

The Role of Cognitive and Emotional Factors in Demobilization: The Pro-choice Protest Movement Activity in Poland¹

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The Role of Cognitive and Emotional Factors in Demobilization: The Pro-choice Protest Movement Activity in Poland. The paper aims at contributing to our understanding of the role of emotions in the protest movements' demobilization by drawing on the pro-choice protest movement activity in Poland. The two most significant waves of social mobilization in the history of democratic Poland were an expression of opposition to the tightening of anti-abortion laws. Although those populist movements failed to achieve their goals, their mass activity ended. Charles Tilly's and Sidney Tarrow's theoretical framework of demobilization explains the dynamics of contention only to some extent. Accordingly, demobilization began when most protesters became discouraged due to repression, boredom, and the desire to return to their everyday life. However, it is a puzzle under what conditions these cognitive factors translate into demobilization in a way that shapes and finishes the trajectory of movement activity. The study contributes theoretically to social movement studies and contentious politics by developing the theory of demobilization. It also sheds light on the role of emotions in orienting and shaping mass mobilization. Furthermore, it contributes empirically to studies on pro-choice activism in Poland by explaining the dynamics of the two great waves of mass mobilization.

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Introduction

This paper aims at contributing to our understanding of the role of emotions in the populist movements' demobilization by drawing on the pro-choice protest movement activity in Poland. The two most significant waves of social mobilization in the history of democratic Poland were an expression of opposition to the tightening of anti-abortion laws. The first wave took place in 2016–2018 and is equated with the activity of the Gals for Gals (*Dziewuchy Dziewuchom* – DD) protest movement. The second wave is the 2020–2021 All-Poland Women's Strike protests (*Ogólnopolski Strajk Kobiet* – OSK). While the Gals opposed the bills, the Women Strike took to the streets against the

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Constitutional Tribunal's (*Trybunał Konstytucyjny* – TK) decision subordinate to the Law and Justice ruling party (*Prawo i Sprawiedliwość* – PiS) to find abortion in cases of disability or incurable illness of a fetus unconstitutional. The populist leaders of DD and OSK managed to transform fears of restricting reproductive rights into moral indignation and anger toward particular decision-makers (Ruiz-Junco 2013: 47). Although those movements failed to achieve their goals, the reasons for concern did not go away, and the fears were still acute, their mass activity ended (Rak 2018a). The stages of mobilization and demobilization followed during these two waves are also challenging to explain. They were not dependent on political decisions related to the distribution of public goods or the political change concerning the contestation activities. Also, they were not responses to the emerging threats to their vital interests (Rak 2018b).

Charles Tilly's and Sidney Tarrow's theoretical framework of demobilization (2015) explains the dynamics of contention with cognitive factors only to some extent. Accordingly, demobilization began when most protesters became discouraged due to repression, boredom, and the desire to return to their everyday lives. In such circumstances, the leaders of the populist movements failed to respond by the institutionalization of their movement, understood as the progression from disorderly street movements to organized party politics, or by escalation, based on the progressive substitution of more extreme goals and more robust tactics for more moderate ones to retain the interest of their supporters and attract new ones (Tilly – Tarrow 2015: 130). However, it is a puzzle under what conditions repression, boredom, and the desire to return to everyday life translate into demobilization in a way that shapes and finishes the trajectory of movement activity.

In this paper, it is argued that the patterns of emotion management and moral injuries are the missing emotional elements of the theory. They are conditions under which the causal relationships between repression, boredom, and the desire to return to everyday life and demobilization take place. By combining Tilly's and Tarrow's theory of demobilization (2015) with Jochen Kleres's and Åsa Wettergren's theory of emotion management (2017) and E. J. Karmela's and Sara Kuburic's theory of moral injury (2021), we can advance a hypothesis that particular patterns of fear, hope, anger, and guilt fuel mobilization while others result in demobilization. A morally injurious event resulting in a moral injury leads to demobilization if a hope-deprived pattern of emotion management occurs.

The study contributes theoretically to social movement studies and contentious politics by developing the theory of demobilization. The development lies in specifying the conditions under which a social movement ends its activity. It also sheds light on the role of emotions in orienting and shaping

mass mobilization. Furthermore, it contributes empirically to studies on pro-choice activism in Poland by explaining the dynamics of the two great waves of mass mobilization. It provides empirical evidence to support the identified causal relationships and their dynamics under particular conditions.

The remainder of the article consists of four parts. By drawing upon a critical discussion on current developments in theories of demobilization, emotions in movements, and populist appeals, the first one distinguishes theories accounting for a decline of social movements. It also establishes a theoretical framework for the analysis by combining cognitive and emotional explaining factors into a new explanatory framework. This is followed by a part on methods and data. Subsequently, we go on to the empirical analysis and research findings. The article finishes with a concluding discussion and recommendations for further research.

Literature review and theoretical framework

Even though we witnessed a considerable development of knowledge on the conditions and dynamics of mobilization in recent years, demobilization processes still pose one of the most significant challenges to social movement theory (Zeller 2021: 267; Lapegna 2013: 846). Researchers build their explanations on either cognitive or emotional factors but also move toward the theoretical integration of these two perspectives (Ruiz-Junco 2013: 46, 51). The proponents of cognitive factor-based explanation differentiate between internal and external sources of demobilization. The first group of arguments points to the dynamics of demobilization as a result of social movement organizations, especially changes in membership structures (Kleres 2007: 170). They include factionalism (Humphreys – Weinstein 2007), the influx of new participants having diverse backgrounds and views, the insufficient integration of participants (Kleres 2007: 170), departing participants, exhaustion, burnout, lost commitment, and organizational rigidity (Davenport 2015: 32). Nonetheless, the changes in social movement organizations do not necessarily result in demobilization. The decline of one social movement organization may lead to an increase in another (Benford 1993: 698). Factionalism can also enhance coherence between factions (Kleres 2007: 170). Empirical evidence to support and refute the theory-driven causal relationships comes from single case studies discussed above that do not consider the conditions under which the relationships occur.

Another group of theoretical frameworks draws attention to external factors such as resource deprivation, problem depletion, unaddressed demands, and state repression as the sources of demobilization (Davenport 2015: 39). Nevertheless, in times of widespread digital activist practices, i.e., actions

oriented on having political influence in a particular context through digital tools (Von Bülow et al. 2019: 1771), resource deprivation can have a limited impact on demobilization. On the one hand, social movements often desist from acting even though their major goals that triggered mobilization remain unaccomplished (Rak 2018b). On the other hand, a failure to satisfy social movements' demands and the resulting ineffectiveness may continue during a long-term phase of their activity and not immediately lead to demobilization. Therefore, the mere presence of this explanatory factor is insufficient to understand the dynamics of mobilization (Fillieule 2010: 3). We need to develop knowledge on the situation that activates demobilization. These critical observations draw scholarly attention to the still underdeveloped issue of emotions such as the sense of helplessness, disappointment, and disenchantment as possible conditions for triggering demobilization.

When the next explaining factor, the state repression, is concerned, let us emphasize that activists may select different strategies to deal with it, including widespread and significant activities for social movement organization and performance but neither public nor disruptive (Honari 2017). Furthermore, soft repression can trigger self-policing and self-control, but it has no impact on the most militant and clandestine groups (Jämte – Ellefsen 2020).

Christian Davenport contributed to the field by offering an intersectional approach that treats demobilization as an interactive and complex process. It combines internal and external factors within one explanatory framework. Davenport focuses on an interaction between external state repression and the problems and tensions internal to social movement organizations (Davenport 2015: 57). Thereby, the researcher goes beyond a traditional definition of repression as protest policing and tackles its other components (Earl et al. 2003: 582). Accordingly, repression forces social movement organizations to adopt countermeasures, especially reappraisal and trust-building. At the same time, the government tries to repel the countermeasures by overwhelming and outwitting a social movement or by promoting distrust through agent-provocateurs (Davenport 2015: 57). Nevertheless, Davenport's model is criticized for the lack of clearly determining causal relationships between actual repression and internal tensions (Kamal 2015: 2). It also does not deliver empirical evidence to support those causal relationships. In addition, the model ignores the emotional aspect that might influence the dynamics of demobilization (Kamal 2015: 3).

According to Tilly and Tarrow, movements suffer a decline of mobilization when most ordinary people who participated in contentious events are discouraged by the repression, boredom, and desire for a routine life (Tilly – Tarrow 2015: 130). The last two factors are closely interwoven, occur when excitement eases into satisfaction or disillusionment, and their visible sign is

the lack of involvement in designing innovative forms of protest (Della Porta 2016: 116). At the time, unless demobilization occurs, social movement leaders respond in one of the two competing ways, i.e., institutionalization or escalation. While the former substitutes “the routines of organized politics for the disorder of life in the streets, buttressed by mass organization and purposive incentive” (Tilly – Tarrow 2015: 130), escalation substitutes “more extreme goals and more robust tactics for more moderate ones in order to maintain the interest of their supporters and attract new ones” (Tilly – Tarrow 2015: 130). Nonetheless, Tilly and Tarrow do not reflect on conditions under which repression, boredom, and the desire to return to everyday life translate into demobilization in a way that shapes and finishes the trajectory of movement activity.

By drawing upon the social constructionist literature (e.g., Hochschild 1979), a mounting body of scholarship draws attention to emotions in social movements (Ruiz-Junco 2013: 46). Transforming individuals previously uninterested in politics into ardent protesters, prompting disengaged activists to re-engage, and engaged protesters to alter the issues they prioritize, emotions shape trajectories of political engagement and thus (re)mobilization and (re)demobilization processes (Ellefsen – Sandberg 2022: 1104). Most researchers focus on explaining what emotions must be skillfully channeled by populists to trigger mobilization and gain public support (Kinnvall 2018). Less attention is paid to the emotional conditions that determine the demobilization or withdrawal of support for politicians and their initiatives (Bakker et al. 2021).

Some researchers assume that consciously experienced feelings such as fear and hope drive social movements when they are widely shared by protesters (Ellefsen – Sandberg 2022: 1107). Having delved into the Lesbian and Gay Association Germany’s activity (*Lesben- und Schwulenverband Deutschland – LSVD*), Kleres argues that emotions play a crucial role in social movements’ demobilization (Kleres 2007: 180). Although it is a single case study, it delivers plausible empirical evidence to support the argument that particular patterns of fear, hope, anger, and guilt spark demobilization potential. On this basis, Kleres and Wettergren build a theoretical framework for studying mobilization and demobilization. As they assume, cognitive assessment interwoven with emotions can explain the mechanism of social mobilization. In their integrated approach, emotions consciously and non-consciously inform and trigger rational action and decision-making (Kleres – Wettergren 2017: 508).

Kleres and Wettergren define feeling rules as the indicators of what emotions are socially appropriate to feel and in what situation. Emotion management means the feeling subject’s attempt to alter, evoke, or harass

a feeling (cf. Hochschild 1983). An emotional regime is a catalogue of feeling rules adopted by a social group. As Kleres and Wettergren underline, emotions are subject to social regulation; action can be voluntarily stimulated by channeling selected emotions to contribute to achieving goals. Activism can involve a conscious shift from a dominant emotional regime through collective emotion management conducive to alternative feeling rules. Notably, alternative feeling rules cannot completely diverge from the dominant ones to mobilize successfully. It means that activism is fueled by a particular alignment with the prevailing emotional regime (Kleres – Wettergren 2017: 508).

The most recent developments in emotions in social movements draw upon trauma studies to account for the psychological consequences of mass trauma as a factor triggering a decline in mobilization. E. J. Karmela and Sara Kuburic propose including the theoretical category of moral injury to examine emotions that inspire demobilization. They argue that moral injury “involves a morally injurious event: a transgression, disruption, or violation of deeply held morals, beliefs, ethics, and/or expectations” (Karmel – Kuburic 2021: 8). A transgression is an act that firmly opposes personal or shared morals etc. As such, morally injurious events are subjective since they rest on the individual’s worldview (Karmel – Kuburic 2021: 8). However, movement participants must widely share them (mass trauma) to spark their demobilizing potential. This explanatory framework focuses on emotions collectively experienced by activists as a result of particular events as a major cause of demobilization.

In sum, conditions under which the theory-driven external or internal factors account for demobilization remain under-researched. Although current scholarship on the patterns of emotion management reveals a promising fulfillment of this gap, it remains scattered and lacks empirical evidence to support single case study-derived theoretical frameworks. We address the gap by conducting an empirical study and proposing an extended theoretical framework of demobilization. Its first element is Tilly’s and Tarrow’s theory of cognitive factors explaining why social movements desist from acting. The other two components are Kleres’s and Wettergren’s theory of emotion management and Karmela’s and Kuburic’s theory of moral injury. They offer emotional conditions under which demobilization takes place.

Methods and data

Engaging with the above theoretical framework, we address the major research question: under what conditions do repression, boredom, and the desire to return to everyday life translate into demobilization in a way that shapes and finishes the trajectory of movement activity? We consider two outlier cases that stand out from other waves of contention in Poland, i.e., the 2016–2018

activism of the Gals for Gals (DD) protest movement and the 2020–2021 Women Strike (OSK) protests. They took place in the same political context, during the rule of the conservative Law and Justice party. Despite different mobilization incentives, they shared a common claim not to tighten the anti-abortion law. DD opposed the bills that assumed a total abortion ban. In contrast, OSK took to the streets against TK's decision to find abortion in cases of disability or incurable illness of a fetus unconstitutional. These spontaneous grassroots initiatives were not preceded by months of preparations and were organized without significant financial outlays and organizational infrastructure (Urbański 2020). Although their claims remained unaddressed, their mass activity ended. The study allows us to understand the dynamics of the populist movements' mobilization and verify the extended theoretical framework of demobilization. It serves to verify the theory-grounded hypothesis that particular patterns of fear, hope, anger, and guilt fuel mobilization while others result in demobilization. A morally injurious event resulting in a moral injury leads to demobilization if a hope-deprived pattern of emotion management occurs.

We use a qualitative method of written, visual, and audio-visual document analysis to collect data on the qualities of the dynamics of repression, boredom, the desire to return to everyday life, emotion management, and injurious events. The selection of existing sources is purposive and draws on the ranking of the most opinion-forming media in 2018–2021 by Institute for Media Monitoring (IMM 2022). The source corpus includes the press (*Rzeczpospolita*, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, *Super Express*), bi-/weeklies (*Sieci*, *Wprost*, *Newsweek*), web portals (*Onet*, *Wirtualna Polska*, *Wpolarityce.pl*), and television stations (*TVN24*, *TVN*, *Polsat News*, *TVP INFO*, *TVP1*). Media source triangulation was essential to provide a confluence of evidence that yields the credibility and validity of data interpretation. IMM based the ranking on an analysis of the frequency of citations of individual media by other media carried out on the basis of 464 920 materials from the monitoring of the press, radio, television, and Internet portals in which the names of press media appeared; Internet portals; radio and television stations or their program titles. The analysis covers all media communications in which they were cited or referred to in reports that initially appeared in other media. The report qualified publications referring to articles and statements that appeared in the pages or on the air of another medium, provided that they are not discussed in the context of media review and are not a reprint from another medium. The main criterion for qualifying a given item was a direct reference to a specific article or statement published in the newspaper or broadcast on a television or radio program. The source corpus includes the titles with the most substantial impact in individual categories (IMM 2022).

Due to the subjective nature of moral injuries, they are more challenging to grasp than the other factors potentially explaining demobilization. Therefore, we use the strategy of non-media source triangulation to develop their comprehensive understanding and test validity through the convergence of their meaning. Accordingly, we draw upon a qualitative method of source analysis of testimonies of pro-choice social movement activists presented during the Polish National Scientific Conference “Poetics of Protest” held at the University of Warsaw on March 6–7, 2021 in Poland. The participant group included five leaders of local and foreign branches of the movements and 32 especially emotionally engaged rank-and-file activists. Most of them would remain anonymous and unavailable to researchers if not for the conference. At the same time, it was a unique opportunity to identify which moral injuries were shared by activists.

Document analysis links elements of content and thematic analysis. The former involves collecting data referring to the movements’ activity and getting a thorough overview of them. Accordingly, we start with identifying text passages in written and transcribed audio-visual materials that contain direct references to (1) DD (2016–2018) or OSK (2020–2021) and (2) disorder *and/or* assembly *and/or* gathering *and/or* protest *and/or* demonstration *and/or* manifestation *and/or* rally *and/or* strike *and/or* riot *and/or* social unrest *and/or* participants of those actions *and/or* police *and/or* officers.

Next up, we arrange information into categories concerning the explaining factors. For the sake of clarity, we unpacked the addressing of the major research question into three specific theory-grounded elements. The first particular research question deals with repression, boredom, and the desire to return to everyday life, as well as their dynamics during the two large waves of social mobilization. We divide the explaining factors coming from Tilly’s and Tarrow’s theory into two groups. While the first includes the dynamics of repression, the second covers the development of boredom and the desire to return to everyday life.

Repression is “the actual or threatened use of physical sanctions against an individual or organization, within the territorial jurisdiction of the state, for the purpose of imposing a cost on the target as well as deterring specific activities and/or beliefs perceived to be challenging to government personnel, practices or institutions” (Davenport 2007: 2). To operationalize repression, we adopt two criteria for differentiating between high and low-intensity repression: the targeted people or institutions and the form of violence used (Gerschewski 2013: 21). High-intensity repression are visible acts aimed at important public figures, large groups of people, or major oppositional organizations. The means of repression are the use of escalated force to police mass demonstrations, violent campaigns against political parties and movements, and the attempted

imprisonment and assassination of opposition leaders. Low-intensity repression is less visible and targeted at individuals and groups of minor importance. It rests upon the employment of formal and informal surveillance apparatus, low-intensity physical harassment and threat, and non-physical forms, including the refusal of job and education opportunities and the limitation of political rights (Gerschewski 2013: 21).

Boredom and the desire to return to everyday life occur when a social movement stops organizing disruptive events and focuses on conventional protests. While conventional events are routine performances of petitions, audiences, strikes, marches, and demonstrations, disruptive events are creative and include innovative direct actions meant to hinder or upset the functioning of targets, objects, and third parties. The latter draws attention to movement participants, strengthens their solidarity, and attracts new supporters (Tilly – Tarrow 2015: 128).

The second specific research question concerns the patterns of emotion management and their dynamics over time. Kleres and Wettergren determine four emotions managed by activists to mobilize (externally) and sustain (internally) their activism: fear, hope, anger, and guilt. Fear is inferred from text when the information on the threat of harm, loss, pain, or danger to movement participants occurs. Hope: when desire and expectations of accomplishing a movement's goal emerge. Anger: when an expression of having been offended/wronged or having experienced antagonism toward something for being or someone for acting to the detriment of movement participants emerges. Guilt: blaming someone for committing a specified or implied crime, immoral act, or a mistake. In line with this theoretical approach, fear can motivate action and uncovers movement participants' insufficient power relative to "the other." The very motivation results from blaming (the ascription of guilt) that can change potentially demobilizing fear into mobilizing anger. In this process, hope is critical since it manages fear and energizes action, which results in producing more hope (Kleres – Wettergren 2017: 507–509).

Embedded in Karmel's and Kuburic's theory, the third specific research question is about morally injurious events that resulted in moral injury during pro-choice activism. Their occurrence is confirmed when a transgression, disruption, or violation of internalized morals, beliefs, ethics, and/or expectations is expressed by movement participants (Karmel – Kuburic 2021: 8).

Based on theory-driven themes, we employ a qualitative technique of theoretical thematic analysis (Javadi – Zarea 2016). It commences with theory-based coding which involves highlighting sections of texts and creating codes to determine their content. While the characteristics of categories are stated above, let us remind the codes here: repression (low/high intensity), boredom and the desire to return to everyday life (conventional/disruptive

performances), emotion management (fear/hope/anger/guilt, and their configurations called patterns), morally injurious events (transgression/disruption/violation of internalized morals/beliefs/ethics/ expectations). When codes are created, we go on to identify patterns among them and combine codes to define latent (interpretative) themes. This stage is followed by re-reading and reviewing the data to compare them with the themes and verify whether the latter is an accurate data representation. After making necessary amendments to provide representatives, we define and name themes to contribute to comprehending the data and interpret them within the extended theoretical framework of demobilization. The analysis finishes with drawing theory-based conclusions on the relationships between themes.

Research results

The analysis shows that DD and OSK could initiate and then coordinate protests in hundreds of cities in Poland and abroad, gathering several hundred thousand participants each at their peak. The first wave of protests is closely related to parliamentary work on laws liberalizing and tightening abortion. It consisted of six stages determined by the successive steps of the parliamentary procedure. They are as follows: (1) 01.04.2016-18.04.2016: from DD's mobilization to the day before the submission of the first draft act, which was to impose a total ban on abortion in Poland, (2) 19.04.2016-23.09.2016: from the submission of the first draft act to the first reading of this draft act, (3) 24.09.2016-06.10.2016: from the day after the first reading to the second reading of the first draft act, (4) 07.10.2016-29.11.2017: from the day after the rejection of the first draft act during the second reading to the day before the submission of the second draft act, (5) 30.11.2017-10.01.2018: from the submission of the second draft act to its first reading, (6) 11.01.2018-12.04.2018: from the day after the first reading of the second draft act to DD' demobilization (Rak 2018a: 140–145).

In contrast, the second wave unfolded in response to TK's judgment delivered on 22.10.2020 and prohibiting abortion due to severe and irreversible damage to the fetus or its incurable disease. This wave covered the following stages: (1) 19.10.2020-21.10.2020: from OSK's mobilization to the day before TK issued the judgement, (2) 22.10.2020-31.10.2020: the period of spontaneous, daily, and conventional protests, (3) 1.11.2020-14.11.2020: inclusion of disruptive protest to the repertoire of contentious performances, (4) 15.11.2020-22.11.2020: protest policing transformed from a negotiated management to escalated force model that included illegal repressions, (5) 23.11.2020-28.11.2020: from a decrease in protest turnout to a final, centrally

organized demonstration in Warsaw, (6) 27.01.2021-29.01.2021: brief conventional protests immediately after the publication of TK's judgement.

Repression, boredom, and the desire to return to everyday life

During DD's protests, police repressions were reactive to the use of violence by protesters involved (TVN 24 2016; ACK 2018). Much more frequent was common institutional pressure targeted at individuals and groups of minor importance, especially rank-and-file activists, people expressing support for the movement on social media, and participating in selected protests. Public institutions dependent on the ruling party employed formal and informal surveillance apparatus (e.g., at schools, by threatening teachers with dismissals and refusal of education opportunities). In small towns, where maintaining anonymity is more difficult, social workers carried out increased checks on mothers participating in protests and threatened them with taking away their rights to children. Protesters were also harassed (e.g., cutting bonuses, refusing to leave) and dismissed from work on the grounds of their worldview. These repressive activities were aimed at excluding protest movement participants from local communities (Suchanow 2017). By hindering political participation, the state apparatus limited the civil rights of Poles. This constant low-intensity repression was peculiar to the whole wave of DD's mobilization. Thus, repressions were not a factor determining the dynamics of DD's mobilization and demobilization.

The institutional repression continued from 2020 to 2021. Furthermore, in the initial phase of OSK's wave of protests, the police temporarily detained several people and checked their IDs. Subsequently, they began to protect churches, parliamentary offices of ruling party members, and their places of residence. The property of Jarosław Kaczyński, the ruling party president, was closely guarded around the clock. On November 10, 2020, Paweł Dobrodziej, the Commander of the Capital City of Police, issued an instruction in which he ordered more decisive action against the demonstrators. Later on, the police claimed that assemblies during the epidemic were illegal and blocked marches. They also applied the police tactic of containment (known as corralling or kettling), i.e., police officers formed large cordons and moved to contain people within a limited area. It allowed them to control and isolate large crowds during public assemblies. This tactic is controversial since bystanders can be contained by mistake, and those contained cannot leave the area without permission, which results in cutting them off from food, water, and toilets. Law enforcement officers fined the protesters, checked their IDs, and sent requests for punishment to the Chief Sanitary Inspectorate (*Sanepid*) for breaking sanitary regulations (Rak 2021b).

On November 18, 2020, ununiformed police officers used telescopic batons against the protesting women in Warsaw. Also, agents provocateurs participated in the protests. During the eight weeks of OSK's mobilization, the Warsaw police detained over eighty people (Ambroziak – Sitnicka 2020). While police officers used low-intensity repression during conventional protests, they went on to its high-intensity variant after the protests finished and the protesters wanted to go home. The former type of repression was usually limited to Warsaw. Additionally, it applied to a relatively small number of often random demonstrators (less than 0.1% of protesters), which heightened the fear that anyone could become a victim of repression. An escalated force model of protest policing, characteristic of high-intensity repression, caused common indignation and condemnation. However, the police, partisan media, and other state institutions subordinated to PiS run violent campaigns to delegitimize movement activists as offenders and madmen (Rak 2021a). During the fourth and subsequent stages of this wave, the combination of low- and high-intensity repression might have resulted in fear of involving in movement actions, a gradual decrease in the number and turnout of protests, and finally, demobilization.

DD and OSK combined conventional and disruptive protests. DD established special-purpose associations and coalitions in big cities (e.g., Warszawa, Kraków, Poznań, Łódź, Wrocław, Szczecin, Katowice), held public meetings, solemn processions, marches, the first one called “Czarny Poniedziałek” (“Black Monday”), others called “Czarne Protesty” (“Black Protests”), vigils, rallies, strikes, e.g., “Ogólnopolski Strajk Kobiet” (“All-Polish Women’s Strike”), petition drives, made statements to and in public media, undertook activities in commercial and social media, e.g., published selfies in black clothing on social media, tagged #czarnyprotest (#blackprotest), gave performances, made rough music (the so-called shivarees), displayed posters, and distributed pamphlets (Rak 2018a: 124). In this respect, these waves of mobilization were similar. DD international branches organized the same protests in solidarity with Poles in other European cities, including Berlin, Brussels, Dusseldorf, Belfast, London, and Paris. OSK widely exploited DD’s legacy of conventional protest forms. In this respect, these waves of mobilization were similar.

Apart from those conventional protests, DD used new and creative forms of protest starting from the first days of its activity. The public’s attention was drawn to celebrity endorsement campaigns, such as the top model Anja Rubik who acted as the movement’s ambassador, actresses Juliette Binoche, Jane Birkin, Julie Delpy, Charlotte Gainsbourg, Milla Jovovich, and singer Rita Ora. Also, Nancy Fraser, an American female feminist theorist and professor of philosophy and political theory at the New School for Social Research in New

York, participated in this campaign. Moreover, activists protested by sending clothes hangers, as the symbol of illegal abortion, to Prime Minister Beata Szydło, who supported the illegalization of abortion, calling the representatives of the state apparatus and sending them emails describing their own ovulation and menstrual period (Rak 2018a: 124). Movement participants also held cultural performances such as an exhibition of paintings or staging of Adam Mickiewicz's romantic drama "Dziady."

During the fourth phase of DD's mobilization, activists used a great innovation in Poland, known as *escraches*, for the first time. It is a direct-action assembly that gained popularity during the post-2008 anti-austerity mobilization. To condemn and harass public figures, protesters gather around their homes, chant, sing protest songs, and shame them. As such, *escrache* is burdensome for public figures and their neighbors. After the first *escrache*, the DD leaders tried to show the action as rational and thoughtful. They explained that since Kaczyński interferes in their lives, they respond the same (Mw – Tr 2016). However, according to activists' testimonies, when the formula of conventional protests was exhausted, boredom arose and from the question "Are we going home or are we standing further?," a spontaneous idea emerged to march to Kaczyński's house. Activists emphasized that *escraches* were rarely planned; more often, they were spontaneous and intended to keep participants in the street to sustain the protest.

Introducing new and using disruptive types of protest ended in April 2018 when the DD's funder restricted the movement's name as a trademark (it will be discussed in detail as a morally injurious situation below), which drew criticism from participants and supporters, divided activists, and held them back from using their collective identity on the Internet and during protests (Rak 2018a: 124).

OSK continued to use disruptive *escraches* throughout its mobilization period, primarily to demonstrate in front of Kaczyński's house and in front of the head of TK, Julia Przyłębska's residence in Berlin. According to activists, including the leaders of the movement's branch in Berlin, these *escraches* were also spontaneous.

The second and third stages of OSK's mobilization in 2020 were characterized by the search and dissemination of new forms of protest. Like DD, OSK activists brought to protest and displayed in a public space (e.g., via flat or car windows) home-made properties containing self-identification symbols such as red lightning and more or less vulgar slogans and poems. Activists and supporting artists created numerous protest songs, e.g., based on the melody of the anti-fascist Italian song "Bella ciao" ("Goodbye Beautiful"). A popular disruptive protest consisted of gathering in public places, dancing, jumping, and singing "Jebać PiS" ("Fuck PiS") to the beat of Starley's song

“Call on Me.” When clubs and discos were closed during the pandemic, this turned out to be a particularly attractive and engaging form of protest. Thanks to it, people for whom the movement’s goals were not important and were not willing to support it in any other way joined protests. In addition, activists massively placed candles and cemetery flowers at the premises belonging to the ruling party. Just like during DD’s activity, a para-theatrical performance, “Dziady,” was organized in the building opposite Kaczyński’s house.

During the fourth phase of the mobilization of OSK, no new forms of protest emerged. No new slogans on cardboard posters appeared, and the old ones did not evoke the same intensity of emotions as in the second and third stages. Protests still took place in many cities, but not every day. Fatigue, discouragement, boredom, and a desire to come back to everyday life became common. In the last phases of OSK mobilization, these tendencies continued, and there were still no new forms of protest.

To sum up, during DD’s protests, police repression did not occur, whereas institutional and environmental pressure played a significant role in the last three stages. Nonetheless, low-intensity repression had no impact on the dynamics of DD’s mobilization. In contrast, the combination of low- and high-intensity repression co-occurred with OSK’s gradual demobilization processes. During OSK’s protests, especially police repression, which started transforming from negotiated management to escalated force in the fourth stage, played a demobilizing role. Institutional and environmental pressure remained at a high level but still failed to influence mobilization.

Boredom with street life during protests and the will to return to everyday life reflected in the involvement in the organization of new and disruptive forms of protests is not the critical factor explaining demobilization. In the decline in DD’s activity, the desire to desist from protests and return to more satisfying and less injurious everyday life was a response to a moral injury. The latter is much more important in explaining the dynamics of mobilization. During OSK activities, boredom and the desire to return to the daily routine were delayed by proposing new disruptive and innovative performances. However, a characteristic of the second wave was the routinization of disruptive protests beginning from the fourth stage of the protest. With the loss of hope for achieving goals, a prolonged period of lack of political reaction to protests, and an increase in the level of repression, OSK’s demobilization progressed.

The patterns of emotion management

In both waves of the protest (2016–2018 and 2020–2021), the patterns of fear, hope, anger, and guilt mattered. While during the first wave, the most common articulation was movement participants' own emotional state, i.e., anger expressed with the slogan "Jesteśmy wkurzone" ("We're pissed off"), the second wave was dominated by profanity on posters and banners, with the most famous slogan "Wypierdalać!" ("Get the fuck out!"). The second slogan was a demand to hurry away from the personal lives of Polish women. The speeches of DD's and OSK's representatives during demonstrations aimed to rationalize anger, justify the reasons for taking to the streets, and articulate the aggregated postulates to change the situation of women. Unique to the second wave of mobilization were profanity and words creating an emotional community of extreme anger (Korolczuk et al. 2019: 186–200; Nowak – Gołębski 2021).

Indeed, during OSK's mobilization, intense anger (rage) directed against the ruling party and the Catholic Church prevailed. It was articulated mainly through slogans on posters (cardboard boxes) displayed during demonstrations in the streets and, exceptionally, on October 25, 2020, in churches. The second form of articulation were the vulgar slogans shouted out during street demonstrations. In addition, DD and OSK blamed PiS and the Catholic Church for the ensuing situation and for violating women's reproductive rights. However, the aforementioned registration of the movement's name by the DD leaders resulted in a change of the blame object. Activists began to blame the leaders for appropriating the common good, i.e., the movement's name, and marginalizing the primary goals. The enemy was no longer external but internal. At the same time, hope for achieving the goals died out among DD activists.

The leaders of DD and OSK tried to evoke other emotions, not only anger. During the first wave, hopes were strengthened that the Sejm would reject the draft act that would tighten abortion law, whereas, during the second wave, the hope was aroused by the non-publication of TK's judgement. An attempt to institutionalize the protest by appointing the Consultative Council (*Rada Konsultacyjna* – RK) on November 1, 2020 can be seen as an action to increase hope. Hope for an improvement in the women's rights situation during the first wave of protests did not appear, and during the second wave, it was negligible, if only because of the lack of trust in the ruling party. Also, the very appointment of RK did not increase the hope for success. Importantly, RK itself did not present the results of its work publicly. Undoubtedly, in an attempt to create an impression of the movement's power and thus trigger hope for its victory, mass demonstrations were organized on November 28, 2020 (attended by approx. one hundred thousand participants), and on the last day of

the sixth stage, on January 29, 2021 (attended by several dozen thousand participants) in Warsaw. In both cases, the hope-driven mobilization was moderately successful. However, faith in the power of protest and hope for victory in an undefined future remained.

Apart from the discussed situations, DD's and OSK's leaders unskillfully referred to hope as a strong mobilizing emotion. If there was any hope, it was rather postponed until PiS loses its position as a ruling party and the rules of the secular state are introduced. Hope, fear, and guilt were hardly evident in both waves of protest, as opposed to anger. During the second wave of protests, this anger often appeared in an extreme version of rage. Nevertheless, contrary to Kleres's and Wettergren's theory (2017: 509), public support for the movements remained very high. Approx. 75% of Poles were against tightening the abortion law and supported the movement's protests.

In sum, during both waves of mobilization, the fear of worsening one's situation (taking away any of the residual reproductive rights) was transformed, thanks to the creation of communication and community bonds, into outrage, anger, and, especially during the second wave, rage. DD's and OSK's leaders made unskillful efforts to exploit the potentially mobilizing hope. However, they failed to refer to and manage the hope for change shared by activists.

Morally injurious events that resulted in moral injury

In April 2018, Agata Maciejewska, the founder of the DD group on Facebook and one of the DD leaders, applied to the Patent Office to register the name as a trademark. Additionally, she was blamed for the failure to account for PLN 35 000 from contributions (Tm – To 2018). DD local and international branches treated the submission of the application to the Patent Office as an attempt to commercialize the movement that belonged to all activists and obtain financial benefits by the group's founder. Let us emphasize that she was the owner of a company selling custom-made garments. Regardless of Maciejewska's intentions, the application for registration was treated as a violation of the elementary values typical of this movement: altruism, social activism, and civic involvement.

This morally injurious event also resulted in other moral injuries. As a result of restricting the movement's name, the main communication channels, i.e., the Facebook groups and fan pages of local and international organizations, were closed, and their owners were asked to change their names. As local and international leaders underlined, this unexpected message from Facebook administrators caused confusion, frustration, and anger. The former found the lack of prior information about the situation from the DD leaders harmful and painful. First, the name was an important identity-forming and social

movement community-maintaining factor. Second, they lost the lists of activists and could not make internet-based calls for action and coordinate protests. Third, those who refused to change the name were deprived of the effects of many months of creative work associated with publishing original materials. Fourth, the movement split into small local groups, which were difficult to identify with DD because their new names had nothing in common with the original. As a result, local and international leaders severed ties with the DD leaders, and the vast majority of them quickly ceased their activities. It was a great loss for the movement because the activists who organized local communities for a common purpose and initiated conventional and creative protests were gone. Only the organizational structures of DD in Łódź, Szczecin, and Berlin survived.

Another injurious situation was the lack of the leader's reaction to the successes in parliamentary work, i.e., the rejection of the "stop abortion" bill. Partial successes in achieving the vital interests of the protest movement were not used to sustain mobilization based on a sense of efficiency and hope for ultimate success. Instead, the DD leaders treated the Federka award and the Polish Business Council by the name Jan Wejchert award as theirs and did not appreciate the work of the entire movement. This peculiar appropriation of rewards evoked a sense of frustration and discouragement. Importantly, the leaders did not have the necessary communication skills and could not stimulate and channel desired emotions, convince, encourage, and motivate activists they had successfully attracted at first. Local and international leaders stressed that they felt morally hurt by being cut off from the movement's successes.

The OSK leader was Marta Lempart, the president of the OSK Foundation. In February 2021, the District Prosecutor's Office in Warsaw charged her with three crimes during the movement's activity, punishable by up to eight years in prison (RP 2021). The decision of the prosecutor's office subordinated entirely to the Minister of Justice was announced after the movement's demobilization. However, numerous, inherently compromising materials appeared in the media subordinated to the ruling party before. They discussed Lempart's and other OSK leaders' non-heteronormative orientation, ridiculed them as well as exposed vulgar language (Wasilewski 2020). There were also criminal charges against Lempart's family (Wprawo 2020). Nevertheless, all these allegations failed to affect the dynamics of mobilization. The main reason was the separation of media narratives and influence into specific information bubbles, characteristic of Polish public opinion. Accordingly, there was no transmission and internalization of views, stereotypes, and information between the generally separated camps: the ruling party and the opposition. These potentially injuring situations did not result in moral injuries.

During the second wave of mobilization, there was a relatively enduring hope that TK's judgment would not be published. However, protesters were disillusioned on the night of January 27, 2021. The act of publication was a morally injurious situation. After the first wave of anger that translated into small and short-lived demonstrations, demobilization took place. Activists indicated that they felt disregarded by the government. For them, the publication was proof of disregarding the majority's opinion and the authoritarian rule of the minority, i.e., the ruling party. They perceived their own efforts and the mass mobilization as politically inefficient. All the resources involved in participating in protests, preparing, and disseminating materials, including banners, slogans, and songs, were wasted. Particularly morally injurious was the feeling of helplessness, the inability to decide about one's life, and the lack of influence on political decisions in Poland. Attention was also paid to TK's politicization at the expense of the quality of decision-making processes.

To sum up, a sense of moral injustice resulted from the DD leaders' actions and played a demobilizing role in the last stages of the first wave of mobilization. In spite of verbal radicalism and the OSK leaders' discursive delegitimation by state institutions, such a feeling did not arise as a response to their actions. Instead, a morally injurious situation had an external source. A moral injury resulted from the publication of TK's judgment. It meant the failure to achieve the movement's goal despite the significant contribution of the participants' resources to their activity.

Conclusion and discussion

The most important mobilizing factor for both waves of protest was anger. During OSK's (All-Poland Women's Strike, *Ogólnopolski Strajk Kobiet*) mobilization, this feeling was extreme and took the form of rage. The external manifestation of rage was the use of obscene words, including the flagship and most common slogan, "wypierdalać." This extreme level of emotions made it possible to regain the sense of self-determination, which had been lost by PiS's (Law and Justice, *Prawo i Sprawiedliwość*) decisions. At the same time, other emotions, especially hope, were marginalized, or blocked, despite some efforts of the DD (Gals for Gals, *Dziewuchy Dziewuchom*) and OSK leaders.

The paths of demobilization of the two movements were different. DD desisted from action due to a severe and unforgivable moral injury. There was also a reconfiguration of patterns of emotional management. Anger directed at "them" turned into anger against "our representatives." It was no longer the rulers, the ruling party, and the Catholic Church who were blamed for the currently painful events but the movement's leaders. Demobilization ensued

when anger and blaming shifted from the ruling party to the DD leaders. At the same time, the hope for change disappeared. The DD leaders were expected to help the movement achieve its vital goals thanks to their efficient management of its resources. Instead, they focused on their particularistic goals. The rank-and-file activists and leaders of DD's local and international branches felt cheated and betrayed. Hope for achieving common goals within a long-lasting social structure that had fallen into disrepair vanished. In addition, fear did not play a significant role during this wave of mobilization. The use of only low-intensity repression against DD was not a sufficient factor for demobilization to occur. It failed to arouse fear strong enough to shape the dynamics of mobilization.

In contrast to DD, low- and high-intensity repression was regularly and consistently applied during OSK's mobilization. This model of repression constantly evoked fear and translated into a gradual decline in participation in protests. As a result, OSK's demobilization was not abrupt. The comparison of the two waves of mobilization reveals that only the configuration of low- and high-repression sparked potentially demobilizing fear. At the same time, it did not cause immediate changes in the dynamics of mobilization and, as such, fails to provide a comprehensive explanation. Nevertheless, like DD, OSK ceased its activity primarily due to a moral injury. The latter resulted in the loss of hope for achieving the common goals. Anger was stronger than during the first wave of mobilization. Furthermore, it was constantly aimed against the rulers and the church, who were also blamed for unacceptable violations of women's reproductive rights. However, anger and blaming weakened over time.

Last but not least, not every morally injurious situation results in a moral injury. Nonetheless, the appearance of a moral injury is a sufficient and necessary condition for demobilization. In addition, a morally injurious event resulting in a moral injury leads to demobilization if a hope-deprived pattern of emotion management occurs.

Our qualitative study introduced and tested an extended theoretical framework of demobilization. It confirmed that the theory-grounded explanatory model allows for a more accurate and multifaceted explanation of the reasons for the demobilization of long-lasting social protests. However, it is necessary to test it on a larger number of cases in order to define the scope of its applicability more precisely.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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