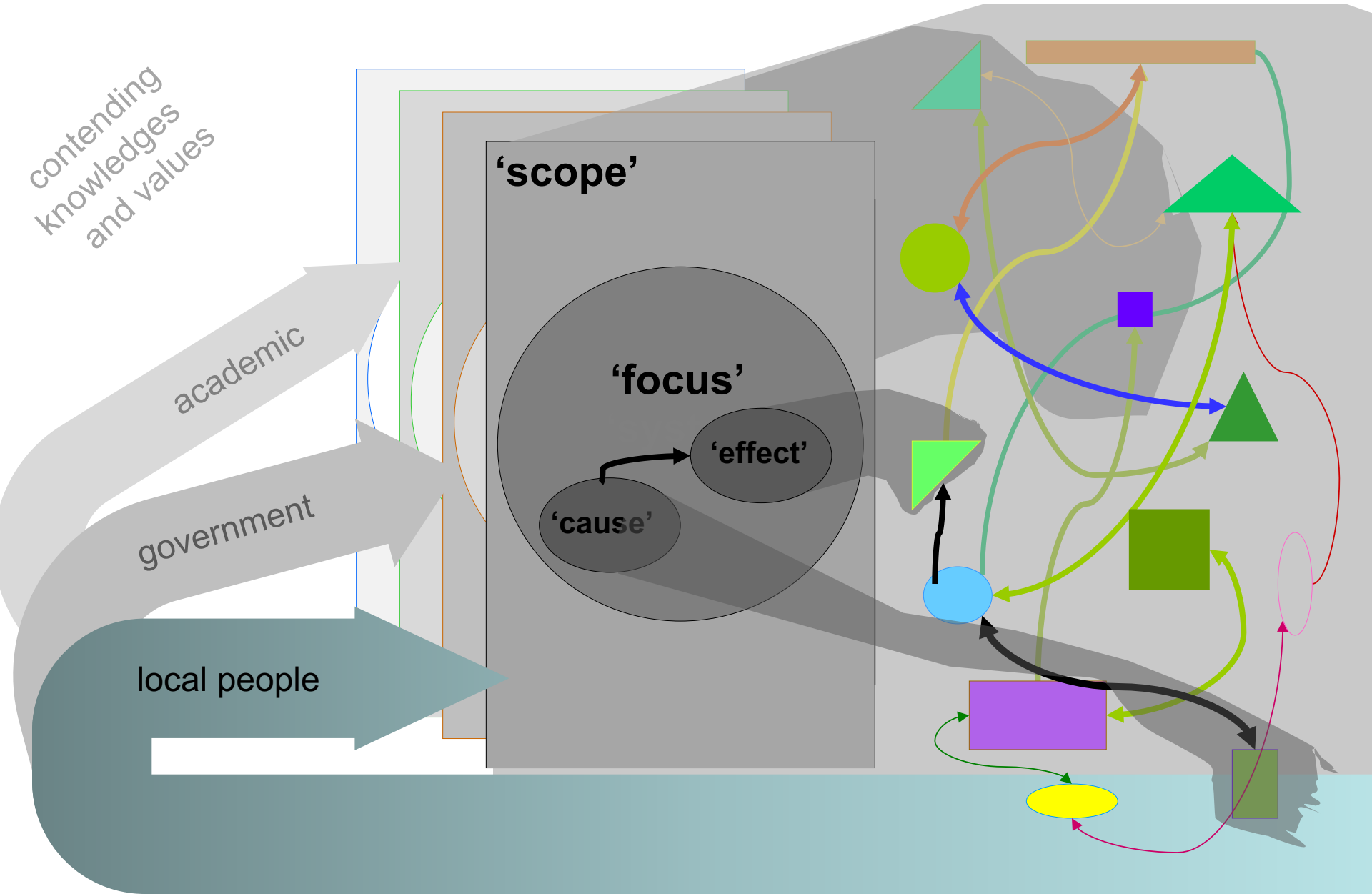


Knowledge: the challenge of plurality

plural frames

diverse pictures

under-determined realities

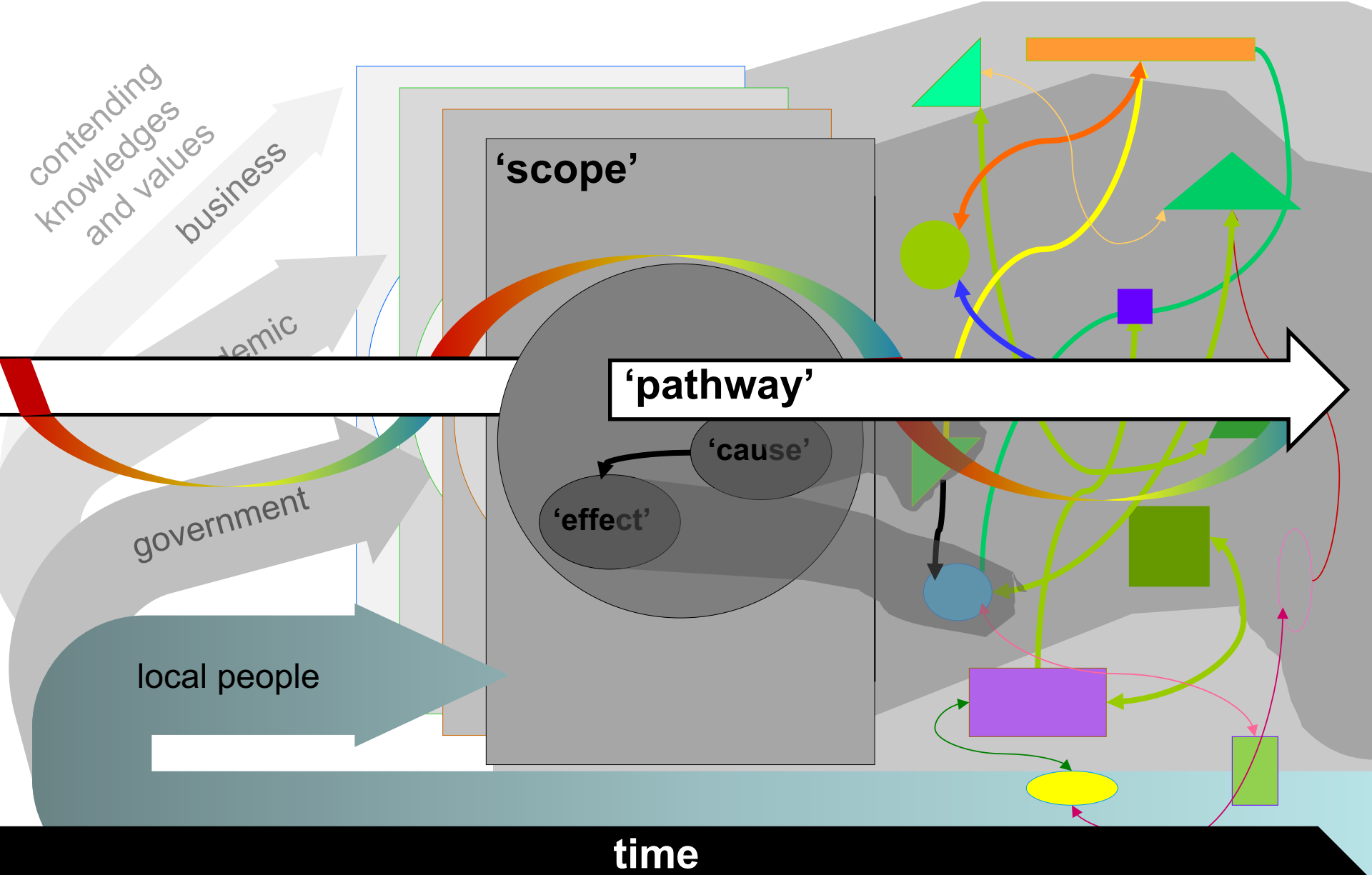


Knowledges and Pathways

plural frames

diverse pictures

under-determined realities



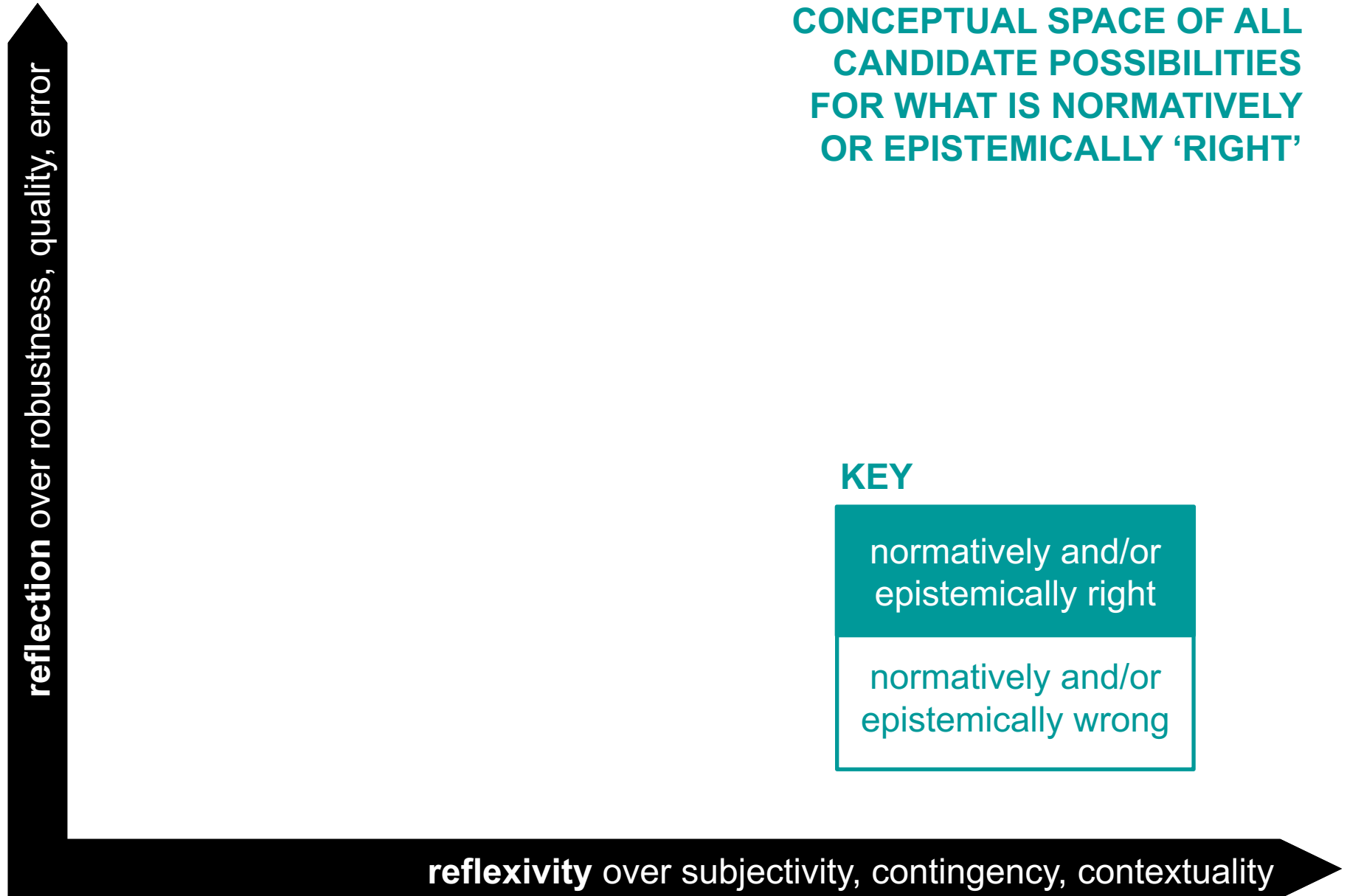
Knowledges and Pathways

CONTEXTS

SUBJECTS AND OBJECTS

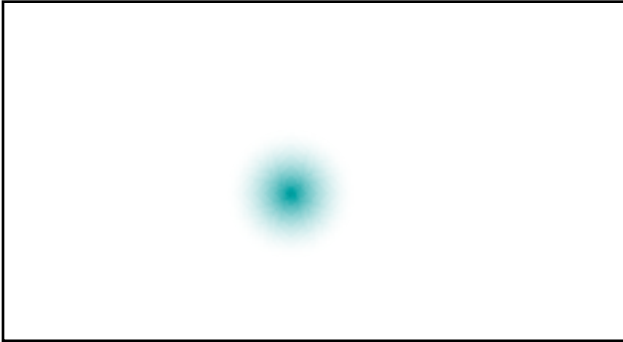


‘Reflexivity’ is not about ‘Anything Goes’



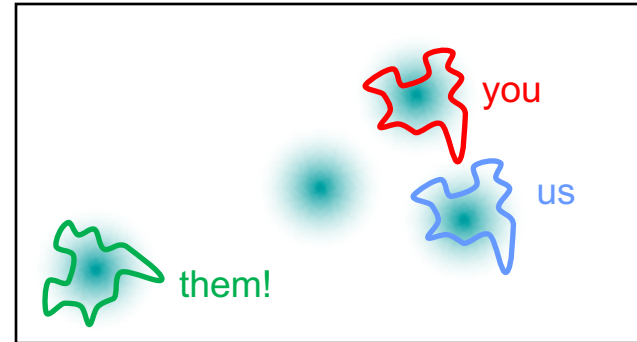
‘Reflexivity’ is not about ‘Anything Goes’

mainstream fallibilism



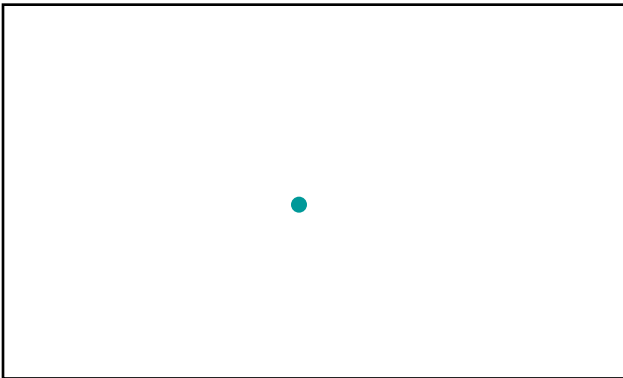
“one thing is approximately right”

conditional plurality



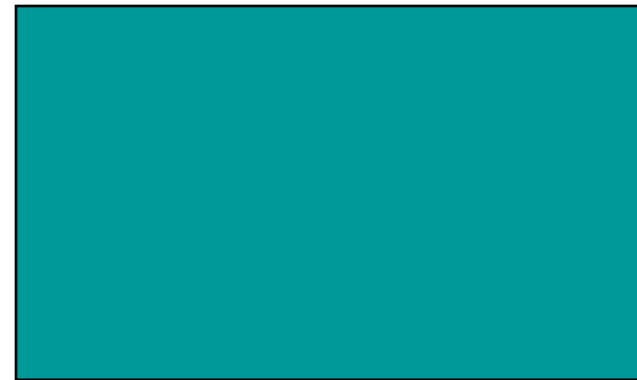
reflexivity: ‘right’ answers & solutions vary by framings of questions & problems

naïve realism



“one thing is precisely right”

caricature relativism



“all things are equally right”

reflexivity over subjectivity, contingency, contextuality

reflection over robustness, quality, error

Phenomena Under Scrutiny

- social and material world
- “systems” and “contexts”
- “scales” and “levels”
- “actors” and “networks”
- “values” and “interests”
- “frames” and “narratives”
- “causes” and “effects”
- processes and relations
- “knowledges”, “incertitudes”
- “positives” and “negatives”
- “structures” and “agents”
- “actions” and “reactions”
- “imaginations” and “visions”
- “metrics” and “indices”

How to Appraise Alternative Policy Actions?

No shortage of strategic and policy assessment methods

Quantitative Culture

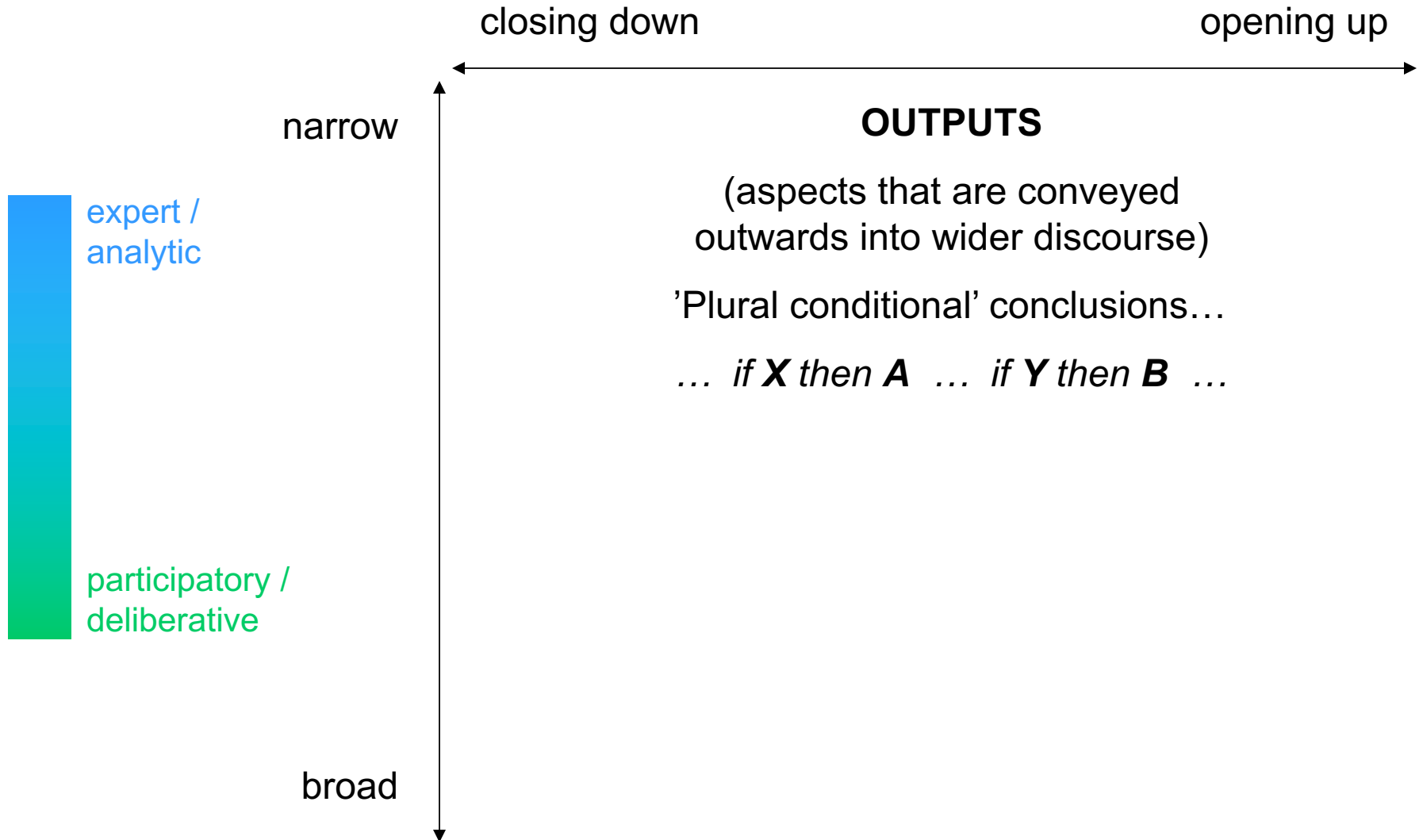
cost-benefit analysis
risk assessment
decision analysis
multiattribute utility theory
technology assessment
life cycle analysis
optimisation modelling
Bayesian networks
extended accounting
data mining
delphi methods

Qualitative Culture

scenario workshops
focus groups
participatory appraisal
stakeholder deliberation
ethnomethodology
collaborative design
capabilities assessment
strategic appraisal
action research
cooperative research
study groups

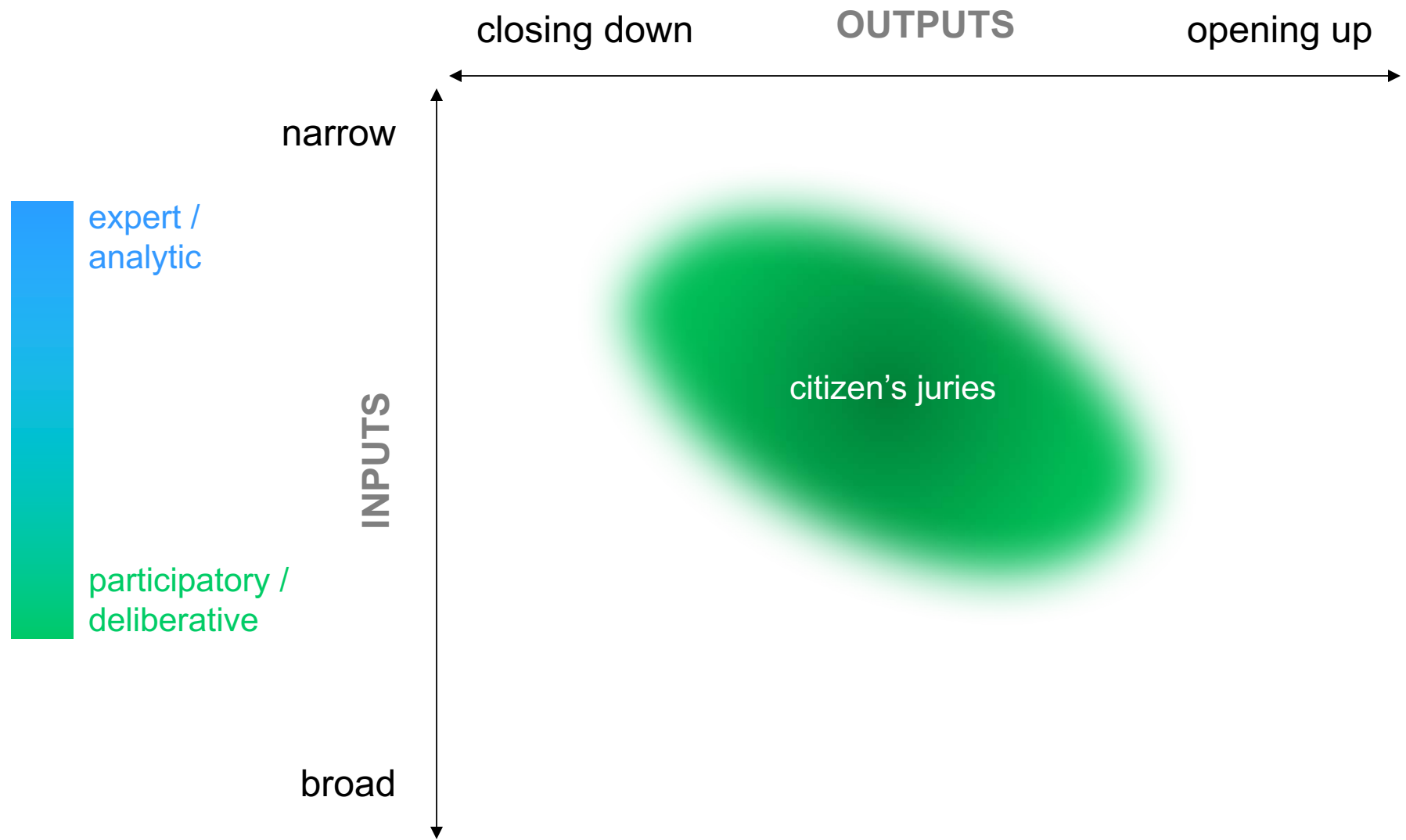
Challenges for Research and Appraisal

How more reflexively to inform policy and wider innovation governance?



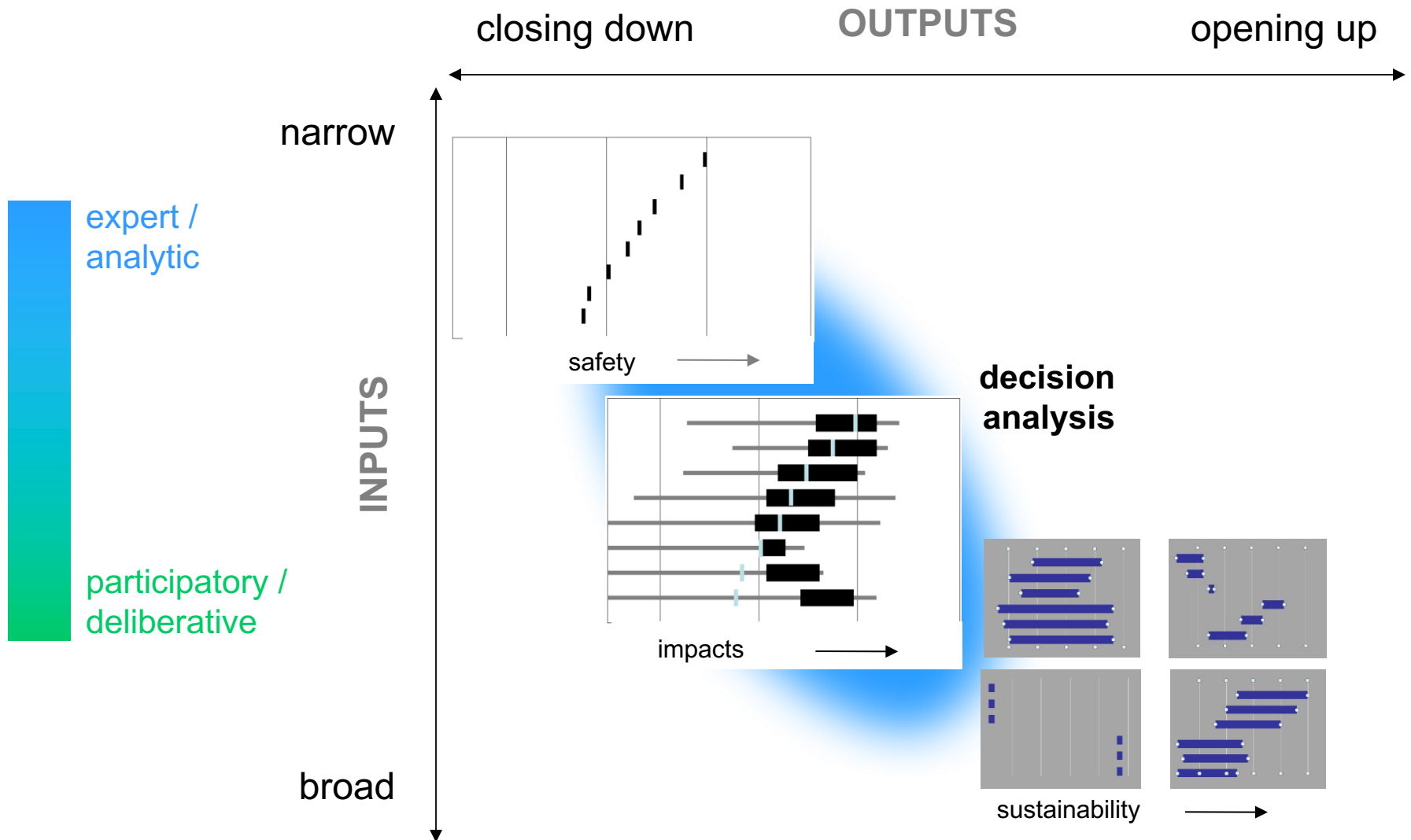
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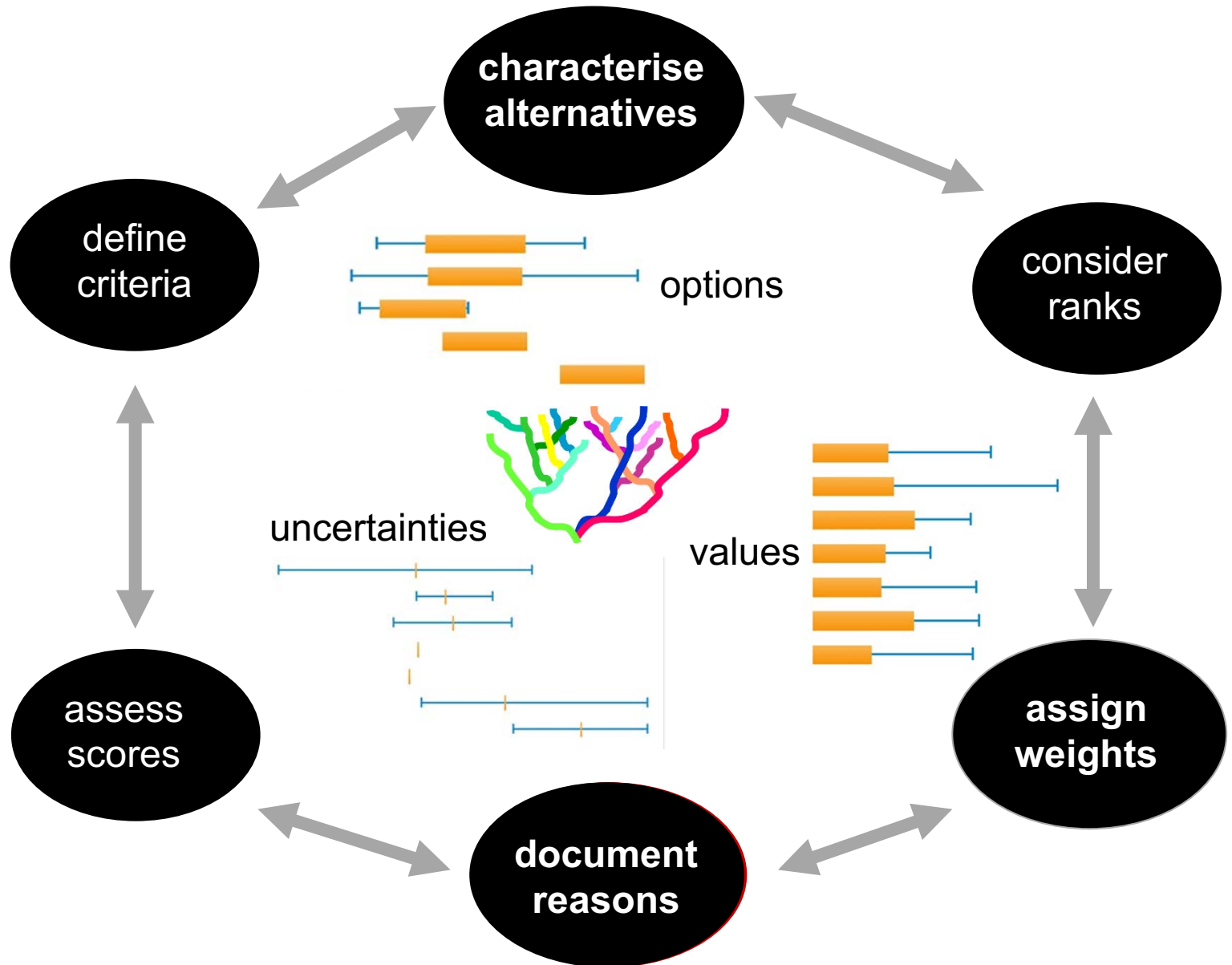


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The MCM process



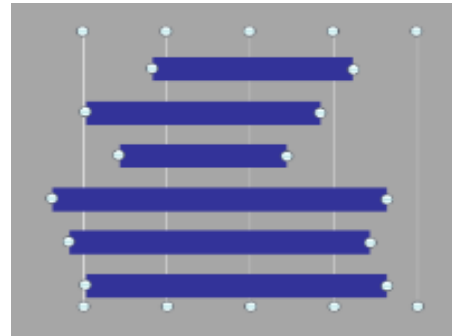
Mapping Perspectives for Deliberation

Multicriteria Mapping ‘opens up’ politics and power in expertise

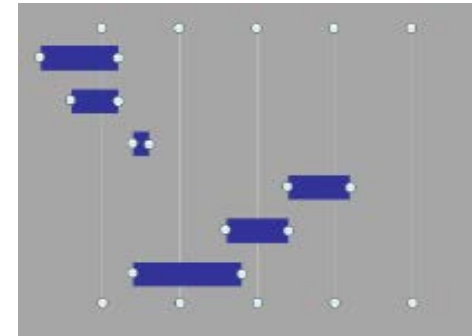


organics
low input
intensive
GM 1
GM 2
GM 3

UK Government
ecology chair



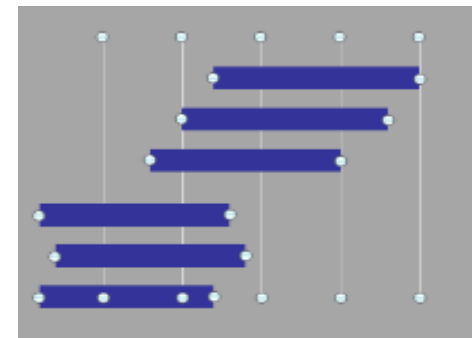
GM industry
research executive



UK Government
safety chair



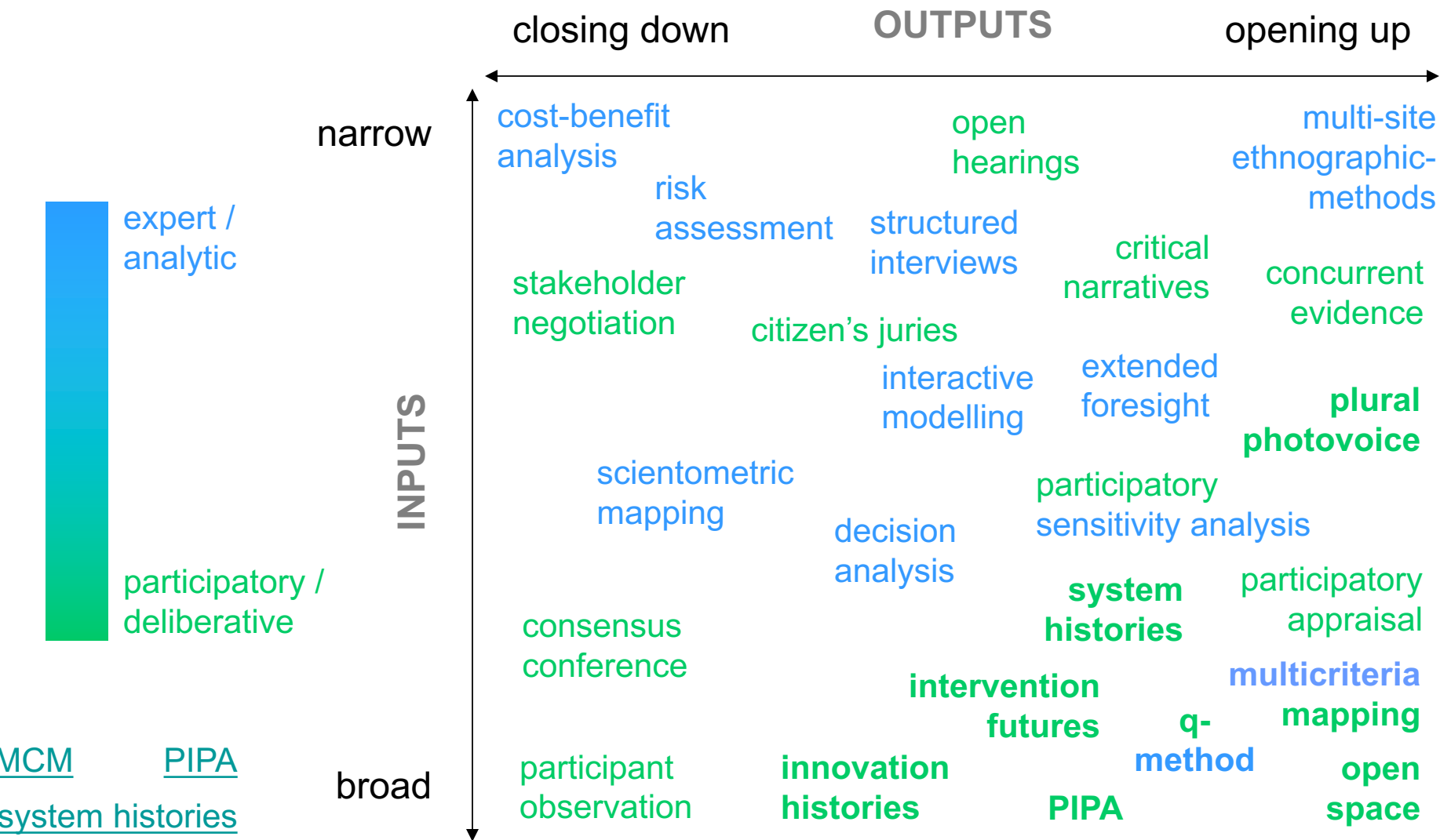
Green NGO
scientist



Acknowledging assumptions, values, uncertainties
‘plural & conditional’ approach is rigorous & democratic

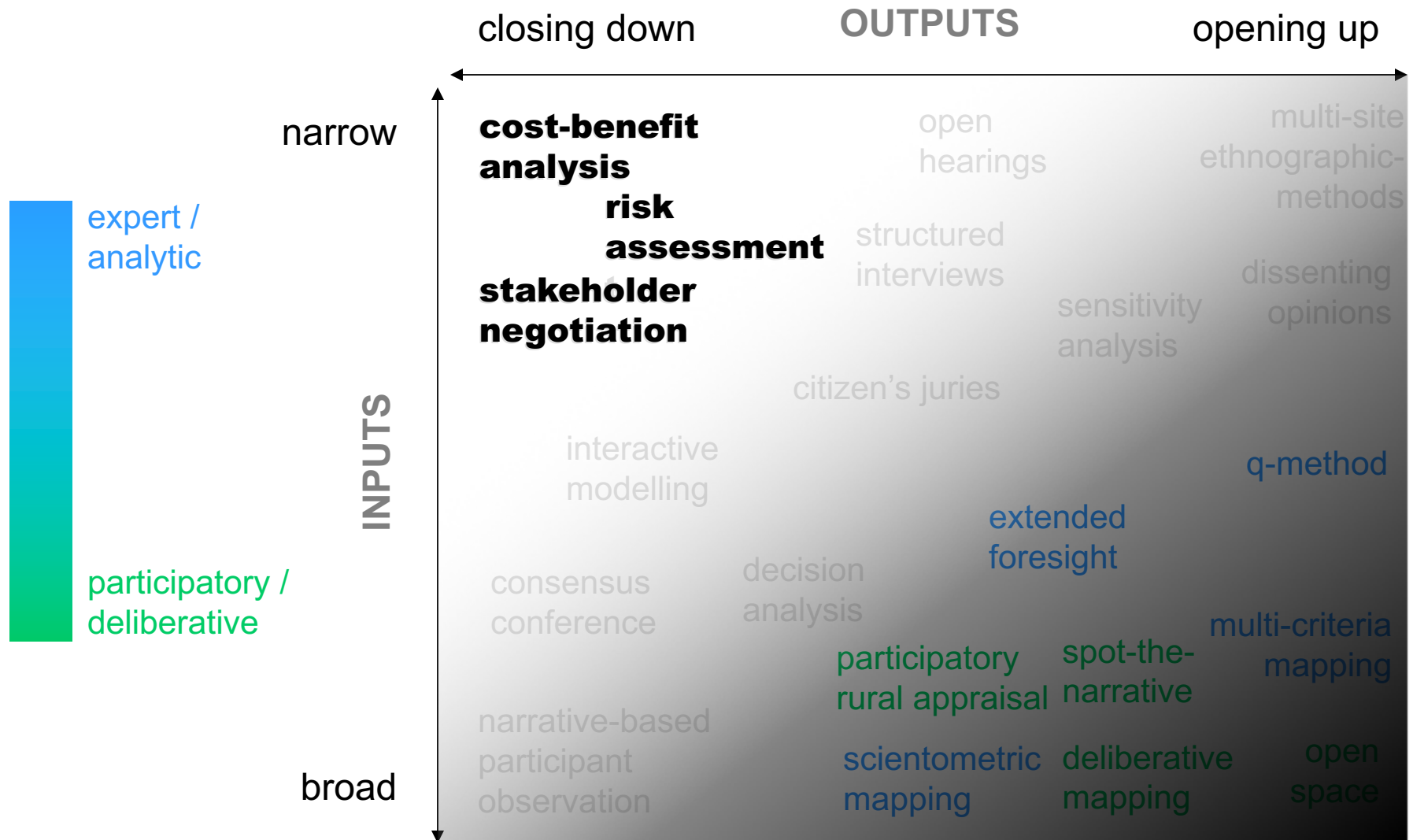
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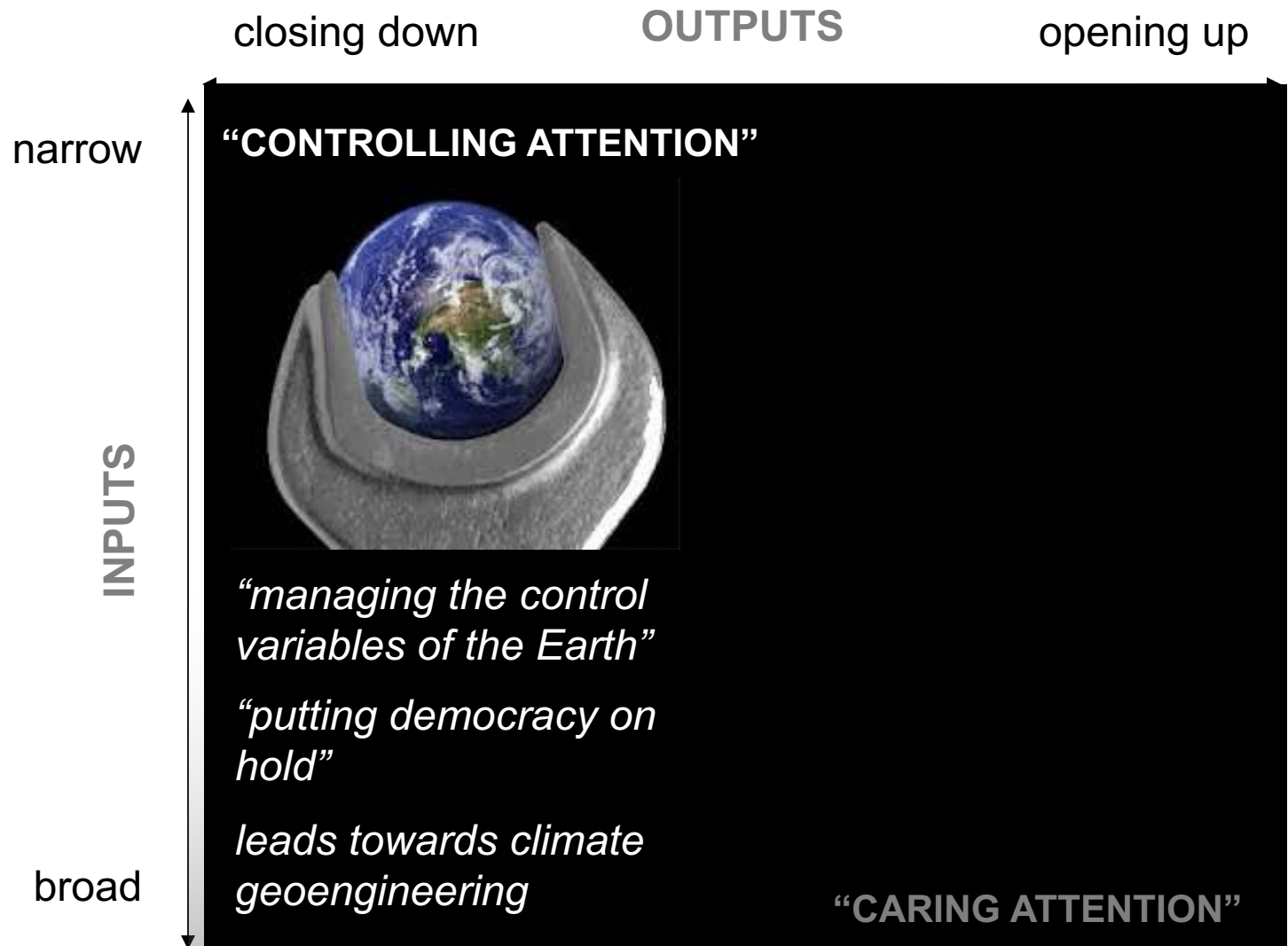
Power Closes Down Research and Appraisal

Institutions privilege blinkered scope, marginal analysis, incumbent interests
... evidence-basing, liability, insurance, agency remits, fiduciary responsibility



The Dance with Power

But incumbent gradients of power continue to pressure for closing down choices



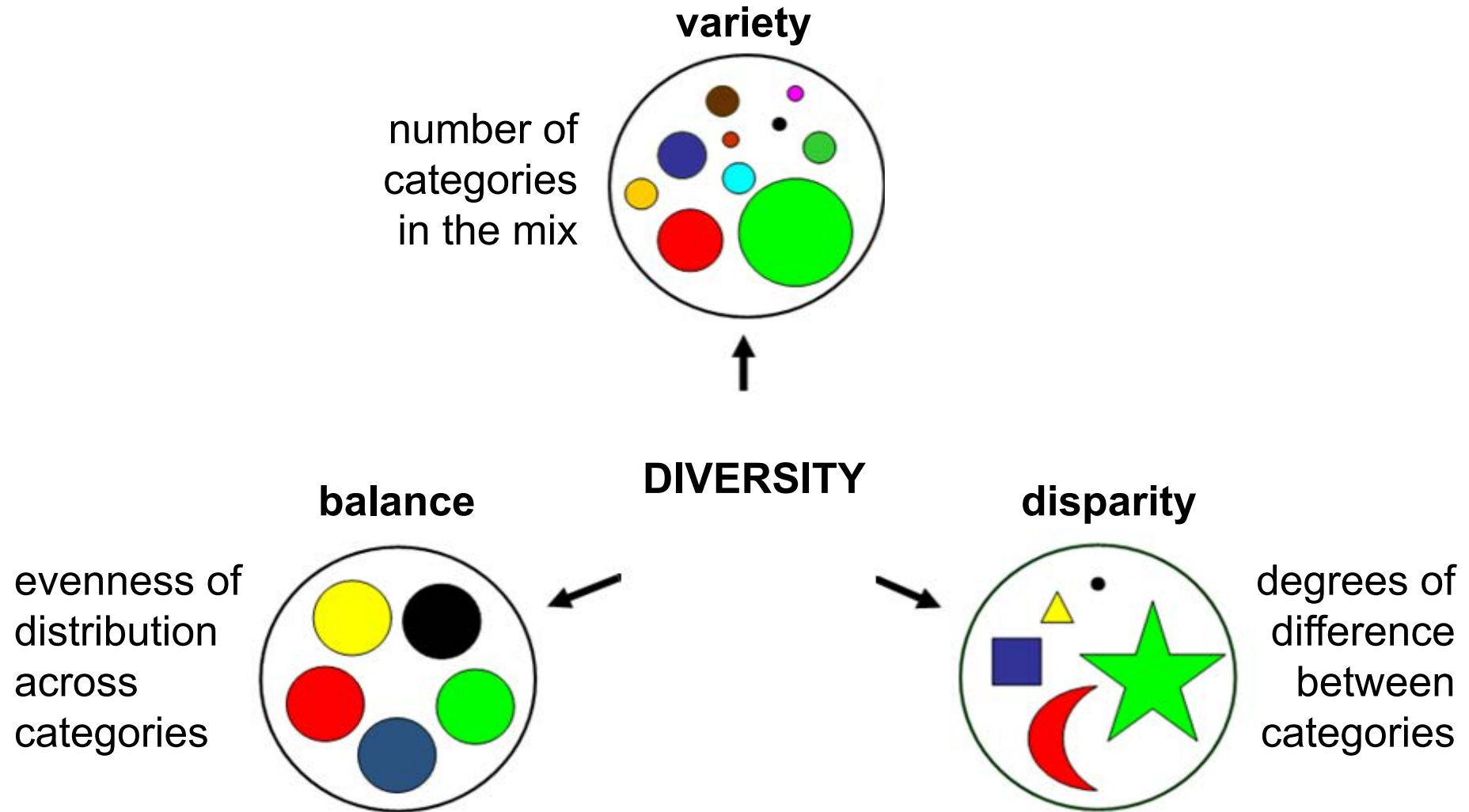
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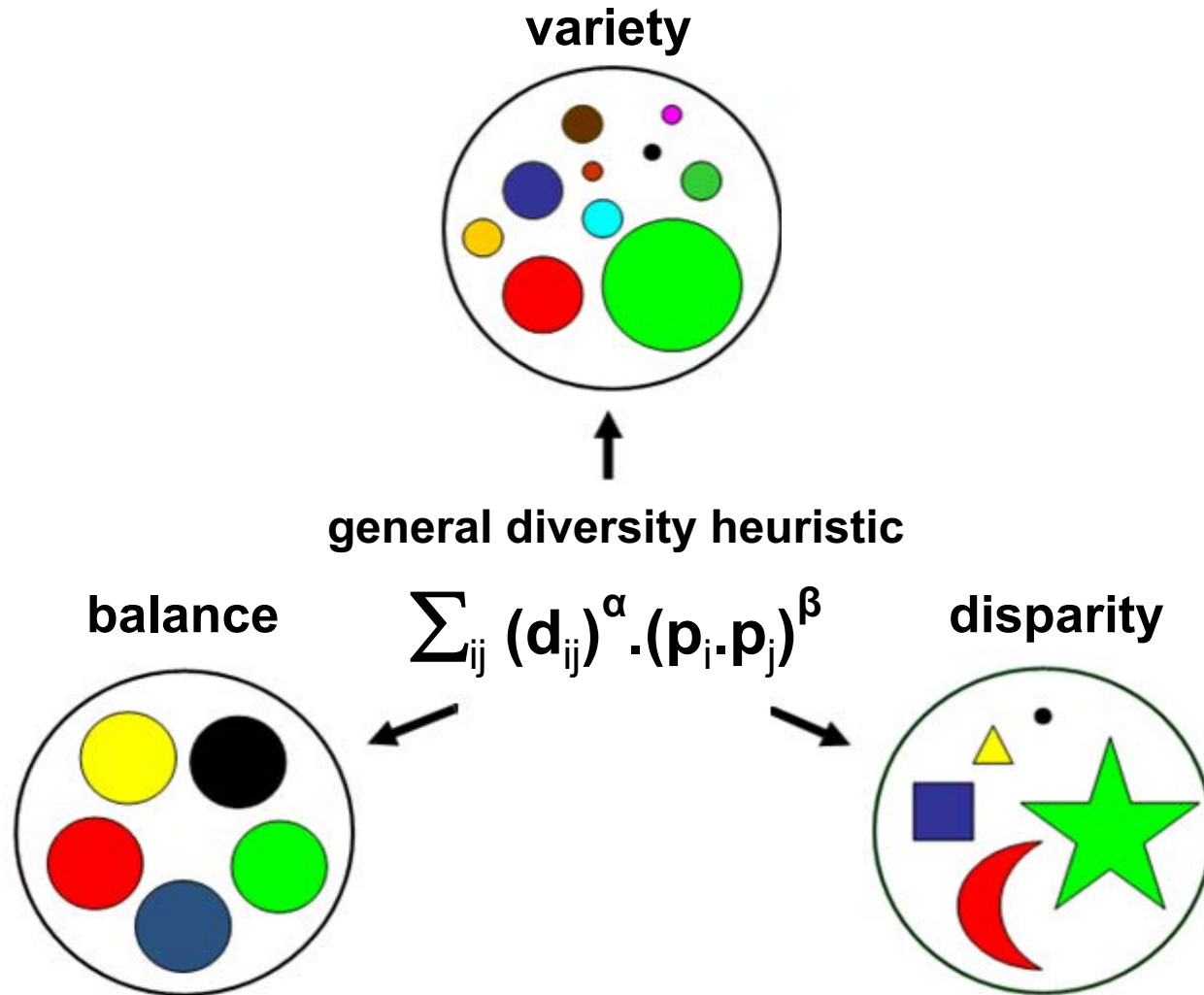
Mapping Diversities

... in 'inputs', 'outputs', 'methods', innovation pathways ...



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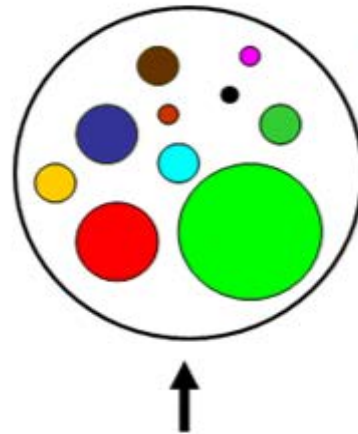


Mapping Diversities

... in 'inputs', 'outputs', 'methods', innovation pathways ...

**contrasting
structures of 'difference'**

variety



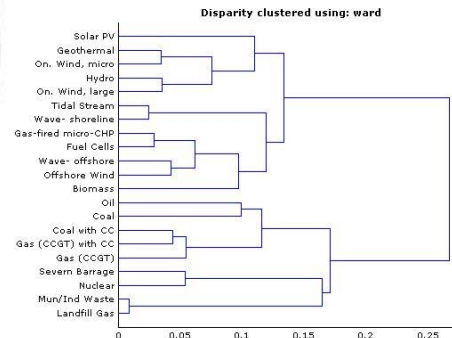
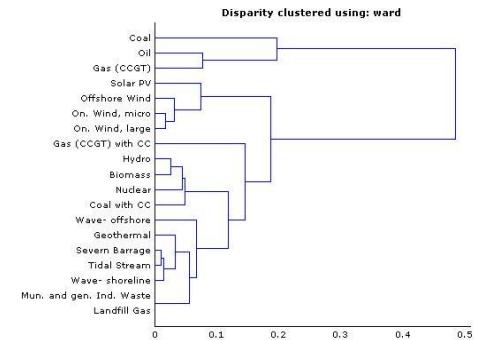
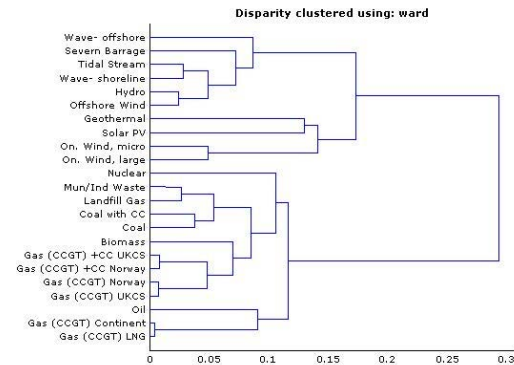
general diversity heuristic

balance



$$\sum_{ij} (d_{ij})^{\alpha} \cdot (p_i \cdot p_j)^{\beta}$$

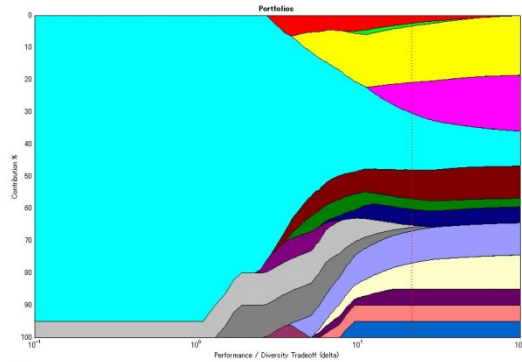
disparity



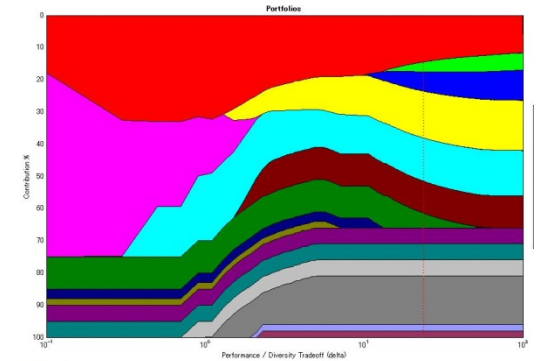
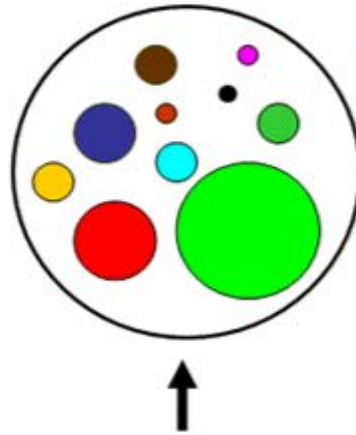
Mapping Diversities

... in 'inputs', 'outputs', 'methods', innovation pathways ...

contrasting
profiles for 'best portfolios'



variety



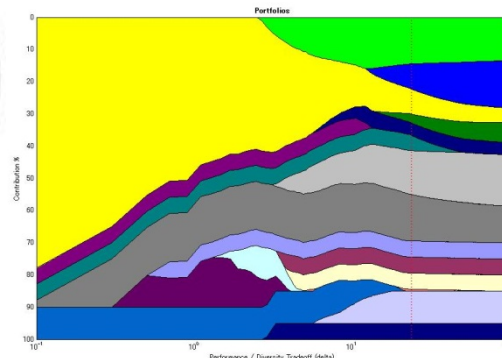
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disparity



Pathways Methods

1. Appreciating Pathways

2. Wider Context

3. Power And Plurality

4. Spanning Cultures

5. Building Repertoires

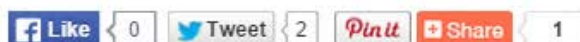
6. Stages And Tasks

7. Illustrative Methods

How To Use The Methods Section

Pathways Approach

METHODS



The STEPS Centre has developed a distinctive 'pathways approach'. Drawing on many other strands of work, this aims to understand the complex, non-linear interactions between social, technological and environmental systems. Some pathways may threaten poor peoples' livelihoods and health, while others create opportunities for sustainability.

Of all the diverse pathways that are typically viable in any given setting, various self-reinforcing dynamics typically mean that only a few 'lock in'. Many others are 'crowded out'. The strongest pressures 'close down' attention around those pathways that are favoured by the most powerful interests. The real challenge, then, is to find ways 'open up' this politics of pathways.

Our interdisciplinary research tries to link this theory to practical solutions that address today's global challenges.

To help make this link between theory and change, we are developing a suite of 'pathways methods' that help open up alternative social, technological and environmental pathways to sustainability, drawing on examples from both our own and others' work.

These resources are continually updated as this work progresses – and in interaction with a wider global community of colleagues. So, the site is therefore always provisional. And we welcome critical comments and suggestions.

METHODS RESOURCES



METHODS VIGNETTES



STEPS CASES: PROJECT APPLICATIONS



OTHER RESOURCES



INDICATIVE EXAMPLE: MULTICRITERIA MAPPING

AGRICULTURAL TRANSFORMATIONS IN KENYA

Pathways in and out of maize production

Alternative dryland staples for subsistence

Alternative dryland staples for market

Assisted seed multiplication of alternative dryland staples

Local improvement of local maize

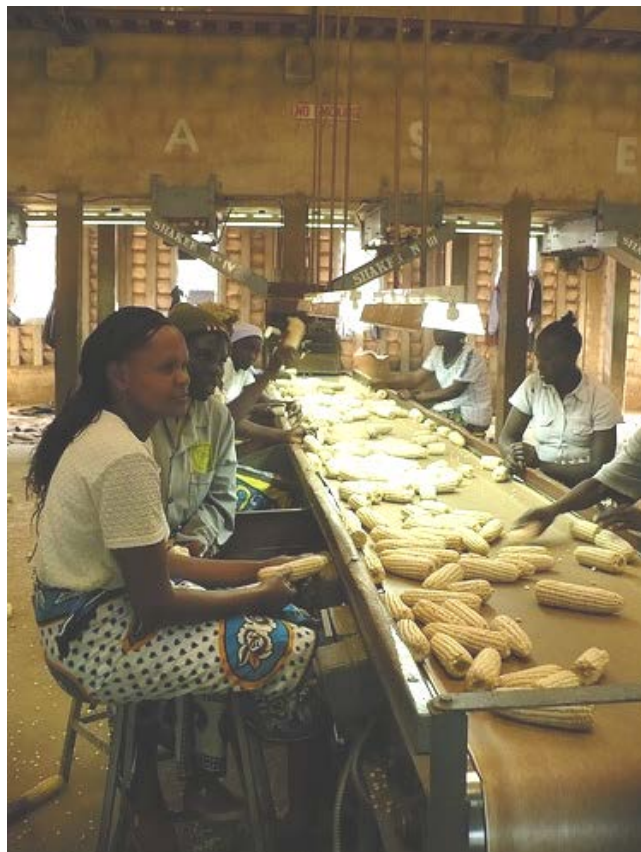
Assisted seed multiplication of maize

Individual high-value crop commercialization

Group-based high-value crop commercialization

Commercial delivery of new DT maize varieties

Public delivery of new DT maize varieties



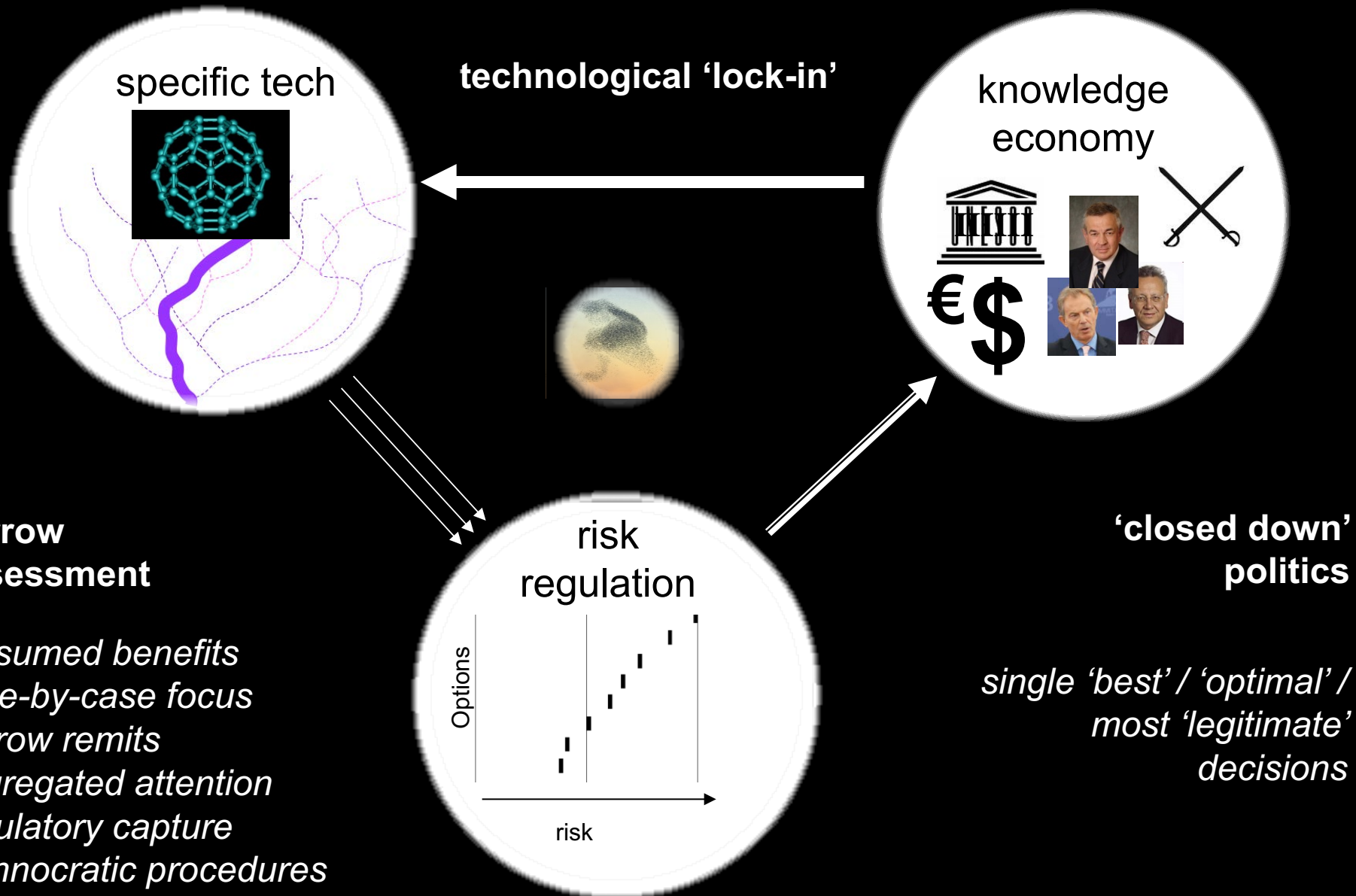
Democratising Progress

'sound science' attempts vainly to restrict political space, yields brittle results



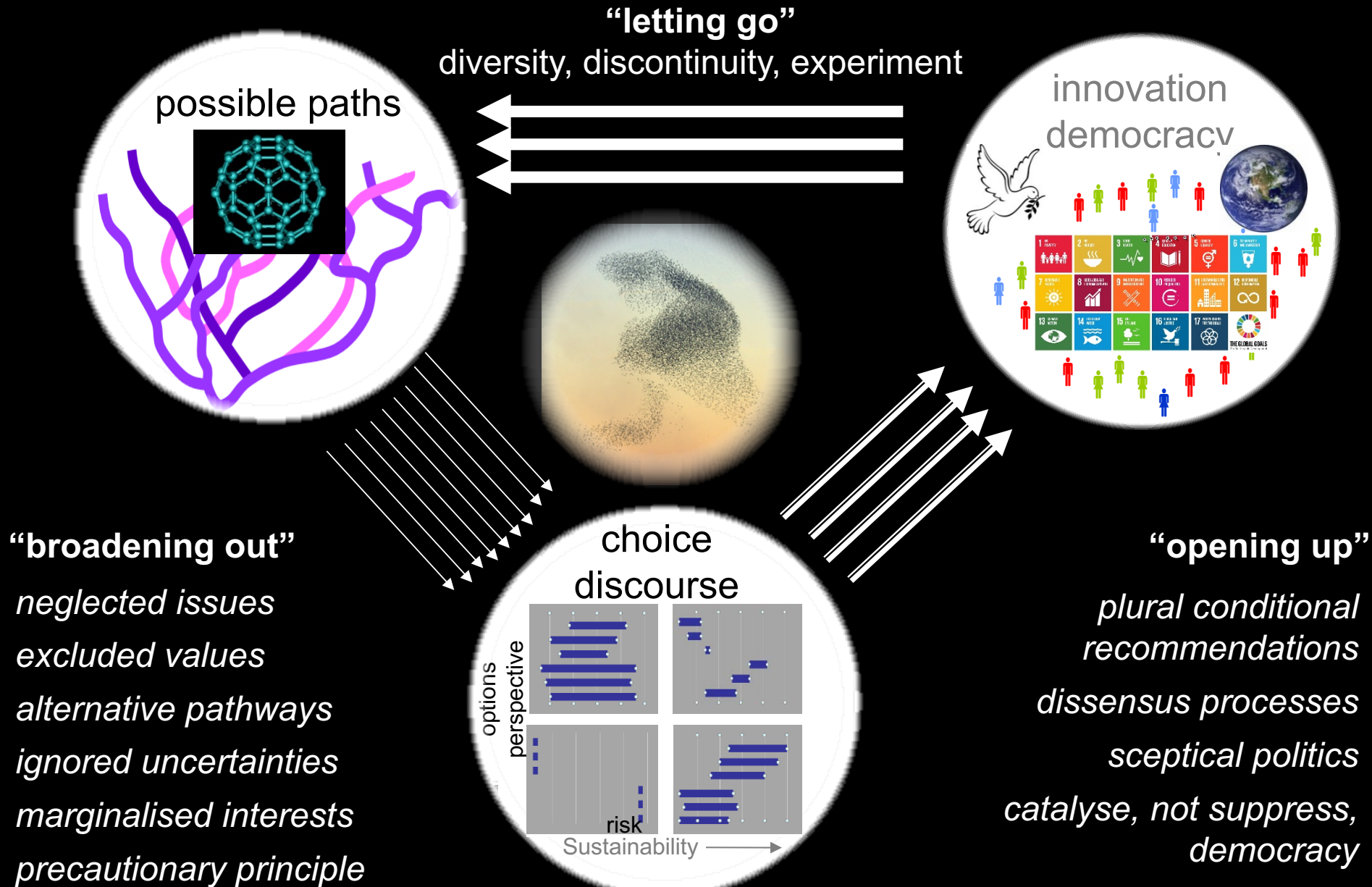
Democratising Progress

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Democratising Progress

‘opening up’ appraisal enables struggles towards accountability & robustness



BASIC STEPS

help appreciate alternative pathways



A: ENGAGE ACTORS - together:

- 1: review **relevant histories**
- 2: analyse associated **networks**
- 3: snowball salient **interests**
- 4: prioritise most **marginal**
- 5: examine **power relations**
- 6: identify basic pathway **visions**
- 7: be alert for hidden **plurality**
- 8: seek **critical feedback**

EXPLORE NARRATIVES

REVEAL STRATEGIES

CHARACTERISE DYNAMICS

KENYA MAIZE RESILIENCE



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Looking at alternative pathways for agricultural livelihoods around Sakai and Mmbasu in East & West Provinces of Kenya

Involving STEPs with

African Centre for Technology Studies

Centre for African Bio-Entrepreneurship

Tegemeo Institute, Egerton University

images and results courtesy of John Thompson, et al, STEPS

KENYA MAIZE RESILIENCE



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**Scoping
interviews**

**Historic panel
data**

Trends analysis

**Rapid rural
appraisals**

Focus groups

**Key informant
interviews**

Disaggregate gender, wealth, productivity

Focus on

5 “low potential” villages (Sakai)

also 3 “high potential” villages (Mmbasu)

KENYA MAIZE RESILIENCE

**Explore framings:
particularly ideas about
‘resilience’, ‘innovation’
and ‘pathways’**

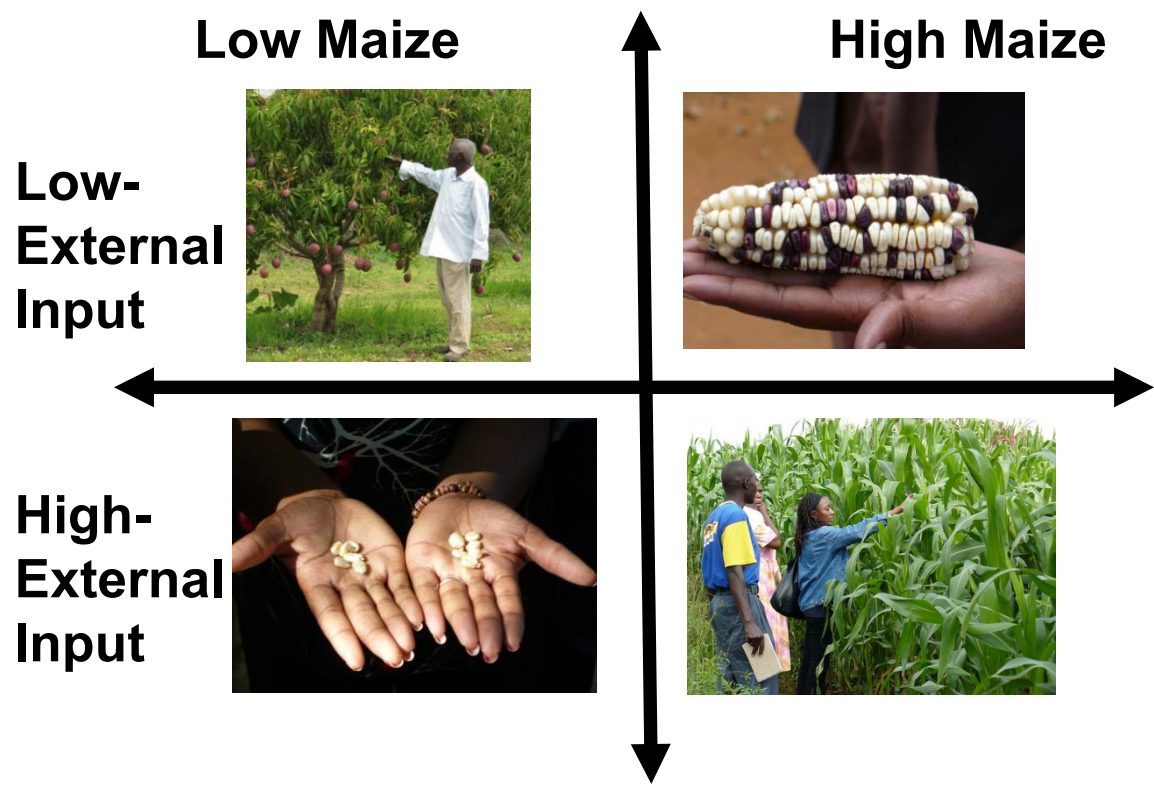
**Test concepts in relation
to environmental change
and maize in Kenya**

B: EXPLORE NARRATIVES

- 1: review **relevant** histories
- 2: elicit notions of **systems**
- 3: explore related **framings**
- 4: address **Sustainability** values
- 5: **scope possible pathways**
- 6: review aspects of **incertitude**
- 7: differentiate **perspectives**
- 8: seek **critical feedback**



KENYA MAIZE RESILIENCE

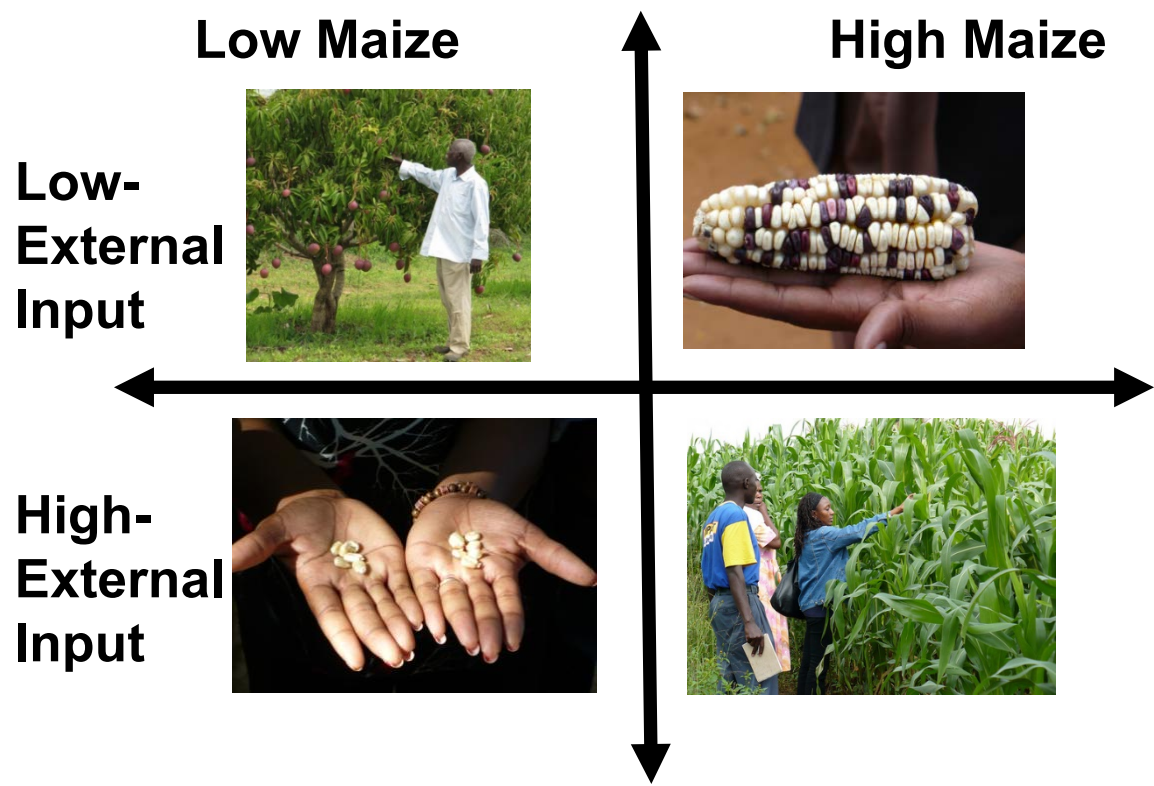


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KENYA MAIZE RESILIENCE



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KENYA MAIZE RESILIENCE

Alternative dryland staples
for subsistence

Alternative dryland staples
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Assisted seed multiplication
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Individual high-value crop
commercialization

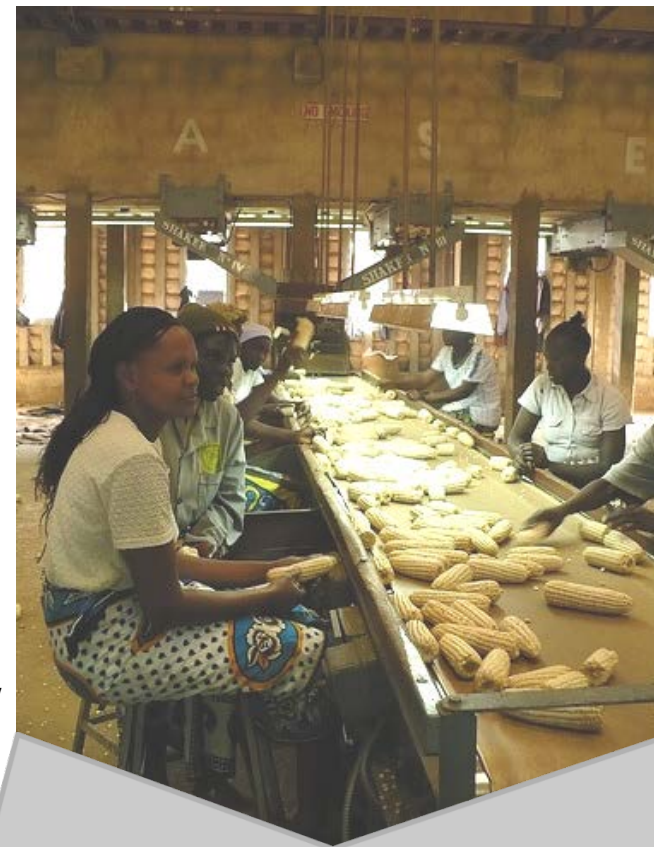
Group-based high-value crop
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Local improvement of
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Assisted seed
multiplication of maize

Commercial delivery of new
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C CHARACTERISE DYNAMICS:

- 1: review **relevant histories**
- 2: explore **challenges/opportunities**
- 3: scrutinise likely **shocks/stresses**
- 4: look at actors' **strength/weakness**
- 5: examine **decision/branch points**
- 6: identify **winners/losers**
- 7: attend to issues of **power/politics**
- 8: seek **critical feedback**



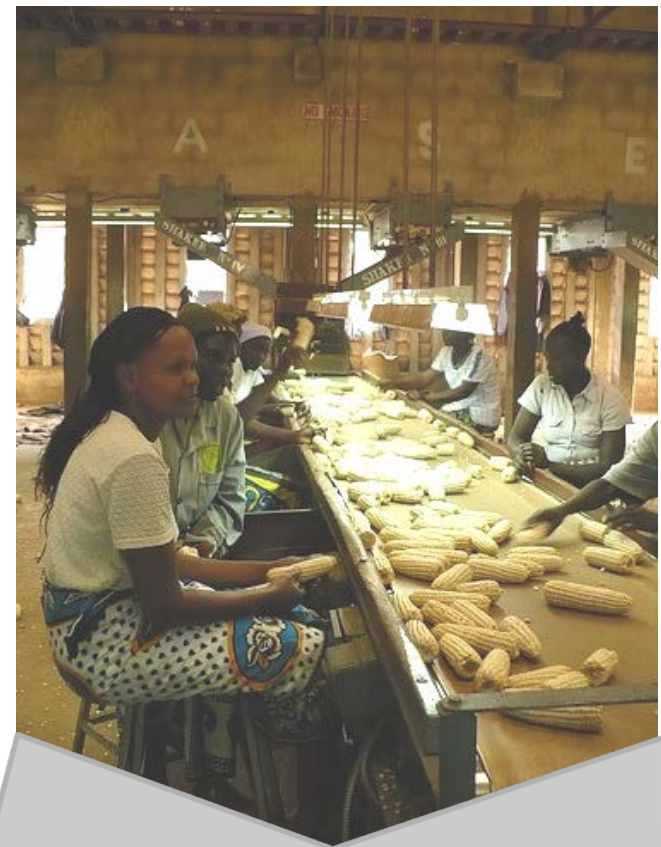
KENYA MAIZE RESILIENCE

pathways served as starting point for opening up the discussion with farmers, scientists and policy makers on:

Diversity of pathways in and out of maize

Relevant criteria for choosing one pathway over another

Alternative visions of the future and institutional support arrangements



C CHARACTERISE DYNAMICS:

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KENYA MAIZE RESILIENCE



Quantitative and qualitative data from multicriteria mapping

Interviews and group discussions prompted by this process

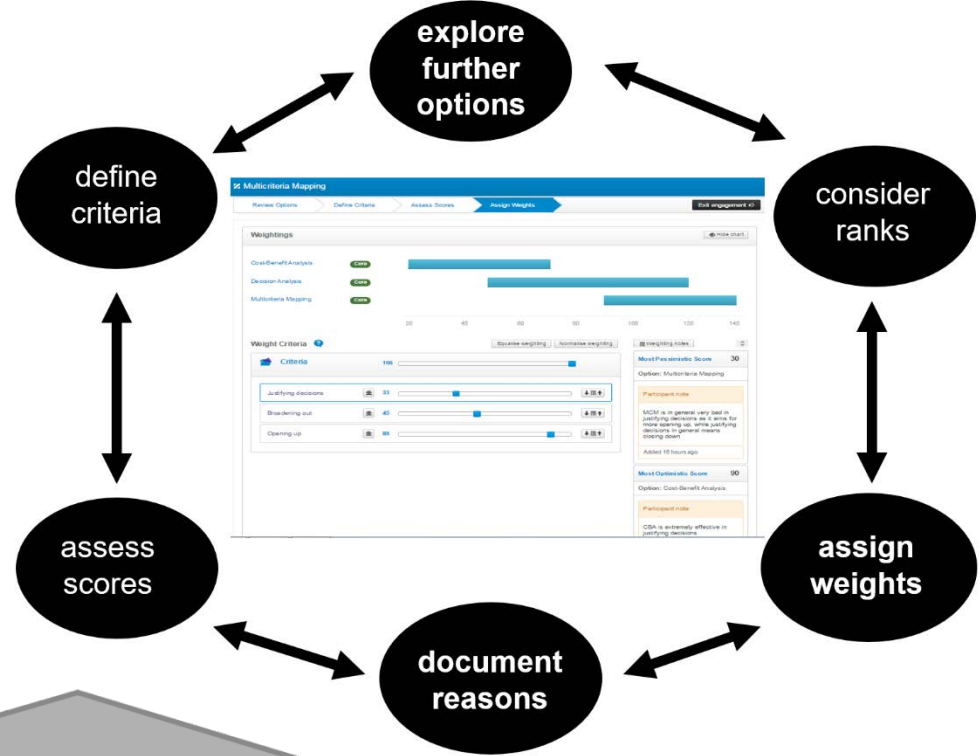


D: REVEAL POLITICAL ACTIONS

- 1: review **relevant histories**
- 2: confirm **key protagonists**
- 3: explore **forms of agency**
- 4: define possible **interventions**
- 5: identify **coping strategies**
- 6: examine **possible responses**
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KENYA MAIZE RESILIENCE

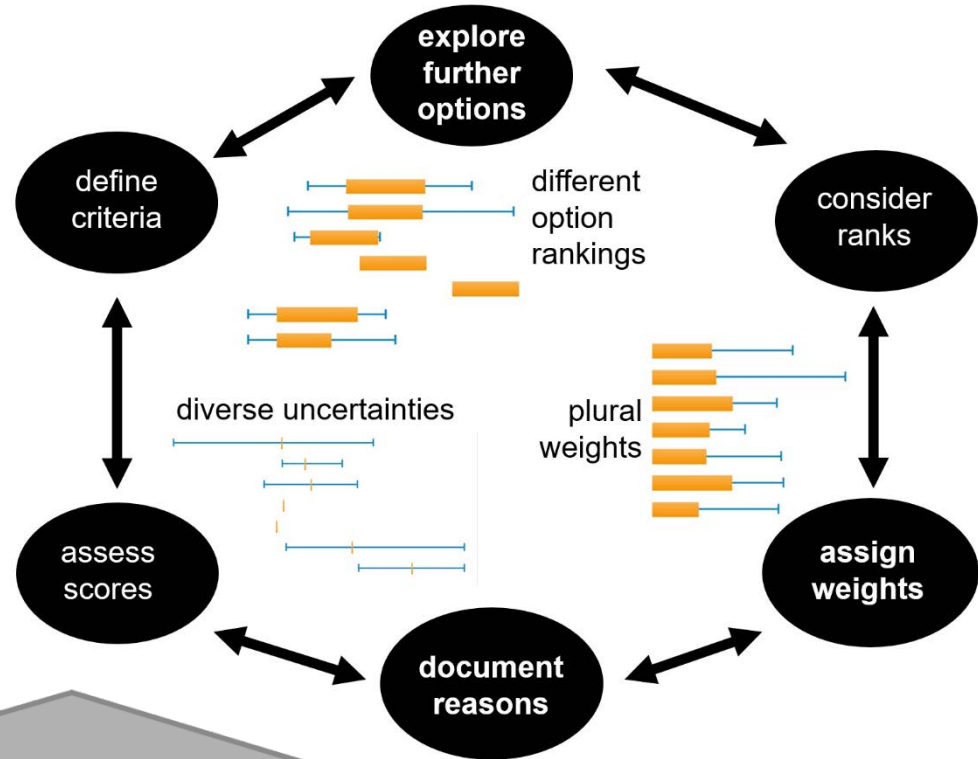


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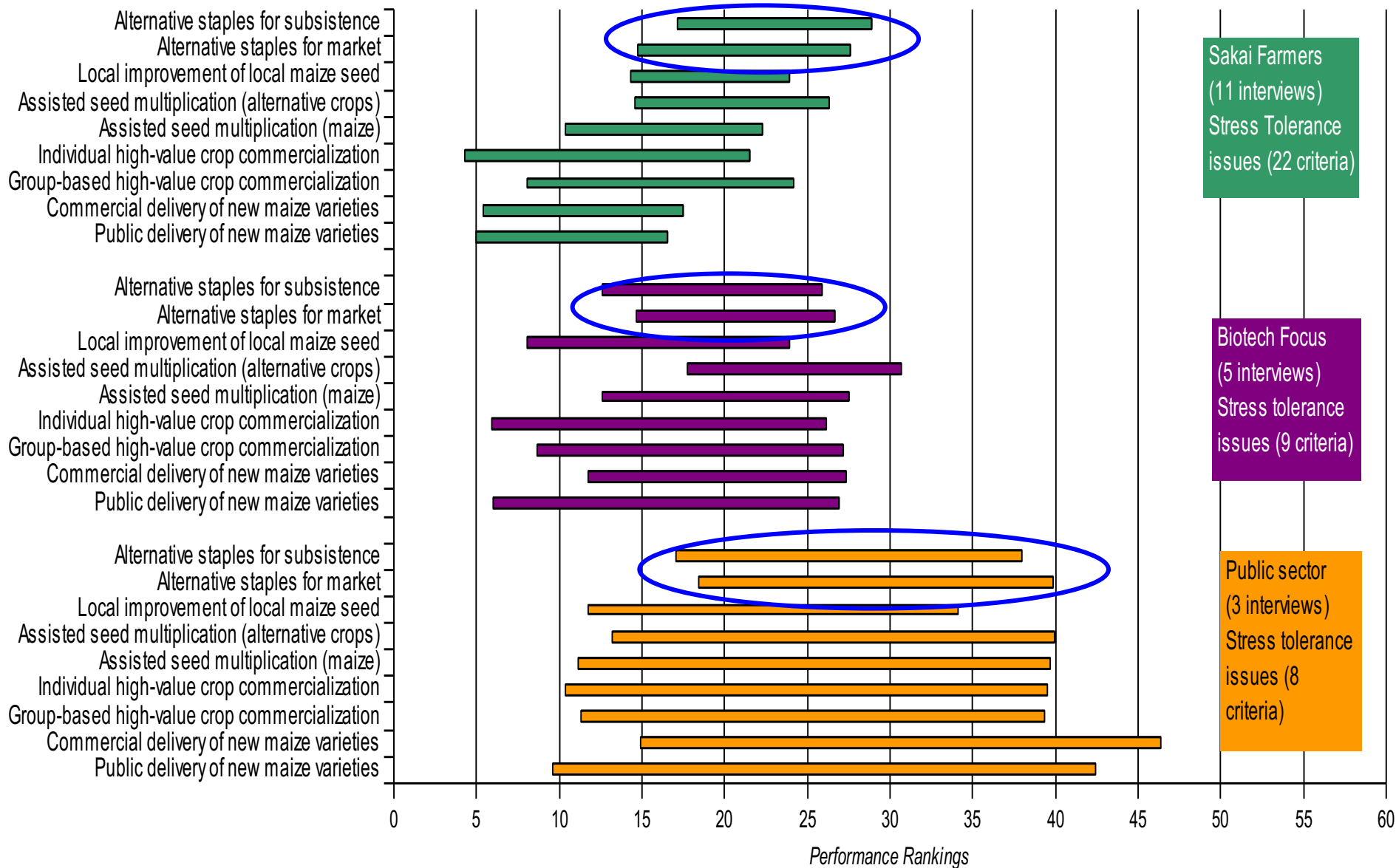
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Pathways Out of Maize: Orphans or Siblings?

Performance rankings for different groups of stakeholders shows a surprising amount of optimism about alternative dryland staple crops, especially under a set of stress tolerance criteria



Pathways in Maize:

Sakai farmer performance rankings show a preference for *local* maize, not *new* maize

