THE POLITICS OF MEMORY IN POLAND AND UKRAINE
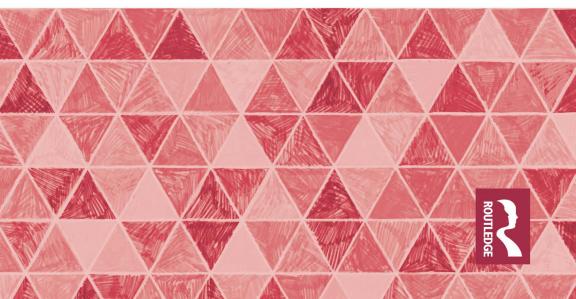
FROM RECONCILIATION TO DE-CONCILIATION

Edited by
Tomasz Stryjek and Joanna Konieczna-Sałamatin

Routledge

The Politics of Memory in Poland and Ukraine

Bringing together the work of sociologists, historians, and political scientists, this book explores the increasing importance of the politics of memory in central and eastern European states since the end of communism, with a particular focus on relations between Ukraine and Poland. Through studies of the representation of the past and the creation of memory in education, mass media, and on a local level, it examines the responses of Polish and Ukrainian authorities and public institutions to questions surrounding historical issues between the two nations. At a time of growing renationalization in domestic politics in the region, brought about by challenges connected with migration and fear of Russian military activity, this volume asks whether international cooperation and the stability of democracy are under threat. An exploration of the changes in national historical culture, *The Politics of Memory in Poland and Ukraine* will appeal to scholars with interests in memory studies, national identity, and the implications of memory-making for contemporary relations between states.

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Memory Studies: Global Constellations
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The 'past in the present' has returned in the early twenty-first century with a vengeance, and with it the expansion of categories of experience. These experiences have largely been lost in the advance of rationalist and constructivist understandings of subjectivity and their collective representations. The cultural stakes around forgetting, 'useful forgetting' and remembering, locally, regionally, nationally and globally have risen exponentially. It is therefore not unusual that 'migrant memories'; micro-histories; personal and individual memories in their interwoven relation to cultural, political and social narratives; the mnemonic past and present of emotions, embodiment and ritual; and finally, the mnemonic spatiality of geography and territories are receiving more pronounced hearings.

This transpires as the social sciences themselves are consciously globalizing their knowledge bases. In addition to the above, the reconstructive logic of memory in the juggernaut of galloping informationalization is rendering it more and more publicly accessible, and therefore part of a new global public constellation around the coding of meaning and experience. Memory studies as an academic field of social and cultural inquiry emerges at a time when global public debate – buttressed by the fragmentation of national narratives – has accelerated. Societies today, in late globalized conditions, are pregnant with newly unmediated and unfrozen memories once sequestered in wide collective representations. We welcome manuscripts that examine and analyze these profound cultural traces.

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With the Afterword by Volodymyr Sklokin

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Preface

The book is the result of a research project "Historical Cultures in Transition: Negotiating Memory, History and Identity in the Contemporary Central and Eastern Europe" carried out jointly by Polish and Ukrainian historians, sociologists, and anthropologists. The aim of the project was to identify the social, political, and cultural reasons and manifestations of the Polish-Ukrainian conflict over common history in the second decade of the twenty-first century. The work contributes to revealing the deep sources of threats to democracy and international tensions in contemporary Eastern Europe.

We propose to examine the historical cultures of Poland and Ukraine, because of two main reasons. First, these countries belong to the "axis of European geopolitics" in the modern era and most recent times and they have experienced many conflicts, and their histories have been closely intertwined with the history of their two big neighbors – Russia and Germany – as well as each other's histories. Second, these cultures are considerably different.

In the last decade, Poland entered into a dispute with the EU over memory and identity policies, while Ukraine finally chose the EU as its main positive point of reference. In Polish-Ukrainian relations, the old animosities revived about the memory of the conflict in 1939–47. Nevertheless, the marking of the border between Poland and Ukraine and Russia remained a factor integrating the historical culture of both countries. Moreover, Ukraine has joined Poland as a state that warns Europe against Russian neo-imperialism.

Introduction

How historical cultures change and how we can study this

Tomasz Stryjek and Joanna Konieczna-Sałamatin

Since the year 2000, the countries of Central and Eastern Europe have been experiencing a series of transformations of their historical cultures, caused by internal factors such as the unprecedented development of the politics of memory in relation to their neighbors. This has been particularly apparent in both the internal and external politics of Russia, while Western European countries develop their own cultural memory and contribute to the international memory of the Holocaust. However, in that part of the continent that experienced both occupation during the Second World War and Communism, national political memory has been growing rapidly since 2000. We believe that this dominance of the national political memory in Central and Eastern European countries is not unique in the world. What *is* unique compared to the rest of the world is a very active politicization of history and memory by populist, conservative, and nationalist forces.

This belief was the foundation for the research project *Historical Cultures in Transition: Negotiating Memory, History, and Identity in the Contemporary Central and Eastern Europe*. The project was undertaken by a team of Polish and Ukrainian historians, sociologists, media experts, and anthropologists, and subsidized by the Polish National Science Center. It was carried out during 2017–21. Its outcomes are presented in this book.

Polish-Ukrainian reconciliation: history, motives, crisis

During 1989–91, unprecedented events took place in Polish-Ukrainian twentieth-century relations. The region's two largest countries – after Russia – established mutual friendly relations as soon as they became sovereign. They did not resume those actions they had undertaken against each other during and after the two biggest upheavals of that century: 1914–18 and 1939–45 (see Portnov in this book).

In 1989, the then satellite Polish People's Republic (*Polska Rzeczpospolita Ludowa*, PRL) transformed into the sovereign Republic of Poland (*Rzeczpospolita Polska*). On 1 December 1991, 90 percent of referendum voters opted for Ukraine's independence. The next day Poland acknowledged Ukraine's existence within the borders of the former Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic (USRS). Eventually, the foundation for their mutual relations became a treaty on good neighborly relations and cooperation, signed on 18 May 1992 (Snyder 2003;

Kowal 2018). The state of Polish-Ukrainian political reconciliation achieved at that time has remained intact. Ukraine accepted Poland's accession to NATO and the EU, while Poland supported Ukrainian aspirations to join these two organizations and in becoming independent of Russia. Their military cooperation has developed since 2014, when Russia annexed the Crimea and the war broke out in Eastern Ukraine.

At the same time, the political elites in Poland and Ukraine believed that the political reconciliation between their countries might not survive unless founded on the two nations' historical reconciliation. That meant that historians jointly undertook to investigate the conflicts occurring between 1918 and 1947 and publicize their findings. The process of historical reconciliation began as early as the 1970s on the initiative of Polish and Ukrainian political émigrés, predominantly the milieu of the Polish monthly *Kultura*, published in Paris and whose editor-in-chief was Jerzy Giedroyc (Korek 1998; Berdychowska 2014). The Roman and the Greek Catholic Churches, and the opposition in both countries became engaged in this process in the late 1980s; and with the 1989–91 breakthrough, they were joined by civic society entities.

In Polish-Ukrainian relations, the pursuit of the politics of memory began early, when this term – which encompasses all actions pertaining to the past (the popularization of its representations, rituals, and discourses) and is aimed at shaping memory and identity – was not even being used in Germany, where discussion on this topic began in the 1980s (Wolfrumm 1999, 31–32).[1]

Political reconciliation was reached quickly because the two countries' interests concerning Russia were convergent. After signing treaties with Russia on friendly relations and borders (Poland in 1992 and Ukraine in 1997), they began to think about preserving this state of affairs for the decades to come. The connection between political and historical reconciliation also consisted of the fact that the conclusion that Poland and Ukraine had to support each other was, in both countries, drawn from the history of the development of Russian/Soviet territory in Europe from the seventeenth century to the mid-twentieth century.

But as it happened, 30 years after those treaties, this was the only permanent conclusion that Poland and Ukraine drew from history. Bringing their policies on Russia closer to each other proved much easier than reaching a consensus about their shared history. The bone of contention remained the 1943–44 conflict in Volhynia, Eastern Galicia, and the Kholmshchyna, between the Home Army (*Armia Krajowa*, AK) on the one side and the Organization of the Ukrainian Nationalists (Orhanizatsiya ukrayins'kykh natsionalistiv, OUN) and the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (Ukrayins'ka povstans'ka armiya, UPA) on the other, particularly the crimes committed against Polish civilians in Volhynia (Motyka 2011; Ilyushin 2009) – and, after the war, the deportation of Ukrainians from Poland to the USRS, while others were resettled within Polish borders – chiefly the 1947 Action Vistula (Pisuliński 2017; Rapawy 2016). As far as the evaluation of these events is concerned, the two sides had been moving closer together up until about 2005, after which came stagnation, and from around 2010, regression. During 2015–18, one could even speak of a Polish-Ukrainian memory war. In other words, Poland

and Ukraine persisted in pursuing a politics of memory conducive to a *culture of peace* (Korostelina 2013) for only about a dozen years. Even though, for the next dozen years or so, they declared that they were still pursuing this peace, some of their actions contradicted this.

To explain why we undertook the task to look into the historical cultures of Poland and Ukraine, we must start with a reminder of how Ukrainian-Russian relations have looked since 1991. During the first 20 years after the 1989–91 breakthrough, the argument that the politics of memory in Central and Eastern Europe had little influence on international security seemed convincing. But the outbreak of the Ukrainian-Russian war in 2014 proved this wrong.

The observation that the Russian-Ukrainian memory war, which began with the 2004 Orange Revolution and contributed to the outbreak of the military conflict in 2014, served as the impulse for the 2017–21 research whose results we present in this book. Unlike the Russian-Ukrainian situation, the probability of transforming the historical conflict between Poland and Ukraine into a military one is many times smaller. On the one hand, it is reduced by Poland's membership of the EU and NATO, and Ukraine's increasingly strong ties with these two organizations, and on the other hand, the two countries shared fear of Russia. Nevertheless, after the events that have taken place in Eastern Europe since 2014, such a conflict cannot be entirely ruled out.[2]

The Russian-Ukrainian conflict has significantly affected Ukraine's politics of memory, as well as the Polish one, although more indirectly. When, during 2014–15, Ukraine became independent of Russia, this pushed its authorities not only to greater equivocality in evaluating the OUN and UPA but also to complete decommunization of the symbolic sphere by means of one of the four memorial laws passed on 9 April 2015 (Law on decommunization 2015; Kasyanov 2018, 307–321). Before 2014, Ukrainian governments had tried to maintain a balance between two narratives about the twentieth-century history of Ukraine: the post-Soviet territorial one, and the anti-Soviet pro-independence one. Ukrainian presidents fostered the one they believed to be the weaker and in such a way so as not to destroy the rival narrative (Grytsenko 2017).

During Poroshenko's administration (2014–19), the Ukrainian authorities abandoned the politics of memory's pendulum-like cycle between one side and the other. Instead, they adopted a historical narration, and a juridizing model of memory very similar to that used in Poland and in the other countries who entered the EU between 2004 and 2013 (Koposov 2018, 177–206).

Fedor, Lewis, and Zhurzhenko (2017, 30) observed that in Eastern Europe in 2014 an "interplay began between 'memory wars' and real war, and the important 'post-Crimean' qualitative shift . . . in local memory cultures in this connection." The Russian and Belarussian cultures of memory, as well as the Ukrainian, "remain fundamentally structured by the Soviet Great Patriotic War myth" (Fedor, Lewis, and Zhurzhenko 2017, 38), and "still represents the strongest identity marker of the 'Russian world', broadly understood as the East Slavic, or Orthodox civilization" (p. 40). While the Russian and Belarussian authorities continued to present their mutual historical relations as "imagined and structured by kinship narratives

and metaphors linked to kinship" (Fedor, Lewis, and Zhurzhenko 2017, 38), the Ukrainian government abandoned this rhetoric. The influence of this myth about Ukraine continued to be expressed in two forms: in the bottom-up preservation of the existing practices of veteran commemoration on Victory Day (9 May), and in the fact that "attempts to create an anti-Soviet nationalist narrative glorifying the OUN and UPA as national heroes often copy the traditional Soviet narrative and borrow from its stylistic repertoire" (Fedor, Lewis, and Zhurzhenko 2017, 38). Consequently, Ukraine remained a country divided with regard to WWII mythology, while for its three biggest neighbors – Russia, Belarus, and Poland – this mythology had long played a consolidating role (Plokhy 2017; Wylegała and Głowacka-Grajper 2020).

During the Revolution and the war in Donbas, OUN and UPA symbols became popular in society as a form of manifesting opposition. In evaluating the historical role of these organizations, Ukrainian public opinion remained divided even though their contributions had been officially recognized. A different official act sanctioning the memory of UPA was enacted when President Petro Poroshenko established the Day of the Defender of Ukraine in 2014, to be celebrated on 14 October, replacing the Day of the Defender of the Fatherland, which had been celebrated on 23 February since Soviet times. According to the authorities' official statement, the choice of the Orthodox feast of the Mother of God, called "Pokrova" in Ukrainian, was motivated by the fact that her icons were particularly revered by Cossacks during the sixteenth to seventeenth century. But the Pokrova feast was also accepted by UPA as the symbolic date of its foundation in 1942. Consequently, advocates for the cult of the partisan units deemed the president's decree an expression of support (Yurchuk 2017).

In the end, Ukraine's politics of memory during the Poroshenko administration remained incoherent. On the one hand, the authorities did not come to terms with the black marks in the nationalist organizations' history, thus allowing an equivocal image of these organizations to develop. On the other, they promoted the concept of the *civic nation* and rejected the ideology of ethnic nationalism. As can be inferred from Poroshenko's defeat in the 2019 election, the official politics of memory and identity politics (for instance, in 2018 the Constantinople Patriarch was successfully persuaded to institute the Orthodox Church of Ukraine by merging three Orthodox Churches) failed to win broad support. At the same time, the nationalist parties' defeat in those elections showed that the main source of their popularity had dried up in 2016 when the war in Donbas became a low-intensity conflict.

The 2014 shift in Russian-Ukrainian relations into a phase of military conflict contributed to the fact that both Ukrainian and Polish strategists for the state politics of memory abandoned the foundation of the reconciliation process, that is, taking into consideration the other side's sensibilities. Evolution in this direction was co-dependent on a rise in nationalism, and appeals to protect Polish sovereignty since Poland's 2004 accession to the European Union. The ideology of ethnic nationalism ruled supreme only in the far right, but the threat to the state's sovereignty became an object of excessive concern for the right-wing Law and Justice (*Prawo i Sprawiedliwość, PiS*) government, which has been in power

since 2015 (Harper 2018). In any case, the nationalists' engagement with the Volhynian question contributed to a growth in their social popularity. The classification of the OUN and UPA's crimes in Volhynia as genocide by both chambers of the Polish Parliament in July 2016 and the conviction that Ukraine should alter her politics of memory concerning these organizations became widely accepted by the public (Grytsenko and Wojnar in this book). But the scope of support for these issues was incommensurate with the popularity of nationalist convictions. The difference between the nationalist circle and the several times larger circle of supporters for such a Polish politics of memory towards Ukraine can be likened to the quantitative difference between the nationalist circle in Ukraine and the circle of people who adopted the OUN and UPA symbols as a way of manifesting resistance to Russia (these two circles in Ukraine are smaller, but their ratio seems similar to Poland). Nevertheless, within the public debate, the individuals engaged in this historical dispute, on both sides, have a tendency to think of these circles as being of equal size in each other's countries; and in consequence, both sides make mutual accusations that the public debate has been entirely dominated by ethnic nationalism.

To explain PiS' position on the genocidal classification of the events in Volhynia, and the politics of memory towards Ukraine in general, it must be said that this party rejects the ethnic model of the nation as being contradictory to the Polish state tradition. Its representatives think themselves defenders of the good name of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (1569–1795) and the Second Republic of Poland (1918–39; *Druga Rzeczpospolita*) as states that developed a unique model of multicultural coexistence within a territory made up of present-day Poland, Lithuania, Belarus, and Ukraine (Zarycki 2014).

These convictions are connected with the weak reception of postcolonial studies in Poland with respect to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and Second Republic of Poland's reign over the territories of modern-day Lithuania, Belarus, and Ukraine. As for Polish scholars, there have been several voices calling for its implementation (Bakuła 2009; Sowa 2011) but they have not led to intellectual change. An attempt made by French historian Daniel Beauvois (2005), an author of works about Right-Bank Ukraine during the nineteenth century (which have been published in Poland), has met with no response (Portnov in this book). The reception of postcolonial studies has rather taken place in regard to Russia's reign over the territories of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (1795–1918), and Poland's subordination to the USSR (1944–89) (Thompson 2000; Uffelmann 2013). In Ukraine, the reception of postcolonial studies has been grounded in a tradition respecting Russian-Ukrainian relations, but related mostly to literary and cultural studies (Grabowicz 1995; Riabchuk 2009; Shkandrij 2015). Postcolonial theory has been used recently (Said 1994; Gandhi 1998; Bhabha 1994) to conduct an analysis of the Ukrainian politics of memory since 2014 (Törnquist-Plewa and Yurchuk 2017). However, Ukrainian scholars have not used it to analyze the reign of Poland over Ukraine, even though an anti-colonial approach was manifest in the evaluation of this reign in émigré and Soviet historiography, and can also be noticed in contemporary studies.

The "seduction" of Polish public opinion by the necessity of having Poland's neighbors confirm her pride in her national history shows that Polish historical culture is more akin to the Russian one than the Ukrainian. Russian elites and Russian public opinion suffer from a syndrome in which they believe the history of their country is underappreciated, not so much by their neighbors, as by all of Europe and America. Polish historical culture is affected by this syndrome as well, but only in relation to neighboring national states.

During Vladimir Putin's presidency, Poland has assumed a defensive position towards Russia's politics of memory, as well as on the opposite "front line" in her disputes over history with her neighbors, namely in her dispute with expelled Germans over how they should commemorate their 1945 experiences (Łuczewski 2017). In her politics of memory towards Ukraine, Poland has held an offensive stance from the beginning of the twenty-first century. By contrast, Ukraine has assumed a defensive stance in her memory relations with both Russia and Poland.

To analyze the process of the "seduction" of Polish public opinion, we shall use some appropriate concepts introduced by Georges Mink and Laure Neumayer (2013) into the research on the memory games played in contemporary Central and Eastern Europe. The two authors indicated that during the second decade of the transformation, there was, in the region, a departure from the politics of memory that was oriented towards reconciliation, and a movement towards the manipulation of the memory in politics. Their concept of historicizing strategies shows how actors start a conflict by imposing their own interpretation of past events in order to accuse their opponent of being the sole perpetrator of the crime, who fails to admit his guilt, and at the same time blurs the responsibility for crimes committed by their side (Mink and Neumayer 2013).

There is no doubt as to the internal benefits that Polish actors could derive from pressuring Ukraine in regard to the Volhynian genocide classification. Things are different in Ukraine, however, where the proposition to alter the politics of memory towards Poland by accepting this postulate does not have to lead to an increase in support for candidates wanting power or those who wield it. During the last 15 years, none of the four Ukrainian presidents, who all pursued very different politics of memory, has called the anti-Polish OUN and UPA campaign an ethnic cleansing. This is because, for one thing, Ukrainian public opinion is several times less interested in the Polish-Ukrainian conflict than is Polish public opinion.[3] The failure to adopt a clear stance on this matter is also a kind of memory game. The authorities did not want the issue of their "concessions" in their relations with Poland to become a field of conflict within internal politics. But in the public opinion in Poland, as well as her relations with Ukraine, this matter acquired such significance that it weighed on the entire region's international security.

It should be stressed that in this region actors play memory games predominantly to strengthen their position in their homeland, which is at the expense of a temporary worsening in their relations with other countries, and not to totally transform their policy towards those other countries (Miller 2012). This is the spot at which the dangerous potential of memory games in the international relations manifests itself most clearly.

Using the concepts of memory studies

After Jörn Rüsen (2008), we can define the historical culture of a given country as all the forms of knowledge, conviction, and imaginations, the social-cultural processes and contexts in which they are internalized (including actions for the purpose of the promotion and commemoration practices of these forms), and the functions that the representations of the past fulfill in a given society. The most important of these is the function of experience. Historical culture enables a society to understand the surrounding reality and define itself in relation to the past and the future. It harbors the permanent social process of giving meaning to the past, in which historians, politicians, artists, and participants of public debates partake (Rüsen 2008).

Rüsen's conception of historical culture is also useful for an analysis of Poland and Ukraine's case because of the emphasis put on the inevitably normative character of the narratives that serve the function of orienting society in culture and history, and shaping its members' identity. Master-narratives in both these countries are, to a large extent, ethnocentric. Assuming nations are communicative communities whose members' sense of belonging is based on the memory of shared civilizational achievements, norms, and values, then identification with these norms gives those nations a sense of positive value. According to Rüsen (2008), collective, negative past actions undertaken against "others," particularly mass murder, pose a special challenge to the image of one's nation. The author continues, becoming aware of such actions makes the national community *lose itself* as it becomes doubtful whether the said norms and values really function in it. This leads to the suppression, forgetting, and distorting of these events, or in projecting them *outwards* by blaming them on other communities (Rüsen 2011).

We have applied these remarks to the analysis of the sources of the crisis in the historical dialogue between Poland and Ukraine in two ways. After the 1989–91 breakthrough, these two countries, in their public debate, came to an evaluation of their "own" civilizational achievements and the norms and values connected with them. Derived from centuries of relations with Ukraine, the experience of Polish public opinion led Poles to feel a high civilizational self-esteem and a sense of superiority over their neighbor. This was substantiated by the conviction that both the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the Second Republic of Poland were propagators and patrons of progress in the countries *in the East*. In Ukraine, particularly in its western part, this met with opposition from public opinion, and fell on fertile ground that originated from pre-1991 émigré and Soviet national historiographies that presented Poles as *occupiers* and *oppressors*. This stereotypical image of the two nations' roles overlapped with beliefs concerning the harms they did to each other from the seventeenth to the twentieth century. Here, the mechanism described by Rüsen (2008) operated with regard to the anti-Polish OUN and UPA action in Ukraine, the reign of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the Second Republic of Poland on the territories they used to occupy, and Action Vistula in Poland. This mechanism was also classified as humiliated silence by Paul Connerton (2008) in his typology of seven kinds of "forgetting."

As for the theoretical concepts at the foundation of contemporary cultural memory studies, the starting point for us was Aleida Assmann's (1999) typology, according to which successive types of social memory – communicative, generational, collective, and cultural – are characterized by a growing degree of generalization and social acceptance, up to the point where the past is completely mythologized. When conducting polls and analyzing public debate, the media, and curriculums, we have to predominantly deal with the collective and cultural memory, and national myths. What is more, in line with this author's other typology in which she distinguishes between social and political memory (Assmann 2010, 50), we have focused on the latter in our analysis of the state politics of memory.

Outside the two countries, there have been only a few studies done on a larger scale that have analyzed the process of Polish-Ukrainian historical reconciliation and the two countries' mutual politics of memory (for instance, Marples 2007, 203–238; Wigura 2011, 93–104; Hrytsak 2013; Zhurzhenko 2014; Portnov 2016; Kasyanov 2018, 322–351). More studies have been about the politics of memory concerning the entire region. Having conducted a comparative political science analysis, Michael Bernhard and Jan Kubik (2014) and also Oxana Shevel (2014) classified Poland and Ukraine as the Central and Eastern European countries that had, after the 2009–11 celebrations of the twentieth anniversary of the 1989–91 breakthrough, fractured memory regimes. Let us add that these two countries' memory fields, which encompass the entire 1939–89/91 epoch, are also fractured.

The book contributes to filling the gap in the English language literature on the subject. We have designed and conducted a complex comparative research of historical cultures (Rüsen 2008), collective and cultural memories (Assmann 1999), and politics of memory (Bernhard and Kubik 2014) of Poland and Ukraine. Trying to reconstruct the transmission of the images of the past in the societies, we have studied the interactions and interrelations of these images' creators and senders (the state) and transmitters (educational institutions and media) as well as recipients (citizens). We have also paid attention to the way collective memory functions on the local level.

Our formulation of the conceptual apparatus for studying historical education and the media was affected by Wertsch's (2012, 175) idea of the narrative template, which seemed particularly inspiring to us. He observed that societies have templates for narrating the past that are unique to those societies, which act as a conservative force in their collective memory. These are schematic structures that are "used reportedly by a mnemonic community to interpret multiple specific events by fitting them into a schematic plot line" (Wertsch 2012, 175). An example of such a template is the narratives about the Great Patriotic War in Russia (1941–45), which shares a template with the narrative about the Patriotic War against Napoleon in 1812 and narratives about other countries' invasion of Russia in the past.

We think that within Polish historical culture the conviction that Russia poses a threat, and that the Polish nation led the nations of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the struggle for freedom against Russia, has the status of a narrative template (Adamczewski 2019). The most glaring form of this template was nineteenth-century Romantic messianism. Its contemporary vitality has been

confirmed by the conservative turn in the Polish politics of memory in the last ten years (Sklokin in this book). In the Ukrainian historical culture, such a template is at the foundation of the narratives, in line with which, in the past, the Ukrainian nation was always an object of conquest and exploitation by "others," and its heroic opposition against them was fruitless; Mark von Hagen (1995, 665) called this type of narration *lacrimogenesis*. This leads to the lack of a sense of agency and the refusal to attribute responsibility to Ukrainians for the consequences of events in Ukraine, particularly the bad ones. In our project, we have substituted Wertsch's (2012) approach with an analysis of the narration from the perspective of the historian Marc Ferro (2014), which shows the political conditions for the narration in historical education in various countries across the world (Studenna-Skrukwa, Szpociński, and Moskwa in this book).

Last but not least, the starting point in our research on the functioning of memory in local communities was Pierre Nora's (1989) reflections on the difference between memory milieus (*milieux de memoire*) and sites of memory (*lieux de memoire*). In European memory milieus, the social communal memory had been persevered, contained in everyday rituals and customs until the 1970s. These sites of memory are most often an effect of the artificial *immortalization* of the past in the form of monuments, archives, and commemoration rituals, which have developed in Europe particularly during the last 50 years (Nora 1989; Traba and Hahn 2012–2015). Following Maria Lewicka (2012, 434–439), we observed that Nora's distinction matches the distinction between the *locus* type of memory, which functions in relation to certain singled out spaces where many remnants of the past have survived, and the memorial type memory, which is connected with a specific form of commemorating the past. Here *locus* is understood as the milieu one lives in, which unlike a monument, is not observed from the outside, but is experienced from the inside. In our project, we analyzed two small towns, one in Poland and one in Ukraine, that have largely maintained their historical residential continuity, are relatively homogenous in ethnic terms, and located in the central part of their respective countries (Markowska and Demel in this book).

Collective memory in Poland and Ukraine: the book's content and main theses

Our research on social representations of the past revealed a few similarities and also some vital differences between Polish and Ukrainian societies. The most important difference concerned the degree of social consensus over the evaluation of a certain set of historical figures and events, that is, the existence of the generally accepted *narrative* about national history.

Serge Moscovici pointed out that social representation is

> a network of interacting concepts and images whose contents evolve continuously over time and space, but there are representations that are shared by all the members of a group (e. g. a city or nation) – called hegemonic

representations and "representations generated in the course of social conflict" – polemical representations.

<div align="right">(Moscovici 1988, 220–222)</div>

An analysis of how Polish and Ukrainian respondents evaluated twentieth-century historical figures and events in a poll conducted in 2018[4] proves that within Polish society is shared a cannon of historical figures that encompasses almost the entire history of the country. There is also a cannon of historical events, assessed in the same way by a significant portion of the society. In Ukraine, it is more difficult to find a representation of the past shared by most of society (Konieczna-Sałamatin, Otrishchenko, and Stryjek 2018, 20–21).

When we inquired about the influence of various phenomena and events from the twentieth-century history of Poland and Ukraine on the later life of their inhabitants, Poles were more unanimous in their evaluation of twentieth-century events and phenomena (Konieczna-Sałamatin, Otrishchenko, and Stryjek 2018, 32–37).

In Poland, there are no marked differences in the said narrative about Polish history in terms of region, generation, or other factors of a socio-demographic character. By contrast, in Ukraine, there are significant differences across regions in terms of the cannon of heroes and anti-heroes and the set of positively or negatively evaluated historical events and phenomena.[5] In Moscovici's (1988) terms, in Polish society the representation of the past has many features of a hegemonic representation, while in Ukraine it is more like a polemical one. The polemical character of the representations of the past in Ukrainian society also finds confirmation in the changes in the politics of memory described earlier, which are aimed at distancing Ukraine from its Soviet legacy, as well as the society's reception of these changes. Half of society regards decommunization as unnecessary and celebrates holidays established in the USSR and connected with the Soviet narration about history (for instance, Victory Day on 9 May), while ignoring holidays introduced recently (for instance, Remembrance and Reconciliation Day on 8 May).

To this, one should also add the fact that many Ukrainians think they live in "historic times." This can be inferred from the answers given by the Ukrainian respondents who were asked which historical event directly affected them or their close family. A relatively large number of them mentioned the 2014–15 events, while the most recent event indicated by Polish respondents was the 1981 introduction of martial law. Thus, it can be concluded that in both countries people talk and think about *history* mainly in terms of political events that lead to people being killed or wounded. In this sense, Ukraine gaining independence in 1991 and Poland joining the European Union in 2004 were not important historical events because nobody died as a result.

Part I of this book is devoted to the politics of memory in these two countries and its intellectual backing. It opens with Andrii Portnov's text, in which the author questions the solidified interpretations of events and phenomena in the history of Poland and Ukraine. He proves that during the process of reconciliation, topics such as the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the Second Republic of

Poland, or the OUN and UPA's anti-Polish action, have not been discussed in historiography using a transnational approach. Next, Oleksandr Grytsenko analyzes the politics of memory in Polish-Ukrainian relations since 1991 from Ukraine's perspective, focusing on the regime of memory of Volhynia in Poland and Polish politics concerning this issue. Grytsenko demonstrates the precedence of Polish initiatives, Poland's growing activity until 2018, and the secondary character of Ukraine's actions. Following these, author Volodymyr Sklokin presents arguments that were in favor of the Polish state's pursuit of the politics of memory that were formulated in the 1990s in the milieu of the conservative monthly, *Arcana*. These arguments contributed to the formation of a group of historians who, during the following decades, pursued the Polish politics of memory offensive. Part I ends with Marek Wojnar's text, which typologizes the stances of Polish and Ukrainian social actors in the contemporary debate over the conflict-inspiring events of 1943–47. He presents a range of stances and convictions held by the participants and the sources of the Polish side's greater number and diversity.

The last three sections of Part I of the book present the disproportions between Poland and Ukraine in dealing with the history of their mutual relations, with the former showing superiority in the sphere of state policy and public debate in this regard. The same pertains to the historiography of all epochs and historical events of both countries, and not exclusively to the historiography of the relations with the other country. After analyzing the results of the poll, we formulated a hypothesis regarding the difference between Poland and Ukraine's historical cultures, namely that **Polish society is much more immersed in the national memory than Ukrainian society**. Nevertheless, Ukrainians are acting as if they want to make up for these differences. In early 2018, they declared that they were more interested in the past than Poles and more often discussed it (Konieczna-Sałamatin, Otrishchenko, and Stryjek 2018, 11). The thesis about Poles' deeper immersion in their national memory found confirmation in our later research (Troszyński and Males/Motuzenko in this book), particularly with representations of the past in the media.

This deeper immersion metaphor means that in Polish public life arguments referring to history appear more often, and that Poles are more widely convinced that they are the heir to the long history of the state and the nation, which, today, obliges them to seek international recognition. These two things are chiefly a consequence of the fact that the Polish public infrastructure of memory (schools, institutes, museums, monuments, etc.) – which to some extent matches Blacker and Etkind's (2013) concept of hardware of cultural memory – has existed since 1918.[6] The infrastructure only began to play a memory-generating role in 1991, but it remains much more modest than the Polish one.

The outcome of this comparison finds confirmation in the chapters of Part II of this publication, which is devoted to historical education. It opens with Marta Studenna-Skrukwa's study – the most comprehensive one included in Part II – which contains a comparative analysis of Polish and Ukrainian history teaching, the narrations in secondary school textbooks, and teachers' convictions. The author has demonstrated the acceleration of the "nationalization" of history education in

Ukraine since 2014, and since 2015 in Poland. This tendency is not new to these countries. Quite the reverse, it seems that the temporary decomposition of the narrative template took place in the 1990s, which was the decade most conducive to the reconciliation process, while later the narrative about national history returned to the rut made by the national historiographies in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Natalia Otrishchenko's text presents a spectrum of educational strategies and roles played by Ukrainian teachers of history. It emphasizes the memory-generating function of education from the perspective of its executors during an exceptional, historical time of war on Ukrainian territory. Another study, penned by Kateryna Pryshchepa, features an analysis of education in Ukrainian schools. It confronts the state's educational goals with the teachers' professional training and perception of the school system, and also undertakes to determine the effectiveness of history education in Ukraine. She also shows how, and owing to what mechanisms, teachers become the *filter* that modifies the state's influence on the content that school children eventually receive in the form of historical education. Next, Andrzej Szpociński analyzes literature textbooks for secondary schools in Poland published between 1918 and 2015 from the perspective of their content regarding Ukrainian culture against the background of other national cultures. He notes the gradual disappearance, since the beginning of this century, of all national cultures except Polish culture, which he attributes to the influence of globalization and information technology on the reception of culture and people's participation in it. Last but not least, Dagmara Moskwa examines the narrations in textbooks on contentious issues during 1939–47 Polish-Ukrainian relations.

The results of a study of how the media represents past events in Poland and Ukraine document a conclusion that there is a disproportion between the memory infrastructure of the two countries. Marek Troszyński, and Lyudmyla V. Males and Bogdan I. Motuzenko's texts (Part III) prove that Poland's superiority in this regard can be observed in the following categories: the number of publications produced during the media monitoring period (two-month period in both 2018 and 2019), the number of media producing these publications, the number of media dealing specifically with history, and the degree to which their stances are diversified in debates on historical issues. In both these countries, the representations of the past in the media were more often motivated by an intention to achieve ongoing political objectives than by dealing with the past for its own sake or because of a mission to disseminate knowledge. But the main line of division in the debates on historical issues was different in these two countries.

In Poland, there has long been four main interpretations of national history represented in the media: nationalist-Catholic, conservative, liberal, and leftist (Troszyński in this book).[7] In Ukraine, the axis of the division between interpretations has been the attitude towards one of two national history narrations: the post-Soviet-territorial one and the anti-Soviet-pro-independence one. Since 2014, the latter has overlapped with the attitude to separatists and the ongoing war. It divides the media into Ukraine-centrist and pro-Russian groups (Males/Motuzenko in this book).

We believe that, in Poland, the more steadfast anchorage of the political divisions and historical interpretations (which are hegemonic representations), paired