Play It Again Sam !!

subversive thoughts on global natural hazard research

Phil O'Keefe and Geoff O'Brien

Global Facts

Humanitarian budget 1990-2010 increase 12fold (OECD DAC data)

All databases, despite incompleteness, show a rise in natural hazards

Little disasters or mundane events have greater cumulative impact than large scale events

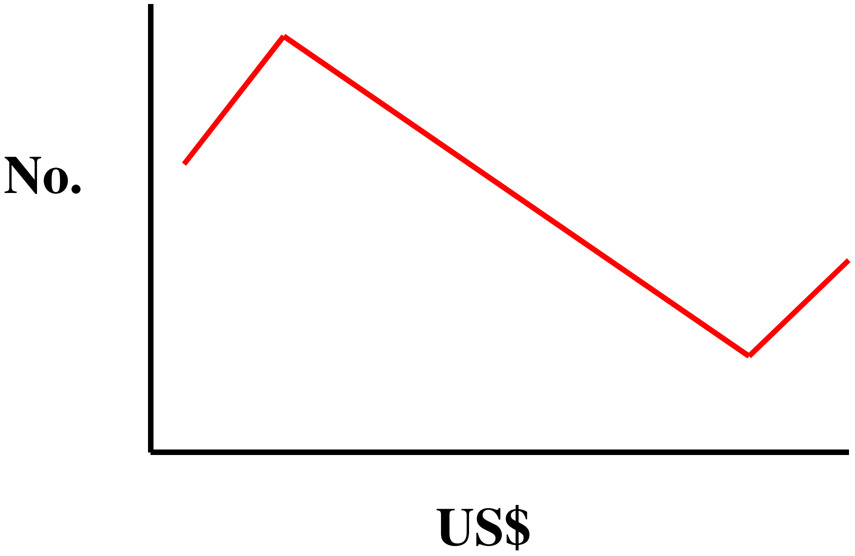
The rise in natural hazards dominated by climatic events, particularly flood and drought

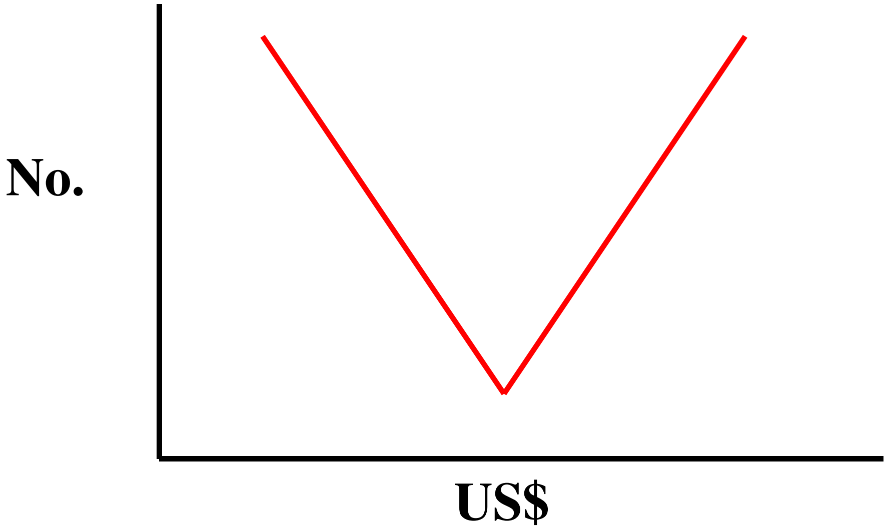
Rule of thumb – a flood at 10% of the impact of drought gets equal media coverage
- August 2010 Pakistan floods, 2000+ dead and rising, Niger drought
- 400 000 severe malnutrition

Global Interpretations

Vulnerability associated with underdevelopment; resilience associated with development

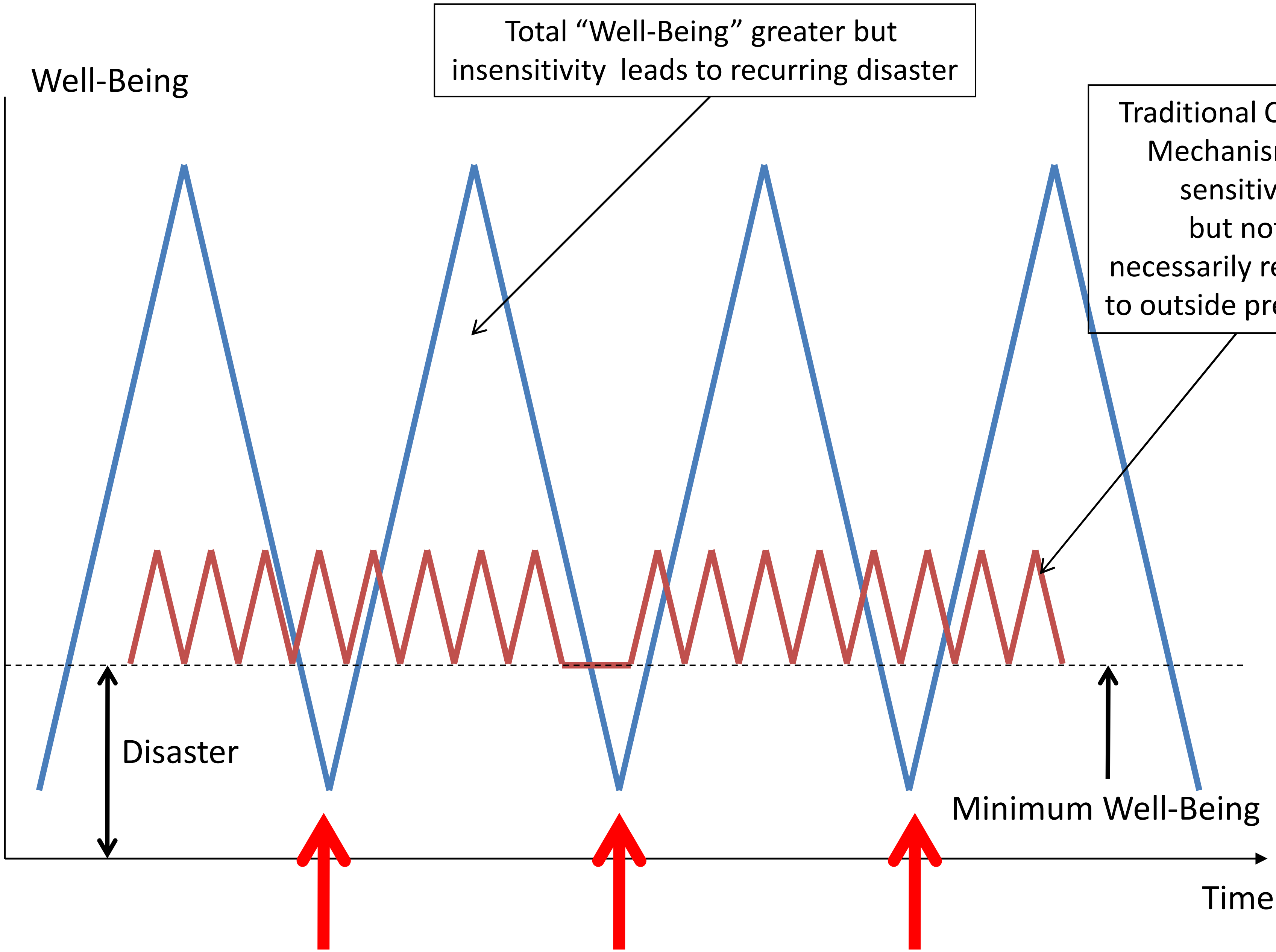
Under globalisation a different level of risk





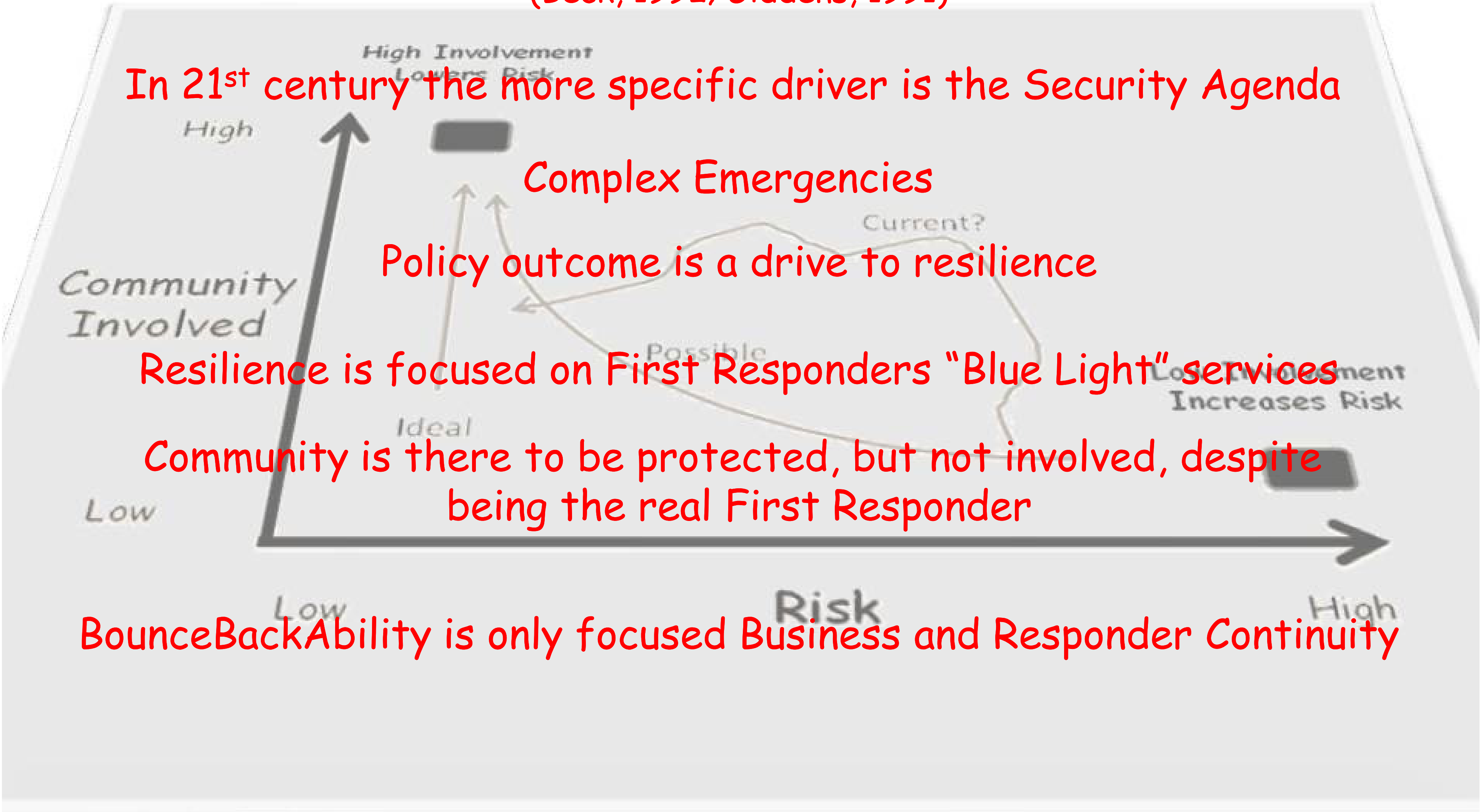
The erosion of entitlement; the collapse of pre-capitalist coping mechanisms

Understanding pre-capitalist and capitalist modes of production


Well-Being
Total "Well-Being" greater but insensitivity leads to recurring disaster
Traditional Coping Mechanisms: sensitive but not necessarily resilient to outside pressures
Disaster
Minimum Well-Being
Time

The Developed World Context

Policy Driver is the Risk Society
(Beck, 1992; Giddens, 1991)



In 21st century the more specific driver is the Security Agenda

Complex Emergencies

Policy outcome is a drive to resilience

Resilience is focused on First Responders "Blue Light" services

Community is there to be protected, but not involved, despite being the real First Responder

BounceBackAbility is only focused Business and Responder Continuity

Local Developed Economies

The erosion of physical and financial resource control from by local authorities:

the recentralisation of decentralised government

Environment is only policy responsibility for centralised government:

management to large-scale quangos (Environment Agency)

Focus of large-scale quangos is on structural control of supply inputs
not on changes to demand:

formal flood control measures v. informal flood accelerators (concrete urban form)

A rural bias rather than an urban focus:

serving land ownership not land use

Local Example

North East Precision Engineering

Turnover £2.5m, 25 employees, fabrication and sheet metal work.
SME hit by deliberate withdrawal of US multinational taking one third of profitability, floods (morpeth date) collapse of factory onto office and ICT control systems.
Estimate damage 400k of which 150k was lost production.
Insurance claim met slowly and only at 50% of independently estimated damages.
No immediate local business tax relief and no funds available for rehabilitation.
Voluntary liquidation of company 18 months later.

Bad debt plus disaster erode local livelihoods

With insurance Acts of God still exist

Towards a Conclusion

A return to the transition
The dominant adaptation mechanism under capitalism is the insurance market,
but only works for big capital.
SMES are rejected by the market and at community level only property holders can
Insure, but then only for property (capital) not livelihood (revenue)

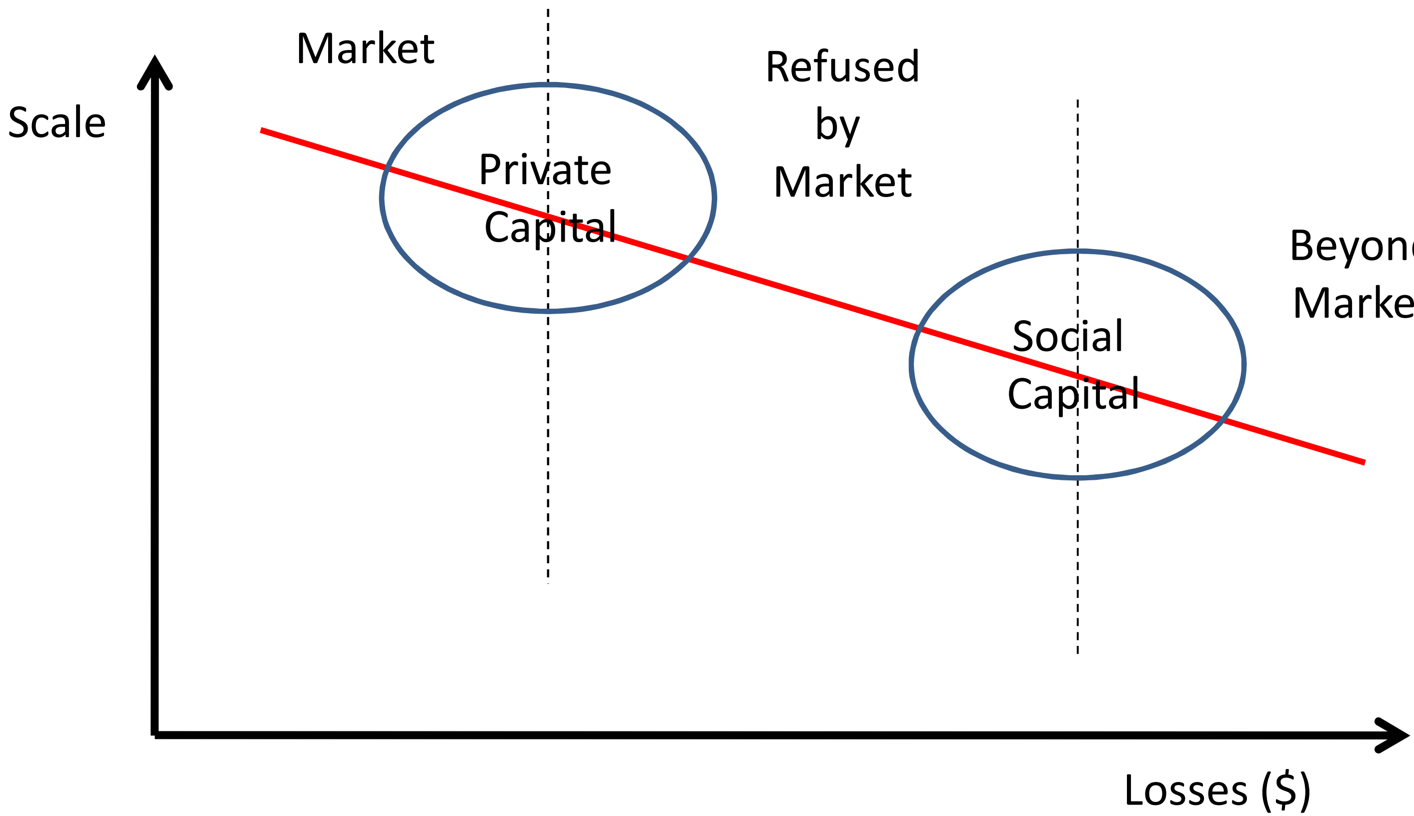
Total size of the insurance market is $3.758tr global insurance market (UK GDP $2.67tr)

Total re-insurance market is $2.13bn with a growth rate of 4%

The powerful continue to push risk and uncertainty onto the powerless

In the anonymity of property, community cannot have a name

The limits of Capital and Risk



Conclusion

Consider where we are now: DRR/CC/MDGs or MDGS/CC/DRR

Much is beyond the market, both the event and the definition of vulnerability

As academics we have confused the arguments by trying to incorporate everything Into risk models (people, technology and hazards with all their attendant histories

To serve vulnerable people well we must concentrate on addressing the issues of vulnerability

We must again unpackage the paradigm of risk