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Policing the Binary-Patrolling the Nation: *Roman Dmowski and the Polish Right on the Eve of the Holocaust*

Topic of research

My dissertation investigates the controversial place of Roman Dmowski and the movement he founded, National Democracy, in Polish national thought and action. By situating Dmowski's sexual and racial politics at the heart of National Democracy's nationalist credo, I intend to combine the empirical rigor of archival research with the conceptual innovation of gender analysis to write a dissertation that fundamentally revises our understanding of twentieth century Poland.

Although the philosophic foundations of National Democracy exemplified the right-wing neo-traditionalism of the interwar period, it also emphasized the importance of pragmatic and well-reasoned political action for national survival. In subsequent decades, this practical aspect of his politics led many Poles, including Second World War resistance fighters and Solidarity strikers, to admire the movement, in general, and its founder, Roman Dmowski, in particular.¹ Today, as Polish anxieties over secularization and European integration mount, National Democracy's ideas have again found fertile soil. Instead of "being reduced to just another

¹ J. Paradowska, "Ciasto czteropartyjne," *Polityka*, 19 December 1988: 24-25; A. Domosławski and M. Lizut, "Potret z arcybiskupem niezgodniony," *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 17-18 April 1999, pp. 25-27.

warning against the dangers of anti-Semitic nationalism,² the party's "goal of transforming the Poles into a nation which would be energetic and skillful" has gained mass support, as evidenced by the 2005 national elections.³ Indeed, the ideology of National Democracy—one rooted in ethno-cultural nationalism, Catholicism, and authoritarianism—has proven resilient, underpinning Polish understandings of family, state, and nation for over a century.

Relevance and contribution to field. Please provide a brief description of the scholarly impact and policy significance of your research.

In the Polish patriotic tradition with which the West is most acquainted, the predominant narrative calls up images of Jan Sobieski at the Siege of Vienna or Józef Piłsudski's "Miracle on the Vistula": the invading Eastern armies, the heroic Polish nation, and the ensuing fight between the bulwark of European Christendom and the Asiatic hordes. Since the nineteenth century, "For your freedom and ours" has been the rallying cry of Polish patriots, stemming from a belief not only in the brotherhood of victims, but also in Poland's Christ-like duty to suffer and, if necessary, die for the salvation of others. This brand of Polish Romanticism is deep and persistent; it explains claims such as George Weigel's in his recent bestselling biography of Pope John Paul II that Polish nationalism, despite its patriotic fervor, has yet to descend into the morass of xenophobia.⁴ The reality of twentieth-century ethno-cultural nationalism, as espoused by the National Democrats exposes the falseness of these notions. As Jan Gross comments in response to the endurance of Polish romanticism:

During the Second World War... Poles failed to recognize a fellow victim, not in some faraway land but in the neighbor living right across the street. Have they, not by this failure, betrayed their own destiny? Whatever the answer, a yet to be written definitive history of Germany occupation of Poland would have to discuss how a combination of anti-Semitic prejudice among the Poles and deliberate, skillful Nazi policies leading to dehumanization of ghetto residents, resulting in excluding the Jews, in Polish eyes and practice, from the brotherhood of victims.⁵

For that matter, a definitive history of Polish ethno-cultural nationalism and its use of antisemitism during the period prior to Nazi occupation also remains to be penned, for Polish antisemitism was a product neither of the Second World War nor of Hitler. To respond to Gross' call, then, one has to go back before the Holocaust to uncover the ideological strains that thwarted Polish-Jewish solidarization in the first place. Such a study must focus on National Democracy and its primary ideologue Roman Dmowski.

Since the 1950s, interwar Poland and the rise of the radical Polish Right have received little scholarly attention, because of ideological pressures and practical concerns. Intent upon rewriting history according to Soviet specifications, the Polish Communist regime discouraged scholars from investigating subjects that failed to legitimate its rule. Because Communists could not easily "Marxify" the interwar period and because such studies were often construed as "cosmopolitan" and "nationalistic," historians focused on less politically explosive topics from the

² Walicki, "The Troubling Legacy of Roman Dmowski," p. 35.

³ In November 2005, Dmowski-ite nationalism scored a victory when President and archconservative Jarosław Kaczyński formed a coalition government with the League of Polish Families, the self-conscious heir to National Democracy.

⁴ George Weigel, *Witness to Hope: The Biography of Pope John Paul II* (New York: Cliff Street Books, 1999).

⁵ Jan Tomasz Gross, *Revolution from Abroad: The Soviet Conquest of Poland's Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), pp. 287-88.

seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Those who rejected the Communist agenda, such as Henryk Wereszycki, found themselves first denounced as fascists and, then, unemployed.⁶

Émigré historians have fallen prey to their own ideological limitations, as well. Embedded in a tradition that honors them as keepers of national consciousness and eager to counterbalance Communist excesses, these scholars, including polonophile Norman Davies, have presented Polish history as one of unmitigated heroism. Historians of the twentieth century, unable to break from these parochial frameworks, depict their country as “God’s playground”—the holy battlefield on which history’s great dramas have been staged. Historian Piotr S. Wandycz reflects:

The longstanding Communist efforts to paint much of the twentieth century up to 1945 in black colors have provoked a reaction characterized by almost uncritical glorification of interwar Poland and its leading figures... Similarly, there is a tendency toward martyrology that could degenerate into national masochism.⁷

Given their propagandistic function, émigré histories are riddled with analytic misinterpretations and factual omissions that tend to romanticize Józef Piłsudski’s as “Poland’s white knight and savior” and ignore or exculpate Roman Dmowski and his movement.⁸

Israeli historians have proven less indulgent. Led by Ezra Mendelsohn, these scholars have tended to treat Polish nationalism as a homogeneous phenomenon of comparable ferocity to Nazism. Allowing the events of the Second World War to shade their analysis, they, like their Polish counterparts, ignore the instability of ethnic categories, and, as a consequence, many miss the thrust of Interwar Polish politics. This inability to approach the field free of ideological baggage has obscured National Democracy’s significance and has produced overdrawn narratives that divide sharply between apologies and indictments.

Despite Dmowski’s profound impact on Poland and much of East-Central Europe, the historical literature on the radical Polish right suffers from these critical weaknesses as well as from relative scholarly neglect. With the exception of Andrzej Walicki’s work on Polish nationalism in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and Roman Wapiński and Mariusz Kułakowski’s detail-rich but untranslated biographies, non-native scholars know very little about the ways in which Dmowski identified, defined, and built the Polish nation.⁹ This is particularly surprising considering Robert Blobaum’s and William W. Hagen’s separate examinations of political antisemitism in early twentieth-century Poland.¹⁰

⁶ Piotr Wandycz, “Poland: Historiography of the Countries of Eastern Europe,” *American Historical Review*, vol. 97, October 1992: 1020.

⁷ Wandycz, “Poland,” p. 1022.

⁸ Eva Ann Plach, *The clash of moral nations: Imponderabilia in the Second Polish Republic, 1926--1935 (Poland, Joseph Piłsudski)*, dissertation, UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO (CANADA), 2001, p. 7.

⁹ Walicki, “The Troubling Legacy of Roman Dmowski;” Walicki, *The Three Traditions in Polish Patriotism and their Contemporary Relevance*; Andrzej Walicki, *Philosophy and Romantic Nationalism: The Case of Poland* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), pp. 348-353; Brian Porter, “Who is a Pole? Where is Poland? Territory and Nation in the Rhetoric of the National Democrats,” *Slavic Review*, vol. 51, no. 4, (Winter, 1992): 639-653; Porter, *When Nationalism Began to Hate: Imagining Politics in Nineteenth-Century Poland* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000); Wapiński, *Roman Dmowski*; Mariusz Kułakowski, *Roman Dmowski w Świetle Listów i Wspomnień* (Londyn: Stareniem Instytutu Romana Dmowskiego w Ameryce i Nakładem Gryf Publications, 1972); Alvin Marcus Fountain, *Roman Dmowski: Party, Tactics, Ideology: 1895-1907* (Boulder: East European Monographs, 1980).

¹⁰ Robert Blobaum, “The Politics of Antisemitism in Fin-de-Siècle Warsaw,” *The Journal of Modern History* 73 (June 2001): 275-306; William W. Hagen, “Before the “Final Solution”: Toward a Comparative Analysis of Political Anti-Semitism in Interwar Germany and Poland,” *The Journal of Modern History* 68 (June 1996): 351-381.

In recent decades, however, American scholars have started to move past previous polemics to address the rise, implementation, and legacy of National Democracy. Alvin Marcus Fountain II's biography of Roman Dmowski and Brian Porter's fascinating study of destructive nationalisms in East-Central Europe stand as examples. Drawing on a wealth of primary sources from Polish state and local archives, Fountain constructs a three-dimensional portrait of Roman Dmowski, his ideas, and his movement. Yet, although Fountain professes to approach his subject with studied neutrality, his failure to address Dmowski's antisemitism and his desire to defend Dmowski against charges of proto-fascism render the work something of a wolf in sheep's clothing. Much more measured and insightful is Brian Porter's intellectual genealogy of National Democracy, which approaches Polish nationalism as the discursive framework within which contested visions of the nation were negotiated. Porter's work, like Fountain's, suffers from its periodization. Failing to push the history of the movement past 1918, both miss an opportunity to address this watershed in Polish national history, for up until the First World War, the National Democrats had lobbied for a state in which the nation could reside. Afterwards, they sought to build a nation—one that was virile, productive, and strong—to fill their newly-won state. This dissertation proposes to move beyond Fountain and Porter by dealing with the history of National Democracy past 1918; by taking advantage of the new archival material made available since the fall of communism; and by combining historical empiricism with in-depth textual analysis to reveal the sexual and racial assumptions that structured Polish integral nationalism.

Scholars both native and foreign, have yet to address gender's central role in producing the irrational fears at the core of National Democracy's ideology. Informed by Benedict Anderson and Edward W. Said,¹¹ recent feminist scholars assert, "Nations and national projects are gendered projects."¹² Yet, as Nira Yuval-Davis and Sylvia Walby have noted, the field wants for more empirically based studies to demonstrate this relationship.¹³ On this point, Edward Said offers some theoretical assistance. In his discussion of Orientalism, Said argues that central to imperial domination is the creation of a language in which a masculine Europe dominates a feminized Orient. If scholars broaden this framework to include all instances of imperial domination, then, postcolonial nations present potential instances in which national sovereignty and national masculinity have been co-wounded. As recent studies in Bengali masculinity suggest: To overcome the damage caused by colonization, massive restorative work has been part of the rehabilitation of these two loci of identity.¹⁴ In this respect, the Polish case is particularly illustrative. Although overlooked by subaltern studies, Poland, having endured episodes of colonization and post-colonization throughout the twentieth century, demonstrates aspects of this phenomenon—one often associated with, but not limited to the "Orient,"¹⁵ and Dmowski, as the chief ideologue of National Democracy, created the political language that Poles, both then and since, have employed to assert their national identity.

My study, therefore, looks to move past theoretical discussions of gender, nationalism, and imperialism to ground them empirically in the history of the Second Polish Republic. This dissertation will re-insert National Democracy into the grand narrative of Polish history and will uncover the ways in which an ethno-cultural understanding of Polishness—one that excluded Jews from the Polish nation—became the predominant form of national expression during the interwar period. In so doing, my project attempts to show how National Democracy's fears of

¹¹ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 1991); and Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979).

¹² Heidi Tinsman, "Gender and Citizenship: A Review of Recent Works" *Feminist Studies* 30.1 (Spring 2004): 206.

¹³ Sylvia Walby, "Gender, Nations and States in a Global Era," *Nations and Nationalism* 6(4), 200: 523-40; Nira Yuval-Davis, *Gender and Nation* (London: SAGE Publications, 1997).

¹⁴ R. W. Connell, *Masculinities* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), p. 277.

¹⁵ Clare Cavanagh, "Post Colonial Poland," *Common Knowledge* vol. 10-1 (Winter 2005): 82-92.

national emasculation and embrace of antisemitism schooled a generation of Poles in the methods and practices of integral nationalism—a necessary precondition, I argue, for the social death of Polish Jewry.

My new study of Dmowski's ideology and its centrality to the proto-fascistic National Democratic movement will make a significant contribution to the historical scholarship on Polish nationalism, antisemitism, and masculinity. In the first instance, my dissertation endeavors to provide a comprehensive account of Dmowski's writings that situates his ideology within the context of Polish nationalist thought, thereby demonstrating the validity of his posthumous title—"Father of Polish Integral Nationalism." Second, and more importantly, my research examines how Dmowski, in particular, and National Democracy, in general, viewed the Polish nation in explicitly gendered terms. More specifically, my work seeks to reveal how anxieties concerning national effeminacy undergirded National Democracy's wariness toward Jews and socialists and inspired the conceptualization of a nation that could serve as the "incubator for masculine individuality, a place where men could be(come) men." In so doing, my dissertation attempts to lay bare the conceptual framework within which the extreme Polish Right understood, inculcated, and policed "Polishness." This line of thought, I argue, became the primary mode of Polish national expression, thereby cementing the separation between Poles and Jews on the eve of the Second World War.

A concise summary of your approach and research methodology including a list of research sites.

My dissertation is based primarily on the documentary records and published tracts left by Dmowski, his party affiliates (Jędrzej Giertych, Jan Ludwik, Zygmunt Balicki Popławski, Józef Haller, Maurycy Zamoyski), and political opponents between 1890 and 1939 as well as upon state documents issued between 1918 and 1939. Three branches of the Polish State Archives in Poznan, Warsaw, and Cracow and additional libraries in Lublin and Wrocław hold the materials central to my project. In Cracow, I conducted research at the Archiwum Polskiej Akademii Nauk and the Biblioteka Jagiellońska, which houses an impressive assortment of Dmowski's personal papers and correspondence painstakingly catalogued by Mariusz Kułakowski, a rare intact collection of Dmowski's publications, and an unparalleled Polish newspaper and pamphlet collection. Upon completing my work in Cracow, I moved to Warsaw, where I navigated the extensive collections pertaining to twentieth-century national politics, social movements, and the founding and operations of National Democracy housed by the Archiwum Akt Nowych; the Biblioteka Narodowa; Warsaw University's Library; the Archiwum Akt Dawnych; Archiwum Polskiej Akademii Nauk; and the Archiwum Państwowe. Moreover, while in Warsaw, I made use of the microfilmed manuscript collection of Wrocław's Ossilenium housed at the National Library. Research excursions to Poznan included trips to the Kornicka library, the AMU Library, the Archiwum Państwowe, and the Archiwum Polskiej Akademii Nauk.

To provide highlights of my research activities: For many months, I spent my time perusing the manuscript collections, newspaper archives, and pamphlet caches in Cracow and Warsaw. While these sources bolstered the information I had gleaned from the official party tracts and the Parliamentary minutes, they failed to offer a ground level view of the National Democrats day-to-day activities. Despairing, I decided to consult Richard Thurlow's *Fascism in Britain* to think more fruitfully about the ways in which I could structure my research. While Thurlow's book offered thoughts on this, it mentioned something far more interesting: Thurlow stated that often documents dealing with fascist parties are difficult to obtain. Sometimes, he noted, such parties were either too ephemeral or too controversial to keep reliable document trails. Other times, governments, including the British one, seized fascist party papers, which remain sealed due to political sensitivities. When faced with these obstacles, Thurlow suggested that one consult police reports in the absence of party meeting minutes. Research at the Archiwum Akt Nowych revealed that the surviving Polish police reports from the interwar period had been seized by the

Communists after WWII and had been housed within the Central Party Archive. The inventories indicated that these reports only concerned Communist party activity. Nevertheless, I trawled through the folios, and despite the fact that heavy censorship appears evident, the police reports did include monthly reports detailing the activities of the National Democrats. These reports, issued from several different regions including Silesia, Pomorska, and Wolyn, provide a wide geographic spread. And while they are, by no means, complete, they may be the best documents available that offer a picture of what party members and local functionaries did on the ground level. This discovery, therefore, should better tie ideology to action, to demonstrate clearly that the rhetoric of the National Democrats truly possessed teeth. My second discovery is similarly exciting. In my last three weeks in Poland, the State Archive in Poznan issued a revised electronic inventory of its holdings and made available documents that had been off limits due to re-cataloging. Upon traveling there, I found that the Poznan archives shed light on the activities of the local branch of the National Democrats. While the paper trail was, again, spotty, it demonstrated that minutes from party meetings had been transcribed. Few of these survive. They do, however, offer glimpses of the National Democrats' specific understandings of the uses of propaganda and their methods of national re-education. Most of these methods indicate that after the accession of Pilsudski, the Endecja was largely forced to operate outside of official state apparatuses—a phenomena which may speak to the enduring legacy of the ideology in the face of various state regimes. The Poznanian discovery, while rich, speaks to the large collection of documents presumably lost in Warsaw during WWII. The center of party activity was located at 6 Aleje Jerozolimskie in Warsaw, right in the heart of the capital. Those buildings sadly did not survive 1944. Nevertheless, through these efforts, my dissertation is able to reconstruct the ideology, politics, practice, and legacy of National Democracy—the most enduring movement of twentieth-century Poland.

A summary of your research findings and preliminary conclusions addressing the questions and issues raised in your research proposal.

Research conducted during my research year in Poland indicates that National Democracy's ideology rested on a profound antisemitism linked to fears of emasculation. From close reading of the movement's press organs and pamphlets, I have extracted four basic principles.¹⁶ First, the party's leaders, including its chief luminary, Roman Dmowski, intended its nationalism to be mass-based. For example, in 1895, Dmowski, commenting upon Polish nationalism's pedigree, pointed out that differences in class and geography had hitherto wracked the movement. To undo these damages, Dmowski hoped to appeal to workers and peasants, to offer them the sense of identity requisite for national health. Second, the National Democrats designed their nationalism to counter Polish Romanticism. Rejecting notions of international brotherhood, the movements' founders stressed Poland's need to engage reality, to recognize the international death struggle, to cast aside its claim as "the Christ of nations," and to allow itself to act defensively. Third, the organization envisioned its nationalism as integral. Treating the national bond as the highest form of social integration, party leaders demanded total and undivided commitment to their doctrines. Fourth, the organization intended its nationalism to supplant eighteenth-century concepts of Noble Republicanism with a modern notion of the ethno-cultural nation—one that had no tolerance for foreigners, nobles, international socialists, or Jews.

Unlike other integral nationalists, such as Hungary's Gyula Gömbös or Romania's Corneliu Codreanu, Roman Dmowski's concept of nation was rooted not only in blood or language, but also and above all in will. For Dmowski and his supporters, "to be a Pole [did] not mean just to speak Polish or to feel close to other Poles, but to value the Polish nation above all else..." From this standpoint, it logically followed that "Polishness," as a potentially transmutable essence, was constantly under siege and in need of protection lest it be conquered and eradicated. Reflecting upon Polish history, Dmowski reasoned that two factors—the nobility and

¹⁶ For the following disquisition, I am deeply indebted to Andrzej Walicki.

the Jews—had rendered Poland “effeminate,” thereby propelling it to the edge of disaster. Dmowski asserted that the Jews, having obtained financial supremacy in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, held the Polish nation in thrall, retarding the development of a vibrant bourgeoisie and promoting the efflorescence of an effete noble class. That the nobility and its Jewish entourage indulged in the antiquated frivolities of the eighteenth-century French court was reprehensible; that their dalliances led to the destruction of the Polish state and the ruination of the Polish nation was unforgivable. Specifically, Dmowski explained that Jewish and noble complicity in the Polish Partitions relegated future generations to inadequate, feminine education. Such an upbringing, he posited, begot children solely capable of “crying and complaining whenever they encounter[ed] injustice.”¹⁷ Thus, because the state defined and educated the nation, Dmowski argued, Poland was singularly disadvantaged in the competition for national survival. He, therefore, maintained that so long as the status quo remained, Poland would continue to be one of the “softest and meekest of nations in Europe.”¹⁸

Disappointed by the Polish nobility and disgusted with the Jews, Dmowski, nevertheless, believed that Poland’s situation was hopeful. If a nation could “fall because it... had been derailed in its development,”¹⁹ Dmowski reasoned that restorative actions were equally possible. For inspiration, Dmowski looked to Prussian Poland. In Dmowski’s estimation, Prussian domination of Poznań, while harsh, had trained the local Poles in Germanic “energy, discipline, and organization,” thereby creating a superior nation.²⁰ Dmowski concluded that the Poznanian advantages acquired in this Darwinian clash included “manly virtues, energy in action and endurance in struggle, those basic attributes without which [Poland would] be unable not only to fashion [its] own state but even to retain it should it be granted...”²¹ Thus, for Poland to be healthy, Dmowski reasoned, the nation needed to emulate the Prussian model and rid itself of its effeminizing “Jewish influences,” which had hitherto prized esthetics, theatre, and literature, at the expense of militarism. To imitate the Prussians, therefore, to sharpen Polish skills, to remedy Poland’s “social diseases,” and to ensure that it would not be relegated to the list of insignificant and extinct nations, Dmowski maintained that the Polish people had to embark upon a program of national egoism—a regimen that would be “rigorous only for those effeminate idlers and ruthless only for those who do not understand the spirit of the time.”²² To this end, Dmowski went so far as to support Ze’ev Jabotinsky’s Zionist objective to populate Israel with Poland’s Jewry, citing his respect for the Jewish religion but his disdain for Jewish habitation in Poland. In these explicitly gendered and antisemitic terms, Dmowski established his understanding of “Polishness” and set out with the National Democrats to reconstitute the Polish nation.

My study rests on one primary precept concerning gender identity in the interwar period: It was absolutely essential to National Democracy’s definition of Polishness, and it operated on three levels within Dmowski’s ideology. First, gender worked to establish Poland as a legitimate nation. Recognizing that his oppressors, notably the German Academy, had cast Poland as weak and effeminate and, therefore illegitimate, Dmowski, refused to embrace an effeminate masculinity as a subversive identity and, instead, lobbied against this trend.²³ Second, Dmowski used gender to cast the Jews as the effete malignancy that threatened Polish masculinity and, in turn, the nation. In so doing, he looked to identify the alien element within and to discredit his

¹⁷ Porter, *When Nationalism Began to Hate*, p. 195. See also: R. Skrzycki [Dmowski], “Młodzież Polski w Zaborze Rosyjskim, IX,” *Przegląd Wszechpolski*, 2 (15 May 1896): 198-199.

¹⁸ Dmowski, *Myśli Nowoczesnego Polaka*, p. 45.

¹⁹ Dmowski, *Myśli Nowoczesnego Polaka*, p. 62.

²⁰ Dmowski, *Myśli Nowoczesnego Polaka*, p. 88-89.

²¹ Dmowski, *Myśli Nowoczesnego Polaka*, p. 51.

²² Dmowski, *Myśli Nowoczesnego Polaka*, *Wydanie Siódme*, p. 62.

²³ Reevathi Krishnaswamy, “The Economy of Colonial Desire,” in Rachel Adams and David Savran, eds., *The Masculinity Studies Reader*, (London: Blackwell Publishing, 2002), p. 295.

political opponents in the Polish Socialist Party, who largely happened to be either nobles or Polonized Jews. Tapping into pre-existing European tropes, as articulated by Viennese philosopher Otto Weininger, Dmowski located Polish effeminacy in the Polish nobility and the Jews, and, as a result, he looked to purge Poland of these two “evils.” Third, by casting these elements out of the Polish nation, Dmowski had isolated his raw material for nation-building. Now, he set out to normalize gender roles within the nation to establish the boundaries of Polishness. Given Dmowski’s anxieties over masculinity, men, in particular, became the symbolic “border guards” of Polish identity.

In sum, my project aims to refocus attention on the theory, praxis, and impact of National Democracy, without which the course of modern Polish history cannot be adequately understood. My dissertation, therefore, will consist of three principal sections that trace the intellectual, socio-political, and cultural trajectories of the National Democrats Part I, which covers the years 1890-1918, analyzes the unfolding and radicalization of Dmowski’s ideology. Offering a ground-level view of the development of modern Polish nationalism, this part situates the rise of the Polish Right within a comparative European context. This section, moreover, demonstrates the complex intertwining of gender and national identity, which was essential to the establishment of a popular movement intent upon ethnic cleansing and national re-education in the name of “Polishness.” Chapter 1, From Positivism to Activism, draws from Brian Porter’s research on fin de siècle Polish politics to set the political and ideological contexts in which National Democracy emerged. Chapter 2, investigates Roman Dmowski’s relationship to right-wing leaders Jan Ludwik Popławski and Zygmunt Balicki and traces Dmowski’s emergence as the chief statesman and ideologue of National Democracy. Chapter 3 focuses on the foundational text of National Democracy, Dmowski’s extended essay, *Myśli Nowoczesnego Polaka* (Thoughts of a Modern Pole), which aspired to “awaken national consciousness where it [did] not exist, to develop it where it [was] weak, to support every independent movement within the ranks of the nation.”²⁴

Part II covers the framing of the March Constitution of 1921 and the founding of Dmowski’s Great Camp of Poland and the National Party between 1926 and 1939; and charts the political and institutional processes by which the National Democrats set out to capture the hearts and minds of the Polish nation. Concentrating on the principal sites of nation building, state-sponsored education (the Towarzystwo Oświaty Narodowej and the Polski Związek Nauczycielski), youth organizations (the Młodzież Wszechpolaacy and the Narodowego Związku Młodzieży Akademickiej), and paramilitary associations (the Ruch Narodowy), I will investigate how the National Democrats set out to foster a muscular “Polishness.”

Part III, examines the social, cultural, and ideological implications of Dmowski’s thought—one that gained hegemony after the Sanacja government’s authoritarian turn in 1936, as evidenced by the renewed vigor with which Polish officials pursued the Numerus Clausus in 1937. This socio-political transformation, I hypothesize, sowed the seeds for Polish-Jewish strife prior to Nazi Occupation, encouraged the establishment of the rabidly anti-Semitic Narodowe Siły Zbrojne, and became central to the recuperation of national identity and state-order thereafter.

Suggestions for future research.

Because my study attempts to be the first full dress account of National Democracy in English, many avenues for future research are available. Nevertheless, taking a lead from William Sheridan Allen’s work concerning the rise of Nazism in German small towns and noting the relative paucity of archival material available in major Polish cities concerning the daily activities of the National Democrats, I maintain that it would be advisable for historians to consider

²⁴ Dmowski, *Nasz Patryotyzm: Podstawy Programu Współczesnej Polityki Narodowej* (Berlin: Czcionkami Drukarni Janiszewskiego i Quitta,” 1893), p. 24.

conducting a micro-history of Polish small town life. A study of Bydgoszcz or Tarnow would provide an understanding of how average Poles interpreted the actions of the National Democrats and how they absorbed the party's rhetoric into their daily lives. Such a project I envision pursuing when transforming my dissertation into a monograph.

Recommendations for the US policy community.

My recommendations for the US policy community are three. First, when dealing with the current rightist tendencies in Poland, I stress to policy makers that Polish conservatism is not an immutable pathology. It is located in very concrete historical phenomena; and if policy makers attempt to understand Poland's history and fears, perhaps, real work may be done to encourage healing, liberalization, and democratization. Second, efforts should be made to view Poland as a post-colonial nation. Much like Ireland, Poland's whiteness has often obscured the fact that it was an occupied territory for most of the nineteenth century. It fell victim to Prussian, Austrian, and Russian desires to expand their empires. As a result, Poland regularly behaves not as Austria or the Netherlands would, but as a country with a great deal to prove. This insecurity must be understood in order to gain greater cooperation. Third, and finally, I turn my attentions to Israel. Oftentimes, political scientists point to the legacy of the Holocaust as an explanation for Israeli policy. While the Sho'ah casts a long shadow over Israel, it would be wise to remember that many of Israel's founders and chief statesmen came of age in Interwar Poland. Their experiences as a minority group in a nominally democratic state; the abuses they witnessed and endured at the hands of the National Democrats; and the tragic end of Polish Jewry they saw must have undoubtedly colored their world views. Perhaps taking these fears into account would lead to greater understanding in Israeli-Palestinian conflict.