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## THE BAPTISM OF POLAND IN PUBLIC OPINION

The reception of baptism in 966 by Mieszko I, prince of the Polans, and by members of his court, was a turning point in the history of Poland, although ancient chronicles noted this fact in a lapidary way: *Mesco dux Poloniae baptizatur*, which means: “Mieszko, the Polish prince was baptized.”<sup>1</sup> The point should be made that this event began the process of Christianizing of Polish lands and bringing the newly formed Polish state into the political and cultural circle of Europe. In order to appreciate the meaning and grade of this event, one should be made familiar with its historical and political context.

The first piece of information concerning Christianity in Poland comes from *The Life of St. Methodius*, known also as the *Pannonian Legend*. We read here, among others, that “the mighty pagan prince, residing in Wisła, insulted the Christians and inflicted harm upon them, Methodius therefore sent word to him: ‘it would be to your benefit if you were to let yourself be baptized of your own free will on your land, otherwise you will be taken into bondage and forced to accept baptism in a foreign land, you will mark my word’.”<sup>2</sup> The ruler of Great Moravia, prince Świętopełk conquered the ter-

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<sup>1</sup> *Rocznik kapituły krakowskiej 966* [Annals of the Cracovian chapter], quot. after: Joanna WILDER, *Polskie chrześcijaństwo. 1050 lat historii 966-2016* [Polish Christianity. 1050 years of history 966-2016] (Warszawa: Arystoteles, 2015), 4.

<sup>2</sup> *Żywot św. Metodego znany też jako Legenda Panońska* [The life of St. Methodius known also as the Pannonian Legend] (Sandomierz: Armoryka, 2011). Internet access: [https://www.nexto.pl/upload/sklep/armoryka/ebook/zywot\\_sw\\_metodego-august\\_bielowski-armoryka/public/zywot\\_sw\\_metodego-armoryka-demo.pdf](https://www.nexto.pl/upload/sklep/armoryka/ebook/zywot_sw_metodego-august_bielowski-armoryka/public/zywot_sw_metodego-armoryka-demo.pdf), quot. after: J. WILDER, *Polskie chrześcijaństwo*, 4.

ritory of the Vistulans and together with this conquest missionaries entered the lands of Lesser Poland and Silesia. This area was Christianized earlier than other lands which at present belong to Poland.

The rank of a pagan prince — according to the diplomatic protocol accepted at the time — was low. In the 10<sup>th</sup> century, Mieszko I's state was still a pagan one. "It came closer to the civilized world and at the same time this world came closer to Polish lands: from the South it bordered with Christian Bohemia, from the West — with Christian Germans."<sup>3</sup> Apart from that, in the second half of the century, Mieszko I tried to overcome the Volhynians from the North, whereas from the West he was menaced by attacks of the German margraves who, under the pretext of spreading Christianity, attempted to conquer new territories. In order therefore to strengthen his position in Europe, as well as to deprive the German Bishops of their main reason justifying their missionary activity in Poland, Mieszko I decided to baptize Poland.<sup>4</sup>

This access to the circle of western Christianity was linked to the marriage of Mieszko I, prince of the Polans with Dobrawa, a Bohemian princess. By this political alliance the Polish ruler planned to win the Bohemian prince as an ally in the battle against the Slavic Veleti. However, the wedding was postponed and Gallus Anonymus wrote in his *Kronika polska* [Polish Chronicle]: "But she declined to marry him, unless he were to forsake that wicked custom and promise to become a Christian."<sup>5</sup> In accordance with the custom of the time, the baptism took place probably on Holy Saturday, the 14<sup>th</sup> of April 966.

Quite a few years elapsed before the new faith was accepted in this erewhile pagan state. At first, the population saw this as threat to its identity and tradition.<sup>6</sup> On the occasion of the celebration of the 1050<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Poland's baptism, the question arises: how is this event perceived in society and what is its significance for the development of the Polish state, of religion and culture. It is with this purpose in mind, that an analysis of the state of historical science of Poles was undertaken on a larger scale than that pertaining to the event, which is presently often evoked in the public discourse and mass media.

The aim of this article is a comparative analysis of social apprehension of the event of Poland's baptism as well as its significance for the development

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>5</sup> GALL ANONIM, *Kronika polska* [The Polish Chronicle] (Warszawa: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1982), 10, quot. after: J. WILDER, *Polskie chrześcijaństwo*, 5.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

of the Polish state, of culture and religion and for the position of the country in the international arena, in the light of opinion polls conducted by the Centre of Studies of Social Opinion (CBOS)<sup>7</sup> and the Centre of Studies of Public Opinion (OBOP)<sup>8</sup> in the years 1965–2016. In order to solve the main problem, the following research methods were applied: the quantitative analysis of contents, the qualitative analysis of contents, the comparative method and the analytical descriptive one.

At the beginning of the research process the following questions were formulated:

- What is today's historical awareness of the Poles?
- Which are the historical events of which they are proud, and which — in the opinion of respondents — bring the Poles disgrace?
- Do Poles know the date of Poland's baptism?
- To what degree is Poland's baptism perceived as a turning point in the context of other events of Polish history until the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century?
- What significance do Poles attribute to it as regards the development of Polish statehood, culture, religiousness as well as the position of the country in the international arena?

The following thesis was accepted in the study process: during the last fifty years the social perception of Poland's baptism did not undergo any changes. In order to solve the research problem, an analysis of reports for the years 1965–2016 kept in the archives of the CBOS and OBOP was undertaken. The research process was divided into four stages, namely:

- STAGE 1: The quantitative analysis of the contents of the CBOS and OBOP reports. The aim of the proceedings undertaken in this stage was finding in the above-mentioned archives all those reports which contained in their titles the key words "baptism of Poland." Next, a thorough quantitative analysis was made of the contents of the CBOS and OBOP reports. The field of the words looked for was widened by such key-words as: "historical awareness," "historical knowledge," "historical events" and "the past."

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<sup>7</sup> *O firmie* [About the firm]. [http://www.cbos.pl/PL/o\\_firmie/o\\_firmie.php](http://www.cbos.pl/PL/o_firmie/o_firmie.php) (accessed 10.06.2016). CBOS was founded in 1982.

<sup>8</sup> *Korzenie TNS Polska* [The roots of TNS Poland]. <http://www.tnsglobal.pl/o-nas/korzenie/> (accessed 10.06.2016). It should be remarked that the Centre of Studies of Public Opinion changed its name during its activity. Its roots go back to 1958. In 1998, it was incorporated into the structures of the international research group TNS, accepting the name: TNS OBOP. However, in April 2012, as a result of the uniting of two research institutes: TNS OBOP and TNS Pentor, the TNS Poland came into being.

- STAGE 2: A qualitative analysis of the content of reports in the field of the social apprehension of the occurrence which the baptism of Poland was.
- STAGE 3: Comparative analyses.
- STAGE 4: Conclusions and postulates.

The quantitative and qualitative analysis of the contents of the reports will be preceded by terminological reflections regarding national culture.

It should be noted that the author did not carry out any of her own studies of quantitative contents, but only made use of results presented by OBOP and CBOS, which determines certain limitations issuing from a secondary analysis of studied material. The range of studied phenomena was limited to earlier gathered data by the above-mentioned study centres. Their incompleteness and different thematic range in the studied periods often rendered a comparative analysis impossible.

#### NATIONAL CULTURE

In analyzing literature on the subject, we frequently came across the opinion that the reception of baptism brought the newly-formed Polish state into the political and cultural circle of Latin Europe. St. John Paul II said openly: “that we as a nation entered the arena of history by holy baptism. And so the history of our Nation — a rich and difficult history — was born through baptism and in baptism our Polish Nation was born.”<sup>9</sup>

Every nation “expresses itself in its culture,”<sup>10</sup> a nation “exists of culture and for culture.”<sup>11</sup> It is often identified through the prism of national culture. According to Antonina Kłoskowska: “it constitutes a wide and complex system (syndrome) of methods of action, norms, values and symbols, creeds and symbolic works, which is considered to be its own by a certain social group, to which it is particularly entitled, grown out of its traditions and historical

<sup>9</sup> *Jan Paweł II w Brazylii 30 VI—11 VII 1980: przemówienia, homilie, modlitwy* [John Paul II in Brasil 30 VI—11 VII 1980: addresses, homilies, prayers], przeł.[transl.] M. Szafrńska-Brandt (Warszawa: Instytut Wydawniczy Pax, 1985), 43.

<sup>10</sup> *Deklaracja Meksykańska* [The Mexican Declaration], quot. after: Leon DYCZEWSKI, *Kultura w całościowym planie rozwoju* [Culture in a comprehensive plan of development] (Warszawa: Instytut Wydawniczy Pax, 2011), 34.

<sup>11</sup> JAN PAWEŁ II. *W imię przyszłości kultury. Przemówienie w UNESCO, Paryż 02.06.1980* [John Paul II. In the name of future culture. Address in UNESCO, Paris 02.06.1980], nr 7 and 14. Internet access: <http://www.centrumjp2.pl/wikijp2/index.php?title=Nar%C3%B3d> (accessed 29.07.2016).

experiences and binding in its sphere.”<sup>12</sup> As Leon Dyczewski rightly remarks: “There is no universal consent on the part of different environments for the contents of the catalogue of products of culture forming the body of national culture. The defining of culture is reduced to the enumeration of the constituent parts of this culture, without a criterion of choice being clearly formulated.”<sup>13</sup> The centre of culture determines the permanence and development of culture as well as of the identity of each nation and society, including Polish culture. “This is an integrated set of central (essential) cultural values and products which consolidate it, as well as of the models of heartfelt reactions formed in connection with these, of mental structures, of models of interpersonal contacts within a society and also of this society with other societies.”<sup>14</sup> It should be emphasized that among essential cultural products besides the Polish language, the crowned White Eagle, the white and red flag, Leon Dyczewski included the baptism of Poland in the year 966.<sup>15</sup> The reception of baptism by Mieszko I thus constitutes an important element of Polish national culture.

#### STAGE 1: THE QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE CONTENTS OF THE CBOS AND OBOP REPORTS

The main purpose of the application of the quantitative analysis of the contents of the CBOS and OBOP reports was to collect research materials. As was mentioned above, it was with this in mind that the above mentioned archives were searched, inscribing successively the following word configurations:

1. “the baptism of Poland”
2. “historical awareness”
3. “historical knowledge”
4. “historical events”
5. “the past.”

Table 1 contains a detailed analysis: Archive reports of the OBOP and CBOS for the years 1965-2016.

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<sup>12</sup> Antonina KŁOSKOWSKA. *Kultury narodowe u korzeni* [National cultures at their roots] (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 2012), 78.

<sup>13</sup> Leon DYCZEWSKI. *Kultura polska w procesie przemian* [Polish culture in a process of change] (Lublin: TN KUL, 1995), 234.

<sup>14</sup> L. DYCZEWSKI. *Kultura w całościowym* [Culture in a comprehensive], 34.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

Table nr 1: Archive reports of the OBOP and CBOS for the years 1965-2016.

Searched key-words	OBOP	CBOS	Jointly
• Baptism of Poland <sup>16</sup>	0	1	1
Including reports containing material referring to the main problem	0	1	1
• Historical awareness <sup>17</sup>	3	7	10
Including reports containing material referring to the main problem	1	1	2
• Historical knowledge <sup>18</sup>	0	0	0
Including reports containing material referring to the main problem	1	1	2
• Historical events <sup>19</sup>	10	13	23
Including reports containing material referring to the main problem	2	(2) repeated	2 (2)
• The past <sup>20</sup>	17	6	23
Including reports containing material referring to the main problem	1	1 (2) repeated	2(2)

Source: own composition based on Archive of social reports of the OBOP for the years 1965-2016. Internet access: <http://www.tnsglobal.pl/archiwumraportow/> (accessed 12.06.2016); Archive of social reports of the CBOS for the years 1982-2016. Internet access: <http://badanie.cbos.pl/search.asp?srctype=general> (accessed 14.06.2016).

<sup>16</sup> Archive of social reports of the OBOP for the years 1965-2016. Internet access: <http://www.tnsglobal.pl/archiwumraportow/?s=chrzest+Polski> (accessed 12.06.2016); Archive of reports of the CBOS for the years 1982-2016. Internet access: <http://badanie.cbos.pl/results.asp?q1=CHRZEST&q2=Polski&q3=&q4=&qtype=all&mode=opt&pgsz=10&pgno=1&srctype=general&q=a1> (accessed 14.06.2016).

<sup>17</sup> Archive of social reports of the OBOP for the years 1965-2016. Internet access: <http://www.tnsglobal.pl/archiwumraportow/?s=świadomość+historyczna> (accessed 12.06.2016); Archive of social reports of the CBOS for the years 1982-2016. Internet access: <http://badanie.cbos.pl/results.asp?q1=%8CWIADOMO%8C%8C&q2=historyczna&q3=&q4=&qtype=all&mode=opt&pgsz=10&pgno=1&srctype=general&q=a1> (accessed 14.06.2016).

<sup>18</sup> Archive of social reports of the OBOP for the years 1965-2016. Internet access: <http://www.tnsglobal.pl/archiwumraportow/?s=wiedza+historyczna> (accessed 13.06.2016); Archive of social reports of the CBOS for the years 1982-2016. Internet access: <http://badanie.cbos.pl/results.asp?q1=wiedza&q2=historyczna&q3=&q4=&qtype=all&mode=opt&pgsz=10&pgno=1&srctype=general&q=a1> (accessed 14.06.2016).

<sup>19</sup> Archive of social reports of the TNS OBOP for the years 1987-2016. Internet access: <http://www.tnsglobal.pl/archiwumraportow/?s=wydarzenia+historyczne> (accessed 13.06.2016); Archive of social reports of the CBOS for the years 1982-2016. Internet access: <http://badanie.cbos.pl/results.asp?q1=wydarzenia+historyczne&q2=&q3=&q4=&qtype=all&mode=opt&pgsz=10&pgno=1&srctype=general&q=a1> Komunikaty 1–13 (accessed 14.06.2016).

<sup>20</sup> Archive of social reports of the OBOP for the years 1965-2016. Internet access: <http://www.tnsglobal.pl/archiwumraportow/?s=przeszłość> (accessed 12-13.06.2016); Archive of social reports of the CBOS for the years 1982-2016. Internet access: <http://badanie.cbos.pl/results.asp?q1=przesz%8C%8C&q2=&q3=&q4=&qtype=all&mode=opt&pgsz=100&pgno=1&srctype=general&q=a1> (accessed 14.06.2016).

Table nr 2 contains the results of the summary quantitative analysis of the contents of reports of OBOP and CBOS for the years 1965-2016, in the subject range.

Table nr 2: Reports of OBOP and CBOS for the years 1965-2016 containing material referring to the main problem.

Searched key-words	OBOP	CBOS	Jointly
<b>Stage 1: Pass-word:</b> Baptism of Poland	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Stage 2: Pass-words:</b>			
• Historical awareness	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
• Historical knowledge	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
• Historical events	<b>2</b>	<b>-2 repeated</b>	<b>2</b>
• The past	<b>1</b>	<b>12 repeated</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Jointly</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>7</b>

Source: OBOP. *The historical awareness of Poles*. Communiqué 035/96. Warszawa 1996. [http://tnsglobal.pl/archiv\\_files/035-96.pdf](http://tnsglobal.pl/archiv_files/035-96.pdf) (accessed 13.06.2016); TNS OBOP. *The pride and shame of Poles*. Communiqué 038/08. Warszawa 2008. [http://tnsglobal.pl/archiv\\_files/K.038-08\\_Duma\\_i\\_wstyd\\_Polakow\\_006a08.pdf](http://tnsglobal.pl/archiv_files/K.038-08_Duma_i_wstyd_Polakow_006a08.pdf) (accessed 13.06.2016); TNS Poland. *The opinion of Poles on the subject of the celebration of important anniversaries*. Communiqué 073/12. Warszawa 2012. [http://www.tnsglobal.pl/archiwumraportow/files/2014/03/K.073-12\\_Obchody-waznych-rocznic\\_O11a-12.pdf](http://www.tnsglobal.pl/archiwumraportow/files/2014/03/K.073-12_Obchody-waznych-rocznic_O11a-12.pdf) (accessed 12.06.2016); TNS Poland. *Poles in relation to history—interest and knowledge*. K.026/14. Warszawa 2014. [http://www.tnsglobal.pl/archiwumraportow/files/2014/04/K.026\\_Polacy-wobec-historii\\_002a-14.pdf](http://www.tnsglobal.pl/archiwumraportow/files/2014/04/K.026_Polacy-wobec-historii_002a-14.pdf) (accessed 13.06.2016); CBOS. *The past as a subject of interest and discussion in contemporary Polish society*. Communiqué 0379. Warszawa 1988. <http://badanie.cbos.pl/details.asp?q=a1&id=0379> (accessed 14.06.2016); CBOS. *The 1050<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Poland's baptism*. Communiqué 5352. Warszawa 2016. [http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2016/K\\_056\\_16.PDF](http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2016/K_056_16.PDF) (accessed 14.06.2016); CBOS. *The historical awareness of Poles*. Communiqué 5364. Warszawa 2016. [http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2016/K\\_068\\_16.PDF](http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2016/K_068_16.PDF) (accessed 14.06.2016).

As may be seen from table nr 2, the research material is jointly created by 7 reports, including 4 opinion polls carried out by OBOP<sup>21</sup> as well as 3 re-

<sup>21</sup> OBOP. *The historical awareness of Poles*. Communiqué 035/96. Warszawa 1996. [http://tnsglobal.pl/archiv\\_files/035-96.pdf](http://tnsglobal.pl/archiv_files/035-96.pdf) (accessed 13.06.2016). OBOP opinion poll of the 9-12 March 1996. 1109 inhabitants of the country, aged over 16, were chosen by ballot. The statistical error for such an undertaking does not exceed  $\pm 3\%$ , with a credibility of judgement equal to 95%; TNS OBOP. *The pride and shame of Poles*. Communiqué 038/08. Warszawa 2008. [http://tnsglobal.pl/archiv\\_files/K.038-08\\_Duma\\_i\\_wstyd\\_Polakow\\_006a08.pdf](http://tnsglobal.pl/archiv_files/K.038-08_Duma_i_wstyd_Polakow_006a08.pdf) (accessed 13.06.2016). The opinion poll was carried out on 5–9 June 2008 in an representative undertaking concerning 1005 inhabitants of Poland aged over 15, chosen by ballot. The maximum statistical error of measure for such an undertaking amounts to  $\pm 3\%$ , with a credibility of judgement equal to 95%; TNS Poland. *The opinion of Poles on the subject of the celebration of important anniversaries*. Communiqué 073/12. Warszawa 2012. [http://www.tnsglobal.pl/archiwumraportow/files/2014/03/K.073-12\\_Obchody-waznych-rocznic\\_O11a-12.pdf](http://www.tnsglobal.pl/archiwumraportow/files/2014/03/K.073-12_Obchody-waznych-rocznic_O11a-12.pdf) (accessed 12.06.2016). The

ports of CBOS.<sup>22</sup> It should be noticed that only one of the above mentioned opinion polls directly refers to the study problem, this is the report entitled *1050<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Poland's baptism*, elaborated by CBOS and based on studies carried out by the computer supported face-to-face method, (CAPI) between 12<sup>th</sup>–19<sup>th</sup> March 2016 among 1007 people—a representative opinion poll test of adult inhabitants of Poland.<sup>23</sup>

As has been already mentioned, OBOP was established in 1958, which means that in 1966—the year of the 1000<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Poland's baptism—it was already conducting its research activity. In order to collect integral research material, its archives were searched thoroughly according to a chronological criterion, writing down successively the year preceding the Millennium of Poland's Baptism: 1965,<sup>24</sup> next: the year 1966<sup>25</sup> and 1967.<sup>26</sup> The qualitative analysis of contents searched of 19 reports of OBOP (1965: 1 report; 1966: 6; 1967: 12) allows one to conclude that none of these referred to the Millennium of Poland's baptism nor to the social apprehension of Poland's baptism.

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opinion poll was carried out on 8-13 November 2012 r. among an all-Polish, representative endeavour involving 1000 inhabitants of Poland, aged 15 and over, chosen by ballot. The maximum statistical error for such an undertaking amounts to  $\pm 3,1\%$ , with a credibility of judgement equal to 95%; TNS Poland. *Poles in relation to history-interest and knowledge*. K.026/14. Warszawa 2014. [http://www.tnsglobal.pl/archiwumraportow/files/2014/04/K.026\\_Polacy-wobec-historii\\_O02a-14.pdf](http://www.tnsglobal.pl/archiwumraportow/files/2014/04/K.026_Polacy-wobec-historii_O02a-14.pdf) (accessed 13.06.2016). Examination term: 7-13 February 2014. Trial: an all-Polish, representative endeavour involving 1000 inhabitants of Poland, aged 15 and over.

<sup>22</sup> CBOS. *The past as a subject of interest and discussion in contemporary Polish society*. Communiqué 0379. Warszawa 1988. <http://badanie.cbos.pl/details.asp?q=a1&id=0379> (accessed 14.06.2016); CBOS. *The 1050<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Poland's baptism*. Communiqué 5352. Warszawa 2016. [http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2016/K\\_056\\_16.PDF](http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2016/K_056_16.PDF) (accessed 14.06.2016). The opinion poll was carried out using a method of direct interviewing (face-to-face), computer aided (CAPI) on 12–19 March 2016 among 1007 persons in a representative ballot trial of adult inhabitants of Poland; CBOS. *The historical awareness of Poles*. Communiqué 5364. Warszawa 2016. [http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2016/K\\_068\\_16.PDF](http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2016/K_068_16.PDF) (accessed 14.06.2016). This study was also carried out using a method of direct interviewing (face-to-face) computer aided (CAPI) on 12–19 March 2016 among 1007 persons in a representative ballot trial of adult inhabitants of Poland.

<sup>23</sup> CBOS. *The 1050<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Poland's baptism...*, the whole document.

<sup>24</sup> Archive of social reports of OBOP for the year 1965. Internet access: <http://www.tnsglobal.pl/archiwumraportow/1965/> (accessed 11.06.2016).

<sup>25</sup> Archive of social reports of OBOP for the year 1966. Internet access: <http://www.tnsglobal.pl/archiwumraportow/1966/> (accessed 11.06.2016).

<sup>26</sup> Archive of social reports of OBOP for the year 1967. Internet access: <http://www.tnsglobal.pl/archiwumraportow/1967/>; <http://www.tnsglobal.pl/archiwumraportow/1967/page/2/> (accessed 11.06.2016).



## STAGE 2: THE QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE CONTENTS OF THE REPORTS

The main purpose of applying the qualitative analysis of the report contents of CBOS and OBOP was an attempt to answer the following study questions: what is today's historical awareness of Poles?; of what historical events are they proud, which are those that—in the respondents opinion—give Poles disrepute?; do Poles know the date of Poland's baptism?; in what measure is Poland's baptism perceived as a turning point when compared with other events of Polish history until the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century?; what significance do Poles attribute to it as regards the development of Polish statehood, culture, religiousness and Poland's position in the international arena? In accomplishing the qualitative analysis of the collected study materials, a comparative analysis of analysis OBOP and CBOS reports was carried out at the same time, and so the third stage of the research was effected.

## STAGE 3: COMPARATIVE ANALYSES

## • The historical awareness of Poles

At the beginning of the comparative analyses, questions arise regarding the level of the historical awareness of Poles, including the question regarding historical events of which they are proud and events that—in the respondents opinion—give Poles disrepute.

The tendency to celebrate important historical events is an important factor of the Polish political and social scene. Some of these provoke strong feelings, others polemics and public discourse. The replies obtained to the question “in general do these celebrations unite or divide Poles,” posed to those who were studied, shows that the opinion of Poles is very varied. Hence every third person (34%) claims that they rather cause division, however 32% think that they unite. Also 32% of those studied do not have an opinion on this subject.<sup>27</sup> In the opinion poll, the question was also asked regarding the celebration of events, which in the opinion of those taking part in the opinion poll, most unite or divide Poles. The replies were sincere and spontaneous. The respondents had the possibility of suggesting several events and facts.

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<sup>27</sup> TNS Poland. *The opinion of Poles on the subject of the celebration of important anniversaries*, p. 2.

Table nr 3: The opinion of Poles regarding the celebration of important historical events.

	Which celebrations most of all, in your opinion, unite Poles? (in %)	Which celebrations most of all, in your opinion, divide Poles? (in %)
Independence Day	18	22
May 3 <sup>rd</sup> / Constitution of the 3 <sup>rd</sup> of May	12	1
May 1 <sup>st</sup>	5	5
The anniversary of John Paul II's death	2	0
Other anniversaries connected with John Paul II	1	0
September 1 <sup>st</sup> / The beginning of World War II	1	0
August 15 <sup>th</sup> / Vistula miracle / Polish Army Day	1	0
The Smoleńsk catastrophe	0	13
The Warsaw uprising	0	1
The anniversary of the formation of Solidarity	0	1
The anniversary of martial law	0	1

Source: TNS Poland. *The opinion of Poles on the subject of the celebration of important anniversaries*. Communiqué 073/12. Warszawa 2012, p. 3. [http://www.tnsglobal.pl/archiwumraportow/files/2014/03/K.073-12\\_Obchody-waznych-rocznic\\_011a-12.pdf](http://www.tnsglobal.pl/archiwumraportow/files/2014/03/K.073-12_Obchody-waznych-rocznic_011a-12.pdf) (accessed 12.06.2016).

In analyzing table 3, it should be remarked that none of the respondents indicated the anniversary of Prince Mieszko I and his courtiers' baptism. The jubilee of Poland's baptism is also absent in social awareness, a fact that is confirmed by the results of opinion polls carried out by OBOP.<sup>28</sup> In 1987,<sup>29</sup> as well as in 1996, the existence of events of Polish history, of which one could be proud, was a conviction held by a decided majority of Polish respondents: 78%.<sup>30</sup> By 2008, this index rose to 87%.<sup>31</sup> However, none of the respondents indicated the baptism of Poland, although they could mention several facts. The question was a open one.

The comparison of results of the OBOP opinion poll from the year 2008<sup>32</sup> with earlier studies (CBOS 1988,<sup>33</sup> OBOP 1996<sup>34</sup>) allows one to form the

<sup>28</sup> OBOP. *The historical awareness of Poles...*, the whole document

<sup>29</sup> See: Piotr Tadeusz KWIATKOWSKI. *Pamięć zbiorowa społeczeństwa polskiego okresu transformacji* [The collective memory of Polish society in the period of transformation] (Warszawa: Scholar, 2008), 232.

<sup>30</sup> OBOP. *The historical awareness of Poles...*, p. 3.

<sup>31</sup> TNS OBOP. *The pride and shame of Poles...*, p. 1.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

conclusion that in the last twenty years, Poles are more critical of their national history, although they do not cease being proud of it.<sup>35</sup> In the opinion of respondents, the following facts are remarkable:

- the year 1989, the fall of communism, the return of democracy — 29%
- the participation of Poles in World War II — 28%
- national insurrections — 17%
- events connected to the regaining of independence after the period of Poland's partition — 11%
- the election of Karol Wojtyła as pope — 8%
- the battle of Grunwald — 8%
- August 1980, the period of the first "Solidarity" — 5%
- Constitution of the 3<sup>rd</sup> of May — 4%
- the battle (siege) of Vienna (1683) — 4%
- the Polish-Bolshevik war 1920 — 4%
- the rebuilding of Poland after World War II — 2%
- scientific achievements of outstanding scholars and inventors — 2%
- other events — 20%
- difficult to say — 6%.<sup>36</sup>

However, the analysis of opinion polls carried out by CBOS in 1987<sup>37</sup> and 2016<sup>38</sup> lead one to different conclusions. Compared with the results of studies of 1987, in 2016 the index of studied Poles, describing their interest in history as great and very great, rose with a decrease of respondents declaring small or no interest in knowledge regarding the past. Nevertheless, this is not linked to a better knowledge of Polish history — during the last 30 years this has decreased as regards knowledge of dates concerning the most important historical events.<sup>39</sup>

- Knowledge of the date of Poland's baptism

The next essential question, which poses itself as regards the studied problem, is that of the respondents' knowledge of the date of Poland's baptism. The qualitative and quantitative analysis of contents of the collected

<sup>33</sup> CBOS. *The past as a subject of interest...*, the whole document.

<sup>34</sup> OBOP. *The historical awareness of Poles...*, the whole document.

<sup>35</sup> TNS Poland. *Poles in relation to history...*, p. 8.

<sup>36</sup> OBOP. *The historical awareness of Poles...*, p. 4.

<sup>37</sup> CBOS. *The past as a subject of interest...*, the whole document.

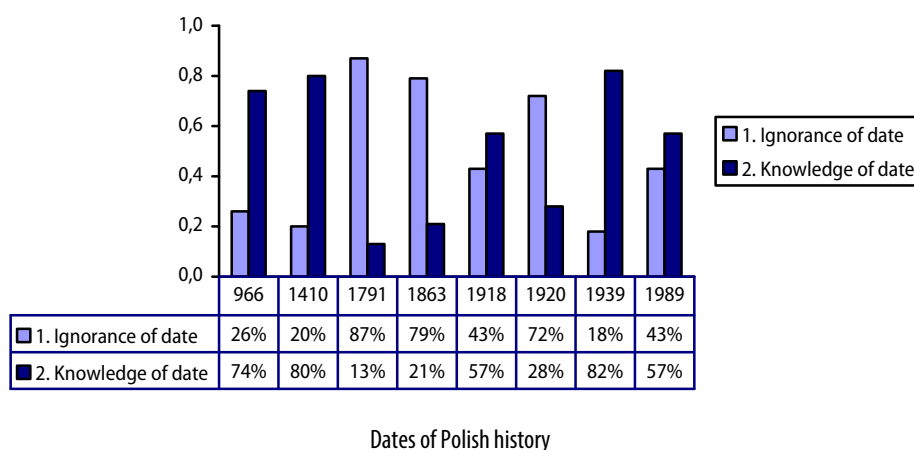
<sup>38</sup> CBOS. *The historical awareness of Poles...*, the whole document.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

material allows us to remark that in the opinion polls carried out by OBOP, the above mentioned problem was not directly studied.

Replies to the above formed study question are given by an analysis of results of studies effected by CBOS. Respondents who were asked in 2016 about events of Polish history which occurred in particular years: a definite majority (74%) linked without error the year 966 with the baptism of Poland. More than a quarter of respondents (26%) admitted that they did not know what important event occurred in 966, or gave a faulty reply. It should be noted that the dates 1939 (82%) and 1410 (80% of correct answers) were more easily recognizable than that of 966. The date of Poland's baptism was better known in Poland's history than 1918 (57%), 1989 (57%), 1920 (28%), 1863 (21%) or 1791 (13%).<sup>40</sup> In addition, knowledge of dates of respondents corresponds with their hierarchy of important events of Poland's history before the year 1918.

Diagram nr 1: What important event of Polish history occurred in the year:



Source: CBOS. *The historical awareness of Poles*. Communiqué 5364. Warszawa 2016, p. 5.  
[http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2016/K\\_068\\_16.PDF](http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2016/K_068_16.PDF) (accessed 14.06.2016).

In comparison with the year 1987,<sup>41</sup> in 2016 the percentage of people who associated correctly with the events of 966 rose from 69% to 74%. The noted increase of positive replies may result from the fact that, in connection with the celebration of the 1050<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Poland's baptism, it is often

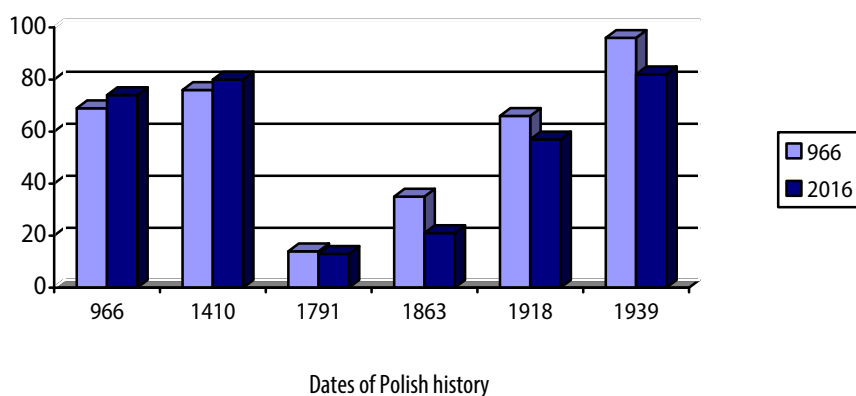
<sup>40</sup> Ibid., p. 5; CBOS. *The 1050<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Poland's baptism...*, p. 1.

<sup>41</sup> CBOS. *The past as a subject of interest...*, p. 4.

mentioned in public discourses both in the mass media, as well as by Catholic institutions and in churches.<sup>42</sup> At the same time, it should be remarked that in studies of nearly 30 year ago, Poles possessed a better knowledge of history when compared with the results of the year 2016.

Diagram nr 2: What important event of Polish history occurred in the year:

Percentage of those knowing the date of events



Source: CBOS. The historical awareness of Poles. Communiqué 5364. Warszawa 2016, p. 6. [http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2016/K\\_068\\_16.PDF](http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2016/K_068_16.PDF) (accessed 15.06.2016).

The qualitative analysis of the content of CBOS reports of 2016 shows that knowledge of the date of Poland's baptism distinguishes people with a higher education (96%), earning the highest income *per capita* (93%). These are mainly specialists of a higher degree and the cadre of directors (97%), administrative workers (93%) as well as engineers and middle personnel (92%). However, unqualified workers (47%), farmers (42%), housewives (39%), pensioners (36%) and those retired (34%), respondents with an elementary education (55% of incorrect replies) or fundamental professional (38%), all had problems with the correct identification of the event of the year 966. These were people with an income of up to 649 zlotys *per capita* (42%) or somewhat higher (40%), most often dissatisfied with their material status (42%), being at least 65 years old (35%), living in small towns (34%).<sup>43</sup>

<sup>42</sup> CBOS. *The 1050<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Poland's baptism...*, p. 3.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

- The baptism of Poland and other events of Polish history until the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century

In 2016, a definite majority (74%) of those studied rightly associated the year 966 with the baptism of Poland. The question arises: to what degree is it apprehended as an event which is a turning point when compared with other events of Polish history up to the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century?

In the OBOP opinion poll of 1996<sup>44</sup> a rather general question was formulated regarding historical events present in Polish history, which might give cause for pride. However, none of the respondents indicated Poland's baptism, although they could designate several facts. Nonetheless, the analysis of contents of the CBOS opinion poll of 2016 shows that 70% of respondents indicated the baptism of Poland as an event which was the most significant turning point in the destiny of the country. Successively, the following are included: the proclamation of the Constitution of the 3rd of May (59%) and the battle of Grunwald (44%). The significance of remaining events is emphasized decidedly less.<sup>45</sup> To compare, I inform that in opinion polls carried out by OBOP the above mentioned events obtained respectively less indications: Constitution of the 3rd of May (4%), battle of Grunwald (8%).<sup>46</sup> It should be noted that the answers of respondents analyzed above are not completely comparable, as they constitute replies given to questions related in range, but these research questions were formulated differently in the opinion polls of 1996 and 2016.<sup>47</sup>

It should be remarked that in the opinion of studied respondents declaring "a great or very great interest in history (N=252) the hierarchy of events, which were landmarks in Polish history and took place up to the regaining of independence 1918, is nearly identical among the body of those studied. Also in this group of respondents, 70% indicated the baptism of Poland."<sup>48</sup>

<sup>44</sup> OBOP. *The historical awareness of Poles...*, p. 4.

<sup>45</sup> CBOS. *The 1050<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Poland's baptism...*, p. 3; CBOS. *The historical awareness of Poles...*, p. 8.

<sup>46</sup> OBOP. *The historical awareness of Poles...*, p. 4.

<sup>47</sup> In the OBOP opinion poll of 1996, the question was asked: "Facts in Polish history of which the Poles may be proud", however, in CBOS research: "What historical event up till the year 1918 were, in your opinion, the most significant, decisive for the fate of our country?"

<sup>48</sup> CBOS. *The 1050<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Poland's baptism...*, p. 4.

Table nr 4: Which event of Polish history up till the year 1918 was, in your opinion, the most significant, a turning point in the destiny of Poland?

Historical event	Percentage of indications
• Baptism of Poland (966)	70
• Constitution of the 3 <sup>rd</sup> of May (1791)	59
• Battle of Grunwald (1410)	44
• World War I, the end of the European order established during the Congress of Vienna (1914-1918)	27
• The third partition, "Finis Poloniae" (1795)	11
• Foundation of the University of Cracow—the Cracovian Academy (1364)	7
• The Conference of Gniezno (1000)	5
• The coronation of Boleslaus the Brave (1025)	5
• The Swedish deluge and other wars with Russia and Turkey in the 17 <sup>th</sup> century	5
• The Lublin Union (1569)	4
• The coronation of Ladislaus the Elbow-high, the end of territorial division (1320)	3
• The second Toruń peace treaty, regaining of Vistula estuary, access to the Baltic (1466)	2
• The Congress of Vienna, establishing of European order without Poland's participation (1814-1815)	2
• Testament of Boleslaus the Wry-mouthed, the beginning of territorial division (1136)	1
• Confederation of Warsaw (1573)	1
• The annexation of Galician Ruthenia, the beginning of eastward expansion	0
• Hard to say	7

Source: CBOS. 1050<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Poland's baptism. Communiqué 5352. Warszawa 2016, p. 4. [http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2016/K\\_056\\_16.PDF](http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2016/K_056_16.PDF) (accessed 15.06.2016). The percentages do not sum up to 100, because respondents were allowed to choose three events.

The significance of Poland's baptism as a turning point for the country's development, is mostly emphasized by respondents aged 18 to 24 (79%), possessing testimonials of secondary education (77%) and with the lowest earnings *per capita* in housekeeping (80%). In social-professional groups, these are mostly pupils and students (82% indications), housewives (81%), unqualified workers (80%), the unemployed (78%) and private businessmen (78%). The importance of this event is less valued by persons aged over 65 (65%), specialists with higher education and the cadre of directors (54%). The attitude toward the baptism of Poland as a event which was a turning point differs essentially depending on the frequency of religious practice.

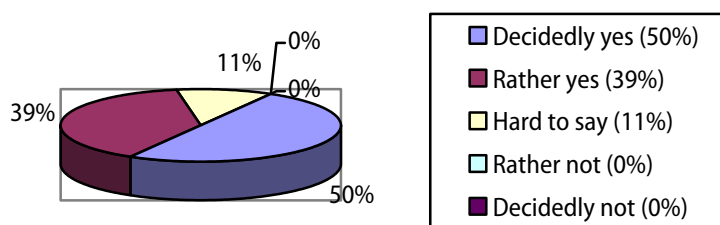
Among those practicing several times a week 93% regard it as the most significant event in Polish history, yet among non-practicing respondents — 58%.<sup>49</sup>

- Estimation of the event of the year 966

As the baptism of Poland is regarded by Poles as one of the most important historical events as well as a turning point — indicated by 70% of respondents — subsequent questions are raised concerning its estimation and the grounds of these convictions.

From the historical point of view, the reception of baptism by Mieszko I — in public opinion — is appreciated as sensible. This opinion is held by a decided majority of those taking part in the opinion poll (89%), with every other respondent (50% of the whole) being decidedly convinced about this. Every tenth respondent (11%) is unable to estimate explicitly the significance of the events of 966. It should be remarked that among those who were asked for their opinion, there were no respondents who judged the baptism of Poland negatively.<sup>50</sup>

Diagram nr 3: This year we celebrate the 1050<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Poland's baptism. In your opinion, was the fact that Mieszko I accepted baptism beneficial from a historical point of view?



Source: CBOS. *1050<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Poland's baptism*. Communiqué 5352. Warszawa 2016, p. 5. [http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2016/K\\_056\\_16.PDF](http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2016/K_056_16.PDF) (accessed 15.06.2016).

Knowing of these decidedly laudatory opinions of respondents, we may raise the question concerning the factors and causes behind the positive attitude for events from before 1050 years. The replies obtained were ordered into three groups of problems: religious considerations (36%), geopolitical considerations (26%) and socio-cultural considerations (10%). It should

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p. 5; CBOS. *The historical awareness of Poles...*, p. 8.

<sup>50</sup> CBOS. *The 1050<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Poland's baptism...*, p. 5.



be remarked that every fourth respondent convinced that Poland's baptism in 966 was a significant event, could not motivate his/her opinion (23%) or declined to give an answer (2%).<sup>51</sup>

In carrying out the qualitative analysis of the report contents, one should note that every third respondent mainly perceives the religious dimension of Poland's baptism (36%). This result may cause surprise. Only 33% of respondents remark that owing to events of 966 Poland became a Christian country and ceased to be a pagan state (4%). At the same time, 2% of those questioned expressed the opinion that it was the political situation that forced the reception of baptism. Somewhat fewer respondents (26%) take into account geopolitical factors. It is noticed that due to this event Poland became part of the western civilized world (8%) and kept its independence (8%). In addition, its international importance grew (6%), and Polish statehood developed (4%).

The aptness of Mieszko I's decision as one based on socio-cultural factors is the opinion of 10% of those questioned. As they understand, it is owing to this event that Poland is now part of the culture and civilization of the West (5%), it constituted a stimulus for the development of Polish civilization and progress (4%), and also contributed to the unification of the nation (2%). Other reasons (7%) evoked by respondents are general statements: "it was good that it happened, the event was important for Poland (3%)" and "this event influenced the future of the country—generally; steered the Polish nation; constituted a new stage in the history of the country (2%)."<sup>52</sup>

Table nr 5: Reasons convincing the respondents that — from a historical point of view — it turned out well that Mieszko I received baptism

<b>Reasons convincing the respondents that — from a historical point of view — it turned out well that Mieszko I received baptism</b>	<b>N=892</b>
<b>Religious considerations</b>	<b>36%</b>
• Because of this event Poland became/is a Christian/Catholic country; emphasis on the signification of Christianity and faith in general	33%
• Because of this event Poland ceased to be a pagan country	4%
<b>Geopolitical considerations</b>	<b>26%</b>
• Because of this event Poland kept her independence, avoided the invasion of Germanic peoples and other attacks, wars and plunder; in general, Poland exists due to this event; it influenced the safety of the country	8%

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., p. 5-6.

• Because of this event Poland became a part of Christian Europe, a part of the western world (modern and civilized)	8%
• This event influenced the growth of Poland's importance in the international arena	6%
• This event influenced the development of Polish statehood; Poland became a state	4%
• There was no alternative; such was the necessity; the political situation demanded this (otherwise baptism would have been enforced anyway)	2%
<b>Socio-cultural considerations</b>	<b>10%</b>
• Because of this event Poland constitutes a part of the culture and civilization of the West; a cultural development of Poland followed	5%
• Because of this event perspectives improved for Poland; it influenced the development of Poland in the future—generally; it constituted a stimulus for the development of Polish civilization, assured progress	4%
• This event positively influenced people and mutual relations between people; it effected the unification of the nation	2%
<b>Other replies</b>	<b>7%</b>
• Generally—it was good that it happened, the event was important for Poland	3%
• This event influenced the future of the country—generally; steered the Polish nation; constituted a new stage in the history of the country	2%
• Others	2%
<b>Hard to say</b>	<b>23%</b>
<b>Refusal to reply</b>	<b>2%</b>

Source: CBOS. 1050<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Poland's baptism. Communiqué 5352. Warszawa 2016, p. 7.  
[http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2016/K\\_056\\_16.PDF](http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2016/K_056_16.PDF) (accessed 15.06.2016).

Analysing the social-demographic characteristics of respondents arguing for the aptness of Mieszko I's decision by definite factors, one should note their predictability and disputability. As results from the opinion poll carried out, reasons of a religious character were mostly presented by persons who practiced religion (58%), declaring right-wing political opinions (46%), being at least 65 years old (47%), in other words pensioners (47%) with an elementary or secondary school education (43%), with a monthly income *per capita* from 1400 to 1999 zlotys (45%). Geopolitical factors were most often evoked by educated Poles (41%), specialists of a higher (46%) and medium grade (39%), living in cities (39%), having the highest income per person in a household (36%), of left-wing political opinion (35%). However, the socio-cultural reasons were noticed by respondents from the largest cities of Poland (22%), who are part of the cadre of directors (20%), with the highest income *per capita* (19%) and with a higher education (18%). Those who had difficulties in motivating their positive attitude were mostly the unemployed (46%),

housewives (42%), unqualified workers (35%) as well as pupils and students (31%). In addition, respondents with the lowest income *per capita* (35%), the religiously non-practicing (33%), aged between 18 and 24 years (32%).<sup>53</sup>

- The importance of the baptism of Poland for the development of Polish statehood, religiousness, culture and standing of the country in the international arena

Being aware of the opinions, the motivation of convictions and reasons of respondents on the subject of Mieszko I's decision of 966, the next research question arises: what meaning do they attach to the fact of the reception of baptism by Poland for the development of her statehood, religiousness, culture and standing of the country in the international arena?

The qualitative analysis of the content of the CBOS report allows one to form the conclusion that the greater majority of respondents (over 80%), notices the positive influence of the fact of Poland's reception of baptism in all four studied dimensions. It should be emphasized that respondents mostly accentuated the profitable significance for its religiousness (88% indications, among these over half of the opinions were decidedly positive). Successively—up to 84% of respondents—noticed the positive influence on the development of Polish statehood and culture, as well as Poland's standing in the international arena (81%).

Table nr 6: In your opinion, did Poland's reception of baptism in 966 have, from a historical point of view, a positive or negative influence on:

	<b>Decidedly positive</b>	<b>Rather positive</b>	<b>Rather negative</b>	<b>Decidedly negative</b>	<b>Did not have any influence</b>	<b>Hard to say</b>
Polish religiousness	47	41	1	1	2	8
Polish statehood	33	51	1	0	3	12
Polish culture	32	52	1	0	3	12
Poland's standing in the international arena	34	47	2	0	5	12

Source: CBOS. *1050<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Poland's baptism*. Communiqué 5352. Warszawa 2016, p. 9.  
[http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2016/K\\_056\\_16.PDF](http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2016/K_056_16.PDF) (accessed 15.06.2016).

It should be emphasized that in the evaluation of the importance of Poland's baptism for her statehood, religiousness, culture and standing in the

<sup>53</sup> Ibid. p. 7-8.

international arena, Poles are so unanimous that their political party preferences do not influence the differentiation of their replies. Representatives of the most important political parties, which have their representation in parliament, in an overwhelming majority positively evaluated the influence of Poland's baptism on all of the discussed dimensions. Table nr 7 gives detailed data.

Table nr 7: The opinion of persons according to whom the fact that Poland accepted baptism in 966, had — from a historical point of view — a positive influence on:

Persons according to whom the fact that Poland accepted baptism in 966, had — from a historical point of view — a positive influence on:	Party electorates qualified on the basis of a declaration of voting in parliamentary elections (in %)			
	PiS	PO	Kukiz'15	Nowoczesna
• Polish religiousness	92	88	91	84
• Polish statehood	88	87	89	86
• Polish culture	88	88	84	87
• Poland's standing in the international arena	81	81	91	87

Source: CBOS. *1050<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Poland's baptism*. Communiqué 5352. Warszawa 2016, p. 10. [http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2016/K\\_056\\_16.PDF](http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2016/K_056_16.PDF). (accessed 15.06.2016).

#### STAGE 4: CONCLUSIONS AND POSTULATES

The 1050<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Poland's baptism falls in 2016, an event that aligned our country with the Christian states of Europe and bound it to the western circle of Christian culture. Later ages showed how lasting and important the Christianisation of Poland was to be. Despite many pagan revolts, the decline of Polish statehood, as well as the destruction of ecclesiastical organization, the Christian faith survived. It became the fundament of Polish history, tradition and culture.<sup>54</sup>

The aim of this article was a comparative analysis of the social perception of the event of Poland's baptism, as well as of its significance for the development of Polish statehood, culture, religiousness and its standing in the international arena, in the light of opinion polls carried out by OBOP and CBOS in the years 1965–2016. The studied material comprised 7 reports, 4 opinion polls carried out by OBOP and 3 reports by CBOS. One should note that only one of the above opinion polls directly refers to the studied

<sup>54</sup> J. WILDER. *Polskie chrześcijaństwo* [Polish Christianity], p. 62.

problem, this being the report worked out in 2016 by CBOS under the title *The 1050<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Poland's baptism*. Furthermore, a thorough quantitative and qualitative analysis of jointly chosen 19 reports of OBOP according to a chronological criterion (1965: 1 report; 1966: 6; 1967: 12) allows one to formulate the conclusion that none of them referred both to the millennium of Poland's baptism nor to the thousandth anniversary of the Polish State. What conclusions issue from the qualitative analyses of the report contents?

Above all, the fact should be emphasized that the problem of social perception of Poland's baptism is present only in opinion polls carried out by CBOS. The fact that it was established in 1982 would explain the lack of data regarding the thousandth anniversary of Poland's baptism.

Subsequent anniversaries of the reception of baptism by Mieszko I and their celebration—as the opinion polls carried out by OBOP show (see P.T. Kwiatkowski 2008, communiqué 035/96, communiqué 038/08)—are missing in social awareness. A decided majority of respondents were convinced that events existed in Polish history which give them reason to be proud (in 1987: 78%; 1996: 78%; 2008: 87%), however, none of the respondents indicated Poland's baptism, although they had the choice to mention several facts. The questions were open ones. Nonetheless, this does not mean that Poles do not attach importance to the celebration of the anniversaries of Poland's baptism. This is attested by the large attendance at the celebration of the thousandth and 1050<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Poland's baptism. This does not, however, change the fact that respondents acknowledge other events as more important and decisive.

Other conclusions were reached, however, in the analysis of opinion polls carried out by CBOS in 1987 (communiqué 0379) and 2016 (communiqué 5352, communiqué 5364). In comparison with 1987, the index rose of examined Poles who described their interest in history as great or very great. However, this is not connected to a greater knowledge of Poland's history—during the last 30 years, knowledge of dates of the most important historical events has diminished. As can be seen in studies undertaken by CBOS in 2016, a decided majority of Poles (74%) is able to assign correctly the proper event of Polish history to the year 966. The year of Poland's baptism is worse identified than the years 1939 and 1410, much better however than the years: 1918, 1989, 1920, 1863 and 1791.

In the opinion of 70% examined Poles, the reception of baptism by Mieszko I constituted one of the most important, decisive events for Poland,

which occurred before the year 1918. Those questioned have no doubt that, from a historical point of view, the decision of the Prince of the Polans in 966 was adequate and right. This opinion is shared by 89% of those questioned.

The qualitative analysis of the CBOS report contents permits one to formulate the conclusion that a decided majority of respondents (over 80%), thinks Mieszko I's decision was a proper one and one having positive consequences both for the country's religiousness, as well as for the development of Polish statehood and for Poland's standing in the international arena. It should be emphasized that respondents mostly accentuated the religious significance of Poland's baptism (88% of indications). Somewhat less — 84% of those examined — remarked a positive influence on the development of Polish statehood and culture as well as on its international standing (81%). The non-religious significance of the event which took place 1050 years ago, is more often emphasized by other respondents, by those who describe their interest in history as above average. Opinions on the subject are not differentiated due to the political party preference of respondents. A great majority of representatives of the most important political parties, represented in the present parliament, judge the influence of the baptism of Poland as positive, from the historical point of view, in all examined dimensions.

In the research process the thesis was accepted that in the last fifty years social apprehension of Poland's baptism has not undergone any change. The incompleteness of source materials issuing from the fact that the author did not carry out her own research, but only based it on data contained in CBOS and OBOP reports, made it impossible to give a univocal reply. By the same, the thesis formulated in the introduction to the article was not confirmed nor refuted.

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## CHRZEST POLSKI W OPINII SPOŁECZNEJ

### Streszczenie

Celem niniejszego artykułu jest analiza porównawcza społecznego postrzegania wydarzenia chrztu Polski, a także jego znaczenie dla rozwoju polskiej państwowości, kultury, religijności oraz pozycji kraju na arenie międzynarodowej, w świetle badań opinii publicznej, przeprowadzonych przez Centrum Badania Opinii Społecznej (CBOS) oraz Ośrodek Badania Opinii Publicznej (OBOP) w latach 1965–2016. Jest on próbą odpowiedzi na następujące problemy badawcze: Jaka jest dzisiaj świadomość historyczna Polaków? Z których wydarzeń historycznych są dumni, które zaś – zdaniem respondentów – przynoszą Polakom niesławę? Czy Polacy znają datę chrztu Polski? W jakim stopniu chrzest Polski postrzegany jest jako wydarzenie przełomowe na tle innych wydarzeń z historii Polski do początku XX wieku? Jakie znaczenie przypisują mu Polacy dla rozwoju polskiej państwowości, kultury, religijności oraz pozycji kraju na arenie międzynarodowej?

W procesie badawczym przyjęto następującą tezę: W ciągu ostatnich pięćdziesięciu lat nie uległo zmianie postrzeganie społeczne chrztu Polski. Niekompletność materiału źródłowego, wynikająca z faktu, że autorka nie przeprowadziła własnych badań, a jedynie bazowała na danych zawartych w raportach CBOS i OBOP, uniemożliwiła udzielenie jednoznacznej odpowiedzi. Tym samym teza sformułowana we wstępie artykułu nie została ani potwierdzona, ani obalona. Przy opracowywaniu materiału badawczego zastosowano metodę analizy porównawczej, ilościową analizę zawartości, jakościową analizę treści oraz metodę analityczno-opisową.

**Słowa kluczowe:** chrzest Polski; opinia publiczna; analiza porównawcza.



## THE BAPTISM OF POLAND IN PUBLIC OPINION

## Summary

The aim of this article was a comparative analysis of the social perception of the event of Poland's baptism, as well as of its significance for the development of Polish statehood, culture, religiousness and its standing in the international arena, in the light of opinion polls carried out by the Centre of Studies of Social Opinion (CBOS) and the Centre of Studies of Public Opinion (OBOP) in the years 1965–2016. It is an attempt to find an answer to the following research problems: what is today's historical awareness of Poles? Of which historical events are they proud, and which are those — in the opinion of the respondents — that give Poland bad name? Do Poles know the date of Poland's baptism? To what degree is Poland's baptism perceived as a decisive event on the background of other events of Polish history right up to the beginning of the 20th century? What importance do Poles give it for the development of Polish statehood, culture, religiousness and standing in the international arena?

In the research process the following thesis was accepted that in the last fifty years social apprehension of Poland's baptism has not undergone any change. The incompleteness of source materials issuing from the fact that the author did not carry out her own research, but only based it on data contained in CBOS and OBOP reports, made it impossible to give a univocal reply. By the same, the thesis formulated in the introduction to the article was not confirmed nor refuted. In elaborating the research material, a method of comparative analysis, of quantitative and qualitative analyses of contents, as well as of an analytical-descriptive one was applied

**Key words:** baptism of Poland; public opinion; comparative analysis.