

# The Struggle in Defense of Baikal: The Shift of Values and Disposition of Forces

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**Abstract:** The paper is aimed at the analysis of evolution of values and disposition of forces involved in the long-term international conflict around the closure of the pulp and paper mill (P&PM) and the reconstruction of the company town of Baykalsk, both located near Lake Baikal, the biggest freshwater lake in the world. The conflict's six phases are: construction and opening of the pulp and paper mill, P&PM (1967-84); the perestroika (1985-90); the collapse of the USSR (1991); the Russian financial crisis (1998); the struggle against the tracing of a transnational oil pipe-line near Baikal shore (2001-06); and the economic crisis (2008). In each phase, the activity of Russian environmentalists is considered under the following aspects: political opportunity structure, main actors, constituency, key values, forms of activity, kind of mobilization and resources for it, and the outcome of the struggle. The paper is focused on the evolution of the relationship between the state and the environmental movement.

**Keywords:** *disposition of forces, environmental movement (EM), mobilization, phases of conflict, political opportunity structure (POS), state, values, Russia.*

## The Case

What is the lake Baikal? It covers 31,500 square km and is 636 km long, an average of 48 km wide, 79,4 km at its widest point. Its water basin

occupies about 557,000 square km and contains about 23,000 cubickm of water, which is about one fifth of the world's reserves of fresh surface-water and over 80 percent of the fresh water in the former Soviet Union. It

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is the biggest freshwater lake in the world, included in the UNESCO's World heritage list. The P&PM and the company town Baykalsk were built at the Baikal shore and put into operation in 1967. It is the case of the most long-lasting fight on the part of Soviet, Russian and international environmentalists against a project of Communist industrial policy and its core, the military-industrial complex. This project and its implementation provoked a lot of tough public debates initiated by Siberian scientists, scholars and writers. Some Russian authors stated that the environmental movement in Siberia and the Far East was launched by this conflict.

This paper analyses the shift in disposition of forces involved in the long-term social and political conflict around the construction, functioning and around projects of rehabilitation of the nearby area, including the company town of Baykalsk. This shift is traced through six main phases of the above conflict, namely: the construction and opening, the perestroika times, the collapse of the USSR in 1991, the Russian financial crisis (default in 1998), the struggle of local and international greens against the transnational oil pipe-line nearby the Baikal, and the struggle for the closure and against the reopening of the P&PM in 2008. For each phase, the paper describes such aspects of Russian environmentalists' campaigning as actors, their values and constituency, the political opportunity structure *in situ* and at large, kinds of mobilization involved and their mottos, and the current results of the struggle. The article sheds light on a changing line-up of forces in the relationship between the state and various civic

groups, stressing the shift from a nature protection activity to the struggle for human rights and freedoms.

### Theoretical Background

The conceptual resources of this article are determined by the topic under discussion, namely, by the long-term conflict between the Russian state and environmentalists. Thus, it draws upon a number of theoretical instruments related to the analysis of relationships between governments and social movements. These include, firstly, the concept of political opportunity structure, POS (Tarrow, 1988, 2005) adapted to the Russian conditions. Strictly speaking, a political opportunity structure in the western sense of the term doesn't exist in Russia, where property and power are largely merged. Russian political theorists prefer to speak of 'system and anti-system forces' or 'corporate state' vs. 'civic society' (Pivovarov, 2006; Inozemtsev, 2010). That is why I interpret this structure as a line-up of pro- and contra-ecological forces accompanied by by-standers and onlookers of various kinds. In stable democratic regimes it is methodologically justified to differentiate between subjects (actors) and contexts. But in such critical and turbulent times as Russia's transformation period, the 'subjects' and 'factors of change', i.e. economic and other contexts, dialectically melt one into another. For example, in the Soviet times, a political opportunity structure had been rather stable. But during the democratic upsurge of late 1980s, the actual political and

social contexts were reshaped by the mushrooming social movements which, taken together, formed a substantial sector of the political opportunity structure. By contrast, in mid 2000s, the Russian state created a number of ‘mass social movements’, that is, in fact, GONGOs, which seriously affected the political opportunity structure for Russian environmental and other movements that were labeled ‘out-of-system movements’ by the authorities. Therefore, it appears reasonable to regard the line-up of forces in transitional periods as a component of the respective political opportunity structure (POS).

Secondly, I consider Soviet/Russian environmental movement as a new social and semi-professional movement evolving from purely conservationist (i.e. nature protection) to human rights and social justice movement (Weiner, 1988, 1999; Conway, Keniston and Marx, 1999; McCarthy and King, 2005). Thirdly, my reflection bears upon the resource mobilization theory and its recent versions (McCarthy and King, 2005), though, following M. Diani and his collaborators (Diani and McAdam, 2003; Della Porta and Diani, 2006). I am inclined to regard this process as a network-based one rather than as the product of a certain ‘resource industry’ (Zald and McCarthy, 1987). Fourthly, since Russian environmental movement is semi-professional, that is, following in their programs and action repertoire the recommendations of social and natural scientists, it seemed reasonable to use in this study the principles of the sociology of social knowledge and in particular its principles of dialogue and ‘following the actor’ (Irwin and Wynne,

1996; Jamison, 1996; Irwin, 2001). Finally, the study is further following a social-historical and comparative approach to the study of movements in general and of Russian environmental movement in particular (Weiner, 1988, 1999; Rootes, 1999; Tilly, 2004; Lane, 2010).

### Methodology

This paper is the result of a systematically organized case-study research. From 1987 to 2009, seven sets of the in-depth semi-structured interviews with environmental activists and their allies and adversaries including regional and local administrators, businessmen, scholars and scientists (about 150 interviews in total) were conducted within the framework of three international and four national research projects<sup>1</sup>. Actually, the paper is the result of a half-a-century-long case-study aimed at the revealing the key actors involved in the conflict and resources they commanded in the struggle around the construction and operation of the P&PM. A chronicle of the conflict has been built which allowed to trace the changes in a disposition of pro- and contra-forces. The programs and manifestos of various environmental leaders as well as the archives of key groups involved in the conflict were also analyzed (the characteristic of these groups is given in the next section). The outcomes of each particular mobilization phase have been checked by content analysis of the Russian Green press<sup>2</sup> and internet resources related to the Baikal case<sup>3</sup>.

### Forces and their Values: A Historical View

The struggle between pro- and contra-environmental forces is deeply rooted in Soviet ideology and culture. D. Weiner distinguished three main value-oriented forces: pastoralist, ecological, and utilitarian. Pastoralists, who were mainly represented by natural scientists, emphasized that nature was valuable in itself. Ecologists, that is 'scientists who held... evidently anthropocentric view, pointing to the dangers of ecological breakdown, (...) arguing that only their scientific expertise could ensure that 'an economic' growth remain within the possibilities afforded by healthy nature'. Utilitarians (also known as adherents of a 'wise use' of nature), represented by the Soviet ruling class, saw nature as an unlimited 'resource field' based on the criteria of current-day economic utility (Weiner, 1988: 229-30). By the late 1920s, the utilitarianism in its utter form decisively triumphed in the USSR. After the World War II, utilitarianism under the motto of 'mastering the nature' became the official ideology of industrialization and of the 'Great constructions of Communism'.

The struggle against the project and construction of the Pulp and Paper Mill near Lake Baikal may be seen as the beginning of the mass environmental movement in the USSR. In the same time (the end of 1960s), the Student Nature Protection Movement (the so called *Druzhina* movement) emerged<sup>4</sup>. Universities and scientific institutions played the role of the movement's generating milieu. Initially, this movement took shape under the patronage of academics and

university instructors. But very soon it became more or less independent from the patronage of both academics and the Young Communist League (*Komsomol*). By the late 1980s, the following value-oriented groups of the movement had taken shape: conservationists, alternativists, traditionalists (enlighteners), civil initiatives (grassroots), ecopoliticians, ecopatriots, and ecotechnocrats (Yanitsky, 1996).

Not only in the Baikal campaign but throughout the country, the conservationists were the core of the Russian Greens. Their starting point was bioscientism ('Nature knows best'). The key values of their ideology were the creation of a world brotherhood of Greens and the construction of a society of modest material needs (Zabelin, 1994). In autumn 1988, the leaders and patriarchs of the *Druzhina* movement founded the Socio-Ecological Union (SoEU), one of the Greens' biggest umbrella organizations<sup>5</sup>. Simultaneously, the Baikal movement was officially established at the meeting of the Irkutsk division of Academy of Science of the USSR in October 1988.

The alternativists were the most ideologically oriented group in the movement. Its young leaders recruited from various social strata were professional ideologists of ecoanarchism who combined socio-political activities with a constant ideological reflection. The alternativists were adversaries of the state as a political institution in principle. In their opinion, an ecological turn' could be carried out only via an alternative project for the whole of public arrangement, namely decentralization of power and

economic activity, self-provision, and self-organization. As to Baikal, the alternativists were the smallest group in situ.

The traditionalists represented a humanistically oriented group of the Russian intelligentsia, with its eternal ideals of good, tolerance, nonviolence, and desire 'to understand and to help'. The traditionalists had been rooted in the past in the sense that they highly appreciated the culture of the 19th century with its ideals of serving and enlightening the people. The core of the group was composed of educators, writers, journalists, and scholars. The majority of traditionalists adhered to pastoralist values and was in explicit opposition to Soviet industrialism. The value basis of individuals in this group varied widely, but despite their spiritual heterogeneity, traditionalists were united by their reflection-prone nature and their critical stand toward the Soviet regime. In the case under consideration, traditionalists were a mighty group headed by the prominent Russian writer Valentin Rasputin. He stated that the Baikal case gave birth to post-war public opinion in the USSR (Rasputin, 1990: 309).

Civic initiatives shared four types of values. The first one was the responsibility for the condition of the living environment ('If not us, then who?'). The second one was attitude towards self-organization of their creative activity. The third set of values comprised the need for self-realization and for fellowship with like-minded people. The fourth set consisted of values related to the maintenance of a safe and clean immediate environment for humans. Taken together, these values helped to provide a sense of

social protection, of emotional comfort and mutual support among individual initiatives. The Baikal movement emerged as a constellation of various civic groups.

The ecopoliticians were the most heterogeneous group of the movement. This group included movement patriarchs who, though not formal members, had a great influence on the movement's politics; theoreticians, who imparted the already well-developed ideological doctrines to different groups of the movement; professional ecopoliticians; leaders of numerous Russian green parties; former politicians (people's deputies of 1980-90s); and practicing politicians, who originated from the milieu of civil initiatives and combined the role of professional politician with membership in an ecoNGO. The group was united by the idea that environmental protection should be at the top of the national agenda. Initially, the Baikal movement took shape as a grass-root informal political force. Later on, some of its founders changed to Big Politics, while the rest remained up to now what U. Beck (1994: 22) has labeled 'sub-politicians'.

The ideology of ecopatriots was characterized by left radicalism, the idea of forceful ecologization of society and explicit sympathy for a state socialism. They were actual utilitarians. At the same time, some of them regretted that forceful Soviet modernization annihilated the unique cultural and natural landscape of the core Russia (the Russian North, the Volga river and lake Baikal regions). I regard the leaders of the Baikal movement as true patriots without any overtones of right or left radicalism.

The ecotechnocrats was the smallest group in the movement. They believed that the solution for all environmental problems lied in the adoption of ecologically sound technologies. Strictly speaking, they didn't promote technocratic ideology in the common sense of the term. I called them technocrats because naive technocratic view was intrinsic to them – that is, they unconditionally believed in society's adoption of the technological innovations created by them. In a manner, ecotechnocrats were the followers of Russian craftsmen. The detailed description of the history of environmental debates in Russia, actors involved and their values see in O. Yanitsky (2009). There were many engineers among the participants of the Baikal movement but no technocrats as such. For the detailed history of Baikal movement see in: S. Shaphaev (2011) S. Goldfarb (1996) and B. Lapin (1987).

As to relationships between the above groups, they being network-organized acted mostly as a united front. But the loose horizontal form of this network structure allowed to these groups to restructure promptly the configuration of a particular frontline. Some activists were the members of several groups.

### **The Shift in Dispositions of Forces and their Values**

To begin with, it is necessary to indicate that Russian scientific and technical intelligentsia has always been at the forefront of environmental debates from the emergence of the Baikal issue in late 1960s up to the 2010s. Then, let

us consider the shifts in alignment of forces and their values at each of the following stages.

At the first stage (late 1960s – mid-1980s) there were two major forces: the government and the scientific community. The government and its ministries for paper-industry, forestry and defense spoke in favor of the P&PM construction. Their irreconcilable opponents were natural scientists from the Siberian division of Academy of Sciences of the USSR and prominent writers and journalists. Tough debates were carried out in central and local newspapers. Naturally, the political opportunity structure was unfavorable to the Baikal defenders. They represented a network of small groups without any mass support. State agencies had a utilitarian stand and never worried about the nature when pursuing their own interests. Scientists and writers played the role of critics only. While the state agencies were able to mobilize all necessary resources, and first of all the mighty propaganda machine, the scientists and writers could only appeal to the top authorities and sent them letters of protest. The outcome of this stage had been easy to predict: the P&PM has been constructed and put in operation.

At the second stage, that is, during the phase of democratic upsurge (1988-91), the situation changed dramatically. Firstly, the political opportunity structure became much more sensitive to bottom-up appeals and demands. For a short period of time, nature protection was put on the top of the state political agenda. In a way, environmentalists may be described as the actors and promoters of sub-politics (Beck, 1994) shaped



during the pre-reform phase (at those times they were called ‘informals’, stressing their position beyond the established social order).

Secondly, new actors appeared on the public arena. Two civic organizations were established: the Baikal Fund and the Baikal Wave environmental movement. Thirdly, the constituency of the movement began to take shape and widen. But this constituency was not unified: its majority was bothered about the state of environment as such, while a minority strongly backed the activity of these two civic organizations. Fourthly, and this was the most important, many sister environmental organizations and groups both from the West and East took part in the defense of Baikal. Therefore, from the early 1990s and onwards, the conflict acquired an international character. All civic actors, domestic and international, insisted on the P&PM operation being stopped. From 1991 onwards, the Fund and the Wave began to receive financial, organizational and technical assistance. Despite all these efforts, the P&PM continued operation.

One of the reasons for this failure of local environmentalists was their splitting into those who were the actual nature defenders and those who used their membership in the above two civic organizations as a social lift for making a political career. Within the ‘Baikal Wave’, left and right wings emerged and an endless dispute on the preferable strategy and action repertoire began, etc. According to local activists, ‘initially, our movement was reactive, sometimes even illegal’; ‘we’ve gathered all information we needed by means of informal contacts’; ‘the establishment of ‘environmental cells’

in factories was a very important step’; ‘participation in our movement was a channel to reach the political sphere’; ‘creating an information network was our main goal’; ‘we were needed in a long-term plan for initializing a chain of local actions’ (Quotes from interviews with activists in Angarsk, 1990). It was not a dialogue but *pressure* from below. All in all, it was the phase of shaping the structure of the movement burdened with twists and oscillations and even mutual accusations.

At the third stage, that is, with the collapse of the USSR (1991), the situation changed sharply again. The political structure of the USSR was destroyed, and that of the Russian Federation was yet to be built. The *nomenklatura* retreated temporarily, while civic groups under the democratic and green banners came to the forefront. Like in East European countries, this ‘in-between’ situation was rather favorable to the emergence of civil organizations which mushroomed all over the country. There were several attempts to establish the Green parties, mainly regional ones, but both lay people and professionals preferred to engage in environmental and other social movements which seemed to them more efficient nature protection tools. Again, financial support and technical help of foreign governments and civic organizations, first of all from the US, played a key role in the maintaining of the emerging network of grassroots and SMO organizations. The result was their incursion into the public arena rather than a dialogue proper.

As to values and goals of the Baikal movement, they presented a mix of conservationist, alternativist, eco-

anarchist, traditionalist, eco-political and eco-technocratic attitudes. The group of conservationists was the most rationally organized and internationally oriented. The local conservationists were the first to establish regular contacts with sister international and national environmental organizations (WWF, Greenpeace, 'Earth First' and some others).

At that time, resources for establishing SMOs and for their actions were not a problem. On the one hand, a lot of people showed interest in environmental issues, and they were prepared to participate in mass protest campaigns aimed at stopping the P&PM. On the other hand, western donors implementing their program unofficially titled 'Sowing the seeds of democracy' supported many new grassroots environmental protection initiatives, with the exception of any political groups acting against the newly emerging political regime. Western donors were afraid that their actions might produce chaos in a country which had nuclear weapons. That is why the western donors, recognizing the eco-anarchists as the most theoretically and politically sophisticated wing of the movement, always neglected (and therefore never sponsored) their radical action repertoire. But at the same time, the emerging market economy and its actors became strong adversaries of Russian environmentalists. Though the Baikal P&PM, this apple of discord, lost its military significance as producer of special cord for military purposes, the developing foodstuff market demanded more and more paper and cardboard for packaging. Generally speaking, nature including woods, water, fresh air, landscape and any other public

goods acquired a market value. So, the history of struggle against the P&PM was to be continued.

The fourth stage (1998) was marked by the Russian financial crisis (default). Despite the onslaught of utilitarians (i.e. business), by that time, the civil forces aimed at saving Lake Baikal attained a privileged position, since the financial and other aid from western donors continued to come in. A phone survey conducted during the Russian financial crisis showed that the majority of Russian environmentalists 'want to and would continue to do what they did before' (Yanitsky, 2000). Western ecoNGOs together with their Russian counterparts developed a new and very efficient form of joint activity called a 'model project'. It was a kind of algorithm of running forestry, agriculture or any other business in an economically efficient way while doing minimum harm to nature and local culture. Model projects could be used for education and propaganda of environmental knowledge as well. In relation to the P&PM it meant that it could be reconstructed or replaced by other, say tourist industry, with much less harm to nature. This would be very important for the Baikal lake basin because such a project would embrace a vast socially and culturally mastered territory suffering from overexploitation of its natural landscapes. But this and other model projects were adjusted to the package of Russian environmental laws and set of institutions which were created during late 1990s and early 2000s by the Federal parliament of Russia (Duma). Russian 'wild capitalism' was incompatible with nature protection, though it lost a lot of power during



the above financial crisis. One should keep in mind that a new counter-ecological force emerged in 1990s. I mean the alliance of P&PM's owners and managers, local authorities and residents of company town Baykalsk. As a result, the P&PM, which had been poisoning Lake Baikal for more than 30 years already, continued operation.

In the fifth stage (2001—2008) the conflict between the state and the environmental movement grew even more fierce. The struggle against the tracing of a transnational oil pipe-line near Baikal shore lasted for five years and was successful. Under the pressure of national and international organizations this pipe-line was moved away from the lake. This case, involving some new participants, deserves our attention because it marked the *third wave of mobilization* of parties. At this stage the political opportunity structure became even more unfavorable to environmentalists, because the transnational pipe-line project was part of the state's mainstream policy aimed at making Russia a mighty energy world power (*derzhava*). Nevertheless, regional authorities and some political parties opposed the project.

The main adversaries were the federal government and big business, on the one hand, and scientists, population of the Baikal region, eco-NGOs and some left-wing political parties, on the other hand. Unlike the ruling party, United Russia, asserted the interests of governing bureaucracy and big business, left-wing parties (communists, socialists) and local trade unions expressed the interests of local population and came out in favor of nature protection. The media played the informant role only, i.e. they were

the by-standers. But that was just the 'regular' disposition of forces. At some critical moments (ecological expertise of the project, decision-making) many other social forces were mobilized. The years 2001-06 saw numerous local, regional and international protest campaigns. For example, in 2005 the website of the regional information center BABR.RU-Siberia was created, on which 100000 signatures were collected by March 18 against the pipe-line construction; by April 12, another 10000 signatures were collected and passed over to the Federal parliament (Khalyi, 2007: 31-33).

The leading force in the struggle against tracing the pipe-line near Baikal shore was Greenpeace-Russia. Public hearings and expertise were carried out in Irkutsk, Khabarovsk, Barnaul and other cities of Southern Siberia and Far East. The Baikal Movement was established. It positioned itself as an informal coalition of NGOs, political parties, professional organizations and ordinary citizens. Allied with the Baikal Wave and enjoying the support of some members of the regional parliament as well as independent experts, the coalition became a mighty social force. Gradually it became clear that this pipe-line conflict was a conflict between the state bureaucracy and civil society. After six years of struggle, prime-minister Vladimir Putin ordered to move the pipe away from the Baikal shore.

Some important developments should be mentioned. First, NGOs proved to be able to frame the issue and device a mobilizing frame (Gerhards and Rucht, 1992), formulate goals, develop an action repertoire, and mobilize local residents. Secondly,

in both cases leaders of the movement (or coalition) used conventional (protest actions, letters of protest, fax campaigns, meetings) as well as new social knowhow (websites, networks uniting scientists, journalists and lay people). Thirdly, the pipe-line traced across territories populated by endemic ethnic groups provoked a wave of mass protest by their organizations backed by those described above as 'traditionalists'. Finally, the actual traditionalists protested against the pipe-line construction because it would destroy a large part of natural ecosystems and cultural landscape around Lake Baikal and would make harm to endemic populations.

The focus of the six phase (2008-10) was again on the problem of halting the P&PM work. During three past decades, Mikhail Gorbachev, then Boris Yeltsin and finally Vladimir Putin repeatedly promised to resolve this urgent problem. But, since the undemocratic structure of the state remained the same, no program envisaging a shutdown of the plant and re-settling the inhabitants of Baykalsk has ever been developed. One of the major results of this long-lasting conflict was the establishment in 2008 the Save Baikal! coalition which became one of the strongest eco-NGOs in Eastern Siberia<sup>6</sup>. Baikal Fund extinguished soon, but Baikal Wave together with the above-mentioned coalition gradually transformed into a mighty civic power capable of influencing the environmental policy in the region. But the economic context changed as well. Forty years ago, the paper-mill was a unique cell of the military-industrial complex of the USSR. By now, it became an obsolescent plant with ill-

skilled staff and with the company town in decay. As one of the activists noted 'The P&PM managers use its workers as hostages' (from interview, 2008). M. Rikchvanova, the co-leader of the above coalition, stressed that the salvation of Baikal became even more topical given the increasing world-wide shortage of fresh water (Rikchvanova, 2010). In 2008, after many delays, the P&PM was finally closed, but in February 2010 it was put into operation again with the promise to close it once and for all after a year or two<sup>7</sup>. Irrespectively to the overall POS, this decision produced a change in the alignment of forces. The state, big business, regional administration and a part of company-town dwellers spoke in favor of this re-opening. Scientists, eco-activists, labor unions and some part of population of the region were against it. One more remarkable thing is that some left-wing parties and labor unions supported the stand of the Coalition.

As at the previous stage, this general alignment of forces remained the same throughout the stage under discussion, but some minor changes took place in the process. The detailed disposition is presented in the Table 1.

What is peculiar to this stage of the long-lasting conflict? It acquired a clear-cut glocal character; it reflects the split in the Russian society at large, into utilitarians/consumerists and environmentalists in a wide sense of the word; while the environmentalists offered dialogue, the opposite part rejected it; the coalition together with local activists then proposed to design an alternative program for Baykalsk's future, but their opponents rejected this kind of cooperation as well<sup>8</sup>.

As forty years ago, the state wishes to shape the environmental policy without participation of civil society organizations.

**Table 1.** *Pro and contra actors in relation to the closure the P&PM in 2010*

For continuation of P&PM work	For closure of P&PM work
The government of the Russian Federation Ministry of trade and economy Federal Agency for Property Management (majoritarian shareholders from March 2010) Top management of the Continental Management, the corporation to which P&PM belongs Retired workers of the P&PM Municipal authorities of Baykalsk Regional administration Militia and other security forces Politically engaged scientists Politically engaged eco-bureaucrats	UNESCO Deputies of Buryatia Republic parliament Some oppositional parties Trade unions of Irkutsk Public chamber of the Russian Federation Majority of scientific community (Siberian division of Russian Academy of Science) Environmental NGOs: regional (Baikal Movement, Baikal Wave) and transnational (WWF, Greenpeace, Pacific Environment and others) Small business of the region Concerned people of the region (including writers, painters, poets) Some public figures from the EU Some top managers of the EU and transnational business Western media (Euro-news)

Source: author's data.

There are some hidden 'pro' and 'contra' arguments. Firstly, selling a closed (i.e. dead) plant is impossible, selling a working one is much easier. Secondly, it is clear that the issue is not only about the facilities but also about the very expensive land under and around the P&PM. Thirdly, Russian workers are physically and mentally not mobile, especially when no legal and organizational basis for re-settlement is provided. Finally, the inhabitants of Baykalsk have regular extra-income from hunting, fishery, etc., which they

would never get at any new place of residence.

The changes in pro-ecological forces in 1987–2008 are presented in Table 2. Although the above mentioned groups differ in values, structure and modus operandi, they are all more or less fit to the frames of this Table. Only the alternativists were the exception: they had never got financial aid from the West and always had rejected to be institutionalized within the frames of existing social order.

**Table 2.** *The changes in pro-ecological forces related to Baikal issue (1987 - 2008)*

Characteristics of mobilization	Perestroika (1987—91)	Collapse of the USSR (1991)	Default 1998	Crisis of 2008-?
Political opportunity structure	Gradually widening	Most sensitive to the demands of civic organizations	Less sensitive, more hostile	Not yet sensitive
Main actors of mobilization	Scientists, scholars, students, local people	Scientists, scholars, students	NGO professionals	Save Baikal and ad hoc political initiatives

Constituency	Scientists, scholars, writers	All layers of civil society and some officials	Practically absent	NGO professionals, academics, journalists, lay people
Key values	Self-organization and self-identification	To assist to keep the democratic course	Self-preservation	Nature protection; defense of basic human rights
Aims of the movement	Preventing huge construction project (i.e. P&PM)	To keep the turn to environmentally oriented policy in the region	Maintaining resource supply from the West	Stop the P&PM, alternative project of region development
Kinds of mobilization	Protesting, creation of Baikal Fund and Baikal Wave movement	Participation in new democratic institutions (city Soviets, advisory councils, etc)	No mobilization at all	Mass protest campaigns, alternative projects development
Resources	People, their knowledge and experience of reality	People, western financial aid and technologies	Western financial aid and technologies	Financial aid from abroad; local human & scientific resources
Outcome	Widening the constituency of environmental movement and its partial institutionalization	Institutionalization continued; the environmental movement gradually transformed into set of NGOs	The environmental movement de-institutionalization, more resource dependence on the West	Building transnational coalition of eco-activists and lay people

Source: author's data.

### Changing Frames, Slogans and Action Repertoire

In the run of 45 years, frames have changed many times. Though, arguably, the master frame – ‘Baikal must be saved’ – has not changed at all, its sense has changed. In Soviet times, it was about the saving of a unique natural object and its surroundings. This is readily comprehensible given that in those times the movement was headed by naturalists. In perestroika times, this frame acquired a plainly political sense, namely ‘Baikal must be released from the iron cage of the destructive social system’. Neither the collapse of the USSR in 1991 nor the financial crisis in 1998 changed this political meaning of the master frame.

But its overtone became in some cases more radical, in some more peaceable (‘reformist’) depending on the overall political opportunity structure for the Baikal movement and on the disposition of its allies and adversaries. In the 2000s, when it became clear that the new regime was stable and, at the same time, as hostile towards the environmental movement at large as the Soviet regime had been, the sense of the abovementioned master frame shrank to ‘The paper mill should be closed immediately!’. This ‘shrinking’ could be explained by the fact that the movement had been politically marginalized. Recently, after the P&PM was ‘conclusively’ closed in 2008 but put into operation again in February 2010, the situation became

dual: the movement's leaders insist on a final closure, whereas local trade union leaders speak in favor of a 'wait and see' tactic.

As to mobilizing frames (here I equalize them with slogans), initially they were constructed by natural scientists and addressed to the leaders of the Communist party only. Then, in the perestroika times the motto 'Go for Baikal!' created by populist leaders of various origin prevailed. Later on, as the movement continued to develop and to diversify, the mobilizing frames followed these processes. These ranged from 'technical' ('Unite to stop the projects that destroy Baikal!') to more political ones ('Hands off Baikal defenders!'). This shift of mobilizing frames was reflected by the change of slogans (mottos): from 'Save Baikal, save Baykalsk' to 'P&PM is a disgrace for Russia!' and 'There is an alternative to Putin, but not to Baikal!'. Besides, the slogans reflect the variety of actors involved in the struggle. Scientists and writers call for saving nature at large, while local people, who are primarily concerned about their own living standards, say: 'Shutting down the P&PM means fresh bottled Baikal water for millions' or 'Tourism – yes, P&PM – no!'. Every election campaign results in slogans growing more political (see: Zayavlenie, 2010 and other sources). A slogan secured from the works of two Russian prominent writers, Alexander Solzhenitsyn and Valentin Rasputin, reads: 'Saving nature means saving the Russian people'.

As to tactics and action repertoire, they were the same as in the West: direct actions such as letters of protest, mass rallies and protest campaigns combined with litigations,

alternative programs and projects for environmental enlightenment of lay people and training of activists. It has been quite natural since early 1990s for the Baikal defenders to collaborate closely with their sister organizations in Russia and across the world. As M. Rikhvanova pointed out, 'the pro-ecological activity of people who live around the lake is growing. They organized themselves around the local newspaper 'Mestnaya'; they consider establishing an Association of All People Living around Baikal (from interview, 2011).

## Conclusion and Discussion

The Baikal case is a long-lasting and irreconcilable conflict reflecting a clash of two opposing ideologies and value orientations: utilitarianism and environmentalism. This conflict bears evidence that Russia is still on the edge between two cultures: industrialism in its utmost consumerist form and environmentalism aimed at reconciliation of man and nature in foreseeable future. This case could be considered a conflict between risk-producers exploiting natural resources and risk-consumers, i.e. those forcefully exposed to harm and risk (Yanitsky, 2000).

In political terms, it is a conflict between the ruling elite and the elite of emerging civil society. The Baikal case is only a mirror showing that this conflict is deeply rooted in Soviet as well as post-Soviet 'market economy' and consumerist culture. In terms of culture, these two cultures differ greatly. The ruling elite's culture is actually a consumerist one, because all

institutions of modern Russia are based on the *resource paradigm* as a common basis providing for the very existence of Russian society, while the civic elite's culture is based on the *common good paradigm*, which includes nature protection and envisages restoration of regional ecosystem's sustainability after the final closure of this P&PM and many other harmful plants.

As the conflict developed, it was step by step acquiring an *international character*, first by way of Soviet scientists' participation in the UNESCO's 'Biological program' and then in the 'Man and the Biosphere' program, which has a special sub-program for biosphere reserves, then by way of Soviet scientists and sociologists' participation in the UN environmental program (UNEP), and finally in the form of direct online and offline international contacts and of building research networks and cooperation involving Russian civil activists along with their partners abroad.

It should be stressed that during the phases under review, the state bodies practiced only one form of communication, and that was *instructive* or *top-down*, which actually meant 'not permitted'-messages only, while civil organizations, local and international, carried out numerous projects in the fields of education, organization work, network building, resource mapping, monitoring the state of the P&PM and the wastewater pollution of Lake Baikal, etc. While the conflict is not yet resolved, it engendered many forms of pro-ecological activity and *dialogue* between the diversity of actors, not only in the Baikal region itself but also far beyond it.

Three more remarkable shifts should be mentioned. First, the struggle launched by academics by and large embraced other strata and groups in the region as well as beyond its limits. Secondly, beginning from nature protection this struggle more and more shifted towards struggle for human rights and liberties, first of all the right to have a say and to be heard. The 'hot summer' of the year 2010 (fires, floods, tornados) enhanced this shift and gave it a clearly political character. Thirdly, in spite of consumerism propaganda in the media, many young people joined this politically oriented movement.

Did the two financial crises (1998 and 2008) affect the Baikal issue similarly? As to the movement as such, these crises have barely affected it. The typical answer to my question has always been: 'We are doing today what we've been doing before'. In the view of environmentalists (as of 2008/10) the reason for reopening the P&PM was mainly economical: selling a 'dead' mill would have been practically impossible (Chabanenko, 2009; Taevskyi, 2010).

The struggle for Baikal has changed over time because everything has changed: actors and their resources, the political opportunity structure, and local, national and global contexts. First, the Baikal movement turned from a local into a national and international one and from a territorially embedded to a network-like organized one. Accordingly, local sources of its resources were replaced by international ones. Secondly, during the 45 years of struggle the movement's political opportunity structure changed at least twice: from rigid and exclusive to friendly and then to adversarial and



even hostile again. At the same time, after the Baikal lake acquired the world heritage status, the Baikal movement and its SMOs gained more international protection and support. Thirdly, the mode of social mobilization changed over time in several directions: from letters of protest to mass campaigns and then to ‘environmental diplomacy’; from mobilization of lay people to mobilization of independent experts including expert-citizens; from one-to-one mobilization to network one, etc. But in my view, the most significant shifts were these: from nature protection towards the struggle for human rights and liberties, and from political resistance to the development of alternative plans and projects for resolving the problem of the P&PM and company town of Baykalsk.

What are the key changes to the POS from the Soviet to the post-Soviet political system? This rather complicated question is under tough dispute till now. But I am convinced – and the fundamental works of the US historian of Soviet environmentalism D. Weiner (1999) confirm my view – that pro-ecological activity had existed under all political regimes including totalitarian. As far as the Baikal issue is concerned, I would like to mention three substantial shifts: 1) from ideologically to economically-based POS; 2) from ‘closed’ to ‘open’, that is, global, POS; and 3) the shift from a uniform and rigid POS to an oscillating POS conditioned by the struggle between federal and regional/local elites and growing civic society.

Did Western funding strengthen or weaken the Baikal movement? This financial aid has pursued a variety of short-term and long-term goals.

One short-term goal was to teach Russian environmentalists to work in accordance with western standards (meaning the tactics and action repertoire), whereas the principal long-term goal was ‘sowing the seeds of democracy’ by rendering financial and technical aid to Russian environmentalists. As to the effect of this aid, I prefer to speak not in terms of ‘strength and weakness’ but in terms of transformations, namely context-sensitive transformations. Conflict has always been the driving force of any transformation. This was the case when, for instance, an oil pipe-line was traced near the lake. Such conflicts mobilized money, people and other types of resources, restructured the given disposition of forces, etc. The forms of this aid gradually changed as well. Initially, it included financial aid and technical assistance. Later on, international environmental organizations such as the WWF and Greenpeace became deeply involved in resolving Russian problems. Most importantly, the international organizations themselves were learning, that is, they began to proceed in accordance with the Russian political and cultural context.

I’d like to stress the importance of monitoring the state of affairs at the paper-mill and around it which has been implemented by expert-citizens, because official sources usually gave incorrect information, insisting that the mill’s closure would result in unemployment for many residents of the company town. The actual picture was different: some of them already left the town, others found another jobs, still others fully agreed with the plan of changing from their hard and

risky work to jobs in tourism industry as was suggested by the alternative plan developed by the environmentalists. Above all, in 2009 the Coalition offered to the state administration a set of alternative projects for rehabilitation of the Baikal region including Baykalsk after the mill's closure. The Coalition offered to discuss these projects publicly and to adopt the mutually acceptable one.

Despite all above-mentioned negative results of the conflict, we should underline its strong *positive effect*. The key word here is *mobilization*. Mobilization assisted greatly in consolidation and maintenance of environmentally concerned people, both professionals and ordinary citizens. The elder generation of scientists educated by pre-1917 academics—mostly ecologists but sometimes pastoralists as well—did two important things: they formed the core of regional environmental community and transmitted their knowledge and know-how to their younger fellows. Environmental ethics shaped in the early twentieth century in Russia has been passed over to new generations of activists. Despite many difficulties, mobilization for the saving the Baikal lake has played the key role in the strengthening and expanding of this community.

Another positive result of this community existence is that it represents an island and network of *high modernity*. It unites high-skilled and interdisciplinary professionals with a rational and reflexive mode of thinking. People who are involved in these networks mostly adhere to post-material values. They are well equipped technically and are engaged

in global information and resource exchange. The very character of their network's structure is a distinguishing feature of high modernity. But there are several impediments to transforming this network informal community into a political force capable to promote environmental reforms. First, there is the growing pressure on the part of the state and big business aimed at achieving total control over all resources. Second, there is a vast social milieu that is characterized by a counter-modernization mentality. Finally, there is a recurrent threat of bureaucratization of these fragile cells of high modernity. The only way out is their further integration into a global environmental community. At the same time, we are in an urgent need of a new model for Russia's ecological modernization in a tightly interdependent and unstable world.

This conflict has played a double role: as a mobilizing force, on the one hand, and as a producer of democratic forms of environmental activity of citizens, on the other. Today, the Baikal issue has acquired a new dimension due to the growing deficit of fresh water in the world, and therefore, the international community's growing interest in protecting this unique reservoir. And, last but not least, this movement, which has accumulated rich knowledge and social know-how, became a model for other environmental groups across the country.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> 'Cities of Europe: The Public's Role in Shaping the Urban Environment', the UNESCO's grant (1987-91);

‘Ecological Movements in Russia’, Russian-French, the EHES grant (1991–1993); ‘Transnational Non-Governmental Environmental Organizations: A Comparative Research in Russia, Ukraine and Estonia’, grant of the Swiss Scientific Foundation for Fundamental Research (1997–98); ‘The Politics of the Russian Greens: Responding to Challenges of Risk Society’, grant of J. and C. MacArthur Foundation (1999–2000); ‘Environmental Policy in Russia: Theoretical Foundations and Means of Implementation’, grant of the Russian Humanitarian Fund (1997–99); ‘Resources and Prospects of Regional Socio-Ecological Modernization’, grant of the Russian Humanitarian Fund (2007); ‘Russian Nature Protection Networks: Structure, Functions, and Human Capital’, grant of the Russian Fund for Fundamental Research (2009–11).

<sup>2</sup> Namely: Tretyi Put’ (The Third Way), Spaseniye (The Salvation), Bereginyya, Nash Baikal (Our Baikal), Zhelenyi Mir (The Green World) and some others.

<sup>3</sup> Ecology and Human Rights. Electronic Bulletin; BABB.RU; <http://www.forestforum.ru>; <http://gorodbaikalsk.ru/soobscheniya-polzovatellyu/proekt-sozdadimbudushee-byikal.html>; [Baikal-movement@googlegroups.com](mailto:Baikal-movement@googlegroups.com); Expert Siberia [http://www.expert.ru/printissues/Siberia/2009/31/news\\_bcbk/](http://www.expert.ru/printissues/Siberia/2009/31/news_bcbk/); <http://www.irk.ru>; <http://www.irk.ru/news/20090818/denial/>

<sup>4</sup> The first *druzhina* was established in Tartu University, Estonia (1969), and then at the biological faculty of the Moscow State University (1970).

<sup>5</sup> The most glorious success of the

SoEU was the organization of nationwide rallies in February 1989 against the northern rivers diversion project, involving about one million lay people in 100 cities of the USSR. The SoEU was also able to collect more than 100 000 signatures against the construction of the Volga-Chograi Canal, a part of the above project. As a result, the project was finally cancelled.

<sup>6</sup> In 2010, the For Baikal coalition counted more than 40 civic organizations among its members. Its main appeal to the world business and bank community was to stop all projects with ‘Basel’ (Bazovyi element), the owner of the P&PM and many other plants in the region (*Ecology and Human Rights. Electronic bulletin*. No 3551, 16.04. 2010: 5).

<sup>7</sup> The leaders of Baikal Wave found out that the government allowed the paper-mill’s operation without using a closed water circulation system (*Ecology and Human Rights. Electronic bulletin*. No 3553, 27.04. 2010: 3).

<sup>8</sup> In November 2008, by the initiative of M. Rikhvanova the ‘*Creating the Baikal’s Future*’ project was launched. Simultaneously, a project competition for the restoration of Baikalsk began by the initiative of the municipal administration. The range of topics was wide, reaching from new agrotechnologies and landscape park projects to waste utilization and tourist industry managers’ training, cf. <http://gorodbaikalsk.ru/soobscheniya-polzovatellyu/proekt-sozdadimbudushee-byikal.html>

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