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Contemporary Perceptions of the Solidarity Movement Held by Polish Nationals

A thesis
presented to
the faculty of the Department of Liberal Studies
East Tennessee State University

In partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
Master of Arts in Liberal Studies

by
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May 2013

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Keywords: Poland, Solidarność, Solidarity Movement, Trade Union, Survey

ABSTRACT

Contemporary Perceptions of the Solidarity Movement Held by Polish Nationals

by

Nathan Peter-Grzeszczak Buhr

Widespread participation in the 1980s Solidarity movement by Polish nationals of both genders, varying ideologies, and differing political backgrounds has led to diverse views of the history and narrative of the movement that today is interpreted in differing ways by groups and individuals. To gain a better understanding of how Poles view this unique time period of their history a survey featuring 54 questions was dispatched to and completed by over 121 Polish nationals. All questions relate to the Solidarity movement in categories covering: Prominent People, Media, Economics, Religion, and Education and concluding with a free-write section for additional comments by participants. The results show near common agreement on some points while in other areas participants expressed conflicting opinions and views. These varying perspectives reflect the ongoing debate concerning the ethos of the Solidarity movement in addition to its effect on contemporary Polish culture.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my family who have supported, nurtured, and believed in me and my loving wife Aleksandra Buhr.



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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Widespread participation in the 1980s Solidarity movement by Polish nationals of both genders, all classes, varying ideologies, and differing political backgrounds has led to diverse views of the history and narrative of the movement that today is interpreted widely by groups and individuals. The Solidarity movement brought a majority of Poles together for a common purpose. The broken promises and propaganda of the Communist Polish United Workers Party¹ created a Polish citizenry that was increasingly distrustful of the government. As national trust in the government and economic conditions declined to abysmal levels, Poles began to look for ways to revolt and demand the modification of a system that was so obviously failing them. The era of the Solidarity movement was a complex period of transcendence for the citizens of Poland as the people rallied together in a grand moment of unity.

Scholars of varying academic backgrounds and disciplines write many insightful statements about the Solidarity movement. In the words of historian Timothy Garton Ash, “Solidarity was the most infectiously hopeful movement in the history of contemporary Europe, and its long-term legacy if one of hope.”² Professor of theology Gerald J. Beyer comments in reference to what Poles felt during the Solidarity movement, “the most important thing was an unusually intense experience of community. The most essential meaning of the initial solidarity was the widespread awareness of the

¹ Communist Polish United Workers Party will be shortened to PZPR in this paper

² Timothy Garton Ash, *The Polish Revolution: Solidarity* (London: Yale University Press, 2002), 351.

deep bond with others.”³ Polish economist Gedymin Spychalski shares the statement, “Solidarity was a trade union only in name. In fact, it was a mass political movement acting on behalf of internal changes which, at its peak of its development, numbered no less than one-third of the country’s total population.”⁴ In the words of Polish sociologist Stanisław Starski⁵, written in 1982:

The Polish working class has definitely demonstrated that the future of socialism-if by socialism we understand the reconstruction of society in a way which allows the labor providing masses, the working class, to achieve political, economic and cultural emancipation and to coordinate more directly the development of macrostructural organizations-is in the struggle to overcome the legacy of the state as the political superorganization of modern society.⁶

With a number of scholars writing about the Solidarity movement from differing perspectives there are no doubt varied interpretations of what the movement stood for, what it accomplished, and how its legacy continues in Poland today.

How do Polish nationals feel about the Solidarity movement today? This is the question I address with this research. The political and cultural drama that unfolded in the 1980s Poland may be seen and interpreted in many contrasting ways to fit worldview and ideology of an individual. Firstly, in this research I looked to see if individuals and groups in Poland understand the Solidarity movement in different ways today, and secondly sought to uncover any commonalities or trends that may group individuals together.

The balance of power between the state and the people, between the individual and the collective, between the powerful and the weak, between the influential and

³ Gerald J. Beyer, *Recovering Solidarity: Lessons from Poland’s Unfinished Revolution* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2010), 12.

⁴ Gedymin Spychalski. “Catholic Social Thought and Socio-economic and Political Transformation in Poland” *Review of Business* 22 (Fall 2001): 33

⁵ Stanisław Starski is a pseudonym adopted by the author for political reasons.

⁶ Stanisław Starski, *Class Struggle in Classless Poland* (Boston: South End Press, 1982), 242.

ineffective, these are a few of the large and daunting issues that drew me to this topic and in this thesis I address them in the context of the Polish Solidarity movement.

CHAPTER 2

HISTORY OF THE SOLIDARITY MOVMENT

Poland Pre-World War II

Trouble for the nation of Poland began in 1772. Being centrally located in Europe and having roughly 75 percent of its borders with other countries, Poland often faced challenges from its neighbors. The parameters of Poland were in constant flux throughout the nation's history. These challenges were at times more than the Poles could fend off and multiple times Poland fell under the rule of others. As Timothy Garton Ash highlights in his book *The Polish Revolution Solidarity*, Poland has a long history of being occupied and ruled from abroad. During the partitions of Poland in 1772, 1793 and 1795 the state of Poland was erased from the map and divided up among Prussia, Russia, and Austria.¹ Amidst these difficult times, facing those who wished to conquer and incorporate their territory, the people of Poland managed to resist by persistently maintaining a distinct sense of their own culture.

One way the Polish people differentiated themselves from their neighbors was through religion. By maintaining strong ties to the Roman Catholic Church Poles were able to draw a distinct line between themselves and the German Protestant or the Russian Orthodox traditions.² Therefore, for most Poles, to be Polish was, and is, to be Roman Catholic.³ In 2010 Gerald Beyer stated, "To this day, more that 90 percent of all Poles

¹ Ash, *The Polish Revolution*, 4.

² Ibid.

³ While The Roman Catholic Church is the predominant religion in Poland, varying denominations of the religious tradition exist as well. The Polish National Catholic Church for example was founded in the United States by Polish immigrants and is a Christian organization not in communion with the Pope. Another example is the Polish Catholic Church that is also not in communion with the Pope. Other

identify themselves as Roman Catholic. This means that in a country of almost 39 million people, approximately 35 million are Roman Catholic.”⁴ As I will show later, this strong tie with the Catholic Church aided in the organization and support of the Solidarity movement.

The beginning of World War II brought a “Fourth Partition” of Poland. Poland was divided between Germany and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics⁵ according to the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of August 23, 1939.⁶ As the first country invaded by Nazi Germany on September 1, 1939⁷, Poland was involved in the war to 1945, longer than any other country.⁸ Shortly after Germany struck, on September 17, 1939, the Soviet Union advanced into Polish territory.⁹ Compared to other countries involved in World War II, Poland lost the largest percentage of its pre-war population. Poland was located between the battling nations of Germany and the Soviet Union, and the country was used as a bargaining chip by the two powers. The Polish people were not only under direct attack from both sides but were also caught in the crossfire between the armies of Germany and the Soviet Union. In the words of Tony Judt in his book *Post War: A History of Europe Since 1945*, “Poland lost about one in five of her pre-war population, including a far higher percentage of the educated population, deliberately targeted for destruction by the Nazis.”¹⁰ World War II was a very dark time in the history of Poland.

religions communities present in Poland today are a number of non-Catholic Christian denominations, Jewish, Muslim, Hare Krishnas and Karaims.

⁴ Beyer, *Recovering Solidarity*, 162.

⁵ The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics will hereafter be referred to as USSR or Soviet Union.

⁶ Norman Davies, *God's Playground: A History of Poland*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1982, 433.

⁷ Austria was annexed by Nazi Germany prior to the declaration of war.

⁸ Davies, *God's Playground*, 435.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 437.

¹⁰ Tony Judt, *Post War: A History of Europe Since 1945* (New York: Penguin Books, 2005), 18. Poles also suffered population loss under Soviet wartime occupation.

The battles, genocide, war crimes, and other atrocities that occurred within the present-day borders of Poland have been well documented by historians but fall outside the scope of this paper. To summarize, the Nazi German labor camps and death camps decimated the population of Polish Jews and other minorities during the holocaust. I present this record to show that World War II forever changed the fabric of Polish society and culture. Post-World War II Poland was increasingly homogeneous in ethnicity and religion to a level that had not been seen in previously in Polish history.

Poland Post-World War II

The bloodshed, chaos, and conflict of World War II came to a halt in Europe in April 1945. President Franklin D. Roosevelt of the United States, Prime Minister Winston Churchill of the United Kingdom, and Joseph Stalin of the Soviet Union met at Yalta on the Crimean peninsula (part of present day Ukraine) from February 4th to the 11th in 1945 to discuss issues facing the “Big Three”.¹¹ Among the topics addressed at the conference were the surrender of Nazi Germany, reparations to be paid to of war-torn nations by those deemed responsible, future national boundaries, and other issues concerning post-war Europe. According to the Yalta agreement Poland was to be a “free” independent nation with free elections but within the Soviet sphere of influence. The leaders of the USSR felt that a buffer zone was needed between Russia and Germany, so the Soviets were keen on keeping Poland under their close supervision. At the time of the Yalta Conference the Soviet Union controlled the nation of Poland. The Red Army had fought hard to gain the territory of Poland, so Roosevelt and Churchill

¹¹ Norman Davies, *Europe: A History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 1036.

reluctantly agreed that Stalin and the Soviets could keep the country within her sphere of influence.¹²

With new borders established and the promise of free elections, the people of Poland briefly appeared to be making a fresh start in a direction of their own choosing, but instead the transition proved to be the replacement of one difficult situation for another. Peace was at last established in the nation of Poland, but the Soviet occupiers imposed new hardships. Censorship and propaganda became a daily reality for all living in Poland as the state monopolized information exchange.¹³ In his book *God's Playground: A History of Poland*, Norman Davies states:

From its headquarters in Warsaw, the Main Office for the Control of Press, Publications, and Public Spectacles (GUKPPiW) runs an elaborate network of local branches. Its officers, who are permanently employed on the premises of all major organizations and concerns, regulate the activities of all media, all news, and translation agencies, all publishing houses, all printing-shops, all concerts, theaters, cinemas, and exhibitions, and all other means of communication.¹⁴

The policies and regulations mandated by the USSR and imposed by the PZPR began to dictate and control almost all aspects of Polish life.

The agenda of the USSR was to promote its ideology in Poland and work towards the Sovietization of Polish culture. This fit into the larger goal of the USSR to influence and shape the mentality of those under its control in order to build a common sense of identity among all peoples of the USSR and its satellite states.¹⁵ Author Vladislav Zubok in his book *A Failed Empire: The Soviet Union in the Cold War From Stalin to*

¹² Ash, *The Polish Revolution*, 3.

¹³ Norman Davies, *God's Playground: A History of Poland Vol. II 1795 to the Present* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 594.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Vladislav Zubok, *A Failed Empire: The Soviet Union in the Cold War From Stalin to Gorbachev* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 61.

Gorbachev contends, “ Stalin’s socialist empire used powerful ideology, nationalism, and social engineering to refashion society and elites. It introduced the uniformity of state industrialization and party systems. At the same time, it took away civil freedoms, wealth, cooperation, and human dignity and offered instead an illusion of social justice.”¹⁶ Ash, as well, cites the goals of Stalin, specifically in regards to Poland, “Stalin himself said that introducing communism to Poland was like putting a saddle on a cow; the Poles thought it was like putting a yoke on a stallion. This fundamental, historic opposition and incompatibility is the most basic cause of the Polish revolt against ‘Yalta’ and Soviet socialism in 1980.”¹⁷ The people of Poland largely resented the pressures of the occupying USSR and eventually began to push back against the rules, laws, traditions, and customs promoted vigorously by the Soviets.

In addition to suffering from the cultural and psychological effects of Soviet domination, Polish citizens also suffered from scarcities of food and goods, especially because supplies of food and goods varied greatly from day-to-day and week-to-week throughout Poland. Production and distribution of foodstuffs were not guaranteed, so when items were available they could be purchased, but often store shelves were empty.¹⁸ The price of food was fixed by the PZPR, so cost of food was not the issue, the issue was often the supply.¹⁹

In communist states the country is run by a ruling party that makes all decisions about the economy, industry, and governance unilaterally without the dissent of an opposition party. This central planning existed in communist Poland where the PZPR

¹⁶ Zubok, *A Failed Empire*, 61.

¹⁷ Ash, *The Polish Revolution*, 6.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, 13.

¹⁹ *Ibid*,.

controlled all economic activity. Post-World War II Poland was separated from its past of being a primarily agricultural economy to becoming one of industry and manufacturing.²⁰ While this shift in economy moved Poland towards a more modern and competitive future, Davies claims that the PZPR was struggling in its leadership of industry. In the words of Davies, “the endless list of negative deformations freely admitted by the Party, include ‘deficient technology innovations’, ‘poor organization of labor’, ‘excessive consumption of raw materials’, ‘wastage of power’, ‘faulty co-ordination’, ‘inattention to quality’, ‘under-investment in the consumer sector’, and ‘poor social and work conditions’.”²¹ Davies goes on to say, “Poland’s second Industrial Revolution has brought more comfort to the statisticians than to the ordinary consumer.”²² Not only did industry fail to function in an efficient manner, but also the bounty of the labor was not distributed in a balanced and equal way, as party members involved in governance were increasingly better compensated than industrial workers.

Starting in the 1950s the People’s Republic of Poland²³ began to run a trade imbalance and was importing more than it was exporting. As the republic became increasingly dependent on imported goods, it began to accumulate a large debt with western countries. In the book *Poland, Solidarity, Walesa* author Michael Dobbs comments on the economic situation of Poland, stating, “In 1973, Poland owed the West only \$2.5 billion. By 1976, the Polish debt rose to \$11 billion, to reach, four years later, over \$20 billion. This was used not only for the purchase of machines and consumer

²⁰ Davies, *God’s Playground*, 595.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 595-596.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ People’s Republic of Poland or PRL

goods, but also for raw material imports.”²⁴ Borrowing of this magnitude was needed to keep the inefficient economy of Poland growing, but an import-export imbalance of this kind proved to be unsustainable for the long term.

Another factor working against Poland was the requirement that it export certain goods to the USSR. The Soviet empire was unique in that some of its satellite states were wealthier in resources and capital than was the mother country. This led the USSR to require certain materials and food to be exported to Russia for the benefit of its citizens regardless of scarcity or need at the point of production.²⁵ In the article “1988 Polish Crisis: Worse than 1980-81” author Konstantin George states, “Soviet Policy has been and remains to be to loot Poland, and for that matter, all its Eastern European satellites, as much as possible. Given Soviet war economy requirements, this looting will increase, to meet the demands of the Soviet war and civilian economy.”²⁶ This angered many Poles because they saw materials and food leaving their country that were often times sorely needed for the Polish people, creating further resentment of the Soviet rule.

In Post-World War II Poland, as in other communist countries, a separate class of citizens began to emerge who became to be known as *nomenklatura*. This group consisted of PZPR party officials who enjoyed a certain amount of power, access to goods and services, and freedom that were denied to regular citizens. For example, one report written by a group of Polish physicians in May 1979 sought to expose “the increasingly apparent stratification of health care, with the elite enjoying their own

²⁴ Michael Dobbs, K.S. Karol, and Dessa Trevisan, *Poland, Solidarity, Walesa* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1981), 39-40.

²⁵ George, “1988 Polish Crisis,” 34.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

special health-care facilities.”²⁷ Ash describes the group as “a client ruling class. Its members enjoy power, status, and privileges (in varying degrees) by virtue simply of belonging to it. They may not individually own the means of production, but they do collectively control them.”²⁸ The *nomenklatura* was very much separated from the struggles of the working class men and women and eventually lost touch with most of the realities of the country, as can be seen in their decisions and policies. One such decision was to increase the price of food when citizens were already experiencing difficulty attaining food, which will be shown later in this paper. This system of party loyalty undermined the advancement of many qualified Poles into positions within the government in addition to upper level positions in factories, industry, education, and hospitals. In the words of Ash,

The Party controls not only the appointment of its own full-time officials, known collectively as the *apparat*, but also all the most important appointments in almost every walk of life: central and local government officials, managers in industry and commerce, publishers, newspaper editors, senior army officers, judges, trades union leaders, university rectors, headmasters, leaders of youth and women’s organizations, bankers, fire brigade commanders... For this purpose, the Party’s Central, regional and local committees maintain lists of positions, and of people judges fit to fill them.²⁹

These positions were not awarded to those who were most suited, best trained, or most competent but instead to those who had the strongest connections to the PZPR. This left many Polish citizens dissatisfied with their leadership and led to a loss of confidence for a majority of Poles in the governmental system of promotion.³⁰

²⁷ Michael D Kennedy, *Professionals, Power and Solidarity in Poland: A Critical Sociology of Soviet-type Society* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 295.

²⁸ Ash, *The Polish Revolution*, 9.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 8-9.

³⁰ Michael D. Kennedy. “Polish Engineers’ Participation in the Solidarity Movement.” *Social Forces* 65, no. 3 (Mar., 1987): 656.

Building Up to Solidarity

Discussed in the previous section, the condition of life for most citizens in Post-World War II Poland were less than acceptable and showed no signs on improving despite many promises from the PZPR for future progress. The few beliefs and hopes that Poles may have cultivated from the statements and propaganda of the PZPR began to disappear as conditions in Poland year to year failed to improve. The people of Poland eventually began to grow restless and became bolder in their statements, actions, and defiance of the PZPR and USSR. The Solidarity movement fits into a long history of worker and intellectual protests that took place in Post-World War II Poland. Strikes and protests in 1956, 1968, 1970, and 1976 all helped prepare the Polish citizenry for the actions taken on August 14, 1980 in the Lenin Shipyards of Gdańsk that sparked the Solidarity movement.³¹

On June 28, 1956, large protests were held in the western city of Poznan and the event came to be known as the Poznan uprising.³² Workers at the Cegielski works (aka: Stalin engineering works) took to the streets in protest of the poor wages and long hours of work with signs proclaiming “Bread and Freedom”. In her book *Solidarity's Secret: The Women Who Defeated Communism in Poland*, Shana Penn states that the workers rushed the PZPR party headquarters in an attempt to have their voices heard and their needs addressed. The Polish army was dispatched by the PZPR to put an end to the demonstration, a task that took them two days to complete. Penn estimates nine hundred people were injured and seventy-five were killed. Ash claims that hundreds were injured

³¹ Ash, *The Polish Revolution*, 42.

³² Ibid, 11.

and at least fifty-three people were killed.³³ This event was significant because it marked the first time that the workers stood up in protest of the PZRP.

In 1968 it was the students turn to test the PZPR. Davies attributed the student protest to the cancelation and censorship of a popular theatrical performance in Warsaw. The play, titled *Forefathers' Eve*, had been written in the 1830s by Adam Mickiewicz and concerned the rebellion of Poles in opposition to the occupying forces of the Russian Empire.³⁴ The rebellion came to be known as the November Uprising. The Polish crowd was savvy to all the subtle anti-Russian subject matter and, in defiance of the Soviet Union, cheered loudly during appropriate moments. Eventually a Soviet ambassador caught on to the anti-Soviet mood created in the theater and ordered future performances of the play canceled. The censorship of a work by a prominent Polish playwright in his own country proved to be more than the students of Warsaw could tolerate and they took to the streets in protest. Students were beaten and arrested for challenging the PZPR. Judt contends that the majority of the students and professors who were arrested during this period were Jewish.³⁵ These anti-Semitic actions introduced by the conservative wing of the PZPR were aimed at clearing Jews from positions of influence that could be used to criticize the PZPR. In the words of Judt, "Jews were now invited to leave the country. Many did so, under humiliating conditions and at great personal cost. Of Poland's remaining 30,000 Jews some 20,000 departed in the course of 1968-69, leaving only a dew thousand behind mostly the elderly and the young."³⁶ This

³³ Ash, *The Polish Revolution*, 12.

³⁴ Judt, *Post War*, 433.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 434.

³⁶ Judt, *Post War*, 435.

event was significant because it marked the first time that the students stood up in protest of the PZRP.

The next major protests came in 1970. In December 1970 close to Christmas the PZPR announced a 20 percent increase in food prices.³⁷ The news of the price increase sparked a number of demonstrations and strikes thorough the country that eventually prompted attacks on party headquarters and the looting of stores. In Gdańsk, workers from the Lenin Shipyard numbering in the thousands marched to the local party headquarters and demanded that the price increase be rescinded. Soldiers who had been dispatched to pacify the crowds began applying force. Davies states “In Gdańsk, a train bringing workers to the shipyards, where a lock-out had been proclaimed, was ambushed, and fired on by armed militiamen.”³⁸ Armored military vehicles crushed participants taking part in demonstrations while soldiers shot others. In total around three hundred people were killed.³⁹ Among the casualties were military men, whose lives were claimed by angry demonstrators. These conflicts between fellow Polish nationals were hard for some Poles to justify and in the words of Ash “The shooting of their comrades in front of the shipyard gates on Wednesday 16 December transgressed that especially sacred unwritten commandment of the Polish religion of freedom ‘Pole shall not kill Pole’.”⁴⁰ A notable number of Polish soldiers refused orders to fire upon their fellow country people. The crisis brought about a change in the administration as the Communist Party leader Władysław Gomułka stepped down and was replaced by Edward Gierek.⁴¹

³⁷ Davies, *God's Playground*, 590.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid, 591.

⁴⁰ Ash, *The Polish Revolution*, 14.

⁴¹ Davies, *God's Playground*, 591.

Again in 1976 the laborers of Poland showed their discontent with the PZPR. Workers in the Ursus tractor factory near Warsaw marched through the rail yards and held up a passing train that was the vital Paris-Moscow express.⁴² In the southeastern town of Radom workers set fire to the party headquarters after attempting to be heard by the authorities.⁴³ The actions of the workers were not without consequence and shortly thereafter police and government-hired thugs came after the workers. Ash reveals “police and security thugs moved in to take a savage revenge on the workers of Radom and Ursus, forcing them to run the gauntlet through two lines of truncheon-wielding police, who called this, with delicate irony, the ‘path of health’.”⁴⁴ Those who were not injured or killed were thrown in prison and faced court proceedings.

Out of these 1976 strikes, some intellectuals saw the need for proper representation of the accused workers and formed the Workers Defense Committee (KOR). Observing that the workers were mostly inept at defending themselves in the courtrooms, the KOR sought to help and protect workers from the overreaching accusations of the PZPR. The formation of the KOR was an important step towards a unified worker and intellectual alliance that bridged a historical class divide. Previously when either the workers or the intellectuals and students held protests, they asked the other group to join in, but often with limited success. A successful movement that unified workers and intellectuals was not achieved until the strikes of 1980, which began as a workers movement but grew to include students and intellectuals, and eventually other groups within Poland as well. Numerous issues that workers protested, such as high food prices, long hours of work, and low wages, affected the intelligentsia as well,

⁴² Ash, *The Polish Revolution*, 19.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

which caused many within the intelligentsia to realize the value of a partnership. Members of the KOR began to produce and publish critiques and condemnations of the PZPR, which provided written justification of further demonstrations and strikes by workers.⁴⁵ Ash states, “There were two excellent uncensored literary magazines and upwards of ten uncensored journals of opinion. The publisher *Nowa* or New, which was the largest of the underground publishers, produced some hundred works, including a Polish translation of Orwell’s *Animal Farm* and a pocket-sized handbook giving instructions for dealing with the secret police.”⁴⁶ Members of the intelligentsia also began to organize “flying universities” (TKN) which were informal classroom sessions held in apartments to provide a space for learning about Polish history and thus reinforcing the culture of resistance to the PZPR and USSR.⁴⁷

These examples of strikes, uprisings, protests, and other actions present evidence to the point that the Polish citizenry was becoming increasingly dissatisfied with the economic conditions as well as the leadership of their country. Life in Poland during post-World War II was a constant struggle for many Poles who endured food shortages, lack of access to goods and services, and censorship under the governance of the PZPR. Out of these difficult conditions a strong and unified voice of the Polish people would soon emerge, declaring a strong desire for change.

⁴⁵ Ash, *The Polish Revolution*, 20-21.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

Early Days of Solidarity

On August 14, 1980, workers managed to sneak protest posters into the Lenin Shipyards of Gdańsk.⁴⁸ The workers were, firstly, demanding the reinstatement of Anna Walentynowicz, a former crane operator who had been fired for attempting to organize the workers of the shipyard and speaking out against the management and, secondly, a one thousand zloty increase in pay. As the work shift began the laborers left the locker rooms and began to march through the shipyard, banners held high. The group proceeded through the shipyard and called out to others to join them and workers dropped their welders and other tools to join the crowd. The protest was gaining momentum.⁴⁹

Once the group reached main gate number two, the gathering had swelled to over a hundred participants.⁵⁰ Once at the gate, factions within the crowd wanted to push on and take the protest into the streets of Gdańsk. The workers began to debate what action should be taken, with some workers expressing fear of leaving the shipyard, citing the 1970 demonstrations that resulted in the violent and bloody crackdown by the army. The leaders of the 1980 protest called for a minute of silence to commemorate those who had died during the December 1970 protests, which was followed by the singing of the national anthem. The management of the shipyard began to make promises to the workers in an attempt to pacify the crowd. As stated by Stanisław Starski in the book *Class Struggle in Classless Poland* the management offered to consider rehiring Walentynowicz and offered to work towards increasing the salaries of the worker.⁵¹ The workers listened to the assurances that the management was willing to offer and the

⁴⁸ Ash, *The Polish Revolution*, 42.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Starski, *Class Struggle in Classless Poland*, 60.

energy of the crowd along with the drive to continue the strike began to decline. It was at this point that a mustachioed electrician who was a previous employee of the shipyard arrived late to the protest and addressed the crowd.⁵²

The mustachioed man was Lech Wałęsa and with a stirring speech from atop an excavator at gate number two breathed new life into the strike. Wałęsa had a history of union activity and organizing workers that brought upon much harassment by police and factory management, eventually leading to his loss of his job at the shipyard. He had been active in the 1970 strike and was now back for another round with the management of the shipyard and the PZPR. A simple man who previous to the 1980 strike had never traveled outside of Poland or read a book, Wałęsa embodied the persona of the common proletariat of Poland who had grown up in the communist system.⁵³ Addressing the workers, Wałęsa warned them not to be fooled by the promises made by the management who in the past had often stated plans to improve the situation of the workers but rarely delivered any substantial changes. With this invigorating speech the will of the workers to carry on the strike was reestablished and a sit-in was declared. The final words of Wałęsa from his perch upon the excavator were “we organize herewith an occupational strike”.⁵⁴

With the declaration of the strike the limousine of the shipyard director was sent to transport Anna Walentynowicz to the negotiations. Walentynowicz was well known by the workers and she was received in a manner befitting a celebrity. She was a long-standing employee of the Lenin Shipyard and due to a lack of kin had found a sense of belonging and family amongst her proletarian workers. Shortly after she was hired in

⁵² Ash, *The Polish Revolution*, 42.

⁵³ Dobbs, *Poland, Solidarity, Walesa*, 86.

⁵⁴ Starski, *Class Struggle in Classless Poland*, 61.

1950, Walentynowicz became a well-known figure in the shipyard by winning a welding competition based on speed and output that was hosted by the shipyard management.⁵⁵ Walentynowicz had outperformed all the other women welders by working at 270 percent the average pace.⁵⁶ This event gave her bragging rights, respect, and fame. Penn shares that Walentynowicz cared for her fellow workers through acts such as preparing hot soup and milk and planting flowers on the factory grounds. Fellow shipyard workers warmly called her “Mrs. Annie” and she used her popularity to stick up for the rights of the workers and was not afraid to take issue with the management, which in turn earned her more respect from workers. With Walentynowicz and Wałęsa both in the shipyard the strike movement had two bona fide leaders who had earned the respect of the workers and had the legitimacy to fight for their demands.⁵⁷

The news of the strike slowly spread throughout Poland despite efforts by the PZPR to conceal, downplay, or spin the events. The state-run media began to report on the strike but added commentary that favored the PZPR and the factory management. Starski reveals that while most of the workers may have read or watched the state-run media, they were well aware that it was largely propaganda.⁵⁸ The workers were staying inside the factory, which provided them some measure of protection from the police or hired thugs, but the PZPR and management had other tactics, aside from the media, that they put to task in an attempt to break the strike. According to Starski crates of vodka materialized at the factory gates in an attempt to distract the workers through drink and

⁵⁵ Shana Penn, *Solidarity's Secret: The women who Defeated Communism in Poland* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, 2005), 38.

⁵⁶ Penn, *Solidarity's Secret*, 38.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 54.

⁵⁸ Starski, *Class Struggle in Classless Poland*, 64.

possibly encourage provocation of the police.⁵⁹ The workers showed great restraint and established a “workers guard” who were charged with keeping order in the shipyard. Two main tasks of the “workers guard” were to keep alcohol out of the shipyard and to regulate who could enter and exit the premises. By keeping a close watch on who was admitted to the shipyard, the “workers guard” could minimize the possibility of police, informants, or other trouble makers gaining access to the workers, gaining information, or instigating a confrontation. A strike committee was soon formed to which Wałęsa was appointed leader.⁶⁰

Within a relatively short amount of time the workers of the Gdańsk shipyard realized that their struggle against the management and the PZPR reached beyond the walls of their institution and encompassed more than just the interests of the workers at a single dockyard. A mentality of camaraderie and togetherness with all workers of Poland soon developed among those striking in the shipyard. With this revelation the strike committee became the Inter-Factory Strike Committee⁶¹ and workers from other regions, trades, and factories were encouraged to participate as well. Workers from all over Poland began to send representatives to relay support, embody concerns, and assist in negotiations with the PZPR. The PZPR and MKS initiated daily negotiations that Polish citizens and people around the world eagerly watched.⁶²

⁵⁹ Starski, *Class Struggle in Classless Poland*, 63.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Inter-Factory Strike Committee will hereafter be referred to as MKS

⁶² Ash, *The Polish Revolution*, 54.

21 Demands of the MKS

Up to this point it is clear that the strike of Thursday, August 14, 1980, began with humble demands that were localized and tied to the needs of workers employed at a single factory. This soon began to change as the workers of the Lenin shipyard realized that their struggle was that of all Polish workers. With a steadily increasing number of participants and supporters, the goals of the strike began to grow as well and an expanded and a list of 21 demands were drafted. This new declaration, that was completed by Sunday evening August 17, sought to improve of living conditions, rights, and access to services for all workers in Poland.⁶³ With the clear statement of these goals the movement began to shift from labor dispute to a national social movement. The following is the list of the 21 demands of the MKS (Inter-Factory Strike Committee):

1. Acceptance of Free Trade Unions independent of both the Party and employers, in accordance with the International Labor Organization's Convention number 87 on the freedom to form unions, which was ratified by the Polish government.
2. A guarantee of the right to strike and guarantees of security for strikers and their supporters.
3. Compliance with the freedoms of press and publishing guaranteed in the Polish constitution. A halt to repression of independent publications and access to the mass media for representatives of all faiths.
4. (a) Reinstatement to their former positions for: people fired for defending workers' rights, in particular those participating in the strikes of 1970 and 1976; students dismissed from school for their convictions. (b) The release of all political prisoners...(c) A halt to repression for one's convictions.
5. The broadcasting on the mass media of information about the establishment of the Interfactory Strike Committee (MKS) and publication of the list of demands.
6. The undertaking of real measures to get the country out of its present crisis by: (a) providing comprehensive, public information about the socio-economic situation; (b) making it possible for people from every social class and stratum of society to participate in open discussions concerning the reform program.
7. Compensation of all workers taking part in the strike for its duration with holiday pay from the Central Council of Trade Unions.
8. Raise the base pay of every worker 2,000 zlotys per month to compensate for price rises to date.

⁶³ Ash, *The Polish Revolution*, 46.

9. Guaranteed automatic pay raises indexed to price inflation and to decline in real income.
10. Meeting the requirements of the domestic market for food products: only surplus goods to be exported.
11. The rationing of meat and meat products through food coupons (until the market is stabilized).
12. Abolition of "commercial prices" and hard currency sales in so-called "internal export" shops.
13. A system of merit selection for management positions on the basis of qualifications rather than Party membership. Abolition of the privileged status of MO [police], SB [Internal Security Police], and the party apparatus through: equalizing all family subsidies; eliminating special stores, etc.
14. Reduction of retirement age for women to 50 and for men to 55. Anyone who has worked in the PRL [Polish People's Republic] for 30 years, for women, or 35 years for men, without regard to age, should be entitled to retirement benefits.
15. Bringing pensions and retirement benefits of the "old portfolio" to the level of those paid currently.
16. Improvement in the working conditions of the Health Service, which would assure full medical care to working people.
17. Provision for sufficient openings in daycare nurseries and preschools for the children of working people.
18. Establishment of three-year paid maternity leaves for the raising of children.
19. Reduce the waiting time for apartments.
20. Raise per diem [for work-related travel] from 40 zlotys to 100 zlotys and provide cost-of-living increases.
21. Saturdays to be days off from work. Those who work on round-the-clock jobs or three-shift systems should have the lack of free Saturdays compensated by increased holiday leaves or through other paid holidays off from work.⁶⁴

As can be seen, these are a very basic set of rights, assurances, and benefits that all people of Poland desired. The right to healthcare, time off work, a living wage, childcare, and education, it is safe to say, are universally desired circumstances in which a citizen can lead a safe, secure, productive, and satisfactory life. The workers of Poland felt that they were working and living in a system that was not compatible with the lives they desired to live. The workers of the MKS envisioned a free and open society where all Poles, no matter their job or class, could have access to basic rights and benefits, while having an equal voice in the politics and direction of the country.

⁶⁴ Lawrence Weschler, *The Passion of Poland* (New York: Pantheon, 1984), 207-208.

With official recognition from the PZPR on Sunday August 31, 1980, the MKS won the right to establish a trade union independent from the government system of the PZPR. With this acknowledgement, the PZPR gave up its monopoly on power and authority as the sole legitimate political party in the nation of Poland. Although the independent trade unions initially were not established to be political parties, and their members asked only for the right to control issues directly dealing with certain industries, this concession created a secondary organization outside of the PZPR that the party would have to negotiate with. This new arrangement would provide an outlet for dissent and criticism that the party previously would not acknowledge. The PZPR previously had kept discussions and debates about policies, decisions, and other governmental matters hidden from public view and only informing the citizenry after a decision had been reached.⁶⁵

Shortly thereafter, on Wednesday September 17, 1980, a group of thirty-five aspiring independent trade unions from throughout Poland met in Hotel Morski in Gdańsk to discuss future plans and actions. The group formally adopted the name *Solidarność*⁶⁶ as the title of the consolidated trade union that would represent the movement that had grown to include three million workers at 3,500 Polish factories.⁶⁷ Lech Wałęsa was elected to the position of Chairman of the union.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ Starski, *Class Struggle in Classless Poland*, 185.

⁶⁶ Solidarity in English.

⁶⁷ Ash, *The Polish Revolution*, 80.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

Expansion of Solidarity

Other groups from differing job sectors, classes, and regions in Poland began to take notice of the actions and ambitions of the shipyard and factory workers. The farmers in Rzeszów, Poland, organized and began what came to be known as Rural Solidarity. Students organized and formed the Independent Student Union.⁶⁹ Journalists, writers, filmmakers, historians, doctors, engineers, architects, economists, and other groups began to organize in a similar fashion as well. Ash jokingly states, “If there had been a Polish association of belly dancers they would certainly have held an extraordinary meeting, demanding changes in their statutes, less Party interference in the sport, more truth in the reporting of it...”⁷⁰ The whole of Poland became more vocal in sharing their critiques on topics ranging from the PZPR, to the economy, to political issues, and so on. All of Poland came together and began to share ideas of what changes they would like to see in the future direction of their country. Due to the oppressive, authoritarian, and overbearing climate created and maintained by the PZPR in Post-WWII Poland, open dialogue of this nature was unprecedented.⁷¹

Declaration of Martial Law

The excitement brought about through the anticipation of change and progress resonated throughout Poland. Solidarity had blanketed the country and as highlighted by Ash, “Poles joked that Lwów and Wilno (now inside the Soviet Union) were the only Polish cities not in revolt.”⁷² As the people became emboldened and stimulated by

⁶⁹ Independent Student Union or shortened to NZS.

⁷⁰ Ash, *The Polish Revolution*, 83.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 7-8.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 102.

discussion of new ideas and possibilities for the future of the country, the propaganda of the PZPR began to lose its effect on the majority of Poles. While this period of time may have been an exciting and stirring time for Polish citizens, members of the PZPR were quickly realizing their vulnerability and exposure.

Likely concerned that the nation of Poland would descend into chaos, the PZPR through the Council of the State declared martial law on December 13, 1981, in accordance with the constitution of Poland.⁷³ Under the orders of General Wojciech Jaruzelski the Polish army took over the country. Ash writes of the first day of martial law, “Troops set up roadblocks between major cities. Civilian telephone and telex lines were cut everywhere. Radio and television stations were taken over. Within hours, Poland was partitioned and blockaded, internally and externally sealed off.”⁷⁴ This early morning assault on the Polish people was a tactic to instill fear and doubt in the Polish population, in addition to reinforcing the rule of the PZPR. Martial law brought chaos and panic as citizens were beaten by troops, people were killed, around 10,000 Solidarity leaders were arrested, illegal printing operations were shut down, and homes were ransacked.⁷⁵

General Jaruzelski addressed the nation by television and explained martial law had been declared in response to an alleged plot to overthrow the communist government by the leaders of Solidarity. Jaruzelski stated that law and order was the main objective of martial law and that Poland was “on the brink of the abyss.”⁷⁶ While the state-run media proclaimed there was indeed a plot against the government, Ash finds little

⁷³ Ash, *The Polish Revolution*, 273.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Jack Bloom, “The Solidarity Revolution in Poland, 1980-1981,” *The Ola History Review* 33, no. 1 (Winter – Spring 2006): 40.

⁷⁶ Ash, *The Polish Revolution*, 273.

evidence to support the accusation made by Jaruzelski of a planned coup d'état.⁷⁷ Ash compares martial law to Poland's World War II history with the statement, "General Jaruzelski's two-week *Blitzkrieg* in December 1981 was to Solidarity what the three-week *Blitzkrieg* of September 1939 was to the Second Republic."⁷⁸ While Jaruzelski may have stated his reasoning for martial law was to protect the Polish people, most Poles likely felt that the action was taken to protect the status quo and the PZPR.

This desperate, bold, and unprecedented move on behalf of the PZPR to remain in power and control caused some loss in momentum for Solidarity, and the movement was forced underground. Martial law brought about the arrests of major Solidarity leaders and made communication between individuals and groups much more difficult. Solidarity, which had enjoyed freedom to organize, strike, and protest for nearly a year and a half was now being challenged with force. While these setbacks provided new challenges for Solidarity, its members were not dissuaded or discouraged and continued to protest and resist the PZPR.⁷⁹

Round Table Talks

Between 1981 and 1989 Solidarity maintained an underground resistance to the PZPR through illegal publications, underground meetings, and occasional protests. The ability of the PZPR to keep the Solidarity movement from challenging its monopoly on power and authority finally subsided with the Round Table talks that took place from February 6 through April 5, 1989.⁸⁰ The talks brought together representatives from the

⁷⁷ Ash, *The Polish Revolution*, 275.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 279.

⁷⁹ Penn, *Solidarity's Secret*, 94.

⁸⁰ Hunter, "Poland in 1989," 33.

government, the democratic opposition (mostly Solidarity members), the Polish Communist Party, and the Roman Catholic Church.⁸¹ The meeting took place in Warsaw and involved four hundred fifty-two representatives. The discussion was primarily concerning how to fix Poland's dysfunctional political and economic institutions.

According to the article "Reflections on 1989: When Poland's future opened up, Solidarity's sense of Agency Disappeared," David Ost cites the 1988 wildcat strikes by Polish the coal miners as one force that ushered the PZPR back to the negotiating table. On May 4, 1988, the Polish union of 460,000 coal miners declared a "collective dispute with the government".⁸² The following day special troops of the Polish Interior Ministry were dispatched to deal with the striking workers and put to use tear gas and percussion grenades as well as physical force. Konstantin George in his article states that 19 members of the strike committee were arrested.⁸³ These strikes showed a resolute workforce that was still dissatisfied with the economics of Poland and the PZPR.

In the words of Ost the wildcat strikes brought about "Round Table negotiations, elections, and the a new government."⁸⁴ The Round Table Agreement brought about free elections where Solidarity leaders could run against PZPR party officials in direct competition for government offices. This move was an acknowledgement of an alternative power structure outside of the PZPR and gave a final legitimacy to Solidarity as a political force.

Out of the round table talks came certain agreements and actions including the creation of an upper-house or *Senat* consisting of 100 seats, the creation of a

⁸¹ Hunter, "Poland in 1989," 33.

⁸² George, "1988 Polish crisis," 32.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ David Ost, "Reflections on 1989: When Poland's Future Opened Up, Solidarity's Sense of Agency Disappeared," *Focaal* 58 (winter 2010): 105.

Presidential office, and an agreement to hold election for the 460 seats in a the lower house of parliament or *Sejm*.⁸⁵ The elections for the 35 percent of the Sejm positions were open to a “free vote” proved to be a smashing success for the Solidarity movement as Solidarity took all of the available posts that were up for vote. In her book *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*, Naomi Klein states, “The results were humiliating for the Communists and glorious for Solidarity: of the 261 seats in which Solidarity ran candidates, it won 260 of them.”⁸⁶ This blow-out victory for Solidarity is proof that few Polish voters were supporting the PZPR, and when presented with an alternative to the PZPR party the Polish people overwhelmingly voted for the opposition, Solidarity. Solidarity had completed a journey starting from a humble labor organization, to a recognized trade union, to a social movement involving a large portion of the Polish population, and ultimately arriving at direct governmental representation. With this victory Solidarity moved into the realm of politics and was finally on near equal footing with the PZPR.

⁸⁵ Hunter, “Poland in 1989.” 33.

⁸⁶ Naomi Klein. *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2007), 175.

CHAPTER 3

WOMEN OF THE SOLIDARITY MOVEMENT

When Solidarity first became recognized as a trade union on August 31, 1980, it is estimated that women accounted for fifty percent of its members.¹ Women were attracted to the Solidarity movement because it advocated for shorter work hours, a lower retirement age, and better pay, which were interests that affected men and women equally. Issues that were essentially associated with the female role in Poland, such as childcare, maternity leave, and schooling, also attracted women.² This meant that female Solidarity members felt comfortable supporting a movement they believed addressed women's issues.

In the 1980s Poland some professions had a higher representation of women than others. In the book *Professionals, Power and Solidarity in Poland: A Critical Sociology of Societ-type Society*, Michael Kennedy highlights the story of a female medical worker who was involved with the Solidarity Movement. Medical professionals were given more autonomy than other professionals in Poland and women were well represented in the field.³ According to Kennedy, "more women played a leading role in the Solidarity medical section than in any other branch of the movement."⁴ Medical professionals were granted power and privileges by their position, but these benefits were awarded by the PZPR, so party loyalty was expected for maintaining a position. Because medical professionals were under surveillance by the PZPR, it was

¹ Penn, *Solidarity's Secret*, 66.

² Baldez, "Women's Movements and Democratic Transition," 267.

³ Kennedy, *Professionals, Power and Solidarity in Poland*. 308.

⁴ Ibid.

risky to associate closely with Solidarity or to speak out against the party on the ground that violating the party's interests could cost them their employment.⁵

The medical worker mentioned above, who wished to remain anonymous, was on the Church Heath Commission in Warsaw and belonged to a team of physicians who wanted to visit a prison in Kwidzyn where twenty political prisoners allegedly had been beaten.⁶ The authorities denied the team access to the prison, but they soon learned that some of the severely injured prisoners had been sent to a hospital near by.⁷ In the words of Kennedy, "She went to the hospital on her own and not as a member of the commission, and subsequently published findings on these prisoners. In response to her activities, the authorities closed down her ninety-bed ward in a regional hospital. Shortly after, they reopened the ward and invited her staff, but not her, to return."⁸ The staff of ten physicians who previously worked under her refused to go back to work and started a petition for her reinstatement that eventually gathered the names of 1,000 medical professionals.⁹ Unfortunately the support of her colleagues was not enough to sway the PZPR and she was officially black listed and therefore denied employment in her profession.

This story of this female medical professional shares a similar arch to the story of Walentynowicz. Both women were pushing back against a system that they believed to be corrupt, authoritarian, and oppressive and lost their jobs for speaking out. Citizens expressing their discontent eventually overwhelmed the PZPR, but to be singled out by the party was likely unnerving.

⁵ Kennedy, *Professionals, Power and Solidarity in Poland*, 306.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid., 307.

Women who were involved with the Solidarity movement played a vital role throughout the history of the movement but especially during martial law. As was mentioned earlier, when martial law was declared many of the Solidarity leaders were imprisoned. Penn notes that of the ten thousand activists that were arrested, one thousand were women and nine thousand were men.¹⁰ With many of the male Solidarity leaders detained, a group of women were able to carry on the movement through the publication of the underground Solidarity newspaper *Tygodnik Mazowsze*.¹¹ Penn shows that the women had distinct advantage over men operating in Solidarity while it was underground with the statement, “Blinded by sexism, the secret police hunted diligently for the men they assumed to be behind the newspaper-Solidarity men in hiding whose names had appeared in bylines.”¹² The Solidarity movement managed to stay one step ahead of the PZPR, secret police, and military by relying on an all-female leadership to organize and publish *Tygodnik Mazowsze* and to keep the ethos of Solidarity alive.

The influential group of women that produced *Tygodnik Mazowsze* was the *Damska Grupa Operacyjna* (DGO) or Ladies’ Operations Unit, a group that formed after the declaration of martial law.¹³ The DGO consisted of seven women, Helena Łuczywo, Anna Dodziuk, Anna Bikont, Małgorzata Pawlicka, Zofia Bydlińska, Ewa Kulik, and Joanna Szczęsna.¹⁴ These women worked long hours in stressful conditions to produce *Tygodnik Mazowsze*, which helped to spread vital news and kept the Polish people connected and united during the difficult time of martial law. In reference to the difficulties of producing *Tygodnik Mazowsze* for the nation of Poland Penn states, “This

¹⁰ Penn, *Solidarity’s Secret*, 66.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 10.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

mammoth enterprise was carried out in people's homes, in basements and attics, in churches, and in cars- in other words Helena and her compatriots pulled it off without the use of real offices."¹⁵

The news operation was always on the move in order to avoid being detected by the authorities and thus all printing supplies, documents, and equipment were constantly being secretly shuffled from one location to another.¹⁶ Penn reveals the day-to-day activities of the DGO that were required to produce *Tygodnik Mazowsze*, "To build an information network-primitive, covert, low-tech the organizers needed living quarters, workspaces, printing equipment, and transportation. They needed names and addresses, false identification cards, and lots of cold cash. Also high on their list were costumes, cosmetics, and props to build a wardrobe of disguises."¹⁷ The DGO was always looking for fellow Poles who could become involved with *Tygodnik Mazowsze*, and it was important to network and include a wide range of people with differing skills. The involvement of Helena Łuczywo in the underground press proved to be good training and she went on to become one of the most successful and well paid women in Poland. Her success stemmed from the newspaper *Gazeta Wyborcza* (Election Gazette) that she helped to found in 1989, which eventually grew into a media empire.¹⁸

In her article "Women's Movements and Democratic Transition in Chile, Brazil, East Germany, and Poland," Lisa Baldez provides the argument that average Poles associated feminism in the 1970s with PZPR party members.¹⁹ Baldez states, "Poles

¹⁵ Penn, *Solidarity's Secret*, 101.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 150.

¹⁷ *Ibid*.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, 100.

¹⁹ Lisa Baldez, "Women's Movements and Democratic Transition in Chile, Brazil, East Germany, and Poland," *Comparative Politics* 35, no. 3 (April 2003): 266.

traveled abroad frequently in the 1970s, making ‘four million trips to Western cities during the decade, but the state restricted international traveling privileges to party loyalists. For dissidents direct contact with the western world remained limited. These and other privileges extended to party elites bred deep antipathy among ordinary Poles and contempt for the ideas they brought back with them from abroad.’²⁰ Thus, members of a ruling party that were viewed with much suspicion by ordinary Poles introduced the feminist movement into Polish society. Baldez provides more evidence citing a 1981 Women’s League conference, “The slogans that party leaders intoned at this meeting echo the concerns of western feminists and suggest that Polish party officials were influenced by international events such as the United Nations’ Women’s Conferences. These slogans included: ‘The corset with which they once laced us keeps disabling us,’ ‘Why are we so weak and helpless?,’ and ‘Democracy is impossible without women’s involvement.’ It is little wonder that Polish women were skeptical of groups whose views elided so neatly with those of party officials.”²¹

Baldez argues that women did not seek to organize outside of the Solidarity movement because a majority of women felt that the movement effectively included their concerns and issues.²² She points towards some of the changes fought for and eventually awarded to the Interfactory Strike committee as, “A three year paid maternity leave, guaranteed day care slots for working women, and, for nurses, higher wages and housing,” as having special relevance to women.²³ While this was enough to satisfy many Polish women, some began to organize outside of the movement in an attempt to

²⁰ Baldez, “Women’s Movements and Democratic Transition”: 266.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid., 267.

²³ Ibid.

raise awareness of the lack of female leadership in Solidarity. Baldez credits a series of seminars conducted by Renata Siemienska in the late 1970s at the University of Warsaw for inspiring the creation of The Polish Feminist Association.²⁴ The Polish Feminist Association along with other similar groups in Poland were pushed underground during martial law but years later came roaring back in response to an antiabortion legislation proposed in the *Sejm* in 1989.²⁵

Today in Poland some women are still seeking increased representation from a political system that they view as not meeting their needs or interests. Some women see inequalities in the political and civil institutions of Poland. In the article “Hostages of Destiny: Gender Issues in Today’s Poland” Monika Platek raises the issue of unequal female representation in Polish politics with the passage, “The elections (1998) showed that, although women in Poland constitute the majority of the population (51.4%), their participation in local authorities is small, even though there are now more women on many Councils; in big towns particularly there are more now than there were five years ago.”²⁶ While Platek feels hopeful about the gradual progress of women in Poland, Beyer feels that there are still obstacles to women’s equality, and he states, “When the issue of gender parity in politics is raised in Poland, it is summarily dismissed by remarking on the few women who have made it to the top; or that in ‘free’ elections, quotas should not be used; or by recalling that a woman’s place is in the home, not in the ‘dirty’ world of politics.”²⁷

²⁴ Baldez, “Women’s Movements and Democratic Transition”: 267.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Monika, Platek. “Hostages of Destiny: Gender Issues in Today’s Poland” *Feminist Review* 76 (2004): 20.

²⁷ Beyer, *Recovering Solidarity*, 131.

CHAPTER 4

SOLIDARITY AND THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Throughout the Solidarity Movements rise to power, the Roman Catholic Church played an integral role in the incubation and organization of the movement. The church in Poland provided a space for shelter and open discourse, which was scarce and risky in a society that was constantly under surveillance by the PZPR. The church proved to be a safe place to gather and discuss alternative points of views or criticisms on topics such as the economy, government, and politics.

The very act of embracing Catholicism was in itself a rejection of Marxism-Leninism and the Soviet system, which was based on atheism and envisioned the abolishment of religion. In the words of philosopher Leszek Kołakowski, “Today it is clear that Catholicism in Poland should be acknowledged as the main factor during the entire postwar period that led to a society and country that could not be ‘Sovietized.’ Even if Catholicism can be criticized on a philosophical or intellectual level, it was the most important aspect of the resistance to the Sovietization of Poland. It was decisive.”¹ The people of Poland were fortunate to have an institution such as the Roman Catholic Church to help balance out the uneven distribution of power during its communist era. While the Roman Catholic Church was nowhere near as powerful as the PZPR in areas such as the government or economy, the church remained highly influential in Polish culture.

Poland was unique in comparison with other Eastern European Soviet states because a strong and well-organized religious presence existed within its borders. This

¹ Beyer, *Recovering Solidarity*, 160.

provided an alternative power structure to that of the state. Because the Roman Catholic Church was not a political party or government organization, the PZPR was not directly challenged for control of the country, but the church and its members were able to make critical statements and appeals for change.² One such member was Solidarity Chaplain and philosopher Father Józef Tischner.³ Tischner was instrumental in managing disputes within the Solidarity movement among members and negotiating on behalf of Solidarity, with the PZPR.⁴

When Pope John Paul II visited Poland in June 1979, the Polish people received him with open arms.⁵ John Paul II, a native of Poland, connected easily with the Polish people as he traveled throughout the country addressing crowds of eager Poles. During one of his public addresses the pope stated, “the future of Poland will depend on how many people are mature enough to be nonconformists.”⁶ Ash portrays the visit as spurring a renewal and recharging of Catholicism in Poland and creating an ever-stronger commitment to the religion. The words of John Paul II helped to encourage Poles of all ages to pursue the faith in addition to challenging the communist system.⁷

A little over a year after Pope John Paul II visited Poland, Catholic mass was being held inside the shipyard during the first days of the strike in Gdańsk. On Sunday August 17, three days after the beginning of the strike, an altar was erected near gate number two and according to Ash, “the blue grey gates were adorned with flowers and a large, frame color photograph of the pope.”⁸ Father Jankowski addressed the workers on

² Beyer, *Recovering Solidarity*, 13.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ash, *The Polish Revolution*, 31.

⁶ Ibid., 31-32.

⁷ Ibid., 32.

⁸ Ibid., 48.

a loudspeaker system and presented a handmade wooden cross. The religious ceremony helped to unite and inspire workers to continue to oppose the PZPR and carry on the strike.⁹

Although the Roman Catholic Church may have supported the Solidarity movement, some Catholics are skeptical of the involvement of the church in the political and economic affairs of a nation. In the article “Catholic Social Thought and Socio-economic and Political Transformation in Poland,” Gedymin Spychalski states, “the church does not intend to forcefully impose one socio-economic model or system over another. Nor can it directly solve the complexities of socio-economic life. What it can do is follow its religious and moral mission by putting forth the various philosophies and suggesting ways to bring them close to each other in the name of Christian principals.”¹⁰ In this model, the Roman Catholic Church should not get too involved with the details of the economy or politics but instead just offer general recommendations and commentary to government officials. In May 2006, Pope Benedict XVI backed up this viewpoint during an address he made to a crowd at St. John’s Cathedral in Warsaw: “The priest is not asked to be an expert in economics, construction or politics. He is expected to be an expert in spiritual life.”¹¹ The vision stated by Pope Benedict advocates for the ability of Catholic leaders to make criticisms of economic and political systems but also allow these systems to regulate and change on their own.

Some Poles believe that church leadership should be more involved in economic issues of Poland. One example from Beyer states, “The Tischner European School of

⁹ Ash, *The Polish Revolution*, 48.

¹⁰ Spychalski. “Catholic Social Thought,” 35.

¹¹ Anonymous. “Priests Are Not Meant To Be Politicians, Pope Says During Poland Visit.” *Church & State* 59 (July/August 2006): 20.

Higher Education in Cracow and the National Back of Poland co-sponsored seminars in economics and business management for priests. These two organizations assumed that priests in Poland today should have some facility in these fields in order to grapple with important contemporary pastoral and social problems. However, the clergy showed little interest, and many priests think that economic issues are not relevant to their work.”¹²

This passage shows that debate continues on the involvement of Catholic priests with the economics of Poland.

Although the Roman Catholic Church may have helped the Solidarity movement and aided in the downfall of the PZPR and communism in Poland, some Poles are concerned about the role of the church in the political affairs of the country today.

Without the strong opponent of communism the Roman Catholic Church has more power and influence than it has had in the past. Catholicism is vastly more popular than any other religion in Poland, but some Poles are still reluctant to allow the Roman Catholic Church unchallenged access and influence over secular life.¹³ Beyer cites a poll that states “from 1989 to 1995 the approval of the churches role in public life fell from slightly above 90 percent to about 50 percent.”¹⁴ This statistic shows that a growing number of Polish nationals wish to maintain a separation of the Roman Catholic Church and secular Polish society.

While the Roman Catholic Church is one large united religious organization, differing opinions and viewpoints exist within the institution. One conservative group associated with the Catholic Church is the Polish media group *Radio Maryja*. This right-wing Roman Catholic Radio Station was founded by Father Tadeusz Rydzyk in 1991 and

¹² Beyer, *Recovering Solidarity*, 184.

¹³ Anonymous. “Priests Are Not Meant To Be Politicians,” 20.

¹⁴ Beyer, *Recovering Solidarity*, 160.

is based in Toruń, Poland.¹⁵ In the article “Voice of the Disinherited? Religious Media After the 2005 Presidential and Parliamentary Elections in Poland,” Stanisław Burdziej describes the connections of Radio Maryja with the politics of Poland. The station was the center of much debate as some of the views expressed on the network were allegedly anti-Semitic and anti-gay. The Vatican does not always endorse opinions expressed on its radio and TV channels. The statement by Pope Benedict XVI that I referenced earlier concerning priests keeping some distance from politics was seen by many as a direct challenge to those involved with Radio Maryja.¹⁶

Radio Maryja has a reputation for being popular among unemployed, low-skilled, elderly Poles. Burdziej cautions that this description may not provide an accurate profile of all who enjoy the stations programming. He does admit that the station’s programming seems to be designed with an older audience in mind. Burdziej states, “The Radio does not emit commercial ads (although religious material is continuously advertised) and it is its talking formula, together with peaceful music and lack of aggressive ads that may be most attractive for many listeners, including the elderly and the sick.”¹⁷ Burdziej goes on to state that the station ranks fifth most popular radio station in Poland, its listeners are much more dedicated to the station, and are often encouraged to participate in activities such as pilgrimages, petition signing, demonstrations, and lobbying politicians.¹⁸ This makes the listeners of Radio Maryja a tighter group that is more organized than listeners of other stations in Poland.

¹⁵ Stanisław Burdziej. “Voice of the Disinherited? Religious Media After the 2005 Presidential and Parliamentary Elections in Poland.” *East European Quarterly* 42, no. 2 (Summer 2008): 208.

¹⁶ Anonymous. “Priests Are Not Meant To Be Politicians,” 20.

¹⁷ Burdziej. “Voice of the Disinherited”: 217.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 217-218.

Radio Maryja is involved in the politics of Poland and the station has a distinct point of view and agenda. Those who listen to the station are likely to agree with the views and opinions expressed on the station. Some of the more controversial statements aired on the station include negative remarks about Jewish people, homosexuality, liberals, the European Union, privatization of state owned companies, Germany, liberal bishops, and opposition politicians. One sub-group within the conservative Roman Catholic Church is the *moherowe berety* or mohair berets. This whimsical title is used to describe older women who are dedicated listeners to Radio Maryja in a borderline militant way. It is likely that individuals and groups identifying with Radio Maryja may have unique opinions about the Solidarity movement that fall outside the mainstream Polish culture.¹⁹

As can be seen, the Roman Catholic Church is very popular and powerful in Poland today. The religion includes many members with differing views and objectives. The protection and organization that the Roman Catholic Church provided for the Solidarity movement was crucial to its success, but some scholars have questioned the church leadership for becoming too closely involved in the secular institutions of the country. Some Poles may debate what role the Catholic Church should play in the political, social, and economic life of Poland today.

¹⁹ Burdziej. "Voice of the Disinherited": 217.

CHAPTER 5

POLAND IN TRANSITION: COMMUNISM TO CAPITALISM

Thus far, evidence has been provided to show that the majority of Polish citizens were not satisfied with the PZPR or the communist system that had been imposed upon them by the USSR. They were ready for a change in leadership and direction. The Solidarity Movement did not propose a specific economic plan or societal arrangement but instead a list of general improvements and betterments consistent with the twenty-one demands of the MKS. The majority of Poles wanted a free and open society with less centralized control and bureaucracy. What is unique about Solidarity was that the people asked for these benefits for the whole of Polish society, not just for select classes, regions, or groups. In this sense Solidarity transcended the interests of individuals and focused on finding a way to improve the conditions of all Polish people. The people of Poland had seen enough of the economic, social, and political system that the USSR had put in place and looked expectantly towards the future of what a new Poland could potentially be. With the goal of heading in new direction the new leadership of Poland looked to the West for guidance and advice in an attempt to break with the policies and ideology of the USSR.¹

In the 1990s Poland began moving away from the communism of Marxism-Leninism and towards Western style market capitalism, or stated in other terms from the collective to the private. Western governments, investors, economists, and entrepreneurs were eager to lend a hand in the process of remodeling the Polish economy. While these

¹ Klein. *The Shock Doctrine*, 175.

groups no doubt wanted to help the Polish people, the motives of these individuals and groups has been the topic of much debate.

With the free elections of 1989 came the emergence of the Balcerowicz Plan that eventually overshadowed other economic plans for reforming the Polish economic system. The Balcerowicz plan proposed a rapid “jump” into market capitalism to make the transition as fast as possible.² Jeffery Sachs, a young American economist who had established a reputation for his work on an economic stabilization plan for Bolivia, endorsed the Balcerowicz Plan.³ According to Klein, Hungarian-American financier, currency trader, and billionaire, George Soros backed Sachs and paid for him and his assistant David Lipton to travel to Poland multiple times during the Round Table Talks.⁴

The Balcerowicz Plan was designed to primarily to disjoin Poland from its Communist past. In his book *Poland's Jump to the Market Economy*, Jeffery Sachs refers to the goal of the Balcerowicz plan: “The goal was to create an economy ‘in the style of Western Europe,’ based on private ownership, free markets, and integration into world markets. The plan also combined long-term market reform with a short-run emergency stabilization program to end the incipient hyperinflation.”⁵ The plan was not restricted only to stabilization of the Polish economy, because there were also goals of economic liberalization, privatization, construction of a “social safety net”, and mobilize international financial assistance.⁶ The goals set by the Balcerowicz Plan were ambitious

² Jeffery Sachs, *Poland's Jump to the Market Economy* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1993), 45.

³ *Ibid.*, 97-98.

⁴ Tadeusz Kowalik, *From Solidarity to Sellout: The Restoration of Capitalism in Poland* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2011), 98.

⁵ Sachs, *Poland's Jump to the Market Economy*, 45.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 45-46.

and charted a dramatic departure from the economic and social history of Communist Poland.

With the exchange of Soviet-style communism for market capitalism some argue that the form of “looting” or exploitation shifted from the USSR to the West. Eager investors from Western Europe, Great Britain, and the United States made their way to Poland in hopes of making a profit in the recently stabilized, newly formed market.

Konstantin George states,

The looting by Western financial interests of Poland has been massive. Over the past two years, Poland had paid nearly \$11 billion in interest payments on outstanding debt, “receiving” in return a mere \$3 billion in “new” credits to roll over existing debt repayment on principal. Despite this net outflow of \$8 billion from Poland to the West, Poland’s net debt to Western creditors climbed, in the last year alone, from \$34 billion to \$39 billion.⁷

George’s comment goes to the point that helping Poland to a market economy was not only a matter of philanthropy but also a business venture.

For all its failings the communist system provided jobs to all who were able to work. While employment in communist Poland did not necessarily translate to improvements in living conditions, it did aim to provide a minimal standard for all and according to Beyer “extreme poverty was relatively rare”.⁸ In his book, *From Solidarity to Sellout: The Restoration of Capitalism in Poland*, Tadeusz Kowalik states that, “Unemployment was to be transitional and limited to 400,000 persons. Meanwhile, in the first year it rose from nearly zero to over one million, in the second year to over two million, in the their year it drew close to three million.”⁹

⁷ George, “1988 Polish Crisis,” 34.

⁸ Beyer, *Recovering Solidarity*, 22.

⁹ Kowalik, *From Solidarity to Sellout*, 136.

According to philosopher Karl Marx, one of the conditions of capitalism is to maintain a large pool of unemployed workers, which he referred to, as the *Industrial Reserve Army of the Unemployed* that capitalists can use at will.¹⁰ If employment is at 100 percent of a set population, then employers have no leverage to pursue lower wages, benefits, or work days. It is only through competition for jobs and work by employees that an employer is able to wield the threat of layoffs or unemployment to drive down benefits or wages. Therefore, according to a Marxist critique, unemployment is a necessary reality for the capitalist system.¹¹

While it can be said that the transition from communism to capitalism brought wealth and prosperity for many Poles, there were also those who were left behind in the transition. Poles living in rural areas were disproportionately more likely to have struggled with the transition to capitalism than those living in urban areas. A lifestyle and economic arrangement that had been learned and relied upon by many Polish citizens was quickly switched out for a new system that was foreign to those who had been raised under the Soviet capitalist system. Beyer uses the term *homo sovieticus* to identify individuals who grew up during the age of Soviet style communism and had internalized the rules and mentality of the system.¹² Beyer states, “the character traits of *homo sovieticus* are: eagerness to blame others and not one’s self, extreme suspicion of others and their motives, fatalistic attitude towards life, a sense of entitlement, helplessness, and irresponsibility.”¹³ These qualities and mentalities of that were cultivated by Polish

¹⁰ Jonathan Wolf, *Why Read Marx Today?* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 77.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Beyer, *Recovering Solidarity*, 37.

¹³ Ibid.

citizens during the conditions of communism were antithetical to success in the new capitalist system.

Beyer identifies one group that was disproportionately affected by the switch to capitalism as those employed by the state-operated collectivized farms (PGR-y). These farms were formed by the Polish government by attracting uneducated, poor citizens from all over Poland with the promise of work, free housing, a small amount of land, transportation, vacation time, preschool for children, and daycare.¹⁴ The PGR-y offered poor citizens a basic level of goods and services as well as a measure of stability that could not have been achieved elsewhere. Beyer shares that these communities were isolated and removed from mainstream Polish culture, which worked against the PGR-y farmers and their families when they were forced to integrate back into society in 1989.¹⁵ Both the integration and navigation of the recently adopted capitalist system was challenging to many rural Poles. While those living in cities likely had some problems shifting to the new capitalist system, PGR-y farmers and other rural Poles had more problems with the new changes.

The balance of the collective needs versus individual pursuit of profit is a balance that all societies deal with. At what level should the state apparatus intervene and referee the market place on behalf of the citizens or in the support of business? A neo-liberal viewpoint argues that the lessening of governmental oversight over markets and businesses is best for society, while the perspectives of communism and socialism suggest that businesses and markets should be regulated and planned to some degree for

¹⁴ Beyer, *Recovering Solidarity*, 67.

¹⁵ Ibid.

the wellbeing of all citizens.¹⁶ The *nomenklatura* in Communist Poland were in charge of all decisions for the country including those regarding the economy and industry. This centrally planned economy was in theory designed to benefit the citizens of Poland but in practice fell short of its goals. In the article “Poland in 1989: Enter Tadeusz Mazowiecki and the Creation of the Balcerowicz Plan,” Richard J. Hunter identifies the “four grand failures” of the centrally planned economy in Poland (in addition to other Soviet-controlled Eastern European countries) as:

1. Failure to create economic value or to improve the standard of living for the average Pole.
2. Failure to provide adequate individual and organizational incentives
3. Failure to “measure up” to comparative economies, not only those advanced capitalist economies in the West, but also several “fraternal” socialist economies in Central and Eastern Europe (most notably Hungary and Czechoslovakia – later the Czech Republic – and Slovenia)
4. Failure to satisfy consumer needs, essentially creating an unofficial dollarization of efficient “black market,” and the existence of “dollar” stores and shops such as the ubiquitous PEWEX¹⁷ shops.¹⁸

These failures left the people of Poland desiring another political system that would be less authoritarian, de-centralized, and democratic.

Numerous scholars have attempted to reconcile the position of the Roman Catholic Church and various economic systems ranging from communism, to socialism, to Capitalism. Mathematician and economist Angus Sibley argues in his article, “The Cult of Capitalism: Hayek, Novak & the Limits of Laissez Faire,” that free markets and

¹⁶ "Neo-liberal, adj. and n." and "socialism, n.". OED Online. March 2013. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/245592> (accessed April 04, 2013).

¹⁷ *Przedsiębiorstwo Eksportu Wewnętrznego* or Internal Export Company.

¹⁸ Richard J. Hunter, Leo V. Ryan. “Poland in 1989: Enter Tadeusz Mazowiecki and the Creation of the Balcerowicz Plan,” *Research Journal of International Studies* 11 (July 2009): 32-33.

limited government intervention are not compatible with Catholic teachings. Sibley cites the Second Vatican Council's *Gaudium et spes*¹⁹ (Joy and Hope) as stating "political authority... must always be exercised within the limits of the moral order and dedicated towards the common good... The complex circumstances of our day make it necessary for the public authority to intervene more often in social, economic, and cultural matters."²⁰ As can be seen, the council is making a clear statement against allowing markets and business to dictate the circumstances of civil society. Government institutions must regulate a balance between the needs of society and the needs of the markets. Sibley sums up the position of Hayek and libertarians as an "obsession with shrinking the state-with privatization, deregulation, and low taxes."²¹ This neo-liberal vision moves the means of production away from government into the hands of individuals.²² In addition to putting all business and industry into private control, neo-liberalism also calls for less government intervention and regulation in the market place.²³ As can be seen, the policies of neo-liberalism differ greatly from socialism or communism that outline economic systems where group ownership or state ownership is the norm.²⁴

Sibley shows that some free trade, laissez-faire enthusiasts believe that the movements of free and unregulated markets are what God intended or divinely designed. These views clash with views held by the Roman Catholic Church and proponents of

¹⁹ Promulgated by Pope Paul VI on December 1965.

²⁰ Angus Sibley. "The Cult of Capitalism: Hayek, Novak & the Limits of Laissez Faire" *Commonwealth* 135, no. 8 (April 25, 2008): 19.

²¹ Sibley. "The Cult of Capitalism": 19.

²² "Neo-liberal, adj. and n.". OED Online. March 2013. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/245592> (accessed April 4, 2013).

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ "socialism, n.". OED Online. March 2013. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/183741?> (accessed April 4, 2013).

economic justice or redistribution of wealth between those with plenty and those without. He sites John Paul II's *Centesimus annus*²⁵ (Hundredth year) of 1991 on "the risk of 'idolatry' of the market" and goes on to state the words of the Pope as, "there are collective and qualitative needs that cannot be satisfied by market mechanisms."²⁶ This passage seems to be in direct opposition to those who wish to see the free market as divinely inspired and claim to see God in the "invisible hand" of market transactions.

Sibley believes that the free market arrangements that economist Friedrich Hayek proposes were responsible for "income inequalities in the United States that revert to levels not seen since the 1920s..."²⁷ The policies of Hayek strongly favor those who possess capital and do little to address the needs of those without. Sibley also takes issue with the proposition of Ludwig Von Mises, an Austrian born economist. According to Mises, free market capitalism is a fair and democratic system where money being spent is a type of "vote". In the words of Mises, "the capitalist system is a democracy in which every penny represents a ballot paper."²⁸ One criticism that Sibley raises with the theory proposed by Mises is that those possessing more money have increased purchasing power and therefor more influence in a system where money spent functions as a type of "vote". In a true democracy each person is granted one vote and thus, in Mises's theory, the free market system fails to satisfy the equality of citizens that is required of a true democracy.

Sibley evokes the Second Vatican council's *Dignitatis humanae*²⁹ (Of the Dignity of the Human Person) as tying freedom to the pursuit of what is virtuous or good, and

²⁵ Encyclical written on the hundredth year anniversary of the encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (Rights and Duties of Capital and Labor).

²⁶ Sibley, "The Cult of Capitalism", 20.

²⁷ Ibid., 18.

²⁸ Ibid., 19.

²⁹ *Declaration on Religious Freedom* created December 7, 1967, Pope Paul VI.

proceeds to show that Hayek is hesitant to acknowledge this link.³⁰ This Catholic document makes the point that freedom is not just the lack of coercion and constraint allowing people to do whatever they desire but freedom is the situation where individuals are able to pursue the good without impediment.³¹ It appears that Hayek is interested in a freedom that places little to no responsibility for effects of an individual's action outside of the legal requirements necessary to protect a functioning free market. The freedom envisioned by Hayek promotes minimal moral or ethical claims and expects the market to regulate and guide the decisions and behavior of entrepreneurs and business people.³²

This dispute over which economic philosophy is most beneficial for all citizens ties into the legacy of the Solidarity movement through Poland's shift from Communism to Capitalism. Poland shifted from a system that was ideally designed and instituted for the common good (but became corrupt and fell short of its goals) to a system that encourages competition and struggle for goods and services. While capitalism can range in levels of regulation and government oversight from more regulated State Capitalism to less regulated *laissez-faire*, according to some Poland opted for a market arrangement that was too open and favored business and the economy over the needs of the majority of its citizens, a system more in line with *laissez-faire* and the economic vision of Hayek.³³ In the words of Anna Walentynowicz from an interview in 1999, "We wanted better money, improved work safety, a free trade union and my job back . . . nobody wanted a revolution. And when I see what the so-called revolution has brought -- mass

³⁰ Sibley, "The Cult of Capitalism", 18.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ Kowalik, *From Solidarity to Sellout*, 39-40.

poverty, homelessness, self-styled capitalists selling off our plants and pocketing the money -- I think we were right."³⁴

The above statement from Walentynowicz may reflect the desires of some Poles for a better life and improved economic conditions for all people of Poland, not hyper-competitive free market capitalism with profits funneling towards a number of elite private business owners. Kowalik mirrors the sentiments of Walentynowicz with the passage,

Shifting income (and property) from the poor to the rich, making about three million workers redundant with small chance of finding work, and concealing the dimensions of lower employment among disability pensioners and earlier retirees (from 1.5 to 2 million) also meant lower prestige of work, a worse position of the workers, and the deterioration of workplace hygiene and safety. The backbone of the working class was broken, the trade union movement was weakened, and for many years offering work for low wages was sanctioned.³⁵

As can be seen in the passage above, Kowalik offers a harsh critique of the economic shock therapy that was put into place for the betterment of the Polish economy, but also with the intention of creating capital for investors and those in positions of power and influence. After the free elections many of the *nomenklatura* were replaced at the governmental level, but many were able to secure positions of power and influence in the business world.³⁶ Kowalik refers to these *nomenklatura* turned business men as “red cobwebs”, claiming that many individuals with PZPR connections and government positions were well suited for the transition to capitalism through private business operations.³⁷ Beyer contends that the wage gap in Poland is too wide and states, “The

³⁴ Matt Schudel, “Anna Walentynowicz of Poland’s Solidarity Movement Dies at 80,” *The Washington Post*, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/04/13/AR2010041304387.html> (accessed March 26th, 2013).

³⁵ Kowalik, *From Solidarity to Sellout*, 140.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 295.

³⁷ Kowalik, *From Solidarity to Sellout*, 295.

salaries of managers in Poland today are anywhere from twenty to fifty times greater than the nation's average."³⁸

In the preface of *Class Struggle in Classless Poland* the publisher³⁹ relays the fact that United States president Ronald Reagan was quick to support the Solidarity movement.⁴⁰ A supporter of free market capitalism, Reagan domestically was not a proponent of labor movements, but in the context of the cold war and aligning the United States with any opponent of the Soviet Union, Reagan voiced publically his support for Solidarity labor union.⁴¹ The labor movement in Poland was fighting for some of the same basic workplace rights and benefits that the Reagan administration denied to American workers. One example of this is the breaking up of the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization (PATCO) in 1981 by the Reagan administration.⁴² When the controllers went on strike in hopes of gaining more pay, a shorter work week, and better working conditions, the Reagan administration did everything in its power to break the American trade union, while simultaneously supporting the Polish trade union Solidarity.⁴³ The publisher of Starski's book goes on to state, "Hopefully the readers of this book will see analogies not between Reagan and Walesa, where there are none, but between Reagan and Brezhnev; between the Polish miners in Silesia and U.S. miners in Appalachia; between Poles as a nation trying to extricate themselves from Soviet domination and Salvadorians as a nation trying to extricate themselves from U.S.

³⁸ Beyer, *Recovering Solidarity*, 116.

³⁹ No Author is cited for the section titled "Publishers Preface".

⁴⁰ Starski, *Class Struggle in Classless Poland*, ix.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Joseph McCartin, "How Reagan Broke PATCO to Create the 'Brotherhood of the Downwardly Mobile'," *Social Policy* 41 (Winter 2011): 15.

⁴³ McCartin, "How Reagan Broke PATCO," 15.

domination.”⁴⁴ This passage provides pause for reflection on what exactly the Solidarity movement was and who can legitimately evoke its ethos.

The above paragraph provides one example of how the narrative of Solidarity was manipulated and used for political reasons. The publisher of Starski’s book states, “The Polish revolution upheavals addressed by this book are of world historic importance, yet there is considerable confusion about exactly why this is so. People with different motives equally pronounce their solidarity with the Polish resistance movement.”⁴⁵ This double standard shows the willingness of politicians, economists, and other elite groups to use the narrative of the Solidarity movement as a rallying point for their ideological agenda.

⁴⁴ Starski, *Class Struggle in Classless Poland*, xiv.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, ix.

CHAPTER 6

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

In order to gather the views and opinions of Polish nationals, I created an online survey. My motivation for conducting a survey was to gather views and opinions to see how they compare to books, scholarly articles, museum exhibits, movies, and other sources of information I have been using for this research. I used a web-based survey on the website Survey Monkey in order to reach a large group of participants. I created one version of the survey in English and one version in Polish. My father-in-law helped me translate the English survey into Polish. For other translations, such as translating answers from participants, I used Google translate to get a rough idea of what the participant was saying and then asked my father-in-law or mother-in-law to help with any further translations. The survey was submitted to the ETSU Institutional Review Board (IRB) and evaluated to confirm that proper IRB procedures and protocols were designed into the study. One requirement of the IRB was that participants remained anonymous, so names were not collected in this survey.

The survey featured forty-four questions about the Solidarity movement. These questions were preceded by ten preliminary questions to gather personal information about each participant in the categories of sex, age, current nation of residence, level of education, income, political beliefs, religion, and level of religious activity. The last question in the personal information section asked if the participant had been personally involved in the Solidarity movement. The questions were grouped into the broad categories of general, prominent people, media, economics, politics, religion, and

education. The survey concluded with a free write section where participants could share any additional information that they felt was relevant to the topic. The criteria I set for eligible participants was that they be at least eighteen years of age and either possess Polish citizenship or identify as a Polish national.¹ These wide and open-ended parameters allowed my survey to reach as many potential voices as possible.

I sent out the survey by email to friends and family of mine who fit the above-mentioned criteria. In the email I asked for recipients to forward the survey to friends, family, and colleagues who met the criteria and would possibly be interested in participating. This method of research is known as Snowball sampling. When the survey was closed on March 19, 2013, 121 participants had completed the survey, of which 80 (66 percent) chose the Polish language survey and 41 (34 percent) chose the English language survey. Combining the information from both the English and the Polish survey I was able to add together the results from each question to create percentages and statistics that appear in the “Survey Results and Analysis” section of this paper.

When adding together the results for percentages, I rounded up for numbers above .5 and down for numbers below .5 to avoid triple digit percentages. If the number of participants who skipped a question was over 25 percent, a number of participants that I have determined to be significant, than I made a note. I used the program Microsoft Excel to create the graphs that appear in this paper. Some of the questions in the survey asked for written responses, and a collection of noteworthy written responses have been used in this paper.

¹ Definition of “Polish National” explained later in this chapter.

I realize that the survey method has some drawbacks. Because this survey was only accessible online, potential participants may have been excluded because they may not have had access to a computer or were not computer literate during the time I was conducting my research for this thesis. I was not able to travel to Poland during my thesis work, but ideally it would have been beneficial to hand out paper surveys to those who are not technically savvy. Also this method requires participants to be literate and therefore does not take into consideration the opinions of those who cannot read or write. These individuals and groups no doubt have opinions that are valid and important to understanding the Solidarity movement and an attempt will be made to include these unrepresented individuals in any future research.

For the term “Polish National”, I allowed participants to decide if they perceived their own identity as being a “Polish national” or not. This was no doubt easy for those living in Poland who are obviously Polish citizens, but where the issue can become more opaque is in instances of immigration where individuals who have been born in or lived in Poland have moved to another country to take up residence. In an effort to include those who may have lived through the events of Solidarity but are no longer residing in Poland, this was left open to interpretation by participants and not just a matter of what was stated on their passport.

Another factor that must be addressed is that only people who were opinionated or interested enough in the topic of Solidarity may have chosen to participate. While it is impossible to gauge the views and opinions of a nation as a whole, a group, or even a single individual, this survey can record opinions and views of individuals are comfortable sharing. Some views and opinions may not be shared, as in some cases what

is thought privately is not always shared publically. Although the survey was confidential according to the requirements of the IRB and names were not associated with survey results, this assurance may not have guaranteed completely unguarded responses. Participants were able to skip answering a question if they did not want to share their answer. My statistics can only speak for those who shared their answers on any given question. Penn relates to the challenge of understanding the lives and views of others with the statement, “There can be a great distance between lived experience and the observation of that experience. At times, the distance is unbridgeable.”²

One final factor has to do with the creation of this survey and the views and perspective of its designer, Nathan Peter-Grzeszczak Buhr. In the book *Reflective Interviewing: A Guide to Theory & Practice*, Kathryn Roulston states, “The task of considering the self in qualitative inquiry is a continuously evolving and ongoing task, and will never be completed. Yet as interviewers, qualitative researchers need to be aware of who they are in relation to research projects, and how that might be theorized in way that are consonant with their epistemological and theoretical assumptions about knowledge production.”³ While I have attempted to be as objective as possible, I have chosen the questions and wording of the survey according to what I felt was important. The structure of the survey plays a role in the process of this research, in addition to my interpretations of the data. I have made countless decisions on how to conduct this research that makes this project unique, but I have also followed many academic guidelines and practices provided to me by the IRB and my Masters of Arts in Liberal studies core curriculum.

² Penn, *Solidarity's Secret*, 311.

³ Kathryn Roulston, *Reflective Interviewing: A Guide to Theory & Practice* (Los Angeles, Sage Publications, 2010), 127.

Using these surveys, I have gathered a wide group of viewpoints from participants with diverse backgrounds. With these issues and concerns on methodology addressed, the opinions and views that have obtained helped me to better understand how Polish nationals view the Solidarity movement today.

CHAPTER 7

SURVEY RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

The opening question, listed on the survey as question two (Q2), participants were asked if they were male or female to which 56% identified as male and 43% as female (See figure 1).

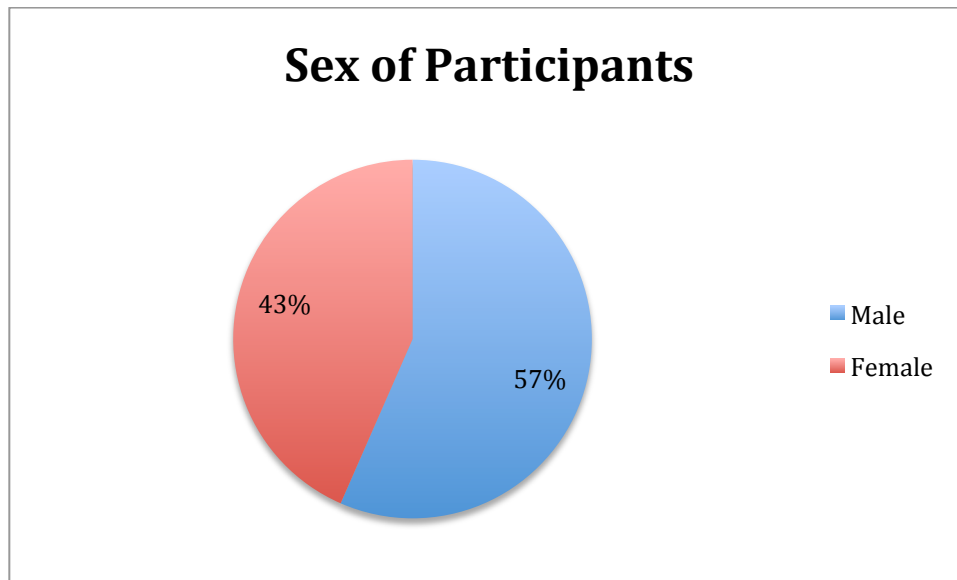


Figure 1. Sex of Participants

Indicated by question three (Q3) participants range in age with 4 percent identifying as 18-24, 19 percent identifying as 25-34, 12 percent identifying as 35-44, 21 percent identifying as 45-54, 33 percent identifying as 55-64, 8 percent identifying as 65-74 and no participants identifying as older than 75 (see figure 2). This places roughly 76 percent of participants over the age of 18 in 1980, the year in which the Solidarity movement began.

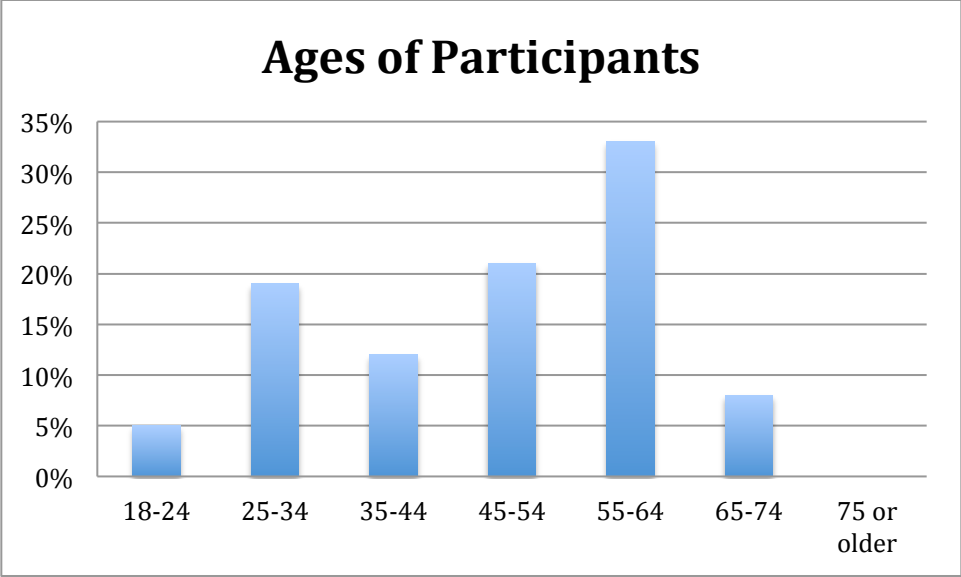


Figure 2. Age of Participants

Question four (Q4) asked participants “Where do you currently live” to which 44 percent responded Poland, 44 percent responded in the United States, 7 percent responded Canada, 2 percent responded Germany, and 3 percent cited other countries (see figure 3). As can be seen, 88 percent are from either Poland or the USA.

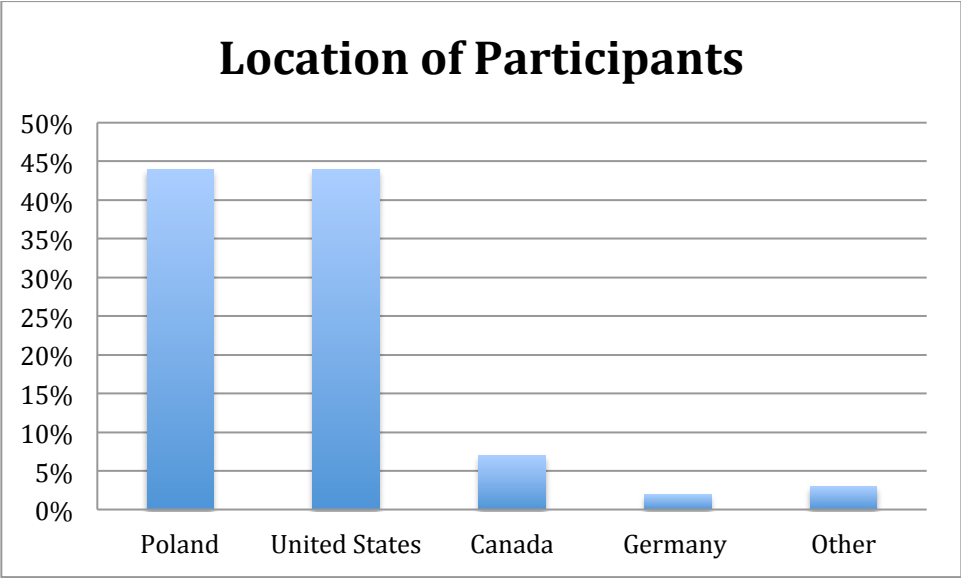


Figure 3. Location of Participants

On the topic of education (Q5), 15 percent of participants had a high school education, 20 percent had a bachelor’s degree, 38 percent had a master’s degree, and 27 percent had a doctorate degree (see figure 4).

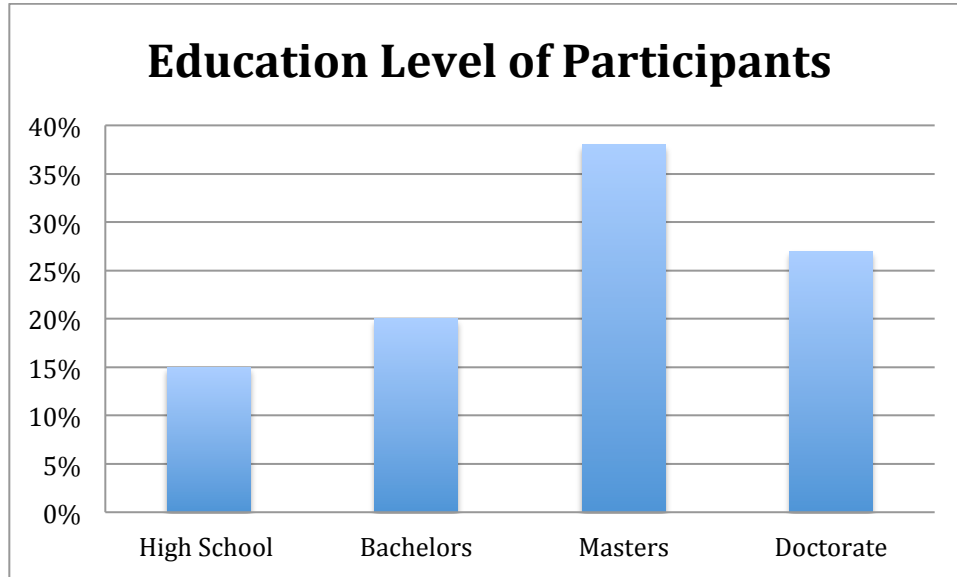


Figure 4. Education Level of Participants

For income I split up the question into two parts. The first part (Q6) dealt with annual income in Polish zloty (see figure 5) and the second part (Q7) asked for participant’s annual income in United States dollars (see figure 6). The exchange rate on April 1, 2013, was 3.25 Polish zloty to 1 United States Dollar.¹ The following Figures 5 and 6 show the number of participants who chose each income bracket.

¹ Currency Converter Google Finance, US Dollar to Polish zloty, <https://www.google.com/finance/converter?a=1&from=USD&to=PLN&meta=ei%3Dbi1aUfD6OqOclwOZjwE> (accessed April 1, 2013).

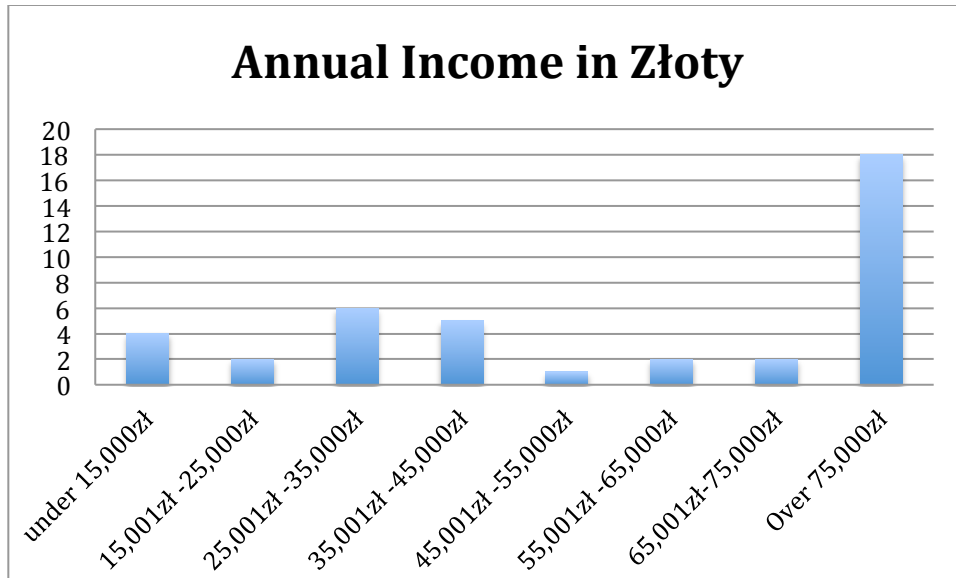


Figure 5. Annual Income in Złoty

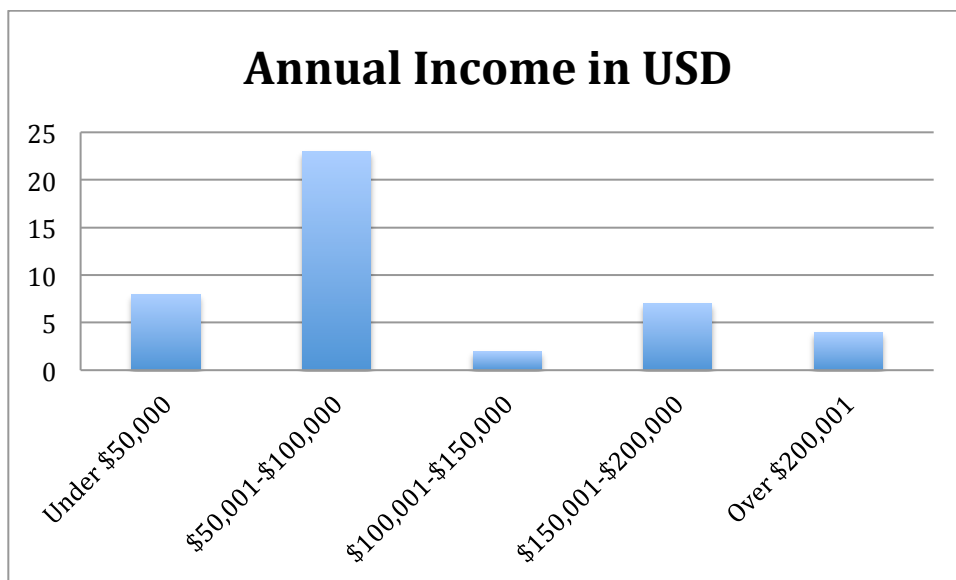


Figure 6. Annual Income in USD

When participants were asked the question (Q8) “How would you describe your political beliefs,?” 32 percent of identified as liberal, 31 percent identified as conservative, 31 percent as non-political, 4 percent as socialist, 2 percent as anarchist, and 1 percent as nationalist (see figure 7).

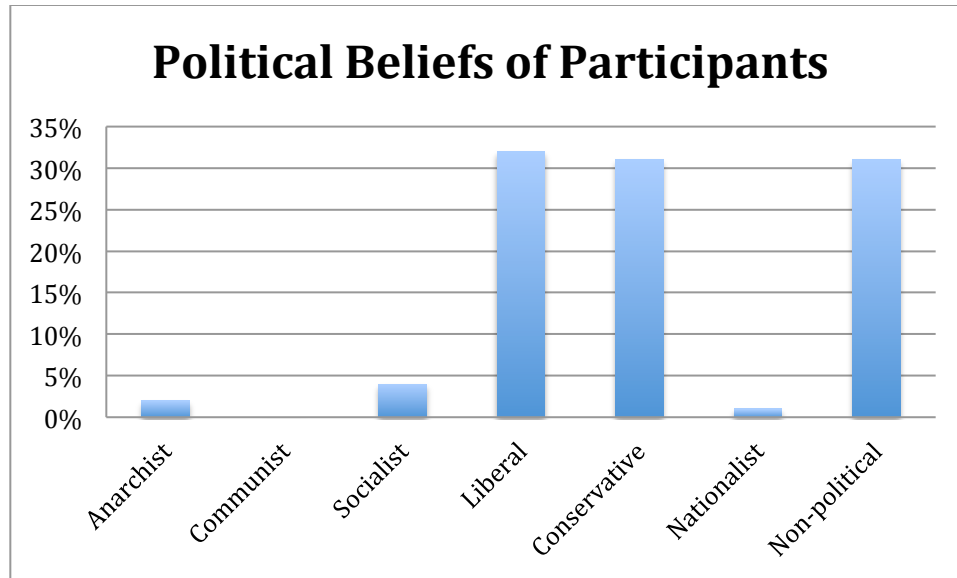


Figure 7. Political Beliefs of Participants

To the question (Q9) “What religion do you identify with,?” 65 percent of participants identified as Catholic, 15 percent as Christian, 18 percent as non-religious, 1 percent as Jewish, and 1 percent as Buddhist (see figure 8).

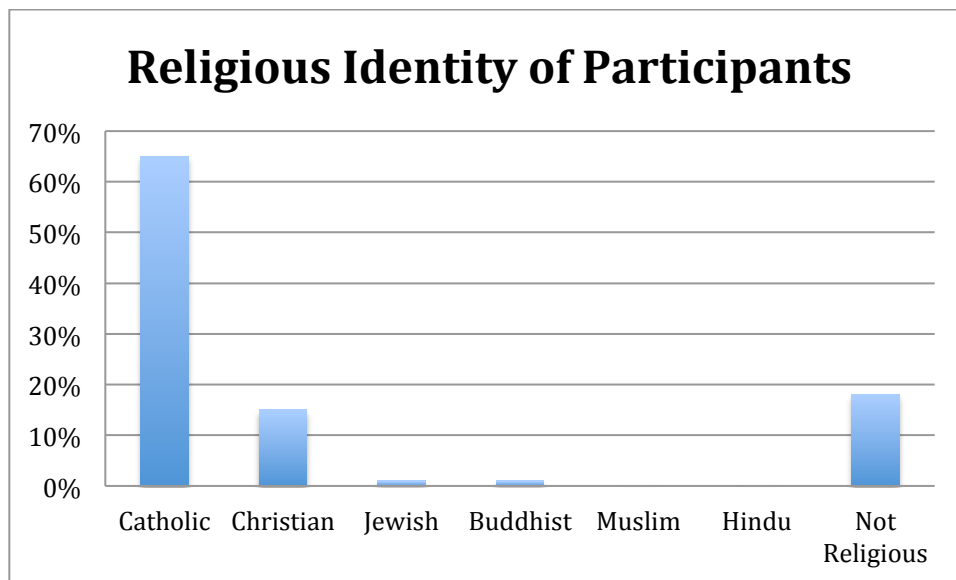


Figure 8. Religious Identity of Participants

In reference to the multiple choice question (Q10) “How often do you attend church,?” 7 percent of participants attend more than once a week, 30 percent attend one

time a week, 18 percent attend once a month, 16 percent attend once a year, 4 percent less than once a year and 25 percent do not attend (see figure 9). This shows that 75 percent of participants are at least involved to some degree with church or religious activities.

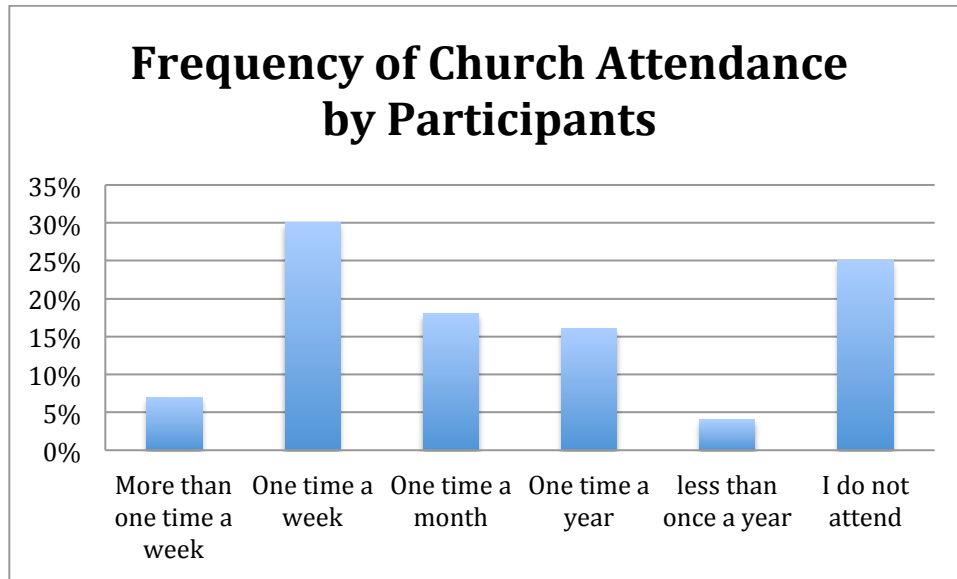


Figure 9. Frequency of Church Attendance by Participants

To the question (Q11)“Were you personally involved with the Solidarity movement during the time period of 1980-1990?” 35 percent of participants answered yes and 64 percent answered no (see figure 10). Once again, 76 percent of participants marked that they were 35 or older, and therefore would have been over the age of 18 in 1980.

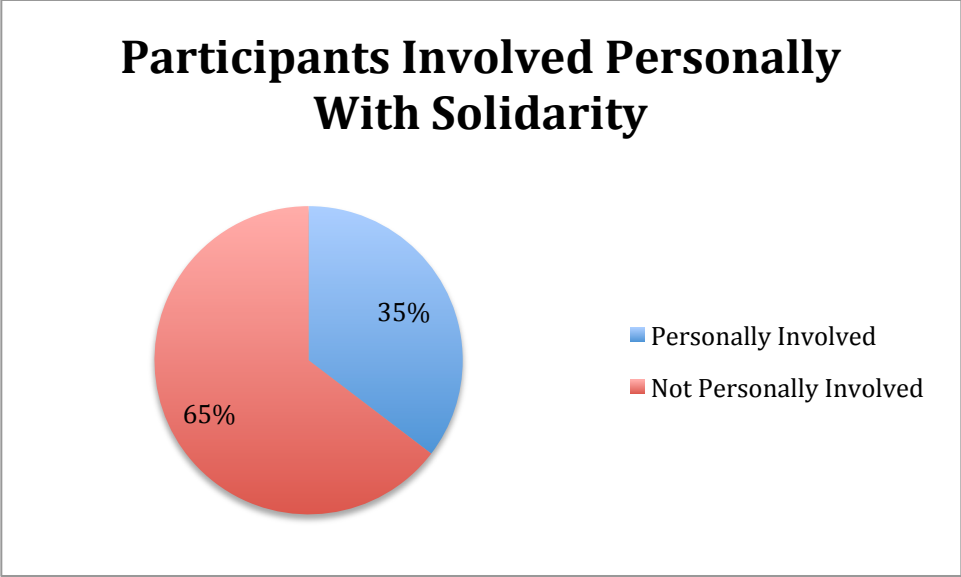


Figure 10. Participants Involved Personally With Solidarity

Starting with some general questions about the Solidarity movement, Q12 asks participants “My overall view of the Solidarity movement (1980-1990) in Poland is?” to which 68 percent answered very positive, 22 percent percent said somewhat positive, 9 percent said neutral, and 1 percent said somewhat negative (see figure 11). For this question, 36 percent percent of participants declined to answer. This question reports that 90 percent of participants have some level of positive feelings about the solidarity movement.

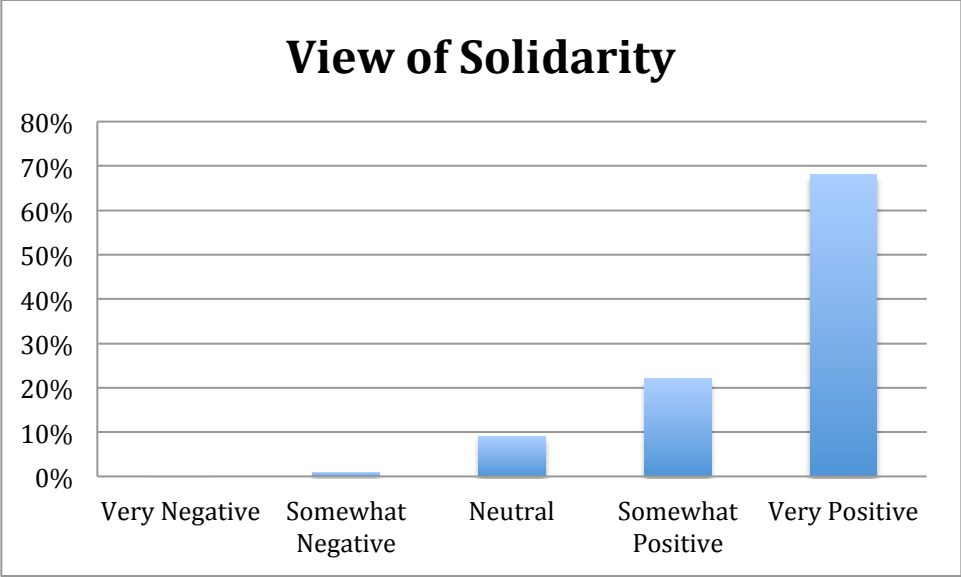


Figure 11. View of Solidarity

When asked the question (Q13) “When you think about the Solidarity movement, what time period do you focus on?” most participants stated 1980-1981 with 68 percent answering the previously mentioned years, while 26 percent mentioned 1982-1990 (see figure 12).

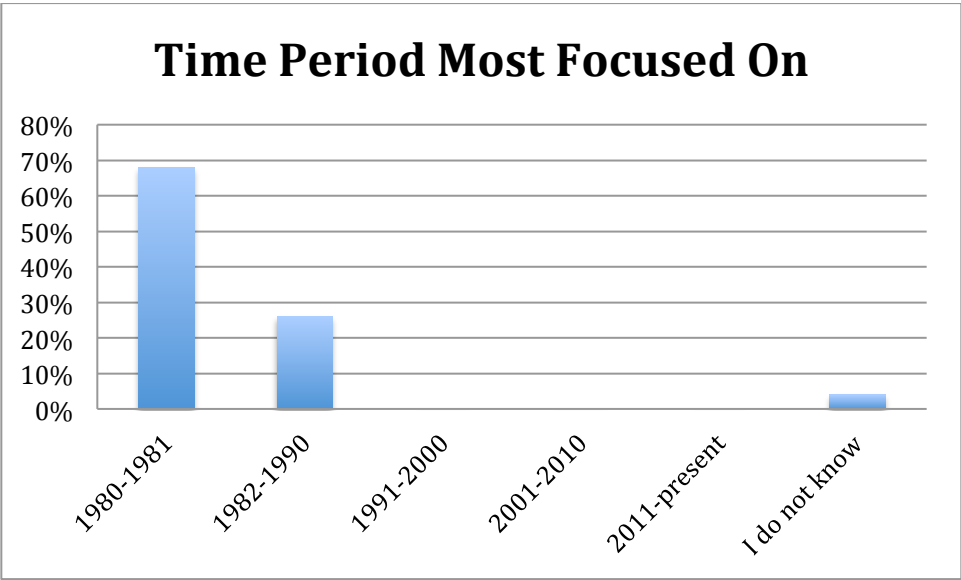


Figure 12. Time Period Most Focused On

This shows that the beginning years of Solidarity is the time period that most participants associate with the movement. The 1980-1981 time period in Poland began with unrest and strikes that lead to the formation of Solidarity and ended with martial law during the 1982-1990 time period Solidarity was underground. This is important because participants may not be thinking about the same events in the history of Solidarity, and therefore may be basing their answers on differing events. In response to the question (Q14) “When you think about the Solidarity movement, what event do you focus on most?” 44 percent answered “Strikes at the Lenin Shipyard” 32 percent answered “Marital Law”, and 24 percent answered “Roundtable Talks” (see figure 13).

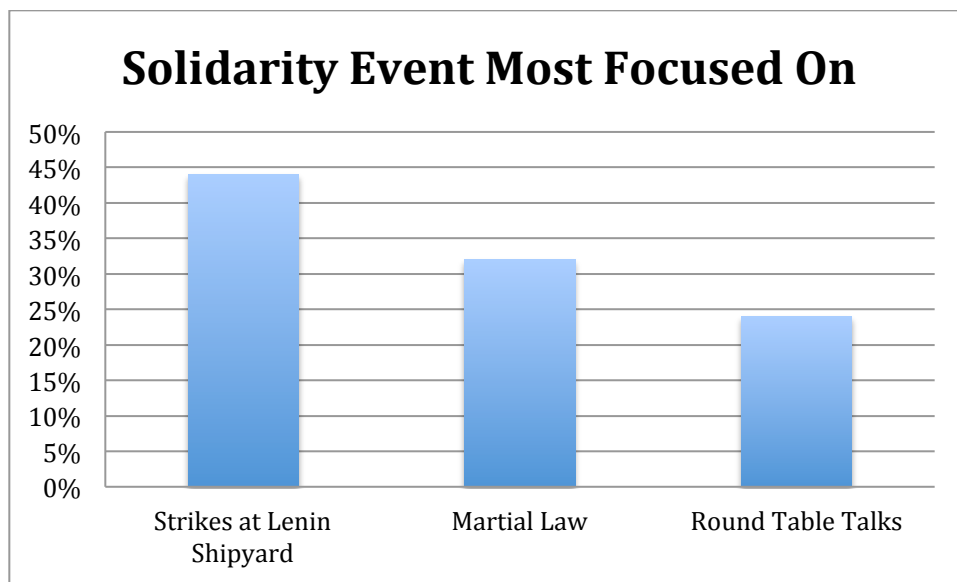


Figure 13. Solidarity Event Most Focused On

These three events can roughly be summarized as the emergence of the Solidarity movement, the struggle of the Solidarity movement, and success of the Solidarity movement. While slightly more participants chose the beginning of the movement as most noteworthy, there is no consensus as to what is the most important time of the movement.

When asked if they agreed with the statement (Q15) “The history and story of the Solidarity movement has changed over time” 44 percent strongly agreed, 30 percent somewhat agreed, 20 percent were neutral, 3 percent somewhat disagreed, and 6 percent strongly disagreed (see figure 14).

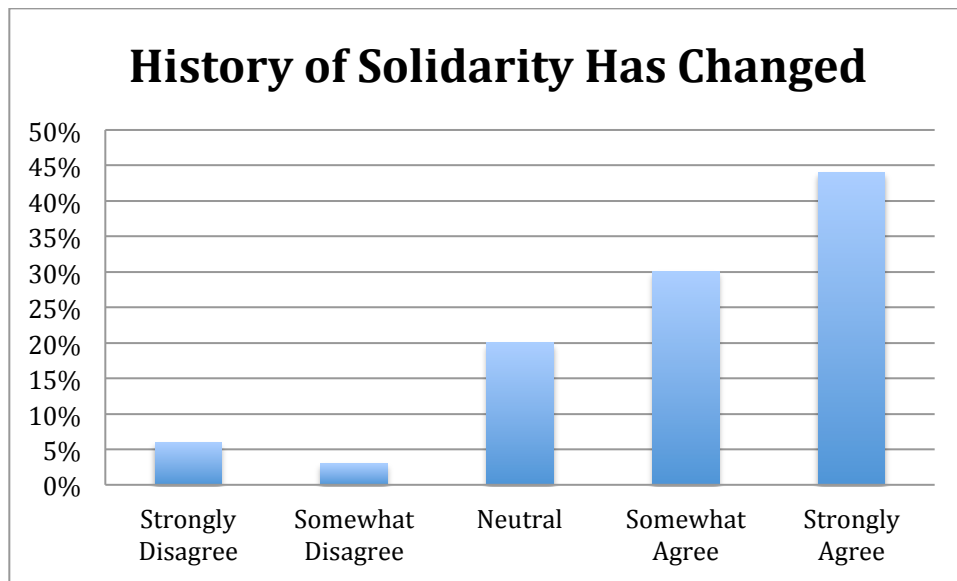


Figure 14. History of Solidarity Has Changed

This shows that 74 percent of participants perceive the narrative to be changing with time. Fifty-two percent of those who took the poll in Polish strongly agreed with this question while the English participants were less resolute with the average of answer falling between neutral and somewhat agree.

The next question (Q16) was a follow up to Q15 asking participants to state how they perceived the history of Solidarity to have changed over time. A male, 55 to 64 year old, liberal, non-religious, PhD from Canada, who was involved as a member of the Solidarity Movement wrote, “What started as an unadulterated movement, over the years it transitioned into self serving platform for political and personal gains.”² This statement

² All responses are anonymous. Q16 English survey, #1, March 18, 2013. 12:38 PM.

reflects a view that some participants may have that the movement began as an idealistic challenge of the status quo but became corrupted over time. This participant also feels that the Solidarity Movement was used by individuals for career advancement or to support ideological arguments instead of reflecting the views and opinions of a large section of the Polish population, as it once had. Beyer backs up this viewpoint with the statement, “Many of the heroes of the former egalitarian Solidarity era actually believed that ‘creating a dominant class, in which they themselves might be key players, was in the long-term interest of workers’.”³ A female, 25-34 year old, liberal, “Less than once a year” Catholic, living in the United States who was not involved in the Solidarity movement writes, “People today don’t realize the impact it had on communism and it is not emphasized in World History (as a lot of history is not) in high school. I feel very few people with an average education (or focused education) know about it and what it did for the countries that were affected by communism.”⁴ This participant bemoans what she sees as a loss of interest and understanding of the Solidarity movement that has occurred over time. In her opinion this does not make the story and narrative less relevant today but instead in need of higher quality teaching to promote increased understanding in all academic disciplines.

Moving on to questions about people involved with the Solidarity movement, question 17 (Q17) asked participants “How would you describe your overall personal views of Lech Wałęsa?” Twenty-eight percent stated very positive, 38 percent stated somewhat positive, 8 percent stated neutral, 18 percent stated somewhat negative, and 9

³ Beyer, *Recovering Solidarity*, 34.

⁴ All responses are anonymous. Q16 English survey, #14, March 1, 2013. 7:04 PM.

percent stated very negative (see figure 15). This question shows that 66 percent of participants hold a view of Lech Wałęsa that falls within the positive spectrum.

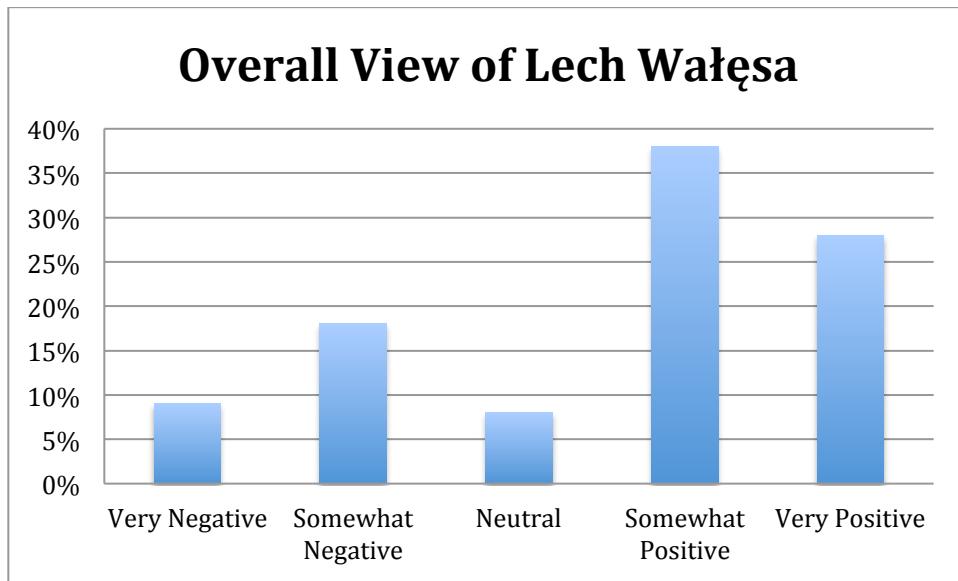


Figure 15. Overall Views of Lech Wałęsa

When asked (Q18) “How would you describe your personal views of Lech Wałęsa before he became president (pre-1990)?” 52 percent stated very positive, 34 percent stated somewhat positive, 11 percent stated neutral, 2 percent stated somewhat negative, and 2 percent stated very negative (see figure 16).

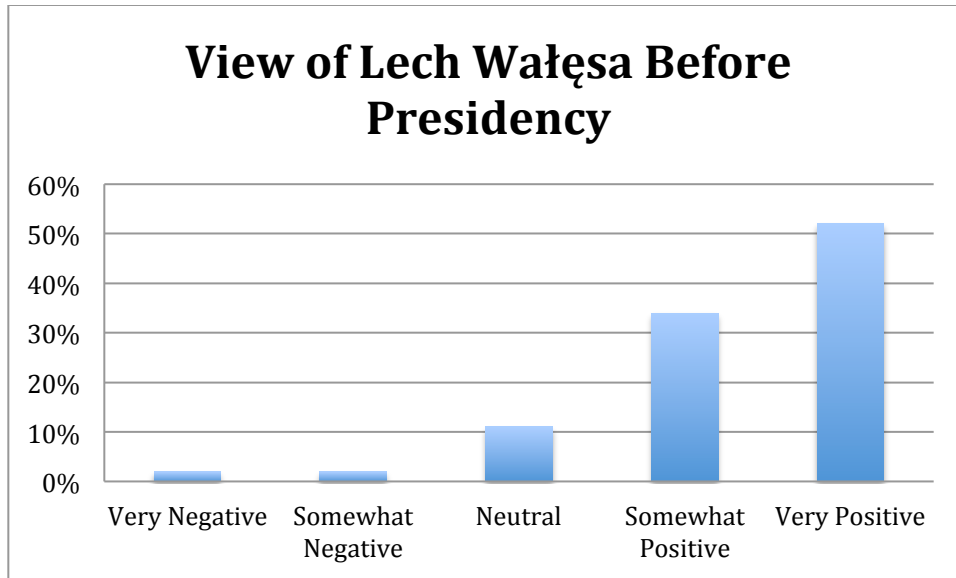


Figure 16. View of Lech Wałęsa Before Presidency

This question reports that 86 percent of participants have some degree of positive personal view of Lech Walesa before he became president of Poland.

When asked (Q19) about views of Lech Wałęsa after he became president (post-1990) only 6 percent stated very positive, 26 percent stated somewhat positive, 14 percent stated neutral, 34 percent states somewhat negative, and 19 percent stated very negative (see figure 17).

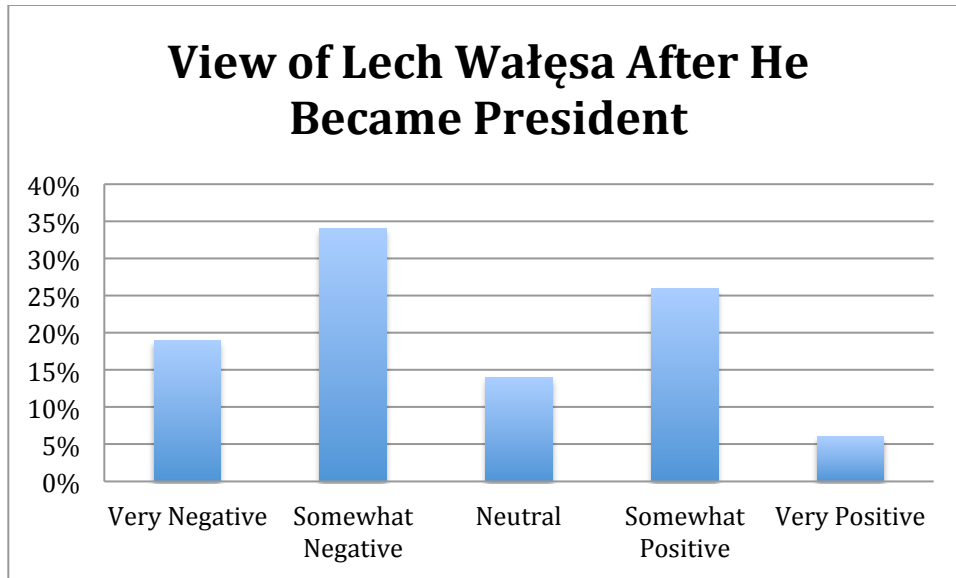


Figure 17. View of Lech Wałęsa After He Became President

These statistics displaying only 32 percent of participants holding a positive view of president Wałęsa show a loss of support by the Polish people. As many scholars have written and as my statistics attest, if Lech Wałęsa had ended his career as an activist instead of going on into politics, he would be remembered in a more positive and less controversial way by the Polish people today. According to my survey (Q20), over half of my participants (56 percent) view the beginning of Solidarity as the most important time in the career of Lech Wałęsa, while 28 percent focus on the years 1982-1990, and only 11 percent focus on his presidency followed by 5 percent on his post-presidency (see figure 18).

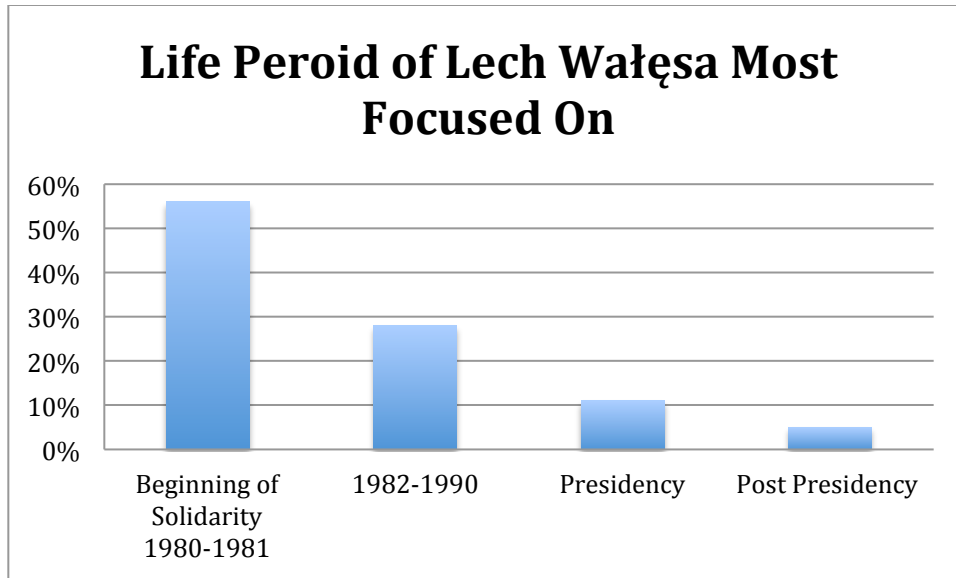


Figure 18. Life Period of Lech Wałęsa Most Focused On

This shows that a majority of participants (84 percent) give more attention to the pre-presidency activities of Lech Wałęsa than during or after his presidency.

When asked (Q21) about personal views of Anna Walentynowicz 27 percent of participants responded very positive, 14 percent responded somewhat positive, 45 percent responded neutral, 10 percent responded somewhat negative, and 5 percent responded very negative (see figure 19).

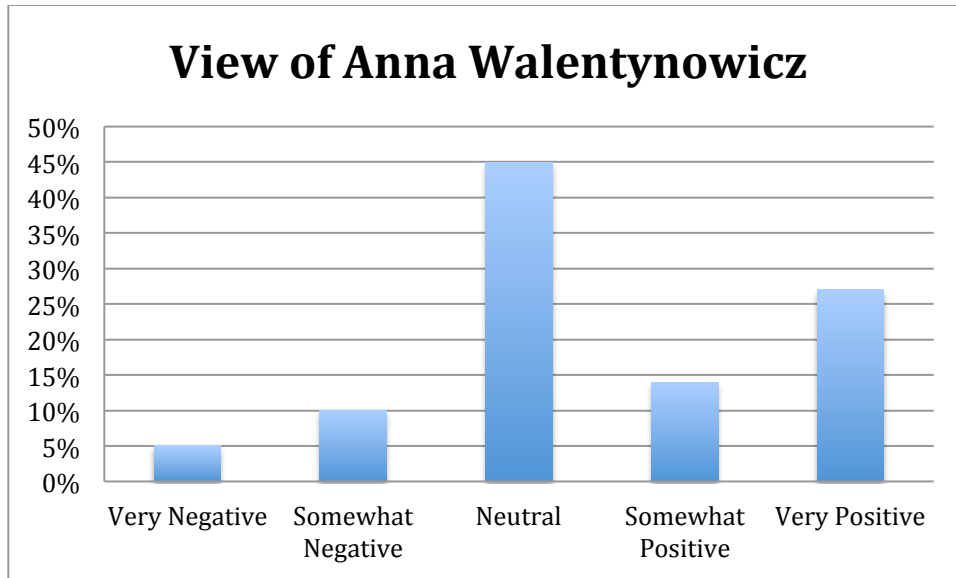


Figure 19. View of Anna Walentynowicz

This neutrality could be a reflection of the less prominent role that Walentynowicz played in the movement. According to Penn, Walentynowicz was instrumental in the early days of the movement, but she never developed a leadership position in Solidarity and was therefore overshadowed by Lech Walesa and other leaders.⁵ The words of Walentynowicz in reference to the strike of August 14, 1980, “a man came to pick me up and he said the workers wanted me to lead the strike. I said to him that I didn’t want to do it because if a woman becomes the head of a strike, it will diminish the seriousness of the event. If I had become head of the strike, people would have said, ‘Women, back to your pots’.”⁶

The next question (Q22) asked participants about personal views of General Wojciech Jaruzelski to which 3 percent answered very positive, 13 percent somewhat positive, 14 percent neutral, 23 percent somewhat negative, and 47 percent very negative (see figure 20).

⁵ Penn, *Solidarity’s Secret*, 61.

⁶ Ibid.

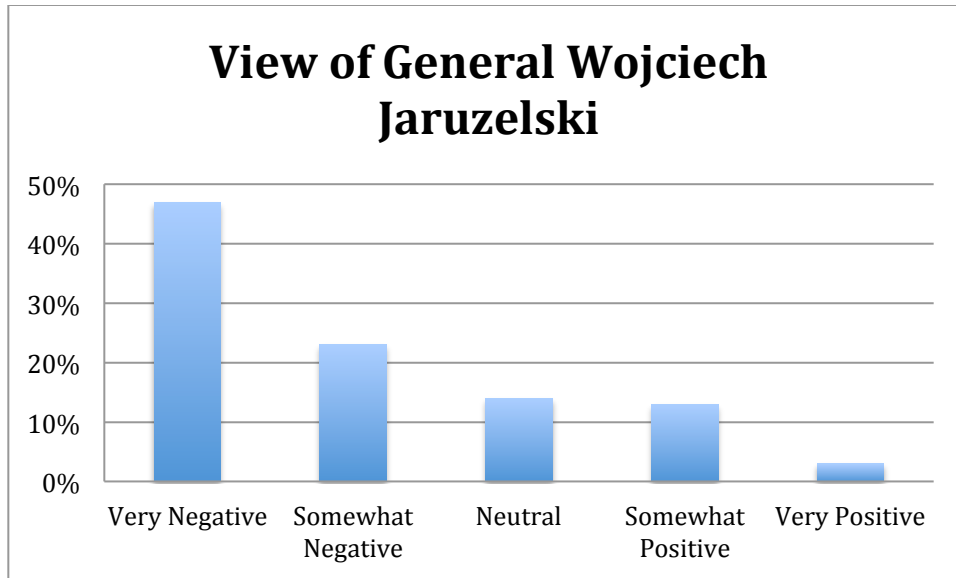


Figure 20. View of General Wojciech Jaruzelski

These statistics show that 70 percent of participants feel a degree of negativity towards General Jaruzelski, likely stemming from his role in the declaration of martial law in 1981. Because of his role in martial law, he may be seen by a majority of participants as a puppet of the Soviet Union, who acted in the interests of the USSR, instead of the interests of Poland. This could also be a reflection of the role that General Jaruzelski occupied as one of the main opposition figures to the Solidarity movement, which 90 percent of participants reported some level of positive feelings about.

The next question (Q23) asked “Are there any other people that were involved with the Solidarity movement that you wish to comment on?” Participants most commonly mentioned the names Andrzej Gwiazda, Jacek Kuroń, Adam Michnick, and Władysław Frasyniuk. All four individuals were involved with Solidarity in positions of leadership. Andrzej Gwiazda was an engineer and noteworthy leader of Solidarity, Jacek Kuroń was involved with starting KOR and a prominent social and political figure in opposition of the PZPR, Adam Michnick was an intellectual and harsh critic of

communism, and Władysław Frasyniuk was a leader of Solidarity turned politician. One male, doctorate, libertarian, Christian, age 35 to 44, living in Poland who was not involved in the Solidarity movement stated, “it is worth recognizing the contributions of many less known or even completely unknown activists whose participating on the movement accelerated communism’s downfall.”⁷ Through this statement he is attempting to highlight that many people involved with the movement never were formally recognized or granted leadership or political positions as a result of their participation. This statement helps to show that credit for the success of the movement should be awarded to the large number of regular Polish citizens who helped to bring about change in their homeland.

The following question (Q24) asked participants to name people who were opposed to the movement to which the names Czesław Kiszczak, Jerzy Urban, and General Wojciech Jaruzelski were the most often mentioned individuals and PZPR members along with secret police the were most often mentioned groups. Czesław Kiszczak was minister of the interior during the presidency of General Wojciech Jaruzelski.⁸ One male, age 25 to 34, Catholic, university graduate, living in Poland who was not involved in the Solidarity movement stated “Jerzy Urban – leader of communist propaganda, good example of a man who made good money on being loyal to his master.”⁹ Jerzy Urban is a Polish media mogul and politician who used to be in charge of promoting communist policy and ideology. On the topic of Urban, Ash states, “the former (communist) government spokesman Jerzy Urban, now publisher of a highly scurrilous and commercially successful weekly called *Nie* (No), published a selection of

⁷ All responses are anonymous. Q23 English survey, #9, March 3, 2013. 2:45 PM.

⁸ Ash, *The Polish Revolution*, 371.

⁹ All responses are anonymous. Q16 English survey, #6, March 3, 2013. 11:13 AM.

all the horrible things Wałęsa’s old-new allies had said about him since 1990, sarcastically entitled ‘Wałęsa’s a monster, so vote for him’.”¹⁰ As can be seen from the title, this article shows a clear dislike for Lech Wałęsa and as Urban was a representative of the PZPR it is easy to see that he was opposed to the Solidarity movement.

When participants were asked (Q25) how they feel the Solidarity movement is represented in Polish culture today, 14 percent responded very positive, 31 percent somewhat positive, 30 percent neutral, 21 percent somewhat negative, and 5 percent very negative (see figure 21).

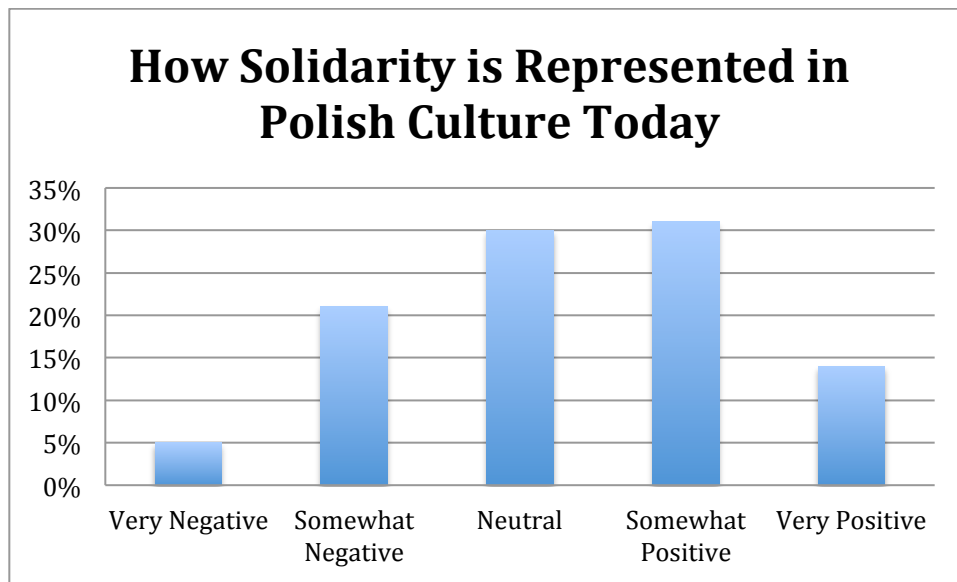


Figure 21. How Solidarity is Represented in Polish Culture Today

This displays that participants possess views ranging from positive to negative on how the Solidarity movement is portrayed and depicted in Poland today. When presented the question (Q26) “How do Polish media companies, portray the Solidarity movement (1980-1990) today?,” 29 percent of participants responded very positive, 28 percent

¹⁰ Ash, *The Polish Revolution*, 377.

somewhat positive, 28 percent neutral, 12 percent somewhat negative, and 2 percent very negative (see figure 22).

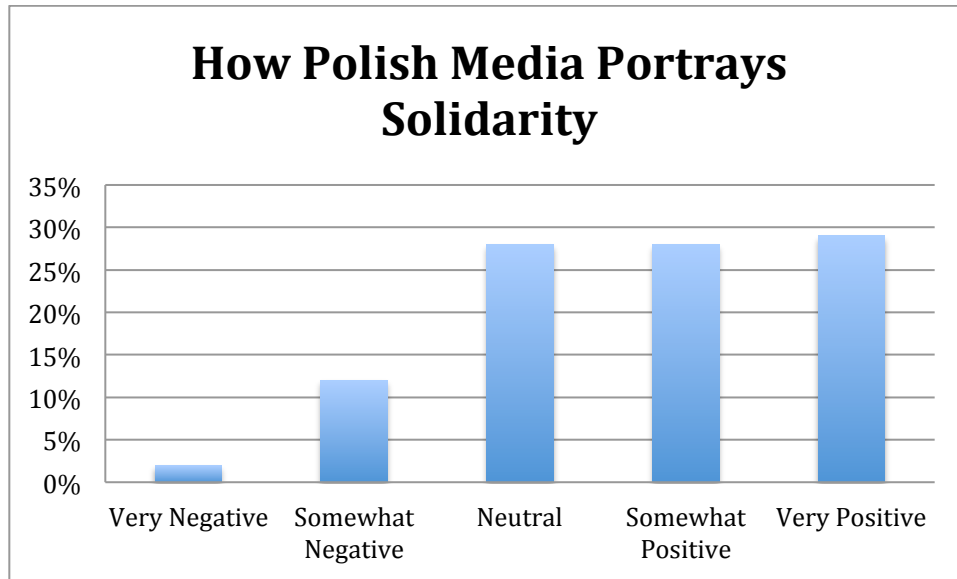


Figure 22. How Polish Media Portrays Solidarity

This shows favoritism towards positive with 57 percent of participants viewing some level of overall positive portrayal of the Solidarity movement by Polish media. In response to a similar question (Q27) about how Lech Wałęsa is portrayed by Polish media companies only 5 percent responded very positive, 22 percent responded somewhat positive, 33 percent responded neutral, 35 percent responded somewhat negative, and 6 percent responded very negative (see figure 23).

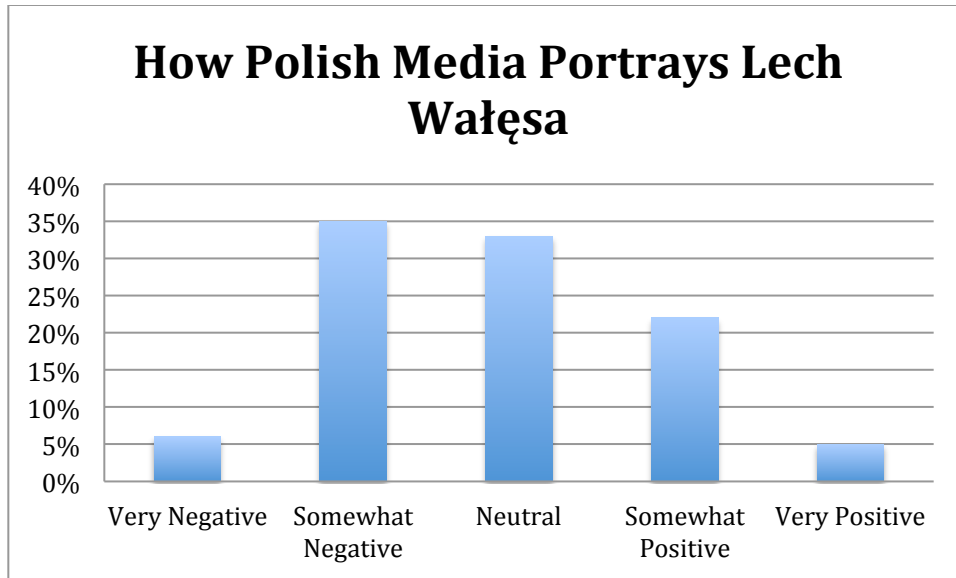


Figure 23. How Polish Media Portrays Lech Wałęsa

This shows that 41 percent of participants that felt the media portrayed Wałęsa in a negative way to some extent and only 27 percent felt that the media portrayed him in a positive way to some extent, but a notable amount were neutral as well.

The final question (Q28) in the media section asked participants for additional comments on the topic of the Solidarity movement and the media. One male participant, age 35 to 44, Christian, doctorate, residing in Poland answered, “The media are notoriously unreliable in this respect. There is hardly any serious investigation of the movement, of its political program, of internal differences, of adopted strategies etc.”¹¹ This statement expresses a distrust of the media and a disapproval of the way in which Polish media addresses the topic of the Solidarity movement and its accomplishments and shortfalls. Another participant who identified as a man, age 45 to 54, conservative, Catholic, living in Poland who holds a masters degree and was involved with the Solidarity movement commented, “Currently, Solidarity and the trade union movement is

¹¹ All responses are anonymous. Q28 English survey, #4, March 3, 2013. 2:12 PM.

destroyed and marginalized by the media”.¹² This statement was opposed by another participant who identified as a man, age 55 to 64, liberal, Catholic, living in Poland, holding a doctorate degree, who was not involved with the Solidarity movement stated, “media very well presented trade union movement, which was becoming more and more demanding.”¹³ These two comments show some level of disagreement on what the role of the Polish media is in telling the story of the Solidarity movement, and supporting labor unions. Being that media outlets are diverse and hold differing opinions, views of the Solidarity movement, and labor unions presumably vary depending on the ideological leanings of the media company.

The next set of questions is on the topic of economics. When asked the question (Q29) “Unity among the Polish people changed in a negative way by the switch from Socialism to Capitalism” 28 percent of participants strongly agreed, 37 percent somewhat agreed, 13 percent responded neutral, 16 percent somewhat disagreed, and 7 percent strongly disagreed (see figure 24).

¹² All responses are anonymous. Q28 Polish survey, #9, March 4, 2013. 10:45 AM.

¹³ All responses are anonymous. Q28 Polish survey, #10, March 4, 2013. 10:45 AM.

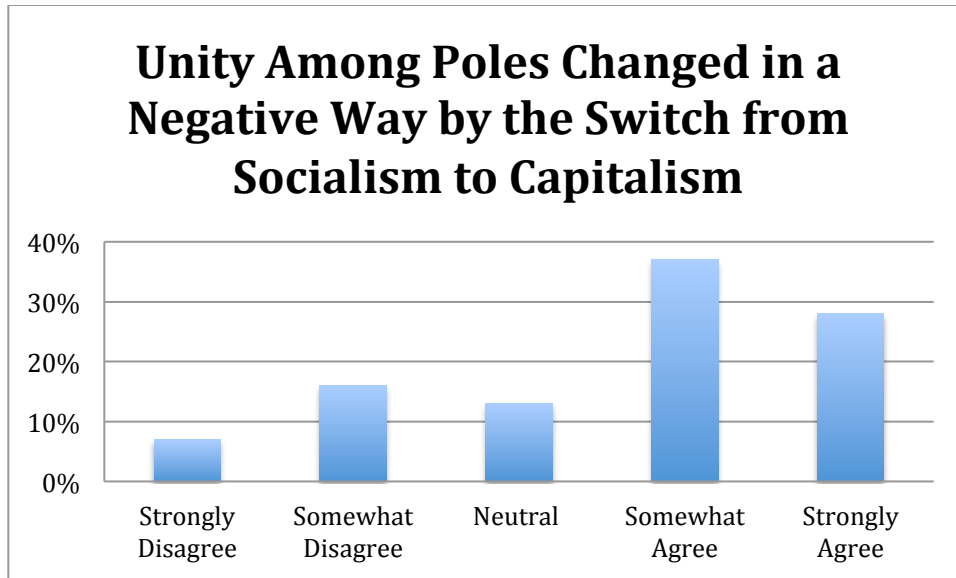


Figure 24. Unity Among Poles Changed in a Negative Way by the Switch from Socialism to Capitalism

Thus 65 percent of participants agreed to some degree that the transition from socialism to capitalism affected rapport in a negative way amongst Poles. This statistic reflects possible reservations held by participants that a capitalist economic system might not always promote the closest ties between country people, who are put into competition for goods and resources in the marketplace. Beyer believes that “Solidarity has been swept away by the new tides of capitalism in the minds of most contemporary Poles.”¹⁴

The next question (Q30) asked participants if they believed that some individuals or groups were more positively affected by the switch to capitalism than others, to which 53 percent responded strongly agree, 40 percent responded somewhat agree, 5 percent responded neutral, 1 percent somewhat disagree, and 1 percent strongly disagree (see figure 25).

¹⁴ Beyer, *Recovering Solidarity*, 47.

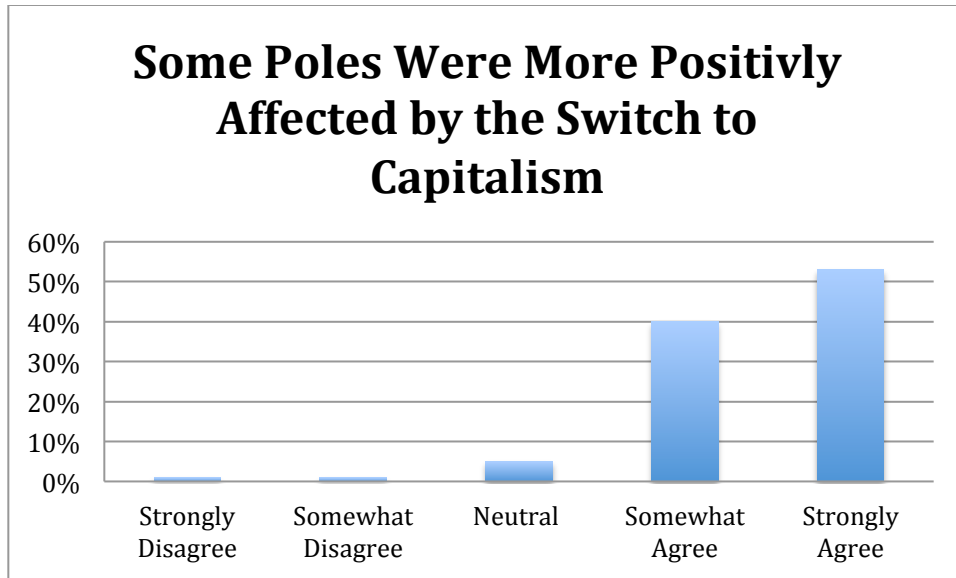


Figure 25. Some Poles Were More Positively Affected by the Switch to Capitalism

This reveals that 93 percent of participants feel to a certain degree that some groups or individuals received a disproportionately positive outcome from the switch to capitalism. Some of the more common groups listed in the comments section were business people, entrepreneurs, government officials, and young people. The question (Q31) asking the reverse, whether some Poles were more negatively affected by the switch to capitalism, 37 percent strongly agreed, 46 percent somewhat agreed, 8 percent were neutral, 9 percent somewhat disagreed, and 1 percent strongly disagreed (see figure 26).

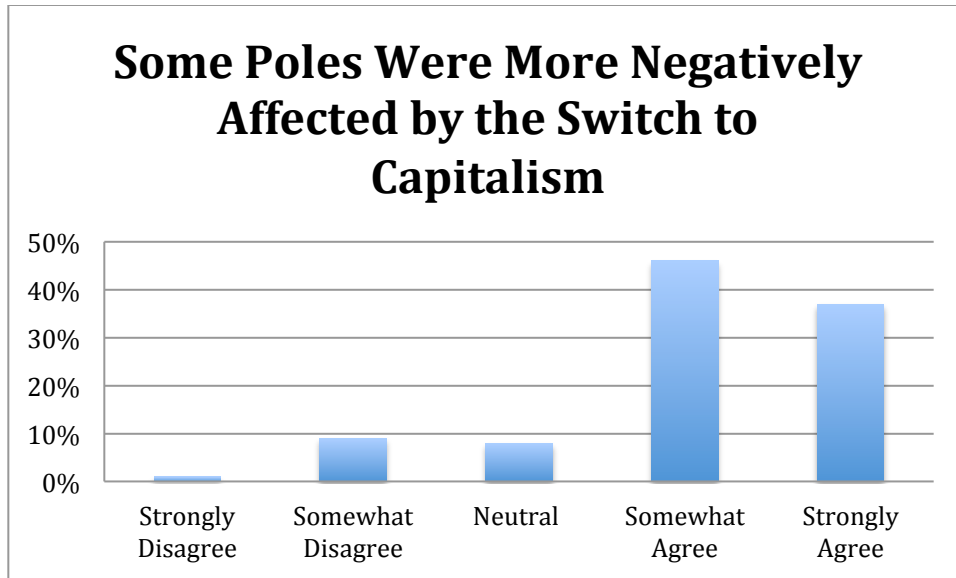


Figure 26. Some Poles Were More Negatively Affected by the Switch to Capitalism

This puts 83 percent in some degree of agreement that the switch to capitalism negatively affected some Poles and commonly mentioned in the comments section were older people, the working class, uneducated, rural people, and farmers.

To the question (Q32) “The people of Poland were properly prepared for the economic switch to capitalism”, 3 percent strongly agreed, 12 percent somewhat agreed, 20 percent were neutral, 42 percent somewhat disagreed, and 25 percent strongly disagreed (see figure 27).

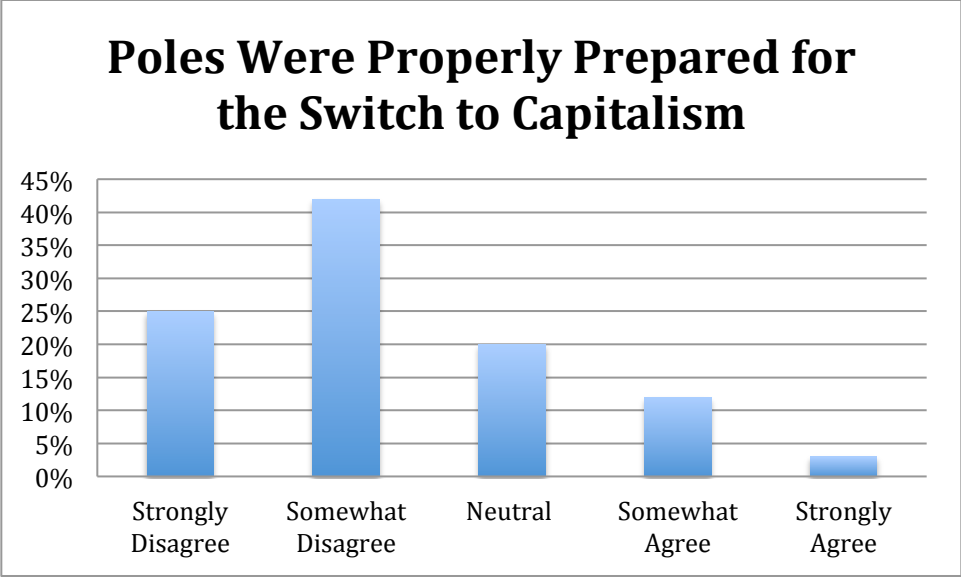


Figure 27. Poles Were Properly Prepared for the Switch to Capitalism

This indicates that 67 percent of participants believe to some degree that the people of Poland were not well prepared for the switch to capitalism. Those participants who were familiar with the “economic shock therapy” were asked (Q33) their opinion of the plan to which 25 percent strongly agreed, 14 percent somewhat agreed, 52 percent were neutral, 5 percent somewhat disagreed, and 3 percent strongly disagreed (see figure 28).

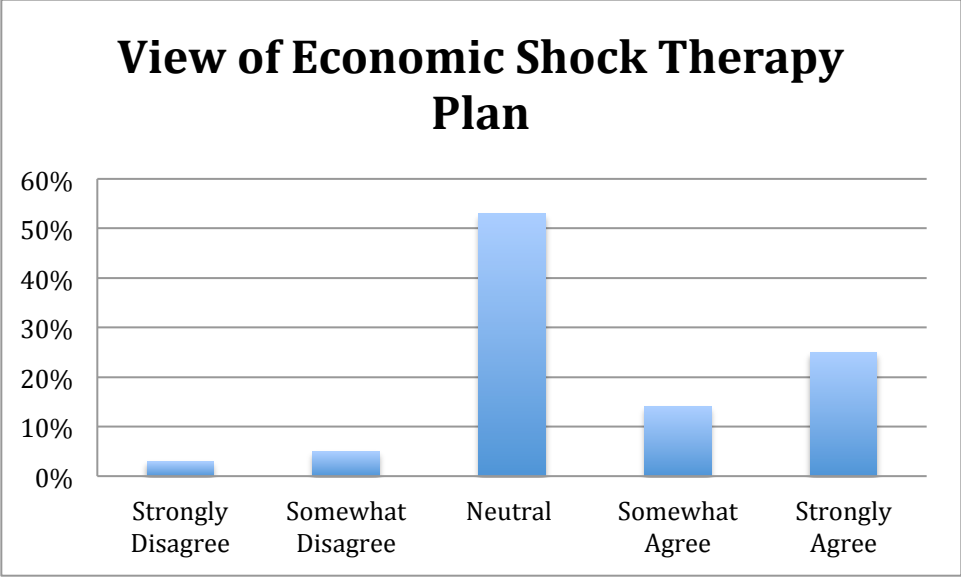


Figure 28. View of Economic Shock Therapy Plan

The large number of neutral responses, over half, could be due to the opaque nature of economics and the likelihood that the average Pole may not have heard about or studied the Balcerowicz plan in detail. This neutrality could be a reflection of indifference or lack of understanding of the plan or its objectives by the majority of the population. However, 39 percent tended to agree to some extent with the plan. One participant who identified as a male, doctorate, Christian, libertarian, age 35-44, earning more than 75,000zł a year and residing in Poland stated, “While details are certainly debatable, the communist system simply went bankrupt. Shock was not an effect of remedies but a result of economic catastrophe caused by communism. As one participant stated, regarding so-called shock therapy: ‘You shouldn't walk through shit slowly, you have to take a leap’.”¹⁵ This participant’s statement frames shock therapy and the Balcerowicz plan as a result of communism.

The following question (Q34) dealt with the *Państwowe Gospodarstwo Rolne* (PGR-y) or “collectivized farms” and if they were discontinued in a satisfactory manner to which 8 percent strongly agreed that they were, 14 percent somewhat agreed, 31 percent were neutral, 27 percent somewhat disagreed, and 20 percent strongly disagreed (see figure 29).

¹⁵ All responses are anonymous. Q33 English survey, #3, March 3, 2013. 2:56 PM.

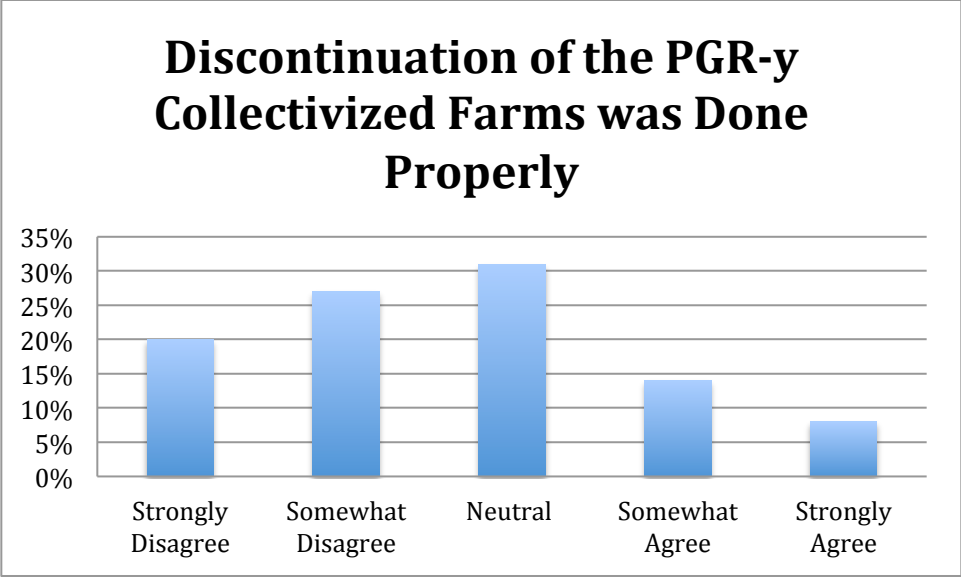


Figure 29. Discontinuation of the PGR-y Collectivized Farms was Done Properly

This shows that just under half (47 percent) of participants feel that the farms were terminated in an unsatisfactory manner. While those who disagreed with the PGR-y farms may have been glad that they were disbanded, more participants than not would have liked to see the situation handled in a better way. As can be seen from Q31, rural people and farmers were listed commonly as being negatively affected by the switch to capitalism. On the topic of labor unions playing a positive in Poland today (Q35), 4 percent strongly agreed, 23 percent somewhat agreed, 30 percent were neutral, 27 percent somewhat disagreed, and 17 percent strongly disagreed (see figure 30).

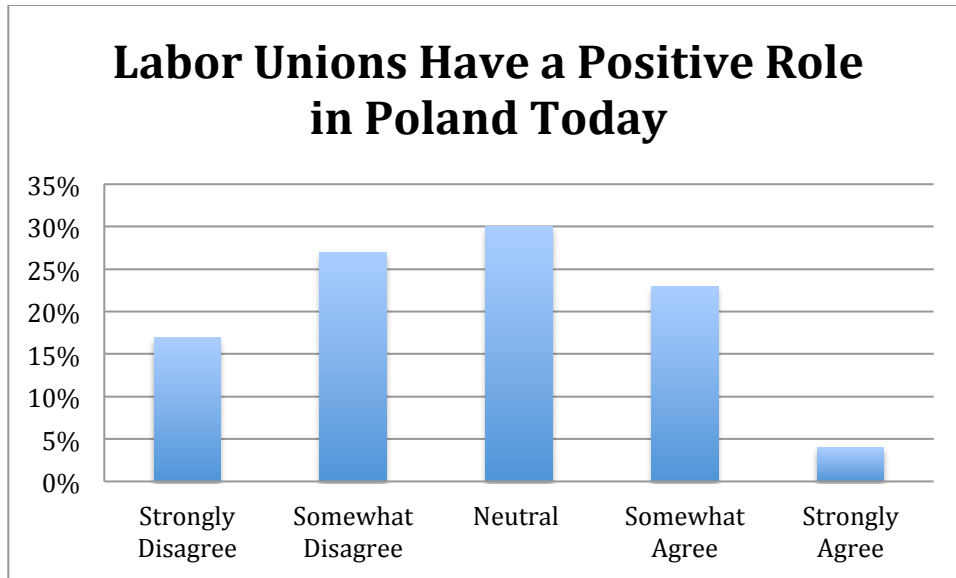


Figure 30. Labor Unions Have a Positive Role in Poland Today

This reveals that 44 percent of participants have some degree of negative feelings towards current labor unions in Poland. To question Q36 which asked participants for additional comments on the topic of the Solidarity movement and economics, one female, Doctorate, age 25-34, catholic, who identifies as a liberal, earning between \$50,000 and \$100,000 who is living in the United States responded, “I feel like any capitalist nation, it will take time for Polish people to grow into taking care of themselves again. At the same time, keeping the unity that made Polish people overcome communism is more difficult to keep in a setting of "looking out for number one." I just hope that they will be able to achieve a happy medium, and only then will this have been a success”.¹⁶ This statement relays this participants desire to see a hybrid system of capitalism and socialism enacted in Poland.

The first question (Q37) in the section on the topic of Politics deals with the politicization of Solidarity in Poland today to which 38 percent strongly agreed that it

¹⁶ All responses are anonymous. Q36 English survey, #4, March 1, 2013. 7:15 PM.

was politicized, 36 percent responded somewhat agree, 21 percent neutral, 4 percent somewhat disagree, and 3 percent strongly disagree (see figure 31).

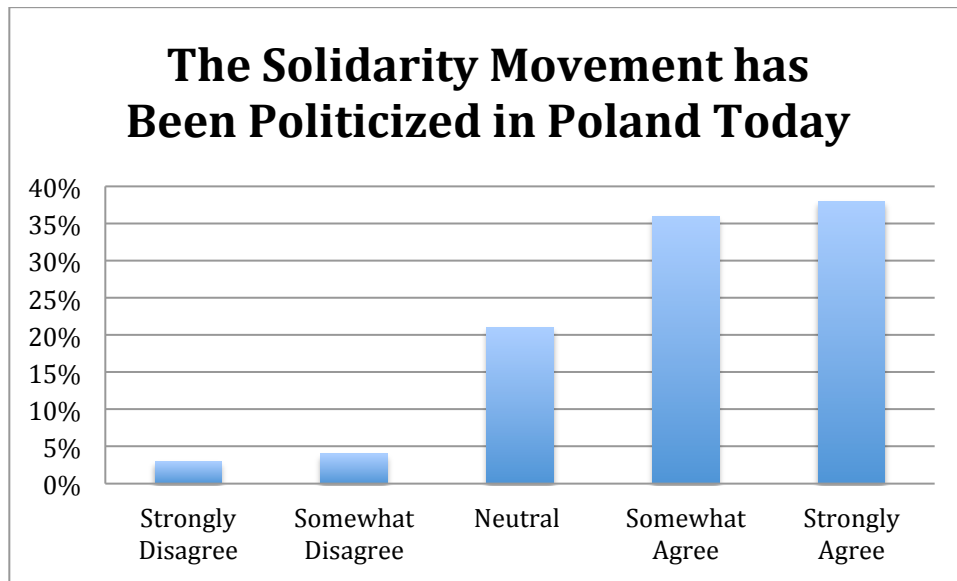


Figure 31. The Solidarity Movement has Been Politicized in Poland Today

These statistics reports that 74 percent of participants feel that the Solidarity movement has been politicized to some extent in Poland today. When asked (Q40) how they felt about the influence of the USSR in Poland from 1980-1990, 80 percent reported very negative, 11 percent somewhat negative, 6 percent neutral, 1 percent somewhat positive, and 0 percent very positive (see figure 32).

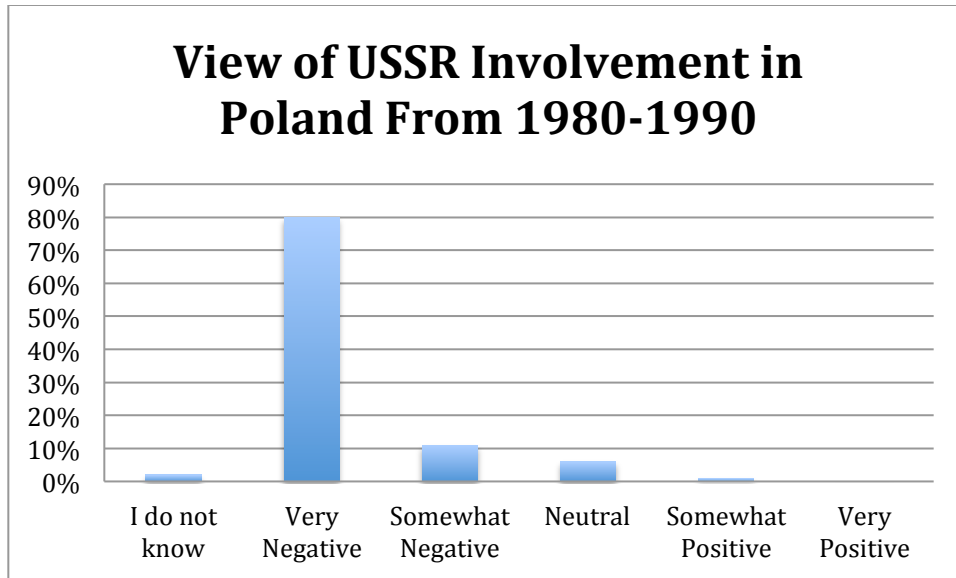


Figure 32. View of USSR Involvement in Poland From 1980-1990

This is a showing of near total agreement with 91 percent of participant's believing that the USSR was to some extent a negative influence on Poland from 1980-1990.

The next set of questions was about the Catholic Church. When asked (Q42) what they felt current views of the leadership of the Catholic Church in Poland are on the Solidarity movement 13 percent answered very positive, 35 percent stated somewhat positive, 27 percent were neutral, 7 percent stated somewhat negative, 1 percent stated very negative, and 17 percent stated that they did not know (see figure 33).

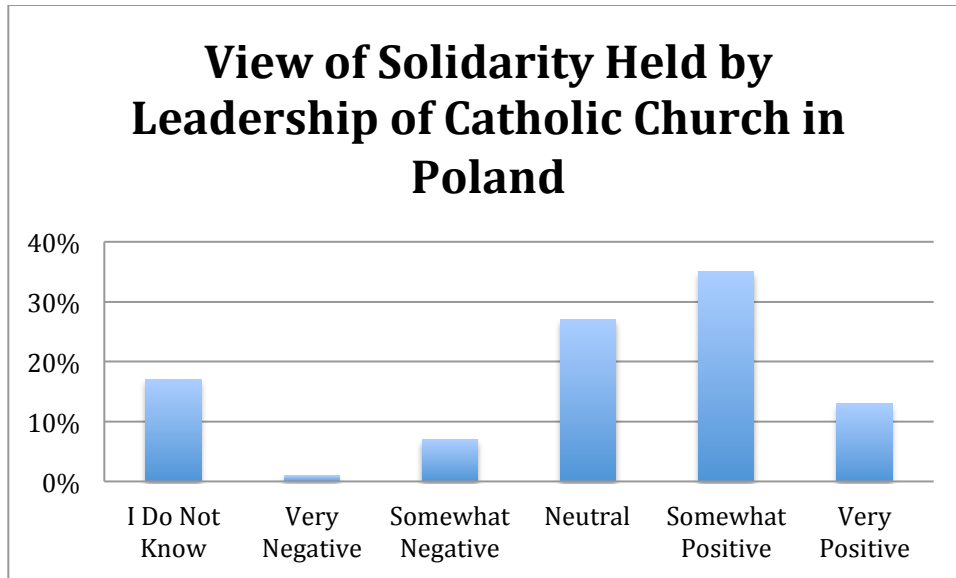


Figure 33. View of Solidarity Held by Leadership of Catholic Church in Poland

This shows that close to half of participants (48 percent) feel that the leadership of the Polish Catholic Church holds some degree of positive view on the Solidarity movement.

To the question (Q43) asking participants to list any religious groups or congregations that have negative views of the Solidarity movement, a male, age 55-64, conservative, non-religious, living in the United States who holds a masters degree and was not personally involved in the Solidarity movement offered the following explanation:

During the Soviet Union oppression of Poland and the development of Solidarity, the Polish Catholic Church was the only institution providing a kind of asylum for most citizens. Everyone, except the politicians and the police regime, had a common enemy – USSR. People in vast numbers felt united by the church, found protection and hope within its walls. Once Poland became an independent country from Soviet control. The role of the church became less vital. Thus, some religious groups or congregations may indirectly blame Solidarity for its troubles, e.g. smaller turnout at Sunday mass.¹⁷

This statements relays the sentiments of some Catholics who look back fondly to the unity, power, and purpose that the Polish Catholic Church commanded during the

¹⁷ All responses are anonymous. Q43 English survey, #7, March 3, 2013. 3:37 PM.

Solidarity movement and the opposition of the PZPR, USSR, and communism.

According to this participant, once the opponents that Solidarity opposed began to subside, rallying through the Catholic Church became less necessary. Another participant, male, age 45-54, conservative, catholic, living in the United States, holding a masters degree, who was not involved in the Solidarity movement, mentioned Radio Marya and the *redemptionists* as a group that had negative views of the Solidarity movement.¹⁸ The following question (Q44) asked participants to name certain groups or congregations that have positive views of the Solidarity movement to which most answered that the majority of those involved with the Polish Catholic Church do. These two questions (Q43 & Q44) help to highlight the fact that different religious groups in Poland today hold varying views of the Solidarity movement.

To the statement (Q45) “According to some interpretations, Catholic teaching calls for solidarity with the poor. This is being addressed in Poland today” 6 percent of participants strongly agreed, 26 percent somewhat agreed, 20 percent were neutral, 20 percent somewhat disagreed, and 20 percent strongly disagreed (see figure 34).

¹⁸ All responses are anonymous. Q43 English survey, #13, March 1, 2013. 9:50 PM.

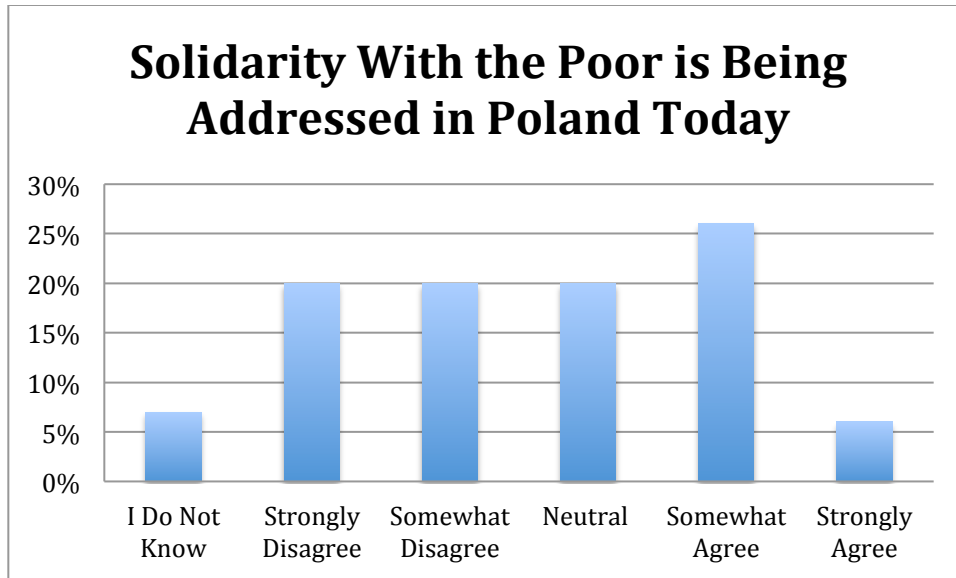


Figure 34. Solidarity With the Poor in Being Addressed in Poland Today

Of those who chose to agree or disagree 40 percent were on the disagree spectrum and 36 percent were on the agree spectrum which proves to be a fairly even spread. According to a study cited by Beyer, “the latest research shows and increase in recent years in the number of Catholics who think that bishops and clergy should take a public stance regarding unemployment (72.6 percent) and social inequalities (70 percent).”¹⁹ The question Q46 asked whether the Catholic Church should be involved with the economy of Poland, to which 4 percent of participants strongly agreed, 13 percent somewhat agreed, 6 percent were neutral, 22 percent somewhat disagreed, and 55 percent strongly disagreed (see figure 35).

¹⁹ Beyer, *Recovering Solidarity*, 183.

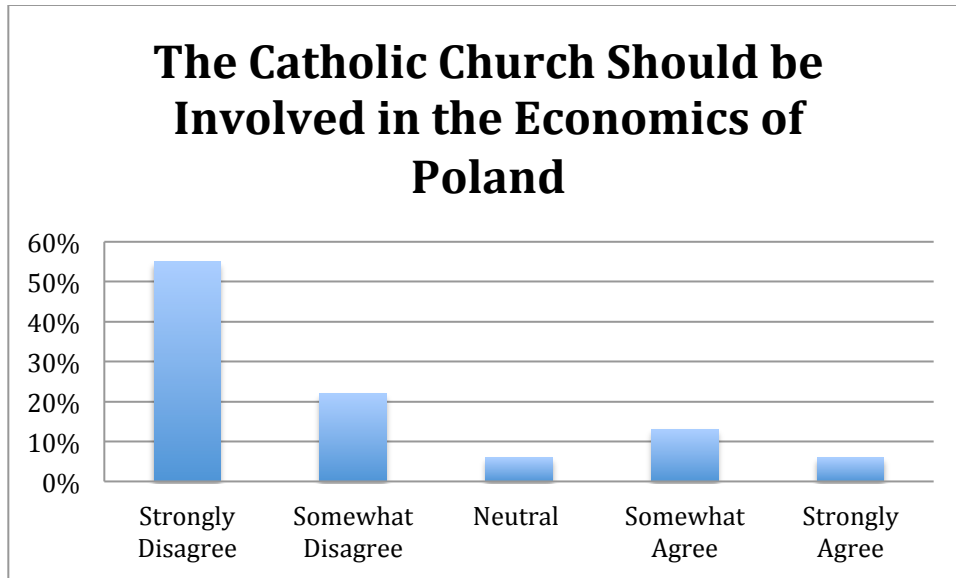


Figure 35. The Catholic Church Should be Involved in the Economics of Poland

This question shows that 77 percent of participants feel to some degree that the Catholic Church should not be involved with the economics of Poland.

When asked (Q47) if the Polish Catholic Church should be involved with the politics of Poland 6 percent of participants strongly agreed, 10 percent somewhat agreed, 5 percent were neutral, 10 percent somewhat disagreed, and 68 percent strongly disagreed (see figure 36).

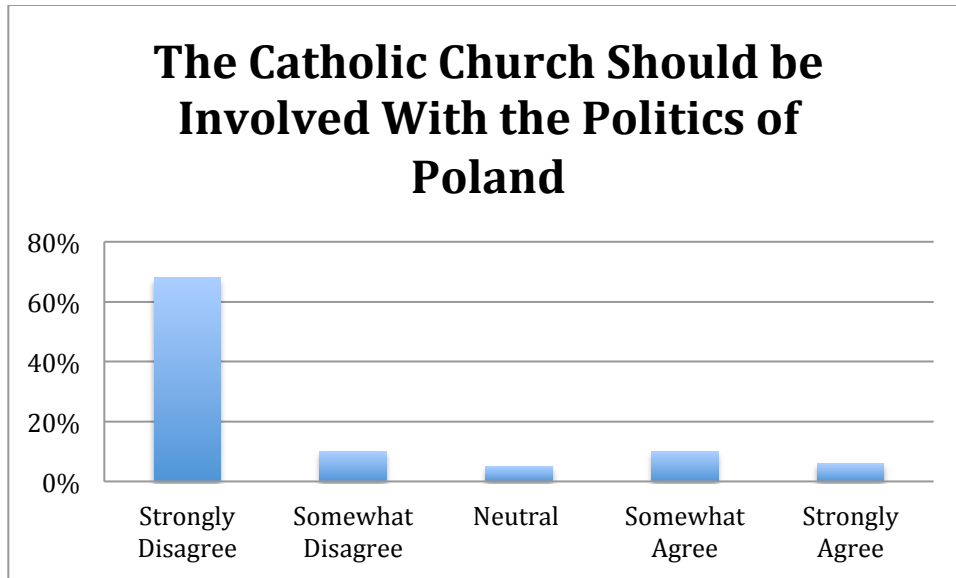


Figure 36. The Catholic Church Should be Involved With the Politics of Poland

This reveals that 78 percent of participants believe that the Polish Catholic Church should not have a role in Polish politics. The previous statistic is backed up by a study cited by Beyer that reported, “The majority (of Poles) still argue that the Church should not become ‘entangled in politics.’ Furthermore, a majority of Catholics (57.3 percent) believe that the Church should not comment on government policies.”²⁰ Beyer argues that if the Catholic Church is to effectively advocate for the poor than the church must be involved with the politics of Poland and that “the church is called to be the critical conscious of society”.²¹ While Poles who are actively involved with the Catholic Church may be more comfortable with the churches involvement in the politics of Poland, other Poles may disagree. Poles who are on the fringes of the Catholic Church, or who have left the faith, or who belong to other religious traditions are likely to hold a negative view the role of the Catholic Church in the Politics of Poland.

²⁰ Beyer, *Recovering Solidarity*, 183.

²¹ Ibid.

Question Q48 asked participants if “The Solidarity movement could not have succeeded without the help of the Polish Catholic Church?” to which 50 percent of participants strongly agreed, 35 percent somewhat agreed, 7 percent were neutral, 6 percent somewhat disagreed and 1 percent strongly disagreed (see figure 37).

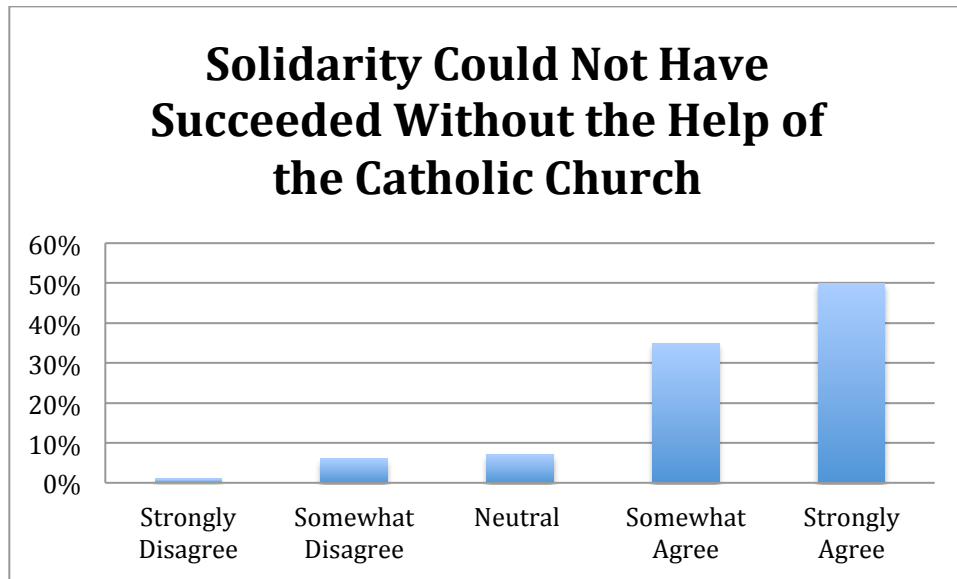


Figure 37. Solidarity Could Not Have Succeeded Without the Help of the Catholic Church

This question displays that 85 percent of participants believe that the Polish Catholic Church was important to varying degrees to the success of the Solidarity movement. The last question (Q49) in the religion section asked for any additional comments from participants on the topic of Solidarity and religion, to which a female, 55 to 64, high school graduate, non-political, catholic, living in the United States who was involved with the Solidarity movement stated, “The church should stay in the opposition to the ruling party and defend the rights of the poor and the workers. Learn how to live with dignity and fairness according to the bible.”²² Another participant who identified as a

²² All responses are anonymous. Q49 Polish survey, #1, March 18, 2013. 1:56 PM.

female, age 35 to 44, conservative, catholic, licentiate²³, living in the United States who was not directly involved with the Solidarity movement simply stated, “Religion and Politics should be separate”.²⁴ In opposition to this statement are the words of a male, age 45 to 54, conservative, catholic, holding a masters degree, living in Poland who was involved in directly involved in the Solidarity movement,

Excluding the church and Catholics [Catholic Church] from political life of the country is the goal of post communist propaganda government (current government wants to exclude catholic church from governing the country). In the past the most important people in intellectual environment of the countryside was the priest, the teacher and the physician (past Polish intelligentsia). It is strange to that we deprive our priests to talk about the political or economic issues; surely they are our full citizens. In the past, local government the priests could govern and now they are not allowed to. Now the current government eliminates the Catholics from the positions, excluding them from governing jobs under the slogan of ‘freedom and equality’. Excluding the priests from the influential groups, groups influencing politics and current government of Poland.²⁵

This participant bemoans the separation of church and state and looks back fondly to a time in Polish history when the priest was at the center of intellectual and social life in Poland.

And lastly the survey covered questions on the topic of education. Question Q50 asks “Do you feel that the current curriculum that is being taught in schools on the topic of the Solidarity movement is fair and accurate?” to which 37 percent of participants responded I do not know, 0 percent responded strongly agree, 9 percent responded somewhat agree, 34 percent responded neutral, 11 percent responded somewhat disagree, and 10 percent responded strongly disagree (see figure 38).

²³ A licentiate in Poland is the equivalent to a Bachelors degree in the United States or England.

²⁴ All responses are anonymous. Q49 Polish survey, #10, March 8, 2013. 8:52 AM.

²⁵ All responses are anonymous. Q49 Polish survey, #12, March 4, 2013. 2:30 PM.

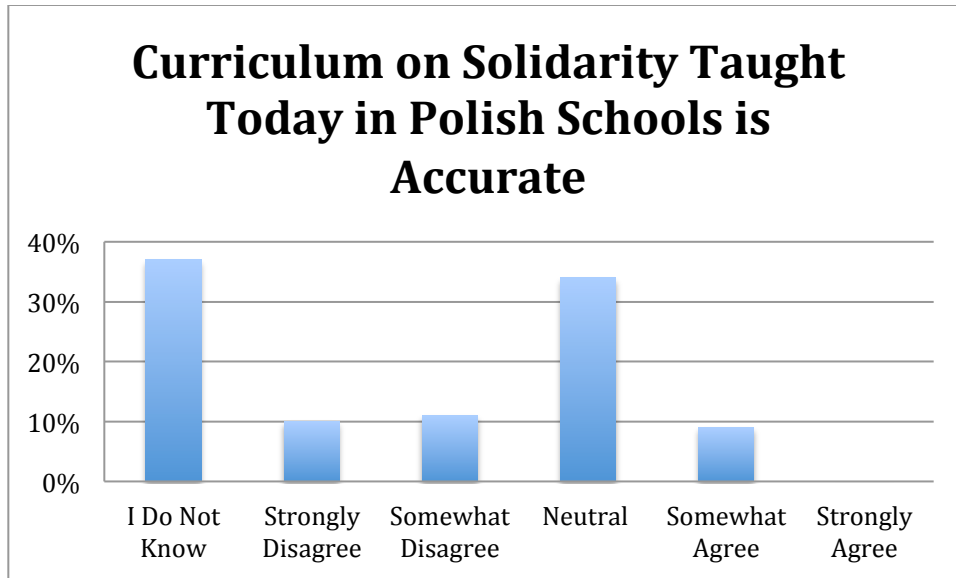


Figure 38. Curriculum on Solidarity Taught Today in Polish Schools is Accurate

The majority of participants may be familiar with current school curriculum as reflected by a large amount of neutral and “I do not know” answers. For this reason more specialized research in this area would be needed for a more definitive answer.

To the question (Q51) “While both workers and intellectuals participated in the Solidarity movement it was primarily:” 24 percent of participants responded a workers movement, 8 percent responded an intellectual movement, 66 responded both, and 2 percent responded that they did not know (see figure 39).

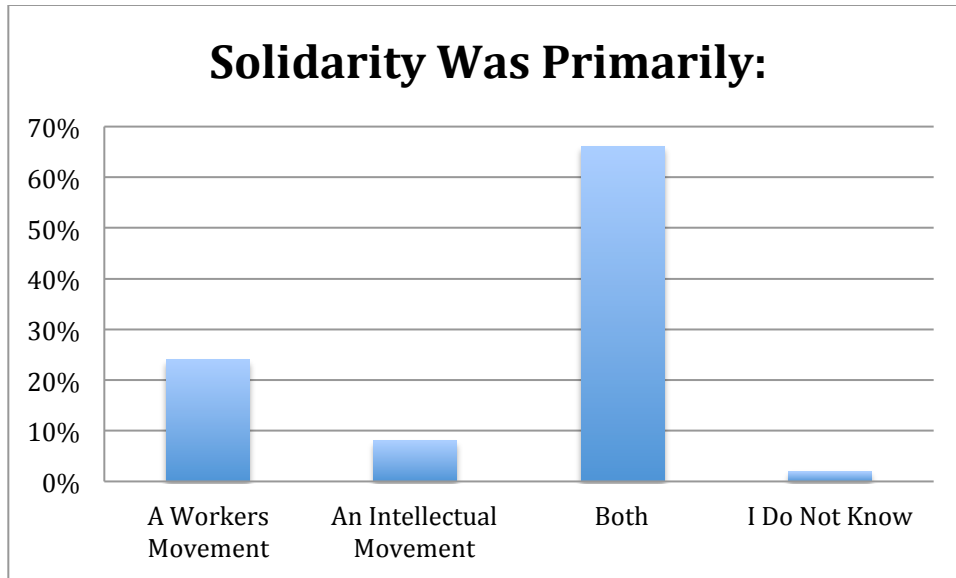


Figure 39. Solidarity Was Primarily

The answers to this question show the reluctance of participants to award the accomplishments of Solidarity to either the workers or the intellectuals. It is safe to say that most participants believe that the movement could not have succeeded without the cooperation of both groups. The last question (Q52) in the grouping on education asked for additional comments on education and the Solidarity movement to which one female, age 18-24, non-political, Christian, Licentiate, living in Poland answered, “not enough time in students history classes is devoted to this topic.”²⁶ Another participant female, age 18-24, liberal, Christian, Licentiate, who is living in Poland stated “very little is said about Solidarity in school, teachers do not explore the subject – students learn dry facts, no details”.²⁷

One woman, age 55 to 64 conservative, catholic, holding a masters degree, residing in Canada, who was not directly involved with the Solidarity movement stated on the topic of Solidarity and education,

²⁶ All responses are anonymous. Q52 Polish survey, #3, March 18, 2013. 10:54 AM.

²⁷ All responses are anonymous. Q52 Polish survey, #6, March 4, 2013. 7:36 PM.

The Solidarity movement fought for the correction of facts concerning Polish history and to a very large extent contributed to the disclosure of traitors from the Socialist period. Since the movement started by underground actions, people with different professions and skills were required. The main achievement of the Solidarity movement in education is the transformation of the consciousness of citizens, especially the younger generation, who for many years were adjusted by systemic brain washing.²⁸

She credits Solidarity for bringing about a restructuring of academics in Poland by navigating away from the biased curriculum of the socialist era.

The next question (Q53) asked participants if there were groups or individuals who attempt to overstate or exaggerate aspects of the Solidarity movement, followed by the question (Q54) “Are there any groups or individuals who try to understate or minimize aspects of the Solidarity movement?” One participant, a male, age 45 to 54, conservative, catholic, living in Poland, holding a masters degree, and who participated in the Solidarity movement stated, “No. It is impossible to exaggerate something that caused the collapse of communism, the most brutal, destructive and murderous political system.”²⁹ Another participant, a female, age 35 to 44, conservative, catholic, doctorate, living in the United States, who was indirectly involved with Solidarity through her father stated in reference to people who exaggerate the movement, “Certainly there are, for example, certain members want to take advantage of the legacy of Solidarity movement for the advancement of political careers.”³⁰ As we can see, depending on the individual the relevance of the Solidarity movement can vary.

The final question (Q55) asked participants for any thing they would like to highlight share or clarify about the Solidarity movement to which one male, age 55 to 64, liberal, non-religious, doctorate, living in Canada, who was personally involved in the

²⁸ All responses are anonymous. Q52 Polish survey, #4, March 18, 2013. 10:54 AM.

²⁹ All responses are anonymous. Q53 Polish survey, #17, March 4, 2013. 2:39 PM.

³⁰ All responses are anonymous. Q53 Polish survey, #21, March 4, 2013. 6:23 AM.

solidarity movement stated, “Solidarity movement was the spark that would set off the chain of events that eventually dismantled the Soviet Bloc. The pope played a vital role in this process. And let's not forget Gorbachev. He was the one who pragmatically allowed the events to proceed rather than counteract them with force. Make no mistake - they could still inflict a lot of harm, and Reagan would do nothing to stop them.”³¹

In the words of another participant male, age 25-34, liberal, catholic, doctorate, living in Poland who was not directly involved with the Solidarity movement, “Many groups overstate Solidarity as if it was a big master plan for Poland. The truth is that its main advantage was negative - it was an anti-government movement that helped to bring down a socialist order. Paradoxically of course, because economic program of Solidarity was in some parts even more socialist than the program of a Communist Party.”³²

According to a woman, age 55 to 64, apolitical, catholic, high school graduate, living in Germany who was directly involved with the Solidarity movement “Thanks to the Polish Solidarity not only Poland became a free country, but all of Europe was freed from the domination of Russia, and Germany could reunite again.”³³

³¹ All responses are anonymous. Q55 English survey, #1, March 18, 2013. 1:22 PM.

³² All responses are anonymous. Q55 English survey, #7, March 2, 2013. 12:39 PM.

³³ All responses are anonymous. Q55 Polish survey, #15, March 2, 2013. 9:44 AM.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Because the Solidarity movement brought together many Poles of differing classes, ideologies, educational levels, and political backgrounds, the narrative of Solidarity is remembered and created in many different ways by Poles today. These narratives likely support any political and ideological views that an individual may hold, and may assist in present-day ideological battles. In the words of Ash, “Solidarity survived as a set of memories, symbols, values, an ethos and a tradition, although there were, as there had always been, major differences in the interpretation of that ethos and tradition.”¹ According to Jan Kubik in *The Power of Symbols Against the Symbols of Power* the movement was apolitical in its beginning years and therefore transcended traditional dividing lines,

Conceptualizing Solidarity as an ascending cultural-political class that came into existence as a polarizing countercultural discourse *before* it became a powerful political force helps one to understand the impossibility of its long-term unity. Solidarity became such a formidable opponent of Communism because it managed to mobilize millions of people through a set of ‘apolitical’ symbols and discourses. They were apolitical in the sense that they were neither ‘left’ or ‘right’; neither authoritarian nor democratic. But they allowed the huge masses of people to win back their self-respect and dignity.²

By providing an idealistic set of goals that appealed to many Poles, the Solidarity movement was able to gain massive support. Through the use of symbols, some of which include the cross, the Virgin Mary, the pope, flowers, slogans, and monuments, for

¹ Ash, *The Polish Revolution*, 372.

² Jan Kubik, *The Power of Symbols against the Symbols of Power: The Rise of Solidarity and the fall of State Socialism in Poland* (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994), 268.

instance those dedicated to the 1956 Poznan workers and another to the 1970 Gdańsk workers, Solidarity was able to unite and mobilize.³

When thinking about the movement, Poles may focus on different aspects of Solidarity, as reflected by Q14. Some phenomena that may come to mind are the political changes that were made, while others may think of independence from the USSR. Some Poles may primarily see the movement as a class battle of workers against the government, and yet others may see the movement as bringing economic change to Poland. While there were many facets to Solidarity, and the movement represented multiple ideals to different members, in the end the movement was successful by including and incorporating the hopes and dreams of a diverse group of individuals and creating unity.

Although the movement provided the Polish people with a great moment of transcendence this moment did not last and once the PZPR was overcome and communist system banished Solidarity began to waiver. Kubik states, “The Solidarity class/movement, united by a common cultural-political vision briefly developed through the late 1970s, was remarkably monolithic for only a brief moment-in the late summer and fall of 1980. The cracks in this monolith had already appeared by early 1981. By 1992 it had disappeared almost without a trace.”⁴ Beyer contends that while Solidarity was extremely inspiring and idealistic, “Today the vast majority of Poles believe that Solidarity no longer serves the good of the country as a whole. When the current president, Lech Kaczyński, refers to Poland as a ‘solidarity state’ his words are devoid of any real significance. Few people expect the government to translate them into policies

³ Kubik, *The Power of Symbols*, 267-268.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 269.

that promote the values of Solidarity's original goals and ethos."⁵ While the energy and actuality may not exist in Poland today, the lessons and ethos of Solidarity survive in the Polish people.

The Solidarity movement provided many lessons, but it also created concrete changes in the Nation of Poland. I have pointed out previously in this paper that the transition from communism to capitalism was not equally beneficial to all Poles. In a poll cited by Beyer, "A quarter century later, only 24 percent maintained that their lives had changed for the better as a result of Solidarity's historic victory, while 31 percent said that their lives became worse, and 42 percent saw no change whatsoever."⁶ Yet another poll, issued in the early 2000s cited by Kowalik asked Poles the question "when was life easier - in communist Poland or today?" to which "more than 50 percent of the respondents preferred the old system and only 11.5 percent the existing one."⁷ While many Poles may have a positive view of the Solidarity movement, the effects and changes it brought to the country are still being debated today. The shift in economic systems has created prosperity for some while bringing others poverty.

Members of the Solidarity movement live on and continue to influence life in Poland today. For example, Lech Wałęsa appears in the news from time to time and recently made headlines with a statement about gay Polish Politicians in parliament. Wałęsa stated his thought that gays, as a minority, should sit in the back of the parliament chamber and perhaps even "behind a wall". According to a CNN article titled "Lech Walesa: No Apology for Anti-Gay Comments" by Matthew Day, Wałęsa stated in an interview that he would not apologize for his comments and that "all I said (was) that

⁵ Beyer, *Recovering Solidarity*, 29.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁷ Kowalik, *From Solidarity to Sellout*, 25.

minorities, which I respect, should not have the right to impose their views on the majority. I think most of Poland is behind me.”⁸ One participant mentioned this in a comment, “Walesa’s comment about the gay among politics” as a negative about the leader turned politician. As we can see the reputation of Lech Wałęsa is still changing, as he remains a controversial figure today.

In the view of Beyer, “Solidarity also clearly pursued the rights of political participation and freedom of expression, which do not belong to the traditional catalogue of economic, social, and cultural rights. Thus, its egalitarianism pertained to economic, social, cultural, political, and civil rights. In short, Solidarity believed that ‘bread and freedom’ are the rights of all human beings.”⁹ This is universal message that resonates beyond the borders of Poland. The Polish people came together and provided an amazing example of what the unity of a group can accomplish, in a movement that was largely non-violent. In the words of Solidarity Chaplin Józef Tischner, “Solidarity, the one that is born of the pages of the Gospel, does not need an enemy or opponent to strengthen itself and grow. It turns towards all and not against anyone.”¹⁰

⁸ Matthew Day, “Lech Walesa: No Apology For Anti-gay Comments” CNN, <http://edition.cnn.com/2013/03/05/world/europe/poland-walesa-anti-gay> (accessed March 26, 2013).

⁹ Beyer, *Recovering Solidarity*, 19.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 23.

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