

MAIN TRENDS IN THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF SOCIAL MOVEMENTS CONCERNING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN KAZAKHSTAN

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Abstract

One of the factors of discontent on the part of the urban population is the loss of natural landscapes, fragmentation, and destruction of habitat due to the sprawl of settlements and infrastructure. The determining role in conflict resolution belongs to local authorities, who mediate between actors with different social and economic interests.

The purpose of this article is to study the prerequisites for the formation and development of the environmental protest movement, caused by the lack of proper communication between the authorities and the public around issues concerning urban landscaping in Kazakhstan. The object of the study is the factors that affect the emergence and development of civil environmental initiatives. The article uses protest event analysis, which allows the dynamics of civic mobilization and its key characteristics to be reconstructed on the basis of various textual sources from social networks.

The Meta Corporation (Facebook, Instagram) played a defining role as a communication channel, with more than 200 posts, 132 photos, 74 videos, 188 pieces of textual information, and 165 links.

At the same time, it was found that the greatest negative reaction and subsequent escalation of the conflict was caused by the withholding of information on the decisions made by official bodies in the public domain (+43%), while the imitation of dialogue by the authorities gives little hope of a positive resolution of the conflict (-12%).

The results obtained with different scenarios underscore the need and responsibility of government agencies to develop and strengthen the capacity of local communities to play an active role in decision-making. Public participation and social partnership expand the number of participants, guaranteeing a new quality of management process in gathering information, setting priorities, making decisions, monitoring their implementation, and evaluating results.

Keywords: *conflict management, ecosystem approach, escalation stages, public administration, social movement.*

Raktažodžiai: *konfliktų valdymas, ekosisteminis požiūris, eskalavimo etapai, viešasis administravimas, socialinis judėjimas.*

JEL Classifications: D74, Q34, Q56, R11.

Introduction

The issues of sustainable development on the agenda today require a revision of environmental policy by the authorities, where the key factor is public involvement in decision-making related to improving quality of life and long-term well-being. A lack of effective communication with the public often leads to conflicts where the efforts of public authorities are perceived as being imposed from above.

In turn, if costs and benefits are discussed openly, people can fully see what they will gain and lose, and this creates a good basis for productive negotiations. Urbanization and the development of urban infrastructure are usually accompanied by the loss of natural landscapes, shrinkage, and the fragmentation of the ecosystem, with irreversible consequences.

The difficulty in resolving conflicts related to the environment is that they generally arise between different private and public interests. However, both current and future interests play a role. Environmental conflicts are caused by resource use rights and the pollution of natural systems.

In turn, avoiding conflicts by restricting access to plans and projects tends to lead to more conflicts in the long run. In the end, not only the economic, but also the political costs rise; citizens lose faith in the decision-making process and in the decision-makers themselves. Also of interest are the communication tools that have recently changed, such as social networks and messaging apps, which have a significant impact on shaping public opinion because of their accessibility and scope.

The relevance of studying the issue of preventing or resolving conflicts related to public participation in decision-making is dictated by the increasing number of examples of citizens' consolidation against projects leading to the reduction of natural ecosystems.

Literature review

Over the past half century, one of the most notable trends in global environmental policy and planning has been the pursuit of sustainability at the local, regional, and global levels. Public

and governmental awareness of the negative impacts of population growth and consumption on environmental degradation and biodiversity loss is a major driver in the development of a sustainable society (Ehrlich and Holdren 1971).

The loss of natural landscapes, habitat fragmentation and destruction, and the sprawl of human settlements and related infrastructure are phenomena of spatial development that pose increasing environmental challenges to the long-term well-being of human society (Goodland and Daly 1996).

One of the first recognitions of these problems was the Brundtland Report and Agenda 21 of the 1980s and 1990s, which popularized the concept of “sustainable development” and led to sustainable development initiatives at the local, regional, and global levels (Conca and Dabelko 1998).

The Brundtland Report defines sustainable development as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (World Commission on Environment and Development 1987). This definition is based on the assumption that the Earth’s ability to provide natural resources and absorb waste is limited (Meadows et al. 1972). The combined pressures of accelerated population growth and material consumption are considered a problem for sustainability because they reduce the sustainability of our planet and its ability to provide resources and absorb waste, thereby threatening the well-being of future generations.

The concept of sustainability focuses on three aspects of human development: social, economic, and environmental (Eizenberg and Jabareen 2017; Reyer et al. 2012; Schädler et al. 2011). In turn, researcher E. Ostrom (2010) considers interaction, within the framework of the collective management of natural resources, as an important factor in the sustainability and long-term use of these aspects. At the same time, one of the most basic principles of the development of a self-determined society is recognition by authorities. As practice shows, interactions with state authorities are evolving and can take a confrontational form.

This study examines the trend of institutionalization of public participation using the example of the opposition of local residents of Nur-Sultan to the decision of the city authorities to drain and develop the territory of Lake Maly Taldykol, which was widely covered on social networks (Facebook, Instagram, Telegram, WhatsApp). The demands of the initiative group (hereinafter IG) @sos.taldykol to preserve the lake found support among the expert community and NGOs.

The petition to preserve Lake Maly Taldykol addressed to the country’s President K. K. Tokayev was signed by more than 12,000 citizens, which allows this problem to be ranked among the five most important problems for Kazakh society (Kazakh Society, 2015). In 2020, this problem was studied by Kazakh researchers whose goal was to use the evaluation of ecosystem services to justify the adoption of effective management decisions in urban planning (Utegov et al. 2021).

The present article proposes to structurally consider the example of formation and evolution of public participation (civic initiatives) around issues related to the decisions of the authorities to destroy urban natural ecosystems in chronological order.

Often, the authorities perceive environmentally oriented initiatives in the context of sustainable development as an obstacle to economic growth (Coetzer et al. 2014). Problems generally arise from the lack of a holistic understanding and recognition of the trade-offs between ecosystem conservation and urban development priorities (Coetzer et al. 2014). Other challenges in implementing ecological approaches are directly related to the size of the area and the diversity of stakeholders. In turn, overcoming challenges requires a high level of coordination between stakeholders and governing structures (Fitzsimons et al. 2013). Other challenges include failure

to stimulate interest among local communities, failure to adopt a truly participatory approach, and lack of harmonization and coordination in the actions of various partners (Kellert et al. 2000; Stoll-Kleemann and O’Riordan 2002).

At the early stages of conflict, people are worried and upset, but the actors continue to communicate. Conflict is primarily resolved around predominantly cognitive issues, such as differences in interests and values (Glasl 1999). At higher stages of escalation, however, anger about the conflict will turn into anger toward the opponents themselves (also based on stereotypes). Thus, the conflict is no longer just about the content of the disagreement, but also about deeply felt emotions toward oneself and one’s opponents, such as feelings of loss of face or embarrassment. This can lead to a deliberate presentation of opponents as enemies and attacks on opponents’ prestige.

These intense emotions are not only the result of escalation, but also contribute to its further eruption, fueling the next step toward escalation. When talk shifts from discussion of content to consideration of personal qualities, and actors begin to feel intimidated or wrongfully accused, the restriction of more intense and confrontational actions is lowered. Subtle lobbying can turn into open protests, and protests can turn into blockades (Glasl 1999). Above all, conflicts should not be destructive. One of the greatest challenges for practitioners, scholars, and mediators is to mobilize the emotions identified and triggered by conflicts, using their energetic potential in a joint effort to protect, manage, and coexist harmoniously with the environment.

These findings highlight the need for and responsibility of public authorities in developing and strengthening the role of the local community in decision-making (Stoll-Kleemann and O’Riordan 2002). One of the indicators of the development of civil society in Kazakhstan is an analytical review based on the results of the Regional Expert Debate held on August 24, 2021 on “Public participation: can we affect something?”, where public figures, activists, and representatives of government agencies of Kazakhstan took part (Social Innovation in Central Asia 2021).

Today, the procedure of the formation of public councils does not provide free access to all activists who would like to participate, because public councils are created by the state bodies themselves. Outside of the public council, hearings on issues related to environmental projects are held at the stage of Pre-EIA (environmental impact assessment), when an environmental impact assessment has already been developed, which means that the decision on the need for the object has already been made and only the question of how much damage they will cause is discussed.

Civil society itself does not fully understand the term *public control*, and the population has no confidence in local NGOs. In the rules on the implementation of public control in public councils, it is stated that any person, i.e., an individual, can take the initiative to the public council, initiate the creation of a commission, public expertise, public monitoring, and public hearings, but this tool is difficult to implement and therefore practically not used.

The aim of this article is to study the prerequisites for the formation and development of the environmental protest movement around issues related to urban improvement in Kazakhstan. As a *hypothesis*, we suggest that the escalation of conflict triggers the mobilization and consolidation of efforts to achieve a goal and the institutionalization of a civic movement.

Materials and Methods

This study uses the protest event-analysis method to reconstruct the dynamics of civic mobilization and its key characteristics based on a variety of textual sources from social media. The event sequence was taken into account by identifying the information that occurred, which was usually caused by the actions of the city administration related to the decision to drain and build up the natural landscape. Thus, each action resulting in a disapproving or positive reaction is

scored from -2 to 2 , depending on the number of people who disapprove or support the decision.

According to some researchers, event analysis has become an important tool for applied analysis, particularly for monitoring socio-political tensions in the regions (Semenov 2018). The event analysis presented in this article is related to the study of the protest movement's evolution as a result of a lack of proper communication between the authorities and the public. It allows us to recreate the dynamics of the escalation of the conflict that takes place due to the lack of transparency in the decisions made, the misinterpretation of the events, and the chosen negotiation strategy. The existing channels of communication in the form of messenger apps such as WhatsApp, Telegram channels, Instagram posts, and Facebook allow us to recreate the entire chronological sequence of events and to identify the most important factors contributing to the escalation of protest sentiments and their further progression.

This study proposes structurally considering the example of formation and evolution of public participation (civic initiatives) around the issues related to the decision of the authorities to destroy urban natural ecosystems in chronological order. It should be noted that social science has paid much attention to the study of the causes and stages of emergence and escalation of conflicts, and suggests the existence of 9 stages of conflict escalation (Glasl 1999).

At the same time, considering the narrow specialization of conflicts related to natural resource management, we turned to the results of a study conducted during the analysis of 118 conflicts in forest management, where the starting point for identifying the stages of development and escalation of protest movements were the 9 stages proposed by Glasl (Yasmi et al. 2006). By means of the iterative Yasmi process, seven categories of escalation stages were identified, which are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. A summary of forms of conflict escalation in natural resources management based on a comparative analysis of 118 case studies

Stage	Measurement of manifestation
1. Feelings of anxiety.	Feelings of anxiety, complaints, rumors, unhappiness, anger, resentment, dissatisfaction, disagreement about solutions/problems, fear of unemployment.
2. Debates and criticism.	Open debate, intense debate, verbal clashes, accusations, arguments, criticism of government policies.
3. Lobbying and persuasion.	Lobbying the government, compensation, persuading the government to recognize local rights, lobbying politicians.
4. Protests and agitation.	Local protest, logging plan protest, demonstration, mass protest, street rally, tractor convoy, farmers' rally, public rally, logger rally, convoy, march, strike, agitation and protest by environmental groups, media campaign, letter-writing campaign, protest against a particular plan.
5. Access restriction.	Squatter invasion, picketing of companies, peaceful occupation of a park, blockade of a logging road, prohibition of work in certain areas, imposed restrictions on livelihood activities, blockade of ports, forced displacement, eviction, forced relocation, displacement by force, fencing off of large landowners' land, landless invasion, road blockage.
6. Court.	Trial appeal, litigation, regional court case, federal court, lawsuit.

7. Intimidation and physical exchange.	Threats, death threats, intimidation, boycott threat, confiscation, murder, wounding, shooting, ambushes, assault, fighting, war, violent confrontations, damage to forestry, murder, vandalism of park officials, burning of base camp, arrests, retaliation by armed forces, police arrests, arson, detention, seizing company equipment, mobilization of soldiers and equipment, military action, police involvement.
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Analysis and Results

Currently, reforms undertaken by post-Soviet states aimed at environment-related projects are increasingly met with resistance and deterrence from the local population. The starting point of the conflict in question is the construction work that started in August 2020 to fill up Lake Maly Taldykol with construction waste. The decision of city authorities was based on the approval of the Detailed Development Project (hereinafter referred to as DDP) No. 510-1496 of 30.07.2020 by Nur-Sultan City Akimat, prepared by SAT-NS Construction Company, where all land under the lake water surface was determined as the site for construction of housing and social facilities.

It should be noted that this circumstance provoked the resentment of the nearby residents, the most active of whom (5 to 10 people) began to raise the question of the illegality of the decision via social networks. One of the factors contributing to this controversy was the indignation and resentment of the residents living close to the lake at the deception of the construction companies in selling and advertising the flats of the residential complex as harmoniously integrated into the natural landscape. The value of the houses' location near the lake had previously been actively promoted by the real estate developers.

At an early stage, the initiative was supported by the ASBC NGO, which had previously promoted the creation of a nature park on the Bolshoi and Maly Taldykol Lakes. The enormous work carried out by ASBC to prepare a biological feasibility study for the project to create a natural park, studying international best practices and organizing a number of study tours to London for representatives of the Astana City Akimat, remained unclaimed after the change in the leadership of the city administration.

Identification of the reasons that served to form the field for the development of the conflict situation is important in foreseeing the conflict situation and understanding the range of people involved. The protest sentiments of a relatively small group of people resulted in the organization of a city-wide clean-up event on the Maly Taldykol Lake, which was widely covered on social media. One of the attempts to rehabilitate the authorities at the time was the proposal to include employees of the Environmental Protection Agency in this action and to give the event its previously planned official status.

Thus, it can be stated that at the very beginning the initiative group opposing the damming of the lake was motivated by the desire to protect its place of residence from illegal intervention, and the problem was of a local nature.

Further in this article we will analyze the chronological sequence of the main events, showing the dynamics of the escalation of the conflict with the involvement of more and more stakeholders and its spreading to the republican level. This will also involve an assessment of the actions of city authorities in response to the growing publicity of the Maly Taldykol Lake conservation issue on social media and in official communications.

Table 2 describes the events of the ongoing protest process of the Maly Taldykol Conservation Initiative and the factors that have institutionalized it from July 2020 to September 2021.

Table 2. Stages of conflict escalation related to construction on Lake Maly Taldykol

Time	Event	Local community involvement	Reaction of the authorities
Stage 1 – Feelings of unease, resentment, and dissent (spreading demands within one's group, trying to get the attention of a wide circle, trying to get attention with a one-time action).			
Period: July 2020 to October 2020.			
July 30, 2020	Approval of the RAP, beginning of backfilling of the lake.	Approval of the RAP, beginning of the backfilling of the lake. Poorly organized group of 5–10 residents. Attempts to actualize the problem through appeals to state authorities.	Ignoring discontent.
August 16, 2020	An Instagram group, SOS Taldykol, was created to unite efforts to save the Taldykol Lake system.	Instagram posts. Local residents and environmentalists and began to highlight the work of saving the lake. The number of views on social networks did not exceed 100–150, with a dozen likes.	Silence, attempts to discredit some members of the initiative group.
August 30, 2020	Organization of a city-wide cleanup day.	Attempts to actualize the problem through the clean-up day. Increased support among citizens and NGOs, support of city publicity groups (over 200 thousand people).	Attempts to substitute water body status and deliberate disorientation.
Stage 2 – the beginning of the process of organizing public protection and conservation of the lake (creating pages on Instagram and Facebook, calling for signing the petition and sharing posts with no more than 100 likes).			
Period: October 2020 to January 2021.			
October 1, 2020	Petition for the preservation of Lake Maly Taldykol addressed to the President of the country, K.K. Tokayev.	Collection of signatures, publications on social networks, and the creation of groups to save Maly Taldykol on WhatsApp. The petition was signed by 3,140 citizens, which put it in the top 5 most important issues for Kazakhstani society.	Ignoring attempts at dialogue and discrediting members of the initiative group in pursuit of personal interests.
October 31, 2020	Creating a public group on Facebook: SOS. Taldykol	IG regularly publishing all activities related to preserving the lake. Over 800 people subscribe, over 200 posts and publications containing 132 photos, 188 pieces of text information, 74 videos, and 165 links are provided.	Ignoring dialogue and activating fake accounts in favor of the decision to drain the lake.
Stage 3 – institutionalization of the SOS Taldykol social movement (elaboration of a common goal and strategy of the movement, formation of a pool of experts, discussions with the authorities, formalization of requirements and their publication).			
Period: January 2021 to March 2021.			

January 30, 2021	First signs of institutionalization of IG, acquaintance, meeting offline.	Joining of @asbk.kz, @artcon.platform, @fading.tse, ecounion.kz.	Imitation of dialogue through a series of publications on agreements reached with IG.
February 6, 2021	Organization of an ice rink and slide on the lake.	Participation of more than 20 people, mass skating on the rink and slide for 2 months.	Neglecting.
February 13, 2021	Roundtable in Astana GenPlan. 2nd attempt at Round Table meeting (04.02.20).	On behalf of the IG, 6 experts in the field of ecology, biodiversity, conservation history, and architecture. Establishment of the Working Group.	Representatives of the Akimat express the opinion that the water has bacteria in it and that the lake is a source of odor and mosquitoes.
February 14, 2021	Official publication of the demands of the initiative group. Formalization of demands.	Suspension of construction; Holding a public hearing; Conducting a comprehensive study; Clearing the area from construction waste; Categorizing the lakes as a water resource; Creation of a nature park on the lake.	Ignoring, followed by the appearance of comments about the presence of cholera in the water and that the lake is a source of foul odor and mosquitoes.
Conclusions: the beginning of a dialogue with the authorities, the delegation of rights to protect the interests of residents to a pool of experts in various fields.			
Stage 4 – institutionalization (systematization, regularity, scaling). Dissemination of knowledge, educational work, discussion of the issue in the expert field (a series of lectures-seminars), getting the authorities to create a working group and hold one meeting, strengthening the use of social media posts to collect up to 9 thousand likes. Protests are now systematic on a weekly basis, with the involvement of different social strata.			
Period: March 2021 to July 2021.			
March 5, 2021	Performance of “Qustarkeldy” near Bayterek in defense of the lake, publication of poems in protection of the lake.	In order to show the fragility of the ecosystem organized by Artcom Platform and artists.	Ignoring discontent
April 3, 2021 April 10, 2021 April 17, 2021 April 24, 2021 May 2, 2021	Organization of a series of public lectures “City vs Nature” on Facebook, and recording on the YouTube channel	IG created a YouTube channel with the same name where all the lectures are published. Experts from Kazakhstan in the field of ecology, hydrology, history, philosophy, architecture, and art participated. A total of 11 speakers.	Ignoring discontent while works on draining and fragmenting the lakes start.

April 23, 2021	Meeting of the Working Group on Small Taldykol, followed by a dialogue attempt.	Acquaintance of representatives of the Akimat with the results of studies of Maly Taldykol and international experience in the creation of parks.	Promise to study all research materials and conduct water sampling.
April 24, 2021	Organization of a tent camp on the lake with an invitation to visit the Maly Taldykol country leadership.	12 people participate, no one from the authorities, except the police, attends.	Ignoring discontent while deliberately misrepresenting the idea that the lake will be saved, referring to the landscaping around Lake Bolshoi Taldykol.
April 30, 2021	Organizing a meditation (yoga) course at the lake.	15 people participated, involving: - asana yoga; - meditation; - a picnic tea-party; - a mini clean-up day.	Ignoring discontent while the draining and fragmentation of the lakes continues.
May 7, 2021 May 9, 2021	Organization of walks on the lake with trash removal.	Organization of walks and photo sessions on the shores of Lake Maly Taldykol.	Drainage and fragmentation of the lakes continues.
May 20–25, 2021	Water sampling by IG at 6 lake sites independently.	Hire a boat, pay for laboratory services, volunteer work.	Drainage and fragmentation of lakes continues.
June 13, 2021	Organization of a 17 km trail race around Lake Maly Taldykol.	25 runners from different clubs in the capital took part.	Drainage and fragmentation of lakes continues.
June 13, 2021	Organization of the clean-up day with broadcasting in Stories.	Over 40 people took part, members of public environmental organizations participated.	Disinformation on the construction of a tourist complex on the lake.
July 10, 2021	Creation and distribution of the video “The most beautiful place in Astana.” Organization of walking tours on the lake with garbage collection.	A number of publications in the official media, discussion of the issue of illegal construction in social networks among not only residents of Nur-Sultan, but also other cities of Kazakhstan.	Drainage and fragmentation continues. Statement by the Akimat that the plot of the water surface will be preserved.
Conclusions: A stable community of residents, experts, and eco-activists has been formed.			
Stage 5 – creation of legitimate forms of public control. Systematization of monitoring and control over the violation of environmental regulations by developers, attracting professional lawyers to prepare lawsuits, branding the civil movement through symbolization, appeals to the international community, preparation and broadcasting of a series of documentaries, involvement of bloggers, the petition to the Head of the State reaches 12 thousand votes.			
Period: July 2021 to present.			

July 15, 2021	The official comment of the Minister of Ecology, Geology and Natural Resources that the lake is on the balance of the Akimat and the research should be financed by the LEB.	A series of releases with the comments of journalists and environmentalists. Agreement was reached with the community of professional lawyers to file a lawsuit against the construction companies.	By the decision of the Akimat, the water body “Maly Taldykol Lake” was transferred from water resource land to a residential area.
September 17, 2021	Petition to preserve Lake Maly Taldykol addressed to the President of Kazakhstan.	The petition is signed by over 12,000 votes and forms a book of 1,583 pages with comments: @tokayev_online @akordapress@berikuali	There is no information in public sources about the change of land status.

The further neglect by the authorities of attempts at dialogue with the public led to the development of a common goal and strategy of the movement, the formation of an expert pool, and the formulation and publication of demands .

Next, through the systematization, consistency, and scale of action in defense of Maly Taldykol, the initiative group contributes to the institutionalization of the movement. The refusal to engage in dialogue leads to more active use of social media, with posts garnering up to 9,000 likes and protests involving different social strata being systematic on a weekly basis.

The established system of dissemination of knowledge about ecosystem services, educational work, and discussion of the issue in the expert field (a series of lectures-seminars) compels the authorities to create a working group under the Akimat of the city and hold its first meeting.

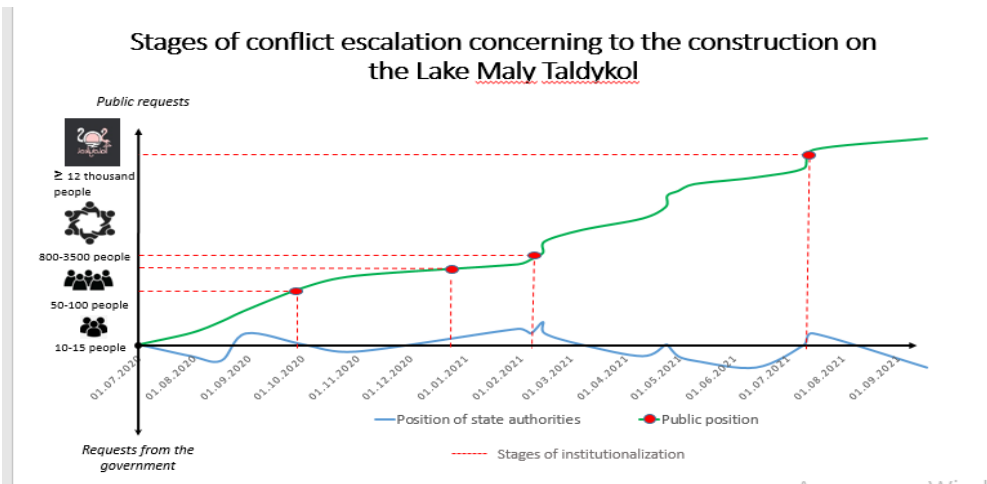


Figure 1. Dynamics of conflict development

Figure 1 clearly shows the dynamics of the conflict and the divergence between the actions of the state authorities and the expectations of activists, driven by the protection of public interests. Unfortunately, the initiative group – facing the fact that the dialogue platform offered by the

authorities is purely formal in its nature, and the recommendations and promises made at the meeting are not implemented – undertakes actions to intensify the protest.

Eventually, we observe that a year later the activities of the initiative group acquired legitimate forms of public control, expressed in the systematic monitoring and control of the violation of environmental legislation by the constructors. This involved attracting professional lawyers to prepare lawsuits, branding the civil movement by symbolization, appeals to the international community, preparation and broadcasting of documentary series, the involvement of bloggers, and the petition to the Head of State, which reached 12,000 votes.

In terms of the scale of the supporters involved, the initiative to preserve the lake has evolved from a small local conflict into a conflict of national significance. The evolution of the level of perception and understanding of the problem of ecosystem loss by the population and the awareness of its global importance apparently contributed to this. The actions of the authorities that led to further escalation of the conflict are systematized in Figure 2.

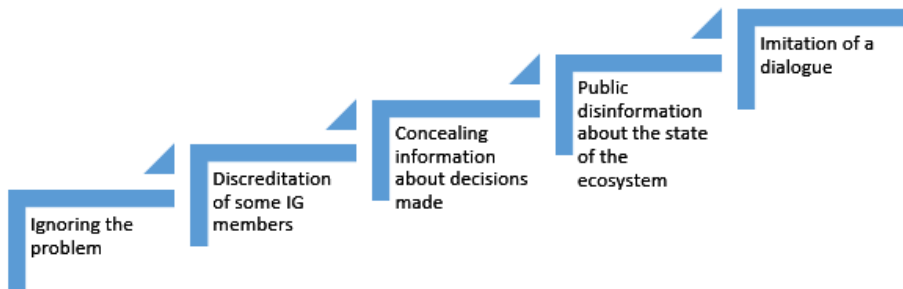


Figure 2. Actions that led to further escalation of the conflict

At the first level, the authorities do not realize that a dialogue with society is necessary. At the fifth level, the authorities recognize that there is a public demand for improvement of the ecological condition of the city, but they hope that they will not have to do anything.

Discussion

It is possible to assert with certainty that the strategy of silencing and ignoring the problem, attempts to discredit some members of the initiative group, change of the terms of water body status, and intentional disorientation undertaken by the city authorities had a negative effect. The strategy chosen led to further self-organization of public advocacy and preservation of the lake by creating a page on the Instagram and Facebook social networks, appeals to sign a petition, and the distribution of posts in defense of the lake's preservation.

One of the main reasons for the emergence and escalation of this conflict was the artificial silence and concealment by the authorities of decisions affecting the rights, freedoms, and obligations of citizens. For example, there is still no up-to-date information in the media about the changes in the condition of the Maly Taldykol water body, the RAP project, and others.

Thus, we have identified the following actions of the authorities that contributed to the escalation of the conflict.

- Ignoring the presence of the protest, and attempting to hide the existence of the problem;
- Forming a false impression of the danger of the lake for the epidemiological situation of the city, as well as its natural drought;
- Discrediting individual members of the initiative group through accusations of involvement in certain business entities;
- Media statements by officials, which were contradictory in character, about the emergence and the prospects of preserving the lake;
- Lack of support from the environmental agency, which is on the balance sheet of the Akimat, when it declared its non-involvement in the Maly Taldykol Lake;
- Failure to fulfill public promises on the conservation of the Maly Taldykol Lake;
- Imitation of dialogue;
- Avoidance of dialogue with the public by ignoring the recommendations of members of the Working Group under the City Akimat established to solve the problem (the protocol was not executed, the meeting was a formality);
- Concealing the facts of decisions on the withdrawal of the lake from the list of water bodies, adoption of the RAP, etc. (this was not coordinated with the residents and experts and was disclosed to the public after the fact);
- Deliberate deception that the lake will be preserved, referring to the landscaping around Lake Bolshoi Taldykol;
- Continuation of works on draining and fragmentation of the lake;
- Disinformation of the authorities about the construction of a tourist complex on the lake.

Based on the experience of researchers in studying the stages of conflict development, it is possible to assume the following three scenarios: optimistic, realistic, and pessimistic. The optimistic scenario consists in the creation by the authorities of a legitimate dialogue platform, where the right of the public to participate in the decision-making process is granted. This involves making changes to the existing strategy and concept of the development of Nur-Sultan city, target indicators of city development, identification of natural landscapes, and the assessment of ecosystem services.

The realistic (practical, pragmatic, reasonable) scenario suggests taking prompt measures to localize the conflict. This involves the creation by the city authorities of a dialogue field, which provides an opportunity for stakeholders to participate in the decision-making process concerning the fate of Lake Maly Taldykol.

This would entail stopping construction and revising both the project of detailed construction and the Master Plan of Nur-Sultan, taking into account the creation of a nature park on the territory of the Maly and Bolshoi Taldykol Lakes and the allocation of an area with a special recreational zone. Adapted management measures should be taken for the territory already exposed to anthropogenic influence to promote the gradual restoration of ecosystems, as well as promoting the use of the park to raise the level of environmental culture and education of the younger generation.

The pessimistic (negative) scenario could be assumed as follows: in order to localize the ongoing protests, measures of strict administrative regulation and control on the part of the authorities will be taken. This in turn will lead to a new wave of misunderstanding and distrust of the population toward the authorities in general, and will move the conflict in a nonconstructive direction. The demands will take on a political coloring, thereby threatening the stability of the

political system. This scenario undoubtedly carries reputational risks for Kazakhstan in the world community.

Conclusions

This study revealed the main prerequisites for the formation and development of the environmental protest movement, caused by a lack of proper communication between the authorities and the public. It confirmed the thesis that the escalation of conflicts triggers the mobilization and consolidation of efforts to achieve the goal, and the institutionalization of the civil movement. The results obtained emphasize the need and responsibility of state authorities to develop and strengthen the ability of local communities to play an active role in decision-making. This is why the modern state needs NGO partners that actualize community problems, and are ready constructively solve them together with the state.

Financial support for civil society institutions should be available and implemented through the allocation of state awards and grant funding. One of the problems that hinders the organization of public partnerships is the lack of knowledge and negotiation skills of the participants. It is also necessary to organize widespread regular training of deputies of maslikhats and businesses on specific cases with the participation of NGOs and experts.

To increase the effectiveness of public influence on decision-making, it must have a certain structure:

1. A community. This involves the formation of a community of interested people, including: NGOs, initiative groups, active citizens, and journalists.
2. Infrastructure. The system of feedback collection and a risk system must be implemented.
3. Media support/advocacy. A regional network of journalists and a system of lobbying from below should be introduced.
4. Legal support for the community.
5. Research.

Achieving effective public participation in governance largely depends on the observance of principles and mechanisms of public participation in governance, and mutual understanding and partnership between local government bodies, representatives of business, and the population.

Complementing the system of self-government at the local level with public participation, social partnership, and joint management expands the number of participants, guaranteeing a new quality of the management process in gathering information, defining priorities, making decisions, monitoring their implementation, and evaluating results. This model of governance avoids the escalation of conflicts and the transition to crowd democracy, which is very controversial in terms of social consequences and the public good.

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Pagrindinės socialinio piliečių judėjimo institucionalizavimo tendencijos Kazachstane tvaraus vystymosi kontekste

Arman Uteпов, Serik Jumabayev, Gaziza Uteповa, Andrey Mitusov, Aigul Kussainova

Patirtis rodo, kad vienas iš miesto gyventojų nepasitenkinimo veiksnių yra natūralaus kraštovaizdžio nykimas ir gamtinės infrastruktūros naikinimas, vykstantis dėl gyvenviečių ir infrastruktūros plėtimosi.

Straipsnio tikslas – ištirti aplinkosaugos protesto judėjimo formavimosi ir plėtros prielaidas, atsiradusias dėl valdžios ir visuomenės nesusikalbėjimo miesto apželdinimo klausimais. Šiame straipsnyje, remiantis protesto renginių analize, nagrinėjamos visuomenės dalyvavimo institucionalizavimo tendencijos, kurios leidžia rekonstruoti pilietinės mobilizacijos dinamiką ir pagrindines jos charakteristikas remiantis įvairiais tekstiniais socialinių tinklų šaltiniais.

Galima tvirtinti, kad nesupratimas ir valdžios negebėjimas imtis iniciatyvių priemonių lems tolesnį konflikto eskalavimą ir jo nekonstruktyvius jo sprendimus. Pagal skirtingus scenarijus gauti rezultatai pabrėžia vyriausybinių agentūrų atsakomybę plėtoti ir stiprinti vietos bendruomenių gebėjimus aktyviai dalyvauti priimant sprendimus.

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