

State-created images of the past

as a way to form collective identities
of East Europeans

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Methods and Data

The data comes from a research project "**Historical Cultures in Transition: Negotiating Memory, History and Identity in the Contemporary Central and Eastern Europe**".

Within this project many various types of research has already been conducted or is planned.

Most of the data comes from representative surveys:

- Poland (sample of 1500)
- Ukraine (sample 2500, excluding occupied territories).

The fieldwork went on in January-February 2018.



Some important dates and facts

	POLAND	UKRAINE
1917–21	Re-establishing of the independent state in the borders that included today's western Ukraine.	<p>Unsuccessful attempt to establish independent state in a struggle with Bolsheviks, white Russia and emerging Second Polish Republic. Ukraine ends up as one of the Soviet republics.</p> <p>1932–1933 Great Famine (Holodomor) a result of forced collectivisation. 3.5 mln. people died of hunger</p>
World War II and later	<p>Polish government and Polish Underground State defend the borders of II Republic – conflict with Ukrainian underground.</p> <p>Culmination phase of this conflict (1943-44) is known in Poland as "Volhynia massacre" (Ukrainian kill up to 100 0000 Poles; as a revenge Poles kill up to 15 000 Ukrainians)</p>	<p>Struggle of Ukrainian independence movement (particularly Ukrainian Insurgent Army – UPA) for western Ukraine leads to ethnic cleansing (Volhynia massacre).</p> <p>After 1945 Ukraine remains Soviet Republic (with the borders of today's Ukraine).</p>

Theoretical background

The **politics of memory** covers all types of public activities in which images of the past are used to shape memory and identity. It is implemented both by the state and non-state actors (political parties, associations-guardians of memory, participants and witnesses of events). (Wolfrum, 1999)

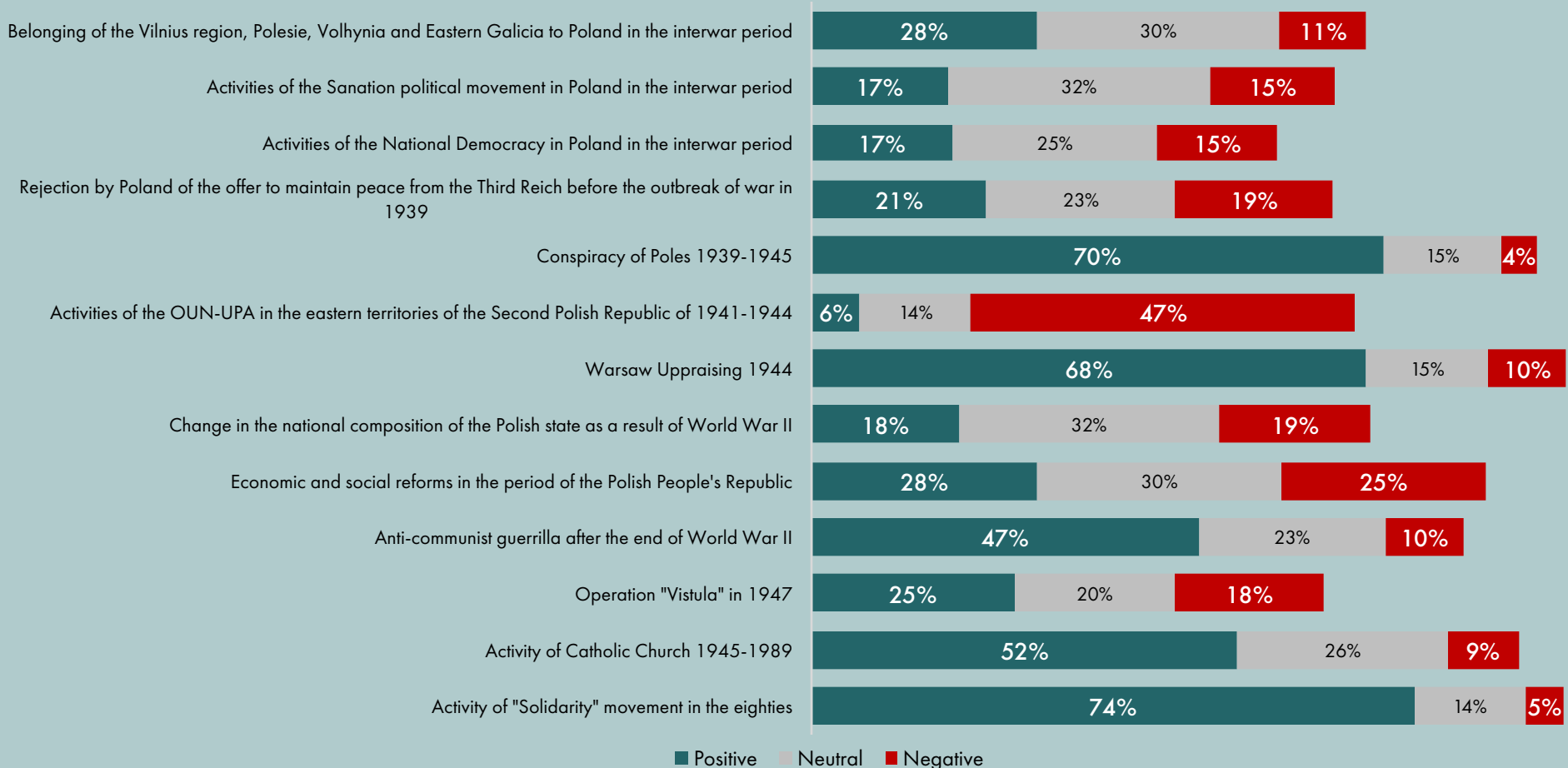
In the context of Poland church is also active player in the politics of memory.

- Both in Poland and Ukraine the state is currently the most powerful player in this field;
- In both countries the state seems to perceive this politics as its main function – at least in recent 10-12 years. This is distinctive for Central Eastern Europe.

Poland and Ukraine are **transition countries**, but while Poland is facing two parallel transition processes, in Ukraine we have quadruple transition (Kuzio, 2001).

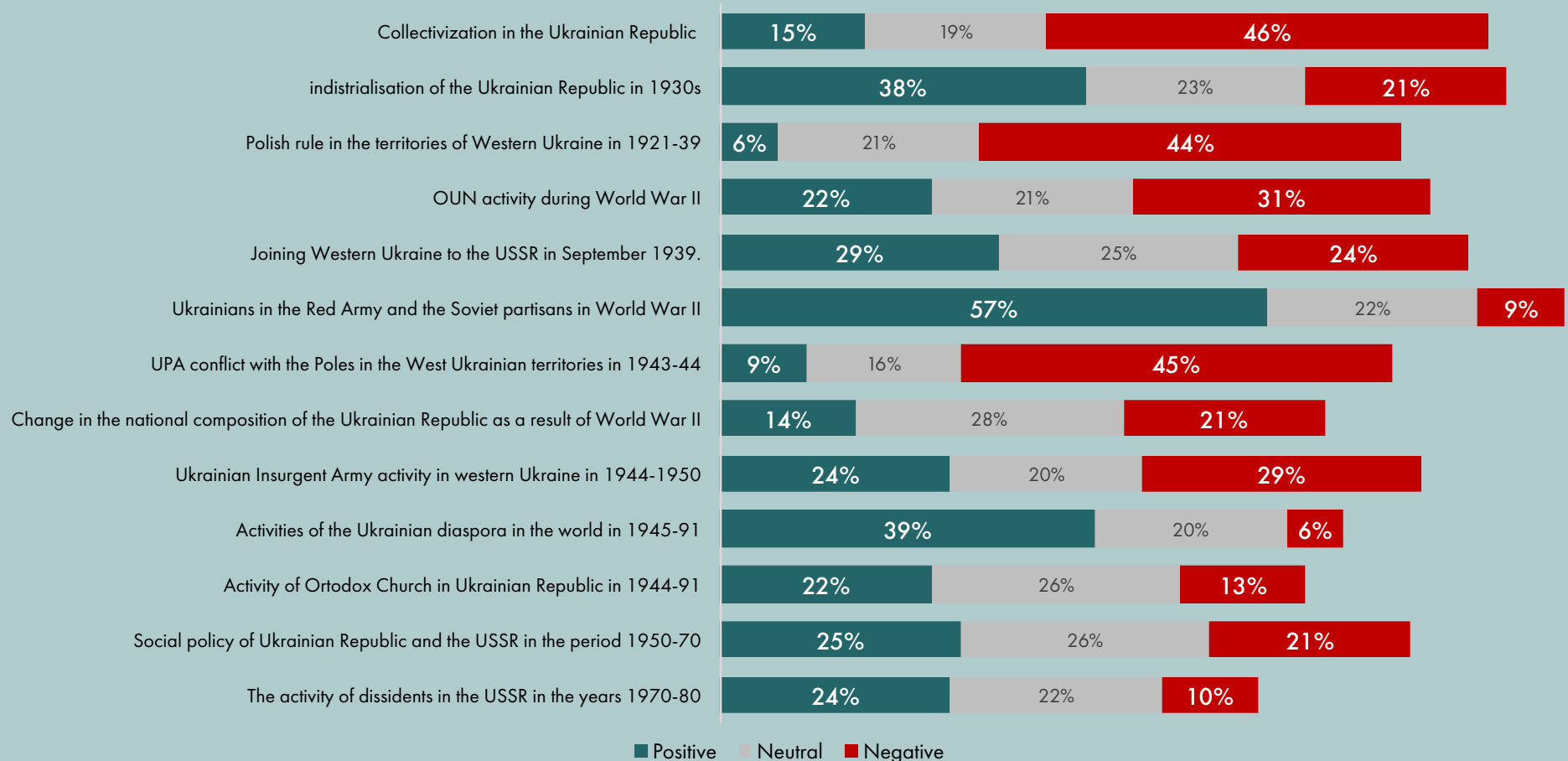
Common perception of the past

Assessment of the impact of some historical events and processes on the further history of the country and its citizens (POLAND)



Common perception of the past

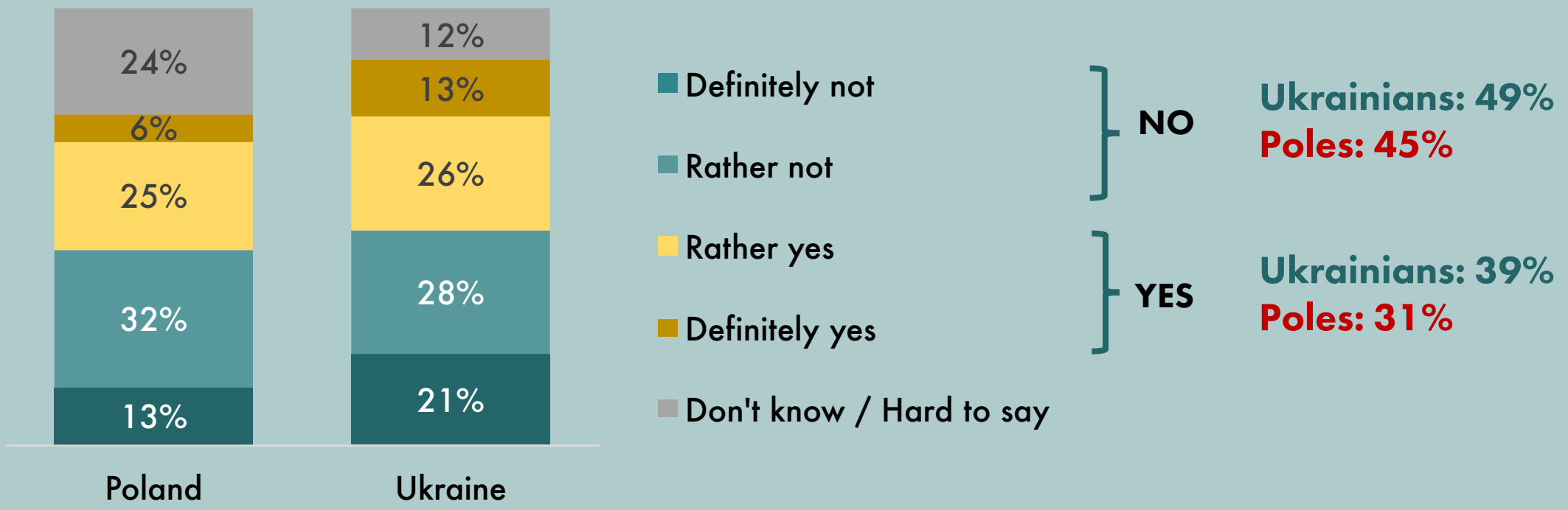
Assessment of the impact of some historical events and processes on the further history of the country and its citizens (UKRAINE)



Can the state interpret the past?

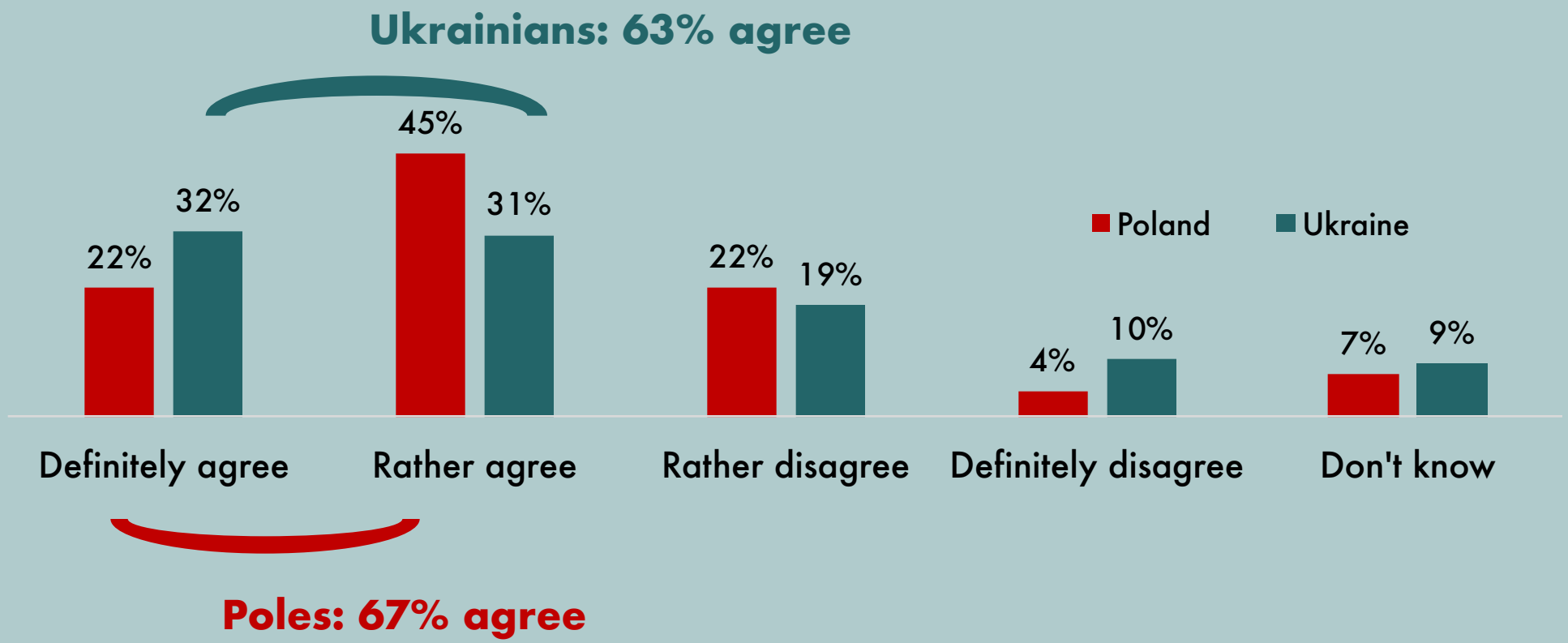
UA: Does the state have a right to decide about interpretation of the past events?

PL: Should Sejm and Senate adopt legal acts that establish the interpretation of the historical events from World War II and communist times?



Should the state interpret the past?

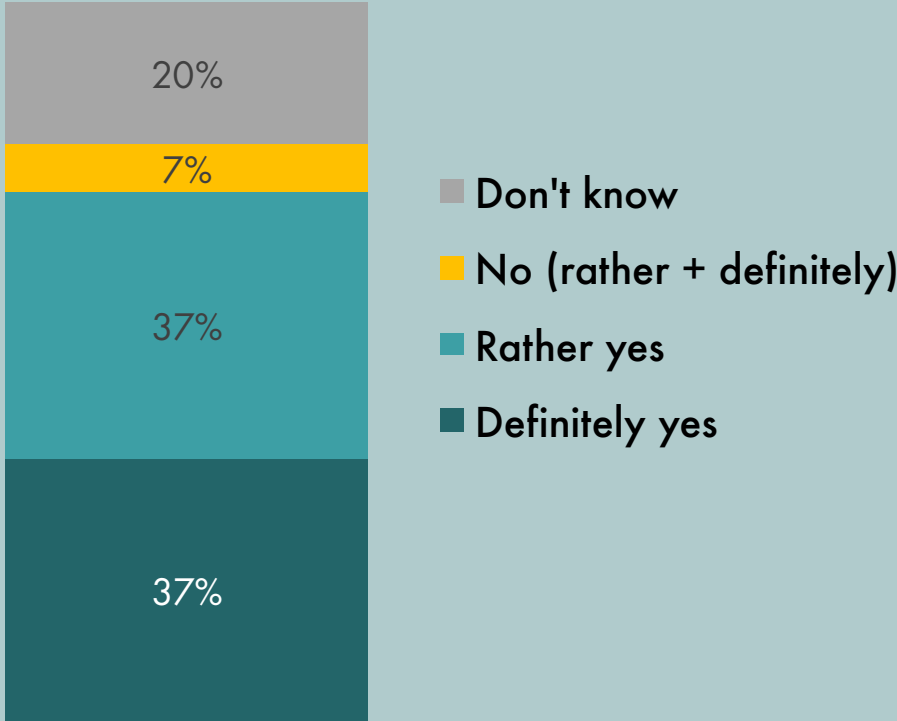
Do you agree that "the authorities of our country pay too much attention to the past and too little to the living conditions of today's Poland / Ukraine"



The results of state interpretation of the past

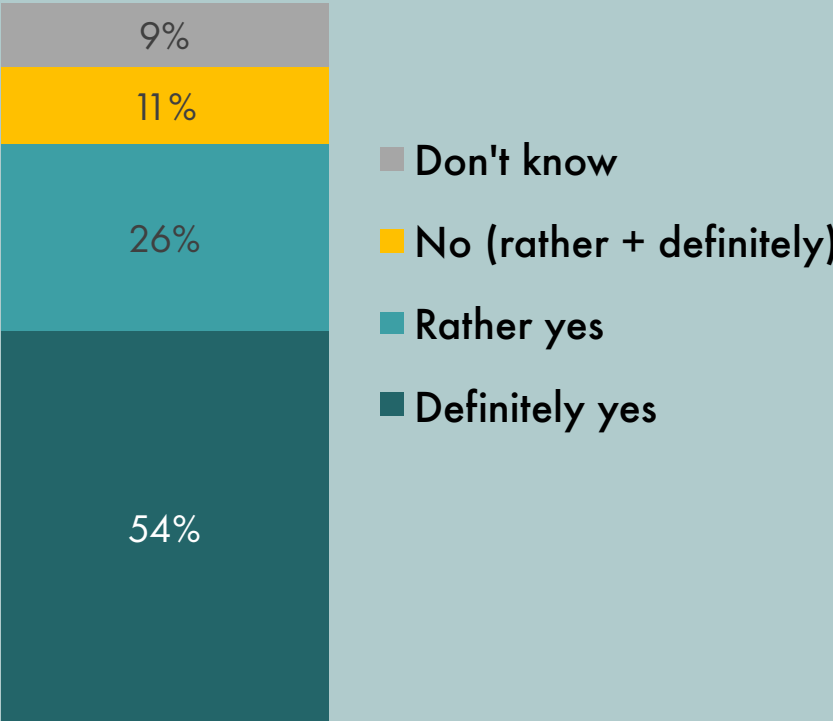
POLAND

Was the massacre of Volhynia (1943) a genocide?



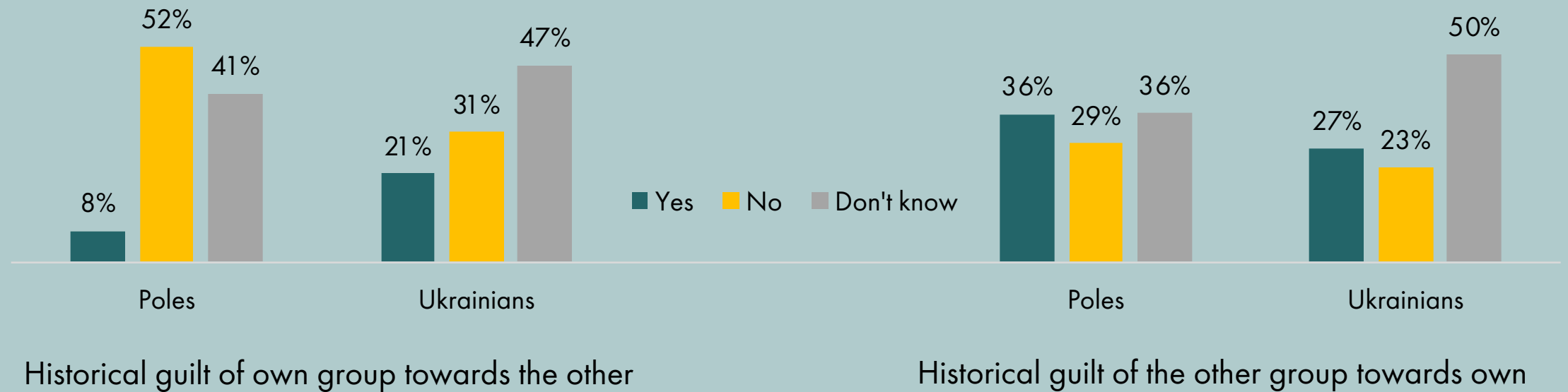
UKRAINE

Was the Famine of 1932-33 (Holodomor) a genocide?



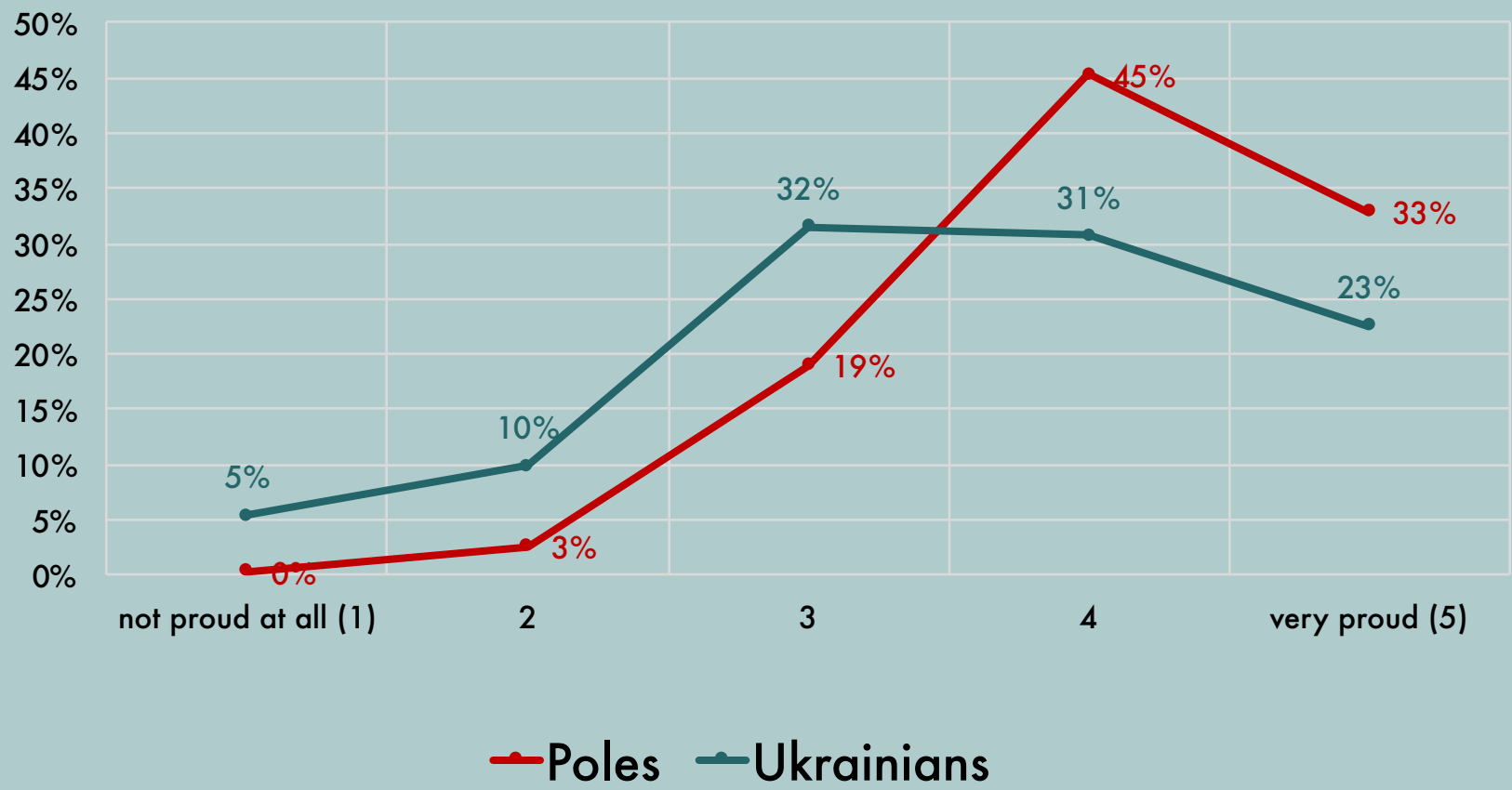
The results of state interpretation of the past

Were there in the history of 20th century such events,
... because of which Poles should feel guilty towards Ukrainians?
... because of which Ukrainians should feel guilty towards Poles?



Acceptance of state-created image of the past

Are you proud of Polish / Ukrainian history?



78% of Poles
and
54% of Ukrainians
are proud
of their history

Final Remarks (instead of conclusions)

- Both Polish and Ukrainian states are very active in politics of memory, however **in every country it has different function**: in Ukraine it is a crucial element of nation-building and state-legitimation process, in Poland it rather serves as a part of conservative mobilisation in front of globalisation challenges;
- **When the state creates a positive narrative about its history – it takes responsibility for the actors** (movements, formations, people) that are constitutive elements of this narrative. This seems problematic for both states: Poland and Ukraine have problems with coming to terms with dark pages of Polish-Ukrainian history.

Final Remarks (instead of conclusions)

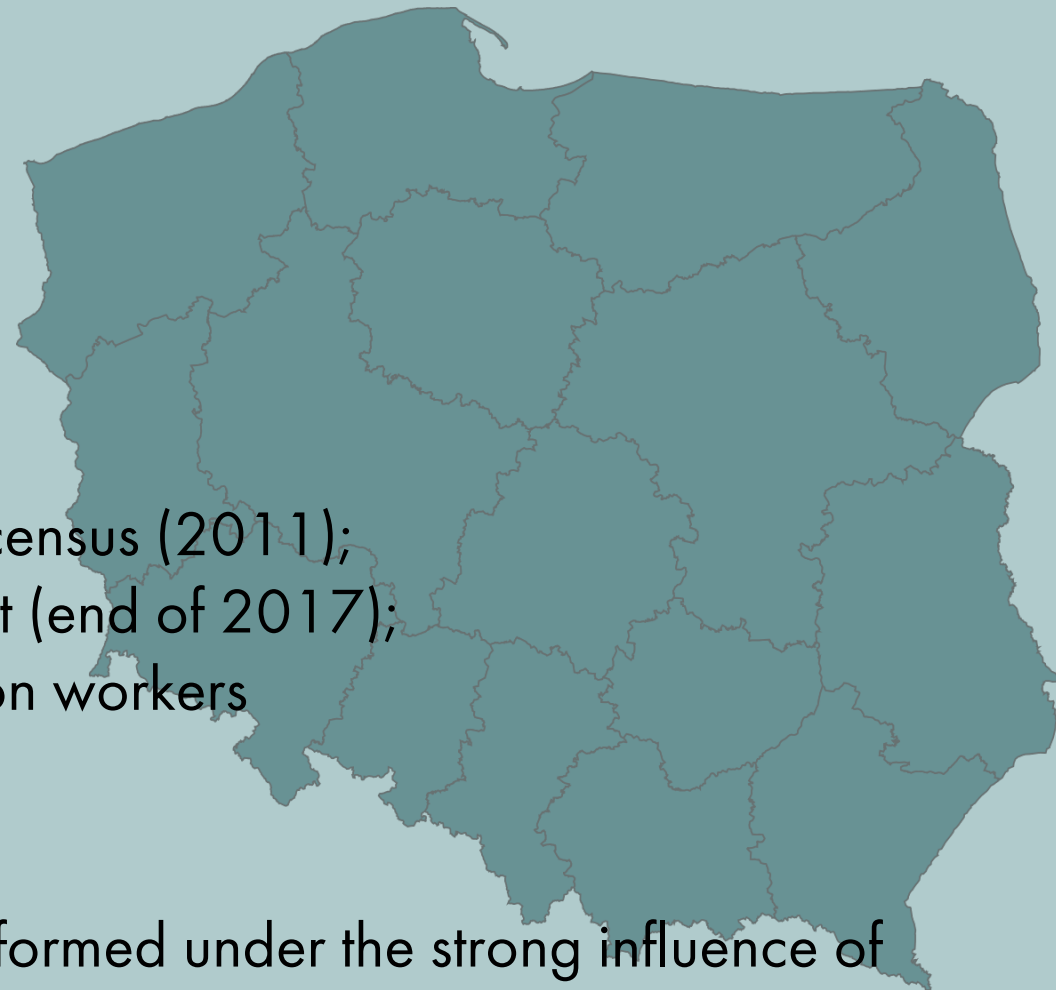
POLAND:

population 38 mln; 97,1% are Poles;

But:

- 51 000 declared Ukrainian nationality in census (2011);
- 145 000 have permanent residence permit (end of 2017);
- Between 700 000 and 1 500 0000 season workers

The attitudes of Poles towards Ukrainians are formed under the strong influence of the images of the historical conflicts (Troszynski, 2016)



Thank you for listening

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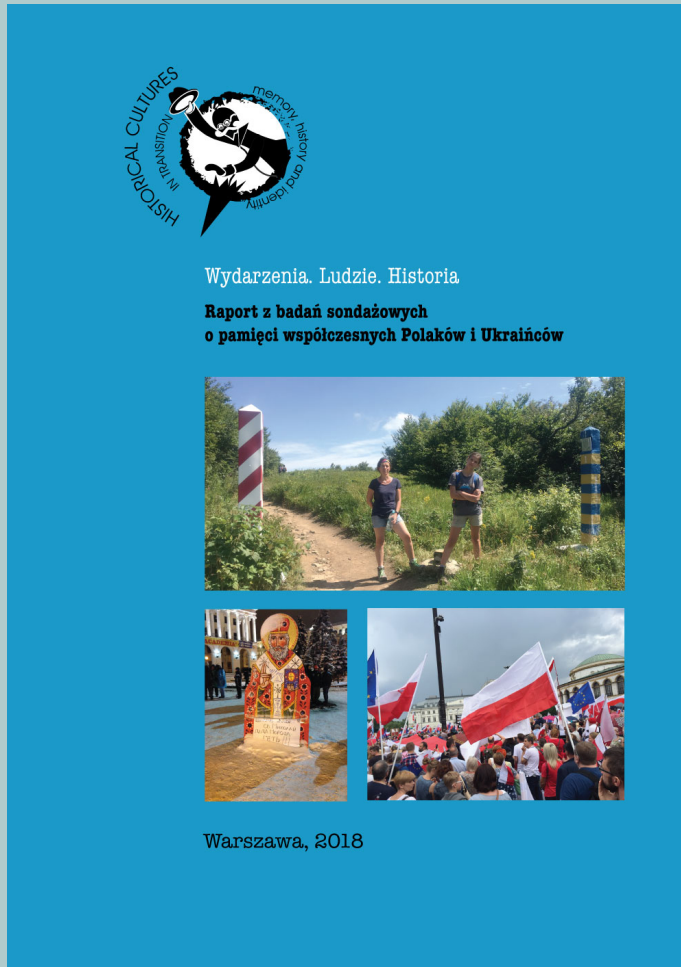
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For those who read in Polish



The research report is available on-line (free)

www.historical-cultures.eu

English version coming

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