

35th anniversary of martial law

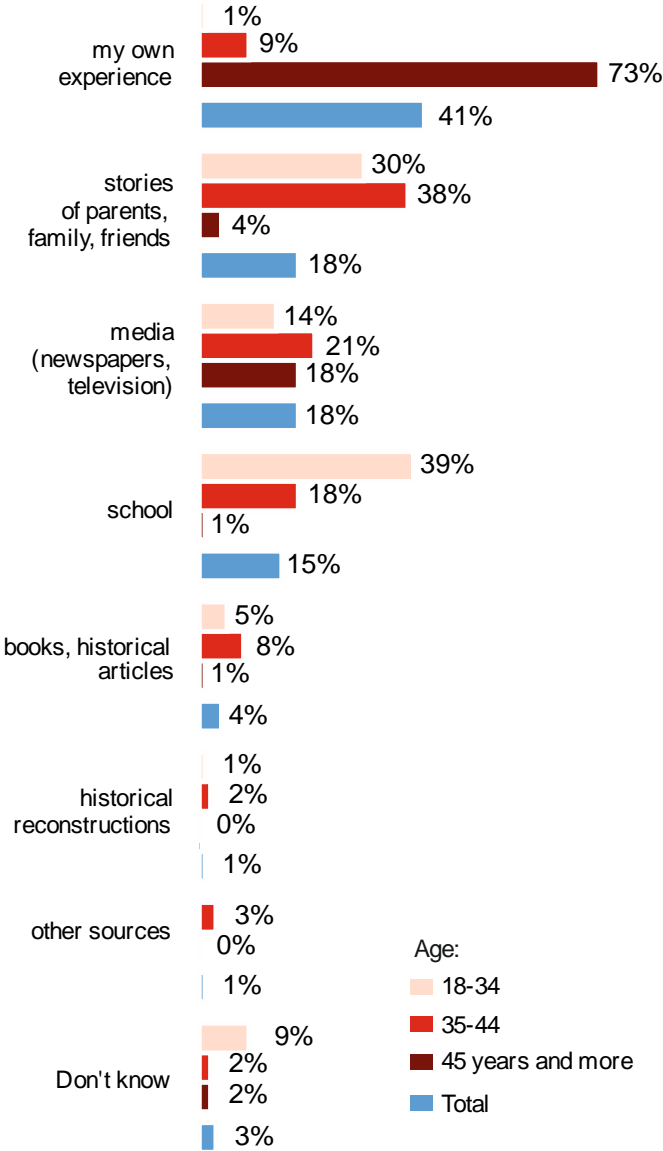
On 13th December 2016 was the 35th anniversary of the introduction of martial law in Poland. Experience is the main source of knowledge about martial law. Two out of five respondents (41%) base their opinions mainly on their own memories and experiences. Less than one-fifth derive their knowledge from family or friends, or from the media (18% each). School (15%) is the other important source of information. Other options, including specialized publications, are mentioned by a very small percentage of respondents.

Sources of knowledge about martial law are differentiated primarily by age. For people who were born after the introduction of martial law, the primary source of knowledge is school. This is most noticeable in case of the youngest respondents (under 25 years), half of whom base their knowledge primarily on school. For respondents who were children in the years 1981-1983 (now aged 35 - 44 years), information from friends or family members is far more important. People aged 45 and more derive knowledge mostly from their own experience of this period.

Generational differences regarding the sources of information about martial law indicate that the process of institutionalization of knowledge about this period is taking place.

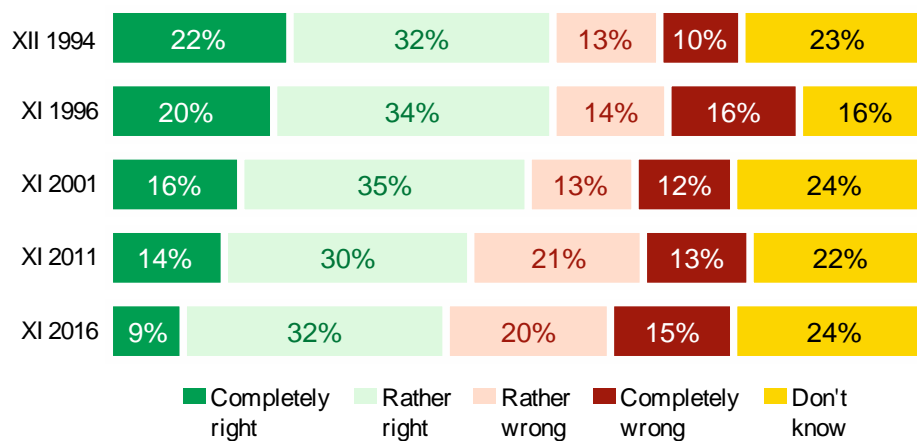
Martial law ceases to be passed as a story about personal experiences, and becomes a part of history. The memory of it gradually ceases to be part of the memory of individuals or families, and moves into the collective sphere, becoming institutionalized.

Where primarily do you have knowledge about martial law from?



The institutionalization of knowledge about martial law means that over time the evaluation of the decision to introduce it has changed. Twenty years ago, more than half of Poles (54%) were convinced this was the right decision, and fewer than one in three (30%) were of the opposite opinion. Currently, two-fifths of respondents (41%) are willing to admit that this was a justified step, while a third (35%) believe it wrong. The percentage of people without an opinion on this remains similar, at less than one-fourth.

Do you think that the decision to introduce martial law in Poland was right?



More information about this topic can be found in CBOS report in Polish: "35th anniversary of martial law", December 2016. Fieldwork for national sample: November 2016, N=1019. The random address sample is representative for adult population of Poland.