Sociotechnical observations

1. The technical is shaped by the nontechnical.
2. The technical shapes the nontechnical in turn.
3. Most problems we care about are more social or political than technical.
4. Technology can be a kind of politics by other means.

Sociotechnical advice for political technology projects

1. Try to understand the role of nontechnical factors (e.g., rules, culture, psychology) in the success or failure of technical projects.
2. Meet people where they are unless you have a good reason not to.
3. Help people do what they already want to do, but aren't doing.
    a. This is easier than trying to get people to do something they don't want to do, or care about something they don't care about.
4. If you're building technology for collective use, you might be building an institution.
    a. You might want to think about rules, roles, motivation, routines, and incentives.
5. Try to understand the technology and its limits. Don't forget maintenance and content moderation.
6. If you value theory, get involved in practice. If you value practice, consider what theory can offer you.
7. Before acting: read, listen, think, and discuss. Predictable, avoidable failure is regrettable.