

Floodplain Restoration

– From Policy ‘Rhetoric’ to Mainstream Practice?



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PhD Supervisor: Thomas Fischer
(Panel: Sue Kidd & Olivier Sykes)

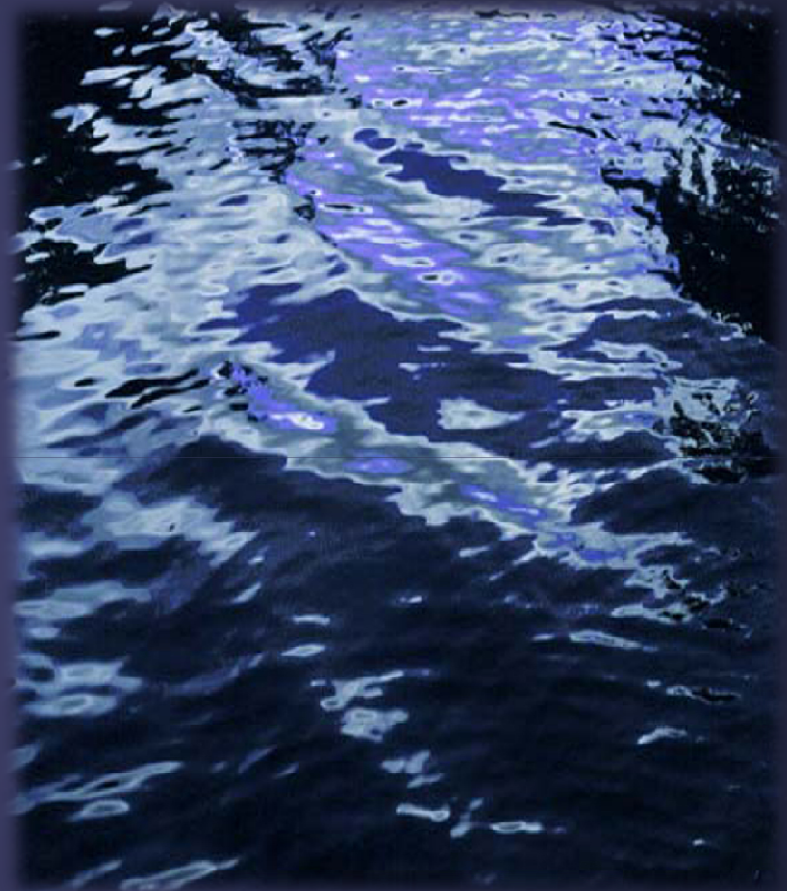


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Overview of the Presentation

- How the Research Began
- Floodplain Restoration
- Research Aim
- Research Design – Social Sciences
- Emerging Findings and Summary



How the Research Began



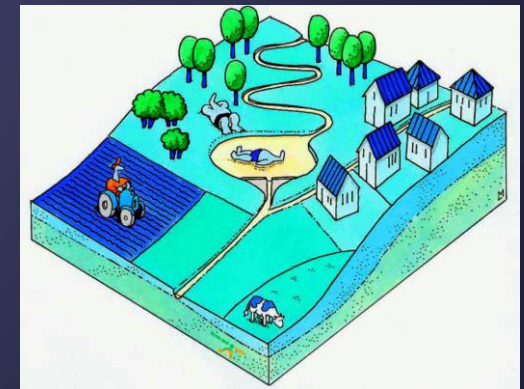
Northwich, Cheshire, NW England.

Source: Colin Lynch

Policy Backdrop - Integrated Water Management

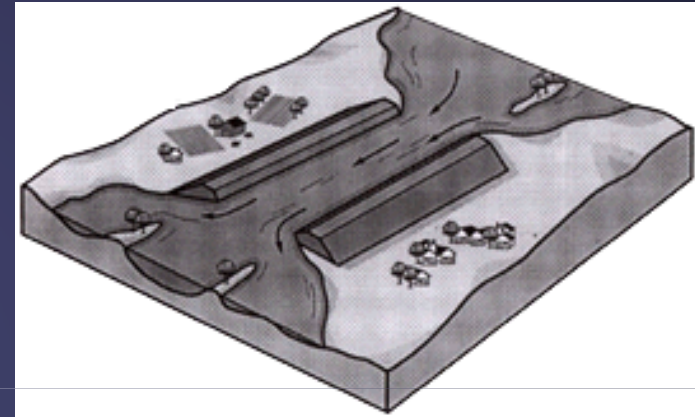
A more holistic approach, ensuring adaptability to climate change:

- Better management of risk – flood warning and awareness; improve resilience and resistance
- Sustainable drainage
- Creation of wetlands, washlands, managed realignment
 - Urban “blue” or “turquoise” belts



Floodplain Restoration

- The negative impact of the large scale uncoupling of rivers from their functional floodplain has become apparent
- There is an evident need to work with natural processes, including the reconnection of rivers to their floodplains to restore their natural hydrological functions

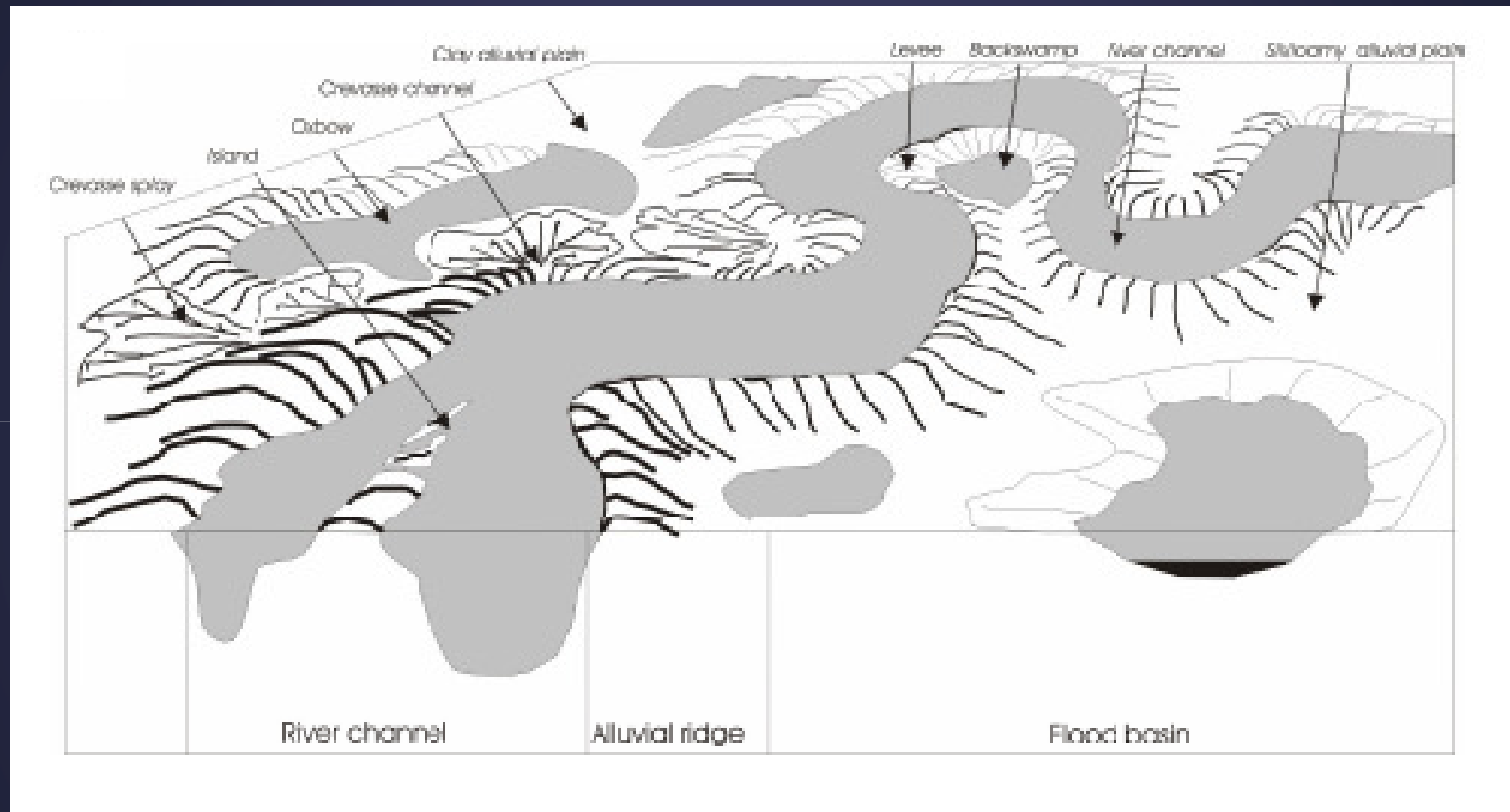


Source: Friends of the river.org

“Squeezing rivers into pipes and underground tunnels is not a solution, and will often lead to worse flooding in the future. We need to make space for rivers to work naturally with floodplains that hold and convey the excess water during floods.”

(Environment Agency, 2006)

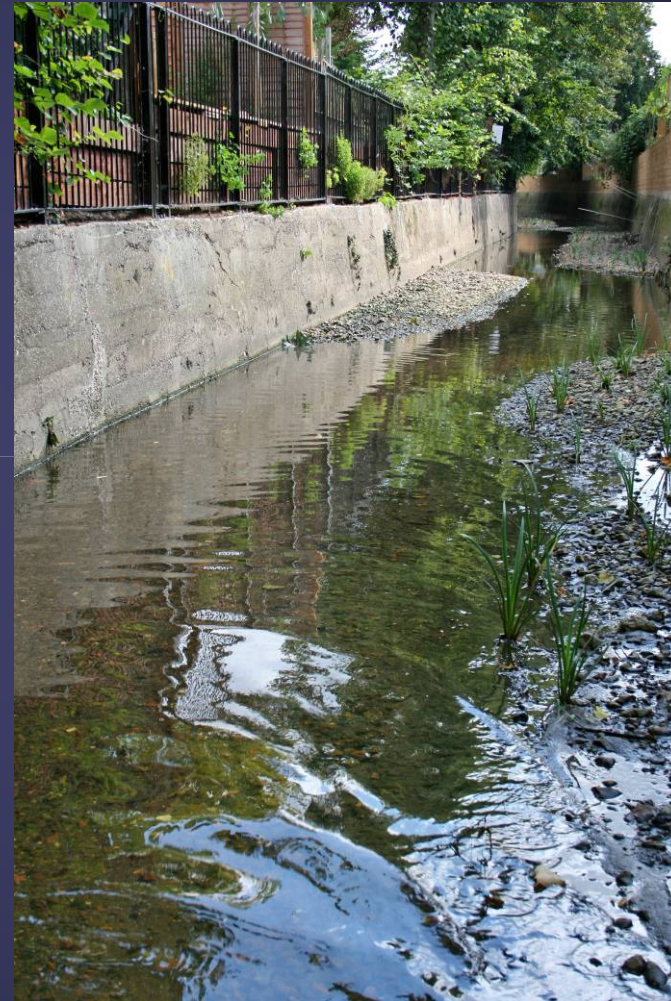
Floodplain Restoration



Source: Blackwell & Maltby, 2005

Floodplain Restoration

The River Quaggy – “a river that is gradually submerged and subsumed within built development” (Copas, 2006)



Greenwich, London

Source: K.Potter

Floodplain Restoration

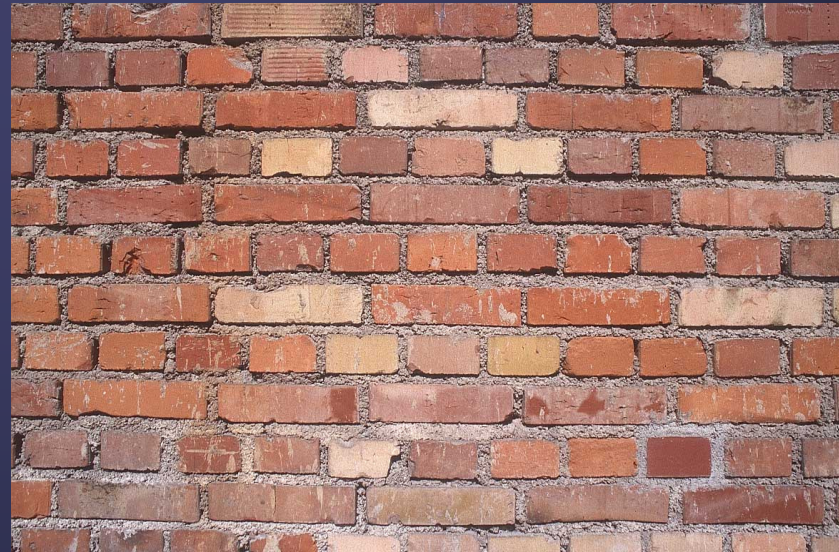
Sutcliffe Park – the ‘Anti flood’ Park



- Surface of the park lowered and shaped to create an enhanced ‘natural’ floodplain
- Takes 22 hours to reach its capacity of 85,000 m³ (35 Olympic swimming pools)
- Alleviating flooding of 600 homes and businesses, and over 4000 people living and working downstream in Greenwich and Lewisham

Source: K.Potter

“Simple and unproblematic models of evidence based policy and practice – in which evidence is created by experts and drawn on as necessary by policy makers and practitioners – fail as either accurate descriptions or effective prescriptions..... while it is tempting to think of evidence entering the policy process as part of a rational decision making process, reality is often far more messy and overtly political than this” (Nutley et al, 2002, p9)

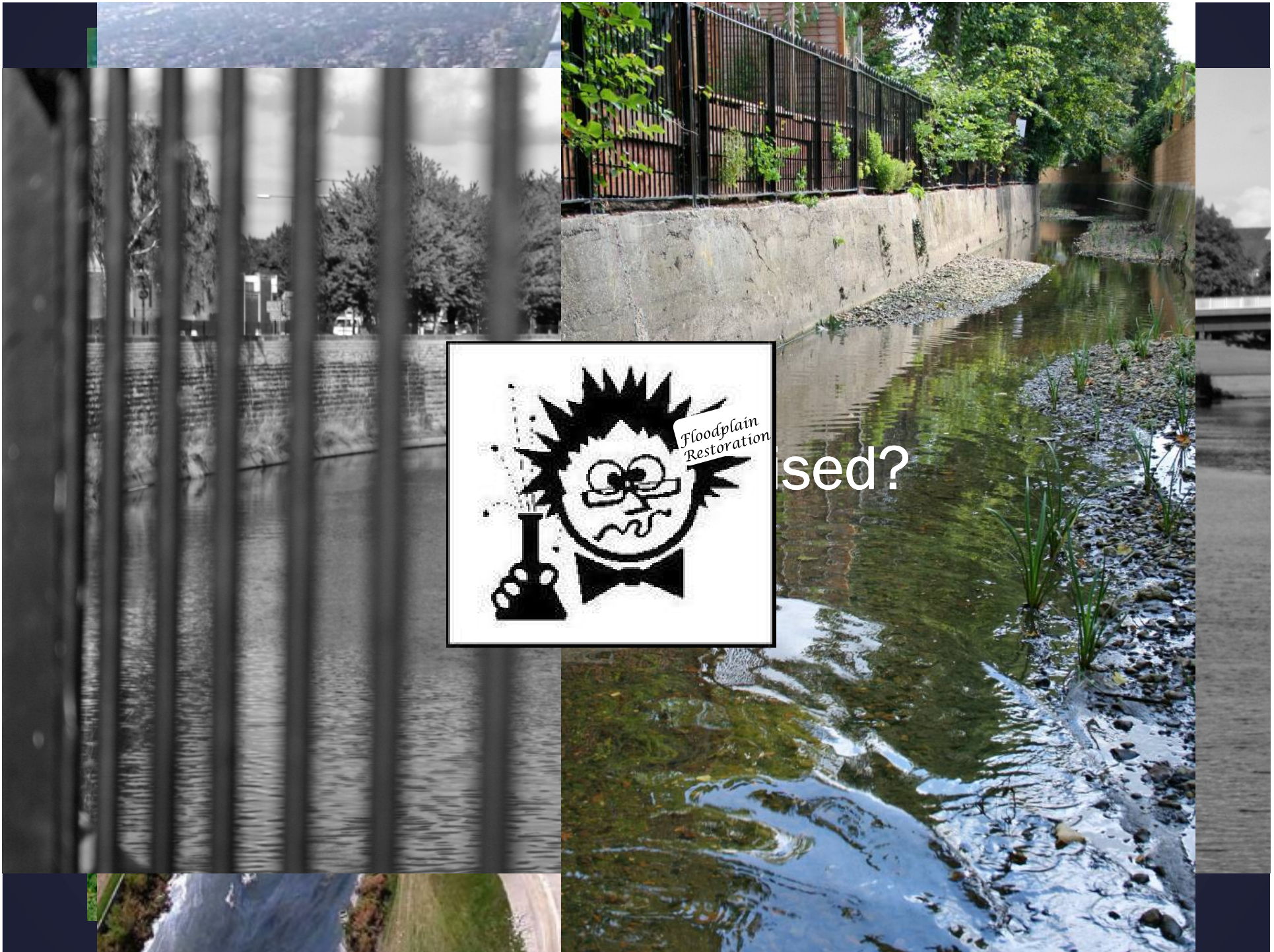


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Aim: to contribute to bridging the implementation gap between policy and practice in the restoration of fluvial floodplains.....

.....with a specific focus on evaluating the potential of the spatial planning system in facilitating the essential land use change.

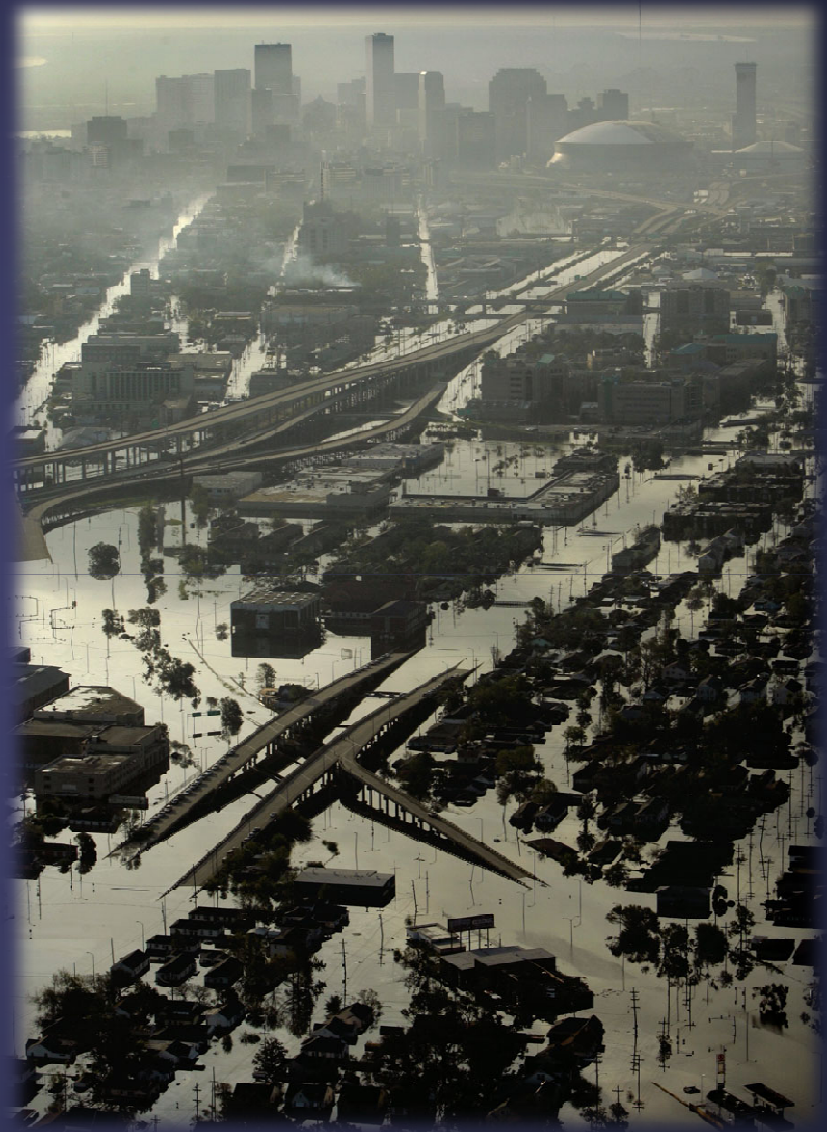




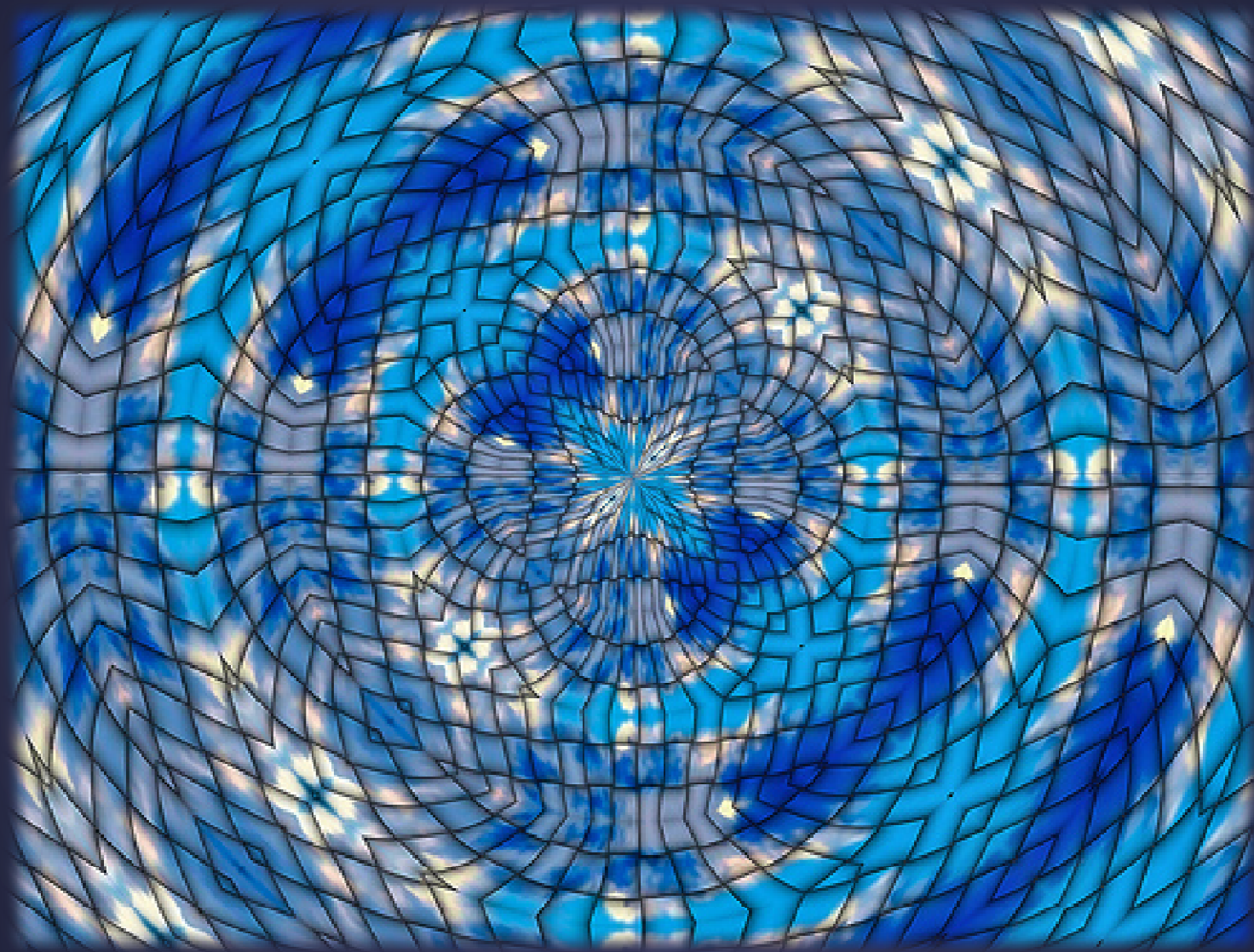
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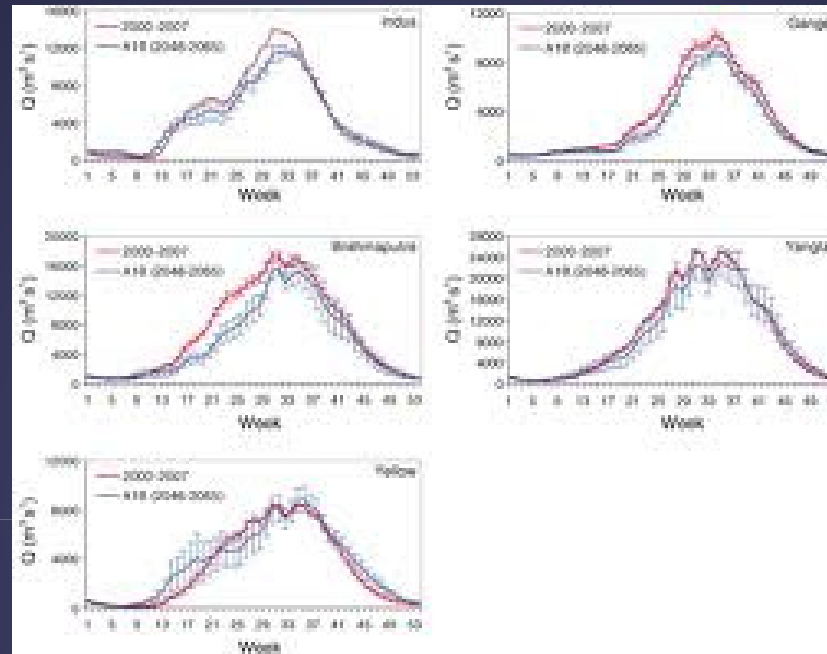
“There are gradually solidifying institutional patterns which can constrain political behaviour and create mechanisms of path dependency that agencies cannot easily overcome.....

.....in some policy fields this stability can evolve into inertia or rigidity, thus resulting in actors being badly prepared for engaging with the new policy issues and problems that emerge” (Crabbe, 2008).



New Orleans, 2005

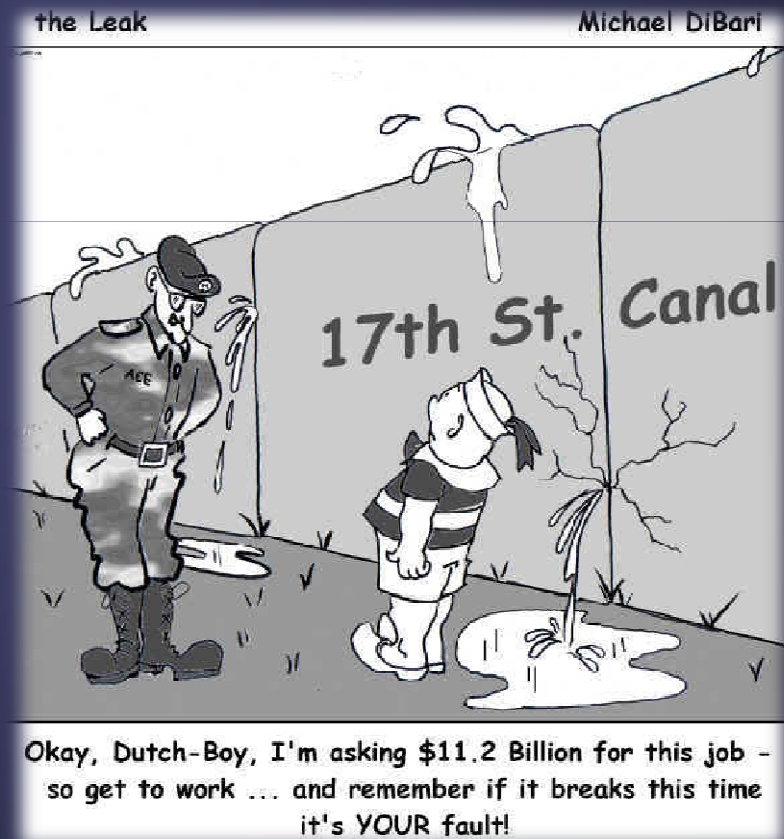




‘....sociologists also seem to have their own special language for talking to each other, like a secret code, replete with Masonic mental handshakes, that has to be cracked before you can understand any of their messages. Sometimes this secret code appears to follow the rule, ‘don’t use one syllable when twenty will do’ (Gilbert, 1997).

The Policy Arrangements Approach

Researchers at Nijmegen University, the Netherlands have developed a policy research framework that builds upon a broader series of theoretical perspectives to recognise both the impact of structures and institutions and current debates on reflexive and post-modern politics (Leroy, P. 2006)



(The Huffington Post, June 2010)

The Policy Arrangements Approach

- A Discursive Turn in the Environmental Policy Domain - 'sustainability', 'biodiversity', 'environmental quality' and 'integrated assessment'
- A second set of concepts were introduced in parallel - 'stakeholders approach', 'shared responsibility' and 'integrated management'
- With different agencies participating under different rule systems, with the potential for varying approaches and definitions of the problem the result can often mean conflicting strategies and lack of policy coordination

(Leroy & Arts, 2006)

This is the way we
always did our
work...



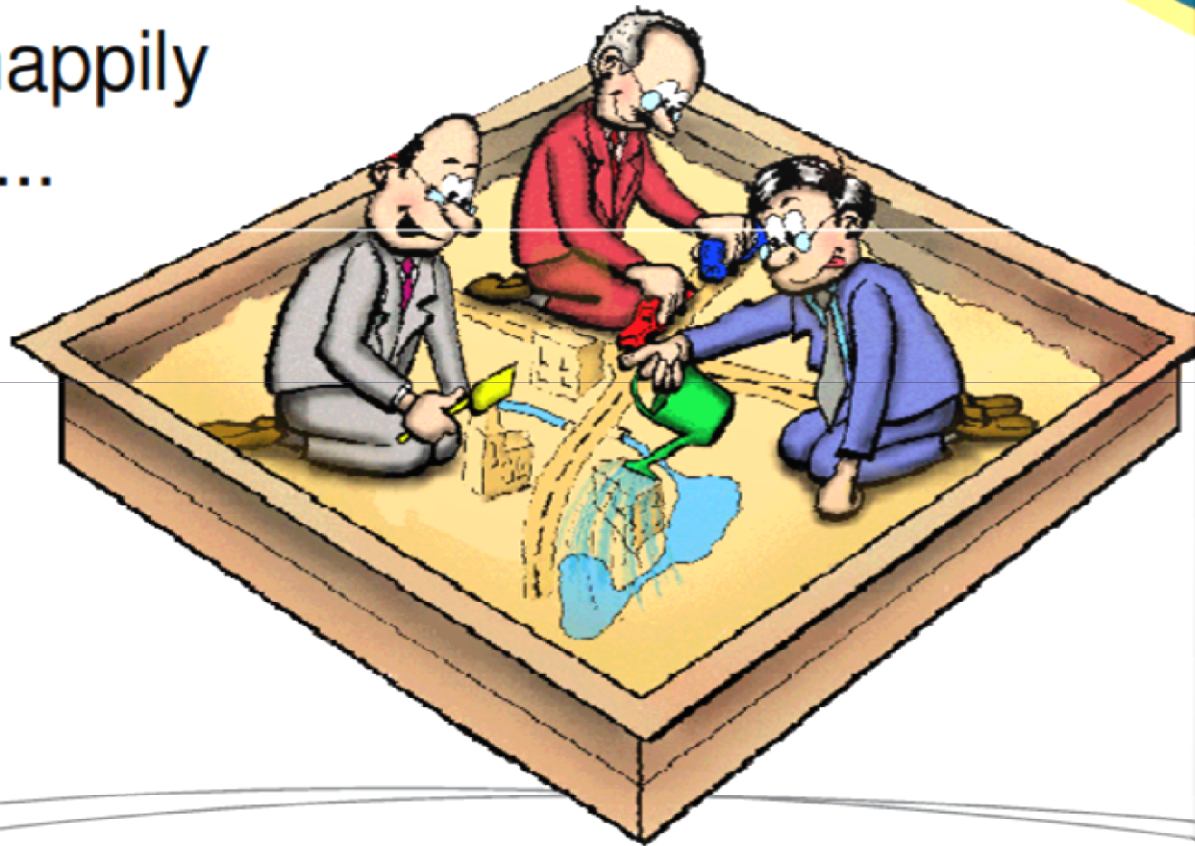
Source: Digman, C. (2009)

Then one day we
looked around and
realised...



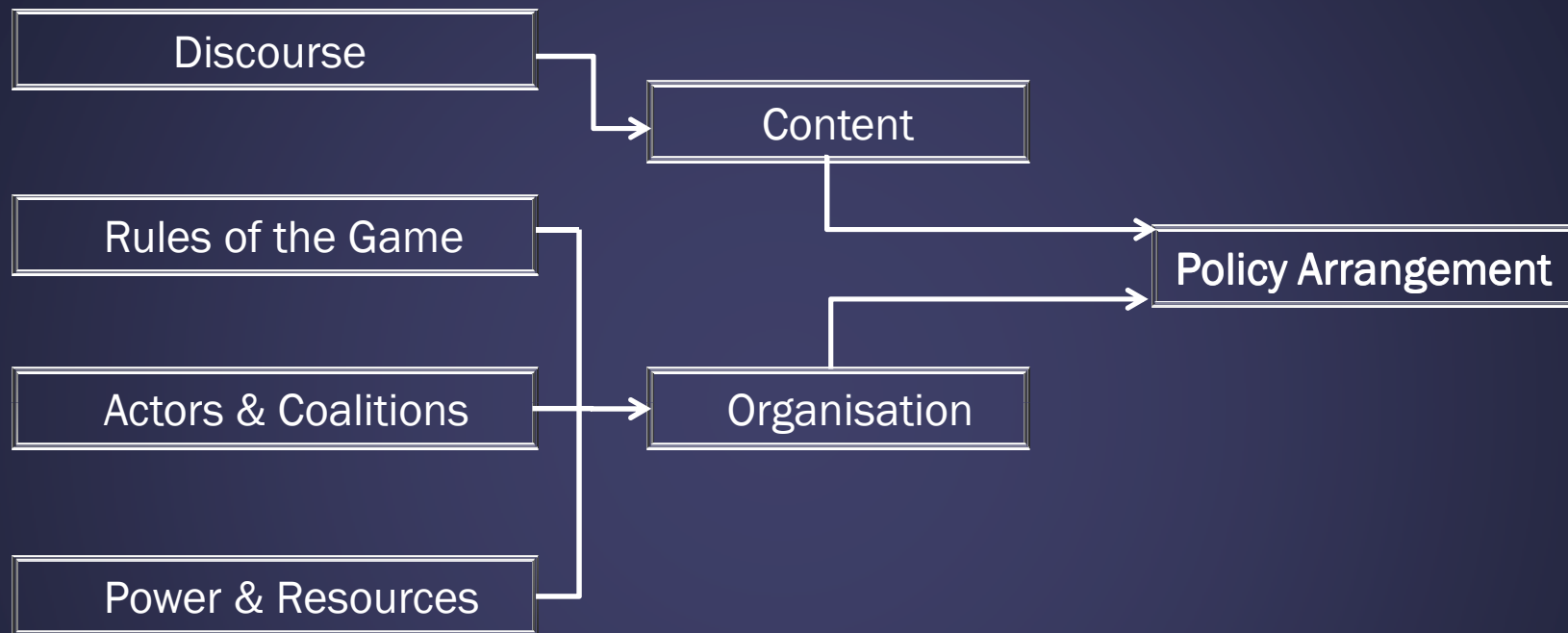
Source: Digman, C. (2009)

From then on we
played happily
together...



Source: Digman, C. (2009)

Four Dimensions of Analysis



Policy Arrangement: the temporary stabilisation of the content and organisation of a specific policy domain

Research Questions:

1. Can a new discourse be observed for floodplain restoration? Why and Who?

2. Has the discursive renewal had effects at an institutional level?

3. Can floodplain restoration institutionalise?



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1. Can a new discourse be observed for floodplain restoration?
2. Has the discursive renewal had effects at an institutional level?

3. Can floodplain restoration institutionalise?

- Policy domains are in a constant state of flux and sometimes new policy arrangements are created, where new views, methods and habits become 'worn in' in the implementation of policy



Summary

- Floodplain restoration
- Change in practice – shallow
- Recognise the institutional context
- Recommendations



<http://lacreekfreak.wordpress.com/2009/04/24/daylighting-in-the-heart-of-seoul-the-cheong-gye-cheon-project/>

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Cumbria floods: there's more where that came from

**The flooding in Cumbria is part of a pattern of weather which shows that global warming is occurring faster than anyone expected, says Geoffrey Lean
Telegraph.co.uk, 20 Nov 2009**

Mr Lean really must shut up. If he really believed this stuff, his writings would be full of campaigns for massive flood defences along the east coast and a bigger London barrage. Not one mention of it, and not one mention from Miliband's Department of Energy and Climate Change or the Committee for Climate Change.

No, propaganda is easy - the ACT ON CO2 nonsense may persuade the gullible, and it's cheap. Constructing defences against supposedly rising sea levels is enormously costly. Let us see the government put our money where its mouth is, and then perhaps we'll have a sensible debate about climate change.

Dwight Vandryver on November 20, 2009

As a resident for 47 years I can say in truth that my lasting memory of England is that it has been pissing down my whole life.....

....and its bloody freezing

Jon on November 20, 2009