Saunders, Clare. "The Role of Resources in Relationships." *Environmental Networks and Social Movement Theory*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013. 74–94. *Bloomsbury Collections*. Web. 26 Apr. 2023. <<http://dx.doi.org/10.5040/9781472544490.ch-004>>.

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4 The Role of Resources in Relationships

This chapter focuses on the organizational approach to social movement theory, coupling organizational ecology and resource mobilization because of considerable overlap between them. Indeed, early proponents of resource mobilization theory (John McCarthy and Meyer Zald) were themselves once organizational scholars. The resource mobilization approach developed in the 1970s in the United States in response to perceived weaknesses of earlier theoretical approaches, partly spearheaded by Gamson's (1975) seminal study that sought to account for factors making supposedly *rational* social movement organizations *successful*.¹ Thus, it was viewed as a shift away from collective behaviour approaches' emphasis on the irrational – even if that aspect of collective behaviour has been exaggerated (Chapter 1). Given the centrality of debates around rationality and irrationality in the social movements' literature, I begin this chapter by exploring the meaning of the concept of rationality. I look at the micro-roots of the literature, before moving on to the organizational level.

According to resource mobilization theorists' conceptualization of a social movement, social movements are comprised of organizations with some degree of formality. These organizations are considered to be dependent on resources – in one shape or another – for their survival. It is suggested that organizations are likely to become preoccupied by the need to maintain themselves as organizations. This makes the battle to achieve or maintain resources pivotal for organizational survival. Consequently, organizations may compete for resources. Alternatively, they might, instead, collaborate as part of a shared strategy to mount effective campaigns and so indirectly increase resources by capitalizing on success. Organizational ecology is also concerned with explaining how organizations interact. It asks important questions about how it is that so many organizations can survive within a single organizational field. It uses the concept of niches to address these questions. Along with resource mobilization theory, the concepts of competition and collaboration are central to organizational ecology. The obvious coherence between resource mobilization and organizational ecology makes it somewhat surprising that little effort has been made, to date, to marry the two approaches. In this chapter, I begin to address this peculiar oversight.

After linking resource mobilization and organizational ecology and evaluating them, I tease out the implications of the theories for interaction in environmental networks. I illustrate the text with examples from recent scholarly accounts of environmental activism. I then explore whether these implications fit what we can glean about the environmental networks on the basis of my survey and interview data. I end the chapter with some concluding thoughts on the value of the resource mobilization/organizational ecology approach.

Resource mobilization theory and rationality

Whereas collective behaviour was criticized for stressing the irrationality of protest, much of the criticism directed towards resource mobilization centres was around its deployment of the concept of rationality. Hence, I visit debates surrounding that term first. The emphasis given to rationality means that research mobilization theory sits at some remove from the collective behaviour approach. To some extent, this reflects scholars' (over)reaction to the weaknesses of collective behaviour theory.

Generally, resource mobilization theory's proponents imply that the model is set within an economic or instrumental understanding of rationality, whereby actors seek the most cost-effective means for realizing interests (Crossley 2002: 58). This perspective constitutes the building blocks for rational actor theory, as incorporated into micro-level resource mobilization theory. It assumes, not unproblematically, that potential activists weigh up costs and benefits of movement participation and that a favourable balance needs to be struck before they join (Klandermans 1994). Klandermans' argument is based on an assessment of Olson's (1965) classic and hotly debated *Logic of Collective Action*. Olson believed that, strictly speaking, collective action² in the pursuit of collective goods was irrational, arguing that if collective actors were successful in achieving a collective good, individuals would stand to gain regardless of whether they participated or their extent of participation. On the other hand, unsuccessful collective actors would be left with a deficit in their cost-benefit balance, having invested in a cause to no avail, while still having to foot the bill for the cost of action. A rational actor would, in Olson's terms, *free-ride*, reaping benefits without personal commitment or outlay to the cause.

But why, then, have people persistently supported groups seeking collective goods such as environmental organizations? Olson's answer was that organizations persuade members to join via distribution of selective incentives – defined as material benefits exclusively for members providing incentives to join by swinging the cost-benefit ratio in members' favour. In reality, though, motivational bases for collective action, including participation in environmental organizations, are much broader than simple economic gain. People may, for example, join groups for a sense of

belonging – to foster solidarity and develop consciousness or shared interests (Fireman and Gamson 1979). Consequently, some scholars have stretched the concept of selective incentives to include social, symbolic and normative incentives (e.g. Opp 1989; Cress and Snow 1996). Such generic use of the term is best avoided if we are to prevent loss of theoretical clarity; it implies that it is 'rational' for an actor to join a group seeking collective good in return for non-material incentives and without recourse to material costs and benefits. While such a statement may be true if one considers rationality to mean seeking the most appropriate course of action in the given circumstance, it twists the original meaning of rational-choice theories. Caution should also be exercised because broad use of the term 'selective incentives' means it has become sufficiently slippery to arouse suspicion that it is merely a means of justifying post-facto generated explanations.

Organizational-level resource mobilization theory

Decision-making individuals within 'rational' organizations³ are assumed to weigh up the costs and benefits of cooperating with others. This kind of rationality applies to procedures under bureaucratic control, involves impersonal quantitative calculation and is what Weber (1971 [1922]) called 'formal rationality'. It stands poles apart from another type of rationality introduced by Weber: 'substantive rationality'. Whereas formal rationality is driven by calculations about success, substantive rationality is driven by values and norms (Kalberg 1980). Many variants of rationality exist on the continuum between these poles, but resource mobilization theorists' original application falls closer to the formal than the substantive. Unless otherwise specified, the term 'rational' will henceforth, for consistency, refer to the instrumental and economically guided rationality to which Weber's formal rationality and Olson's conception of rationality initially referred, and upon which most resource mobilization theorists built their theories (even though many later diverged from it).

Resource mobilization theory originally argued that emergence of movements was not due to strain, neither generalized beliefs, as in collective behaviour approaches (Chapter 1), but to an injection of external resources from elites. In their embryonic conception of the theory, McCarthy and Zald (1977: 1215) drew on Turner and Killian (1957) in their belief 'that there is always enough discontent in any society to supply grassroots support for a movement if the movement is efficiently organized and has at its disposal the power and resources of some established elite group'. They ventured even further to stress that 'grievances and discontent may be defined, created, and manipulated by issue entrepreneurs and associations' (*ibid.*). Nonetheless, it appears that resource mobilization theorists, at least sometimes, selectively chose examples of insurgency that fit the theory, at the expense of due

consideration of wider movements (Crossley 2002: 84), or other case studies. There are quite possibly as many examples of social movements that do *not* fit the theory as ones that do, including Jenkins' (1985) farm workers' movement and the rise of black insurgency (McAdam 1982).

More than aspects of the theory that seek to explain movement emergence, of particular interest for this book are variables that affect social movement organizations' behaviour and choices of allies. In resource mobilization theory, such variables relate in some way or another to the broadly defined concept of resources. As Oberschall (1973: 28) suggests, 'resources are anything from material resources – jobs, incomes, savings and the rights to material goods and services – to non-material resources – authority, moral commitment, trust, friendship, skills, habits of industry',⁴ and premised upon the notions of instrumental rationality and self-gain. Despite being a 'loose cluster of ideas that exponents use selectively and interpret idiosyncratically' (Turner 1981: 8–9), the theory can be especially useful for interpreting the activity of organizations that have a neo-corporatist structure (Dalton 1994: 10). Such groups – like Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace, the Campaign to Protect Rural England and the Wildlife Trusts – have to maintain themselves by seeking new members, encouraging existing members to re-subscribe, paying staff, funding research and so on, and this makes cost-benefit-type appraisals an inevitable and important part of daily organizational life.

Centrally important to the resource mobilization approach are strategic actions to secure a favourable resource balance, whether in members, money, press coverage and/or public sympathy. This apparently reveals itself through inter-movement competition or cooperation mimicking the marketplace. When demand for environmental organizations is high (when the issues are salient), product differentiation occurs, and new specialist groups emerge (Barman 2002: 1195). Rawcliffe (1998: 77), for example, notes that the early 1990s saw a dramatic rise in environmental organizations as demand surged. Consequently, more established organizations such as the Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF) undoubtedly lost some of their members to more specialist groups (Rawcliffe 1998: 145). The problem was that supply began to outstrip demand, for when demand is high but only a few organizations exist, it is easier to obtain resources and there is consequently thought to be less competition and little need to specialize.

Links with organizational ecology

These implications of resource mobilization theory are closely related to the theory of organizational ecology (Hannan and Freeman 1977, 1989), which suggests that organizations are affected by the configuration of other organizations in their social environment. Rooted in arguments from neoclassical biology, but

focused on corporate organizations, Hannan and Freeman sought to answer the question 'Why are there so many kinds of organizations?' Their answer was that organizational diversity exists because organizations search for their own unique niches for optimal survival. Niches balance supply and demand within multiple organizational fields; by carving out a target market, set of issues, an ideology and specific organizational forms, functional specialization/division of labour, and cooperation and/or competition emerge. An organization has found its niche when it is able to grow, or as a minimal requirement, sustain itself. The resultant configuration of organizational types is considered a direct result of competition and resource availability. Particular

organisational forms presumably fail to flourish in certain environmental circumstances because other forms successfully compete with them for essential resources. As long as the resources which sustain organisations are finite, and populations have a limited capacity to expand, competition must ensue. (Hannan and Freeman 1977: 940)

Overall patterns of organizational diversity are considered the result of competitive and cooperative interdependencies that determine organizational survival and chances of prosperity as organizations 'find niches to protect themselves against competition' (Aldrich 1999: 43). Competition apparently occurs when the presence of one organization has an adverse effect upon another. Competition is pure when both organizations suffer, and a 'predator-prey relationship' describes the situation that occurs when competition benefits one actor but causes suffering to another. Symbiosis is where two organizations coexist to mutual benefit when interdependence is based on mutual need.

However, organizational ecology does not robustly predict the extent of inter-organizational competition. Perrow (1973: 241–2) is critical of the approach because it is difficult to extrapolate from the natural to the social environment. Furthermore, its central focus is not on interactions between organizations, but on determining the likelihood of organizational survival and adaptations to competition – as in population ecology. Particularly, he suggests that the central question, 'Why are there so many types of organisation?' is misdirected because, at least with firms, the market is dominated by large successful organizations that rarely die. This is of course also true of environmental organizations because a number of long-standing national and international environmental organizations flourish, some dating back to the nineteenth century. But even if large, established, environmental organizations are fairly ubiquitous, local groups and radical networks have high turnover, and frequently 'die' due to activist burnout, or a campaign reaching its natural end, rather than due to competition.

Young (1988) comprehensively critiques organizational ecology and most of its concepts. Young's most relevant criticism is that the concept of niche is difficult to define for organizations (4–5). How many dimensions should we include and which are most crucial? Another specific weakness is that it does not allow us to predict the type of collaboration that will occur as a result of niche overlap. Why does niche overlap just as easily result in cooperative symbiosis as in noncooperative competition?

The existing social movement literature tells us that there is a degree of competition between social movement organizations. But in the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) movement, 'niche activism' is thought to lead to cooperative – rather than competitive – interorganizational relationships (Levitsky 2008). Levitsky (2008: 272) offers this argument because organizations in the LGBT movement that have found their niches focus 'on very specific issues, strategies, or tactics' and therefore they 'increasingly rely on the proficiencies of differently specialized organizations in the movement'. Arguably, though, there are fewer organizations in the LGBT movement than in the environmental one, making it easier for them to each truly find their niches. In environmental networks, it seems fair to posit that the greater number of organizations means that there is more likelihood that a higher proportion of them are working in similar ways, thus increasing the chances of competition.

It may be that we can hypothesize that organizations similar to one another have a greater propensity for some form of interaction – whether cooperative or competitive. There is also the flip-side proposition to consider – seemingly disproved by Levitsky's (2008) LGBT study – which suggests that groups operating in distinct and independent niches neither compete nor cooperate. I show later in this book that answering the question about the actions that lead organizations to compete or cooperate requires looking beyond supposedly rational organizations towards environmental networks at large and their interrelationships with individuals, the polity and/or other campaign targets, involving insights from different social movement theories (Chapter 8).

Evaluating resource mobilization theory

Proponents of resource mobilization generally find *some* evidence that supports the theory, although social movements cannot be wholly explained by it (Dalton 1994: 10). This is partly because resource mobilization is not a grand narrative for which supporting evidence must be found, but rather an analytical tool to assist understanding of particular aspects of movements. However, resource mobilization is lacking because of the disproportional emphasis given to instrumentally rational

organizations (Kitschelt 1991: 334–7). Via resource mobilization, social movements ‘were quickly conceptualised in an insular way that privileged reform movements and formal organisations’ (Buechler 2004: 54). Not all social movement activity focuses on reform, neither is it restricted to the activities of formal organizations. Piven and Cloward (1977), for example, emphasize the role of loosely organized protest and mass defiance in poor people’s movements. ‘In this view, resource mobilisation’s emphasis on formal organisation amounts to conceptual blinders that preclude analysts from considering other forms of protest’ (Buechler 2004: 56). This means that resource mobilization theory ‘completely neglects spontaneous actions, newly emerging relations, and grassroots arrangements that are often critical to the successful development of social movements’ (Bystydzienski and Schacht 2001: 3). According to McAdam et al. (2001: 15):

Read 20 or 30 years later, early resource mobilisation models exaggerate the centrality of deliberate strategic decision to social movements. They downplay contingency, emotionality, plasticity and the interactive character of movement politics.

Crossley (2002: 66–7) suggests that the idea of selfish rational movement activity upon which resource mobilization is based, is equally as derisory as collective behaviour theory has been (exaggeratedly) alleged to be. Variables like solidarity, collective identity, consciousness and ideology are either ignored, or, at the other extreme, are incorporated under the broad umbrella of ‘resources’, stretching the concept to its limits. Selective incentives – in the economic sense – are infrequently provided by radical environmental organizations, yet these are furnished (at least during active protests) with healthy supporter levels. Furthermore, in a situation where a quick decision needs to be made, it can be irrational to be instrumentally rational – it takes time to seek out all possible options (Turner 1981: 12), and, at the end of the day, subjective decisions will always be made by activists, who are inescapably social beings. This notion ties in with Simon’s (1991) concept of ‘bounded rationality’, in which he provides examples of individuals’ choosing courses of action that are ‘good enough’ rather than optimal. This is what he calls a tendency to ‘satisfice’. It is, he suggests, the result of competing demands for time and attention and limits to individuals’ cognitive abilities. This is yet another reason why it is necessary to look beyond a rational actor framework.

Resource mobilization theory was initially applied to movements of the 1960s and 1970s. This was the period during which organizational activities were regarded by newly emerging radical factions as unfashionable and ineffective. At that time, fluid and amorphous dissident subcultures were proliferating. Foss and Larkin (1986: 18–20) suggest that this means that resource mobilization theorists were focussing only

on the more legitimate aspects of agitation during this important subcultural period, and that the approach makes social movements appear more cohesive and orderly than they really are. As resource mobilization theorists focussed on at least internally institutionalized 'social movement' organizational behaviour (which is what others have referred to as interest group politics), they have described the emergence and trajectory of something quite different from other social movement theorists who regarded being non-institutional as an essential factor for being considered a social movement. Zald (1992: 336), one of the founders of the approach, admits that resource mobilization theory may 'warp the analysis of the more unbounded and fragile forms of organizations often found in social movements'.

Competition, resource mobilization and implications for environmental networks

Despite the many weaknesses of resource mobilization theory, there is sufficient strength in the approach for it to be applied to environmental organizations that have interest-group type structures – such as Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace. The approach should not be thrown out for overemphasizing the rational and formal aspect. However, it should be recognized that such formal organizations are only *part* of the picture, and that rationality only partially dictates the behaviour of even formal environmental organizations. Indeed, we could argue that the approach deserves credit for asserting that collective action is not irrational and spontaneous, as painted by a *few* collective behaviour scholars, and for recognizing that organization underpins many social movements. What is particularly useful for this book is the approach's emphasis on the role of resources in dictating patterns of interaction. The theory talks directly to notions of competition and collaboration at the organizational level.

Resource mobilization theory argues that competition exists because the main goal of any movement organization is survival. Without survival, further movement goals cannot be sought (McCarthy and Zald 1977: 1220–4). To survive, resources – whether in the form of money or active support – are crucial. New social movement organizations – informal, participatory and non-hierarchical groups – tend to extract resources from members in the form of active participation (Chapter 6), whereas protest-businesses – formal organizations that mobilize money rather than active participation – mobilize direct-debit subscriptions to raise finances (Jordan and Maloney 1997).

For protest businesses, the majority of movement supporters tend to be mobilized through postal appeals, remain at a distance from the organization and tend not to interact (Jordan and Maloney 1997), resulting in little solidarity. In contrast,

groups which can muster few monetary, material and professional resources, for various reasons – such as being newly formed or radical in outlook – will apparently attempt to generate more extensive network links ‘as an essential replacement for the scarcity of organisational resources’ (della Porta and Diani 1999: 88). They are thought to rely more heavily on social capital, preexisting networks or community relations, what Jenkins (1985) terms ‘indigenous organisation’. According to this perspective, local, small-scale or radical grass-roots environmental groups would be expected to be embedded in denser networks than national groups as they strive to use limited resources to best effect (Edwards and McCarthy 2004: 141).⁵ Previous research suggests that this supposition does not always match what has been empirically tested. Lhotka et al.’s (2008) study of environmental organizations in Alabama, for example, found that environmental groups that were best resourced were also the best networked and that the outreach capacities of groups run by volunteers were much less effective.

We can also learn from the resource mobilization approach that national environmental organizations like Friends of the Earth, which acquire most of their funds from ‘supporters’⁶, will likely seek to keep them loyal in the face of high levels of multiple memberships. In 1997, 65.8 per cent of Friends of the Earth’s paper membership belonged to at least one other environmental organization (Jordan and Maloney 1997: 82). As we have learned from organizational ecology, high levels of supply of environmental supporterships lead to variation in target constituencies, tactics and issues and dictate movement networks. Thus, McAdam et al. (1988: 715–16) suggest that

the SMO [social movement organisation] must negotiate a niche for itself within the larger organisational environment within which it is embedded. This usually entails a complex set of relationships with other organisational actors representing the movement.

According to Tony Juniper, ex-Director of Friends of the Earth (Habitats Campaigner at time of interview), the result is ‘regular informal liaison or coordination meetings with other major environmental . . . groups . . . [to] make sure that there isn’t a duplication of efforts and resources . . .’ (interview in Szerszynski 1995: 89, cited in Rootes 2007).

This liaison, historically at least, included the once-monthly ‘Kentish Town Dinner’, at which the executive directors of the big environmental organizations met to formulate policy, and decide how best to divide labour (Seel 2000). It certainly resulted in differentiation; while Greenpeace has had a historical tendency to mobilize money from its emergent action supporters network, to allow it to perform professional media-oriented stunts on global issues, Friends of the Earth

has tended to focus more on locally based campaigning, offering direct involvement for local people. Consequently, Rootes (1999) suggests, rather as Levitsky does for the LGBT movement, that environmental organizations are not competitive so much as they increasingly cooperate on the basis of an accepted division of labour.

Diani and Donati (1999: 20), however, would argue that despite the existence of a consensually agreed division of labour, environmental organizations that seek finances continue to compete to attract new supporters. To do this, many groups offer, in the Olsonian sense, selective incentives – such as a monthly update, car stickers and free publications. They are also said to exaggerate the benefits of being a member, downplay the constraints they face and seek to maintain a favourable public image. Hannigan (1995: 94) suggests this is why ‘big’ groups tend to turn their backs on local issues (as Schlosberg 1999: 122 found in the United States) in favour of drastic doomsday-like, ‘sexy’, or winnable issues. Although this is probably exaggerated, it is certainly true that large environmental groups tend to cooperate more with other organizations most like themselves (Saunders 2007b). And, according to Weston (1989: 205), the two main factors that Friends of the Earth (at least in the past) used to select its key campaigns were funding availability and win-ability. More recent observers have added organizational maintenance to the pot. Rawcliffe (1998: 78), for example, notes how large environmental organizations like Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth seem increasingly motivated by self-investment, and that, consequently, their activities are becoming curtailed by their cumbersome budgets (Jordan and Maloney 1997: 18–25).⁷ Certainly by 1992, ex-employees and ex-allies of Greenpeace thought that ‘Greenpeace had become mired in its own bureaucracy and had lost touch with the grassroots, that it had become a cumbersome sluggish organization that decreased in effectiveness as it increased in size’ (Dale 1996: 5).⁸

Thus, although local groups might often be whistle-blowers on important local issues (Friends of the Earth 2002a: 3), their campaigns may not always be fully supported nationally. Consequently, some local groups may feel that national groups do not give them sufficient support, engendering a sense of suspicion (DeShallit 2001). Although, as we shall see below, this is probably too harsh a judgement of Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace in the United Kingdom, Diani and Donati (1999: 23) report that it is true for the Italian environmental movement in which national environmental organizations apparently only support local mobilizations against high-risk plants ‘to gain visibility for themselves [rather] than promoting the struggles in the first place’. At the very least, the literature on environmental movement organizations notes that large organizations must act in their self-interest in order to sustain themselves. Drawing on this idea, Tilly’s (1985) interpretation of

resource mobilization theory notes that self-interested groups are likely to engage in impromptu game analysis, estimating the optimistic best, and pessimistic worst likely outcomes of competition and/or cooperation (Forder 1996), with the overriding objective of self-gain.

For 'not in my back yard' (NIMBY) groups, logic would suggest that the best tactic would be to compete with other local groups to ensure that the locally unwanted land use (LULU) they are campaigning against is built in their competitors' constituency and not their own. An underlying economic motive may be the likely deleterious effect on property prices. This is common in the early stages of local campaigning, as evident in the 1980s Kent-based anti-Channel Tunnel Rail Link campaigns (Rootes and Saunders 2001), in which groups protesting against Routes 3 and 4 were, to the dismay of campaigners against Route 1 and 2, promoting any alternatives to save their own backyards. Similarly, in the early 1990s, the Greenwich Society promoted a bypass that would have increased total traffic volume throughout the borough, but removed congestion from their local patch (Connelly, interview June 2001). The immediate response to the late 1980s South Circular Assessment studies in London, which proposed a series of possible road schemes to relieve congestion, was outright hostility between groups representing different constituencies. The first meeting of the umbrella group ALARM (All London Against the Road Menace) was the scene of much bickering and 'nigh-on gang warfare' (Shields, interview June 2001). There was also a small amount of NIMBY rivalry in anti-waste facility campaigns in Kent (Rootes 2003a).

Sooner or later, NIMBY organizations usually begin to realize that there are wider issues that need to be articulated in order to win their campaign, and that their concern is only part of the broader picture. Rucht (1990: 171) suggests that if NIMBY groups are initially unsuccessful, they begin, perhaps out of desperation, to question the need for LULUs per se. Issues like exclusion from consultation and decision-making (procedural rhetoric), the search for alternatives, and the wider relationship of the issue to other policies (global rhetoric) begin to be addressed (Gordon and Jasper 1996). At the extreme, activists may even commence campaigning for a new social order. For instance, some activists in local anti-road action groups began to address the wider anti-car agenda by promoting green transport plans, while more radical anti-roads protesters began to engage with anti-capitalist protests, just as local anti-incineration campaigners have addressed wider waste management issues by coordinating local composting projects (Rootes 1999: 298). In this kind of scenario, the rationale of protecting one's own constituency gives way to the more comprehensive rationale of addressing broader concerns, so reducing propensity for inter-group conflict and competition.

The transition from NIMBY to NIABY (not in anybody's back yard) prevents local groups from competing and enables them to support one another instead. Rucht (1990: 171) calls this transition the 'principle of generalization', and suggests that it is most likely to happen when the conflict is lengthy, the activists involved are young and well-educated, protest groups and organizations are tightly inter-linked, and when groups with which the NIMBY group is networked have a well-developed ideology and much experience. Based on nine case studies of anti-nuclear and airport construction campaigns in West Germany, France and Switzerland, Rucht (1990) found that the 'principle of generalization' accurately reflected campaign groups' trajectories.

There is certainly a tendency to find that a lack of NIMBYism brings groups together and that a local case of contention can result in the integration of NIMBY groups into the NIABY (not-on-anybody's-back-yard) field (Robinson 1999). Local contentious issues are useful for bringing together groups from different ideological and strategic planes as groups either realize the benefits of cooperation, and/or feel too weak to fight the cause alone.

According to Tilly (1985), once groups realize that they can benefit from interaction, decisions on whether to cooperate are dictated by patterns of gains or no-gains, resulting in a process of trust-benefit generation. This he terms 'rational interaction', the result being that 'egoistic parties . . . recognise that cooperation suits their interests' (Tilly 1985: 735). It becomes tactically and strategically preferential for organizations to interact with those others with which they have a symmetric relationship of trust and gain (Todeva and Knoke 2002: 4). As Lhotka et al. (2008: 241) report, 'Trust between groups is a quality to be earned'. Positive interaction is required before more positive interaction can take place. Unfortunately, building positive relations is not always easy across ideological divides or even between similar groups.

The historic relationship between Friends of the Earth and Earth First! is a classic example of a marred trust-benefit relationship. In the early 1990s, Andrew Lees, Friends of the Earth's campaigns coordinator, was actively contacting local groups asking them to disengage or refrain from contact with Earth First! groups, fearing that it would spoil Friends of the Earth's reputation and credibility (Doherty 1998).⁹ Earth First! and other anti-roads groups were dismayed with Friends of the Earth when it abandoned the anti-roads protest at Twyford Down in 1992 after being threatened with an injunction, which would have crippled the organization, forcing the choice of either pulling out or dealing with organizational collapse (Lamb 1996: 177). Needless to say, it chose the former course of action. In contrast, for Earth First!ers the singular objective was to prevent the road being

built at all costs. Lush (quoted in Wall 1999b: 68), a sympathetic protester, had the following view:

[Earth First!ers proclaimed] 'we're the best, Friends of the Earth copped off and f**ked off'. . . yet when you look at it, they really tried to help the Twyford Down Association. They set up this extremely bizarre 'we are the middle class, we are representative of middle England' and extremely media-obsessed camp. They found it uncomfortable, but they were f**king there . . . After three days the police cut through this very-easy-to-cut chain and they got slapped with this injunction [meaning that] they could be fined as a company and have their assets taken . . . but as a company they have to make decisions . . . unless they wanted to cease to be Friends of the Earth.

Unfortunately for Friends of the Earth, the majority of EarthFirst!ers were unsympathetic to its need for organizational maintenance, resulting in a chasm between the two which deepened when Friends of the Earth claimed the limelight for the victory of the East London River Crossing road campaign – which was really won by the Oxleas Alliance, a coalition including Earth First! and the Wildlife Trusts and sustained by local campaigners (Stewart in interview, June 2001).¹⁰ Torrance, founding member of Earth First! and Oxleas Alliance representative, reprimanded Friends of the Earth for deviating from the planned strategy of shared victory and urged that caution should be exercised in future transactions (in interview, 2001). This has increased scepticism and distrust among EarthFirst!ers – many of whom were in the first instance wary of becoming involved in an alliance with what they deemed to be a competitive organization like Friends of the Earth, referring to them as ' . . . namby pamby environmental organizations that are more worried about their image than saving wilderness' (Earth First! website 2004). On the other hand, the conservative (prefaced with both a lower- and upper-case 'C') Twyford Down Association did not feel as if Friends of the Earth had let them down; it considered that all legal means had been exhausted and thanked it for continued support through a tactical voting campaign (Porritt 1996). By contrast, some members of the Twyford Down Association regarded EarthFirst!ers as 'anarchists parachuting into the campaign', lacking both local knowledge and emotions (Bryant 1996).¹¹

There have since been attempts to reconcile links between Friends of the Earth and Earth First! Ex-Friends of the Earth director, Charles Secrett, attended the 1995 Earth First! Summer Gathering, and relations at the 1995–6 Newbury Bypass protest were much more amenable, with Friends of the Earth staff present as legal observers. Yet, as Porritt admits (in Bryant 1996: 303), 'no-one can ever pretend

that so diverse a range of tactics and organizations can hold together without a certain amount of internal strife’.

Indeed, Friends of the Earth has much more in common with Greenpeace than Earth First! and hence a greater inclination to cooperate, as Juniper (a more recent ex-director), relayed:

although it [Greenpeace] does direct action, it does it in ways which enable it to function. . . like a national membership organisation with an office and everything . . . to that extent we’re able to work with them. . . in a more upfront and open way than some other . . . more grassroots and informal networks are able to relate to us. (quoted in Seel 2000)

Previous research suggests that organizations with the same, or very similar organizational structures and ideologies are the most likely to gain from joint activity, and therefore cooperate, especially when not competing. Diani (1995) found that this rang true for the environmental movement in Milan. Similarly, Schlosberg (1999: 129) reports that networks of environmental organizations in the United States are based on ‘rhizomatic organizing’ – uniting around similarities. This might include local people networking to solve a local problem, or groups in different areas responding to similar circumstances. Although similar organizations tend to be the most likely candidates for cooperation, they are also, as we learn from organizational ecology, more prone to competition as they share a niche space. The circumstances that lead similar organizations to compete rather than cooperate require exploration. I now turn to see whether my primary research illuminates our understanding of the role of resources in relationships. The focus of this exploration is on the conditions under which NIMBY groups generalize, the role of niches in shaping competition or collaboration, whether national groups sideline their local counterparts and the extent to which resource-poor groups are able to foster network links.

Resource mobilization and networks in practice: The London data

Do NIMBY campaigns generalize?

There are countless examples of generalization in campaigns against roads and waste facilities. The example of aviation campaigning in London, however, demonstrates that this may be a long and drawn-out process. In aviation campaigning, the interactions between local and national organizations has not resulted in a NIABY attitude, but instead required national environmental organizations’ to compromise their own NIABY stance. Thus, instead of outright

opposition to new runways, the Airport Watch coalition initially agreed to an awkward compromise to promote a Thames Estuary airport as an alternative. National environmental organizations continue to emphasize the climate change implications and development pressures that expanded aviation capacity will bring wherever new runways are placed, but local groups have, in some cases, been slow to grab the baton. The No Third Runway Action Group at Heathrow was willing to use almost any ammunition it could find to prevent the construction of a third runway at Heathrow airport, without stepping outside of the law because it was dependent on its local council for financial support (more on this in Chapter 5). The No Third Runway Action Group's instrumental rationality, typical of NIMBY groups, may have been what prevented it adopting a NIABY stance. The Group's enthusiasm for an estuarine airport goes hand in hand with a weaker concern for the broader development and climate change implications it would have. Heathrow and Communities Against Noise, the aircraft noise organization, had been gradually introducing its newsletter readers to the grand-scale environmental implications of aviation expansion so as not to offend its largely Conservative supporter-base, and this is slowly having a noticeable effect. This suggests that, at least in some cases, relations between national and local environmental organizations need to endure over the long term for a NIABY scale-shift to occur. History seems to support this; it is probably no exaggeration to state that it was a matter of decades before local anti-roads campaigners coalesced into a network with common goals.

***Do environmental organizations carve out a niche,
and does this help them overcome competition?***

The survey results provide very little evidence of competition between environmental organizations. But this does not prove that competition does not exist, but rather that competition is not best measured by a survey instrument. By contrast, qualitative interviews with key campaigners did reveal instances of competition. The questionnaire asked each respondent to list their organization's five most important competitors. Only 5 national, 1 regional and 2 local organizations claimed to have competitive relations with others, giving a total of 22 competitive relationships, as shown in Table 4.1.

Of these 22 competitive relationships, 15 did not have collaborative or information sharing links. This indicates that, in the survey sample at least, environmental organizations are most likely to admit to competitive relations with groups with which they entirely lack network relations. It could be that a lack of contact results in wariness and becomes self-reinforcing. Certainly trust-benefit relations will be absent in such situations because of the lack of opportunity to develop reciprocally supportive ties. Seven of these competitive relations exist between

Table 4.1 Competitive relationships in London's environmental network

1.	London Federation of City Farms/Groundwork
2.	League Against Cruel Sports ¹² /International Fund for Animal Welfare
3.	League Against Cruel Sports/RSPCA
4.	League Against Cruel Sports/Hunt Saboteurs
5.	Ramblers Association/National Trust
6.	Ramblers Association/Youth Hostels Association
7.	Ramblers Association/Living Streets
8.	Ramblers Association/Transport 2000
9.	Women's Environmental Network/Friends of the Earth
10.	Women's Environmental Network/Greenpeace
11.	Street Tree/Groundwork
12.	Street Tree/Tree Council
13.	Street Tree/NUFU
14.	London Friends of the Earth/Greenpeace
15.	London Friends of the Earth/Campaign to Protect Rural England
16.	London Friends of the Earth/Transport 2000
17.	London Friends of the Earth/Royal Society for Nature Conservation
18.	Groundwork Southwark/SEA (acronym unknown)
19.	Groundwork Southwark/Planet Earth
20.	RSPB Bromley/British Trust for Ornithology
21.	RSPB Bromley/London Wildlife Trust
22.	RSPB Bromley/National Trust.

The organization listed first, in each case, is the one which listed the other as a competitor.

organizations in which both parties are specialist organizations, or which fill a similar organizational niche. League Against Cruel Sports (which considered itself part of an environmental network), for example, has a similar organizational remit to all three organizations it competes with, as do the Ramblers Association and Living Streets, and Bromley Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and the British Trust for Ornithology (see Table 4.1). However, this pattern is only seen in a minority of competitive organizational situations, which indicates that organizational ecology dynamics (Hannan and Freeman 1977, 1989), while they might be at play, appear not to be crucial in determining which organizations compete, or at least not in instances of competition that organizational representatives disclose.¹³

The few instances of competition disclosed in survey responses means that it is not possible, with the data I have, to accurately determine the conditions under which competition and cooperation occurs. Yet interviewees frequently discussed competition in in-depth interviews, whether this be for members, money, finance or to claim an issue as their 'property'. Schofield (Campaign to Protect Rural England Head of Regions) summed up the nature of competition between environmental organizations with the phrase: 'I think there is always competition by default between organizations for supporters and money and stuff' (in interview October 2003). Phil Thornhill (director of Campaign Against Climate Change) went so far as to suggest that Friends of the Earth may have been actively trying to stifle competition from Campaign Against Climate Change. Friends of the Earth had at one point in time allegedly made it awkward for Thornhill to draw on Friends of the Earth resources – such as use of the photocopier – for Campaign Against Climate Change promotional material, even though Thornhill was also a committed local Friends of the Earth campaigner. Indeed, Campaign Against Climate Change has continued to feel subject to a predator-prey relationship. While the relationship between Friends of the Earth and Campaign Against Climate Change appeared – at least at face value – to have improved by the time of the December 2010 National Climate March, at which Friends of the Earth director Andy Atkins gave a rousing and welcomed speech, other environmental organizations were not in its good books. At the post-march rally, a spokesperson for Campaign Against Climate Change took to the podium to thank Atkins for his speech, but also stated: 'Don't we know who our friends are. Thank you Andy. Campaign Against Climate Change is skint. Thank you Greenpeace for bringing your banner. Give us your f**king money'. The remark about Greenpeace was very sarcastic.

The Campaign to Protect Rural England has also sensed competition from Friends of the Earth and RSPB. In 2003, some of its campaigners were unhappy to

see that those two organizations were taking up campaigns against reforms to the planning system, an area they deemed to be their speciality:

I have heard through some of their [RSPB's] staff that they want to do more in London. And I thought 'Oh my God, no' they might start treading on our toes a bit in terms of supporter bases. But if they come to London . . . on the basis of their profile, members will go to them. I think they've already got something ridiculous like 27,000 members in London and we've got 6,000. They might take some of our members but it almost certainly would not be reciprocal. (Waugh interview June 2003)

While I do not have conclusive evidence that formation of niches prevents competition, it certainly seems to be the case that campaigners working within environmental organizations feel threatened when others begin to work in their niche area, even if this does at times strengthen the overall profile of their campaigns.

Are local groups sidelined?

Although national environmental organizations have considerably more links with other national organizations over local ones, it is unfair to suggest that they sideline local campaigners (Saunders 2007b). A scan of the DL list compiled for national environmental organizations¹⁴ – a list of all connections that survey respondents of national organizations have with others – shows that they have more links with other national organizations than regional and local organizations. As each organization was given the opportunity to list five organizations at each spatial level (local, national and regional), it would be expected that there be the same number of links directed towards organizations at each of these spatial dimensions. However, national environmental organizations frequently named just one, two or even no local and regional organizations, but several national ones, showing that they have a clear bias towards exchanging information and collaborating with one another over local and regional groups.¹⁵ In the information received and provided and in the collaboration networks, there are more than 50 linked pairs of national organizations (these networks are derived from questions 11–13 in the questionnaire, see Appendix 1). National group ties with regional and local groups are much fewer, with 17 pairs or less. This clearly shows a tendency for national groups to work together and share information with one another to a much greater extent than they do with their local and regional counterparts (Table 4.2).

But this does not straightforwardly translate to a conclusion that local organizations are ignored or feel sidelined. Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth and the Campaign to Protect Rural England all have strategies in place to involve local activists in their campaigns. Moreover, most of the local-level campaigners I interviewed were

Table 4.2 Pairs of ties in DL list by the sphere of operation

NETWORK	NO. PAIRS IN NATIONAL DLS			
	Southeast London	Northwest London	Regional (London-wide)	National (London-based)
Collaboration	12	8	11	62
Received- Information	12	8	12	67
Provided- Information	17	9	13	55

content with the support they received from national groups, generally having a nuanced understanding of the nature of resource constraints facing national organizations (Saunders 2007b). Indeed, during my participant observation for one day per week for a 6-month period at the national Friends of the Earth headquarters at Underwood Street, London, I was surprised to note how infrequent calls from local groups were. Sitting opposite the Local Groups Co-ordinator, I was able to see firsthand that she only received two or three calls from local groups per day.

Do resource-poor organizations have the most links?

To test della Porta's and Diani's (1999: 88) assertion that local grass-roots organizations have more ties to compensate for their lack of other resources, the average number of ties for national, regional, and local groups has been calculated on the basis of the DL lists. In the survey, local organizations could list a maximum of 60 organizations, and national organizations could list 75 organizations with which they have network links (that is with multiplex links counted more than once – so a link in each of the information providing, information receiving and collaboration matrices would lead to a score of 3).¹⁶ By weighting the ties of London-based national organizations to make them equivalent to the maximum number of ties that local organizations could list,¹⁷ southeast London environmental organizations listed on average 5.39 ties, northwest London organizations listed 5.5, regional (London-based) ones 5.75, and national organizations 11.73. Assuming that national organizations are the most resource-rich, it appears that resource-poor organizations have fewer ties than resource-rich ones, suggesting perhaps that the presence of resources, while it might stifle flexibility, actually facilitates networking, whereas a lack of resources hampers it, in tune with Lhotka et al.'s (2008) findings.

Despite this evidence, it is certainly not the case that a wealth of resources always leads to wide and inclusive networks. Although Greenpeace has an enormous stockpile of wealth compared to most other environmental organizations, it is a relatively marginal actor in all networks. This is because Greenpeace is very protective of its brand and appears to prefer to work collaboratively only when it can hold the reins. On the other hand, London Wildlife Trust was in a financial lull at the time of surveying,¹⁸ but was the most popular organization for networking (whether in the receiving of information, or in collaboration), falling close behind Friends of the Earth only in information provision. The Campaign to Protect Rural England is also in the top ten most popular organizations in each network and yet its networking abilities, especially at the regional level, are allegedly constrained by a lack of funding (Schofield [Campaign to Protect Rural England] interview, October 2003).

Concluding remarks

This chapter has discussed resource mobilization theory in the frame of rational-actor theory. It has looked at individual and organizational level movement factors in this light, and drawn parallels with organizational ecology. It has considered networking implications of the theory and evaluated the approach. In conclusion to this chapter, we could argue that resource mobilization dynamics appear to go some way towards explaining how and why environmental organizations network in the manner in which they do. As I have shown, it can shed some light on the process by which NIMBY organizations can become embedded in broader environmental networks. Strategic thinking can lead to a scale-shift as they realize, through the process of generalization, that their campaign is just the thin edge of a much broader wedge. It also suggests to us that niches are important for environmental organizations seeking survival in the face of competition from others. The London data provides tentative support for the idea that similar organizations sometimes compete, especially when niches overlap. Similar organizations, though, also work better together than entirely dissimilar ones, especially when they are working under a mutually agreed division of labour. I also found that outright competition between very different types of organizations seems more common when organizations have had little historical contact. This could be because such organizations have lacked opportunities to build up mutually reciprocal trust-benefit relations. Networking also seems more likely when organizations have monetary or staffing resources to make it happen, and/or when the parties involved in collaborative efforts are willing to compromise stances. This latter qualifier is important because it can help explain why Greenpeace – ever protective of its own public reputation – has few network links despite it being one of the most resource-rich organizations in the sample.

Greenpeace appears to hold fast in its views, only entertaining entering coalitions when it can assert some control over them.

However, as has been routinely argued, resource mobilization focuses too much on individual organizations and assumes they take a coldly rational approach. Even Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace – among the most established and corporate-like environmental organizations in Britain – are much more altruistic towards fellow environmentalists than they would be if they were truly economically rational and absorbed by organizational maintenance. And if it were true that interaction in environmental networks was completely dictated by instrumental rationality, there would still need to be consideration of political processes and opportunities (Chapter 5). Given that environmental organizations are not entirely at the dictates of instrumental rationality, we also must consider culture, collective identity and solidarity (Chapter 6 and Chapter 7). Zald and McCarthy (1987: 180), key proponents of resource mobilization, would agree. They close their resource mobilization-based account of competition and conflict among social movement organizations stating that ‘at some point, social movement analysis must join with cultural and linguistic analysis if it is to understand fully cooperation and conflict in its socially specific forms’. Therefore, although resource mobilization can provide us with some useful insights into understanding the rational side of environmental networking, we really need to look beyond it to get a fuller picture. The political environment is also important, and, in an environmental networks perspective, more fluid environmental groups also need to be considered. In the next chapter I turn attention to political opportunities.