

Chapter 19

Preparing for Refugee Exodus in Crisis: Poland Case Study

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ABSTRACT

Using macro-, exo-, meso-, and micro-level framework for assessing interdependencies in crisis management system in Poland, this chapter addresses expansion of planning and preparedness to novel hazards and threats such as precipitated mass movements of populations due to environmental changes. The Ukrainian refugee crisis served as backdrop for Poland's crisis management system testing. Benefits of planning and preparedness for mass displacements highlighted (a) an emerging all-hazard approach to crisis management, (b) proactive threat identification and assessment, (c) issuance of acts, laws, and regulations based on novel threats, (d) comprehensive multi-jurisdictional exercises, and (e) increasing importance of mutual aid agreements.

INTRODUCTION

I once had a record of whale sounds, I swear I understood. It didn't matter what world they were under, what language, what depth of water divided, the song went on and on. What I mean is: none of this is chaos. Immigration, cross the river, the blood of us. It goes like this: water, land, water, like a waltz. – From the Whale and the Waltz Inside of It by Ada Limón

The objective of this study was to determine whether and in what ways situating mass migration hazards and threats within a country's domestic crisis management system could enhance resilience to address future migratory spikes. To that end, the chapter illustrates the integration of mass migration policy into the national framework of crisis management in the Republic of Poland. Using the conflict in Ukraine

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between 2013 and 2014, the authors analyzed planning and preparedness processes undertaken in Poland to face challenges of potential refugee exodus out of Ukraine across Shengen lines into European Union territory. Planning and preparedness processes are explored within the framework of domestic crisis management and at the intersection of macro-level, supranational structures.

Data were drawn from structured interviews conducted with officials from the Polish National Police (PNP) Office of Commander-on-Chief, Bureau of International Cooperation, and operational command responsible for operational planning for mass refugee exodus from Ukraine in 2014. To triangulate data (for example, Anfara, Brown, & Mangione, 2002), documents including news articles, governmental reports, legal acts, regulations, and after-action reports served as additional collection sources.

The Bronfenbrenner's model (Bronfenbrenner, 1995) framed our study. The model proposes four subsystems (a) micro, (b) meso, (c) exo, and (d) macro, all of which comprise the overall ecological environment for human development. The micro-system can be described as set of relations between the entity and the environment in an immediate setting. Interactions and linkages immediately outside of proximate setting or community constitute the meso-system. Meso-system resides within wider cultural contexts represent an exo-system. Finally, larger global environment constitutes the layer called macro-system. Because understanding ecological interdependence means understanding relationships (Capra & Luisi, 2014), dividing research space into micro-, meso-, exo-, and macro-systems is useful when examining organizational contexts; this is especially true within the domain of crisis management across domestic/internal, supranational, and human security arenas.

BACKGROUND

Mass migrations have been exacerbated by ecological factors, subsequent conflicts, and destabilization. Mass population displacements are no longer slow-developing phenomena, but are precipitated by greater interconnectedness, mobility, communication, and transportation pathways. Management of ongoing and future displacements necessitates an adoption of internal, supranational, and human security perspectives. When discussing differences in crises and approaches in managing them, Quarantelli (1993) contended that *consensus crises* (brought about by natural and technological agents) and *conflict crises* (brought about by international human agency such as riots and civil disturbances) differed from *ecological crises* (such as land subsidence, climatological pollution, famines, or draughts). The dissimilitude resulted from their slow onset/slow-progressing nature, as such "Chronic ecological problems very seldom create an immediate emergency or crisis" (Quarantelli, 1993, p. 26). Subsequently, slow-progressing phenomena foster social familiarity and tend to be relegated to local level social problems like poverty or homelessness rather than viewed as potential unexpected crises. Thus, ecological issues have historically taken back seat in traditional approaches to emergency management that have relied on the distinction between natural, or technological hazards and man-made threats. However, cumulative sum of slow progressing phenomena peak eventually. Chronic ecological issues can, and do create immediate emergencies and crises. For example, the Big Smoke wrapped Londoners in December of 1952. The five-day catastrophic event caused thousands of immediate respiratory-related deaths and triggered mortality and morbidity effects extending over time (Bell & Davis, 2001). The crisis reminds us about consequences of unanticipated convergence between weather and chronic pollution. Today, seemingly slow evolving hazards and threats may gain culminating urgency much faster due to increasing mobility

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