

Beyond the  
fortress:  
emotional  
components of  
resilience in  
the context of  
war in Ukraine.





Between late February and May 2022, approximately 3.5 million war refugees from Ukraine crossed into Poland, with nearly one million remaining in the country.

For a state of 37 million people - largely homogenous and without prior experience managing large-scale migration - this constituted an unprecedented situation.

**CNN** On Scene

Lviv, Ukraine

9:32 PM

**BREAKING NEWS**

**UN: 600,000+ FLEE WAR-TORN UKRAINE AMID RUSSIAN INVASION**

TONIGHT 8P ET

STATE OF THE UNION  
**ADDRESS**  
SPECIAL LIVE COVERAGE

**CNN**

NEWSROOM

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Around 75%- 80% of Poles have been involved in helping Ukraine, including by sending packages with essential goods, participating in charity collections, engaging in volunteer work, and hosting Ukrainians in their homes;

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Ukrainian diaspora: as of 2022, there were more than 2 million immigrants in Poland, of which about 1.5 million were Ukrainians.

March 12, 2022, passed the Act on Assistance to Ukrainian Citizens in Connection with the Armed Conflict on the Territory of Ukraine;

- entry to people without documentation was granted

€11 billion (around 2% of the country's GDP) has been allocated to various forms of aid in the first year of the war. By the end of 2023, this amount had reached approximately €20 billion (3.1% of GDP);

190,000 Ukrainian children are enrolled in Polish schools.

- Gallup “migrant acceptance index”: minimum = 0, maximum = 9

|              | 2016       | 2019       |                              | 2016       | 2019 |                                  | 2016       | 2019 |
|--------------|------------|------------|------------------------------|------------|------|----------------------------------|------------|------|
| <b>World</b> | <b>5.3</b> | <b>5.2</b> | <b>Post-communist Europe</b> | <b>2.9</b> |      | <b>Non-post-communist Europe</b> | <b>6.8</b> |      |
|              |            |            | Poland                       | 3.3        | 4.2  | Belgium                          | 6.2        | 4.8  |
|              |            |            | Czechia                      | 2.3        |      | Denmark                          | 7.1        |      |
|              |            |            | Hungary                      | 1.7        | 1.6  | Finland                          | 6.6        |      |
|              |            |            | Slovakia                     | 1.8        | 2.5  | France                           | 6.5        |      |
|              |            |            | Estonia                      | 2.4        |      | Germany                          | 7.1        |      |
|              |            |            | Latvia                       | 2.0        | 2.3  | Greece                           | 3.3        |      |
|              |            |            | Lithuania                    | 2.7        | 3.7  | Iceland                          | 8.3        | 8.4  |
|              |            |            | Bulgaria                     | 2.4        |      | Ireland                          | 7.7        | 7.9  |
|              |            |            | Romania                      | 2.9        |      | Italy                            | 6.5        |      |
|              |            |            | Slovenia                     | 4.4        |      | Luxembourg                       | 7.5        |      |
|              |            |            | Croatia                      | 2.4        | 1.8  | Malta                            | 5.0        |      |
|              |            |            | Serbia                       | 1.8        | 1.8  | Netherlands                      | 7.5        |      |
|              |            |            | Montenegro                   | 1.6        | 1.9  | Norway                           | 7.7        |      |
|              |            |            | North Macedonia              | 1.5        | 1.5  | Portugal                         | 6.7        |      |
|              |            |            |                              |            |      | Spain                            | 7.4        |      |
|              |            |            |                              |            |      | Sweden                           | 7.9        | 7.9  |
|              |            |            |                              |            |      | Switzerland                      | 7.2        | 6.4  |
|              |            |            |                              |            |      | United Kingdom                   | 6.6        |      |

# Searching for a clue

## **Interpretative frames:**

Never again – again and again;

P. Slovic, If I look at the mass I will never act”: Psychic numbing and genocide. Judgment and Decision Making, Vol. 2, No. 2, April 2007, pp. 79–95

Zero-responder contribution (*public good* context);

Resilience;

Aritmetics of compassion (*the question of a just contribution, outsider vs. insider perception*)

The socially constructed image of a war victim as a kind of moral identity - shaping the emotional attitudes of hosts toward refugees.

# punitive compassion?

**Virtuous violence** – people commit violence because they believe it is the morally right thing to do.

**Punitive compassion** - acts of compassion are morally right *per se*, and they are sometimes used as a punitive measure against an aggressor.

- Can such acts move beyond symbolic gestures and group mourning rituals?
- A. P. Fiske, T. S. Rai, *Virtuous Violence: Hurting and Killing to Create, Sustain, End, and Honor Social Relationships* (2014)





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What do we know about the group resilience in the time of crisis?

Is this hospitality (a temporary social practice) or act of rescue?

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Whose resilience? War refugees?

Hosting families?

Does a newcomer become a group member?

Do models of humanitarianism and traditional domestic hospitality have similar cultural meanings and patterns of social organization?

- the ability of hosts to control their guests, impose their own rules on them, and derive certain benefits from hosting (*Of Hospitality* by [Derrida \(2000\)](#))

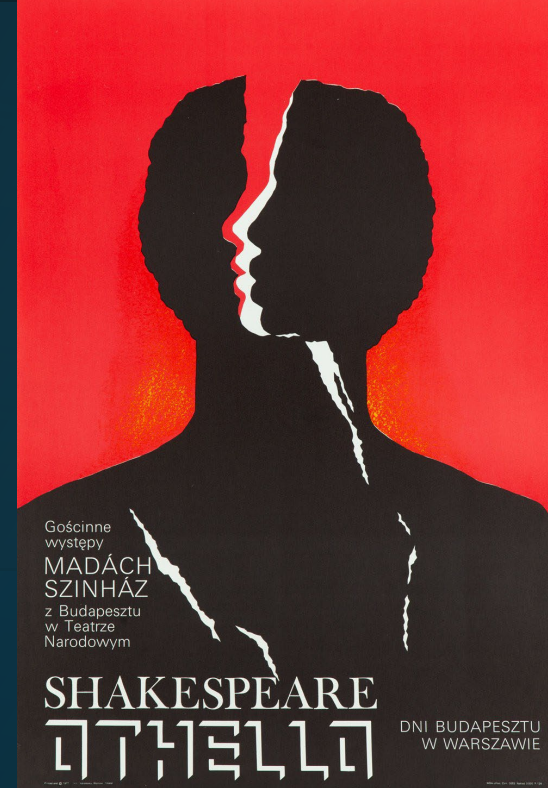
- the obligation of hosts toward the guest, urging people to open themselves to the Other and, therefore, to abandon or weaken their protection and security ( [Levinas \(1961\)](#) )

- high moral demands of sacrifice.

- Individualism                      vs                      group solidarity



Will it be like in a  
Shakespearean  
tragedy, where acts  
of heroism and noble  
motivations still  
ultimately lead to  
disaster?



## 1. Context/History-specific vs Universal

Russia is the aggressor that must be punished at all costs, because its revanchism is - and always has been - destructive.

2. Pseudoinefficacy  $\longleftrightarrow$  individual (grandiose?) agency

3. Identity (personal? national?)



Figure 1: Imagery and attention produce feelings that motivate helping behavior.



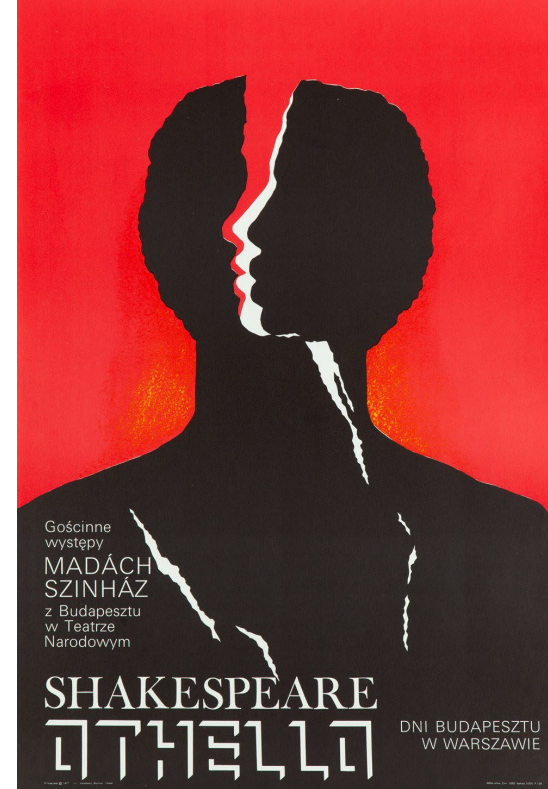
- **Strain on social support systems** - healthcare, education, and childcare services'
- **Russian propaganda** and its influence;
- **The rise, reinforcement of nationalist parties**  
*Stop the Ukrainization of Poland campaign*
- **Increased sense of risk** (in the context of NATO protection and the potential escalation of the conflict (including its spillover into Poland and the risk of nuclear confrontation);





## 2024 presidential elections in Poland

- anti immigration, anti-ukrainian rethoric;
- Grzegorz Braun – openly pro-Russian candidate, Holocaust denier, recieved more than a milion votes;
- the nationalist, Trumpian, historian Karol Nawrocki has narrowly defeated the liberal, pro-EU mayor of Warsaw, Rafał Trzaskowski;
- Nawrocki as a candidate demonised Ukrainian refugees in the country and opposed Ukrainian integration into European-oriented bodies, such as the EU and NATO.



Respondents read a realistic “Iran War” scenario modeled on the dilemmas that faced President Truman in 1945. In this hypothetical conflict, the United States is fighting a difficult ground war against Iran that it is expected eventually to win, but at a projected cost of between 100 and 40,000 American troops.

Participants were asked to choose between

(1) continuing the ground war (GW), accepting those troop losses;

(2) launching a nuclear strike that would end the war immediately, killing either 100,000 or 2 million Iranian civilians while saving all American troops.

Slovic, P., Peterson, M., McDermott, R., Post, DR, Västfjäll, D (2026 forthcoming) *When Our Minds Go Nuclear: Rethinking Nuclear Strategy and Policy Through the Psychology of Risk and Decision Making*. The Texas National Security Review.

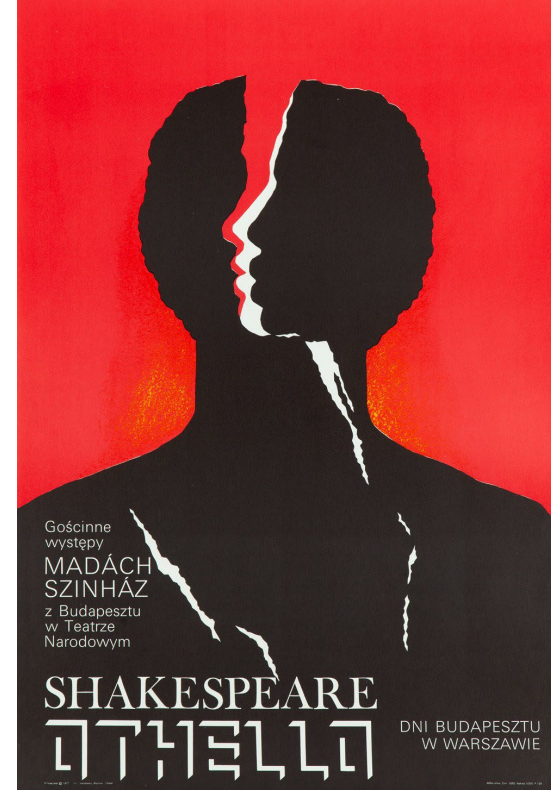


Support for nuclear use rose sharply as projected American troop deaths increased - from 14% when 100 troops were at risk to nearly 50% when 40,000 were. Even minimal losses created significant support for bombing;

Punishment Index measured endorsement of harsh domestic policies (death penalty, abortion bans, closed borders, strong leaders). Individuals scoring high on this index were up to five times more likely to favor nuclear strikes than low-punitive respondents;

Gender differences reflect protective motives;

Most respondents described their final choice—even a nuclear one - as justified and virtuous. Many saw the act as tragic but necessary, a moral duty to protect American troops.



I spent years trying to  
understand the crude  
mechanisms of history  
the monotonous procession and  
uneven struggle  
thugs leading brainwashed  
crowds  
against a handful of the  
just and the rational

I have little left  
very little  
objects  
and compassion

Zbigniew Herbert „Elegy for the Departure of the  
Pen, Ink, Lamp"