



INSTITUTE
OF NATIONAL
REMEMBRANCE



Education for Remembrance

**Transfer of historical knowledge
in the context of the attitudes of Poles towards their past**

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Warsaw 2023

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Foreword

Commissioned by the Institute of National Remembrance, the research into the historical awareness of Poles is the first undertaking on such a large scale, and the primary aim was to discover the degree of knowledge about the past possessed by the inhabitants of our country.

The research results are extremely interesting and lead to many inspiring conclusions. Above all, they should stimulate more excellent reflection on the state of knowledge and historical awareness, especially among young Poles – secondary school students. They also provide answers to questions concerning the sources from which Poles draw their understanding of their past. They show which activities, as well as which educational offerings, enjoy the most significant interest and produce the best results.

A dynamically changing world requires historical education to be adapted to the perceptions of young Poles. The wide range of means and methods supporting teaching prompts us to reach for creative forms of acquiring knowledge about our past. Achieving a synergistic effect between new technologies (e.g., computer games or encounters with 'living history' at concerts and theatre performances) and traditional forms of teaching from textbooks is the key to building an inclusive message – attractive in form and, at the same time, based on sound scientific research.

Education for the future is a mission fulfilled by the Institute of National Remembrance, often inspiring unconventional but effective activities that increase historical awareness and knowledge.

History is a bridge between the past and the present for the benefit of future generations of Poles – socially aware, proud of their ancestors, with a strong sense of connection and responsibility for their Homeland.

Karol Nawrocki, PhD
President of the Institute of National Remembrance

Introduction

More than six thousand people participated in the research project, and the selected results are included in this publication. In three random and representative surveys, the attitudes of Polish society towards the past were analysed. The focus was on categories of crucial importance for the design of educational policy: secondary school students, history teachers, and Poles aged 20 and over. Such extensive quantitative research was complemented by in-depth qualitative research employing focus group interviews.

The research scale, unprecedented for this issue, reflected the research concept adopted, which aims to describe the structure of attitudes to history. It is intended to enable the design of the most effective actions in the history of didactics, i.e., targeting educational content to the most precisely profiled audiences. To this end, an attempt was made to re-enact the multidimensional perspective of the respondents' perceptions of the past and identify issues for understanding contemporary Poles' memory of their history.

Issues related to historical culture, i.e., how society relates to the past, were analysed. A test of Polish historical knowledge was conducted among the respondents, and it was verified whether knowledge of what had happened evokes reflection and is conducive to explaining contemporary events. The study's novelty also consisted in juxtaposing the ways of teaching history preferred by teachers with students' opinions, which determines the space for intervention and corrective actions.

The result of the presented project is material which is beneficial not only for theoretical studies of the collective memory of Poles but also for practical activities in the field of history education and its promotion by all institutions which are faced with the task of shaping the collective memory of subsequent generations of Poles.

Krzysztof Malicki, PhD
University of Rzeszów

Information About the Research

Research Objectives

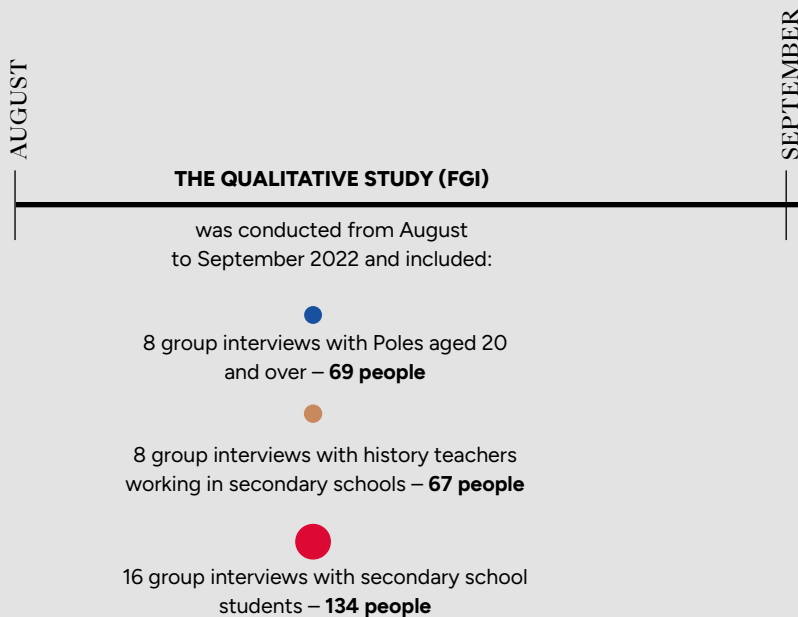
- 1.** Identifying the structure of Poles' attitudes towards history and the past – an analysis of its components, with particular emphasis on the use of history to explain contemporary problems.
- 2.** Determining the level of Poles' knowledge of the key issues of national history, including knowledge of iconography as fundamental for shaping the image of Polish history.
- 3.** Assessing the selected innovative forms of history teaching by students and teachers and comparing the position of both categories.
- 4.** Exploring popular perceptions of the past by the re-enactment of historical canons, i.e., identifying the figures, events and places of remembrance most strongly present in the national consciousness.
- 5.** Identifying the wide range of sources of knowledge that shape collective memory and the most important media and places of memory (film, book, museum, Internet, family conversations, etc.).

Research Segments

The project involved three nationwide random and representative surveys and a qualitative study employing focus group interviews. The project covered the critical categories from the point of view of the issues of remembrance and historical education, i.e., history teachers, secondary school students and Poles aged 20 and over in a number that allows for in-depth analyses for each category. The survey enables conclusions to be generalised to the population of Poles 20+ and history teachers (with a maximum error of 3%) and secondary school students (with an error of 2%). The main survey was preceded by a pilot study.

Research Concept and Coordination

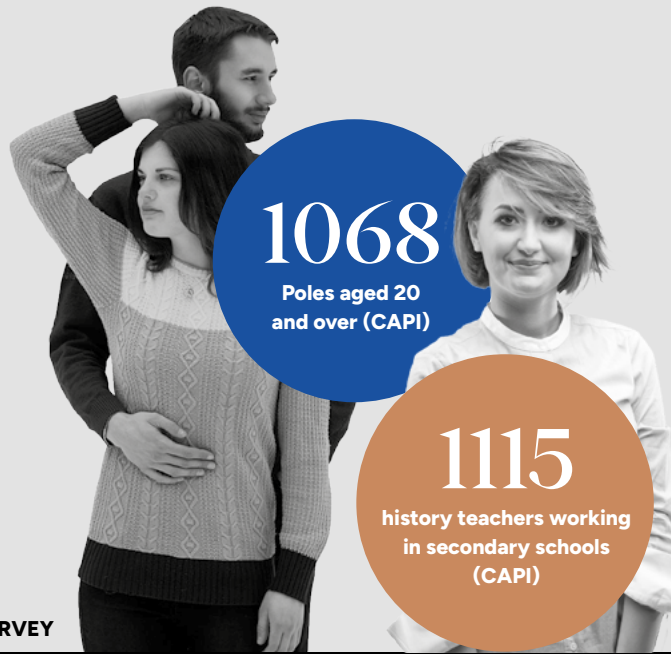
- ▶▶ Krzysztof Malicki (University of Rzeszów),
- ▶▶ Sławomir Wilk (University of Rzeszów),
- ▶▶ Iwona Żuk (IPSYLON Social Analysis Laboratory)



Through standardised tools, the research allowed for analysing issues specific to particular categories of respondents and comparing these categories through questions included in all three questionnaires. The size of the research sample makes it possible to re-enact perceptions of the past on a regional basis. In the case of students, analyses taking into account the stage of education are also possible.

Field Implementation

- ▶▶ Quantitative study – ASM Centrum Badań i Analiz Rynkowych Sp. z o.o.
- ▶▶ Qualitative study – consortium of companies: Instytut Badawczy IPC Sp. z o.o., Grupa WW, Sp. z o.o., Quality Watch Sp. z o.o.



1068

Poles aged 20
and over (CAPI)

1115

history teachers working
in secondary schools
(CAPI)

THE QUANTITATIVE SURVEY

was implemented from September
to December 2022 and included:

DECEMBER

3781

secondary school
students¹ – high schools,
technical and first-level
vocational schools (CAWI)

1 The research did not cover students of other nationalities who arrived in Poland and started school in the wake of the outbreak of war in Ukraine.

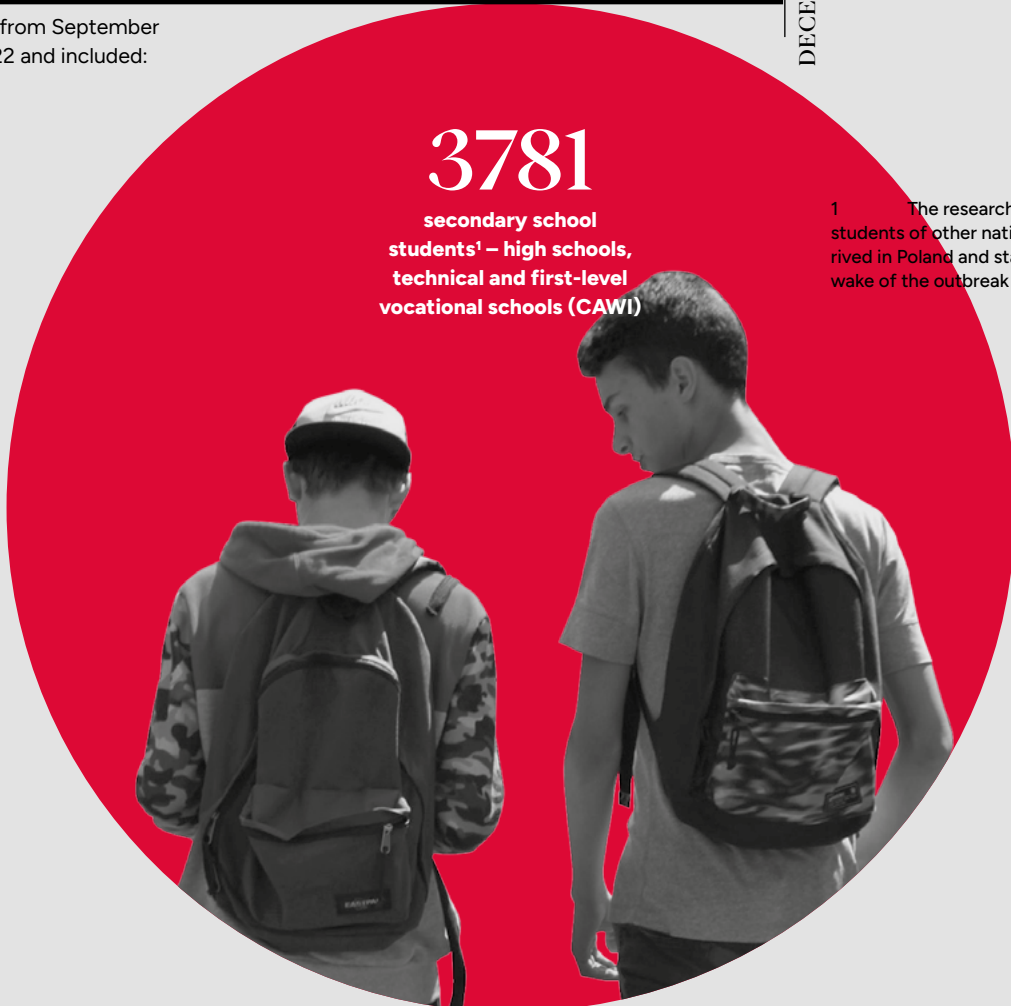
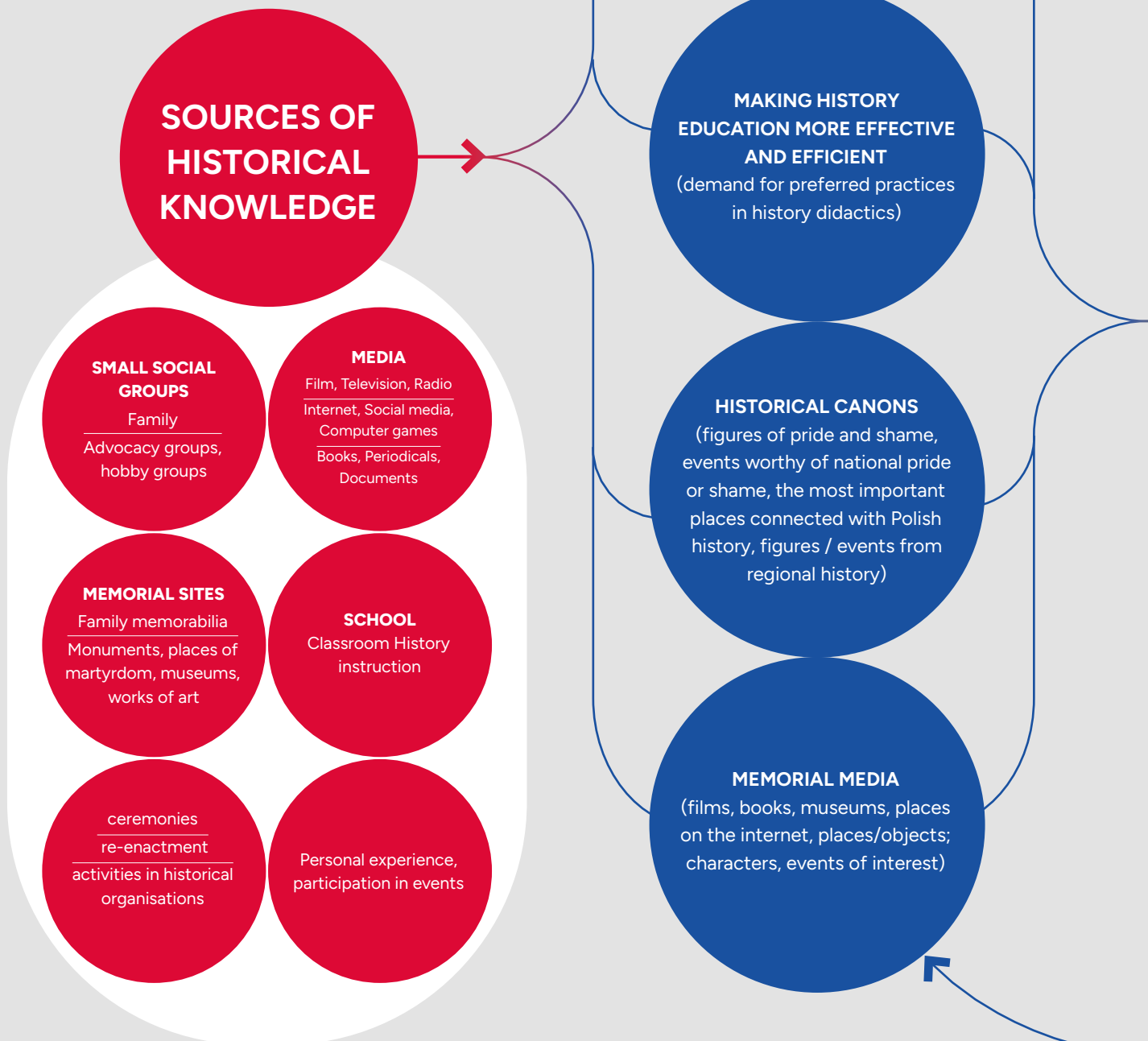
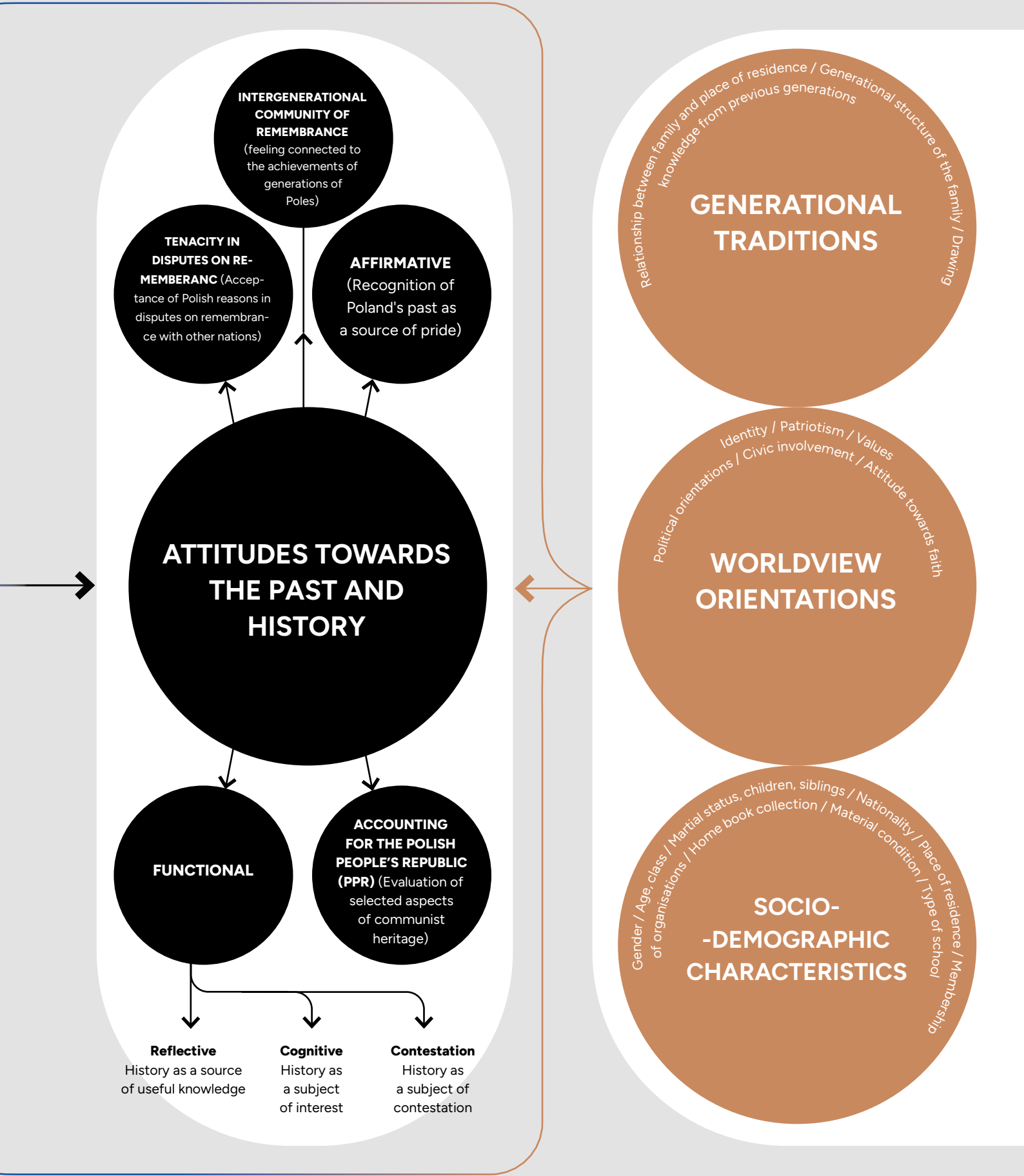


Diagram of the main issues identified and analysed during the 'Education for Remembrance' project



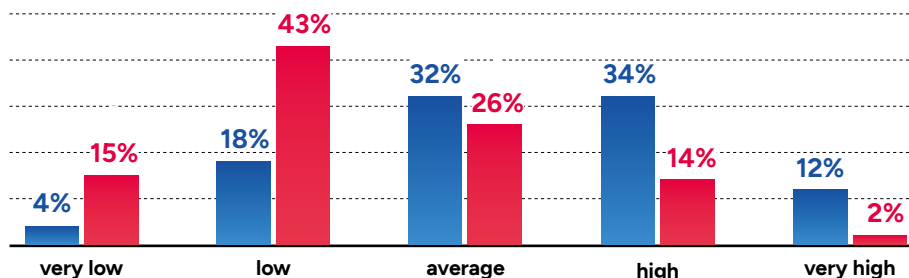


Polish People's Knowledge of their Past

Knowledge of historical dates, figures and events is the basis for formulating reliable judgements about the past. To verify the level of knowledge of Polish history, respondents in two categories, i.e., Poles 20+ and secondary school students, were asked 28 questions on knowledge of history: from Poland's Christianisation in 966 to joining NATO in 1999. Questions about events in the 20th century dominated the test. The questions were in text form (11 questions) and visual form, asking for recognition of figures and events presented in photographs (17 questions).

The key conclusion of the test is that Poles 20+ have a higher level of knowledge than secondary school students. This result may come as a surprise, since the students are up-to-date with the study of history. **The average knowledge test score of Poles 20+ was 56%, while that of students was only 39%.** Among students, the level of knowledge increases with the subsequent years of schooling, but the differences found are not significant: the average test score in Class I was 35%, while in Class IV it was 42%.

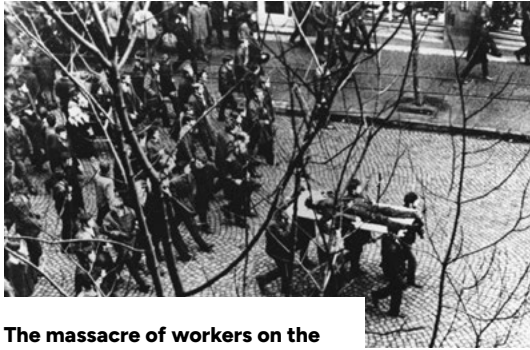
Level of historical knowledge



The level of knowledge determined by answers to 28 test questions

■ N=1068 Poles 20+ ■ N=3781 students

The results of the knowledge test show that questions in text form were more problematic for respondents than those in visual form. The pictures were better identified; however, the results were also surprisingly low in this area.



The massacre of workers on the coast – December 1970.

■ 52% of Poles 20+ and
■ 28% of secondary school students correctly identified the photo.



The shelling of Westerplatte by the battleship Schleswig-Holstein (1939) was correctly recognised in the photograph by

■ 65% of Poles 20+ and
■ 50% of high school students.



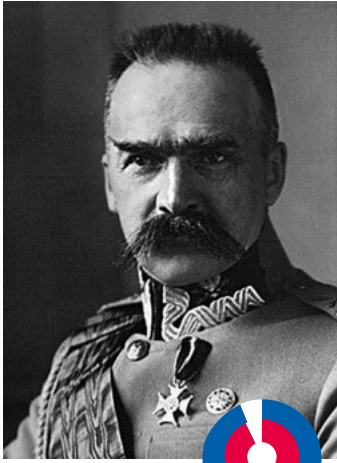
Signing of the August Agreements (1980). The photo was recognised correctly by ■ 51% of Poles 20+ and ■ 20% of secondary school students. For one in four students, the photo represented the signing of the Round Table Agreements.



The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising in 1943 was correctly recognised by ■ 41% of Poles 20+ and ■ 38% of students. Almost one-fifth of respondents in both categories thought that the photograph was taken during the Warsaw Uprising.



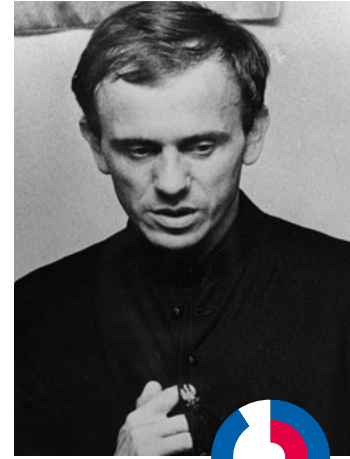
Students were more likely to correctly identify the Fathers of Independence of 1918 in the photographs than the First Secretaries of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party. Poles 20+ indicated the opposite tendency.



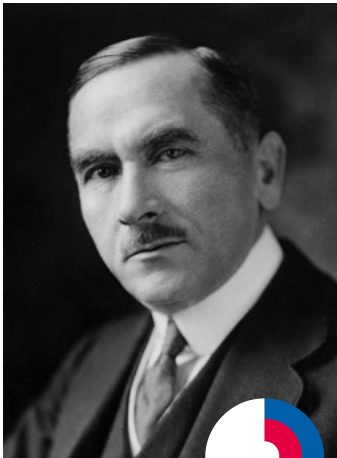
The best-recognised figure in the study was **Józef Piłsudski**. The rate of correct answers was ■ 94% among Poles 20+ and ■ 93% among secondary school students.



Wojciech Jaruzelski is known to almost all ■ Poles 20+ (97%) but only ■ 56% of students recognised him.



The photograph of Father **Jerzego Popiełuszki** was recognised by ■ 91% of Poles 20+ and half as many ■ 45% secondary school students.



Roman Dmowski was recognised by ■ 49% of Poles 20+ and ■ 65% of students.



The photograph of **Edward Gierek** was correctly identified by ■ 83% of Poles 20+ and only ■ 35% of students.



John Paul II with Primate Wyszyński after the 1978 Conclave. The photograph was recognised by ■ 55% of Poles 20+ and ■ 61% of students.

The results of several questions on critical events in 20th-century history are essential for understanding the processes that resulted in Poland's enslavement and the regaining of independence in the 20th century.

- Only 41% of Poles 20+ and 29% of students could correctly identify the consequences of the discovery of the graves of Polish officers in Katyń, i.e., breaking relations between the Polish government in London and the Soviet Union.²
- 54% of Poles 20+ and 33% of students know that in 1943 in Volhynia and Eastern Lesser Poland, the Ukrainian Insurgent Army committed organised genocide against the Polish population.
 - Over a quarter of adult Poles and students identified preventing the communists from taking over Poland as the most critical aim of the Warsaw Uprising. Significantly more respondents (40% of Poles 20+ and 30% of students) answered that the essential objective of the Uprising was to force the German garrison to surrender.
- Only 35% of Poles 20+ and 32% of secondary school students know the reason for the imposition of martial law, i.e., they indicated the desire of the communists to destroy Solidarity and retain power. One in three Poles 20+ and one in six students still believe that martial law saved the country from Soviet intervention.
 - Some results concerning Polish history of earlier centuries also seem interesting.
- 71% of Poles 20+ and 67% of students know that the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth consisted of Poland and Lithuania. However, according to 8% of Poles 20+ and 13% of students, it was a union of Poland and Hungary.
 - Although 89% of Poles 20+ and 83% of students know the date of the Baptism of Poland, only three quarters of Poles 20+ and students know that baptism was received from Bohemia. One in six Poles 20+ and one in three students stated that the Baptism was received by Poland from Hungary.

Students' level of historical knowledge is related to the type of secondary school they attend. The best test results were found in secondary schools (43%) followed by technical schools (39%), and the lowest was in trade schools (29%). The gender of the respondents also influences the outcome of the test: male students, on average, answered 44% of the test questions correctly and female students 36% of the questions. The declared political orientation of the students is also linked to the level of historical knowledge – the farther to the right, the higher the level of knowledge.

Declared patriotism and interest in political issues were also found to significantly influence the level of historical knowledge among students and Poles 20+. The stronger the identification of one's self with a patriotic attitude and the greater the interest in political affairs, the higher the level of historical knowledge.

² This question was repeated in the wording from the 2015 survey of upper-secondary school students of Class IV, the level of knowledge was then 51%. See: Krzysztof Malicki, Krzysztof Piróg, *Postawy młodzieży ponadgimnazjalnej wobec przeszłości i historii Polski XX wieku [Attitudes of Secondary School Students Towards the Past and History of Poland of the 20th Century]*, Warsaw 2016, p. 112.

Sources of Historical Knowledge

History is present not only in professional scientific publications but also in every cultural product. Its elements can be found in all aspects of society's activities. Only the limitations of our sensitivity and perceptiveness can act as a barrier to discovering the past in every phenomenon we experience. Identifying the most important sources from which we gain knowledge about the past and which connect us to history was one of the most important objectives of the survey conducted.

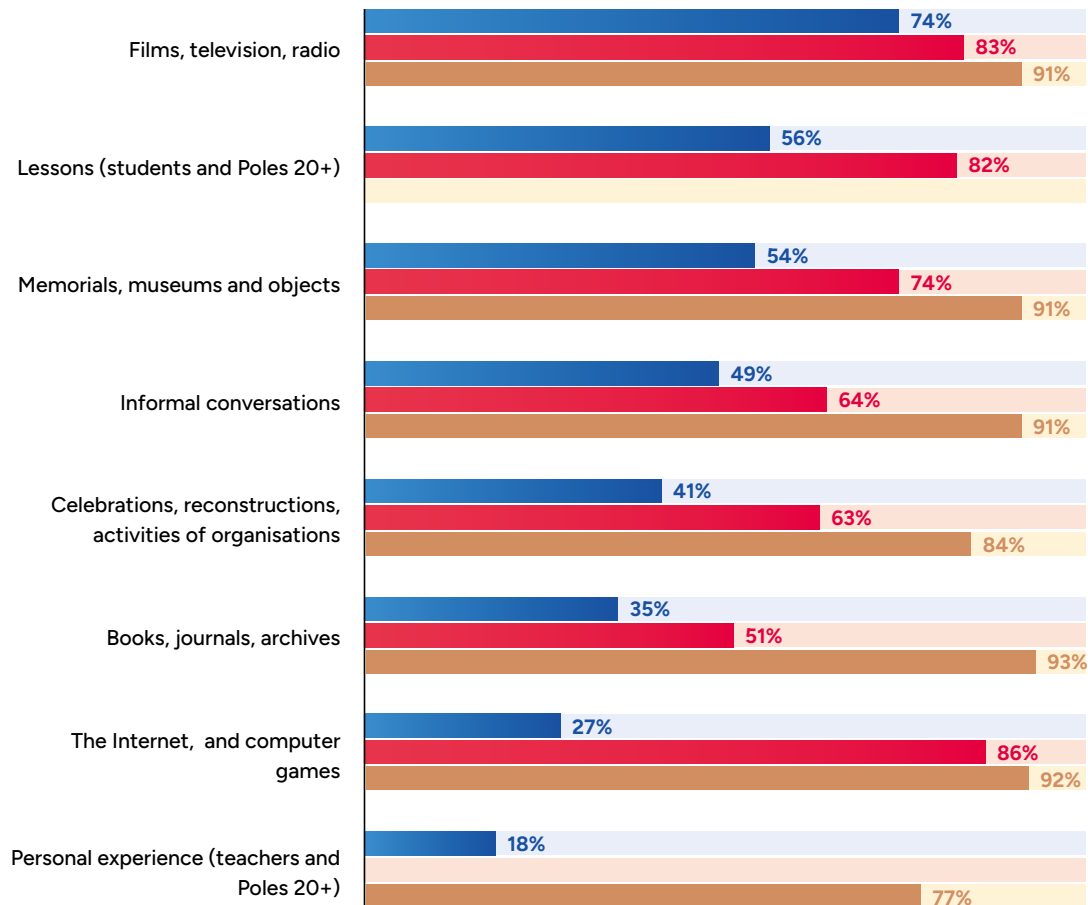
Respondents were presented with a list of 29 sources of historical knowledge and then asked to identify the sources they used. In addition, they were allowed to add their answers in an open-ended form. The individual responses were combined into eight categories to make the results easier to understand.



Sources of Historical Knowledge

The sources of historical knowledge most frequently indicated by Poles 20+ are films, television and radio, followed by school lessons (in their youth). The answers confirm the critical role of memorial sites, museums, souvenirs of the past and small group discussions (especially within the family). Students use three sources with similar frequency, i.e., films, school lessons and the Internet. Internet sources, crucial for students, are unimportant for adult Poles. Teachers are noticeably different from the other categories, as most of them use all types of historical knowledge sources.

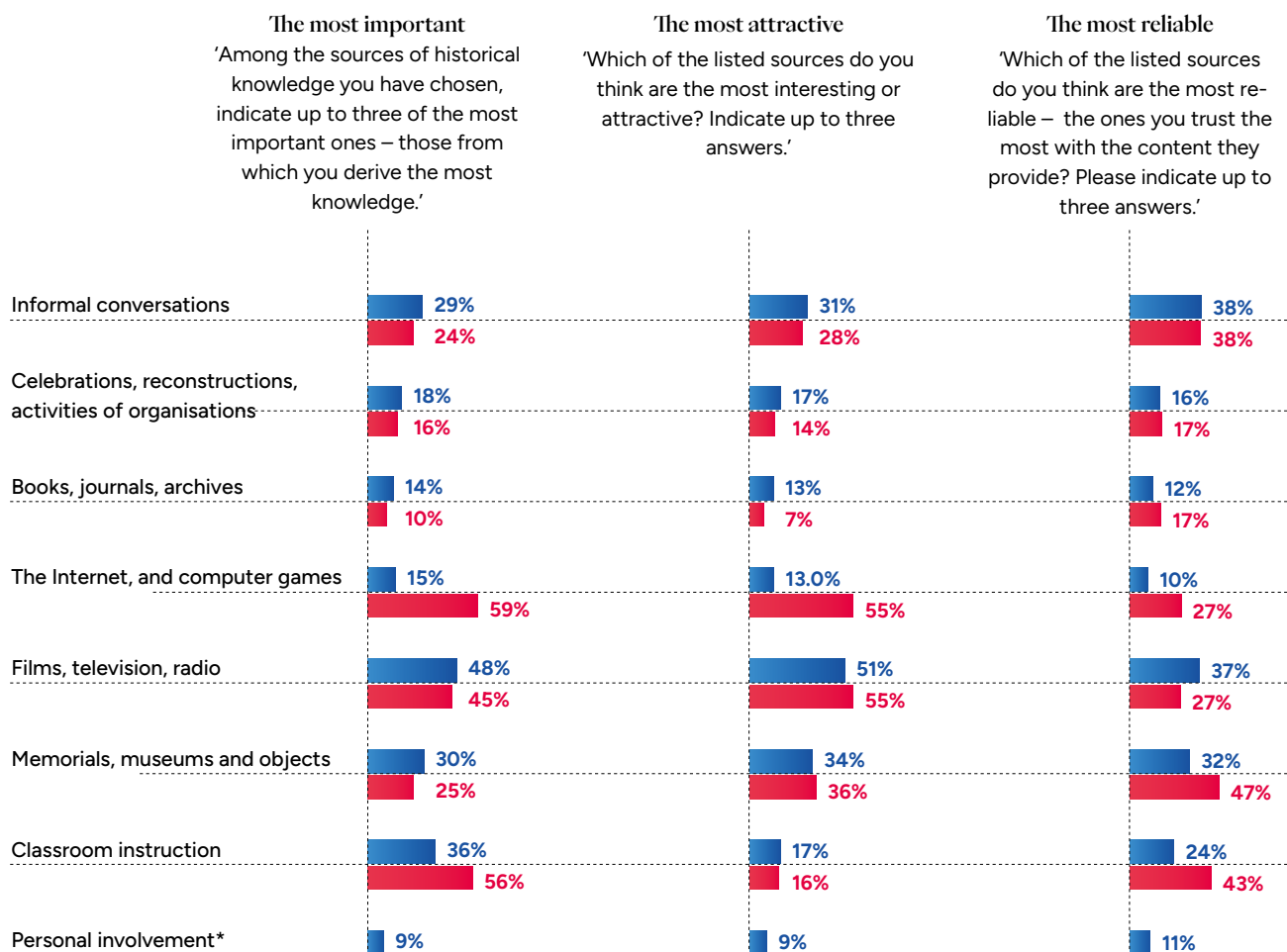
‘Where did you get your historical knowledge from?
Tick all the answers that apply to you.’



Percentages do not add up to 100 because more than one answer could be selected. Detailed responses have been combined into broader categories and 'other sources' have been omitted.

■ N=1068 Poles 20+ ■ N=3776 students ■ N=1108 teachers

Secondary school students and Poles aged 20+ were asked to indicate **the most important sources of knowledge for them** (they derive the most knowledge from them), the most attractive and the most reliable (they trust them the most).



* category not used in the student survey

■ N=1068 Poles 20+ ■ N=3776 students

Students often indicate **classroom instruction** as an essential and reliable source of knowledge but far less frequently as an exciting source. Poles 20+ assess classroom instruction even more critically: less than a quarter indicate it among the most reliable sources and a sixth cite it as among the most interesting. The propensity to perceive classroom instruction as a reliable source of historical knowledge decreases with the age of adult Poles, which is probably related to the school education experienced by older generations during the communist era.

And so, it is a bit better at the moment because there are plenty of sources you can use. Gone are the days when my generation only had what was served up at school.

Krzysztof, 54 lata, Małopolskie Voivodeship

The Internet and computer games are essential sources of knowledge about history only for the younger generation. While it is the most important and interesting source for students, it ranks only fourth in the hierarchy of reliability. Thus, it can be inferred that students know the limited reliability of knowledge drawn from online sources.

In the case of schoolchildren and adult Poles, it is notable that low importance is attributed to printed history, i.e., books, magazines and archival documents. They are rarely regarded as the most important or exciting sources of knowledge. It is surprising that in the hierarchy of credibility as well, their position is low.

The first thing I would probably do is to search on Wikipedia, and then I would look for some recordings on the Internet, possibly on YouTube, and then perhaps I would search for more information in a textbook because, after all, I can't complain about the history textbook at my music school because everything I need is there. If I can't find something on the Internet, I can find it in the textbook so I don't have to look for all the information on the Internet.

Maja, a secondary school pupil, Śląskie Voivodeship

Memorials, museums and material mementoes of the past occupy a unique position among sources of knowledge. Although they are not often indicated as the most significant sources, they were often mentioned as the most interesting and even more often as the most reliable. Places and objects that are material witnesses of the past are promising areas for historical didactics and for reaching the consciousness of the younger generation.

If I have to prepare for school, I tend to use a textbook. If I have to find some information, then it is the Internet, of course, and usually Wikipedia because it is suggested first by the search engine. My parents have some knowledge about history, mainly my father. I know that he was a wizard at history back at school. I also know that when I need something, I can go to him or call him, or just ask him when he is at home. It depends.

Aniela, secondary technical school pupil, Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship

I always go for Youtube videos because you can also see things, and they are narrated. The videos are often made as a presentation and I also use this format for listening and taking notes because it makes things easier. And I also use the Internet to read, to find out, to discover.

Karolina, a secondary technical school pupil, Lubuskie Voivodeship

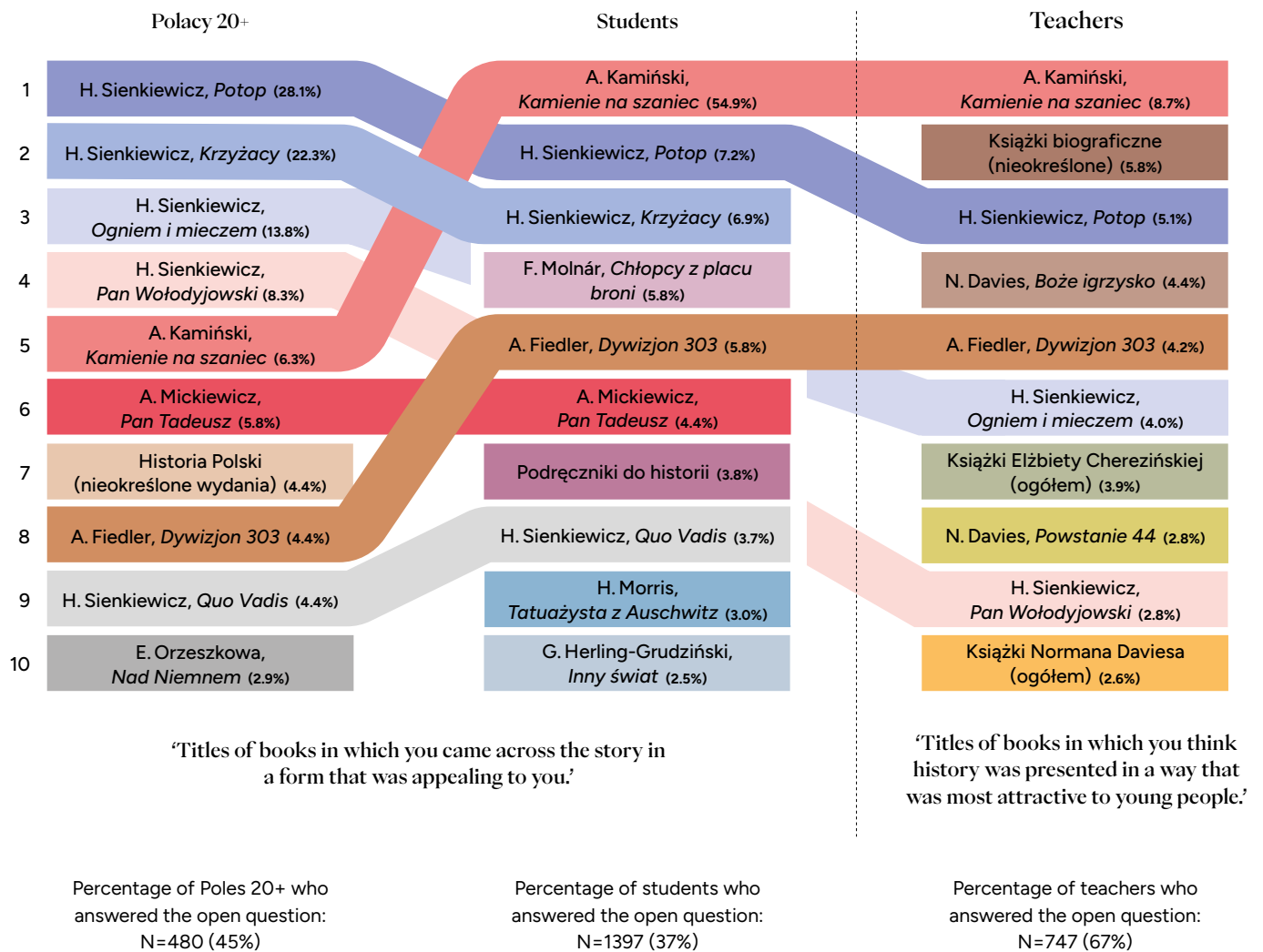
Memorial Media and Sites

The memorial media and places occupy a special place among the storage media. By transmitting historical content, all of them shape collective perceptions of the past and – although to varying degrees – reflect history as it was. They also provide a surrogate ‘experience’ of the past and can often initiate significant shifts in social consciousness. Not all media content plays an equal role in historical awareness. Every museum has a different impact on its audience. Only in some places where something important has happened can we feel and experience the presence of history.

The survey asked all three categories of respondents the questions about the books, films, websites, museums and places of remembrance that most interestingly present historical themes. The questions were open-ended and allowed for any answer to be entered. Secondary school students and Poles 20+ indicated media and places that were interesting to them, while teachers acted as experts and they answered which books, films and museums they thought were interesting for young people. Comparing the answers of students and teachers makes it possible to show the disproportion between what interests students and what teachers consider interesting for the young generation.

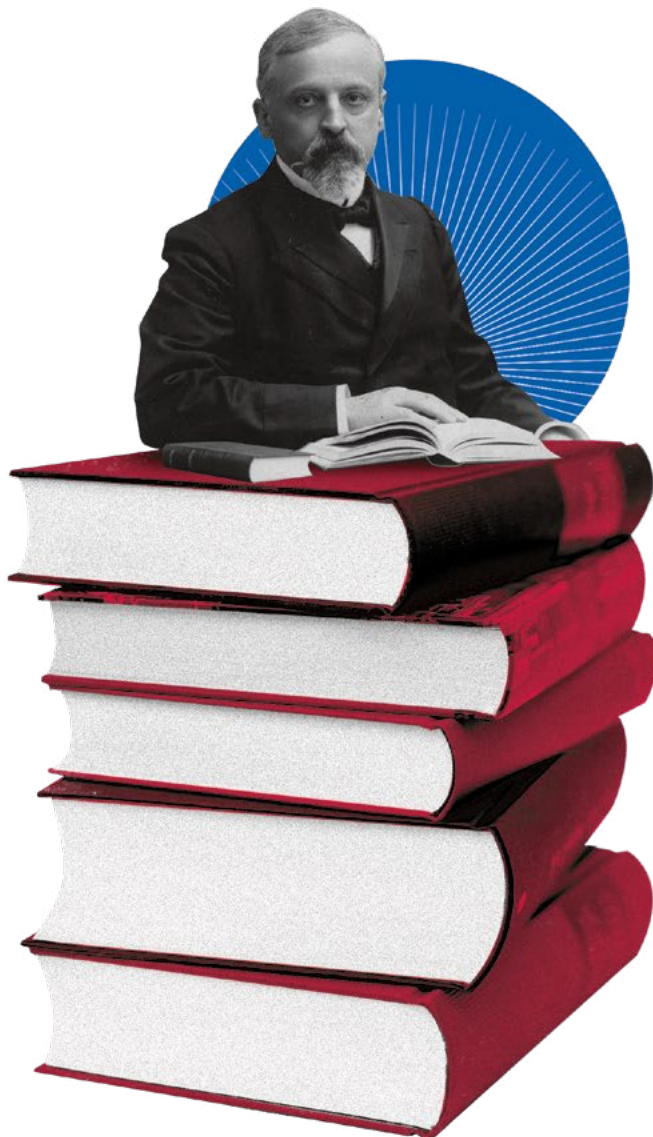
Books presenting history in an attractive way

Respondents in all three categories indicated approximately 800 book titles which, in their opinion, attractively present historical topics. Only the preferred author was often given, sometimes the genre of literature (e.g., biographies, recollections) or the historical period about which the respondents like to read.



The ranking of books most frequently mentioned by all three categories of respondents leads to several conclusions:

- Polish literature dominates, classic items such as great national narratives about the fight against invaders and the struggle for freedom.
 - There is little role for publications of a scientific nature, books by professional historians, which – as potentially interesting to students – are mentioned only by teachers. Fiction and school reading dominate among Poles 20+ and students.
- A significant discrepancy concerns the indication of Henryk Sienkiewicz's works, which dominate among Poles 20+ (five out of ten most frequently mentioned titles), and are attributed much less importance by students.



I'll give the example of a book entitled *Kamienie na szaniec* [*Stones for the Rampart*] which wonderfully shows how people of our age, not much older, were able to sacrifice their lives for their fellow countrymen. I'm really proud that there were such people – thanks to them we don't have those problems now, we don't have to hide in bunkers, we can go out in the street, we don't have to conceal who we are.

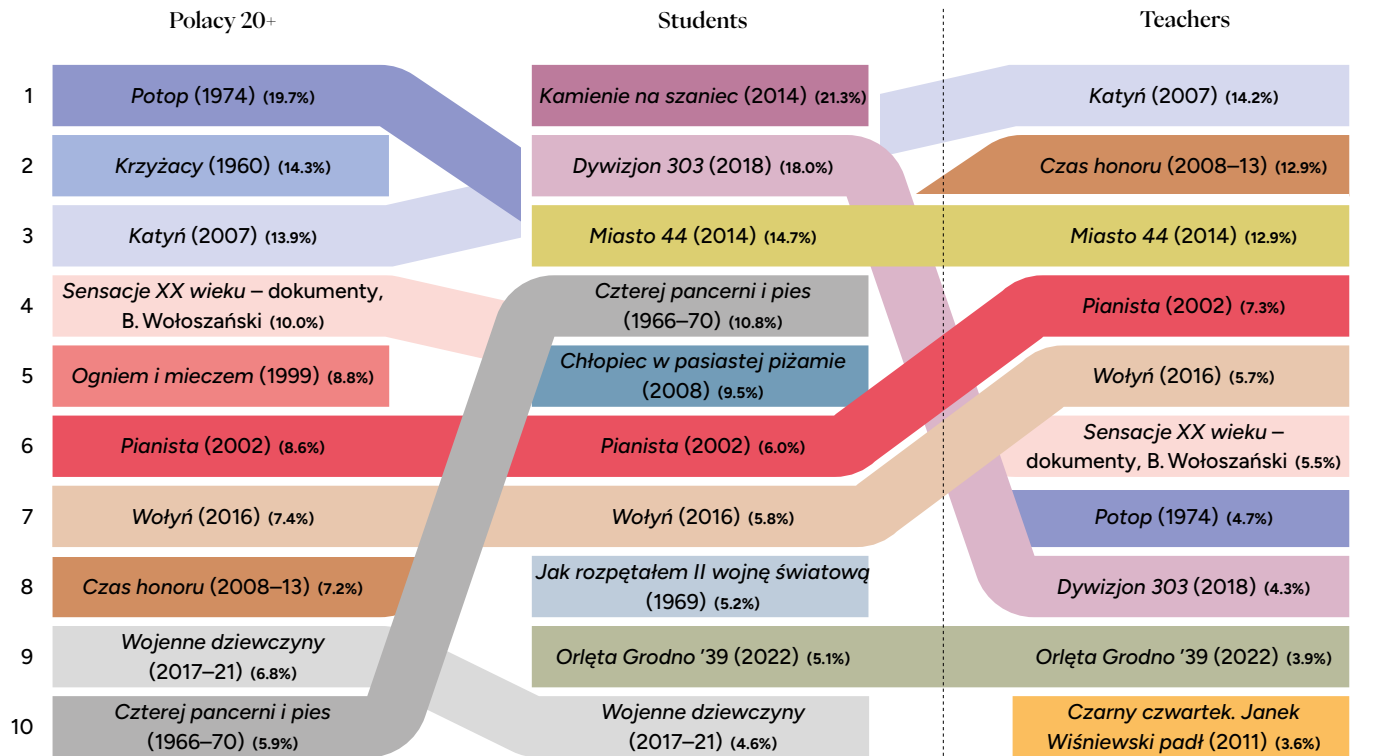
Aleksandra, secondary technical school pupil, Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship

I just wanted to say something about a book called *Kamienie na szaniec* [*Stones for the Rampart*] because it looks like it is based on facts. I just wanted to say that I am extremely proud of those guys because they fought to the end during World War II. Basically they are the kind of characters who inspire genuine admiration in me.

Kasia, a vocational school pupil, Łódzkie Voivodeship

Films presenting history in an attractive way

Based on the respondents' answers, a list of more than 500 film titles (feature films and documentaries) was formulated, which were considered to present historical topics in an interesting way.



‘Titles of films (including documentaries and series) in which history was presented in a way that was most appealing to you.’

‘Titles of films (including documentaries and series) in which, in your opinion, history was presented in a way that was most attractive to young people.’

Percentage of Poles 20+ who answered the open question:
N=811 (76%)

Percentage of students who answered the open question:
N=2077 (55%)

Percentage of teachers who answered the open question:
N=969 (87%)

The analysis of the most frequently mentioned titles allows the following conclusions:

- The canon of attractive films is inconsistent – only two films, *Wołyń* and *Pianista*, made it into the top ten of all respondents' categories.
 - For Poles 20+, screen adaptations of Henryk Sienkiewicz's novels are of great importance, but their impact on students is moderate; they are also not often recommended by teachers as potentially attractive to young people.
- The attractive filmography is dominated by the World War II period (13 films), Polish cinematography (17 films) and plots concerning the struggle with the occupants for freedom and independence.
 - The role of dealing with the communist period is marginal; among the most significant films, one film concerning this period appeared (*Czarny czwartek*) and only in the category of teachers.
- The role of documentaries is insignificant; basically, only history teachers appreciate it.

To give an example, I watched *Ogniem i mieczem* [*With Fire and Sword*] about fifty times when I was a child. I knew the whole film by heart. It was then that my passion for history was aroused.

**Michał, a history teacher,
10 years' professional experience,
Podlaskie Voivodeship**

We recently watched *Gierek* with my grandmother. We watched the film first. My brother commented on it because he watches all sorts of historical trivia. And then my grandmother started talking about her life in those times. So I learnt the history of Gierek's time in detail.

**Alina, a secondary school pupil,
Śląskie Voivodeship**

Websites presenting history in an attractive way

The Internet is very often indicated as a source of historical information, especially by students. Nevertheless, the final identification of websites offering interesting historical content proved problematic.

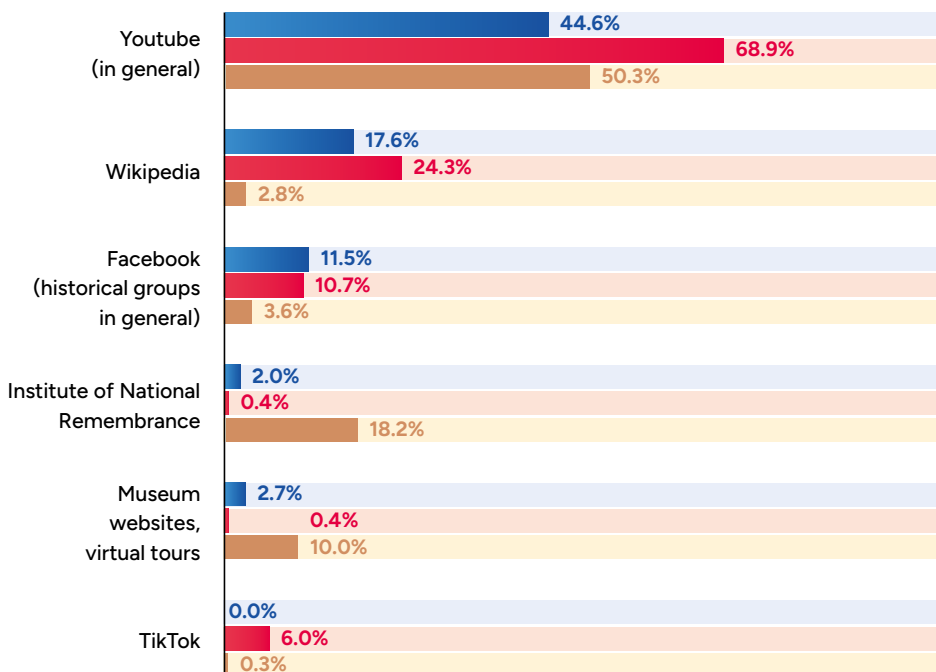
The analysis of the answers provided shows that:

- At least one website was indicated by less than one-third of the students; this implies a vast gap between the declaration of obtaining information from the Internet and the ability to show the source precisely; this suggests a rather haphazard search on the Internet and drawing on its resources in a not very thoughtful way.
 - YouTube, Wikipedia and Facebook dominate the indications; in the case of YouTube, the only clearly distinguishable and frequently indicated channel is 'History without censorship'.
- Among students, the number of professional sources of knowledge, e.g., the website of the Institute of National Remembrance, museum websites or professional history portals, is marginal; they are mentioned much more often by teachers, who consider them to be attractive forms of acquiring knowledge for

young people; unfortunately, young people either do not share this opinion or have not yet encountered these websites to be able to assess their attractiveness.

Poles 20+ and students: 'A place on the Internet (website, forum, community) where you came across an interesting presentation of historical issues.'

Teachers: 'A place on the Internet (website, forum, community) which you think presents historical issues in a way that is attractive to young people.'



Percentage of respondents in each category who answered an open question: ■ N=148 (14% of Poles 20+ category), ■ N=1184 (31% of student category), ■ N=759 (68% of teacher category)

I look for things on YouTube. There's a channel that our history teacher showed us, called 'History Without Censorship,' or something like that. And generally, the person who hosts it does it in a very nice and humorous way. There are a lot of interesting facts and that's why I like it and visit it when I want to find out more.

Patrycja, a secondary school pupil, Mazowieckie Voivodeship

I often search for things on Facebook, on profiles dealing with history, or I follow some TikTok profiles connected with history because they post lots of that kind of tidbits.

Paweł, a secondary technical school pupil, Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship

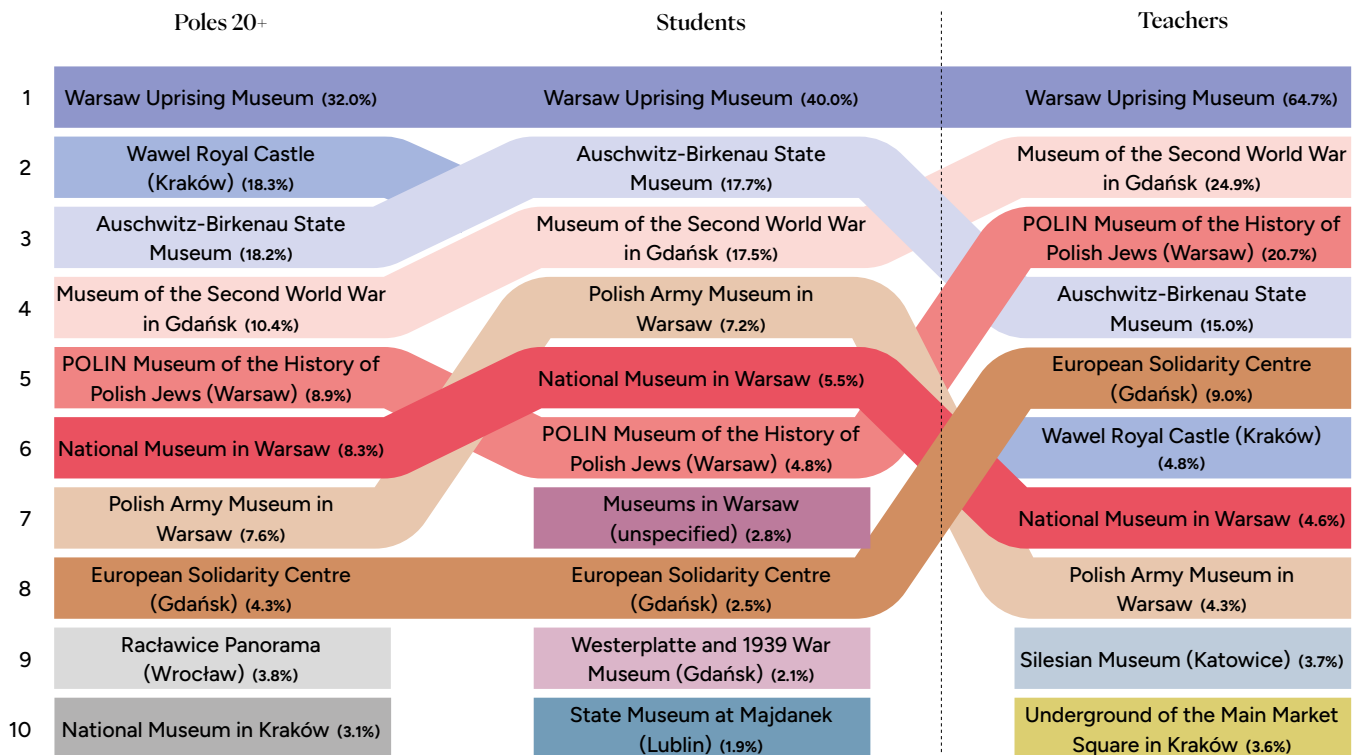
As far as I'm concerned, I usually search for information on the Internet, of course [...] More specifically, it might be Wikipedia or a website called 'Integrated Educational Platform' – I think that's what it's called – and I often visit it because you can often find topics from history there. The ones that we have in our textbooks, in fact, so you could say that it's a kind of second textbook in an online version, with slightly different content.

Jan, a secondary technical school pupil, Mazowieckie Voivodeship

Museums presenting history in an attractive way

Wealthy material was provided by the question on museums that, according to respondents, present history in an exciting and knowledge-enriching way. Over 400 establishments were mentioned, including regional and local ones. An analysis of the most frequently mentioned establishments leads to the following conclusions:

- There is a noticeable consistency in the perception of the attractiveness of museum facilities by all three categories of respondents; as many as 7 museums appear among the 10 most frequently mentioned facilities in each category.
 - Museums on the Second World War predominate; nevertheless, a diversity of temporal and thematic perspectives can be seen among the mentioned establishments.



'Museums that present history in a way that was interesting to you, reached you, enriched your knowledge the most.'

Percentage of Poles 20+ who answered the open question:
N=654 (61%)

Percentage of students who answered the open question:
N=1263 (33%)

'Museums that in your opinion present history in a way that was most attractive to young people.'

Percentage of teachers who answered the open question:
N=1085 (97%)

I visited the Museum of the Second World War in Gdańsk, I think it's a good place to visit and I recommend it. There are many things which are described in detail and I think that it would also be a good way to share information. You can go there on a school trip because it really is... just great, and the information is precise, and you can see everything there, some tanks, some animated films...

Amelia, a secondary school pupil, Łódzkie Voivodeship

I would like to visit the Warsaw Uprising Museum again, because I was there a long time ago [...] and I know that a lot has changed there. And I am interested how it looks now. When I was there last time [...], we followed a line and picked up all the notes about what was happening there day by day. They showed us different films, and some things in display cases. But apparently things have changed, so I'm curious to see how it looks now, whether it's a bit different or follows the same principle.

Dominika, a secondary school pupil, Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship



Places where history can be experienced in a special way

The question about places where respondents could feel and experience history (in Poland or abroad) should be considered in the context of the previous question about museums. While we see a predominance of 'implants', here, spaces of memory that are a direct 'product' of history are primarily indicated. Auschwitz-Birkenau is perceived as a space beyond the definition of a museum and ranks first in all categories of respondents.³ An analysis of several thousand responses shows the following trends:

- As with the case of museums, there is a strong consistency in the perception of the attractiveness of places by all three categories of respondents – 7 sites appear at the top of all three rankings.
- The places mentioned indicate a strongly differentiated temporal and thematic perspective and include vital spaces important for understanding Polish history.
 - The role of martyrological sites, spaces marked by suffering, is significant,
- Respondents' answers prove that experiencing history does not require many trips outside Poland – domestic locations dominate.

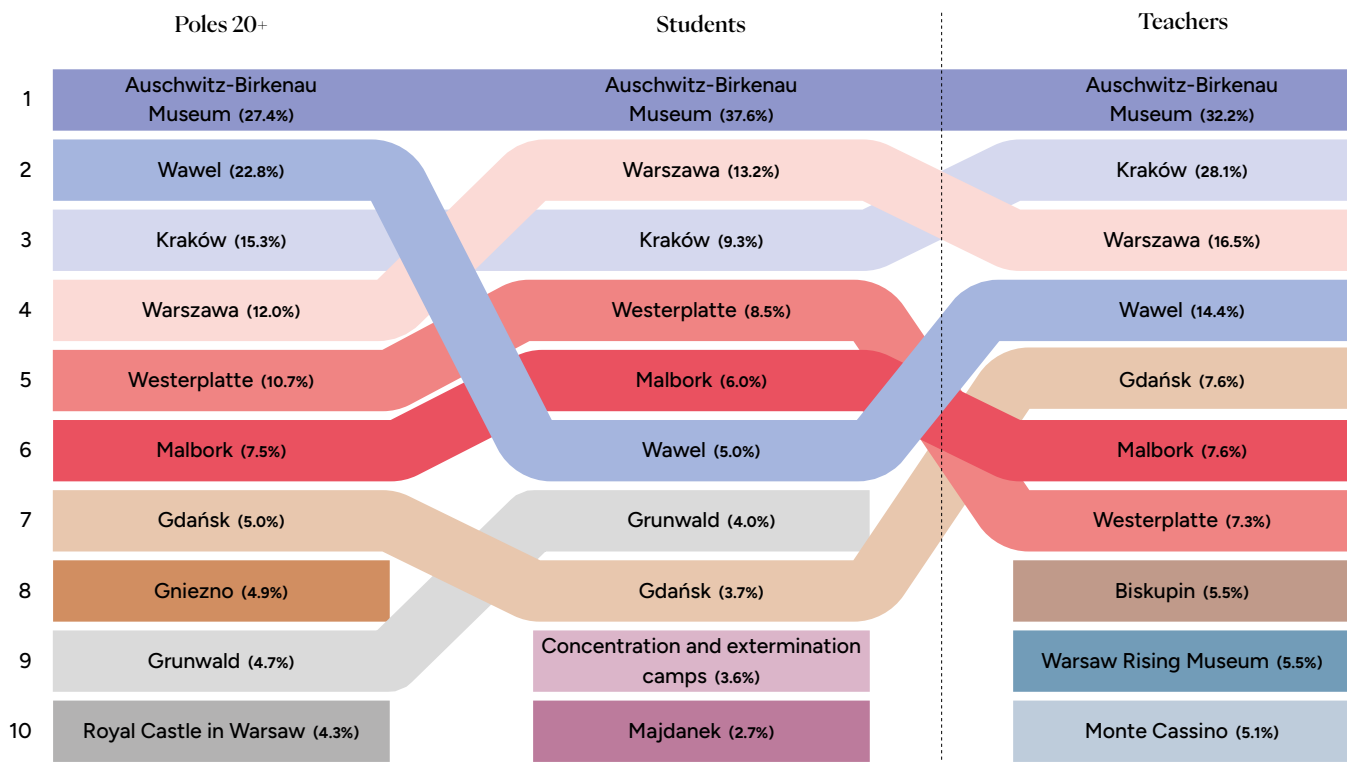
³ For an in-depth analysis of the role and significance of Auschwitz in the consciousness of Poles in the light of research, see: Marek Kucia, *Auschwitz jako fakt społeczny. Historia, współczesność i świadomość społeczna KL Auschwitz w Polsce [Auschwitz as a Social Fact. History, Contemporaneity and Social Consciousness of Auschwitz in Poland]*, Kraków 2005.

You can go to Auschwitz with your grandchildren – take them there to show them, tell them. But tell them the facts, what actually happened, and not a rose-tinted version showing everything very positively. The real story of what it was like sixty, seventy years ago. How it all happened there.

Jerzy, 74, Mazowieckie Voivodeship

Young people ask about Auschwitz much more often, and they're interested in the Auschwitz camp. I think that the Auschwitz museum always makes an impression on people. But for the last two years, they've been asking much more about it and I don't know if that's just me or if other teachers have also experienced this. They want to tour it, they're interested in the history of Auschwitz.

Barbara, history teacher, 31 years' professional experience, Opolskie Voivodeship



'Places in or outside Poland where you felt the presence of history in a special way.'

Percentage of Poles 20+ who answered the open question:
N=759 (71%)

Percentage of students who answered the open question:
N=1857 (49%)

'Places in or outside Poland where students can feel the presence of history in a special way.'

Percentage of teachers who answered the open question:
N=1058 (95%)

My aunt used to work at Wawel Castle so I went there a lot, and I'm very intrigued by the place because, to put it simply, it is immersed in history. There are many people buried there, kings and so on, and so I enjoy visiting the place very much.

Julia, a secondary school pupil, Małopolskie Voivodeship

I can say that it's Warsaw because when you first see the pictures of how the city was destroyed, then it really is incredible to see what it has become. There are also places which survived, and somehow preserved their historic value. The same applies to the National Museum or the Warsaw Uprising Museum, so that the city is filled with history.

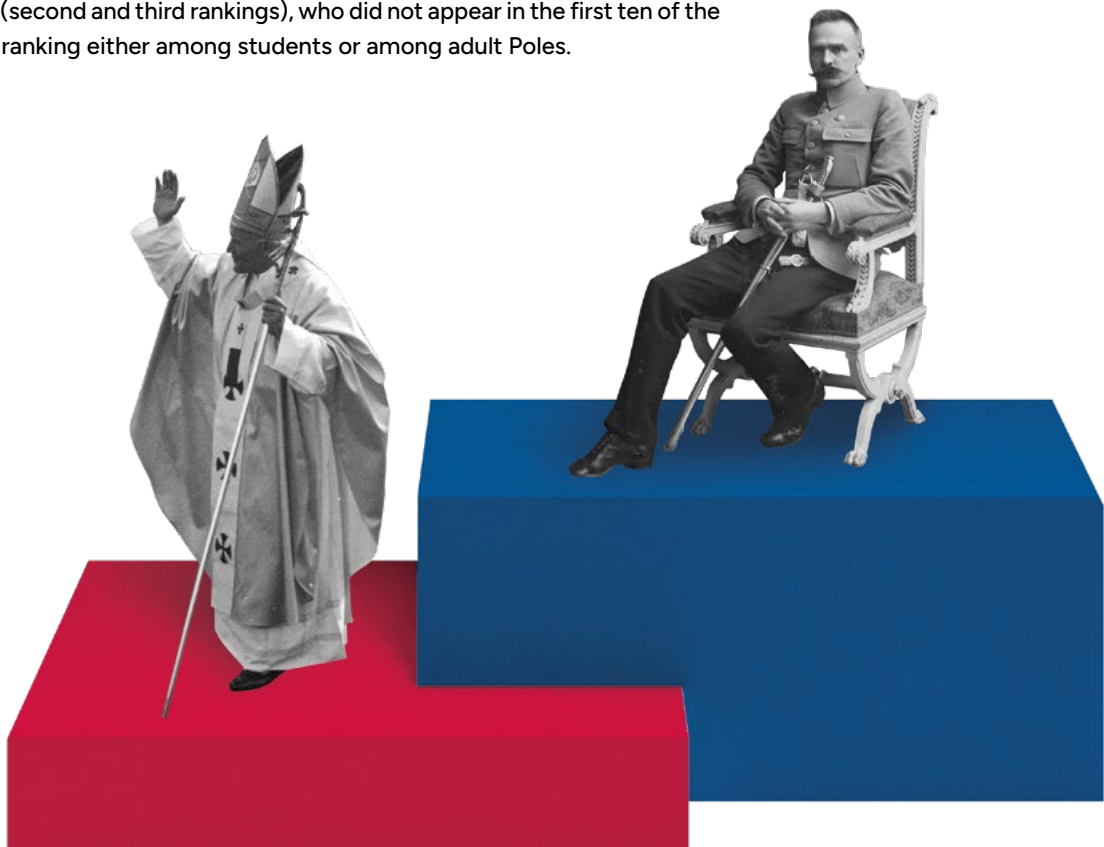
Sylwia, a secondary school pupil, Podkarpackie Voivodeship

Characters and events from history that arouse curiosity and a desire to know more

The analysis of the figures and events from Polish history which aroused the curiosity of the respondents and which they would like to get to know (and in the case of teachers: which they would like their students to be more interested in) allowed the following trends to be observed:

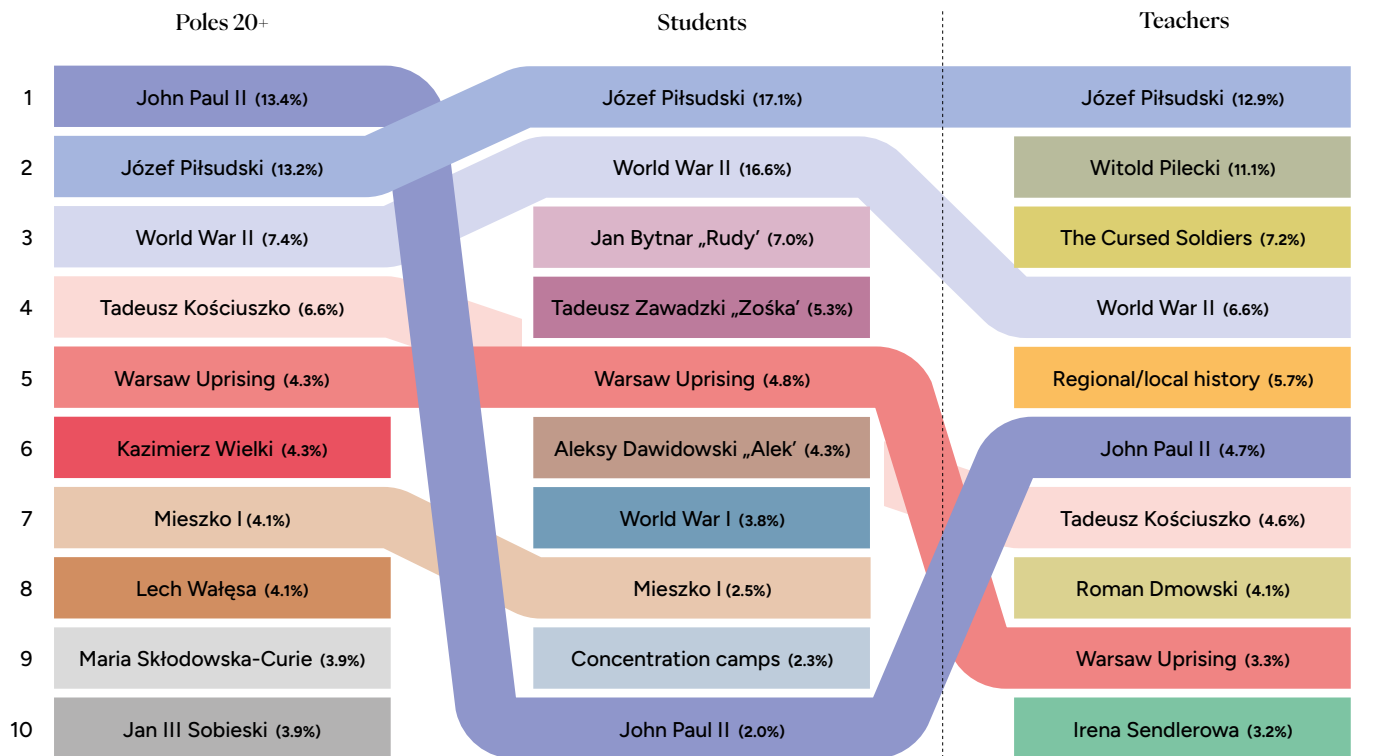
- ▶▶ Figures and events from recent history dominate – most often from the period of World War II⁴; this war often appears as a separate category; curiosity about World War I holds a relatively high position, although only in the category of students.
 - ▶▶ Józef Piłsudski is by far the most prominent figure, and his high position is only matched by that of John Paul II (by Poles 20+) and Witold Pilecki (by teachers).
- ▶▶ The attention is drawn to the disproportion in indications of the figure of John Paul II. Among Poles 20+, he is mentioned in the first place, and only in tenth place among students (with a result of only 2%).
 - ▶▶ Teachers in their responses strongly emphasised the Cursed Soldiers (second and third rankings), who did not appear in the first ten of the ranking either among students or among adult Poles.

⁴ On the significance of the Second World War in the memory of Poles in the light of nationwide surveys, see: Piotr T. Kwiatkowski, Lech M. Nijakowski, Barbara Szacka, Andrzej Szpociński, *Między codziennością a wielką historią. Druga wojna światowa w pamięci zbiorowej społeczeństwa polskiego* [Between Everyday Life and the Great History. The Second World War in the Collective Memory of the Polish Society], Warsaw 2010.



Józef Piłsudski is a very important figure who commands respect. But I personally admire the context Józef Piłsudski and Dmowski lived in because, in my opinion, it was an example of how politics should be conducted nowadays, and that in spite of the fact that both gentlemen had completely different views and even personal disputes about the same woman, they were still able to pursue policies for the good of the nation. I think that is something that makes me feel respect for them – that people who were hostile towards each other personally were able to continue the politics for the good of the country. I think that this is what is currently missing in Polish politics.

Patryk, a secondary school pupil, Łódzkie Voivodeship



‘Events or figures from history that arouse particular curiosity in you, whose fate you would like to learn more about.’

Percentage of Poles 20+ who answered the open question: N=485 (45%)

‘Events or personalities from history that, in your opinion, would make young people more interested in.’

N=1686 (45%) Percentage of students who answered the open question: N=1686 (45%)

Percentage of teachers who answered the open question: N=969; (87%)

Open-ended responses also indicated figures from current politics, but these were not included.

Is the Family Still a Centre of Remembrance?

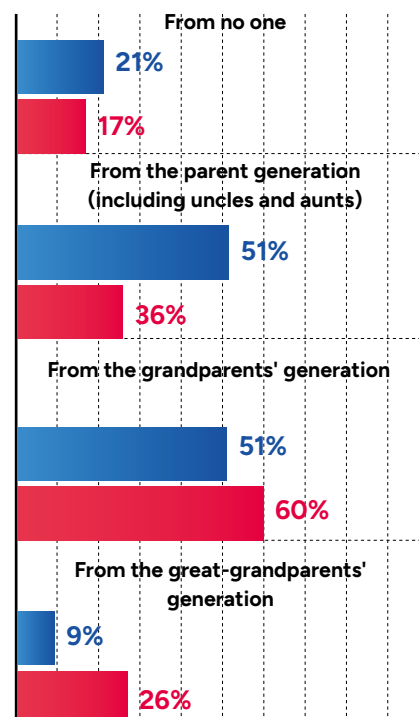
In the family, considered the primary cell of society, the first questions about our past are asked. It is also in the family that the first ideas about what was in the past are formed. The family is a micro-scale history, the earliest contact with language, culture, tradition, and religion. Family heirlooms are small vehicles that carry history into the future. Thanks to the family, we can learn about our roots, which broadly define our identity.

The research results show that the family is still an essential element in memory transmission to younger generations of Poles. Conversations about the past within the family are declared by 68% of Poles 20+, 62% of secondary school students and 93% of history teachers. Despite the significant changes affecting the modern family, learning about history within the family is still done from a multi-generational perspective. The research shows that more than half of students and Poles 20+ draw historical knowledge from only one generation of their family members, while a quarter draws it from two generations. From three generations (e.g., parents, grandparents and great-grandparents), 8% of students and 4% of Poles 20+ obtain their knowledge

Students most often obtain historical knowledge in their family from their grandmothers and grandfathers, while Poles 20+ get knowledge with comparable frequency from their grandmothers and grandfathers and their parents.

'From how many generations of your family members do you draw historical knowledge?' ➡

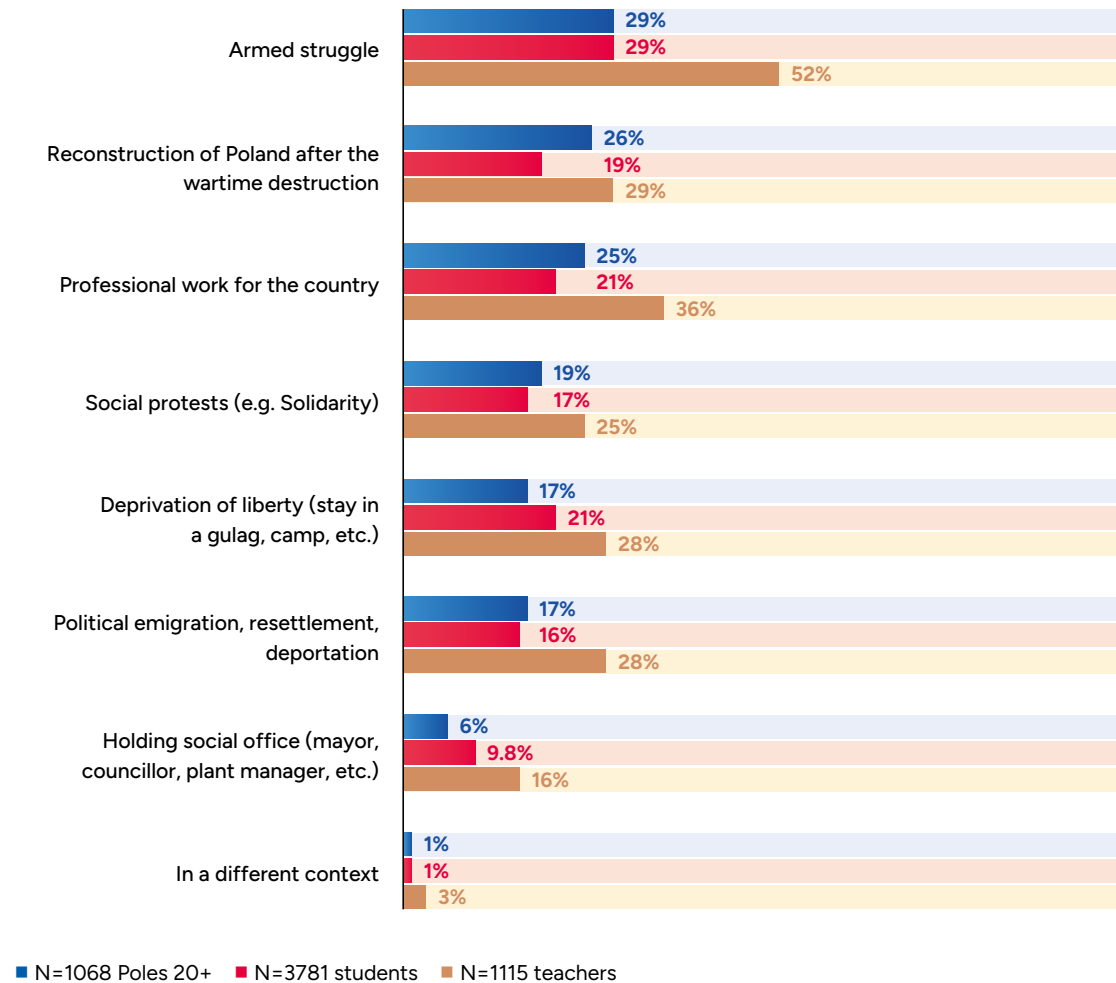
Percentages do not add up to 100 due to the possibility of choosing more than one answer. ■ N=1068 Poles 20+ ■ N=3781 students



Is the Family Still a Centre of Remembrance?

Tales of ancestral history are a way of learning about Polish history in an exciting and multifaceted way. Although the heroic-martyrdom motif plays the central role (participation of ancestors in battles, internments in camps and prisons), the effort of daily work for the country is also mentioned. There is also no shortage of reminiscences of emigration and forced resettlement in the family circle, so it often affected Poles during the period of enslavement.

'In what context is your ancestors' involvement in past events mentioned in your family?'



I often asked my grandparents about it when they were still alive. In fact, I did not learn a lot because my grandpa [...] was deported to Germany when he was sixteen and had to work in those labour camps. And those were very difficult memories for him. He didn't talk about it much. I know that he had some document [...] with the German insignia, and my grandfather, out of grief and because of everything that had happened to him, burnt it one day because he never wanted to identify with it. I'll definitely tell my children about it one day, though, because my grandpa was a good man.

Katarzyna, 34, Małopolskie Voivodeship

I think that I have some knowledge about it. Recently, I even asked my grandparents about their ancestors and I found out that my great-grandfather fought in the Greater Poland Uprising. But I think that this knowledge is quite superficial, and I only found out that my ancestors often changed their place of residence.

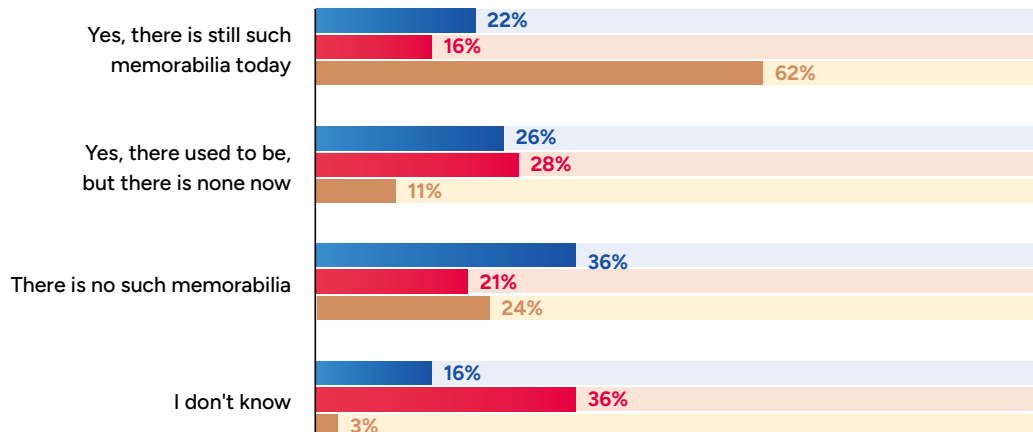
Bartosz, a secondary school pupil, Wielkopolskie Voivodeship

I know the origins of my family [...] My great-grandmother survived World War II. She told me how she felt when she was a small child. My uncle also talks a lot about our family history. I know that one of my great-grandparents fought during the war, and one of my uncles was drafted and fought in Japan. As for the stories which are not so close to me, I have one blessed person in my family so I have heard a lot about this. And on my father's side, one person perished in Auschwitz, and one person was shot and died in a forest.

Wiktoria, a secondary school pupil, Śląskie Voivodeship

An interesting light is shed on family memory and its relation to national history through family heirlooms kept at home. Most of these are in the families of teachers, or at least this group has the most extraordinary knowledge of the heirlooms in their possession. More than a third of the students are aware that memorabilia is kept in their family. These results should be taken as an indicator of the sensitivity to history rather than the ownership of essential items from the past. Ownership of family heirlooms is often declared by women, city dwellers, people with better material conditions, and general secondary school students.

'Are there any important family memorabilia kept in your family?'



■ N=1068 Poles 20+ ■ N=3781 students ■ N=1115 teachers

Is the Family Still a Centre of Remembrance?

Photographs predominate among family heirlooms – they are mentioned by three quarters of those claiming to own any heirlooms. The next items declared are documents (23%), orders and medals (16%), letters, memoirs and diaries (11%). Some people also mentioned military items and parts of uniforms – evidence of their ancestors' bravery - as well as jewellery, everyday items, equipment and devotional objects.

As family memory is often a product of a national history marked by mass migrations, deportations and escapes, the survey asked respondents about the length of time their ancestors had lived in the place of their current residence. History teachers were by far the most knowledgeable about when their own family lived in the area – only 3% could not provide an answer. 14% of Poles 20+ and one-third of students declared a lack of knowledge in this area. It is interesting to note that the most remarkable 'extended residence' of respondents' families (living in the area before World War II) was found in the Świętokrzyskie (43%) and Podkarpackie (42%) Voivodeships.



I have a lot of photographs. In fact they are the only heirlooms but they are very precious to me.

Małgorzata, 39, Łódzkie Voivodeship

My grandmother has two medals awarded to my great-grandfather after the war. But I'll have to ask her about that because I've never seen them. But I know that they exist because I've heard about them. So they are one of the more interesting things... But in general, it's mainly pictures.

Maja, a secondary school pupil, Łódzkie Voivodeship

This is the study arranged by my dad when he was still living in this house. And I haven't changed anything here, because there are heirlooms from my grandfather, who was a distinguished commander of the Grey Ranks. There is a Virtuti Militari order awarded by the state. I know that there is a street in Pruszków named after him, and a roundabout. So I know that my grandfather was a distinguished person in my family [...]. On my right, you can see a frame with my grandfather's armband from the Warsaw Uprising – it's white and red, with an eagle, and there's a stain from his blood, and a bullet hole.

Piotr, 44, Mazowieckie Voivodeship

How Would We Like to Learn History?

History lessons do not have a monopoly on imparting knowledge about history and are rarely considered an attractive form of learning about the past. In the lucrative market for historical content, school lessons face challenging competition. A fundamental objective of the research project was to identify effective ways of reaching young people with history and to suggest improvements in teaching about the past. By juxtaposing students' opinions with those of teachers, it is possible to identify practical, attractive and implementable methods of teaching history.

Respondents were asked to evaluate 16 methods of learning about history, the common denominator of which was the transformation of the student from a passive listener to an active researcher, and the partial transfer of learning about history outside the classroom.

The analyses essentially aimed to construct a ranking of the methods that secondary school students find interesting, and a ranking of the methods teachers find interesting for their students. The juxtaposition of these rankings shows a far-reaching divergence in the opinions of the two categories. Two phenomena draw particular attention in this regard.

First, according to history teachers, what is most often attractive to pupils is what essentially already constitutes 'variety' in history lessons (meeting a history witness, visiting a museum, developing a presentation for a class).

Second, the forms, which students mainly find attractive, overlap with what teachers find interesting for the younger generation. It includes forms of teaching such as visits to places of martyrdom, excursions to places of military struggle, and multimedia experiments with variants of history. A vast discrepancy concerns the difficult to implement proposal to observe professional archaeological work and to assist in it. However, the split in evaluating the idea of students preparing presentations is particularly telling. Teachers find this form much more interesting for pupils than is evident from the opinions of those involved.

It's much easier and better to acquire knowledge when you visit places and see things than just listening to a teacher giving bare facts in a classroom, or just reading about things in a textbook. It's simply much more interesting, and it seems to me that most people our age enjoy it.

Martyna, a secondary school pupil, Lubelskie Voivodeship

Visits and tours are a great idea because you really see things. It could be a tour with a guide as they tell the story in an interesting way and I remember it longer than when I hear it in the classroom. But let's not kid ourselves – you can't go on a visit or tour every day. You also have to spend time at school. It would be very nice to find the perfect balance.

Konrad, a secondary technical school pupil, Podkarpackie Voivodeship

How Would We Like to Learn History?

Relatively high agreement between the perspectives of the two categories can be seen in the evaluation of meetings with witnesses of history or participation in historical re-enactments of a military nature.

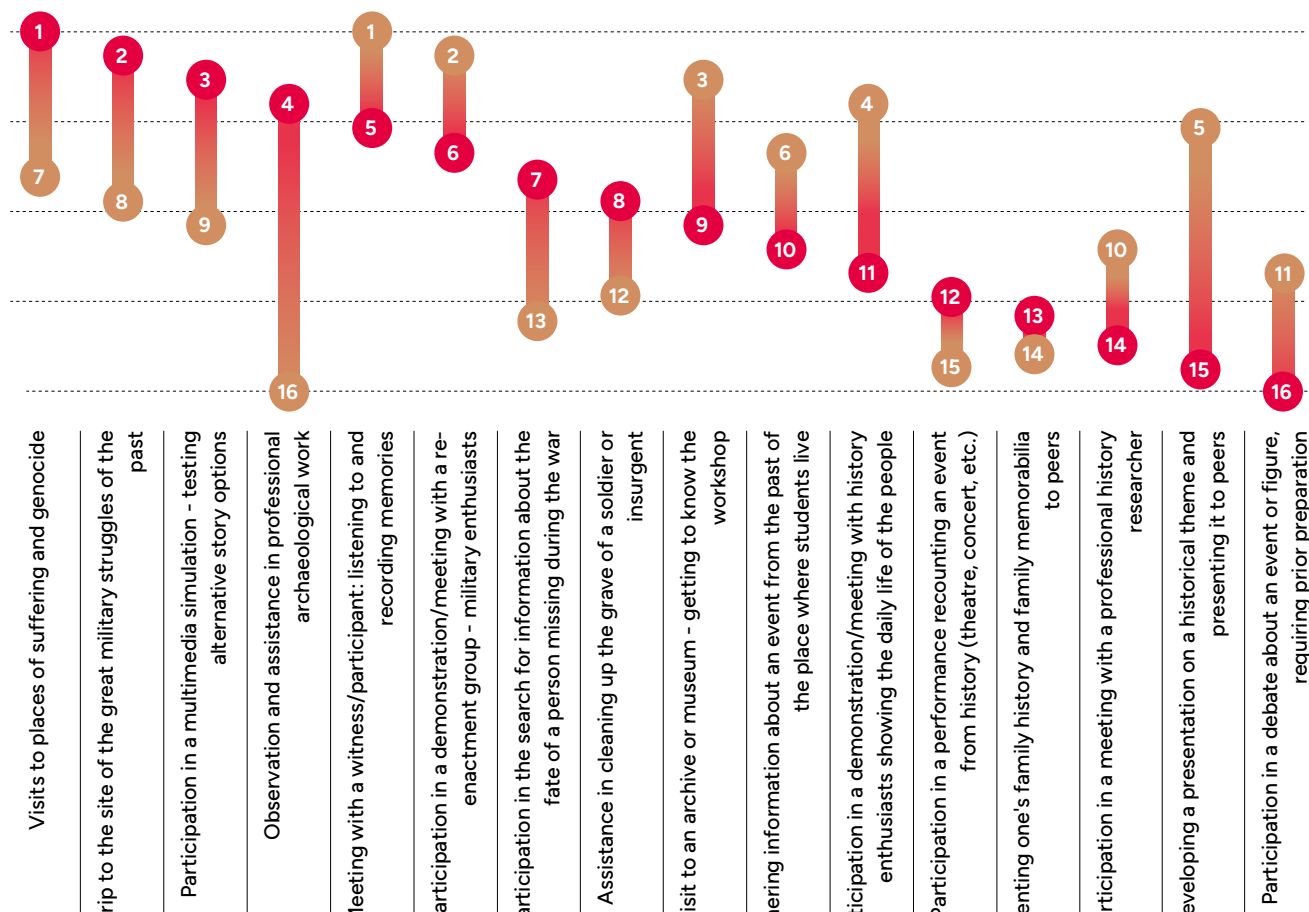
Forms of activities most attractive to ■ students and ■ teachers according to teachers: position in a hierarchy (from 1 - most interesting to 16 - least interesting)

■ **Forms of activities most attractive to students in their opinion: position in the hierarchy formed based on the response rate: 'I would take part in this even if I had to devote only my own time to it outside the history lesson'** N=3726 pupils

■ **Forms of activities most attractive to students according to teachers: position in a hierarchy created based on the question: 'Please look again at the listed proposals for bringing history closer to pupils and choose from them max.5, which you think (based on your experience) would be the most interesting for students'** N=1115 teachers

I think that it would be cool to have meetings organised with older people who remember the war, for example. Some meetings with insurgents or just people who took part in World War II. And then an exchange of views between our generation and those who lived through it and were actual witnesses. I think it definitely has a greater effect on people when they listen to a first-hand witness than just hear information read from a book or from some movies. I think that would be a much better solution.

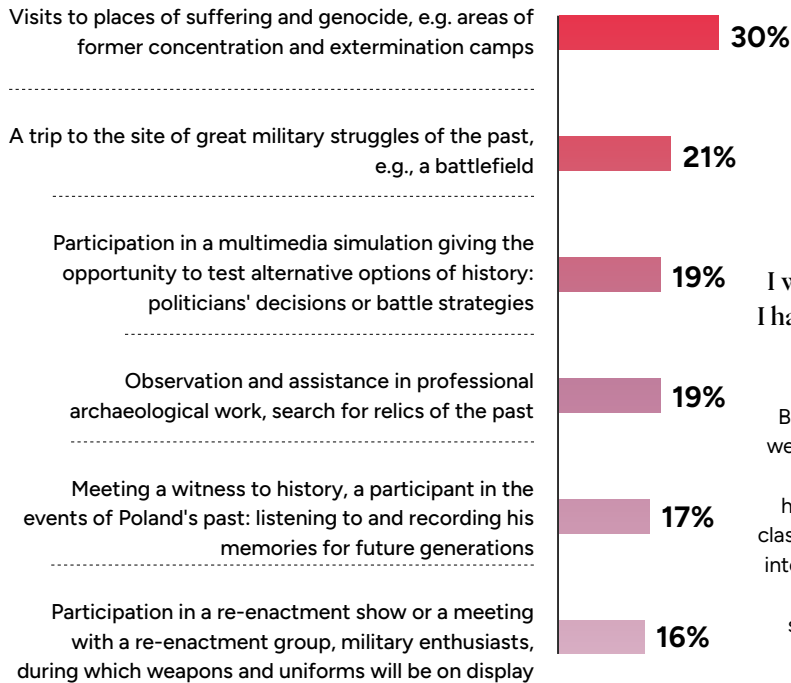
Maciej, a vocational school pupil, Lubelskie Voivodeship



It should be noted that active forms requiring going into the field were the most common forms of learning about history, indicated by students as those they would like to pursue even in their free time.

At my previous school everybody had to prepare an interview with someone who participated in those events. We recorded it and then just listened to it, to those interviews, during our history lessons. And we were able to learn a lot from it.

Lidia, a secondary school pupil, Podlaskie Voivodeship



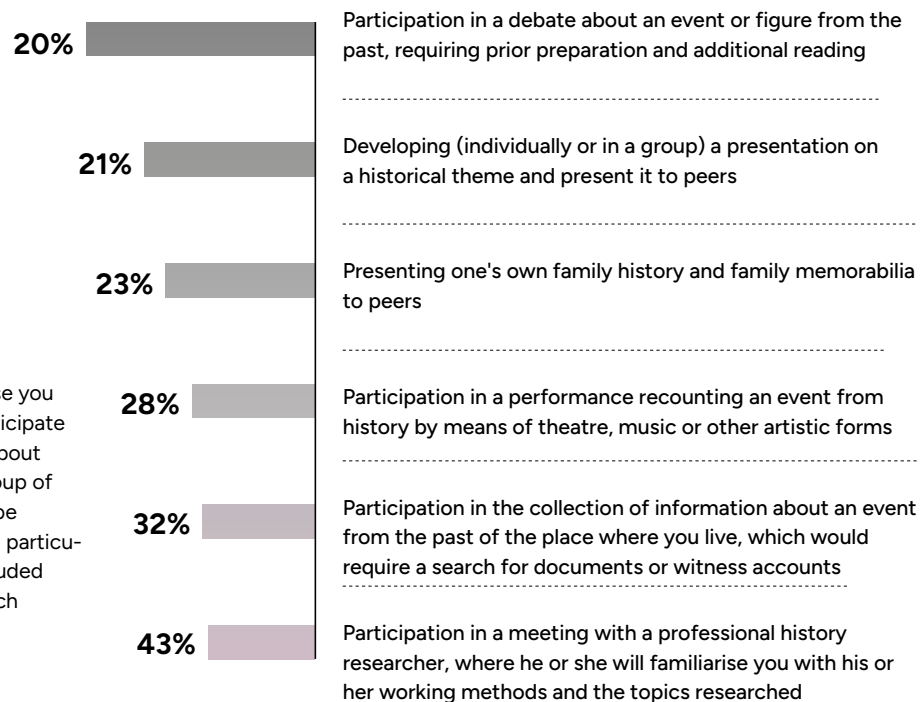
I would take part in the event even if I had to devote only my free time to it beyond the history lesson

Based on a set of questions: 'Suppose you were offered the opportunity to participate in several events aimed at learning about history either on your own or in a group of classmates. To what extent would you find it interesting to take part in a particular event'.

N=3726 students (55 excluded who answered 'difficult to say' to each question)

I would not be interested in participating in the event

Based on a set of questions: 'Suppose you were offered the opportunity to participate in several events aimed at learning about history either on your own or in a group of colleagues. To what extent would it be interesting for you to participate in a particular event'. N=3726 students (55 excluded who answered 'difficult to say' to each question).



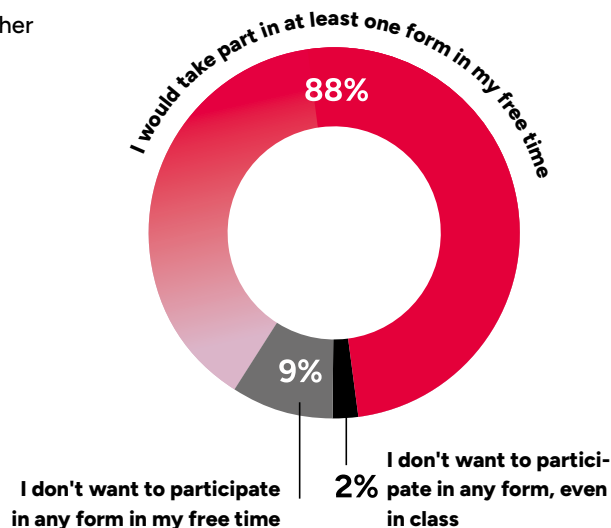
The students least appreciated static forms, and they disliked the history debate formula, requiring additional reading and the development of presentations on historical topics.

Notably, 88% of students indicated at least one of the proposed models for learning about history as prompting them to devote time to it outside school hours. **12% of students would not commit their free time to participate in any forms of history learning.** The extreme reluctance to take part in any form of learning about history – even within lessons – was expressed by only 2.4% of secondary school students.

Students reluctant to devote their free time to any form of learning about history

- ▶▶ are more likely to attend vocational schools than other secondary schools
- ▶▶ rarely consider themselves patriots, and understand patriotism more often as a civic rather than a heroic attitude,
 - ▶▶ have little or no book collection,
- ▶▶ live in more modest material conditions.

'Suppose you were offered the opportunity to participate in several events aimed at learning about history either on your own or in a group of colleagues. To what extent would you find it interesting to participate in a particular event?'



Even the best ideas for improving history teaching ultimately have to clash with the evaluation of those who would implement them. The teachers' assessment of the sixteen proposed forms of education shows that they overwhelmingly considered these forms effective in educating young people. However, the matter becomes more problematic when the extent to which these forms are feasible in the current teaching system was assessed. Opinions were much more divided in this case.

Notably, methods that could be more innovative are indicated as practical and accessible. The analysis also shows that among the three forms of history teaching marked by teachers with the highest frequency as effective and easy to implement, as many as two are the same forms in which students are least interested. Sometimes, what teachers find effective and challenging is conditioned by objective factors related to the workplace. Visiting genocide sites as an effective but complex form of learning about the past is often indicated by teachers from provinces distant from the largest genocide memorial sites (Auschwitz-Birkenau, Majdanek, Stutthof, Gross-Rosen). On a positive note, this form of teaching is least frequently assessed by teachers as ineffective.

N=3726 students (55 students who answered 'difficult to say' to each question were excluded).

I think that history lessons could be improved with some trips to museums because when you see something in real life it's completely different than you imagine it. I was actually with my class on a trip to museum in Gdańsk where I could see different things from the world war. And it was much more interesting than just a lesson in a classroom.

Sylwia, a secondary school pupil, Podkarpackie Voivodeship

Effectiveness and degree of difficulty of selected forms of history teaching as perceived by teachers

Based on a set of questions: 'In your opinion, would such activities be effective in teaching and feasible in the current history teaching system?' N=1115 teachers



Attitudes of Poles Towards History and the Past

A central element of the research project was an attempt to characterise the attitudes of Polish society towards history.⁵ Knowing the structure of such attitudes would make it possible to design the most effective educational activities and direct them to where they can yield the best results. The study looked both at Poles who are interested in at least select aspects of the past and, above all, at those for whom history is crucial because they derive practical lessons that they use in their everyday lives. A distinction was also made between those who have a negative attitude to the exposure of history in social life and those who are indifferent to history.

An additional aspect of deepening the knowledge of attitudes towards history was the estimation of the scale of feeling a connection with the memory of previous generations of Poles. The extent to which Polish society takes an affirmative stance towards history was also verified; the respondents' attitudes towards conflicts with other nations related to memory and their perspective towards the communist legacy – still casting a shadow over the present – were analysed.

A set of 39 statements was created to explore the multidimensional issue to which all respondents – students, Poles 20+ and teachers – referred.

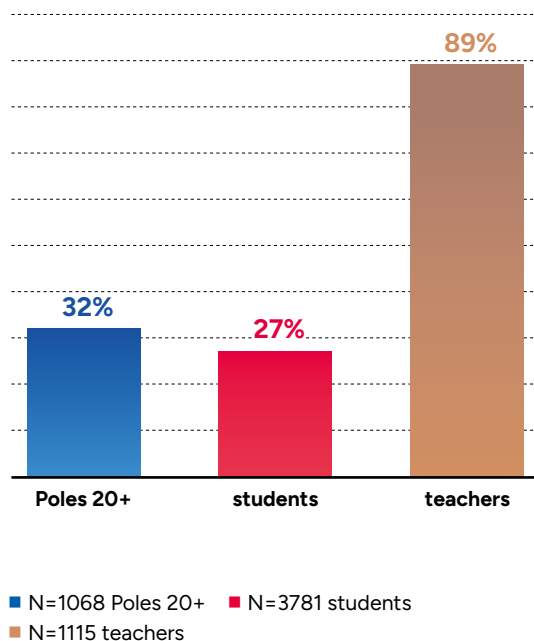
⁵ The concept of attitude measurement in the present study is a development and modification of the model used in the 2019 and 2015 surveys of secondary school students. See: Krzysztof Malicki, *Pamięć przeszłości pokolenia transformacji* [Memory of the Past of the Transformation Generation], Warsaw Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar, 2012; Krzysztof Malicki, Krzysztof Piróg, *Postawy młodzieży ponadgimnazjalnej wobec przeszłości i historii Polski XX wieku* [Attitudes of High School Youth Towards the Past and the History of 20th-Century Poland], Warsaw 2016.

Reflective, cognitive and contesting attitudes

The first and most important of the blocks of questions sought to determine to what extent there is an interest in history among Poles, combined with reflection on it, resulting in a 'living history' used to explain the present. The basis for determining attitudes was the identification of three components.

The reflective component – king into account questions concerning the practical use of history as a source of useful knowledge – such as that which helps explain contemporary problems, defines identity, and helps avoid past mistakes. The component was diagnosed in 32% of Poles 20+, 27% of secondary school students and 89% of teachers.

Occurrence of the reflective component



The diagram shows the aggregate response rate of 'strongly agree' and 'tend to agree'

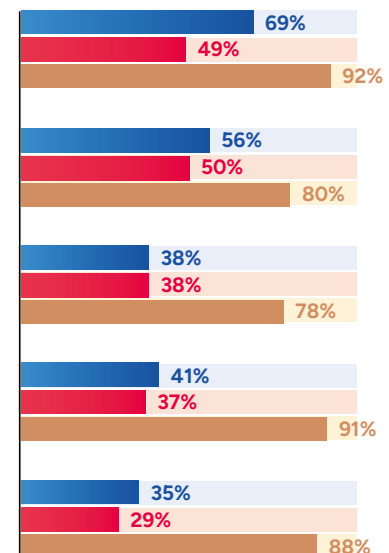
Through knowledge of national history, we know who we are

Knowledge of history helps avoid making the same mistakes in the future

I sometimes reflect on how an event in history has affected my life

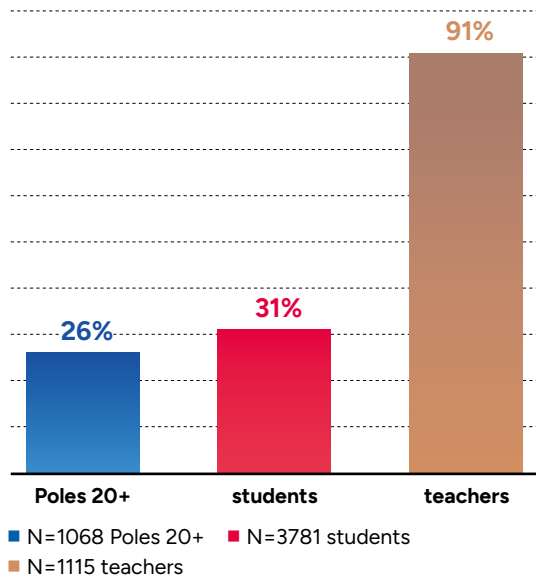
I happen to use my knowledge of history as an argument in a discussion

Striving to clarify a contemporary issue, I happened to look for information in historical studies



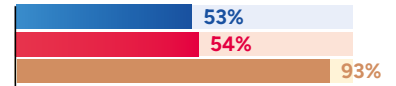
The cognitive component – composed of questions that determined whether there was an interest in learning about history among respondents. This component was found in 26% of Poles 20+, 31% of students and 91% of teachers.

Occurrence of the cognitive component

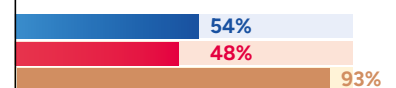


The diagram shows the aggregated response rate of ‘strongly agree’ and ‘rather agree’.

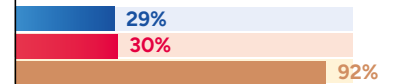
There are events in the history of my country or the world that interest me very much



I enjoy learning about historical events or figures (e.g. by watching films, listening to stories, reading about historical topics)

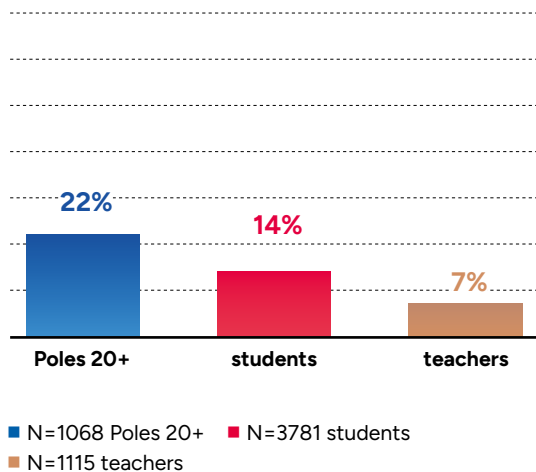


I think I know Polish history well



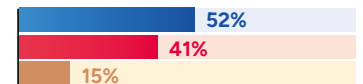
The contestation component – sought to determine whether history is (was) a source of negative emotions, expressed, inter alia, in criticism of the exposure of the past in social life.

Occurrence of the contestation component

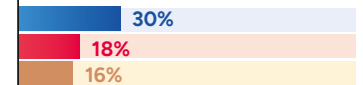


The diagram shows the total response rate of ‘strongly agree’ and ‘rather agree’.

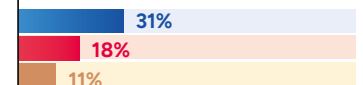
I only learn/learnt dates and historical facts when I am/was forced to do so



It makes me angry when you keep coming back to history and talking about it



Spending public money to fund historical research is a waste of money



The components identified were not of a disjointed nature and could occur in different configurations. Based on their intensity and co-occurrence, attitude types were distinguished, the main ones being:

Reflective and Respective Position

an openness to learning about history and reflecting on it in contemporary events. This attitude is the most desirable from the point of view of history didactics.

Research shows that people with this attitude are characterised by higher historical knowledge and are more likely to declare patriotism, interest in politics and civic engagement.



It dominates among ■ 15% of secondary school students and ■ 13% of Poles 20+.



It dominates among ■ 8% of secondary school students and ■ 11% of Poles 20+.

Contesting Attitude

denies the sense of history's presence in people's lives.

Research shows that people with this attitude show characteristics opposite to those with a reflective-cognitive attitude. They rarely consider themselves patriots, declare little or no interest in political affairs, have low scores on a test of historical knowledge, and are characterised by low levels of civic-mindedness. And in the case of students, they are more likely to declare left-wing political views and an aversive attitude towards faith.

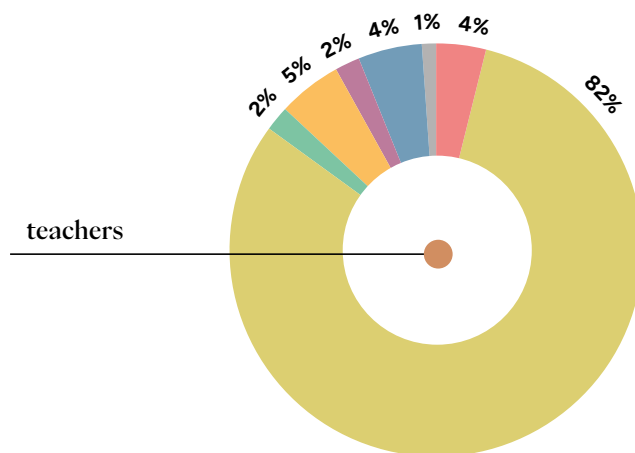
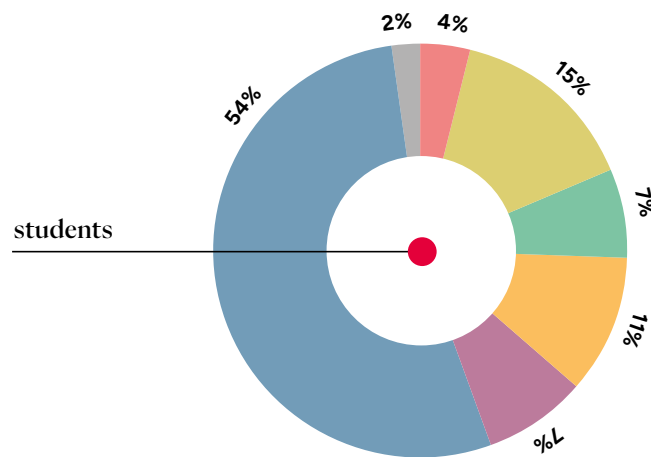
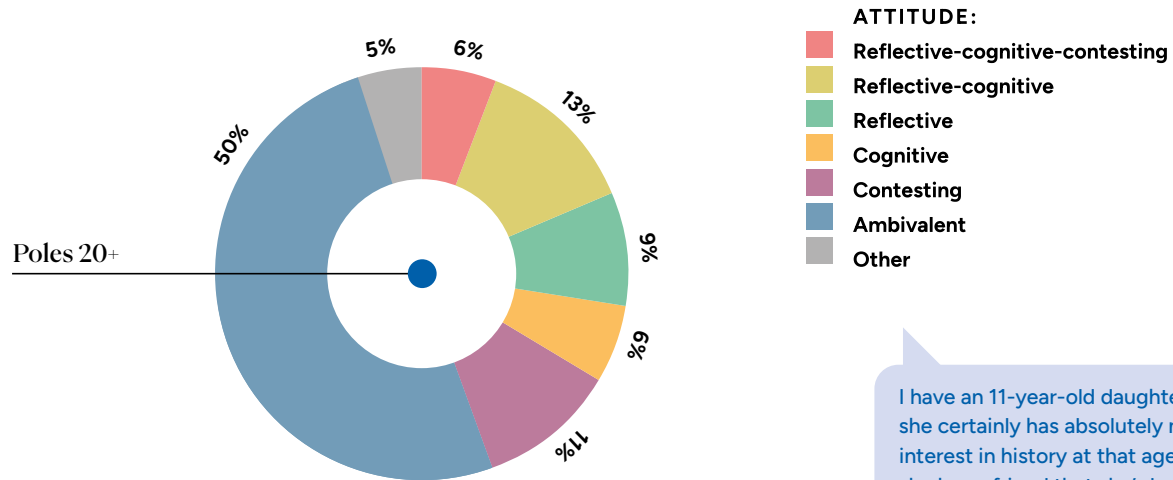
Ambivalent Attitude

they lack the reluctance to learn about the history and make it an object of reflection in the present context; they also lack openness to history and thought on it. People with this attitude are the category most indicated for potential educational activities.

Research shows that people with this attitude are characterised by little or no interest in political issues, low scores on the historical knowledge test and low levels of citizenship.



It dominates among ■ half of the secondary school students and ■ Poles 20+.



I have an 11-year-old daughter and she certainly has absolutely no interest in history at that age. But she has a friend that she's been at school with for four years, a girl from Ukraine. And the situation in Ukraine and the fact that this girl's whole family lives somewhere under constant threat, [...] has got my daughter interested in what may happen or has already happened in our country. And she started asking me about such a situation – whether I would fight in a war, whether we would have to flee the country, etc.

Marcin, 39, Śląskie Voivodeship

It is good to teach history by showing an analogy to modern times. And when concentration camps and mass extermination are mentioned, I immediately think about the present war in Ukraine and what they showed on TV, digging up and exhuming bodies in different towns. It reminds me of the photographs, for example, taken by Germans during World War II when they accidentally discovered Katyń and Kharkiv [...] So it's good to show past events because they may happen again. And the current conflict also reminds me of the first days of September in 1939 when the world knew, but did little.

Rafał, 42, Łódzkie Voivodeship

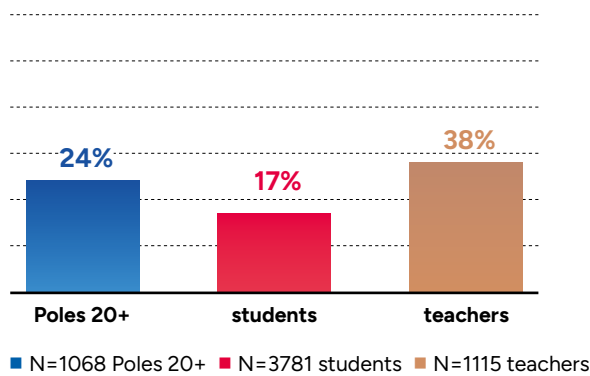
Aggregate attitude index based on intensity and co-occurrence analysis of components

■ N=1068 Poles 20+ ■ N=3781 students ■ N=1115 teachers

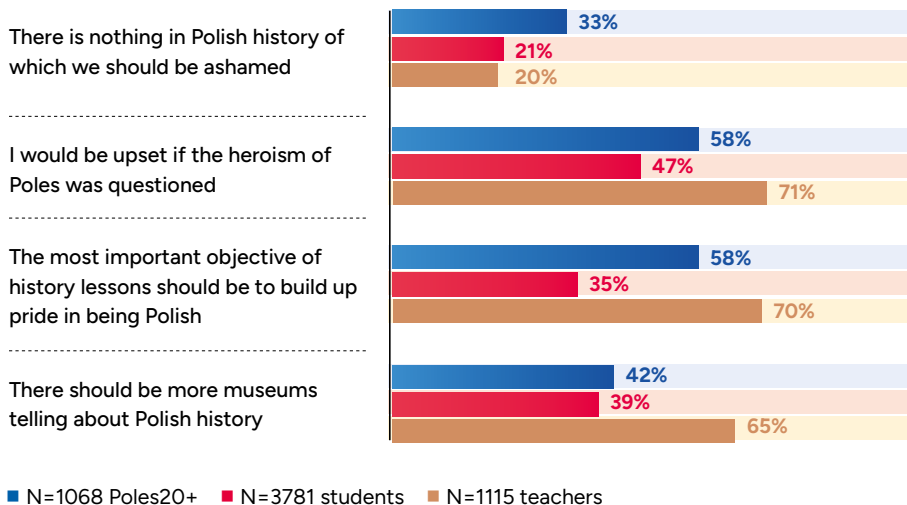
Affirmative attitudes

National history can be subject to both idealisation and criticism. Disputes of this kind are integral to discussions and often play an essential role in shaping national consciousness. In the study, respondents were asked four questions about aspects of their evaluation of Polish history, efforts to maintain memory through education and museum commemoration practices. Based on these, an affirmative attitude towards history was found in 24% of Poles 20+, 17% of secondary school students and 38% of history teachers.

Aggregate index of affirmative attitudes



The diagram shows the cumulative index of 'strongly agree' and 'rather agree' affirmative responses.



I like that when we face crises and difficult situations, we always unite as a nation. [...] Even now, the situation in Ukraine has shown us that Poles – in spite of the history we share, our memories, and despite our grandparents' remembering what happened in Ukraine during World War II – are still able to forgive, stand up and help others. And we do that as a nation.

Agnieszka, 40, Podkarpackie Voivodeship

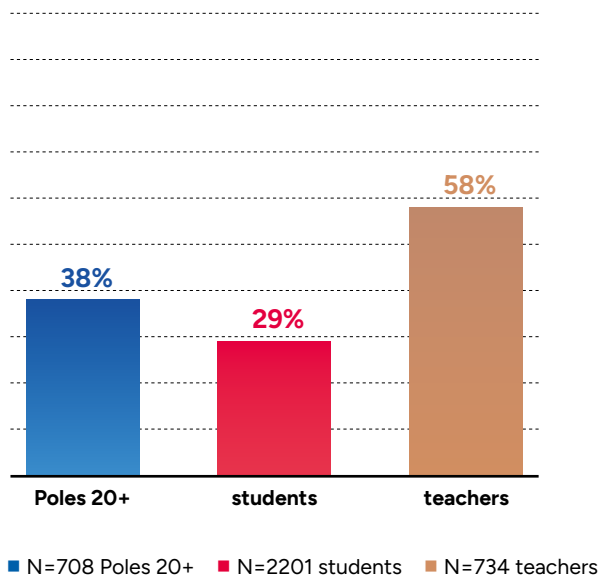
I am most proud of Poles in those moments when we have terrible quarrels (not only now but also in the past), and in such critical moments – even though we quarrel and disagree with one another – we still do things out of solidarity. That we can unite to create some initiative, fight or strive for a common goal without losing face, or that we gain some benefits for ourselves. And this is what I am most proud of. And I am also proud of Poles who are not afraid to say out loud what they think, to talk about memories from difficult times they went through, who want to tell young people about how things used to be so that they don't do the evil things that were once done to us. And this is something I am proud of.

Agnieszka, a secondary school pupil, Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship

Attitudes of tenacity in disputes over memory

As memory and history are often the subject of disputes in relations with other nations and significantly impact the formation of national sympathies and antipathies, respondents were asked questions about their attitudes towards selected conflict areas in remembrance.⁶ They made it possible to ascertain to what extent the respondents are closer to the perspectives of defending the Polish cause. An attitude of tenacity, standing up for the national reason, was found in 38% of Poles 20+, 29% of students and 58% of teachers.

Aggregate index of attitudes of incivility in memory disputes.
Data gaps have been excluded



⁶ For an interesting comparative study of the memory of Poles and Ukrainians in the light of, inter alia, survey research, see: Tomasz Stryjek, Volodymyr Skłokin (eds.); *Kultury historyczne Polski i Ukrainy. O źródłach nieporozumienia między sąsiadami* [The Historical Cultures of Poland and Ukraine. On the Sources of Misunderstanding Between Neighbours], Warsaw 2021

We should press the Ukrainian government. I mean, not now, of course, not while there's a war. I'm talking about what happened before. Idolising Bandera, Banderites marching on the streets. The point is that their national hero that they worship is a murderer whose actions resulted in the murder of thousands of Poles in Volhynia. I don't think it's OK towards our country [...] and I think that this issue should simply be regulated in some way at a diplomatic level.

Maciej, a vocational school pupil, Lubelskie Voivodeship

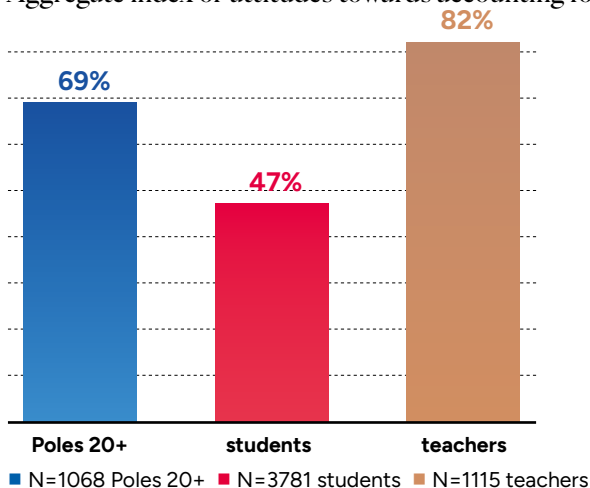
Some time ago, I watched an interview about how, during World War II, Polish museums were robbed of some paintings or some cultural heritage of our country, and that these items are still kept in German warehouses, different museums. I think that giving them back to us would be some kind of... I don't know what to call it but it would be a step towards understanding or reconciliation with regard to those times.

Konrad, a secondary technical school pupil, Opolskie Voivodeship

Accounting for the Polish People's Republic (PPR)

Despite the passage of more than three decades since the beginning of the systemic transformation, the evaluation of the People's Republic of Poland and its legacy remains a subject of lively discussion. For this reason, selected issues related to the troubled legacy of the PPR were analysed, particularly concerning the memory of communist-era crimes and commemorations dating from that period. Support for settling the legacy of the PPR was observed in 69% of Poles 20+, 47% of secondary school students and 82% of teachers.

Aggregate index of attitudes towards accounting for PPR

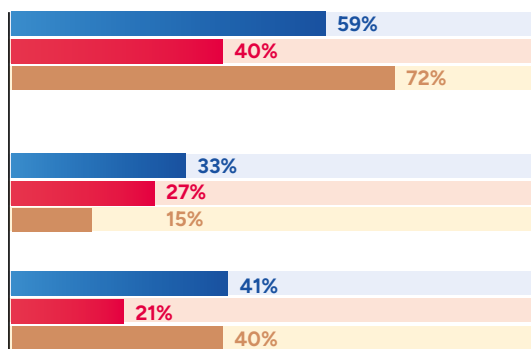


The diagram shows the cumulative index of 'strongly agree' and 'rather agree' affirmative responses.

People who collaborated with the communist security service should today be banned from holding important public positions

Offences and crimes of the communist period are a past that is no longer worth revisiting

Monuments commemorating heroes/events from the communist era should be demolished



I have witnessed many times elderly people speaking positively about the era of the Polish People's Republic, communism. And how those times were good because everyone had a job, and everything was available, food was also available, there wasn't much – but still. The main thing was that nobody had anything, but everything had to be distributed evenly. It's often said that when you lives in prosperity, then everything is exaggerated, the past is seen through rose-tinted spectacles. [...] And I often quarrel with people like that. It's true that they had jobs because Poland was being rebuilt after the war, because industry was developing rapidly. But Poles were poor, we lived under the Russian regime. And I don't know, I don't understand, I can't comprehend why people say good things about those times, especially those who lived during that era.

Aleksander, a secondary school pupil, Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship

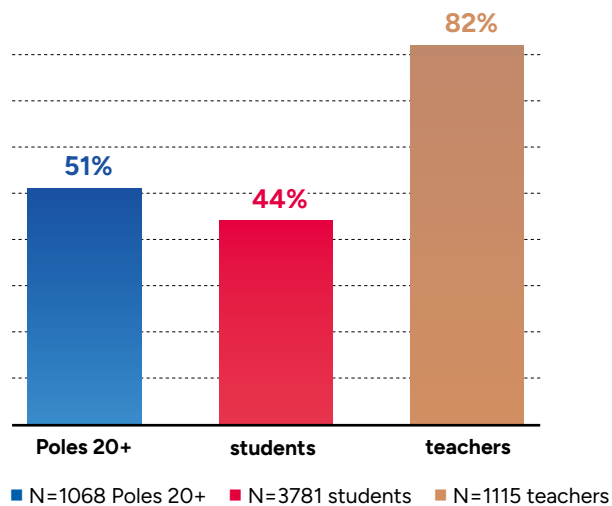
Everybody knows that communism collapsed but we still have some monuments and other things to commemorate the Red Army, how much it helped us. I see lanterns and candles there every year, and some evil guys who should be rotting in hell have poems dedicated to them... I mean, it's OK, they could have done something like that for them because of propaganda and things like that in the past. But generally speaking and looking back on them so many years later, they should be erased. But they are still there and any foreigner can go there and read it and think that Poles are still into Uncle Stalin.

Miłosz, a secondary technical school pupil, Lubuskie Voivodeship

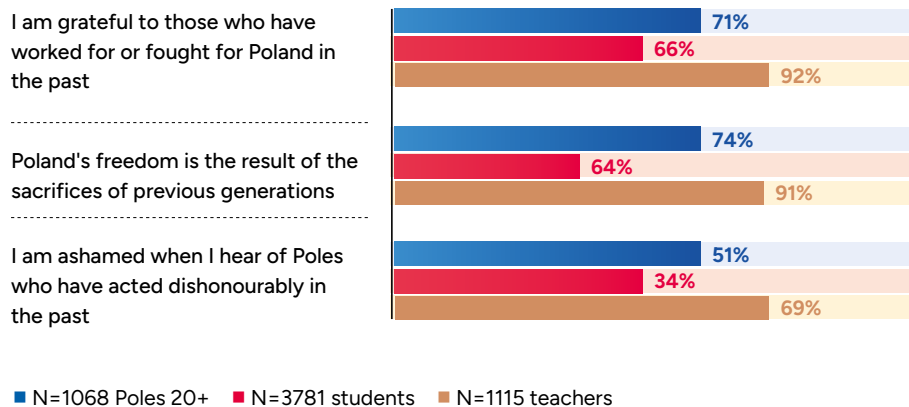
A community of remembrance with past generations of Poles

In analysing types of attitudes to memory, an attempt was also made to determine to what extent there is a sense of a community of memory with past generations of Poles in contemporary society. That means a declaration of gratitude towards their struggle and work and a sense of shame for what was wrong and dishonourable in history. An attitude encompassing these ways of thinking was observed in 51% of Poles 20+, 44% of students and 82% of history teachers.

Aggregate index of intergenerational memory community attitudes



The diagram shows the cumulative index of 'strongly agree' and 'rather agree' affirmative responses



History and Patriotic and Civic Attitudes

The relationship between the sense of patriotism and remembrance of the national past seems obvious and does not require in-depth research. What is much less pronounced, however, is the relationship between memory and civic attitudes – actions taken or at least declared to be taken for the benefit of the community. Both issues were included in the scheme of the study conducted in the conviction that shaping patriotic and civic attitudes is closely related to, and is an excellent challenge for, history education.

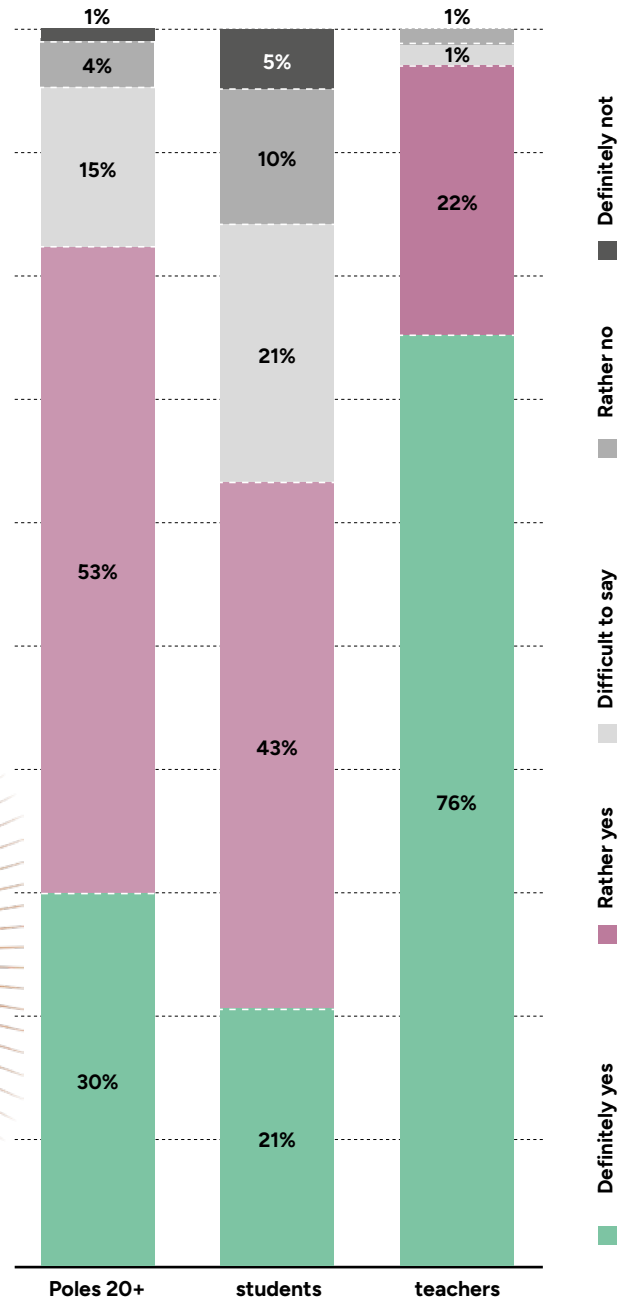
The question 'Do you consider yourself a patriot/patriot?' was answered in the affirmative by 64% of secondary school students, 83% of Poles 20+ and 98% of history teachers, with a clear predominance of 'definitely yes' answers among teachers and 'rather yes' answers among the remaining categories.

The data shows that those who consider themselves patriots (students and Poles 20+) are characterised by a higher level of civic involvement, more regular membership in social organisations, a higher level of belief in God (believers and practitioners) and a higher level of historical knowledge. Those describing themselves as patriots were more likely to declare a sense of commonality of memory with past generations and rarely tended to contest history.

Apart from the declaration of patriotism, how the concept is understood is very important. In light of the survey results, it can be concluded that patriotism is much more often understood in a **heroic way** (love for the homeland, respect for national symbols, readiness to fight, raising children in the Catholic faith) than in a **civic way** (participating in elections, paying taxes, obeying the law, working for the community). Two-thirds of students understand patriotism in a heroic way (67%), while among Poles 20+ and teachers, the rate is less than 45%. Identifying patriotism with civic-mindedness is most common among adult Poles – it applies to a third of this category.

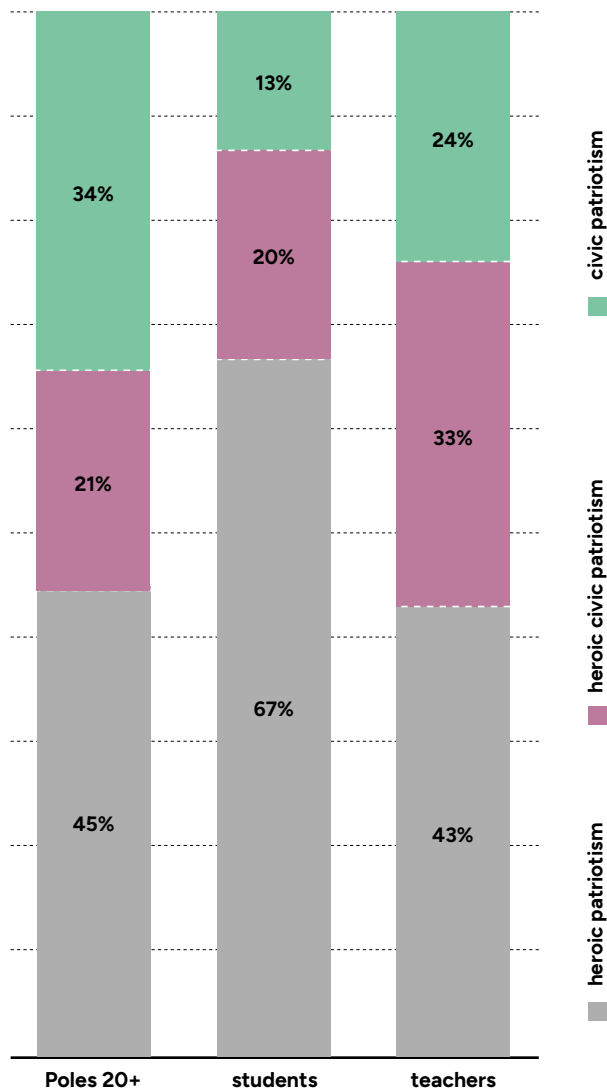


Do you consider yourself a patriot?



N=1068 Poles 20+ N=3781 students N=1115 teachers

The prevailing understanding of patriotism



'Which behaviours do you think are the most accurate indicators of patriotism/being a patriot?'

N=1068 Poles20+ N=3781 students N=1115 teachers

Among all three categories of respondents, those who understand patriotism in heroic terms are more likely to consider themselves patriots than those who define it in civic terms. Patriotism understood in heroic terms is more likely to co-occur with a right-wing political orientation and a tendency to take an uncompromising stance in memory disputes with other nations. Among Poles 20+ and students, a positive relationship was also heroically found between understanding patriotism and being a believer and practitioner. Patriotism understood in a civic way is more common among Poles 20+ with higher education and among students more interested in political issues.

It would be so cool if most Poles, in fact all Poles, knew history so that they didn't make mistakes. And to strengthen patriotism, which is disappearing these days. What worries me the most? When I took part in the Independence March last year, Poles got on well together. But when I am at matches between clubs, for example, Poles fight against one another. On one hand, it hurts me, But on the other it makes me laugh that we fight each other and are so brave. But when it comes down to it, no one cares about it any more. So history would be useful, knowledge about history. I think it would enhance that patriotism. And that it would change a lot.

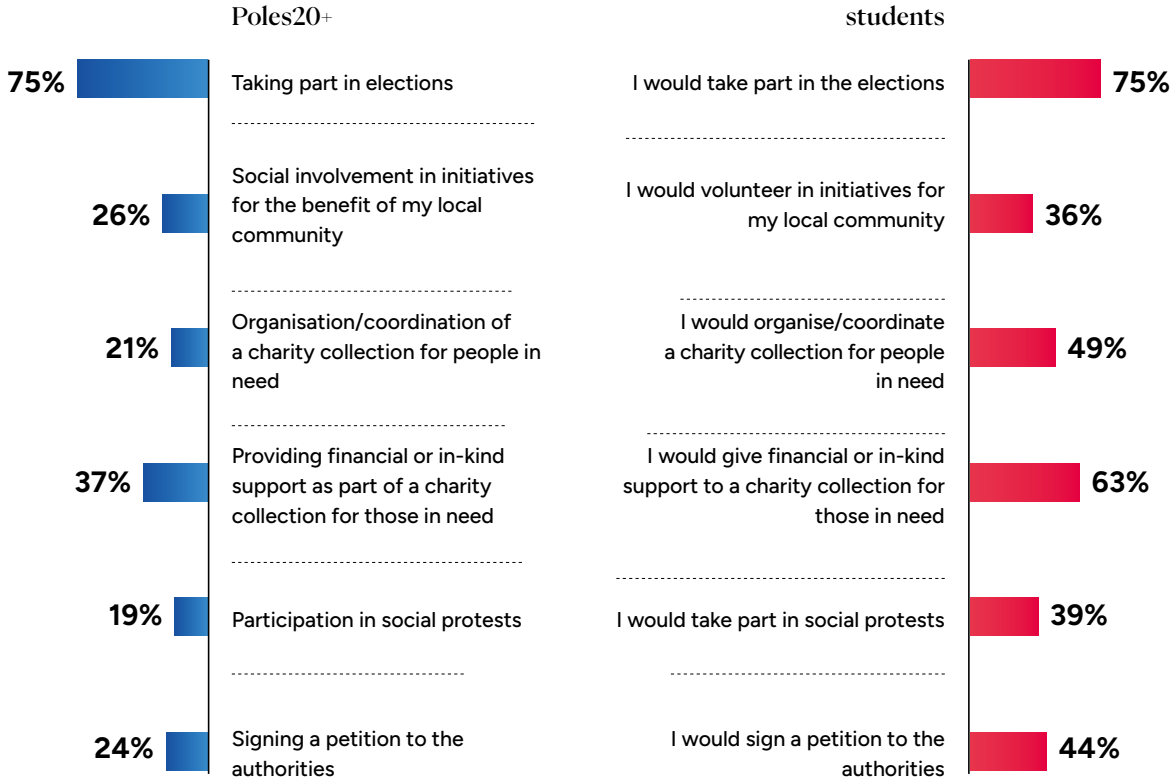
Sebastian, a vocational school pupil, Lubelskie Voivodeship

When they hear about patriotism, they immediately think about dying for their homeland. Someone or something hammers such things into their heads. But I tell them clearly that dying for your homeland is a last resort. And that they should live, and devote their lives and abilities to their own good, the good of their families, their homeland, and that they shouldn't let themselves be killed during a war. It's like General Patton said, that war isn't about getting yourself killed and that he didn't want to create those kinds of patriots.

Leszek, a history teacher, 24 years' professional experience, Mazowieckie Voivodeship

History and Patriotic and Civic Attitudes

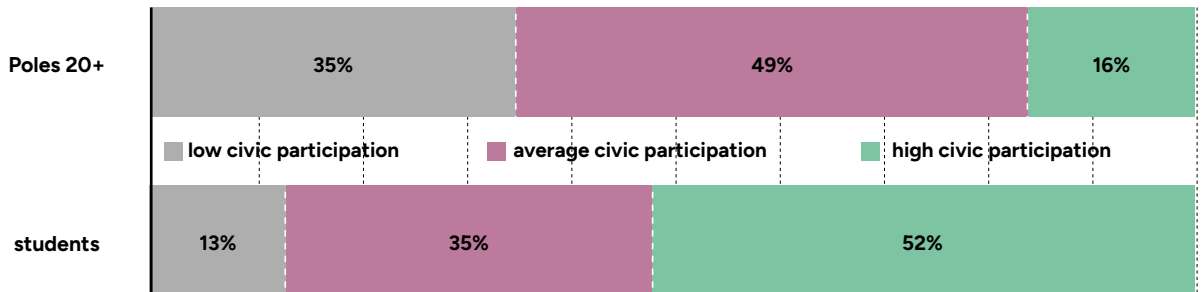
The civic activity index was calculated based on six questions about going to elections, involvement in community initiatives, organising a charity collection, donating support to a collection, participating in community protests, and signing a petition. **Students were asked about their declared propensity to take action, while Poles 20+ were asked about the frequency of taking action so far in their lives**



Aggregate response rate 'often' and 'very often' N=1068 Poles 20+

Aggregate affirmative response rate: 'rather yes' and 'definitely yes' N=3781 students

The index was calculated based on six questions on active citizenship.



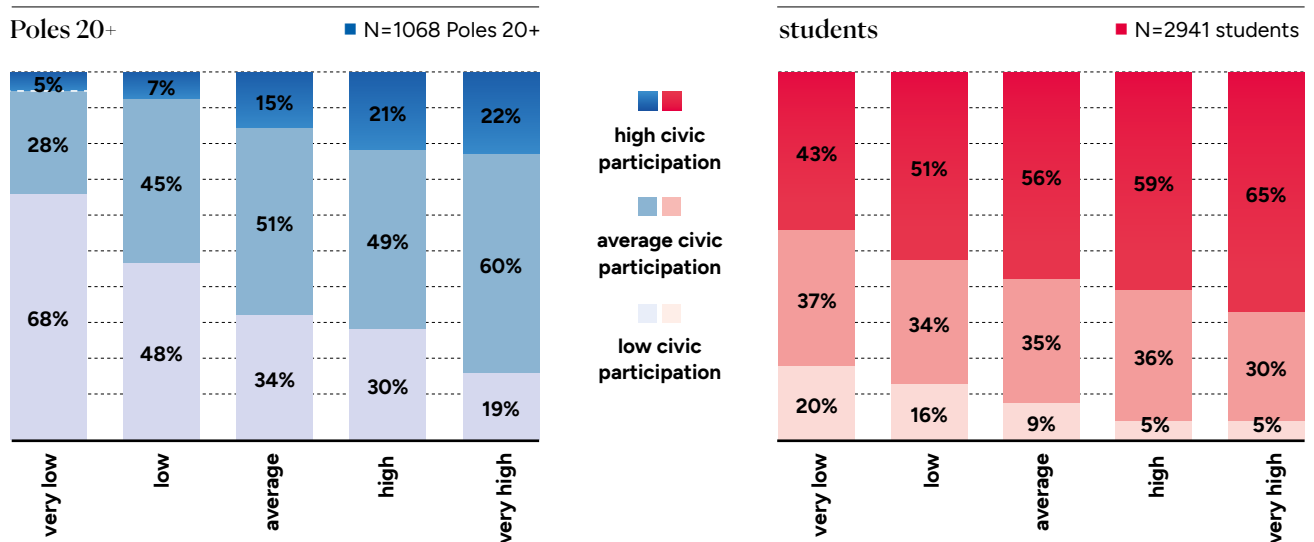
N=1068 Poles 20+; N=2941 students (the index was calculated only for students who answered more than half of the index questions, i.e., a minimum of 4 out of 6 questions, hence the smaller percentage).

The results show a significantly higher rate of civic engagement among secondary school students (52%) than among adult Poles (16%), bearing in mind that the results in both categories can only be compared conditionally. Indeed, the result obtained in the group of students reflects excessive optimism and will only partially be borne out in civic engagement in the future. However, in the case of Poles 20+ and schoolchildren, a link was found between the level of historical knowledge and civic involvement (or declaration of such involvement). The higher the knowledge confirmed by the test score, the stronger the civic activity.

If you take an interest in local history, then you can definitely become a local patriot, more involved citizens in time. It just happens when we somehow engage such students. If we can communicate certain facts that they should pay attention to, then we can somehow shape a certain kind of role model to be followed, and show some figures from the past worthy of being noticed and remembered.

Anna, a history teacher,
30 years' professional experience,
Podlaskie Voivodeship

Level of knowledge and civic activity



The data obtained shows that a more robust civic attitude also characterises students and Poles 20+ who derive historical knowledge from family members from other generations, have a strong reflective and cognitive attitude towards history, consider themselves intensely patriotic and are interested in current politics. Notably, a civic attitude often characterises students open to learning about history in their free time.

Great History in the Context of Little Homelands

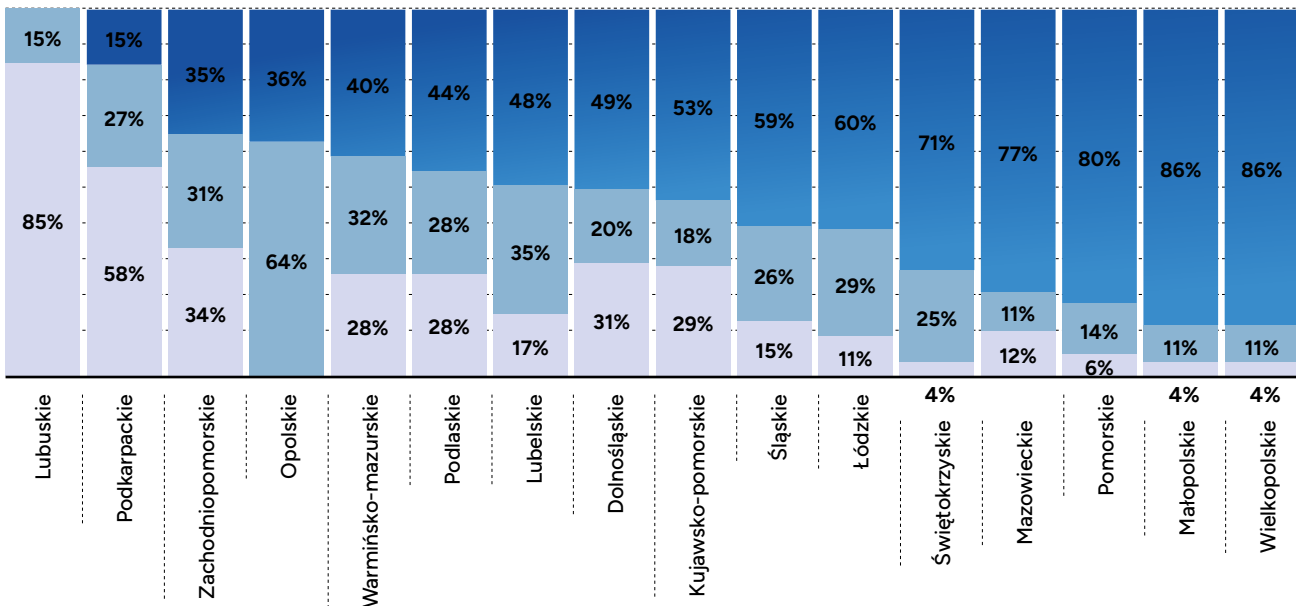
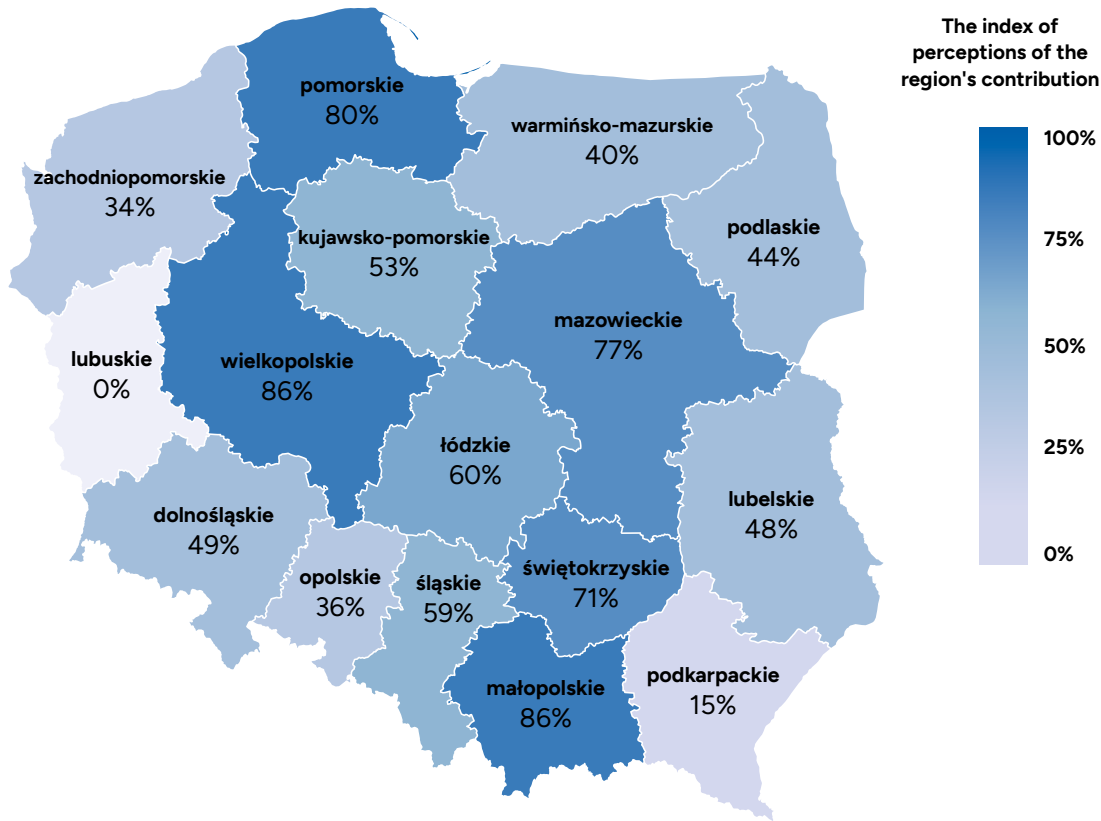
A look at Polish history and remembrance in the context of the national and family community would be incomplete without consideration of the regional-local dimension. The demand, raised in the public debate, that the teaching of history should sensitise the young generation to history happening in the neighbourhood has found expression in this project, thanks to the segment of questions aimed at diagnosing the extent of knowledge about figures, events and places connected with the area of residence of respondents, as well as questions about the contribution of regions to national history.

Secondary school students and Poles 20+ were asked five questions about the uniqueness of regional history, i.e., the contribution of their region of residence to national history. The extent to which respondents agreed with the statements that their region: had made a significant contribution to the Polish economy; had a more interesting history than other regions; had been the site of many important national events; and that its inhabitants had been courageous in the fight for freedom and had contributed to the development of culture was checked.⁷

Despite the very general questions, the results confirmed the limited knowledge of the history of the small homelands: 13% of Poles 20+ and 26% of secondary school students answered 'difficult to say' to each of the five questions in the set. All five questions were responded to unequivocally by one-third of Poles 20+ and one-fifth of students. The index calculation considered the responses of those who responded to more than half of the statements, i.e. the reactions of 69% of Poles and 52% of students.

⁷ These issues were studied with the use of the same methodology and in relation to students in 2009 (and with similar results). See: Krzysztof Malicki, *Pamięć przeszłości pokolenia transformacji* [*Memory of the Past of the Transformation Generation*], Warsaw 2012, pp. 122–127.

The index of perceptions of the region's contribution to national history was calculated based on five questions. Poles 20+



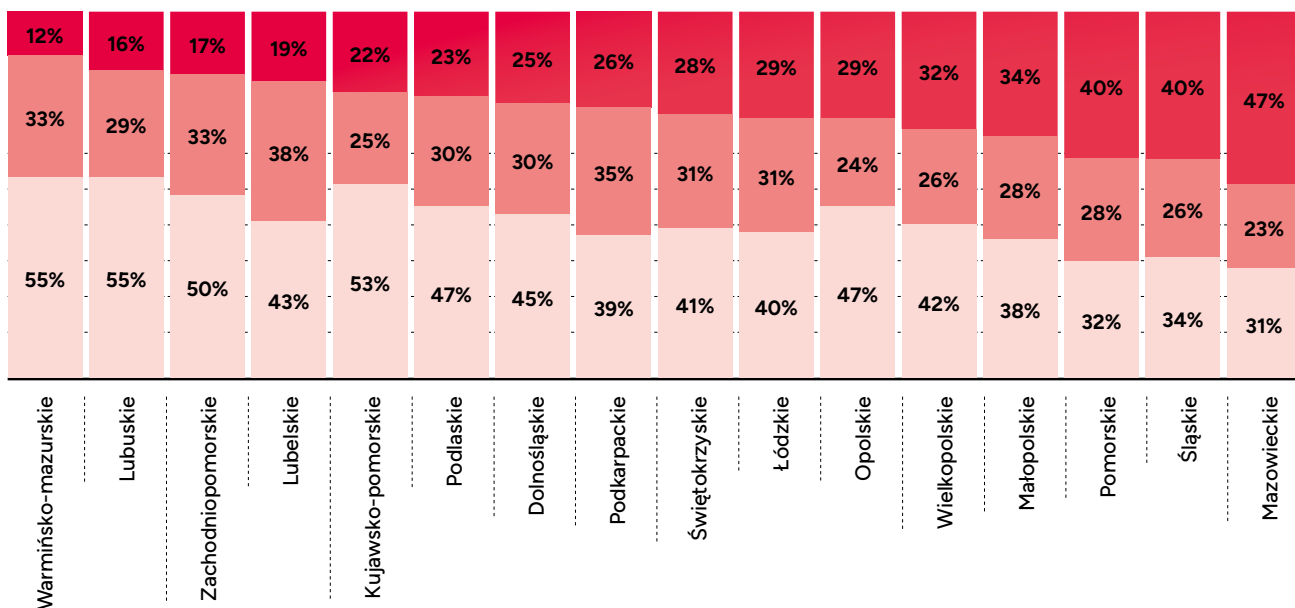
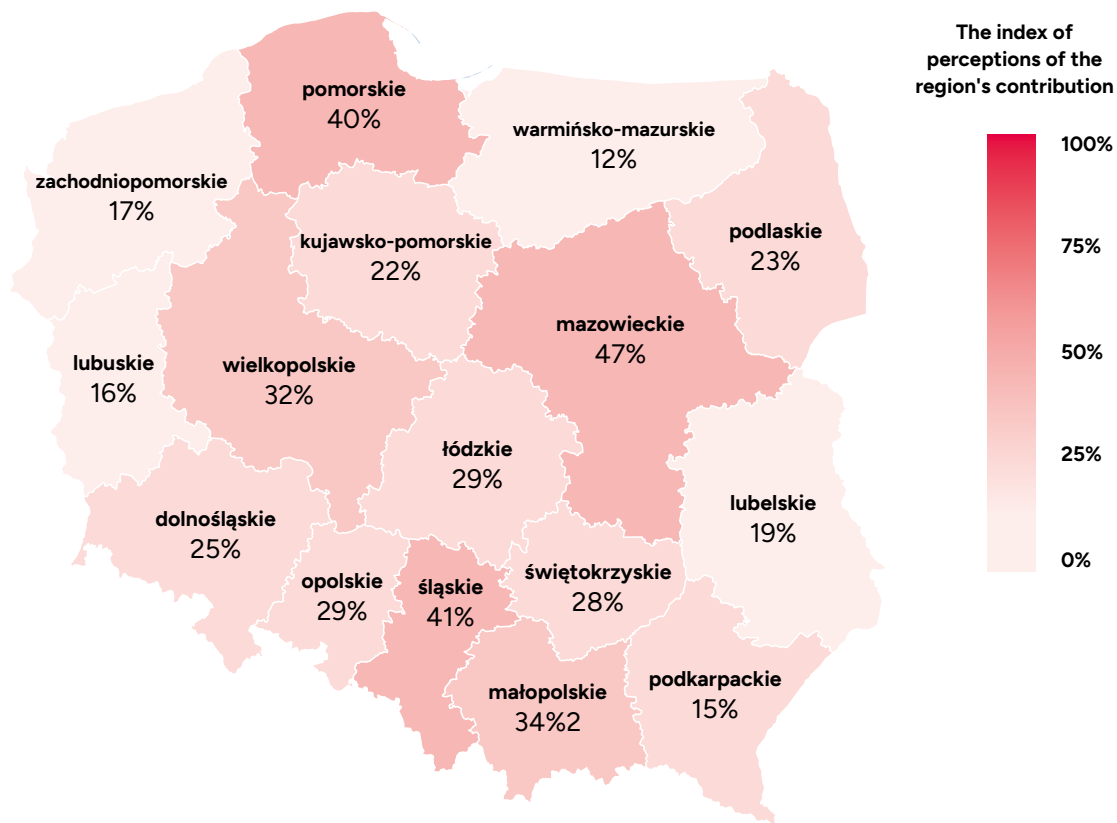
N=732 Poles 20+, omitted were those who responded to fewer than 4 questions

low

average

high

The index of perceptions of the region's contribution to national history was calculated based on five questions. Students



N=1983 students, omitted were those who responded to fewer than 4 questions

low average high

The belief that the region and its former inhabitants have contributed little to national history most often applies to the Recovered Territories. Respondents most appreciate the importance of one's region from areas that appear most frequently in history textbooks, i.e., Wielkopolska, Małopolska, Pomerania and Mazovia. Poles 20+ are much more likely than students to attribute their region's significant contribution to the country's history. The pupils' answers seem to be derived from a low level of knowledge about regional and local history.

These findings are consistent with the results of the analysis of open-ended responses to the question on figures and events from the history of the local community. Less than one-sixth of students and less than one-third of Poles 20+ mentioned any figure from the past of their place of residence. Regarding the question about events, the rates were even lower: less than a tenth of pupils and a quarter of Poles 20+ responded. At the same time, territorial differences were found: higher response rates were recorded in Poland's historical centres: Małopolska, Wielkopolska, Mazovia and Pomerania.



In Lublin, we have a castle and a concentration camp at least. But in spite of living in Lublin, I never visited those places during history lessons. Because we just strictly followed the textbook. So we had nothing from regional history. In fact, I don't identify with the events that happened here in the past. I know that something could have happened here but it wasn't described in any way.

Bartosz, a secondary school pupil, Lubelskie Voivodeship

I think that preparing projects about historical events that happened in the region where we live or in its vicinity is very interesting, it helps people develop, and strengthens local patriotism. It's interesting because you discover something that used to be here and you see how it looks now and you can guess what happened and how it all ended. In my opinion, it really helps you develop, and most of all [...] we have this sort of sentimental connection to the place, and as we develop and learn about these things, then this feeling increases further.

Aleksander, a secondary school pupil, Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship

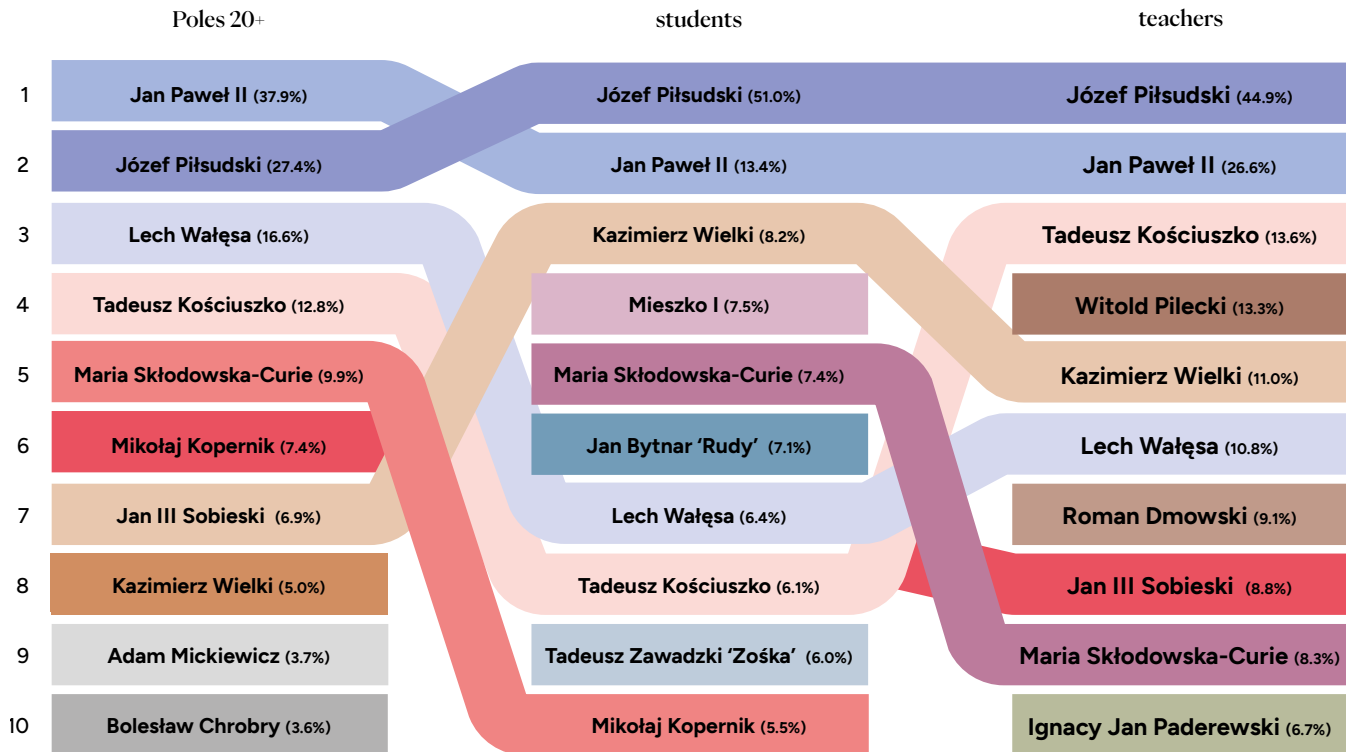
Historical Canons

A historical canon is a set of figures, events and cultural creations associated with a community's past that is considered essential by that community and knowledge of which is valid and deserves to be passed on to future generations. Studying historical canons is one of the more effective ways of exploring a community's perceptions of its history, as canons are most often well recognised within a community and symbolise it. They reflect the ideas and values of the community and foster community bonds between generations.⁸ For this reason, the figures and events that we count among the canons of pride or shame say a lot about ourselves, how we perceive ourselves and what values we hold dear.⁹

⁸ The concept of the canon after: Andrzej Szpociński, *Współczesna kultura historyczna i jej przemiany* [Contemporary Historical Culture and Its Transformations], Warszawa 2021, s. 56 i n.

⁹ The largest collection of studies on the transformation of canons in the consciousness of Polish society (allowing comparisons since the late 1980s) is included, among others: Piotr T. Kwiatkowski, *Pamięć zbiorowa społeczeństwa polskiego w okresie transformacji* [The Collective Memory of Polish Society in the Transformation Period], Warsaw 2008; Piotr T. Kwiatkowski, *Odzyskanie niepodległości w polskiej pamięci zbiorowej* [Regaining Independence in Polish Collective Memory], Warsaw 2018.

The canon of national heroes – figures we are proud of



'The figures from Polish history that I am proud of are...'

Figures from current politics were also indicated in the open-ended responses, but were not included in the compilation.

Percentage of Poles 20+ who answered the open question:
N=839 (79%)

Percentage of students who answered the open question:
N=1992 (53%)

Percentage of teachers who answered the open question:
N=1046 (94%)

When analysing the respondents' answers to questions about historical figures that make them feel proud, it is worth noting the following conclusions:

- The canon of national pride in relation to historical figures shows a high degree of stability – the persons most often indicated, appear invariably in the surveys carried out in the past decades; only their hierarchy is subject to slight changes.
 - The chosen figures most often personify the will to fight for freedom and symbolise a strong and powerful state; the achievements of these figures testify to Poland's position in the world; Poles and Poles representing the world of science and culture are of much lesser importance.
- Despite the aforementioned stability of the canon of pride, it is noteworthy that there has been a change in the perception of John Paul II by the generation of schoolchildren – in studies conducted with a similar methodology in 2009, 37% of schoolchildren mentioned him, in 2015 – 21% of schoolchildren, and in the present study – only 13%;¹⁰ these results are certainly conditioned by the fact that in previous studies (especially in 2009), the answers were given by young people who could still remember this figure, and certainly remembered the period of mourning for the Polish Pope.

Well, I would say that Józef Piłsudski also seems a bit of a controversial figure to me. That's because I have this dilemma regarding the May Coup, whether it was necessary or not. It always stirs up some controversy. But still, he is a figure that did a lot of good for Poland.

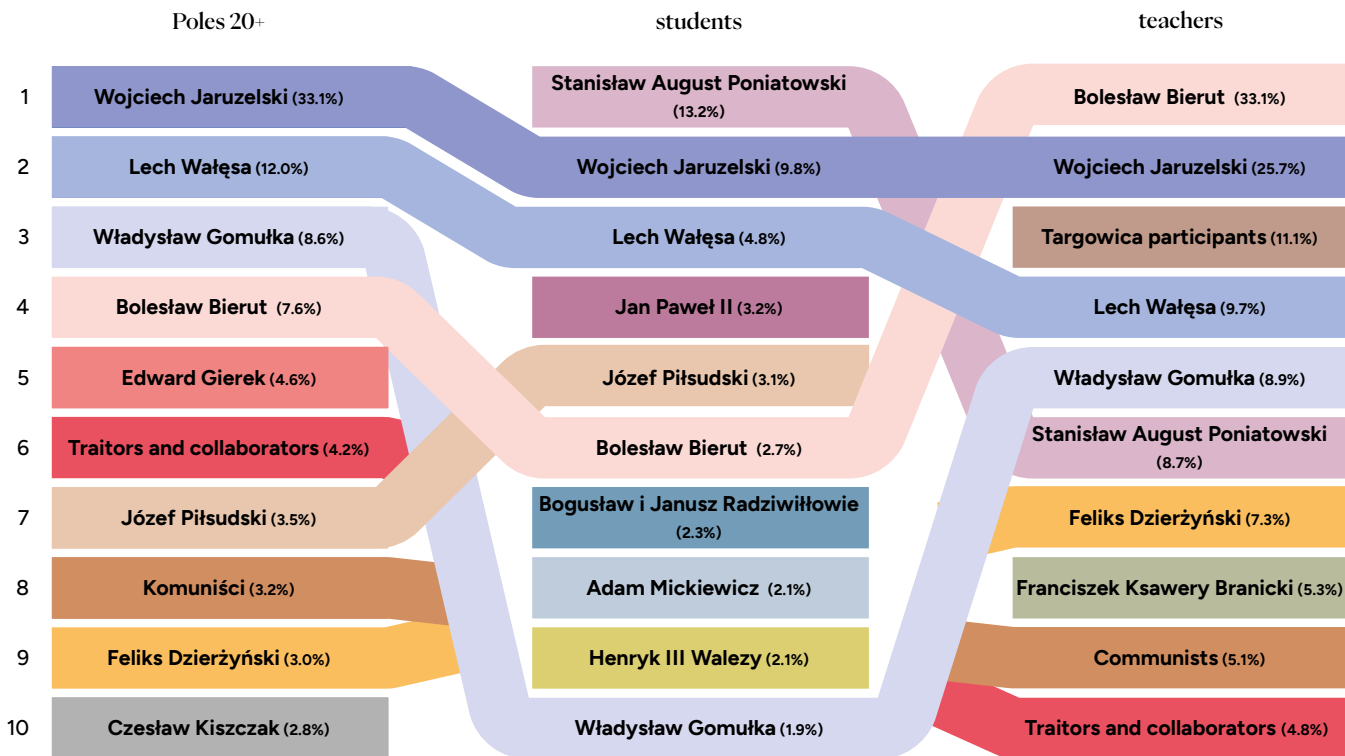
Maciej, a vocational school pupil, Lubelskie Voivodeship

As for pride, I think I'm most proud of the Pope. John Paul II was a Pole who was elected Pope. This is the kind of pride that comes from the whole world hearing about him, the whole world loving him. The whole world remembers what time he died. The whole world could see him kissing the ground immediately after landing in any country because he was happy to arrive safely. This is pride because everyone remembers it, everyone heard about Poland because of him.

Alina, a secondary school pupil, Śląskie Voivodeship

¹⁰ Comparative studies for the transformation of canons among young people from 2009 and 2015 are included in the publications: Krzysztof Malicki, *Pamięć przeszłości pokolenia transformacji* [Memory of the Past of the Transformation Generation], Warsaw 2012; Krzysztof Malicki, Krzysztof Piróg, *Postawy młodzieży ponadgimnazjalnej wobec przeszłości i historii Polski XX wieku* [Attitudes of High School Youth Towards the Past and History of 20th-Century Poland], Warsaw 2016.

The canon of national anti-heroes – figures we are ashamed of



‘The figures from Polish history that I am ashamed of are...’

Figures from current politics were also indicated in the open-ended responses, but were not included in the summary.

Percentage of Poles 20+ who answered the open question:
N=430 (40%)

Percentage of students who answered the open question:
N=875 (23%)

Percentage of teachers who answered the open question:
N=683 (61%)

The list of historical figures that evoke a sense of shame in us contains far fewer items than the canon of figures that evoke a sense of pride. At the same time, respondents were more likely to be unable to name any figure than in the case of pride. A review of the most frequently indicated responses leads to the following conclusions:

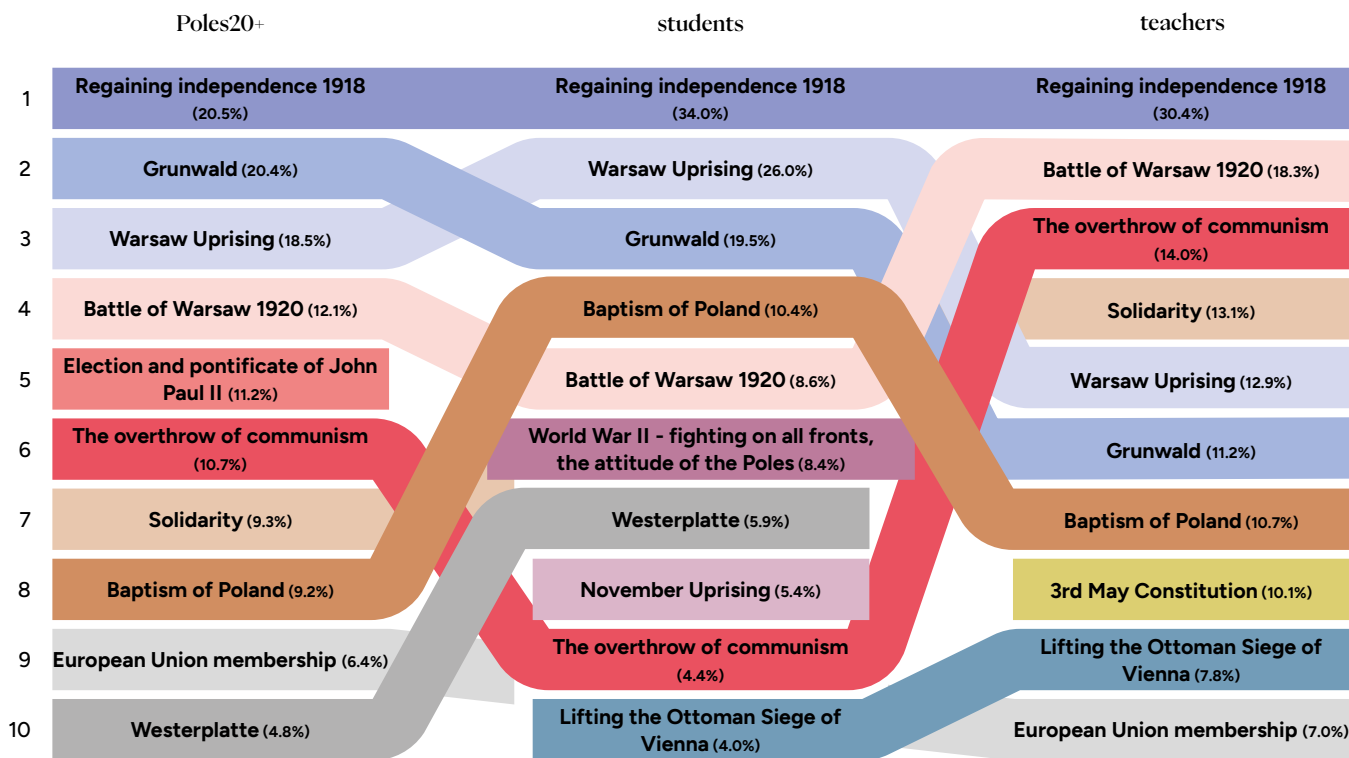
- ▶▶ As with the pride canon, the shame canon also seems to be persistent in the consciousness of Poles – similar studies from recent decades confirm the presence of the same names.
 - ▶▶ The shared features of most of the figures mentioned in this canon are a betrayal of the country, subjection to invaders, and activities leading to economic and military weakness of the country.
- ▶▶ The most significant disproportions between categories of respondents concern the evaluation of leaders from the communist era; the rates of negative indications are much higher among Poles 20+ and teachers than among students.
 - ▶▶ Among the ten most frequently occurring figures of whom we are ashamed, John Paul II appeared in the category of students, absent from the most frequent indications of the other categories.

You can be ashamed of August Stanislaw Poniatowski and also, to some extent, the nobility in the 15th and 16th centuries because they chose the kings by election.

Nikolas, a vocational school pupil, Podkarpackie voivodeship



The canon of events in the history of Poland that we are proud of



‘The events in Polish history that I am proud of are...’

Percentage of Poles 20+ who answered the open question:
N=795 (74%)

Percentage of students who answered the open question:
N=2227 (59%)

Percentage of teachers who answered the open question:
N=1058 (95%)

The historical events that we point to as a reason for our pride can be seen as a reflection of the achievements of figures from the positive canon. There, Jozef Pilsudski is at the top of the hierarchy; here, in all three categories, the regaining of independence in 1918 is most frequently mentioned. A review of the results also leads to other conclusions:

- ▶▶ Victorious, successful events dominate, although military defeats such as the Warsaw Uprising or the defence of Westerplatte are also present.
 - ▶▶ A continuation of the positive canon of events in the next generation is apparent – the results correspond strongly with research conducted earlier.
- ▶▶ Events whose main motive is the pursuit of freedom, in spite of even the most insurmountable obstacles, are highly rated; heroism is accompanied by wise policies and making a mark on the history of Europe and the world.
 - ▶▶ Particularly worrisome disproportions between particular categories of respondents occur in indications of Solidarity – numerous among Poles 20+ and teachers and marginal in the category of students (far outside the top ten of the hierarchy, in 31st position), indicating a total lack of awareness of the unprecedented and invaluable significance of this movement for Polish history. A disproportion also concerns the pontificate of John Paul II mentioned by 11% of Poles, 3.5% of teachers and only 0.5% of students.

The Warsaw Uprising. Although it is possible to say from the historical point of view that it didn't quite make sense because so many people, civilians, lots of innocent people, died. But I appreciate the insurgents themselves, those who fought for our freedom. And I think that it was this a national uprising that showed our nature, that we never give up and will always fight for what is ours. So the Warsaw Uprising, as well as all the earlier national uprisings. The fact that we have always fought for our freedom and independence.

Maciej, a vocational school pupil, Lubelskie Voivodeship

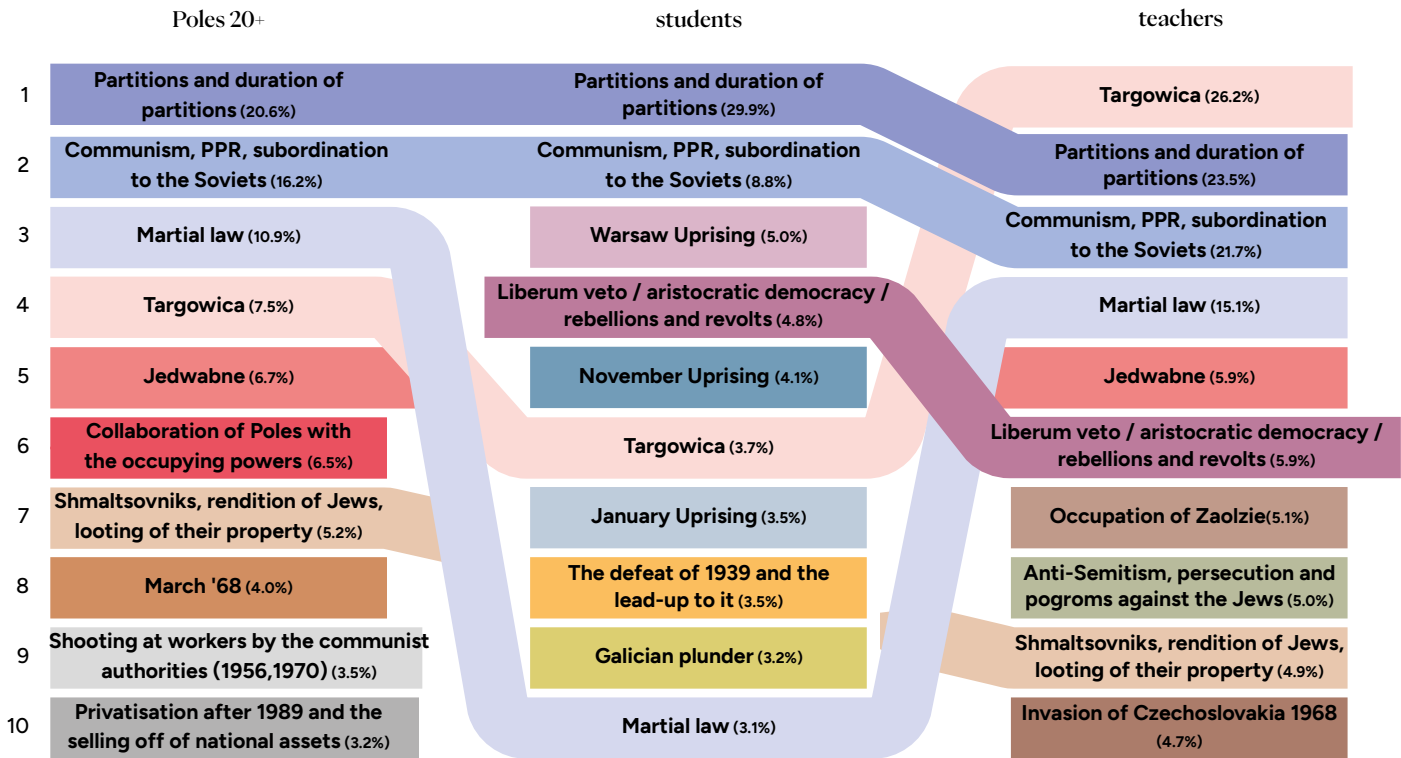
I am greatly impressed by the founding of the Polish state [...] and the history of Poland during the Middle Ages, of the first members of the Piast Dynasty. [...] That is why I think we should be proud that we were established at all, that we made our presence felt at all..

Julietta, a secondary technical school teacher, 39 years' professional experience, Wielkopolskie Voivodeship

The fact that we survived 123 years of partitions. That we regained our independence at one of the last possible moments. Thanks to my profession, I have met various fascinating people. I have talked to people who remembered how Poland regained its independence in 1918. [...] And she said one very, very important sentence that if the partitions had lasted for another 10-15 years, it wouldn't have been possible to talk about Poland as a nation any more. So that was something that was engraved in my memory. What am I proud of? The fact that we were able to survive as a nation.

Robert, 54, Matopolskie Voivodeship

The canon of events in Polish history of which we are ashamed



‘The events from Polish history that I am ashamed of are...’

Percentage of Poles 20+ who answered the open question:
N=402 (38%)

Percentage of students who answered the open question:
N=683 (18%)

Percentage among teachers who answered the open question:
N=782 (70%)

The most frequently indicated answers to the question about events in Polish history of which we, as Poles, are ashamed to allow the following conclusions to be drawn:

- The canon of adverse events is relatively permanent – the set of circumstances indicated by respondents does not undergo significant changes concerning research from previous decades,
 - A common feature of the events mentioned in this canon is the betrayal of one's homeland and various forms of subjection to invaders; the reasons for including these types of events in this canon also seem to be ineptitude leading to disasters and intolerance towards national minorities.
- The most significant disproportion between the categories of respondents concerns the evaluation of martial law – the frequency of its mentioning by students is much lower than in the case of Poles 20+ and teachers.
 - Noticeable is the presence in this canon of events referring to negative attitudes towards the Jewish community – all the more remarkable since positive phenomena, e.g., helping Jews during World War II, did not appear as often in the canon of positive events.
- The frequency with which secondary school students mention national uprisings (Warsaw, November, January) as shame-inducing events are noteworthy; although opinions of this type have been noted in previous studies (2009, 2015), the rates are relatively highest in this study

In my opinion, the partitions of Poland could serve as an example of this. It is a shame that a Pole is wise after the event. And even the May 3rd Constitution is a great example which shows that Poles like doing things at the last moment, when it's too late. They try to make something from nothing, and make every effort to save themselves. And it would be enough to think about it earlier. Well, everyone knows what happened. And in my opinion, it's a great shame for Poles that such a power was reduced... and disappeared from the map for 123 years.

Wiktorja, a secondary school pupil, Lubelskie Voivodeship

Well, generally, I think that communism was a tragedy. For me, communism is just something terrible in terms of culture in our country because it was copied from the USSR and didn't originate with us. And that period wasn't pleasant for people living the time. For example, ration coupons for food, tanks in the streets, fear in the streets, and the militia was nothing like today's police, which is more helpful – they could just throw people to the ground and then everyone knows what happened.

Artur, a secondary technical school student, Łódzkie Voivodeship

Conclusion

Although not all issues related to the multifaceted problem of attitudes towards history can be included in a single study, this project has produced many results that should be of interest to those planning activities in history didactics. These results can be analysed not only in terms of contemporary attitudes of Poles towards their history but also in terms of their potential transformations in the future. For this reason, they require careful recognition today and further in-depth research in the future to monitor the changes taking place.

Using the results of this study to attempt to characterise Poles' memories of their future, we can conclude the following:

1. In light of the test results, Poles' knowledge of their past can be described as moderate, with noticeably weaker results in the case of adolescents compared to adult Poles. However, much more important than analysing the general result seems to be looking at answers to specific questions in terms of understanding the most important historical processes in the history of Poland. Here, we can see that questions about critical events and phenomena (e.g., Polish parliamentary traditions, Katyń, the Warsaw Uprising, martial law) presented great difficulty for respondents. Respondents fared slightly better in identifying iconography documenting key figures and events in Polish history, but even here, one can see large areas of ignorance, all the more worrisome because the modern world is dominated by visual messages.

2. The knowledge acquired by Poles about history comes from diverse sources, both traditional (conversations with the older generation, visits to museums) and modern (Internet, computer games). Generational differences are noticeable in this respect, especially in the case of Internet use, which is the domain of youth. The results reveal several paradoxes: what is the most important and reliable source of knowledge (classroom history instruction) is rarely considered attractive. What is important and interesting (the Internet) is deemed less reliable. Sources that are not the most important (conversations with the older generation, history enthusiasts, contact with memorials and museums, memorabilia of the past) are considered exceptionally reliable. These are inconsistencies worth thinking about by those who plan history education.

3. Unfortunately, history in its most attractive form for Poles (both young and old) rarely takes the form of the printed word. And if it does, it is expressed in school readings (young people) and the great Sienkiewicz epics (Poles 20+). Motion pictures (cinema, popular movies, videos) are indicated as an interesting source, but among the most frequently mentioned titles, screen adaptations of school readings and Sienkiewicz's works again take centre stage. Among the half a thousand films that appeared in the respondents' answers, there is no shortage of gems – valuable feature films and documentaries. Unfortunately, they are usually mentioned by individual respondents, mainly history teachers. A review of the websites mentioned by the respondents also shows how marginal the role of professional research portals or unlimited knowledge resources in the form of digitised archives and virtual libraries from all over the world is. Instead, historical knowledge is sought on sites such as YouTube, Wikipedia, Facebook or even Tik Tok.

4. On the other hand, there is optimism about the role of museums. They are often regarded as interesting and very reliable sources of knowledge. More than 400 establishments were mentioned in the open question. Although military and martyrdom museums predominate, small regional museums were also included in a broad perspective. Taken together, they all offer a history that is varied and presented professionally. In addition to museums, respondents also mentioned, in significant numbers, places where history can be experienced in a special way. The high importance of museums and memorials, as captured in this study, indicates the under-utilised potential of these spaces in history education.

5. Although the contemporary transformation of the family model is sometimes considered a factor in the weakening of the multigenerational transmission of memory, in the light of the survey, these processes do not yet appear to be of particular concern. Most respondents from all surveyed categories declare conversations about history within the family circle. The topics of such discussions are not limited to remembering the drama of the wars. It covers many issues, including the daily work of ancestors for the country. There is a limited awareness of what memorabilia is possessed, of what is stuck in the home drawer. However, this can be seen as a challenge, an opportunity to bring history closer if this source is used more effectively.
6. The forms of conveying historical knowledge that would interest pupils and those that teachers find interesting for young people are different. The forms preferred by students are active and dynamic, and often are those in the field. Teachers are more likely than pupils to prioritise static forms and those confined within classroom walls. Of course, it is essential to remember that teachers' responses are influenced by their awareness of the constraints of the curriculum and the time available to them. These disparities are worth deeper reflection and further monitoring. An optimistic conclusion of the survey is that only one in ten pupils declared extreme disinclination towards any experiments in implementing new forms of history didactics.
7. About one-third of students and Poles 20+ were found to tend to consider the impact of history on the present. Openness to and interest in learning about history was found in a comparable group of respondents from both categories. It can therefore be concluded that several percent of pupils and Poles 20+ have an attitude that combines interest in history with reflection on it and recognition of it as a helpful resource in everyday life. Such an attitude seems a target point of history education and should characterise an informed citizen. A tendency to question the sense of history's presence in everyday life was observed in 14% of secondary school students and 22% of adult Poles. The attitude of half of the adult Poles and students can be described as ambivalent. They show no particular interest in history, but neither are they negative towards history. These results can be seen as a challenge and a space for potential educational policy action.
8. The analysis of attitudes towards history reveals a positive correlation between knowledge of and reflection on history and the display of civic attitudes – learning about history stimulates civic activity.
9. Knowledge of the local and regional past, i.e., of the small homelands, is poor. Ignorance of figures and local events is accompanied by a moderate awareness of the regions' contribution to national history. What should be emphasised here is the great disproportion between the results obtained in areas more or less frequently present in the pages of history textbooks.

10. The memory of Poles emerging from the historical canons formulated by them (figures and events of which we are proud and of which we are ashamed) indicates an effective transmission of perceptions of the past to subsequent generations. The lists of typical figures and events are similar to those compiled by Poles in similar surveys in past decades. The most notable case of change in the canons is the declining importance of the figure of John Paul II for the younger generation. At the centre of our memory are the figure of Józef Piłsudski and the regaining of independence in 1918. Some results show the need for deeper reflection on the proportions of content taught at school – primarily because in the indications of the young generation of events of which we, as Poles, can be proud, there is hardly any mention of the Solidarity movement.

Taking into account the opinions of the young generation of Poles, one can risk the claim that the future shape of attitudes towards history will be shaped in places of living memory and virtual space. In the former case, this applies to museums and institutions combining the uniqueness of a site marked by history with an attractive communication formula. The results of the survey show that there is a high demand among young people for offers in this area. The Internet also offers considerable opportunities for those who want to build an alternative to random, chaotic and only sometimes professionally verified content in this underdeveloped space. There is still a need to create an offer that is frequently used and attractive to young people and which does not raise questions of credibility.

The question remains open as to what place school will occupy in the process of shaping attitudes towards Polish history. To what extent will education within its framework be a real education for remembrance, fostering the development in subsequent generations of Poles of reflective-cognitive attitudes, attitudes combining an interest in history with a perception of its impact on everyday life? The answer is also related to whether the voice of the young generation, signalled, among other things, by the results of this study will be listened to and considered.

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