

## “Pomor’e ne Pomoika”: Framing the Protest Campaign against the Landfill Project at Shies Station in Russia’s Arkhangelsk Region

*Elena Gorbacheva*

THIS chapter explores the protest movement *Pomor’e ne pomoika*, which took on the construction of the Shies landfill in Arkhangelsk region.<sup>1</sup> The movement began in 2018 and lasted about two years, becoming one of the most visible Russian environmental protests of the last decade (“Kak protestuiut rossiiane” 2020). This reaction to the use of unoccupied land—specifically, the creation of a giant “ecotechnopark,” which was more a dump for waste from Moscow than a modern and sustainable waste utilization project—started at the local level, but quickly attracted regional and even national attention. Rallies and pickets in support of the Shies protesters were organized from Kaliningrad to Novosibirsk, and even abroad, in Oslo and Cologne (Iadroshnikov 2018).

Despite the authoritarian system of government in Russia, protests of various scope are in fact common. Between 2007 and 2016, around 9.5 percent of all protests had an environmental agenda (Lankina and Tertychnaya 2020). Usually, these protests remained localized (Wu and Martus 2021). What is peculiar about the Shies protest is that a seemingly local issue attracted massive, countrywide support. In this chapter, I analyze how protest coordinators and activists framed their opposition in order to better understand what allowed the Shies campaign to resonate on the national level, attract thousands of supporters,

---

1 “Pomor’e is not a dump.” (All translations are my own, unless stated otherwise.) Pomor’e is a territory along the White Sea in Russia’s European North.

and achieve its main goal: termination of the project.<sup>2</sup> While many factors are responsible for the campaign's success, I focus on the frame alignment—in my view, the crucial factor. By frame alignment, I mean a process defined by Snow, Rochford, Worden, and Benford as “the linkage of individual and SMO [social movement organization] interpretive orientations, such that some set of individual interests, values and beliefs and SMO activities, goals, and ideology are congruent and complementary” (Snow, Rochford, Worden & Benford 1986, 464).

My research question is the following: Which frames helped the coordinators of *Pomor'e ne pomoika* succeed in elevating the protest to the national level? To answer this question, I use the method of frame analysis. My analysis is based on the data that I gathered during fieldwork in Arkhangelsk in October 2019, a year after the first protests in Arkhangelsk. I conducted interviews with *Pomor'e ne pomoika* protest activists and coordinators. I recruited my informants via three methods: 1) writing to protest coordinators and arranging interviews; 2) talking with participants of *bessrochka*, a permanent protest in the center of Arkhangelsk; and 3) the snowball technique. Altogether I conducted twenty-five interviews. I decided to conduct my fieldwork in Arkhangelsk, as some of the largest rallies of the campaign were held there. In addition, the main coordinators of the *Pomor'e ne pomoika* movement—the largest protest group within the Shies campaign—lived in Arkhangelsk. I supplement the interviews with materials from newspapers and social media, written by journalists as well as activists who took part in the protests. I also analyze the posters and resolutions published after most of the protest rallies in the Arkhangelsk region.

I have chosen to use frame analysis because it focuses on grievances, their articulation and interpretation, and on the way in which ideas, images, and culture in general are used to construct an understanding of an issue and formulate a call to action (Lindekilde 2014). Shies was not the first protest in the region, or the first protest against an anti-waste facility in Russia. However, as I argue, the frames with which the protesters articulated their grievances made this protest stand out.

The chapter is structured as follows. First, I provide background on the landfill and the conflict that followed after construction plans were revealed. I then contextualize the Shies protests vis-à-vis similar

2 The project's termination was announced in June 2020 and went into effect in October 2020 (“Osnovnoi ob”em rabot” 2020).

waste-related protests in the Russian Federation. Next, I analyze the frames used by the *Pomor'e ne pomoika* movement, providing my explanation for how the scale shift in mobilization was achieved. In conclusion, I explain why the Shies campaign was so successful, arguing that efficient use of framing by protest coordinators helped them avoid being labelled as a selfish Not in My Back Yard (NIMBY) marginal group.

### *Background*

At the end of July 2018, residents of Urdoma, a settlement close to Shies in the Lenskii district of Arkhangelsk region, noticed that a forest by the Shies railway station had been cut down. They heard a rumor that some sort of a dump was being constructed at Shies. They tried to find out what was going on and soon discovered that a new gigantic landfill was scheduled to be built, and that the first trains with waste from Moscow were scheduled to arrive the next month, in August 2018. Although equipment and machines had already been dispatched to the site that summer, the project was only officially presented to the residents in October. During the autumn, the description of the project changed several times; the final plan was to create EcoTechnoPark Shies—a place for storing briquettes of shredded and then sorted Moscow waste, transported by rail. Local municipal authorities were against the project from the start, but in November new amendments initiated by the regional governor, Igor' Orlov, were passed, shifting the right to create and change master plans concerning land use from municipalities to the regional government (Mikusheva 2018).

In the proposed plan, the construction company Technopark claimed that similar waste management technology had been used for more than thirty years in Europe (“Ekotekhnopark Shies” 2019). The company also claimed that the plot of land in Shies was perfect for such construction, due to its low population density, good transport connection, suitable weather conditions, lack of bodies of water, and distance from residential areas. According to EcoTechnoPark documents, no suitable plots were found in Moscow region, and thus an alternative place to dispose of Moscow's waste had to be found. The project was undertaken together with the Government of Moscow, which offered to send six billion rubles (the equivalent of 6 percent of the Arkhangelsk regional budget in 2018) to Lenskii district, to be earmarked for cleaning up illegal dumps, building new and reconstructing old roads, re-

pairing schools, and buying new buses. Alongside this, EcoTechnoPark would have created five hundred jobs with an average monthly salary of 44,000 rubles (around 570 euros in October 2018).

The governor at that time, Igor' Orlov, stated that those who protest against такого важного, перспективного для региона проекта are either ill-informed and unintelligent or political speculators (Kuznetsova 2018).<sup>3</sup> Here Orlov cast the protesters as a typical NIMBY opposition: they had selfish interests and lacked knowledge of the subject (Kraft & Clary 1993, 96). Orlov also stressed that while the project was not yet officially approved, he viewed its investment potential as desirable for the region and pointed out that the project included not only waste storage, but also recycling, both of which were on the federal agenda (Loichenko 2018).

The first protests against the Shies project were organized in August 2018 by the residents of the Urdomskoe municipality, who had formed an organization called Chistaia Urdoma.<sup>4</sup> In December 2018, the activists began to keep watch at the construction site, and in spring 2019 they set up a permanent encampment. In October 2018, the first protests against the Shies landfill were held in Arkhangelsk, the regional capital, and Severodvinsk—cities hundreds of kilometers from the construction site. The protests in Arkhangelsk were organized by the newly created *Pomor'e ne pomoika* movement. *Pomor'e ne pomoika* also initiated a series of “all-Russia” protest days. These were daily demonstrations across the region and Russia as a whole, and sometimes even abroad, and the first was organized on December 2, 2018. As the coordinators stated, they wanted to maximize the publicity of the Shies protests; after the experience of the anti-pension reform protests initiated by Aleksei Naval'nyi's network on September 9, 2018, they felt that a single day of protest would generate better media coverage than earlier uncoordinated local protests. This idea worked well—thirty thousand people took to the streets of Arkhangelsk region during the first all-Russia protest day. There were five such days in total and numerous other events, all of which attracted thousands of people across the region.

According to a survey organized in August 2019 in Arkhangelsk region, 98.3 percent of the population did not support the construction at Shies (“Sotsial'naia situatsiia” 2019). Moreover, 51.3 percent of respond-

3 “such an important and promising project for the region”

4 Clean Urdoma. Urdoma is an urban locality in the Arkhangelsk Region.

ents said that they had taken part in the protests. Before the protests, Arkhangelsk region was considered to be relatively quiet politically (Chuvashova 2011; “Rost protestnoi aktivnosti” 2018; Kynev, Petrov, and Titkov 2018). This makes the Shies case even more remarkable.

After months of protests, the construction at Shies officially ceased in June 2019, until further examination of the site so as to ensure the safety of the project. When asked about Shies in May 2019, President Vladimir Putin said that he did not understand why a landfill should be built close to residential areas. The population’s opinion, Putin continued, should be taken into account. Scientists and scholars, including prominent members of the Russian Academy of Sciences, criticized the project itself, the lack of transparency, and the place chosen for its construction (Kantor 2019). In the latest version of the city of Moscow’s territorial scheme for waste management, published at the end of 2019, there was no mention of the Shies landfill (Podobedova & Lindell 2019). In January 2020, a court ruled that the buildings built for the project were illegal and had to be demolished (Vasil’eva 2020). On April 2, 2020, the governors of Arkhangelsk region and Komi Republic—the two regions with the largest anti-Shies protests—announced their resignation (Pertsev 2020). Their replacements stated that they did not support the Shies project (“Novye glavy Komi” 2020). In June 2020, EcoTechnoPark Shies was excluded from the list of priority investment projects of the Arkhangelsk region by the regional government (“Proekt ‘Ekotekhnopark “Shies” iskliuchen” 2020). The regional authorities promised that the land damaged at Shies would be rehabilitated by 2031 (Karpovich 2020).

A similar landfill for Moscow waste is EcoTechnoPark Mikhali, located in northern Kaluga region. Yet unlike the Shies project, the Mikhali landfill was actually built; construction began in 2017 and was completed in February 2020. The governor of Kaluga region at the time, Anatolii Artamonov, actively supported construction. Regional authorities, including Artamonov and Aleksandr Surkov, vice-head of the district where Mikhali is located, claimed that locals actually wanted the project and needed an investor (Pavlova 2017). Simultaneously, they asserted that Muscovites who owned dachas in the area did not want new infrastructure, and the related new jobs, in the district (Ivanova 2017). Since 2018, residents of Mikhali and other Kaluga settlements joined rallies and pickets against the landfill, but never more than several hun-

dred people took part. The new governor of Kaluga region, Vladislav Shapsha, has expressed his support for the EcoTechnoPark.

In sum, the Shies protest is a unique example of a successful mobilization against a project that was already underway, and initiated by Moscow and supported by regional authorities. Yet how might the victory of the Shies protests be explained? In the interviews, the coordinators of *Pomor'e ne pomoika* cited several reasons why regional protests were successful: 1) over the centuries, residents in this sparsely populated and frigid region had grown accustomed to helping one another; 2) the highly coordinated nature of the campaign; and 3) widespread resentment over how unfairly resources are allocated among Russia's regions. These factors certainly played a role determining the outcome, but the scope of my research does not allow for detailed analysis of all of them. Instead, I use frame analysis to examine how *Pomor'e ne pomoika* succeeded in elevating the protest against the landfill to the national level.

### *Protesting in Russia*

Rootes and Nulman define an environmental movement “as a loose, non-institutionalized network of informal interactions that includes, as well as individuals and groups who have no organizational affiliation, organizations of varying degrees of formality, and is engaged in collective action motivated by shared identity or concern about environmental issues” (Rootes & Nulman 2015, 730). The history of environmental movements in the Soviet Union includes notable campaigns such as the protection of Lake Baikal and the thwarting of river diversion (Weiner 1999). In the late Soviet era, social movements with an environmental agenda were the most successful. However, despite the liberties of the 1990s, environmental protest declined in post-Soviet Russia (Henry 2010).

All protest in non-democratic states such as Russia faces significant barriers, including an undeveloped civil society, high costs to protest, state-controlled media and Internet, tightened anti-protest regulation, and so on. Protest against the Shies landfill faced an additional obstacle: it was a business project supported by officials in Moscow and the Arkhangelsk region. As Alfred Evans Jr. has explained, “an alliance between key government officials and wealthy corporations can create a formidable barrier to the goals of highly motivated social activists, even

when those activists have substantial support from the public” (Evans Jr. 2012, 239).

At the same time, because they address universal values such as the well-being of children and populations in general, environmental movements are more tolerated by nondemocratic governments (Rootes and Nulman 2015). In China, there have been several successful movements against incinerator construction and factory pollution in recent years. According to Lang and Xu, protesters succeeded when they had “prominent allies among scientists, officials, and journalists in local and national media,” the size of mass mobilization “overwhelmed the capacity of the local government to repress it,” or protesters engaged in a violent confrontation with police and fought until the government conceded (Lang & Xu 2013, 842–43).

Currently, research on environmental movements in authoritarian regimes focuses mostly on China, while the Russian context has been understudied (Wu and Martus 2021). Scholarship on waste protests in Russia is only just emerging, with a few exemplary studies of state and civil society relations as regards the “Rubbish Riots” in Moscow region (Wu and Martus 2021), as well as of the politicization of environmental discourse in the Shies case (Chmel', Klimova & Mitrokhina 2020).

Initial protests at Shies strongly resembled NIMBY activism. Anti-waste protests against landfills, incinerators, and so on, are usually examples of NIMBY-type activism—actions of locals opposing unwanted projects in their neighborhoods (Johnson and Scicchitano 2012). However, within a few months of the first messages about the planned landfill at Shies, protests spread across the region as well as the neighboring Komi Republic. The organization of all-Russia protest days allowed the campaign to extend its reach beyond Arkhangelsk region and Komi: on the second all-Russia protest day, February 3, 2019, protests were held in dozens of regions (Gordeev & Romanov 2019). Therefore, in the case of the Shies protests, we can speak of an *upward scale shift*—a moving of collective action to a higher level, for example, from local to regional and national (Tarrow 2010, 215).

Diffusion of a protest movement across new geographies or social groups is especially complicated if the grievance against which the contention occurs is of a local nature or the contenders' claim is too narrow. Social movements frame their claims, create bridges between these frames and others, and facilitate production of collective identi-

ties among the participants of social actions (McAdam, Tarrow & Tilly 2001). Below, I explain how *Pomor'e ne pomoika* succeeded in shifting the scale of the movement by efficiently framing its claims.

### *Frame Analysis*

To analyze the frames constructed by *Pomor'e ne pomoika* coordinators and participants, and to reveal the mechanisms through which frame expansion ensued, I divide the frames that I identified based on their tasks. Snow and Benford (1988) suggest that framing has three core tasks: 1) diagnostic—characterization of some social phenomenon as problematic and in need of repair; 2) prognostic—offering a solution to the said problem; and 3) motivational—calling others to join in collective action in order to solve the problem.

### *Waste as an Issue*

The first task, *diagnostic framing*, aims to identify the problem, its source, and its “victims” (Benford & Snow 2000). The problem—the construction of the landfill at Shies—has two aspects, both of which were present in resolutions, speeches, and placards during the mobilization. The first aspect is the landfill itself. The storing of municipal solid waste, especially unsorted, was deemed problematic by the protesters and they criticized this inefficient mode of waste management (Chuprova 2018). While the construction company concentrated on the fact that this would be a landfill for briquettes of municipal solid waste, protesters spoke of мусор, дерьмо, помой<sup>5</sup> being brought to their land (Gorbacheva 2019a).

One of the activists' biggest concerns was that the proposed site was located in a swamp, at the source of several rivers. Any leakage at the landfill would poison not only the surrounding area, but also the Northern Dvina River, which flows into the Arctic Ocean and thus could pollute the whole Barents region. They likened the consequent risk to a genocide against the Russian nation. Natural resources—including clean water, mushrooms, and berries—underpin the livelihoods of locals, who feel that their environment is already endangered by the Plesetsk spaceport, a nuclear test site at Novaia zemlia, and several industrial enterprises (“Arkhangel'skie pisateli” 2018). The protesters argued that no environmental assessment of the landfill had been conducted, and

5 “trash, shit, slop”



that the project and its execution violate the 42<sup>nd</sup> article of the Russian Constitution, which states: Каждый имеет право на благоприятную окружающую среду, достоверную информацию о ее состоянии и на возмещение ущерба, причиненного его здоровью или имуществу экологическим правонарушением (“Stat’ia 42 Konstitutsii” 1993).<sup>6</sup> For these and other reasons, attendees expressed no confidence in the leaders of the Lenskii district of Arkhangelsk region and demanded their resignation at the first large rally, on August 26. The authorities were also criticized for concealing and falsifying information about the construction process.

The second aspect of the Shies project that aroused anger was that it was planned for waste from Moscow. Residents of Arkhangelsk region described feeling disrespected and even humiliated by the project, and posed the question of why they were being treated worse than Muscovites. The protesters complained that мы им еще алмазы отправляем, а они нам отправляют свое дерьмо (Gorbacheva 2019b).<sup>7</sup> They also wondered why the capital, given all of the taxes it received from the regions, could not afford to store its own waste (or better, recycle and process it).

The participants of the anti-Shies campaign spoke of internal colonization in Russia; Moscow, the idea went, treated them as a colony. The poster below voiced a popular sentiment: Москва—не метрополия, Архангельская область—не колония!<sup>8</sup> On the map, one can see how small Moscow is compared to Arkhangelsk region and Russia as a whole. Yet it was the capital that dictated its will to everyone else.

---

6 “Everyone should have the right to a favorable environment, reliable information about its state, and for a restitution of damage inflicted on their health and property by ecological transgressions” (“Constitution of the Russian Federation” 1993).

7 “We are even sending them diamonds, and they send their crap to us.”

8 “Moscow is not a metropole, and Arkhangelsk region is not a colony!”



Figure 1: Rally in Arkhangelsk, May 19, 2019. Photograph by Kirill Iuras (used with permission)

### *Who Is to Blame and How to Help?*

The protesters came up with a number of strategies for fighting the construction, as observed in the *prognostic framing* category. The activists believed that a large and geographically wide mobilization against the landfill would reach federal media and thus lead the authorities to reconsider the project. This was their reason for organizing all-Russia protest days in 2018–2020. At every step, the coordinators of the protests actively engaged with journalists from all over Russia and even abroad, and took every chance to publicize their movement. For example, when a prominent activist, Andrei Borovikov, was prosecuted in September 2019, he gave many interviews to the domestic as well as the

foreign press, which he believed would help to promote the movement.<sup>9</sup>

In October 2019, a year after the first protests in Severodvinsk and Arkhangelsk, the goals of the protesters included not only the termination of the Shies project and the import of waste from other regions, but also a ban on all interregional shipment of unsorted waste. In addition, they demanded a new approach to waste management at the federal level. Here we see the expansion of the protesters' goals from the local and regional to the national level.

Resolutions passed at protests across the region usually called for the resignation of Governor Orlov as well as others in positions of local power. However, *Pomor'e ne pomoika* intentionally avoided taking on the central authorities, in order to include larger groups of the population in the protests, who might be frightened or reluctant to directly oppose the country's leaders. Additionally, the resolutions demanded investigation of regional bureaucrats and organizations responsible for initiating the construction. After almost a year of protests, the residents of Arkhangelsk region spoke out against the repression of protesters. They called for an investigation into conflicts between private security guards and Shies observers, and for those responsible for the violence to be held accountable. After the start of the waste reform,<sup>10</sup> an increasing number of posters criticized its execution.

According to activists, regional authorities had approved construction because they did not in fact represent the interests of residents—a result of the absence of fair elections at the municipal and regional (to say nothing of the federal) level. The activists tried to solve this problem by electing their own governor. Businessman and protester Oleg Mandrykin was selected as the Stop Shies candidate. Yet, in the end, he

---

9 Borovikov was charged under the so-called Dadin article, or Article 212.1 of the Criminal Code, named after the activist Il'dar Dadin, who had repeatedly violated established procedure for holding public events, becoming the first person to whom the article had been applied, in 2015. Borovikov became the third person to be charged under this article.

10 On January 1, 2019, a waste reform began in Russia. By this time, all regions with the exception of St. Petersburg, Moscow, and Russian-occupied Sevastopol, were required to formulate a regional waste management scheme and select a regional operator, who would be responsible for waste management in the region, including the creation of new waste infrastructure. The waste reform did not start on time and most regions did not have enough resources to build the necessary infrastructure. Thus, waste tariffs increased significantly, causing widespread dissatisfaction among the population.

did not appear on the ballot given the formidable barriers to registering opposition candidates.

Especially in the first year of the protests, activists appealed directly to Putin to cancel the project. Indeed, in the past, the Russian president had personally ordered the closing of landfills in response to public pleas (“Putin rasporiadilsia” 2017). However, over the course of the protests, many of the people with whom I spoke became disillusioned with Putin and the political system as a whole. Their faith in Putin decreased as they became more familiar with the attitude of the local and federal authorities. Finally, the protesters believed that cancelling one landfill project would not solve the overall problem of waste management. Thus, they demanded change of the entire system, including separate waste collection and recycling not only in the region but across the country.

### *Protest Growth*

The last core framing task, *motivational framing*, deals with the images and words that activists use to encourage others to join a protest. Here I identify three frequently used and powerful images: homeland, future generations, and the Great Patriotic War. The most frequent frame is that the North, and Shies in particular, are *наша земля*,<sup>11</sup> which needs to be defended (Ekologicheskoe dvizhenie 42 2020). Another common protest slogan refers to protecting the land and air for future generations.

It is notable how frequently Shies protesters employed Second World War symbols. For example, the protesters’ camp at the construction site was called Leningrad, and one of the activists’ checkpoints nearby—the Brest Fortress (Nevskaia 2019). Moreover, when protesters realized that the original name for their movement, Svobodnyi sever (Free North), would be abbreviated as ss (Cyrillic СС) (which also stands for the ss, or Schutzstaffel, the Nazi paramilitary organization), they adopted a new name: *Pomor’e ne pomoika*. The activists often called Shies *наш Сталинград*<sup>12</sup> and compared the environmental costs of the landfill with the bombing of Hiroshima (Ekologicheskoe dvizhenie 42 2020). They also claimed that it was their duty to protect their land just as their fathers had during the war (see fig. 2 below). The poster includes the

---

<sup>11</sup> “our land”

<sup>12</sup> “our Stalingrad”

phrase *родиной не торгую*,<sup>13</sup> repeating the famous words of General Karbyshev in the Second World War. In the case of Shies, use of the war trope meant that the protesters had higher morals than those who had signed the construction agreement.



Figure 2: Rally in Severodvinsk, September 22, 2019. Photograph by Aleksandr Bobylev (used with permission)

These images indeed invoked strong feelings and reminded people of the values that were under threat because of the Shies project. The coordinators spoke of these frames in the interviews, but they are more prevalent in interviews with activists and are visible on protest placards. In these images, we see the crystallization of the amplification mechanism—an increase in the salience of core values and/or beliefs of the movement (Snow et al. 1986; Snow, Vliegthart & Ketelaars 2019). However, I find that the main motivating mechanism the coordinators used was frame extension, including issues that could attract wider audiences (Snow et al. 1986; Snow, Vliegthart & Ketelaars 2019). In the next section, I discuss how this frame extension resulted in the protest's elevation to the national level.

13 “I don’t trade my Motherland”

### *Frame Expansion*

Research on environmental movements has established that to shift from a local portrayal of an environmental issue, activists must move away from NIMBYism and make their grievance relatable for the wider population (Leonard 2011). In a study of anti-incineration campaigns in the United States, Walsh, Warland, and Smith (1993, 1997) conclude that local campaigns managed to grow to a nationwide movement through successful bridging of anti-incineration and different frames. In addition, early frame extension that could engage a broader cross section of a population was found to be of the utmost importance for the success of an environmental movement.

Protest coordinators and activists not only showed how the Shies landfill affected the whole Barents region and criticized the national waste management system; they also focused on regional inequality. In so doing, *Pomor'e ne pomoika* coordinators appealed to all residents of Arkhangelsk region, and of more regions besides, thus making the movement more visible and, they believed, more likely that they would achieve their goal and stop construction at Shies. They resorted to the use of the environmental injustice frame. They worked on transforming the issue of a locally unwanted landfill into a structural problem—the unjust distribution of environmental grievances in the Russian Federation.

### *Environmental (In)justice*

The environmental injustice frame is often used by researchers to explain mobilization against phenomena that have negative environmental consequences (Sherman 2011; Rootes 2009; Walker 2012). In fact, the environmental justice movement first started as a reaction to the waste problem: the term “environmental justice” was coined when it was revealed that Black communities in the United States were often discriminated against during the selection of sites for hazardous or locally unwanted facilities such as landfills (Sherman 2011).

In general, residents of Arkhangelsk region found the decision to construct a landfill for Moscow waste at Shies station to be unjust (Chmel', Klimova & Mitrokhina 2020). Coordinators and activists whom I interviewed all claimed that they would have protested even if the landfill was for Arkhangelsk regional waste, but acknowledged that the fact that the site was for Moscow refuse only increased their an-

ger. During my fieldwork, people often spoke of a gorged Russian capital that did not really care about the regions, the North in particular. Thus, it can be argued that people in Pomor'e felt relatively neglected. Summing up recent developments in relative deprivation theory, van Zomeren, Postmes, and Spears (2008) point out that individual-based deprivation is not sufficient for collective action, but when one group develops the sense that they are being discriminated against, they may mobilize against this unfairness. In the case of Shies, the protesters experienced environmental injustice when policies and practices related to environmental decision-making, distribution of benefits, and negative effects were implemented on the basis of socioeconomic factors, geography, and so on (Newton 2009). Shies protesters said that while Moscow received environmental benefits, the regions were forced to carry the environmental and social burdens of the center's excessive consumption. Environmental justice is one of the few master frames of social movements (Benford & Snow 2000), and this frame is visible in the Shies protest. The protests started just after construction of the landfill began—right after the first trees were cut to make way for the project. Thus, the Shies case is an example of prospective environmental injustice, a concept proposed by Irina Velicu (2020).

The frame of opposition to landfilling was successfully conflated with the environmental injustice frame—the frame that appealed to a wider cross section of the region's population. In the case of Shies, all three concepts of justice were present (Walker 2012). First, *distributive justice* is evident in mentions of tax revenues sent by the region to the federal center, as well as of what it gets in return. Second, *justice as recognition* is also relevant here, as Arkhangelsk residents express a feeling of disrespect and humiliation given that a landfill for Moscow waste was planned for their community. Third, *procedural justice* arises when protesters claim that residents of the region were not consulted before construction started, and that the hearings that were conducted were falsified.

To summarize previous research, George Towers (2000) found three explanations of why local activists opposing land-use projects employed the concept of environmental justice: 1) the historical record, exemplified by U.S. social rights movements; 2) the personal transformative experience of activists, who realize by way of their campaigns that environmental grievances stem from a structural lack of democracy; and

3) networking with other groups fighting for similar causes. Towers then adds an original explanation: in some cases, use of the environmental justice frame is dictated by activists' strategic response to existing siting procedures. Towers suggests that movement coordinators should tailor their framings to the geographical scale at which a given contest occurs, and that limiting a movement to a single scale negatively affects the chances of success. This way, for example, proponents of a contested construction might cast their opponents as selfish and concerned only about their immediate surroundings, and thus label them NIMBY. In contrast, the use of environmental justice can counter allegations of NIMBYISM and widen support for a given movement by expanding its geographic focus.

The second explanation can also be applied to the *Pomor'e ne pomoi-ka* movement. As they revealed to me, the coordinators hoped that by participating in the movement, residents would gradually evolve from passive to active citizens, who fought for their civil and political rights. However, they felt that an openly oppositional agenda that blamed the Russian political regime for Shies would only alienate most of their potential supporters, who might not be ready for an anti-regime agenda. Therefore, the coordinators opted for a more organic approach, and strategically chose the frame of environmental injustice to attract residents of other regions, showing their solidarity with the protesters and thus elevating the issue to the national level.

### *Conclusion*

The Shies campaign could have remained a NIMBY protest. However, NIMBY activism usually remains localized; opponents may easily defend themselves against the claims of such protesters, by claiming that the activists ignore the greater good of the region and instead pursue selfish interests. In the case of Shies, the coordinators and activists succeeded in countering the NIMBY frame with an environmental injustice frame. They argued that the project endangered not only nearby residents, but potentially the whole Barents region and even beyond. They also argued that Shies was the result of an unequal relationship between center and periphery, and used anti-Moscow sentiment in the regions to their advantage. What is more, their demands were not limited to closing the Shies project alone; they targeted Russia's entire system of waste management and welcomed additional environmental solutions



to the waste-management problem. The slogans and images used by the protesters seemed to resonate with the population's values and beliefs, which resulted in unprecedented turnout at rallies and demonstrations across the region. Shies itself became a resonant frame: it is now not only a railway station in the Russian North, but a social phenomenon—and it is spreading widely. For example, a Shies-2 tent camp was organized in Kazan' in late 2019, where activists began a protest against construction of an incinerator (Bakin 2019).

Naturally, the victory at Shies was the result of many factors. The coordinators have argued that a number of phenomena, including center-region relations and regional social capital, were responsible for their success. We might also point to different levels of democracy among Russia's regions and other regional specifics (Remington 2010) when explaining why, for example, the Mikhali protest in Kaluga region was small-scale and unsuccessful while the Shies movement succeeded. It should be noted that all of the coordinators of *Pomor'e ne pomoika* worked for—or used to work for—Naval'nyi's headquarters in Arkhangelsk. They stated that their experience with Naval'nyi was invaluable, having taught them a great deal about protest organization, public relations (including with the police and media), and legal issues. Some explained that they had wanted to start the *Pomor'e ne pomoika* movement because they were worried about the landfill and knew that they had enough resources and knowledge to organize a large movement. Perhaps equally important was that the coordinators had a firm belief from the very beginning that they would win; in the interviews, they expressed the importance of this conviction for the protest's success. They suggested that what distinguished their campaign from its counterpart in Kaluga region was their belief in eventual victory, a belief that Kaluga activists lacked.

In this chapter, I have tried to show what distinguished the Shies protests from similar campaigns. Well-chosen frames played an important role in participants' mobilization and eventual success; the environmental (in)justice frame is especially crucial in this regard. Shies was not the first landfill project against which people in Arkhangelsk region protested. In 2017, citizens of Severodvinsk and nearby areas mobilized against the Rikasikha landfill, which was to be created for the inter-municipal waste of Arkhangelsk, Severodvinsk, Novodvinsk, and two municipal districts. The first rally against construction of the

landfill was organized in July 2018 (Varenik 2018) by the same organizer who later would become a founder of *Pomor'e ne pomoika*. After a series of protests, petitions, and public hearings—on the wave of the anti-Shies campaign—the authorities decided to build the landfill elsewhere (“Aleksi Alsuf'ev: ‘mezhmunitsipal'nogo’” 2019). However, the campaign against Rikasikha was confined to the north of Arkhangelsk region and in general was smaller than the protests against Shies.

As regards the success of *Pomor'e ne pomoika*, it could be that the people of Arkhangelsk are an anomaly, and will not tolerate injustice. When I asked the activists why they thought the Shies protests were so successful, they told me that Northerners have always been free. They had not lived under the Mongol yoke, had never experienced serfdom, and during the Soviet era, political prisoners exiled to labor camps and special settlements in the North often remained in Pomor'e after release. Still, it is clear that the anti-Shies movement understood the importance of utilizing social capital, anti-center resentment, and the sense of relative deprivation in the northern regions. In so doing, the movement skillfully framed the campaign in a way that created a large coalition, and *Pomor'e ne pomoika* succeeded as a result.

### References

- “Aleksi Alsuf'ev: ‘mezhmunitsipal'nogo ob'ekta obrashcheniia s TKO v Rikasikhe ne budet—eto reshennyi vopros’” 2019, *Press-tsentr Pravitel'stva Arkhangel'skoi oblasti*, 28 March, <http://dvinanews.ru/kmsjmd6f> (last accessed 25 July 2020).
- “Arkhangel'skie pisateli potrebovali ot Orlova prekratit' musornuiu avantiuru” 2018, *Tv29.ru*, 28 October, <https://tv29.ru/new/index.php/bk-obshchestvo-2/17226-arkhangel'skie-pisateli-potrebovali-ot-orlova-prekratit-musornuyu-avantyuru> (last accessed 20 September 2021).
- Bakin, Ignat 2019, “Pod Kazan'iu ekoaktivisty po primeru Shiesa razbili palatochnyi lager',” *Znak.com*, 3 December, [https://www.znak.com/2019-12-03/pod\\_kazanyu\\_ekoaktivisty\\_po\\_primeru\\_shiesa\\_razbili\\_palatochnyy\\_lager](https://www.znak.com/2019-12-03/pod_kazanyu_ekoaktivisty_po_primeru_shiesa_razbili_palatochnyy_lager) (last accessed 9 February 2020).
- Benford, Robert D. & David Snow 2000, “Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment,” *Annual Review of Sociology* (26), 611–39.
- Chmel', Kirill, Aigul' Klimova & Evgeniia Mitrokhina 2020, “Politizat-

- siia ekologicheskogo diskursa v Arkhangel'skoi oblasti na primere stroitel'stva musornogo poligona okolo stantsii Shies," *Journal of Social Policy Studies* 18 (1), 83–98.
- Chuprova, Iuliia 2018, "V Urdome proshel miting protiv stroitel'stva musornogo poligona na granitse s Komi," *KomiOnlain*, 27 August, <https://komionline.ru/news/v-urodme-proshel-miting-protiv-stroitelstva-musornogo-poligona-na-granitse-s-komi> (last accessed 29 September 2021).
- Chuvashova, Natal'ia 2011, "Protestnoe povedenie v regione (na materialakh Arkhangel'skoi oblasti)," *Arktika i Sever* 4, 112–21.
- "Constitution of the Russian Federation" 1993, <http://www.constitution.ru/en/10003000-03.htm> (last accessed 13 October 2022).
- Ekologicheskoe dvizhenie 42 2020, "Shies – istoriia odnogo obmana," *Sotsial'no-ekologicheskii soiuz*, 2 November, [https://rusecounion.ru/r/shies\\_storyoflie](https://rusecounion.ru/r/shies_storyoflie) (last accessed 13 October 2022).
- "Ekotekhnopark Shies" 2019, *Shies.ru*, <https://shies.ru> (last accessed 28 September 2020).
- Evans Jr., Alfred B. 2012, "Protests and Civil Society in Russia: The Struggle for the Khimki Forest," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 45 (2–3), 233–42.
- Gorbacheva, Elena 2019a, "Interview with Protester A," unpublished interview.
- Gorbacheva, Elena 2019b, "Interview with Protester B," unpublished interview.
- Gordeev, Vladislav & Valerii Romanov 2019, "V gorodakh Rossii proshli protesty protiv musornykh svalok," *RBC*, 3 February, <https://www.rbc.ru/society/03/02/2019/5c56fe4c9a7947c0698465c2> (last accessed 14 August 2021).
- Henry, Laura 2010, *Red to Green: Environmental Activism in Post-Soviet Russia*, Ithaca, N.Y.
- Iadroshnikov, Igor' 2018, "'Pomor'e ne pomoika': protest protiv moskovskogo musora rasprostraniaetsia na drugie regiony," *Bellona*, 5 December, <https://bellona.ru/2018/12/05/ediniy-den-protesta/> (last accessed 6 July 2020).
- Ivanova, Oksana 2017, "Zhiteli Iznoskovskogo raiona protestuiut protiv stroitel'stva ekotekhnoparka," *kp40.ru*, 20 October, <https://www.kp40.ru/news/society/45949/> (last accessed 12 September 2021).
- Johnson, Renée J. & Michael J. Scicchitano 2012, "Don't Call Me NIMBY:

- Public Attitudes toward Solid Waste Facilities,” *Environment and Behavior* 44 (3), 410–26.
- “Kak protestuiut rossiiane” 2020, *Tsentr sotsial’no-trudovykh prav*, 5 March, <http://trudprava.ru/expert/article/protestart/2184> (last accessed 28 September 2021).
- Kantor, Vadim 2019, “Akademiki razgromili poligon na Shiese,” *activatica.org*, 21 November, <http://activatica.org/blogs/view/id/8584/title/uchjonye-obsuzhdayut-problemy-kotorye-sozdast-poligon-na-shiese> (last accessed 23 July 2020).
- Karpovich, Polina 2020, “Rekul’tivatsiiu zemel’ na Shiese predpolagaetsia zavershit’ k 2031 godu,” *29.ru*, 30 June, <https://29.ru/text/economics/69343342/> (last accessed 25 July 2020).
- Kraft, Michael E. & Bruce B. Clary 1993, “Public Testimony in Nuclear Waste Repository Hearings: A Content Analysis,” *Public Reactions to Nuclear Waste: Citizens’ Views of Repository Siting*, eds. Riley E. Dunlap, Michael E. Kraft & Eugene A. Rosa, Durham, N.C., 89–114.
- Kuznetsova, Evgeniia 2018, “Gubernator Arkhangel’skoi oblasti dopustil vvoz musora ne tol’ko iz Moskvyy,” *RBK*, 19 October, <https://www.rbc.ru/politics/19/10/2018/5bc8ac499a7947257cabebaf?from=main> (last accessed 29 September 2021).
- Kynev, Aleksandr, Nikolai Petrov & Aleksei Titkov 2018, “Monitoring samochuvstviia regionov KGI: tri goda v stroiu,” *Komitet grazhdanskikh initsiativ*, 20 June, <https://komitetgi.ru/analytics/3797/> (last accessed 6 August 2021).
- Lang, Graeme & Ying Xu 2013, “Anti-incinerator Campaigns and the Evolution of Protest Politics in China,” *Environmental Politics* 22 (5), 832–48.
- Lankina, Tomila & Katerina Tertychnaya 2020, “Protest in Electoral Autocracies: A New Dataset,” *Post-Soviet Affairs* 36 (1), 20–36.
- Leonard, Liam 2011, *Community Campaigns for Sustainable Living: Health, Waste & Protest in Civil Society*, Bingley.
- Lindekilde, Lasse 2014, “Discourse and Frame Analysis: In-depth Analysis of Qualitative Data in Social Movement Research,” *Methodological Practices in Social Movement Research*, ed. Donatella Della Porta, Oxford., 195–227.
- Loichenko, Svetlana 2018, “Gubernator Arkhangel’skoi oblasti: ‘Do dvatsatogo goda ia ne imeiu prava ustavat,’” *Pravda Severa*, 27 December, <https://pravdasevera.ru/2018/12/27/60boaoceb43ef52e7c67a>

- 72a.html (last accessed 29 September 2021).
- McAdam, Doug, Sidney Tarrow & Charles Tilly 2001, *Dynamics of Contention*, Cambridge.
- Mikusheva, Ella 2018, "Oblastnye deputaty otobrali pravo utverzhdat' genplany u munitsipalitetov," *29.ru*, 14 November, <https://29.ru/text/politics/65618911/> (last accessed 21 July 2020).
- Nevskaia, Iuliia 2019, "Zachistiat nas, uidem v lesa partizanit,'" *Novaia gazeta*, 31 October, <https://novayagazeta.ru/articles/2019/10/31/82582-zachistyat-nas-uydem-v-lesa-partizanit> (last accessed 4 September 2021).
- Newton, David E. 2009, *Environmental Justice: A Reference Handbook*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Santa Barbara, Cal.
- "Novye glavy Komi i Arkhangel'skoi oblasti vystupili protiv poligona na Shiese" 2020, *Interfax*, 17 April, <https://www.interfax.ru/russia/704700> (last accessed 14 May 2020).
- "Osnovnoi ob'em rabot po rekul'tivatsii uchastkov na stantsii Shies budet zavershen do kontsa 2020 goda" 2020, *Shies.ru*, 11 October, <https://shies.ru/news-post/osnovnoj-obem-rabot-po-rekultivaczii-uchastkov-na-stanczii-shies-budet-zavershen-do-koncza-2020-goda/> (last accessed 28 October 2020).
- Pavlova, Alena 2017, "Gubernator predlozhlit stroit' 'musornye' zavody bez obsuzhdeniia s zhiteliami," *kp40.ru*, 14 February, <https://www.kp40.ru/news/society/42086/m> (last accessed 29 September 2021).
- Pertsev, Andrei 2020, "Zhertvy Shiesa: kak odin musornyi poligon pogubil dvukh gubernatorov – Komi i Arkhangel'skoi oblasti," *Meduza*, 3 April, <https://meduza.io/feature/2020/04/03/zhertvy-shiesa> (last accessed 25 July 2020).
- Podobedova, Liudmila & Dada Lindell 2019, "Vlasti Moskvy opredelilis' s regionami dlia vyvoza stolichnogo musora: kuda i na kakikh usloviakh budut vyvozit' pochti 60 mln tonn otkhodov," *RBC*, 16 December, <https://www.rbc.ru/business/16/12/2019/5df3a7379a7947639f728830> (last accessed 25 July 2020).
- "Proekt 'Ekotekhnopark "Shiyes'" iskluchchen iz reestra prioritetnykh proektov Arkhangel'skoi oblasti" 2020, *Press-tsentri Pravitel'stva Arkhangel'skoi oblasti*, 9 June, <http://dvinanews.ru/-mp98bmh2> (last accessed 25 July 2020).
- "Putin rasporiadilsia za mesiat zakryt' svalku v Balashikhe" 2017, *Lenta.ru*, 22 June, [https://lenta.ru/news/2017/06/22/gorod\\_sad/](https://lenta.ru/news/2017/06/22/gorod_sad/) (last

- accessed 1 October 2020).
- Remington, Thomas F. 2010, "Accounting for Regime Differences in the Russian Regions: Historical and Structural Influences," working paper, Atlanta, Ga.
- Rootes, Christopher 2009, "Environmental Movements, Waste and Waste Infrastructure: An Introduction," *Environmental Politics* 18 (6), 817–34.
- Rootes, Christopher & Eugene Nulman 2015, "The Impacts of Environmental Movements," *The Oxford Handbook of Social Movements*, eds. Donatella Della Porta and Mario Diani, Oxford, 729–42.
- "Rost protestnoi aktivnosti v Rossii: rezul'taty vserossiiskogo monitoringa 2017–2018 gg." 2018, *Tsentr ekonomicheskikh i politicheskikh reform*, 11 November, <http://cepr.su/2018/11/08/protests-2017-2018/> (last accessed 18 October 2020).
- Sherman, Daniel J. 2011, *Not Here, Not There, Not Anywhere: Politics, Social Movements, and the Disposal of Low-Level Radioactive Waste*, London.
- Snow, David A. & Robert D. Benford 1988, "Ideology, Frame Resonance, and Participant Mobilization," *International Social Movement Research*, 1, 197–217.
- Snow, David A., E. Burke Rochford Jr., Steven K. Worden & Robert D. Benford 1986, "Frame Alignment Processes, Micromobilization, and Movement Participation," *American Sociological Review* 51 (4), 464–81.
- Snow, David A., Rens Vliegthart & Pauline Ketelaars 2019, "The Framing Perspective on Social Movements: Its Conceptual Roots and Architecture," *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Social Movements*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., eds. David A. Snow, Sarah Anne Soule, Hanspeter Kriesi & Holly J. McCammon, Hoboken, N.J., 392–410.
- "Sotsial'naia situatsiia v Arkhangel'skoi oblasti" 2019, *Tsentr sotsial'nykh izmerenii "Fokus,"* 26 August, [https://vk.com/olga\\_russova?w=wall19731967\\_3697](https://vk.com/olga_russova?w=wall19731967_3697) (last accessed 29 November 2020).
- Tarrow, Sidney 2010, "Dynamics of Diffusion: Mechanisms, Institutions, and Scale Shift," *The Diffusion of Social Movements: Actors, Mechanisms, and Political Effects*, eds. Rebecca Kolins Givan, Kenneth M. Roberts & Sarah Anne Soule, New York, 204–20.
- Towers, George 2000, "Applying the Political Geography of Scale: Grassroots Strategies and Environmental Justice," *Professional Ge-*

- ographer* 52 (1), 23–36.
- van Zomeren, Martijn, Tom Postmes & Russell Spears 2008, "Toward an Integrative Social Identity Model of Collective Action: A Quantitative Research Synthesis of Three Socio-Psychological Perspectives," *Psychological Bulletin* (134), 504–35.
- Varenik, Iaroslav 2018, "Svalke net: v Severodvinske proidet miting protiv stroitel'stva musornogo poligona," *29.ru*, 13 July, <https://29.ru/text/politics/65148931/> (last accessed 6 July 2020).
- Vasil'eva, Anna 2020, "Udar nizhe Shiesa. Sud obiazal zastroishchika likvidirovat' ob"ekty poligona v techenie mesiatsa," *Kommersant*, 9 January, <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/4215469> (last accessed 7 July 2020).
- Velicu, Irina 2020, "Prospective Environmental Injustice: Insights from Anti-mining Struggles in Romania and Bulgaria," *Environmental Politics* 29 (3), 414–34.
- Walker, Gordon 2012, *Environmental Justice: Concepts, Evidence and Politics*, London.
- Walsh, Edward, Rex Warland & Douglas Clayton Smith 1993, "Backyards, NIMBYS, and Incinerator Sitings: Implications for Social Movement Theory," *Social Problems* (40), 25–38.
- Walsh, Edward, Rex Warland & Douglas Clayton Smith 1997, *Don't Burn It Here: Grassroots Challenges to Trash Incinerators*, University Park, Pa.
- Weiner, Douglas 1999, *A Little Corner of Freedom: Russian Nature Protection from Stalin to Gorbachev*, Berkeley, Cal.
- Wu, Fengshi & Ellie Martus 2021, "Contested Environmentalism: The Politics of Waste in China and Russia," *Environmental Politics* 30 (4), 493–512.