

Integration – what can I do? A systems perspective

Kevin Collins

Open Systems Research Group

COMMUNICATION
AND
SYSTEMS
Department

k.b.collins@open.ac.uk



The Open University

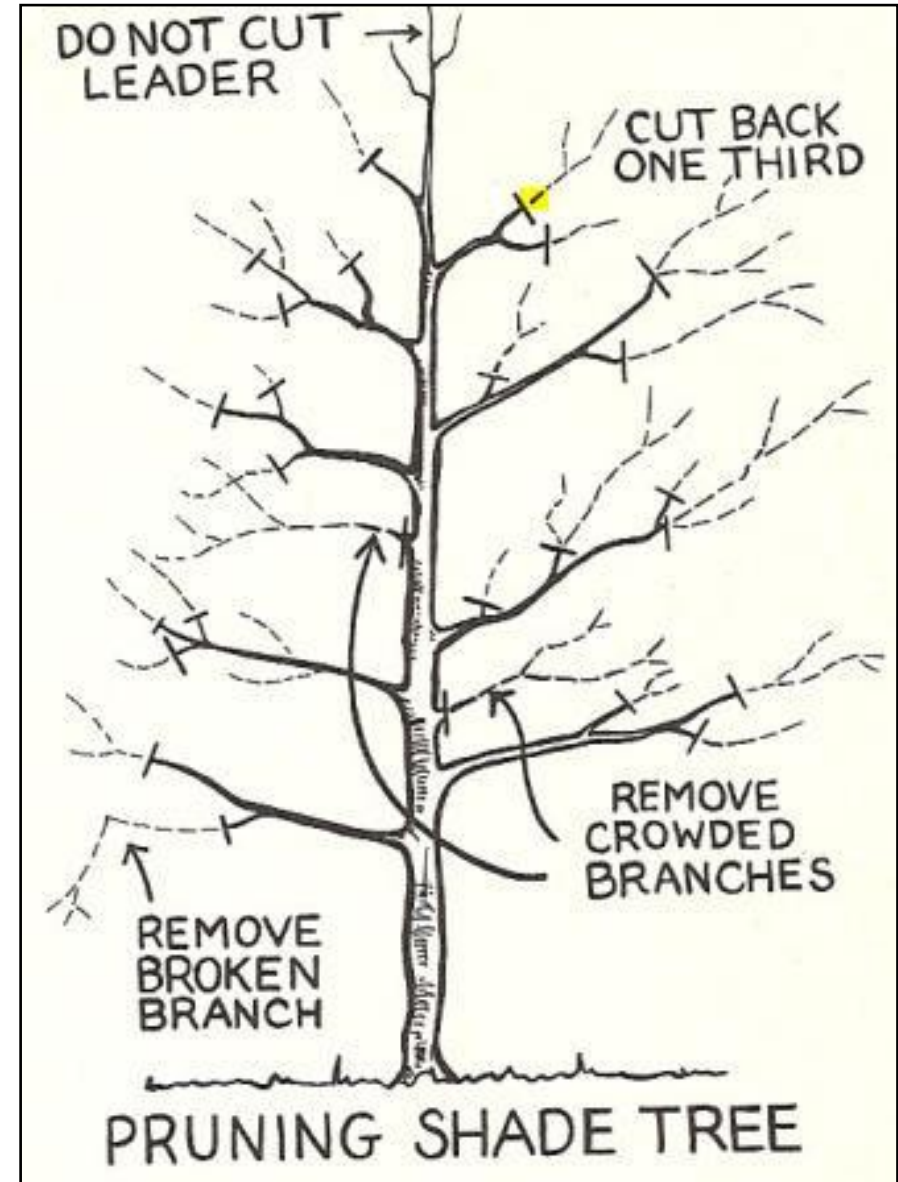
Integrated Water Management
CIWEM
21 October 2010



My Brief:

- Getting us thinking about integration
- Enabling insights
- Ways forward

- Outcome:
 - awareness of integration as systems thinking and practice





Integrated data
Integrated science
Integrated care
Integrated transport
Integrated wiring
Integrated society
Integrated government
Integrated software
Integrated services
Integrated policy
Integrated culture
Integrated design
Integrated payment
Integrated management
Integrated computing
Integrated thinking
Integrated communication

Integration:

- Everywhere
 - Desirable
- Understandable
 - Catchy
 - Affirming
- Taken for granted
 - Expansive



Integrated data
Integrated pest control
Integrated science
Integrated care
Integrated transport
Integrated wiring
Integrated society
Integrated software
Integrated services
Integrated culture
Integrated policy
Integrated payment
Integrated design
Integrated management
Integrated thinking
Integrated communication
Integrated computing

Apart from 'cuts',
what is the
missing word
that connects
all of these?



System

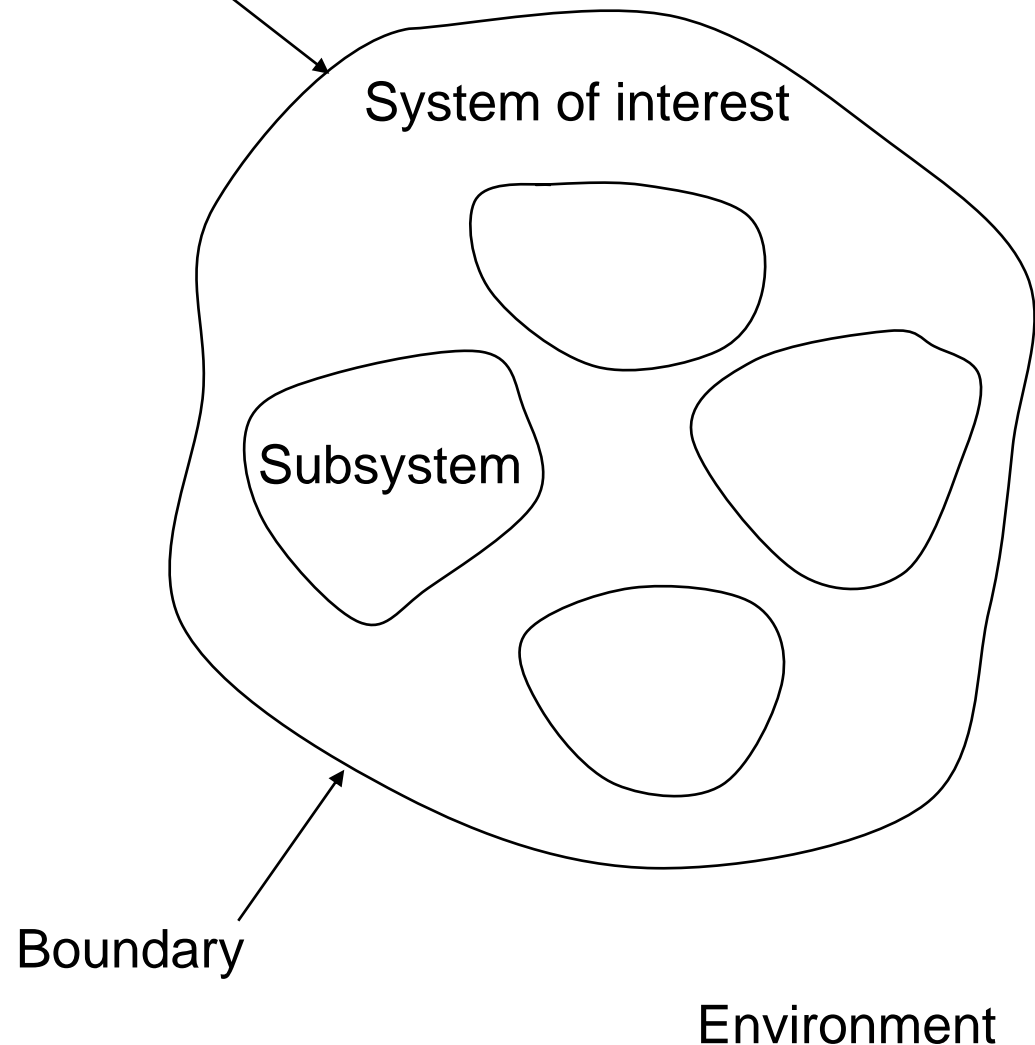


A distinction made by someone
(they have placed things together)



System

- Greek verb: *synhistanai* - 'to place together'
- An organised whole defined by someone as having a purpose: a system of interest
- Comprises:
 - the person making the distinction
 - a boundary choice
 - a set of things that do the work (elements / subsystems)
 - environment





A system of interest is, by definition,
integrated

So what is the problem?



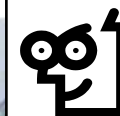
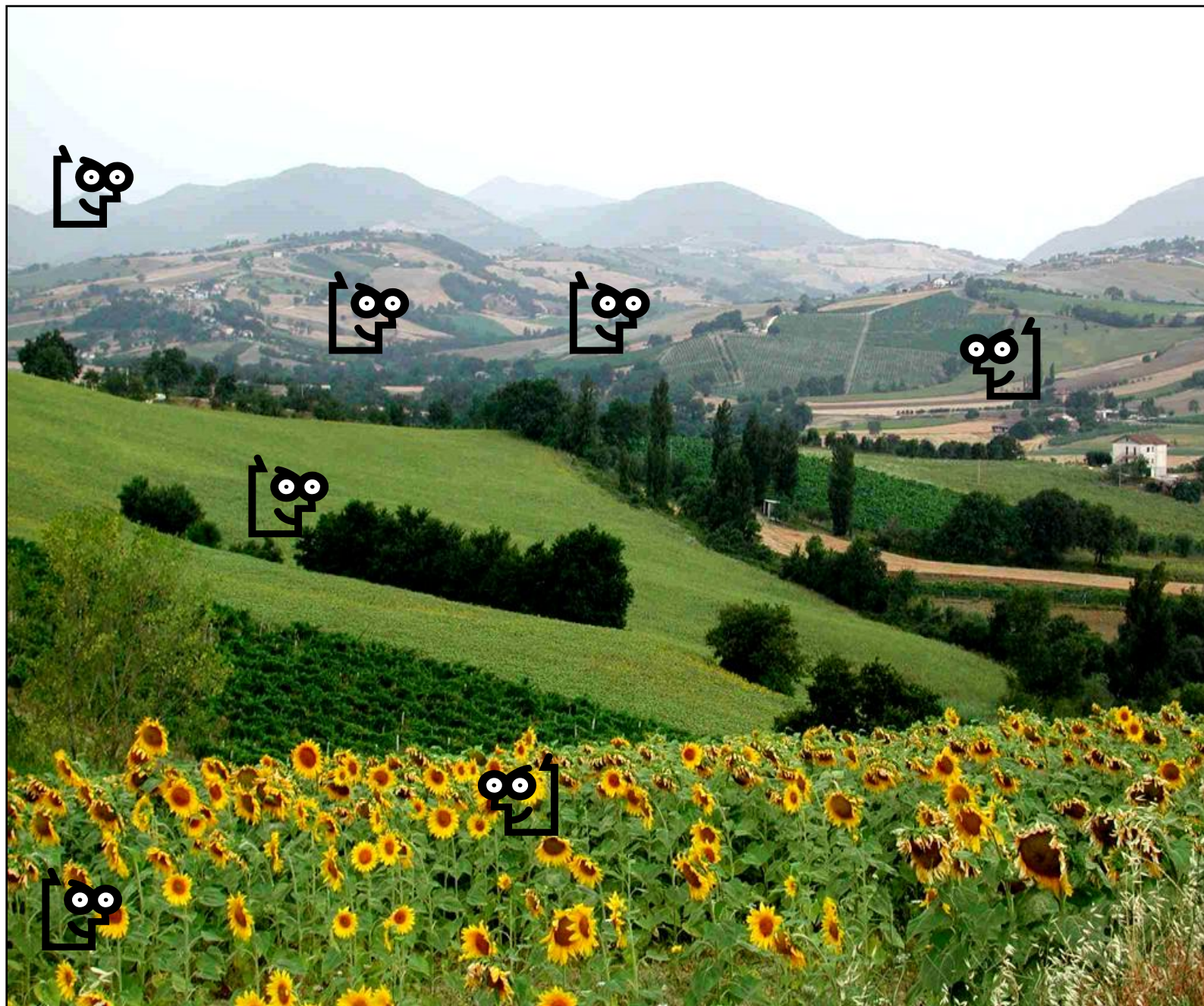
We have different views on the what, why, how of integration

- $A + B = AB?$
- $A + B = C?$
- $A - B = ?$
- $A \times B = ?$
- $A / B = ?$
- $B + A = BA?$
- $B - A = ?$
- $B / A = ?$
- $A + B + C = ABC?$

Which of these = integration?



A systems
view
of
a
situation....

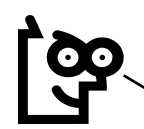
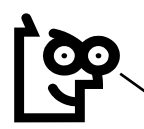
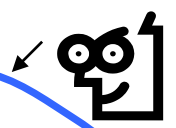
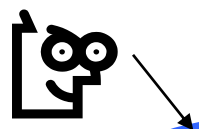


...recognises
multiple
stakeholders
which
means....





...recognising multiple viewpoints and partial understandings of the 'situation'

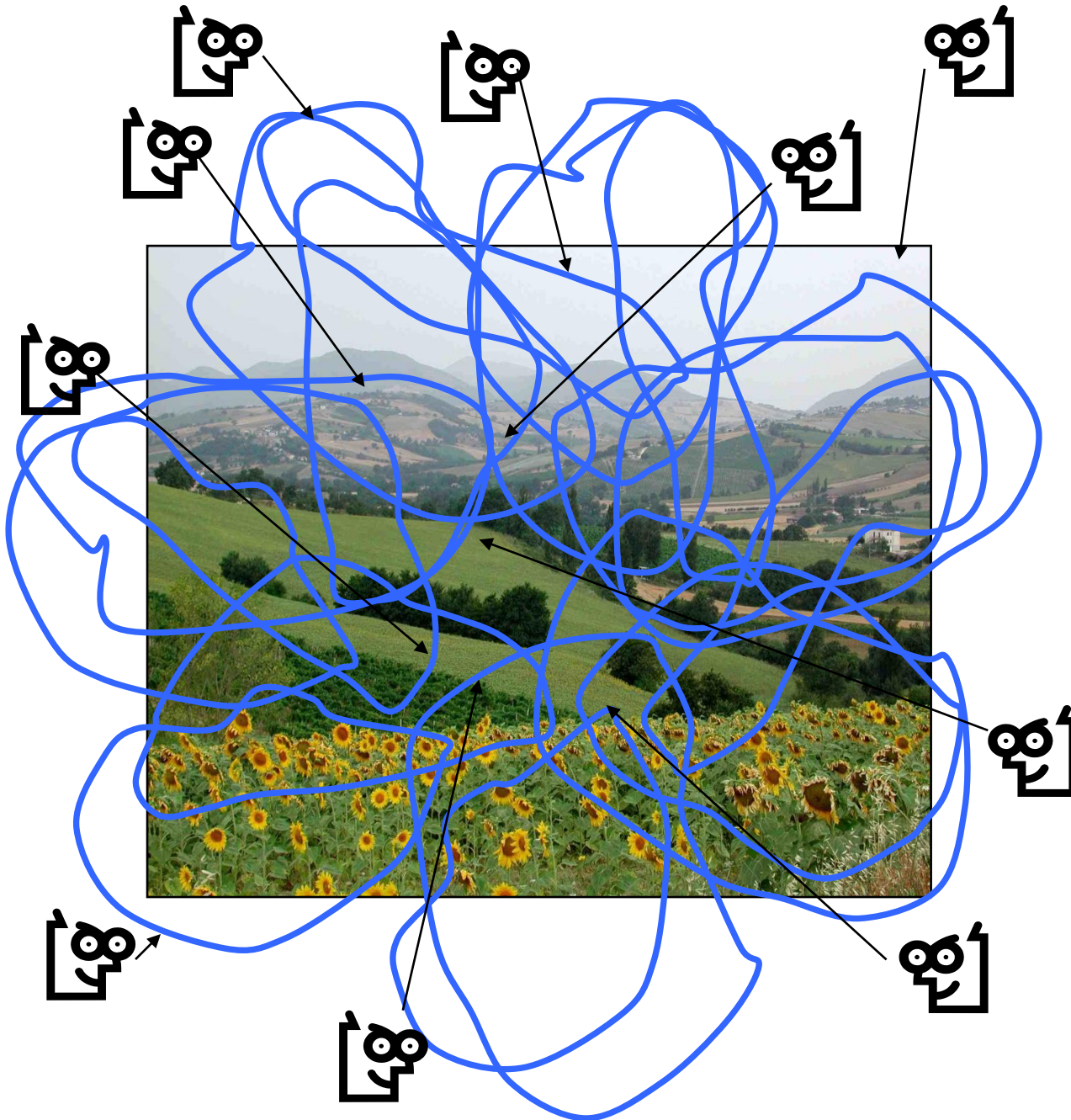




Integration is not mechanistic, linear

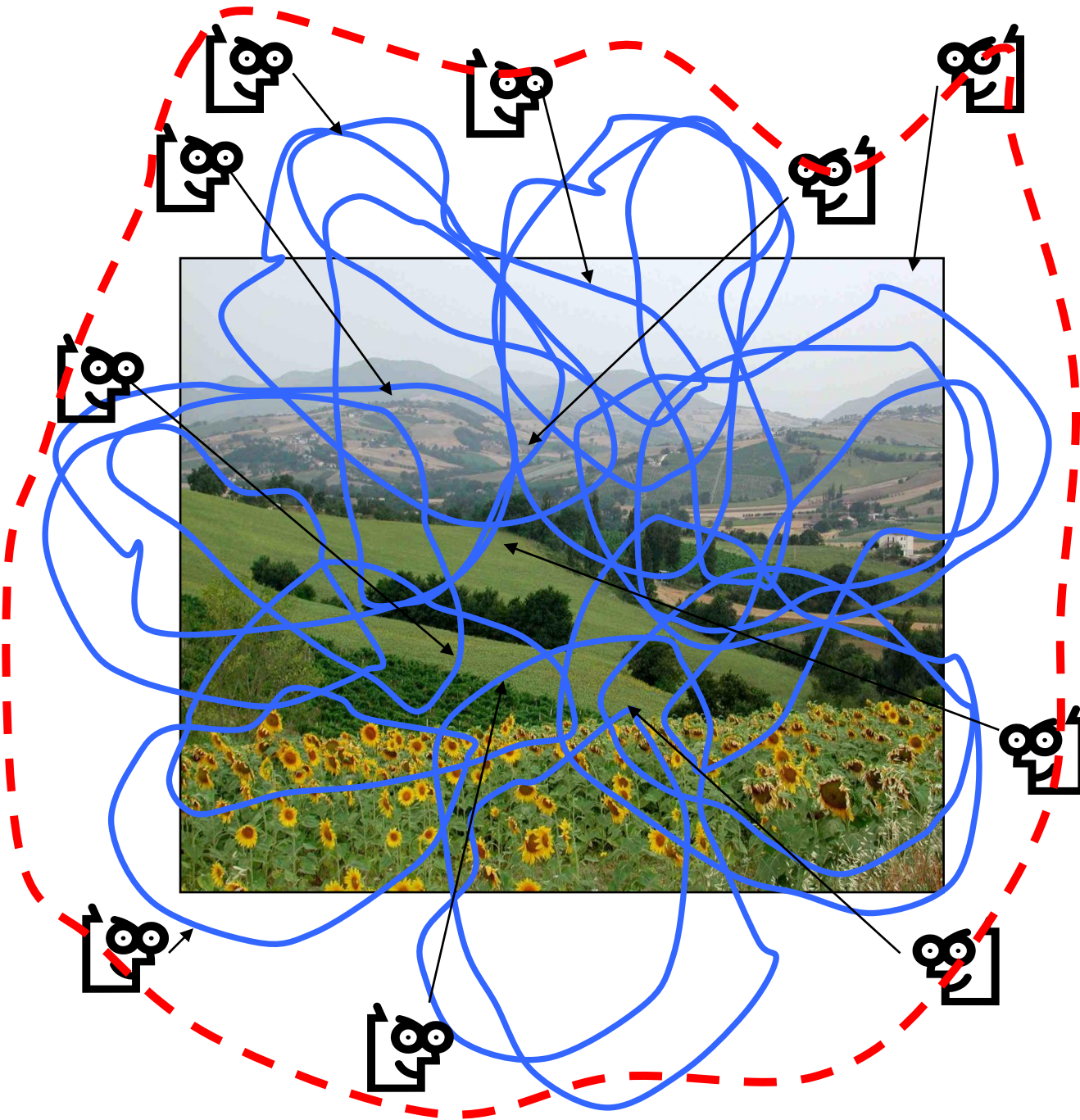
It is a 'messy' issue because of multiple:

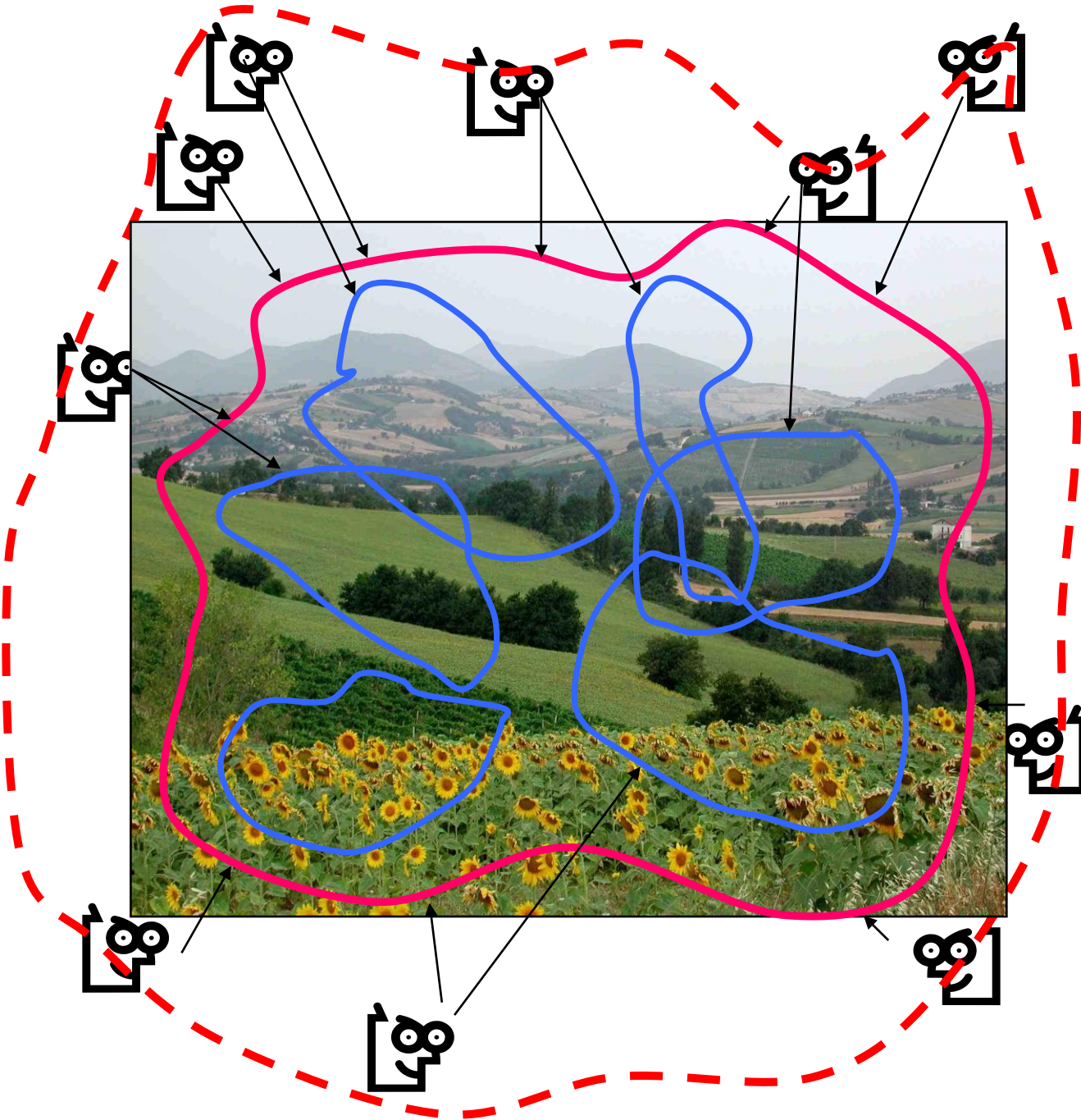
- *stakeholding*
- *perspectives*
- *systems of interest*
 - *purposes*
- *boundary choices*
- *interdependencies*
 - *controversies*
 - *practices*





Integration requires social learning processes if different systems of interest are to be understood in order to bring about more integrated thinking and practice which leads to concerted action



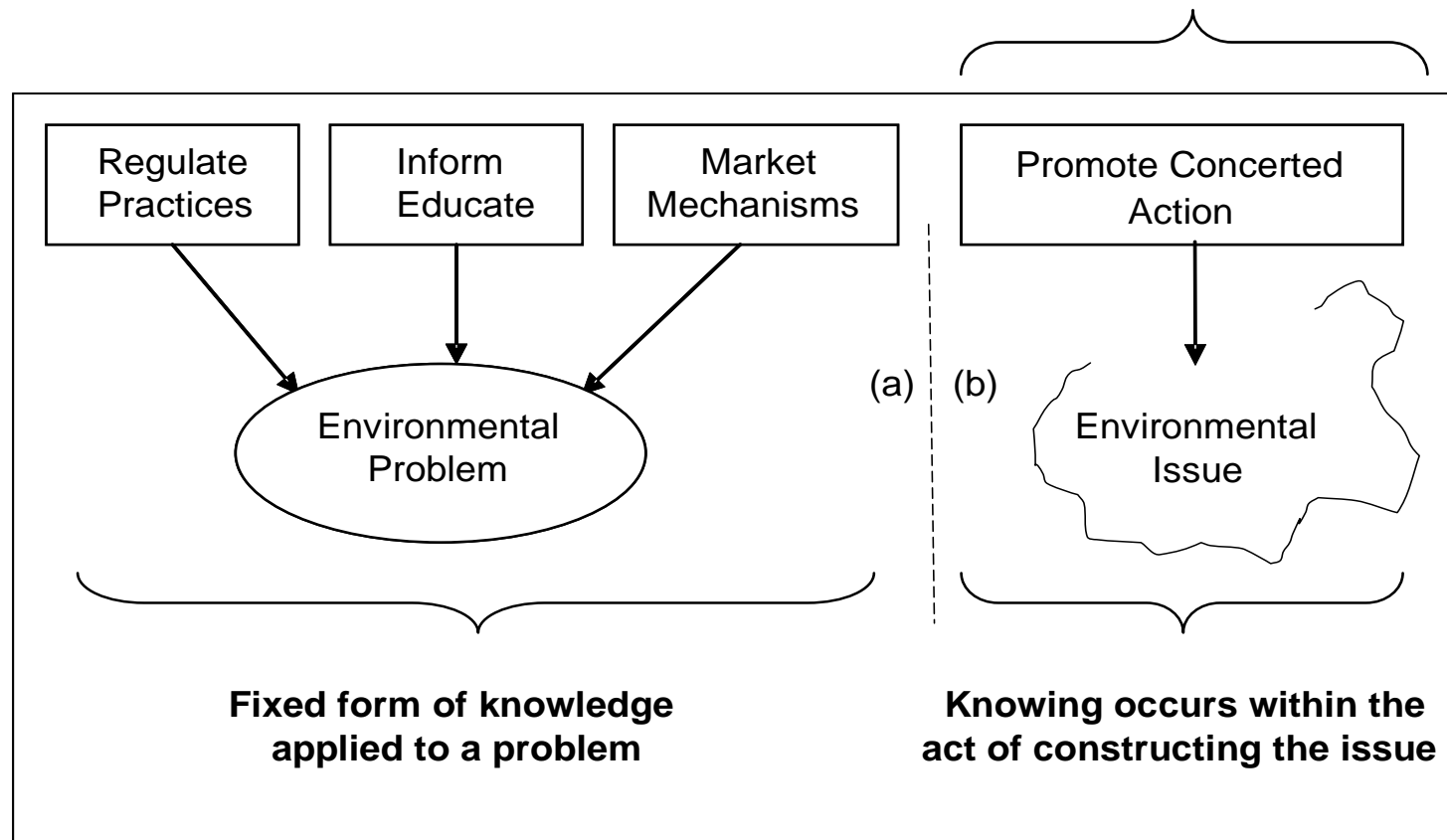


Integration requires social learning processes if different systems of interest are to be understood in order to bring about more integrated thinking and practice which leads to concerted action among stakeholders

Messy issues require complementary ways of knowing



Designing learning systems for integration





Integration – what can I do?

Develop understanding and practices which recognise:

- integration is not mechanistic
- integration as part of systems thinking and practice
- need for social learning processes to reveal:
 - different systems of interest
 - purposes
 - boundary choices
 - opportunities for concerted (integrated) action



Systems thinking & practice

brings together multiple, partial and simplified representations of a whole system of interest

....to ***learn*** about....

the complexity, interdependencies and uncertainties in ways that make the situation more understandable or amenable to change through concerted action



Today as a social learning process.....

Think about your, speakers' and delegates':

- understandings of integration
 - situations
 - systems of interest
 - purposes
 - boundaries
 - practices
-
- What can you learn from them and they from you?
 - What needs to happen for that learning to occur?

Your own systems thinking and practice ...



1. Characteristics of an integrated situation based on your point of view / professional area

2. Integration issues for your situation

3. Opportunities for integration in your situation

4. Constraining factors in your situation

5. Enabling factors in your situation

6. Priority actions in your situation

7. Personal actions (what can you do to progress integration)

8. How has today's event helped you in thinking about and answering some of the above?

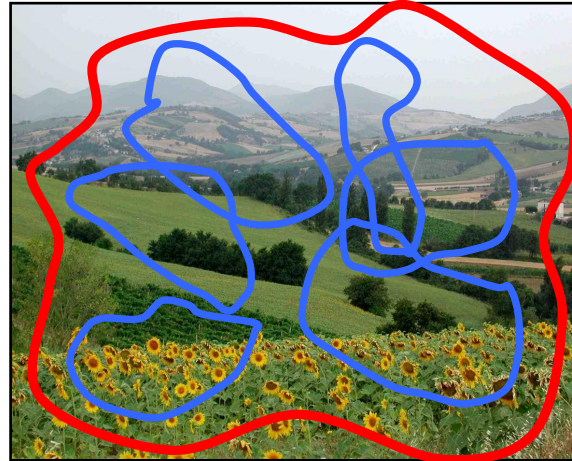
Integration – what can I do? A systems perspective

Kevin Collins



Thank You

k.b.collins@open.ac.uk



Open Systems Research Group