

Polish Assistance for the Ukrainian Refugees: Current State and Perspectives of Research

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Abstract

The aid for the Ukrainian refugees in Poland has been analyzed almost since the beginning of the full-scale Russian aggression against Ukraine in February 2022. In 2023, the first comprehensive studies on that topic were published. This article aims to map the state of research on Polish assistance – both direct and indirect support – to the Ukrainians fleeing the war to determine which issues have been the subject of analysis and which have been ignored. On the basis of the publications indexed in Scopus and in Google Scholar, a total of 110 publications dealing directly with the topic of the Polish aid for the Ukrainian refugees were identified. They include working papers, articles and books which were published from March 2022 to November 2023. The article is divided into four parts. The first part has an introductory character and aims at presenting the publications, which explain why Poland and its inhabitants massively helped the Ukrainian refugees. The next three parts focus on the role of the main types of actors involved in assisting the Ukrainians in Poland, i.e. state-institutions, actors such as non-governmental organizations, business, educational institutions and churches, and finally Polish society.

Keywords: Poland; Ukraine; aid; refugees; state of research; literature review.

Introduction

Since the beginning of the full-scale Russian-Ukrainian war¹ on the 24th of February 2022, the Ukrainian-Polish border has been crossed 14 million times – mostly by the

¹ The article is funded by National Science Centre in Poland under the project no. 2020/39/B/H55/00782.

Ukrainian refugees²; some 1,5 million of them have applied for temporary protection in Poland; around a million currently stays in Poland (UNHCR n.d.). In the first days following the war's outbreak, the measures of key importance were the grassroots initiatives taken by Polish citizens, but as days went by, systemic aid became indispensable (Ociepa-Kicińska, Gorzałczyńska-Koczkodaj 2022). The large influx of refugees rapidly overwhelmed local services and led to a complex humanitarian emergency. This necessitated a "whole of society" response involving multiple agencies alongside civil society (Lee, Khaw, Lindman, Juszczyk 2023: 4–45). Activities to help Ukrainians have been carried out by Polish authorities, public and business entities, non-governmental organizations and ordinary people (Wilk 2023), which all closely cooperated (Rakusa-Suszczewski 2023). An inclusive model of migrants' protection was quickly developed, combining formal and informal means of assistance from multiple state and non-state institutions and citizens into an effective way of dealing with the migrant's crisis (Firlit-Fesnak 2023). Humanitarian organizations and Ukrainian NGOs in Poland played a leading role in these activities, but they also involved other organizations and institutions that had never had much to do with Ukraine or humanitarian aid before the outbreak of the war in February.

The aid for the refugees in Poland has been analyzed since almost the beginning of the conflict (Byrska 2022). In 2023, the first comprehensive studies on that topic were published (Jarosz, Klaus 2023). The analysis of the schemes of aid has both an academic and a practical meaning. It is a step towards establishing new policy solutions (Jaroszewicz, Grzyski, Krępa 2022), particularly in such areas as the Polish health care system (Prusaczyk, Bogdan, Vinker, Gujski, Żuk, Kowalska-Bobko, Karczmarsz, Oberska, Lewtak 2023) and migration policy (Wylęgała 2022).

This article aims at mapping the state of research on Polish assistance – both direct and indirect support – for the Ukrainians fleeing the war to determine which issues have been the subject of analysis and which have been ignored. The article does not deal with the studies related to the number and situation of the Ukrainian refugees (Staniszewski, Kownacki 2023; Wylęgała 2022; Solga, Kubiciel – Łodzińska 2022; Długosz) or the multi-faced impact of their arrival to Poland (Duszczyk, Górny, Kaczmarczyk, Kubisiak 2023; Trojanek, Gluszak 2022; Zabłocka-Żytka, Lavdas 2023).

The corpus of the publications analyzed for the purpose of the article included the publications indexed in Scopus and in the Google Scholar, which met two criteria simultaneously. First, they were published in 2022–2023³. Second, they were tagged Poland – Ukraine – refugees. Some publications, which were missing, were added

² It should be noted that formally speaking most of the Ukrainian citizens who fled Ukraine since the beginning of the full-scale Russian aggression are neither refugees or asylum seekers. Only some of them, as noted above, have applied for temporary protection in the countries, which host them (Bukowski, Duszczyk, 2022a: 15). Nevertheless, both in academic publications and in the medias, they are mostly referred to as "refugees". That is why this term will be used in this article.

³ The article was finalized in early December 2023.

manually, particularly at the suggestion of the reviewers. In the case of Scopus all the indexed documents (142 in total) have been analyzed. In the case of Google Scholar (15,300 items) a selective analysis of 200 of the most relevant publications was conducted⁴. In consequence, some 110 publications dealing with the topic of the Polish assistance for the Ukrainian refugees which had been published from March 2022 to November 2023 were identified. They include working papers, articles and books and cover such areas as medicine, social sciences, arts and humanities, psychology. It's worth noting that most of the scientific publication on that topic belong to health-related areas (medicine, psychology, immunology and microbiology, pharmacology etc.)⁵.

Table 1.

Documents tagged "Poland and Ukraine and refugees (article title, abstract, keywords) on Scopus (2022–2023) by subject

Medicine	58	Immunology and Microbiology	5
Social Sciences	55	Engineering	5
Arts and Humanities	16	Computer Science	5
Economics, Econometrics and Finance	11	Pharmacology, Toxicology and Pharmaceutics	4
Psychology	9	Decision Science	4
Environmental Science	8	Biochemistry, Genetics and Molecular Biology	4
Business, Management and Accounting	7	Other	39

Source: www.scopus.com (Accessed: 07.12.2023). The number of publications does not sum up to 142, as some publications belong to more than one area.

Because of the number and variety of publications of the analyzed topic, the article is rather a scoping than a systematic review. It aims to present "preliminary assessment of potential size and scope of available research literature" and to "identify nature and extent of research evidence" (Grant, Booth 2009). It would be impossible to summarize all the relevant publications within the scope of this article: that is why some of them, especially those that present interesting, more innovative research hypotheses are discussed in greater detail, while others – especially those that are more descriptive or prospective in character – are only briefly mentioned.

The article is divided into four parts. The first part has an introductory character and aims at presenting the publications, which explain why Poland and its inhabitants massively helped the Ukrainian refugees. The next three parts focus on the role of the

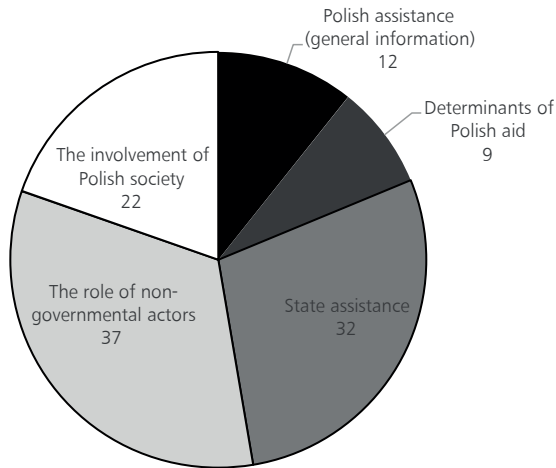
⁴ Google Scholar sorts results by relevance (Google Scholar, n.d.), so first 200 results were included in the corpus.

⁵ This seems to be a broader phenomenon. Queries on "Syria and refugees" or "Sudan and refugees" brings similar results.

main types of actors involved in assisting the Ukrainians in Poland, i.e. state-actors, non-governmental institutions (including state financed, but autonomous institutions like the universities) and Polish society⁶. Such a division is justified, because most of the publications on the topic focus on the aid provided by specific entities, like local authorities, schools, hospitals etc. Such an approach has already been used in the first comprehensive studies on the Polish aid to the Ukrainian refugees (Jarosz, Klaus 2023).

Diagram 1.

The main topics of the publications on Polish assistance to the Ukrainian refugees



Source: own elaboration.

Determinants of Polish aid

Since the 24th of February 2022, a dozen studies have been devoted to the determinants of the Polish aid to the Ukrainian refugees. One of the first research projects on that topic was conducted by a research team from Jagiellonian University in March 2022. On the basis of the survey conducted among those involved in helping the Ukrainian refugees, the authors concluded that the Polish assistance of Ukrainians could be explained by a feeling of closeness towards refugees from Ukraine,

⁶ International organizations (UNHCR, UNICEF, International Organization of Migration, International Rescue Committee, Norwegian Refugee Council, Danish Refugee Council) played an important role during the refugee crisis in Poland, in particular by financing several aid schemes for the Ukrainians, and providing Polish actors with necessary know-how (Jarosz, Klaus 2023: 78–81). Some basic data on the activities of these organizations is available in their yearly and/or special reports on the situation of the Ukrainian refugees in Poland (see for example UNICEF n.d.), even if they focused rather on the existing needs assessment (IOM 2022; UNHCR 2023), than on the already realized projects. On the other hand there have been barely no research on their assistance in Poland since the beginning of the full-scale Russian aggression against Ukraine. That is why their activities are not included in this article.

anticipatory fears (of a Russian invasion), and a community norm of helping. These three dimensions predicted collective helping resulting from a sense of a common fate and a feeling of togetherness with Ukrainians (Kossowska, Szwed, Szumowska, Perek-Białas, Czernatowicz-Kukuczka 2022). Those conclusions were confirmed, at least partially, by public opinion polls. Poles considered the full-scale Russian invasion against Ukraine as a threat to Poland (Feliński, Rogulska 2022). Some 80% of the Polish population (particularly women) was distressed by the war scenes in the media (Chudzicka-Czupała, Hapon, Chiang, Żywiołek-Szeja, Karamushka, Lee, Grabowski, Paliga, Rosenblat, Ho, McIntyre R.S., Chen 2023; see also Brągiel, Gambin 2023).

A research team from the Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw studied the influence of agentic and communal narcissisms on the attitude towards the Ukrainians, concluding that agentic national narcissists (i.e. those who base their global self-evaluation on the overestimation of their individual skills) held less favorable attitudes toward Ukrainians, while strongly believing in Russian narration. On the other hand, communal national narcissists (i.e. those who base their self-evaluation on their social, community-related skills) were more favorable toward Ukrainians and were less prone to believe in Russian narration (Nowak, Brzóska, Piotrowski, Żemojtel-Piotrowska, Jonason 2023).

Other scholars pointed out at the fact that the crisis itself (in that case the influx of refugees) was a trigger for collective action. “By working on seemingly mundane tasks of provisioning and transport, they [volunteers] attempted to shape history” (Dunn, Kaliszewska 2023a). An Indian-Polish research team conducted in-depth interviews with the young volunteers to understand their motives. The authors of that study divided the motivators into four categories: normative (compassion, obligation to help women and children), hedonist (personal satisfaction), eudaimonic (leadership) and personal (family influence) (Sengupta, Verghese, Rys, 2023). Two series of interviews were conducted in Norway and Poland among those who had been helping the Ukrainians and led to the conclusion that Nordic (Norwegian) altruism was based on trust, efficacy, and rule-following, while Slavonic (Polish) altruism had anti-systemic character. In other terms, Poles involvement in helping the refugees could be explained among others by their historically motivated distrust towards the Polish state (Larsen, Witoszek 2023). Finally, some other authors – rather publicists than scholars – also referred to the role of tradition of the anti-communist movement “Solidarity” in the 1980s to explain Polish assistance to the refugees from Ukraine (Rymsza 2022).

The assistance of state institutions

The policy of Polish state authorities toward the Ukrainian refugees, especially at the central level has been quite extensively studied. This issue was of interest because of the unprecedented character of the 2022 humanitarian crisis, but also because the

massive immigration to Poland was a largely new phenomenon; one which the authorities did not quite know how to deal with (Pędzwiatr, Magdziarz 2022). The Ukrainian refugee crisis was therefore perceived as a sort of crash test for state institutions and procedures (Ociepa-Kicińska, Gorzałczyńska-Koczkodaj 2022). The aid to the Ukrainian refugees was also of practical interest, as there was a need to assess and to improve the existing mechanisms of aid (Duszczuk, Bukowski 2022b; Goniewicz 2022).

One of the basic sources to analyze both Polish state and non-state aid to Ukraine and the Ukrainian refugees remains the Ukraine Support Tracker run by the Kiel Institute of the World Economy. The Ukraine Support Tracker estimates the costs of Polish refugee-related aid at 15,42 billion USD, which makes 2,5% of Poland's GDP; Poland is in first place in the world in terms of costs of refugee-related aid in relation to GDP (Ukraine Support Tracker n.d.).

The state policy towards the refugees at the central level has been quite extensively analyzed since the first weeks of the conflict (Firlit-Fesnak, Jaroszewska, Łotocki, Łukaszewska-Bezulska, Ołdak, Zawadzki, Żołędowski, Żukowski 2022; Podgórzeńska, Grabowska, Podolak, Pięta-Szawara 2023).

The research focused on the "Law on assistance to Ukrainian citizens in connection with the armed conflict on the territory of that country" adopted by the parliament on the 12th of March 2022. The law guaranteed some fundamental elements for the refugees from Ukraine, like legal residence in Poland (including a personal identification number PESEL and automatic approval for an eighteen month stay), financial and non-financial aid to address basic needs, access to the job market, access to medical care (on the same scale as for insured Polish citizens). It also provided financial aid (a daily allowance) to the Polish citizens who offered their homes to the Ukrainian refugees (Kraśnicka, Szymański 2023, 514–515). Most of the studies on the topic had a rather descriptive legal approach (Klaus 2022; Uścińska 2022). Some pointed out at innovative solutions introduced by the special law, like the financial aid to Polish citizens, who hosted the refugees, which helped to avoid the problem of refugee homelessness (Socko 2022). Fewer were the studies on more questionable aspects of the special law, like the inclusion of refugees in the social aid program "Family 500+". There is little research on other state initiatives aiming at helping the refugees such as the creation of "central reception points" near the border with Ukraine established by the Ministry of Interior and Administration (Rakusa-Suszczewski 2023, 160–161).

Some studies focused on the role of particular state institutions, such as the Social Insurance Institution (ZUS) (Uścińska 2022, Głogosz 2022), the ombudsman (Wentkowska 2022) or the voivode, i.e. the regional representative of the central government. Others dealt with the legal protection (observance of rights) of refugees in Poland, especially in the context of human trafficking (Hoff, de Volder 2022), but also the temporary custody for minor citizens of Ukraine who found themselves on the territory of Poland without the protection of adults (Wojewoda 2022) or the

access of Ukrainian refugees (who were often raped in Ukraine) to abortion – which was very difficult due to the restrictive anti-abortion law in force in Poland (Cioffi, Cecanecchia, Cioffi 2022). Another topic of interest was the need to go beyond the humanitarian aid and develop strategies of adaptation and integration of the Ukrainian refugees (Pacek 2022; Synowiec 2022; Wodzicki, Herbik-Piszczako, Pichola, Patarska, Tomera, Laszek, Komada, Trzeciakowski 2022), as well as the evolution of the Polish refugee policy since the 24th of February 2022 (Andrejuk 2023).

There have been relatively few research projects on the political uses of the Polish state aid to the Ukrainian refugees, both on an internal (Grabowska 2023) and international level (Vaagland, Chmiel 2023; Bharti, Bista 2023). Scholars rarely analyzed if and how the Polish authorities tried to use the aid for the Ukrainian refugees to strengthen the sense of national pride in Poles, to force Ukraine to make concessions on issues of importance for Poland (historical policy, especially recognition of Ukrainian responsibility for the Volhynia massacre), or obtain concessions from the EU on such issues as the rule of law in Poland. One topic has attracted more attention from the researchers: a comparison of the political discourse of the Law and Justice party (in power since 2015) on the refugees coming to Poland through Belarus with the support of the Belarussian regime (since 2021) and those coming from Ukraine. Since the beginning of the activities of Belarus aiming to create a migration crisis on the border with the EU, the Law and Justice held an anti-immigration discourse; on the other hand the Ukrainian refugees in 2022 were presented as “poor” and worthy of help (Tomczak-Boczko, Gołębiowska, Górny 2023; see also Babakova, Fiałkowska, Kindler, Zessin-Jurek 2022; Moll 2023).

The involvement of local authorities has been rarely studied in a systematic way (Madej, Myśliwiec, Tybuchowska-Hartlińska 2023; Matuszczyk 2023). There are some case studies dealing with the support for the refugees especially in Lublin (Podgórska, Jekaterynczuk, Yarosh, Kuzmuk, Liubchuk 2023; Dziekańska, Jekaterynczuk, Podgórska, Stawicki 2023), but also in Warsaw (Wach, Pachocka 2022), Poznań (Wojtasz 2022), Wrocław (Błaszczak, Dolińska, Makaro, Pluta 2023), Kielce (Perdzyńska-Zarzewny, Gościńiewicz 2022) the cities in Silesia (Werczyńska 2022) and in particular in Krakow, where activities to help the refugees were analyzed in an extensive report published by the Krakow University of Economics (Pędzioł, Brzozowski, Nahorniuk 2022). Some attention was also devoted to one of two border cities, recognized by Ukraine, as “city-saviors”, i.e. Rzeszów (Jekaterynczuk, Podgórska 2023), the other one – largely ignored by the scholars – being Przemyśl (Jarosz, Klaus 2023). Among more detailed issues of interest to researchers, it is worth mentioning The legal framework of the local government assistance to the refugees (Rycerska 2022), the financing of assistance to refugees by local authorities (Kowalska 2022), the situation of the Ukrainian on local job markets (Bieniek-Majka, Stupałowska 2022) or the question of the participation of Ukrainian refugees in local, self-government communities and their right to vote in local elections (Mroczkowski 2023).

The role of non-governmental organizations, education institutions, business and churches

NGOs, but also education institutions, business entities, churches etc. played a major role in dealing with the Ukrainian refugee crisis (Bejma, Pająk-Patkowska 2023). Nevertheless their involvement has still not been studied in a systemic way. A good example is the business sector: to date there is only one publication which deals indirectly with that topic (Zajac 2023).

Basic data on the activities of some major Polish NGOs involved in helping the Ukrainian refugee is available in their annual and special reports (see for example Caritas Polska 2023; KIK Warszawa n.d.), however these publications are rather descriptive in form and may not be objective. Their role since the 24th of February 2022, however, has remained largely out of scope of the interests of the scholar community; rare exceptions being the studies of housing and homelessness NGOs (Duce 2023), as well as the involvement of LGBTIQ human rights organizations and activists in Central-Eastern Europe in helping the Ukrainian refugees (Shevtsova 2023).

The activities of the Ukrainian minority (Kowalewska 2023, Trzeszczyńska, Demel, Błaszczak-Rozenbaum 2023) and migrants in Poland (Kyliushyk, Jastrzębowska 2023) to assist Ukraine and Ukrainian refugees met with some more interest; this particularly concerns the Ukrainian House in Przemyśl, run by the Union of Ukrainian in Poland (Tucka-Kłosowska 2022). On the other hand, there are no studies on the role played by the Ukrainian House in Warsaw, run by the migrant established “Our Choice” Foundation, which became one of the major hubs of aid after the beginning of the full-scale war with Russia.

There are quite a few publications related to the activities of educational institutions: schools, universities and adult education actors (on that last topic see Wołk 2022). Some of them are of a general, overview character (Pogorzała 2023). Others deal with challenges for the Polish educational policy related to the influx of students from Ukraine and the need to adapt to the needs of the refugees (Szaban 2022, Kurzyna-Chmiel 2022), particularly through sustainable integration (Rataj, Berezovska 2023). Kielce Scientific Society published a comprehensive report on help, integration and educational support for Ukrainian children in kindergarten, school and local government institutions. The book dealt with such topics as teaching the Polish language to the children and youth from Ukraine, establishing friendships between Polish and Ukrainian kids or talking about the war to the children (Zbróg 2022). Two case studies are also worth mentioning. The researchers from the Jacob of Paradies University in Gorzów Wielkopolski published a book on the inclusion of the children who fled Ukraine in primary schools in their city (Orłowska, Budzyński, Lubimow 2022). Another study was devoted to the experience of teachers from Bydgoszcz during the first months of the war (Grzybowski 2023). The experience of

the Polish universities during the Ukrainian refugee crisis was studied only in a limited degree (Antczak, Gruszka 2023), even if Polish higher education sectors launched several initiatives aiming at helping the Ukrainians, among others, by employing scholars from Ukraine.

Another issue which has been quite extensively analyzed is the role of the Catholic Church. Some studies on that topic had a comprehensive character like the article of Franciszek Mróz (2023). The results of his survey revealed that the Catholic Church's activities and support to Ukrainians were carried out on many levels: charitable—mainly material, financial and social housing assistance, psychological, educational, and medical. Scholars – some of them catholic priests – analyzed the concern for migrants and refugees in the Church documents in the context of the conflict in Ukraine (Mraczek 2022), the position of the Polish Episcopal Conference on the war and the influx of refugees (Leśniczak 2023), religious advertising in the activities of the Catholic Church for Ukrainian Refugees (Stępniaś 2022) and the activities of some parishes to help the refugees like the ones in Chorzów (Śpiewak, Widera, Jánošová, Jobczyk 2023) or in Łomianki near Warsaw, which established a Center of Aid for Ukraine (Wojakowska 2022). The activities of other confessional groups (Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church, protestants) have not been studied yet.

The media sector was also of interest to researchers. Scholars analyzed Polish press (Zawadzka-Palucka 2023), state tv TVP Info channel (Rak, Rezmer-Płotka, Marszałek-Kawa 2023), radio programs (Czarnek-Wnuk, Sygizman 2022) and books for kids (Bednarek 2022). In general, the refugees were presented in a positive way, as culturally close and worthy of sympathy, which probably contributed to their good reception in Poland. Nevertheless, the presentation of the refugees and their situation in Poland was depicted somehow differently depending on the political preferences of the editors (Kindziuk 2022).

An important part of the publications related to Ukrainian refugees in Poland deals with health issues. Their detailed analysis goes beyond the scope of this article. Taking into account the number of citations, most important studies dealt with the organization of medical assistance in Poland for Ukrainian Citizens during the War (Fatyga, Dziegielewska-Gęsiak, Muc-Wierzoń 2022, Biesiada, Mastalerz-Migas, Babicki 2023; Jankowski, Lazarus, Kuczyn, Zemskov, Gałązkowski, Gujski 2023), hospitalizations of Ukrainian migrants and refugees (Lewtak, Kanecki, Tyszko, Goryński, Kosińska, Poznańska, Rząd, Nitsch-Osuch 2022), the necessity to vaccinate the Ukrainian refugees (Rzymiski, Falfushynska, Fal 2022), in particular against COVID-19 (Malchrzak, Babicki, Pokorna-Kałwak, Doniec, Mastalerz-Migas 2022), as well as cancer care for Ukrainian refugees (Püsküllüoğlu, Grela-Wojewoda, Szczubiałka, Zemek, Lompart, Sałek-Zań, Kopciński, Pasięka, Adamczyk, Mucha-Matecka, Kłęk, Ryś 2023).

The involvement of Polish society

During the first weeks after the beginning of the Russian invasion, the aid for the refugees largely relied not on humanitarian aid organizations, but on volunteers. The war in Ukraine also favored the emergence of new social movements: grassroots initiatives and civic actions (Jasiecki 2023). This massive volunteer response represented a case of “distributed humanitarianism”. It avoided bureaucratic accountability measures, relied on person-to-person aid chains and was faster and more cost-efficient than large-scale institutionalized aid (Dunn, Kaliszewska 2023b).

Private assistance for Ukrainian refugees and attitudes towards helping the refugees has been studied since spring 2022. These studies covered such issues as the experiences and motives of the volunteers (Domaradzki, Walkowiak, Bazan, Baum 2022), their emotions and the development of relationships between the helpers and the refugees (Kalinowska, Kuczyńska, Bukraba-Rylska, Sałkowska, Krakowska 2023), the scale and forms of social engagement in helping refugees, the value of financial assistance, volunteering and its different forms, hosting the refugees as an important element of aid, as well as changes in the attitude of Polish society towards refugees and helping them over time (Baszczak, Kiełczewska, Kukołowicz, Wincewicz, Zyzik 2022).

Some scholars analyzed more detailed issues, like the role of Ukrainian migrants in Poland, who were actively involved in helping their compatriots fleeing the war (Kyliushyk, Jastrzębowska 2023), societal threats related to the crisis narratives on the refugees, such as societal fatigue (rise of negative attitudes, aid burnout) and othering (Grabowska 2023) or the effects on the war on the mental health of Poles (Babicki, Kowalski, Mastalerz-Migas 2023).

The attitudes towards the refugees were monitored regularly by the Center for Public Opinion Research (CBOS) (Feliksiak 2022; Scovil 2022; Scovil 2023a; Scovil 2023b). Robert Staniszewski from the University of Warsaw had conducted in-depth research on the social perception of the refugees in Poland. In April–May 2022, some 69% of the polled declared that they had been involved in helping Ukraine, while almost 94% believed that Poland should accept the refugees (64,2% – until they would be able to go back to Ukraine, 29,7% – so they could settle in Poland) (Staniszewski 2022b). He also analyzed the attitude of Polish society towards the special law from the 12th of March (Staniszewski 2022a), as well as Poles perception of migrants and refugees in the light of the Ukrainian migration crisis (Staniszewski 2023b). His research confirmed a very different approach of the Poles towards the Ukrainian refugees and the migrants from Belarus. He also noted what he called positive attitude dissonance: from April–May 2022 to January, the attitude of Poles towards the refugees improved, however the polled claimed that since the beginning of the war they became more critical towards the Ukrainian who had come to Poland (Staniszewski 2023a). Based on focus group research, Przemysław Sadura and Sławomir Sierakowski came to different conclusions: according to them over the time

Poles became reluctant towards the Ukrainians, particularly because they feared they would lose priority to public services (health care, education) (Sadura, Sierakowski 2022). One of the social groups particularly critical towards the refugees were Polish women, which was explained by the mating market competition (Krakowski, Sambanis 2023). The perception of the refugees was also studied by several other scholars and experts (Kubiciel-Lodzińska, Kownacka 2023; Karakiewicz-Krawczyk, Zdziarski, Landowski, Nieradko-Helusko, Kotwas, Szumilas, Knyszyńska, Karakiewicz; Helak 2022). It is interesting to note that positive attitude towards the Ukrainian refugees in Poland did not fundamentally differ from the situation in Western European countries (Moise, Dennison, Kriesi 2023).

The most popular form of assistance for the refugees was financial aid. Other forms of aid included support in administrative affairs, assistance in job search or school enrolment, helping with the Polish language, spending free time together or sharing an apartment or a room. This last form of aid was particularly popular among those who considered themselves well off (Grzymała-Kazłowska, Downarowicz, Wydra 2023).

From the refugees' perspective, accommodation assistance played the most important role. Some 33% of the Ukrainians had to pay for it. Others (48%) used houses, apartments, single rooms provided by private persons, public entities or authorities. Only a small number (9%) had to stay in places of collective accommodation such as Ptak Warsaw Expo in Nadarzyn near Warsaw. For the moment there are no in-depth publications on that issue, however some research projects are in progress, like "Experiences of Receiving Ukrainian Refugees at Your Own Home. The Sociological Analysis of the Phenomenon of Polish Hospitality" (principal investigator – Kamil Łuczaj from University of Łódź) (WSiZ, n.d.).

Despite these numerous publications, some issues related to the aid of Polish society to the refugees have been ignored. This concerns in particular the importance of symbolic aid for Ukraine and the Ukrainians (manifestations of support, protests in front of the Russian embassy and consulates, displaying of Ukrainian flags), fundraising to help Ukraine and Ukrainian refugees, the role of the internet (Facebook groups like "Help for Ukraine" – 556 thousand members (Facebook, n.d.) and similar methods, like collection of funds through such sites as Siepomaga.pl (Siepomaga, n.d.)).

Conclusions

Since the 24th of February 2022 an important number of papers, articles and books on the Polish aid to the Ukrainian refugees have been published. The analysis of 110 publications identified, mainly through Scopus and Google Scholar, allow the presentation of preliminary conclusions regarding the state and prospects of research on the Polish assistance to the Ukrainian refugees.

First, this topic has been studied mainly by Polish researchers publishing both in Poland and abroad, and in a lesser way by the scholars from Ukraine or other countries. Some mixed Polish-Ukrainian research projects have also been carried out. Second, the authors focused on the aid provided by particular types of actors: central or local authorities, non-state actors (churches, educational institutions, NGOs) or Polish society. There have also been some publications focusing on the determinants on the Polish involvement or trying to present Poland's assistance in a comprehensive way.

Some issues have been studied quite extensively. This particularly concerns the "Law on assistance to Ukrainian citizens in connection with the armed conflict on the territory of that country" and its implementation, the health-related aspects of the Ukrainian refugee's presence in Poland or the attitude of the Polish society towards the Ukrainians. Some other topics were analyzed in a more limited way (the role of local authorities, the education sector or the Catholic Church). Nevertheless, some issues remain significantly beyond the scope of interest of researchers. This particularly concerns the aid provided by major humanitarian NGOs, the international organizations and business actors as well as its effectiveness.

Some of these studies were presented in recognized scientific journals and have been since cited many times (Lewtak, Kanecki, Tyszko, Goryński, Kosińska, Poznańska, Rząd, Nitsch-Osuch 2022; Ociepa-Kicińska, Gorzałczyńska-Koczkodaj 2022). Others were published at smaller Polish cities, with no major international impact (Perdzyńska-Zarzewny, Gościńiewicz 2022). Some of them were prepared by the state institutions dealing directly with the Ukrainian refugee crisis, like the Social Insurance Institution (ZUS) (Uścińska 2022). Many of them were written under the pressure of time, as the refugee crisis developed. That is why newer, first in-depth studies are particularly valuable (Jarosz, Klaus 2023).

It should be noted that these conclusions have a preliminary character, as some projects are still being realized – this is in particular the case of the Warsaw based Collegium Civitas, which runs the project "Commitment – neutrality – hostility: Polish society towards the refugee crisis and the Russian-Ukrainian war", which aims at conducting a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the Polish aid for the refugees, as well as the image of the Russian-Ukrainian war and the refugees in the Polish media (Collegium Civitas, n.d.).

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