

“We Transcend the Divide”: Protest and Music in Poland

A research project about contemporary Polish protest music



About the project

Throughout history, music has accompanied social movements championing various causes: from equality to peace. In the recent years, Poland saw a rise of many new protest movements, for example, the All-Poland’s Women’s Strike or the Committee for Defense of Democracy. The rise of such movements is accompanied by a lot of new, political music. In the past few years, many amateur and professional artists recorded new protest songs, which often got millions of views on YouTube; recent street protests in Poland also often had DJs, artists, or playlists accompanying their resistance.

What can protest music tell us about such social movements? How meaningful is music for protests? This research project tries to understand how lyrics, sound, and performances of protest music contribute to its political functions. For this, we want to talk to both artists who create protest music and protesters who listen to it.

Do you have your favorite protest songs to share with us? Have you actively participated in protests such as the Women’s Strike or similar? Do you have thoughts about how music was used in recent protests, for

example against the ruling party's policies? Have you written a protest song or created a protest playlist yourself?

If your answer to any of those questions is yes, keep reading and consider getting in touch to talk about your experiences!



About the researcher



Joanna Zienkiewicz is a PhD candidate at the University of Groningen, coming from Poland. Interested in broadly understood connections between music and politics, she previously studied how music can be used by political parties to obtain support. She received an award for 2021 best Master's thesis from the International Association for the Study of Popular Music Benelux, and she is currently funded by the Dutch Research Council (NWO) to study the types and functions of protest music in contemporary Poland.

What will be asked of you?

To participate in the study, we first ask for your informed consent. After you fill in the form, we will get in touch with you to plan a date and time for an interview.

The interview will take the form of a relaxed conversation about your experiences with protest music and your interpretations of various contemporary Polish protest songs, lasting around 60 minutes. You may expect questions such as: what song do you think best represents the Women's Strike, what do you like about it? Depending on your preference and availability, the interview can take place in person, or online, via the Google Meet platform. In case of an online meeting, you will receive a meeting invitation via email. No Google account or downloads are necessary: you can join the virtual room by simply clicking on the link. In case of a meeting in person, we will meet in a public place such as a café.

How is your data used?

The interview will be audio recorded and transcribed. By default, all interview transcripts will be anonymized: you won't be referred to with your name but only with a participant number. Any references to your identity will be removed. The audio recording of your interview will also not be shared with third parties, and it will be stored safely in a protected folder within the university workspace environment.

However, if you are an artist participating in the study, you may not wish to be anonymous. If this is the case, you have an option to indicate this in your consent form by ticking the appropriate box.

All data collected in this study will be used only for scientific purposes and academic articles. Please be aware that this research, due to its focus on protest movements and their music, addresses political matters. Because of that, the topics discussed (such as protest activity) may be considered potentially sensitive. Please note that your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You have the right not to answer questions and to withdraw at any stage without need for explanations and without consequences: if you decide to withdraw, all raw data collected will be deleted as soon as possible.

The research is primarily conducted in English, but our interviews will be in Polish. To make sure that translations of your words are accurate, in the consent form, you can additionally indicate whether you would like to receive a draft of the English translation of your interview (via email) to check it and suggest any necessary changes. You may also request a copy of the transcript of your interview in Polish, if you would like to check it and correct any possible inaccuracies.

Financing

This research is financed by the Dutch Research Council (NWO) within the [PhDs in the Humanities](#) funding scheme. The aim of this programme is to offer research talent the opportunity to obtain a doctorate and to gain promotion to academic staff positions. The project you are invited to participate in has been awarded funding in the [2022 round](#) alongside seventeen other projects in the Netherlands.



[Information about the project \(PDF\)](#)

[Consent form \(in Polish\)](#)

Contact information



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Please direct questions to:

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[Contact us!](#)

For any complaints about this study, please contact the Research Ethical Review Committee (CETO) of the Faculties of Arts, Philosophy, and Theology and Religious Studies of the University of Groningen, e-mail: ceto@rug.nl