



Balza, Tadas (2018) *The choice of repertoires in women's movement against tightening the abortion law in Krakow since 2016: inner dynamics and tensions*. [MSc].

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University  
of Glasgow | School of Social  
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MSc Russian, Central and East European Studies

Dissertation

**The Choice of Repertoires in Women's Movement Against Tightening  
the Abortion Law in Kraków Since 2016: Inner Dynamics and Tensions**

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Date of Submission: 10<sup>th</sup> September 2018

Word Count: 12789



## **Abstract**

The aim of this research is to explore different factors that influence the choice of repertoires in women's movement against tightening the abortion law in Krakow, Poland, since 2016, when mass demonstration in October mobilized hundreds of thousands of participants in more than 140 locations. Since then, the government and conservative groups tried to introduce several times and pro-choice women's activists had to innovate their approach, attract new people, and keep public's attention on the issue. Activists had to balance between building solidarity, convincing authorities of legitimacy of the cause while being limited by the resources and facing a weakening interest of the public, which live in a polarized society where various demonstrations happen almost every week. In-depth interviews with activists, analysis of Facebook groups and media reports helped understand what challenges activists face and what tensions and divisions arose inside the movement. The data showed that there is certain fatigue among participants and it is getting harder to mobilize supporters. Furthermore, there is a growing negative sentiment towards Catholic Church and its influence on policy makers. Finally, social movement created safe spaces for women to share and talk about their experience which conditioned a greater awareness of sexism.

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## Introduction

The debate about abortion in Poland started in the interwar period. Back then all abortions were illegal and were called Women's Hell (pl. *piekło kobiet*). It is a phrase that can often be found in contemporary pro-choice movement, and that was invented by famous medical doctor, translator and journalist Dr Tadeusz Boy-Żeleński who launched a campaign to decriminalize it. The women themselves were not very active. They were too embarrassed to talk about this "impure, filthy" matter as for generations they were raised to serve their country by fulfilling their duties in families; among them, by giving birth to future fighters for independence of the Homeland (Jankowska, 1993).

However, not all women were silent. Dr Justyna Budzińska-Tylicka, Irena Krzywicka, Maria Pawlikowska-Jasnorzewska were among those who joined the cause. Also, Polish lawyers declared in their 2<sup>nd</sup> Congress that they do not support penalisation of abortion. Thus finally, not without attacks from anti-abortion groups supported by the Catholic Church, abortions were legalized in 1932 in cases of rape, incest and medical indications (Jankowska, 1993). After WWII in 1956, the abortion law was liberalized as in all socialist countries: abortion was allowed until the 12<sup>th</sup> week of pregnancy on the grounds of difficult economic and social situation (Jankowska, 1991). During socialist years there were attempts to reverse that and to restrict abortions again but to no avail.

Things started to change in March 1989, when a Catholic newspaper published a draft bill for unborn child protection which banned abortion completely and both, a woman and a doctor, could be imprisoned for up to 3 years if proven they were taking part in it. During the following months, this bill was discussed in a parliamentary commission and it generated a massive media coverage as well as big protests in Warsaw, Poznań and Bydgoszcz (Jankowska, 1991). The progress with this law was interrupted for some time by parliamentary elections in June 1989 (which were won by Solidarność). Nevertheless, it went back on track in the Senate at the end of the year. By September 1990, the slightly changed draft (cases of rape and threat to mother's health were introduced and a woman was not to be punished anymore) was discussed during plenary session. The debates in the Senate generated again some demonstrations though not so numerous. The Pope John Paul II also added to the discussions his concerns for unborn life and supported the decision of the Senate (Jankowska, 1991).

Polish society had mixed feelings. Majority of them, around 60 %, in November 1990, were against Senate's proposed bill to delegalize abortion (Jankowska, 1991). At the same time, on the one hand, women were shocked and couldn't fully comprehend and believe that the proposal law will be passed. On the other, it was seen as inevitable because of the influence of the Church and the upcoming visit of the Pope (Jankowska, 1991). The law was passed and came into force on 16<sup>th</sup> of March 1993, allowing abortion only in cases of rape or incest, when there is a threat to mother's health or life, or prenatal tests

show severe and irreversibly damage of the foetus. Abortion can be made up to 23<sup>rd</sup> week of pregnancy and in cases of illegal abortion mother is not punished (SEJM POLSKIEJ RZECZYPOSPOLITEJ, 1993).

Though the debate and protests in the early 1990s generated around 30 women's organisations, they were quite fragmented and did not unite because of the fear to be called communist. Also, neither of them called themselves a feminist group (Funk and Mueller, 1993, p. 258). At that time emancipation of women was still seen often as a remnant of the Communist past that nobody wanted to identify with (Jankowska, 1993). What is more, people were tired of political quarrels and daily problems and deprivation that this drastic transition from socialism to capitalism brought. Some even did not understand the law and what will it bring (protection of unborn child), others felt helpless or did not believe it will go through (Jankowska, 1991). Finally, the country did not have a strong and autonomous women's movement tradition that could effectively resist: during socialist period most of the rights for women were given from above without a need to fight for them (Jankowska, 1991). The combination of these reasons led to criminalization of abortion. The situation remained unchanged until recently.

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of October 2016 after the announced plan of Polish government to restrict the already stringent law on abortion in Poland, hundreds of thousands of women and their supporters participated in Czarny Protest (Black Protest) against these plans. The events were registered in 143 places and around one hundred thousand Poles participated in street demonstrations (Korolczuk, 2016). According to public opinion polls 58 % of respondents supported Czarny protest and 15 % answered that they took part in protests either by joining demonstrations or by wearing black that day. (CBOS, 2016) This was an exceptional mobilisation (though not unique in Polish history e.g. anti-ACTA movement in 2012) which made the government change its mind. The law was not passed and the current less-strict law remained allowing 'abortion only in cases of incest or rape, threat to health and life of a woman, and foetal genetic distortion' (Kubisa, 2017). Still, the law remains one of the strictest in Europe, together with Malta and Ireland (the latter might exit this group after 26<sup>th</sup> May 2018 referendum that was won by pro-choice groups (*Irish abortion referendum: Ireland overturns abortion ban, 2018*)).

It seems that there is little research done yet on the recent women's movement in Poland that in 2018 still manages to mobilize substantial parts of society against further attempts by conservative groups in society and parliament to push the law that would put a near ban on abortions. This research will try to explain, by describing various forms of protests chosen by the activist, what is the internal dynamics of this movement, where the divisions and tensions lie.



# 1. Social Movements in Central and Eastern Europe

When it comes to post-communist Poland or Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) in general, there has not been much research done on social movements. Critics were saying that after the collapse of communism and seemingly successful transformation to market economy, CEE distinguished itself with weak civil society and low participation rate of citizens in various movements or organisations (Jacobsson and Saxonberg, 2013, pp. 4–5). Poland distinguishes itself with even lower participation rates than neighbouring post-communist countries, even though Polish people are quite used to participating in street protests as they had one of the more pluralist and liberal communist regimes (Lasinska, 2013, p. 238). Thus, recent various protests and mass mobilizations in Poland are not common considering last 25 years. During this time, various NGOs were established but they did not have the need to mobilise supporters in the society to survive. Due to abundant sponsors and funds from Western Europe and the US, they professionalized and learned how to get funding from there (Jacobsson and Saxonberg, 2013, p. 6). This is changing, however: during recent two years we could witness various informal and formal groups and organizations being born that can mobilize substantial numbers of citizens for the last two years. Mostly, they are directed against various policies that the current government of conservative Law and Justice Party (PiS) tries to implement.

However, Jacobsson and Saxonberg argue that social movements in Central and Eastern European countries are an under-researched niche. They say that researchers were concentrating more on weak civil society, non-participatory character and formal organisations in CEE societies. Thus, this does not allow to capture the less structured forms of mobilizations that happened in CEE. By recently collaborating with other researchers, they published several books trying to fill this gap by researching urban movements, the collaboration between squatters and tenants in Poland, LGBT movement in Poland, home-birth movement in Hungary and many more (Jacobsson and Saxonberg, 2013, 2015; Jacobsson, 2016). This research also joins this initiative in generating knowledge on social movements in CEE. This will help to re-evaluate our established perception about the state of civil society in this region where a lot of social changes are happening in recent years.

To answer why this movement was successful in achieving its main goal we need to study the protest actions or repertoires. Hanna et al have distinguished and tried to conceptualize around 200 forms of possible protest actions (Hanna *et al.*, 2016). It is valuable to explore all the different and innovative ways movement activists use to reach their goals. However, what is more valuable and interesting is to try to trace back the decisions and reasons why particular protest repertoire was chosen as a protest form. Tilly writes that ‘repertoires [or protest actions] are learned cultural creations, but they do not descend from

abstract philosophy or take shape as a result of political propaganda; they emerge from struggle.’ (Tilly, 1993) This struggle is the interest of this research.

## 2. The Choice of Repertoires

Repertoire of contention, in social movement theory, is a certain tool to express discontent that is chosen by a movement’s activist. This tool can be some form of protest or other activity that allows them to reach the goals that conceptualized inside the movement (Tilly, 1993). Repertoires are chosen by movement activist, so first and foremost they depend on the choice an activist makes. Their decision is based on which strategic goal they are trying to reach. Firstly, repertoires are chosen to strengthen the **collective solidarity** with other members of a movement. Pizzorno (1993) writes that solidarity is a necessary condition for further actions that lead to an agreed result. Solidarity grows with shared experiences and by raising awareness about one’s community. Thus, solidarity is closely related with building **collective identity**. Solidarity is born when a community is faced with a threat that members are aware of and preferably when participants are engaged in a radical action (Della Porta and Diani, 2006, p. 179). This is what happened in Poland – women and their supporters mobilized when a harsh law was accepted by the Parliament.

However, to maintain the internal solidarity and gain new support, protest leaders must balance between choices of protests that are too radical and not radical enough. **Building a pool of new supporters** is another goal that needs to be balanced with building solidarity. Choosing a protest form that is too radical, they risk alienating potential new supporters (Della Porta and Diani, 2006, p. 179). If it is not radical enough they may lose confidence of their followers. Activists in predominantly Catholic Poland are constantly balancing and considering how far they can go not to offend religious people since a big part of them are supporters of women’s movement.

Third audience that activist must have in mind is the media. This is the main channel to reach masses of people. Nowadays, it is also sensible to propose to add social media to its definition as well. In that case, we would need to consider not only a **novelty and newsworthiness** of a repertoire, that the traditional media is mostly interested in (Della Porta and Diani, 2006, p. 180), but also various strategies of how to make social media algorithms “interested” in a protest action and help popularizing it among social media participants and actors. Research show that protest events that involve a big number of people, utilize radical or innovative actions are more likely to attract media attention than those which do not (McCarthy, McPhail and Smith, 1996). However, it must not be too radical in order to maintain “a good taste”, legitimacy in media’s eyes as well as the eyes of general public.

And finally, activists must convince the **government of the legitimacy** of the cause and seriousness of an issue. After all, social movements raise political demands that governments should be able to address properly. What has been noticed is that usually radical tactics are better accepted where governments are more hostile to activists' demands (Cress and Snow, 2000). In Poland, the ruling party is quite favourable of the 'Stop Abortion' initiative and we can notice that women's movement is getting more radical in their views as they do not get an expected response.

Therefore, this study proposes the following framework for the analysis of women's movement against tightening the abortion law in Krakow. Their choice of repertoires in Krakow could be explained by looking at various dilemmas activists encounter when trying to reconcile building of awareness and solidarity, looking for novelty of an event and at the same time building the circle of supporters in a society while trying to convince the authorities of the worthiness of their demands.

In addition, it is possible to explore two other factors that condition the choice of repertoires, but which are not consciously chosen by activists. Available **resources**, such as finances or number and endurance of people, limit the choice of repertoires. What is more, certain values of movement members also limit the choices. The discussion is not only about efficacy but also much about symbolic value of a protest as well (Della Porta and Diani, 2006, p. 181). Pacifist movement, for example, would probably not use repertoires that inflict violence. Charles Tilly puts quite accurately this limitation of **cultural context**:

The existing repertoire constrains collective action; far from the image we sometimes hold of mindless crowds, people tend to act within known limits, to innovate at the margins of the existing forms, and to miss many opportunities available to them in principle (Tilly, 1986, p. 390)

The cultural influence might depend on differences between generations or countries. Different generations might have different tastes for what they consider to be appropriate (Della Porta and Diani, 2006, pp. 182–184). Certain repertoires change from state to state. People build barricades more often in France than in Switzerland (on the other hand, Switzerland practices direct democracy more frequently than France (Kriesi *et al.*, 1995).

When choosing a repertoire activist chooses consciously according to selected strategic goal, but also, they are influenced unconsciously by cultural context and available resources. They have an interesting task to balance all those factors together and still reach their ultimate goal. What is more, there are usually different contesting factions inside the movement that make this task even harder.

### 3. Social Movements as Cognitive Praxis

Social movements signify when there is a certain tension in society, a social problem that deeply touches it. When a political opportunity arises, with favourable context for communication and individuals willing to participate, a social movement is born (Eyerman and Jamison, 1991, p. 56). When people and organisations sharing similar interests and concerns come together to cooperate, they carve out a societal space where they raise these concerns and invite others to come and discuss them. Various groups and individuals who participate in a discussion, compete over definitions and over how to act. This is where new identities, new interpretations and new worldviews are born, and this is what defines a social movement according to Eyerman and Jamison (1991, p. 55). In this case, the process is more important and it is always fed and mirrored by constant debates and arguments about words, phrases, slogans, actions and protest events. If needed, words can be redefined, maybe a new identity can be created that can spread in a society. It would be useful to use this approach in exploring women's movement in Krakow. There are certain factions and tensions between groups in Krakow's women's movement and this cognitive approach could help explain why they are there.

Opposition is also important. By confronting it and various power agents, movement activists innovate tactics and create new organization form (Eyerman and Jamison, 1991, p. 58). A social movement can even create an opposition conceptually, especially if creation of new identities are involved; and in general particular movements tend to influence other movements, and create each other (Eyerman and Jamison, 1991, pp. 63–64). We can see these tendencies in Poland right now, where a lot of different one-issue movements appeared in recent years, which influence and feed off each other.

The success of a social movement in this case can be measured in two ways: by successfully achieving short-term strategic goals and by assessing how well the knowledge produced by the movement was spread in a society (Eyerman and Jamison, 1991, p. 64). In our context, the success could be defined either if the movement was successful in resisting the implementation of new harsher policies regarding abortion, or how effectively the ideas and worldviews regarding abortion were diffused and accepted in a society. In other words, how aware broader society is of the sufferings and injustice that Polish women talk about. We could give a proper answer to this question with a combination of quantitative research. However, a qualitative research can indicate and explain much more in-depth if and how these tendencies of producing and spreading knowledge exist. The following chapter provides an insight on the methodological approach and data collection in more detail.

## 4. Methodology

This is an open-ended and flexible case study of women's movement in Krakow, Poland. It is open to new data, have flexible questions and is possible to change if necessary when gathering data (Klandermans and Staggenborg, 2002, p. 153)

Due to lack of research on this movement and because of a qualitative nature of this study, it was hard to formulate possible outcomes. Women's movement in Kraków is considered to a certain degree a synecdochical or revelatory case which is like a springboard to understand the movement in general (Klandermans and Staggenborg, 2002, p. 162). Studying women's movement in Kraków we might uncover certain divisions or dynamics that might illustrate certain tensions in society or general dynamics of women's movement in Poland. Nevertheless, it can be considered as a case study of women's movement against tightening the abortion law in Krakow.

Semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with movement activists and participants. The interviews were conducted in Polish, English and Lithuanian languages. Even though I have sufficient knowledge of all three languages, a translator from Polish was present during some interviews. The participants were selected with the help of one of the main activists in Kraków that I have previously established personal contacts with. From there, I used a snowball type of sampling of activists and participants with intent to conduct information-rich interviews (Creswell and Poth, 2018, p. 159). In total, 10 interviews were conducted with various activists participating in women's movement in Kraków. A continuous analysis of the interviews was done to decide when a sufficient saturation has been reached and interviews can no longer provide any new significant datum.

The fact that during the beginning of the movement I was living in Kraków and I have participated in some of the street demonstrations, ensured the appropriate rapport with the activists and participants of the movement. However, to increase validity of the research and accuracy of data, triangulation was used to verify the data collected during the interviews. Media reports, data from Facebook pages of three main movement communities (O Prawach Kobiet - Kraków, *Ogólnopolski Strajk Kobiet Kraków* and *Krakowskie Dziewuchy* (formally known as *Dziewuchy Dziewuchom Kraków*)) were gathered and analysed. Simultaneously, I was exercising a close cross-referencing and thorough evidence check in order to provide a thick and rich description to increase the validity of the research.

I tried to answer to my research question by doing a thematic analysis of my interviews with activists, analysis of media reports and Facebook groups. Drawing from a literature, there are three main sources that influence decisions of movement activist: various resources that are available, protest culture in a given society and strategy, that has 4 main goals (1) collective identity and solidarity building, (2) external support building, (3) legitimacy in the eyes of authorities and (4) newsworthiness in the eyes of media.

I was aiming at providing an in-depth analysis and rich description of women's movement protest actions and their possible reasoning for these actions. By doing so, it was possible to find a broad variety of protest forms and a community highly sensitive to any changes in government messages or countermovement activity (the supporters of total abortion ban which include various organisations e.g. Ordo Iuris Institute, Catholic Church etc). I was aiming not to decisively state the causal relation but rather build a hypothesis of what are the possible explanatory variables.

There are some other questions that surfaced during the process of research worth exploring such as how this movement functions, what services does it provide, what stage the movement is in, what kind of different factions and divisions are there, how they collaborate and what is general dynamics of the movement.

#### 4.1. Results

In the end, I collected 10 in-depth semi-structured interviews with activists from various backgrounds in Kraków during my field trip in May 2018. I have talked with activists from OSKK, Razem party, administrators of Facebook group Krakowskie Dziewuchy, Kraków KOD branch, association (S)prawa Kobiet and other activists who don't identify themselves strongly with any of them. Interviews were transcribed and all of participants were randomly coded due to confidentiality and anonymity (R01, R02... R10). This was a highly important issue since some of the information provided about protest actions might not be considered legal. I was not able to reach some of the respondents, but I am confident I gathered enough data for this research.

I have also analysed various women's groups, Facebook events of demonstrations, meetings, workshops, media reports about them, documents from the Parliament of Poland. Finally, I also drew on my own experience given that I was living in Kraków at that time when protests started, and participated in some of them myself.

### 5. Analysis

Though there are a lot of individual activists whose participation overlaps in various organisation, we can distinguish three main organisations or informal groups that work in the field of women's rights in Kraków and are the most visible. Some of them are formal organisation, others remind an informal network with fluid boundaries. There is a formal organisation **(S)prawa Kobiet** which was founded late in the year 2016,

after the biggest protests of the 3<sup>rd</sup> of October 2016. Then there is **Ogólnopolski Strajk Kobiet Kraków (OSKK)** which is a branch of the bigger informal organisation Ogólnopolski Strajk Kobiet (Nationwide Women's Strike). The branches have wide freedom in making decisions and organising events. The unofficial leader and influencer is Marta Lempart from Wrocław. Then there is an informal network of **left-leaning activists**. Some of them are members of Razem (Together) party. This network of leftist activist does not have clear organisational boundaries but mostly is associated with a leftist Razem party, which does not have any elected posts in the parliament or local institutions.

These definitions are arbitrary and there are a lot of activists who participate in different circles in different times. However, in one way or another, when talking to activists they were referencing and identifying somebody being from one group or another. **Krakowskie Dziewuchy** (Krakow Gals; it was formerly known as *Dziewuchy Dziewuchom Kraków*) and **O PRAWACH KOBIET – Kraków** (About Women's Rights – Kraków) are basically Facebook group connecting a lot of different women and their supporters in Kraków, they only function as Facebook groups. They are not organisations and do not appear independently during demonstrations.

Finally, there are other groups that are allies or help in various ways. **Komitet Obrony Demokracji Kraków branch (KOD)** is one of them. For the purposes of this study, an interview with an activist from KOD was conducted as well, as it was interesting what is the dynamics between KOD and women's movement. KOD has been very active in the recent two years in Poland and has a lot of knowledge about organizing demonstrations, as a lot of members of KOD are older and participated in demonstration in 1980s (Respondent R07).

For the convenience of a reader, please refer to Appendix C for a timeline of events starting April 2016 to September 2018.

### 5.1. Strategies

Strategies can be selected consciously or unconsciously. Because it is a movement which consists of various organisation and many actors who have different worldviews, this is a place where various ideas are challenged and contested. Strategies in this case mean not something that is necessarily rationally discussed and decided, but sometimes a goal that activists intuitively feel and do not conceptualize. One event may also reach several goals, e.g. be newsworthy and increase legitimacy in the eyes of authorities. Having this in mind, the following subchapters discuss various repertoires of contention that movement actors create, and reveal some divisions inside the movement.

### 5.1.1. Collective Identity and Solidarity Building

#### *Role of Emotions*

Most of new activists and new people came into the movement in September, a week or two before the voting in the parliament of two laws: 'Stop Abortion' and 'Save Women'. The first one intended to ban abortions and criminalize women who might do it, while the second one was a proposal to liberalize. Because a lot of new people who came were ones that till then did not have any experience organizing demonstrations and participating in a political debate, the beginning was quite conflictual. In the first meeting in Bonobo café, there were a lot of tensions and organizers did not want any influence of any existing organization:

Those girls who were there [...] absolutely said that they... they do not wish anyone from existing organization to intrude into the process, they wanted [to do] on their own. We also said that... we don't want to intrude, but we can help with equipment [...] that we can help with guarding [the demonstration] and this was our role. [...] I think they saw then, that we don't want to dominated the movement. (Respondent R07)

New activists were distrustful of existing organisation and felt unrepresented by them. They decided to raise their own voice. The lack of voice and representation in public sphere of women who had hard experience with abortion caused a lot of emotions to be locked inside. Abortion was a taboo topic not only in the media, but also among friends. The outburst of these emotions gave an impulse for a political action.

On the day of 3<sup>rd</sup> of October 2016, when the biggest demonstrations since the Solidarity times mobilized thousands of people, in Krakow some women organized Strajkowa Wszechnica Kobięca (Women's Strike Academy), which was a series of mini-lectures about herstory of women's movement in Poland, about reproductive rights etc (see Appendix B for full program). After each mini-lecture there was a time for discussion and 'no matter what was the topic of mini-lectures, [...] women stood up and cried and told stories about their experience' (Respondent R09).

On the same day near Manggha Museum of Japanese Art and Technology people gathered to paint various banners together and prepare for the upcoming protest in the afternoon. One of the respondents (R02) participated there and recounted similar experience. In the process of making banners people started sharing their personal experiences. Respondent R02 remembers a story of a father whose wife died because a doctor refused to make an abortion even though she was in a life-threatening condition.



These emotions and shocking personal facts that people shared made people understand how something, that politicians decide, influence their own life. Respondent R02 told that she exactly then convinced herself that existing law regarding abortion, so-called compromise, does not work and that she needs to stand up and fight for her and other women. It must have been a huge emotional load on this respondent since even during the interview she became visibly emotional. Another respondent shares her thoughts:

To tell you the truth it was a shock for me, that people stood up, cried and shared their experiences that were very very personal [...] [my] experience of that... a mass of people felt safe enough for the first time to share those experiences and feel a part of community... it had an unbelievably strong impact [on me]  
(Respondent R09)

It was a dominant feeling on that day amongst a lot of participants. All these emotions helped feel solidarity among people who participated. Maybe on some level consciously, but mostly not, emotions played a big part in mobilizing a lot of people for the following events.

### *Difficult Identity*

A movement struggles with its identity and numerous different views that its actors possess. One of the issues that appears constantly when discussing the organisation of demonstrations is should it be *logo* or *no-logo*. In other words, to what extent symbols and signs of organizations and political parties should be allowed. One of the main reasons is that the organizers (if it is not a political party) do not want that a demonstration would be associated with any political parties. It is believed that they would use a movement and a demonstration to build their own political capital. Having in mind that political parties are the most untrusted institutions in Poland (63 % declare that they definitely or rather do not trust political parties (CBOS, 2018)), it is not that surprising. Respondent confirm that:

When we were organizing Black Friday [23rd March 2018] [...] [I said] I will speak willingly, I will help lead it only with one condition if it will be no-logo. [...] there won't be any surreptitious... some parties, there will only be women and all women, those who are for a compromise [...] and those who are for a free choice  
(Respondent R05)

I am for no logo because I believe that a cause is greater than any kind of logos. I also think that there is a party which tries... to win a lot with women's rights, it is Razem party, with which I don't have the best relations (Respondent R10)

Some activist from the left side, who are more associated with Razem party are not always content with this. They talk that they feel unjustly limited:

We had like access to abortion in our programme since 2015, so it's not like we just decided to join this movement [...] they didn't allow flags, but badges... but there were 3 women leading this demonstration, 2 of them were from Razem party. But no one will know them because it was not written in the media or anything, or they could not even introduce themselves being from Razem... [...] You don't bring your flags, and you don't bring the banners with the logo, [and then] people [are] like, where is Razem party when there was demonstration. (Respondent R08)

Other activists do not see this as a serious issue. They say that it is a question of internal democratic discussion what kind of demonstration is being organized and that to reach common goals and for tactical purposes a demonstration can be full logo or no-logo (Respondent R09).

Besides that, activists see themselves in a bigger perspective as well. They see as participants of a worldwide women's movement, share solidarity with them and draw inspiration from activist around the world:

There is this powerful awareness and not only in Poland but in the whole world. I think [...] somewhere there was the last drop, that movement metoo, those movements against violence against women in South America, against harassment and sexual violence in Japan, there are a lot of these things happening everywhere at the same time [...] one can't stop that now, too many people participate (Respondent R02)

### *The Declaration of Krakow*

Some actions that movement activist take fail to build solidarity and even deepen the divisions inside the movement. One of those actions was the Declaration of Krakow. In January 2018 various opposition parties (PO, Nowoczesna, SLD, PSL) together with some civic organisations (KOD) decided to sign a declaration of unity and common fight against the erosion of democratic system in Poland. Besides that, it declared support for civic initiative bills, citizens' right to decide about themselves, support for women's causes, environmental issues, social exclusion and finally constitutional values, secular state, independent courts and judges. A declaration also said that Poland's place is in the family of European Union (see full text of the declaration in Appendix A).

Some women organisations from Krakow were also invited to sign this declaration. An association (S)prawa Kobiet and OSKK signed this document. It created an enormous conflict inside a movement. The main criticism was that they signed a declaration together with those parties that do not really do much for women's causes, including abortions. Three weeks ago, some PO and Nowoczesna party members did

not participate in the voting of the proposed bill to legalize abortions in Poland, which some activists saw as a betrayal of them and deepened distrust of these two main opposition parties. What is more, the Declaration was signed with PSL which is a very conservative party (12 out of 15 MPs voted for rejecting the bill 'Save Women 2017' (SEJM POLSKIEJ RZECZYPOSPOLITEJ, 2018b) and 10 out of 15 voted for accepting the bill 'Stop Abortion' for further deliberations (SEJM POLSKIEJ RZECZYPOSPOLITEJ, 2018a))

When talking to some of the activists they became visibly irritated. It just confirms what an emotional thing that was and how it divided the community.

It is a complete paranoia [with disgust]. No. I won't be saying more about this. It is a ... Stockholm syndrome, let it be, there is nothing more to say. Simply, paranoia... (Respondent R09)

If [they] don't vote in the parliament and they don't give a \*\*\* about women's rights and then 2 most important women's organisations in Krakow sign a common declaration with those parties... [...] you can't do that, this is a suppression of the whole movement (Respondent R01)

On the other hand, the activists from the organisations and groups that signed the declaration see it differently. Their motivation to sign it was based on a belief that working together with the opposition, they will be able to influence the decisions and policies of the opposition. They also say that only because of them some sentences regarding women's rights appeared in the declaration at all:

We reached what we wanted, that is, the inclusion of these point that were not there, as protecting human rights, women rights, protection of nature... supporting citizen's legislative initiative (Respondent R10)

We wanted that statements that are important to us would be included. [...] also we wanted to work together with people from different parties, that we could convince them from inside and make them do things that we need. That is, protests are [pressure] from outside, and we do this lobbying (Respondent R02)

Finally, OSKK decided to withdraw from it. Officially, it was because OSKK is not a formalized organization that can make these kinds of decisions. Unofficially, it was done because of enormous pressure that members of OSKK who decided to sign it received online and extremely negative comments:

There was such a wave of hate and pressure that we had to withdraw [...] because I need to go to work, live, I need to function, I can't receive messages all the time what a \*\*\* I am. [...] later events with voting for in vitro maybe

showed that it was a good thing [to withdraw], but the motivation to withdraw was the hate we received from our own community (Respondent R10)

The Declaration of Krakow is a hot topic and it certainly divided the community. Obviously, the joining of two popular women's organisations was very useful for political parties. Women's issues in recent years managed to mobilize such a big part of society that no other demonstration did. The benefit for women's organisations is trivial and the influence that they could do is not clear. The text in a declaration is quite vague and general. After 9 months from the Declaration there aren't many who remember it now.

### *Radicalisation of views*

The identity of the movement went through some changes regarding the Church and abortions in general. Two processes can be distinguished during the last two years. First is a growing acceptance of an idea of the legalisation of abortion. Second, a growing negative sentiment towards the Catholic Church. These are observations made from analysis of data that was gathered. Further quantitative research would be needed to confirm that.

However, almost all respondents supported the legalisation of abortion in Poland but not all of them had this view 2 years ago. It was rather a journey of raising awareness for themselves as well:

Personally, to tell you the truth, me too, I went there to defend the compromise during that all demonstration, when I needed to say, I didn't say that I was for legalisation [...] [Now it's] half and half, and then discussions starts, I... me too.. It tormented me, that I would start to think [about it] (Respondent R01)

What is more, in the beginning of September a new event was created for the 30th of September 2018 called 'Worldwide Day for a Safe Abortion' that declares to be the first pro-choice march (*Światowy Dzień Bezpiecznej Aborcji- Kraków jedzie na Marsz!*, 2018). Untill now, all bigger demonstrations were organized as a reaction to action of the government to show the discontent. There were activists and participants demanding freedom of choice regarding abortion, but no demonstration officially declared. This could be a first clear sign of the transformation of a movement to a more proactive one and it can signify the radicalisation of views.

The other process is a growing negative sentiment against the Catholic Church and its actions in Poland. According to a research made by Pew Research Centre (2017), even though Polish people are the most religious in the region (41 % of Poles say they go to worship services weekly), they are also the most critical of it (70% say that religion and government policies should be separate, 68% say that religious institutions focus too much on money and power). This is a favourable ground for this sentiment to grow.

Most of my respondents mention the events in March 2018 as a critical point when they understood that ‘the Church is the greatest enemy of women’ (R01). In January 2018, the same situation repeated itself as in September 2016. Two civic initiative bills reached the parliament – ‘Save Women 2017’ and ‘Stop Abortion’. The first one was rejected, the second went to parliamentary commissions. However, after initial protests in January for a long time there was no sign of further actions regarding ‘Stop Abortion’. Until the 14<sup>th</sup> of March, when a 378<sup>th</sup> meeting of Episcopal Conference of Poland – the main organ of Catholic Church in Poland – released a statement which included point number 4 declaring that

Reminding the necessity of unconditional respect for every human being in every moment of their existence (por. *Dignitas personae*, 10), bishops appeal to immediate start of legislative process of the project ‘Stop Abortion’.  
(Konferencja Episkopatu Polski, 2018)

On the 19<sup>th</sup> of March, the bill ‘Stop Abortion’ appeared in the agenda of Justice and Human Rights parliamentary commission of Polish Sejm which after discussions gave a positive response to the bill and directed it to Social and Family commission for further deliberations (Kancelaria Sejmu, 2018). The activists of women’s movement saw it as a clear sign of the influence of the Catholic Church. The bill that was pushed to the backgrounds of parliamentary works, reappeared suddenly 4 days after Episcopal Conference’s statement urging to return to active legislative process of this bill.

And it was good because the Black Friday we understood who our enemies are. [...] and that Black Friday there were not only slogans that I... I don’t know... I want to decide for myself, and so on, but also it was all against bishops and the Church. A year and a half ago it would have been impossible, because even me, I was asking not to use anti-church slogans [back then] (Respondent R01)

As the respondent noted, this gave an impulse to organize demonstrations in March that had a much stronger anticlerical tone. The one after the letter of Episcopal Conference on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2018 was organized in front of Bishop’s palace in Kraków and on the second next Friday on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2018, which was called Czarny piątek Kraków – Furia! (Black Friday Kraków – Fury!). One could find slogans a ‘What bishops know about being a mother’, ‘Vatican clerks leave our country alone’. Later in the evening some of Friday protesters went again to protest in front of Bishop’s palace.



*Figure 1 Black Friday protest in front of Bishop's palace. Image from respondent's R06 personal archive.*

According to many respondents, this was not possible two years ago and slogans and signs were not targeting the Church. There has been a shift here, at least among movement members. However, even in the Black Friday protest, respondent R01 remembers people who came there to protect the current law, the so-called compromise, which allows abortions only in three cases.

As data suggest, Polish people are quite critical of religious institutions, but in the beginning of the movement in 2016 there were not a lot of sentiment against a church. One of the reasons was that it was done consciously not to alienate a big part of society. This and other ways how movement activist tried to gain support from a wider public will be discussed in the next chapter.

### 5.1.2. External Support Building

To build support in a wider society, it is a very important goal for any movement if they want to succeed. And the biggest discussions thinking about this goal is how radical can one be to push the boundaries of public discourse but also not to alienate the bigger part of society. Activists in Poland were very conscious of people's religious feelings in the beginning. They did not want to offend or deepen existing divides in the society and radical language towards the Church was considered unnecessary.

There was an idea to copy a protest seen in Warsaw when a group of women ostentatiously existed a church during the Mass. However, respondents say they decided not to copy because that they did not want to offend religious people since a lot of them supported their cause:

We thought it's a bit silly if you don't go to church, it's like fake yeah, because the biggest effect it would have if there was really catholic women who disagree, but if we go, then it's a bit not really (Respondent R08)

this protest form wouldn't do anything, it would just induce more resistance of those people, those who participate in the Mass because they are religious but maybe they are with us and don't want... to have this disorder during the Mass. There were a lot of times when I collected signatures and a woman would stop and say, faster faster, I am late for the Mass. It's Poland. (Respondent R01)

Furthermore, early in 2016 there were discussions about what language should be used during demonstrations. One respondent remembers that a dominant view was that they should be talking more about personal experiences, what the law can do to them and avoid more radical feminist slogans:

We had a discussion, were dominating voices were that we need to talk the most about every day women's experiences, how this law if adopted would influence their lives and do not use too much labels [...] that are usual in feminist protest but not everybody understands them or accepts them... some slogans about vaginas or my womb (Respondent R04)

Even now, another respondent agrees that firstly they need to fight anti-abortionists and to use more populist slogans in order to attract more people to demonstrations and not to raise a question of legalisation of abortion so openly:

First, we need to kick out those who want to create hell for women and then we can fight amongst each other how liberalisation should look like [...] I think slogans about liberalisation or extreme slogans push away part of people. [...] if you want to have 100 000 people you need to talk a bit in a populist way. That most of people would like (Respondent R10)

However, there are contesting views to this. There are voices who think that they need to be more radical in order to successfully resist the current plans and to push their own policies:

We tried to be not radical in the beginning but now this movement needs to decide how to talk. Because we talked not radically, and it didn't do much. Look!

It's one year and a half and half of the people still are for a compromise [...] if we would be more radical, maybe we would reach our goals [to legalize abortion till 12 week] faster (Respondent R01)

Though there is a certain radicalisation of views in the movement – more and more people support legalisation of abortion and there are more anti-church slogans during demonstrations – there is no clear consensus how far they can go. The tension between being more radical and building support in a society exist and movement activist are discussing that constantly.

There are also other repertoires that activists come up with and try to include people or raise their awareness about the cause. One activist told a story how they made spontaneously gathered in front of a big anti-abortion billboard on wheels that was showing shocking images of terminated fetuses and started complaining loudly:

We simply gathered there and started to moan loudly, so ... and other people joined us, and you know how a group works... [...] then from those people, we all, almost 13 people went to a police station and wrote down our complaints (Respondent R01)

These billboards appear quite often in various Polish cities on busy street or squares. Activists from left-wing Razem party started a campaign against the billboards called “Szantaż z dala of szpitala” (Blackmail away from hospitals). There is a Facebook page and a website where information is shared how to report anti-abortion billboards to police or municipality. The website also provide information that debunks the myths that these billboards announce (*Szantaż z dala of szpitala*, no date). The campaign also shares results of a couple of cases. One of them is considered a success even though the accused was acquitted: the judge stated that the billboards exceed the norms and customs of Polish society, and that makes a precedent for further cases.

There are several cases in Krakow when more radical actions were taken. Some of the billboards were destroyed or paint was spilt on them:

Someone destroys them. If it appears next to a church, someone comes and tears it apart. Or maybe paint accidentally spills on them... or somebody cuts it... (Respondent R01)

However, this is not a common practice and most activists say they would not do that though they understand the emotions that are behind these actions. These kind of destructive actions might not be regarded well in a society were violent repertoires are regarded un-civil (Jacobsson, 2016, p. 20). What is more, one can even be prosecuted for destruction of foreign property by state institutions. Thus, activists



choose to force governmental institutions follow every possible law which is a lengthy and costly process. Sometimes lawyers agree to work *pro bono*, or somebody decides to finance it. In any way, this is important in convincing the authorities that the concerns citizens have are valid and legitimate.



Figure 2 an anti-abortionists' billboard damaged with paint in Kraków. Image from Facebook group Krakowskie Dziewuchy: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1586953938286805/permalink/1665753323740199/> [Accessed 2018-08-21]

### 5.1.3. Legitimacy in Regards of and Impact on Authorities

Women's movement in Poland that mobilized in 2016 has grown and attracted a lot of new participants that had nothing to do with contentious actions before. They are sharing their experiences online, meeting, talking about discrimination and sexism. However, it started with one very concrete goal – to prevent the Parliament from adopting a new law that would completely ban the abortion. They succeeded. Two days after the biggest demonstration, on the 5<sup>th</sup> October the parliament rejected the bill proposed by Ordo Iuris. The MPs who voted against the bill probably were impressed by thousands of protesters in hundreds of Polish cities. It appears MPs are impressed not only by demonstrators.

The same day the first bill 'Stop abortion' was rejected Episcopal Conference of Poland released a statement that said that "Polish bishops remind, that they do not support law projects that introduce punishments for women that did an abortion" (Konferencja Episkopatu Polski, 2016). Later a member of ruling PiS party wrote on Facebook that this statement "authorized us [them] to reject the bill that included criminalizing women" (Epoznan.pl, 2016). Clearly, the Catholic Church has a big direct or indirect influence on policies as politicians, and a big part of society, are ready to listen to the Church's teachings.

Having this in mind, activists have a daunting task to convince the authorities that their cause is legitimate and make an impact on them. They are trying to go any legal way possible to push the authorities to recognize them, their cause, and make them change policies and actions regarding their demands. As mentioned in previous chapter, activists are trying to report the billboards of anti-abortionists as disturbing public order and defend it in the court.

Activist in Poland also use a right to legislative initiative which allows hundred thousand citizens to propose a bill and then the parliament is obliged to proceed with the hearings. When news about the first and second attempt to tighten the abortion in 2016 and 2017 news spread, a citizen's committee Ratujmy Kobiety (Save Women) proposed a law to legalise abortion again both times. Together with local activists for the second bill 'Save Women 2017' they managed to get 371 156 signatures from Polish citizens and bill 'Save Women 2017' was accepted in 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2017 (SEJM POLSKIEJ RZECZYPOSPOLITEJ, 2017). However, this is not enough as during the first hearing in the Parliament in January 2018 it was rejected.

Sometimes activists find very direct ways to express their discontent. One activist reminds going to see her MP during his visiting hours and talking to him face to face and expressing her discontent:

To go to a member of PO [party] for example who during the vote for 'Save Women' took his voting card out [...] we go during his visiting hours and saying to him, look me in the face and tell me that when I will be raped, I will have to bear a child (Respondent R02)

However, it seems it is hard to convince as the politicians in Poland seem to come back to the same question about tightening abortion law repeatedly. At the moment, the second bill 'Stop Abortion' is buried in parliamentary groups and can resurface again. Though probably this will not happen till the autumn local elections are over of the fear to alienate more electorate. Local activists confirm this view.

#### **5.1.4. Novelty and Newsworthiness in Regard of Media**

Media is another audience activists must think about when they want to convey their message. They need to convince that an event is newsworthy. The media nowadays should be considered in a wide definition. It is not only newspapers, TV channels but also bloggers and social media, which gives a direct access to

citizens without a filter of professional journalists and reporters. However, there is a filter of algorithms that decide what is trending and what is popular, thus activists must think about innovative ways how to spread their message and reach the biggest audience possible.

The idea of Czarny Protest (Black Protest) appeared in September 2016. It was a result of conscious discussions how to do something innovative that would attract a lot of attention on social media. Activists from Razem party were impressed by media attention that a projection of the judgement of Constitutional Court on the wall of Prime Minister's office brought early in 2016 and wanted to find a way to repeat that.

So they were really looking for something that would be easy to do also and something that people can engage... [...] the pictures with the hashtag [#CzarnyProtest], yeah it was quite big because also like anybody can do this, social media, you can take a picture, and you could also see pictures of like teenagers, like classmates, or like a whole class of girls doing this, and people would change also their profile pictures (R08)

Another event that brought quite a lot of media attention and was a result of conscious considerations was a happening called Nie składamy parasolek (We Do Not Close Our Umbrellas) that was organized 3 weeks after the main event on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2016. The bill putting a total ban on abortion was rejected so there was no immediate reason to organize a demonstration. Still activist wanted to maintain the interest of the public and to show the ruling party that they are still able to mobilize, and they are watching what they do. Other cities organized demonstrations that were much less numerous than the ones on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of October. Krakow activists decided to organize a happening in the evening in Blonia fields where they stood in the form of an umbrella and were shining with flashlights.

Because 3rd October [it was raining] and we were walking with open umbrellas, [...] that umbrella became our weapon. So that we do not put our umbrellas yet and we look to the hands of the government what they are doing. So in the end it was quite visual [...] I was very happy that they were showing Krakow everywhere, that thank you Krakow for doing something different, that we will remember it for a long time (Respondent R01)

We just understood that it would be lost ... people.. it's enough.. we didn't know we will be doing again and again those protests, so we decided to do something different (Respondent R02)



*Figure 3 a drone photo of a happening on 24th October 2016 in Blonia fields in Krakow. Image taken from <http://krakow.wyborcza.pl/krakow/51,44425,20895511.html?i=0> [Accessed on 23th August 2018]*

The Umbrella event played very well in the media. The choice in Kraków to somehow make an event more visually attractive served its purpose, the photos of this event in Kraków spread widely in national media. It is hard to create something new after two years of continuous protests not only about reproductive rights but also against judicial reform, various environmental issues. As Tilly wrote (2013), the novelisation and improvisation is very incremental and happens rarely. A lot of choices are conditioned by the dominating protest culture in a given society

## 5.2. Protest culture

Cultural and historical context also influence the way people express their discontent. Recently in Poland there are various protests happening almost every week. Environmentalists protested against cutting trees in primeval Bialowieza forest, mothers of disabled children occupied a hall in the Parliament in May 2018 demanding more social care for their children, students were occupying universities in June 2018 showing their resistance to proposed reform of higher education, pro-democratic citizens gather each time to protest against judicial reforms that the ruling party is introducing. Women's activists fighting against tightening the abortion don't seem as an exception in this context.

There is a reason for this. Lasinska writes that Poland had a special history during communist times and before, that formed a favourable political-cultural environment for collective action and civic

participation. She explains that main reasons for that was constant oppression and worse living conditions than in neighbouring countries. What is more, a special history of communist regime where under weak institutional regime, the first protest took place in 1956 which conditioned more diverse public life and less restrictive regime that created better conditions for later protests. (Lasinska, 2013, pp. 74–76). Therefore, culturally it is more acceptable to participate in various demonstrations right now. A tightening law on abortion seemed to activate a lot of young people who understood that this law can influence their life personally.

Data from interviews suggest that contemporary women's movement have contact with people who participated in protests in 1980s. Big technical support during demonstrations women's activists receive from KOD which has a lot of members who participated in 1980s Solidarity movement (Respondent R07) and can share their experience and know-how. It relatively makes organisation of a demonstration easier, at least in the beginning.

### 5.3. Resources

The decisions about protest actions are influenced by things that not always depend on activists. One of the most important resources for a movement is people. Without them there is no movement and to be able to participate one must have enough free time, financial guarantees also endurance to actively be involved in a movement for a long time. Data suggest that people who participated in the first protests in October 2016 were those from cities bigger than 500 thousand inhabitants (53%), with higher education (73%) with a stable job. Around 43% had a work contract or owned a company (13%). 48% of participants described their financial situation as satisfied, but that they need to save for bigger shopping, another 36% declared that financial situation is good and they don't need to save. 56% were between 18 and 34 years old (Kowalska, Nawojski and Pluta, no date).

Some resources are free and available to everyone nowadays. Technology opens a lot of new possibilities and speed in everyday life of a movement. Most of the communication in organizing events in Krakow was done through social networks.

#### 5.3.1. People

People are always one of the biggest resources in social movements. In autumn of 2016 Black Protests attracted a lot of new people to the movement.

When there was the first voting for 'Save Women' and that tightening law... of abortion law... I was at work and instead of doing some training at work I was

listening to a parliamentary session. I have never done it in my life (Respondent R10)

However, today the situation is a little bit different. Activists say that there are not a lot of people active right now and it is hard to make them participate. There is a certain fatigue of activism, people are getting used to the situation and people can't spend a lot of time on activism. The protests in Poland started almost immediately after the election of PiS and are a constant in Polish public life. We must remember that abortion issue is not the only one. There are protests against judicial reforms, for the rights of disabled people, against cutting down trees in primeval Bialowieza forest, constitutional court and others. Thus, in this busy climate people are getting used to it. Most of respondents feel the same:

What is the reason that people stopped coming? First of all, fatigue and they got used to it. People need to live. It is always like that, and it is not related to the situation that is in Poland right now. [...] it was the same in [19]80s (Respondent R07)

Another complexity is lack of time, because every one of us has a job, most of us have families (Respondent R02)

That's all, we are working together, those fights that we had in the beginning are not there. You know, there are so little people left that really want to do something that there is nothing to divide anymore (Respondent R01)

Despite everything if there is a really really important cause, the most important in the world, people unite (Respondent R10)

The situation right now is that people participate if the threat of adopting a total ban abortion is high. Otherwise activists talk that there are little people left who really do something. Main reasons are lack of time, fatigue and compartmentalisation of all the protests that are happening in Poland in recent years.

### 5.3.2. Technology

Technology is another useful resource that is available for free. Almost immediately several groups were created where women from Krakow could join and share their views and other useful information. Now the most active groups are O PRAWACH KOBIET – KRAKÓW (8570 members), Krakowskie Dziewuchy (4163 members) and Ogólnopolski Strajk Kobiet – Kraków which is a Facebook page, but it generates a lot of discussion under the posts. These groups are used to organize demonstrations and other events, discuss and share information.

They are also used to share knowledge about various reproductive health medicaments that are not easily accessible. Both contraceptive pills and morning-after pill are only accessible with doctor's prescription, which is sometimes hard to get because there is a conscience clause in Polish law. It allows doctors to refuse certain treatment methods for patients if it contradicts their personal beliefs. Therefore, there are a lot of gynaecologists, especially in rural areas, that refuse to prescribe contraceptives or morning-after pill because their religious views contradict using any kind of contraceptives. Medical abortion pills are forbidden in general as they induce abortion which is generally illegal.

Thus, women use Facebook groups in Kraków to share pills or knowledge about them. Respondents say that they receive requests any other day:

The main question is if I know where to get a morning-after pill. I get these requests almost every day (Respondent R01)

In all those women's groups [...] constantly there are questions about gynaecologist, questions about pills, girls help each other, there are a lot of girls who seeing that it is going to be only prescribed, bought a lot of them, there are girls who know certain gynaecologist who write these pills without problems (Respondent R04)

Interestingly one of the group contains a small database which doctors do not prescribe those pills and are of more conservative views (*O PRAWACH KOBIET - Kraków*, no date).

There is a bigger discussion happening in those groups and social media in general. People interact, share their views and raise various issues. The discussions in those groups work as a space where people learn new ways how to interpret reality that is around them. People are sharing things they notice that they consider unjust or wrong and discuss with others if it is really like that. It raises their awareness and changes the way they think. It can have an impact on a society in general as one of the biggest groups in Poland *Dziewuchy Dziewuchom* has over 100 thousand members there. There are hundreds of various other local groups as well where we can predict the same thing is happening. Some respondents also notice this change:

A lot of girls, that started define themselves as feminists, started posting various articles, varies things from the internet with a question, do I overreact or is it extremely sexist, a lot of these kind of post there were on these groups, [...] but maybe we see it everywhere because it is everywhere and not because we are to sensitive (Respondent R04)

While browsing through those groups, one can find plenty of posts that respondent R04 was talking



Krakowskie Dziewuchy



about. For example:

Figure 4 a post sharing a sexist commercial which reads 'she knows what she will have on her lips soon...' A post from a group *Dziewuchy Dziewuchom*

Figure 5 a sign on the door says: 'I will hire a girl to sell ice cream'. The post says: 'Kraków is being Kraków. Because only a girl can sell ice-cream. I know it is a private business and an owner can hire anybody he wants, but this ad is very not cool.' A post from a group

The whole movement started as a movement against tightening the abortions law. However now it grew to something bigger. This movement carved a societal space where women can safely discuss the issues they care about, share experiences, draw attention to cases of sexism, organize themselves and start a political action in order to demand the authorities and society in general to accept and deal with their experiences. There is an enormous potential for further research of this movement.



## Conclusions

Using the theoretical framework proposed by Della Porta (2006) for analysing the choice of repertoires of a movement, helped better understand the internal dynamics and divisions of Krakow's women's movement against tightening the abortion law. The repertoires of women's movement were analysed by doing thematic analyses of 3 main categories of factors that influence the choice of protest actions: protest culture, resources and chosen strategies which on its own can be divided into collective identity and solidarity building, external support building, newsworthiness and legitimacy.

The analysis showed that the initial emotions that gave an impulse for civic participation mobilized a lot of people in 2016. However due to the issue not being resolved and continuous civil fight, there is a noticeable fatigue among participants – less and less people are actively participating in the movement.

At the same time, movement met various challenges from inside and outside. Different perceptions led some activist to radically different evaluations of the Declaration of Krakow that for some time divided the community and left some scars. Despite that, activists manage to come together when there is a threat the law could be introduced. They also manage to mobilize a substantial number of participants.

Furthermore, in the beginning of the movement activists tried to adjust more radical feminist slogans and language to gain popularity and build support in society. However, after 2 years they are still fighting back against tightening the abortion law. Due to that and visible influence by the Catholic Church on policy makers, it led to radicalisation of certain views. Activist more and more talk that they need to demand liberalization of abortion law and at the end of September 2018 they are organizing the first pro-choice march since 2016. Also, there is a growing anti-church sentiment and a bigger awareness of Church's influence in policy making. This led to organizing some demonstrations exclusively against the Catholic Church regardless that there is a big part of participants who are religious.

Finally, the new safe spaces created by the movement (Facebook groups, various meetings and demonstrations), created a favourable environment for women's solidarity to manifest. They use these spaces to share certain medicaments related to reproductive health that are not easily accessible because of restricting laws and conscious clause that allow doctors to refuse certain treatment based on their beliefs. Women also use these spaces to discuss feminism, sexism, share examples of it and raise their own awareness. This confirms Eyerman and Jamison's (1991) definition of social movement as a place where movement activists and participants produce and spread knowledge based on the tensions existing in a society.

There are further many ways how the movement can be researched. Firstly, a lot of my finding could be verified with qualitative methods in order to better understand the scale of changes that happened and

how widely they spread in the society. The theory of Eyerman and Jamison of a cognitive aspect of a social movement could be verified by collecting quantitative data about people's attitudes towards abortion. At the moment there are no representative and actual data about it. In comparison with previous surveys done before 2016, it would let us understand what were the changes in the attitudes towards abortion.

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## Appendix A – Krakow’s declaration

# DEKLARACJA KRAKOWSKA

*Mając na uwadze dobro Polski oraz jej Obywaterek i Obywateli, pomimo dzielących nas różnic, zobowiązujemy się do wspólnego działania w obronie wolności i demokracji. Od ponad dwóch lat mamy do czynienia z konsekwentnym niszczeniem demokratycznego państwa prawa i jego instytucji, z narastającymi podziałami w społeczeństwie. Aby się temu przeciwstawić, potrzebujemy jedności.*

*Będziemy wspólnie działać na rzecz równego traktowania i poszanowania praw człowieka oraz przeciw łamaniu praw i wolności obywatelskich, przeciw mowie nienawiści i wszelkim aktom agresji i nietolerancji.*

*Będziemy burzyć mury dzielące społeczeństwo i budować mosty dla wzajemnego porozumienia. Będziemy wspierać projekty obywatelskie, tym samym oddając Obywatelkom i Obywatelom prawo do decydowania o sobie. Będziemy aktywnie wspierać działania na rzecz praw kobiet. Będziemy działać na rzecz ochrony przyrody i środowiska, które jest dobrem wspólnym, należącym również do przyszłych pokoleń. Będziemy przeciwdziałać wszelkim formom wykluczenia społecznego. Będziemy bronić wartości konstytucyjnych, państwa neutralnego światopoglądowo, niezależności sądów i niezawisłości sędziów.*

*Jesteśmy Polakami i Europejczykami. Jesteśmy przekonani, że miejsce Polski jest w rodzinie krajów Unii Europejskiej. Nie pozwolimy na podkopywanie naszej obecności w strukturach europejskich.*

*Cenimy mądrość Polek i Polaków, dlatego będziemy przeciwstawiać się próbom centralizacji państwa i ograniczania kompetencji samorządów.*

*Będziemy wspólnie działać na rzecz demokracji w trosce o los Polski, a także naszej małej ojczyzny – Krakowa. Deklarujemy współpracę w obronie wspólnych wartości.*

Sygnatariusze:

Komitet Obrony Demokracji  
.Nowoczesna  
Platforma Obywatelska  
Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe  
Przyjazny Kraków  
Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej  
(S)prawa Kobiet  
Strajk Kobiet  
Unia Europejskich Demokratów



Figure 6 Image taken from <https://www.ruchkod.pl/deklaracja-krakowska/> [Accessed 2018-08-21]

## Appendix B – A Programme of Women’s Strike Academy

Wykłady i dyskusje o prawach reprodukcyjnych, aborcji, fundamentalizmie oraz historii protestów i strajków kobiecych w Polsce.

12.00-12.30

Aborcja – z perspektywy ginekolożki (Bożena Jawień, ginekolożka)

12.30-13.00

Syndrom post aborcyjny (Beata Zaduminska, terapeutka)

13.00-13.30

Nadzorować i karać (Hanna Lipowska-Teutsch, psycholożka)

13.30-14.00

Protesty przeciwko zmianie ustawy w sprawie dostępu do aborcji w 1991 roku (Sławomira Walczewska, filozofka)

14.00-14.30

Fundamentalizm i kobiety (Beata Kowalska, socjolożka)

14.30-15.00

Strajki kobiet w Polsce (Ewa Furgał, herstoryczka)

(source: (Respondent R09, 2018))

## Appendix C – A Timeline of Women’s Movement in Kraków from 2016 to 2018

**2016 MAR 14** – first knowledge about Ordo Juris project ‘Stop Abortion’. They have 3 months to collect signatures

**2016 APR** – first small protests

**2016 summer** – various small events – workshops and discussions, mainly organized by Razem party.

**2016 SEP 22** – First Black Protest

**2016 SEP 23** – Parliament rejects ‘Ratujmy Kobiety’ (Save Women) bill for liberalisation of abortion law and accepts ‘Stop Abortion’ for further works

**2016 SEP 25** – Black Protest Sunday

**2016 OCT 3** – Nationwide Women’s Strike - including Women’s Strike Academy and various other smaller events

**2016 OCT 5** – Parliament rejects ‘Stop Abortion’ bill in the first hearing

**2016 OCT 24** – Happening in Blonia fields in Krakow ‘We Won’t Close Our Umbrellas’

**2016 DEC** – an association (S)prawa Kobiet is founded

**2017 MAR 8** – International Women’s Strike

**2017 August-October** – gathering signatures for ‘Ratujmy Kobiety 2017’ for liberalisation and a new edition of ‘Stop Abortion’ which would ban abortion in cases of serious disease or damage of a foetus.

**2018 JAN 10 (late in the evening)** – Parliament rejects citizen’s initiative bill Ratujmy Kobiety 2017 in the first reading and the second edition of ‘Stop Abortion’ goes through to work in parliamentary commissions

**2018 JAN 13** – Black Protest – End to Compromise!

**2018 JAN 29** – signing of Krakow’s Declaration

**2018 MAR 14** – Episcopal Conference of Poland requests to return bill ‘Stop Abortion’ to legislation process

**2018 MAR 18** – Protest ‘A Word for Sunday’ against churches influence



**2018 MAR 19** – Bill ‘Stop Abortion’ gets a positive evaluation from a parliamentary commission of Justice and Human Rights and is sent to a second commission of Social Politics and Family

**2018 MAR 23** – A demonstration Black Protest Krakow – Fury!

**2018 JUL 2** – Bill ‘Stop Abortion’ was deliberated and was sent to special sub-commission for a proper research

**2018 JUL 2** – Protest ‘To the Trash bin’

**2018 SEP 30** – Worldwide Day for a Safe Abortion (upcoming) – first pro-choice march

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