

**REPRESSION-INSPIRED INNOVATIVE FORMS OF PROTEST AS A FACTOR  
 SUSTAINING MOBILIZATION: THE CASE STUDY OF ALL-POLISH WOMEN'S  
 STRIKE<sup>285</sup>**

<b>Abstract:</b>	<i>The paper aims to discover the relations between repression and the occurrence of innovative forms of protests (hereinafter: IFP) during the All-women's Strike in Poland (2020-2021). The Authors identified two most essential features of IFP, namely the use of the Internet and avoidance of physical violence. IFP were significant for these manifestations, considering pandemic circumstances and strict restrictions on public assembly. The following questions were asked during the research: 1) What was the content of the IFP? 2) Who is the target of IFP? The study draws on process tracing to determine whether repression by law enforcement caused a public reaction against those measures. Moreover, qualitative content analysis was used to determine the content published in public domain posts on Instagram. The period examined is 20 October 2020 (tightening abortion law by the Constitutional Court) to 8 February 2021 (when the last post was published). The purposeful selection of cases included 450 posts by the most engaged Polish female celebrities. The paper provides knowledge of how specific repression triggered certain types of IFP and who was the target of these protests. The authors also explain the use of IFP during the All-women's Strike in Poland.</i>
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**Introduction**

In the face of coronavirus-related restrictions and a justified need to keep social distance, individuals who seek to manifest social demands and contentious political issues were forced to find alternative forms of protests in the pandemic-ridden reality. Most of them used measures that stemmed from the experience of anti-austerity movements which applied new technology as a supplementary form of protest. Regardless of physical barriers, innovative forms of protest (hereinafter: IFP) help to overcome time and space limitations and attract a global audience focused on specific issues. For that reason, in the digital era, protesters more often use IFP as a form of support for traditional contentious politics. The Internet, as a space primarily free from state control, allows manifest statements and behaviors that, in traditional forms of protest, might trigger repression from law enforcement and state officers. Therefore, IFP have become popular and reduced the costs of running protests mitigating the risk of repression and becoming a unique form of contentious politics, especially in the

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face of constrained traditional forms. This occurred during the coronavirus crisis of 2020-2022, when the freedom of assembly, like other rights and freedoms, was limited or suspended. Moreover, in this period, the partisanship of police officers increased, which led to more frequent use of repressions, especially against anti-government demonstrations<sup>286</sup>. IFP can be manifested in many ways. Moreover, some of the IFPs may be used as a separate form. For that reason, the authors seek to discover the level of coherence between IFP and traditional forms of protest, especially in the demanding social change trajectory of mass mobilization. The aim is also to indicate how users of alternative demonstrations reacted to repressions during street protests and who was blamed for obstructing requested social changes.

The paper aims to discover the relationship between repressions and IFP during the All-Women's Strike in Poland 2020-2021 (hereinafter: AWS). The authors decided to focus on the AWS after the tightening of abortion law by the Constitutional Tribunal (pol. Trybunał Konstytucyjny, hereinafter: TK). The TK's decision triggered the largest mass mobilization in Poland after 1989, despite corona-related limitations on public gatherings. Moreover, previous experience of movements protecting reproductive rights in Poland justified the use of IFP<sup>287</sup>. Therefore, the authors selected a case characterized by mass mobilization, which involved repressions and well-developed means of IFP.

The article provides empirical evidence about the coherency of IFP and AWS and how the target of the former changed over time during the protest. The authors explain what determined the response to repression and indicate other factors. The paper offers an extension of the IFP theory and indicates what motivated people to continue protesting. The authors examine benefits that stem from using IFP rather than traditional forms of protest. The study also indicates the importance and role of connective leaders, symbolism, and management of emotions in IFP.

## Literature Review

The appearance of a new form of participation in a political process stems from, among other things, technological advancement. In the 1990s, the widespread use of information and communication technology (ICT) in public services<sup>288</sup> and the integration of social media platforms by anti-austerity movements<sup>289</sup> confirmed that digital tools became equally important as traditional forms of political participation. One of the most widespread forms of participation in digital space is the manifestation of social demands. All such forms of activity are recognized as innovative forms of protest (hereinafter: IFP), e.g., the use of social media. IFP creates a collective identity through photos, likes, or comments that users post online<sup>290</sup>. These digital forms of protest guarantee unique opportunities and the lack of repressions from law enforcement and state officers. They also gather people around the world, regardless of time and space barriers. As a result, protests in social media became one of the main forms of contentious politics, recognized as equal to other political rights and freedoms. For that reason, IFP may be the target of the same limitations as, for example, the right of peaceful assembly, freedom of speech, and press<sup>291</sup>.

Researchers frequently analyze IFP based on case studies as examples. Richard Bonneau, Melanie Langer, Megan Metzger, Jonathan Nagler, Joanna Sterling, and Joshua Tucker address the issue in terms of exchanging tactical information while directing the protest and using emotions, such as anger, to motivate

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<sup>286</sup> Joanna Rak, Karolina Owczarek, *Freedom of Assembly at Stake: The Warsaw Police's Partisanship During Polish Protests in Times of Pandemic*, "Studia Securitatis", Vol. 16, No. 2, 2022, p. 172

<sup>287</sup> Joanna Rak, Maciej Skrzypek, *PROFILE: why have social mobilizations for women's reproductive rights in Poland failed?*, "Social Movement Studies", 2023, pp. 1-8

<sup>288</sup> Ann Macintosh, *E-Democracy and E-Participation Research in Europe*, "Digital Government. Integrated Series In Information Systems", Vol 17, 2008, Springer, Boston, [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-0-387-71611-4\\_5](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-0-387-71611-4_5), pp. 85-102

<sup>289</sup> Donatella Della Porta, Alice Mattoni, *Social Networking Sites in Pro-democracy, and Anti-austerity Protests: Some Thoughts from a Social Movement Perspective*, "Social media, politics and the state", Routledge, London and New York, 2014, pp. 39-63

<sup>290</sup> Paolo Gerbaudo, Emiliano Treré, *In search of the 'we' of social media activism: introduction to the special issue on social media and protest identities Information*. "Communication&Society", Vol. 18, 2015, pp. 865-871, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2015.1043319>

<sup>291</sup> Joanna Rak, Roman Bäcker, *Theorising struggles between neo-militant democracies and their enemies*, "Neo-militant Democracies in Post-communist Member States of the European Union", Routledge, London and New York, 2022, p. 8

people to strike<sup>292</sup>. They emphasize that social media messages are emotional and motivational to encourage or discourage protesters from taking further actions. The paper shows the importance of generating emotions during protests. IFP prefers emotional messages over rational ones. IFP posts can consciously be constructed in a way to enrage their audience and motivate people to action. This has a positive influence on the motivation of the protest participants, but it may also raise a question about the reasons for which someone joins the IFP. Is it a desire to express one's disagreement and consciously fight for rights, an action triggered by strong emotions, or a desire to follow a specific temporary trend that arose with the mass publication of AWS-related posts by well-known personalities?

Ruben Enikolopov, Alexey Makarin, and Maria Petrova pointed out that IFP actions boosted the activity on the VK platform<sup>293</sup> during a wave of political protests and electoral fraud in parliamentary elections in Russia in December 2011. They proved that increased activity on the VK platform translated into a growing number of protesters. Enikolopov, Makarin, and Petrova confirmed that the benefits of celebrity involvement in the IFP were also related to the increased activity generated by those supporting the protest. The use of hashtags related to the protest helped to gather a new group of observers who supported the protest. This could build their online recognition and generate potential income. Enikolopov, Makarin, and Petrova's observations provided knowledge about the importance of IFP in undemocratic states, where forms of contentious politics characteristic of democratic systems do not work. They also pointed out that IFPs are becoming an especially important channel for the flow of information in the case of protests in countries where the government controls traditional media. The situation also occurred in Poland with IFP playing a crucial role in sharing information. It was particularly important as fully partisan public media hardly mentioned or completely ignored the protests.

Donatella Della Ratta and Augusto Valeriani have analyzed the Internet's role in the Arab uprising. They proved that technology was not the most important in IFP. Instead, it was the culture created by users that permitted discussions between different types of activists. They also presented a new approach to leadership, adapting the concept of connective leadership in management to social movement studies<sup>294</sup>. According to the definition, connective leaders are more aware of interdependency and diverse opportunities in contrast to traditional leaders. They are characterized by a connective perspective, combining interdependence and diversity with their advantages. Jean Lipanm-Blumen and Harold J. Leavitt distinguished three types of connective leaders: Conductors/hands-on leaders (have expert knowledge), Patrons (a kind of high-level intermediary who serves as a link between the group and director positions), and Keepers-of-the-flame (they recruit further groups when the first one has completed its activities)<sup>295</sup>. It means that connective leaders can take on different roles considering their skills or connections with others. In social movement studies, in the context of IFP, connective leaders may be partially associated with an individual or an organization. Nevertheless, they bring a fresh approach to protests by using IFP and their outreach to spread information about protests. They provide a bridge between the traditional form of protests and IFP. Leaders motivate and sustain their audience's commitment to the cause. They also act as gatekeepers to verify pieces of information and share those that are most relevant<sup>296</sup>. Through their contacts with people responsible for organizing strikes, they can act as intermediaries, i.e., representing the characteristics of the Patrons.

The literature points to the importance of using symbols during protests, which bond protesters<sup>297</sup>. Because IFP communication takes place on the Internet where the audience is diffused, it is important that

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<sup>292</sup> Richard Bonneau, Melanie Langer, Megan Metzger, Jonathan Nagler, Joanna Sterling, Joshua Tucker, *How Social Media Facilitates Political Protest: Information, Motivation, and Social Networks*, "Advances in Political Psychology", Vol. 39, 2018, pp. 85-118, DOI: 10.1111/pops.12478

<sup>293</sup> Ruben Enikolopov, Alexey Makarin, Maria Petrova, *Social Media and Protest Participation: Evidence From Russia*, "Econometrica", Vol. 88, 2020, pp. 1479-1514

<sup>294</sup> Donatella Della Ratta, Augusto Valeriani, *Remixing the spring! Connective leadership and read-write practices in the 2011 Arab uprisings*, "CyberOrient. Online Journal of the Virtual Middle East", Vol. 6, 2012, p. 291

<sup>295</sup> Jean Lipanm-Blumen, Harold J. Leavitt, *Hot Groups and Connective Leaders*, "Organizational Dynamics", Vol. 38, 2009, pp. 225-228

<sup>296</sup> Donatella Della Ratta, Augusto Valeriani, *Remixing the spring! Connective leadership and read-write practices in the 2011 Arab uprisings*, "CyberOrient. Online Journal of the Virtual Middle East", Vol. 6, 2012, p. 291

<sup>297</sup> Maciej Kowalewski, *Street protests in times of COVID-19: adjusting tactics and marching 'as usual'*, "Social Movement Studies", Vol. 20, 2021, pp. 759-760, DOI: 10.1080/14742837.2020.1843014

protests of this type also have their symbolism to unite groups of users. The Internet is a visual medium, so it is even more crucial to have identification in the form of symbols. Experiences of AWS confirm that symbolic actions united protesters, not only those who participated in traditional forms of protests but also Internet users involved in IFP. For instance, they used the symbol of lightning, which meant disagreement with limiting women's reproductive rights. Social media users published posts with photos of the lightning or included the symbol as an emoji in the text. This distinguished them from other users, and those who supported the protest could identify who also did. However, in addition to this, users used hashtags such as #StrajkKobiet and #PiekłoKobiet. At the same time, this increased the possibility of the post reaching a wider audience. It is worth noting that the main organizer of the protest, the National Women's Strike, had experience in creating such actions. In 2016-2017, when the so-called 'Black protest' took place, participants were dressed in black, and their symbol was a black umbrella<sup>298</sup>. This indicates that the organizers were aware of the importance of organizing symbolic actions and decided to do so for AWS. The Internet, where IFP takes place, is a platform promoting influencers and celebrities. They express their views on topics important to society, such as ecology or vaccination, as experienced during the coronavirus pandemic. It was no different with the restriction of women's reproductive rights and AWS. Polish celebrities publicly supported AWS and joined protests in both traditional and IFP formats. They encouraged people to participate in the protests by publishing posts about the TK ruling. They also used hashtags and symbolism associated with AWS.

Celebrities became connective leaders responsible for spreading information about the traditional protest mobilization - the place and time of the gathering<sup>299</sup>. Given the diffusion of networks, it is difficult to identify a single leader solely adopting IFP, so the role of idols and well-known people who join protests to gather and lead people reached by their posts was important<sup>300</sup>. The statements posted by connective leaders strengthened the group and its legitimacy in achieving the demands manifested. Therefore, although the leader of AWS was Marta Lempart, who was also one of the leaders of the National Women's Strike, the support of connective leaders who guided smaller groups of protesters also proved valuable<sup>301</sup>. It is worth noting that connective leaders also influence public opinion. Therefore, this study is essential to discover how Polish female celebrities shaped their audience's opinion and responsibility for the situation in the country. Moreover, because the study subjects are women, they also influenced the actions of other female protest leaders due to their self-identification with the group of protesters<sup>302</sup>. IFP were especially visible in Poland in 2020-2021 due to the COVID-19 restrictions. During the threat of infection, IFPs were useful for people who could not physically participate in traditional forms of protest. IFP accompanied and, in a way, complemented traditional forms of protest that took place in the streets almost all over the country. Therefore, the relevance of IFP during the AWS should not be underestimated.

To sum up, the lack of knowledge about shaping the thinking of protesters by connective leaders using IFP is identified as the research gap. This study provides knowledge and indicates the trigger relevant to the target. It also indicates the relationship between the use of IFP and repression by state officers. IFP can be an extension or a complement of traditional forms of strike. They also share specific characteristics, which, in the case of IFP, can be strengthened due to the fact of protesting online. Considering the visual importance of online messages, symbolism is more valuable in IFP. On the Internet, it is easier for users to identify protest participants through strike-related symbolism. Symbols are also used and promoted by connective leaders. Provided they are well-known and trusted, they can offer interpretation of facts and promote information flow through hashtags. This is also intended to reach a broader audience and encourage participation in protests in

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<sup>298</sup> *Idem*

<sup>299</sup> Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy, Mayer N. Zald, Ann Arbor, *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements. Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings*, Cambridge University Press, 1996; Donatella della Porta und Mario Diani, *Social movements. An introduction*, Blackwell Publishers, Oxford, 1999, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11577-000-0016-8>

<sup>300</sup> Melucci Alberto, *Challenging codes. Connective action in the information age*, Cambridge University Press, New York 1996

<sup>301</sup> Donatella Della Ratta, Augusto Valeriani, *Remixing the spring! Connective leadership and read-write practices in the 2011 Arab uprisings*, "CyberOrient. Online Journal of the Virtual Middle East", Vol. 6, 2012, p. 291

<sup>302</sup> Bonneau Richard, Langer Melanie, Metzger Megan, Nagler Jonathan, Sterling Joanna, Tucker Joshua, *How Social Media Facilitates Political Protest: Information, Motivation, and Social Networks*, "Advances in Political Psychology", Vol. 39, 2018, p. 94, DOI: 10.1111/pops.12478

defense of rights. Connective leaders can take on different roles to shape opinions, motivate, or inform people. When consciously creating their posts conveying emotional charge, they can manage emotions among members of their audience.

## Materials and Methods

The concentration on protestors' reactions to repressions stems from Gerschewski's theory that the latter is one of the pillars of autocratic political regime stability<sup>303</sup>. This has been characteristic of ruling elites in Poland since 2015<sup>304</sup>. In response to a decision that limited the sovereignty of political nations, the level of unconventional participation increased<sup>305</sup>, supported by the IFP. Therefore, the authors seek to discover the level of coherency of IFP and traditional protests during the pandemic period. IFP coherency means the reference to the trajectory of traditional forms of protest, the similarity of manifested goals, targeting guilty individuals, and the mobilization to participate in demonstrations in public space and IFP. The high level of coherency means that IFP is a supplement for traditional protests, with similar goals and trajectory. In turn, when the level of coherency is lower, IFP might transform into a separate form of contentious politics. It depends on the genesis of the protest with different goals, trajectories, and measures. Considering the reach of posts on social media, the IFP content became more influential than that of mass media as regards the public debate on the tightening of the abortion law. Therefore, the authors also seek to explore who was blamed for the tightening of the abortion law in Poland. For that reason, the research questions were as follows: 1) What is the relationship between the use of IFP and repressions? 2) Who is the target of IFP? The answer to the first question allows the authors to determine the level of coherency of IFP's content with AWS's trajectory. In turn, the answer to the second question allows the authors to examine how the target of IFP changed during the AWS.

The study draws on the following methods: process tracing to determine whether repression by law enforcement caused a public reaction against those measures and qualitative analysis of sources to determine the content of posts on Instagram. The authors analyzed 450 Instagram posts (photos and videos) published by Polish female celebrities and media content related to AWS's protests between October 19, 2020, and February 8, 2021. Most of the posts published referred to gatherings in Warsaw. Therefore, the authors decided to analyze protests organized in the capital. Female celebrities were selected considering that they are presenting themselves as representatives of victims of the tightening of the abortion law in Poland. The celebrities referred to such values as sisterhood and solidarity with all women whose reproductive rights were limited. Moreover, most of them participated in protests in person.

The authors also modified the engagement Rate index (hereinafter: Erm), a well-known social media analysis<sup>306</sup>. In that is, any form of interaction with posts is another value, considering that impact on content posts' positioning. According to ERm's provisions, interactions' values (1 for any reactions; 3 for users' comments) are summarized and divided by the number of profile fans and percent as results in percent. Each value above 1,0 means that the post reached an audience more significant than the number of followers. The higher the ERm, the greater the number of ERm applied to indicate how female celebrities' posts engaged their audience and decided the reach of each material. This index was adopted to compare interaction among posts over the weeks and change the target of IFP. 
$$ER_m = \frac{[(comments*3)+(reactions*1)]*100\%}{number\ of\ followers}$$

The choice of female celebrity groups is based on their exposure activities to the protection of women's reproductive rights in social media. The authors selected the most engaged individuals according to

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<sup>303</sup> Johannes Gerschewski, *The three pillars of stability: Legitimation, repression, and co-optation in autocratic regimes*, "Comparing autocracies in the early Twenty-first Century", London and New York, Routledge, 2015, pp. 58-83

<sup>304</sup> Wojciech Sadurski, *Poland's constitutional breakdown*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2019; Radoslaw Markowski, *Creating authoritarian clientelism: Poland after 2015*, "Hague Journal on the Rule of Law", Vol. 11, 2019, pp. 111-132  
Roman Bäcker, Joanna Rak, *Trajektoria trwania opancerzonych demokracji*, "Studia nad autorytaryzmem i totalitaryzmem", Vol. 41, No. 3, 2019, pp. 63-82

<sup>305</sup> Joanna Rak, Roman Bäcker, *The Role of Cognitive and Emotional Factors in Demobilization: The Pro-choice Protest Movement Activity in Poland*, "Sociologia", Vol. 2, 2023; Joanna Rak, and Maciej Skrzypek, *Op. cit.*

<sup>306</sup> Maciej Skrzypek, *Polish Deputies Support to the Anti-vaccination Movement in Social Media. The Case of Confederation Leaders*, "Digital Communication and Populism in Times of Covid-19. Studies in Digital Politics and Governance", Springer, Cham, [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-33716-1\\_8](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-33716-1_8)

media coverage of celebrities' activities in this issue. Content from the following outlets was considered: kobieta.onet.pl, vogue.pl, wysokieobcasy.pl and vizez.pl. The selection was also based on the celebrities' previous experience in social issues, like Maja Ostaszewska and Martyna Wojciechowska.

The next criteria were a catalog of the following hashtags #PiekłoKobiet, #StrajkKobiet, #prawakobiet, #jeszczebędzieprzepiękniejeszczebędzienormalnie, which were familiar for official AWS's communication. Hashtags are used to improve the exposure of content on social media. The authors selected Instagram as a platform where female celebrities distribute their abortion-related content, considering the popularity of this social media in Poland.

Posts related to the AWS were identified based on their content, such as videos or photos from the strikes, the content referring to the strikes, or hashtags related to the AWS, e.g., #StrajkKobiet or #PiekłoKobiet. Based on this, the authors analyzed the content of the selected posts and created a database in which they included entities or people to whom the celebrities referred in their posts. The authors noticed 23 targets of the posts, including TK, Law and Justice Party, state authorities, Roman Catholic Church, politicians, police, Jarosław Kaczyński (leader of Law and Justice Party), the government, state, Kaya Godet (Polish anti-abortion activist), ruling elite, Confederation Party, Patriarchy, Prime Minister, council members, deputy prime minister, Kinga Duda (relative of President), nationalists, prosecutor's office, Civil Platform, fascists, Robert Bączkiewicz (leader of the March of Independence Association) and Julia Przyłębska (leader of TK). The analysis has shown that 276 posts out of 450 did not indicate any target. Therefore, the remaining 174 posts were the basis for further analysis.

### **The Background of the All-Woman's Strike in Poland**

At the beginning of the 2000s, pro-choice groups institutionalized their structures as Manifas and developed online initiatives. However, every attempt to deal with binding regulations failed<sup>307</sup>. As a result, that issue disappeared from public debate until March 2016, when the Polish Church called for the 'full protection of human life', which triggered efforts to tighten the abortion law by the Pro-Right to Life Foundation (Pol. Fundacja Pro -Prawo do Życia) and Ordo Iuris Institute for Legal Culture (Pol. Instytut na rzecz Kultury Prawnej Ordo Iuris). Both institutions established the 'Stop Abortion' Committee which prepared a draft act submitted to the Sejm on October 3, 2016. In response, almost 100,000 people took to the streets in protest. Mass demonstrations called 'Black protests', occurred in 118 Polish and 50 European cities, Canada, Kenya, and China. Finally, the Sejm rejected the draft act, but at the same time, the ruling party declared to begin the preparation of an 'unborn life' protection program. This wave of mobilization ended in January 2018 when Organization Gals for Gals registered its name as a trademark. This led to mass dissatisfaction and mobilization. For the first time, in 2016-2018, supporters of abandoning the abortion law used IFP to support protesters in real-time. The rejected proposition of the 'Stop Abortion' Committee may be recognized as a partial success. However, in October 2020, ruling elites followed the decision of the TK to reject the most often-used premise to terminate pregnancy<sup>308</sup>. On October 22, 2020, the TK decision triggered the largest number of demonstrations in the modern history of Poland. Despite strict coronavirus-related restrictions, when the right to peaceful assembly was suspended, opponents of the abortion law tightening took to the streets. While considering threats to public health and being afraid of punishment for participation in an illegal manifestation, some protesters decided to use IFP. Therefore, the pandemic period in Poland was an apogee of developing alternative forms of political contentious.

To discover relations between traditional forms of protest and IFP, it is necessary to determine how IFP developed since the TK decision was announced on October 22, 2020, to enter into force on January 27, 2021. Early manifestations were organized on October 19, 2020, when protesters in cars blocked the area near the TK Headquarters<sup>309</sup>. On the day of the TK decision, protesters gathered in front of Jarosław Kaczyński's (leader of the ruling party) house. During the manifestation, some protesters clashed with police officers who used tear gas to prevent access to Kaczyński's residence. The Police Spokesman avoided speaking about

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<sup>307</sup> Joanna Rak, Maciej Skrzypek, *Op. cit.*, p. 3

<sup>308</sup> Lucy Martirosyan, *The feminist movement in Eastern Europe: Struggles in a changing landscape*, <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/5050/feminist-movement-europe-eurasia-ukraine-armenia-poland-georgia> (6.11.2023)

<sup>309</sup> Dawid Krawczyk, *Samochodowy protest w obronie prawa do aborcji. Strajk Kobiet pod Trybunałem Konstytucyjnym*, <https://warszawa.wyborcza.pl/warszawa/7,54420,26412741,ostra-jazda-pod-trybunalem-konstytucyjnym-strajk-kobiet-protestuje.html> (7.11.2023)

protesters throwing eggs and rocks, something that unpartisan media outlets and observatories confirmed. Therefore, the direct coercive force was used to deal with the civil disorder<sup>310</sup>. Moreover, officers arrested 15 people and accused them of participation in illegal gatherings and violation of the bodily integrity of police officers. Some of the violators were fined. On October 25, protesters organized mass demonstrations in front of and inside churches across Poland under the slogan "Word for Sunday". In response, police officers restricted access to churches.

One of the most media-covered incidents occurred in front of the Basilica of the Holy Cross in Warsaw. Inscriptions were displayed on the walls of churches, such as: "Abortion is ok", "Women's hell", "Abortion without borders", "My body ≠ Your Religion", and posters depicting a crucified pregnant woman and the slogan "Your fault, your fault, your very big fault"<sup>311</sup>. The entrance to the temple was guarded by members of nationalist organizations, including the Independence March Guard. The police reported a total of 22 protests and 79 cases of inscriptions painted on the facades of churches (including historic ones), and nearly 80 people were arrested. Some individuals interrupted the masses and put counterfeit bills in the donation tray. On October 27, through official party profiles on social media, Jarosław Kaczyński called for protecting churches against protesters whom he described as vandals. His openly polarized statement triggered further demonstrations under the slogan "This is a War". On October 29, 2020, more demonstrations were organized simultaneously near the Headquarters of Public Television and the President's Palace<sup>312</sup>. To sum up, it was the first phase of mobilization when protesters resorted to violence and transformed collective actions into civil disorder.

The turning point was October 30, when almost 100 thousand protesters in Warsaw took to the streets. In response to growing mass mobilization, counter-protesters, such as hooligans and nationalists, used violence against supporters of less restrictive abortion laws. Police detained 37 individuals of whom 35 were armed. There is evidence that the police changed the target of repression<sup>313</sup>. They also modified the strategy of protest policing. Some undercover officers were hidden in the crowd. In the face of growing social unrest, police used coercive measures to control counter-protesters, who were recognized as a threat to public order<sup>314</sup>. On the next day, other manifestations were peaceful<sup>315</sup>. The second mobilization phase ended with mass demonstrations on November 18, after Kaczyński's public speech in the Sejm. He openly compared protesters and supporters to Nazis, blamed them for the death of the unborn, and undermined the legitimacy of opposition deputies to represent the people<sup>316</sup>. At the same time, demonstrators gathered in the center of Warsaw. Police officers used tear gas against parliamentary deputies who supported protesters. As the spokesman explained, coercive measures were necessary to maintain public order<sup>317</sup>. In real-time, OKO.press journalists informed that

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<sup>310</sup> Onet, *Protest po decyzji TK w sprawie aborcji. Tłum na Żoliborzu, policja użyła gazu i zablokowała dostęp do domu Kaczyńskiego*, <https://wiadomosci.onet.pl/warszawa/aborcja-tlum-na-zoliborzu-policja-pilnuje-dostepu-do-domu-kaczynskiego/195qg2k> (7.11.2023)

<sup>311</sup> Onet, *Kolejny dzień protestów przeciw zakazowi aborcji. Kobiety manifestują w kościołach*, <https://wiadomosci.onet.pl/warszawa/aborcja-wyrok-tk-protesty-w-kosciolach/v2rwgn> (7.11.2023)

<sup>312</sup> PAP, *Protest przeciwko wyrokowi TK ws. aborcji zakończył się pod Pałacem Prezydenckim*, <https://www.pap.pl/aktualnosci/news%2C746911%2Cprotest-przeciwko-wyrokowi-tk-ws-aborcji-zakonczyl-sie-pod-palacem> (7.11.2023)

<sup>313</sup> Polsat News, *100 tys. protestujących w Warszawie". Pseudokibice zaatakowali manifestujących*, <https://www.polsatnews.pl/wiadomosc/2020-10-30/strajk-kobiet-w-polsce-zandarmeria-wojskowa-na-ulicach-i-mobilizacja-srodowisk-narodowych/> (7.11.2023)

<sup>314</sup> TOK.FM, *"Dziś w całej Warszawie z bram wybiegają narodowcy". Ataki na rondzie de Gaulle'a i Dmowskiego*, <https://www.tokfm.pl/Tokfm/7,103085,26463192,dzis-w-calej-warszawie-z-bram-wybiegaja-narodowcy-ataki-na.html> (7.11.2023)

<sup>315</sup> Kacper Sulowski, *Dziady na Mickiewicza. Kolejny protest pod domem Kaczyńskiego, byli Zalewski, Przybysz, Szpak.*, <https://warszawa.wyborcza.pl/warszawa/7,54420,26465861,dziady-na-mickiewicza-kolejny-protest-pod-domem-jaroslaw-kaczynskiego.html?disableRedirects=true> (7.11.2023)

<sup>316</sup> Natalia Bogucka, *Gesty i słowa zdradziły Kaczyńskiego? Ekspertka od mowy ciała wyjaśnia*, <https://www.o2.pl/informacje/ekspertka-od-mowy-ciala-komentuje-ostre-wystapienie-jaroslaw-kaczynskiego-6577284237400864a> (7.11.2023)

<sup>317</sup> TVN24, *Funkcjonariusze bez mundurów, gaz łzawiący i zatrzymania. Jak przebiegał protest w stolicy*, <https://tvn24.pl/polska/nagrania-ze-strajku-kobiet-w-warszawie-interwencja-nieumundurowanych-policjantow-gaz-lzawiacy-palki-zatrzymania-4755356> (7.11.2023)

uniformed anti-terrorist officers attacked protesters. The Police spokesman called the use of violence unreasonable and condemned the incident. However, the public noted that the response by the police and anti-terrorist squads was inadequate<sup>318</sup>. On that day in Warsaw, police detained 499 people<sup>319</sup>. In this phase of protests, a new threat to public order came from hooligans and nationalists. In response to the growing threat, law enforcement changed the rules of protest policing from negotiated management to escalated force, including illegal repressions. In response, the number of IFPs increased, which was confirmed by the empirical part of the research.

After November 19, the protest policing by law enforcement services continued despite the demobilization of protesters, the abandonment of violence by gathering members, and the peaceful character of gatherings. Polish deputies engaged themselves in mediation between protesters and police officers<sup>320</sup> and protecting detained individuals<sup>321</sup>. Police officers still used coercive measures, even though protesters avoided clashes with the police. The coercive force was also used against deputies who supported protesters<sup>322</sup>. The police illegally raided the Warsaw University of Technology. The police explained that police officers were not familiar with the city<sup>323</sup>. Then, the number of demonstrations decreased, which was a sign of demobilization. In that period, police officers did not change their repressive strategy. The last phase started after TK's decision entered into force on January 27, 2021. Mass manifestations were organized less often than before<sup>324</sup>. The march on January 27, 2021, was peaceful and police officers did not block its participants. Therefore, the last phase was the time of demobilization and futile attempts to re-mobilize protesters. The police changed their strategy after the TK published its ruling.

To sum up, almost 30 years of debate about the extent and scope of abortion law in Poland ended with the TK ruling that the most common premise of abortion was unconstitutional. In response, opponents took to the streets despite corona-related restrictions. They also used alternative forms to support the protest's more stringent abortion law. Although protesters started manifesting their views peacefully in the second and third waves of protests, repressions against them continued. In the further part of the article, the authors examine the frequency of IFP and their targets as a response to repressions.

### **Innovative Forms of Protests During All-Women Strikes in Poland**

The authors have distinguished four phases of the protests: from October 19 to October 29, 2020 (phase I), from October 30 to November 18 (phase II), from November 19, 2020, to January 26, 2021 (phase

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<sup>318</sup> Radosław Gruca, *NEWS OKO.press. Policjant, który bił pałką demonstrantów, miał już problemy z prawem*, <https://oko.press/news-oko-press-policjant-ktory-bil-palka-to-antyterrorysta-mial-juz-problemy-z-prawem> (7.11.2023). Wojciech Czuchnowski, *"Wydział Chaos" w akcji. Kim są policjanci w cywilu, którzy palowali protest kobiet*, <https://wyborcza.pl/7,75398,26527953,wydzial-chaos-w-akcji-kim-sa-policjanci-w-cywilu-ktorzy.html?disableRedirects=true> (7.11.2023)

<sup>319</sup> Onet, *Policja komentuje wczorajszy protest i sytuację z liderem Lewicy. "Nagranie wyraźnie pokazuje, kto jest winny"*, <https://wiadomosci.onet.pl/kraj/strajk-kobiet-policja-komentuje-sytuacje-z-wlodzimierzem-czarzastym/e081v15> (7.11.2023)

<sup>320</sup> TVN24, *Manifestacja w obronie aktywistki przed sądem. Nerwowa atmosfera, mediowały posłanki*, <https://tvn24.pl/tvnwarszawa/wola/warszawa-pikieta-przed-sadem-okregowym-w-sprawie-zatrzymania-aktywistki-4755145> (7.11.2023). Błażej Makarewicz, *Strajk Kobiet w Warszawie. Starcia z policją, gaz i zatrzymania*, <https://wiadomosci.radiozet.pl/polska/polityka/Strajk-Kobiet-w-Warszawie-28-listopada-2020.-Kolejny-dzien-protestow.-Relacja-na-zywo> (7.11.2023). Radosław Gruca, *Protestujący blokują radiowóz, policja odcina kolejne ulice. Strajk Kobiet na ulicach Warszawy*, <https://oko.press/rondo-dmowskiego-rondem-praw-kobiet-ruszył-protest-przeciwko-wyroкови-tk-julii-przylebskiej-live> (7.11.2023)

<sup>321</sup> Dziennik Gazeta Prawna, *Strajk Kobiet w Warszawie: Zaczęło się pokojowo. Na koniec znowu przepychanki i gaz łzawiący [ZDJĘCIA]*, <https://www.gazetaprawna.pl/wiadomosci/artykuly/1497545,strajk-kobiet-w-warszawie-zaczelo-sie-pokojowo-na-koniec-znowu-przepychanki-i-gaz-lzawiacy-zdjecia.html> (7.11.2023).

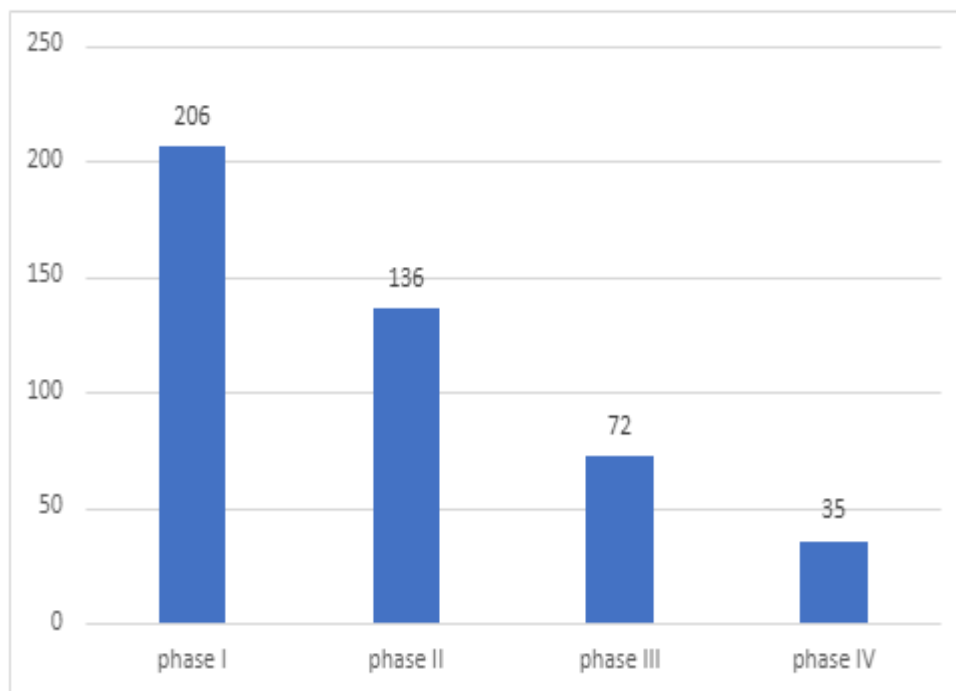
<sup>322</sup> Malwina Zaborowska, *Strajk Kobiet: Kolejny dzień protestów. W stolicy policja użyła gazu łzawiącego*, [https://www.rmfm24.pl/raporty/raport-strajk-kobiet-kobiet-kolejny-dzien-protestow-w-stolicy-policja-uzyl,nId,4883402#crp\\_state=1](https://www.rmfm24.pl/raporty/raport-strajk-kobiet-kobiet-kolejny-dzien-protestow-w-stolicy-policja-uzyl,nId,4883402#crp_state=1) (7.11.2023)

<sup>323</sup> Maciek Piasecki, *Policja wtargnęła na teren Politechniki goniąc demonstrantów. Dwie osoby połamały ręce, nogi*, <https://oko.press/policja-wtargnela-na-teren-politechniki> (7.11.2023)

<sup>324</sup> Joanna Rak, *The Impact of Morally Injurious Events on the Dynamics of Mobilization for Women's Rights in Poland*, "Przegląd Politologiczny", Vol. 3, 2022, pp. 35-45



III) and after January 27 to February 8, 2021 (phase IV). The authors have analyzed posts published in each phase and indicate an average ERm for these periods. Figure 1 shows the number of posts in each phase, including AWS-related posts published.



**Figure 1. Number of Posts in Certain Periods of Protests in General<sup>325</sup>**

The largest number of posts was published in phase I (206 posts), especially from October 25 (mass demonstrations in front of churches) to October 28 (after the publishing of Kaczyński's speech) – 121. The frequency was like the mass mobilization during the AWS. The average of ERm posts in phase I was 3,73, which means that these posts reached an audience almost four times bigger than the average of female celebrities' followers. The use of IFP depended on the situation in Polish cities. In phase I, posts that did not specify the guilty dominated. It was also the result of the protester's activity, which focused on car protests, blocking Kaczyński's house, and church protests. In phase II, female celebrities published 136 AWS-related posts, with an average ERm of 2,37. Their decreasing number and lower audience than in phase I did not reflect the growing mobilization after October 30, 2020. However, in this phase, the exposure of the target group was higher than before. Therefore, female celebrities, apart from reporting on protesters' activity, blamed people responsible for the tightening of the abortion law. In phase III (72 materials; average ERm – 1,88) and IV (36 materials; average ERm – 2,92), the number of posts rapidly decreased, which referred to the progressive demobilization of the AWS.

From October 18, 2021, to mid-February 2022, the total number of posts was lower than in phase II, which was the result of IFP user demobilization, despite a temporary increase of ERm. In that period, posts referred to the use of force by the police and opponents of abortion law tightening being arrested. Female celebrities continued their support. Therefore, during phase II, the expected frequency of posts, the trajectory of IFP, and traditional forms of protest showed very high coherency. Both types of contentious politics used the same symbols and slogans, such as lightning.

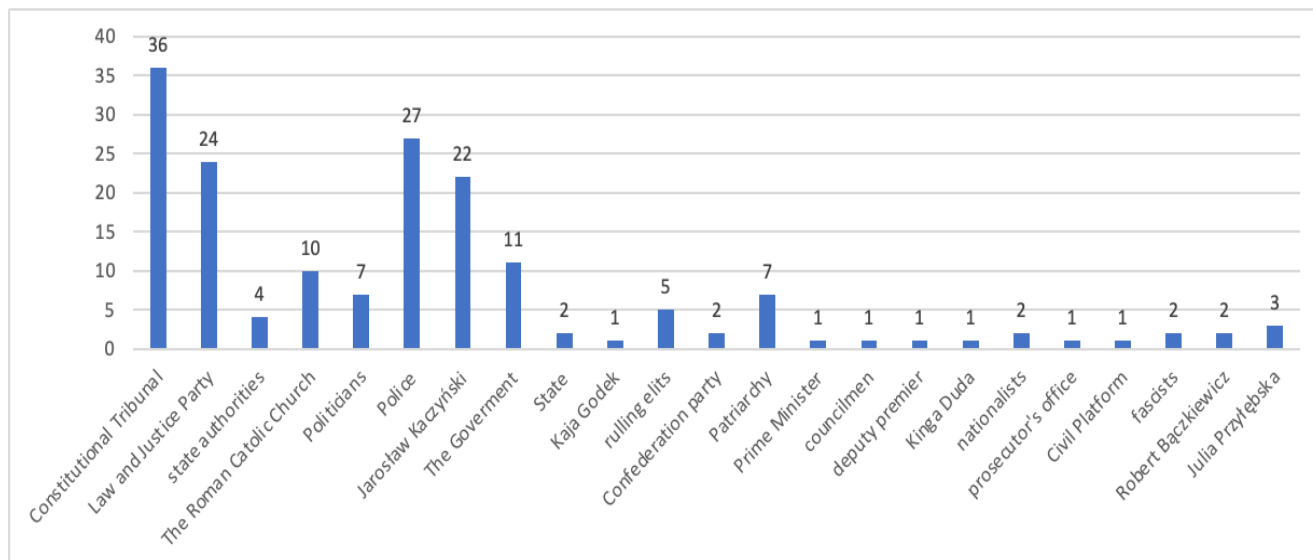
This created a sense of community and solidarity between protesters and users, especially the audience of female celebrities' social media profiles. Moreover, there were some differences in goals between street protests and female celebrities' posts. Another proof of decreasing IFP users' demobilization is a decline in average ERm over the phases. The lowest values occurred in phase III when posts reached more than two times smaller audiences than in phase I. Even if in the last phase the temporary audience increased, the number

<sup>325</sup> Source: Authors own research

of users was still lower than at the beginning. Therefore, IFP during the AWS was a coherent and supplementing form of contentious politics in Poland. Using IFP allows opponents of the tightening of the abortion law to boost user engagement and gather the largest audience around the issue. At the same time, when mass demobilization occurred, the number of posts decreased. Considering the number of posts and their ERM, public attention around the AWS dropped over the weeks, what is the proof of demobilization IFP?

After indicating the trajectory of IFP and their relations with the mass mobilization of the AWS, the authors examined who was the target of alternative forms of contentious politics. Firstly, it is worth pointing out that the 276 posts did not indicate the target. The posts accounted for most of the material analyzed. These posts focused on IFP, social demands, and values rather than blaming individuals or institutions. Therefore, IFP focused public opinion on values, such as the protection of reproduction rights, freedom of choice to terminate pregnancy, and women in general. The literature on the subject indicated that creating emotional posts was beneficial for motivating protesters<sup>326</sup>. Unfortunately, such posts constituted the minority. Female celebrities focused on promoting values, which were expected to drive the protest and people reasonably defending their rights.

Secondly, the target of IFP changed over the weeks. In the posts analyzed, targets of IFP included most often TK (36 posts for the entire period studied), police (27 posts for the entire period analyzed), Law and Justice Party (24 posts for the entire period analyzed), and Jarosław Kaczyński (22 posts for the entire period analyzed). This is shown in Figure 2.



**Figure 2. Targets of IFP<sup>327</sup>**

Figure 2 also indicates the number of posts about other institutions or individuals targeted by Polish female celebrities in their posts. Figure 1 shows that Polish female celebrities associated the situation in the country with the institution adjudicating on the matter, as well as the ruling party and its leader. On the other hand, posts that mentioned the police responded to measures applied by the police during the protests, among other things, the use of tear gas by police officers.

The authors juxtaposed the number of posts about the most common IFP targets (TK, Law and Justice, Jarosław Kaczyński, and police) published in a given period and the phases of protests, as shown in Table 1.

<sup>326</sup> Richard Bonneau, Melanie Langer, Megan Metzger, Nagler Jonathan, Sterling Joanna, Tucker Joshua, *How Social Media Facilitates Political Protest: Information, Motivation, and Social Networks*, “Advances in Political Psychology”, Vol. 39, 2018, p. 94, DOI: 10.1111/pops.12478

<sup>327</sup> Source: Authors own research

Targets of IFP	The highest number of posts in one period in one phase	Number of total posts	ERm	Phase
TK	31	46	3,7	First
Law and Justice/ruling elites	9	63	4,29	Second
Jarosław Kaczyński	10	20	2,81	Second
Police	7	28	2,33	Second
	11			Third/Four

**Table 1. Number of Posts in One Phase About Targets of IFP<sup>328</sup>**

The table shows that the largest number of posts in a single period was published in phase I (19 to October 29), and the number of posts on TK was 31. It is worth noting that on October 23, eighteen posts were published. In total, female celebrities blamed TK 46 times, and the average ERm for posts related to TK is 3,7.

However, the largest number of posts overall analyzed period target Law and Justice/ruling elites. In total, 63 posts about the ruling camp were published, with an average ERm of 4,29, which is the highest value for all analyzed groups. Therefore, most interactions involved ruling camps, meaning these posts were the most engaged. It led to the observation that the audience on Instagram often met posts that blamed the ruling camp more than the other groups. Most of this content was published from October 31 to November 17, while in the entire phase II, nine posts were published. The next target was Jarosław Kaczyński (**20 posts**), the leader of the Law and Justice, who was mentioned in most posts published from October 31 to November 17, while ten posts were published throughout phase II. The average ERm for posts blamed him was 2,81. Kaczyński was blamed rather than his party and posts related to him had a lower audience than posts related to Law and Justice.

The police were the target of 28 posts, mainly from October 31 to November 17 and November 28, 2020, to January 26, 2021. However, considering all phases of the protests examined by the authors, most posts about the police were published in phase III (11 posts). The average ERm for this material is 2,33, which is the lowest value of each group. It means that posts blaming police officers reached the smallest audience, almost two times smaller than content related to the ruling camp.

Referring to all phases identified, almost all posts that mentioned the TK as the body responsible for the problem were published in Phase I. It coincided with the announcement that the TK would rule on the abortion law in Poland. This caused negative emotions expressed in female celebrities in posts. Most of them were addressed to the ruling party and its leader and were published in phase II when the party leader made negative comments about the protesters. In contrast, the largest number of posts blaming the police were published in phase III, which resorted to arrests and the use of tear gas.

IFP target changed during the AWS because of various incidents. In phase I, when female celebrities posted information most often, the target was the TK following its announcement on the revision of the abortion law. This aroused strong emotions among citizens. Being a constitutional body, the TK attracted much attention in phase I. A smaller number of posts mentioned the government which controlled the TK. For this reason, the former became the target of IFP. Phase II was dominated by posts about Jarosław Kaczyński and Law and Justice, the ruling party he was the chair of. This was due to Kaczyński's open criticism of the protesters and calling them vandals. In his speech, he directly attacked the protesters. This shifted negative emotions towards TK to him and his party. In the last phase, the target was the police. Police officers changed protest policing after Phase II and resorted to the use of force as a method of demonstration management, including arrest. This made protesters concerned about their health and lives, which they expressed in their posts. The posts blamed the ruling camp for generating the highest user interactions, while material related to police officers had the lowest. Moreover, it turned out that changing the target of IFP led to declining user interactions and audience of posts, which did not serve to counter demobilization.

<sup>328</sup> Source: Authors own research

Empirical evidence confirmed the high level of coherency of IFP's content with AWS, especially in the symbolic pool. However, it did not guarantee maintained mobilization, which, like protests, took on the street declining since the end of phase II. Demobilization in the case of both forms of protest stemmed from different factors. Regarding IFP, it was the result of the declining number of abortion-related posts and lower public interactions with these materials. Female celebrities also changed the target of IFP over the weeks, which was motivated by AWS's trajectory. In the beginning, users blamed TK as a body, which was decided. Then, when members of the ruling elites justified and supported TK's decision, female celebrities' attention was moved to these politicians, especially the Law and Justice Party leader. In the last phase, when police officers changed the rules of protest policing, more posts were targeted as complaints of restriction of reproductive rights in Poland. In turn, the demobilization of traditional forms of protest stemmed from the following reasons: armed counter-protesters who used physical violence against demonstrators, changing protest policing into escalated force. At the end of January 2021, entered into force TK's decision triggered mass frustrations and moral injuries among protesters. Considering the high coherency of IFP's content with AWS's trajectory related to demobilization protests on the streets, the latter also impacts publishing frequency and public attention on posts.

## Conclusions

To sum up, this case study delivered several conclusions about using IFP. The analysis proved that law enforcement and state officers did not respond to protesters using IFP. No forms of repression were implemented against the protesters, e.g., they still had access to the network, or AWS-related hashtags that helped them to reach their audience. Therefore, in comparison with traditional forms of protest, IFP is less vulnerable to repressions from state officers. It stems from the fact that users of this form did not have any contact with law enforcement. They could express their disagreement which was not met with any response from the police. Since IFP is independent of place and time, it was particularly important during the coronavirus pandemic. Among other things, people were concerned about their health, and by using IFP they could comfortably and fearlessly express their support to AWS. This form was also helpful for people with disabilities who could not participate in the traditional form of strike. Therefore, IFPs were useful for protesters because they could express their continuous support that was visible to all Internet users. They used a special template or a set of AWS-related symbols on their profile photo.

As noted in the literature, IFP has an impact on the success of a protest<sup>329</sup>. This study confirms the importance of using symbolism in IFP. It is motivated by the emotions that accompany protesters. IFP can be used by celebrities to comment on various incidents during the protests. When the police used tear gas, celebrities referred to the facts in their posts, highlighting the subordination of the police to the ruling party. Thus, the activity and decisions made by IFP targets triggered many emotions among protesters. They were strengthened by connective leaders who motivated and encouraged their audiences to continue protesting.

Another conclusion is that IFP focused on individuals and institutions that celebrities believed were responsible for the tightening of the law on abortion and counteracting reproductive rights. State authorities were responsible for the failure to fulfill social demands, e.g., the TK (most posts in phase I, when public disapproval increased rapidly due to TK's handling of the abortion issue), Law and Justice Party, and Jarosław Kaczyński (mostly in phase II after statements were made by ruling party politicians about protesters). References to police repressive actions were less frequent. However, the police were more often referred to when they used tear gas and arrested protesters.

The change in the IFP's target was triggered by the activity of a particular body or person, which generated many emotions among protesters. The first impulse was the news that TK had started revising the abortion law. The change in target occurred when Jarosław Kaczyński, the leader of the ruling party, expressed his negative opinion about the protesters. Another target was the police who used coercive measures against the protesters. This caused female celebrities to become emotional, as expressed in their posts. The posts

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<sup>329</sup> Richard Bonneau, Melanie Langer, Megan Metzger, Jonathan Nagler, Joanna Sterling, Joshua Tucker, *How Social Media Facilitates Political Protest: Information, Motivation, and Social Networks*, "Advances in Political Psychology", Vol. 39, 2018, p. 94, DOI: 10.1111/pops.12478

related to the pronouncement included a special graphic design of a teary eye. The graphic design had a symbolic dimension not only related directly to the incident but also to the entire situation in Poland.

The analysis showed that IFP and the traditional form of protest had similar dynamics. When there were many posts about the AWS, people participated in strikes in large numbers. In contrast, protesters lost engagement when the number of posts decreased, and they stopped taking to the streets. This was done in response to the reduction of engagement on the part of connective leaders, who stopped fulfilling their role of informing and motivating their audiences. Moreover, the spread of moral injuries among protesters played a significant role in the cessation of protests. This also resulted from the failure to fulfill the demands formulated.

The high-level coherency of IFP's content with AWS's trajectory, as well as the symbols and slogans, confirmed that female celebrities had a strong connection with protesters and did not run separate forms of expressing their concerns. As a result, the IFP support to the AWS was efficient; however, it did not stop demobilization in phases III and IV. Demobilization was proven by the declining number of posts comparing the following phases and the drop in average ERm for materials in each phase. Therefore, female celebrities published over the weeks, and their content could have been more engaging. It is worth noting that any relation between the number of posts and their engagement occurred, which confirmed that lower attention from female celebrities was in line with mass demobilization, including Instagram users. In turn, the changing of the IFP target over the weeks stemmed from the activity of individuals and institutions related to the tightening of the abortion law in Poland. In the beginning, female celebrities focused their attention on the TK, as a formal executor of the decision. Then, posts focused on Kaczyński and his political camp because members of the ruling elites called to fight with protesters and justified TK's decisions. Since phase III, when the police changed their model of protest policing towards escalating force, celebrities focused on law enforcement services as supporters of the ruling elite decision. Therefore, external factors, such as decisions of political institutions and law enforcement activity determined the subject of IFP. The most engaged posts related to the ruling camp as a real decision-maker. In turn, materials that blamed police officers as a supporter of ruling elites had a lower audience. Nevertheless, celebrities reacted to state officers' response to protests by changing the targets of their posts. Finally, changing the target of IFP led to a decline in the average post engagement, which led to a drop in the audience of abortion-related content.

This article provides an empirical contribution highlighting the impact of connective leaders on their audiences. Despite the high coherency between the IFP's content and the trajectory of traditional protests, the decline in the frequency of publishing posts and the drop in public attention to these materials showed that the IFP did not stop demobilization. Therefore, besides dispersing on the street, virtual withdrawal among users occurred. This empirical study allows for broad assumptions formulated at the beginning. High coherency of IFP's content with traditional forms of protest, especially considering used slogans and symbols, express solidarity with the latter. Occurring connective leaders as the bridge between manifested social demand and users of IFP is significant, as well as mass demonstrations. However, in the case of IFP, other factors also determined the success of that form of contentious politics. Firstly, timing and frequency of publishing. Materials posted in real time and more often by a larger number of celebrities bring a higher level of public attention, measured among others by posts' engagement. Secondly, choosing a target for IFP is also significant, and changing it may lead to increasing or declining public attention. Therefore, IFP users, to improve mobilization, need to choose the subject in which decisions trigger higher public reactions.

The study discusses how IFP refers to traditional forms of protest and how the target of IFP changed over time. The study has expanded the IFP research with another case study of AWS during the COVID-19 pandemic. It also shows how useful and safe a form of protest the IFP was in the case of the AWS. The paper also offers a theoretical contribution showing that IFP are a motivating factor for protesters as the engagement in the traditional form of protest decreases. This confirms that IFP has an impact on protest success and can be an efficient extension of the traditional form of strike. The paper also confirms the validity of creating emotional posts and using protest-related symbols.

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