



General And Particular Social Vulnerability To Natural Hazards In Poland

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ABSTRACT

The concept of a natural hazard can be clearly distinguished from a natural disaster (Lisowski, 1993). The latter can be described in terms of systems theory as 'irreversible change in the (...) of the system, compared to the situation prior to ...' (ibid.). Natural disasters are often identified with the extreme natural phenomena. Donald Rumsfeld's (2002) words that there are: (i) known knows, (ii) known unknowns and (iii) unknown unknowns might be applied to natural hazards and disasters and supplemented with the (iv) unknown knows which means that people sometimes knowingly ignore the hazard or disaster (Kundzewicz et al., 2011).

Usually approach to assessment of risk of extreme natural phenomena involves convolution of natural hazards and vulnerability (Bankoff 2004). Multi-dimensionality of the vulnerability rise from the exposure (environmental), susceptibility (socio-economic) and coping capacity (organizational or system) conditions (Villagran, 2006). Studies of vulnerability to defined natural hazards describe usually the specific conditions of natural phenomena and socio-economic characteristics of the defined regions, taking the form of hardly comparable for different hazards, complex geographical indices.

The scientific aims of the studies are the measurement and evaluation of social vulnerability to chosen environmental hazards in Poland i.e. construction and estimation of spatial differentiation of the indices of society vulnerability to identified environmental hazards in Poland using the unified methodology. The results encompasses assessment of the spatial inconsistency of identified, potential environmental hazards in Poland and spatial differentiation and conformity of (locations) of vulnerable people and digital division areas and increased vulnerability to identified, potential environmental hazards in Poland.

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