

## Original Paper

# The Beginning of Agoral Gatherings in Poland and Their Macro-Systemic Political and Economic Consequences: Events of Lublin July 1980

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### Abstract

*The aim of this study is a psychological-historical analysis of the sequence of events in recent Polish history, in which Lublin July 1980 played a key role as a mental bridge between the first visit-pilgrimage of Pope John Paul II to Poland 2-9 June 1979, and the strikes of “Solidarity”, which began in August 1980 and culminated in the signing of strike agreements with the authorities of the People’s Republic of Poland in Gdańsk, Szczecin and Jastrzębie Zdrój. We have shown that the behaviour of the participants of the strikes in state enterprises in the Lublin region allows for their qualification as agoral gatherings, with their moral and cultural patterns rooted in the phenomena of psychosocial meetings between Poles and Pope John Paul II. We have shown that the events in Lublin have become a field for the psychosocial exploration of democratic behaviours in striking factories—in the face of the power of the totalitarian system in the People’s Republic of Poland. In this way, Lublin July 1980 became a link for social learning based on moral, patriotic and religious values—which led to “Solidarity” strikes all over Poland. These strikes were another link in the process of realization of self-determination of the Polish people as a sovereign state. The power of agoral processes created by the “Solidarity” movement in August 1980 did not manage to stifle any repressive tactics and strategies of the authorities of the totalitarian system, including the horrors of martial law in Poland. The movement applied the principle of non-violence to overcome totalitarian violence, which collapsed like a proverbial “house of cards,” first in Poland, and then throughout Central and Eastern Europe. It led to peaceful change in the psychosocial, political and macroeconomic situation of countries such as Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, the GDR, Romania, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Russia and Albania.*

**Keywords**

*agoral gatherings, the Lublin July 1980 strikes, John Paul II's first pilgrimage to Poland in 1979, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Pyramid in the events of Lublin July 1980, non-violent intentions of the participants of Lublin strikes, peaceful collapse of the totalitarian communist system*

**1. Introduction**

The aim of this study is a psychological-historical analysis of the sequence of events in recent Polish history in which Lublin July 1980 played a key role as a mental bridge between the First Visit-Pilgrimage of Pope John Paul II to Poland 2-9 June 1979 and the “Solidarity” strikes which started in August 1980 in the Baltic cities of Gdańsk and Szczecin and in Upper Silesia, and were crowned by the signing of strike agreements with the authorities of the People’s Republic of Poland in Gdańsk, Szczecin and Jastrzębie Zdrój. We indicate the psychological significance of strikes in the Lublin region for the development of events in Poland, especially in August 1980. To this end, we present the term *agoral assembly*, introduced for the analysis of the psychosocial phenomenon of mass meetings with Pope John Paul II, and then we prove that the events of Lublin July 1980 also had the character of agoral assemblies, which evaluated in the direction of the strikes of “Solidarity” in August 1980 (Biela, 1989). We will try to prove that the events of Lublin became a field of psychosocial exploration of the democratic behaviours of employees in their plants where they were employed—in the face of the power of the totalitarian system in the Polish People’s Republic in the Lublin region.

**2. The Concept of Agoral Gathering**

The *agoral gathering* was proposed as an ideal concept type explaining the psychosocial phenomena accompanying the mass peaceful assemblies that took place during papal visits, followed by “Solidarity” strikes and similar events that took place in the 1980s and 1990s in such European countries belonging to the bloc of the so-called socialist states as: Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, the GDR, Romania, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Russia and Albania (Note 2). As Biela pointed out (2007, 2012, 2013), agora gatherings differ significantly from other phenomena known in social literature in the field of collective behaviour described by such terms as *crowd*, *mass*, *public behaviour*. The term *agoral gathering* is derived from the word *agora*, meaning a voluntary, mass, public gathering, inspired by some higher moral or social values, e.g., human dignity, truth, freedom, justice. Biela (2013) points to seven conceptually expressed constitutive features for agoral gatherings: (1) the participants’ orientation towards higher values; (2) intentions of non-violence on the part of the participants themselves; (3) voluntary participation; (4) openness of the gathering; (5) mass scale of participation; (6) the participants’ experience of unity while being aware of the social importance of the gathering and the elimination of collective fears; (7) positive consequences of the gathering both on an individual and social scale.

The literature on the subject mentions, among others, the following examples of agoral gatherings: the

foreign visits of Pope John Paul II (Biela i Tobacyk, 1987), non-violent marches of Mahatma Ghandi, peaceful marches of Martin Luther King, marches in defense of life, peaceful strikes of Solidarity (Biela, 2012), and more recently the people demand for social justice in Israel that are interpreted as an agoral gathering (Zysberg, 2018) or the peaceful street demonstrations of August and September 2020 in Minsk and other Belarusian cities.

### 3. The Experience of Anagoral Gathering Community and Liberation from Fear

Participation in agoral gatherings abounds in experiences, not just personal experiences, but also those of great social importance imbued with universal human, patriotic and national values, experienced as participation in changing the course of recent history. Finding themselves in a situation of unprecedented mass scale, participants discovered its unique importance by becoming aware of the moral ideals of life, expectations and universal values that motivated so many people to come together. This allowed the participants to free themselves from fear and feel safe, to discover community and the unity of their desires. This was expressed, among others, in the statement: “I see here how many people think as I do.” It was a kind of collective *catharsis*.

Many of the participants coming to the assembly did not yet have clear articulations of their motives for participation. They only had an intuitive conviction of their values and ideals as their main motives. The agoral gathering created conditions where their intuitive feelings became clearer, more obvious, more authentic and more stable. The process leading to the articulation of social and moral ideals during an assembly is defined as an *agoral clarification and verification of the value system*. This could be recognized by the spontaneous reactions of the participants of the gathering at significant moments when they heard the semantic articulation of their expected values (e.g., the words “freedom,” “truth”—mentioned by John Paul II during his first visit to Poland in 1979).

### 4. Positive Consequences of Agoral Gatherings

The positive experiences of the participants of the agoral assembly not only had very valuable consequences for the individuals participating in this meeting, but were closely related to positive changes on a social scale. On the basis of psychological analysis of agoral experiences, the following features of the agoral processes themselves can be listed (Biela, 2012):

- 1) the harmonious unity of emotional-motivational and cognitive processes during agora gatherings;
- 2) the communal nature of the agoral experience reaching a social depth, rooted in universal human needs;
- 3) the cumulative strength of collective processes and behaviours indicating the direction of positive changes and commonly accepted social aspirations;
- 4) deep roots of the agoral experiences and experiences in the individual and collective memory of the participants of these gatherings;
- 5) strong radiation of agoral processes to people who were not participants of the gathering.

A significant effect of post-agoral processes is the extension of the range of experiences to people who, for various reasons, did not participate in an agoral gathering but are within the psychological range of its impact. This creates a plane that accelerates the pace and scale of social integration. As an example we can give the scope and pace of post-agoral processes after the first visit of John Paul II to Poland, which took place from June 2 to 10, 1979. During the days of these agoral gatherings, which were attended directly by about 50% of the Polish population, the participants became aware of the unity of their thoughts, feelings and beliefs on a national scale. The mass meeting with the Pope and the general interest in his visit caused an increase in Poles' sense of internal freedom, sense of security and social integration between people from different professions, as well as an increase in the need for authentic thinking and acting. This undoubtedly contributed to the process of deepening the social and professional solidarity of Polish workers, farmers and intelligentsia. This process resulted in the creation of the "Solidarity" movement in July and August 1980. Thanks to this movement, a bloodless revolution took place, as a wave of agoral gatherings first changed the political face of Poland and then spread to other countries of the so-called Soviet bloc, leading to the collapse of the totalitarian system in a peaceful manner in Hungary and Bulgaria (Parchewa, 1992; Dimitrova, 1996). Examples of the impact of this wave of agoral gatherings were also the events of the "Velvet Revolution" in the Czech Republic and Slovakia (Hislope, 2004; Ferjenčík, 2013; Naništová, 2013). Another example of agoral behaviour was the peaceful dismantling of the Berlin Wall, which led to the unification of two German states. Similar agoral phenomena resulted in the formal collapse of the USSR and the creation of independent states from the former Soviet Union republics. These are further examples of post-agoral phenomena and the positive social consequences associated with them, like in the Baltic republics of the former USSR (Gaidys & Tureikyte, 1996), and in Albania (Rama, 2020).

### **5. The Wave of Agoral Gatherings that Changed the Face of Poland**

The wave of agoral gatherings which changed the totalitarian face of Poland and later the whole of Central and Eastern Europe into a free and democratic region began on June 2, 1978 during Pope John Paul's visit to Victory Square in Warsaw, where over half a million participants gathered. Agoral gatherings took place at the sites of the Pope's pilgrimage, where a specific climate of the gatherings was created in Gniezno (associated with the cradle of the Polish nation), Częstochowa (a sacred place—the religious capital of Poland), Wałdowice (the Pope's hometown), Oświęcim (a place of seriousness and remembrance—as the only place on the route of the visit, where no cheers were raised for the Pope, in respect of the murdered), Nowy Targ (where the mountain landscape created an atmosphere of apotheosis of the beauty of the land and native nature); and finally, the Cracovian agoral meetings, which culminated in the difficult to count 2–3 million agora at Krakowskie Błonia.

The process of radiation of the experiences of the participants of these agoral gatherings led to the spread of the personal and territorial range of the effects of the agoral phenomena, which had several psychosocial effects:

- 1) extraordinary acceleration of the process of social integration on the scale of the whole of Poland involving people of different professions, social status, education levels and ages;
- 2) breaking down the barrier of fear in the individual and social dimension on which the foundations of the totalitarian system were based;
- 3) the social conviction on a more and more massive scale that since Poles can gather together to articulate their common expectations and values, they will probably be able to achieve these expectations and values if they wish.

## **6. The Events of Lublin July 1980 as the Case of Agoral Gatherings**

The first strikes which started in Lublin July 1980 began in the State Aviation Company in Świdnik at the Faculty of Mechanical Processing on 8 July 1980, exactly 13 months after the departure of Pope John Paul II from Poland after the end of his first visit-pilgrimage, which mentally changed Polish society.

### *6.1 A Series of Strikes from 8–25 July 1980*

The direct cause of this strike was the increase in food prices, the inability to satisfy basic biological and physiological needs, i.e., those needs at the very basis of Maslow's hierarchy of needs pyramid (1987) including food, water, warmth and rest. Workers were dissatisfied with their safety level at work, and safety also belongs to the basic needs in Maslow's pyramid. In addition, workers complained about the working conditions in their factory, pointing to the existence of privileged groups of citizens (Note 3). The strike demands also included the elimination of privileges for these groups. Their strike lasted until July 11, when a "stationary committee" (Note 4) of employee crews signed an agreement with the director of the plant, as a representative of the state authority authorized to do so. This was probably the first written agreement concluded between the Communist authorities and the strikers (Note 5). It was also the first time in the history of the People's Republic of Poland that the authorities began talks with the workers and did not use force against the protesters. Under this agreement, all groups of workers received a pay rise and were paid an average salary for the period of protest. The Lublin Voivode also declared a better supply of food for the city. This was the first effective agreement between the authorities and striking workers in the Polish People's Republic. This agreement was a significant signal that there was a possibility of dialogue with the state authorities. After 81 hours of a rotary strike, WSK Świdnik employees returned to work. This strike actually initiated the Solidarity era in Poland. During the strike, strike activity spread to other factories in the Lublin region, such as the one in the city of Świdnik:

- 1) Communication Equipment Factory in Świdnik,
- 2) Polmozbyt in Lublin,
- 3) Agricultural Machinery Factory "Agromet" in Lublin,
- 4) Lubelskie Zakłady Naprawy Samochodów in Lublin,
- 5) Repair and Production Plant of Agricultural Mechanization in Lublin,

- 6) Truck Factory in Lublin,
- 7) Puławy Nitrogen Works in Puławy,
- 8) “Bogdanka” Coal Mine in Łęczna,
- 9) Ball Bearings Factory in Kraśnik,
- 10) Polish State Railways Lublin Junction,
- 11) Municipal Transport Company in Lublin.

It should be clearly emphasized that the Lublin daily press did not inform the public about the Lublin region strikes at all, despite the fact that since 9 July, Radio Free Europe had been broadcasting information about them, and the wave of strikes reached its climax on 18 July 1980. Seventy-nine factories in Lublin and Lublin Voivodship protested. During the whole strike period, i.e., until 25 July, 91 factories went on strike in Lublin alone. The protests thus became part of the experience of a large part of the city’s inhabitants. The strike of Polish State Railways in Lublin employees was particularly painful for the authorities, and the city felt the impact of the strike of Municipal Transport Company in Lublin from 18 July. An exemplary list of strike demands from plants in the Lublin region is presented in Table 1. It contains the demands formulated by railway men from the Polish State Railways Lublin Junction.

**Table 1. List of Strike Demands by Rail Way Men of the Lublin Junction (PKP)**

Strike demands in the order they were formulated	
1	increase in basic salary by 1,300 PLN per month for all employees
2	introduction of non-working Saturdays
3	equalization of family allowances with the militia and the army
4	introduce a high-cost supplement
5	improve the supply of groceries in shops to the level of Silesia
6	introduce disclosure of awards and promotions
7	elect a new trade union council representing the interests and defending working people
8	ensure that all staff organize and attend the workers’ assembly
9	persons acting on behalf of the crew must be specially protected
10	improve social and living conditions in general
11	the militia (MO) and security service officers are not allowed access to the locomotive depot
12	the crew representatives guarantee order, and discipline
13	early retirement at age 55 in traction teams
14	until the above mentioned postulates are not fulfilled, no one will take up work

The strikes in the Lublin region lasted from 8 to 25 July 1980 and included about 40-50 thousand workers from over 150 workplaces (Kaczor, 2000; Gach, 2005). Before the protests in August 1980,

they constituted the largest strike action since the events of December 1970. In fact, by 20 July, the government signed agreements with the individual striking companies promising to increase wages.

One success of the workers on strike in the Locomotive Depot of Lublin was the chance to hold democratic elections to the works council. Also due to the strikes, the celebration of 22 July anniversary of the announcement of the PKWN Manifesto did not take place in the Lublin region. After these events, the People's Republic of Poland (PRL) created a new symbol of Lublin July '80: the strike of Lublin railway men together with their legendary locomotive welded to the tracks.

Lublin July was a real expression of opposition to the deepening economic crisis. The strike demands were mainly of an economic and social nature and concerned the principles of workplace operation. The strikers demanded higher wages, improved working conditions, and better supply, but also, among other things, holding those guilty of waste and abuse accountable, reduction of bureaucracy, new elections of trade union authorities and a free press. Through these strikes, the workers won wage increases and promises to improve working conditions in their plants.

Despite the significant scale of these events of July 1980, there was not a single word about it in either the local or central press. Instead, in July 1980, the city authorities of Lublin hung posters all over the city with the words: "An appeal to the citizens of Lublin to remain prudent and calm and take up work." This kind of behavior clearly showed that the authorities were losing control over the society. The events in Lublin gave people faith in their own strength, and showed a deep alienation of society from the authorities. The degree of this alienation depended on the level of the party hierarchy of this power. Provincial and local authorities were more concerned about the situation of striking workers than the central authorities (Note 6). It was not until July 18, 1980, i.e., 10 days later, under the pressure of a radical intensification of strikes, that the central government at a meeting of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party (KC PZPR) in Warsaw decided to set up a special governmental commission headed by Deputy Prime Minister M. Jagielski to consider the demands of workplaces in the Lublin region. However, when this commission arrived in Lublin on 25 July, the strikes were actually over. Walking around Lublin at that time, one could feel an atmosphere of anxiety, but also sympathy for the strikers. In such an atomized society, new ties were formed between people (Chudy, 1981; Jadczyk, 1981, p. 66).

The protests in the Lublin region were different from the strikes of 1970 and 1976 in Poland, which had taken place on the streets. The experience of the prior years led the strikers not to take to the streets, where they could be quickly pacified, but to "hunker down" in their workplaces. This form of protest was more effective. The workers did not leave the workplace until the end of their shift, leading a rotating protest. They adopted an attitude of readiness for dialogue with the authorities: negotiation, not confrontation. Leadership teams were elected because, for the workers themselves as well as for the authorities—the word "strike" was a kind of *taboo*, these teams were called "stopover" or "worker committees" (Note 7).

## 6.2 The Strikes of Lublin July 1980 as Agoral Gatherings

In this part of the analysis, we will undertake a psychological interpretation of agoral gatherings. This interpretation will be based on the answer to the question: Do these strikes meet the particular constitutive features of the definition of an agoral gathering, which are indicated in the first part of this study in a conjunctive manner?

### 6.2.1. Guidance of Higher Values by Strikers

The first constitutive feature of an agoral gathering concerns the motivation of its participants' higher motives. How does this issue relate to the participants of the Lublin strikes in July 1980? The direct incentive to participate in the Lublin strikes was the threat to satisfying basic physiological needs in the form of a rather radical increase in food products in the factory canteen (in WSK Świdnik, the flagship incentive was the increase in retail prices at chops available to employees). Table 1 shows that as many as 4 out of 14 employee demands of the striking crew: the introduction of an increase in earnings for all, a price premium, improvement in shop supply and a general improvement in social and living conditions. An analysis of the remaining demands from this table shows, however, that there is a kind of sublimation of needs that motivate workers' participation in the July 1980 strikes. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2. Motivational Relationship between the Demands of Railway Men on Strike at the Lublin Locomotive Depot and the Needs at Individual Levels of the Maslow's Needs Pyramid**

Successive tiers of the Maslow's Needs Pyramid	Strike demands by number
1. Physiological needs: food, housing, clothing, procreation	1. Increase in basic salary by 1,300 PLN per month for all employees 4. Introduce a high-cost supplement 5. Improve the supply of groceries in shops to the level of Silesia 10. Improve social and living conditions in general
2. Security needs: protection from sickness, unemployment, and senile incapacity	8. Ensure that all employees who organize and participate in the workers' assembly are not penalized 11. The militia and secret security officers are not allowed access to the locomotive depot 13. Early retirement at age 55 in traction teams
3. The needs of belonging:	2. Introduction of all free Saturdays



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acceptance, love, friendship, camaraderie, solidarity,  
belonging to a group

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4. The need for recognition: success, respect, prestige, importance	3. Equalization of family allowances with the militia and the army
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5. The need for self-fulfillment: the need to develop oneself, one's abilities, talents, interests, spiritual and religious development, to confirm one's value	7. Elect a new trade union council representing the interests and defending working people  12. The crew representatives guarantee order and discipline  14. Until the above mentioned postulates are not fulfilled, no one will take up work
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The data from Table 2 indicate that the motivation for the participation of employees in Lublin's workplaces is actually represented by all five levels of needs. However, the saturation of motivation based on higher needs (level 5 of the Needs Pyramid) is significant, as it is articulated by as many as three very important demands—concerning self-discipline, discipline of employees at the workplace, solidarity and consistency, and having a trade union council elected from among themselves (Note 8). The motives that prompted workers to strike in Lublin in 1980 were also higher needs based on patriotic and religious values, which also manifested itself in their singing of patriotic and religious songs together in workplaces.

#### 6.2.2 Non-Violent Intentions of Participants in the Lublin Strikes

The second constitutive feature of agoral gathering is the principle of non-violence held by their participants. During the strikes in July 1980 in Lublin, participants observed this principle in solidarity and exemplary behaviour. Thus, from the very start, i.e., beginning with the strike in WSK Świdnik, they intentionally started the strike with the decision not to start their shift work without any aggression (even verbal) towards the manager of their shift and the chief executive of their workplace. They informed him of their motives when they started the strike. They were not aggressive toward the authorities of their state-owned enterprise. They calmly formulated the strike demands collectively in each striking company and handed them over with dignity to the company director.

Employees behaved in a similar way without using any aggression in striking factories throughout the Lublin region. They came to work on a rotating basis, but did not take up work on their positions—expecting the authorities to respond to their collective strike demands. In fact, by July 20, an agreement between the strike committee and the authorities of a given workplace was signed in every striking company in the Lublin region.

### 6.2.3 Voluntary and Open Participation in the Lublin July 1980 Strikes

Another constitutive feature of agoral gatherings is the voluntary participation in these meetings. In the case of the strikes of Lublin July 1980, participation in them was entirely voluntary, in the sense that each employee made an individual decision whether or not to take part in the strike at their plant. It was therefore his or her personal choice to take part in the protest of his or her plant's employees to improve the situation in that plant through dialogue with the authorities, without any behavioral aggression or violence.

The openness of agoral gatherings is exemplified by the fact that every potential participant feels invited to take part in them. In the situation of the "outbreak" of strikes in the Lublin region in July 1980, every employee of a state-owned enterprise was able to feel invited to an open community of striking employees in their workplace. It was their strike for themselves, their family, their co-workers, the whole company. This was a realization of the paradigm of unity among the workers in each of the striking state enterprises.

### 6.2.4 Mass Scale of Agoral Gatherings

The mass scale of agoral gatherings as their constitutive feature is related to their local and situational conditions. In the case of strikes in factories, the type and profile of a given enterprise should be taken into account, as well as the number of employees employed in it. In determining the scale of mass strikes, it is necessary to take into account not only the number of strikers in a given workplace, but also the very number of striking enterprises and the global number of striking employees in the analyzed region. In the case of strikes in the Lublin region lasting from 8 to 25 July 1980, in over 150 workplaces about 40–50 thousand workers were involved in the strike action. This means a serious scale of mass gatherings organized in a planned manner, which achieved their goals expressed in the strike postulates they formulated in a peaceful way.

### 6.2.5 The Participants Experience of Unity While Realizing the Social Importance of Agoral Gathering and the Elimination of Collective Fears

An important dimension of agoral gatherings is that their participants create a climate of unity while realizing the social importance of the gathering. The participants of Lublin July 1980 created a climate in which they experienced employee solidarity, which has a very strong awareness rooted in the whole region. The content of this solidarity and unity was also preserved in the collective memory of the Lublin region's inhabitants, which was not overshadowed by the June 1979 echoes of the agoral gatherings accompanying Pope John Paul II's first pilgrimage to Poland, together with his patriotic, religious and moral messages.

In July, the striking state enterprises of the Lublin region became the continuators of the great agora with the Polish Pope—who instilled in the hearts of the participants of this agora the need to experience a climate of unity in solving problems important for their work and the wider social environment. Their experience of the agora within their workplace not only freed them from collective fear, but also allowed them to formulate their demands concerning social and labour problems in a civilized way and

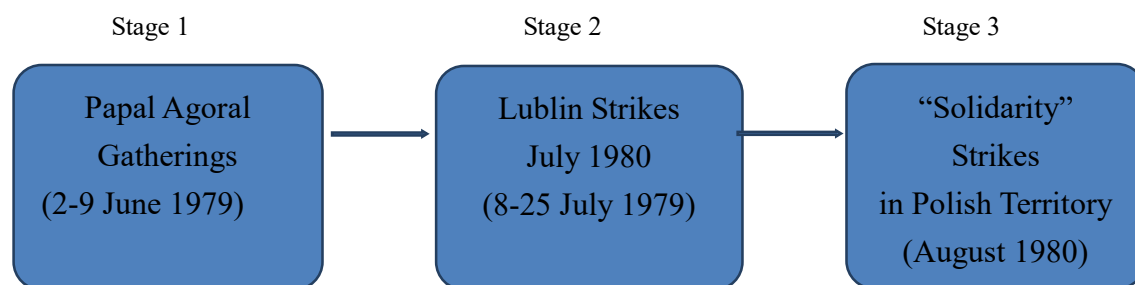
to submit them to their authorities for consideration. The important issue was that in every strike in the Lublin region it was possible to reach an agreement and sign the provisions of the social agreement concluded in this way at the level of state enterprises.

#### 6.2.6 Positive Consequences of Agoral Gatherings both on an Individual and Social Scale

The last anticipated consequence of the agoral gathering is its positive consequences both on an individual and social scale. In the case of agoral gatherings coinciding with Pope John Paul II's visit to Poland, its positive consequence was the collective *catharsis* of individual participants of these gatherings. On the social scale, however, their positive consequence was precisely the strikes of Lublin July 1980, which showed that through the solidarity of employees of state-owned enterprises, a climate of non-violence and patient but concrete dialogue, measurable benefits can be obtained, both individual and social, concerning the improvement of working conditions and its safety, organization of work activities, basic salary, family allowances, free time, consumer needs of employees and their families, trade unions—and thus measurable benefits for individual employees. It was a kind of regional manifestation of the paradigm of social and mental unity of the Lublin state-owned employees who decided to build their own democracy and solidarity at the regional level (Biela, 2020).

#### 6.2.7 Do the Strikes of Lublin July 1980 Meet all the Constitutive Features of Agoral Gatherings in a Conjunctive Manner?

Summarizing the psychological analyses of the strikes of Lublin July 1980, we can state with all certainty that these strikes, understood as gatherings of people, fulfil all seven features that constitute their definition as “agoral gathering,” without exception. From this we can conclude that they were agoral gatherings. The psychological consequence of these gatherings in Poland was the further development of civic self-determination of citizens and workers in large industrial districts in Poland in August 1980 both on the coasts of Gdansk and Szczecin, as in Upper Silesia. The movement covered the whole of Poland, integrating more than 10 million Polish citizens into the “Solidarity” strikes. The “Solidarity” strikes have also been interpreted in the psychological literature as agoral gatherings, thanks to which Poland liberated herself from Communist totalitarianism (Biela, 2013). The position of the strikes of Lublin July within the milieu of processes of Poles' self-liberation is illustrated in Figure 1.



**Figure 1. The Sequence of Agoral Gatherings which Led to Poland's Self-Liberation from the Totalitarian System**

From Figure 1 we can see that the strike events of Lublin July 1980 were agoral gatherings (Stage 2) which fulfilled the expectations that arose during the agoral gatherings with John Paul II less than a year earlier: that Poles can take their workers' matters into their own hands without fear and present them in a civilized way in a form agreed upon between them as strike demands in their workplaces. Local companies and regional authorities took their employees seriously and signed appropriate strike agreements with each of them separately. In this way they experienced employee solidarity at the level of their own company and strikes took place concerning their own company matters. They also experienced solidarity with their colleagues from all over the Lublin region for the first time, in more than 150 state-owned enterprises, where strike action took place—modelled on the climate of agoral gatherings (see Stage 1). During the agoral labour strikes in the Lublin region in July 1980, prototypes of labour solidarity were created based on regional ties.

Patterns of agoral-solidarity behaviour acquired in this way in the days of Lublin July became one of the important factors determining the behaviour of strike crews in September 1980 on the Gdansk Coast, the Szczecin Coast and Upper Silesia, and then encompassing state enterprises throughout Poland in the civic social movement of “Solidarity.” This really fulfilled the paradigm of unity at a mental, social, political and economic level—in a nonviolent, solidaristic and democratic way (Biela, 2020).

## 6. Final Conclusions

Our psychological analyses of the behaviour of the participants of these gatherings, strikes in state enterprises in the Lublin region involving employees of workplaces from three Polish provinces, has allowed us to qualify them as agoral gatherings (Biela, 2013). Their moral and cultural characteristics developed during the phenomena of meetings of Poles with Pope John Paul II during his first pilgrimage to his homeland. In this way, Lublin July 1980 became a link in social learning based on moral, patriotic and religious values—which led to “Solidarity” strikes all over Poland. These strikes were the third link in the process of realization of self-determination of the Polish people as a sovereign state. The powers of the agoral processes created by the “Solidarity” movement in August 1980 did not manage to stifle any of the repressive tactics or strategies of the authorities of the totalitarian system, not excluding the horrors of martial law. This movement, applying the principle of non-violence, led to the defeat of totalitarian power, which collapsed like a proverbial “house of cards,” first in Poland and then throughout Central and Eastern Europe. This is the strength of agora gatherings. It is a pity that at the same time in the countries of the former Yugoslavia, instead of organizing agoral gatherings according to the paradigm of unity (Biela 2020), civil war crowds took their bloody toll (Bilali & Vollhardt, 2019).

After the death of the leader and builder of the Yugoslavian state—J. Tito—politicians and journalists developed real or artificially created confrontations which took advantage of ethnic differences in the nations forming the ethnic mosaic of former Yugoslavia. These confrontations were widely publicized

by the central, regional and local media. The confrontation culminated in an intense ethnic war, with all its environmental damage (Jha, 2014), real human horrors (Hislope, 2004; Fink, 2010) and even acts of genocide (Demolli, 2013). Thus, it has to be underlined here that there is no alternative strategy to agoral gatherings for the peaceful prevention of crowd-based war conflicts, which builds mental unity based on higher values shared by the participants of these gatherings (Biela, 2013, 2020).

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## Note

Note 2. These countries are listed in the chronological order of occurrence of agoral gatherings.

Note 3. Date: 1980-07-08 10:00

In Wytwórnia Sprzętu Komunikacyjnego (WSK) at Świdnik, the employees of hall No. 1 stopped working in response to a significant increase in food prices in company buffets. Talks with the non-working employees were started by the shift manager, and then by the director of the WSK. At 12.30 p.m. the whole WSK crew joined the strike. See: Jadczyk (1981), *Diariusz lipcowych dni*. p. 66.

Note 4. This was the original name of the strike committee at the workplace (Dąbrowski, 2006).

Note 5. After over 8 hours of negotiations, they were signed agreement by the plant director Jan

Czołgała and representatives of the crew headed by Zofia Bartkiewicz - a technologist and an active participant in the July 1980 strike in Świdnik.

Note 6. In the State Archive in Lublin a telex of 8 July 1980 is preserved, addressed to the Central Committee of the PZPR in Warsaw by the First Secretary of the Voivodship Committee of the PZPR in Lublin, Władysław Kruk, who describes the situation concerned about the workers' strikes in Świdnik and Lublin. This message, which in fact presented the beginning of the strike, without any political comments, ended with the alarming call "very urgent information - please pass it on immediately." At that time the Central Committee of the PZPR communicated with the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party (PZPR) up to three times a day, informing about the strike events and social moods (See: Dąbrowski (2006)).

Note 7. The historical study of data about Lublin July 1980 is based on the following materials: Chudy, 1981; Jadczyk, 1981; Kaczor, 2000; Gach, 2005; Dąbrowski, 2006.

Note 8. The postulate of electing one's own Trade Union Council developed during the September strikes on the Baltic Coast and in Silesia into the irresistible thought about the creation of NSZZ "Solidarity."