

Perception of natural disasters as a security threat in rural Poland: insights from a quantitative study using CAPI surveys

Natural disasters are increasingly recognized as significant threats to rural communities worldwide. This study examines the perception of natural disasters as a source of fear among rural inhabitants in Poland, based on quantitative research conducted within the “Rural crime in Poland” research project. The study is grounded in a survey conducted in 2023-2024 among 1,006 residents of rural areas.

Findings indicate that a significant proportion of respondents perceive natural disasters as a major source of concern, second only to fears related to health. The level of anxiety varies across demographic groups, with women, older individuals, and residents of remote rural areas expressing greater worry.

The study incorporates also an analysis of the 2024 flood in southern Poland, which severely impacted rural infrastructure, livelihoods, and security perceptions. The disaster highlighted systemic vulnerabilities, such as limited emergency preparedness, increased risks of victimization (e.g., looting and fraud), and exacerbated social inequalities.

The presentation will discuss the implications of these findings for rural security policies, emphasizing the role of local governance, law enforcement, and community-based initiatives in mitigating both the physical and social consequences of natural disasters.