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Building Narrative Capacity in Mediatized Times: A Study of KOD Social Movement in Poland[1]

Abstract. This paper focuses on the development of the narrative capacities of KOD social movement in Poland that were shaped in the mediatization process. Firstly, we assume that the analysis of a discursive character of movements' political and media operations can expose how KOD constructs its narration and how the media deconstructs it. Secondly, since KOD operates in a highly media-saturated environment, the study of how the movement appropriates communication technologies and uses them in everyday practices is essential. We conduct the research within the framework of critical discourse studies (CDS) where we combine interviews (IDIs) with the movement's leaders and a content analysis of organized media outlets to collect textual data. The data enabled us to track how KOD social movement builds its narrative capacity in the process of mediatization, and in particular, how KOD's narrative capacity is manifested in the movement's discursive practices, and how media deconstructed KOD's narrative capacity. The research showed that KOD representatives deploy the narrative frame of the significant role of the ICT and the media in the functioning of the movement. As the results indicate, discursive practices aimed at building narrative capacity were oriented towards adaptation to functioning in a mediatized communication environment. However, the results of our research showed that KOD could be characterized as a fragile movement and failed to build a stable narrative capacity.

Keywords: narrative capacity; mediatization; fragile social movement; social media; critical discourse analysis(CDA); qualitative research

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Introduction

Contemporary social movements operate in highly media-saturated environments where one of the key determinants of movements' successes is the way in which they appropriate communication technologies and use them in everyday discursive practices. Hence, two issues are crucial to describe the social movements' role in society. The first one is a discursive character of movements' political and media operations that can bring more light into the way that the movement constructs its narrative and how it is deconstructed by the media. The second one is an analysis of how movements implement communication technologies and use them in everyday discursive practices and mediatization processes. Such appropriation of communication infrastructure delivered by tech companies in order to reshape the public discourse occurs on the level of movements' discursive media practices and mediatization processes. Hence, combining these two issues we are able to understand social movements' media-related practices as a discursive formation framed in the relations with other social structures, institutions, and situations (Unger, Wodak, & Khosravink, 2016, p. 1888).

Thus, in this paper we trace how the Committee for the Defence of Democracy (*Komitet Obrony Demokracji*, KOD) built its narrative capacity in the process of mediatization of the movement. We are particularly interested in how KOD's narrative capacity is manifested in the movement's discursive practices and how media deconstructed KOD's narrative capacity.

In order to complete this task, we have conducted an analysis of KOD – Polish social movement. It was created in November 2015 after the Law and Justice party (*Prawo i Sprawiedliwość*, PiS) achieved an electoral victory. Its origin was a reaction to the call of the former oppositionist from the 1980s, Krzysztof Łoziński, as a response to the PiS government's activity in the area of the judiciary. Mateusz Kijowski answered to the appeal by establishing a group on Facebook. The first protests organized by KOD were held in 2015.

The case study of a contemporary Polish social movement reflects the contemporary political context and its unique historical frame. Firstly, contemporary political changes in Poland after the electoral victory of conservative and anti-European parties in 2015 led to the introduction of the politics that was perceived as a threat to the democratic rule of law. Poland under the PiS government entered the road of radical conservative reforms in numerous state institutions (including the Constitutional Court), as well as in the field of legislative system and public media. As a result, in 2016, the EU launched a formal inquiry to analyse if the current reforms violated the rule of law. Secondly, KOD was compared with the Workers' Defence Committee (*Komitet Obrony Robotników*, KOR) from the 1970s and the Solidarity from 1980s (Karolewski, 2016). In the last 40 years, KOD was the largest Polish social movement since the Solidarity and by many people it was perceived as its successor in terms of the effect it had on politics and the part of Polish society.

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Theoretical Approach

Social movements are the subject of numerous studies on organized communication in protest activities, or even mediatized activities, but they relatively rarely raise the issue of how movements transform their media discursive practices in mediatized institutions. A number of well-developed studies use ethnographical (Gerbaudo, 2012) or social network analysis approaches (Gonzales-Bailon & Wang, 2016) to analyse social movements' functioning on protests spots and online during actual protest events. Meanwhile, Cristian Vaccari (2017) uses comparative analysis of online political engagement in Germany, Italy and the UK during electoral campaigns. In turn, W. Lance Bennett, Alexandra Segerberg, and Curd Knüpfer precisely track relations of social movements, civic engagement, and political organizations (Bennett & Segerberg, 2013, 2015; Bennett, Segerberg, & Knüpfer, 2018). Anne Kaun, Maria Kyriakidou, and Julie Uldam (2016) build on the concept of political agency and apply it to "communicative capacities" of social movements staying on the level of media practice. Additionally, Polish social movements are often perceived from the historical perspective, as in the case of the Solidarity (cf. Meardi, 2005; Payerhin & Zirakzadeh, 2006) or, more recently, in terms of LGBT rights (Ayoub & Chetaille, 2017; Mikulak, 2019) and discursive frames of abortion issues (Molek-Kozanowska & Wanke, 2019). Early works on discourse and social movements were focused on collective actions frames (Ellingson, 1995), group culture (Fine, 1995), construction of the meaning and framing (Johnston & Klandermans, 1995; Klandermans & Goslinga, 1996), or power relations in discourse (Holzscheiter, 2005). Moreover, a strong body of studies on right-wing populist movements (cf. Groshek & Koc-Michalska, 2017; Moffitt, 2018) underline other factors than social media usage that affect voters' political engagement, for instance, traditional media use, homogeneity of communicative networks, a role of journalism, or users' ideological points of view. The critical discourse studies (CDS) framework is applied by Johann Unger, Ruth Wodak, and Majid Khosravink to analyse discursive construction of movements' social media operations (Unger, Wodak, & Khosravink, 2016, pp. 1170–1241).

Thus, our intention is to shed more light on the process of mediatization and its manifestations in social movements' discursive practices. The mediatization of politics is a widely discussed issue. Initial studies on mediatization considered this process as the adaptation of political actors to the rules of the media (Mazzoleni & Schulz, 1999; Schulz, 2004; Strömbäck, 2008, 2011; Strömbäck & Esser, 2014a, 2014b, 2014c). Such studies leave no doubt that media logic dominates the interaction of political actors and media (Strömbäck & Esser, 2014b, pp. 386–395; Strömbäck, 2008, 2011). Moreover, the awareness of the role of the media determines the actions undertaken by political actors (Esser & Matthes, 2013, pp. 188–192). However, such a framework on mediatization of politics considers the process as linear. The studies are limited to reciprocal interactions between politics (i.e. politicians, political parties) and the media (i.e. media organizations, journalists).

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There are only a few studies that capture the process of mediatization in social movements (a social actor in the process of political communication) at the time when they go through the transformation from media practices of individual members to fully structured social organization. In order to capture these processes, we construct our research framework based on mediatization theory with regard to social movements (Brodzińska-Mirowska & Wojtkowski, 2017; Mattoni & Treré, 2014). Thus, we understand the mediatization of politics as the process of multi-dimensional changes in the area of politics that are affected by the developments in media and new communication technologies. Such changes are the consequences of interrelations of political actors (politicians, parties, governments, etc.), media (journalists, media organizations, etc.), and the audience (individual members or collective actors) (Brodzińska-Mirowska & Wojtkowski, 2017, pp. 141–142). In this paper, however, we focus mostly on the relations between media, politics and a social movement as a particular social institution. Hence, the interactions that shape the dynamics of mediatization are captured as a discursive formation of media and social movements narratives. On the one hand, we analyse how social movements create their narrative schemes, how they think and talk about themselves, and, on the other hand, how movements' discursive practices are interpreted and reproduced by media. Concerning the time span of a movement's operations, their media perception and recontextualization, we are able to grasp the role of media in shaping the discursive public sphere (Bennett, 2018). Hence, in the course of formalizing activities, giving them a specific discursive framework, the social movement introduces solutions that will enable effective action in and through the media. The social movement is trying to build an organization in such a way as to professionalize the communication process, especially with the media, and to implement specific media logic rules and resources that stand for a unified media policy and media plans on how to communicate with other social institutions and present the movement as a professional and influential figure in the public discourse.

Analyses of the process of mediatization and its manifestations allow us to observe whether and what actions the organization is implementing to increase its narrative capacity potential. Thus, the movement operates to effectively build the narrative capacity understood by Zeynep Tufekci as "the ability of the movement to frame its story on its own terms, to spread its worldview" (Tufekci, 2017, p. 555). Tufekci bridges narrative capacity with two other: disruptive capacity and electoral and/or institutional capacity. Disruptive capacity captures how movements interact with political processes. Electoral or institutional capacity is a movement's ability to effect the electoral process, on the one hand, and change political institutions via undertaken strategies, on the other hand (Tufekci, 2017, p. 670).

Capacity, in general, was derived from theories of development and applied as "movement's collective ability to achieve social change" (Tufekci, 2017, p. 493) that could be demonstrated by the movement in terms of organized protests, potential

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threats, timeframe of protest activities, etc. We, however, would like to emphasise a discursive dimension of capacities at the time the movement is going through mediatization. Hence, we assume that the direct link between the way that movement's authorities perceive and narratively frame its actions and media coverage of these activities would sketch the picture of an actual discursive narrative capacity formation. The protest activities undertaken by the movement are only one side of a movement's narrative formation. The other three movement's narrative frames relate to the formal organization (e.g. rules and resources that movement implements), the professionalization of communication (e.g. an implementation of media logic), and building the political agenda. It corresponds with key questions posed by Tufekci (2017, p. 499):

> Is a movement able to make many people aware of its issues? Or are its views smothered via active censorship? Do the mass media represent the movement as unimportant, trivial, or frivolous? Do ordinary people get a chance to hear the movement's version of the events or its cause?

Since the contemporary social movements rely strongly on communication technologies to create their position in the public discourse, analysing the movement's capacities allows for better "understanding the impact of digital technology on social movement trajectories" (Tufekci, 2017, p. 668). It is obvious that digital media empower a social movement's presence and changes its dynamics. But, as cases of a few social movements have proven (i.e. Podemos, Occupy, M5S), broad online presence does not translate directly into the movement efficiency in the long term. Especially when a movement's structuration develops. It corresponds with demographic data that show that KOD in 2016 was mainly supported by people from larger cities who were relatively better educated and less religious (CBOS, 2016, p. 3). After just over half a year of activity, in June 2016, the activities of KOD were supported by 40% of respondents (answers were summarized: *definitely yes* – 13% and *yes* – 27%), 18% *definitely did not support* KOD, while 27% *did not support* their activity. Participation in protests organized or co-organized by KOD was declared by only 3% of respondents (CBOS, 2016, p. 2). This study, however, is limited to tracking how narrative capacity effects KOD's mediatization. In such terms, mapping a movement's narrative capacity means embedding this notion into a particular multi-layered, unique specificity of the movement. Hence, narrative capacity does not simply refer to how a movement uses digital tools to communicate its agenda to the world. It should rather be perceived in terms of gaining the public voice and visibility in terms of agenda formation, structures that could coordinate communication, institutional formation, or how the movement makes decisions (cf. Tufekci, 2017, p. 416). Moreover, like any other social process, the formation of narrative capacity interacts with often contradictory processes and counter-movement frames in mainstream media.

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Methods and Research Questions

Our research was of an exploratory nature, so it focused on the research problem concerning the activities of the social movement, which are undertaken in order to build narrative capacity. Thus, we capture how the process of mediatization and formation of narrative capacity were perceived, imagined and reconstructed by KOD officials and the media on the level of linguistic categories used. CDS allowed for synthetizing discursive schemes framed in crucial arguments and narrative frames used by KOD officials and in media coverage. Following the above theoretical proposal and main research problem, we pose three detailed research questions:

- RQ 1. How does KOD build its narrative capacity in the process of mediatization?
- RQ 1a. How is KOD's narrative capacity manifested in the movement's discursive practices?
- RQ 1b. How did media deconstruct KOD's narrative capacity?

To answer these questions, we employed two-stage data-based inductive critical discourse analysis (CDA) that follows the methodological framework recommended by Unger, Wodak, and Khosravink (2016, pp. 1191–1197). To collect the data, firstly, we undertook in-depth interviews (eight IDIs) with representatives of KOD central (Warsaw) and regional structures (Kujawsko-Pomorskie Voivodeship), including representatives of KOD management board and persons responsible for communication. Then the linguistic data was qualitatively analysed in order to capture discursive schemes deployed by KOD officials. Secondly, we carried out a content analysis of a variety of media outlets referring to KOD's activities. The sample was selected from press materials published in *Gazeta Wyborcza*, a daily newspaper with the highest circulation (at that time); *Polityka*, a weekly magazine with the highest circulation (at that time); and OKO.press, an independent online media start-up. The sample was selected in terms of circulation and a liberal point of view presented by the editorial boards aligned broadly with KOD's politics. Deliberately, we did not select right-wing private and public media, favorable to the government's policy, since their coverage of KOD was negative from the very beginning. The research included articles from May and November 2016 and July 2017. The chronological selection resulted from the fact that during this period, the largest anti-government/pro-democracy protests were organized or co-organized by KOD. The analytical unit was a single article and the sample included all articles concerning KOD published in three selected media. The sample totalled 101 articles (56 from *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 36 from *Polityka*, and 9 from OKO.press). The analytical units were coded considering the following variables: genre, main topic, main narrative categories concerning KOD, keywords used, and the positive, neutral, or negative coverage framing.

Thus, the collected textual data was analysed in order to extract the specific codes and linguistic categories that reflect the processes of the movement's mediatization

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in terms of professionalization of communication; media logic, rules and resources implementation; institutionalization and organizational approach to communication. To complement the discursive construction of movement's mediatization, there were distinguished the categories related to building narrative capacity: framing movement's narrative on one's own terms; relation to the media framing and coverage; implementation of digital technologies in movement's practices; formal organization of movement's communication. However, due to the dynamic character of the discourse, these concepts are often collocated and overlapping.

Research Results

Mediatizing the Movement

The mediatization process of KOD was correlated with the phase of its highest activity. It included not only the building of structures in individual regions of Poland, but also attempts to form more structured and organized communication channels. IDIs with KOD's representatives indicate their awareness of the role of communication technologies in shaping the movement. This became clear in claims regarding the implementation of activities that improved the process of managing the communication, which was aimed at both better coordination of KOD's activity and increasing the effectiveness of communication, especially in the new media. For example, one of the respondents reconstructs it in terms of "cleaning up" and "cleaning it" with analytical tools. At the same time, team management ("IT unit", "team that will handle") is emphasised:

> (1) For a month or so we have an IT unit that is trying to deal with it (…) The IT unit was recently set up to clean up all this mess that exists, because there's no other way to clean it (…) on the Internet it's quite easy because there's Google Analytics, and Facebook provides quite good tools of analysis (…) we're not satisfied with the results yet, but outlook is promising (…) In terms of Twitter, I would say, frankly, that we are not there yet, we're crawling there, and right now we're trying to create a team that will handle Twitter and hashtags. (KOD3)

Regarding managing the communication process, the same respondent one more time emphasised team management and bridged it with "network" building. These categories can be perceived as a crucial narrative frame used to describe professional communication:

> (2) We will split the team depending on the type of media, a specific person to deal with specific media. We have more or less thirty people, only volunteers though, who are creating a cool network that is slowly, slowly beginning to emerge and knows what to do. (KOD3)

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What seems to be characteristic in terms of mediatization, another respondent perceives professionalization of communication as opposite to "spontaneous" and "dynamic" beginnings of the movement. Moreover, again media relations are considered as a form of specific institution, thus, the narrative frames of "press office" or a "small unit" were used:

> (3) At the beginning everything was spontaneous, dynamic, amazing and everybody said that everything would be great and that nothing could break down – so to speak – but after those first few days and a few attempts to establish contact with the media, it appear that we have to set up something like a press office. We've used the help of a journalist that has a lot of past experience, (…) she has helped us to establish and sustain those media relations, she's created a small unit called the press office (…). (KOD2)

During the interviews, the respondents spoke of changes in the organization of the communication process. The IDIs also underscore that in that specific movement there was a high level of awareness of the role of the media and the need to prepare the organization for cooperation with the media. It also seems that representatives were aware of the need for consistency in the process of building the image of the movement. Thus, activities aimed at professionalization in the field of organization image management should be considered as a consequence of the mediatization process. Interviewees declare the need to "professionalize" communication in terms of implementing market-wise Public Relations by deploying the narrative frame of selling ("sell") the movement's image, or using the "people with experience" as assets:

> (4) For two weeks we've had an outside colleague that is very experienced when it comes to PR. We have to professionalize, there's no other option (…) basically. The PR professionals we have already are necessary and essential because it is not easy to sell anything these days, even a social movement. (KOD3)

> (5) Our big asset is that there's a huge number of people with experience (…) We're using the experience of people (…) who know how to do it, we're starting to work it out and build, we want something like this to be established, to have some form, for instance, a graphic one, of communication. *Nowoczesna* [a new political party – Authors' note] have developed this well. (KOD2)

In managing communication, the aim is also to increase communication efficiency in a market-oriented manner, including identifying "target audience" or transformation into "corporation" that recalls the orientation to managerial narrative:

> (6) First, we have to exactly and precisely identify our target audience. Regretfully, this is a slow transformation just like in a corporation [in terms of communication management – Authors' note] but poorer. (KOD3)

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Increasing the efficiency in the field of communication management requires the evaluation of communication activities, which is one of the most important stages of communication management. Unsurprisingly then, the respondents one more time emphasised analytical "tools" in comparison to the "professional agency" and lack of financial resources:

> (7) We use the tools that are offered by Twitter and Facebook. (…) at the basic level, yes, but there haven't been deeper analyses carried out by some professional agency that would summarize it. We just can't… because one needs money and we have other more urgent needs at this moment. (KOD2)

And:

> (8) We run the website's statistics. But we do not follow generic reach in social media. (KOD5)

To sum up, mediatization of the movement was framed with two dominant schemes. Firstly, the professionalization of communication management was coined in the semantic field of team management. Even the initial metaphor of cleaning up the movement's early days chaos was accompanied with "team" that can handle "the mess". Moreover, multiple "units", "networks", and "teams" were included into this frame. Secondly, mediatization was perceived as a market-derived construct and a selling strategy. Members' skills were coined as "resources", and, in general, KOD was captured as a sort of "corporation" that requires a "target audience". The analyses also showed that KOD representatives are aware of the challenges related to their presence in the media space, which resonates in the linguistic categories they use to describe it. Their response to the mediatization process is an attempt to professionalize in the area of communication. In their opinion, professionalization will enable greater effectiveness in building their capital in terms of narrative capacity.

The role of traditional and new media in building KOD's narrative capacity

It is worth emphasizing that KOD concentrated its attention on building relations with both traditional and new media and it is also worth recalling that KOD was essentially created through new media. However, the mobilization effect in the case of, for instance, KOD's protests was in fact possible due to the focus on relations with traditional media and a strong cooperation with political parties, which is well illustrated by the following statement:

> (9) Do the media help us? For sure they do (…) We organize a march by ourselves (…) and according to different accounts, 15 to 40 thousand people turn up… let's say it's something between 25–30 thousand. By comparison, on 7 May (…) we include politicians, who

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have much greater access to media and suddenly, according to estimates, there were between 50 to 250 thousand people. (KOD2)

With this short excerpt, the emphasis is put on the politicians' "access to media" and eventually the outcome in numbers of participants during KOD manifestations. Moreover, in terms of the role of traditional media in broadcasting the movement's activities, the same interviewee refers to "increased awareness of the movement" when the origins of KOD were framed by television and newspapers, especially *Gazeta Wyborcza*.

(10) [Y]es, it started on the Internet. The first response from the media side was from traditional media in a way, but in fact it was online media because it was the online version of *Gazeta Wyborcza* (…) At first it was calm and everyone just watched it develop (…) the biggest [response – Authors' note] was after a week, when we published the first letter to the President (…) It was the first response from traditional media, when TV stations called, newspapers started to take an interest, and we were invited to interviews (…) it really increased the awareness of the movement among the people. (KOD2)

To answer the first research sub-question (1a. How is KOD's narrative capacity manifested in the movement's discursive practices?), we tracked activities within the mediatization process that had been undertaken by KOD to increase its capital in the field of narrative capacity. As we have mentioned in the previous section, KOD focused on the professionalization of communication processes related to building relations with the media, as well as coordination and development of online communication and the development of their own media. Thus, we consider these activities as elements of building narrative capacity.

Therefore, the study led to the conclusion that the increased tendency to organize one's own media may be, on the one hand, another indicator of media logic internalization, but on the other hand, it may result from experiencing challenges and difficulties in cooperation with traditional media. It is worth noting that both elements are interrelated. In other words, KOD took actions that were supposed to increase its narrative capacity. In the context of cooperation with traditional media, KOD representatives drew attention to the undoubted benefits for the movement. They also referred to the narrative frame of challenges and difficulties of this cooperation. In the process of building the narrative capacity, KOD representatives considered the role of the media as crucial to developing the "civic state" and the general information flow. Yet the same respondent claims that these expectations were "illusions and wishful thinking". Especially when it comes to framing narrative scheme on an everyday grassroots basis, KOD did not have an "impact on" media coverage:

(11) We want to build a civic state where everybody will think on one's own and we are able to do it due to media. We show information and through this people are able to find out about what is going on. (KOD6)

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(12) [W]e had some sort of expectations concerning so-called independent media, but we've slowly learned that these were illusions and wishful thinking. They all support us privately, they are happy that we exist, they attend out marches, but when it comes to the broadcast they start to react more and more contumaciously towards KOD every day. (KOD3)

(13) If it comes to cooperation with the media, the only newspaper that writes about us regularly is *Wyborcza*. When something spectacular is happening, every newspaper is interested (…) But there has to be something big. It has to be attractive (…) We have no impact on whether, they want to write about us. We try to inform them about every event and encourage them via a mailing list and quite a large database (…) but unfortunately, not everybody wants to write about us. (KOD1)

It seems that the factors indicated by the respondents contributed to the aforementioned drive to create their own communication channels. The respondents emphasized the motivations associated with setting up their own media and many of them indicated the need to create a communication platform on which KOD could broadcast its own content. The initial motivation corresponds with the previous statements that media "change the course" on KOD coverage. Movement's new "channels (…), news-sheet" stand as the answer to this issue. One interviewee uses a metaphor of a "scream" as a way to build narrative capacity that, moreover, needs to be "watched over" in terms of specific media outlets. Finally, the other respondent perceives significant difficulties with "access to the platforms", "frequent airtime" and objectiveness in reporting on KOD.

(14) We exist there [in public media – Authors' note] but the coverage is so negative and one-sided that it is not even worth talking about, and the media, no matter whether they're independent or private, (…) unfortunately, are slowly starting to change the course more and more [media change their approach to reporting on KOD – Authors' note], so we have to watch over to have where and with what to scream.(KOD3)

(15) [U]nfortunately, we need to have our own channels, our own news-sheet (…) which we publish, it has – depending on the region – its own title, because there are small editing teams that publish it on their own. (KOD2)

(16) [our own media – Authors' note] are needed to put things straight. We cannot access the platforms [TV – Authors' note] because we will not be given frequent airtime. The reporting about us is not objective; I don't even watch regime media [TVP, state-owned media – Authors' note], Polsat and TVN try to report about us well enough, but our own media are needed in order to reach a larger public. (KOD1)

KOD media are perceived as a platform that gives the opportunity for greater control over public discourse, consequently more efficient organization management,

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and appropriate shaping of narrative capacity (KOD5). It provided a possibility to build an agenda for proposing specific ideas or solutions about the current political situation (KOD4, KOD2). Such an approach to their own media may suggest that without their own outlets they did not see the possibility of making any real impact on the media agenda and, thus, on real political actions:

> (17) Certainly, we influenced politicians. Due to the first march we have managed to stop changes pushed forward by the government. Take a look at how many people, because of their professional honesty, resigned from working for the regime media. The other thing is that many journalists were dismissed. That is why our media and our marches are needed. For people to join KOD (and there will be more and more people interested) we need our own media. (KOD1)

There are three dominant discursive schemes in how KOD officials describe the movement's narrative capacity. Firstly, the narrative frame to stress the role of traditional media and press in specific (*Gazeta Wyborcza*) is deployed. Interviewees perceive it as a key to build the movement's awareness and, in general, civic society. Secondly, however, KOD representatives frame it in the scheme where over time, the media has shifted its attention, losing interests in the movement's grassroots operations. Thirdly, KOD officials place the narrative framework in terms of creating the movement's media as a response to a change of the course of media coverage on KOD. Indeed, the discursive schemes illustrating traditional media power were perceived as factors that determine the movement's narrative capacity. However, since KOD representatives were aware of this "change of the course", a question arises: what, in fact, was the media narrative about KOD?

KOD's narrative capacity and the media narrative scheme

A robust content analysis enabled us to distinguish two dominant patterns of media narrative scheme and the framing within the reporting. Firstly, the framing in the coverage of KOD's activities evolved from a mostly positive one in the early stages of movement's operations, to a neutral (in case of *Gazeta Wyborcza* and OKO.press) or even neutral/negative (in *Polityka* weekly magazine) by late 2016. In May 2016, reports on the activities of KOD in *Gazeta Wyborcza* were enthusiastic. Media compared the relations between KOD and PiS to the battle, where specific semantic strategies correlate positively with the social movement's abilities to articulate the power ("resistance against", "KOD has already won", or "powerful enemy"):

> (18) The Committee for the Defence of Democracy has done the work that can't be overestimated by organizing resistance against the dismantling of the rule of law by the Law and Justice (PiS). (Dorn, 2016)

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And:

(19) After the demonstration of KOD on Saturday, May 7, there is no doubt that the Law and Justice has brought up a powerful enemy that will be able to remove this party from power. (Rolicki, 2016).

Or:

(20) If someone asks me if KOD wins or loses, I say: KOD has already won today. KOD showed that a large part of Polish society does not agree with what the power exposes. I do not agree in a spectacular way. (Michnik, 2016)

A year later, the narrative about KOD was clearly different and and the terms that clearly dominated in the media coverage included "mistake", "giving up the field", "pushing away from KOD", "falling into crisis":

(21) The mistake of KOD was largely based on the fact that the movement was supposed to defend the constitutional principles of the rule of law, but instead the movement gave up the field to the party politicians and drifted towards defending the *status quo* that gave the power to PiS (…) every politician present on the scene of KOD demonstration pushed a group of people away from KOD, until almost everyone was pushed back (…) ORP movement [Obywatele RP – Authors' note] does not make this mistake. The civic motive is radically separate from political and party motives. They keep politicians at a distance. (Żakowski, 2016)

(22) KOD attracted crowds because the first spectacular successful demonstrations made many citizens engaged. But KOD fell into crisis not only because of the *top* collapsed, but also the protest formula only *against*, run out, because if defensive movements cannot defend what they are fighting for, they lose their support after some time. Unless, they propose a vision for the future. Yet KOD did not do it. (Beylin, 2017)

Surprisingly, the analysed content of OKO.press, which is an online, crowd-funded media start up established as a result of anti-PiS protests and in response to changes in Polish media system, was mostly neutral, with some tendencies to be negative in terms of describing KOD's internal issues. Similarly, in *Polityka* the framing towards KOD evolved from a mostly positive and neutral one ("sense of participating in historical event") to neutral and negative in July 2017 ("not realized hopes", "picnic-like dynamism"):

(23) Besides, KOD is not just crowds. It also means extended local structures, the formation of educational and publishing activities. KOD eludes the schemes in which Kaczyński has so far pressed his opponents. (Wołek, 2016)

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(24) Probably everyone who could take part in Saturday's KOD and the opposition march, had the sense of participating in a historical event, the biggest, as it were, political manifestation in the history of the Third Polish Republic. (Baczyński, 2016)

More in the same categories:

(25) The hopes placed in KOD have not been realized. (Bd, 2017)

And:

(26) KOD picnics have their own phlegmatic dynamics, KOD band played, politicians spoke from the stage, the nation heard and then politely went home, like after a picnic. (Pytlakowski, 2017)

Secondly, the sampled coverage almost exclusively referred to the protest activities, the internal KOD crisis (otherwise known as "Kijowski gate", an affair related to the former KOD's leader Mateusz Kijowski whose private company was accused of misappropriation of money from public collections of KOD), and the internal elections. There was almost no coverage about other activities performed by KOD (e.g. education initiatives) in the collected sample. One of the key categories used in OKO.press articles were protests where KOD was perceived as one of the organizers. When the narrative scheme followed issues other than KOD's protest activities, the movement was perceived as less radical and dynamic than other newly establishing social organizations (e.g. Obywatele RP, a social movement established on 10 March 2016 to hold subsequent protests against PiS government). The other published articles concerned KOD's structure, strategic mistakes, and the internal crisis and elections using a narrative frame of "failure":

(27) There were pessimistic voices that KOD is sinking, and the current leaders will not stop it, so the movement is doomed to failure. There was even a suggestion to restart KOD and change its name. (Leszczyński & Pacewicz, 2017)

Polityka's discursive scheme was initially concentrated on the protests organized by KOD. Comparisons to the Solidarity movement in terms of hope and unity emerged in *Polityka*'s and *Gazeta Wyborcza*'s editions from May 2016. KOD was framed in the categories of a real danger to the PiS government – either as a chance to build a firm anti-PiS coalition or even a possible future political party. *Gazeta Wyborcza* presented a very positive attitude to the movement in which commentators placed an emphasis on the long-term social activity of the movement. The frame of the uniqueness of the movement's operations was also presented, as well as the role of activists, especially at the local level. The social character of KOD and its mobilization potential were also

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underlined in the narrative. In November 2016, *Polityka* and *Gazeta Wyborcza* wrote about KOD's likely transformation in terms of building an election coalition and the development of internal structure (i.e. the visit of KOD's leadership to Brussels, and discussions on the possible creation of electoral lists). *Polityka*'s narrative frame from July 2017 focused on the original topics – namely the protests – and supplemented this with stories on KOD's elections and leadership changes. *Gazeta Wyborcza*'s initial enthusiasm was no longer visible in its editions from July 2017. This was a month of special civic activity related to government proposals for reforming the judicial system in Poland. KOD was perceived only as a part of broad opposition. More often, it appeared in the press narrative in the context of a crisis of the opposition and a crisis of leadership. Moreover, in the materials sampled from July 2017, other social actors appeared, who hoped they would be another force engaged in pro-democracy actions (e.g. Obywatele RP).

Conclusions – KOD as a Fragile Mediatized Movement

As the study revealed, in terms of the critical discourse analysis, the building of KOD's narrative capacity during the process of mediatization was mostly discursively framed in the scheme of professionalization in terms of the attempts to implement inter-institutional solutions aimed at coordinating the process of communication with the public, through both external and one's own media. Indeed, such activities are supposed to increase the effect of narrative capacity on breaking media power and influencing public discourse. It should be added that KOD, unlike many social movements, did not dissociate itself from political parties. In the process of shaping the narrative capacity, the social movement tried to use the media capital of the opposition parties as a platform to make narrative capacity more vibrant and ensure that the movement's voice is heard better.

With regard to the main research question, we argue that KOD narrative scheme was based on the introduction of professional communication tools and elements of media strategy, but these were limited to mere declarations. Although interviewees declared an organized approach to communication, it was not reflected in the actual movement's practices. Comparing the narrative scheme with the media practices undertaken by KOD, we see the discord. In the analysed period, KOD had two official websites; an information portal koduj24.pl; 13 regional websites; 16 regional Facebook accounts and groups (closed and open); PDF outlets published by the main board (i.e. Obywatel or Dekoder) and many regional structures; centralized Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Google+ handles. It may suggest that such a great number of social media weakens the narrative capacity and its effect on the media and public discourse.

Did it have an influence on KOD's narrative capacity and the movement's mediatization? Indeed, the study indicates that the shift in the nature of activities towards

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internal and grassroots work (civic education activities, formalizing a new statute and structures, forming working teams in communication, or establishing media strategy) may be the result of KOD's image problems and difficulties in managing communication. The manifestation of this is, firstly, the lower media exposure and, secondly, a narrative scheme that is not consistent with the communication assumptions that KOD had originally expected (KOD7). However, despite the attempts to build strategic communication, there was very little potential in terms of forming the narrative capacity.

To sum up, KOD can be perceived as a fragile social movement. Taking into account the process of development of social movements, in the case of a fragile social movement one can observe an overlapping of individual phases of the development with factors determining their fragility. The fragility is characterised by the reality that "the multiplication of communications channels facilitates an *ease of assembly* which has the unintended consequence that movements will tend to fail to develop the organizational capacities to negotiate their changing environment" (Carrigan, 2016, p. 207). In the case of KOD, however, we see that weakening is a more advanced process. As a result, KOD communicated in multiple – often contradictory in terms of the content – channels. It did not create a stable, coherent narrative scheme; it deprived itself of the possibility to manage protest activities which, consequently, weakened its voice and narrative capacity. As a consequence, KOD, as a fragile social movement, remained ineffective in its activities in the field of communication with the public through the media, mainly due to its low narrative capacity.

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