

Poles
and
Ukrainians
in daily
contacts

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2021

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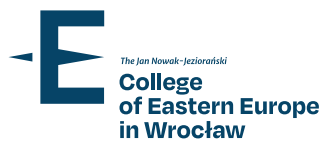
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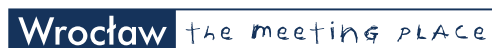
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1. Introduction.

Why this study matters?



1. Introduction.

Why this study matters?

Poland and Ukraine are linked not only by 535 kilometres of a common border, but also by a long, and sometimes painful, common history. In recent years, the two countries have been increasingly connected by the unprecedented economic migration of Ukrainians to Poland, which has been taking place since 2014–2015 due to severe security and economic crises in Ukraine. This process accelerated after the liberalisation of the visa regime between the Schengen Area and Ukraine in 2017, which allowed Ukrainian citizens to travel visa free within the EU (with the exception of Ireland and Great Britain), Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.

However, only in Poland can Ukrainian citizens work without a visa, provided they possess a biometric passport and a declaration of employment. The administrative fee for obtaining the declaration of employment is covered by the employer and costs 30 Polish zloty (less than eight euro). Once authorised to work in Poland, Ukrainian workers are protected by Polish labour regulations. Polish employers are obliged to fulfil all employment-related requirements, including registering their Ukrainian employees with the Social Insurance Institution (ZUS).

As a result of these bureaucratically simplified and relatively inexpensive provisions, **Ukrainians have become the largest national group migrating to Poland. Official Polish statistics approximate the number of Ukrainians residing in Poland at around 1.3 million.**¹ While many, particularly seasonal workers, stay in Poland short-term, a significant number hope to stay in Poland longer.

Evidence from a September 2020 poll commissioned by Grupa Impel points to this conclusion, with as many as 67% of Ukrainian respondents declaring that they are happy with their life in Poland. A relatively high percentage (41%) of respondents also reported wanting to stay in

1 In 2020, the Polish Statistical Office (GUS) presented its first report on migrants living in Poland. According to this data, by 2019 the number of Ukrainians living in Poland was estimated at 1 351 418. See: <https://stat.gov.pl/statystyki-eksperymentalne/kapital-ludzki/aneks-populacja-cudzoziemcow-w-polsce-w-czasie-covid-19,12,2.html>

Poland permanently. Almost half (49%) have either brought their family to Poland or plan to do so in the future.²

These data have important implications for the future demographic makeup in Poland. According to 2016 research conducted by Piotr Szukalski with the Institute of Sociology at the University of Łódź, the number of mixed Polish-Ukrainian couples has risen with the number of Ukrainian immigrants in Poland.³ This trend is expected to continue and intensify in the near future. However, the resulting cultural and demographic change in Poland could elicit negative reactions among more nationalistic groups within Polish society. Data gathered by the Union of Ukrainians in Poland suggest that such behaviour is already visible today and includes acts of physical and verbal aggression directed at Ukrainians. Negative responses are also visible on the internet and in Polish media. This issue seriously concerns representatives of the Ukrainian minority in Poland and was the subject of a special report published by the Union in 2018.⁴

Despite the existence of hostility from a limited segment of Polish society, **the Polish economy undoubtedly benefits from increasing Ukrainian migration.** According to the estimates published by Jakub Growiec and Paweł Strzelecki of the Warsaw School of Economics and the National Bank of Poland as well as Robert Wyszynski of the National Bank of Poland, Ukrainian migrants have contributed to approximately 2.5% of Polish GDP growth (0.5% per year) since 2014.⁵ Business owners and employers are eager to hire Ukrainians, especially (but not exclusively) in industries that are less popular among Polish

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- 2 Grupa Impel, Ukraińcy na polskim rynku pracy – doświadczenia i perspektywy, 2020, available at: https://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/landingi-editor-uploads/xEP-5pUuU/Sanpro_badanie_ankietowe_UKRAINCY_2020.pdf
 - 3 Piotr Szukalski, Małżeństwa polsko-ukraińskie, Demografia i Gerontologia Społeczna – Biuletyn Informacyjny 2017, No. 8, available at: <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/145226322.pdf>
 - 4 Związek Ukraińców w Polsce, Mniejszość ukraińska i migranci z Ukrainy w Polsce Analiza dyskursu (praca zbiorowa), Związek Ukraińców w Polsce, 2018, available at: http://www.oup.ukraina.com.pl/images/stories/DOCUMENT/raport_mniejszosc_ukrainska.pdf
 - 5 Paweł Strzelecki, Robert Wyszynski, Jakub Growiec, The contribution of immigration from Ukraine to economic growth in Poland, NBP Working Papers, Warsaw, 2020, available at: http://www.nbp.pl/publikacje/materialy_i_studia/322_en.pdf

workers. Ukrainian citizens are often hired to work in the construction, production and growing e-commerce industries. They are also increasingly being employed in the service industry.

Ukrainian migration and immigration to Poland also affects the Ukrainian economy. Ukrainian government officials and politicians argue that their citizens should remain in the country and support the already frail economy.⁶ The workforce exodus has particularly impacted investment and industrial development in the western regions. On the other hand, Ukrainians working abroad send back sizeable remittances.

In 2019, the World Bank reported that Ukraine “remained the largest recipient of remittances in the region, receiving a record high of nearly 16 billion US dollars in 2019, with the lion’s share of remittances coming from Poland (about two-thirds of the total)”.⁷ Overall, **the unidirectional flow of migrants creates an asymmetrical situation in which many Ukrainians get first-hand experience in Poland, but few Poles get similar level of experience in Ukraine.** As demonstrated throughout this report, this asymmetry has implications for the overall relationship between the two countries.

Political relations between the two countries are also complex. Since Poland joined the European Union in 2004 Ukraine has perceived the government in Warsaw as its “advocate” in the West. Polish authorities have consistently supported Ukraine’s democratic and pro-Western choice and were considered Ukraine’s key partner in relations with the EU and NATO. This strong commitment was demonstrated by the involvement of Polish President Aleksander Kwaśniewski in negotiation talks during the Orange Revolution in 2003–2004 and Polish Foreign Affairs Minister Radosław Sikorski’s involvement in Euromaidan talks in 2013–2014.

6 Denys Shmyhal: We should learn to live in these new conditions at least for two years (in ukr.: Денис Шмигаль, Треба навчитися жити в нових умовах щонайменше два роки), RBC, 22 April 2020, available at: <https://www.rbc.ua/ukr/news/denis-shmigal-nauchitsya-zhit-novyh-usloviyah-1587495027.html>

7 COVID-19 Crisis Through a Migration Lens. Migration and Development Brief 32, World Bank April 2020, p. 19. Available at: <http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/989721587512418006/pdf/COVID-19-Crisis-Through-a-Migration-Lens.pdf>

Poland's role as an advocate for Ukraine was weakened after 2014. It was not included as a member of the so-called "Normandy format", which was set up in June 2014 by the leaders of Ukraine, Russia, France and Germany, and thus has little influence in the conflict resolution discussions. Moreover, with the adoption of the Association Agreement, the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA) and liberalised visa regime in 2017, there were few remaining opportunities for Poland to advocate for further Ukrainian integration with the EU. Subsequently, Poland has shifted its foreign policy priorities regarding Ukraine.⁸ Ukrainian foreign policy priorities also shifted; while Poland remains an important partner in assistance and bilateral cooperation, Ukraine has since prioritized relations with other key EU states.

In terms of culture, Poland's status as a producer of popular culture diminished in the 1990s and its role as a cultural bridge to the West for Ukraine changed in light of the Soviet Union's collapse. During that time, the Polish government began increasing its cultural diplomacy and promotion of Polish culture abroad. Since the early 21st century Poland has invested significant financial resources into producing foreign-language translations of Polish literature and the Ukrainian elite willingly joined these initiatives.⁹

Since the 1990s, Ukrainian has been a target translation language for Polish literature, overtaking more widely spoken languages like German, French or even English. According to the Ukrainian Book Institute, the publishing market remains heavily dominated by English. However, Polish ranks fifth among the most popular foreign languages, almost as popular as German and French. Poland institutions also offer various scholarships targeted at the Ukrainian intellectual elite,

8 Nadiia Koval. *Beyond the Historical Arguments: What Future for Ukrainian Polish-Relations. A view from Poland*, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Kyiv, 2018. Ukrainian version (Надія Коваль, *Окрім історичних суперечок: яке майбутнє для польсько-українських відносин? Польський погляд*) available at: <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/ukraine/14974.pdf>, Polish version (Nadiia Koval. *Jaka przyszłość czeka relacje polsko-ukraińskie oprócz historycznych sprzeczek? Perspektywa polska*) available at: http://fes.kiev.ua/n/cms/fileadmin/upload2/perspektywa_polsko-ukrainska.pdf

9 For information on books see: Program Translatorski ©Poland: <https://instytutksiazki.pl/zagranica,4,program-translatorski-@poland,29.html>; for information on study visits organized to Poland see: <https://www.studytours.pl/o-stp/>

aiming to foster an image of Poland as a friendly nation and dedicated partner.

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the speed of intellectual exchange between Poles and Ukrainians accelerated. Although not receiving significant government support, Ukrainian literature was also translated into Polish and disseminated throughout Western Europe via Poland, increasing awareness of such Ukrainian authors as Yuri Andruchovych, Oksana Zabuzhko and Serhiy Zhadan. As a result of personal contacts and positive attitudes across Poland, Ukrainian public intellectuals feature regularly in Polish national newspapers and media outlets.

The fall of communism also made tourism much easier. As a result, many Poles realized that they were able to rediscover their national heritage in western Ukraine, at the same time learning about Ukrainian heritage. On the one hand, this opening-up has brought historical awareness on both sides. On the other hand, the unreconciled history of the Second World War and collective memory continue to be discussed in the public sphere, particularly on the Polish side. Conflict in this area has intensified since 2015 when the Law and Justice (*Prawo i Sprawiedliwość*) party won parliamentary elections in Poland. Law and Justice later formed a United Right government and secured re-election in 2019. The previous approach to rapprochement and reconciliation based on mutual forgiveness was dismissed by the new authorities as shallow and hypocritical, leading to a new approach which expects Ukrainians to “admit the truth” about the most painful events in the mutual history.

This truth has been codified on the highest political level in Poland with a parliamentary decision in 2016 to define the mass killings of ethnic Poles by Ukrainian nationalists on the territory of contemporary Ukraine during the Second World War as a genocide, and a 2018 attempt to introduce criminal penalties for denying the criminal nature of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) and the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA). Despite the new Polish approach, the subsequent Ukrainian governments have maintained the policy of symmetrical rapprochement based on mutual forgiveness.

Incidents of conflict have proliferated in both countries. **In Ukraine, Polish historians have been barred from accessing excavation sites. In Poland, Ukrainian sites of memory have been destroyed.** An example of how these tensions have manifested in the realm of public perception is the film “Wołyń” (English titled “Hatred”) by prominent Polish director Wojciech Smażowski. The controversial war drama premiered in Poland in September 2016 and has been occasionally broadcast by Polish public television (Telewizja Polska), most recently in December 2020.

All the factors discussed above – migration, weakened political framework and conflicts over history – have had a direct and lasting impact on Polish-Ukrainian relations and the mutual perceptions of their citizens. Thus, an in-depth study of mutual perceptions is overdue. What do Poles and Ukrainians know about each other now? How do they imagine each other and the respective countries? How do they perceive relations between their countries? How exactly do they interact with each other? In which areas do they see opportunities for or limitations of cooperation?

This study, which results from the partnership of four institutions – the Warsaw and Kyiv offices of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, the Jan Nowak-Jeziorański College of Eastern Europe in Wrocław, and the Foreign Policy Council “Ukrainian Prism” from Kyiv – attempts to answer these questions. In August 2020 we began joint research into the perception of Ukraine and Ukrainians by Poles, and Poland and Poles by Ukrainians. We concluded our research in December 2020, resulting in the production of this report.

2. Research methodology



2. Research methodology

Our analysis is based primarily on the results of public opinion survey research which was carried out for this study in both Poland and Ukraine in December 2020. The survey, commissioned and financed by the Kyiv and Warsaw offices of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, was carried out by Polish firm MASMI and Ukrainian firm InfoSapiens. The research consisted of computer-assisted web interviews (CAWI) with representative samples from Poland (1051 respondents) and Ukraine (2243 respondents).

The online written questionnaire was comprised of 40 questions (closed, open and semi-open) translated into Polish, Ukrainian, and Russian. While data were gathered in these three languages, the analysis was conducted by researchers in Polish and Ukrainian. The working language of the team was English.

We decided to use the CAWI data collection method during the first team meeting in September 2020. CAWI presents numerous advantages for international research projects. This method allows researchers to access large, adequately diverse groups of respondents in multiple countries, gives researchers significant control over the research instrument, reduces variations resulting from differences between language versions, and increases adequacy in data analysis. However, this method is limited in its ability to reach rural or older populations which have reduced internet access. Researchers are also unable to control how respondents fill out the questionnaire, in contrast to a direct interview.

Fully aware of these limitations, we agreed that this method was best suited for the goal of our research endeavour, which was to investigate the mutual perceptions of Poles and Ukrainians. In order to present a more nuanced picture of Polish and Ukrainian perspectives that incorporated historical perspectives, we also reviewed existing literature on the subject and analysed earlier opinion poll research. The synthesis of our research with existing data therefore provides wider context on the subject matter.

3. Research results



3. Research results

3.1 Stereotyping the Other – neighbour, worker, average guy

While mutual stereotypes and associations are difficult to quantify and vulnerable to subjective interpretation, the value of analysing these categories resides in the possibility of digging deeper into collective imagery of the Other and the nature of social attitudes. In other words, we were interested not only in the extent of positive or negative attitudes to representatives of the neighbour nation, but also the key images, ideas and possible sources behind these attitudes. In our survey, stereotypes were analysed through answers to the open question: “What are your three associations with the word ‘Ukrainian’ (for Poles)/‘Pole’ (for Ukrainians)?”

The high response rate to this question resulted in over 4000 answers in the Ukrainian sample and over 2000 answers in the Polish sample.¹⁰ The charts below (Fig. 1–2) illustrate the 15 most common stereotype categories from the data in both countries. For both Poles and Ukrainians, three most important categories involve ideas and perceptions related to work migration, positive character traits, or neutral concept of neighbourhood.¹¹

10 The data was collected via the open question #13 ‘What comes to your mind when you hear the word “Ukrainian”/“Pole”? Please write up to three words’ Some of the respondents have provided only one or two answers, some have repeated the same idea a few times, some answers were illegible. After discarding illegible data and do not know/do not care answers, the 1051 sample from Poland has provided 1740 non-unique associations and the 2243 Ukrainian sample has provided 3754 non-unique associations, which were subsequently coded by the researcher.

11 In a study “What is Ukraine’s perception in the EU. The Cases of Germany, France, Italy, Poland”, conducted by the Ukrainian think-tank New Europe Center in autumn 2020 there was one question to the Polish respondents that is close to ours, asking about three associations with Ukraine as a country. Interestingly, they are close to the results of our research, the three most popular answers being “immigration/seasonal workers”, “poverty/unemployment”, and “war/conflict with Russia”. See: http://neweurope.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/What-is-Ukraine-s-perception-in-the-EU_eng_web-1.pdf

Fig. 1, UKRAINIAN STEREOTYPES ABOUT POLES

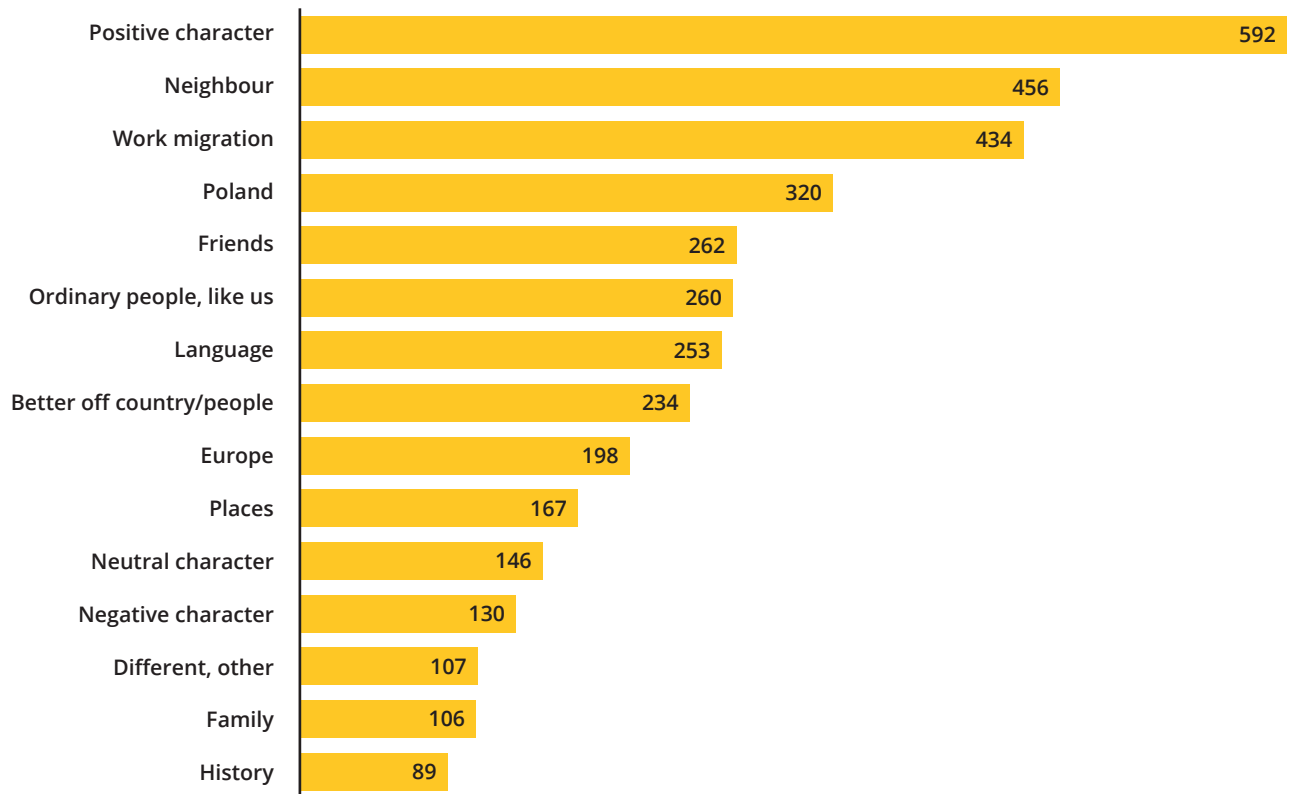
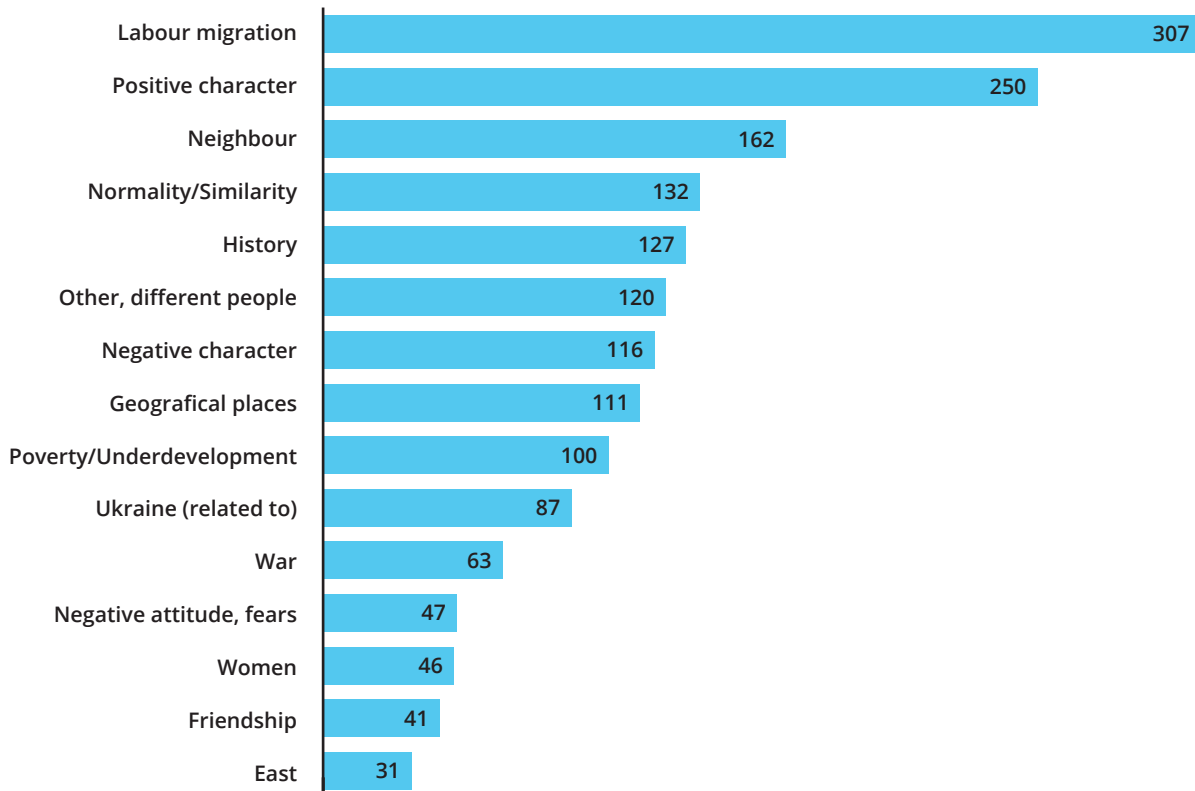


Fig. 2, POLISH STEREOTYPES ABOUT UKRAINIANS



Source: Own data and analysis.

Beginning with migration or work-related associations, the survey showed that for Ukrainian respondents, **words such as “Poland” and “Poles” were closely linked with the concept of Ukrainian заробітчани (zarobitchany), which can be roughly translated into English as people who are making money abroad and is related to the general idea of the need to work abroad to earn a living.** Looking deeper into these associations we see that Ukrainians treat Poland as a country providing such opportunities, where Poles are primarily seen as employers.

Among Polish respondents, associations with the word “Ukrainian” even more heavily linked with the general concept of migration and economic migrants, but from a different angle, underlining the migration is temporal and related to economic hardships. In some cases, associations were made with specific jobs, such as construction worker or cleaning lady, suggesting that respondents have had individual encounters with Ukrainians performing these jobs. They may also reflect wider stereotypical imagery of a low-wage workforce which is attributed to Ukrainian migrants or perceptions of Ukraine as a poor country.

Additionally, assessments of the economic situation and overall quality of life in the neighbour country appeared to significantly impact respondents’ perceptions. Ukrainians tended to stereotype Poles as more successful, economically better off, and living in a more democratic and prosperous country, while Poles were more likely to associate Ukrainians with poverty. Poles also pointed to Ukraine’s internal difficulties, though sometimes through a compassionate lens: “A Ukrainian is a person forced to separate from family to earn his/her living or to sacrifice a lot in general”. In addition to negative assessments of the Ukrainian economy, the Polish sample revealed comparatively strong (in)security-based associations with Ukraine, such as “war” and “asylum seekers”.

Among Ukrainians, positive assessments of Poles and their character traits largely outnumbered negative ones. Overall, Ukrainians attributed more than 30 positive character traits to Poles. The most common include “kind/good”, “industrious” and “well-mannered”. Negative character traits were mentioned less often. The most common

one was “cunning”. Neutral stereotypes of Poles frequently named by respondents include “talkative” and “traditionalistic”.

Among Poles, impressions of Ukrainian character traits were more equally balanced between positive and negative. Positive traits included “nice, lovely people”, “hardworking people”, “good” and “hospitable”. Notable among the negative traits of Ukrainians as perceived by Poles were abuse of alcohol, lack of culture and lack of integrity. Unlike Ukrainian respondents, Polish respondents voiced specific stereotypes about Ukrainian women, which might again reflect the asymmetry of relationship. Poles provided Ukrainian female names, some colloquialisms, references to the beauty of the Ukrainian women, or even prostitution.

Nonetheless, a large share of respondents in both country surveys refused to provide any specific associations, opting instead for neutral definitions: “A Pole is someone who lives in Poland” or “A Ukrainian is someone who comes from Ukraine”. Others stated that the opposite country is “normal”, “ordinary”, or “just like any other”. These responses can be interpreted in a number of ways.

They could mean that respondents want to treat people as individuals, rather than an “other” or carrier of stereotypical national traits. However, neutral or imprecise answers could also reflect insufficient knowledge or disinterest. Indeed, some respondents admitted that they have no knowledge of or interest in the neighbour nation. While both explanations are possible, the large proportion of associations that underline similarity and closeness between the two peoples (“just like Ukrainians/Poles”, “very close culture”) allows us to argue for the more optimistic interpretation.

Interestingly, **while both Polish and Ukrainian respondents saw each other overall as “neighbours”, Ukrainians more often used the term “friends” and “brothers” to describe Poles.** Another term present in both samples which indicates closeness was “Slav”. Family ties between the countries were also more frequently stressed by Ukrainians, who, as noted earlier, have more family members living or working in Poland than vice versa due to asymmetric migration. These responses indicate that Ukrainians feel much closer to Poles than Poles feel to Ukrainians.

One, perhaps notable, result of the survey was that both Poles and Ukrainians rarely associate each other through their respective cultural phenomena. A minority of Ukrainian respondents made associations with renowned Polish artists (Fryderyk Chopin, Henryk Sienkiewicz), as well as some popular productions from the socialist period (including a famous series called *The Four Tank-men and a Dog* and some cartoons) and some contemporary authors, such as the Polish science-fiction writer Andrzej Sapkowski.

Others associated the word “Poland” in a more general sense with music, movies and literature. In contrast, Polish respondents revealed few culture-related associations with Ukraine. No Ukrainian culture figures were mentioned in the sample. Even with the single mention of “Shevchenko” it is unclear whether it referred to Taras, the poet, or Andriy, the football player. One respondent mentioned Andriy Shevchenko both by name and surname. In total there are less than 10 culture-related associations from the Polish sample, most referencing folk culture.

Respondents in both countries mentioned language in their associations. **Ukrainians much more often remembered some specific Polish words and phrases, including swear words, than Poles remembered or mentioned Ukrainian ones.** This could be another result of the asymmetrical migration, reflecting the reality that more Ukrainians have been immersed in Polish-speaking society than vice versa. One word used by Ukrainians to describe Poles which had no equivalent in the Polish sample was “pan”, referring either to a neutral form of address (“mister”) or a societal position (“master”). The latter is a remnant of an older stereotype of Poles as oppressors.

In some instances, Poles appeared to confuse Ukrainians with Russians. Among their associations with Ukrainians were words like “matryoshka”, “pelmeni” as well as four mentions of Putin and two of Lukashenka. Some respondents provided simple Russian phrases as their three primary associations with Ukrainians. “Russia”, “Russian”, and a derogative term “Rusek” also appeared in the Polish sample. There are a few potential explanations for these responses.

First, Ukrainian migrants in Poland consist of people from all over Ukraine, including from its largely Russian-speaking regions. Second, within Poland there is inadequate knowledge of Eastern European nations and languages. Polish respondents tended to categorize Ukraine

as Europe on the one hand and as the “East” on the other, indicating that there is no consensus about Ukraine’s place on the world’s political map. On the contrary, when Ukrainians rely on political geography in their associations with Poland, they attribute its position invariably as “Europe”, “European” or “EU”.

Both Ukrainians and Poles used historical stereotypes in reference to each other. Overall, Ukrainian associations tended to be neutral and covered a longer time span, with the exception of irregular mentions of oppression or suspicions of Poles still coveting Ukrainian territories. Conversely, Poles primarily generated negative historical associations related to experiences in the Second World War. Ukrainians were associated with such phrases as *banderowiec* (“Bandera follower”), UPA, bandits and mass violence.

In their geographic associations, Ukrainians named the Polish capital Warsaw as the place they most associate Poland with. At the same time, for Polish respondents the most common association with Ukraine is the city of Lviv, with which many Poles still feel to have deep historical and cultural connections.

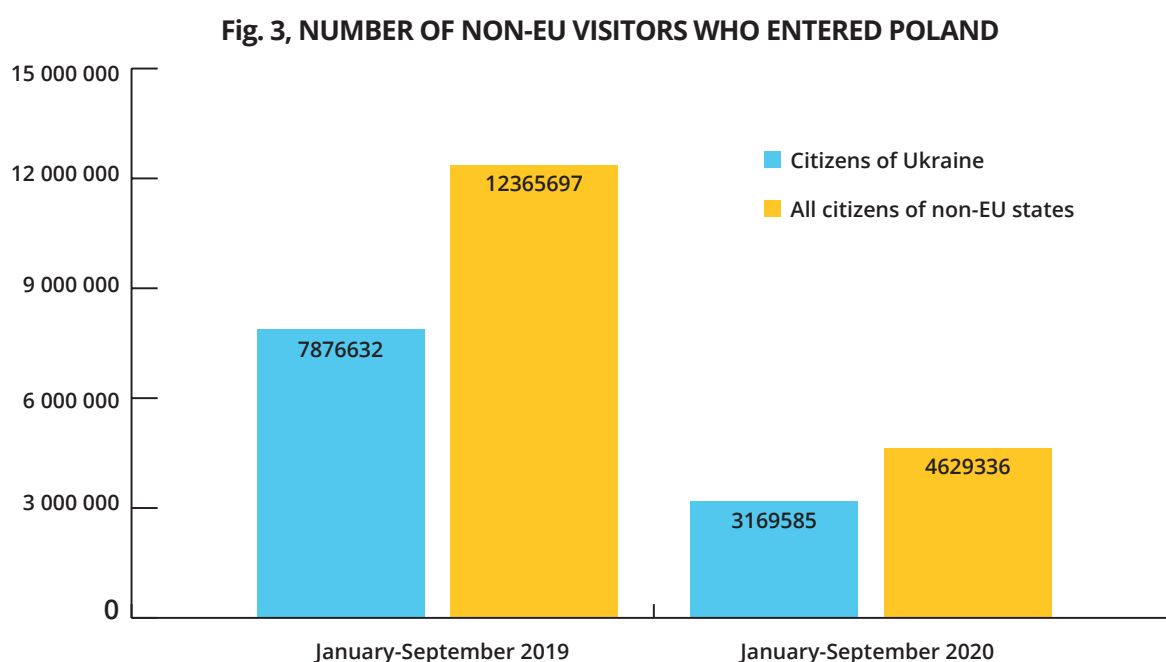
To summarize, in both countries an important share of respondents did not voice any negative stereotypes, and an important number expressed similarity and closeness between the nations. Historical memories and daily experience with migrant workers appeared as the two most important sources of negative stereotypes about Ukrainians among Poles. However, a clear minority of Polish respondents said that there are too many Ukrainians in Poland or that Ukrainians take work from Poles, suggesting that Polish society has to a certain degree accepted Ukrainian migration to Poland.

The high percentage of Ukrainian respondents who did not voice negative personal stereotypes about Poles and expressed feelings of closeness to them is something that future cooperation could be built upon. More symmetrical contacts between Poles and Ukrainians from different societal strata could potentially reduce negative stereotypes in the future while more attention to cultural diplomacy and tourist exchange could contribute to more knowledge and awareness of the neighbour.

3.2 Entrenched asymmetries of everyday contacts

While direct contacts between Poles and Ukrainians take place in both countries, significantly more Ukrainians go to Poland than Poles go to Ukraine. **Nearly 40% of Ukrainian respondents have been to Poland, while only 25% of the surveyed Poles have been to Ukraine.** Also, contacts between Poles and Ukrainians have significantly increased in recent years. A 2010 survey by the Warsaw-based Institute of Public Affairs (ISP) reported that only 10% of Ukrainians had been to Poland.

Given the migration trends described in the introduction of this report, it can be reasonably expected that the number of contacts between Poles and Ukrainians will continue to increase in the future, despite border complications caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Polish Border Guard recorded 60% fewer Ukrainians entering Poland from January until September 2020 compared to the same period in 2019. However, Ukrainians continue to constitute a majority of non-EU citizens coming to Poland, and their proportion within this group even increased in 2020 despite the pandemic. In 2019, Ukrainians constituted 64% of all non-EU citizens who entered Poland, increasing to 68% in 2020 (Fig. 3).



Source: Polish Border Guard.

Over half of respondents in our December 2020 survey expressed willingness to visit the neighbouring country (59% of Ukrainians and 56% of Poles, respectively). Only 25% of Ukrainians and 17% of Poles showed no desire to do so. It can be argued, therefore, that contacts between Poles and Ukrainians will continue to be strong in the post-pandemic future. The data suggest that such an increase will take place both in overall numbers and in frequency of visits. Already now, **the number of respondents who have visited the neighbouring country multiple times exceeds those who have been there only once.**

While the overall trends point to increasing contacts, there are differences and inequalities between the Polish and Ukrainian samples. As stated before, Ukrainians go to Poland more often than Poles go to Ukraine. Among Ukrainians who have been to Poland, over two-thirds (69%) have been there more than once, and 20% have been to Poland more than 10 times, suggesting that they have a more permanent relation with this country or its people. Among the Polish respondents who have been to Ukraine, more than half (51%) have visited it more than once, almost a third (29%) have visited it two to three times, and 11% have visited it four to five times. Only 6% of those who have visited Ukraine did so more than 10 times.

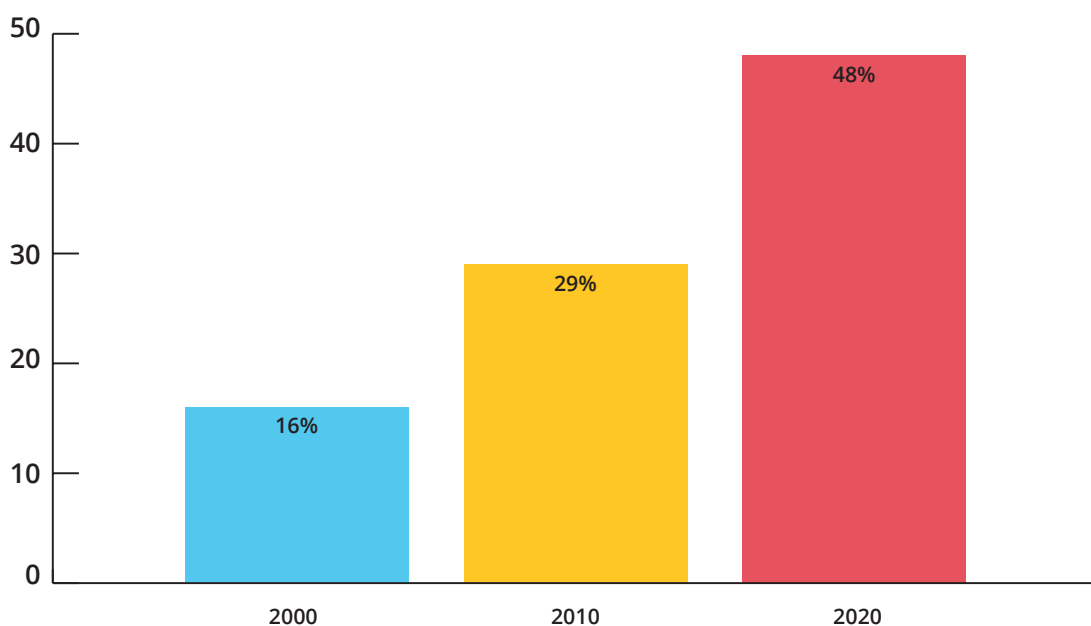
Ukrainians from the western regions visit Poland in greater numbers and with greater frequency, with one-third of respondents from the western regions declaring more than six visits to Poland. This inequality between the western and eastern regions of Ukraine can be explained by a number of factors. Western Ukraine and Poland are closer geographically, western Ukrainians have been allowed to enter Poland visa-free since the 2008 conclusion of the Small Border Traffic Agreement, and historical ties connect western Ukraine and Poland. Contemporary western Ukraine was also once part of the Polish state, first in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and later the Second Polish Republic.

While the smaller size of the Polish sample prevents regionally based quantitative analysis of visits to Ukraine, available data showed that residents of Podkarpackie voivodeship, which borders Ukraine, travel to Ukraine more often. As in the western Ukrainian case, this can probably be explained by geographical proximity and economic factors (such as cross-border trade and shopping).

Our data reveal that Poles and Ukrainians visit each other in different numbers and for largely different reasons. A large proportion of respondents from both countries indicated tourism as the main reason for cross-border visits – 79% of Poles and 48% of Ukrainians. The same proportion of Ukrainian respondents (48%) stated coming to Poland for work, while 22% visited their neighbour state to see family or friends. These visits are most likely paid to their Ukrainian family members who either work or study in Poland.

Regarding work-related visits, our December 2020 survey revealed a significant increase from previous decades. In 2010 less than one-third (29%) of Ukrainians who travelled to Poland did so for work, and in 2000 that number was only 16%. As discussed previously, this increase in work-related travel from Ukraine to Poland results from Ukraine's economic situation, the visa-free travel regime introduced in 2017 and simplified Polish employment regulations for foreigners which make it easier for Ukrainians to obtain a work permit in Poland than elsewhere.

Fig. 4, WORK AS A REASON TO TRAVEL TO POLAND

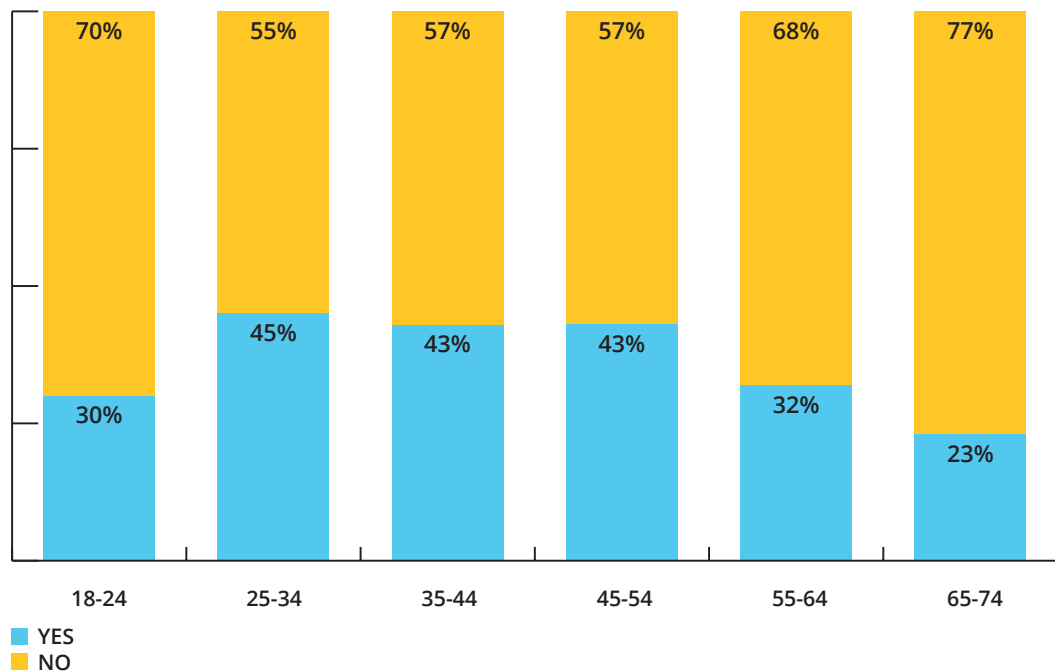


Source: Joanna Konieczna-Sałamatin, Coraz dalsi sąsiedzi? Wizerunek Polski i Polaków w Ukrainie, Warszawa: Instytut Spraw Publicznych, 2011 and own data and analysis.

As the numbers of Ukrainians visiting Poland have increased, the average age of the Ukrainians visiting has decreased. It is mostly young and middle-age people who travel to Poland, which also holds true for those who go to Poland for work-related reasons. As many as 45% of those who have been to Poland and 56% of those who have gone to Poland for work are 25–34 years old.

In comparison, a survey by Joanna Konieczna-Sałamatin reported that Ukrainian travellers to Poland in the early 2000s were predominantly in their 30s people, while in 2010 they were in their 40s.¹² Konieczna-Sałamatin argued that this was the same group of Ukrainians travelling to Poland over the decade with close personal connections to that country often dating back to the 1990s. The current age composition of Ukrainian visitors to Poland suggests that they are no longer limited to the group of people from the early 2000s or 2010. This may also explain the larger number of Ukrainians who come to Poland overall.

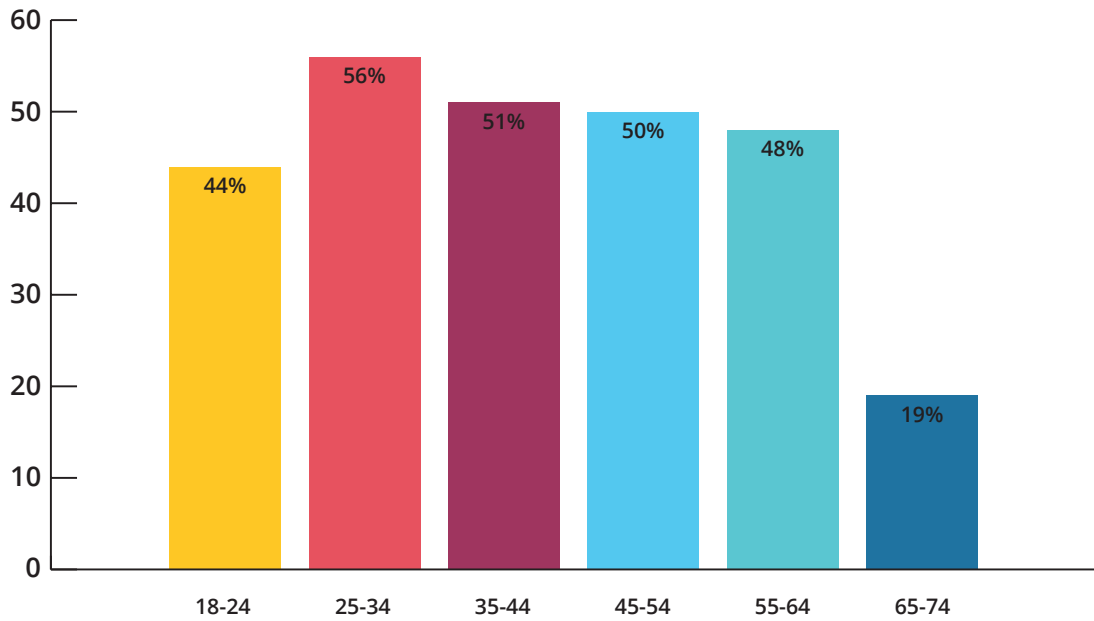
Fig. 5, HAVE YOU BEEN TO POLAND? BY AGE



Source: Own data and analysis.

12 Joanna Konieczna-Sałamatin, *Coraz dalsi sąsiedzi? Wizerunek Polski i Polaków w Ukrainie*, Warszawa: Instytut Spraw Publicznych, 2011, p. 4.

Fig. 6, UKRAINIANS WHO TRAVEL TO POLAND TO WORK, BY AGE

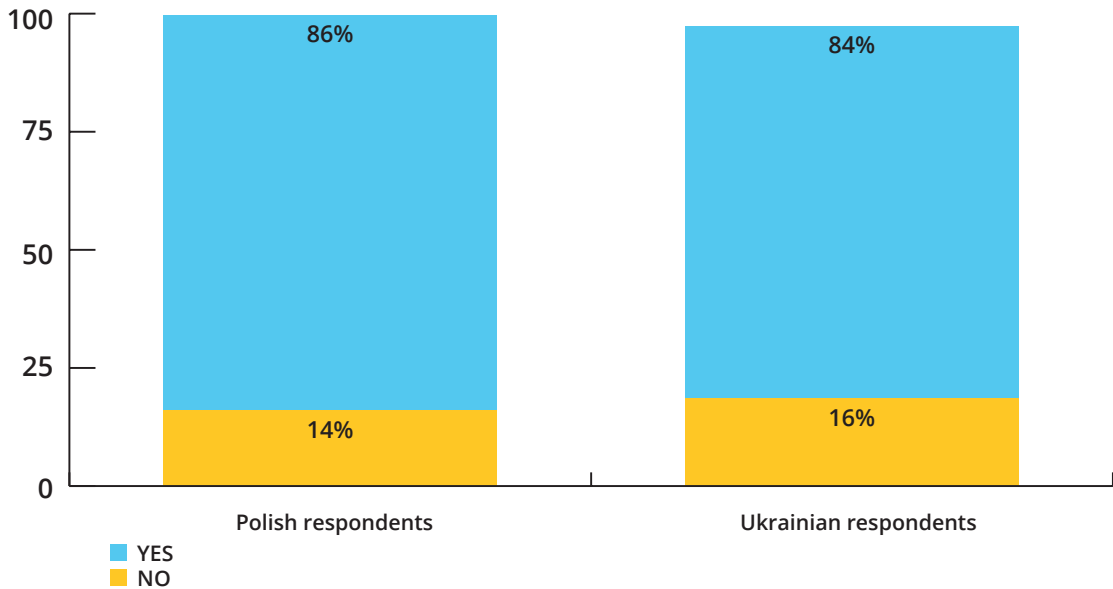


Source: Own data and analysis.

Given these trends, it is unsurprising that the largest number of reported contacts between Poles and Ukrainians are occurring at work, as it is admitted by 82% of Poles and 61% of Ukrainians, respectively. However, a clear hierarchical asymmetry emerges after accounting for the position of the respondent. While as many as 40% of Ukrainian respondents reported having worked for a Polish employer, only 2% of Poles reported having worked for a Ukrainian employer. Also, 9% of Polish respondents reported having employed Ukrainian workers, while 3% of Ukrainians reported having employed Polish workers.

In contrast to the high proportion of Ukrainians who travel to Poland for work-related reasons, only 5% of respondents who have been to Poland declared education as the reason for their visit. Among this group, the largest proportion of respondents by age (12%) were 18–25 years old. At the same time, while the number of Ukrainians studying in Poland might still seem low, data gathered by the Polish Statistical Office (GUS) clearly illustrate a large increase in the number of Ukrainians studying in Poland over the last ten years. **Almost a third of Polish respondents in the age group of 18–34 declared having an experience of studying with Ukrainians.**

Fig. 7, DO YOU HAVE FAMILY MEMBERS IN POLAND/UKRAINE?



Source: Own data and analysis.

For Poles, Ukraine is not a popular destination for work or education. Only 13% of Polish respondents who had visited Ukraine did it for work-related reasons, and even fewer (3%) visited it for education-related reasons. Visits to see family in Ukraine are also less prevalent (16%), and are more common among young adults (18–34) than within older age groups.

Mixed Polish-Ukrainian families remain uncommon, meaning few Poles or Ukrainians have family members in the neighbour country. **Only 16% of Ukrainians report having a Polish family member while 14% of Poles reported having family from Ukraine.** Among those who have cross-border relatives, most are outside the immediate family (cousins, uncles, aunts). Marriage is still very rare; it is declared by only 4% of Ukrainian and 1% of Polish respondents who declare to have family members from the neighbour state.

The survey data point to generally positive mutual contacts between Poles and Ukrainians. As many as 45% of Ukrainian and Polish women, 45% of Ukrainian men and 51% of Polish men view their contacts as rather positive. Over one-third of respondents in both countries reported having friends from the neighbouring country. However, we also observed some differences based on age group, particularly for the Ukrainian respondents. While 48% of respondents in the youngest age group (18–34) declared having a Polish friend, 40% of middle-age Ukrainians, and only 17% of the oldest Ukrainians reported the same.

These differences between age groups point to a generational shift in Ukrainian-Polish interpersonal relations. A similar trend was observed among Polish respondents, although the difference between the youngest and oldest groups was smaller (10 percentage points versus 30 percentage points in the Ukrainian sample).

While the data reveal an overall increase in Polish-Ukrainian contacts, **Polish respondents showed limited command of the Ukrainian language.** Only 12% stated knowing even basic Ukrainian. Out of those with Ukrainian language skills, 14% declared a medium or high-level command, with the remainder (86%) commanding basic-level skills. Unsurprisingly, command of Russian is much more common among Polish respondents, with 59% of all respondents and 86% of older respondents (55–74) reporting some level of knowledge.

These higher numbers are remnants of the Russian language curriculum which was mandatory in Polish schools during the period of the Polish People's Republic. Russian is still taught in Polish schools today, including at the university level, although the number of offered classes is decreasing. Among Poles who know Russian, 36% do so at a basic level and 39% at an intermediate level. Only 2% claim to know Russian at a high level.

As other trends have indicated, more Ukrainians speak Polish than vice versa. **Nearly a third (28%) of Ukrainian respondents reported having a basic command of the Polish language, especially those who are among younger and middle-age groups.** About a third of the respondents, regardless of their age group and gender, speak Polish at the intermediate level. Those who know it well amount to 10%, while those who know it poorly (30%), or very poorly (27%). Regionally,

knowledge of Polish is the highest (44%) in western Ukraine due to geographic proximity to Poland and historical and economic ties.

In the economic sense (i.e. recognising or purchasing products from the respective neighbouring country) the situation is similar. In 2014, Ukraine and the EU signed the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA) which entered into force in 2017. The DCFTA allowed for mutual ease of access to markets based on predictable and enforceable trade rules. As Poland is a member of the EU, this agreement has affected the economic ties between the two countries as well.

While Ukrainian goods are now more available on the Polish market, both online and in Polish shops, they appear to have limited popularity among Polish consumers. Only 17% of Polish respondents admitted buying Ukrainian goods, while 83% have no such experience. Among items Poles reported buying were Ukrainian sweets (mainly *Roshen*), halva, honey, alcohol (vodka, wine and beer), kvas, cigarettes, cosmetics, clothes and grocery products.

In contrast to the relatively low numbers of Poles buying Ukrainian products, almost 40% of the Ukrainian respondents reported purchasing Polish products, especially women (44%) and those aged 35–44 (53%). While Polish products were more popular for respondents in the western region (46%) and Kyiv area (50%), they were less popular in the northern (29%), centre (36%) and southern (35%) regions. Ukrainian respondents declared purchasing Polish household cleaning supplies, food, clothing, shoes, sweets, beverages (tea and coffee), dairy products, meat, cosmetics, personal hygiene products, and electronics.

At the time the COVID-19 pandemic hit in early 2020, cross-border trade between Poland and Ukraine was booming. In 2019, the Polish Central Statistical Office (GUS) reported that from among all of Poland's neighbours, Ukrainians spent the most on a single shopping trip to Poland, thereby giving way to the Germans only in terms of the total value of purchases.¹³ The pandemic has slowed, but not stopped, this trend.

13 Anna Gorczyca, Ukraińcy przebili Niemców – na jedne zakupy w Polsce wydają więcej. Co i gdzie kupują u nas cudzoziemcy? Co jest tańsze?, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 24 grudnia 2019, available at: <https://wyborcza.biz/biznes/7,177151,25541016,ukraincy-przebili-niemcow-na-jedne-zakupy-w-polsce-wydaja.html?disableRedirects=true>

3.3 Culture and collective memory

In 2020, the first issue of the *Nowa Europa Wschodnia* magazine featured an interview with Polish-Ukrainian historian Ola Hnatiuk who declared the end of the golden age in Polish-Ukrainian relations.¹⁴ Our survey results, however, suggest a different interpretation. It may be true that intellectual and political contacts have decreased due to political tensions, popular culture and especially everyday experiences came to be more the new key characteristic of Polish-Ukrainian relations.

Generally speaking, Ukrainians have historically been receptive to Polish culture. During the communist era, many in the Soviet Union saw Poland as a gateway to the Western world. Polish-language books, magazines, and cinema shaped a generation of Ukrainians by offering topics and stories less available in the repressive Soviet state. Polish director Jerzy Hoffman presented historic epics set in Ukraine and romantic stories. Polish actress Barbara Brylska secured a place in the Soviet “hall of fame” through her memorable role in Eldar Ryazanov’s classic *Irony of Fate*. Soviet-born Anna German overcame her turbulent family history and became a successful Polish-language singer.

In our survey, respondents were asked to name three famous Poles/Ukrainians. While they had up to three choices, two-thirds of both Polish and Ukrainian respondents chose not to answer. Among those who gave a response, over one-third of Poles and almost one-half of Ukrainians provided at least one name. Politicians were the most common category. **Current Polish president Andrzej Duda was the most prominent Pole for Ukrainian respondents (13%), followed by former presidents Lech Wałęsa (10%) and Lech Kaczyński (8.5%).**

In Poland, Ukrainian politicians were also commonly named. Yulia Tymoshenko (over 10%) and former professional boxer and current Kyiv mayor Vitaly Klitschko (10.5%) were named most often, followed by current president Volodymyr Zelensky (6.5%). Former presidents Petro Poroshenko, Viktor Yushchenko and Viktor Yanukovich were listed by 3.5 to 4.5% of respondents. It seems that presidents epitomize

14 Rozmowa z Olą Hnatiuk, W poszukiwaniu złotego wieku, *Nowa Europa Wschodnia*, 1-2/2020, p. 7.

the two countries in the eyes of public opinion, and this is confirmed by previous similar surveys.¹⁵ At the same time, it is worth noting that 50% of respondents in both countries pointed to political relations as the worst part of Polish-Ukrainian relations. Hence, the presidents have a significant responsibility for the future of Polish-Ukrainian relations.

In terms of cultural figures and entertainers who were commonly named, around 7.5% of Ukrainians respondents named the poet Adam Mickiewicz, while around 9% of Poles indicated the poet Taras Shevchenko. Ukrainians also mentioned actress Barbara Brylska (5%) and singer Anna German (4.5%). **The age demographics of these respondents indicate the lingering importance of Soviet cultural heritage for older Ukrainians as mentioned above.**

These personalities are largely unknown for the generations born after 1991. For younger Ukrainians, Polish culture was represented by two quite dissimilar individuals – 19th-century composer Frederic Chopin and contemporary fantasy writer Andrzej Sapkowski. Among older Poles (aged 55–74), footballer Valery Lobanovski and pole vaulter Sergei Bubka symbolized Ukrainian sporting excellence. Among Ukrainian respondents the footballer Robert Lewandowski (3%) was the top Polish athlete, named even more often by those ages 25–34 (7%).

The 20th century Ukrainian nationalist fighter Stepan Bandera exists in a category of his own and merits special recognition for his ongoing role in Polish public discourse. In our survey he was named by almost 7.5% of Polish respondents, making him the fourth-most recognizable Ukrainian. His high ranking could be a reminder of the deep rifts in historical dialogue discussed earlier. At the same time, the fact that he placed fourth in the overall results of the survey might be more indicative of a declining importance of the memory of the Second World War in Polish-Ukrainian relations.

Barbara Brylska and the director Jerzy Hoffman led to the next question in the survey concerning cinema and TV productions seen in the last three years. In both countries, the number of respondents who have seen a TV production they considered Polish or Ukrainian was rather low. **Only 17% of Polish respondents have seen a Ukrainian production and 20% of Ukrainians have seen a Polish production.**

15 Joanna Konieczna-Sałamatin, op.cit.

In Poland, television continues to play an important role in people's lives, especially among older age groups. The top three screen productions are television series or programmes. The Ukrainian period soap opera *Love in Chains* was mentioned by 3% of all Polish respondents. Next was *Ladies and Villagers*, a Polish production with Ukrainian participants. The third position is held by the Russian-produced period soap opera set in a Cossack host, stanitsa, and shown in Poland as *Cossack Love*.

For Ukrainians it is still the 20th century classics that make them think of Poland. The epic *With Fire and Sword* based on Henryk Sienkiewicz's novel and set mostly in Ukraine came in first with 3.5%. The second place was taken by the Jerzy Hoffman film *The Quack* (2.2%). The third spot went to the classic series *Four Tank-men and a Dog* (1.5%). Only 2% of Ukrainian respondents declared having watched a Polish historical documentary, while almost 9% were sure to have seen a Polish production but had trouble naming it. The two contemporary productions that came more than once in the Ukrainian survey are *The Witcher* (22%) and *365 Days* (15%).

The survey also examined respondents' knowledge of the neighbour nation's literature. **While 22% of Polish respondents indicated books as sources of knowledge about Ukraine, only 2% reported having read a Ukrainian book in the last three years.** The only two authors mentioned more than once were Nikolai Gogol and Oksana Zabuzhko. In contrast, few Ukrainian respondents (3%) claim to have learned about Poland from books.

The previously-mentioned fantasy writer Andrzej Sapkowski (*The Witcher series*) was a top choice for the handful of Ukrainian respondents, along with Henryk Sienkiewicz (1846–1916) and his historic epics set in 17th-century Ukraine. Also listed was contemporary author Janusz Wiśniewski and his psychological romance *Loneliness on the Net*, which was also popular in Russia. Having compared these choices with the books that received Polish state support, it would seem that popular Polish literature finds its way to Ukrainian readers in its own right.

The memory of the tragic Wolyn Massacre overshadowed Polish-Ukrainian relations in the early 2000s. Thus, there were expectations that historic memory would be reflected in the responses to our survey,

especially on the Polish side. And indeed, **two-thirds of Polish respondents indicated interpretations of history as the worst area for Polish-Ukrainian relations, and 83% said visiting Ukraine only made it worse.** Just 10% of respondent thought that history is something that can fix Polish-Ukrainian relations and only a handful thought it should be a priority in the future.

This is probably explained by good everyday contacts between Poles and Ukrainians as well as the fact that many come to concede that issues of historical memory cannot be resolved. The Ukrainian sample for this questions was just answered by 87 persons. From the perspective of Polish respondents, culture in general was not seen as a priority area for mutual cooperation (8%), ranking far below security, integration, migration and energy.

3.4 Structural asymmetries in country-centred perceptions

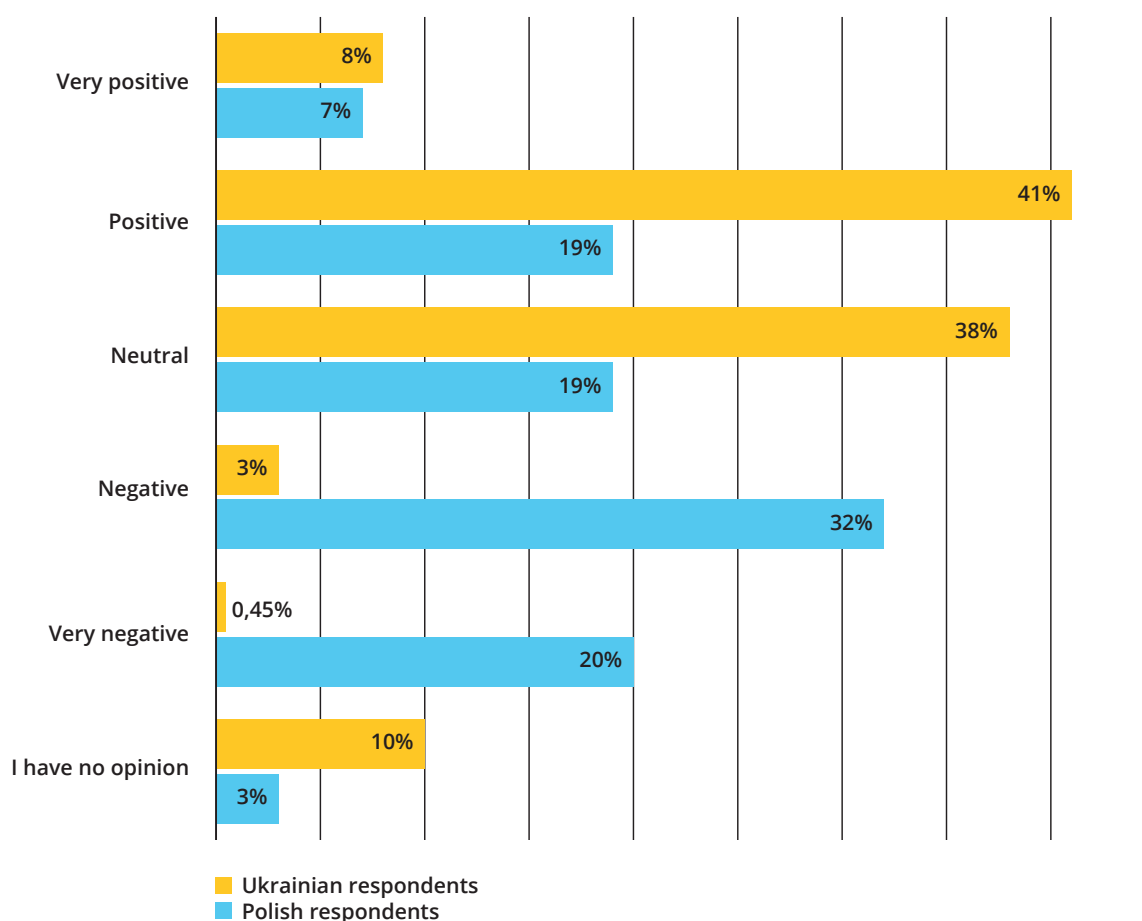
Bilateral political relations between Poland and Ukraine are marked by a structural asymmetry, which defines and limits peoples' perceptions of the neighbouring country. Poland's border with Ukraine is also an EU external border, marking a division between an EU member state and a country that has gone a long way to come closer to the EU (often benefiting from Polish support), but that is still a ways away.

With the attainment of the Association Agreement, DCFTA and the liberalized visa regime, the agenda of further European integration of Ukraine has stalled. Thus, Polish-Ukrainian relations demonstrate an acute need for a strategic aim regarding future cooperation. Given the current lack of direction for future bilateral relations, we asked respondents about their general perceptions of the neighbouring country and the state of bilateral relations between Poland and Ukraine.

Our survey results show that **the (geo)political asymmetry between the two countries translates into asymmetries in mutual perceptions.** While Poland and its government are generally viewed favourably among Ukrainians, Ukraine is viewed critically by respondents in both countries. These conclusions are made on the basis of

our study results as well as similar results from a 2013 mutual perception study.¹⁶ To gauge overall perceptions, we asked Ukrainian and Polish respondents about their impressions of the economic and political situation in their own country and the neighbouring state. Two-thirds of Ukrainian respondents reported positive or very positive views of Poland's economic situation and almost half (49%) had such views about its political situation.

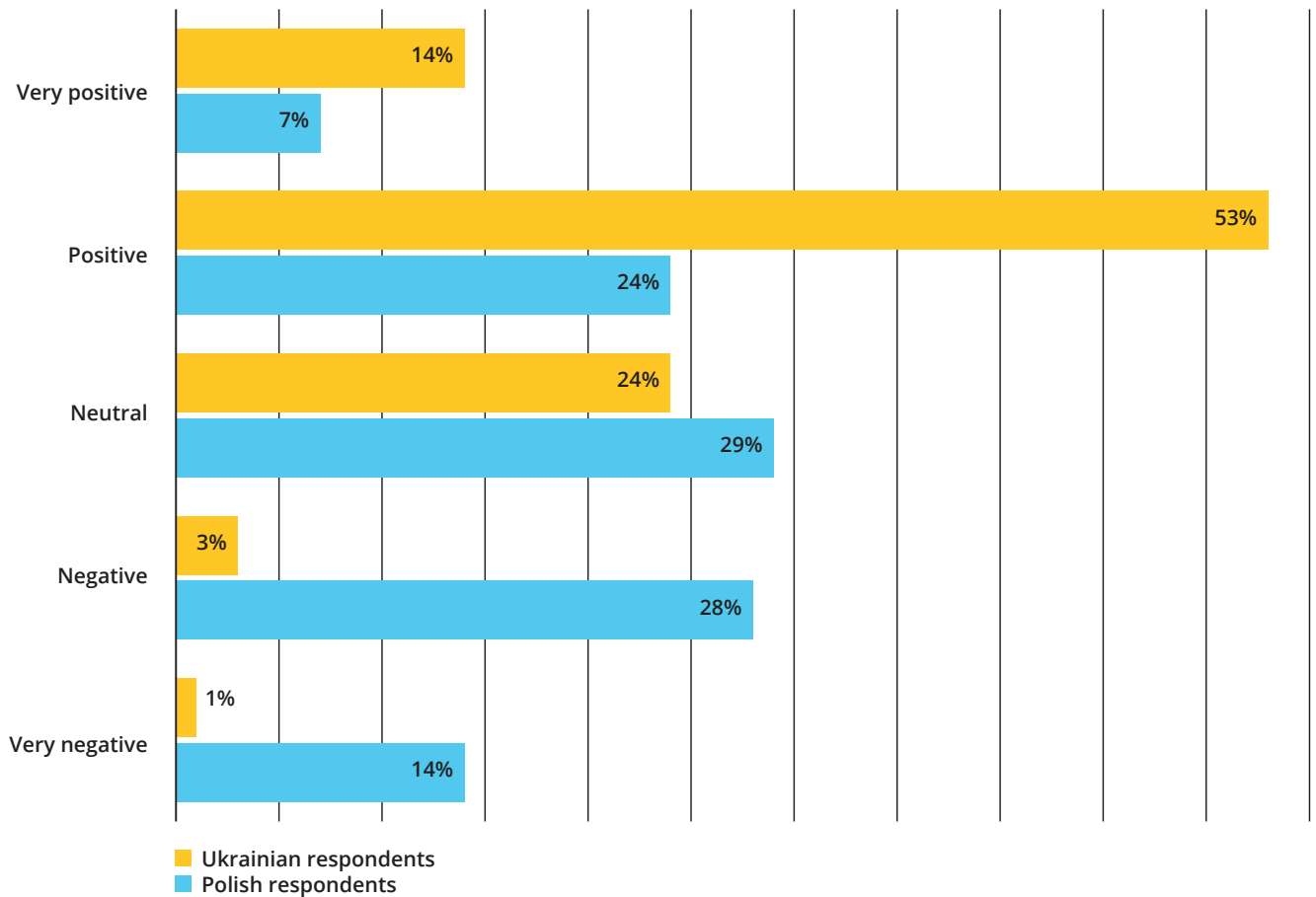
Fig. 8, IMPRESSIONS ON THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN POLAND



Source: Own data and analysis.

16 Joanna Fomina, Joanna Konieczna-Sałamatin, Jacek Kucharczyk, Łukasz Wenerski, Polska-Ukraina, Polacy-Ukraińcy. Spojrzenie przez granicę, Instytut Spraw Publicznych: Warszawa, 2013, pp. 53–56.

Fig. 9, IMPRESSION ON THE ECONOMIC SITUATION IN POLAND



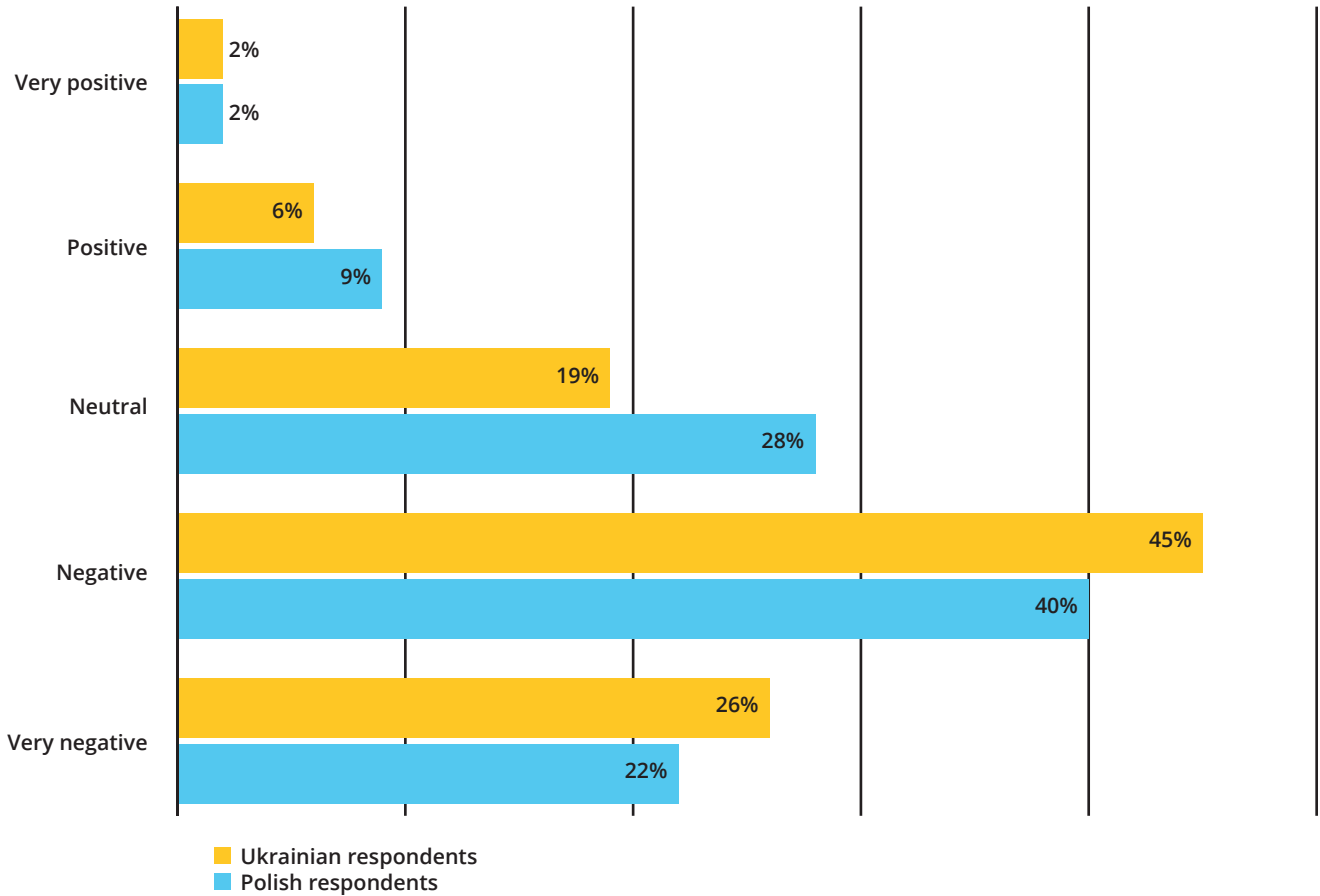
Source: Own data and analysis.

While almost a quarter of Ukrainian respondents expressed neutral feelings about the political situation in Poland, which might signal lack of knowledge or interest, it is indicative that all negative opinions are registered in single digits. Polish assessments of their country are more varied, reflecting their higher level of knowledge of and experience with Polish society. Over half (52%) of Polish respondents perceived the political situation in their country as negative or very negative.

The discrepancy between Polish and Ukrainian perceptions is logical. While many Ukrainians visit Poland, most learn about Poland from Ukrainian media, which show less awareness of problems and debates both inside Poland and between Poland and EU members/institutions. Additionally, as we have outlined, many Ukrainians visiting Poland do so because they perceive Poland as a place of economic opportunity and thus are more likely to positively assess its institutions.

A series of 2017 and 2018 public opinion polls commissioned by the International Republican Institute confirmed that Poland consistently ranks among the top countries Ukrainians have warmest feelings about.¹⁷

Fig. 10, IMPRESSION ON THE ECONOMIC SITUATION IN UKRAINE



Source: Own data and analysis.

17 See the following surveys: Dynamics of social and political views in Ukraine, April 24 -May 5, 2017 (in ukr: Динаміка суспільно-політичних поглядів в Україні 21 квітня – 5 травня, 2017), available at: https://www.iri.org/sites/default/files/2017-may-survey-of-residents-of-ukraine_en.pdf, p. 56, Dynamics of social and political views in Ukraine, September 14 – October 10, 2017 (in ukr.: Динаміка суспільно-політичних поглядів в Україні 14 вересня – 10 жовтня 2017), available at https://www.iri.org.ua/sites/default/files/editor-files/2017_11_Ukrainian%20Poll_UA.pdf, pp. 24–25, Dynamics of social and political views in Ukraine, March 15-31, 2018 (in ukr.: Динаміка суспільно-політичних поглядів в Україні 15-31 березня 2018), available at https://www.iri.org.ua/sites/default/files/editor-files/2018_03%20National_UA%20OFFICIAL.PDF, pp.45–46, Dynamics of social and political views in Ukraine, September 28 – October 14, 2018 (in ukr.: Динаміка суспільно-політичних поглядів в Україні 28 вересня – 14 жовтня 2018), available at https://www.iri.org.ua/sites/default/files/editor-files/National%20Poll%20Public%20Release%20UA_3.12.18.pdf, pp. 91–93.

Although the question was not included in the 2019–2020 questionnaire, the results showed a rise of warm feelings towards Poland in 2014 (with 57% reporting such feelings), probably due to political solidarity in this turbulent year, and slight decrease has taken place since 2017 (50%).¹⁸

Another poll, commissioned in 2018 by the US-based RAND corporation, asked respondents from Eastern Partnership countries which of the following countries' security and economic arrangements would be best for their own countries (possible responses were Poland, Belarus, Finland, and Switzerland). Of Ukrainian respondents, 28% cited Poland more often than any other country.¹⁹

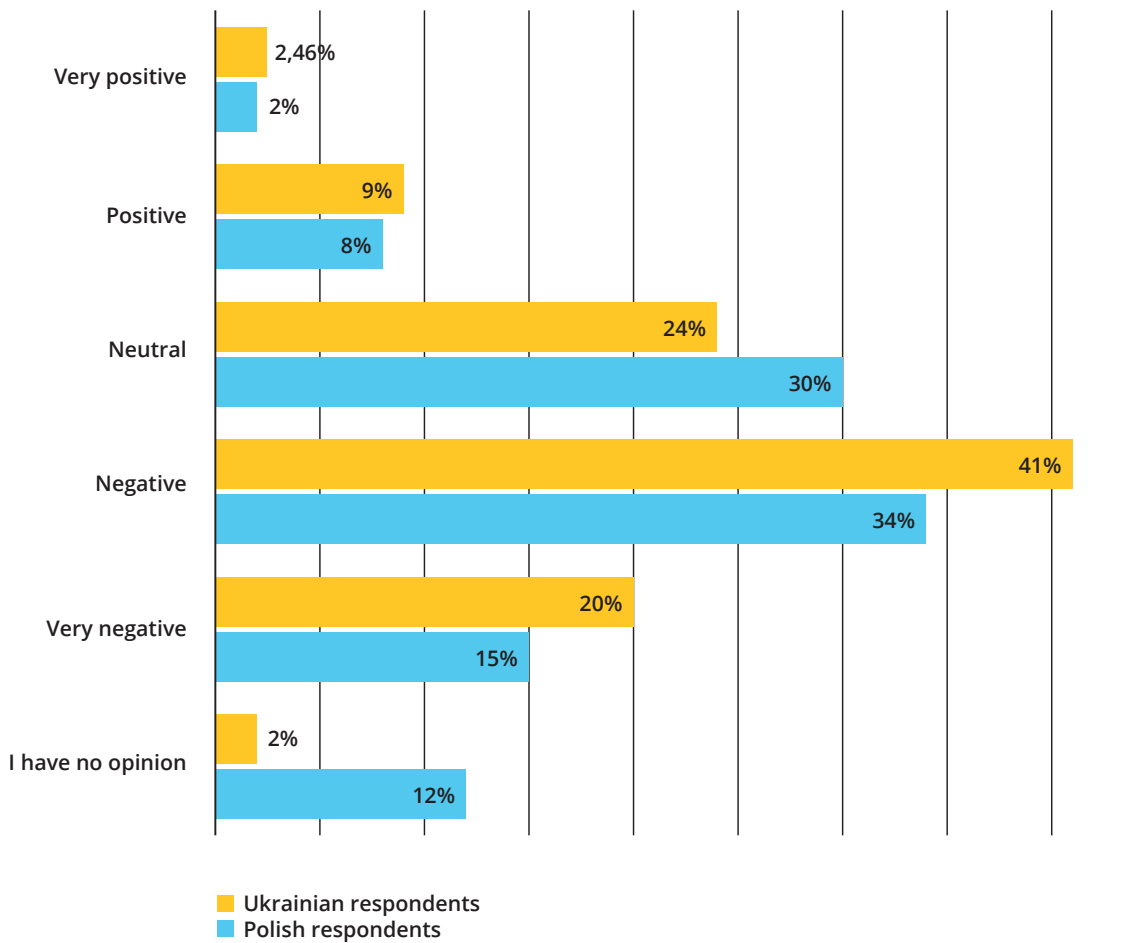
In stark contrast to perceptions of Poland, **our research revealed generally negative perceptions of Ukraine's internal situation.** The only difference is that among Polish respondents more people are neutral in their assessments of Ukraine's economic and political situation (almost a third in both cases). It is yet unclear whether these neutral statements are a sign of their lack of interest or an indication that there is some room for doubt or need for additional information.

The Ukrainian economy is perceived negatively or very negatively by 71% of Ukrainians and 68% of Poles, while 61% of Ukrainians and 49% of Poles gave similarly negative assessments of the political situation. Polish perceptions of the Ukrainian economy could be based on their knowledge that many Ukrainians come to Poland for work. The high percentage of Poles (42%) with a neutral opinion or no opinion of the political situation in Ukraine may suggest their lack of interest in or knowledge of Ukrainian political affairs.

18 Динаміка суспільно-політичних поглядів в Україні 28 вересня – 14 жовтня 2018, available at https://www.iri.org.ua/sites/default/files/editor-files/National%20Poll%20Public%20Release%20UA_3.12.18.pdf, p. 93.

19 Rethinking the Regional Order for Post-Soviet Europe and Eurasia. Rand Corporation, 2018, pp. 26–27.

Fig. 11, IMPRESSION ON THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN UKRAINE



Source: Own data and analysis.

When asked to assess if the other country is well-governed, Ukrainians seem to be both opinionated (less than 10% chose the “neither yes, nor no” option) and manifestly positive about Poland (almost 82% answered “definitely yes” or “rather yes”). On the contrary, Polish respondents are more unsure (38% of answers were “neither yes nor no”) and moderately negative in regard to Ukraine: over half (53%) think that Ukraine is “rather” or “definitely” poorly-governed.

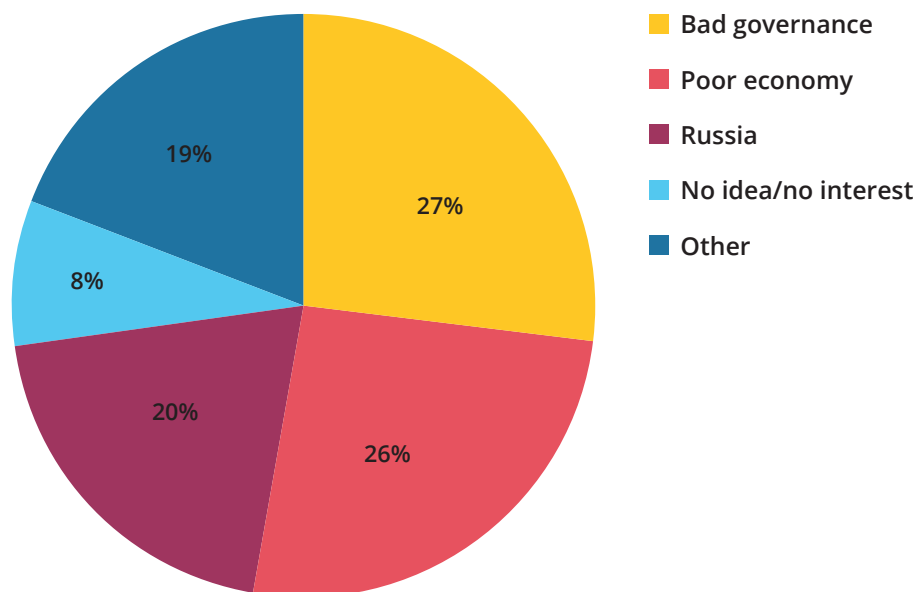
Respondents who gave negative assessments of the opposite country were asked to list what they perceived as their biggest problems. Due to the disproportionate percentage of respondents who assessed Ukraine negatively, we are unable to draw conclusions from both samples. While Polish respondents listed 865 specific problems they see in Ukraine, Ukrainians provided only 26 such problems in regards to Poland.

Overall, Ukraine's biggest problems as perceived by Polish respondents fell into three categories. The first category related to governance-related problems (230 total mentions, 27% of total responses). This category includes corruption (the most common answer, 120 mentions), issues related to bad governance (65 mentions), problems of democracy (27 mentions) and low quality of current political elite (18 mentions).

The second category was related to economic challenges (225 total mentions, 26% of total responses). Poverty was mentioned 94 times, economic ineffectiveness 75 times, and lack of jobs 65 times. This cluster visibly reflects the effect of the recent mass work migration to Poland: the Polish respondents seem convinced that poverty, lack of jobs and low wages in Ukraine are the contributing factor why its people migrate to Poland.

The third category relates to the challenges that have an effect on Russian-Ukrainian relations (173 total mentions, 20% of total responses). Here 98 Polish respondents referred to the war with Russia/ Russian aggression and 75 cited other problems like Ukraine's excessive dependence on Russia. This shows a great understanding among Poles of Ukraine's security challenges, which could be among the strongest compared to other EU countries.

Fig. 12, BIGGEST PROBLEMS OF UKRAINE



Source: Own data and analysis.

Despite the visible asymmetry in Polish-Ukrainian perceptions, respondents from both countries reported more positive attitudes towards each other when compared with neighbouring Russians, Germans, and Belarusians. First, **neither Ukrainians nor Poles report sizeable negative or very negative feelings towards each other.** However, Ukrainians are more positive towards Poles, with 82% of the respondents claiming that they have either “positive” or “very positive” attitude towards Poles and only 15% have neutral feelings. Poles, on the other hand, fluctuate between overall positive (48% for both “positive” and “very positive” answers) and neutral attitude (43%).

Unsurprisingly, Ukrainians tended to have varied opinions about Russia, which translates into over a third of the respondents (35%) having feelings towards Russians that are “neutral”, almost a third (32%) “positive” and “very positive” and 31% “negative” and “very negative”. Poles are more vague in their attitude towards Russians, with almost half of the respondents (48%) having a “neutral” attitude, one third (33%) “positive” and “very positive”, and less than one-third (21%) “negative”.

While both Poland and Ukraine have had contentious relations with Russia, the stronger feelings among Ukrainians appear to result from their current, predominately negative experiences with Russia stemming from the 2014 annexation of the Crimean Peninsula and the ongoing war in Ukraine’s eastern territories. For Poland, many of the most divisive issues in the relationship with Russia stem from the Second World War period, with the most recent event being the 2010 plane crash in Smolensk.

We found reverse results regarding attitudes towards Germany. **Almost two-thirds (61%) of Ukrainian respondents reported positive or very positive feelings towards Germany** and only 3% reported negative or very negative feelings. **Among Polish respondents less than half (41%) had a positive or very positive attitude, and 16% rated their attitude to be negative or very negative.** These results may reflect the anti-German rhetoric which in recent years has been popularized by right-wing organizations, Polish media, and the current Polish government. Anti-German sentiment in Poland emanates from the Second World War period when the German state committed mass atrocities against the Polish population.

Both Poles and Ukrainians share a border with Belarus. Feelings towards its people differ, however, in both states. **While over two thirds (69%) of Ukrainians view Belarusians positively or very positively, and only 1% have negative feelings towards them, Poles are overall (53%) more neutral.** Positive and very positive feelings towards Belarusians were expressed by less than a half (39%) of the respondents. While this difference in attitude to Belarusians expressed by Ukrainians and Poles need deeper qualitative studies to be properly assessed, intensifying migration of Belarusians to Poland could increase the contacts and have more impact on attitudes.

Between the two samples, Ukrainian respondents tended to be more optimistic in their assessments of bilateral political relations, with almost three-quarters (71%) reporting friendly or very friendly relations. Polish respondents were more reserved; an equal percentage of Poles thought relations were friendly or neutral (39% each). Regional differences in the Ukrainian sample reflected general trends. The highest percentage of Ukrainians who perceived relations neutrally (13%) or negatively (26%) were from the country's east. But even eastern Ukrainian respondents were more positive about the current state of bilateral relations than Polish respondents overall.

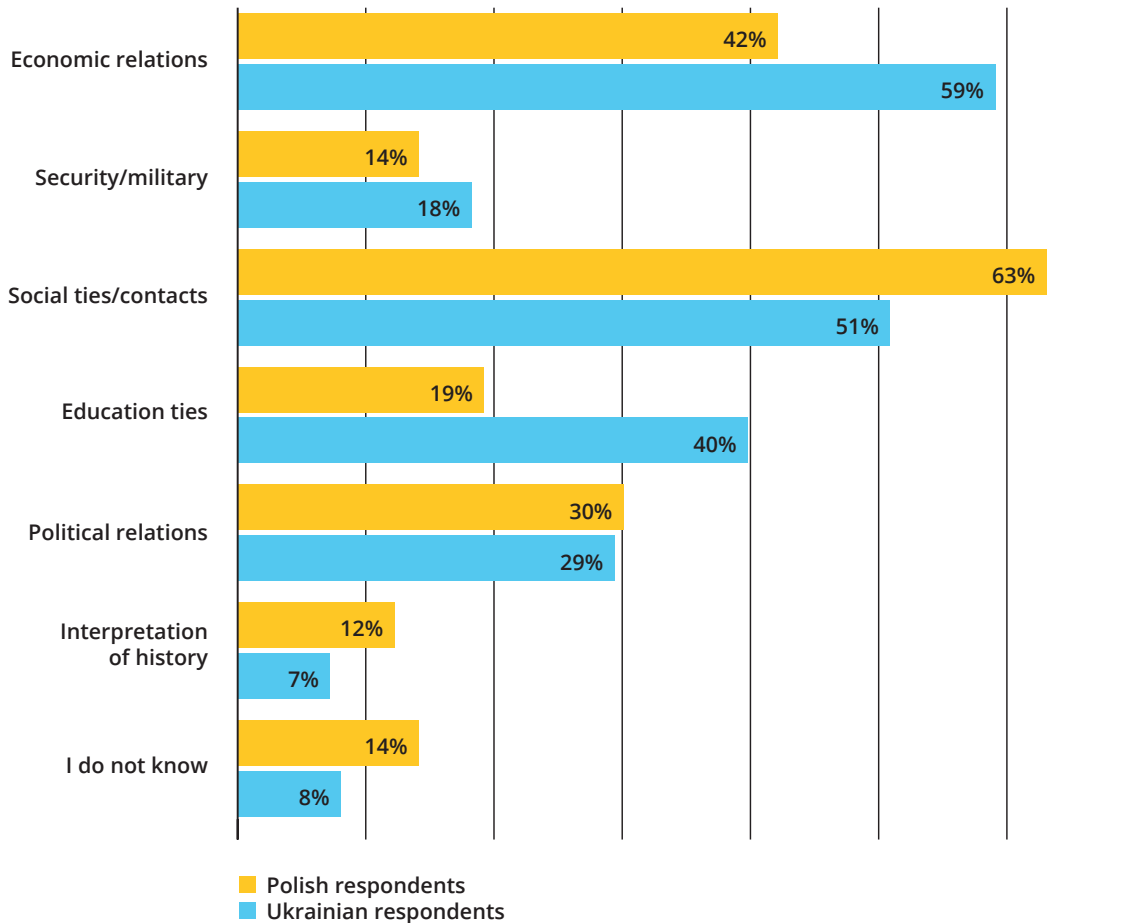
However, due to ambiguous political dynamics and the rising importance of historical policy, positive assessments of bilateral relations have fallen significantly since the 2013 mutual perception study was conducted. At that time, 85% of Ukrainians and 65% of Poles perceived bilateral relations as "good" or "very good"²⁰. The decrease has been sharpest among Polish respondents. We also observed a concurrent increase in those perceiving neutral relations, a 300% (5 to 20%) increase among Ukrainians and a 680% (5 to 39%) increase among Poles. There is reason for optimism, however. The increase in neutral perceptions among Poles has come at the expense of negative perceptions, which have fallen 70% (39 to 9%) since 2013.

Those who reported a negative view of bilateral relations were asked the question "What areas are the weakest in terms of relations between Ukraine and Poland?" **In both samples these respondents think that**

20 Joanna Fomina, Joanna Konieczna-Sałamatin, Jacek Kucharczyk, Łukasz Wenerski, op.cit, p. 61.

political relations and interpretations of history are the weakest areas, although this response was more common among Polish respondents. Other answers again showed that Ukrainians attribute more meaning to economic relations while Poles to societal contacts.

Fig. 13, STRONGEST AREAS OF COOPERATION

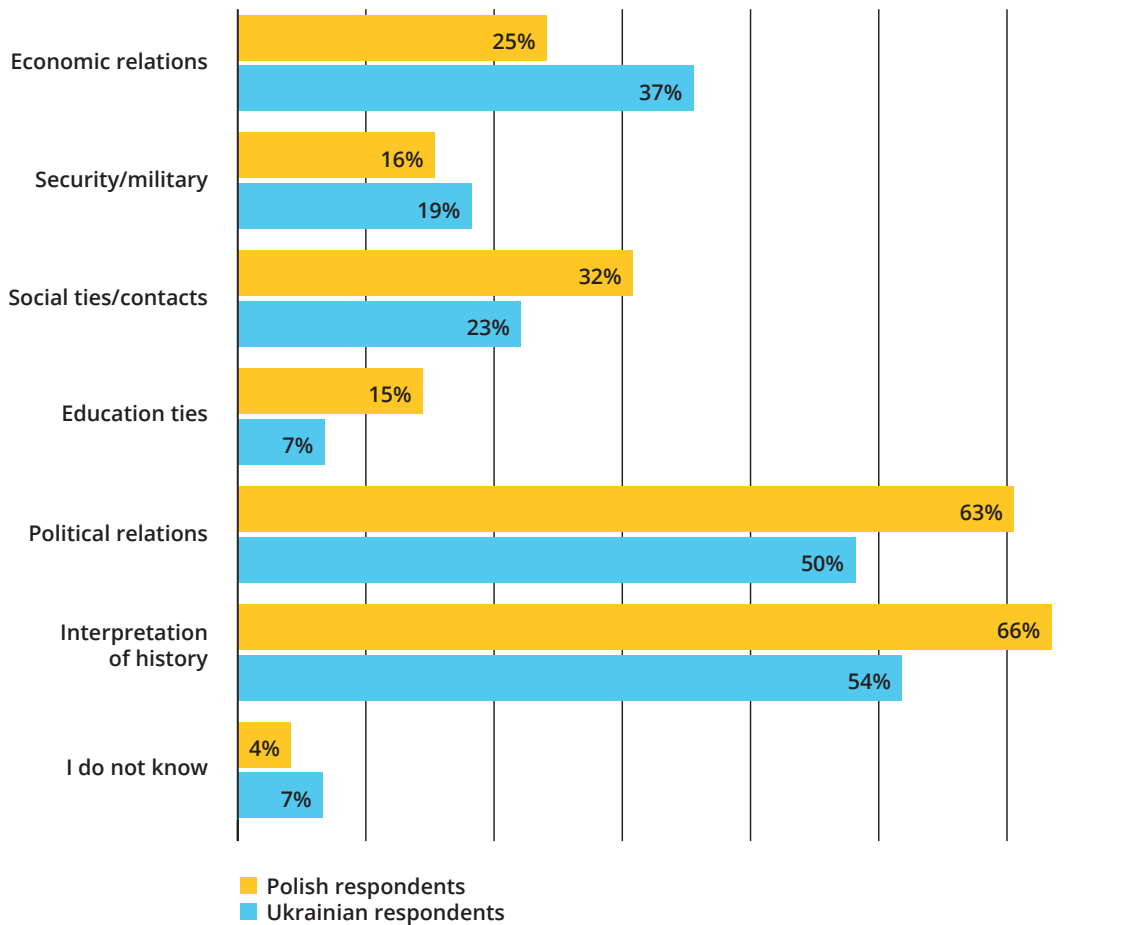


Source: Own data and analysis.

In assessment of the question “What areas are strongest in terms of relations between Ukraine and Poland?” there is a slight preference for developing economic relations on the Ukrainian side (59% compared to 42% of the Polish sample). This is probably due to the desire noted among Ukrainians to obtain the same level of economic development as Poland, being exposed to a number of Polish goods and Poland becoming a major destination for work migration.

Ukrainians also are interested in educational ties more than Poles are (39% against 19%), as in recent years Poland has become the major destination for Ukrainians who want to study abroad²¹. Poles put more importance to social contacts than Ukrainians do (63% against 52%), which is probably a result of more frequent contacts with Ukrainian migrants in Poland.

Fig. 14, WEAKEST AREAS OF COOPERATION

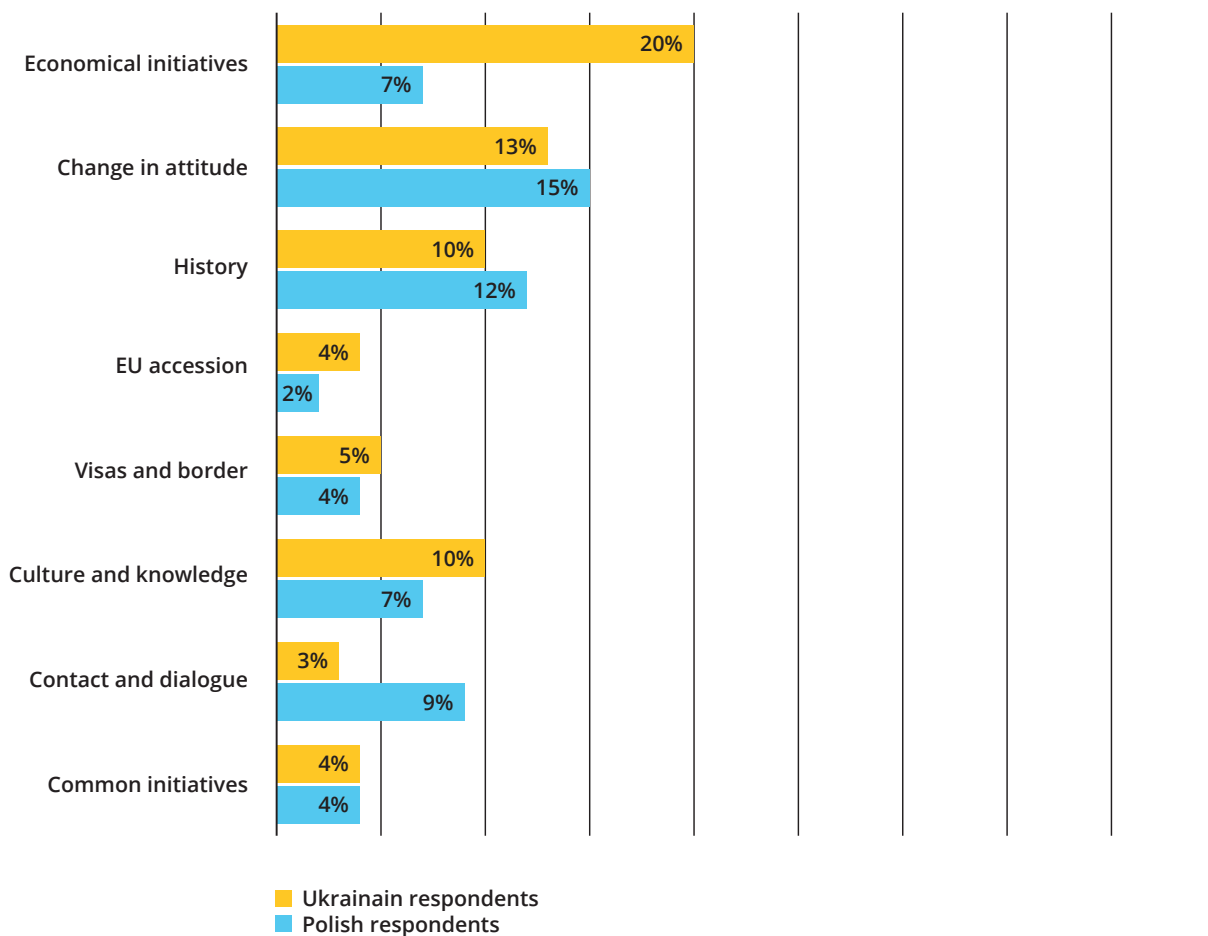


Source: Own data and analysis.

21 See for example the study of the Ukrainian think-tank CEDOS which reports that out of the 8% of Ukrainian students who studied abroad in 2016/2017, 44% were studying in Poland. See: Yehor Stadny: Ukrainian Students Abroad. Data before the 2017/18 School Year (in ukr. Єгор Стадний. Українське студентство за кордоном: дані до 2017/18 навчального року), available at: https://cedos.org.ua/pdf/Українське_студентство_за_кордоном_дані_до_2017-2018_року.pdf

Despite existing challenges, **71% of Ukrainian respondents and 65% of Polish respondents were optimistic about prospects for improving their bilateral relationship.** Only 6% of Polish respondents and 5% of Ukrainians thought it was impossible to improve relations. However, close to a quarter of Ukrainians (24%) and almost one-third of Poles (29%) do not have an opinion in this regard, which can indicate either low priority or lack of interest in this topic for a sizeable part of population.

Fig. 15, HOW TO IMPROVE BILATERAL COOPERATION?



Source: Own data and analysis.

Respondents who reported optimism about improving the bilateral relations were asked an open-ended question about what they thought could help to achieve that. As further confirmation of previous trends outlined in this report, our results revealed some leanings of the “economic” thinking of Ukrainians and the “social” thinking of Poles.

Ukrainians were three times more likely to believe that economic and trade cooperation are key to improving bilateral relations (20% compared to 7% of Poles). In contrast, Polish respondents most frequently mentioned the need for changes in attitude (15%), which encompasses responses related to changes in emotions, values, understanding, and societal acceptance. Ukrainian respondents listed these factors at a similar, but slightly less frequent rate (12%).

Both groups of respondents cited history and reconciliation (12% of Polish respondents and 10% of Ukrainian respondents). Within the group of Polish respondents who mentioned history and reconciliation, two visible subcategories of responses emerged. One group of responses underlined the need for less emphasis on history to improve relations. The other group of responses stressed that Ukraine must work with its guilt to attain this aim.

Finally, we asked respondents which areas they see as priorities for future cooperation. In their responses, counterintuitively, many more Poles seemed interested in security cooperation than vice versa (29% against 17%). Ukrainians are more interested in further cooperation in the realm of European integration (almost 30% against 23%), which suggests that the old idea of “Poland as Ukraine’s advocate in Europe” has not lost all its attractiveness and could be rethought for the challenges of the present day. Also, both Poles and Ukrainians show moderate interest in prioritizing migration issues, cultural exchanges (just as many people said “no opinion”).

4. Summary and conclusions



4. Summary and conclusions

The experience of significant labour migration from Ukraine to Poland in recent years has largely reshaped interactions between Poles and Ukrainians. This movement of people in search of employment opportunities, which is a result of both push and pull factors, namely the economic recession in Ukraine and the easing of migration rules for Ukrainian citizens in Poland, has worked in one direction only. Yet, Ukrainians are largely relocating to Poland to find employment. Their stay in the neighbouring country is often short-term and linked to seasonal employment. However more and more Ukrainians are staying in Poland for longer periods of time, often bringing their family members to join them.

As a result, the majority of interactions which take place between Poles and Ukrainians are happening in Poland and at workplaces. Despite a temporary recorded decline in Ukrainian migration to Poland due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of Ukrainian migrants is expected to increase once the pandemic is over. Our research revealed that among those Ukrainians who have not been to Poland, over half would like to visit it in the future.

Our research also reveals that mutual stereotyping and associations have been marked by this new reality. Both positive and negative associations are linked to the work migration context and especially the interactions from which they derive. For example, historical imagery and personal experience with migrant workers appear to be the most important sources of negative stereotypes about Ukrainians among Poles. Yet, this stereotyping looks asymmetrical, as Ukrainians tend to like Poles and Poland more and feel closer to them than vice versa. Still only a minority of Polish respondents have stated that there are too many Ukrainians in Poland or that Ukrainians take work from Poles.

This finding suggests that to a certain degree the Polish society has accepted Ukrainian migration. While both Ukrainians and Poles used historical stereotypes in reference to each other, Ukrainian associations tended to be neutral and cover a longer time span. Conversely, a number of Poles generated negative historical associations related

to experiences in the Second World War: *banderowiec* ("Bandera follower"), UPA, bandits and mass violence.

In both countries an important share of respondents did not voice any negative stereotypes and an important number expressed similarity and closeness between the nations, which still augurs well for future cooperation. More symmetrical contacts between Poles and Ukrainians from different societal strata could potentially reduce negative stereotypes in the future and more attention to cultural diplomacy and tourist exchange could contribute to more knowledge and awareness of the neighbour.

The results of this research raise important questions about the potential for hidden dangers in this asymmetrical relationship. In addition, we should remain aware of the possible parallel reality that often accompanies the inflow and presence of migrants in a host country. Thus, in mapping out measures that address these challenges we have identified two areas that require careful observations and further policy actions. This included the implementation of non-discrimination policies and practices within Polish workplaces as well as monitoring the activities of groups using nationalist, anti-immigrant and anti-EU rhetoric and their potential impact on social attitudes.

Overall, our research shows that greater efforts in the area of education and cultural diplomacy are needed. This survey shows that there is still too little knowledge about both nations. Instead, assumptions and outdated concepts prevail. This is especially visible in regards to culture which is an area that has a great potential of uniting people and overcoming barriers, and yet at the moment it remains almost completely unexplored.

Many Ukrainians still think of Polish culture using references from the Soviet times, while some Poles still confuse Ukraine with Russia and many admit knowing very little about the Ukrainian culture overall. This also holds true for popular culture which, as our research revealed, is becoming more recognizable in both societies. This means that Poles are watching more Ukrainian or Ukrainian-themed TV series or consuming Ukrainian goods. On the Ukrainian side, there is more exposure to Polish cultural products which they can access during their stay in Poland.

The asymmetry of political positions of the two countries translates into differences of perception. For Poland, its government and economy are generally viewed extremely favourably among Ukrainians; while Ukraine is viewed critically by respondents in both countries. The biggest problems in Ukraine as perceived by Polish respondents are related to governance, economy and Russian-Ukrainian relations.

Yet, respondents from both countries reported more positive attitudes towards each other when compared with attitudes to other nations, namely Russians, Germans, and Belarusians. Neither Ukrainians nor Poles report sizeable negative or very negative feelings towards each other. However, Ukrainians are more manifestly positive towards Poles, while Poles fluctuate between overall positive and neutral attitudes. In a similar vein, Ukrainian respondents tended to be more optimistic in their assessments of bilateral political relations, while Polish respondents were more reserved.

Also, due to ambiguous political dynamics and the rising importance of historical policy, positive assessments of bilateral relations have fallen significantly since the previous mutual perception study conducted in 2013, with sharpest decrease among Polish respondents. The good news is that polarization in this question is subsiding: the increase in neutral perceptions among Poles has come at the expense of both positive and negative ones. On the other hand, indifference and/or lack of interest might become an important challenge in the near future.

As for the strongest areas of cooperation, Ukrainians underline economic cooperation, while Poles stress the importance of societal contacts and interactions. The same pattern reproduced when representatives of both nations are looking for a way to improve bilateral relations. Ukrainians believe in the healing power of intensified economic exchanges and trade, while Poles speak about a need of changes in attitudes and societal acceptance.

On the Ukrainian side, this probably reflects the desire to obtain the same level of economic development as Poland, supported by exposure to Polish goods and the experience of work migration. On the Polish side, such an emphasis on attitudes could probably be a reflection of more frequent contacts with Ukrainian migrants in Poland. Both Ukrainian and Polish respondents think that political relations and interpretations of history are the weakest areas of cooperation.

Finally, in the areas seen as priorities for future cooperation, Poles seem most interested in security cooperation and Ukrainians in further cooperation in the realm of European integration. This suggests that the old idea of “Poland as Ukraine’s advocate in Europe” has not lost its attractiveness and could be rethought for the challenges of the present day. As optimistic as this finding might sound, it still calls for some caution given the potential for a worsening of political relations as seen in previous escalations between the two nations.

Overall, this study heralds a pluralistic age where Polish-Ukrainian relations are developing on different levels. They include interactions between people of different ages, different employment background, coming from different regions and with different language skills. This democratization of relations and their diversity implies that contentious topics of the past might become replaced by more commonplace interactions.

5. Research instrument



5. Research instrument

Dear Research Participant,

This research project is aimed at recognizing the current state of relations between Poles and Ukrainians who are direct neighbours and who share together common past experiences as well as have a potential of building a common future. The survey has been prepared by four institutions in Poland and Ukraine. They are the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Warsaw office, the Jan Nowak-Jeziorański College of Eastern Europe (Poland), the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Kyiv office and the Foreign Policy Council Prism (Ukraine). You can be assured that your answers in this questionnaire will be confidential. Please answer each question as accurately as you can. The study will take approx. 10 min.

S0. Country

- 1 Poland
- 2 Ukraine

S1. Please select your gender

One possible answer

- 1 Man
- 2 Woman

S2. How old are you? Enter your age in years.

ENTER THE EXACT AGE:

S3. Which region do you currently live in?

.....

S4. Please select the settlement size of the place you currently live in.

- 1 Countryside
- 2 City below 100 k citizens
- 3 City from 100 to 499 k citizens
- 4 City over 500 k citizens

S5. What is your education level?

- 1 Primary
- 2 Basic vocational
- 3 Secondary and post-secondary
- 4 University Degree - bachelor's degree
- 5 Master's degree
- 6 Doctorate degree

MAIN QUESTIONNAIRE

For Poland ask: Q1_1. Have you ever been to Ukraine?

For Ukraine ask: Q1_2. Have you ever been to Poland?

Single answer possible

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Ask Q2 if Q1 = 2

For Poland ask: Q2_1. Would you like to visit Ukraine?

For Ukraine ask: Q2_2. Would you like to visit Poland?

Single answer possible

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Ask Q3 if Q1 = 1

For Poland ask: Q3_1. How many times you were in Ukraine?

For Ukraine ask: Q3_2. How many times you were in Poland?

Single answer possible

- 1 1
- 2 2-3
- 3 4-5
- 4 6-9
- 5 10 or more

Ask Q4 if Q1 = 1

For Poland ask: Q4_1. What was the purpose of your visit in Ukraine?

For Ukraine ask: Q4_2. What was the purpose of your visit in Poland?

Multiple answer possible

- 1 Tourism
 - 2 Work
 - 3 Education
 - 4 Other, please specify
-

Ask all

For Poland ask: Q5_1. Do you have any family members who are Ukrainian?

For Ukraine ask: Q5_2. Do you have any family members who are Polish?

Single answer possible

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Ask Q6 if Q5 = 1

For Poland ask: Q6_1. Who are your Ukrainian family members to you?

For Ukraine ask: Q6_2. Who are your Polish family members to you?

Multiple answer possible

- 1 Parents
- 2 Grandparents
- 3 Husband / wife
- 4 Father-in-law / mother-in-law
- 5 Son-in-law / daughter-in-law
- 6 Other relatives

Ask all

For Poland ask: Q7_1. Do you have any friends who are Ukrainian?

For Ukraine ask: Q7_2. Do you have any friends who are Polish?

Single answer possible

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Ask all

For Poland ask: Q8_1. Have you ever worked or studied with Ukrainians?

For Ukraine ask: Q8_2. Have you ever worked or studied with Poles?

Single answer possible

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Ask Q9 if Q8 = 1

For Poland ask: Q9_1. Which statement describes your contact with Ukrainians?

For Ukraine ask: Q9_1. Which statement describes your contact with Poles?

Multiple answer possible

- 1 Studied together at the university
- 2 Colleagues in the same workplace
- 3 I was employing a Pole [ask for Ukraine] /a Ukrainian [ask for Poland]
- 4 A Pole [ask for Ukraine] / Ukrainian [ask for Poland] was my employer

Ask Q10 if Q8 = 1

For Poland ask: Q10_1. What was/is your experience in regard to your contact with Ukrainians?

For Ukraine ask: Q10_2. What was/is your experience in regard to your contact with Poles?

Single answer possible

- 1 Definitely positive
- 2 Rather positive
- 3 Neither positive, nor negative
- 4 Rather negative
- 5 Definitely negative

Ask all

For Poland ask: Q11_1. Do you speak Ukrainian?

For Ukraine ask: Q11_2. Do you speak Polish?

Single answer possible

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Ask Q12 if Q11 = 1

For Poland ask: Q12_1. How well do you speak the Ukrainian language?

For Ukraine ask: Q12_2. How well do you speak the Polish language?

Single answer possible

- 1 Very good (Advanced level)
- 2 Good (Upper intermediate level)
- 3 Medium (Intermediate level)
- 4 Bad (Basic level)
- 5 Very bad (Beginner level)

Ask all

For Poland ask: Q13_1. What comes to your mind when you hear the word "Ukrainian"? Please write up to three words/expressions

For Ukraine ask: Q13_2. What comes to your mind when you hear the word "Pole"? Please write up to three words/expressions

Open answer

- 1
- 2
- 3

Ask all

Q14. Do you follow what is going on in these countries?

Multiple answer possible, rotate answers

- 1 In Poland
- 2 In Ukraine
- 3 In Europe
- 4 In USA
- 5 In other countries
- 6 I do not follow information from any of these countries

For Poland ask if Q14 = 2: Q15_1. What are your main sources of information about Ukraine? Please mark all that apply

For Ukraine ask if Q14 = 1: Q15_2. What are your main sources of information about Poland? Please mark all that apply

Multiple answer possible

- 1 Media (TV, newspapers, magazines, radio)
- 2 Internet web sites
- 3 Social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram)
- 4 Books
- 5 For Poland: Friends/family from Ukraine
For Ukraine: Friends/family from Poland
- 6 Other, please specify

Ask Q16 if Q15=1 or 2 or 3 or 4

For Poland ask: Q16_1. Please name the most important specific sources of information about Ukraine which you use

For Ukraine ask: Q16_1. Please name the most important specific sources of information about Poland which you use

Open answer

1

Ask all

For Poland ask: Q17_1. Do you know any famous Ukrainians (for example politicians, history figures, actors, singers, writers)?

For Ukraine ask: Q17_2. Do you know any famous Poles (for example politicians, history figures, actors, singers, writers)?

Single answer possible

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Ask Q18 if Q17=1

For Poland ask: Q18_1. Could you name the first 3 famous Ukrainians that come to your mind?

For Ukraine ask: Q18_2. Could you name the first 3 famous Poles that come to your mind?

Open answer

- 1
- 2
- 3

Ask all

For Poland ask: Q19_1. Have you read in the last 3 years any books of the Ukrainian authors?

For Ukraine ask: Q19_2. Have you read in the last 3 years any books of the Polish authors? Single answer possible

- 1 Yes, please specify which one
- 2 No

Ask all

For Poland ask: Q20_1. Have you seen in the last 3 years any Ukrainian movies/TV programmes?

For Ukraine ask: Q20_2. Have you seen in the last 3 years any Polish movies/TV programmes?

- Single answer possible
- 1 Yes, please specify which one
 - 2 No

Ask all

For Poland ask: Q21_1. Do you buy regularly any Ukrainian goods?

For Ukraine ask: Q21_2. Do you buy regularly any Polish goods?

- Single answer possible
- 1 Yes, please specify which one
 - 2 No

Ask all

Q22. Generally speaking, how would you describe your attitude towards these nations?

Single answer in each row, rotate row order

		Very positive	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Very Negative
1	Ukrainians	5	4	3	2	1
2	Poles	5	4	3	2	1
3	Russians	5	4	3	2	1
4	Germans	5	4	3	2	1
5	Belarusians	5	4	3	2	1

Ask all

Q23. How do you assess the current relations between Ukraine and Poland?

Single answer possible

- 1 Definitely friendly
- 2 Rather friendly
- 3 Neutral
- 4 Rather unfriendly
- 5 Definitely unfriendly
- 6 I have no opinion

Ask Q24 if Q23 = 1 or 2

Q24. What areas are strongest in terms of relations between Ukraine and Poland? Please select up to three answers

Max 3 answers possible

- 1 Economic relations
- 2 Security / military
- 3 Social ties / contacts
- 4 Education ties
- 5 Political relations
- 6 Interpretations of history
- 7 Other, please specify....
- 8 I don't know

Ask Q25 if Q23 = 4 or 5

Q25. What areas are the weakest in terms of relations between Ukraine and Poland? Please select up to three answers

Max 3 answers possible

- 1 Economic relations
- 2 Security / military
- 3 Social ties / contacts
- 4 Education ties
- 5 Political relations
- 6 Interpretations of history
- 7 Other, please specify...
- 8 I don't know

Ask all

Q26. Do you think Poland and Ukraine can still improve their relations?

Single answer possible

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 No opinion
- 4 There is no need for improvement. Relations between both countries are good.

Ask Q27 if Q26 = 2

Q27. What, in your opinion, are the main obstacles to improving Polish-Ukrainian relations? Please name maximum three.

Open answer

- 1
- 2
- 3

Ask Q28 if Q26 =1

Q28. What, in your opinion, can help improve Polish-Ukrainian relations? Please name maximum three.

Open answer

- 1
- 2
- 3

Ask all

Q29. What is your impression of the political situation in these countries?

Single answer in each row, rotate row order

		Very positive	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Very negative	I do not have an opinion
1	in Ukraine	5	4	3	2	1	
2	in Poland	5	4	3	2	1	

Ask all

Q30. What is your impression of the economic situation in these countries?

Single answer in each row, rotate row order

		Very positive	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Very negative	I do not have an opinion
1	in Ukraine	5	4	3	2	1	
2	in Poland	5	4	3	2	1	

Ask all

For Poland ask: Q31_1. In your opinion is Ukraine a country that is well-governed?

For Ukraine ask: Q31_2. In your opinion is Poland a country that is well-governed?

Single answer possible

- 1 Definitely yes
- 2 Rather yes
- 3 Neither yes, nor no
- 4 Rather no
- 5 Definitely no
- 6 I have no opinion

Ask Q32 if Q31 = 4 or 5

For Poland ask: Q32_1. What are the biggest problems faced by Ukraine?

For Ukraine ask: Q32_2. What are the biggest problems faced by Poland?

Open answer

- 1
- 2
- 3

Ask all

Q33. In which area should Poland and Ukraine cooperate the most?

Single answer possible

- 1 Security issues
- 2 Energy security
- 3 European integration
- 4 Culture
- 5 Migration
- 6 Other, please specify.....
- 7 None
- 8 I have no opinion

If not, which country could take such a role?

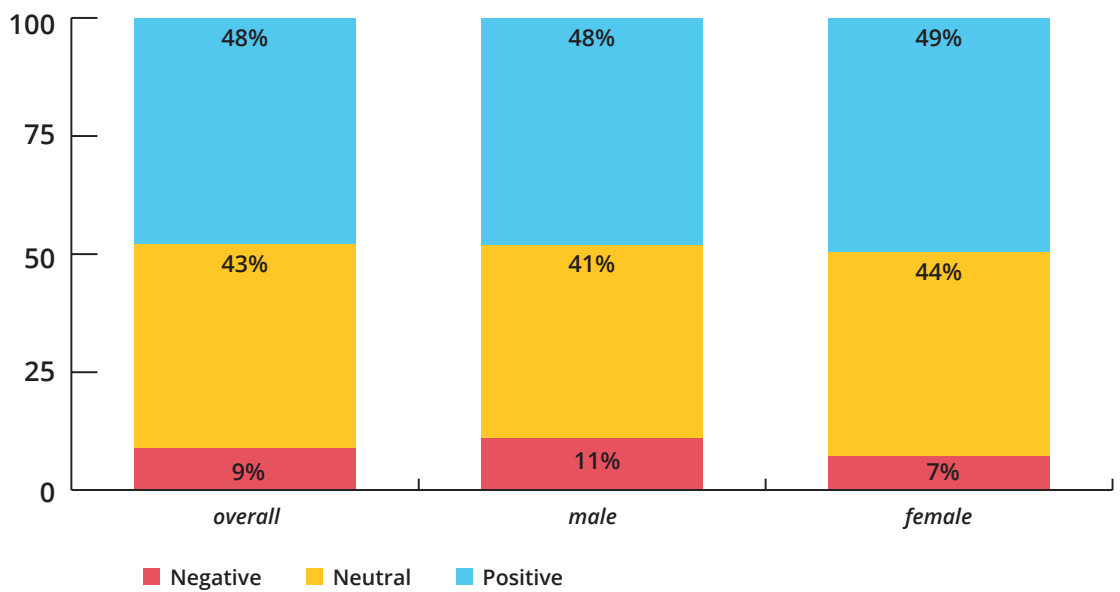
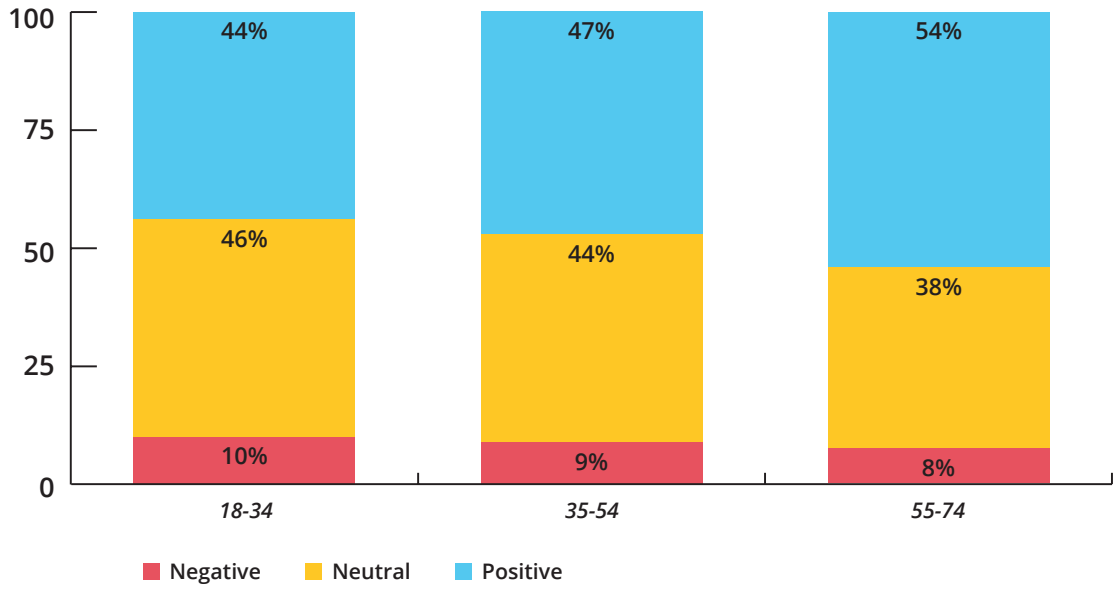
Thank you for your time!

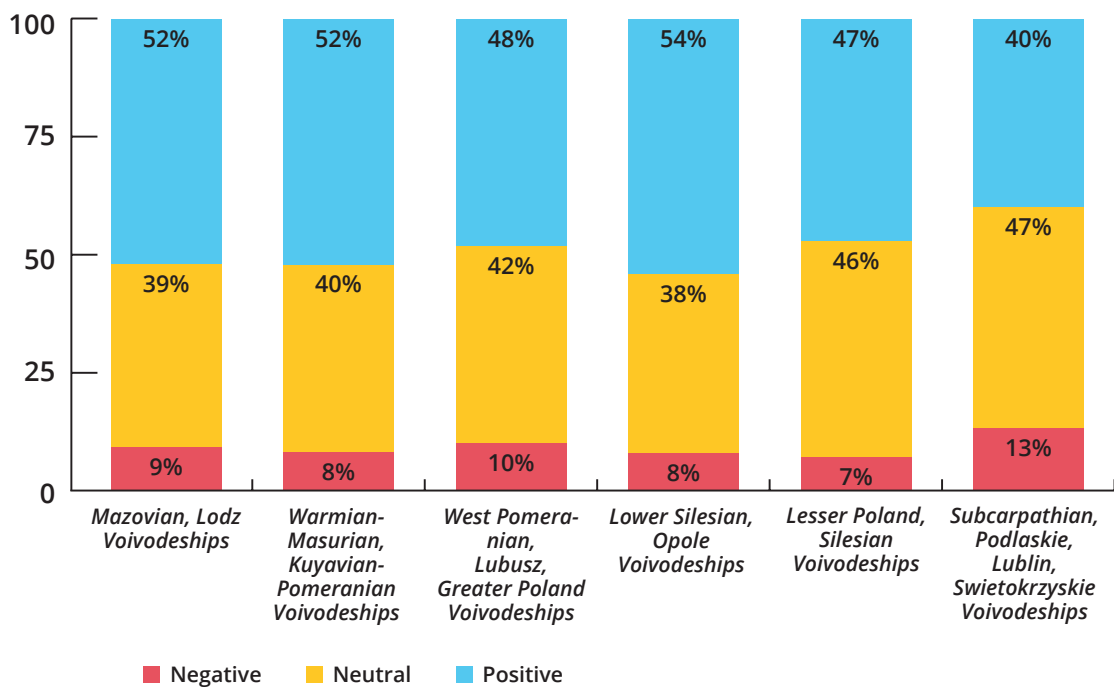
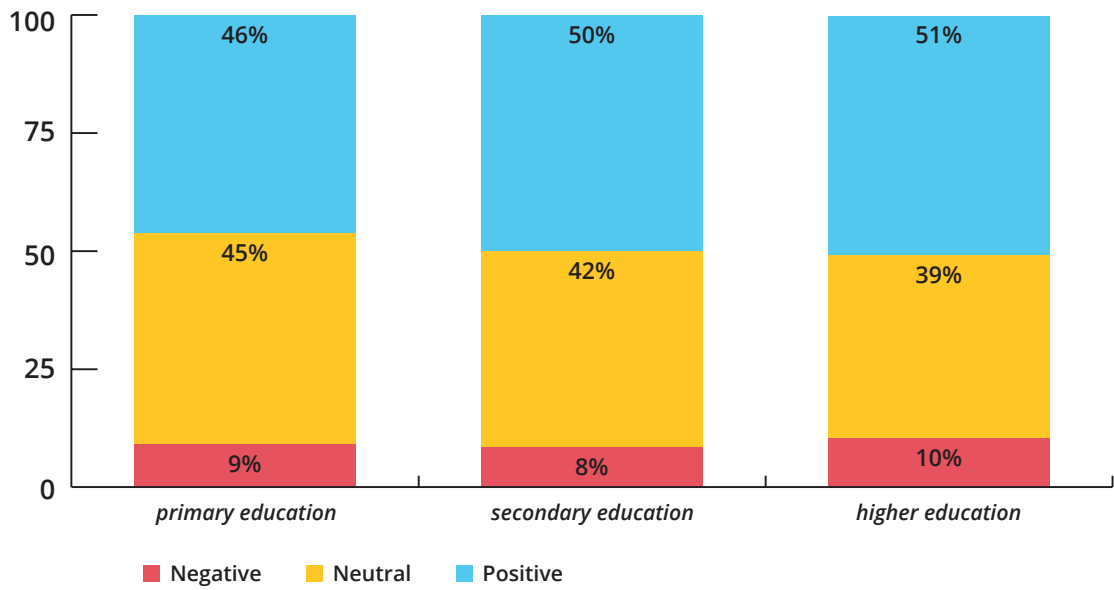
6. Annex



Q22 part 1

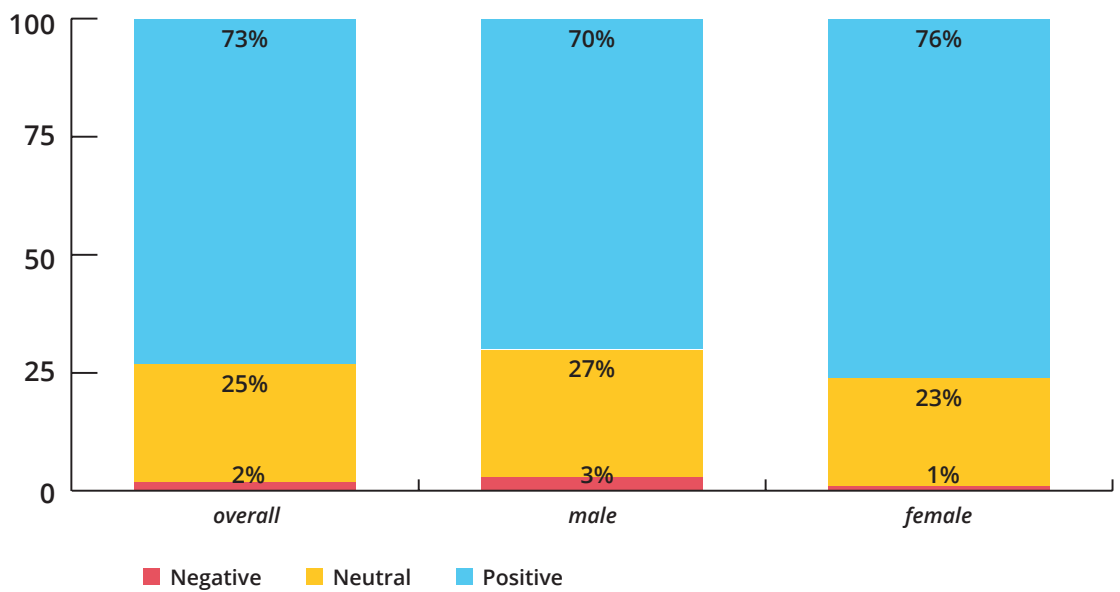
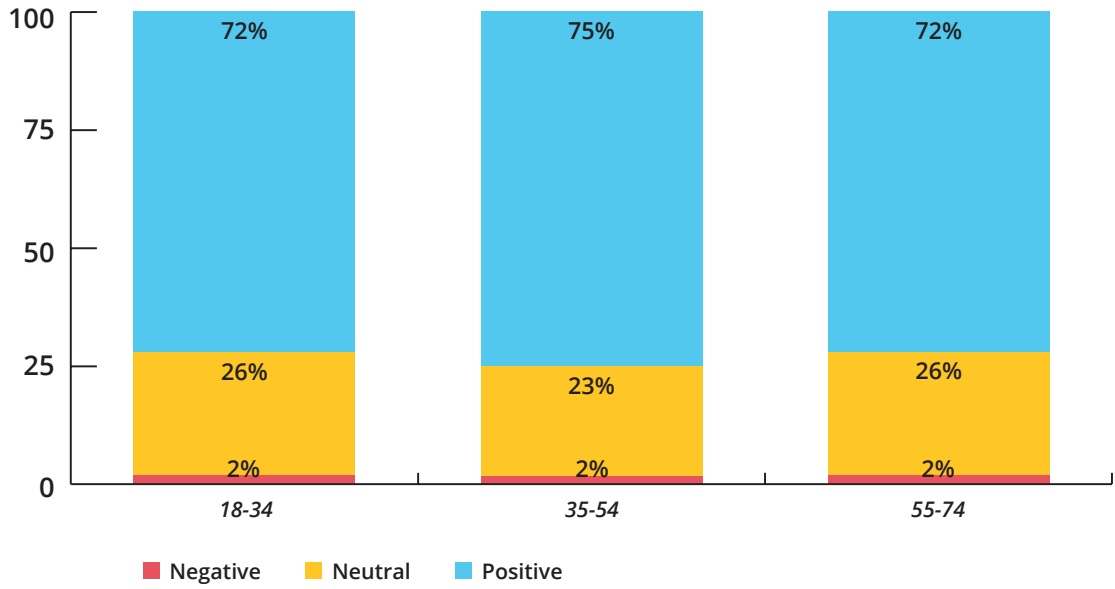
How would you describe your attitude towards Ukrainians

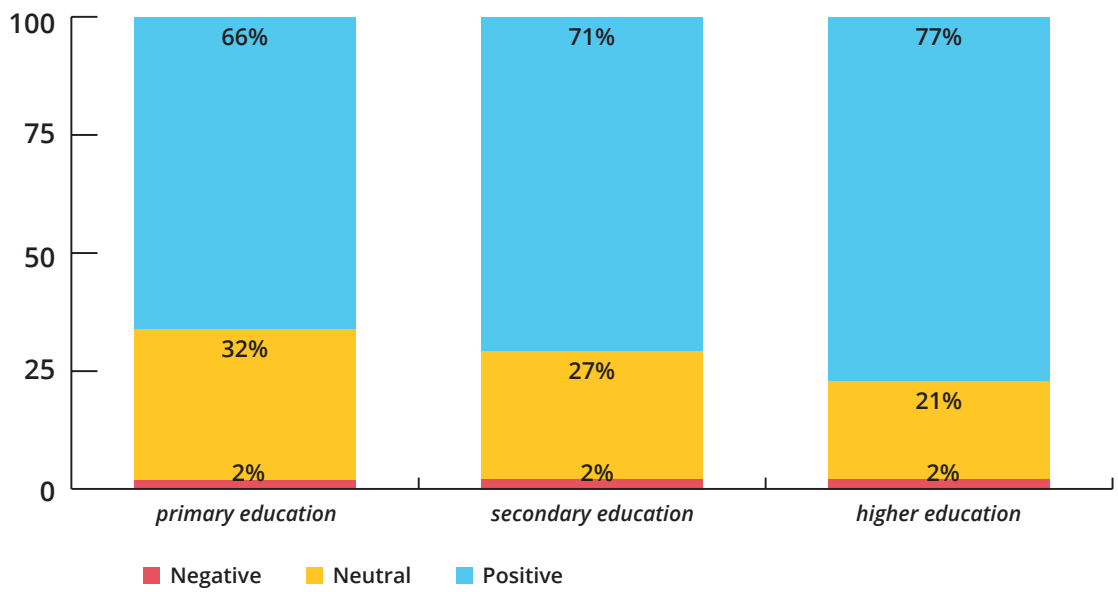
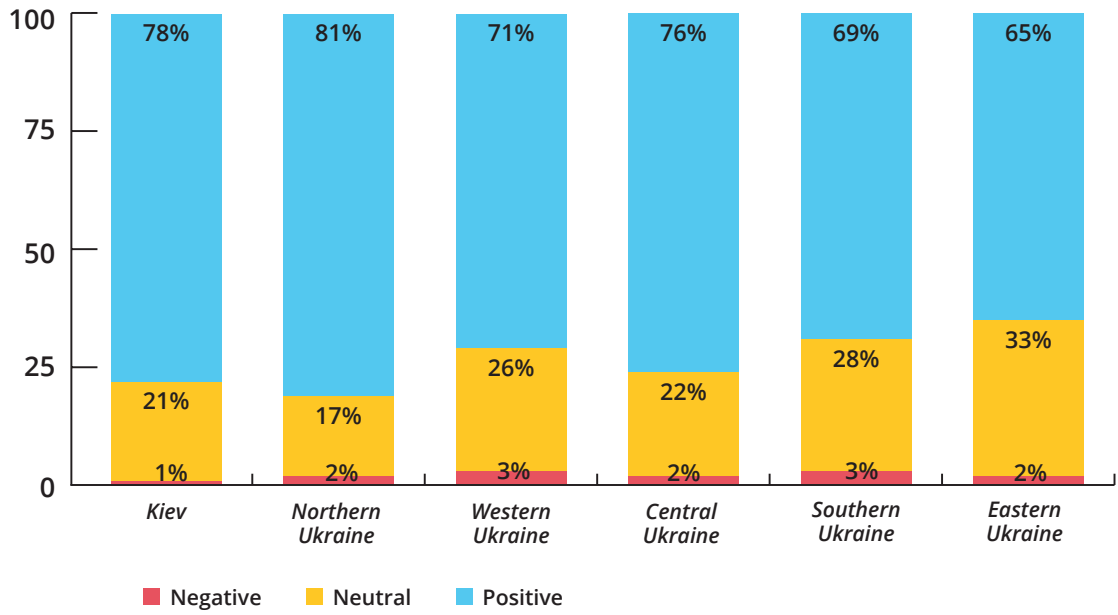




Q22 part 2

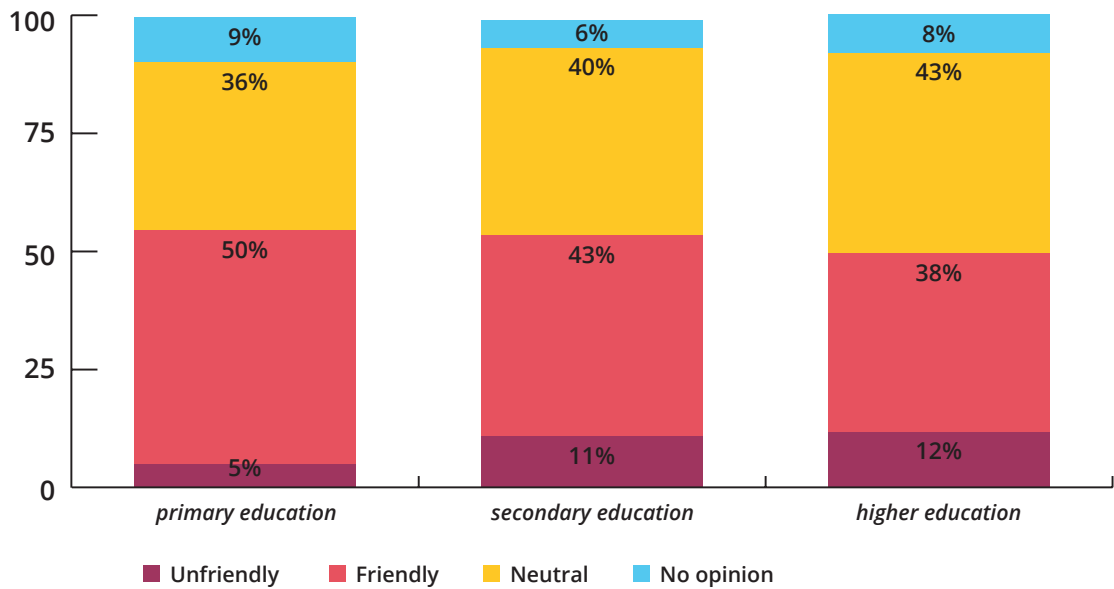
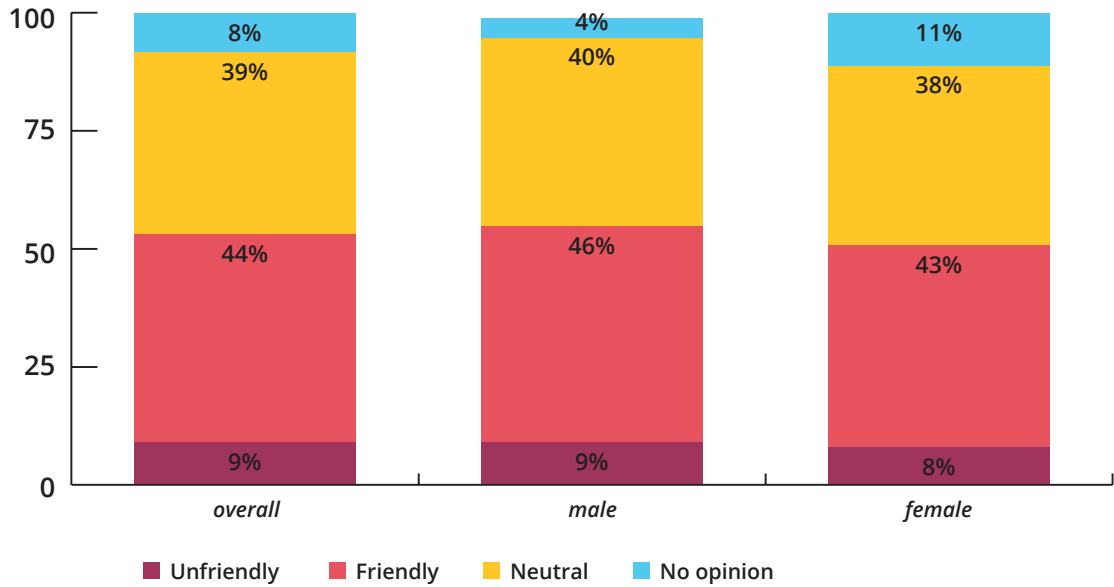
How would you describe your attitude towards Poles?





Q23

How do you assess the current relations between Ukraine and Poland? (Polish respondents)



Q23

How do you assess the current relations between Ukraine and Poland? (Ukrainian respondents)

