A Historical Perspective on the Movement for Nuclear Safety in Chelyabinsk, Russia

By Maria Tysiachniouk, Natalia Mironova, and Jonathan Reisman

Abstract:

This work discusses the Movement for Nuclear Safety in the heavily-industrialized South Ural region of Russia. We analyze the movement in its stages of development from a crowd of dissenters during Gorbachev’s Perestroika to a highly professionalized network of networks in the present day. This work is based on qualitative sociology research conducted in the form of in-depth interviews, participant observation, and collaborative work with the leader of this social movement, Natalia Mironova. The research conducted between the years 1998 and 2002. We apply the paradigms of collective behavior, collective action, and new social movements in order to analyze the strategies and goals of the movement over the course of its 15-year history.

Introduction

This paper represents a case study of the Movement for Nuclear Safety in the Southern Ural region of Russia. Like many current social movements in Russia, this one began during Gorbachev’s Perestroika and now has grown to become a professionalized NGO network. Research for this paper was conducted in 1998-2002 using qualitative methods. We used 21 biographical interviews, 7 thematic interviews, participatory observation, and analysis of documents.

The Movement for Nuclear Safety operates in Chelyabinsk and Chelyabinsk Oblast which is in central Russia at the intersection of Europe and Asia. Its population is 3,680,000 people, with one million living in the city of Chelyabinsk. Vast territories of Chelyabinsk oblast are heavily contaminated by radionuclides due to the operations of the Industrial Enterprise Mayak. Since 1949 Mayak has been producing tritium for nuclear weapons. In the early years of its operations, the plant haphazardly discharged nuclear waste into the Techa river. In 1957 an accident occurred and large amounts of radioactivity were released into the air, water, and soil of the surrounding territory. Several villages were evacuated, however there was not enough knowledge at that time to assess the effects of contamination and there was no monitoring of its levels. In many other villages, no information was disclosed and people continued to live on contaminated territories and use the surrounding environment as they always had. The facts about contamination appeared only during Perestroika, many decades later, and it took Chernobyl to open up the information. The Movement for Nuclear Safety was born with this disclosure.

In our paper we will give a theoretical background, analyze the historical context of the movement, test several Western sociological theories in the Russian context. We will put the movement within the framework of other social movements.

Theory

In the beginning of the century, social movements were explained through the collective behavior paradigm - now called the “traditional approach”. This paradigm came from the theories of social psychology which grew to popularity in Europe at that time. Such writers as Smelser, Bloomer, Turner, and Killian saw social movements as the result of social deprivation, where some part of the population becomes unhappy and so resorts to protest. According to this paradigm, these were non-institutionalized protests that were temporary and destined to fade after a small societal adjustment accomodates their fleeting complaints. Accordingly, social movements were not seen as a normal and ever-present part of a society’s functioning (Zdravomyslova 1993, p. 13). Protest was seen as unstable and unsustainable. Smelser demonstrated that a movement results from structural strain, uncertainty, tension, deprivation, and contradictions within a society (1963, p. 80). He added that there is always an “us”-“them” division for participants in the movement. In his research, Bloomer found that prerequisites to a social movement include a crisis of legitimacy in the power structures as well as a structural conduciveness to such collective movement behavior (1969, p. 232).

1 An “oblast” is a political territory of Russia with power structures subordinated to the federal government.
To analyze the Movement for Nuclear Safety in Chelyabinsk, we will apply the paradigm of collective action, also called the resource mobilization paradigm (McCarthy and Zald 1977). This paradigm grew out of the framework of the American tradition in social movements research and became firmly established in the 1970's. As opposed to the collective behavior paradigm, resource mobilization does not view social movements as irrational, but rather as an integral part of a democratic society. Accordingly, movements are viewed as employing tactics, strategies, and the ability to achieve the goals that they set forth to achieve. Here, collective action is seen as planned and rational. Under the resource mobilization paradigm, there is a linkage between institutionalized and non-institutionalized forms within a movement, where the repertoire of collective action can include both direct action and more conventional forms including dialogues and negotiations. Non-institutionalized entities can institutionalize and continue achieving their goals through political processes (Jenkins 1983).

Within the resource mobilization paradigm, economic and political opportunities are seen as necessary prerequisites to action. The opportunities for action within a certain period of time become resources for a movement. Here it is useful to look at resource mobilization theory as developed by McCarthy, Zald, and Obershaw. They see opportunities as resources that must be mobilized by a movement while, at the same time, the cost of mobilization must be overcome. Thus, according to theory, movements will try to choose activities in order to maximize resources and minimize costs (McAdam, McCarthy and Zald 1988; Zald and McCarthy 1987; Obershaw 1973). Under this paradigm, resources are either internal – within the movement - or external – outside of the movement. External resources usually include different supportive social institutions, communication networks, and informational resources (McAdam, McCarthy and Zald 1988).

As a part of resource mobilization theory, we will introduce into our analysis the political process model as developed by Tilly (1984), McAdam (1982) and Gamson (1988). This theory states that if the political situation of a given time, either global, national, or local, is favorable to the needs of a movement, then the price of resource mobilization decreases. Applying this theory requires an in-depth study of the socio-political systems and processes at the time of the social movement's birth and operation. The repertoire of a movement's political actions is closely connected with this political process model.

The concept of the structure of political opportunities was developed by Tarrow. The structure can be qualitatively determined by the extent of openness in a political system, its level of stability, and the power structure of interest groups. Another important factor is the relationship between a movement and like-minded individuals within the political system. This concept helps to determine and explain the collective action repertoire of any movement (Tarrow 1983, 1988).

Hjelmar developed resource mobilization further, applying the theories to large NGOs rather than just entire movements. In much of resource mobilization theory, entering politics and becoming a pressure group is a usual outcome for social movements. Hjelmar's findings differ slightly, writing that an organization can achieve its goals and afterwards maintain its structural organization. In his theory, an NGO can waver back and forth between two types of political identity - (1) movement identity and (2) pressure group identity (Hjelmar 1996, p. 65). The first entails a questioning of conventional politics and a bottom-up approach. The collective action repertoire of an organization with movement identity includes grass-roots mobilization tactics such as rallies, demonstrations, and referendums. Hjelmar calls this strategy "problematization" (1996, p. 43-51). The second type of identity entails top-down political strategy where an organization works pragmatically with the government according to what goals are possibly and probably achievable. Hjelmar labels this strategy "political effectiveness", and it includes lobbying, litigation, and dialogue with power structures (1996, p. 59-69). This categorization is relative and the two identities are not mutually exclusive. At certain times, a group's collective action repertoire may include a combination of the two strategies.

The last paradigm we will apply is new social movements, which was developed in the 1970's and 1980's in Western Europe by researchers such as A. Touraine (1973), C. Offe (1985), D. Rucht (1991) H. Kreisi(1988), and A. Melucci(1980). This theory differentiates between old social movements and new social movements, the latter classification not only being given to movements in contemporary time. Where as old movements were determined by who held them, as in the labor, youth, or peasant
movements, new social movements are determined by the values they try to uphold - ecology, equality, peace, and human rights. The theory of new social movements is a "value" paradigm, and so the analysis of a social movement's values is important for determining whether or not it is a new social movement. Movements that fit this classification are often contrary to old values and against the utilitarian values of a market economy. New social movements reject modernity because of its orientation towards industrial growth and nationalism and all of their consequences. The organizations involved are usually decentralized, small and informal, and rely on tactics such as demonstrations and protests. Nevertheless, a new social movement can be a driving force of historical processes (Zravamislova, 1993, 114).

New social movements are also global in character and value, and their opponent is not a state itself but contemporary post-industrial society. (Touraine 1973, p. 360). Dieter Rucht (1991) connects the appearance of new social movements with a new stage of the globalized world and such processes of the globalized world as modernization. Melucci says that new social movements form counter-cultural institutions that hope to spread a new-value system throughout society (1989, p. 210). Castells adds that the goal of the movement's organizational development is to become an effective political force without destroying the identity and autonomy of the movement and without creating a formal structure and hierarchy (Castells 1983, p. 17). Based on the data of Western movements, Offe (1985) found that new social movements are almost always formed by the middle class and, in general, consists of people with high education, civil servants, and those with economic stability and spare time.

We will look at the Movement for Nuclear Safety separately with each of these paradigms and analyze how the Movement for Safety changed over the course of the its development and how these changes were linked to the changing social and political situation in Russia on both the national and local levels.

**Political Context**
1984-1989

The peak of Soviet environmental activism occurred in 1987-1988 with Mikhail Gorbachev's policies of Perestroika (restructuring of the Soviet system in a more democratic way) and Glasnost (openness and freedom of speech). These socio-political watersheds totally changed the structure of political opportunities in Russia by allowing opponents of the Soviet regime to express their views and demands for change (see table 1, row 1). Gorbachev began to allow debate on environmental issues, some believe in order to avoid more contentious political questions. Nonetheless, social movements coalesced and began to make demands on government, industry, and society. The Chernobyl disaster, which occurred only two years earlier in the beginning of Perestroika, also helped to awaken environmental concern and its memory continually legitimized the already growing movement.

The ensuing flash of environmental activism created new NGOs throughout Russia, including in Chelyabinsk oblast where many activists began to work, in one way or another, with the region's heavy industrial character. The People’s Front, which began to function in Chelyabinsk in 1987, was an eclectic gathering of activists interested in various facets of democracy (see diagram 1, period 1). Ideas and values of political freedom were spreading through the population at the time, and within the broader amorphous movement of the People’s Front, there existed ecological concerns. Activists concentrating on this particular aspect of the movement later created the NGO Movement for Nuclear Safety.

This period in the movement's formation can be seen as a "concerned society" stage in which occurred a swelling of general distress in Russia resulting in the vague beginnings of organization in the non-governmental arena. This period saw large rallies and demonstrations for democracy in general, as well as many events specifically in opposition to nuclear development (see table 1, row 4). The Movement for Nuclear Safety drew attention to the nuclear infrastructure of the region, including radiological pollution in the territory surrounding Mazak. They held public hearings with public attendances of over 1000. They also collected thousands of signatures against the government plan to build a South Ural Nuclear Power Plant.

1990-1992
The period between 1990 and 1992 saw a change in Russia’s political context with elements more favorable to NGO activity coming into the government. Diverse political views circulated through the government and public at this time. Boris Yeltsin, as the chairman of the Supreme Soviet, promoted liberal democratic reforms, while Gorbachev, as president of the USSR, pushed for a new socialism. On the whole, the government was oriented towards change and solving the problems created in past Soviet times. In March 1990, a quintessential set of elections were held for federal and local Councils of People’s Deputies. In the midst of non-stop rallying, marches numbering over 2000, and demonstrations in which participated a total of over 7.5 million people, these elections brought democratic and liberal deputies into the government on all levels, thus resulting in the birth of political pluralism in Russia (see table 1, row 1).

The government became extremely sensitive to environmental and health concerns in this period (see table 1, row 2). In April 1990, the Ministry of Nuclear Energy (Minatom), together with the Ministry of Health, decided to change its policy of secrecy with regard to information on radioactivity levels in territories surrounding its enterprises. On the federal level, new environmental legislation was passed, including the law “On Environmental Protection” which prohibited the burying of foreign spent nuclear fuel on the territory of Russia. Furthermore, the government created and financed a rehabilitation plan for the entire Ural industrial region, while, the next year, Gorbachev ordered a comprehensive investigation into the conditions of Chelyabinsk oblast, resulting in a three-volume report. The Movement for Nuclear Safety conducted much of this research over the period 1990-1992 and interacted with deputies of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR for its formulation.

On the regional level, several activists from the democratic People’s Front were elected to the Council of People’s Deputies on both the oblast level and within the city of Chelyabinsk. The Democratic Party of Greens was established at this time. They received support from the power structures, and one leader from the Movement for Nuclear Safety was invited to chair a new Commission on Radiological Security under the oblast administration. Until this point, radiological security had always been a concern exclusively of the federal government. The creation of this commission in Chelyabinsk oblast was the first change of its kind in this policy. Because of this, People’s Front activists were able to participate in the expert assessment of the Ministry of Economy’s plan to build a South Ural Nuclear Power Plant. In 1991, the Movement for Nuclear Safety published an expert ecological assessment of its construction and operation. That same year the movement received support from the Chelyabinsk city government to conduct a referendum which, without the support for oblast power structures, opposed the planned construction and led to an agreement of city power structures not to import or bury spent nuclear fuel within the oblast. Also in the framework of this commission, the movement held an international conference entitled “The Activities of the Military-Nuclear Facility in the Urals” with the participation of Mayak representatives and 500 representatives of nine countries, including 50 NGO activists.

The positive results of the 1990 elections stemmed from the spreading of unrest and democratic values in the “concerned society” period (1984-1989). The amorphous and widespread movement during perestroika allowed activists to enter government, thus sewing the seeds for a new period in the movement’s structural organization. Leaders from various facets of the broader democratic movement got government positions and fellow activists tended to concentrate around that leader which most closely represented their interests (see diagram 1, period 2). Those interested specifically in nuclear security accordingly clustered around a specific leader, namely the Movement for Nuclear Safety activist in the Commission on Radiological Security. This stage of “institutionalization” saw a co-optation of the movement in which the interests of activists became institutionalized within the government. Although the People’s Front continued meeting as a broad-based and rather amorphous group of activists, there was a tendency in this period for specialization around particular problems and corresponding government structures.

1993-1996
In the period 1993-1996, democratic and independent politicians and deputies in Chelyabinsk oblast were replaced by communist apparatchiks. With them, these apparatchiks brought back to power a strain of Russian politics that was not favorable for non-governmental organizations and the environmental movement. This change occurred in September 1993 when President Yeltsin used his presidential authority, many say unconstitutionally, to disperse the Supreme Soviet and the Councils of People’s Deputies on oblast and local levels throughout the country. When Yeltsin issued this decree, number 1400, Russia’s federal government was extremely unstable. His aim was to oust his opponents, namely Vice President A. Rutskoy and his fellow communists in the Supreme Soviet, and secede Russia from the USSR by replacing the Supreme Soviet with a two-house parliament called the Federal Council of the Russian Federation. After a dramatic shoot out at the White House (seat of the Supreme Soviet) in Moscow, Rutskoy was arrested and Yeltsin succeeded in disbanding the Soviet.

Inadvertently, this success on the federal level had negative impacts in Chelyabinsk oblast, where the Council of People’s Deputies, consisting of democratic and independent representatives, including an activist from the Movement for Nuclear Safety, was disbanded. Replacement councils were five times smaller and the new elections filled them with enterprise heads and former communist party apparatchiks. In the years after 1990, the general public had a strong belief in democracy, however, with fast social, economic, and political reforms, what Yanitsky (2000, 101) calls a “wild market”, and an economic crisis in 1992, people lost faith in the democrats and did not re-elect them. The Commission on Radiological Security under the oblast administration was also closed in 1992 due to a lack of financing.

Activists in the Movement for Nuclear Safety, therefore, no longer had positions or influence with the government. Their relationship with the new oblast power structures degraded and activists found themselves targeted by the Federal Security Service (the post-Soviet version of the KGB) which accused them of espionage and used newspapers for a smear campaign. With links thus severed, the movement in Chelyabinsk focused on non-governmental activities. In December 1993, the Movement for Nuclear Safety registered and received official NGO status (see diagram 1, period 3). Between the years 1994 and 1996 the movement’s members, that small part of the region’s population that remained socially active, helped form and register several local NGO’s including Kyshtym-57 (named for an explosion at the Mayak plant in 1957), Nuclear Hostages, White Mice, Techa (the name of a a river heavily polluted with radioactive isotopes), and the Muslumova Committee for Self-Government (from the polluted village of Muslumova on the Techa River).

During this time, the Movement for Nuclear Safety and its new fellow organizations engaged in a few direct actions and public hearings on environmental pollution and the health of victims of radioactive pollution. They also collected some signatures against the South Ural Nuclear Power Plant and the importation of foreign spent nuclear fuel. Most efforts, however, involved working with government deputies on new legislation. The movement also began working with local activists engaged in defending the rights of victims of the nuclear industry. They collaborated and brought a lawsuit against the plant Mayak in defense of a three-year-old boy who was born with certain pathologies related to the plant’s radioactive pollution. The courts decided in favor of the boy and Mayak gave 10,000 dollars toward a 25,000-dollar surgical procedure at the Leningrad Military Medical Academy.

1997-1998

In this period, the power structures of Chelyabinsk oblast made various decisions in favor of promoting nuclear development (see table 1, row 1). According to the head of Movement for Nuclear Safety, “Minatom bought local power structures” (Interview, 2002). They passed the law “On the Radiological Security of the Population of Chelyabinsk Oblast” which contained a mess of political double-talk allowing the burial of spent nuclear fuel within the region. The 1991 agreement of power structures not to allow this was thus overturned. Many activists see this as a result of Minatom’s influence on the oblast administration. Our respondent from the movement said, “Mayak prepared the document and administration just signed it” (Interview, 2002). It also became clear at this time, that power structures were failing to properly administer the rehabilitation plan for the Ural region, which the

---

2 “Apparatchik” is a Russian term referring to the staunch, high-level bureaucrats of the Communist Party.
3 The Supreme Soviet was the federal legislature of the USSR.
Movement for Nuclear Safety helped to compose in 1990. Funds allocated for victims of radioactive pollution actually went to improving the infrastructure of nuclear enterprises. Meanwhile, the FSB continued to pressure the movement and publicized accusations.

Despite corruption on the oblast level, this period saw very few direct actions. The biggest action, a well-planned spectacle called “If You Can Live, You Can Sail”, involved activists sailing on the radioactive Techa River despite prohibitions. The media was notified beforehand and the action received attention throughout the oblast. Besides this one action, the period was quiet for the movement. Activists focused their attention on tactics mainly of information dissemination. They organized an educational program for the public called “The Danger of Plutonium, the Literacy of the People” and also published several books on health and radiation, as well a book on political strategy entitled “Negotiations as the Basis for Interaction”.

Networking and building capacity became major priorities (see diagram 1, period 4). The movement began collaborating with environmental organizations from the cities of Tomsk and Krasnoyarsk in Siberia. They linked with people working on issues such as obtaining medicine for victims of radioactive pollution, advising and assisting pregnant women on how to maintain their health in a polluted environment, and working to free activists imprisoned for releasing information on the nuclear sector. The movement also linked with NGOs in the United States in order to learn from their experience. The Movement for Nuclear Safety brought activists from Chelzabinsk and neighboring regions to the U.S. in order to study the experiences of American NGOs and learn techniques in establishing a dialogue with government. Activists also had the opportunity to participate in negotiations on nuclear policy with the U.S. government. From these new networks came collaborative projects for capacity building such as “Widening the Experience of Conducting Referendums – the Role of NGOs.” Additional collaborations were established between the movement and experts from the Chelyabinsk Medical Academy as well as between the head of the Movement and a State Duma deputy from the Fraction Yabloko.

1999-2000

In March 2000 Vladimir Putin became president of the Russian Federation and environmental policy became weak. After a collapse of the country’s bank system in 1998, Putin set his priorities on economic development, including heavy exportation of natural resources. To facilitate this path more easily he hushed environmental concerns by closing the Federal Forest Service and putting the State Committee of Ecology under the Ministry of Natural Resources (see table 1, row 1). The latter restructuring created the situation where one ministry had the responsibilities to both protect resources and exploit them. This was contradictory and helped to weaken environmental protection. Constant restructuring of state resource sectors also began in this period, which further hampered efforts to check development.

In this period, the issue of importing foreign spent nuclear fuel rose to contention. The Ministry of Nuclear Energy claimed it would use profits from importation on social and environmental programs. Nevertheless, broad sectors of the public and virtually all environmental organizations throughout Russia opposed the plan. The Movement for Nuclear Safety participated in several direct actions at the time, such as delivering barrels of “radioactive waste” from different countries to the steps of State Duma and staging large protests linking the dangers of transporting the spent fuel with international terrorism. They also helped in collecting signatures for a national referendum on the issue. Two million signatures are necessary to force a national referendum in Russia, and while 2.5 million signatures were collected, the government dismissed 600,000. The reasons behind disqualifying many of the signatures include the fact that many of the people who signed listed no addresses, as many villages in Russia have no streets.

This collaboration around the issue of foreign spent nuclear fuel helped to strengthen previous NGO networks and to create new ones for the movement (see diagram 1, period 5). Because Chelyabinsk oblast was one possible depot for the imported spent fuel, it got the attention of large national and

---

4 The State Duma is the current federal legislature of the Russian Federation.
international organizations such as Socio-Ecological Union (a Russian NGO) and Greenpeace. The Movement for Nuclear Safety partnered with these NGOs in actions, information campaigns, and the referendum. These relationships developed and became networks. The movement also increased its interaction with expert communities in this period. It began to collaborate with young lawyers in order to study and analyze the implementation of Russia’s legislation. It also brought three lawsuits in this period—all of which failed.

2001-2002

In June 2001, Putin accepted into legislation the amendment allowing importation of spent nuclear fuel from abroad. The environmental upsurge of the previous period failed to prevent this. During this period Putin strengthened the federal government and accelerated his program of economic development (see table 1, row 1). Still, the Movement for Nuclear Safety increased its interaction with the federal power structures. Movement activists worked with the Russian parliament to discuss nuclear policy and with the Ministries of Health and Emergency Situations to discuss victims of radioactive pollution. They also received a favorable decision from the Supreme Court of the Russia Federation on a lawsuit brought by the movement to reject the federal government’s decision to import spent nuclear fuel from Hungary. On a positive note, in November 2001 Putin organized the Civic Forum in which he invited representatives of non-governmental organizations to discuss the development of civil society and the role of NGOs in Russian politics. This was the beginning of acknowledgment of the third sector by Putin’s administration.

During this period, the Movement for Nuclear Safety also worked on strengthening its expert community and inter-network structures (see diagram 1, period 6). Activists from the movement began collaborating with universities and professional sociologists, they worked with lawyers to create a course on nuclear policy for the local law department, and they initiated and supported scientific research for the Ph.D.s of seven activists from the cities Tomsk, Ozersk, and Chelyabinsk. In 2001, the movement created a declaration of the new Network for Nuclear Security which consists of 20 NGOs from four oblasts in the region. The movement worked with these groups on many projects including the following capacity building seminars: “School of Civic Action”, “School of Strategic Planning”, and “Nuclear Politics in Russia: Transparency and Civic Control”. They also published a book for the general public called “Tritium is Dangerous: Complicated Issues Simplified”.

Analysis

The situation in which the Movement for Nuclear Safety arose - Perestroika and the fall of the Soviet Union - was an extreme time for Russian society. With the explosive release of long-withheld government information, Russia experienced something of a public uproar. People throughout the country were suddenly exposed to the contradictions of their society and its political ideology, and simultaneously many, including thousands of people in Chelyabinsk oblast, found out why the cancer rates in certain locations were so high. This was an extraordinary situation.

The collective behavior paradigm is useful with such a case. Bloomer succinctly describes the “concerned society” period in question, saying that the first stage of a social movement is “amorphic, poorly organized, with no visible form, and composed of elements of collective behavior similar to a crowd, while the mechanisms of interaction within are elementary and spontaneous” (Bloomer 1969, 10). In addition, the “general belief” in democracy was an important framework for protest actions, as Smelser predicts (Smelser 1963, 80).

One of the most important tenants of the collective behavior paradigm is the temporary character of social movements. Dawson and Gettys outline the four stages of a social movement: (1) social unrest, (2) popular excitement, (3) formalization, and (4) institutionalization (Dawson and Gettys 1948). This progression describes the movement as an outburst at first, due to mounting social pressure, which eventually leads to activists entering the government. This is followed by a steady fading of the movement, where it finally disappears into politics. According to this theory, a movement will deterministically change so that eventually preservation of the organizational structures themselves becomes the primary goal and charismatic leaders turns into oligarchs. When we look further along the
movement's history, into the second period of "institutionalization" we see that this theory holds (see diagram 1, period 2). Activists from the People's Front enter the government, and out of the movement's amorphous character emerges a set of more specialized organizations. Dawson and Gettys would see this as stages 3 and 4 of their outline, where "At the head of the movement, on the stage, stands the leader who has become a government representative" (1948). Accordingly, this would signify the beginning of the end of the Movement for Nuclear Safety in Chelyabinsk oblast.

If we study only the first two periods of the movement (1984-1989 and 1990-1992), the paradigm of collective behavior holds. However, if we move further we see that Yeltsin's decree 1400 of September 1993 kicked democratic activists out of the government and thus disrupted the clean sequence of "institutionalization". Leaders of the People’s Front returned to the movement, and rather than disappearing, it began building its alliances and networks to become a professionalized and well-connected NGO.

The paradigm of resource mobilization gives movements a greater leeway in its analysis of their development. As with collective behavior, this paradigm accurately portrays the beginning of movement, however, it uses the framework of resources and political opportunities. Perestroika, the opening of society, and the upsurge of democratic idealism were all important opportunities for the beginnings of the movement (see table 1, row 1). Therefore, under resource mobilization, these political and social upheavals became important "resources" that could be "mobilized" by the movement. At the time of the "concerned society" stage (1984-1989) there was actually no conscious resource mobilization going on, but rather the unorganized crowd-like beginnings of a movement. No definite goals were set up and no institutionalization had yet reached the activists who were interested in a broad range of democratic issues. Under the resource mobilization paradigm, however, this period provided many resources for the movement. The Chernobyl catastrophe served as a "resource" by demonstrating to the public the fallibility of Soviet infrastructure and helping to wake up the environmental concern of the overall population. This event got the attention of Gorbachev, and the Chelyabinsk movement, situated far from the site of Chernobyl, was able to draw this attention towards their own nuclear accidents and repercussions. Gorbachev's order for comprehensive research of Chelyabinsk oblast testifies to their success. The masses of disgruntled citizens in the oblast were mobilized by People's Front leaders in order to attract this attention. The public of the "concerned society" stage can be seen as "human resources" to be mobilized by leaders into protests, demonstrations, rallies, and signature collecting (see table 1, row 3 and 4). This period shows a high level of cultural conduciveness, which Hjelmar defines as "the degree to which people can identify themselves ideologically with particular themes in campaigns" (1996, p. 39). This public sensitivity, coupled with freedom of speech and relative openness, lowered the cost of human resource mobilization for the movement.

The explosion and sheer abundance of political opportunities and human resources in the time of Perestroika allowed the democratic movement to influence politics in its favor, and thus paved the way for a new set of favorable political opportunities in the next period 1990-1992. Looking at this occurrence through the theory of political opportunity structure, we see a cycle of the movement acting on and reinforcing the existing political opportunity structure, which was favorable in this instance. The effective mobilization of resources such as a new political freedom and popular democratic ideas allowed activists in the movement to enter the government and thus create more responsive and sensitive power structures for the following period (see table 1, row 1).

Yanitsky, who studied environmental movements on the national level, refers to this occurrence of activists entering the government, which happened throughout Russia at this time, as "infiltration" (1993). According to our data, the result of infiltration is access to such resources as space, government infrastructure, and political power. The activists in the governemnt also took the opportunity to create the Democratic Party of Greens, another important resource for the movement which provided a means to receiving legitimate recognition in the political sphere. The grievances of the movement thus became institutionalized into the government structures on the local level. These new resources greatly reduced the cost of carrying out the movement's first referendum in 1991. Because the city council agreed to conducting the referendum, the movement did not have to collect signatures, which is otherwise necessary. Mobilization of political resources was effective and, although the oblast-level power did not
agree, the referendum resulted in an agreement among the city power structures to prevent the import of spent nuclear fuel into Chelyabinsk oblast.

Many of the political and human resources that helped start the movement for Nuclear Safety disappeared after 1993. The economic crisis of 1992 turned the attention of the public towards economic problems, and political battles removed People’s Front activists from the local government. The political opportunity structure became unfavorable for the movement, and so activists sought after other types of resources. For the next period 1993-1996, the most consequential resources came in the form of networks and alliances with other NGOs, and funds - mostly international grants from Western foundations. As a strategy for mobilization of these resources, the Movement for Nuclear Safety used a process of “frame alignment” as described by Snow et al. (1986). Here the movement’s goals were to both solicit more diverse grant resources as well as to recruit additional constituencies. The large Movement for Nuclear Safety helped form several smaller organizations (see the context section) which encompassed interests such as health, women’s rights, and human rights. This type of frame alignment, where an organization expands its message or its interests to include a broader array of issues, is called frame extension (Snow et al. 1986, p. 243). The Movement for Nuclear Safety, which coalesced out of an amorphous movement for democracy, once again became a broad-based movement that could share interests and collaborate with a variety of other NGOs, as well as receive international funding in support of various social issues.

Legislation also became an important resource for the movement during this period (see table 1, row 4). Since Perestroika, the Russian government had signed in an array of laws concerning nuclear energy and the rights of the population. These became opportunities to challenge the government and voice concerns through the legislative system. Kitschelt (1986) wrote that the chances of successful resource mobilization go up when a movement works within the widespread norms of their surrounding society. Here we see an instance of such a “normal” tactic. Working through legislation to communicate with the government has proven somewhat effective. In 1996, the movement won its first lawsuit, but lost its next three in the years 2000-2001. The effectiveness of this particular tactic is heavily dependent on the sensitivity of the government and the courts within a specific period of time.

The period 1997-1998, the political opportunity structure became more favorable on the federal level, in that the head of the Movement for Nuclear Safety became an assistant to a deputy from the political fraction Block Yabloko (a democratic party). This allowed the movement to once again mobilize federal government’s resources, including funds to attend Parliament hearings. On the local level, to the contrary, the political opportunity structure sank to a new low. The government of Chelyabinsk oblast passed a law allowing the import of spent nuclear fuel into the region, and dismissed the grievances of the movement with the new catch phrase “radiophobia”, which has entered the vernacular of Chelyabinsk oblast politics.

This lack of government sensitivity was matched by a lack of cultural conduciveness. The collapse of banks in 1998 dramatically shifted attention to economic needs, and so mobilization of the public for environmental goals was extremely difficult. Attempting to do so would take time and effort without promise of reward, therefore, raising the cost of mobilization. Thus, during this period, the movement focused on building NGO networks and partnerships with that section of the population that remained involved in the movement. As with the last period, broader networks bring in new human resources, the ability to share resources, and a larger base for receiving funding aimed at different points of civil society. The Movement for Nuclear Safety was able to create a number of networking projects and publish many books in this period, testifying to their ability to mobilize the appropriate resources. This supports the theory of “ecological concentration” which says that the more organizations exist in a certain region, the easier it is for them to mobilize resources (McCarthy 1987). In this case, the NGOs in the South Ural region and adjacent Siberia could exchange experts, build capacity together, and hold joint workshops and conferences. In addition, funds are available specifically for network building.

With the coming of Putin’s administration and his changes to the government’s environmental policy, the political opportunity structure has been very unfavorable for the movement. The continuing effects of the bank collapse focused much attention on economic growth at this time. The spent nuclear fuel issue was an opportunity for the movement to work and forge relationships with large NGOs. This brought with it access to new and substantial resources. Although the political opportunity structure was
unfavorable during this period, the movement successfully mobilized resources from all over Russia and abroad.

The next period (2001-2002) showed that this mobilization came to naught – in June 2001, President Putin supported the Duma’s decision to accept the new legislation on importing spent nuclear fuel. After the failure of this big environmental mobilization (direct actions and the attempted referendums), the Movement for Nuclear Safety started building an expert community and legitimizing the grievances and demands of the movement is the most effective way to achieve safe nuclear policy in Russia. In this most recent period of its development it has focused on building its expert capacity. By networking with various specialists and experts in different fields, the movement hopes to establish a professional relationship with the government. In the first years of the Putin administration especially, NGOs were much ignored. The head of the movement believes that a formal coalition of experts has more status in Russia than any number of NGOs.

Through the course of its development, the Movement for Nuclear Safety has assumed various identities - it began as part of a larger movement, then institutionalized and became its own organization, and then linked and networked until it once again represents a broad movement for democracy. For this reason, we want to test Hjelmar’s resource mobilization approach to analyzing the entire movement of the Southern Urals.

Using Hjelmar’s approach in analyzing the development of the Movement for Nuclear Safety yields some interesting findings and demonstrates the unique situation of environmental movements in Russia. In the “concerned society” stage, (1984-1989) the mass demonstrations clearly point to a movement identity. Because of this, the movement engaged in a problematization strategy. Still, there was no organized NGO at this stage, so the collective action repertoire used can be seen as an unconscious form of resource mobilization. For this same reason, the next period (1990-1992) also does not easily fit into Hjelmar’s classifications. With activists in government, the situation seems like one of political effectiveness. This is true, however, the now partially institutionalized group of activists maintains a movement identity. They continue to problematize through a city referendum, educational programs for the public, and publishing the results of expert assessments. These grass root mobilizations testify to an apparent movement identity, even though the leaders of the movement are now working in the government. This is a situation unique to Russian social movements.

During the next period (1993-1996), the movement already took the form of a network of NGOs with the Movement for Nuclear Safety at its head. This period saw specialization of the organizations – some assuming a movement identity while others chose to act as a pressure-group. The Movement for Nuclear Safety itself took the pressure-group identity in this period and tried to engage in different forms of dialogue with an insensitive government, including lawsuits, public hearings, and parliament meetings.

In the period 1997-1998, the government continued to be insensitive while cultural conduciveness also continued to be low. Thus, there was a tendency at this time to use the media for direct actions such as “If You Can Live, You Can Swim” in 1997. This period was mainly one of problematization with education, publishing, and conferences. This supports a tendency that our research has shown - that education always becomes important for a movement when both government sensitivity and cultural conduciveness are low.

During the next period, the movement experienced further institutionalization. Different NGOs had different combinations of political effectiveness and problematization, and there were overlaps and collaborations between organizations as well. Some attended meetings with the Ministry of Nuclear Energy while others created radio shows and worked with local educational curriculums. With the common threat of importing spent nuclear fuel arising (1999-2000), the resources for problematization reappeared. By proposing this plan and drawing the attention of environmentalists to Chelyabinsk oblast, Minatom was creating, in some ways, favorable opportunities for the Movement for Nuclear Safety.

Throughout the country, problematization was dominant during this period, however, there was also much effort put towards working with the government.

As explained earlier, the Movement for Nuclear Safety has in recent years focused on developing an expert community and legitimizing its position. This has naturally led the movement to tactics of political effectiveness. They now focus on negotiations, dialogues, and expert assessment and research.
which gives them a pressure-group identity. Still, because multiple NGOs are involved in the movement, there are some organizations that work exclusively on the grass roots level.

Hjelmar mainly applied his approach to large environmental organizations. In our analysis, we made an effort to apply his theory to the changing dynamic of the movement which has grown into a network of anti-nuclear and environmental networks. In such structures, the strategic planning process allows one to choose priorities for a whole range of environmental organizations. Here, if the pressure-group identity is needed, then all organizations participate. If problematization is called for, then there is a continuing potential among those organizations that work in grass roots. In our opinion, it is possible to apply Hjelmar’s approach not only to one large environmental organization but to a network of organizations. The same dependence on cultural conducive-ness and political opportunity structure can be demonstrated when we analyze a network. We suggest further research in applying this approach to a network of organizations.

When applying the paradigm of new social movements, we find that the Movement for Nuclear Safety fits many key points of the description. The movement is value-oriented, as is the case with new social movements. It is not, however, composed of middle-class activists in a post-industrial society living comfortably and using their free time and money to increase their quality of life. Russia is not a post-industrial country, nor is it postmodern, and a middle-class is rather non-existent. The Movement for Nuclear Safety is based on grievances and established itself when a group of people realized that the military-industrial Soviet regime had knowingly put radioactive waste in their water. Activists are victims or friends of victims, and they are campaigning in order to protect their health. They face harsh problems including the legacy of past disasters at various nuclear facilities and the threat of further imports.

According to the literature of this paradigm, new social movements are uninstitutionalized loose networks of organizations. The Movement for Nuclear Safety, however, has become a professional and institutionalized NGO. They devote resources and strategy to promote their institutionalization and to establish formal networks with other organizations and expert institutions. According to the paradigm, new social movements are squeamish when it comes to the policy process, however, the movement in Chelyabinsk intensely involves itself in negotiations, hearings, and discussions with all levels of government. In accordance with the paradigm this movement has values differing from those of mainstream society, and they do wish to spread them among the government and population. But this is not mutually exclusive with their strategic and goal-oriented practices.

The Movement for Nuclear Safety’s values have amplified over time as they joined with people representing various social issues. If we look at the list of values in row 1 of Table 2, there is a new social movement in the west to support each one of them. This movement in Chelyabinsk is cumulative and has grown and linked to cover all of these issues. If we cover up the rest of Table 2 and only look at the group’s values (row 1) we can see that they do not differ with the description of a new social movement. If we look at the group’s mission (row 2) however, we see that its activists strive to participate in the policy process and thus contradict the new social movements paradigm.

Most notably, the movement’s strive to create an expert community is at odds with the paradigm. Row 3 of Table 2 shows how the movement’s capacity has increased and its community of experts in different fields has grown. The creation of expert community became a stated goal only in recent years, however, we can see that the tendency existed in the movement since 1990 when it began its initial institutionalization phase. This sort of structure is not part of the new social movement painted by the paradigm.

Conclusion

We tested three paradigms and found that collective behavior is an appropriate paradigm for our data, but only in the early stages of the movement. The resource mobilization paradigm can also be applied and does well to illustrate the movement, however, in the late stage our case becomes a network of institutionalized organizations rather than just a movement. We applied Hjelmar to the whole network that the Movement grew into rather than an individual organization, and we found that no problems arise in doing so.
This course of development that the Movement of Nuclear Safety followed is a common one for social movements in Russia. Yanitsky (1993) found similar results when using the resource mobilization paradigm to study environmental movements on the national level in Russia. The early stages of the movement, from its inception until 1993, also match with the processes of movement development on the contaminated territory of Kirish in Leningrad oblast. (Tsepirova 2002, pp. 70-100). The tendencies that we saw in the most recent stages of the movement, in the building of a network of networks, is also described by many similar contemporary articles. Our findings support many recent works on environmental movements throughout the world.

Della Porta and Rucht, using literature and original data, found that movements of the kind we found in Chelyabinsk occur mostly among national and transnational environmental campaigns of the Northern Hemisphere (Della Porta and Rucht 2002, p. 9). Instead of pressing the government, these movements try manage conflict and find consensus. They mostly use mediation techniques rather than tactics of confrontation. Thus, our findings of contemporary environmental movements in Russia match with what has been written about national and transnational environmental campaigns throughout the developed world. Although we looked at the entire development process of the movement, it is the last few periods that reflect global tendencies in environmentalism.

Diani and Donati found that a tendency toward professionalization is almost universal in contemporary analysis of environmental movements (1999, p. 29; Brand 1999). In Europe, the relationship between environmental and political actors has improved in recent years. Environmental NGOs have begun to participate in negotiations with power structures and officials on all levels. In Germany, for example, there is a strong willingness among the power structures to engage in dialogue with environmental interests (Brand 1999, p. 51). In order do engage in such a dialogue, NGOs are professionalizing. We see the same processes occurring in Russian movements.

The Movement for Nuclear Safety understands the need to be professional and is consciously building an expert community to do so. This is a seemingly more conscious process than in other cases of professionalization in the literature. The consciousness of the movement towards its goal of becoming an expert community is unique.

References


Zald, M.N. and McCarthy, J 1987. Social Movements in an Organizational Society: Collected Esseys, New Brunswick


Acknowledgements

This paper was supported by the John D. and Catharine T. MacArthur Foundation together with the Center for Independent Social Research in St. Petersburg, and the Movement for Nuclear Safety in Chelyabinsk. Authors are grateful for the support of these institutions.

Table 1 – Resource Mobilization and the Political Opportunity Structure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. political context</td>
<td>economic and political crisis of USSR, Gorbachev’s Perestroika and Glasnost (freedom of speech), Chernobyl catastrophe</td>
<td>Yeltsin elected President of Russia, collapse of USSR, political freedom and romanticism of federalism, privatization</td>
<td>economic crisis, shooting at Supreme Soviet, socio-political instability, fight for property and controlling finances, formation of bank system, strengthening of apparachicks, formation of independent businesses, banks collapse, restructuring of finances</td>
<td>strengthenin g of state, FSB, and vertical power structure, some economic growth</td>
<td>strengthenin g of state, FSB, and vertical power structure, some economic growth</td>
<td>strengthenin g of state, FSB, and vertical power structure, some economic growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. political opportunity structure</td>
<td>no dialogue, gov. allows openness and freedom of speech, activists not assassinated</td>
<td>gov. sensitive to the movement</td>
<td>local gov. responds to dialogue</td>
<td>some dialogue with federal gov., local gov. not sensitive</td>
<td>some dialogue with federal deputy, overall federal gov. not sensitive</td>
<td>dialogue and interaction with federal gov.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. cultural conducivness</td>
<td>high, vast public involvement</td>
<td>high, vast public involvement</td>
<td>low, little public involvement, economic crisis</td>
<td>Low-moderate</td>
<td>moderate, public discourse on importing nuclear waste</td>
<td>Low-moderate,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. repertoire of collective action</td>
<td>rallies, demonstration, public discussion</td>
<td>participation in elections, Democratic Party of Greens, referendum, research</td>
<td>lawsuits, working on legislation, public hearings, work in Parliament and with deputies</td>
<td>Advising local population, direct action, radio talk show, newspapers, educational museum, augmenting curriculums in local schools, conferences, networking</td>
<td>referendums, direct actions, lawsuits fail, advising local population, radio talk show, newspaper articles, educational museum, augmenting curriculums in local schools, conferences, networking</td>
<td>expert dialogue and interaction with federal power structures, efforts to build partnerships, lawsuits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. identity</td>
<td>movement identity</td>
<td>institutionalized movement identity</td>
<td>pressure-group identity</td>
<td>movement identity</td>
<td>movement identity</td>
<td>pressure-group identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. practice</td>
<td>problematization</td>
<td>political effectiveness</td>
<td>political effectiveness</td>
<td>problematization</td>
<td>problematization</td>
<td>political effectiveness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 – Professionalization of the Movement

|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. values</th>
<th>Political freedom</th>
<th>Ecological rights and political freedom</th>
<th>Right for health and security, ecological rights, and political freedom</th>
<th>Democratic culture, partnerships for protecting rights of health and security, ecological rights, and political freedom</th>
<th>Human rights, Democratic culture, partnerships for protecting rights of health and security, ecological rights, and political freedom</th>
<th>Participatio n in process of decision-making on questions regarding human rights, democratic and ecological values, security, and political freedom</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. mission</td>
<td>To form the social movement to protect those suffering from contamination</td>
<td>To form public and government understanding of contamination situation</td>
<td>To protect interests of people living on contaminate d territories, to facilitate civic initiatives</td>
<td>To protect ecological rights and get compensatio n for victims, justify the need for social support of victims</td>
<td>To protect civil rights, to initiate lawsuits, to prevent damaging activities by nuclear industry</td>
<td>To protect civil rights and the right to participate in decision-making, and to prevent environmentally damaging activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Expert activity</td>
<td>Dialogue with victims, determining the problem, who suffered, when and why pollution started and how to stop it</td>
<td>Assessment of interaction between social economic and defense industry of the state, expertise how state decided problem itself, why unsuccessful</td>
<td>Assessment of the division of responsibilities and abilities related to problem of pollution, determining potential partners in power structures, analysis of activity of local administratio n, Ministry of Nuclear Energy, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Emergency Situations, Ministry of Nature, ministry of Social Protection and others, assessment and analysis of effectivenes s and methods of interaction of NGOs and power in protecting victims</td>
<td>Assessment of effectivenes s of the dialogue with local power structures like noneffective and create strategy for interaction with local power. Strategy making for dialogue with State government, Structural analysis of NGOs community, Network experience</td>
<td>Legislatio n to protect victims protect rights to health and for healthy environme nt, expertise in legislative process, control of completen ess of laws and the volume of social protection and number of victims, that victim receives, highlighti ng unprotecte d groups, non-determine d diseases which were not included in the contamina ted territories, highlighti ng the damaging for environme nt technologi es, analysis of effectivenes s of dialogue wi th...</td>
<td>Expert assessment of the interaction with local and federal power, system analysis of situation of structure and effectivenes s of movement, developmen t of different approaches to different federal and local bodies, widening the use of judicial mechanisms, determining the opportunitie s to transition in a local expert community, determining the demand and opportunity for intellectual and status growth</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Diagram 1 - Evolution of Development of Social Movements on contaminated Territories

Concerned society (1984-1989.)

Discourse on issues

Institutionalization - Movement works through the government (1990-1992)

Institutionalization and NGO formation (1993-1996)

Specialization on issues

Development of networks (1997-1998.)

Developing political strategy

Inter-network collaboration (1999-2000.)

Applying political strategy

Building expert community (2001-2002.)

Applying and analyzing strategy