

Katyn Forest Massacre and the Massacres of Poles in Volhynia in Polish Politics of Memory (1990-2019)

It is a well-known fact that every ruling elite is trying to promote its own, very selective vision of history. This assumption opens up a promising research field for sociologists and political scientists. It seems particularly interesting to examine the way in which the state institutions are trying to influence the collective memory of very sensitive and traumatic historical events, especially if the social memory has been suppressed for a long time. In the context of contemporary Polish history, two events immediately comes to mind: the Katyn Forest Massacre and the Massacres of Poles in Volhynia.

The author's aim is to achieve the following research objectives:

1. to describe and understand the way in which the state institutions tried to influence the Polish collective memory of the Katyn Forest Massacre and the Massacres of Poles in Volhynia. The chronological scope of the analysis will cover the period from 1990 to 2019. The focus will be put on transformation of a society's collective memory through the public education system and commemorative resolutions adopted by the Polish Parliament.
2. to collect and analyse the data about the Poles attitudes towards the official politics of memory. More specifically, the author seeks to establish whether the state-led commemorative activities regarding the Katyn Forest Massacre and the Massacres of Poles in Volhynia are visible and well received by the society.

The main hypothesis of the project is formulated as follows:

H1: The creators of the state's historical policy have been actively involved in highlighting the importance of the Katyn Forest Massacre since the early 1990's. The significance of the Massacres of Poles in Volhynia has not been officially acknowledged until the end of the first decade of the 21st century.

The author will use the following scientific methods:

1. **the qualitative content analysis** - the author seeks to examine the stenographic records from the proceedings of the Sejm and Senate Committees responsible for drafting resolutions concerning the Katyn Forest Massacre and the Massacres of Poles in Volhynia. Moreover, the presented project includes an analysis of the speeches of deputies and senators relating to the above subject matter delivered during the plenary sessions of the Sejm and Senate. The examination of the final content of the commemorative resolutions adopted by the Polish Parliament will be also conducted. Yet another aim is to analyse the core curriculum and history textbooks used in Polish schools in the period 1990-2019.
2. **the survey method** - the presented project includes a nationwide survey on attitudes towards the official politics of memory. The mentioned research will be conducted on the representative (random) sample of adult Poles. The stratified sampling will be applied to select the appropriate participants. When stratifying the sample the following variables will be taken into account: gender, age, education and the respondent's region of residence. The planned survey will be carried out with the use of a Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing technique (CATI)

Expected Scientific and Societal Impact of the Project:

The project touches on important and, at the same time, extremely controversial issue. It can be viewed as a contribution to the long-lasting, public and academic discussion on the Polish politics of memory. The obtained project results will advance our understanding of this multilevel phenomenon. The gathered information can also be useful from the perspective of Polish policy makers and various non-governmental organizations that seek to commemorate the victims of totalitarian regimes.