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The Church–State Relationship in Polish Media: Combining the Grounded Theory and Intermedia Agenda-Setting at the Network Level

Abstract: The article examines the reports on the 1050th anniversary of the Baptism of Poland as a religious and political event in mainstream Polish newspapers, websites and TV news in April of 2016. Using qualitative grounded theory and quantitative intermedia agenda-setting at the networked level, the author shows how this religious event was presented and interpreted as a dominant force in this Church–state relationship. As a result, he claims that the Church–state relationship in media was covered by an increasing policy of the Church putting pressure on the state by expanding religion in the public sphere.

Keywords: Church–state relationship, secular state, Polish media, grounded theory, Poland’s baptism anniversary

Introduction

The position of religion is changing dynamically in the public sphere understood as a space created by “communication about public affairs in journalism, opinion and argumentation, in the face of communication as well as in mediated communication” (Rasmussen 2014: 1315–1316). One of the key elements in this process remains the tension between religion and the state. Every day, its traces touch citizens through the basic infrastructure of the public sphere, meaning the various means of mediated communication. The media representation of the Church–state relationship is, however, doubly problematic. On the one hand, public discourse may point to the dominance of various models of the Church’s relations with political authorities (Neuberger 1999). On the other hand, the Church–state relationship undergoes media transformations. Participants of this theater, wanting to be covered by the media, re-articulate their positions in order to better respond to the logic of the media (Hjarvard 2008, 2011).

For decades, religious changes in the public sphere were linked to the process of secularization (Berger 1967; Bruce 2002; Dobbelaere 2002; Luckmann 1967). However, this phenomenon was characteristic of Northern and Western countries of late modernity. Meanwhile, as Beckford (2010) notes, the modernity of North Western Europe may be only one of the many options among multiple modernities, in which religion has a high degree of visibility. This intuition is also reinforced by broader approaches, present in the pluralism of modernities and the various shades of secularization distinctly beyond North

and Western Europe or in general outside the European context (Künkler, Madeley, & Shankar 2018).

The case of Poland seems to be interesting in this perspective. The cultural and religious formation of the Polish society grew on the basis of opposition to the communist regime and was characterized by relative durability (Hervieu-Legér 2000). In the first years after the changes in the nation's political system, Casanova (1994) predicted that shortly, Catholicism in Poland would remain a public religion, and it was impossible to imagine that it would undergo privatization. Currently, the country still boasts an 89.5 percent Catholic population (Central Statistical Office of Poland, 2016). However, the tendencies of the privatization of religion are slowly becoming dull (Borowik 2010).

It is undeniable that the current Church and state relationship occupies an essential position in the nation's media agencies. When considering the media dimension of the Church and state relationship, we should question the contents of the message it gives. Does the Church influence state authority? It is possible that over the years among those in authority in the center-right parties there has been a shift towards state influence on the Church? The author of this paper tries to address this problem based on the case study of the media coverage of the 1050th anniversary of the Baptism of Poland using grounded theory and intermedia agenda-setting at the networked level.

Research Question and Hypotheses

The comparative character of this study is first of all supposed to show how the selected media covered the event of the 1050th anniversary of the Baptism of Poland. The study asks a basic question: How does the media shape the coverage of the events of the 1050th anniversary of the Baptism of Poland? The author based on this question set the following hypothesis:

H1: Networked attribute agendas of the 1050th anniversary of the Baptism of Poland correspond to each other to a high degree.

This research develops the networked agenda setting approach which comes from the field of communication studies. Within the approach, media content can be seen as based on networks of attributes. Therefore, when comparing different media, we are dealing with the issue of the correspondence of their networks of attributes.

The position of the Catholic Church in Poland has changed radically as compared to 1989 and earlier. Poland during the communist period stood out from other countries in that the opposition, whether they were believers or not, practiced Catholicism as a symbol of fidelity to Polish culture (Hervieu-Legér 2000). Meanwhile, Church–state relationships were hostile: “religious symbols could invoke an alternative vision of Polish nationhood without the use of words” (Herbert 2015: 60). Over two decades of freedom in the Church–state relationship have caused radical changes. Already in the early 1990s, the Church became an active participant in politics and strengthened its influence (Borowik 2007). The Concordat with the Holy See and a series of laws guaranteeing the support of religious institutions have set the axis of cooperation. Depending on the historical period, the last 25 years have witnessed cooperation or the instrumentalization of these relations. The visible sign of this

change is the war rhetoric that grew around the symbolism of the cross (Kozub-Karkut & Głuszek-Szafranec 2016).

The good relationship between the current Law and Justice politicians and Catholic circles, including the Church hierarchy, allows us to see cooperation between the Church and state after 2015. The question remains whether this cooperation is based on equality or the domination of one of the parties. This problem addresses two competing hypotheses: H2a: The state–Church relationship in the media coverage of the Baptism of Poland presents the domination of the state over the Catholic Church.

H2b: The Church–state relationship in the media coverage of the Baptism of Poland presents the domination of the Catholic Church over the state.

This article is structured as follows: the Church–state theory is introduced and later related to the Polish case. After that materials and methodology are presented, we will respectively focus on the application of the mixed methodology of both the qualitatively grounded theory and the quantitative intermedia agenda-setting networked approach. Subsequently, findings are presented in two subsections as quantitative and qualitative data. In the concluding discussion, the right approach to the Church–state relationship is implemented.

Different Approaches to the Church–State Relationship

A brief background has to be provided, followed by Church–state relationship models and their Polish counterpart. In the past two decades, there have been a few waves of public debate with the media regarding the issue of the Church–state relationship, particularly with the Roman Catholic Church.

Liberal democracies have one model or pattern of Church–state relations, and it is known as the secular state (Walczuk 2013). Considered to be a ‘pure separation’ and ‘religious state *à rebours*’ (Małajny 2013), it justifies the issues on the subject of the state’s attitude towards religion. When we do not treat the issue according to the objective category, but as principles that regulate mutual relations, it is useful to apply Neuberger’s (1999) classical typology, which is based on six models.

The first of Neuberger’s models, termed ‘secular-absolutist,’ was characteristic of the Soviet Union and the communist bloc and was based on a generally oppressive approach towards religion. The second represents its extreme opposite and it is a ‘theocracy,’ such as the one present in Saudi Arabia. The third model known as the ‘separation of Church and state’ occurs in the form of open separation as found in the USA or it can be hostile separation, which is evident in the case of the French *laïcité*. In each version, the state assumes a secular nature and public authorities do not interfere in Church affairs. The French variant also has a ban on wearing explicit religious symbols in public places.

Another ‘model of recognized communities’ was based on historical religious divisions in such societies as Germany. It assumes the recognition of religious groups and gives them equal rights when they fulfill such legal requirements as group size, institutionalization, etc. ‘The established Church model’ assumes that, for historical reasons, a particular Church has been established as an official or established Church, which has been granted a constitutional position, such as the Church of England and the Church of Scotland.

The sixth Church–state model, known as the ‘endorsed Church model,’ represents a situation in which there is no established Church, all religions have rights, and one of the Churches is preferred in a symbolic way. Poland fits into this model, in particular by virtue of Article 25 of the current Constitution, which states that “the relations between the Republic of Poland and the Roman Catholic Church shall be determined by the international treaty concluded with the Holy See, and by statute” (“*The Constitution of the Republic of Poland*” 1997).

Regardless of the adopted model, in a variety of political regimes, Church–state relations are part of a permanent element of media agendas (Guzek 2019; Guzek, Głuszek-Szafraniec, & Szostok 2015; Knoblauch 2014; Thomson, Perreault, & Duffy 2017). Perceiving Poland as an example of an endorsed Church, current scholarship on media coverage of the Church’s presence in Poland’s public sphere in the years 1997–2012 indicates four types of associations (Sowiński et al. 2013).

A position termed the ‘model of presence and natural tension between the Church and the secular public sphere’¹ assumes that the public sphere belongs to the natural sphere of the Church’s activity on a religious and axiological dimension. In contrast, ‘the separation model’ leads to religious freedom in the negative sense and causes religion to shift into the private lives of citizens. This model establishes a linear relationship between the increase in secularization and the increase in state modernization. Besides, it is assumed that the secular state is simultaneously an axiologically pluralist state.

The third case referred to as the ‘model of the religious public sphere,’ has two main premises. First, it functions on the basis of “the conviction of the particular historical contribution of the Church in shaping national identity and tradition” (Sowiński et al. 2013: 11). Second, it indicates the need to build a separate religious public sphere, which would be like a counterweight to the generally secular public sphere that does not approve of the Church. Opposition to the third case presents the last ‘equality of status and testimony model.’ It emphasizes the integrity of the Church and the public sphere. Therefore it assumes that the public sphere belongs to the fundamental spheres of the Church’s activity.

The Church–state relationship models presented in this way along with the Church–public sphere relationship models presented in the media should be treated as a basis for analyzing the subsequent results of the 1050th Anniversary of the Baptism of Poland.

Material and Methods

The empirical material used for this analysis consists of 71 items, published and emitted between April 4 and 18, 2016, including all coverage of the 1050th anniversary of Poland’s Baptism. The collected data was retrieved from the newspapers *Gazeta Wyborcza* and *Rzeczpospolita*, TV news *TVP Wiadomości* and *TVN Fakty* and such websites as *Onet* and *Wirtualna Polska (WP)*. The material was examined through the grounded theory linked with intermedia agenda-setting directives on the networked level. *Gazeta Wyborcza* is a prestigious left-liberal daily newspaper set up as a press service for Solidarity trade union. In addition, *Gazeta Wyborcza* has already been used in one of the network agenda-setting studies (Guo et al. 2015). *Rzeczpospolita* is a prestigious political and economic

¹ The author of this report uses the term ‘public sphere’ according to Habermas.

title with a conservative bias. *Wiadomości* represents the TV news service of public *TVP* while *TVN Fakty* is considered to be one of the most important competitive commercial TV news services. *Onet* and *WP* are the biggest news websites in the country. As former studies show, all of the mentioned media are familiar with religious affairs (Brzoza 2015; Hodalska 2011; Popow 2015; Sarna 2014; Stachowska 2015). The grounded theory called for the developing theory based on the data, and instead of utilizing existing theories, it has successively entered into sociology (Charmaz 2006; Glaser & Strauss 1967; Strauss & Corbin 1990). Thus, recent studies have shown that it can be accommodated into media studies (González-Teruel 2015; Gynnild 2016; Neumaier 2015; Steensen 2009). Regardless of the kind of analysis field, Katy Charmaz (2006) encourages the reader to look at the theory methods rather as sets of principles and practices than prescriptions or packages.

In this project, the grounded-in-data categories, numbering 169, have been established as attributes in the networked intermedia agenda-setting studies. Traditionally, the agenda-setting attributes are based on the coding book of content analysis. Here the attributes extracted from the first stage of the grounded theory code the total media content into categories. According to the author, this conceptual stage of the grounded theory has to be seen as the best moment for meeting the frequency demands. Although frequency is not needed in the grounded theory, it might be a good start to set the researcher's theoretical proposals. As a result of research procedures grounded in multiple theoretical perspectives, the project is oriented towards "capturing a more complete, holistic, and contextual portrayal of the unit(s) under study" (Jick 1979: 603).

An essential element of the research procedure was to build a matrix of attributes, which allowed for setting the media agenda network for each studied title (Guo 2012) and, on this basis, identify attributes linked to a greater extent than others. Using a binary coding approach, respectively, attributes present in the article have been assigned a value of '1' if they appeared in articles or '0' if not. The author composed six symmetrical matrices of 169 rows and 169 columns based on the interrelationships between the elements found in the media content. An example of the matrix from *Gazeta Wyborcza* appears below (see Table 1). Each cell shows the number of times when two attributes appeared in the same article. Thus, if cell C corresponding to F is 2, this means that these two attributes appeared together in two articles.

The author used the statistical tool known as the Quadratic Assignment Procedure, which, by comparing three matrices, counts correlations between their networks of attributes in order to test hypotheses H1, H2a, and H2b. By checking the most important attributes of the research material, the tool determined the degree centrality, which is the number of connections between the attribute and other attributes, that is, the number of ties in a single node. Finally, the research employed Johnson's hierarchical clustering to detect patterns in each media network.

Intermedia-Agenda Setting

As mentioned, the collected and already partially analyzed material was subject to the intermedia-agenda setting on the networked level (Guo et al. 2015). Intermedia agenda-setting

Table 1
Excerpt of the *Gazeta Wyborcza*

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
A	0	0	1	0	1	0	0
B	0	0	1	0	1	0	1
C	1	1	0	0	1	0	1
D	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
E	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
F	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
G	0	1	1	0	0	0	0

A. The Paetz case is a shame for Poland; B. Paetz has to concelebrate the mass; C. Paetz accused of molesting clerics; D. No penance for Paetz; E. Paetz feels he's the host of the ceremony; F. Paetz pushes himself into the ceremony; G. Paetz refuses to concelebrate the mass.

Source: Own research.

is a part of a bigger perspective of the agenda-setting approach developed from the 'Chapel Hill Study' regarding the presidential elections (McCombs & Shaw 1972). Traditionally, the first level of this approach referred to the transfer of salient issues from the media agenda to the public agenda, according to the accumulation of messages and the appropriate media exposure (McCombs 2004). The second level of the theory set the designation of the hierarchy of attributes that described the objects on the media agenda and transferred them to attributes in the public agenda. The third level, called the agenda-setting model (NAS), described how the connection between elements of the media agenda passed on to the public agenda (Guo 2012, 2014, 2016; Vu, Guo, & McCombs 2014).

The agenda-setting theory refers to the impact of the media's agenda on the public's agenda. The study of television and newspaper networks (Reese & Danielian 1989) and elite newspapers (Protess & McCombs 1991), however, pointed to the need to ask the question concerning who is shaping the media agenda itself? Scholarship on the influence of media agencies on each other, called intermedia agenda-setting, is an attempt to answer this question (Brandenburg 2002; Golan 2006; Lopez-Escobar, Llamas, McCombs, & Lennon 1998; Vliegenthart & Walgrave 2008). A recent study on this topic identified four key factors shaping the intermedia agenda of a given media outlet (Vonbun, Königslöw, & Schoenbach 2016): the production cycle of the medium, the other medium as the opinion leader on the subject, a persistent topic and being closer to the event than other media networks. The NAS model from the perspective of the intermedia-agenda setting assumes that the media shape their respective agendas based on the transfer of a network's attributes that are based on connections between the highlighted elements rather than individual attributes.

Quantitative Results

Calculated by the UCINET program, the centrality shows that individual titles treated as separate attribute networks have some common elements. This is visible when analyzing three central nodes that attain the highest levels of active relationships in the studied structure (Robins 2015). The centrality of all the networks exposes Mieszko and his agency in

favor of the emerging state. In the press, Mieszko's topics concern the fundamental importance of his decision (the second result in *Gazeta Wyborcza* from 23 related links and *Rzeczpospolita's* 17 links). On the *Onet* portal and *TVP Wiadomości* service, Mieszko's character is treated as the basis for all the topics discussed (*Onet* with 98 links and *TVP Wiadomości* with 65 links). The degree of centrality indicates that among the topics with the highest co-occurrence with other issues from the Anniversary of Poland's Baptism, concern over historical themes dominates, whereas political issues, including Church–state relationships, are not vital topics in the analysis.

Table 2

The Most Central Attributes on the Network Media Agendas of Media

Media	Issue	DC
Gazeta Wyborcza	1050 th Baptism Anniversary	25
	Mieszko	23
	The great significance of Mieszko's decision	23
	Abp. Stanisław Gądecki, Head of the Episcopal Conference	17
	Abp. Wojciech Polak, Primate of Poland	17
Rzeczpospolita	Mieszko	19
	The great significance of Mieszko's decision	17
	The 1966 Procession of the Bright Mount Icon	16
	The Baptism shaped the nation	16
	The Baptism advanced civilization	16
	The Baptism as a cultural advance	16
	The Baptism brought Poland into the Christian Nations	16
In 966, Poland accepted Western European culture	16	
TVN Fakty	Mieszko	55
	The 1050 th anniversary of Poland's Baptism	44
	Dobrawa	44
	The Nation's Celebrations	44
	The National Assembly in Poznań	44
	Abp. Paetz is to Co-celebrate the Mass	34
	St. Adalbert's Confession	34
	Gniezno City	34
	The Primate of Poland invites all Bishops to the Ceremony	34
TVP Wiadomości	The 1966 Procession of the Bright Mount Icon	65
	Mieszko	65
	Gniezno Cathedral	58
	The President delivers a message	54
Onet	1050 th Baptism Anniversary	99
	Mieszko	98
	The President participates in the Eucharist in Poznań Arch-Cathedral	89
WP	National Ceremonies	47
	1050 th Baptism Anniversary	44
	The National Assembly in Poznań	44
	Mieszko	39

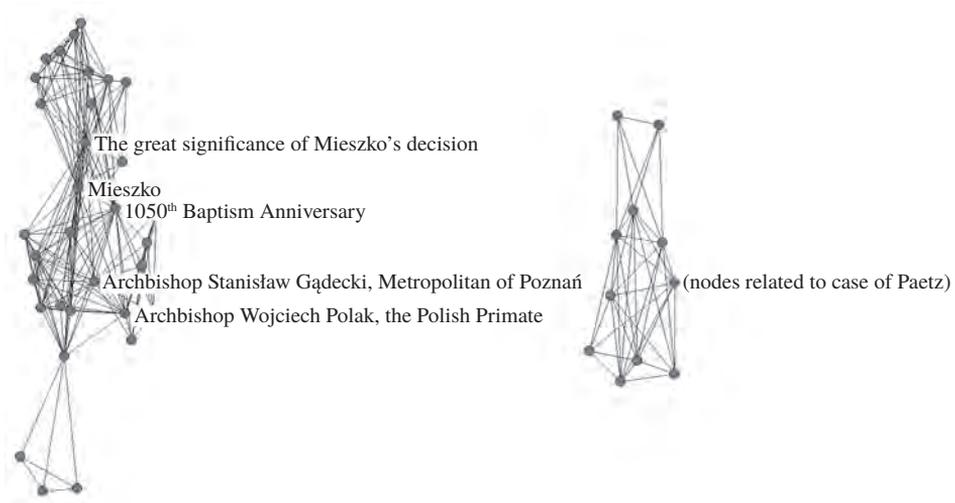
DC—degree centrality of the number of connections that a particular attribute has in the network.

Source: Own research.

The structural position of the network of attributes of individual media differ. As illustrated by the visuals of the themes in *Gazeta Wyborcza* (Figure 1) and *TVN Fakty* (Figure 2), differences in the number of issues and their relationships are significant. The correlations between these two networks, taking into account the quadratic assignment procedure (QAP) was only +0.162.

Figure 1

The Research Subject's Network in *Gazeta Wyborcza*



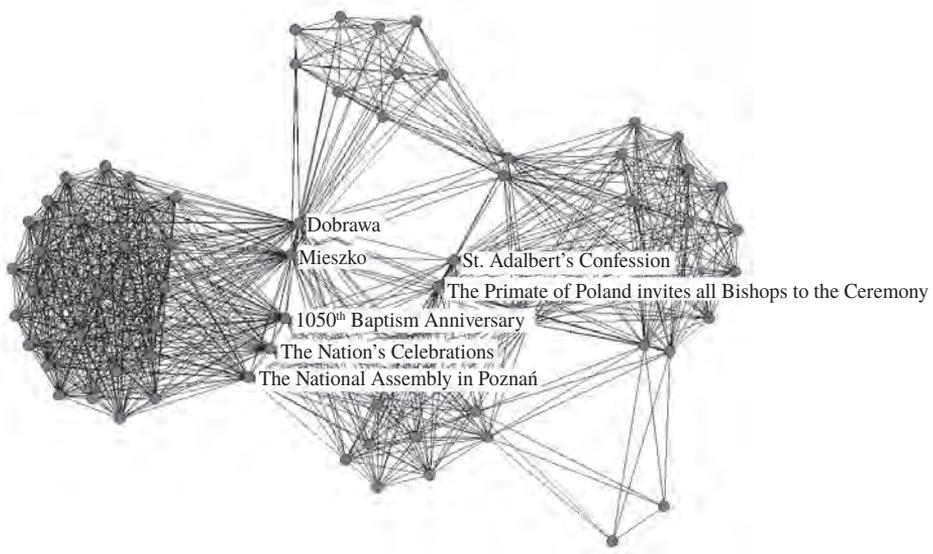
Source: Own research.

The correlation of all networks generated from the examined media, which takes into account the quadratic quota (QAP) turns out to be relatively low. In the case of the closest thematic subjects, *Onet* and *Rzeczpospolita* come out to only +0.269. Therefore, this observation does not confirm the hypothesis of a high degree of correspondence between agendas.

Verification of further hypotheses requires an analysis of the attributes associated with the Church–state relationship and determining whether it is based on the domination of one of the parties. When Johnson's hierarchical clustering of networked attribute agendas of the analyzed networks expressing a cluster-like similarity is applied, a basic pattern emerges.

In the case of *Gazeta Wyborcza* (see Figure 3), the hierarchical clustering of the networked hierarchy's similar attributes on a basic level showed the most significant cluster 1 ['Mieszko' in the 'Mieszko's decision of great importance' and '1050th Baptism Anniversary'] and smaller cluster 2 ['Abp. Stanisław Gądecki, Head of the Episcopal Conference' and 'Abp. Wojciech Polak, Primate of Poland'] and cluster 3 ['Dobrawa,' 'The Baptism shaped the nation,' 'The Baptism of the Duke's court,' 'The Baptism brought Poland into the Christian Nations,' 'The Baptism as a step of faith,' 'Celebrations at Ostrow Lednicki']. At the higher levels, the hierarchical clustering of *Gazeta Wyborcza* did not reveal a pattern of similar attributes related to Church–state relations.

Figure 2

The Research Subject’s Network in TVN Fakty

Source: own research.

Table 3

Network Measures of Interconnectedness

	Gazeta Wyborcza	Onet	Rzeczpospolita	TVN Fakty	TVP Wiadomości	WP
Components	128	86	132	98	79	96
Average degree	2.556	11.030	2.237	10.574	15.858	6.467
Degree Centralization	0.135	0.301	0.101	0.268	0.296	0.2440
Density	0.015	0.066	0.013	0.063	0.094	0.038
Connectedness	0.039	0.249	0.025	0.180	0.288	0.105
Fragmentation	0.961	0.751	0.975	0.820	0.712	0.810
Closure	0.728	0.640	0.866	0.835	0.757	0.616
Compactness	0.026	0.152	0.018	0.116	0.185	0.105
Clustering coefficient	1.040	1.312	1.090	0.955	0.938	1.276

Source: Own research.

In *Rzeczpospolita*, on the basic level there appeared cluster 1 based on the attributes concerning the context and consequences of the Baptism of Poland. As Figure 4 shows on the highest level, the pattern based on historical context and results appeared in another two clusters as follows: cluster 2 [‘The Baptism shaped the nation’ and ‘The great significance of Mieszko’s decision’] cluster 3 [(‘The Baptism shaped the nation’ and ‘The great significance of Mieszko’s decision’)—(‘Mieszko’)]. These associations confirm the implantation of state celebrations in the historical context of religion and nation.

Table 4

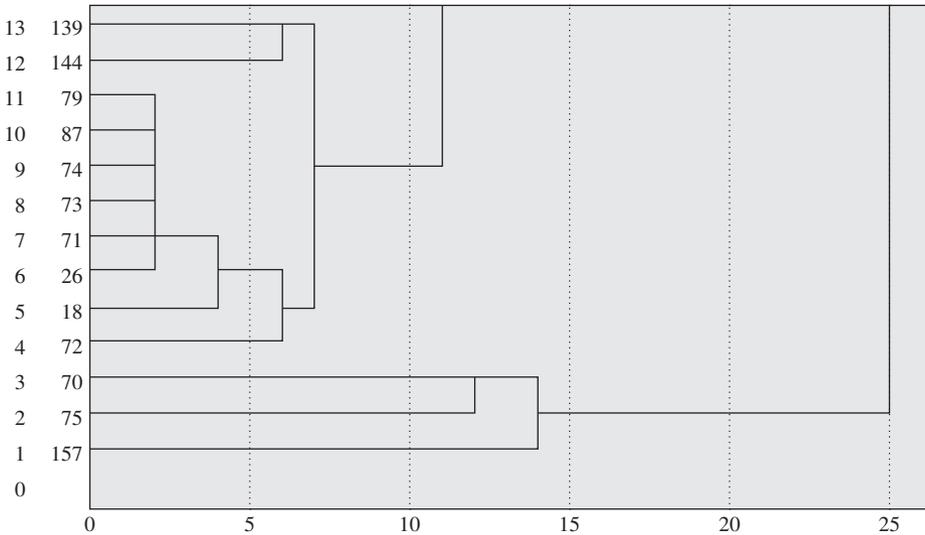
QAP Correlation

	Gazeta Wyborcza	Onet	Rzeczpospolita	TVN Fakty	TVP Wiadomości	WP
Gazeta Wyborcza	1.000	0.233	0.200	0.132	0.071	0.096
Onet	0.233	1.000	0.269	0.162	0.223	0.244
Rzeczpospolita	0.200	0.269	1.000	0.106	0.151	0.066
TVN Fakty	0.132	0.162	0.106	1.000	0.063	0.242
TVP Wiadomości	0.071	0.223	0.151	0.063	1.000	0.266
WP	0.096	0.244	0.066	0.242	0.266	1.000

Source: Own research.

Figure 3

The Crucial Part of the Dendrogram’s Group—Average Clustering of Research Categories in *Gazeta Wyborcza*



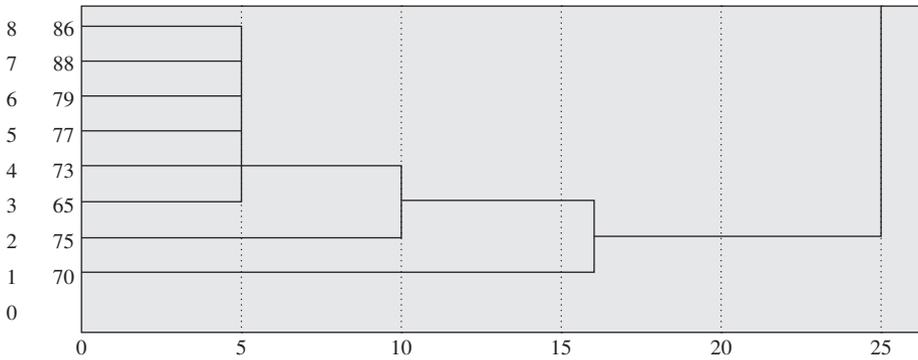
26, Celebrations at Ostrow Lednicki; 70, Mieszko; 71, Dobrawa; 72, Circumstances of Mieszko’s baptism; 73, How the Baptism shaped the nation; 74, The Baptism of the Duke’s court, 75, The great significance of Mieszko’s decision; 79, The Baptism brought Poland into the Christian Nations; 87, The Baptism as a step of faith; 139, Abp. Stanisław Gądecki, Head of the Episcopal Conference; 144, Abp. Wojciech Polak, Primate of Poland; 157, 1050th Baptism Anniversary.

Source: own research.

The hierarchical clustering of the networked agenda of *Onet* indicates a pattern of similar attributes on the basic level as follows: [(‘The President is participating in the Eucharist in Poznań’s Arch-Cathedral’—‘The Prime Minister is participating in the Eucharist in Poznań’s Arch-Cathedral’)—(‘Celebrations at Ostrow Lednicki’)]—[‘National Celebrations’]. The presented pattern shows that *Onet* service’s attributes are based on the agency for the authority’s representatives in the context of Church rituals.

Figure 4

The Crucial Part of the Dendrogram’s Group—Average Clustering of Research Categories in *Rzeczpospolita*

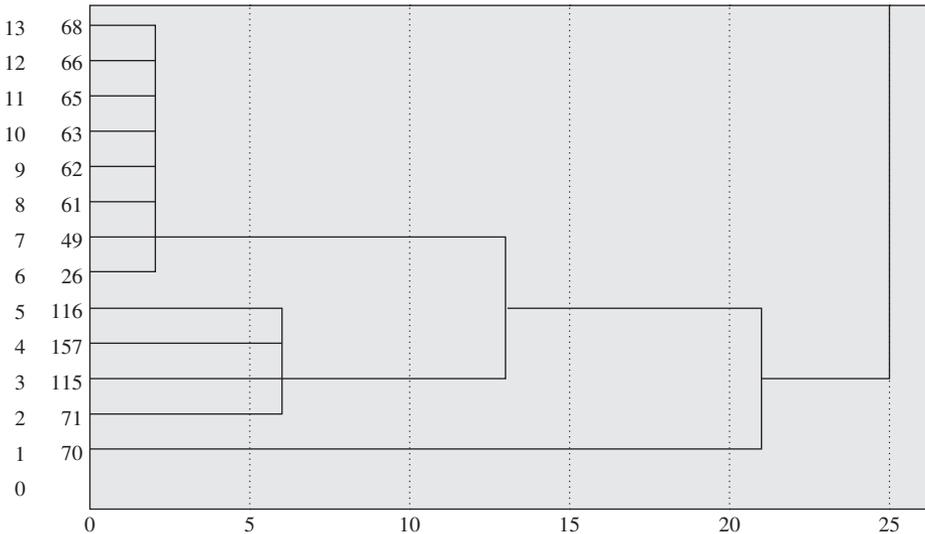


65, The 1966 Procession of the Bright Mount Icon; 70, Mieszko; 73, The Baptism shaped the nation; 75, The great significance of Mieszko’s decision; 77, In 966, Poland accepted Western European culture; 79, The Baptism brought Poland into the Christian Nations; 86, The Baptism advanced civilization; 88, The Baptism as a cultural advance.

Source: own research.

Figure 5

The Crucial Part of the Dendrogram’s Group—Average Clustering of Research Categories in *TVN Fakty*



26, Celebrations at Ostrow Lednicki; 49, The President is participating in the Eucharist in Poznań’s Arch-Cathedral; 61, 1385 Poland set the standards for tolerance; 62, 1683 Victoria of Vienna; 63, 1920 The Battle for Warsaw; 65, The 1966 Procession of the Bright Mount Icon; 66, 1978 John Paul II’s Papal Election; 68, 1980 The Start of the “Solidarity” Movement; 70, Mieszko; 71, Dobrawa; 115, The National Assembly in Poznań; 116, The Nation’s Celebrations; 157, 1050th Baptism Anniversary.

Source: own research.

Similar patterns on the basic level of hierarchical clustering appeared in *WP* [(‘the National Assembly’ of the ‘1050th Anniversary of Poland’s Baptism’) and ‘National Celebrations’] as well as the news on *TVP Wiadomości* [‘The National Assembly’ of ‘1050th Anniversary of Poland’s Baptism’ and ‘National Celebrations’]. In both cases, the attributes do not have a religious environment for the events but are based on the political actors’ viewpoints.

In the case of *TVN Fakty* (Figure 5), on the basic level of hierarchical clustering, there is also a reference to the state agency in the smaller cluster 1 [‘Celebrations at Ostrow Lednicki’—‘The President is participating in the Eucharist in Poznań’s Arch-Cathedral’—‘1385 Poland set the standard for tolerance’—‘1683 Victoria of Vienna’—‘1920 The Battle for Warsaw’—‘The 1966 Procession of the Bright Mount Icon’—‘John Paul II Was Elected Pope’—‘1980 the Solidarity Movement starts’] and cluster 2 [‘Dobrawa’—‘The National Assembly in Poznań’—‘The Nation’s Celebrations’ of ‘The 1050th Celebrations of the Baptism of Poland’]. Unlike previous cases, the analyzed historical topics are mixed with the activities of the authorities.

Qualitative Results

Quantitative data presented earlier pointed to clear areas for further qualitative analyzes. On the one hand, NAS results revealed the dominance of historical issues and the lack of any strong correspondence with all the networked attribute agendas of the examined media. On the other hand, the hierarchical clustering of the networked agendas pointed to the present at the primary and most substantial of the clusters combination of attributes of the Church–state relationship. However, based on this data, there is no way to indicate the direction of domination. At this stage of the study, it is necessary to refer to the results of the qualitative analysis.

Surprisingly, there was a limited presence of the issue of the Church–state relationship in *Gazeta Wyborcza* in the context of the media coverage of the 1050th Anniversary of the Baptism of Poland. The current collaboration between the ruling party and the Catholic Church present in the interview on April 16 with historian Karol Modzelewski was not enough to build a model of cooperation. This also applies to the statements by one of the opposition’s representatives that the April 16 message stated that the President of Poland was the head of a religious state, while the public expects Poland to be a European state.

Rzeczpospolita presents the contents on the anniversary based on the historical context and current events. The overwhelming majority of historical material had two conflicting narratives, and the first is presented in the following example:

“Whether we want it or not, we are the heirs of his decision to this day. What is more, I am grateful for the fact that, if it were not for this happy decision, neither the Polish state nor the nation formed on its soil would survive later on. It was Catholicism that saved us during the Partitions. This faith protected us against Protestant Prussians’ Kulturkampf and Moscow’s Russification. It was the struggles between different Church rites for physical survival that fed the national spirit and liberation ideas after the partitions and much later, up to the days of Turian communism. All this happened thanks to the genius of Mieszko” (Mieszko z Piastów, cwany geniusz, *Rzeczpospolita*, 16.04.2017).

The author of the passage points out that the genius of Mieszko's decision gave us great gains thanks to Catholicism, which helped keep the nation's identity during the partitions. There are also opposing opinions in *Rzeczpospolita* daily, as in the following excerpt from Robert Mazurek's [RM] interview with historian Antoni Dudek [AD]:

RM: What did the [communist] party want to prove?

AD: *That the case of the Baptism was not about religion, but about the construction of a nation and that the entire millennial history proves that this nation is more important than the Church, which has repeatedly betrayed national interests.*

The purpose of this passage is a perverse demonstration of the opposition's logical thinking about the role of the Church in the nation, in order to reassure the reader that Catholicism is a natural part of Polish patriotism.

This ground-breaking historical narrative is combined with the current coverage of the Anniversary of the Baptism of Poland in which representatives of the state and the Church contribute to the dynamics of the events. *Rzeczpospolita* points out the order of the celebrations and their natural interweaving. In the case of the religious celebrations, the efficiency of the Church is due to the representatives of the Church; *Rzeczpospolita* clearly avoids pointing to the moments of tension or domination in one of the parties. As a result, the model that can be built on its message assumes equality and cooperation.

In the *WP* portal, the topic of Church–state relations is based on a specific type of tension. Senator Jan Maria Jackowski began to speak out on an article about the participation of Juliusz Paetz in the religious ceremonies. He was the retired Archbishop of Poznań who resigned from office due to the scandalous atmosphere of clerical abuse. As the speaker of the ruling party, the Senator supports the involvement of the controversial Archbishop in these celebrations, citing the Catholic Church's canon law. The statement of the parliamentarian should be read as a consensus for the Church's view in solving the incident.

In the descriptions of these religious events, the efficiency of the representatives of the Church is directed towards subjects representing the state. These are indicated by the descriptions of the start of the religious procession just after the National Assembly ended, the descriptions of the Bishops giving crosses to executive representatives, or quoting the President's speeches during religious ceremonies where he points to the prominent place of religion in the life of the state:

“These two dimensions—the spiritual and the national—are interwoven and lasting, although there were times when the state element disappeared as a result of anger, war or aggression, which came upon Poland and touched Poles,” stated President Andrzej Duda (*Mass in Gniezno, 1050th Anniversary of the Baptism of Poland, WP*, 14.04.2016).

The accurate statements of the parliamentarians, as well as the descriptions of the entry of government representatives into the conventions and the roles assigned to them by the bishops, indicate the superiority of the logic of the Church.

The logic of *Onet's* information is based on balancing state authority and the Church's position, yet turns out to be different. The contents of certain news items reveal the previously mentioned efficiency of the Church's people in relation to the representatives of the state. There is also the opposite situation where the representatives of various Churches are

observers of the activities of state representatives in the secular space. The reporting tone of the two parties is given in these excerpts:

“In the solemn Mass under the leadership of the Papal Legate Cardinal Pietro Parolin, apart from the President and his wife, the Marshal of the Sejm and the Senate, Marek Kuchcinski and Stanislaw Karczewski and Prime Minister Beata Szydlo also participated . . .” (Solemn Mass on the occasion of the 1050th anniversary of the baptism of Poland. An Incident during the Procession, *Onet*, 15.04.2016).

“Alongside the heads of state and parliamentarians, including the Council of Ministers with Prime Minister Beata Szydlo, members of the Polish Bishops’ Conference also took part at the meeting of the National Assembly, led by Archbishop Stanisław Gądecki, Metropolitan of Poznań, as well as representatives of the European Parliaments and the Diplomatic Corps” (National Assembly on the Occasion of the 1050th Anniversary of the Baptism of Poland, *Onet*, 15.04.2016).

Onet’s material repeated that the central point of the celebration is the appeal of the Polish Primate, Archbishop Wojciech Polak, for mutual forgiveness, delivered in the presence of representatives of the political forces that are present in parliament. In this context, there is a clear message that can be described as the Church’s agency of public consensus, which is addressed to the political class and goes beyond the role of the Catholic Church as a co-organizer of the religious and state celebrations of the Baptism of Poland.

In the case of *TVP Wiadomości*, there are two essential media issues. First of all, the contents are dominated by religious material, which is in contradiction to the typical logic of the media (Altheide & Snow 1988; Asp 2014; Meyen, Thieroff, & Strenger 2014). Second, the Church and state relations give way to materials primarily associated with the Church celebrations, which present the Church hierarchs and faithful people or state ceremonies focusing on the activities of government representatives.

In key news material for this analysis of the Church–state relationship, it is easy to see the earlier logic that can be summarized as the representatives’ presentation of a narrative of earned graces from the Church representative. An example is a moment of the President’s message during the *TVP Wiadomości* broadcast from 14.04.2016. In the background of the image of the representatives of the Holy See, the Catholic Church and other Christian Churches in Poland, during the National Assembly, we can hear a fragment of the President’s speech, highlighting the fundamental role of Christianity in sustaining Polish statehood.

When talking about the Church–state relationship, *TVP Wiadomości* also points to the domination of the Church’s efficiency. For example, the news on the 14.04.2016 edition focused on the meeting of the Polish Episcopal Conference on the topic of the importance of Baptism in shaping and sustaining Poland’s statehood. A narrative is presented, according to which the Baptism signified an unquestionable civilization leap. The information also includes the statement by Archbishop Stanisław Gądecki, President of the Conference of Polish Bishops, which reveals the Church’s basic view about the significance of the anniversary celebrations:

If at that time, Mieszko would have decided to remain in the heathen world, Poland might not exist today. If he had turned to the East, we could be part of Russia (Archbishop Stanisław Gądecki, published in *TVP Wiadomości*, 14.04.2016, issue at 19:30).

The coverage of the 1050th anniversary of the Baptism of Poland by *TVN Fakty* remains balanced regarding the Church–state relationship. The news about the religious ceremonies in

Gniezno emphasizes that only President Andrzej Duda is a guest at Gniezno Cathedral. He will appear as the host only during the state celebrations scheduled for the next day in Poznań.

Concluding Discussion

In this article, the author aims to examine the coverage of the events of the 1050th Anniversary of the Baptism of Poland and identify the direction of possible domination within the coverage in the Church–state relationship. The results which were obtained from the analysis of the quantitative data did not confirm hypothesis H1 about a high degree of correspondence between agendas.

An explanation for this state of affairs can be found in the previously presented division of four factors influencing the agreement of the intermedia-agendas (Vonbun et al. 2016). The low degree of correlation shown in Table 4 between the pro-government *TVP Wiadomości* and the opposing party *TVN Fakty* (+0.063) or *Gazeta Wyborcza* (+0.071) points to a separate production series whose agents use different ideological elements.

Onet's pattern of hierarchical clustering of their networked agenda assumes that the political authority possesses the potential to be active in the Church environment. From the presented data, we cannot, however, conclude that the state dominates the Church. An analysis of the qualitative data pointed to the vital position of Church representatives in this relationship. The coverage of Primate Wojciech Polak, described as the Church's agency of public consensus, is written into Poland's model of the endorsed Church (Neuberger 1999). The Catholic Church is not merely a co-organizer of the anniversary celebrations of the Baptism of Poland. The Church is also obliged to show politicians the way to go in the area of axiology and social order. The Church's narrative comes out to be analogous to the one from the period of the Communist regime when religion was the basis of social legitimization (Kubik 1994). This differentiates both types of cases and concerns the forms of political system. During the Communist period, the Church was the basis for the structure opposing the authorities. Presently, however, the Church plays the role of its ally.

In the case of the second hypothesis, the qualitative analysis partially confirms hypothesis H2b according to which the media coverage of the anniversary of the Baptism of Poland is based on the domination of the Church over the state. The hypothesis weakens the balance presented by *Rzeczpospolita*. The daily simultaneously presents the state and Church's efficiency. Unlike the other titles, *Rzeczpospolita* points to the simple dependence of the dominance of the state party during national celebrations and the Church's domination during religious celebrations.

A clear reinforcement of the presented hypothesis is the tension present in the *WP* service. The moment when a politician of the ruling party speaks about an ecclesiastical affair and his narrative accepts a typically ecclesial side, and this seems to confirm the model of the religious public sphere (Sowiński et al. 2013). The Senator's statement from the ruling party puts the matter in the hands of Church hierarchy according to canon law, which turns out to be doubly problematic. First, previous studies point to media trends for religious events coverage as 'common culture' (Hoover 2006) or as a 'banal' religion (Hjarvard 2012).

In the case of the *WP* materials on the topic of the Church–state relationship, we cannot talk about trivialization. Second, the cautious attitude of the ruling party’s policy shows that while working alongside news media logic, they have gone beyond the strategy of working in journalism and adopted an institutional characteristic (Asp 2014). News media logic is based on simplification, polarization or stereotyping techniques (Strömbäck & Esser 2009) feed on the scandal (Allern & Pollack 2012). Meanwhile, the logic adopted by the ruling party’s policy is aimed at silencing the scandal.

By answering the question posed at the beginning, we should begin by stating that the complex network of dependencies in the media coverage of this religious event points to the dominance of the Church’s position over the state’s. The basis of this domination is the ability of the Catholic Church to present the event as a confirmation of the nation’s religious order. However, this conclusion requires a broader discussion in light of the possibility of transferring inter-media agendas onto public agendas.

This text concentrated on the inter-dependencies of the net within the framework of inter-media agendas. In the classical model of agenda-setting, the next step concerns transferring the media agendas to public agendas. The text does not concern the entire NAS model’s process, and the results of the inter-media agendas have been added to available research studies in the area of perceiving Church–state relationships, yet they show a certain correspondence.

According to Grabowska’s (2013) report on religion and the Church in public space, over half of the respondents do not agree on the Catholic Church taking on political roles. However, when it comes to answering the question about the participation of bishops and clergy in state ceremonies, more than 80 percent of respondents are against such a situation (Grabowska 2013: 2). Considering that this tendency persists in subsequent CBOS Reports in 2009, 2010 and 2013 (Grabowska 2013), we can assume that dominant coverage of Church people over the people in authority will not be a controversial issue. However, we cannot fully verify this. Therefore It should be stated that this research is primarily limited by the anniversary theme of the analysis and a lack of the audience reception component.

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