Emergency Management in England – the New Framework

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Abstract

The terms emergency management is used increasingly both in academia and practical area in the past few years. One of the major themes of emergency management is the structural framework. Due to changes in climate and varying characteristics of natural and man made hazards, the UK government has started to transform its emergency management since the 1980s. This paper attempts to describe the updated emergency management arrangements in the UK. The paper also illustrates two major controversies in the Civil Contingencies Bill: decentralisation and the definition of emergency, crisis and disasters.

The Transformation of the UK Emergency Management Structures

The UK emergency system has been based on the Civil Defence Act 1948 for several decades. However, the Act no longer provides sufficient structure for modern emergency management. The end of the cold war and a series of disasters occurring in the 1980s encouraged debate about the need for peace time disaster preparedness (Coles 1998). It is also recognised that civil protection, in the twenty first century, is different from the past decades.

The UK government has started to transform (Loughlin 2004) its emergency management structure since the 1980s, for example, the Civil Protection in Peacetime Act has been revised in the late 80s and 90s. Following the autumn flood 2000 and foot and mouth disease 2001, the Cabinet has speeded up the reform of the emergency management structures and has started to discuss the Civil Contingencies Bill.

The first review of the Civil Protection in Peacetime Act 1989, concluded that the principal responsibility for responding to disaster should still lie with the local authorities; and the related authorities should build up coordination of the various services (Civil Protection 1989).

The second review of the Act 1991 was carried out in order to respond to the debates in the Emergency Planning Community in terms of statutory duties on local authorities. However, rather than regulating the coordination among agencies involved in hazard events, the second review introduced a 'broad-based approach' to achieve improvements in local authority planning for emergencies in both peace and war through a package of measures. These measures included the introduction of an integrated emergency management policy, a more flexible use of the civil defence grant, guidelines for dealing with disasters, and in view of emergency planning in metropolitan areas, a more efficient use of emergency centres and communications(Baker 1991, quoted in Coles 1998).

After the second review, the Home Office stated that:

> 'the main role of local authorities should be to develop an integrated approach to emergency management ······ councils would be expected to make contributions to emergency planning from their own resources'.

<div align="right">(Civil Protection 1993)</div>

The third review was summed up in a Home Office consultative document 'The Future Role and Funding of Local Civil Protection in England and Wales' in November 1997. This document suggested that the local authorities should highlight the necessity of the following points:

1. The need for a statutory duty for peace-time emergency planning.
2. Co-ordination arrangements for emergency planning in terms of boundaries.
3. Restructuring of financial arrangement.
4. National performance standards.

<div align="right">(Home Office 1997)</div>

In the 1998 publication by the Home Office 'Draft Discussion Document on Benchmarking in Emergency Planning', it further suggests several standard criteria, for example, training, exercises, planning process, stockholder communications, involvement and operational issues, partners, business continuity planning(Hutchinson 1998).

The first major change of the UK emergency management is to move the Home Office to the Civil Contingencies Secretariat (CCS) in the Cabinet in 2001 (UK Resilience 2004). This office was established in July 2001. It gives the Prime Minister's Office a greater strategic oversight of national major incidents.

On 7 January 2004, the government published the Civil Contingencies Bill (Cabinet Office 2004a). The objective of the Civil Contingencies Bill is to produce a single statutory and regulatory framework for dealing with all forms of disruptive challenge to modern society (Cabinet Office 2003a). Consequently, several acts are either repealed or revoked after the approval of the bill these are displayed in the following table 1:

Table 1: the repealed or revocation bills/acts

Short title and chapter	Repeal or revocation
The Emergency Powers Act 1920 (c. 55)	The whole Act.
The Emergency Power Act 1964 (c. 38)	The whole Act.
The Criminal Justice Act 1982 (c.48)	Section 41.
The Civil Defence Act 1948 (c.5)	The whole Act.
The Civil Protection in Peacetime Act 1986 (c. 22)	The whole Act.
The Civil Defence (Grant) Act 2002 (c.5)	The whole Act.

Source: Cabinet Office (2003c): 19.

The Bill focuses on several topics:

1.Improving the coordination between horizontal departments in responding phrase.

2.Facilitating capabilities of emergency service teams through a capabilities programme.

3.Enhancing the counter-terrorism framework.

4.Improving business continuity management.

5.Enacting new civil contingencies legislations.

(Cabinet Office 2004b)

In order to achieve these goals, a new emergency management structure was established. According to the Bill, the emergency civil resilience structure can be divided into three levels: the local authorities, the regional level, and central government.

Central Level

The Bill illustrates the role of central government in preparing for and dealing with emergencies. Most emergencies in the UK are dealt with at a local level by the emergency services. In the past, there was no direct link between central government and local authorities. However, it is argued that due to the complexity and scale of modern disasters, no single organisation could meet the challenge of each and every incident; therefore, a leading central government in charge of the disaster is required (Cabinet Office

2003b). The purpose of the CCS is to improve the UK's resilience to 'disruptive challenges at every level through anticipation, preparation, prevention, and resolution':

1. Promoting the safety of the community through enhancing the quality of local civil contingency planning
2. Enhancing the quality of regional and national civil contingency planning by fostering greater resilience in regional and central government arrangements
3. Enhancing the quality of national resilience by promoting HM Government's interests in civil protection at an international level.

(Cabinet Office 2004c)

Through assessment, prevention, preparation, response, and recovery management activities, the CCS integrates activities both inner and inter departments activities (UK Resilience 2004). In the phase of assessment, the CCS helps lead governmental departments to examine and conduct risk assessment in their own areas. In the prevention period, certain preventative measures are adopted to eliminate, or reduce potential risks. The preparation phase includes planning, training, and simulations. Plans should be concerned with an effective integrated response to major incidents. In order to make best use of personnel's skills and knowledge, routine and additional training and simulations are required to test the effectiveness of procedures for responding to major incidents.

In the response period, CCS will play a role in terms of coordination and communication. Recovery management includes the physical, social, psychological, political and financial consequence of an incident. CCS helps to integrate the requirement of the communities and responders.

The CCS is comprised of different lead departments in response of different types of natural and man-made disasters, these include terrorism, civil defence, flooding, marine and coastal pollution, radiation hazards, CBRN (chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear incidents arising from non-terrorist causes), radiation hazards (outside the UK),

satellite incidents, emergencies on offshore installations, disasters overseas, search and rescue, serve storms and weather, transport accidents, disasters in sports ground, major explosions arising from landfill gas, dam failures, earthquakes, major structural failures in buildings, serious industrial accidents, exploded wartime ordnance, major software failures, electronic attack, disruption of supply chains, animal disease and welfare, food contamination, drinking water contamination, infectious diseases (UK Resilience 2004).

According to 'Dealing With Disaster' (CCS 2003), all departments have responsibilities to plan, prepare, train and exercise for dealing with emergencies occurring in respective areas of responsibility. For example, Department of Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) is the leading department dealing with floods and dam failures. For windstorm-hazards, the CCS is responsible for coordination. For further details, see the CCS website:
http://www.ukresilience.info/handling.htm.

Regional Level

Regional offices are established as a new civil protection tier. The purpose behind building this new tier is to provide a strong link between local and central areas. It is argued that:

> 'the clear role for the regions in civil protection will ensure the consistency of activities across and between the tiers, and set out clear expectations and responsibilities – from front line responders through the regions and to central government departments'

The regional tier has the following responsibilities:

1. Improving co-ordination at a regional level
2. Improving co-ordination between the centre and the region
3. Improving co-ordination between the region and the local response capability
4. Improving co-ordination between regions

5.Supporting planning for a response capability

6.Leading a regional response

7.Assisting with recovery

(Cabinet Office 2003b: 22)

It is believed that this two-tier level is not restricted to coding existing practice. This level will also enhance performance, communication, and ensure operational effectiveness and financial efficiency (Cabinet Office 2003b: 23).

To achieve these responsibilities, Regional Resilience Forums (RRFs) and Regional Civil Contingencies Committees (RCCC) should be set up. The levels and operation for the RRFs and RCCC can be summarised in the following table 2.

Local Level

The Bill's emphasis is on the clarification of roles and responsibilities for local authorities. It recommends that county and shire/district councils have statutory responsibility as a front line for dealing with disaster.

It is believed that a single framework for emergency management is necessary in the light of coordinating local responding organisations. On the one hand, it can avoid county councils and shire/district councils from overlapping their responsibilities. On the other hand, it is believed this single structure can speed up the efficiency of emergency response.

In the perspective of operation, a command and control framework is set up (CCS 2003). Besides, a new category for emergency related agencies is established (CCS 2004a).

Table 2: The Levels of operation for both Regional Resilience Forums and Regional Civil Contingencies Committees

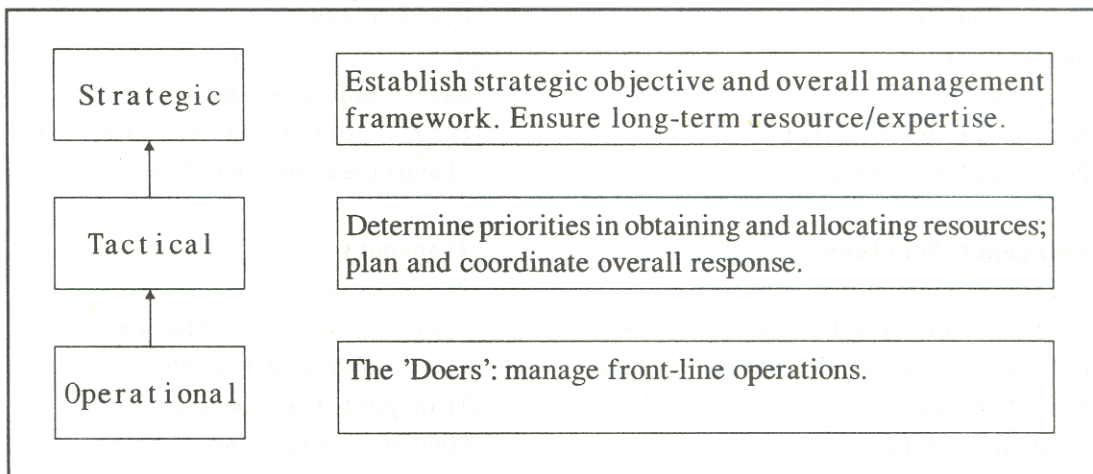| Group	Situation	Example
RRF	Planning	Routine meetings, perhaps every six months, to review development of regional capabilities and to share information.
RCCC level 1	Standing to	Ad hoc meeting called in advance of a predictable emergency (for example disruptive industrial action) or a heightened level of risk (for example, a heightened terrorist threat level).
RCCC level 2	Regional emergency	Ad hoc meeting called during an emergency efforts across the region and use of regional capabilities if necessary.
RCCC level 3	Special legislative measures	Ad hoc meeting only possible in the event of an emergency so serious that special legislative measures apply to the region. Purpose is as at level 2, and additionally to allow the Regional Nominated Coordinator to discharge their role.

Source: Draft Civil Contingencies Bill － Executive Summary (2003b): 24.

In the command and control co-ordination model, there are three tiers called Bronze, Silver, and Gold (Operational, tactical and Strategic) levels (please see the table 3). Responsibilities and duties of each department level are distributed. However, it is emphasised that this is a flexible structure liable to vary according to the scope and characteristic of the incident.

Most incidents are set up at the 'operational' level, with all emergency services coordinated by the police. The 'strategic' level will be established when an incident cannot be controlled at the 'operational' level. The 'tactical' level is invoked by the police when the magnitude of the incident is huge. At this level, an efficient plan, coordinating skills, prioritising tasks/resources, and service delivery is required. In addition to emergency service units, this level requires the involvement of other agencies, and therefore, good communication is highlighted.

Table 3: The Combined Response: Command Control and Co-ordination

Strategic	Establish strategic objective and overall management framework. Ensure long-term resource/expertise.
Tactical	Determine priorities in obtaining and allocating resources; plan and coordinate overall response.
Operational	The 'Doers': manage front-line operations.

Source: Civil Contingencies Secretariat 2003: 18.

The Civil Contingencies Bill divides emergency response agencies into two groups in order to clarify each agency's responsibility (see Table 4). The first responder group is responsible for civil protection activities, which includes assessment, prevention and planning for potential disasters. It also has the duty to inform and warn the public. In order to enforce the cooperation among multiple organisations, the establishment of a Local Resilience Forums is required. Moreover, the duty to plan for business continuity management is allocated to the local authorities.

Criticisms

As soon as the Bill was published, criticisms of the new Bill were raised. The main arguments can be summed up as follows: (1) the problems of centralisation of the emergency management structure; and (2) the definition of emergencies, crises and disasters. The following section will discuss these two issues.

Table 4: the responsible agencies in the categories 1 and 2

Category 1	Category 2
Local Authorities Shire County Shire District Unitary Metropolitan District Port Health Authority	**Utilities** Electricity Gas Water and Sewerage Public Communications Providers (Landlines and Mobiles)
Emergency Services Police BritishTransport Police Police Service of Northern Ireland Fire Service Ambulance Service	**Transport** Network Rail Train Operating Companies (Passenger and Freight) Transport for London London Underground Airports
Other NHS Bodies PrimaryCare Trusts Health Protection Agency NHS Acute Trusts (Hospitals) Foundation Trusts Local Health Boards (inWales) Any Welsh NHS Trust which provides public health services	Harbours and Ports Highways Agency **Government** Health and Safety Executive
Government Agencies Environment Agency Maritime and Coastguard Agency	

Source: Civil Contingencies Secretariat 2004b: 11.

The problems of centralisation/decentralisation of the emergency management structure

The issue of decentralisation has become a key factor of constitutional change and apolitical trends in the European countries, as well as in the UK.

Friedmann, the first man who brought about the concept of 'decentred planning', argues that decentred planning is a 'participatory style which requires both planners and citizens to have the capacity to listen sympathetically, and share responsibility for problem definition and solution' (Freidmann 1973: 484; Freidmann 1993, quoted in Lane 2003). Decentralisation has at least four main characteristics: (1) participation,(2) response, (3) legitimacy, and (4) liberty (Heywood 2002).

With the development of decentralisation, the concept of devolution and regionalisation has also been a trend. The transformation of the UK government structure has had a great impact on disaster recovery and emergency planning in the UK.

From 1921 to 1972, devolution in the UK can be regarded as an attempt to compromise between nationalist and unionist interests. The experience could be recognised as unionist hegemony, which collapsed the re-imposition of British direct rule (Bradbury and Mawson 1998; Bradbury 2003).

Since 1970s, devolution has developed as a claim for independence or autonomy from Scotland and Wales, as well as Northern Ireland. Both Scotland and Northern Ireland have established their own council and laws, for example, in the 1997 White Paper Scotland's Parliament stated the constitutional position after the devolution. It states that the new Scottish Parliament is to be a devolved body, with power being delegated to it from Westminster (Bogdanor 1999a; Bogdanor 1999b).

In England, regional self-government has been an increasing popular demand (Elcock

2003); however, devolution and regionalisation confronts more problems. It is argued that England does not exist constitutionally. 'England is a state of mind, not a consciously organised political institution' (Rose, 1982: 29, quoted in Bogdanor 1999).

The Regional Economic Planning Councils (REPCs) were established in the mid-1960s in order to prepare regional strategies (Elcock 2003). However, the England regionalism did not develop until the 1970s (Bradbury 2003).

During the 1980s, the Thatcher government interrupted the regionalist process. Believing both Freedman and Hayek, she abolished most of the regional planning units because government agencies are considered an unnecessary evil; and therefore, should be abolished or reduced in size wherever possible.

In the 1990s, regional planning was revived. The Major government enhanced the idea of a regional arena integrating the administration of different central departments to create the Government Office of the Regions in 1994 (Mawson 1997). But it was left to the Labour Party to give positive encouragement to regional leaders (Bradbury 2003).

According to Elcock's interview with senior officers involved in the preparation of Regional Planning Guidance (RPG) acting as Regional Planning Bodies (RPBs) in the English regions, there have been several ways to establish regional offices (Elcock 2003):

1. According to the Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) Note No. 11 of 2001 set by the Government.
2. Supervised and approved by regional local authority consortia, chambers or associations and their member authorities planning staff.
3. Directed by the Government Office for the Regions (GORs).
4. Regional Development Agencies (RDA).

(Elcock 2003)

From Elcock's research, the establishment of regional offices vary. An interesting point is that none of these agencies has any legal power over the others. Consequently, if any

agency produced similar strategies or plans, they must find a way to cooperate and work together (Elcock 2003).

Further, the relationship between central and local government can be categorised as follows:

1. Local government as an agency for central government. In other words, the local government plays a servant role to fulfil the requirements from central government.
2. Partnership for both sides working together for common ends.
3. Stewardship model: central government plays a master role to delegate authority to local government which is seen as a subordinates.
4. Power-dependence relationship: both central and local government has a number of resources which each can use against each other.

<div align="right">(Coxall and Robins 1998: 371)</div>

Again, the relationship between central and local government in England is a complex one. It is diverse. It changes from one authority to another and also within one authority over time. Therefore, it is hard to classify any regional bodies into any of the categories. However, it is argued that there has been a general trend in which central government has assumed more and more control over local government because 'local democracy was not working' (Coxall and Robins 1998:371). There are only a few formal regional government agencies able to carry out the new requirements from the new transformation.

1.The Benefits of Centralisation

The dilemma between the need for central control and the necessity of discretion of local authorities for emergency services is still a controversy (Wilson 1967; Lipsky 1980; Handler 1986; Boin and Otten 1996). Generally, the benefits of centralisation in the emergency services will be discussed in the following sections.

In the perspective of public finance, it is argued that a centralised structure can achieve a higher level of stabilisation and distribution (Oates 1972; quoted in Folmer and

Jeppensen 2003). A centralised structure can help to stabilise and distribute equipment, resources and budgets. In addition, from a total disaster risk management point of view, it can strengthen the central leadership, in turn helping to prevent disaster losses (May 1985; Zimmerman 1985).

Cumberland (1979, 1981) points out two circumstances — inter-regional externalities and inter-jurisdictional competition — where uniform regulations are better then non-uniform regulations.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) publication 'Our Fire and Rescue Service' (ODPM 2003) argues that, many services are best delivered through regional offices. Several reasons are given to justify the benefits of a centralised fire and rescue service.

For example, in human resource management, owing to increasing numbers of natural and man made hazards, it is difficult for any single local authority to respond effectively. The administration and information cost prevents local authorities delivering effective services. From a cost and effectiveness perspective, the control rooms are more suitable to operate at a regional level due to the frequency of their use.

In terms of operational procedure, the English fire service has its own equipment and operational procedures. When dealing with major hazards, the coordination between fire services from different counties or regions is necessary. It makes the cooperation and communication more difficult.

During an emergency, it is argued that a centralised-structure could strengthen the effectiveness of responding and recovery activities. Some crisis researchers find that emergency service responders favour centralizing the decision-making power during an abnormal incident or hazard (Drabek 1986, t' Hart, Trosenthal and Kouzmin 1993; Boin and Otten 1996). Thus, the command and control model for emergency management is widely applied in all related agencies. This is a model highly centralised, top-down, and one that implements para-military approach (Fordham 2000).

2. The Benefits of Decentralisation

However, the centralised structure is also criticised in terms of bureaucracy, a lack of flexibility and intensive response. Consequently, creating an effective organizational response under a complex, uncertain circumstance becomes a challenge for emergency service teams (Comfort 1993).

The benefit of decentralisation can be regarded as better information availability. For example, access to updated hazard news and better coordination and distribution of resources. The distribution of tasks and the power that the decision maker has for decision-making are also improved. In other words, local authorities have better access to information about a situation than central government, and they can adapt services in accordance with local needs and preferences. It is also believed that deliberative democracy can overcome the problem of bounded rationality, reduce transaction costs, and legitimise the final policy choice (Bohman 2000; Elster 1998; Lane 2003; Khaleghian, 2003).

Deliberative democracy, however, has its potential weaknesses. Time consuming discourses (Weber 1998), and policy conservatism, prefers incremental changes (Lindblom 1959). These issues would hamper the effectiveness of an emergency response. Weber points out that these weaknesses could be solved through a set of rules for deliberative processes (Weber 1998).

The trend of public management can be summed up as a participatory, deliberative process which:

> 'allows for active, visible, discretionary control of an organisation by persons who are
> free to manage; explicit standards of performance; greater emphasis on output control;
> increased competition, contracts; devolution; dis-aggregation of units; de-regulations;
> customer service orientation; and private sector management techniques' .

> (Christensen and Laegreid 2002)

Decentralisation broadens the options for people to influence public authorities and policy -making process and outcomes. In contrast, it is doubted that the new public management could break up political responsibility (Christensen and Laegreid 2002).

In practice, local authorities are usually given responsibilities they are ill prepared for, or have limited capability to carry out. The central government preserve of control over power may be better administered locally (Bossert 2000; Khaleghian 2003).

Applying theory to practice

It is argued that an understanding of system theory may contribute to proactive emergency management. New techniques and theories of emergency management should include more qualitative approaches to overcome insufficiencies in this discipline.

In Perrow's (1984) 'normal accident' theory, he indicated that when a system becomes tighter and more complex, it will fail:

> If interactive complexity and tight coupling - system characteristics - inevitably will produce an accident, I believe we are justified in calling it a normal accident, or system accident. The odd term normal accidents is meant to signal that, given the system characteristics, multiple and unexpected interactions of failures are inevitable. This is an expression of an integral characteristic of the system, not a statement of frequency.
>
> (Perrow 1984:5)

Responding to natural or man-made disasters involves the coordination of a complex group of agencies, ranging from emergency response organisations, local authorities to communities directly exposed to disaster. However, these agencies tend to work separately and subject to their own structured rules and procedures. In order to minimize the potential problems in an emergency or crisis, whether internal or external, emergency management team need to make decisions under stressful circumstances. Agencies involved quickly respond by acting on their own account and developing new systems of relations,

information and interaction in order to deal with non-routine, complex problem solving problems. But if the multi-components cannot find a network, the system will collapse (Lagadec 1997).

Much research finds that the majority of large-scale accidents are caused by a combination of individuals, groups, social and organisational factors, and rarely caused only by technical factors (Turner 1978). It is suggested that a clearer, simplified organisational structure helps focus the training for emergency response teams in terms of coordination and communication.

The Definition of Emergency

The term 'emergency' is regarded as 'an event which presentsa serious threat to human welfare in, or to the environment, or topolitical, administrative or economic stability, or to the security of , a place in England or Wales' in the Civil Contingencies Bill (Cabinet Office 2004a). In otherwords, the emergency power can be declared withina largerange of circumstances than those addressed in the present legislations (Cabinet Office 2003c). According to the Bill, emergencies includes circumstances which threatens serious damageto:

(a)human welfare in a place in the United Kingdom,

(b)the environment of a place in the United Kingdom, or

(c)the security f the United Kingdom or of a place in the United Kingdom.'

(Cabinet Office2004a)

In order to clarify thescope of emergency, in the 'The Government's Response to the Public Consultation on the Draft Civil Contingencies Bill' (Cabinet Office 2004b), it is suggested to insertthe 'major incident' applied in the 'Dealingwith Disaster' in the definition. Accordingthat handbook, the Police and Fire Service' define a major incident as 'any emergency that requires the implementation of special arrangements by oneor moreof the emergency services, the NHS or the localauthority for:

1.the initial treatment, rescue and transport of a large number of casualties;

2.the involvement either directly or indirectly of large numbers of people;

3.the handling of a large number of enquiries likely to be generated both from the public andthe news media, usually to the police;

4.the need for the large scale combined resources of two or more of the emergency services;

5.the mobilisation and organisation of the emergency services and supporting organisations.'

(CCS 2003: 71)

In addition, the definition for the NHS is ' any occurrence which present a serious threat to the health of the community, disruption to the service, or causes such numbers or types of casualties as to require special arrangements to be implemented by hospitals, ambulance services or health authorities' (CCS 2003: 71).

However, due to the variety of natural and man-made disasters, it is argued that these definitions are not sufficient to cope with modern incidents. It is further illustrated that a lack of definition could lead to confusion in the coordination of emergency response teams during an incident event. It is argued that a clearer definition of these events benefits the correctness of decision-making and the effectiveness of response activities during the event. However, there has been insufficient discussion in the literature to clearly define what is meant by terms such as; emergency, crisis and disaster (Borodzicz 1997). This paper attempts to define these terms.

The term emergency can be defined as 'situations requiring a rapid and highly structured response' (Borodzicz 2000).

Crisis could also be defined as a situation requiring a rapid response (Borodzicz 2000), however, it is difficult for decision makers to make decisions because of ill-structure in the context of technical, social and cultural dimensions (Turner 1978), for example, unclear information, communication. The greater the degree of ill-structure, the more difficult the incident can be managed. Consequently, a crisis may lead to disaster(s) (Borodzicz 1996).

Disasters would be defined as a cultural construction of reality. A disaster is distinct from both emergencies and crises only in that physically it represents the product of the former. Disasters then, are the irreversible and typically overwhelming result of ill handling of emergencies and crises (Borodzicz 1996).

A disaster may not be dealt with only responded to. Due to the unchangeable nature of the event, more scholars are now researching the understanding and managing situations of crisis in order to proactively preview disasters.

Toft and Reynolds illustrates a model which displays the evolution of a disaster in six stages (Toft and Reynold 1994: 19-29). Stage one is the notional normal starting point. A set of precautionary norms and laws are accepted and believed at this stage. An accumulation of unnoticed events occurred in the stage two. This is also called the incubation period (Turner 1978). Stage three is the precipitating event, people are forced to become aware of the change through the onset of a crisis event. In stage four, the onset phase, the immediate consequence of the collapse of cultural precautions becomes apparent. Following, stage five is the rescue and salvage period, this is the first stage adjustment. Finally, the sixth stage is the full central readjustments period. At this moment, an inquiry would be carried out. Precautionary norms will be adjusted according to the inquiry report (Borodzicz, 2000). See figure 1 below.

It is argued that using emergency, crisis and disaster as a response model enables emergency service decision makers to clarify event perception and requirements. It is further suggested that running exercises/simulations based on crisis events can improve the focus, design and evaluation of the exercises/simulations. Exercises/simulations have already been widely used in emergency services in order to facilitate emergency service members' efficiency in dealing with incidental events.

The purpose of a crisis simulation for emergency response teams is to train experts to adapt the necessary response to a crisis, given that they might face numerous unpredictable and uncertain events (Ford and Schmidt 2000; Wilson 2000).

From the learning theory point of view, it is suggested that crisis simulations can help to improve the emergency response performance in terms of cross-agency communication and coordination through the understanding of each other' s tasks and goals (Kaplan, Lombardo et al. 1985; Lagadec 1997; Carrel 2000; Dobson, Pengelly et al. 2001; Borodzicz 2002). Effective training environments could help to develop and maintain team performance or competencies, for example, knowledge, skills, and attitudes (Ford and Schmidt 2000).

Figure 1: Model of emergency, crisis and disaster based on training requirements
Time
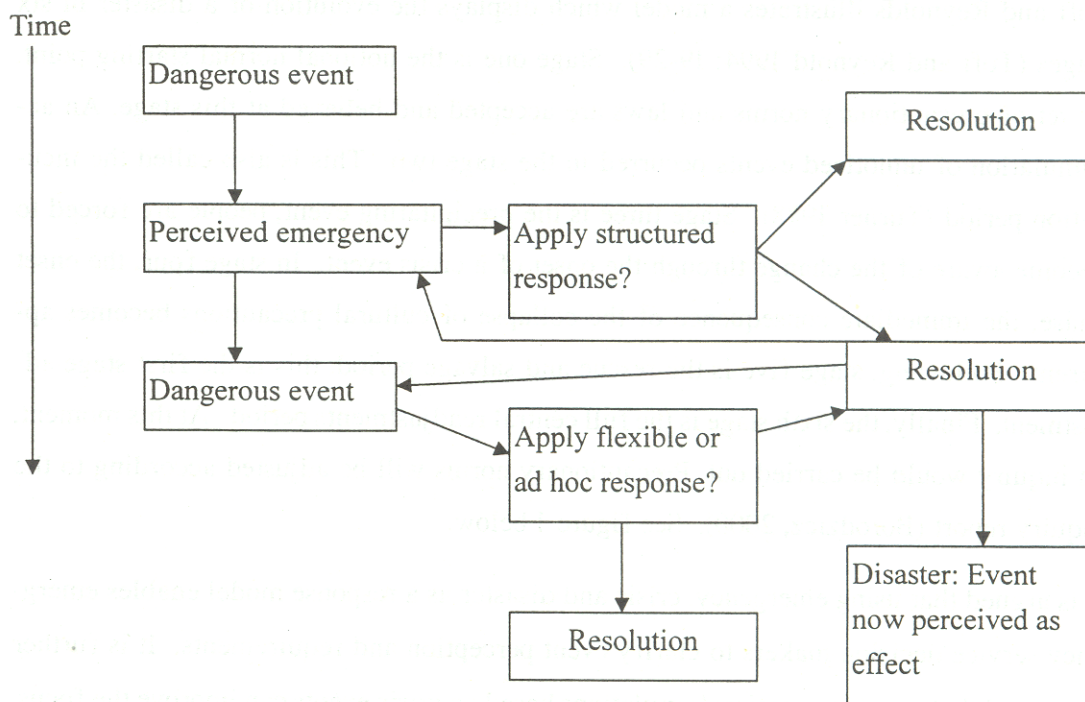
Source: Borodzicz: 2000

Conclusion

This paper has demonstrated the transformation of the UK emergency management systems and also examined the structures and responsibilities of emergency response authorities at different levels.

The main arguments towards the Civil Contingencies Bill have also been highlighted. These include: (1) the struggle between centralisation and decentralisation; and (2) the need for a clearer definition of the terms 'emergencies', 'crises' and 'disasters'.

It is suggested that a clearer, simplified organisational structure and a focus on training for emergency response in terms of coordination and communication should be a focus. In addition, it is argued that in response to crisis events, an increased focus on the effectiveness of simulations and exercises is important.

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