Protest participation - an effective tool for changing local activities in selected Polish cities

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Abstract: The right to assembly is one of the rights of citizens guaranteed by the Polish Constitution. They can collectively express their commitment in a public manner. Public gatherings can be religious, recreational, a march of support, or a celebration of some kind. Therefore, not every public gathering takes the form of a protest, which is usually rooted in some conflict. Various actors participate, such as groups of citizens versus local or central authorities, state institutions, or even international organizations, etc. The scope of the dispute can also be broad. It is important to remember that conflict, as Lewis Coser emphasized, does not always have to be destructive to society (the local community). It can lead to the search for new solutions, the development of something different, the clarification of various misunderstandings, and greater transparency.

The aim of this article is to identify the multifaceted nature of protests taking place in several of Poland's largest cities (cities with populations over 300,000) and to examine their effectiveness. The first research question is: who is the target audience for protests taking place in the city? The second question concerns the effectiveness of protests addressed directly to local authorities. In response to these questions, research hypotheses were developed. The first hypothesis states that the more protests take place, the more often they are addressed to the central government rather than the local government. The second hypothesis assumes that regardless of the topic of a local protest, their effectiveness is negligible. The research methodology is based on three stages. The first will focus on the theoretical framework. The second will focus on determining the number of protests, protest organizers, issues, and target audiences based on analysis of local press and city hall websites. The third stage will involve selecting non-governmental organizations organizing local protests and conducting interviews to assess their effectiveness.