

Women's Protests in Poland in 2015-2021 in the Context of Charles Tilly's Approach to Social Movements¹

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Abstract

The paper explores the women's movement in Poland in the second and third decade of the 21st century. It applies the theoretical framework developed by Charles Tilly to present how the protests of Poles in 2016 and 2020 corresponded to the constituting features of social movements. Based on desk research of documentation of the protests by the protesters themselves, media and researchers, the paper highlights how protesters used the social movement repertoire and WUNC manifestations (worthiness, unity, numbers, commitment) to address the recurring problem of women's reproductive rights in two latest manifestations of the struggle that has been a major component of Polish feminism since its origins.

Keywords: social movements; Charles Tilly; feminism; women's protests; All-Poland Women's Strike; reproductive rights; Poland

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1. Introduction

Social movements have been a subject of scientific exploration for decades. The original approaches developed in the late 19th and early 20th century treated them as evidence of the polity's instability and insufficiency (Langman & Benski, 2019, p. 303), to evolve to perception of social movements as 'one of the principal social forms through which collectivities give voice to their grievances and concerns about rights, welfare and well-being of themselves and others by engaging in various types of collective actions [...]' (Buechler, 2006, p. 48). Nowadays, they make a significant part of the political science research, as well as political developments.

Poland has a long history of social movements of its own, including the highlight of the 'Solidarity' in the 1980s (Touraine, Dubet, Wieviorka, & Strzelecki, 1983) and the post-communist breakthrough after 1989. The 1990s and 2000s marked an important time of development of various movements in Poland (Gliński, 2011, pp. 273–274). Another major shift occurred after 2015, when the conservative coalition of the United Right, led by the populist party Law and Justice (*Prawo i Sprawiedliwość*, PiS) took power and initiated reforms that amounted to democratic backsliding (Bernhard, 2021). The steps taken against independence of the judiciary, media pluralism and autonomy, rule of law, human rights guarantees and women's rights triggered various forms of top-down as well as bottom-up organisations and public protests.

The objective of the present study was to analyse the Polish women's initiative after 2015 and the protest campaign in 2020 as social movements. For this goal, Charles Tilly's perspective (Tilly, Castaneda, & Wood, 2020) was applied, providing a set of characteristics which define and constitute the concept of a social movement. The paper refers to the recent protests in 2016 and 2020 as two distinct waves of the same process. The study was based on a qualitative analysis of a database of publications referring to the women's movement in the Polish information portals and social media, as well as on desk research of reports of activities taken and demonstrations held in the form of media coverage, women's organisations own declarations and reports, as well as scientific publications.

2. Charles Tilly's perspective in the context of the theory of social movements

Social movements theory has been evolving. Initially perceived as a threat to social order, a symptom of unpredictability and lack of respect to organisation of the society (Oberschall, 1973, pp. 1–24), contentious politics was analysed within the framework of crowd psychology (Le Bon, 2013). Only later association of social

movement research with analysis of social change led to redefinition of these approaches and more nuanced study of contentious politics. The main aspects of contention that are the subject of analysis concern different stages of social movements and their evolution, starting with their origins and background, to message shaping and formulation of postulates, to mobilisation of supporters, repertoires of action and modes of operation, to outcomes analysed on micro level (biographical impact), mezzo level (situation of social groups involved or concerned in social movements) and macro level (results achieved within societies and political systems). Observation of individual movements in their actions and effects allowed development of paradigms of analysis and theories, as well as instrumentarium of social movement exploration (della Porta, 2014).

The historic evolution of social movement research saw a series of theories that sometimes competed and sometimes complemented each other in interpreting the studied processes (Goodwin, & Jasper, 2004). The most influential theories included the relative deprivation theory, resource mobilisation theory, political opportunities structure, new social movements theory and cultural theories.

The relative deprivation theory is especially important with respect to origins of social movements. According to this approach, social movements arise in situations of comparable disadvantage experienced by a group (Langman & Benski, 2019; Merton, 1968). Therefore, the juxtaposition of a privilege vs. marginalisation is key to understanding how movements shape, but it may be also important in the process of organising the movement's efforts and assessment of its outcomes. In the 20th and 21st century, this theory takes into account the processes of globalisation and their impact on social movements (Mayo, 2005).

The resource mobilisation theory refers to circumstances that support development of a movement and effectiveness of its actions, indicating that those elements are determined by various types of assets and resources available to the movement (Langman & Benski, 2019). Those resources may concern not only the tangible assets (including but not limited to funding, materials, equipment etc.), but also intangible assets, especially those related to human capital, which may be reflected in the capacities of the movement's leaders, as well as characteristics of movement participants and supporters. The sphere of communication, with its evolving technologies and patterns is also an important area studied within this approach (Carty, 2018).

Political opportunities structure relates social movements to their environment. Social movements operate within political systems and the specifics of the system in question affect their potential on different stages. The concept was developed around the question of how political opportunities structures, i.e. the level of openness and strength of the state apparatus impacted political outcomes (Kriesi, 1995), however it has come to be applied also to the questions of triggering social movements and attracting support (McAdam, McCarthy, & Zald, 1996).

This political opportunities structure is often paired or opposed with cultural approaches (Polletta, 2004) which strive to present social movements in even broader perspective. Scholars applying this theory highlight the need to explore the impact of not only political and social, but also cultural factors which impact attitudes, as well as perceptions of both movement activists and potential supporters. Importantly, this approach attempts to combine objective and subjective components of the environment that affect both occurrence and development of social movements (Jasper, 2007).

Another important factor that has to be taken into account involves the questions of communication. The way social movements communicate with their supporters, addressees of their postulates, as well as bystanders is key for their effectiveness and impact. In this context, framing (Caiani, 2023) has become one of the most important categories, referring to the process of building interpretative frames around specific themes or terms.

The 1960s saw a surge of movements that inspired scholars to look more closely at the character and functioning of the movements themselves, leading to what has come to be called the new social movements theory (Kriesi, Koopmans, Duyvendak, & Giugni, 1995). Despite the doubts and discussions concerning the extent of continuity and change between different kinds of movements, such unique features as prioritising identity over interests, formulating of intangible postulates rather than mainly material ones and addressing them more broadly to the society than decision-makers warranted this distinction (Chesters, & Welsh, 2011; Larana, Johnston, & Gusfield, 2004).

Considering the variability and versatility of social movement theories, each movement or campaign of contention requires multiple analyses reflecting on various aspects and combining them. To enable a closer insight into the process of contention in Poland, the present article focuses on the repertoires of protest, considering the process of shaping the analysed social movement's image, addressed both at the social movement's participants and its environment. To achieve this objective, I focus on the framework of analysing social movement repertoires developed by Charles Tilly.

With his multiple publications concerning the definition, characteristics and evolution of social movements (Tilly, 2003; Tilly, et al., 2020; Tilly, & Tarrow, 2015), Charles Tilly has become the mainstay in research of this phenomenon. In his research of social movements' essence, nature, history, evolution, tools and potential for future development, he constructed a definite approach to their overall exploration. Tilly defined social movements as:

endeavours by categorical groups who share an identity and thus go beyond isolated individual decision to engage in activism. Social movements are a type of contentious politics, which in turn are politics by non-electoral means; and thus, related to social change and to the public affairs understood as the issues affecting many members of a polity. (Tilly, et al., 2020, p. 167)

He further identified a range of specific features that turn a series of contentious events into a social movement:

1. Social movement campaign: a sustained, organised public effort making collective claims on specific authorities, e.g. national governments;
2. Social movement repertoire: combinations of culturally recognisable forms of popular protests, e.g. marches, rallies, demonstrations; and,
3. WUNC displays: the coordinated public performance of Worthiness, Unity, Numbers, and Commitment by members and supporters of the movement. (Tilly, et al., 2020, pp. 168–169)

Individual elements of the definition have been a subject of exploration by various scholars. Collective action lies at the baseline of perception and analysis of social movements (Almeida, 2019, p. 8). The diverse repertoires range from peaceful attempts to reshape the public discourse to violent public actions, but collective involvement is social movements' constituting element: 'The irreducible act that lies at the base of all social movements, protests, rebellions, riots, strike waves, and revolutions is contentious collective action. Collective action can take many forms – brief or sustained, institutionalized or disruptive, humdrum or dramatic' (Tarrow, 2011, p. 7) to transforming a need or conflict into a social movement, both in terms of building movements and mobilising their membership and in terms of affecting the movement's environment. The importance of the latter impact is especially important as social movements represent non-electoral politics, as their leaders and participants seek not chances to take formal positions of power, but rather to use their resources (Meyer, & Luppó, 2007, pp. 118–122) and opportunities (Kriesi, 2006) in order to promote their fundamental cause and encourage its desirable solution. These causes lie in the area of public affairs, as evidenced by both theoretical approaches to social movement (Khagram et al., 2002) and multiple case studies concerning movements in various parts of the world, quoting such examples as social justice movements (Langman & Benski, 2019, pp. 303–324), labour movements (Khagram et al., 2002, pp. 245–300) or equal rights movements (Leitz, 2021). Identity as a factor mobilising and uniting members and participants has become a mainstay of defining social movements (Diani, 2003, p. 6; Meyer, Whittier, & Robnett, 2002), especially since the research concerning new social movements (Kriesi et al., 1995). While identity is a precondition of shaping a sense of commitment, social movements also stimulate further redefinition and development of identities (della Porta, & Diani, 2020, pp. 94–95).

Application of Tilly's framework is especially important in analysing the modern movements for several reasons. Firstly, this framework is concentrated on the repertoires of contention and provides a detailed scheme for exploring them. Therefore, it is especially useful in discussion of how different actions are planned, developed, implemented or – as in the present study – communicated.

Secondly, Tilly's framework ensures the needed flexibility. It was constructed to allow analysis of various movements, and its versatility and universality is important in analysing movements outside the United States and Western Europe. Thirdly, especially with technological developments and evolving cultural patterns, repertoires of contention are significantly changing, with appearance of new tools and new forms of well-known solution. This is why it is important to apply Tilly's framework and explore its adaptation potential in this new context.

The following part of the paper is divided in thematic sections. After presentation of the material and methods is the next section, the paper will introduce the background of Polish feminism. Further, I will verify occurrence of elements of Tilly's definition within the wave of pro-choice and pro-women's rights protests recorded in Poland in autumn 2020, striving to explore the nature of these processes. The analysis of WUNC displays that follows is based on media materials published during the women's strike at the turn of 2020 and 2021. The analysis focuses on the process of documenting effectiveness of WUNC displays in the public sphere, and thence it presents those publications that show the movement in a positive manner. There are also multiple materials of negative character which require further research.

3. Material and methods

The exploration of WUNC displays within the women's protests in Poland in 2020/2021 applied a database of publications purchased within a scientific project funded by the Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Wrocław (project title: *Resonance, Resilience, Reconfiguration. Strategies of Social Movements in Poland after 2015*). The database included materials concerning the selected social movements, published in information portals and social media between 2015 and 2023). The database was developed by IMM, a company specialising in analysis of the Polish media market and it covered all-Polish online press outlets as well as social media indiscriminately, identifying all published or posted items referring to the selected key words. Therefore, the database contained not only articles by professional journalists and activists, but also materials by other people observing and commenting on the evolving situation. Without further verification, they cannot be treated as a reliable source on the actual course of events and behaviours of the involved actors, but they provide a full reflection on the public discussion about the protest process and what was effectively communicated within the process. Thence their usefulness in the designed research context.

The present study covered publications identified by such keywords as 'All-Polish Women's Strike', 'protection of women's rights', 'protection of men's right'. For practical reasons, the sample was restricted to five randomly drawn dates in November 2020, December 2020 and January 2021. The number of gen-

erated items is shown in table 1. An item is defined as a single post or article, regardless of the number of the keywords referred to or the number of mentions within the material.

Table 1:
Number of items found on portals and social media for the drawn dates

Date	Number of items
24/11/2020	12,466
3/12/2020	3,991
15/12/2020	4,292
24/12/2020	1,925
14/1/2021	867

Source: developed by the author based on the IMM database purchased within the project.

It can be noted that while the number of published mentions of gender equality rights and All-Polish Women’s Strike in November was high, it fell significantly, reaching the level below 1,000 in mid-January 2021. This is consistent with wearing out of the protests, as they were ignored by the authorities.

From the above sample, only those items were considered which displayed positive attitudes towards the women’s movement, i.e. those by women’s organisations, activists, news outlets presenting the women’s movement’s stances (e.g. interviews with activists), as well as by supporters of the movement (especially those declaring participation in the protests) (coded by the author herself). There was no verification concerning authorship of the items (either by activists/leaders, by supporters or bystanders), in order to include the full picture of the bottom-up movement and not only the discourse specifically tailored by the leaders of the campaign. All those items were read and analysed to identify representations corresponding to displays of worthiness, unity, numbers and commitment. The results section further in the paper discusses patterns of content that were identified.

4. Polish feminism

The roots of the Polish feminist movement are traced by scholars to the late 19th century (Sikorska-Kowalska, 2019). As there was no Polish state by that time, the main areas of feminist activity involved social, educational and professional emancipation, bottom-up self-help and self-organisation, but also involvement in the Polish pro-independence struggle (Górnicka-Boratyńska, 2020). These foundations were key in the successful post-WWI effort by female activists to

persuade leaders of the newly re-established state to grant full voting rights to women. In 1918, Poland was among the first European states to approve such law and even the first Polish parliament elected in 1919 included female representatives (Suska, 2019). On the other hand, social equality and reproductive rights for women lagged behind for the entire inter-war period.

The change of regime after WWII, when Poland became a part of the communist bloc, brought significant evolutions. On one hand, gender equality was a part of the communist standard, frequently quoted and presented as a great success of the new authorities (Fidelis, 2020). On the other, the state failed to ensure protection for women, and consequently the emancipation was matched with double burden of employment and housework for many women, feminisation of poverty and underrepresentation of women in management and authority positions – in the state and party echelons (Jarska, & Perkowski, 2016). The women's organisations were present and active in social life, addressing and articulating actual problems and challenges women faced, even if they were hardly influential in politics and clearly subjected to the communist party (Bauchrowicz-Tocka, 2020). The balance of the communist period for gender equality in Poland is still a matter of debates and controversy among both scholars (Fidelis, Kluch-Kuczevska, Perkowski, & Stańczak-Wiślicz, 2020) and public commentators.

While the fall of communism led Poland to gradual development of liberal democracy in 1989–2015, the feminist movement gained momentum and became visible and audible in the public discourse. Already in the 1990s Poland had its first female prime minister (Hanna Suchocka, 1992–1993) and even female president of the central bank (Hanna Gronkiewicz-Waltz, 1992–2001), and in the 2000s, 2010s and 2020s top positions (prime ministers, deputy prime ministers, speakers of the Sejm, speaker of the Senate) were held by women multiple times, but the struggle for full rights and non-discrimination was far from finished. The share of female members of the Sejm steadily grew from 9.56% in 1989 elections to 27.17% in 2015 (Kotowska-Wójcik, & Luty-Michalak, 2019, p. 8) and reached the record level of 28.47% in 2019 and 29.34% in 2023, but this is still not a high share. At the same time, the traditional model of family life and traditional gender roles remained strong, enhanced also by the strong position of the Roman Catholic Church. This was evidenced by school curricula (Chmura-Rutkowska, Duda, Mazurek, & Sołtysiak-Łuczak, 2016), as well as the situation on the labour market (Sielska, 2015). Since the second decade of the 21st century this has been matched by a strong anti-gender and anti-feminist discourse, especially from the populist right (Graff, 2014).

While there are many areas of equality debate in Poland, the most prominent one involves family life and roles, home violence, model of parenthood and especially reproductive rights. The latter subject was in the focus of a broad discussion in early 1990s, soon after the fall of communism (Bień-Kacała, & Drinóczi, 2023), which was concluded with a resolution referred to as 'the abortion compromise',

prohibiting pregnancy termination in any circumstances other than life or health threat to the pregnant woman, serious and irreversible congenital defects of the foetus or cases of criminal offences such as rape or incest (Act of 7th January 1993, 1993). The restrictions were enhanced by the conscience clause allowing a medical doctor to refuse performance of a legally allowed procedure, if it breached their moral convictions. These strict provisions were a result of an arrangement between the Polish politicians and the Roman Catholic Church (Kościelniak, 2020). It has to be stressed that in Poland, the Church played traditionally an important role, and it was even enhanced during the period of communism. Not only was its role in toppling communism appreciated, but Catholicism was also an important element of the ethos of the Solidarity and a major value for many post-Solidarity politicians. Finally, in view of the high share of Roman Catholics within the society itself, democratic leaders believed that the Church's support was key for the success of economic and political reforms, as well as accession to the European Union, and therefore they were willing to make concessions including those associated with religious education at public schools and women's reproductive rights.

Those regulations resulted gradually in a paradoxical situation in which the provisions, although in force and widely accepted, were subject to loopholes that made them void in multiple situations. On the one hand, the conscience clause allowed doctors to refuse even those procedures that had to be performed to save the patients' life. Such refusals concerned entire hospitals sometimes, and in the 2010s and 2020s, pro-choice non-governmental organisations and the Ombudsman warned that there were entire regions where no hospital and no physician within the public healthcare system would provide this service (Rzecznik Praw Obywatelskich, 2019). The situation was not effectively amended by the requirement that a hospital unable to provide a service should refer the patient to another entity. In such cases some doctors would refuse to even issue the relevant documentation. On the other hand, there were other options to terminate pregnancy outside the official healthcare system. Initially forced to resort to underground providers, later, especially after Poland's accession to the EU, women gained fully legal opportunities to avoid the restriction either by ordering delivery of abortion medication by mail or by traveling abroad for the procedure. There was also a growing support from non-governmental organisations helping organise delivery of the medication etc. (Dzwonkowska-Godula, 2022) However, it has to be highlighted that the access to abortion procedures depended on the financial resources available to the woman and on her capacity to find a loophole in the healthcare system. Thus, restrictions in reproductive rights translated to further discrimination of some groups of women.

On the other hand, Polish women started to apply legal opportunities to fight for their rights to relevant healthcare by referring to the European Court of Human Rights. The most prominent case concerned Alicja Tysiąc, a woman

for whom pregnancy involved a risk of losing eyesight (ruling issued in 2007), another one concerned a person denied the right to prenatal exams that could reveal deformations of the foetus justifying legal termination (ruling in 2011), and the third – a minor rape victim (ruling in 2012) (Michalczyk-Wliziło, 2023). In its rulings the Court confirmed breaches of right to private and family life, right to life and prohibition of torture, but also their association with discrimination (Kapelańska-Pręgowska, 2021). The legal complaints continued after 2015, linked also to rule-of-law issues (Kubal, 2023). With multiple and frequently broadly commented cases of women losing their lives due to lack of abortion and comprehensive healthcare service for pregnant women, the strict anti-abortion law is sometimes seen as a threat to women's life and health.

Also in the local legal system's context, the 'compromise' was later repeatedly questioned, both from pro-life and pro-choice stances (Kozub-Karkut, 2017, p. 238). In 1996, the Parliament amended the respective legal act, introducing a possibility of abortion due to the woman's dire situation, but the amendment was declared unconstitutional by the Constitutional Tribunal. The parliamentary term of 2015–2019 processed particularly many initiatives related to reproductive rights (Zabrzewska & Dubrow, 2021). In 2016 and 2017, there were further draft acts to liberalise the abortion law submitted as citizens' initiatives (Druki sejmowe no. 830/2016; no. 2060/2017), and in the same years, there were two citizens' initiatives submitted to the Parliament concerning further limitation of access to pregnancy termination procedures (Druki sejmowe no. 784/2016; no. 36/2017) (Sejm Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej, n.d.). None of those was accepted, and the 'compromise' was eventually revoked only in 2020, when the Constitutional Tribunal, controlled by the rightist government, declared the foetal pathology exception unconstitutional (Constitutional Tribunal, 2020b).

Meanwhile, Poland witnessed the rise of the feminist movement and non-governmental organisations promoting sex education and reproductive rights, but the public opinion's stand on abortion remained remarkably stable. A polling agency CBOS performs regular surveys on this matter (Bożewicz, 2023). Since 1992 support for allowing termination in cases of a threat to the mother's life ranged from 86% and 92%, in the case of a threat to the mother's health from 71% to 82%, in the case of pregnancies resulting from crimes from 72% to 80%, and in the case of dramatic foetal defects from 53% to 71%. Support for decriminalisation of abortion because of a difficult financial situation never reached 50%, while for other reasons (difficult personal situation, unwillingness to give birth), it never exceeded 40%. Although since 2016, there was a steady increase of the difference between pro-choice and pro-life groups in the former three cases, it remained significantly negative (from around -70 and -60 in 2016 to approximately -50 and -40 in 2023). This shows, why it was difficult for women's movements to mobilise people with postulates of liberalisation of the abortion law, but attempts to make it even stricter and limit the already narrow possibilities triggered significant reactions and protests.

The specific feature of the protests which occurred after 2015 involved the strong association of the women's movement's postulates and pro-democratic initiatives (Korolczuk, Kowalska, Snochowska-Gonzalez, & Ramme, 2019). In 2015 power in Poland was taken over by the rightist populist party Law and Justice (*Prawo i Sprawiedliwość*) which questioned equality demands, e.g. by criticising the Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Witkowski, 2021, p. 217-218) and promoting traditional roles of women (Cieślak-Florczyk, 2013). Law and Justice also very firmly rejected the right of choice (Dziemidok-Olszewska, & Michalczyk-Wliziło, 2024, p. 202-204) and supported pro-life legislative initiatives. The ruling by the Constitutional Tribunal, too, was issued upon a motion of members of the Sejm representing Law and Justice (Constitutional Tribunal, 2020a). Consequently, women's demonstrations were directed against the government and although (as described below), the protesters refused to support anti-populist political parties, close cooperation was observed between the women's and pro-democratic movements (Korolczuk et al., 2019). The anti-government slogans were especially visible during the wave of protest in 2020.

This context unsurprisingly was intertwined with the issue of the role of the Roman Catholic Church, which built a strong alliance with Law and Justice (Kowalczyk, 2019). For many protesters – both leaders and supporters of the women's movement, the Church was the actual culprit of the ruling, as bishops and priests expressed multiple times their demands that abortion be banned even in circumstances allowed by the 'abortion compromise' (Suchomska, & Urzędowska, 2021, p. 13-14) and the ruling of the Constitutional Tribunal occurred at the time of yet another enhancement of the role of the Church in Polish politics. Many slogans referred to priests and especially bishops, and many mentioned charges against the church, especially those related to paedophilia and other sexual offences. Church buildings were frequently targeted by demonstrators and there were even occurrences of protests inside churches during mass (Frąckowiak-Sochańska, Zawodna-Stephan, Żurek, Brzozowska-Brywczyńska, & Nymś-Górna, 2022).

Another important external factor that affected the demonstrations and their perception was the COVID-19 pandemic. Although the pandemic started in spring 2020, the first wave was not very hard in Poland and in actuality, anti-spread restrictions were more perceptible to most citizens than the disease itself and its direct consequences. However, the situation changed with the second wave in autumn 2020, when morbidity and mortality rates soared (Płonka-Syroka, 2023). Anti-COVID provisions significantly restricted the right of public assemblies (Daško, 2021), and some believed that these regulations were also intended to hamper anti-government protest (Czerwiński, Dropek, Kruszk, Maciejewski, & Mazur, 2024). This situation had a twofold effect on the protesters, in both instances making it harder to decide to participate in a public protest gathering. Firstly, the protesters were aware of the health risks they took,

especially in the case of big demonstrations where very many people met – even though the demonstrations were held in open air, their participants were crowded together for several hours at a time, day by day. Secondly, this signified a greater risk of legal consequences, since the participation in a gathering was an offence.

In this context, the overall form of policing these protests should be mentioned, too. The strong, even aggressive reactions of the members of the ruling Law and Justice against the protesters was also reflected in frequently inadequate reactions of police officers towards people participating in the demonstrations (Szczepaniak, 2022, pp. 119–121) up to the point that police was perceived as an ally of the rightist side against the protesters (Kosiewski, 2023, p. 14). On the other hand, there was a lot of lenience for counterdemonstrators or individuals who simply attacked protesters. This was also possible due to very vehement reaction in pro-government rightist media (Palczewski, 2023, pp. 312–314), but on the other hand it also enhanced mobilisation of the demonstrators' part to some extent (Firgolska 2022, p. 19).

5. Women's movements in Poland after 2015

5.1 Shared identity

The first, original women's protest undertaken after the United Right took power in Poland in 2015 was triggered by submission to the Sejm of a draft act aimed at further limitation of access to legal abortion in Poland (Makarewicz, 2019, p. 30). Women and feminist organisations all over Poland reacted with protests and demonstrations, which culminated in organisation of a coordinated Poland-wide protest action on Monday 3rd October 2016. Only in 2019 was the movement formalised to establish the All-Poland Women's Strike Foundation (Fundacja Ogólnopolski Strajk Kobiet), However it still identified itself as follows:

We are a bottom-up, independent social movement of angry women and reasonable men who support us. We protest and act for women's rights, democracy, Poland for everybody, we mobilise and act in over 150 towns in Poland – 90% of them are localities of fewer than 50,000 inhabitants, which is our greatest strength and source of our pride. We are an informal, non-partisan initiative of women, either non-associated, or members of various women's organisations. (Ogólnopolski Strajk Kobiet [OSK], 2020)

This self-description, as well as activities taken by the All-Polish Women's Strike, confirm several recurring elements of the unequivocal and clear identity of the movement. Its characteristic elements are womanhood and sisterhood, but

also openness to diversity and democratic ideals. At the same time, activists stress its egalitarian character, as a group and initiative of 'everywomen', regardless of their background and origin.

5.2 Collective actions

Collective contentious action was not only at the root of establishment of the All-Polish Women's Strike movement but remained the cornerstone of its activities. The collective action involved mainly the two large waves of demonstrations, first in 2016 and then in 2020. The former took a black umbrella as its symbol (Korolczuk et al., 2019, p. 51) – while this was undoubtedly due to the incidentally bad weather on the day of the demonstration, one cannot omit the reference to Polish feminists using umbrellas to hit the fence at the residence of the head of state in 1918 claiming the right to vote (Korolczuk et al., 2019). The latter wave – triggered by the quoted ruling of the Constitutional Tribunal was generally associated with the red lightning symbol and a wealth of creative, funny, catchy and provocative slogans written on cardboard (Kosiewski, 2021). This element was an echo of the movement's bottom-up identity rooted in spontaneity and participation. However, apart from those spectacular, momentous campaigns, the movement activists kept taking smaller measures, some focused on promoting key messages (of the feminist movement itself or other minority groups) or even self-help and development, supporting women in various situations (Korolczuk et al., 2019, p. 135). Thus, the movement strives to build a community so that its postulates are spread not only through all-Polish symbolic initiatives, but also by word-of-mouth of members of a developing feminist community.

5.3 Non-electoral politics

As shown above, the movement self-declares as non-partisan. Importantly, the initiative originated in mid-2010s from protest against draft act proposal from a conservative think tank *Ordo Iuris* Foundation, supported by the rightist Law and Justice Party. Thus, the movement had clearly defined political antagonists on the political arena and even party scene, but it was characteristically cautious in highlighting cooperation with its allies. Some politicians not only expressed support for the struggle for women's rights, but even took part in the protests and tried to use their parliamentary immunity to protect protesters, e.g. Magdalena Biejat of the Left (Kiełczykowska, 2020) or Barbara Nowacka of the Civic Coalition (Kromer, Krawczyk, Kondzińska, & Wojtczuk, 2020). However, the party management remained equivocal and unclear in its declarations, supporting return to the 1990s' 'compromise' (Chrzczonowicz, 2016), while the women's movement

already postulated deep liberalisation of the abortion law. In local/regional elections in 2018 and in parliamentary elections in 2019, the All-Polish Women's Strike offered support to individual candidates (especially female candidates) and some of its activists took part in the contest, but the organisation itself did not register any lists and the support concerned individuals and not party lists. Thus, the movement remained non-partisan and was never associated with any party despite its leaders' clear political views.

While the protests did not side with any of the parties to the Polish political conflict, the adversaries were very clearly defined. The protests were directed against the inspirators of the Constitutional Tribunal's ruling: the Law and Justice Government and the Roman Catholic Church. Thus, they resonated with the pro-democratic movement in support of court independence and rule of law. Human rights were the clear common ground of those two movements, and this connection was reflected in some initiatives by the All-Polish Women's Strike, including appeals to stop democratic backsliding and restore the rule of law.

5.4 Context of social change

The other two elements of Tilly's definition relate to the environment social movements function in. In line with Tilly's findings, the women's movement in Poland in the 2010s and 2020s operates in the context of clashing tendencies of social change. Since the post-communist transformation Poland has been a place of gradual redefinition of gender roles, both with developing research (Slany, Struzik, & Wojnicka, 2011) and activism (Krzyżanowska, 2012, p. 223–225), as well as changing attitudes of the public opinion. Gradual implementation of pro-equality, anti-discrimination and anti-violence laws marked the state's changing policies (Waszkiewicz, 2009): despite the strong position of the Roman Catholic church and widespread traditionalism, equality between men and women and anti-discrimination policies have become increasingly important and salient issues. On the other hand, there has been evidence of cultural backlash (Margolis, 2019) in Poland, too, especially after the right came to power in 2015. The conservative postulates concerned both the conceptual background (e.g. questioning of the need to expand the use of feminine forms of nouns) and postulates in law, some of them very radical (e.g. requests for Poland to withdraw from Istanbul Convention on preventing domestic violence). The subject of the right to terminate pregnancy has become a hallmark of women's rights, as an overwhelming share of Poles accepted the right to abortion both in the case of specific conditions (e.g. threat to the mother's life and health) and at the woman's free will (Chrzczonowicz, 2020). This is also the reason why abortion-related decisions and situations tend to trigger broad waves of protest: the draft act limiting the right in 2016, the Constitutional Tribunal's ruling in 2020, or – to a lesser extent – the death of a pregnant woman due to doctors' inaction in 2021 (Flis, 2021).

5.5 Public affairs affecting many members of the polity

The subjects addressed by women's movement are defined to concern all women, half of the society. Although support for feminist postulates is persistently associated with a specific profile (the highest among young to middle-aged women in bigger cities) (Korolczuk et al., 2019, p. 92), protests in 2015, and especially in 2020 stimulated activity of other members of the Polish society, too. In its declarations and slogans, the movement strived to convey another message: that women's rights affect every person, if not directly, then by touching women in their families or environment. In many places in Poland, demonstrators in 2020 entered churches, stressing that Roman Catholic women, too, are victim to the ruling by the Constitutional Tribunal (Nowicka, Lewandowska, Uziak, & Grymula, 2020). These measures were designed to build the awareness not only among those who already supported the movement, but also in other milieus, originally rejecting the protests.

The scope of the mobilisation in 2020, especially among women and young people was a very important contribution to the Polish politics achieved by the women's protests. Those groups played a role in the historic voter turnout in the parliamentary elections in 2023 and therefore in the victory of the democratic parties and change of the government.

6. Pro-choice protests in 2020

6.1 Social movement campaign

Social movement campaign is defined as '*a sustained, organised public effort making collective claims on target authorities*' (Tilly, et al., 2020, p. 6). In the case of women's movement in Poland in the second and early third decade of the 21st century, the most spectacular case of a social movement campaign is the series of protests triggered by the ruling of the Constitutional Tribunal. They lasted in October–December 2020 and were shortly renewed in January 2021, but among their active participants and organisers there were activists of the All-Polish Women's Strike and other feminist organisations that remained active even outside these specific moments. Although the protesters declared that many actions were spontaneous, as evidenced by demonstrations in towns and localities with no prior feminist activities, use of recurring symbols (especially the lightning, but also the black umbrella) testifies that all diverse activities made a part of a single broader collective process. As far as the movement-defined antagonists are concerned, the focus on authorities was visible in selection of points of beginning or conclusion of demonstrations (governmental buildings, offices of the ruling rightist political parties, but also the private house of the main ruling party's leader), slogans and

banners or placards. Importantly, protesters frequently and expressly referred to the Roman Catholic Church as the driving force of the anti-feminist changes.

6.2 Social movement repertoires

The Polish women's protests in 2020 referred to the classic repertoire of social movements to build their own distinct and consistent public image. Bottom-up and spontaneous campaign of producing home-made cardboard placards with variable ironic slogans and illustrations, frequently referring to modern pop culture or Polish heritage resulted in immense diversity of the protest's symbols, which in itself became the new hallmark of the Polish women's movement. On the other hand, the repertoire included a wide range of classic tools typical for social movements. There were rallies and demonstrations (Suchomska & Urzędowska, 2021), dispersed communication (especially through social media) (Łozowska, 2020), as well as statements by leaders in traditional media (Suchomska & Urzędowska, 2021, pp. 18–19). The protests were supported by petitions – especially online petitions, but signatures were also collected to submit a draft act on liberalisation of abortion regulations to the Parliament (Fundacja Centrum Praw Kobiet, 2020). The movement also received support from public figures, both politicians and celebrities, either by direct participation in demonstrations or through public display of the symbolic red lightning. The lightnings or umbrellas were also displayed on houses, balconies or in windows of private houses or offices of organisations or companies. Another corporate component of the repertoire involved companies' inclusion of the symbol on the products (e.g. cookies with lightnings) or financial donations (e.g. sale of a special set of products with the revenues or part thereof assigned to the All-Polish Women's Strike).

6.3 Manifesting worthiness

It is interesting to mark that the women's protests in 2021 did not attempt to build a dignified image of demonstrations, as evidenced most visibly by widespread use of bad language in slogans, on placards, as well as in chants during the demonstrations. However, the worthiness of the cause was constantly stressed. It was highlighted that the change resulting from the Constitutional Tribunal's ruling hit basically the most disadvantaged. Protesters, and especially their representatives referred to the situation of families with disabled children, highlighting the suffering and tragedies that could have been prevented by abortion (Pamuła, 2020). This was later echoed in another wave of protests in 2022, after a woman died of sepsis as a complication of doctors' refusal to remove a dying foetus from her uterus. Another source of worthiness referred to women's human dignity and their rights to life and human integrity, as well as protection from torture. Policies of the government and the church were presented as a brutal invasion

of women's privacy so that the protesters were acting as outraged defenders. All those elements contributed to an image of just anger of the oppressed.

The patterns identified on the analysed days are listed in table 2.

Table 2:
Displays of worthiness

date	displays	Examples
24/11/2020	agency	slogans used in demonstrations: 'I think, I feel, I decide'
	intelligence	original, catchy, smart slogans, carton boards, memes etc. establishment and operations of the advisory board, a meticulously prepared agenda
	tolerance/solidarity	cooperation with other groups, including environmentalists and organisations supporting people with disabilities
	motherhood	mothers participating in demonstrations together with their children
	perseverance	slogans used in demonstrations: 'No giving up after one month'
3/12/2020	support from respected figures	a meeting with a distinguished female fighter, veteran of WWII, participant of Warsaw uprising Wanda Traczyk-Stawska
	righteous and just postulates	fighting for enlightenment 'rage and hope' (quotes from a foreign publication)
	defending those in need	data concerning feminicide and violence against women establishment of a self-help group in Rawa Mazowiecka
	intelligence	original, catchy, smart slogans, carton boards, memes etc.
15/12/2020	intelligence	original, catchy, smart slogans, carton boards, memes etc. innovative attires, performances, mocking opponents
	bravery	comments on bravery and perseverance of participants of the demonstrations
	normalness	'abortion is ok' and similar slogans, normalising the experience of abortion strike demands seen as a return to normal, right conditions
24/12/2020	consistence	the Women's Strike consistently reiterating its postulates
	equality	referring to overall equality of men and women as a beautiful vision
	long-term endeavour	despite the short-term defeat, the women's movement shall prevail
	patriotism	women's movement as a way to change Poland
14/1/2021	intelligence	the language of the women's strikes as irony, humour, not hate speech
	consistence	interview presenting consistent demands concerning reproductive rights
	flexibility	declaration of moving on to a more reflective phase with gradual exhaustion of the demonstrations without immediate effect
	everyday works	article about a women's movement organisation offering support to women

Source: The author.

It can be noted that displays of worthiness in the women's strikes were multiple and very diverse. They presented the protesters as smart, modern and intelligent. Secondly, even though the slogans used bad words, they were shown

to contain puns and refer to pop culture. It was also highlighted that protests demand what's normal, not privileges, but equality that is ensured in other countries. Demands were shown as just, rational and consistent. Thirdly, there was a strand of worthiness displays referring to Polishness, patriotism and important memories and figures of the Polish history. Finally, a strand that was gaining as the protests wore out, concerned flexibility, readiness for a long-term struggle and openness to applying new tools (e.g. development of extended programmes).

6.4 Manifesting unity

Unity was among the major values highlighted by the protesters and 'you will not walk alone' was a popular slogan chanted at demonstrations and rallies. The concepts invoked by the All-Polish Women's Strike, as well as organisers of individual demonstrations included solidarity and sisterhood, both concepts historically important in Poland, referring to the 'Solidarity' movement of the communist times and in the feminist movement, too (Wickström et al., 2021). Another aspect of displaying unity concerned outright exclusion of political parties, even though their representatives were welcome as participants and supporters. In Poland, party politics is strongly associated with conflict and disagreement, and the movement endeavoured to become separated from those negative connotations. Paradoxically, unity was also rooted in diversity of the movement's participants (Ramme & Snochowska-Gonzalez, 2017), that's why it was stressed that protests were organised in different places, small and big towns and in all parts of Poland, as evidence by the map of events at the website of the All-Polish Women's Strike. Thus, the movement highlighted its position as a gathering of Poles despite various differences among them. It is especially important to mention two groups of apparent outsiders who made an important part of the movement, enhancing the image of unity. Firstly, demonstrations and rallies were attended by men, declaring that their mothers, sisters, partners and friends' human rights were vital for them, too (Słowiński, 2020). Secondly, there were a few statements of participants who publicly declared devotion to the Roman Catholic faith, but rejected the brutal intervention in women's human rights in the name of the religion: a survey showed that 67% of Roman Catholics in Poland opposed stricter anti-abortion law and 45% supported street protests (Szwed & Jędrzejek, 2021).

Table 3:
Displays of unity

date	displays	examples
24/11/2020	solidarity	solidarity events (in support of people repressed or bigger demonstrations in Warsaw and Krakow)
	involvement of different groups	posts by people self-identifying as doctors, inhabitants of small towns etc. in support of the Women's Strike
	various forms of protests	demonstrations, silent demonstration with candles, posts, discussions online
3/12/2020	solidarity	declarations of solidarity with repressed protesters posted online and presented at demonstrations
	support from local councils	various localities that consider naming streets or squares after 'women's rights'
	support from artists and celebrities	declarations of artists and celebrities supporting the protests criticism of those who pretended nothing was happening
15/12/2020	support from artists and celebrities	support from an award-winning actress
	political support	MPs demanding explanation on police reactions to demonstrations
24/12/2020	support from artists and celebrities	former foreign minister admitting participation in demonstrations
	participation in Polish/religious traditions	singing Christmas carols
14/1/2021	appeals for unity	appeal for solidarity of all those repressed by the rightist government (women, judges, independent journalists)
	diversity	inclusion of transwomen
	solidarity	solidarity events (in support of people repressed by police, 'You are not alone' slogan)

Source: The author.

The materials on the studied dates showed especially solidarity (not only declarations but also dedicated solidarity events). While there was no involvement with political parties, support from individual politicians (either on the national or local level) was frequently highlighted. The materials also presented protesters as a diversified group united around the shared values and postulates.

6.5 Manifesting numbers

Manifestation of numbers in the women's protests in Poland in 2020 was twofold in nature. Firstly, and most naturally, there was strong stress on the number of participants of rallies and demonstrations. According to some reports, the larg-

est demonstration gathered 100,000 people (Sala & Orłowski, 2020). The New York Times described the women’s protests as ‘the largest demonstrations in the country since the fall of communism in 1989’ (Magdziarz & Santora, 2021). The same message was conveyed by photos and films published online, at the social media profiles of the All-Polish Women’s Strike, as well as individual participants. Many of those photos showed crowds or documented the length of the marching columns. The other aspect involved promoting the number of places where meetings and rallies were held, as evidenced by maps and lists of localities published by the organisers or by media. This showed that the process was truly all-Polish, spilling all over the country, not limited to the biggest and most modernised cities, but present also in small towns or even villages.

Table 4:
Displays of numbers

date	displays	examples
24/11/2020	large demonstrations	several hundred people in Krakow the largest demonstration in Warsaw photos and videos of demonstrations, posted mostly by individual participants
	multiple demonstrations	shorter or longer notes on multiple demonstrations in many different places in Poland
	huge media coverage	report stating there had been over 900 thousand materials published about the Women's Strike in the media and social media
3/12/2020	multiple demonstrations	shorter or longer notes quoting multiple names of localities where events were held
	large demonstrations	photos and videos of demonstrations, posted mostly by individual participants
15/12/2020	social support	quoting public opinion polls showing high support for women's strikes
	large demonstrations	photos and videos of demonstrations, posted mostly by individual participants descriptive wording, e.g. 'mass demonstrations'
24/12/2020	large demonstrations	large demonstrations presented in media resumes of the year
	part of a bigger picture	slogans and comments: 'it's a war', 'it's a revolution'
14/1/2021	multiple demonstrations	shorter or longer notes quoting multiple names of localities where events were held

Source: The author.

The same characteristics appeared in the sample. Numbers were mostly reflected in organisation of multiple demonstrations in various places of Poland and in showing the biggest, most numerous of them in the biggest cities. Displays of numbers were also confirmed with external sources (quoting reports or notices of broad support for the protests or at least broad interests in them).

6.6 Manifesting commitment

At times, protests at small localities were documented with photos of small groups or even individuals, who had the courage to speak up for their values in a frequently reluctant or hostile environment. This was strong evidence of the final element of Tilly's definition: commitment. Protesters' acceptance of the risk of being rejected, criticised or even badmouthed by their neighbours was a proof of how important the pursued values and interests really were.

Another important element related to commitment was the reaction of the authorities and especially law enforcement. Participants of women's protests frequently met with police brutality (Director of the National Mechanism for the Prevention of Torture, 2021), they were charged with breaking anti-pandemic provisions or with hooliganism. Determination and consistence in the struggle despite these obstacles were important elements of the movement's identity.

Interestingly, the commitment context rarely referred to the pandemic threat. Participation in rallies during the spread of a dangerous infectious disease might also be seen as evidence of protesters' courage and determination, however, it was hardly mentioned, possibly because in late 2020, there was still a lot of fear of COVID-19 in Poland, so using this argument might actually discourage the public.

Table 5:
Displays of commitment

date	displays	examples
24/11/2020	suffering repression from the authorities and/or police	a photojournalist arrested for working at a demonstration police intervention at the house of a 14-year-old boy who shared a pro-strike post online police interventions and brutality during demonstrations in Warsaw
	solidarity with those under repression	demonstrations and declarations of solidarity with the arrested journalist
3/12/2020	suffering repression from authorities and/or police	request by leftist MPs that the Supreme Audit Chamber verifies police operations during demonstrations information on a police intervention at the houses of three teenagers in Oleśnica, a post by one of the girls: 'you won't arrest all of us' police using tear gas against protesters #stoprepressions hashtag mayor of a town in central Poland hated by rightist activist for supporting demonstrations leftist MP hurt with tear gas by police disciplinary measures against teachers displaying support for the protests and/or allowing their students to do so
15/12/2020	suffering repression from authorities and/or police	police brutality at demonstrations criticism of police brutality by the deputy ombudswoman disciplinary proceedings against a teacher involved in demonstrations police hearing of a 19-year-old organiser of a demonstration
24/12/2020	suffering repression from authorities and/or police	instances of police brutality
14/1/2021	suffering repression from authorities and/or police	teachers punished by education boards for supporting women's protests police persecuting people participating in women's demonstrations (including teenagers)

Source: The author.

References to various forms of repressions (especially police brutality at the demonstrations themselves; but also policemen coming to someone's workplace or home; police investigating someone exclusively for their participation in the protests; court summons or rulings; professional sanctions, frequently affecting teachers or officials) were the major form of display of commitment. On the analysed days there were no references to COVID threats. It should be stressed that displays of commitment were very frequent, similarly as displays of worthiness.

7. Conclusion

Tilly's definition, based on broad and in-depth analysis of variable social movements over history provides a clear and viable framework of analysing various aspects and components of both historic and modern movements, especially with respect to repertoires of contention. Its value lies also in its versatility and adaptability to various conditions, which make it an efficient tool even after development of new technologies and forms used in the repertoires as well as new values and objectives of movements.

The Polish women's movement of 2010s and 2020s is a continuation of prior postulates of feminist and women's movements all over the world. It also reiterates demands known from previous periods. The problem of reproductive rights is still a dramatic challenge in Poland that stimulates self-organisation and activity of women and men. The most recent wave of protest, triggered by further restrictions imposed in this area, was characterised by very strong emotions, especially anger, expressed in public, but also in dynamic and very creative development of the slogans and forms of the known repertoires. As shown in the study, it draws from the long traditions of social movements, creatively applying the social movement campaigns and repertoires, as well as strengthening its message with WUNC representations. The study of publications referring to the women's strike and women's rights showed a wealth of approaches to worthiness, and their evolution in time, probably in reaction to lack of immediate success of the protests. Displays of unity and numbers were more consistent throughout the sample, while the quantity of publications gradually fell. Finally, commitment displays arose from the reaction of the authorities. All those elements contributed to image-shaping of the movement. Further analysis is planned to describe how opponents of the movement strived to counter and question those positive displays.

Another future field of research involves activities of the women's movement in view of the evolving society and political opportunities. Change of the ruling coalition in Poland in 2023 and its policies vs. women's rights will require new measures by feminist activists to attract support and impact decision-making. Inspired by prior campaigns, the Polish women's movement can also inspire evolution of the society, however its long-term efficiency in changing the position of women in Poland remains to be seen.

Thus, it can be concluded that the Polish women's movement still brings the well-known and well-rooted postulates developed within the history of the movement. At the same time, it remains flexible active in terms of redefining the machinery of protest.

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Annex 1. Sample quotes.

Displays of worthiness	
24/11/2020	<i>'Women protest in multiple small and big towns, also men are on the streets to support them. They all create funny, smart, but also vulgar and critical slogans. Some people are outraged by them, but others compliment the expressiveness and irony'.</i> polskatimes.pl
3/12/2020	<i>'Demonstrators at protest express their postulates not only by crying or chanting. Many people choose to prepare DIY banners. Initially, those were mostly classical slogans, but in time, there were more and more creative ones. [...] They refer sometimes to hit cinema films, such as Avengers or Harry Potter. [...] What are the most frequent slogans at strikes?</i> <i>I think, I feel, I decide [...]; Government is no pregnancy, it can be terminated; My body, my choice; Women's freedom; Women's rights are human rights; Choice instead of prohibition; Sentence against women; Court to trial [...]; We've had enough; Women's hell; Separate the state from the Church; Revolution is female; This is a war; My uterus is my business; This is a tragedy [...]; I hope you step on a lego bloc barefoot'.</i> kurierlubelski.pl
15/12/2020	<i>'Such demonstrations cannot last forever. [...]' – said Agnieszka Holland about the Women's Strike. – "The authorities want to tire protesters out, but I don't know if they realise how big a change has occurred. There has been a giant shift in the social and political awareness of the young generation" - said Holland in Onet Opinie broadcast. – "Nothing's going to be as it used to be" – she added'.</i> onet.pl
24/12/2020	<i>'On Wednesday (23.12), a group of women came to the Main Market Square in Cracow to "sing till we're free". This is another element of the protests against the Constitutional Tribunal which made the abortion law even stricter. The Wednesday demonstration was a walk. [...] On Wednesday before the Christmas Eve let's have a walk on the Main Square and sing [...] [Christmas carols]'.</i> tuteraż.pl
14/1/2021	<i>'The movement is now shifting to its programmatic phase, leaders choose activity and self-organisation. They stress that they are an "informal, non-partisan initiative of women. No headquarters, no board, only a helpdesk – all-Polish committee of support (...) The Women's Strike applies autonomy of local groups. With common actions, we have a beneficial shared minimum – shared name, slogan and basic visual identification, as well as formal and material support of the helpdesk"'</i> oko.press
Displays of unity	
24/11/2020	<i>'Once again protesters associated with the Women's Strike appeared in front of the police station at ul. Szeroka in Kraków. The demonstration on Tuesday evening was a response to police's behaviour towards representatives of the media who report on protests against the Constitutional Tribunal's ruling on abortion, lasting over a month now.</i> <i>"We fight for legalisation of abortion and equal rights, but we also solidarise with the apprehended and repressed journalists, photoreporters and other media workers. Free media are the foundation of democracy! We support those brutally mistreated by the policy in the capital city during the city blockade and all victims of police brutality!" – was the organisers' announcement of the demonstration on social media'.</i> polskatimes.pl

3/12/2020	<i>'The recently completed roundabout in Częstochowa will be called the Roundabout of Women's Right – as was decided at the Thursday session of the local Municipal Council. This should be a certain symbol of Częstochowa as a city that supports women – said the authors of the idea'.</i> portalsamorzadowy.pl
15/12/2020	<i>“We feel like we've done our job well” – say Anita Lipnicka and Moriah Woods, who recorded together the song Our Voice/Nasz głos. It was their response to the Constitutional Tribunal's ruling making abortion law even stricter. There are a lot of differences between them, but they sing in one voice of disappointment, sadness, but also hope and better future'.</i> hellozdrowie.pl
24/12/2020	<i>“Warriors, those in politics, in the Sejm, Senate, European Parliament, those with the Women's Strike, protesters in the streets, those who act in non-governmental organisations and those at computers who describe our shared fight – together we make our dreams come true.” – Dorota Warakomska, feminist'.</i> wysokieobcasy-ee.pl
Displays of numbers	
24/11/2020	<i>'There were very large women's protests in our region, too. Not only in Zielona Góra and Gorzów, but also smaller localities, including: multi-thousand women's protest in Żary on 25 October 2020; multi-thousand women's protest in Żagań on 28 October 2020; women's protest in Żagań on 7 November 2020; women's protest in Szprotawa on 29 October 2020; protest in Lubsko on 29 October 2020; protest in Nowa Sól on 26 October 2020; protest in Koźuchów on 26 October 2020; protest in Ślubice on 26 October 2020; protest in Sulechów on 26 October 2020'.</i> zielonagora.naszemiasto.pl
3/12/2020	<i>'It's the second time that hundreds of people took to the streets of Suwałki to protest against the Constitutional Tribunal's decision to enhance restrictiveness of the abortion act'.</i> suwalki.info
15/12/2020	<i>'The Women's Strike started months ago. Then, at the very beginning, protest actions were held in almost 150 towns. However, strikes go on until now. The biggest ones are still held in the capital city. Some time ago we wrote that the Women's Strike is moving online, e.g. through social media. But not only that. There are also votes and petitions held online. The web acts also as a communication mechanism. Previously, this was mainly about organising events on Facebook, now, there is also Instagram as a notice board'.</i> newsbook.pl
14/1/2021	<i>'The All-Polish Women's Strike faces the challenge of the fading revolutionary flame. In late October and in November, there were tens and hundreds of thousands of 'angry women and supportive wise men' in the streets that turned empty now. [...] Fading flame of the revolution? No, the anger stays, the reflection accumulates'.</i> oko.press

Displays of commitment	
24/11/2020	<i>'Magdalena Biejat, a leftist MP, reported to the prosecutor's office the case of tear gas used against by a non-uniformed police officer. She noted in the report's grounds that the situation hampered her implementation of her MP responsibilities.</i> <i>Tear gas was allegedly used against Magdalena Biejat by policemen on 18 November when the All-Polish Women's Strike protested at Powstańców Warszawy square in Warsaw near the Polish Television headquarters. There was a tussle between protesters and policemen them. The report concerns behaviour of police officers who surrounded the strikers and used tear gas. Among the victims, there were All-Polish Women's Strike activist Marta Lempart, Klementyna Suchanow, as well as the leftist MP Magdalena Biejat. Individuals were dragged from the crowd for ID verification'.</i> gazetawroclawska.pl
3/12/2020	<i>'Activists from Oleśnica were summoned to the police station as witnesses. "This is a common practice. After we testify, charging us will be easier" – says one of the organiser who is a high school student.</i> <i>Last week, there was a lot of talk about the case of an eight-grade primary school pupil from Krapkowice. The 14-year-old learned that he would bear consequences for sharing on FB information about a local demonstration of the women's strike, but finally, the court rejected the motion by the police'.</i> wroclaw.wyborcza.pl
15/12/2020	<i>'A teacher from Tarnowskie Góry will face a disciplinary proceeding. Disciplinary counsel of the Schooling Inspectorate in Katowice charged a teacher from Tarnowskie Góry who had participated in the women's strike with using bad language and publishing 'offensive content' online. The proceeding was initiated upon a complaint filed with the Inspectorate by a rightist MP'.</i> tarnowskiegory.naszemiasto.pl
24/12/2020	<i>“Some people absolutely have a right to give up in terms of protests because of the scale of police brutality. Of intimidation. People know that if they come to Warsaw to protest, they will get hit. You cannot resent them” – said Marta Lempart'.</i> tokfm.pl
14/1/2021	<i>'A 16-year-old [...] took part in protests against stronger restrictions in abortion look. During the demonstrator her identity was verified by the police and on 12 January, the girl was visited by a curator'.</i> kobieta.onet.pl