THE CONDITIONS OF CHOICE:

Analysis of the decision making process on abortion in Western Ukraine

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Master's Thesis

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Major subject: Political Science

Master's program: Development and International Cooperation

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University of Jyväskylä

2019

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Abstract

Abortion decision making is an unavoidable process to women, who find themselves in a situation of unintended pregnancy. Such decision can be very hard to make, especially for women who live in conservative and traditionalistic societies. This study aims to look at young women's decision making process on abortion and struggles that they face in Western Ukraine. Its' goal is to find out what factors have an influence on decision to terminate pregnancy or keep a child and to look at the conditions in which the decision is being made. Narratives of eight women who had an experience of unplanned pregnancy in young age and decision-making on abortion are being analyzed in this study. For this research, seven respondents wrote their personal stories and one interview has been conducted. The narratives were analyzed with thematic and narrative analyses, that were used for both finding similarities throughout all of the narratives and looking at each narrative separately, studying details and specific conditions of women's lives at the time of unplanned pregnancy. The analyses were done with the help of three theoretical approaches: Marxist feminist theory, Radical feminist theory and Intersectionality. Each one of these theories gives an explanation to the conditions of women's lives in society by looking at the various sources of women's oppression and discrimination. Marxist feminist theory claims that women's position in a society won't be equal to men's as long as motherhood and taking care of children would be seen as primarily women's responsibility. Such discourse not only restricts women's access to reproduction decision making, but also limits factors that influence her decision. Radical feminist theory says that root of women's oppression and discrimination is in patriarchy. Until the system changes and women get not only equal rights, but also equal treatment in the society, they wouldn't be able to have full control over their lives. Intersectionality, applied to this research, offers to look at various social, economic and political characteristics of women who are facing decision making on abortion as overlapping factors influencing the decision. In conclusion, four main factors that influence the decision-making on abortion of young women in Western Ukraine have been distinguished in this study. In addition, it has been proven that all of the factors are interconnected. The narrative analysis has helped to get a closer look at the specific conditions in which young Western Ukrainian women make their decisions on abortion.

Key words: abortion, decision-making, young women, feminism, Western Ukraine.

This work is dedicated to my best friend Lilia Skrypnyk,

who has been supporting and inspiring me since

the day we became friends. Thank you.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Every year 99 millions of unintended pregnancies are induced globally, which means that, each one of those women has to make a decision that can change her life. Some of them are going to choose to have a baby, some will terminate the pregnancy, some will risk their lives doing unsafe abortion. However, is it really a choice in the latter scenario? The truth is that women all over the planet have abortions every day, but not all of them have access to the procedure in clean and safe environment, provided by a trained medical professional. Isn't the fact that women are ready to risk their health and lives enough to finally realize that reproductive autonomy must be a given human right?

Ukraine has never been on the list of the countries that have restricted abortions. However, when facing unplanned pregnancy, Ukrainian women suddenly find a lot of restrictions around themselves as well. Gender inequality in Ukraine affects every aspect of women's life, so when standing in front of the decision, what are the options? In this study, I am going to see how young women from Western Ukraine who experienced unplanned pregnancy were making the decision on abortion or had the child. The topic of abortion decision making has been previously studied by Rosalind Pollack Petchesky (1986), Purnima Mankekar (1973), Akinrinola Bankole, Susheela Singh and Tylor Haas (1998). In Ukraine, the topic of decision-making has not been well studied yet, but Halyna Yarmanova (2012) and Iryna Mogilevkina (2000) have produced valuable studies on the topic of reproductive rights. However, the lack of studies on reproductive decision-making makes my research relevant and useful for developing future qualitative in-depth studies on reproduction. It will also show the struggles that young women experiencing unplanned pregnancy face in Western Ukraine. I am hoping that this research might be useful for policy makers, and social and feminist activists to identify problems that still need to be addressed.

For this study, I conducted qualitative research with unmarried women, who were 15-30 years old at the time of unexpected pregnancy and who live in Western Ukraine. Western Ukraine includes Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk, Ternopil, Khmenytsk, Chernivtsi and Volyn' regions. The respondents were offered the choice between a written narrative and an interview, which were analyzed with thematic and narrative analyses. The analyses have been done through the lenses of three theoretical approaches: Marxist feminist theory,

Radical feminist theory and Intersectionality theory.

The aim of this research is to look at the factors influencing women's decision to either give birth or terminate the pregnancy, as well as to study various social conditions, in which the decisions are made. The research questions are:

- What are the factors influencing the decision-making on abortion in the case of an unplanned pregnancy?
- In what conditions is the decision on abortion in case on an unplanned pregnancy made?

When looking for the factors influencing the decision-making process, my goal is to merely identify the factor, not to distinguish which factors have more or less influence on the decision.

This research is important for women in temporary Ukraine, as several legislative acts have been proposed in recent years to limit access to abortions. However, Ukrainian problem of high abortion rates should be addressed not by new restrictive legislations, but by improving conditions of life for Ukrainian women.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1. General Overview

Since the 1990s, the number of induced terminated pregnancies around the world has decreased drastically. Access to effective contraception, especially in developing countries[1] of Eastern European region as well as Central Asian region (former Soviet Union state members), in the period of 1991-1994 proved to be very successful, rate of abortions in these regions decreased in half. The Program of Action of the 1994 Cairo International Conference on Population and Development stated that unsafe abortions are one of the main reasons of maternal mortality. All United Nations members, regardless of their state abortion laws, agreed to improve post abortion care, which saves women's lives. Since 2000 a total of 28 countries have changed their abortion laws, 27 of which expanded legal grounds which would allow abortions in order of saving women's lives. But despite the statistics showing that free access to abortions benefits women's health, there are countries adopting tougher regulations on abortion laws, like USA. (Singh et al. 2017, 9).

Despite abortions being highly or partially restricted in most of the world, abortions are nevertheless performed. In 2010-2014, the estimated number of abortions was 55.9 million annually around the world, 49.3 million of which took place in developing regions and 6.6 million in the developed ones. It has been estimated that nowadays 35 women out of 1000 worldwide have an abortion. Such a rate suggests that on the average, every woman in her lifetime would have one abortion. Of course, one may argue that these numbers are very vague, because if it is hard to get insightful real data about abortions from developed countries that do document these procedures, then how is it even possible to get data from the countries where all abortions are made illegally and aren't documented anywhere? Access to such data is also limited because women don't like to talk about their experience of abortion, many of them fear stigmatization that surrounds the topic. To address the challenges in data gathering and calculation, population scientists developed a range of methodologies to estimate abortion incidence. Estimating abortion at the international level

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[1] Here and through: terms *developed* and *developing* regions (countries) refer to the list of economies by World Bank (2018). Countries of low-income economy and lower-middle-income economy are classified as *developing*. Accordingly, countries with high-income and upper-middle-income economies are classified as *developed*.
World Bank list: https://datahelpdesk.worldbank.org/knowledgebase/articles/906519-world-bank-country-and-lending-groups

requires a different approach. A statistical model that combined all available national-level estimates with information on factors known to be linked to abortion incidence has been recently developed. Its goal is to "fill in the blanks" where direct information is missing. Calculated estimates are annual averages for five 1990-2014 five-year periods (at the global level, regional and sub-regional levels). This approach to estimate abortion incidence enables assessment of changes over the past 25 years and of variation across regions. (Singh 2017, 8).

For abortion to be categorized as safe, it must be performed by a trained professional using safe modern method. . Accordingly, the abortion is less safe if only one of these conditions is fulfilled and least safe if none is (Ganatra et al., 2017 as cited in Singh, 2017, 7). As of 2010-2014, 45 per cent of all abortions were unsafe and they mostly happen in developing regions. Also, there is a correlation between restriction of abortion by law and unsafe abortions practices. At least 31 per cent of least safe abortions happen in the countries where abortions are the most regulated and are not allowed even in the case of rape, incest or if pregnancy is potentially dangerous to woman's life. (Singh 2017, 10).

So, what are the characteristics of women, who'd most likely seek an abortion? Of course, this question is very hard to answer, as conditions of life and wellbeing are very different from country to country and if social portrait of a group can be made in one state, it can't necessarily fit the group in another state. However, according to Chae (2017 as cited in Singh 2017, 12) and her research in few selected countries, women of young age in developed regions are the most likely to seek an abortion. At the age of 20-24, women are already sexually active, but most likely not ready to have a child for many reasons. As for the developing regions, it is hard or nearly impossible to calculate ab average age when women have their first abortion, as in the countries where official documentation is not filed, women are also not very eager to talk about abortions. (Singh 2017, 12).

The marital status is an important factor when it comes to the abortion decision making. Mostly in developing regions, women who get pregnant outside the marriage are harshly judged by the society. There are also cases when legal marriage is not that important for the society anymore, as long as a woman is in committed relationship with the father of her child. By the way, relationship status also matters a lot when deciding to have a child or

terminate the pregnancy. Only, its meaning might be completely opposite in different regions. While in developed states women are more likely to terminate pregnancy if they are single, in developing countries young girls are in relationships for most of their childbearing years. Being in a relationship increases their chances to get pregnant, hence it increases chances for young women in relationships to get an abortion. (Singh 2017, 12).

The number of children that a woman already has is a very important factor. In developed regions especially, desired number of children in a family is getting smaller, so women who want just one or two children might terminate pregnancy that happens in young age to postpone having a family. Women might also opt for abortion if they already have several children and can't or don't want to take care of more. The age of a child or children also matters. Sometimes, if a woman gets pregnant again soon after giving a birth, she decides to terminate that pregnancy and focus on newborn with all her attention and energy. (Singh 2017, 12).

The financial situation of women who had an abortion is a flexible characteristic that varies by country. It is an obvious assumption, that finances, or rather the lack of it, has everything to do with the decision to terminate a pregnancy. However, various studies show very different conclusions. In 12 of 19 developing countries with national survey data on the economic status of women who have had an abortion, the wealthiest two-fifths of women have had a surprisingly disproportionately large share of abortions. However, in two of these countries (Armenia and Azerbaijan) the pattern is reversed. Poorer women have had more abortions than women of any other economic group. In the rest of the reviewed countries, there is rather weak relationship between wealth and reported experience of abortion. (Chae et al., 2017 as cited in Singh 2017, 12).

2.1.1. Abortion Procedure

It has been talked a lot about socio-economic and even unlawful conditions in which abortions take place, but it is also important to pay attention to the procedure of abortion to understand what consequences and impact it has on a woman. There are different methods with which abortions have been provided throughout the ages, but only recently the procedure has been medicalized. Before abortions became? legal, not so much real research

has been done on them, and they were often induced by the woman herself or other people without medical education whatsoever.

Now abortion, if done in safe conditions and by a medical professional, is one of the safest procedures, especially if it is done at the early stages of pregnancy, at least within the first trimester. First option, that is nowadays an established method of termination of pregnancy – is surgical abortion. The word "surgical" scares off many women, but in fact the procedure is done by vacuum aspiration and it doesn't include cutting, sewing and other usual attributes of a surgery. It requires only basic facilities and simple equipment to perform a safe procedure. It is supposed to be not very painful and is followed by rather painless post-abortion recovery for several weeks.

Besides surgical abortion, women are now able to induce the abortion themselves by only taking few pills or combination of pills. It is called medial abortion and it is done with *misoprostol* or *combination of misoprostol and mifepristone*. The effectiveness of misoprostol is 85 per cent; this medicament basically causes contractions that make the fetus detach. It is a rather safer option and can be performed without even a visit to the doctor (although, it is always recommended?). The combined method is preferred in developed countries where laws aren't restrictive, as its effectiveness is 95-98 per cent and it adds *mifepristone*, which is basically responsible for stopping the women's body to produce pregnancy hormone. *Mifepristone* is usually taken in doctor's office 24 hours before *misoprostol*. The medical abortion method is only safe to do for first 10 weeks of pregnancy.

Both options are safe for women's health and future fertility, and only in very rare occasions there are complications. Unfortunately, procedures even as simple as that might cause psychological complications for a woman. That is why in developed regions, when a woman comes to doctor's office seeking for abortion, she spends few minutes talking to a doctor and maybe is offered a list of options she has in her position.

The talk and the list of options is, unfortunately, often needed because the procedure of abortion is yet inseparable from the social context. The stigma associated with the procedure might make it hard to obtain any information about the procedure itself. "Abortion stigma also compromises researchers' ability to get representative information on actual

practices, which makes it more difficult to address barriers to care. In addition, stigma can result in providers opting out of abortion services entirely—sometimes out of conscientious objection, but also out of a preference to avoid association with a culturally proscribed health service". (Singh 2017, 20).

2.1.2. Stigmatization and Secrecy

"Stigmatization is a deeply contextual, dynamic social process; it is related to the disgrace of an individual through a particular attribute he or she holds in violation of social expectations" (Norris et al. 2011, 3). Abortion stigmatization is often applied exclusively to women, who have had an abortion, which makes sense, but as Norris and her colleagues ask – how about other people associated with abortions? Medical professionals who work at the clinics that provide abortions as well as the friends and family of the woman who support her decision to terminate pregnancy are also stigmatized. Even pro-choice activists can be affected by abortion stigmatization. Stigmatization is a prescription of certain negative characteristic to an individual and further disgrace of that individual through the prism of that negative attribute. Kumar et al. (2009) says that abortion stigma is "a negative attribute ascribed to women who seek to terminate a pregnancy that marks them, internally or externally, as inferior to ideals of womanhood" (Kumar, 2009 as cited at Norris 2011, 3). Moreover, Kumar argues that stigma is created and spreads across all levels of human interaction "between individuals, in communities, in institutions, in law and government structures, and in framing discourses" (Kumar, 2009 as cited in Norris 2011, 3). Studying abortion stigmatization is very important; understanding that it will help developing strategies to reduce it, and reducing it will improve the access to health care for stigmatized women.

Abortion stigma is also a "concealable" stigma. It means that women, who had an abortion, tend to conceal it from others and such secrecy only makes it harder psychologically, as if they were concealing a crime. Women also don't have a full control over the information – it can be reviled by (and to) other people, which makes women struggle not only with stigma after information about abortion was reviled, but also worries about stigma if the information is reviled. The secrecy of the abortion also affects other people – like partners, family, friends and even providers. (Quinn & Chaudior, 2009 as cited in Norris 2011, 3).

In countries where clandestine abortions are popular, where highly restrictive laws and stigma dominate – women often choose secrecy over health. Such behavior usually has bad consequences. Unfortunately, it is quite often that women wait until the last moment after the unsafe abortion procedure with complications. The longer women keep their secret and don't ask for medical help, the worse are consequences – often life-threatening. In fact, high women's mortality in countries with highly restrictive abortion laws is associated with untimely post abortion care. Thanks to Cairo Program of Action in 1994 even those countries with strict laws provide post abortion care to women as standard women's health care, it accepted by government and health care providers. However, such politics only proves that government is aware of the risks to women's health and wellbeing that are caused by the lack of proper laws and safe abortions (Singh 2017, 28).

However, stigmatization is a burden not only to those women who have opted for abortion. Young mothers and single mothers are also being stigmatized, which makes the decision-making process even harder. Single mothers, especially the ones who have never been married before and receive social benefits from government, are often stigmatized as "lazy" and dependable on "taxes" of other hard-working members of the society. (Albritton 2010, 10). Moreover, in developing regions there is usually a moral stigma applied to single mothers: it is still considered to be shameful to conceive a child outside marriage and women are being criticized because they don't provide a male role model for a child. (Worell 1986, 7). Somewhat similar to what single mothers go through, young mothers are often accused of irresponsibility, lack of knowledge about taking care of a child, and assumed to be from financially insecure family (Everson 2015, 4-9).

2.1.3. Reasons Why Women Have Abortions

An abortion, being a private matter, is still a very important political tool and measure. High number of abortions in the country probably means that political, economic, social situations in the country might need an improvement. There are multiple cases of governments' attempts to decrease number of abortions by restricting abortion laws instead of addressing the socioeconomic problems that often influence woman's decision. That is why we should study reasons for abortions – they can be good indicators of bigger problems in society, which each state should address.

The most common reason why women terminate pregnancies worldwide is to postpone or stop childbearing. It is a generalized reason that might mean different things in different regions. For example, in developed regions, women, who want to have an abortion to postpone pregnancy, usually do it because they want to finish studies, build a career or a family first. In developing regions such as Sub-Saharan Africa, many women, who have abortions to postpone the pregnancy, do it because of their young age – often they are still in their adolescence. (Bankole 1998, 118; Singh 2017, 12). Another reason – to stop childbearing – is often applied to slightly older women who already have a desired number of children.

Second most common reason consists of socioeconomic factors, range of which may be very wide. Many of in-depth studies show that economic factor, although is always present, does not have a big value in abortion decision making. However, Bankole's study (1998) based on data from 27 countries shows a different result. According to Bankole, inability to provide proper care for the child came as a second factor in overall importance and this factor is mentioned by women from both developing and developed regions. Such difference in data may be explained by the difference in interpretation of data. For example, Bankole classifies answer "afraid that baby will disrupt employment or studies" as economic reason. Although, the connection is obvious, a lot of other researchers would classify such answer as disruption if personal aspirations. (Bankole 1998, 117-119).

Other possible socioeconomic reasons include 1) relationship problems (not only with the partner or biological father of the child, but also with family, friends and sometimes members of the community that the woman lives in), 2) age and marital status, 3) risk to mother's health, 4) fetal defect, 5) other reasons (that may be a wide variety of reasons, including rape or incest). (Bankole 1998, 119). Furthermore, I am going to focus on the factors of abortion decision making that are most likely applicable to my object of the study – young unmarried women aged 15-30 who live in Western Ukraine.

2.1.4. Personal and Social Relationships

The first thing that comes into mind when talking about a relationship as a factor in the abortion decision making is the relationship with the partner or absence of such a bond. Single women generally have unintentional pregnancies more rarely than those in relationships, but they are also more likely to come to the decision to terminate the pregnancy. There are also previous studies that show a correlation between bad relationship with the partner and likelihood to terminate pregnancy. (Sihvo 2003, 602). There are also many scenarios when women in abusive relationships are forced to give birth or terminate pregnancy.

The question of family support could be taken to two extremes in the case of young woman's unplanned pregnancy. On the one hand, if a woman leans to keeping the baby, family support might play a key role in the decision making, giving the woman security and assurance that she can rely on close people when she needs help, no matter what is her relationship status with the child's father. On the other hand, very often young women are simply scared to tell their families about the pregnancy, which leads to additional stress and pressure. Cases when women seek support in family, but receive deeply negative reaction are not exceptional. "When a young girl is coerced by her parents into having an abortion, there is often a breakdown in the parent-child relationship; coping mechanisms include denial and avoidance with the end result often being an inability on the young woman's part to enter into maturity and act as an independent adult. Or, if a girl has an abortion without her parents' knowledge, she ends up in a cycle of lies and cover-ups which emotionally strain all her relationships". (Ring-Cassidy & Gentles 2002, 217).

Apart from the interaction with the primary circle concerning the unplanned pregnancy, a woman is also influenced by the community(s) she lives in. Whether it is educational institution, neighbors, office colleagues, etc. – such communities are the source of stigmatization. Women have to be discreet about the pregnancy with such communities, which can negatively reflect on psychological state and mental health. Secrecy itself makes unintended pregnancy feel like shameful and dishonoring condition that is "deviant" and "unnatural", especially if a woman happens not married. (Ring-Cassidy & Gentles 2002, 226).

2.1.5. Personal Aspirations

Personal dreams and aspirations have become a reason to terminate pregnancy relatively recently. Women, after they got an access to education, work and career growth, have a chance to consider what goals they want to pursue in life. Less than a century ago women even in developed regions didn't have such opportunity because of the social expectance to follow traditional gender roles.

However, social benefits which women received after decades of fight with patriarchy make the abortion decision process even harder. Women, who in conservative societies are still primarily seen as mothers, have to combine work with motherhood and domestic labor, so when unintended pregnancy occurs, a woman is not only making a decision whether she is ready to become a mother, but also if she is ready to accept twice as much of responsibility. Studies show that occupation and work status correlate with the decision to have an abortion. (Sihvo 2003, 603). Job market worldwide is highly competitive, especially for young women, who often are refused a job because of employer's concern that they will leave for maternity leave right away or become less focused on job responsibilities after they have children.

There is also a connection between the level of education and likelihood to terminate the pregnancy. Level of education, though being a characteristic of women who are likely to have an abortion, is often also a reason why women terminate their pregnancies. Desire to continue education rather than interrupting it for maternity leave is a common reason among young women. Higher education level, however, generally positively influences women. On the example of Chile, in the period of 50 years (from 1957 to 2007) maternal mortality ratio dropped for 93.8 per cent and it is directly connected to the women's access to education. (Koch et al. 2012, 3).

2.1.6. Religion and Abortions

Most of the religions of the world frown upon abortions. Here I want to review how various religions influenced views on abortion throughout time and until now, and then in section 2.2.5 Religion in Western Ukraine I will focus on Historically, religions where regulating the views on abortions and till this day they serve as a platform for abortion stigma formation. However, even though negative in general, views on abortions may widely differ

in various religions. There are, for example, few religions that are, in comparison to others, "friendly" to abortions: Hinduism, Buddhism and Judaism among them. According to the information taken from the Pew Research Center website (2013), Hinduism, in fact, condemns abortion, because it violates their teachings on nonviolence. But the general value system teaches that the right way to act in any situation is to choose the lesser harm, which in a big picture means that Hinduism wouldn't disapprove of an abortion executed to save woman's life. Buddhism does not have an official position on abortions, but it is believed by Buddhists that life begins at the conception and killing any life is morally wrong. Judaism is interesting in this sense, as in its traditional teachings it said that mother's life and well-being is a priority. Reform, Reconstructionist and Conservative movements of Judaism openly advocate for access to safe abortions, but Orthodox movement has more restrictive views on the matter. There are also few Christian traditions that believe abortion can be justified in certain conditions – usually those conditions are rather like danger to life than social. Islam, the second largest religion in the world, has its own views and traditions. According to Islamic teachings, fetus in the womb of a woman acquires a soul only after the fourth month of pregnancy – abortion is not permitted after that term. However, it is technically permitted before pregnancy term reaches four months. Different Islamic scholars have slightly different thoughts on that, but all agree that "permission" should only extend to women whose health and life is in danger or in case of rape, for example. On practice, we know that primarily Islamic countries usually forbid abortions on legislative level. (Religious Groups' Official Positions on Abortion, 2013)

Christian position towards abortions was changing through the history. For example, in early days of Christianity abortions were strictly forbidden, and women who conducted it could fall under punishments and penalties, but during Renaissance control measures were somehow weakened. Of course, Church's moral and ethical codes had its influence on creation of civil laws, like English Common Law, which later also influenced on forming American laws, where abortions were already included to the list of punishable actions. However, abortion in the Catholic Church was treated as a crime equal to murder without any softening circumstances only beginning in 1588, under Pope Sixtus V. Before that time, there were some sort of loopholes for women seeking an abortion. For example, if woman had conducted an abortion before she felt the "quickening" (movements of growing fetus), it was considered as miscarriage and wasn't punishable. In other words, abortion was

considered as crime only after the fetus has already been animated. And even earlier, there was some sort of a "grace period" when a woman could have an abortion and stay unpunished: 40 days since the day of conception for girls and 80 days for boys. How would anyone prove the exact date of conception and find out the sex of a child while it's still in the womb remains unknown. (Mankekar, 1973).

In the modern world narrowing moral views on abortion to calling them just Christian is definitely wrong, as various confessions have quite diverse views on this topic nowadays. A good example of that is an open letter to Colin Powell from an ad hoc coalition of religious leaders. In order to express support to ICPD (International Conference on Population and Development) they stated: "We want to make clear that while people of various faith traditions believe abortion to be a serious moral issue, most religious denominations affirm the moral right of women to decide when abortion is morally justified in light of their circumstances, the teachings of their denomination and the dictates of their conscience".

Even though religions disapprove abortions, it doesn't mean that religious women do not terminate pregnancies. In USA, for example, 79 per cent of women of reproductive age affiliate themselves with a religion, but according to current abortion rates, one out of four American women will have had an abortion by the age of 45. There is also no noticed difference in abortion-related behavior of atheist women versus religious women. Even Catholics, who are very strict with abortion matter have an equal percentage of abortions to everyone else. (Frohwirth et al. 2018, 1-4). Although, according to Adamczyk (2013), personal religiosity has a stronger influence on issues of the state that do not have strong legal underpinnings, and is not as focused on issues that are already illegal. For example, researchers found that personal religiosity has a weaker influence and is less vocal on such behaviors as stealing, lying and even murder, but stronger influence on attitudes about sexual morality and behaviors. The explanation behind is that while people who participate in illegal acts would already be accountable for their behaviors, religion must be the guide in personal sphere like morality, that has no written rules. (Adamczyk 2013, 217-220).

2.1.7. Morality and Abortions

It would be a big mistake to assume that religiosity is the only source of moral considerations when it comes to abortions. But first, it would be useful to distinguish what morality is in general. The term morality is often used in public and even academic spheres without universal understanding of the word's meaning. It is sometimes applied as a synonym to "ethics", and while these terms share similarities, they also differ in meaning: ethics is rather a philosophical reflection upon the rules of mankind, traditions and customs, ways of people living together as a society; morality, on the other hand, is often seen as a shared standard of behavior in a society (Gammel 2009, 2). According to Thomas Scanlon, *individual* morality is a set of moral standards that apply to an individual. Those are "…standards that [are] determining the permissibility, impermissibility, and blameworthiness [of] individual actions, but it can also include conclusions about values – about the best way to live – that are also commonly called morals" (Scanlon 2016, 3). In short, morals are do's and don'ts that are accepted and shared in certain community, but the root where morals come from can differ. "No moral decision is made in a vacuum. Morality is itself the dimension of our life together in which we consider the effects of our decisions and actions upon others and theirs upon us" (Heyward 1986, 43). Philosophy, religion, laws, etc. – it all shapes a person's morality, which is complex and can differ in different societies. Hence, that means that moral rules of certain phenomena are not fixed and universal – they are fluid and depend on the circumstances in which a decision is being made.

Heyward looks at the moral side of terminating pregnancy through the lens of pro-choice feminist liberation theology. Her main statement is that various institutions have no right to meddle in or even regulate the moral choice of a woman to abort. Abortion is a personal matter and personal choice based on personal morality, which means that if decision to abort feels right to a woman – it is, in most cases, a right decision in general. "…at the level of personal morality, a woman's choice to abort or not is fraught with ambiguity and complexity, and that this is the case even when, as is often true, the woman is clear that for her the decision to abort is right. I would submit that the morality of abortion ought to rest in this morally ambiguous and complex realm of personal decision; specifically, in the realm of the particular woman's personal decision" (Heyward 1986, 43). Heyward argues that lack of support from various religious institutions towards women's right to choose reflects how deeply patriarchal they are, and also illustrates their neglect of women as fully embodied

moral subjects of their own life. "To what extent do we trust women to live as moral persons? …To the extent that we tag certain qualifications onto our own understandings of when or if abortion is right, we are dabbling in a long-standing distrust of women that is steeped in many generations of assumption about woman as mindless body, woman's natural role as wife and mother, woman's sexually insatiable appetites, and so forth" (Heyward 1986, 44).

2.2. Situation in Ukraine

Multi-indicator Cluster Survey (MICS 2012, 102), which took place in Ukraine during 2012 shows that over 80 per cent of pregnant women in Ukraine end up giving birth, 13,9 per cent termination of pregnancy and 5,3 per cent experience miscarriages. In comparison to the same research in 2007, the rate of abortions has noticeably decreased (in 2007 it was 25,3 per cent. Previously numbers used to be even higher, and during the Soviet Union and first years of Ukrainian independence abortion was the most popular way of birth-control because various contraceptives were not as available as they are now. Same research also shows that only 4,2 per cent of all women who had an abortion at least once were not married and had never been married before.

To understand the causes and consequences of an abortion it is important to know in what environment it is exercised. We can look at the abortion rates, and that information is no doubt very important for monitoring the general picture, but it is equally essential to include socioeconomic factors to explain the phenomenon in specific region. For example, according to the Abortion Worldwide 2017 report, young women, who have never been married before, have more abortions than any other group. However, in Ukraine abortions rates are higher in the group of older women, which is explained by their wish to regulate the desired number of children (Ukraine MICS, 2012, 103). In short, to understand the factors influencing abortion decision making it is important to study the position of women in Ukrainian society: their political involvement, economic and social situations, cultural issues.

Let's look at the gender equality issues in Ukraine. It has been proved that there is a direct correlation between human development index (HDI) and gender empowerment measure (GEM). Countries where women empowerment level is higher also have higher human development index. According to Human Development Indices and Indicators: 2018

Statistical Update, as for 2017, HDI of Ukraine was 0,751 which puts Ukraine on 88th place in rank out of 198 countries and territories. However, at the same time, the gender inequality index (GII) in Ukraine is 0.285 and the country is ranked at 61st place, which is higher than HDI ranking, mostly due to women's relatively high level of education. (Gander 2006, 3).

2.2.1. Ukrainian Women and Political Participation

It is vitally important that women participate in politics at all levels, as they bring new issues into political concern, represent women and advocate women's rights. Moreover, according to the World Bank (2001, 12) there is a correlation between corruption and improvement of women's empowerment and participation in the parliament. In Ukraine, women's participation in politics still leaves a lot to be desired, even though positive changes have happened since The Revolution of Dignity. Since the last parliamentary elections in 2014, there are 53 women compared to 398 men in Verkhovna Rada (Ukrainian Parliament) of Ukraine. Only 12,5 per cent of the members of the parliament are women, and it is also the highest number in Ukrainian history. It does not mean that Ukrainian women are not sufficiently participating in politics, but the number of elected women decreases as the power and influence of the position increases. As for the 1st of January 2013, there were 12 per cent of women in the regional counsel, 23 per cent in district counsel, 46 per cent in the settlement counsel and 51 per cent in the rural counsel. On the average, there are 13,5 per cent of women in regional councils in Western Ukraine. (Zakharova et al. 2017, 6-14).

A larger number of women in the parliament would secure Ukrainian women a proper defense of their rights. "Women's views are not represented, their needs are not met, their problems are not addressed, their rights are not implemented. In the very near future, it is imperative that women should voice their opposition to a society ruled by old men in dark suits and gray ties, to their mythology and misogyny. Otherwise, a democratic civil society in Ukraine will remain an impossible dream" – words of Ukrainian activist and researcher Solomea Pavlychko cited in Gander (2006, 4). This applies to reproductive rights as well, and even though abortions in Ukraine are allowed on request, this right has been disputed multiple times in past. Not so long ago, on 27th of March 2017, Dmytro Golubov registered a new legislation for vote in Verkhovna Rada, which would forbid women to terminate pregnancy on request, unless the father of the child supports this decision. Legislation, so clearly patriarchal in its foundation, caused a lot of outrage among Ukrainian women,

especially feminist activists, and year later was dismissed[2]. Even though the vote never happened, this case highlights that in Ukraine men are the ones who have the power to decide what happens to a woman's body. Female representation in politics on the governmental level is not only important for the protection of women's rights, but also for creating gender balance and positive image. As for today, there are a lot of people in Ukraine with rather conservative views and ideas that there is no "women's place" in politics. The number of women in Verkhovna Rada is consistently small because young girls rarely dream of or consider career in politics. A higher percentage of women in the parliament would create an image of women as strong, smart advocates for a change, and potentially would have a positive influence on what is considered "women's roles" in the Ukrainian society in general. (Mayerchyk 2017, 192).

2.2.2. Economic Issues of Ukrainian Women

On the legislative level, Ukraine guarantees gender equality on the labor market, while in reality, most of power, possessions and influence in general still belong almost exclusively to men. Since Ukraine got its independence in 1991, the economic situation of Ukrainian women, in contrast to other spheres, changed in a negative direction. The return to the patriarchal tradition deepened the inequality: women's salaries, compared to men's, decreased and government regulated daycare degraded, which in many cases put women in a position of choosing between work or taking care of her children. Unfortunately, the situation of female discrimination at the labor market has not changed much ever since. According to the State Statistics Service of Ukraine, in the period since January till September 2017, women's average monthly income was 6414 UAH (€202), and men's average monthly income was 8271 UAH (€261), which means that men's salary in Ukraine is on 29 per cent higher than women's (Vyshnevska 2019, 19). Such an inequality exists because women often are occupied in less prestigious jobs and because women rarely have high-ranked and well-paid positions. Young women are the most vulnerable group on the labor market, employers are not eager to employ young women because of the risk to pay for their maternity leaves. As a result, young women are forced to accept worse positions

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[2]The legislation project about modifying legislative acts of Ukraine about restriction to medical termination of pregnancy (abortion). (2017, March 27). Retrieved from http://w1.c1.rada.gov.ua/pls/zweb2/webproc4_1?pf3511=61424
Official web-portal of Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine

and agree to work for a smaller salary. Also, once women get an official status of being unemployed, it is harder for them to get back on the labor market at any age. Unequal division of domestic labor occupies women at home for far more hours than men and creates a double load of responsibilities for women. This does not allow women to focus on their careers as much and, again, prevents employers from hiring women for high-ranked positions. Finally, conservative views about the traditional role of a woman, supported both by men and women, does not help to change the situation. (Shestakovskyi 2013, 49-52). Such unfortunate economic issues have its influence on family planning in Ukraine as well, and make young single women the most vulnerable group of the society, who in the case of an unplanned pregnancy, will most likely have an abortion. (Koriukalov 2014, 51).

2.2.3. Social Issues of Ukrainian Women

Apart from the economical struggles, women in Ukraine also often face social issues such as a poor healthcare system and stigmatization and stratification in education. (Gander 2006, 29). The healthcare system in Ukraine is officially free to every Ukrainian citizen, but in reality, it is poorly financed and undeveloped, which means that patients have to pay for medical assistance and, more often, medications themselves. In 2014, patients paid with their own money 46 per cent of the general expenses for healthcare, mostly expenses on medications, not medical attention. General expenses on medications covered by the Ukrainian government total up to only 35 per cent of all expenses on medications. (Report (In)expensive Healthcare 2017, 29). Corruption, low-qualified specialists and lack of modern equipment are other gaps of the Ukrainian healthcare system. Although the Ukrainian healthcare system claims to be universal for both men and women, the latter experience system's flaws more often due to the economic inequality. However, there are programs in the Ukrainian healthcare system designed specifically for women, which include care for reproductive health, family planning, oncogynecology and medical attention to victims of violence and abuse. Ukrainian government is especially interested in developing programs for reproductive health care, aiming to decrease the number of maternal and infant mortality. Another goal of the program is to decrease number of abortions, educational plan of action targeting usage of contraceptives has been created for that matter. (Koriukalov 2014, 22-25).

As for education of Ukrainian women, relative gender equality, that has been reached

in this sphere during the time of Soviet Union, was transferred into independent Ukraine as well. In fact, as for 2013-2014 academic year, there were slightly more women in higher education than men – 52,3 per cent of all students. Nevertheless, gender segregation is still present in various fields of education. For example, as for 2011, there were 74 per cent of women with higher education degree in psychology, 73 per cent in art studies, 72 per cent is philology and 68 per cent is pedagogy, but only 11 per cent of women with higher education degree in national security sphere, 18 per cent is science and engineering, 24 per cent is physics and mathematics. Such division is caused by gender stereotypes that are often transmitted to children of young age by family and teachers at junior school. (Mayerchyk 2017, 135-142).

2.2.4. Cultural Issues

After the collapse of Soviet Union, one of the most important things for Ukrainians was strengthening the church and returning to familiar Christian traditions, which also meant returning to deeply patriarchal traditions. The shift from woman-worker to woman-housewife, woman-mother, woman-wife was very significant to the nation. Despite 27 years having passed since Ukraine received its independence and feminist movements were strengthened with the help of Western Europe and USA, Ukraine is still holding on to the traditional image of a woman as a caretaker and guardian of the home, children and family. According to a research on Ukrainian youth aged 25-29 years old, both men and women thought that the best age for a woman to get married was 18-22 years old (Predborska as cited in Gander 2006, 35). Early marriage and parenthood at a young age is accepted and often supported in Ukraine, especially in rural areas, where gender stereotypes are stronger. The study, funded by the Canada-Ukraine Gender Fund, showed that men and women in Ukraine have different hierarchy of values. While for men priorities were their jobs, friends, leisure time, hobbies and politics, women prioritized family, children and religion as their key values. The same study also showed that men from older generations took little interest in raising children and rarely knew what was going on in their lives, how they were doing in school, who they were friends with and what were their hobbies and interests; however, fathers of younger generations showed more interest and involvement in parenthood. (Gander 2006, 35-36).

Western and Eastern Ukraine show rather big differences in gender-related issues.

During the Orange Revolution of 2004 and Revolution of Dignity in 2013-2014, differences were especially noticeable. Politically and historically, East of Ukraine tended to support building stronger ties with Russia, which is rather orthodox in questions of gender equality, while West of Ukraine insisted on strengthening connections with Western Europe. However, a paradox has been arising in past few years regarding the views and values of Western Ukrainian population. Despite long years of working towards European integration and wishing to share the lifestyle and standard of living with Western European countries, people seem to be not ready to accept liberal values of Western Europe. It has been especially noticeable since the liberalization of laws about tolerance and equality and organization of first pride marches in Ukraine. Various nationalistic organizations (mostly popular in Western Ukraine) have been popularizing the traditional image of a woman and organizing marches for traditional family values as a response. The war on the territories of Eastern Ukraine had its influence on the rise of nationalistic organizations and adding to gender stereotypes spreading as well. Ukrainian soldiers and veterans are often among those men who come to various gender and sexuality themed events with a simple goal to stop them from happening. (Gander 2006, 36)

Cultural issues influence reproduction and family planning as well. Strong pro-life movements in Ukraine, Christian tradition and gender stereotypes have created a stigma around abortion and women who have had an abortion. Pro-life rhetoric creates a feeling of shame surrounding women who have had abortions and strongly criticizes anyone who supports women's right to choose, going as far as calling pro-choice positioned people murderers. This shifts the discourse of abortions from medical and human rights fields into the area of "ethics" and "morality". Shift like that can potentially turn into legislative changes. In 2010, the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine together with Ministry of Health of Ukraine and Ukrainian Counsel of Churches as well as religious organizations held a symposium called "Moral and Ethical Aspects of Medical Termination of Pregnancy". The goal of the symposium was to set a union of medical and religious positions towards abortions. Moreover, abortion stigmatization includes spread of false scientific data about physical and psychological health of women who had abortion. For example, women are threatened with "post-abortion syndrome", which unavoidably includes neurosis, reluctance towards intimate relationships, difficulties in developing close relationships with other people, getting addicted to alcohol and drugs and even developing suicidal tendencies.

Meanwhile medicine, in fact, does not recognize such syndrome as real. (Yarmanova 2012, 120).

2.2.5. Religion in Western Ukraine

Ukraine is highly religious country. According to Razumkov Center report (2018), in 2018 as many as 72 per cent of the people identified themselves as religious. Western Ukraine is characterized as the most religious part of Ukraine, where only 2 per cent of people called themselves not religious or atheists. In the same region, the most popular religious confessions are Orthodox (46 per cent) and Greek-Catholic (40 per cent). It is interesting that among the 24 regions there are only two (both of them in West of Ukraine), where none of the respondents answered "I don't belong to any of the confessions" or "I don't know". This means that 100 per cent of the respondents picked this or some other religious confession, and all of them were within Christianity[3].

Halyna Yarmanova, a Ukrainian researcher, wrote about a number of active religious organizations in Ukraine, whose activity is focused on or concerns the anti-abortion propaganda. In her article, she reviewed the work of five religious organizations and 5 "pro-family values" organizations. They differ because the first ones are supported and in some cases funded by the Churches of various confessions, and the second ones are usually civil organizations that refer mostly to Ukrainian traditions. It seems that Halyna Yarmanova includes "pro-family values" organizations in her research, because Ukrainian traditions are strongly connected to Christianity. Yarmanova calls the objects of her research "anti-choice organizations" instead of "pro-life", saying that there is nothing about the value of life in their activity, just pure desire to restrict women from their right of choice. The activities of the discussed organizations have similar character, almost all of them are creating anti-abortion materials and later spreading them in schools, colleges and universities, hospitals and reproductive health clinics. Some of them are also providing lectures, public events and walks in support of "pro-life" agenda. The biggest one was automobile ride called "From Ocean to Ocean", which started in June 2012 in Vladivostok, Russia and ended in Portugal. Motto of this action was "Stop Abortion!" and it was supported by heads of Orthodox

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[3] *Релігійні вподобання населення [Religious Preferences of Ukrainian Population]*. (2015). Retrieved April 18, 2017, from
http://www.infolight.org.ua/content/religiyni-vpodobannya-naselennya-ukrayiny.

Churches in Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and Lithuania. There is also an organization that works in direction of legal change, on their website they state that their team is working on creation of new laws, which would make abortions illegal in Ukraine. In Ivano-Frankivsk city, there were few actions organized by religious organizations, in which protesters were gathering in front of hospitals and reproductive health clinics to shame women who came there, and doctors, who were providing abortions. Yarmanova claims in the postscript to the article describing the protests in front of a reproductive health clinic, that during the protests, four terminations of pregnancy were conducted, which means that clients' privacy rights were violated. (Yarmanova 2012, 99-122).

3. THEORETICAL OVERVIEW

There is no unique and general theory of feminism. Like anything else, it has several schools of thought that focus on various issues. Liberal feminism, for example, mostly focuses on legal changes that would give men and women equal opportunities. Cultural feminism underlines the differences between men and women, but "different" doesn't mean "worse". Radical feminists fight with patriarchy not only in public spheres and on paper, but also in private lives, criticizing gender-related stereotypes. Socialist (or Marxist) feminism claims that gender inequality can be solved through elimination of class inequality. Also, there is an intersectionality theory, which framework is often used in feminist theories. Intersectionality is a theoretical approach based on interconnectedness of race, gender, class, age and other social categories that overlap in oppression and discrimination of an individual. Different feminist theories have different approaches to various issues. Reproduction has always been one of the most disputable issues, covered by a variety of feminist thoughts.

I chose Marxist feminist theory because I thought it was the best way to explain how political and economic conditions of Ukrainian women are influencing their ability to make reproductive choices. Marxist feminism focuses on production and reproduction as the central features of human society, (Engels 1940, as cited in Paltasingh & Lingam 2014, 43). It emphasizes the gendered division of labor and argues that until women are not allowed the same possibilities on the labor market, their oppression will continue. This approach helped understanding the financial problems that the Ukrainian women have due to unequal division of men and women on labor market. Radical feminism helped me to explain position of Ukrainian women in patriarchal hierarchy and power relations of men and women in Ukraine. Radical feminism examines the male hierarchal order in the society and the patriarchal structure that give men both economic and political power. Patriarchy defines woman's position in the society and makes them subordinate to men, which influences all spheres of life, including reproduction matters. Finally, I chose intersectionality because it looks beyond the reproductive rights on the legislative level and instead focuses on marginalized groups that because of the various social, political and economic issues may not have an opportunity to exercise their rights.

3.1. Marxism and Feminism

Technically, since the revolution of 1917 and until the collapse of Soviet Union in 1991, the government never used the term "feminism" on its agenda. Marxist theory alone gave a push to women's emancipation that very soon grew into women's liberation unknown to Western European Societies at the time. Communist government never cared about women's rights or reproductive rights; it only saw women as an additional work power to industry and main source of creation of new human power. Petchesky writes that according to Marx, "reproduction is a social activity, distinct from the activity of childbearing and determined by changing material conditions and social relations" (Petchesky 1986, 8). In "The German Ideology", Marx defines "three aspects of social activity": "the production of material life", "the production of new needs" and human procreation – reproduction within the family, which to him is also a "social relationship". This means that in Marxism, women are part of production, only their role was prepositioned to reproduction. (Petchesky 1986, 9). The theory has been developed in this way because neither Marx, nor Engels, nor Lenin or Trotsky thought of human sexuality specters. Heterosexuality was believed to be the only innately human sexuality. In such heterosexual scheme, women's job of nurturing and childbearing was only seen as natural. That is the reason why new theory that would challenge women's destiny of motherhood was not created (Smith S. 2015, 1-24). Engels wrote that to sustain life people need two types of production: production of material goods and production of human beings themselves – because women had an exclusive ability of childbirth they were left with the reproductive role. (Green 1986, 211).

However, Marxism as a political theory was still promising women many progressive benefits and rights that women didn't have at the time, but even in theory it was not enough by itself to secure women a strong position in the society and a list of rights and freedoms. The problem with the Marxist theory was its' gender generalization. "Marxist categories of class have often assumed the location of the male members as representing that of the whole class. The Marxist-feminist position rejects the illusion that the subjects/objects of class oppression and class struggle are homogeneous, i.e., *male only*" (Green 1986, 211). However, Sharon Smith (2015, 1-24) in her work "Women and Socialism: Class, Race and Capital" (revised version) seems to disagree with that, as she reputedly quotes Marx, Engels, Trotsky and others, who underlined the importance of working-class women in achieving revolutionary results. Marx laid the theoretical ground to the theory of social reproduction

but did not bring it to the end, and that is when Marxism and feminism have got a chance to merge together and create a better theory for women and their emancipation. "Both Marxism and feminism are emancipatory theoretical traditions in that they envision the possibility of eliminating from social life certain forms of oppression" (Wright 1993, 211). The *theory of social reproduction* is based on the domestic labor, which was always laid on women's shoulders. Women were not allowed into industry and were only expected to obey the role of house-wife, which made them subordinate to their husbands. Hence, being subordinate in family led to being subordinate in the society, too. That meant that changes towards the position of women accepted on the government level, however progressive, would not give desired outcomes if the whole perception of a woman and her role were not changed on individual level. As long as women are perceived as clueless creatures and as long as women remain voiceless in a state run by men, any choice or freedom given to them wouldn't really be a choice nor freedom.

That is why Marxist feminism focuses on women's choice. Not only on women's *right* to choose, but mostly on the social and material conditions that form a decision. Petchesky points out that in a Marxist theory, women, even being an equivalent to "human making machines", were still in power to make their own reproductive choices, but not ever like they please. "…They [women] do not make them [choices] under conditions they create but under conditions and constrains they, as mare individuals, are powerless to change" (Petchesky 1986, 8). Marxist feminism eliminates the requirement for women to reproduce and stands for their right to have access to power just like men, this way women would be able to create for themselves conditions in which they can make a real choice, and not just pick the best option in given conditions.

3.2. Radical Feminism

At the end of 50s and until 80s in America radical feminism was The Feminism. Most of the things that women from developed countries today take for granted, such as access to education, financial freedom, and most importantly, freedom of reproduction, are consequences of the second wave of women's liberation movement. However, there are still a lot of societies around the world where women are not granted even that.

Radical feminism is based on the belief that women's oppression is the most basic form of oppression that can be seen in all societies. Jelena Vukoičić writes that the root of further oppression, discrimination and injustice is patriarchy. In this system men are on top of the hierarchical ladder and, according to radical feminist theory, gender inequality is a foundation of all other inequalities. Male domination is created and sustained thanks to such factors as 1) *birth imperative*. Just because women are physically capable of having children it doesn't mean all women *must* have children. The obligatory motherhood that is translated through generations is limiting women's reproductive freedom. 2) *Translation of a subordinate image of a woman*, which means that femininity and female sexuality (often pictured in media and transmitted throughout generations in girls' bringing up) is socially constructed and often gives us an image of a woman, that is subordinate to a man, helpless, clueless and needs a "protection". 3) *Violence against women* is another factor that sustains male domination. Power inequality and dominance of a man might grow into a violence against women. Domestic violence, rape, prostitution are the examples of physical abuse men exercise on women, very often knowing there will be no punishment for their actions. Power hierarchy of patriarchy system has a long history and despite some criticism it meets today, there are still a lot of 4) *support from influential institutions*. Church, traditional family models, pro-life movements – all of them are limiting women's freedom by continuing the acceptance of male dominance. (Vukoičić 2013, 35-36).

Vukoičić suggests that the concept of radical feminism rose on some basic principles of Marxism. Discourse of class, conflict, production, exploitation, etc. is often "reused" in classic feminist texts, as it fits the pattern of oppression. By changing "class" on "sex", "production" on "reproduction", "capitalism" on "patriarchy" and so on, it is possible to explain the problems radical feminism highlights and see the solutions it offers to change the system. (Vukoičić 2013, 37). Linda Gordon has voiced similar thoughts in her "On 'Second Wave' Socialist Feminism" article. Gordon suggests that the whole 'Second Wave' of feminism in the USA was socialist, however she makes a distinction between Marxist feminism and socialist feminism, pointing out that while Marxist feminists were fighting the capitalism to end oppression, socialist feminists were fighting patriarchy. Her description of socialist feminist is very similar to general understanding of what radical feminism is. Although, Gordon pointed out that in the sixties no one really understood the theory of radical feminism or feminism in general. She made excellent comparison of feminist

movement in mid-60s to an elephant, which blindfolded journalists, activists and theorists were touching, but never being able to grasp it at full. (Gordon 2013, 1). Second wave of feminism, even though being called "second" was, in fact, something new to a lot of women. The first wave of women's liberation movement were suffragettes and their goals and ideas differed from those adopted in mid-20th century. In the 1960s women were already liberated in some senses, way more fearless and much more determined.

The 'Second Wave' activism in USA was carried around the country under the slogan 'The Personal is Political'. The slogan was the name to a fight against domestic violence. Women, who finally came forward and broke the silence of what is happening behind the closed door showed what patriarchy looked like from the inside. The start to the movement was probably given by Carol Hanisch, who in 1969 wrote an article for "Notes from the Second Year: Women's Liberation", which carried the same name "The Personal is Political". In 2006 Hanisch clarified that the name to the article was given by the editors Shulie Firestone, Anne Koedt and Kathie Sarachild. The article itself, although not scientific, draws a very good picture of the resistance and theory behind it at the end of 60s. The work is dedicated to discussing women's "therapy groups" that were forming in different cities at the time. Harnisch says she never liked the word "therapy" as it assumes that women visiting those groups were sick or there was something wrong with them, while in reality, quite the opposite was happening. Those were activist women, strong and independent, ready to resist the system, and they were getting together to discuss personal things, that were silenced before. Hanisch gave it very spot on name of 'political therapy', which didn't even mean an affiliation with any particular political power, but 'political' in broader sense - it meant that personal problems discussed at the meetings were, in fact, collective and should have been deled with only collectively, by united women of different races, ages or backgrounds. Hanisch calls out inner misogyny and encourages to try and understand 'apolitical' women, who didn't take part in the movement and sometimes even judged it. Their 'apolitical' was seen as, in fact, political too. And their voices were just as important. Such political therapy gave its results. Very soon women, who suddenly had more voice than ever, started to realize that bad things in their life not necessarily can be blamed on them. Denying victim blaming and looking for the root of the problem deeper in the system brought them to the patriarchy and opened the eyes on very unjust power division. (Hanisch, 1969).

Unfortunately, decades later, 'The Personal is Political' is still applicable to women's movements everywhere. Silenced topics of women's oppression are still there, still not being heard. Ukraine is a developing country with strong nationalistic movements, especially in the West of the country, which means strong ties with tradition and conservative views of the population. As Ukrainian researcher Oksana Dutchak noted, "on paper" Ukraine is very progressive country – Constitution of Ukraine "guarantees" women equal opportunities, but in reality Ukrainian women don't have as much access to positions of power and influence as men. An explanation to that can be gender stereotypes that women are unsuitable for making important decisions. Besides, even though it is prohibited by law for employers to specify gender in their employment opportunities advertisements, by only opening any work search website in Ukraine, it is possible to see hundreds of advertisements where not only gender, but also age and even physical features are specified. This creates very tough environment for women in job-search, which often makes them accept jobs with bad workers' conditions like long hours, low salary and sometimes even health hazards. Add social pressure of motherhood to that. A large proportion of women who, as Dutchak describes them, don't contribute to economy of the country – are housewives (28,6 per cent). Other women without registered employment can be working illegally in Ukraine or be worker-immigrants. (Dutchak 2018, 7-14). The latter is a growing problem in Ukraine that lacks in a research. Such conditions of life, however unjust and bad, are very familiar to Ukrainian women, as patriarchy is a system that creates these conditions is in heart of Ukrainian "traditions". Changes for women on the societal level can be done only when changes are accepted on personal level and families stop rising their daughters using patriarchy patterns. So, yes, every time when someone says to a teenage girl: "It doesn't matter what education you opt for, what matters is to marry a good man" – personal gets political.

3.3. Intersectionality

Intersectionality is a theory of an overlapping social identities as race, gender, sexuality, class, etc., that each contribute to systematic oppression and discrimination. The term "intersectionality' in feminist work was first used in 1989 by Kimberle Crenshaw. Leslie McCall and Ange-Marie Hancock later did another influential input in the theory. And even these three authors, crucial in the history of the theory, have slightly different views on the matter, they all agree that intersectionality should avoid primary focus on

gender and generalizations (*some* women doesn't mean *all* women). What differs in these three authors' works are their conceptualization of relationships among different inequalities. (Walby et al. 2012, 226-228).

Crenshaw was the one who pointed out black women's invisibility. In a women's liberation movement, radical feminist theory assumed that gender-based oppression is the root of any oppression. Crenshaw disagreed, pointing out that both gender equality project and anti-racism project failed noticing black women's struggles. In fight with domestic violence, feminists, who were primarily middle-class white women and students, forgot that black women, besides being oppressed by gender, were also oppressed by their race. That is when Crenshaw brought intersection of race and gender, in which one part of identity is equally important to the other. Previous researchers, Crenshaw says, haven't been sufficiently careful which brought them to treating one identity as dominant over other. Crenshaw distinguished two types of intersectionality – structural and political. Structural type of intersectionality reviews the intersection of unequal social groups, political concerns the intersection of political agendas and projects. (Crenshaw 1989a; 1991b, as cited in Walby 2012, 226).

McCall distinguished three different approaches to intersectionality: intra-categorical, anti-categorical and inter-categorical. Intra-categorical approach is in a way inspired by Crenshaw and focuses on small groups at neglected points of intersection. Its goal is to see the life experiences of members of such groups and most often is used with small groups that have not been previously analyzed. Anti-categorical intersection is based on method that deconstructs analytical categories. This approach prioritizes fluidity of categories over stabilization, as stabilization of categories proves "to be problematic in essentializing and reifying the social relations that the analyst may be seeking to change". (McCall, 2005 as cited in Walby 2012, 227). Finally, Inter-categorical approach "provisionally adopt[s] existing analytical categories to document relationships of inequality among social groups and changing configurations of inequality among multiple and conflicting dimensions". (McCall, 2005 as cited in Walby 2012, 227).

Hancock has also built her own typology of approaches to analyze intersectionality. To study the categories of differences she identifies three approaches: unitary, multiple and

intersectional. Unitary approach studies only one category that is presumably primary and stable. Multiple approach studies more than one category, if they are equal in value and relationship between them is stable. Intersectional approach also studies more than one category, that matter equally. However, in intersectional approach relationship between categories is open, they are fluid and mutually constitute each other. (Hancock, 2007 as cited in Walby 2012, 227).

Even though the tern "intersectionality" was first used in 1989, the idea dates back to mid-19th century, and all this time it was an important tool of highlighting racial problems intersected with other categories of oppression. However, according to Joanna Simpson, project officer of Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women, everyone belongs in intersectionality. According to Crenshaw, overlapping categories usually were sex, gender, nation, race and class, but now we understand that there's endless count of identities applicable to a human that create unique life-conditions. (Simpson 2009, 8). Age, education, background, family status, housing status, sexual orientation, religion, spirituality, and so on – this is just an example from a long list of identities.

Ukrainian society is relatively homogenous, so it is safe to say that the majority of Ukrainians do not experience racial discriminations. However, there are some national and/or ethnic minorities in Ukraine, who can relate to that. For example, the Romani people have been under the attack of nationalist organizations multiple times just in the past year. During the last attack, a 23-year-old man was killed and three more people, including children, were seriously injured. (Burdyga, 2018). Romani women in Ukraine is that invisible group of people that intersectionality might be well implacable to. Except for being discriminated and oppressed in the Ukrainian society due to their ethnicity, Romani women are also oppressed because of their gender. Romani communities aren't very homogenous, but they all are, no doubt, very patriarchal – men are "the head" of family and they are the ones who decide if their wives stay at home to be housewives or go to work, if their daughters receive an education and, very often, they even decide whom their daughters get to marry. (Kondur, 2015).

Based on the topic of this research, the reader must have guessed by now that gender discrimination is present in the Ukrainian society. It is a patriarchal society women are rather

seen as house "guardians" and mothers. A woman is expected to know how to cook, to be responsible for cleaning, to have a desire to get married, and to want children. On top of that, women's images are widely objectified in the Ukrainian media, show-media, advertising. These gender stereotypes are taught to children as early as in elementary school books where girls are always drawn in pink, busy helping mothers, while boys are engaged in adventurous, sometimes mischievous activities. (Nosova 2017, 26-27). Back in 2016 when I was on the last year of Bachelor program, I took Sociology of Childhood course and for the final research paper, my friend and I went back to our schools and asked 3rd graders, 7th graders and 10th grader what it means for them to be a girl/boy. The results we got showed how interestingly children's minds develop, but more importantly, they showed how early gender stereotypes are tied to children and how deeply they affect their self-image and the perception of opposite sex. Later those gender stereotypes transform into gender discrimination, objectification and even domestic violence, as women are seen not like personalities with their own individual dreams, aspirations and desires, but exclusively men-pleasers. I'm not saying this linkage is unavoidable for every Ukrainian, but the level of domestic violence in Ukraine is very high – 21,6 per cent of Ukrainian women aged 15 to 49 have been victims of physical, sexual or moral violence from their partner, according to the United Nations Population Fund (2014).

Discrimination by age is another popular form of discrimination in Ukraine. Such discrimination can possibly happen with anyone, although researches show that it tends to happen with two age groups in particular: youth and elderly people. These two groups are polar and according to Nepyivoda (2010, 53-57), social distance between these two groups is very wide, as both treat each other as potentially dangerous. Elderly people tend to think that youth in their 20s is "criminal" and youth despises elderly people for their conservative views and dreads them especially before elections. For the purpose of this research, I am now going to focus on young women, as a possible target of intersectional discrimination. First of all, there is certain age discrimination at the job market. Young people, especially those living in rural areas, struggle when finding a job after schooling, as employers prefer to hire someone with experience. Young women, however, have even lesser chances to find a job, as potential employers often assume that they will soon get married and get pregnant. In such a case, an employer would have to pay for maternity leave. It is not rare for young women to hear such questions as "are you married?", "do you have a partner?", "do you

have children?", "when do you plan to have children?" at the job interviews. Employers want their employees to be fully focused on work and they do not believe that young women who have families and small children can do that. (Bilosludtzev 2013, 22).

Intersectionality is rarely mentioned in the literature on reproductive rights. Since the beginning of the fight for the reproductive rights, it has been mostly a fight of the white middle-class women. It is undeniable, that their efforts have brought amazing results, but it is also hard not to notice that they ignored needs of any other woman who did not fit in their ideas of womanhood and women's needs. For example, a lot of campaigns were focusing on the legal side of reproductive autonomy (such as the access to abortions and contraception), but no-one thought of the accessibility, and consequently, the already marginalized and oppressed groups of the population were left behind. Nowadays various inclusive social programs have been created in developed regions, and many are specifically focusing on offering help to women from low-income households to take care of their reproductive health, visit planned parenthood clinics and have access to contraception and safe abortion. Unfortunately, Ukraine is not in the list of those countries. In Ukraine intersectionality is still not implemented and in the discussion about reproductive rights the question of women's reproductive health is usually addressed as a "women's issue", assuming that it is equal to all women regardless their race, ethnicity, class or age. (Sands 2017, 38-40).

To sum up, these three theoretical approaches together work the best to characterize Western Ukrainian society. Problems in the power relations between men and women on domestic level, as it is explained in Radical Feminism, grow into inequality of men and women on political, economic and social levels. According to Marxist feminist theory, inequality on such levels leads to unequal division of men and women on labor market and viewing motherhood as primary "work" for women. In such conditions, reproductive choices of women are very limited, even if they technically have an ability to make a decision. Intersectionality shows how various social, economic, political and private aspects of women's oppression create interconnected factors that influence reproduction decision making.

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1. Qualitative methods

Qualitative research methods are used for this research in order to try to interpret not only numbers and rough reasons, but to go in depth of to the respondent's world, see the society with her eyes and understand the experiences she was going through. When looking for a word that best describes qualitative studies, that word would be "understand" as that is the ultimate goal of any qualitative research – to better understand. (Minayo, 2012 as cited in Muylaert et al. 2014, 187). Qualitative methods allow a researcher to explore a wide array of dimensions of the social world; include experience, understandings and thoughts of the respondents. "We can do [the research] qualitatively by using methodologies that celebrate richness, depth, nuance, context, multi-dimensionality and complexity rather than being embarrassed or inconvenienced by them". (Mason 2002, 1). Qualitative methods allow creativity and interpretation. Besides, these methods fit so well for this research because of the flexibility they offer. The goal is not only to find the answers to existing questions, but also see the new perspectives on the matter, and maybe find unexpected angles that have been previously missed. (Ospina 2004, 2).

4.2. Data gathering

When I decided to work on this topic one of the biggest concerns was methodology and data gathering. From the beginning, I was leaning to qualitative methods, but thinking how hard it would be to find respondents, who would agree to talk with me about such a delicate topic, was holding me back. Also, because the topic of abortions and/or decision making is silenced I, frankly, had only a vague idea where to look for such respondents. In the end, I decided that this research will have a real value for me and will motivate me to work on it only if I find bravery to try and get respondents who would share their stories with me in-depth.

Right after I had made the decision, I started thinking about an appropriate methodological approach. Of course, first thing that came to my mind was semi-structured in-depth interview, but the more I thought about it, and the more I discussed my topic with others, the more it became obvious that interviews can't be my only option. Some women (friends and family), who were interested in my topic and had similar experiences, but

couldn't be my respondents, were telling me that they would feel uncomfortable talking about it (especially with a stranger), but would prefer to gather their thoughts and write their stories themselves. This led me to the idea to do both interviews and written narratives. When I was looking for respondents, I gave them a choice: to write a free-form story or have a talk with me via available video-call handles. Most of the women who replied to me, preferred writing. Some rationalized it with timing – it was hard to find an hour or more for an interview during the day, while writing could be done whenever it is comfortable. Others said that they were concerned about privacy – they were not able to have a video-call with me during working hours and in the evening it was hard to find a quiet place at home without being interrupted by family members. Finally, most of the women just indicated that they would feel more comfortable to write rather than talk. By the end of the data gathering I had seven written stories and one interview.

To find respondents I used social media. My first idea was contacting the clinics and ask front desk or doctors themselves to distribute my contact information to women who fit my research criteria, but none of the clinics I wrote to answered.

4.3. Social Media in Academic Research

Using social media in social research in the academic world is a fairly new practice, but fast growing in popularity. As technologies develop, academic world catches up. Studies show that response rates to academic surveys conducted in traditional way were and still are decreasing and that happens for different reasons: being too busy, research being not relevant or even having an unavailable address to return the survey are among them (Johnson & Owens, 2003 as cited in Dusek et al. 2015, 279-282). Decrease in response rate is a serious problem as it may interfere with data quality: how representative is the data of the sampled group if response rate is low? Going online seems as a logical step that not only allows to speed up the survey process, but also offers such benefits as lower cost of a survey and ability to sample hard-to-reach populations. For these reasons, online surveys are especially popular among students. (Dusek 2015, 279-282).

There are many ways of using various social media handles for collecting data – from downloading analytics and statistics of users' habits to polls and sharing questionnaires among social groups of research interest. While big data access depends on the chosen media

handle (for example, Twitter API gives you a chance to count, filter, search through real-time tweets and download data to work with it in R or Python, etc.), it is harder to sample your group of interest yourself, choosing right respondents according to needed attributes. There are several ways to do it. First, a researcher can use a *snowball sampling*. This method is especially popular when working with hard-to-reach groups of population and more often used in qualitative research. To find the respondents, the researcher needs to find a way into assumed network of subjects qualified for the study. For example, a researcher can be referenced to the first respondent, who after an interview and establishing of a personal relationship; will reference another potential respondent to the researcher. Second possible method to sample respondents in social media is *targeted sampling*. This method can be used for recruiting respondents for both quantitative and qualitative research. Main characteristic of it is selecting research subjects by specific attributes that have been defined as targets for study beforehand (Watters & Biernacki, 1989 as cited in Dusek 2015, 279-282). For example, to target respondents, the researcher can use few demographic variables, such as gender, age, level of education, marital status, etc. to filter only those who best reflect the researched group of population (Dusek 2015, 279-282).

To find respondents for my research I too decided to go online and use social media available to me. To find my respondents I used both snowball sampling method and target sampling method. I did the sampling in few separate steps. First, I applied the targeting method and by using such variables as location and gender, I picked a number of groups on Facebook where I could find potential respondents. I shared the post on my private Facebook page which was rather random in terms of targeting, but made it easier for me to share the post to other groups directly from my page instead of writing new post each time. This also made it easier to share it to multiple local groups that I selected according to the areas that interested me, for example "Ivano-Frankivsk City" group, "Ternopil City" group, "Lviv City" group, "Ivano-Frankivsk Speaks" group, "Kalush is the Best City" group, and many more alike those, whose members were primarily citizens of Western Ukrainian cities. I also posted my message to such groups as "Feminism UA", "Fem-support", "Mothers of Khmelnytskyi", "Motherhood in Lutsk", etc. – groups whose primary members would be women or, even closer to my sample, women who have given birth. Surprisingly, quite soon the post on my page got around 30 shares from friends and family, some people were also sharing the post from other groups. It didn't go viral, but already on the second day of my

"campaign" a few women wrote to me, expressing their interest in the research and agreeing to participate. In total, I posted two different posts to the same groups to select my eight respondents.

By using social media such as Twitter, Instagram and mainly Facebook, I shared my post, where I wrote a little bit about the research, my motivation and its urgency together with contact information (I created separate email address for the research and encouraged potential respondents to reach me through it). This message itself was a second step of targeting as I revealed in it the criteria for picking respondents: a respondent must be a woman, 15 to 30 years old, living in Western Ukraine at the time of pregnancy and having terminated a pregnancy or given a birth to a child while being unmarried. The translated versions of original posts (both first and follow-up) are attached as the appendix to this thesis.

Finally, I familiarized the women who agreed to participate in my research with the topic and gave them a short informal guideline with questions that I had most interest in. The guideline also liberated them to avoid anything they found irrelative and/or add anything they found important in their particular case. Prior to sending the guideline, I exchanged a couple of emails with each participant, telling a little bit about myself, explaining my motivation in this research and in general trying to create the feeling of trust between me and respondents. I felt like it might help the women to tell their stories, make me less of a stranger. I highlighted how important it was for me to hear the unique voice of the storyteller in each story. With the guidelines, I was risking turning this study into a semi-structured questionnaire but that was not what I wanted. I realized it was necessary to create some guidelines after several women asked me for directions because they found it was hard for them to even begin a story without any sort of "instructions". In the end, after the women sent me their stories, I thanked them and asked if they knew any other women who would fit my criteria for research and might like to participate. That was my third stop of sampling using snowballing method. I also kind of included it in the shared message, asking people to share the post with women they know fit criteria.

Sampling my respondents via social media handles was definitely beneficial for me. More than that, it made my research possible, because finding respondents who would like

to share their stories of such a delicate matter would be much harder if I went with some other way of sampling.

4.4. Respondent Overview

As the result of my sampling through social media, I ended up having eight respondents. In total, 12 people contacted me, who wanted to share their stories, but four of them did not meet the criteria, so I had to politely turn them down. I present the basic information about each respondent below in Table 1. To start with, all of the respondents are obviously women. Coincidently, I have four respondents who, when finding out about the unplanned pregnancy, have decided to terminate the pregnancy and the other four have decided to give a birth. Third option – to give the birth to the child but later on giving it up for adoption is not a focus of my study, though the question was raised in the interview that I conducted. Other seven respondents never mentioned this option in their narratives, so there's no possibility to analyze the data which I don't have. However, in some cases the lack of data on the topic is a research result in itself – I take it that if thoughts about giving the child away for adoption was not mentioned by any of the respondents, they never really viewed it as a possible option in the first place.

Table 1. Socio-demographic characteristics

	Resp. 1	**Resp. 2**	**Resp. 3**	**Resp. 4**	**Resp. 5**	**Resp. 6**	**Resp.7**	**Resp. 8**
Decision	A*	A	B**	B	B	A	A	B
Age*	20	23	19	15	27	20	22	18
Occupa-tion	Student	Student	Student	High school student	Profes-sional	Student	Student	High school graduate
Relation-ship**	Dating	Dating	Dating	Dating	Dating	Dating	Single	Single

* A- abortion; **B- giving a birth; ***age at the time of pregnancy;
****relationship status when finding out about pregnancy.

Returning to the demographics, I am pleased to say that I have quite homogenous a group of individuals. Five out of eight women were collage or graduate students at the time

of pregnancy, six of them were 18-23 years old, and only two were standing out of the group. One of them was a 15-year-old high school student, and another one a 27-year-old professional working in event planning. None of my respondents were married at the time of the pregnancy, two out of eight were single and the rest of them in a relationship. All of the respondents at the time of pregnancy lived in various cities of Western Ukraine, such as Ivano-Frankivsk, Lviv, Ternopil, Khmelnytskyi, Lutsk, and one respondent from a smaller city – Kalush (Ivano-Frankivsk region). Apart from Kalush, all of the cities are regional centers and have a population of more than 200 000 people. The population of Kalush is around 60 000 people. So, all the respondents were from urban areas, hence they all were living in similar conditions meaning that there is no big gap between style of life of each respondent, as it would be if any of them lived in a small town or rural area.

4.5. Narrative Inquiry

Having eight different life stories in my hands, I had to find a way to analyze them in the best way possible. As I mentioned before, prior to data gathering, I considered doing semi-structured interviews and semi-structured questionnaires, but such a method seemed a bit impersonal. I was afraid that my respondents would find direct questions insensitive, and I wanted to give them as much freedom as possible in including moments from their experiences that they found most important and valuable. In the end, to fit all my wishes, I picked narrative inquiry as a chosen methodology. Narrative inquiry, previously used mostly in literature, has been accepted by science and is now used in a diverse range of fields including anthropology, economics, history, psychology, sociology, and sociolinguistics. (Riessman, 2008 as cited in Wells 2011, 5).

Narrative, as any story, may be found in any sort of material – not just written form such as a diary, letter or report, but also in a speech form like interviews, in electronic communication or even visual forms such as photos or film (Wells 2011, 39-41). As I mentioned before, I have seven written stories and one interview. At first, I was a little worried if such disproportionate ratio would work out for me, but after reading more about narrative types, and reviewing previous narrative studies, I realized that this method gives unlimited freedom to analysis as well as leaves the space for creativity. For example, Jonathan Shay – psychiatrist by profession – made a shared narrative research, in which he compared memories of his clients (veterans of Vietnam war) with the old Greek epos "Illiad"

by Homer. In his research, Shay showed that perception of war has not really changed after all this time. What captured my attention, though, was the data gathering in Shay's research: he combined notes he took during sessions with his clients, interviews and separate stories written by his respondents (Wells 2011, 44). Such diversity still let him come to impressive results and calmed me down about mixing material. In the end, story itself is the most important and the way it is framed always differs anyway because storytellers are different people.

Options are not limited when it comes to defining what narrative inquiry actually is. Many authors gave narrative quite different definitions: while some say a narrative is a story about an event with an end-point (Gergen, 2009 as cited in Wells 2011, 5), the others stretch it to narrative as a life story, collected by series of research interviews (Lieblich, 1998 as cited in Wells 2011, 47-48). Such a variety only means that "…how narrative is analyzed is? intertwined with how it is defined" (Gulich & Quasthoff, 1985 as cited in Wells 2011, 8). The way I define narrative is rather close to Gergen's idea – it is *an event-based story, an episode of life that had a definite beginning and through the series of actions comes to an end*.

When reading on narrative inquiry, I came across interesting article by Feldman et al. (2004), where rhetorical analyses of narrative took place. I was inspired by the article, which takes the reader step by step through the analysis. And although their approach and definition of rhetorical analysis does not fit this research the way I would like, I find the idea illuminating. The respondents were asked to write their stories in free form, which means that I should not only pay attention to the context of the story, but also to the way it is told. Franzosi (1998, as cited at Feldman et at. 2004, 148) says that narrative analysts ask why the story was told that way and what the storyteller means. According to Charles Smith (2000, 329), the narrative is characterized by "perspective" and "context". When he says "perspective", he really means the perception of storyteller; a narrative can't be treated like an objective truth, it is only the story which contains the point of view of the narrator. It is also in a way filtered, as the storyteller only puts in the story what he/she finds significant and important for reader (listener, etc.) to know (Gee, 1991 as cited at Smith 2000, 329). "Context", on the other hand, related to "frame", is used in different situations to refer to 1) the external influences on the narrator; 2) the way the narrator constructs the narrative, and

3) characteristics of the resulting text. In this case, the "external influences" might include the historical period, culture, physical surroundings, as well as social settings – to whom the story is told and for what purpose (Smith 2000, 329). Narrative inquiry seems complex, various and generally interesting to me. Narratives differ from each other and the method itself I find quite different from usual methods is social sciences. "The aim of narrative inquiry is therefore not to find one generalizable truth but to 'sing up many truths/narratives'" (Byrne-Armstrong, 2001 as cited in Hunter 2010, 44).

It is also important to look at the method critically. While treating narratives as anti-facts helps to understand the method, it also brings up an obvious question of validity. If each narrative is just a story composed between a narrator and listener, how can we prove its importance and say it's representative? Researchers such as Michel Foucault, Michelle Fine, Kenneth Gergen and Mary Gergen, Michael Clandinin and Jean Connolly have discussed the risks of narrative inquiries and warned researches about dangers of interpretation, because not only is the narrative told through the lenses of the world view of storyteller, but it is also retold through the lenses of the researcher (Hunter, 2010). However, listed 'dangers' are not exclusively adoptable to narratives, a lot of other qualitative research methods face the same questions. For example, case studies – by the first look questionable method to be used in social studies, because of the risk of generalization. However, as proven by Flyvnjerg, discipline without real examples is usually ineffective one (Flyvbjerg, 2001).

4.6. Thematic Analysis Method

Another method often used with narrative data is thematic analysis. However, interesting is the idea of analyzing each story separately and looking not only at its' content but also the way it is told, I couldn't miss the opportunity of identifying themes throughout the narratives and distinguishing concrete factors that are influencing decision making on abortion. Besides, thematic analysis is a good entrance into qualitative research, that otherwise may seem vague, complex or challenging. It teaches the mechanics of coding and analyzing qualitative data that later can be linked to broader theory. It is a *method* of data analysis rather than *approach to* data analysis, which makes it suitable for beginners in qualitative analysis. (Braun & Clarke 2012, 57-58).

Thematic analysis is a method for systematic identifying, organizing and making sense of patters or themes throughout the dataset. Such an approach allows the researcher to see and understand shared experiences, make sense of commonalities. However, not all identified patterns can or should be analyzed in thematic analysis, only those that are important for the topic of the research and are answering on a specific question, even if that question becomes apparent only through the analysis. For example, if a research on worker's socialization is being done and across the interview transcripts pattern of workers coming to work at 9 o'clock in the morning is seen, it doesn't mean that this pattern is in any way important for the research, but if most of the workers say they usually try to come few minutes early to chat with their coworkers, it is the shared commonality that makes sense for the research questions. (Braun & Clarke 2012, 60).

Thematic analysis can be a very *flexible* method. It allows the researcher to focus on data in many different ways. When working with dataset of any size, researcher is allowed to focus on one big theme throughout whole dataset or pick a number of themes to concentrate on. The analysis can pay close attention to obvious or semantic meanings in data, interrogate latent meanings, assumptions and ideas that lie behind something clearly stated. The fact that thematic analysis can take so many forms makes it suitable for a wide variety of research questions and topics. (Braun & Clarke 2012, 60)

A researcher should do three major steps for identifying and analyzing themes through dataset: carefully familiarize with the data, do data coding and develop patterns. Familiarizing with data begins as soon as the data is collected. For example, during the interview researcher already notices some interesting moments, similarities, outstanding of some points. Transcription of the data, if researcher is doing it himself/herself also familiarizes with dataset. Very important can be a translation of data, because researcher, in order to transmit the old meanings in another language, has to be very careful and attentive to the details of the data. Then comes reading and multiple times rereading of each transcript separately and as a whole dataset. Only with proper preparation a researcher can know the data and do appropriate coding. To do successful coding, data has to be handled properly, if researcher is working with big dataset consisting of, for example, big number of in-depth interviews, it is preferable to use analytical tool (NVivo or similar), however, there is no right or wrong in coding by printing out the materials and color code, or pasting needed

materials in a new Word document. According to Braun and Clarke, the most important thing to remember when coding in thematic analysis, patterns shouldn't correspond to data collection questions. Coding can be *descriptive* and *interpretative*, but almost always they are a mix of both. In well-done thematic analysis, themes are distinguished based on what respondents said, not what they were asked. Finally, theme development from all the codes and nodes created takes a lot of reading and rereading of latter. Organizing and categorizing codes followed by gradually reducing them into themes that answer research questions is what needs to be done. (Jugder 2016, 2-5; Braun & Clarke 2012, 63-70).

4.7. Thematic Analysis

As mentioned before, any analysis should start with familiarizing with data. I worked with the personal narratives and in seven cases out of eight, I have been sent personal stories written by my respondents, so my first step of analysis was reading each narrative. Next step for me was transcribing interview, although prior to that I listened to the interview recoding. I wanted to have all the materials in written form to move on to translating. I found the translation of the data to be challenging, but interesting. I got a good chance to read all the transcripts very carefully and was a little bit nervous while translating, because my respondent's language often included a lot of euphemisms, metaphors and idioms characteristic to Western Ukrainian dialect, which, when translated to English, didn't make a lot of sense. In such cases I had to pick English equivalent of wording to preserve the original meaning. After I was done with translation, I reread all of the narratives few more times: to check the spelling, to see if it makes sense in English like it does in Ukrainian and, finally, focused on content of narratives to try and see shared patterns.

To simplify the task of coding I used the NVivo computer program. Prior to receiving the written stories from my respondents, I sent them a general guideline in which I indicated what am I looking for in their narratives. I asked them to tell me about their feelings when they first found out about unplanned pregnancy and gave vague description of topics that they might cover when writing, but pointed out that these topics aren't compulsory to cover and they are free to tell their stories the way they like, including in it things they found most important and valuable in whole experience. In general, my guideline consisted of open questions, so I was not worried about risk that my coding will correspond to the asked questions. When I finished coding, I was left with eighteen separate codes like "absence of

money", "importance of marital status", "desire to continue education", "abortion as sinful doing", etc. These eighteen codes I further categorized in eight subcategories. For example, sub-category "unsatisfying financial situation" included such codes as absence of money, absence of place to live, absence of job, lack of financial security, coercion of relying on family. Eight created subcategories were: 1) unsatisfying financial situation, 2) financial situation not prevalent, 3) relationship with the partner, 4) relationships with friends and family, 5) personal aspirations, 6) occupation, 7) religion, 8) ethics and morality. These seven categories were finally organized in my main four themes of research: *Economic Situation, Relationships, Social Issues, Morality*. Of course, coding, creation of subcategories and categorization of subcategories into themes took a lot of revision after each step. To do the analysis I used Broun and Clarke's (2012) "six phases of thematic analysis", which proved to be very informative and useful.

4.8. Narrative Analysis

While thematic analysis is present in this research to find the factors of decision-making on abortion that women most often mention and generally explains *why* women decide to terminate the pregnancy or give a birth in certain social conditions, narrative analysis is here for finding out *how* they make their decisions and *how* they talk about them. To me, the biggest difference in these two types of analysis lies in their purposes: thematic analysis that I did is rather descriptive, as semantic meanings were analyzed in it, while narrative analysis is more interpretative, with insight into latent meanings.

When I first decided that I am going to work with narrative analysis, I got very excited, as this form of analysis allows a lot of freedom and creativity. When reading various literature on narrative inquiry and examples of narrative analysis, all of them differed from each other, sometimes quite drastically. This approach is flexible and unlike with thematic analysis, researcher can't apply it to a data following a "template", it has to be specifically created or modified for each research. I created five points, which I am going to use in each narrative separately for its analysis. First, I am going to look at a form in which narrative is written. When I was first corresponding with my respondents and telling them about the task, I encouraged them to write in any form that they find more comfortable. It could be a story, a letter, a diary entrance, an essay or even a poem. Chosen form can tell a researcher how respondent is feeling about her experience. For example, if I were to analyze a narrative

written in a form of a diary entry, I'd interpret it as a certain secrecy that respondent feels around her experience, as diaries are usually private and are easier to write when you do not intend to share written information with anyone. Of course, I did not ask my respondents to share their personal diaries with me, but only suggested that if writing in a diary is something they do regularly, writing their narratives as if it was a diary entry might have made their tasks easier. Second, I am going to pay attention to the structure of a narrative, and if the story is a well-structured from the beginning to an end, or rather chaotic and reminds a free flow of thought. The idea is, that if narrative is well-structured, a respondent probably gave a lot of thought to her experience, analyzed her own feelings, causes and consequences, whilst chaotic writing means that respondent might have blocked the experience and didn't think of it a lot, or has not yet rationalized it for herself. Third, I am going to analyze the language that respondent uses. I am not interested in grammar and spelling, but the general tone: is it official and only lists the facts, without particular details or emotional and articulate? Moreover, all of the narratives vary in its' length. There are some around two pages and another barely half a page long. There is also a difference in length of specific topics that women discuss in their stories, like almost whole page on personal aspirations as a reason for abortion and then a line or two of mentioning religion. Finally, I am going to look at the content of the narrative. In thematic analysis, I was looking for similarities and shared experienced, in narrative analysis I am going to do the opposite and pay attention to what makes each story unique, what experiences impressed women the most and what unexpected they mentioned.

4.9. Ethics

When choosing how to conduct this research, one of the most important issues to be addressed was the sensitivity of the topic. First of all, because the topic requires recalling memories that might be painful to the respondents, it is important to ensure personal approach to the respondents. Simple questionnaire might give the respondent an impression, that her experience is not valued enough, is part of the statistics, so answers (if still agreed to fill in) would be resentful and not full. In-depth interview, on the other hand, might bring the risk of "too much" of personal involvement of the researcher. It had to be considered, that the researcher is a stranger to a respondent, and she might feel uncomfortable – even unsafe – to talk about intimate details of her life with a stranger. It is safe to assume that common ethical principles used in social research often are not enough, number of factors

have to be considered when approaching a respondent. For example, timing is very important. When a respondent is sharing painful experience that is still very fresh in memory, it is more likely that this memories will have stronger emotional response, and even though recent experiences might be better described and detailed, it is important to remember that research should not harm the respondent. In some cases, sharing the story of sensitive character with the researcher might have a therapeutic result. It is also important to warn your respondent about the potential emotional response that may be caused by reliving hard experiences – explaining the topic of research, it's value, causes of personal interests of a researcher might make a big difference, as it gives a respondent time to prepare and familiarizes researcher. Moreover, researcher's response to the gathered data is another issue that shouldn't be ignored. Often, sensitive experiences shared by respondents have a big influence on researcher, it is important to be morally prepared to hear emotional stories and control own response for the sake of wellbeing of a respondent. Non-judgmental, objective approach would make a respondent feel safer and would allow to open up. Finally, the importance of notifying the respondent about the confidentiality and anonymity is undeniable, it would encourage the respondent to open and trust the researcher. (Cowles 1988, 163-179).

5. DATA ANALYSIS

5.1. Thematic Analysis

After coding process of gathered data I ended up with four themes best describing various factors that had a place in decision making process. First theme is *Economic Situation*. It includes the factor of unsatisfying financial conditions and negligibility of financial situation in decision making. Second theme is called *Relationships* and includes review of such factors as respondent's relationship with her partner and relationship with primary circle of connections (friends and family). Third theme is *Social Issues* and includes the factor of personal aspirations and occupation. Finally, fourth theme is called *Morality*, which stands for the review of such factors as religion and ethics and morality. Further, these four themes are reviewed with the help of intersectionality theory, which anticipates the overlap of latter in decision making.

5.1.1. Economic Situation

To begin the thematic analysis, I am going to review two subcategories of Economic Situation theme. Two subcategories are 1) unsatisfying financial situation and 2) financial situation not prevalent. These subcategories are somehow contradictory and it is interesting to look for the contradiction through the narratives.

Let's begin with *unsatisfying financial situation*. This subcategory is the biggest one, it includes five codes, and a lot of them are interconnected. For example, lack of money, absence of job, having no own place to live. All of my respondents were very young, six out of eight were still students at the time of pregnancy, so unsatisfactory financial situation was quite understandable. Such conditions do not seem very suitable to provide good environment for a child to grow up, and that is probably the reason that makes financial situation important factor in decision making.

> *"…it was so hard to find a job, especially for a student. I didn't have any income and I had no chance to get one. I lived with parents and younger sister. Undoubtedly, it was an important factor in decision making".*

Several respondents also expressed fears about the lack of financial security. Decision to have a baby would make respondent responsible for a child, and to sustain a good care after the child, respondent would need a regular income. However, mentioning of a financial security and other financial challenges shows that the decision, whatever it was, wasn't careless and one-sided. The respondent considered possible scenarios and evaluated the difficulties that she would face.

"It was scary, we lived in dormitory, my hometown was 140 kilometers away and in another region. Like any other students – we weren't financially secure".

(Respondent 3)

When talking about difficult financial situation, respondents sometimes mentioned that they would either *have to,* or *can* rely, on financial support from their families. The wording in here seems important, as financial support of a family can be seen both as negative and positive thing. For example, if the family of the respondent and/or her partner has a low income, relying on their help would be tiresome for the family and not desirable. It also would create a financial depending of respondent on her family. In this case, abortion would seem as better option financially-wise, and the decision to give a birth would only be more complicated and difficult to accept.

"Absence of own money. Family was in hard financial situation too...
But it didn't affect my decision. Although, if I had financial freedom, I think it would be emotionally easier to live with my decision".

(Respondent 4)

Looking at the other scenario, decision to keep a baby can come easy if the respondent *wants* to have a child. However, knowing that financial situation wouldn't be a problem, but

leaning towards termination of a pregnancy anyway, can make woman's decision even harder by involving moral and ethical doubts.

"Parents, of course, would help. Boyfriend's mother really loved me and she was only half-joking when she was saying she already wants grandchildren".

(Respondent 2)

At the same time, even though several of respondents expressed their fears and expectations towards financial help from family, unfortunately those expectations were not always fulfilled. Lack of support or indifference from the family can not only make it harder for the respondent to make a right decision, but also hurt her.

"Actually, the only thing I got lucky with – I had my own [inherited grandmother's apartment] place to live in. … But I didn't have any moral or financial support from my mother. I mean, she was like: "You are pregnant? Oh, okay". I mean, that's it. No arguing, but I never heard from her "I'll help you"," I'll give you an advice", "I'll buy you something" or "I'll give you some money".

(Respondent 8)

Now, when we see that unsatisfactory financial situation can be a factor that has its' place in decision making, let's see what respondents are saying about the *prevalence of financial situation*. It is important to note, that only a couple of respondents in their narratives said things like "this is the only most important thing that influenced my decision". Usually, decisions were much more sophisticated and while many factors were revised, only few overcame the others in final decision. Therefore, lack of prevalence of financial situation becomes a separate, and quite contradicting, subcategory in the theme. Both those respondents who had the abortion and gave birth, had other factors overcoming the unsatisfactory financial situation.

"We did some budget math and decided that his salary will be enough
for the beginning (oh, how wrong we were), but financial situation
bothered us less than anything else".

(Respondent 5)

Often when respondents talked about their financial situation, it seemed to be connected to other themes and subcategories, such as relationship with the family, morality, personal plans and dreams. Interconnectedness of the themes shows how complex and complicated is the decision.

5.1.2. Relationships

The theme Relationships consists of two subcategories which are 1) *relationship with the partner* and 2) *relationships with friends and family*. Every respondent in her story mentioned the relationships with other people at the time of pregnancy, even if some of them never said that those relationships influenced the decision.

The strongest theme that goes throughout all the narratives is relationship with the partner. Respondents often said that partner's support of the decision was very important to them, also partner's moral support at uneasy time meant a lot to them. It was important to be on the same page with their partners, sharing this experience was also like sharing the responsibility.

"Actually, my future husband was an only person who knew about the
pregnancy. I trusted him the most and, really, that pregnancy concerned
him too. I didn't want to tell anybody else.

…The only support I needed was the support of my future husband. I got
it. I didn't need anybody else. And there was no doubt about what to do".

(Respondent 1)

Desire to share the news about unplanned pregnancy and deal with it together can visit not only those who have a partner. A respondent, who got pregnant while she was single,

still shared the news with the father and asked for his help. She needed someone's support in such stressful for her situation and felt much better when she got it.

"Of course, after that test I called the only boy, who could possibly be a
father. We didn't date, we just met at the party, had a bit of alcohol and
a lot of fun. ...I calmed down a lot just because he acted decently. I
mean, it wasn't just my problem anymore, it was his too, it kind of
relieved me".

(Respondent 7)

Only one respondent did not tell her partner about the pregnancy and made the decision to terminate the pregnancy on her own. In her narrative, she says that the reason of not sharing the news was her fear to be judged. She was worried that her partner might want to keep the baby, but even the thought of his support was scaring her. More than anything she did not want to spoil their relationship. Later, after the procedure was done, respondent still felt some doubts about the decision and secrecy of her action made her feel worse.

"I thought that I don't want to tell anybody about the pregnancy. I
definitely didn't want to tell my boyfriend, I was imagining him getting
excited about the baby and supporting pregnancy, or telling me that he'll
support whatever I decide – and it felt like that decision would pressure
me twice as much".

(Respondent 2)

Relationships with other people also had a value to the respondents. On few occasions, we see respondents sharing the news of unexpected pregnancy with her friends. Some of them included friends into decision making process, asking for advice, while others told about the unplanned pregnancy after the decision was made.

"At the same day I told about the pregnancy to my best friend and asked
her to borrow me money to go to a private clinic. She reacted much

better than I've expected and I am still very grateful to her for not asking
me annoying questions – she kind of let me tell her what I felt like I need
to tell her. She helped me a lot – she even went to the clinic with me the
next day.

...My friend helped me a lot, without her I'd feel worse and for longer
time, I think".

(Respondent 2)

The other respondents, on the other hand, preferred to keep the pregnancy in secret. A couple of respondents mentioned that they felt great shame and wouldn't want to tell anyone else about the pregnancy to save themselves from judgement.

"I was just ashamed to call and ask if the hospital is providing
termination of pregnancy because somebody will think I'm a slut or
something. It is a very strange feeling because with my brain I
understand that whatever anybody thinks of me shouldn't matter, but the
feeling of shame is uncontrollable, it just was there and that's it. Because
of this reason, I didn't tell anybody else, I think. At first moments, I
considered calling my best friend, even mom – but it was terrifying – to
confess that I've messed up".

(Respondent 7)

I have noticed that none of the respondents decided to tell about the unplanned pregnancy to her family and ask for advice. Of course, respondents who decided to keep the baby eventually shared the news, but they did not include them in decision making. Except for one respondent who, still, mentioned that she wouldn't tell her mother about the pregnancy if it wasn't for another complication and prospect of surgery.

*"I don't think I would tell my mother about the pregnancy right away,
but surgery is not pregnancy, so I told her. In 5 minutes we were in a taxi
going to do an ultrasound".*

(Respondent 5)

5.1.3. Social Issues

To the theme of Social Issues, I have included such subcategories as 1) *occupation*, 2) *personal aspirations*, 3) *marital status*. I have been considering including marital status subcategory in a Relationships theme, but came to a conclusion, that marriage because of the unintended pregnancy is, in fact, couple's way of following social rules.

The occupation of a woman at a time of pregnancy is important for the decision making. Young women, who are working or studying, might want to continue their studies or progress in a career instead of taking maternity leave.

*When the doctor showed me ultrasound screen and said:
"Congratulations, mommy!" – my dreams about science career and
ability to finish education and build my life the way I wanted flashed
before my eyes".*

(Respondent 3)

Besides of the career and education, plans for the future, desire to prove herself and fulfill herself can be very important factors in decision making. Simply not being ready for the motherhood is also a valid reason to terminate pregnancy. Women might not be willing to treat such reason as acceptable and feel a shame for admitting that they chose themselves instead of a child. Such shame might be the result of growing up and socializing in patriarchal system, where since early childhood every girl is told that her mission in life is to become a mother.

"I was really scared that if I keep that baby my future will be destroyed. I've been studying so hard and for so long and I felt like all that would be a waste if I give a birth now. I didn't know which career I want to pursue, but I knew that I want to fulfill myself and become someone before I get a baby – or at least figure out who do I want to be. And I immediately started to feel bad because of thoughts like that, it seemed so selfish".

(Respondent 1)

Finally, it is important to talk about importance of marriage in Western Ukrainian society. None of my respondents was married at the time of pregnancy, but six out of eight were in long-term relationships. Several respondents in their narratives mentioned that when deciding if they should keep the baby or terminate pregnancy together with their partners, there were two options: to get married and have a child or not to get married and terminate the pregnancy. Women are drawn to the idea of getting married if they want to keep a baby, because it at least will guarantee them some support when raising a child.

"When I shared the news with my future husband, he said: "Well, it's your choice. If you decide to have a baby, we'll get married. If you decide to get an abortion, I won't be against it."

(Respondent 1)

Marriage is also something expected by society. Although it is 21st century and single mothers aren't really frowned upon anymore, young women are expected to accept marriage proposal. Social morality and religion might have influence on that, as it is considered shameful to have a child outside marriage and, obviously, intimate relations are forbidden outside of a wedlock by a church. The child might be called a "bastard" or "born in sin", but it most likely won't go on for long. This expectation shows how conservative and traditionalistic Ukrainian society still is. Another quite traditional phenomenon in Ukrainian society is toxic masculinity. The image of men in Ukraine is that he has to be tough, strong and decisive, so I wasn't surprised to see the evidence to that in few of the narratives.

"And my boyfriend decided that we need to get married and have a child"

(Respondent 6)

This looks like women's right to choose does not completely belong to her after all. Patriarchal system in Ukraine gives men power to control many aspects of women's lives, mainly because the image of female subordinate is settled in child's bringing up. The upside is that in the narratives I at least did not see the traces of forced abortion

5.1.4. Morality

Finally, the last theme is called Morality. The two subcategories of which this theme consists are 1) *religion* and 2) *ethics and morality*. These two subcategories are interconnected as religion provides people with moral guiding, but also ethics and morality outside the religious scope often share similar values as those found in various religions.

Effective measure of one's religiosity does not exist, hence there is no quantitative data that would prove the correlation between religion and decision to give a birth in case of unplanned pregnancy. Among my respondents, however, several women said that they are religious and consider abortion to be sin and a murder.

"I believe, but I am not religious, I don't go to church, because here in Ukraine the understanding of church and religion (smiles) – you know… But main factor to not terminate the pregnancy was that abortion is a murder and it would morally crush me for the rest of my life.

…And the most important, it was a sin for me. It is a murder. There was a child in me already, that child has never harmed my future, at all".

(Respondent 8)

However, it doesn't mean that all religious respondents chose to continue their pregnancies. For example, Respondent 6 admits that she thought of abortion in a context of

sin but still went through the procedure. In fact, religious women do as many abortions as those, who are not believers or are atheists (Frohwirth et al. 2018, 1-4).

"Back then I wasn't very religious but I thought about abortion in a
context of sin. I even went to confession and told about it to the priest.
But it's not a big moment for me. Now I'm rather an atheist and I don't
think about it at all".

(Respondent 6)

While religious respondents, who had an abortion, might have felt guilty or ashamed afterwards, not religious women did not experience such feelings. It does not mean that they lack morality or sympathy or whatever else, they just have a different set of beliefs and values. Morality is coming from personal beliefs and society, so if a woman believes in science, rather than god – her attitude to some things might be different. For example, many religious people believe that life begins at the moment of conception. Others will point out the difference between a fetus and a baby.

"Because I found out about pregnancy quite early, I could do medication
abortion and that option I liked better – it felt like fetus is not a baby,
because you can't get rid of a baby with a pill, but you can if it's only
cells".

(Respondent 2)

In some cases, moral values of a person have stronger influence on her actions than religion, especially if a person describes herself as "not very religious". Most of the respondents who admitted to be believers, noted that they don't think they are "very religious", which could be interpreted as present belief in god, but not in Church rituals and Church as institution.

"Religion did not influence this decision, I believe in God, but being a scientist, back then I already knew that religion is rather a criminal procedural "divine" codecs and I wasn't scared of punishment from the "Above". The main motive of keeping this baby was feeling of responsibility for my own actions, and it made no sense to punish and take life away from the creature that did nothing wrong".

(Respondent 3)

Every person has that inner compass that points us into "right" direction, although there is no one ultimate "right" and case of abortions is an excellent example. While one woman thinks "the only right choice" is to have a child, the other might think "I have no means to support this child, the only right choice is to terminate this pregnancy" – and they both are right. Each woman who agreed to participate in this study did what was best for her and what agreed with her morality.

"Abortion does not repulse me. I don't believe in god and I don't think it is a murder. Those are just cells".

(Respondent 7)

5.2. Narrative analysis

Respondent 1

The narrative of the first respondent is written as a story in the first person. It is well-structured narrative, that respondent begins with telling a little about herself, her partner and unintended pregnancy that she experienced when she was 20 years old. She goes on telling about her feelings when she found out about the pregnancy and how she came to the decision to have an abortion at once. In her story, she mentions financial situation and religious views very briefly, but pays more attention to describing the relationship with her partner and her experience of the procedure itself. An interesting thing she does in her narrative is adding a rather long prologue in the end, where she told a little bit more about her life after the abortion and adds that she felt remorse for terminating that pregnancy only years after, when she had her first baby. That remorse was a decisive factor at her next unplanned pregnancy

– she gave a birth to a second baby because she felt guilty. The respondent also mentions that her partner was the only one person she ever told about that first pregnancy. It means that even if she did not feel ethical or moral conflict, she still has affected by the abortion stigma, which shows in the secrecy around the experience and feeling of guild even years later. To tell her story, the narrator chooses calm and clear language, not "dry" and official, but also not overly emotional. When reading the narrative, it feels like she merely retells the story, not relives it again, although the descriptions of the emotions she had are very detailed. The length of the narrative reaches to one and a half page and all the paragraphs are almost equal in size. Such consistency gives the impression that the story was well thought through. It is interesting, though, how respondent draws attention to her partner calling him "my future husband" throughout the text and tells about his promise to get married in case she decides to have a baby. It seems like it was very important to her for me to know from the first sentence that her first pregnancy wasn't a result of careless relationship. This illustrates that respondent, growing and living in patriarchal society, supports gender stereotypes about foulness of single motherhood.

Respondent 2

The form of the second narrative is also a story in the first person. It this narrative respondent doesn't tell a lot about herself, but pays a lot of attention to the feelings she had when she got to know about abortion and her doubts. In general, the story is well structured, narrative goes chronologically from the beginning (finding out about pregnancy) and to an end (personal conclusions), but the longest paragraph that describes feelings and doubts is a bit chaotic and much more emotional than the rest of the text. Respondent shares her thoughts that giving birth at that time wouldn't be worst thing that could have happened, and her decision to terminate pregnancy was built solely on her own wish to fulfill herself before becoming a mother – feeling that she felt so deeply ashamed about that she didn't want to share the news about pregnancy with anyone else. As a result, secrecy and keeping this information from her partner made her feel bad afterwards the procedure. This is an excellent example of how important it is to demolish the stigma and secrecy around the topic of abortions. Keeping it a secret only makes the whole experience worse by isolating women from others and keeps them from seeking a psychological help when needed. Another moment that drew my attention was respondent's description of her visit to public hospital, where she was planning to have an abortion. The stuff of gynecological department (both

women) were very vocal about respondent's decision to terminate pregnancy. The doctor refused to do the procedure and called responded stupid and a murderer. Such behavior of the hospital's stuff is deeply concerning, because once again, it takes the right to make a decision on her own from a woman. In the end, respondent had to go to a private clinic to terminate the pregnancy, where nobody expressed any judgment, but procedure's price was very high. The story, length of which is one and a half page, is told in rational calm language with only few emotional parts. However, she finishes with coming to peace with her decision, even if it took her some time.

> *"Maybe, I had that abortion because of the panic, but if I made that decision at that time – to have an abortion – than that decision was right".*

Respondent 3

The story of a third respondent is one page long and told in the first person. This is the first of my respondents who decided to give a birth. The structure is good and makes it easy to read through the store, well-proportioned paragraphs, however there is a noticeable difference in language, which is more emotional, with bigger number of idioms and sentences ending with exclamation point. The respondent was only 19 years old when she got pregnant and by the description of her emotions when doctor showed her a sonogram, she immediately felt fear, dread and big disappointment. Previous respondents when describing similar emotions, pointed out that decision to have an abortion was made at that precise moment. However, this respondent changed her mind on the way to the clinic, even though her partner was not excited or supportive of her decision. An interesting moment of this story is the reason that changed respondent's mind. She points out that she doesn't consider herself a religious person (even if she believes in God), what made her change her mind was ethical and moral views.

> *"The main motive of keeping this baby was feeling of responsibility for my own actions, it made no sense to punish and take life away from the creature that did nothing wrong".*

After the decision to keep the baby, responded and her boyfriend got married – they followed "the procedure" so popular in Western Ukraine. The idea of being a single mother scares women for many reasons, but social unacceptance of single motherhood in young age is probably one of the most important. However, respondent adds in the end of the narrative, that she got a divorce with her husband few years later and points out that pregnancy shouldn't be a reason to get married.

Respondent 4

The fourth narrative that I received I find the most unique so far. It is the shortest narrative, that only reaches half of the page, does not have a clear structure and is written in the most peculiar way, where narrator doesn't talk a lot about herself, but tells the story and her emotions using one word phrases.

"15 years old. Shock. The fear and insecurity about future.
Disappointment".

Yes, such sentences are not very descriptive, and yet the narrator tells everything we need to know. Style of writing of this narrative reminds of a typographical short story. The language, unlike to previous narratives, is surprisingly unemotional and creates the feeling that narrator only states facts of her life, but doesn't really share the experience. It might be a self-defensive mechanism that inspired a narrator to write her story in this way. She got pregnant only at 15 years old, her family was in a bad financial situation and her partner, although he proposed to get married, was not excited to become a husband and a father at such a young age. It must have been very hard time for the respondent, that she didn't want to revisit, but took part in this research to share her side of a story as a pregnant teenager. She says that her decision was made basing solely on her religious views, she considers abortion to be a sin and a murder, so not even for a minute she doubted what has to be done.

Respondent 5

The most chaotic, free mind flow structure can be seen in a narrative number 5. The respondent, who experienced the unintended pregnancy relatively recently, recalls the time of her complicated pregnancy unclearly, all the events merged into one mass. The form of the narrative is a story in the first person, but structure is basically absent. The narrator, in

big confusion of the events, jumps chronologically and adds new information to the paragraphs that at the first glimpse does not seem connected. However, after few readings, it is possible to make out a story of her passionate and emotional writing. The story is two pages long and even though unstructured, paragraphs seem proportional in size.

A 27-year-old respondent, who was in a relationship and had a stressful job, at the first visit to the doctor discovered not pregnancy, but inflammation of an ovary and was scheduled to have a surgery. However, after doing a blood test, she discovered that she is pregnant, which complicated the situation a lot. Decision to keep the baby was very risky because of the need to treat an inflamed ovary, however abortion would complicate the treatment of an ovary. After consulting few doctors about her health safety, respondent decided to terminate the pregnancy, but like it was seen before, two out of three doctors responded that "a child is a God's gift" and refused to do the procedure. Again, it shows how conservative Western Ukrainian society is. Medical professionals rely on religion and have the power to regulate women's options in case of unplanned pregnancy.

The respondent, together with her partner, decided to keep the baby in the end. She ironically points out that they did some math and calculated that her partner's salary should be enough for supporting a baby, which turned out to be a very wrong assumption.

Respondent 6

The story in the first person written by respondent 6 is perfectly clear, very well structured and written with rather unemotional language. This might be so due to a big amount of time that separates the event of the story and its' writing, the narrator might have grown detached to the events of the past. Her story is one and a half page long and consists of several short paragraphs, each of which develops another topic. The respondent begins her story with a very short passage about herself and lack of financial security at the time of pregnancy. She mentions that finding out about pregnancy gave her a feeling or despair and catastrophe. She rationalizes this feeling with lack of means, absence of job and place to live. Unsatisfying financial situation, according to the respondent, was the main reason to terminate the pregnancy. Further, she tells about her relationship with her friends, who she told about abortion, and their judgement of such her action. A unique thing that no one except respondent 6 mentioned before, is her wish to have a support group or affordable

psychological help for women in such situations. It is true, that in Ukraine mental health is often dismissed and the niche is underdeveloped. Narrator tells that without support and presence of somebody to talk about her experience, she developed a depressive state and felt really bad about her decision. She cried when saw pregnant women and had a panic attack when saw some commercial with pregnant women happily announcing it to her husband. Respondent's partner was the only one to see and understand her state, but could do very little to help her. Finally, in six months she got pregnant again and for the second time she was absolutely sure about keeping the baby. Her partner supported her in this decision and offered to get married, although the wording of this in narrator's story makes it sound like decision to have a baby and get married belonged to the partner, rather than respondent herself. Maybe it a reflection of toxic masculinity, to which people are so accustomed in Western Ukraine – a man always need to be the one who makes tough decisions.

Respondent 7

The longest story of two and a half pages belongs to respondent number 7. Like many others, it is a story told in the first person, but unlike others, it tells the events of only two days during which the respondent found out she is pregnant and had an abortion procedure done. The structure of the story is excellent, it smoothly takes a reader through the story and doesn't awake any additional questions. The language is emotional and even a bit conversational, that creates a feeling of openness to share from a respondent. Narrator begins her story with the description of taking a pregnancy test in University bathroom. She describes her felling of panic once the test turned out to be positive and tells the details of the relationship with the father, who was not her stable partner. She writes about his support and help a lot throughout the whole text, although narrator points out that usually she doesn't wait for a man to come and save her, from what I make an assumption that she needed help in general in state of panic.

An interesting moment in the narrative that caught my attention was her mentioning that she didn't know what to do when she found out about the pregnancy. Meaning, she knew she will have an abortion, but didn't know *how* to get one. Later she describes that it took few hours to research possible hospitals and clinics in her city to find a place where abortions are provided, and not for very high price. It tells about the lack of basic sexual education in Ukraine. Information like that should be well-spread and available everywhere, but instead

it takes a while to find a suitable place and doctor. Speaking of the doctor, respondent number 7 illustrates another case of brutal treatment of patients seeking abortion by medical personnel. She, like respondents reviewed before, had been yelled at for stupidity, irresponsibility and immorality. However, the doctor agreed to do the procedure of medical termination of pregnancy, only if respondent comes back the next day after thinking about her decision more. That happened only after men-to-men talk of the doctor with respondent's intimate friend, and it is an excellent illustration of how deeply patriarchal system is incorporated into Ukrainian society. Basically, the doctor calmed down and agreed to do his job when he found out that it is a man who makes a decision. Finally, respondent came back for the procedure the next day, that doctor provided without further discussion. Respondent says that she has never regretted her decision.

Respondent 8

The last narrative differs from the others drastically, as its' for is an interview. I had a talk via Skype with my respondent for nearly an hour. In-depth interview is a form of a narrative, however, it is hard to tell that it has been very well structured, it is much easier to lose the trail of thought during the talk. My respondent was often steering away from the topic of decision making and factors influencing it and telling me more about the struggles of a single mother. Nevertheless, I have got all the information needed for this research from the interview. The talk we had was very friendly and open, respondent was eager to share her story and her own thoughts on a lot of aspects of it.

We started with the respondent telling me about herself at the time of pregnancy. She found out about unplanned pregnancy being 18 years old and told about it to the father of a child, who did not take the news with enthusiasm and went back to his hometown on East of Ukraine to never come back. That is one of the reasons why women and women exclusively are supposed to be responsible for decision making on abortion. If a woman has a child, she stays with it, but a man has more opportunities to leave, without even strong judgement from the society.

The respondent number 8 gave birth to a child and mentioned few times that her religiosity has everything to do with it. She was the only one who said that when finding out about unplanned pregnancy, she felt happiness. According to herself, that was probably

linked to a desire to have a strong caring family which she was lacking during the childhood. Respondent said that abortion in her eyes is a sin and giving a birth was always an only option for her, despite all the other factors that made her pregnancy so hard: young age, lack of money, lack of security, lack of support. Apparently, to her, when the decision was made, it was all she ever needed to overcome everything else.

6. CONCLUSION

Decision making on abortion is complicated and sophisticated process, which was attempted to be analyzed in this research with two separate approaches: thematic analysis and narrative inquiry. Thematic analysis resulted in distinguishing of four factors that take place in decision making discussion: economic situation, relationships, social issues and morality. None of these factors is more important than the other as they all are interconnected. Narrative analysis presents in-depth look into each story and highlights exceptional conditions that had an influence on decision outcome, apart from the factors listed above. Based on results of analyses, it can be said that decision on abortion is made based on a complex of factors, which are all interconnected. Also, every case of decision on abortion is unique and to understand the reasons which woman had, one must look at her social, political and economic background, not only general characteristics like age or occupation.

Research analysis also shows that conditions in which young Ukrainian women find themselves, when unplanned pregnancy occurs, are deeply concerning. The patriarchal system of Ukrainian society produces gender inequality that touches every aspect of women's life and makes group of young single West Ukrainian women particularly vulnerable. Stigmatization, secrecy and often denial of rights in reproduction autonomy from the medical stuff of public hospitals makes the experience of unplanned pregnancy even more stressful and difficult.

Such results are reached by looking at the thematic and narrative analysis through the prism of Marxist feminist, radical feminism and intersectionality theories. Applying intersectionality in thematic analysis allowed distinguishing four factors that influence women's decisions on abortion, while Marxist feminist and radical feminism theories helped interpreting the conditions in which women had to make a decision.

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8. APPENDIX

1. Guideline for the Narrative

Hello,

Thank you for agreeing to take part in my study.

With this study, I am trying to get to know more about experiences of women who once found themselves in a position of making the decision: to terminate the pregnancy or give the birth. Story of each woman is unique and extremely important, it reflects the society that we live in and highlights problems that we still need to address.

To contribute to this research, I am asking you to describe your own experience and put in writing the feelings, emotions and concerns that you had during unplanned pregnancy. It is important for me to hear your story, but it is your choice how to tell it. Write in the most comfortable form for you: it can be a story in the first person, a letter, a diary entry, etc. The form of your writing can be anything you like, as long as it helps you to open up and share your story.

I am interested in hearing everything, you can start from the moment of finding out about pregnancy and finish by telling me how you felt after abortion/giving birth to your baby.

Here are few examples of topics that you can write about:

- You age and occupation at time of pregnancy
- Your reaction when you found out about pregnancy
- Fears and concerns during pregnancy
- Things that made you happy during pregnancy
- Relationship with a partner/father of a child
- Relationships with family and friends
- How long did it take you to make a decision
- How did you feel after the decision was made
- Thoughts on abortion prior to pregnancy
- Thoughts on parenthood prior to pregnancy
- Moral views
- Financial situation

None of this topic is compulsory and the order does not matter. Some of them are interconnected and complimentary. In case you do not feel comfortable writing on some of this topic – don't, just skip it. If you would like to add anything that is not in that list – please, feel free to do so.

In case you would like to ask me any questions about this guideline or research – contact me via email decisionmaking.ukraine@gmail.com or WhatsApp or Viber: +1 347 645 ****

2. First Sampling Round

Hello!

I am a student of University of Jyväskylä (Finland) and I am looking for women who would be interested to take part in my research and share with me their stories about 1) making a decision to terminate pregnancy, 2) making a decision to give a birth.

I am looking for respondents from Western Ukraine (Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk, Ternopil, Chernivtsi, Khmelnytskyi, Volyn' regions), who were 15-30 years old at the time of pregnancy.

I am very interested in my topic, it is important and, unfortunately, not well enough researched in Ukraine.

If you are interested in my topic, you are eager to take part or know anyone who would agree to take part in this study, please share with them this post and write me on address decisionmaking.ukraine@gmail.com - I will tell you more about the research and will answer all your questions.
I would be very thankful for sharing this post.

Please, do not tag potential respondents under this post for keeping anonymity and confidentiality.

Thank you.

3. Second Sampling Round

Hello,

Previously I wrote about my search for respondents who had an experience of decision making on abortion or giving birth in case of unplanned pregnancy. I am happy to tell you that my search was effective and a lot of women got back to me and shared their wonderful stories. However, for representative research I need few more respondents.

If you are resident of Western Ukraine, had an experience on unplanned pregnancy at the age of 15-30 years old and were not married at that time, please contact me.

For your contribution to this research I will ask you to write about your own experience in a free form. I will send you a guideline which you can use for inspiration and guidance, but I do encourage you to skip any topic that you don't want to discuss and, more importantly, add any information about your experience that you find relevant and important. Please, remember that it is your story and you can write it in any way you like – as a story in the first person, a letter, a diary entry, even a poem, if it is the most comfortable way for you to write.

If you are not very fond about writing and would prefer to tell about your experience – I will be more than happy to contact you via video-call handle of your preference.

To contact me, please write on address decisionmaking.ukraine@gmail.com

Please, share this post or send it to women you know, who had described experience.

I'm also asking you not to tag potential respondents under this post to keep their anonymity and confidentiality.

Thank you.