

Becoming Your Brother's Keeper: Poland's Response to the Conflict in Ukraine  
Through the Lens of Collective Memory

Professor Laura Brunell  
Department of Political Science  
Gonzaga University

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Abstract: This paper presents original, qualitative research based on interviews conducted in Poland in February 2024. Twenty-five interviews with “average citizens,” i.e., non-political elites, were conducted in four Polish cities: Gdańsk; Kraków; Lublin and Wrocław. The interviews sought to measure the degree to which Poles agree with continued support of Ukraine and Ukrainian refugees and why they feel that way. Qualitative data analysis of the interviews yielded the following findings: Polish support for Ukraine remains strong, with some evidence of fraying and tensions; Polish support is grounded in both humanitarian and security concerns, shaped by geographic and international relations realities. The war in Ukraine has activated collective memories of war, ethnic cleansing and loss of sovereignty that have resurfaced or persisted during the post-war and post-communist eras.

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## **Introduction**

The impact of Russia's 2022 full-scale invasion of Ukraine on Poland has been profound. During the first 10 weeks of the war, more than 3.5 million Ukrainian refugees crossed into Poland and by the year's end, it was estimated that more than 7 million Ukrainians had passed through its borders (Duszczuk and Kaczmarczyk 2022; Fusiek 2024). By April 1, 2022, over 3 million Ukrainian refugees were residing at least temporarily in Poland (Wojdat and Cywinski 2022).

The response of Polish civil society to this humanitarian crisis was extraordinary (Myck, Krol and Oczkowska 2025; Duszczuk and Kaczmarczyk 2022). Almost overnight, Polish volunteers and civil society organizations, eventually with funding and statutory authority from national, regional and local governments, set-up reception centers; arranged for home-sharing and other forms of housing; gave people rides and train tickets to move to other parts of Poland and Europe; provided social and psychological support and access to the Polish job market; and offered Ukrainian children seats in Polish schools (Fusiek 2022). Over the next three years, many Ukrainians moved to other parts of Europe and the world or returned to Ukraine. As of November 2023, it was estimated that just under a million Ukrainians have made Poland their temporary home (European Council 2024; Toth 2024) and as of September 2024, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees reported that 970,120 are recorded to be in Poland (UNHCR 2024).

## **Polish Attitudes Toward Ukraine and Ukrainians in Public Opinion Data**

Public opinion data collected the day after the full-scale invasion reveals strong Polish support for arming Ukraine and for Ukrainians fleeing the war. The Spring 2022 Global Attitudes Survey found that 84% of Poles supported NATO sending arms to Ukraine (Pew Research Center 2022). Over time, support for Ukraine stayed strongest among older generations of Poles, but in spring 2022, 83% of people aged 16 - 34, expressed unequivocal support for Ukraine (Krawatzek and Goldstein 2023).

Regarding refugees, nearly 93 percent of Poles were in favor of helping Ukrainians fleeing the country in the first 24-hours after the invasion. 57.9 percent of the people surveyed stated that Poland should support all people leaving Ukraine without conditions and another 34.8 percent said Poland should receive and support those most in need and in danger (Dabrowska 2022).

Support for accepting Ukrainian refugees stabilized around 80% over the following year, before dropping to about 73% in May 2023 (CBOS 2023). The Polish Center for Public Opinion Research (CBOS) attributed the drop in support to "an uncertain economic situation," and "in particular with the uncontrolled influx of cheap Ukrainian grain to Poland " which had "sparked protests" throughout Poland (CBOS, 1).

Support for Ukrainian refugees was strongest in urban areas, among people with education and older people and lower in rural areas, among people with less education, those who assess their economic situation poorly, among young people and, in particular, younger women (18-24). In fact, there is a 30-point gap between men and women in this age group, which is attributed to the fact that most Ukrainian refugees are female who compete directly with Polish women for jobs (as well as romantic partners).

By October 2024, support for Ukrainian refugees among Poles had sunk to 53% (Krzysztozek 2024) but had risen slightly to 57% by December 2024 (Sas 2025). It is not surprising that public support for

Ukrainian refugees has flagged after 3 years of generous support including access to the labor market, language training, social assistance payments, housing and education. Even so, more than half of Poles surveyed still favored supporting Ukrainians in Poland by the end of 2024.

### **Contribution of this Study: Complexities of Past and Present Polish-Ukrainian Relations**

What explains Poland's extraordinary support of Ukraine in its time of need? Surveys typically ask Poles if they favor supporting Ukraine or about their attitudes and experiences with Ukrainians (positive, somewhat positive, somewhat negative, etc.) but they do not ask questions that can elicit the rationales behind their support. The research presented here sought to reveal these rationales. It presents as bottom-up, qualitative portrait of citizens' agreement with and rationalizations for their support for Ukraine. I interviewed 22 people in 4 cities, in the course of the daily lives in parks, at tram stops, in shopping malls and the like. I also interviewed 3 people I knew and one, a museum curator, was interviewed because of the nature of his work, rather than being chosen randomly on the street. The spontaneous nature of the street interviews and the open-ended design of the questions provide a sort of Rorschach test of Polish attitudes towards Ukraine. Textual, thematic analysis of their answers allow me to tease out the influence of Poles' collective memory of war and foreign domination as well as contemporary narratives about Poland's role in Europe, security threats, etc.

Even the casual observer of European history might infer that it is Poland's fear of Russia that compels it to support Ukraine. However, Poland and Ukraine, or perhaps its more correct to say Poles and Ukrainians, have their own complex history, a history imbricated by economic asymmetries and interdependence, political competition and betrayal, and, sadly, even ethnic cleansing. Because of the complexity, recency and manipulation of this history by nationalist forces on both sides as well as by the Germans during the war and the Soviets before during and after the war, it is not a foregone conclusion that Poles would rise-up to support their Ukrainian "neighbors."

### **Poland's Multicultural Past**

One cannot use the word "neighbors" in discussions of Polish ethnic relations without referencing Jan T. Gross's (2001) *Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne*. The book created political controversy in Poland by surfacing the tragic story of the Poles of Jedwabne murdering their Jewish neighbors without explicit orders from the Nazis but during the Nazi occupation of Poland in 1941. Polish nationalist accounts of the 1940s stress Polish suffering and persecution and foreground stories of Poles risking their lives by hiding and aiding Polish Jews (Zubrzycki 2022). While there are many such stories, it is also true that Poles abetted the Nazis in the genocide of European Jewry or, as is the case in the Jedwabne, murdered their Jewish neighbors on their own.

There is a tension between Poland's dominant national mythology stressing heroism and victimhood and the tremendous loss of Polish Jewry and Polish-Jewish cultural presence that resulted from the war. Genevieve Zubrzycki delves deeply into this tension in *The Crosses of Auschwitz: Nationalism and Religion in Post-Communist Poland* (2006) and *Resurrecting the Jew: Nationalism, Philosemitism and Poland's Jewish Revival* (2022). These thorough and multi-layered ethnographies reveal that Poland's, perhaps all, national identity formation is a product of claiming and reclaiming, writing and revising historical memory through the agency of both civil and political actors in the present.

The history between Poles and Ukrainians is no less complex. Most of present-day Ukraine was part of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Polish landowners, especially in the regions of Galicia and Volhynia,<sup>1</sup> profited from their feudal relationship with Ukrainian peasants for generations. Ukrainian national identity was forged in the waning of Poland's political power and the dismembering of the Polish state through partition by the Russian and Austro-Hungarian empires. Ukraine's first national hero, Bohdan Khmelnytsky, led a successful Cossack and peasant revolt against Polish nobility in 1648. This success against the Polish crown led to the Pereyaslav Agreement with Moscow, which traded recognition of the Ukrainian duchy for its "protection" or suzerainty to Russian Tsar Alexis. This agreement in turn led to the Russo-Polish War which concluded with the division of Ukraine between Russia and Poland.

A similar political contest among European powers to the west and to the east of present-day Ukraine occurred during the 20<sup>th</sup> century during the interwar period. Poland regained its independence as part of the Treaty of Versailles. The Russian empire was dismantled in the 1917 revolution. Ukraine had for a short time its own socialist republic, before being absorbed once again by its eastern neighbor as a Soviet socialist republic. These chapters of European history demonstrate that the modern histories of both Poland and Ukraine have been forged from bloodshed and war between Poles and Ukrainians, contests that have been enflamed and driven by the political pursuits of neighboring countries and conquerors.

The most recent chapter of bloody conflict between Poles and Ukrainians occurred in the 1940s. Once again, the geography of these two nations provided the backdrop of military competition among European powers, this time Hitler's Third Reich and Stalin's Soviet Union. The infamous Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact envisioned a newly partitioned Poland and the continuation of Ukraine as a soviet republic. The secret agreement did not stop the German army from coopting Ukrainian nationalists to the Nazi cause using them to undermine Polish control of what is now eastern Ukraine and enlisting them in their struggle against the Red Army. Both Nazi and Soviet propaganda stoked ethnic rivalry between Poles and Ukrainians for their own ends. Ethnic cleansing was the order of the day. In addition to pogroms against Jews perpetrated by both Poles and Ukrainians, Ukrainian nationalists murdered thousands of Poles and seized their farms, businesses and homes throughout the regions of Volhynia, Ternopil, and Lviv. They arrested and turned over Poles active in the Polish resistance and Home Army to the Nazi occupiers. Most of these were murdered either by firing squad in prisons after brutal interrogations, or after transport to forced labor or extermination camps.

The post-war period saw the tables turn once again. The border between Poland and the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic was re-drawn along Stalin's desired "Curzon Line," effectively moving the border some 50 miles to the west and ceding formerly Polish controlled regions to the Soviet Union. As a by-

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<sup>1</sup> A note on place names: I refer to cities and regions of present-day Ukraine by their Ukrainian names, e.g., as Lviv, rather than Lvov (as transcribed from Russian) or Lwów (as it is known in Polish). The one exception to this rule is Wołyń, the Polish term for Volhynia, because of its historical significance to Poles and its centrality to this study and when speaking of the area from the Polish point of view and in direct quotes from my interviewees. The Wołyń massacre (or genocide) refers to the 1943 mass killing of Poles by Ukrainian nationalists not only in Wołyń proper but throughout present-day western Ukraine and southeastern Poland.

product of Soviet “liberation,” Poland’s army fell under the command of the Red Army during the war and, ultimately, the political control of the Soviet Union after it.

The years between the war’s end in 1945 and the consolidation of the Polish Communist regime were a time of massive population movement and forced relocation. Prisoners of war, political prisoners in forced labor camps in territories controlled by the Third Reich, and civilians who had been forced away from their pre-war places of residence had to find their way back to their original locations or, in the case of the peoples from the eastern territories, were forcibly relocated to newly acquired territories in the west of Poland (taken from Germany as punishment for starting the war.) Polish authorities feared a resurgence of the Ukrainian nationalism, especially in south-eastern Poland, where the largest number of Ukrainians resided. Thus, the idea for “Operation Vistula” was born.

Operation Vistula used the Polish army and other state-controlled resources to disperse Ukrainians throughout the territory that comprised the Polish People’s Republic. Ukrainians were forcibly removed from their farms and homes and transported to farmland and villages in Silesia. Those suspected of participation in the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN), often referred to as “Banderites” after the Ukrainian nationalist leader Stepan Bandera, were summarily executed or transported to a former Nazi prison in Katowice where they were interrogated, beaten, starved and imprisoned for several years.

The purpose of this recitation of the violence that has occurred between Poles and Ukrainians is to underscore the point made above: that it was not a “given” that Poles would rally so immediately and instinctively to assist Ukrainians fleeing the Russian full-scale invasion of 2022 or that the Polish state would throw its full political weight behind Ukraine. How have Poles come to term with this painful chapter of their national story? How have they transmuted these events in ways that allow them to support Ukraine today?

### **Memory Studies and Collective Memory**

The field of memory studies and the concept of collective memory are helpful guides in anticipating the ways these historic events have been “remembered,” internalized, politicized and retold (Bosch 2016; Boyer and Wertsch 2009; Roedigger and Wertsch 2008). The foundation of memory studies is the observation that historical events and facts, “what really happened,” can be separated from the way these are “remembered” by people of successive generations who were not witness to them. What is “remembered,” or more accurately, what is retold and commemorated, becomes the collective memory of the nation, even as different versions of history are surfaced and contested, and fall in and out of political favor or national salience over time.

Jelena Subotic (2019) coined the term “ontological insecurity” as the context within which efforts to construct political memory have occurred across post-communist Europe. She writes:

The post-communist interest in the past, I have argued, is motivated not by a search for an honest account of history but rather by the desire to further strengthen national identity and a sense of the nation’s valor as existing continuously in time (226-227).

Bernhard and Kubik (2014) elaborated the process through which various “mnemonic actors” contest the importance of historical events and advocate for different visions of collective memory. These contests comprise “memory regimes,” defined as sets of cultural and institutional practices that publicly

commemorate and/or “remember” an event or a set of related events and past processes (14-16). They argue that “intensive participation of state institutions and/or political society” leads to “official memory regimes” which result “mnemonic fields” that are discernible in a given country at a given period (16). While stable and discernible, official mnemonic fields shift over time through the circulation of political elites, political realignments, generational change, and exogenous shocks (16).

### **Poland’s Collective Memory of World War II and the Mnemonic Field of Wołyń**

Since 1989, political and cultural actors in Poland shifted the mnemonic field around its collective memory of World War II in several ways. They supplanted Soviet official histories of events such as the massacre of Polish officers at Katyń and the war. Today every Polish history book states it was the Soviets (not the Germans) who decapitated the Polish army, or even the Polish nation as some would argue, and who sat on their heels while the Nazis put down the Warsaw Uprising. Soviet imposed ideas of “brotherhood” and “liberation” have been exposed as propagandistic euphemisms to legitimate Soviet political control and Polish national servitude.

The mnemonic field surrounding Wołyń emerged from family oral histories passed down from generation to generation. Public monuments and memorials were created through the agency of descendants of the victims and Home Army veterans organization who enlisted the support of municipal governments to provide space for their localization. Resolutions and commemorations at the sites by national government actors followed a decade or more later. The mnemonic field created by the memorials and the events they commemorate stress national solidarity, victimhood, heroism, and martyrdom, often expressed through Catholic symbology and martyrology.

The first large public memorial to victims of the genocides of the 1940s does not mention Wołyń by name. Rather, it is entitled, “Monument to the Victims of Ukrainian Insurgent Army.” It is located in Wrocław, one of the sites of my interviews. Some believe that Wrocław was the first place such a monument first appeared because it was formerly a German city almost entirely repopulated by people from Poland’s former eastern territories (Monuments of Remembrance 1918-2018).

Monuments of Remembrance 1918-2018, funded by the European Union’s Europe for Citizens program among others, states that the memorial commemorates “Polish citizens murdered in the south-eastern borderlands in 1939-1947 by an organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) - Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA)” across seven regions of the Second Polish Republic between 1939 and 1947 (Monuments of Remembrance 1918-2018). The plaque also honors the memory of Ukrainians who protected Poles.

The Wrocław monument was funded by the Borderland and Veterans' Organizations of Wrocław and was unveiled in 1999. The is embossed with a quote by Poland’s most revered writer, Adam Mickiewicz: “If I forget them, let God forget me.” Land from the seven territories where the genocides took place are ensconced in the memorial (Monuments of Remembrance 1918-2018). The design features two large cement towers that appear like human figures facing each other. The negative space between them creates a human form with outstretched arms reminiscent of Christ on the cross. It is located a 15-minute walk from the main market square near Polish Hill and in proximity to other memorials.



Photo credit: [Bonio, Pomnik ofiar Ukraińskiej Powstańczej Armii na Placu Polskim we Wrocławiu \(WikiMedia Commons\)](#)

The city of Gdańsk, also the cite of research in this study, unveiled a monument to the memory of Wołyń on the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the massacres in 2003 (inyourpocket.com 2025). Like Wrocław’s memorial, the monument is inscribed with a quote by Poland’s most revered writer, Adam Mickiewicz: “If I forget them, let God forget me.” The memorial was established by the World Association of Poland’s Home Army. The monument is in a small green space adjacent to a church in the old town in a residential area.



The city council of Lubliń, also a cite of this research, designated a space for a Wołyń memorial in 2013, on the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the genocides (Dzieje.pl 2016). It passed by unanimous vote of the city council without debate. The small square is located in a residential neighborhood, a 30-minute walk

from the entrance to the old town (Brama Krakowska). It is near Saxon Park and various academic facilities belonging to several of Lublin's universities.



The front inscription dedicates the statue to the victims of genocide against the Polish nation perpetrated by Ukrainian nationalists between 1939 and 1945 in Volhynia and the south-eastern territories, “mothers and fathers, children and elderly, and clergy” murdered in a particularly cruel manner solely because they were Polish. The front-facing facet of the base quotes Pope John Paul II, “The nation that loses its memory, loses its identity.”



As for national memorials, in 2003, the descendants of the Home Army created a memorial to members of the Home Army who died in Wołyń in the Żoliborz area of Warsaw, a rather nondescript residential area of Warsaw four miles away from the old town area where most significant memorials and museums are located. The park, called Wołyń Square, comprises 160 square meters and has several elements: a plaque surrounded by large pillars; an enormous sword; and wall with engraved panels and symbolic crypts.



Successive Polish governments have recognized the painful history of Wołyń. The Polish Sejm passed a resolution commemorating the massacre in 2009 under the first center-right government cabinet of Donald Tusk.

The PiS government, which ruled Poland from 2015 to November 2023, took many actions to commemorate and emphasize Poland's heroism and suffering in the events leading to and during World War II. Among these were the creation of the museum devoted to the Warsaw Uprising, the creation of the Institute for National Remembrance, and the passing of a law making it a crime to accuse any Pole of criminal actions against Jews during the Nazi occupation. The Kaczyński government took several actions to control the narrative of the Museum of World War II in Gdańsk, actions which were met with a letter of protest from over 500 Polish cultural elites (Michalska 2017).

A monument the civilian victims of the Wołyń massacre was unveiled on the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the event in 2013, during Tusk's second cabinet (BBC 2013; Warszawa.naszemiasto 2013). It is adjacent to the pre-existing memorial to the Home Army members lost in defending Poles in the eastern territories. It



graphic but historically accurate depiction of the means of death for many victims of the massacre including children.

In 2016, under the PiS government, the Sejm declared July 11 each year to be the “National Day of Remembrance of the Victims of the Genocide of Citizens of the Polish Republic committed by Ukrainian Nationalists” (Sejm 2016). On the day of remembrance in 2017, the Lublin city council designated land in the city for a memorial to victims of Wołyń (Dzieje.pl 2017).

In 2023, Poland’s President Duda and Ukraine’s President Volodymyr Zelensky commemorated the tragedy together in church in Lutsk, Ukraine (DW 2023).

Demands for the exhumation and repatriation of the remains of Polish victims of the massacres have become a frequent subject in Polish state-run media, right wing press, and comments by President Andrzej Duda. In January 2025, Poland’s Prime Minister Donald Tusk and Ukraine’s President Volodymyr Zelensky agreed a plan to allow the exhumation of Polish victims, with Prime Minister Tusk referring to the agreement as a “significant breakthrough” (Rankin 2025).

Some have attributed the uptick in attention to Wołyń to Russian trolling campaigns (FakeHunter no date; Szczudlik and Legucka 2023; Gorwa 2018). It is curious that public references to Wołyń have proliferated over the social media era with both monuments and commemorations at the memorials growing in frequency and size decade by decade since 1989. Some of this increase is certainly attributable to exogenous actors such as Russian bots and pro-Russian trolls “stirring the pot,” but it is also the case that the salience of Wołyń has grown within the official mnemonic frame of Polish suffering and victimhood and the patriotic duty to remember all forms of national suffering promoted by PiS (Bruała 2024), the Institute for National Remembrance, numerous museums and museum installations as well as social movement actors and parties associated with the Polish far-right.

The mnemonic field created by Wołyń and the patriotic duty to remember reinforce and animate two other potent mnemonic fields in Polish politics and undergirding Poland’s support for Ukraine: security and national identity.

Terrill (2023) explored the Polish political elites’ framing of the war using discourse-historical analysis. She analyzed eight opinion pieces written for an international media outlet supported by PiS and other right-leaning cultural elites between 2017 and 2023. These revealed three rhetorical strategies: appeals to stories and narratives (mythopoesis); appeals to authorization (stressing Poland is an authority on the subject of Russian aggression); and appeals to morals and values (moralization). She also identified four topoi: the topos of responsibility; the topos of history; the topos of threat or danger; and the topos of humanitarianism.

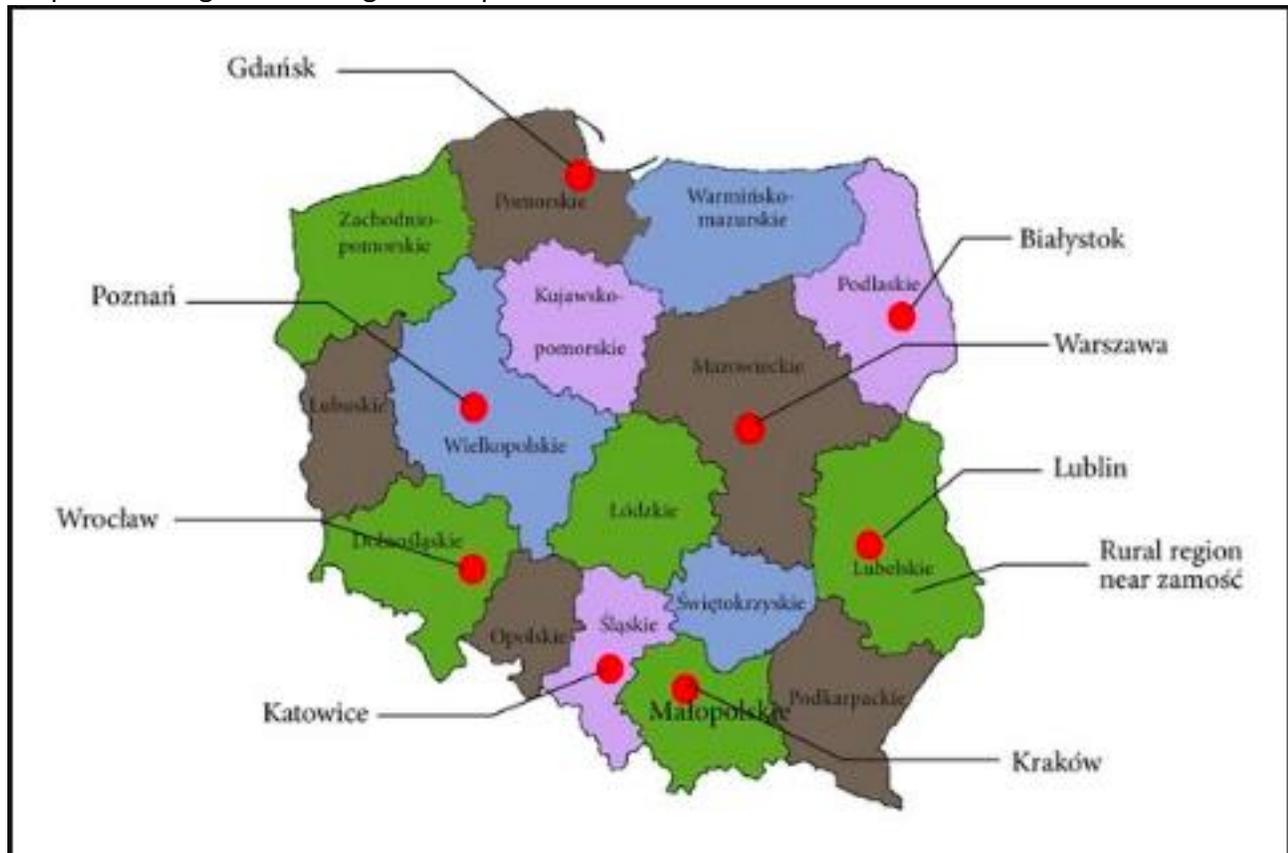
These strategies and topoi are useful in anticipating possible rationales the Polish citizens could offer for their support (or non-support) for Ukraine on the one hand, and how they balance ethnic enmity and ethnic cleansing between Poles and Ukrainians in the past, against the threat posed by Russia today.

### **Research Design: Methods and Data**

Because the majority of Ukrainian refugees are located in Poland’s largest cities and I am interested in the views of those most affected by the influx, I chose 4 Polish cities - Gdańsk, Lublin, Kraków and

Wrocław – as the sites of my research. Each of the cities is the capital of their respective regions (województwa). They represent geographic diversity as they are located in the north (Gdańsk); south (Kraków); east (Lublin); and west (Wrocław) of the country (see map below.)

Map: Polish Regions and Regional Capitals



Source: ECAP Study, cited in The Prevalence of Asthma and Declared Asthma in Poland on the Basis of ECAP Survey Using Correspondence Analysis - Scientific Figure on ResearchGate. Available from: [https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Map-of-Poland-Red-points-indicate-the-major-cities-in-ECAP-study-Katowice-Slaskie\\_fig1\\_235524521](https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Map-of-Poland-Red-points-indicate-the-major-cities-in-ECAP-study-Katowice-Slaskie_fig1_235524521) [accessed 20 Sept 2024]

The cities are among Poland's 10 largest cities with populations ranging between 360,00 and 750,000 (see Table 1).

Table 1: Population of 10 Largest Polish Cities (Research Sites bolded)

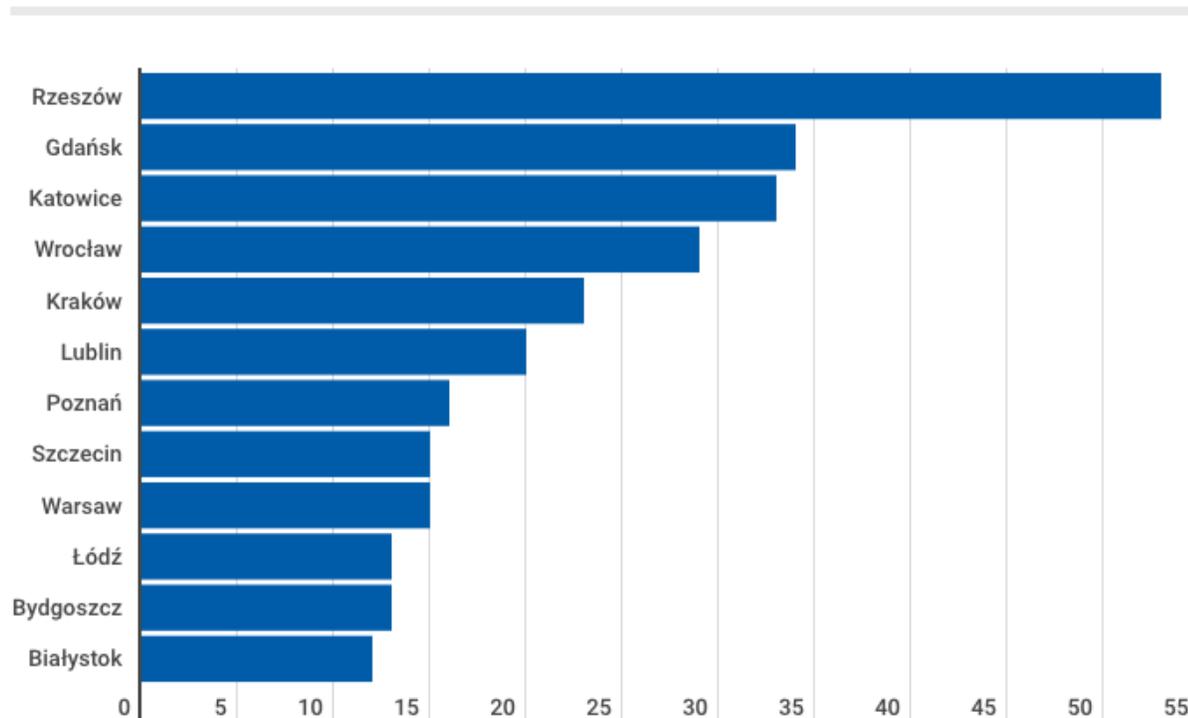
City	Population
Warsaw	1,702,139
Lodz	768,755
<b>Kraków</b>	<b>755,050</b>
<b>Wrocław</b>	<b>634,893</b>
Poznan	570,352
<b>Gdańsk</b>	<b>461,865</b>
Szczecin	407,811
Bydgoszcz	366,452
<b>Lublin</b>	<b>360,044</b>
Katowice	317,316

Source: World Population Review, 2024 (<https://worldpopulationreview.com/cities/poland>)

All four cities; populations increased between 20 and 35 percent as a result of their hosting Ukrainian refugees in 2022 (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Population of Polish Cities, April 2022.

### Increase in the population of Polish cities since Russia's invasion of Ukraine (in %)



SOURCE: [European Investment Bank](https://www.eib.org/en/stories/ukrainian-poland-infrastructure-refugees), based on Union of Polish Metropolises Data, as of April 1, 2022.  
<https://www.eib.org/en/stories/ukrainian-poland-infrastructure-refugees>

The interviews were conducted in February 2024, as the war approached then passed its two-year mark. The majority<sup>2</sup> of the interviews were conducted in public places (parks, shopping malls, public squares, transit stops) with people unknown to the researcher.

### Description of Sample

A total of 24 people were interviewed across the four cities. One interview was conducted with a subject known to the researcher in Warsaw (total N=25). (See Table 2 for the number of respondents and refusals by city.)

Table 2: Number of Interviews (and Refusals) per City

City	Number (refusals) <sup>3</sup>
Gdańsk	9 (1)
Lublin	3 (6)
Kraków	7 (2)
Warsaw	1
Wrocław	5 (2)
Total	25 (11)

Of the refusals, five said they didn't have time because they had somewhere they had to be; two said "no thank you;" two said they were not interested in Ukraine; one said, "What would be the point?" and one said it was too sad of a subject.

The response rate among subjects unknown to me was 50% overall, but varied across cities. The lowest response rate was in Lublin, where I had twice as many refusals as acceptances. The response of several people who refused was rather chilly, while others seemed to legitimately have some place they had to be. Lublin is somewhat smaller and less cosmopolitan feeling than the other cities in the sample but is also home to many universities and large numbers of students, including a high proportion of non-European students. The city is very close to Poland's eastern border with Ukraine and is part of the historical region that includes Wołyń. A survey conducted to assess interest in creating the city's Wołyń memorial found that 20 percent of the residents of Lublin had roots in areas that had been ethnically cleansed (Dzieje.pl 2017).

One respondent in Lublin who did agree to the interview said she supported helping Ukraine because she has roots in present-day Ukraine (but was ethnically Polish). Another Lublin respondent agreed to answer my questions but noted that he believed Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy had been dishonest in his appeals for help and in his performance in office.

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<sup>2</sup> Three interviews were with people known to the researcher, personally or professionally.

<sup>3</sup> I counted refusals given by a single person on behalf of people sitting or walking together in pairs or a group as a single refusal.

At the time I was conducting the interviews in February 2024, Polish farmers were blockading border crossings from Ukraine within an hour of Lublin, as well as crossings out of Poland to Slovakia and Germany, to protest what they see as unfair competition from Ukrainian agricultural products, products that between May 2023 and September 2023 were not to be sold in the European Common Market on their way to export to the larger global market (Stezycki 2024). When this agreement expired, the Polish government imposed one of its own (Easton 2024). The perception among Polish farmers is that Ukrainian grain is produced more cheaply than their own because Polish farmers must meet higher standards of production, especially due to the cost of following ecological standards imposed by the European Union. The grain protests were one temporal factor that could explain the higher refusal rate in Lublin. Overall, there was a feeling of tension and irritation among people I approached in Lublin that was not as palpable or common in the other cities.

### Demographics of Respondents by Gender, Age and Profession

I aimed for a gender-balanced sample, but slightly more men responded than women. One subject identified as non-binary. I sought out subjects of various ages, but at least 18 years old. Breakdowns of subjects by gender and age appears in Tables 3 and 4. The ages are estimates as I did not ask the subjects their ages, but some older respondents stated their ages in the course of answering the questions.

Table 3: Gender of Respondents (N=25)

Male	Female	Non-binary
14	10	1

Table 4: Age of Respondents

Age	Number
18-24	7
25-44	7
45-64	4
65-84	5
85+	2

I sought a range of professional or class affiliations by going to different types of neighborhoods, e.g., some more marginalized or working-class, some more desirable and historic neighborhoods, as well as more peripheral areas of the cities. I also approached 5 people who seemed to be affected by social problems (e.g., mental health, alcohol or drug dependence, homelessness). None of these resulted in full interviews. (See refusal reasons listed above.)

Of the respondents, six were students, six worked in service or retail sectors, and four worked in education, technology or media. One was unemployed and one was a full-time parent. (See Table 5.)

Table 5: Professional, Economic or Social Location of Respondents

Type of Employment	Number
Student	6
Service or Retail	6
Education, Technology or Media	4
Retired	6
Full-time Parent	1
Unemployed	1

### Interview Questions

The approach was experiential and inductive as described by Braun and Clarke (2012). I used open-ended questions that would be conducive to qualitative, thematic analysis. Questions 1 and 2 appear below.

1. Do you agree with the support, both military support and support for refugees, that Poland has provided to Ukraine?
2. Why? Why do you think Poland should support Ukraine/Ukrainians? Or why not? What bothers you about supporting Ukraine/Ukrainians?

A third question drew out people’s thinking about the role of history, specifically “difficult events” that occurred between Poles and Ukrainians between 1937 and 1945. I deliberately but vaguely referred to “events” of the 1940s or to the “issue of Wołyń” in order to draw out the respondents thinking about this chapter of Polish-Ukrainian relations but without providing any descriptions of the events themselves.

This question is grounded in theories of collective memory, where traumatic events and events involving national victimization tend to leave lasting marks on the collective national psyche (Alexander 2004; Levy and Sznajder 2006; Lim 2010; Subotnic 2019). Thus, I anticipated that this chapter of Polish-Ukrainian relations would influence Poles feelings toward Ukrainians today. It was hypothesized that Poles have had to reconcile, forgive, rationalize or somehow come to terms with these events in order to be moved to assist Ukraine today.

3. What influence, if any, should historical incidents between Ukraine and Poland, such as those occurring in Poland’s former eastern territories during and after WWII, have on Polish-Ukrainian relations today?

While I deliberately chose rather vague language in the written question, i.e., “historical incidents” as people pondered this wording as they read the question for themselves, generally aloud, I supplied the “idea” of Wołyń, not using the word “massacre,” as it is usually called in Polish, *rzeź Wołyński*, but rather the more neutral word “issue” (*sprawa*) alluding not so much to the massacre itself but to the political issue that continues today over the exhuming and returning the remains of its victims to Poland (AP News 2023).

The interviews were recorded and then transcribed in Polish, first using the transcription tool available in Microsoft Word, then gone over at least twice more by the author. The resulting text was then read over by a native speaker as a final check and to attempt to make out any words that could not be understood after many attempts. Respondents' answers were edited only minimally, e.g., to remove double words and filler words for the text analysis stage. Contradictions and occasional statements that did not "make sense" were retained in their original wording. In other words, there was no attempt to make the speaker's comments "more rational" or to create a more coherent narrative in such cases.<sup>4</sup>

## Results

Respondent answers to Question 1, do you agree with Polish support, both military and for refugees, that Poland has provided to Ukraine, were coded and tallied manually. Results appear in Table 6.

Table 6: Agree with Support for Ukraine

Yes - categorically	19
Yes – conditionally	5
Don't know	1

While I asked about military support for Ukraine and for Ukrainian refugees separately, most people did not address them separately. Responses were coded as either categorical (i.e., absolutely, no conditions, limits, qualifications given) or conditional ("to a point," "with some limitations," "for those who actually need it"). A majority of respondents (76%) voiced categorical support for Ukraine while 20% wanted some conditions on the support, for example, that refugees be required to work or that support be given only to people of modest means and not to the wealthy. One person said they really didn't know about military stuff but that maybe "the West" should do more and that we should ask Ukrainians if they think the support is sufficient.

For Question 2, asking why they agreed with the support or had reservations about it, the codes were created from the words used by the respondents. Answers could be labeled with multiple codes. (See Table 7.)

Two respondents expressed reservations about the amount of support stating that they were concerned that Poland had done so much that it was in danger of not being able to defend itself or simply that Poland needed to worry about defending itself.

Eight of the nine types of responses can be clumped into broad two categories: humanitarian reasons (because they are human beings, because Ukrainians are good people; because they are our neighbors; because war is terrible = 25 responses of this type) and security concerns (because Russia is the aggressor; because it's in Poland's self-interest; security of Poland, Europe or the world; as well as Poland should not support because it needs to be able to defend itself = 20 responses of this type). Responses are grouped into these two broader categories in Table 8.

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<sup>4</sup> I did change the wordings that appear in the English translations I report here to make them more idiomatic and intelligible to the reader.

Table 7: Reasons for Supporting Ukraine

Reason to support or not support	Number
Because it's the humanitarian thing to do	8
Because Russia is the aggressor, dangerous, bad	8
Because Ukrainians are good people	7
Because they are our neighbors	6
Because it's in our self-interest, PL will be next	5
For the security of PL, Europe or the world	5
Because war is terrible	4
Because I have Ukrainian roots	1
PL should NOT continue supporting Ukraine: because PL has done enough; needs to be able to defend itself	2

Table 8: Humanitarian and Security Reasons for Supporting Ukraine

<b>Humanitarian Reasons to Support Ukraine</b>	<b>Number</b>
Because it's the humanitarian thing to do	8
Because Ukrainians are good people	7
Because they are our neighbors	6
Because war is terrible	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Security Reasons to Support or Not Support Ukraine</b>	
Because Russia is the aggressor, dangerous, bad	8
Because it's in our self-interest, PL will be next	5
For the security of PL, Europe or the world	5
Should NOT: because PL has done enough; needs to be able to defend itself	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>

## Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis was conducted in Polish using the MAXQDA qualitative data analysis program . Word counts were done on words generated through a grounded theory of collective national memory, looking for words with great historical resonance in Poland such as “war” and “World War II,” as well as the word “history” itself. Other words were recognized as reoccurring through the process of conducting and transcribing the interviews, such as “Russia,” “neighbor,” and “generation.” After coding and rereading, coding and rereading the responses several times, a final pass was made to create codes for the more general sense of the statements, such as “because we are next,” rather than for individual words. Through this iterative process, several themes emerged.

Theme 1: Support for Ukraine is Strong (with evidence of some fraying and tensions)

Theme 2: Humanitarian Reasons for Supporting Ukraine

Theme 3: Security Reasons for Supporting Ukraine

Theme 4: Ways of Reconciling the Past

### Theme 1: Support for Ukraine is Strong

Two years after the full-scale invasion, subjects articulated strong support for Ukraine, with a few signs of softening support. This finding resonates with public opinion data both initially and in 2024. Nineteen of 25 respondent articulated strong support for Ukraine, while 5 expressed conditional support and one did not know. Most respondents’ responses were along the lines of this one from Gdańsk which repeated back the language of the question:

“I agree with this, that Poland should help Ukraine both in the military sense and for refugees”  
(Gdańsk Respondent 1).<sup>i</sup>

A minority of respondents expressed the idea that are limits to how much Poland can help, that Poland has done more than any other country, or that aid to refugees should be limited to those who really need it or to those who are working in Poland.

There were trends among those who gave conditional support. First, all of the respondents who expressed that there should be limits or conditions for support were men and most were self-employed (4 of 5). Second, there were regional disparities. While qualifications were rare in Gdańsk, Kraków and Wrocław, two of the three respondents in Lublin offered conditions to support. They said:

“I believe that Poland is very good at helping its allies and neighbors. However, I believe that it has gone a bit too far and the scale on which we are helping Ukraine is beyond our capabilities”  
(Lublin, Respondent 2).<sup>ii</sup>

“[I agree] for some refugees, certainly for the poorer ones. To some degree, well, we have to support them somehow for some of the people who are here, certainly to some extent, not to such an extensive extent, in my opinion, as it is, but to some extent certainly. Some help is recommended because we live with them in our community, so yes” (Lublin, Respondent 3).<sup>iii</sup>

These comments echoed conditions offered by respondents in Gdańsk and Kraków:

“I think I agree there should be support. Maybe it shouldn't be to such a degree. The support could be equally large, but organized a little differently. There are many benefits that can be maintained, but they should be made conditional by work. They should take into account many other factors, but I agree that you most definitely need to help people in need. Personally, I try to help as much as possible” (Gdańsk, Respondent 2).<sup>iv</sup>

“I agree, but not completely. The point is that this aid has gone too far. It is carried out at the expense of Polish society. It's too much. I understand that Ukraine needs the support, that they are fighting for their lives now. But the thing is, it can't be that they live-off of our corpse. As I see it, there's just not enough to go around” (Kraków, Respondent 3).<sup>v</sup>

Some respondents expressed the idea that Poland has given the most support of all countries and/or that other countries need to help more:

“Of course I am in favor of support for Ukraine. If it would help, I would help at any time. I have already helped as much as I could. I gave many things. But after a certain extent, you have to think about yourself. And other countries give less. Or they limit it all. But you need to help because there is no other option” (Kraków, Respondent 4).<sup>vi</sup>

“Please, madam, it is like this: on the subject of support no county in Europe has given as much as Poland has. No country” (Gdańsk, Respondent 9).<sup>vii</sup>

Gdańsk Respondent 9 went on to state his unequivocal support for Ukraine and Ukrainians. He had spent a decade living and working in western Ukraine and praised Ukrainians as good, hospitable, and hard-working people who deserve support in fending off Russian aggression. Thus, his initial response stressing how much Poland had already done to support Ukraine was not implying that Poland should not do so. Rather, he is proud of Polish support of Ukraine and feels that other countries in Europe should be doing more. These sentiments coincide with the “heroic Poland” and Poland as a leader in Europe framing identified by Terrill (2023) in her analysis of national narratives promoted by PiS and other cultural and political elites.

## **Theme 2: Humanitarian Reasons for Supporting Ukraine**

The most common framing for why Poland should help Ukraine was humanitarian. Humanitarian rationales were expressed 25 times across the 25 interviews:

[Why should we help?] Firstly, for humanitarian and generally humane reasons, that it is right and just at this time (Kraków, Respondent 5).<sup>viii</sup>

[Because] man must help his fellow man (Gdańsk, Respondent 1).<sup>ix</sup>

You have to help people in need (Gdańsk, Respondent 2).<sup>x</sup>

Because support for war victims is important. War itself is, after all, the humanitarian catastrophe it appears to be, and war victims in particular are victims of such a catastrophe (Wrocław, Respondent 1).<sup>xi</sup>

Because Ukrainians are not only our neighbors, but also people who simply need to be helped, because what is happening there is a tragedy. So yes, I think we should support them (Wrocław, Respondent 2).<sup>xii</sup>

Several respondents asserted the need to help and protect children or mothers and children in particular. Said one woman in Wrocław:

We should help because we never know what situation we will find ourselves in. These are people wronged by fate and entire families, women, children, I feel sorry for the children the most, of course, because an adult will somehow cope. So, I definitely in favor of support for Ukraine (Wrocław, Respondent 4).<sup>xiii</sup>

Note that her answer also speaks to the existential fear Poles have of being in a similar situation, “we never know what situation we will find ourselves in.” These remarks exemplify the sense of danger topos identified by Terrill and leads us to the next theme: security.

### **Theme 3: Security Reasons for Supporting Ukraine: Russia and Geography**

As in the previous response, many subjects framed the necessity of supporting Ukraine in security terms as well as humanitarian ones. The two themes were not mutually exclusive. In toto, security rationales appeared 20 times across the 25 interviews.

[We should support Ukraine] precisely because by supporting Ukraine we also save ourselves. Because these two things are related to each other, so it is in Poland's interest (Kraków, Respondent 6).<sup>xiv</sup>

The war in Ukraine itself poses a direct threat to Poland (Wrocław, Respondent 1).<sup>xv</sup>

For geopolitical and strategic reasons, i.e. we should help Ukrainians there now so that we can have more peace and security in the future (Kraków, Respondent 5).<sup>xvi</sup>

I think, based on my understanding, that we need to help to protect ourselves against Russia. When Ukraine falls, we will be the first target (Kraków, Respondent 4).<sup>xvii</sup>

These comments reveal the existential fear the war has activated in Polish consciousness. The war in Ukraine activates Poles' fear of Russian aggression against Poland, the sense that Poland (and Europe) will be next on Russia's list of conquests should it succeed in taking Ukraine.

We should help Ukrainians, despite our difficult history with them. I believe that everyone needs help. They need help because they have become victims of aggression from Russia (Wrocław, Respondent 1).<sup>xviii</sup>

If we don't help, it may happen [that] we will be in a more difficult situation in Europe and also in Poland due to the policies of Russia and Putin (Kraków, Respondent 5).<sup>xix</sup>

Said one woman who remembered vividly her childhood under German occupation and survived over 40 years of Soviet control, “And Russia is ruthless. Ruthless. (Kraków, Respondent 4).<sup>xx</sup>

Thus, it emerged that geography and security were closely intertwined in most respondents' minds. Russia was the most frequently invoked geographical reference (other than Ukraine and Poland). It was mentioned 19 times across the 25 interviews. The next most frequently cited place was Wołyń (Volhynia), which will be discussed in the section on history. There were 11 references to Europe, 4 mentions of the European Union and 1 reference to "the West."

Said one respondent from Gdańsk and another from Kraków:

I mean, I agree [with supporting Ukraine] because Ukraine is fighting for all of Europe. If Ukraine loses, then Russia may attack the rest of Europe (Gdańsk, Respondent 6).<sup>xxi</sup>

Because we are in NATO, but Ukraine is poor. She is terribly poor. It doesn't matter whether I like Ukrainians or have feelings for them. No. This is about tactical considerations. Because it further threatens Europe, because if there is a madman like Putin, we have everything to fear (Kraków, Respondent 6).<sup>xxii</sup>

Because there is a general belief that if we do not support Ukraine militarily, and they do not act as a so-called buffer, i.e. a wall between Western Europe and the European Union and Russia, the Russians will first go through Ukraine and then attack us (Warsaw, Respondent 1).<sup>xxiii</sup>

The geographic proximity to Ukraine was stressed by many. Some of stated that Ukraine is very close to Poland, while others referred to its being Poland's neighbor. The neighbor references at times implied a responsibility to come to Ukraine's defense out of "neighborliness" while others implied that its nearness meant what happens there directly affects or could affect Poland.

These are our neighbors and despite everything, I think we are obliged, even if not to help for the sake of help, but to help for ourselves, because we are very close to the border. And if Ukraine can't cope, we won't cope either. [These are] our brothers [since we] are very close to Ukraine, historically and genetically, and I think we have to help them (Kraków, Respondent 2).<sup>xxiv</sup>

We are neighbors and what [happens] beyond that close border, let's say, because we are neighboring countries, this also has a big impact on us. That is, whatever the situation will be there, it would of course radiate to us, so of course we have an interest in ensuring that there is as much peace as possible, as much freedom and society as possible, and that we can have the best possible relations and relationship (Gdańsk 7).<sup>xxv</sup>

#### **Theme 4: Memory and Ways of Reconciling the Past. New Generations, Old Fears.**

When asked how Poles' "difficult" history with Ukrainians should affect Poland's willingness to support Ukraine today, most expressed the desire to move past this history or that the humanitarian or security issues of today were more important than what happened in the past (with Ukrainians). Some respondents framed the need to move past the history with Ukraine because they, like Poland in the past, have become victims of Russian aggression or that the difficult history with Ukraine paled in comparison to past offenses by Russia:

We should help Ukrainians, despite our difficult history with them. I believe that everyone needs help. They need help because they have become victims of aggression from Russia (Gdańsk, Respondent 8).<sup>xxvi</sup>

It seems to me that this difference between Poland and Ukraine is historical and that this thorn has not been completely forgotten, but has been... subjected to such a pause, that in the scale of important things, most Poles have decided that these historical problems that we have between Poland and Ukraine are less important than the fact that Ukrainians are now being murdered in their own country. They are being denied independence, territorial integrity and this calculation has caused, at least it seems to me, not so much these Ukrainian-Polish conflicts have been forgotten or forgotten, but they have been somewhat pushed into the background (Kraków, Respondent 5).<sup>xxvii</sup>

Several respondents spontaneously used the words "new generation" or "different times" to justify Poland's support for Ukraine. Said one respondent in Gdańsk:

There were some disputes between Poland and Ukraine in the 1930s, but they should be resolved calmly, but not now, not when there is a war. When things calm down, [we can] just settle these matters. We and the Germans also sorted it out somehow. And actually, at the moment, well, I can't say that the Germans are friends, but we live normally with them. Same with Ukrainians. We can live normally. The past was then, at that time. ...[I]t is also said that Poles did not treat Ukrainians very well. That's what my parents told me, but I don't know what it really was like. It's a completely different generation growing up now (Gdańsk, Respondent 5).<sup>xxviii</sup>

This respondent was not alone in drawing a comparison between the improvement in relations with Germany, this one in contrast to the lack of healing in relations with Russia:

It is a bit like comparing the history of Polish-German and Polish-Russian relations. Why are Poles so much more friendly towards Germans than towards Russia? Because in our relations we have gone from mutual accusations and pain to forgiveness to an attempt to re-establish relations. With Russia, this has never worked. In the 1990s, such an attempt was made. It was not carried through to the end (Kraków, Respondent 5).<sup>xxix</sup>

This respondent continued to say that in comparison to the many unresolved traumas inflicted upon Poland by Russia and/or the Soviets, the ethnic cleansing that occurred at Wołyń is but one, lesser known incident:

[W]hen it comes to Polish-Ukrainian relations, probably not so many people are educated in schools today about Polish-Ukrainian relations. They talk about the Volhynian crime, but it is so small compared to the Gulag, to the Katyń crime, to the Soviet Union's invasion of Poland in 1939 and so on and so forth. So [in comparison], these Ukrainian problems are smaller than the problems with Russia (Kraków, Respondent 5).<sup>xxx</sup>

## **Discussion and Conclusions**

Taken together, the themes that emerge from the qualitative analysis are in line with public opinion data showing strong but softening support for Ukraine and Ukrainian refugees. While there were some who refused to participate and gave stand-offish remarks such as, “Ukraine does not interest me,” these came from two types of potential respondents: marginalized people and people in Lublin.

Overall, there was a strong willingness to engage on the subject and to give what seemed to be honest and balanced assessments. Respondents expressed the need to be clear-eyed and pragmatic about the security threat but also to be charitable and humanitarian to their “neighbors” and “brothers” in the face of Russian aggression. Many framed the conflict as an existential threat to Poland and security rationales were complemented by moral arguments about protecting the vulnerable in time of war.

The results dovetail with several themes identified by Terrill in her analysis of right-wing elite messaging such as Poland’s expert knowledge of Russian aggression, as well as firsthand experience with war and losing one’s country. Some respondents also singled out Poland as a leader in Europe, the European Union or NATO based on both Polish experience with Russia and as well as its strategic location at the boundary of NATO’s eastern front. Respondents expressed pride in the strength of Poland’s response and leadership in international organizations and forums.

As for memory politics, Poles expressed a remarkable degree of resolution vis-à-vis Germany. They expressed a consciousness that transgressions had occurred and had been examined and rectified in ways that allowed for normal relations to ensue. In the case of Ukraine, they believed it was important to remember what happened in Wołyń but not to allow the issue to drive a wedge between Poland and Ukraine now in a time of war when Polish leadership is necessary and Polish-Ukrainian solidarity is paramount for stopping further Russian advances into Europe. Thus, efforts in Russian-sponsored social media campaigns that have attempted to “stir the pot” of bad blood between Poland and Ukraine have had only marginal success.

As evinced by the timing and proliferation of monuments commemorating Wołyń, attention to the massacre has grown over the past two decades. The desire to repatriate of victims’ remains has become a more common demand by descendants of victims and found support in the rhetoric of Polish political leaders of the right even more recently, in the past 3-5 years. The memory of Wołyń meshes well with national narratives emphasizing victimhood, suffering, martyrdom and heroism. The process of healing the wounds left by this incident was forestalled by post-war Soviet occupation and control of historical narratives of the war. Forty-five years of experience with Soviet manipulation of Polish history left Poles with a strong desire to reclaim and rewrite this history but to do so with a critical eye on Polish interests today.

### **Directions for Future Research**

All of Europe awaits the cessation of fighting in Ukraine. The return of Donald Trump to the American presidency has created intense uncertainty around how such a cessation will come about and what it will mean for the future of Europe. Growing support for right-wing, populist parties across Europe seems to threaten European solidarity against Russian aggression. Poland is an interesting counter example to these trends. It has moved away from a right-wing, nationalist-populist government and elected a centrist, pro-European Union one.<sup>5</sup> It has consistently articulated the need for European and trans-Atlantic solidarity and increased military spending and a NATO presence in Poland. It is certain to play a pivotal role in Europe's emergent, post-Ukraine war security regime.

Polish attitudes toward Russia, Ukraine, and European security as well as their commitment to European solidarity and humanitarianism demonstrate that some of Europe's 20<sup>th</sup> century enmities have been overcome through reclaiming and rewriting history; acts of acknowledgement and contrition; and the creation of institutions for political and economic cooperation among former enemies. Future researchers should trace how this chapter of violence is written and commemorated and advocate for new institutions that have the potential to transform enemies into allies.

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<sup>5</sup> Poland's most extreme right party, Konfederacja, did campaign on the idea that support for Ukraine was too great (Charlish and Strzelecki 2023) but won only 7.2% of the vote, a slight increase from the 6.8% it received in 2019 (politico.eu 2024).

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<sup>i</sup> Zgadzam się z tym, że Polska powinna pomagać Ukrainie zarówno w sensie militarnym, jak i dla uchodźców (Q1 Gdk1).

<sup>ii</sup> Uważam, że bardzo dobrze Polska potrafi pomagać swoim sojusznikom i sąsiadom. Jednak uważam, że poszło troszeczkę za daleko i skalę na jaką pomagamy Ukrainie przekracza nasze możliwości. (Q1 Lbn2)

<sup>iii</sup> [Zgadzam się] dla części uchodźców na pewno tak, dla tych biedniejszych. W jakiejś części, tak ze względu na to, że, no musimy jakoś im wspierać dla części osób, które są tutaj, na pewno w jakimś stopniu, nie w tak obszernym stopniu w mojej ocenie jakim jest, ale w pewnym stopniu na pewno jakaś pomoc jest wskazana tak, bo jesteśmy, żyjemy w jakiejś tam wspólnoty, więc tak jak najbardziej. (Q1 Lbn3)

<sup>iv</sup> Uważam, że zgadzam się powinno być w sporcie. Może nie powinno być do takim stopniu. Trochę powinno być, oczywiście równie duże, ale troszeczkę inaczej zorganizowane, że wiele benefitów, które utrzymują, oni powinny być uwzględnione pracą, powinny być uwzględnione wieloma innymi czynnikami, ale zgadzam się jak najbardziej trzeba pomagać ludziom w potrzebie. Osobiście sam staram się pomagać, jak tylko to jest możliwe. I to chyba tyle. (Q1 Gdk2)

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- <sup>v</sup> Zgadzam się, ale nie w całkowicie. Chodzi o to, że jest zbyt dalekim zakresie posunięto to pomoc. Jest od prowadzony kosztem polskiego społeczeństwa. Za dużo jest tego. Ja rozumiem, że Ukraina, że ich potrzeba, że oni walczyli teraz swoje życie. Natomiast to jest to. Nie może być tak, że po prostu w naszym trupie oni będą na (not understandable). Jak tu widzę jakoś niezbyt za dużo po prostu jest. (Q1 Krk3)
- <sup>vi</sup> Oczywiście. Jak to pomoc to bym pomogła w każdej chwili, bo ile bym mogła już pomagałam. Wiele rzeczy dałam. Ale pewnego stopnia, bo trzeba o sobie myśleć. A inne państwa mniej dają. Albo ograniczają to wszystko. Ale pomoc trzeba, bo nie ma innego wyjście. (Q1 Krk4)
- <sup>vii</sup> Proszę Pani, to jest tak: na temat wspomagania, żadne państwo w Europie tyle nie daje, co Polska daje, proszę Pani, żadne państwo. (Q1 Gdk9)
- <sup>viii</sup> Po pierwsze ze względów humanitarny i ogólnoludzkich, że to jest słuszne i sprawiedliwe w tym momencie. (Q2 Krk5)
- <sup>ix</sup> człowiek musza pomoc inny człowiek. (Q2 Gdk1)
- <sup>x</sup> trzeba pomagać ludziom w potrzebie. (Q2 Gdk 2)
- <sup>xi</sup> ponieważ wsparcie dla ofiar wojny jest istotne. Wojna jako taka jest mimo wszystko katastrofą humanitarną, jakim się wydaje i w szczególności ofiary wojny są ofiarami takiej katastrofy. (Q2 Wrc1)
- <sup>xii</sup> ponieważ Ukrainy, to nie tylko nasi sąsiedzi, ale to są też ludzie, którym po prostu trzeba pomóc, bo to, co się tam dzieje, to jest tragedia. Więc tak uważam, że powinniśmy ich wspierać. (Q2 Wrc2)
- <sup>xiii</sup> Należy pomagać, bo nigdy nie wiadomo, w jakiej sytuacji my się znajdziemy. To są pokrzywdzeni ludzie przez los i całej rodziny, kobiety, dzieci, najbardziej mi szkoda jest dzieci, oczywiście, bo dorosły sobie w jakiś sposób poradzi. Tak, że jak najbardziej Jestem za wsparcie dla Ukrainy. (Q2 Wrc4)
- <sup>xiv</sup> Właśnie dlatego, że wspierając Ukrainy ratujemy siebie też. Bo to jest jedno z drugim związane, no więc to leży w interesie Polski. (Q2 Krk6)
- <sup>xv</sup> Wojna na Ukrainie akurat jako taka jest w niebezpieczeństwie bezpośrednim dla Polski. (Q2 Wrc1)
- <sup>xvi</sup> A po drugie ze względów geopolityczno-strategiczných, czyli powinniśmy pomóc Ukraińcom teraz tam, żebyśmy mieli więcej pokoju, bezpieczeństwa w przyszłości. (Q2 Krk5)
- <sup>xvii</sup> Ja uważam, po moim rozumie, że pomóż trzeba, bo zabezpieczyć się przed Rosją. Gdy Ukraina upadnie to my jesteśmy na pierwszym celu. (Q2 Krk4)
- <sup>xviii</sup> Powinniśmy pomagać Ukraińcom, mimo że historię mamy. Trudną tą, którą mamy z Ukraińcami, uważam, że każdemu trzeba pomóc im trzeba pomóc, bo stali się ofiarami agresji ze strony Rosji. (Q2 Wrc1)
- <sup>xix</sup> Jeśli nie pomożemy, teraz możesz tak zdarzyć, będziemy w trudniejszej sytuacji w Europie i też w Polsce ze względu na politykę Rosji i Putina. (Q2 Krk5)
- <sup>xx</sup> A Rosja jest bezwzględna. Bezwzględna. (Q2 Krk4)
- <sup>xxi</sup> Znaczy, zgadzam się dlatego, że Ukraina walczy dla całej Europy. Jeżeli Ukraina przegra również wtedy Rosja może zaatakować resztę Europy. (Q2 Gdk6)
- <sup>xxii</sup> Bo jesteśmy jednak w NATO, ale Ukraina jest biedna. Strasznie jest biedna, to jest nieistotne czy mi się podobają Ukraińcy, czy ja do nich żywię. Nie. To chodzi o względy taktyczne. Bo to zagraża dalej Europie, bo jeśli jest szaleniec taki jak Putin, to my się musimy wszystkiego obawiać. (Q2 Krk6)

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<sup>xxiii</sup> No bo jest ogólne przekonanie, że jeżeli my nie wesprzemy militarnie Ukrainy, a oni nie będą tak zwanym buforem, czyli nie będą murem między Europą Zachodnią i Unią Europejską a Rosją, to Ruscy najpierw przejdą przez Ukrainę, a potem napadną na nas. (Q2 Wwa1)

<sup>xxiv</sup> To są nasi sąsiedzi i mimo wszystko, myślę, że jesteśmy zobowiązani, nawet jeśli nie pomagać dla pomocy, tylko pomagać dla siebie, bo my jesteśmy, bardzo blisko granicy. I jeśli Ukraina nie poradzi sobie, to my też sobie nie poradzimy i to nasi bracia takie jesteśmy bardzo blisko z Ukrainą przecież historycznie i genetycznie, i myślę, że mamy im pomagać. (Q2 Krk2)

<sup>xxv</sup> My jesteśmy sąsiadami i to, co jest za bliską granicą, powiedzmy, bo jesteśmy państwami sąsiadującymi. To ma też duży wpływ na nas. To znaczy, jaka sytuacja będzie tam, to oczywiście to by promieniowało na nas, więc jakby mamy oczywiście interes w tym, żeby tam był jak największy spokój jak największa wolność i społeczeństwa i żebyśmy mogli mieć jak najlepsze relacje i stosunek. (Q2 Gdk7)

<sup>xxvi</sup> Powinniśmy pomagać Ukraińcom, mimo że historię mamy. Trudną tą, którą mamy z Ukraińcami, uważam, że każdemu trzeba pomóc im trzeba pomóc, bo stali się ofiarami agresji ze strony Rosji. (Q3 Gdk8)

<sup>xxvii</sup> Mi się wydaje, że ta różnica pomiędzy Polską a Ukrainą historycznej i zdra taka, ona nie poszła zupełnie w niepamięć, tylko została troszkę zatrzymana taką poddana pauzie, że na szali ważnych rzeczy większość Polaków uznała, że te historyczne problemy, jakie mamy pomiędzy Polską i Ukrainą, są mniej ważne niż to, że Ukraińcy teraz mordowani w swoim kraju. Odmawia im się niepodległości, integralności terytorialnej i ta kalkulacja spowodowała, tak mi się przy najmniej wydaje, że nie tyle te zatargi Ukraińsko-Polskie poszły w niepamięć czy w zapomnienie, ale zostały troszkę odsunięte na dalszy plan. (Q3 Krk5)

<sup>xxviii</sup> Między Polską a Ukrainą były kiedyś zaszłości trzydziestym dziewiątym roku, ale to należy rozwiązać spokojnie, ale nie teraz, nie teraz kiedy jest wojna, kiedy się rzecz uspokoi, po prostu te sprawy załatwić. Myśmy z Niemcami też jakoś załatwili to. I w sumie w tej chwili, no, nie mogę powiedzieć, że Niemcy są przyjaciółmi, ale normalnie żyjemy z nimi. Tak samo z Ukraińcami. Żylibyśmy normalnie. Zaszłości były w tamtym czasie. No nie wiem podyktowane różnymi względami o Polsce też się mówi, że Polacy nie bardzo traktowali Ukraińców. Wtedy tak mi moi rodzice opowiadali, ale jak było naprawdę, to ja nie wiem. To już zupełnie inne pokolenie w tej chwili rośnie. Ale te sprawy należy obgadać, ustalić, zamknąć i koniec, ale nie teraz nie w czasie wojny to na pewno nie. (Q3 Gdk5)

<sup>xxix</sup> Jest trochę tak, jak porównamy historię stosunków Polsko- Niemieckie i Polsko-Rosyjskie. Dlaczego Polacy o wiele bardziej są przyjaźni nastawieni do Niemców niż do Rosja? Ponieważ w naszych stosunkach myśmy przeszli drogę od wzajemnych oskarżeń i bólu do wybaczenia do próby ułożenia stosunków na nowo. Z Rosją, nigdy nie było tego efekt. Zostało w latach dziewięćdziesiątych dwudziestego wieku, podjęta taka próba. Ona nie została doprowadzona do końca. (Q3 Krk5)

<sup>xxx</sup> Z kolei, jeśli chodzi o stosunki Polsko-Ukraińskie prawdopodobnie też wcale nie tak dużo ludzi dzisiaj w szkołach jest edukowane na temat stosunków Polsko-ukraińskich mówi się o zbrodni wołyńskiej, ale jest to takie małe w porównaniu do gułagu, do zbrodni katyńskiej, do inwazji Związku Radzieckiego na Polskę w trzydziestym dziewiątym roku i tak dalej i tak dalej. Więc podział w takich kategoriach ilościowych, te problemy ukraińskie są mniejsze niż problemy z Rosją. (Q3 Krk5)