

Documenting and Conceptualizing Community Disaster Recovery

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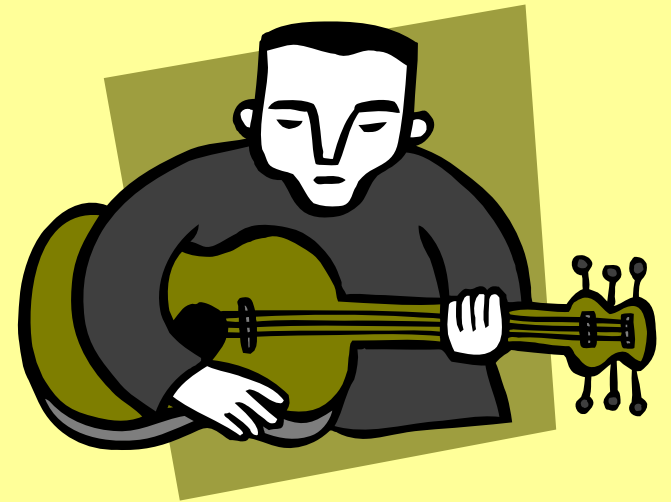
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Documenting Consequences and Recovery

- About 30 communities of all sizes across the country.
- Flood, hurricane, tornado, earthquake, wildfire.
- Multiple visits to communities over 12 years.
- Documenting recovery both longitudinally and cross-sectionally.
- Cumulatively, far more than a year on the road

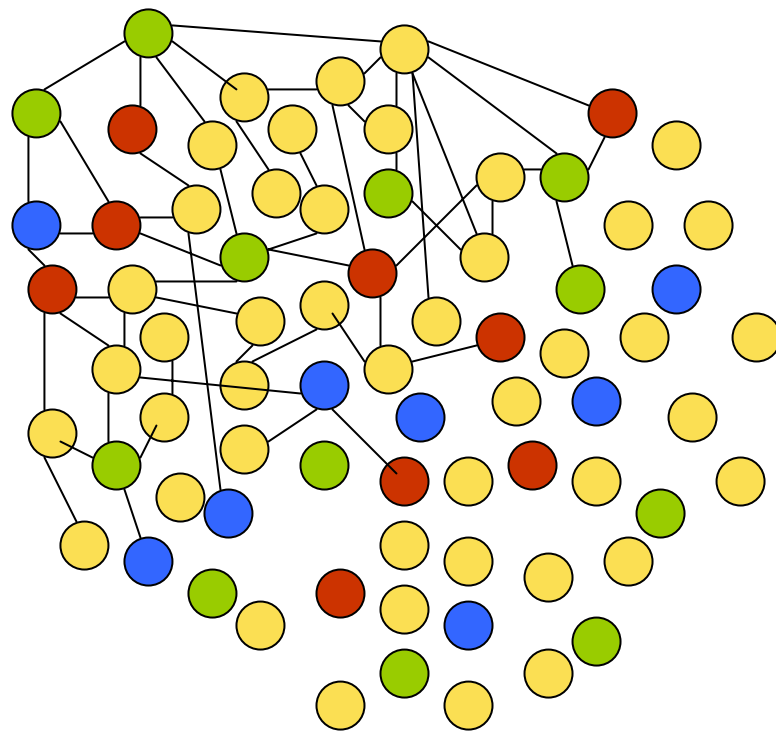


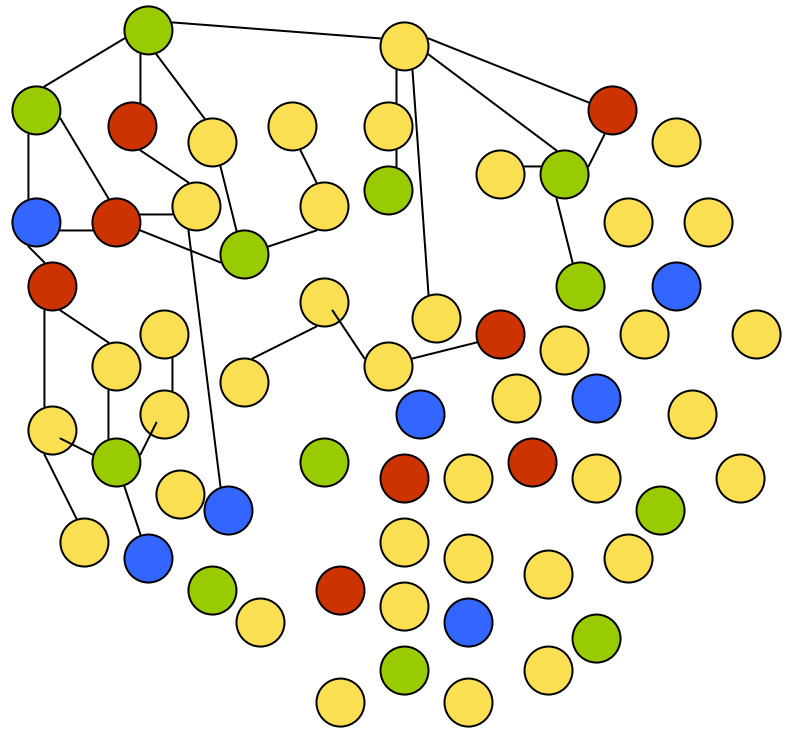
- From Sea to Shining Sea
- From the Redwood Forest to the Gulf Stream Waters . . .
- (These data were made for you and me.)



CONCEPTUALIZING COMMUNITIES, CONSEQUENCES, AND RECOVERY

- Communities as complex, dynamic, self-organizing, open systems.
- Continually changing, usually at the margin.
- An extreme event is a serious perturbation to the system.
- It disrupts relationships within the system and with important outside elements.





Event, given
exposure and
vulnerability

Figure 1. Relationships Among the Consequences of Extreme Events.

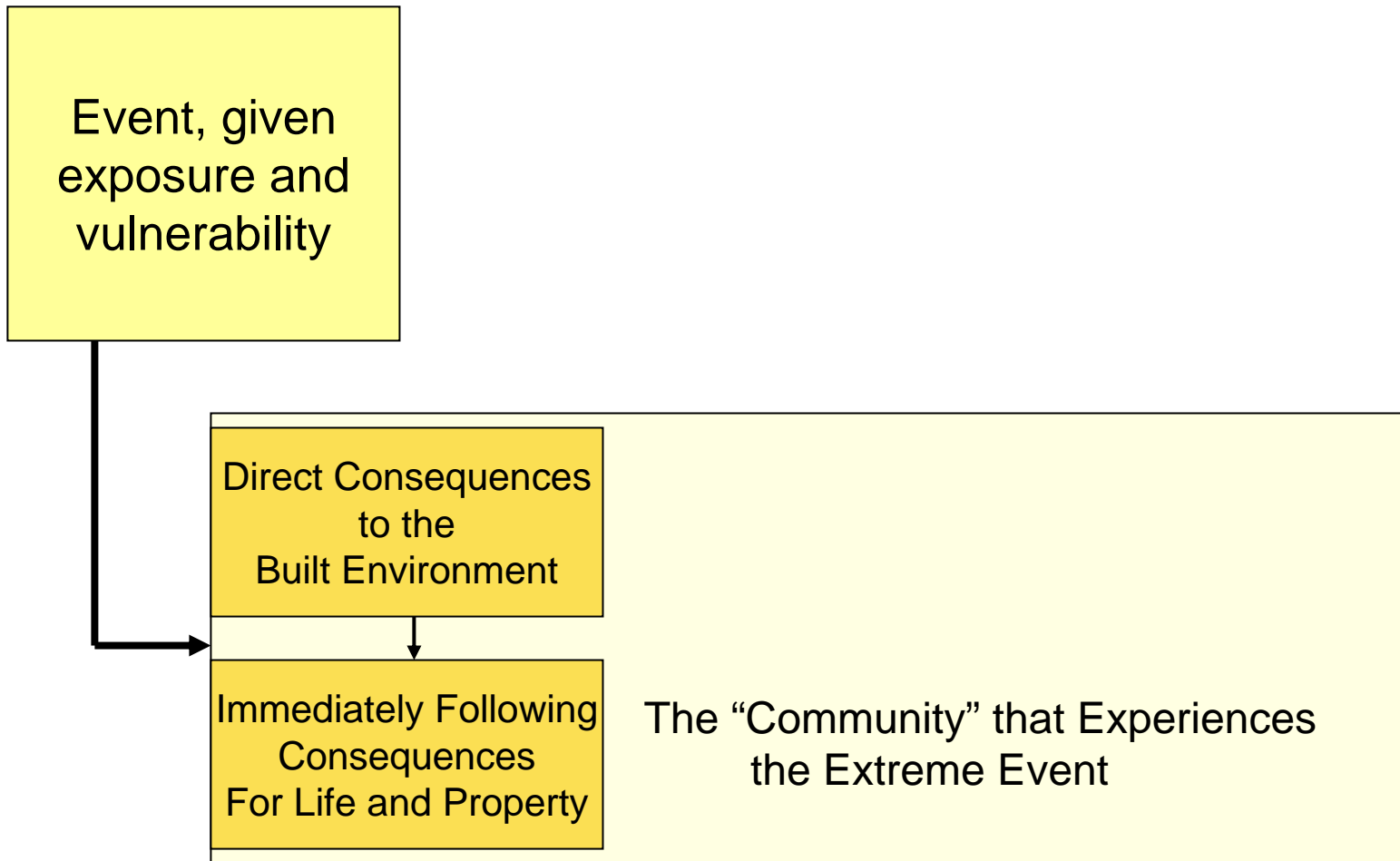


Figure 1. Relationships Among the Consequences of Extreme Events.

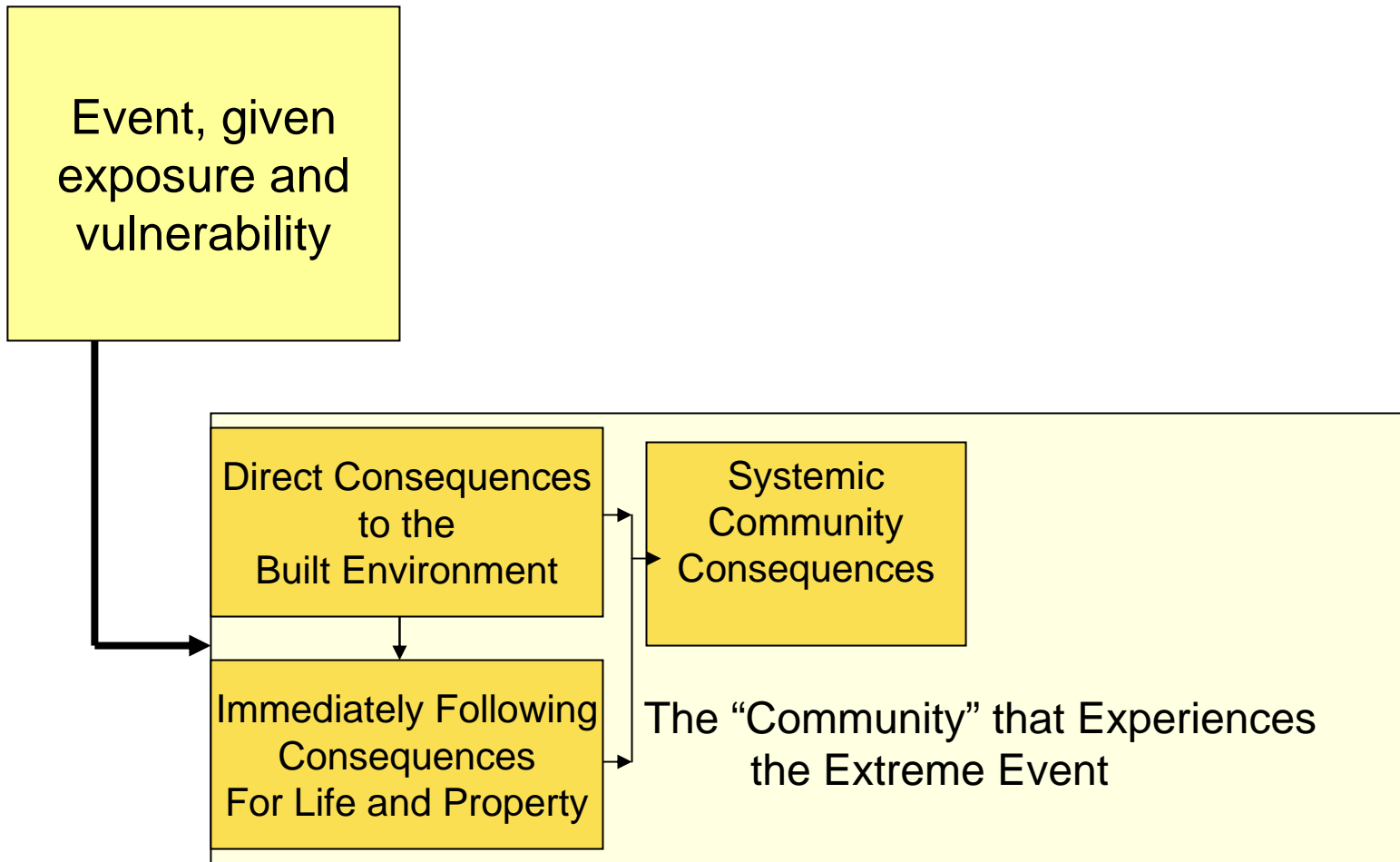


Figure 2. Relationships Among the Consequences of Extreme Events.

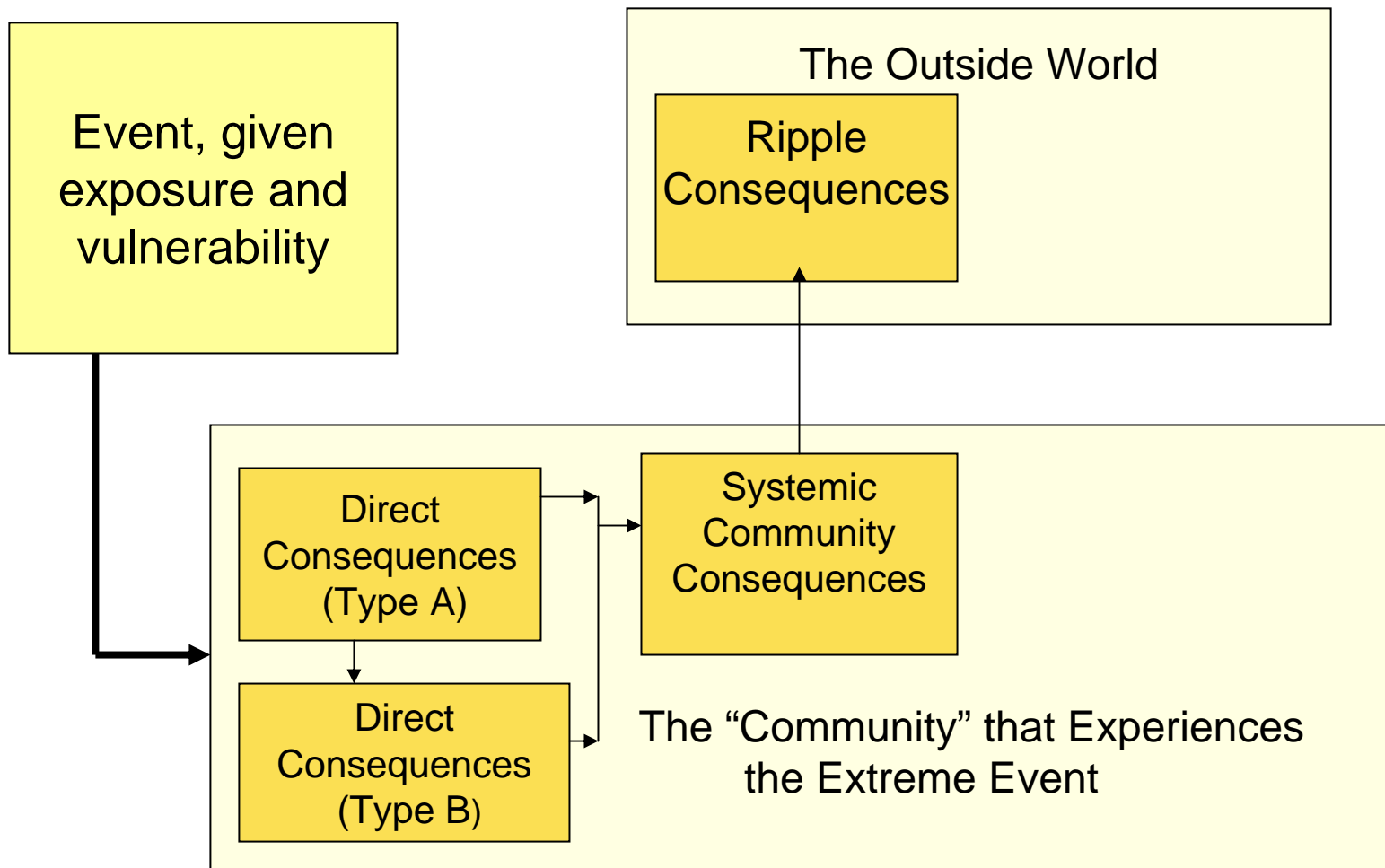


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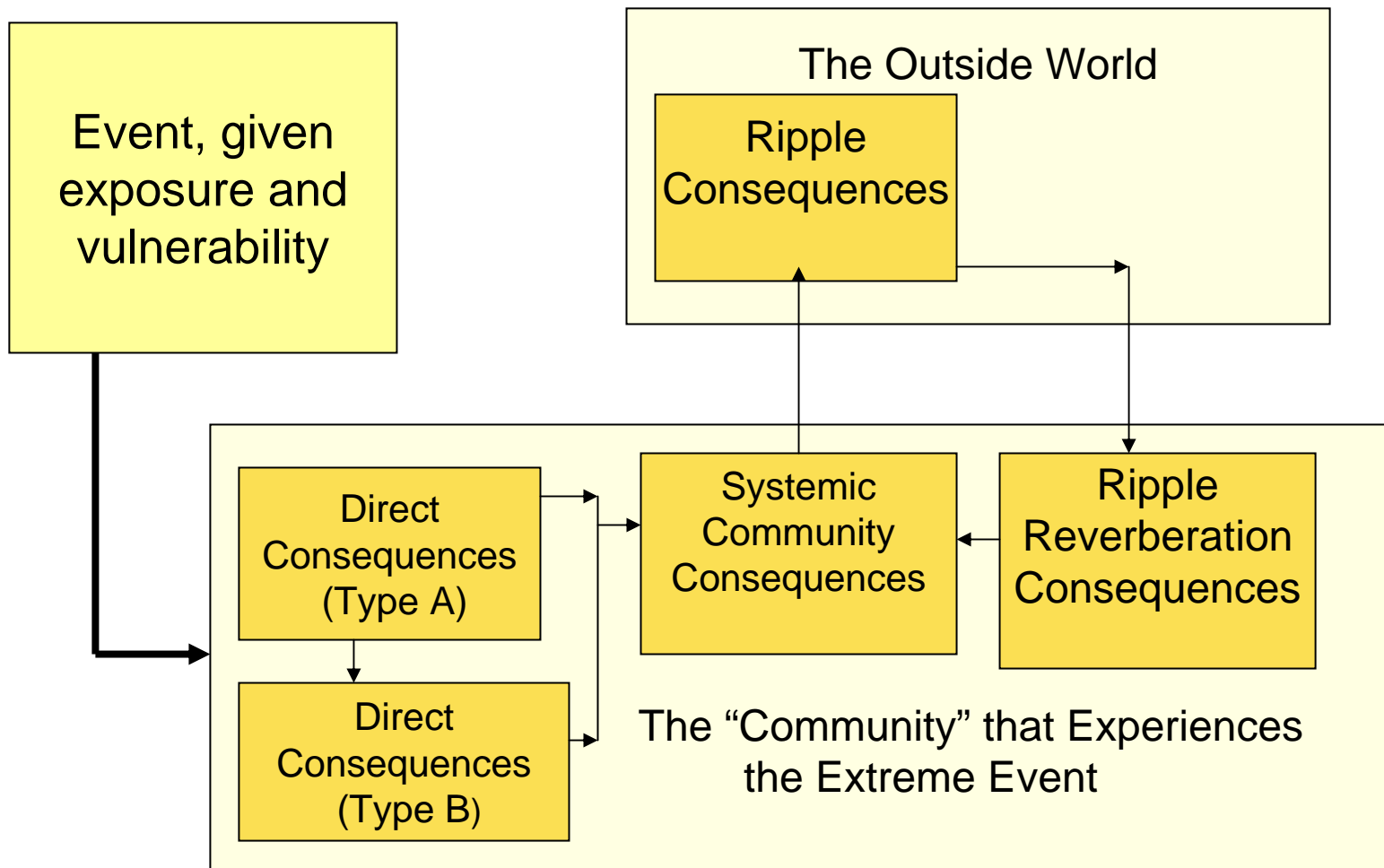


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An implicit view of recovery processes

- Individual elements “decide” what to do, how to do it, and where to do it following the event.
- Relationships are ruptured or changed.
- Needs and priorities change.
- The system doesn’t “bounce back” to what was; it re-forms.
- It may re-form a lot like the pre-event system, but does not have to.

Recovery conclusions

- If community recovery means reestablishing what existed before the event, it almost never happens.
- Recovery is neither assured nor automatic.
- There is no recovery timetable.
- For us, recovery is becoming satisfactorily viable in the post-event milieu.

- The real benefits of community hazard mitigation are enhanced probabilities of community recovery, given an event.
- Replacing, rebuilding structures is necessary, but not sufficient for recovery.
- It takes time to repair, rebuild, or replace relationships.

Government usually has to make up-front investments

- We call it “seeding” the system.
- No guarantee of success.
- More likely to be successful if the “seeds” are congruent with the “climate.”
- Recovery almost necessarily involves inefficiencies.

WHERE TO FROM HERE?

- Practical efforts to facilitate recovery
 - A short book aimed at helping local government managers
 - It is now out for review
- Working toward greater fundamental understanding
 - Building the research data base
 - Devising and testing hypotheses by building models of a composite composite community
 - If we get some funding.

Thank you so much
for your very kind attention.

