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5 Political Structures, Political Contingencies and Environmental Networks

This chapter introduces political opportunity structures and political process theories, and considers their implications for patterns of interaction in environmental networks. These theories essentially argue that political environments impact the emergence and development of social movements. In its simplest form, the key proposition is that relatively open states – those that are decentralized and which encourage participation – are likely to produce moderate movements that mobilize large numbers of protesters. At the extreme, the ideal open state would attract zero protest, as there would be no need for extra-institutional complaint. This is rather like Smelser's (1962) differentiated societies, which he considered create weaker movements than non-differentiated societies (see Chapter 1). In contrast, closed states – which are highly centralized and discourage or even repress political participation – are expected to be hostile terrains for movements, resulting in small, radical, or even violent movements. However, this simplistic explanation glosses over variation in the approach. To get around this, I distinguish between weak and strong versions of political opportunity structure theory. The strong version (e.g. Kitschelt 1986; Kriesi 1995) argues that characteristics of political structures principally determine the incidence and forms of social movements. Weaker versions of the approach – political process theory, especially in its later iterations (McAdam [1982] is an example) – merely assert that political structures and the relationships associated with them are *part* of the social and political environment that social movements must negotiate, and are important among the *many factors* that shape the incidence and forms of social movements (e.g. Tarrow 1998). The former approach is most problematic and is critiqued in this chapter.

Whichever approach is taken, we shall see that scholars have had a tendency to conflate structural and non-structural variables. This makes the name of the theory of political opportunity *structures* seem somewhat inappropriate. Some theorizing also displays a tendency to downplay the effect of organizations' strategy, status and choice of issues upon their actual opportunities for campaigning. To circumvent the latter problem, I draw on literature from pressure group theory to make the concept

of political opportunities more useful for understanding environmental networks. Note that I am purposely omitting the word 'structures' in this part of the account.

After evaluating the theory and discussing its pertinence to extant literature on environmental movements, I tease out the implications of the theory for interaction in environmental networks. The empirical section focuses on the extent to which organizations' strategies (whether insiders, thresholders or outsiders) and self-perceived relationships to the polity (on a continuum from constructively engaged to actively opposed) affect the way in which environmental organizations network with one another. To avoid the charge of being overly statist – a well-versed critique of political opportunities literature – *and* to make the account relevant to local environmental organizations, I look at organizations' relationships with their local authorities in addition to central policymaking institutions.

The 'strong' approach

Political opportunity structure scholars argue that the emergence and behaviour of new social movements can be attributed to the 'structure' of national policymaking institutions (see Lentin 1999; Xie and Van der Heijden 2010). Kitschelt (1986) and Kriesi (1995) wrote the key defining works for the approach. They argued that social movement strategies are determined by the characteristics of the national polity within which they operate. Such theorists tend to imply that movements within a particular state are homogenous entities – that is that organizations and activists working within a given set of structural conditions behave similarly. This assumption is a major weakness of the theory. As Tarrow (1998: 91) suggests, 'If variations in movement structure and strategy could be predicted from differences in state structure, then all of a country's movements would resemble one another'. Yet it is a given fact that movements *within the same country* differ from one another. Furthermore, and more to the point for this chapter, movement organizations even *within the same movement* often have a variety of aims, structures and strategies. For example, animal rights activists include 'hard core vegans' *and* those who argue that 'you don't have to give up meat to care' (see Walls (2002) on the Campaign Against Live Exports in the United Kingdom). This has two important implications for social movement theory: first, that broad-brush approaches to theory gloss over the important differences between organizations and activists within movements in the same country, and second, that it is not feasible to rely on macro structural features of a polity as predictors of social movement behaviour. Decision-making procedures will probably always be more open to moderate groups than to their more radical counterparts. It scarcely needs pointing out that movements and/or organizations seeking fundamental changes to social structures are least likely to be granted

access and are the most likely to be repressed (Tarrow 1998: 92). Thus, I postulate that a consideration of strategies of organizations and their relationship with the polity can tell us much more about environmental networking than any broad-brush theoretical approach. In other words, a more fine-tuned approach than the ‘strong’ one is needed to investigate how political opportunities shape movements.

The chapter also flags up another weakness of broad-brush approaches to political opportunity structures: they tend to assume that all campaigns are directed towards policy change at the national level. The targets of social movements may be considerably more multifaceted than this. Other targets, for example, include international financial institutions, corporations, and local governance (see Chapter 3). While this chapter does not, for reasons of space, address all possible targets, it does at least consider both the national *and* the local polity.¹ I first explore the ‘strong’ approach to political opportunities in more depth.

A critique of the ‘strong’ approach to political opportunity structures

Although it has precedents in the collective behaviour approach, and Lipsky (1970) suggested that fluctuations in political systems should be considered when explaining protest, it was a concept by most accounts coined and christened by Eisinger (1973 – in McAdam 1982, Tarrow 1998; Burnstein et al. 1995; Meyer 2004), who defined it as ‘the openings, weak spots, barriers and resources of the political system itself’ (Eisinger 1973: 11). Note that virtually all accounts entirely overlook Smelser’s (1962) contribution to this branch of the literature. Much ground was made exploring the concept cross-nationally in the 1980s. However, different scholars seem to have adopted idiosyncratic approaches to the application of the theory, sometimes adding new variables more suitable to the particular movement or polity researched. As Staggenborg (2010: 17) states, ‘specific definitions of political opportunity differ considerably’.

According to Tarrow’s (1998) synthesis, political opportunity structure refers to variables that measure the presence or absence of political alliances, divisions within the elite, tolerance of the polity to protest, and repression or facilitation by the state. But this makes the approach seem more coherent than it really is and, in common with many who use the approach, might be considered to evoke improper use of the word *structure* (cf. Goodwin and Jasper 1999, 2004). To illustrate these issues, I explore two key contributions to political opportunity structure theory. Kitschelt (1986) looked not only at what he called ‘input structures’, but also at ‘output structures’. Input structures, for him, were determined by a number of factors including the number of political parties – itself shaped by the nature of the electoral system – the degree of dependence of the legislature on the executive, and

practices in place to deal with interest groups and to aggregate demands. Output structures involved the capacity of the state to implement policies demanded by social movements. Thus, strong centralized states that can govern markets and which have an independent judiciary were seen in a positive light. However, a strong state is not always beneficial for social movements because it has the capability to take strong action *against* the interests of social movements just as it is capable of bringing favourable policies to fruition.

Kriesi (1995), on the other hand, looked at the formal institutional structure (which included some of Kitschelt's input and output structures), and what he called informal elite strategies, which are either inclusive – facilitating, cooperating, assimilating – or exclusive – repressive, polarizing, confrontational. Along with Tarrow, both scholars make the mistake of lumping all these variables under the label of 'structure'. As Rootes (1998) argues, few of these variables are truly structural in nature – many are temporary and volatile. Thus, 'contingent political opportunities' might be a better label for many things miscategorized as structural.

Based upon structural and contingent types of political opportunities, it is possible, although not unproblematic, to conceptualize idealized 'open' and 'closed' polities (Table 5.1). Even though they are usually treated by scholars as if they can be neatly slotted into one category or the other, real life polities always fall some way between these two extreme types. To further complicate, they also change over time. The United Kingdom, for example, is seen to have practiced 'active exclusion' of environmental organizations under Margaret Thatcher (Dryzek et al. 2003), but has been viewed as accommodative under the latter years of her premiership (Rawcliffe 1998).

To generalize from the approaches described above, it might be suggested that idealized 'open' states have a decentralized structure, egalitarian ideology and proportional representation – allowing informal and formal access; thereby absorbing pressure before it builds up, resulting in moderate social movements. In this kind of polity, it is assumed that social movement activists regard negotiations and demonstrations as worthwhile as they will be likely to result in policy gains. As Kitschelt (1986: 302) sums up, those movements in a liberal egalitarian political culture are expected to be much less antagonistic, largely because they have less need to antagonize. By contrast, closed states – which at the extreme are centralized, corrupt and totalitarian – deny access, and activists regard conventional forms of political participation as time-wasting activities. Where protest is repressed, many find it too dangerous to take to the streets. According to this approach, when protest does occur in a closed polity, it tends to sway towards 'more direct forms of struggle such as land occupation, factory seizures, store-house raids and insurrections' (Boudreau 1996: 181) or go underground and be violent and sect-like.

Table 5.1 Idealized open and closed polities

Type of Political Opportunity	Indicator of Openness	Idealized Open Polity	Idealized Closed Polity
STRUCTURAL/ PERMANENT	Degree of centralization	Decentralized	Centralized
	Configuration of power	Proportional Representation	Totalitarian
CONTINGENT/ TEMPORARY <i>(ranked in order of durability)</i>	Political culture	Egalitarian	Corrupt/inegalitarian
	Policymaking capacity	Strong	Weak
	Elite divisions	Divided	Undivided
	Electoral stability	Unstable	Stable
	Policing/tolerance of protest	Tolerant	Repressive
	Alliances and counter-movements	Elite Alliances	No Alliances

A closed polity is most likely to engage in repression of social movement efforts. But heavy-handed policing and repression are thought to act as double-edged swords for social movements. For obvious reasons, they discourage social movement activity by increasing the costs for individual activists, yet could also serve as a stimulant to protest by reinforcing the identity, solidarity and sense of injustice felt by challengers (Kriesi 1995: 177–8; della Porta and Fillieule 2004: 233). Della Porta (1995: 80) sees protest policing as ‘an important barometer of the political opportunities available for social movements’. Although perhaps overgeneralizing, she suggests that tolerant policing fosters diffuse movements, but harsh policing encourages smaller, more radical groups that are inclined to violence.

The contingent/temporary features of a polity are less stable and vary over time, but still impact upon the actual opportunities social movement organizations receive, albeit that these are not structural. Tarrow (1998) suggests that movements are more likely to be successful in gaining acceptance, or making material gains (Gamson 1975) when a political regime is unstable, or has elite divisions. When a government and a shadow government are in close competition, they will have greater proclivity

to support the demands of popular social movements in an attempt to sway public demand in their favour (Maguire 1995). In the United Kingdom, for instance, the Labour Party in opposition has provided consistent support for social movements. Note, for example, Ed Miliband's overt support of the Trade Union Congress march in November 2010.

Unfortunately, Kitschelt (1986) and Kriesi (1995: 177–98) did not stick to the synthesized approach given in Table 5.1. Instead, it seems plausible that they may have cherry-picked variables that suited what they wanted to say about the movements they studied. Consequently, they reach different conclusions about which states are 'open' and which are 'closed'. Kitschelt (1986: 66), for example, described the German polity as closed because of its 'input structures' – having a centripetal party system and weak legislature – and 'output structures' – characterized by 'jurisdictional and territorial fragmentation of the state', an autonomous judiciary and little control over the private sector. Kriesi (1995), however, on the basis of more structural characteristics – such as Germany's decentralized federal system, which has multiple points of access – classified it, perhaps more accurately, as open. In addition, the work of Kitschelt and Kriesi can be viewed as outdated and overly focused on Western industrialized countries.

It is a shame that movement scholars remain unsure about which indicators can reliably be used to characterize a polity as open or closed. The fact is that no one has created a set of dimensions proved to reliably influence the opportunities open to social movements. As Opp (2009: 174) states:

It is highly questionable to provide a priori lists of dimensions and claim that these are related to an increase or decrease in political opportunity structures. Dimensions involve empirical propositions, and it must therefore be tested empirically whether they affect the actual perceived goal attainment of groups.

The upshot is that this leads to the suspicion that Kitschelt's interpretation may have been coloured by his realization that German anti-nuclear organizations lacked access to the polity. However, a more convincing explanation for German anti-nuclear organizations' lack of access to the polity might have simply been the movement's system-challenging ideology and strategies – a contingent rather than structural factor.

Furthermore, as Welsh (2001) argues, not all organizations within a given movement in a particular country will share ideology and strategies. Welsh discusses this with reference to the British anti-nuclear movement, but the argument can be applied to movements more generally. Welsh bemoans that the British anti-nuclear movement is often misrepresented 'as if it corresponds with an actual, undifferentiated collective actor' (Welsh 2001: paragraph 2.1). In actual fact, the

British anti-nuclear movement, despite existing within a constant political structure, was historically split over both tactics and strategy. Whereas one faction focused on constitutional means of opposing nuclear energy, another turned towards education and direct action (ibid. paragraph 3.3). Thus, theories of macro-political opportunity structures neglect to take into account that different factions or even different organizations have varying behaviour that in turn influences strategies and status. As Rootes (1997a: 93) suggests, '[political opportunity] systems may be relatively open or closed to different kinds of issues and or groups, and this makes global categorization hazardous if not entirely arbitrary'.

Further, many variants of political opportunity structure theory assume that all movements depend on, or target, national political institutions to the same extent (Meyer and Staggenborg 1996: 134). In reality, sub- and counter-cultural movements are likely to have more autonomous targets and be considerably less affected than those instrumentally oriented organizations or movements with a 'highly focused problem structure' (Kriesi 1995: 193). What curtails one type of movement (e.g. a closed policy window) may be exactly the feature that spawns a different type (e.g. the rise of the UK's direct action movement) (see Saunders 2007c). This is why Tarrow (1998: 90) warns against what he calls 'the seduction of statism'.

The 'weak' approach

Despite my critique of the strong approach to political opportunity structures, I argue that the weak approach has merit. The weak approach suggests that *political processes* (not necessarily 'opportunities' or 'structures') impact organizations within movements to variable degrees. It is clear that there are many factors contributing to the making of *opportunities for campaigning* within environmental networks that are not structural. For example, Earth First! blossomed in the United Kingdom, when conventional campaigning appeared fruitless and direct action seemed the only viable course of action remaining. Although the political opportunity 'structure' of the state may have been relatively 'open', defeats at public inquiries and the apparent determination of the government to promote road building meant that, at least on the roads issue, channels for legal campaigning were 'closed'. This did not mean that legal avenues for campaigning were equally closed to all environmental groups across issues. At around the same time, the government was relatively open to the campaigning efforts of the Wildlife and Countryside Link and this resulted in a stronger Wildlife and Countryside Act (1990).

The concept of 'political process' is therefore useful for explaining some aspects of environmental activism in Britain. In this book, the concept of political opportunities is not used for cross-national comparison, so this means important politico-cultural

differences between countries are not of concern. That does not mean that my approach is parochial, for I suggest that it can be applied more broadly across countries (see Conclusion). I purposely avoid giving the British polity a generic label as 'open' or 'closed', recognizing that it can be 'closed' in some respects and 'open' in others, and also 'open' to some environmental organizations or issues while being 'closed' to others. Furthermore, non-structural variables are not misrepresented as objectively structural, and I note that movement strategies can and do vary within a single supposedly relatively 'open' polity. Finally, inclusion of radical groups that seek to bypass the state in their campaigning demonstrates my awareness that achieving changes in policy is not the central aim of all environmental organizations. I also look at attempts to influence both state and local level policies. Thus, the caveats of the cross-national and 'strong' political opportunity structure approach are avoided.

In Britain, the electoral system is relatively closed, but this is allegedly balanced by a relatively open administrative system (Rootes 1992: 171–92). The electoral system – especially the first-past-the-post ballot – has stifled the progress of the Green Party of England and Wales, while the alleged relative openness of the governmental structure to representations by environmental organizations has arguably impacted the shape and form of the wider movement (although this may be less true of other issues). In his argument on British exceptionalism,² Rootes (1992) suggested that unconventional protest was largely absent from British environmentalism (as it was until just after the article was published, when direct action networks became prominent) because, among other things, the polity had broadly accepted environmentalism. That the political opportunity structure in Britain has been quite open to *moderate* green groups since the 1980s is indeed widely recognized, being 'sufficient for them [environmental organizations] to remain well-ordered and non-disruptive' (Rawcliffe 1998: 55).

Although the polity is allegedly relatively 'open' to moderate (but not radical) environmental organizations, this does not automatically guarantee success for moderate organizations. An open polity creates competition within the wider movement sector by increasing access for others. Olson (1965: 23) and Jordan (1999), for example, present evidence of 'demosclerosis'. This is the idea that the British policy arena has become so overcrowded and unresponsive to changing circumstances that it cannot effectively incorporate demands of pressure groups. For instance, the Organic Foods and Targets Bill proposed by Friends of the Earth (2000) was suppressed due to pressure from government whips. Harking back to Kitschelt's (1986) 'output structures', even if environmental organizations' Bills become law, they may lack adequate enforcement – as with the toothless Road Traffic Reduction Act of 1997. Contrary to the aims of the Bill, the government has

refused to set targets for traffic reduction, and it can be considered as little more than lip service, in the light of the pro-car Ten Year Transport Plan (DETR 2000) that followed it, and the lack of emphasis on traffic reduction in the 2011 Carbon Plan (DECC 2011).³ According to Porritt (1997: 64):

With the exception of Mrs Thatcher's short-lived 'green period' in the late eighties . . . there has not been an ounce of heavyweight political leadership on environmental issues for the last 25 years.

After 1990, in light of the British government's apparent embrace of environmentalism, which failed to manifest itself in the implementation of new green policies or the more effective enforcement of current environmental legislation, environmentalists became more sceptical of the integrity of Thatcher's 1988 pledge to the environment. By the time of the Rio Earth Summit (1992), a large swathe of the British environmental movement, including environmental organizations that only a few years previously had been regarded as radical – such as Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth – was considered to have 'lost its critical voice, as states, corporations, and environmental organisations all appeared to share the same language, the same commitments and the same appeal to management as the way to solve environmental problems' (McNaughten and Urry 1988: 65).⁴ Undoubtedly, the 1992 recession helped the environment slide down the political agenda. This combination of ineffective policy change and incorporation (some would say co-option) of the environmental movement, led to a perception among diehard activists and radical youth that the mainstream environmental organizations were impotent. Even activists within organizations like Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace were beginning to complain about a lack of action and commitment. Furthermore, a general disillusionment with politics had been steadily developing. Whereas in 1973, 49 per cent of the public believed the system of governing Britain 'could be improved' either 'quite a lot' or 'very much', the figure had risen to 75 per cent by 1995 (MORI 1998).⁵

This and other important events created a political environment ripe for the rise of radical environmentalism. The rights of young people had been infringed by several Thatcherite policies, including the removal of student grants, the implementation of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act (CJA) (1994) and the elimination of unemployment benefits for 16–18-year-olds (Robinson 1999: 343). This created a pool of dissatisfied youth from which the personnel for direct action networks was drawn. It was also in the early 1990s that the government embarked upon its controversial UK-wide road expansion and 'improvement' programme. This resulted in high levels of public campaigning, but culminated in the defeat of objectors in 141 of 146 public inquiries (Must in McKay 1998: 128). Activists of all persuasions, witness to a democratic dead end, were realizing the inefficacy of

official channels for halting roads, and sought alternative means. Relatively high rates of unemployment, and an emerging do it yourself youth counter-culture in the aftermath of the anti-poll tax campaigns that set a precedent for direct action, contributed to a new and much more radical protest culture. The development of do it yourself culture not only coincided with closed political opportunities that spurned extra-parliamentary campaign strategies, but also with an election year (1997) – two types of contingent political opportunities found to be significantly associated with greater networking among environmental groups in the United Kingdom (Poloni-Staudinger 2009: 387).⁶

The emergence of radical environmentalism in the United Kingdom seems to disprove Rootes' (1992) British exceptionalism thesis, which, according to Wall (1999a: 117), was a weak argument. Wall suggests that pre-1992 environmental activism in the United Kingdom was *not* exceptionally non-radical. He illustrates his argument with reference to the 1970s roads protests, the 1980s peace movements and previous spates of animal rights activism, each of which sometimes used militant direct action. What this case does show, however, is the danger of predicting movement trajectories on the basis of permanent political opportunity structure indicators alone, and that more volatile factors can have unexpected and sometimes drastic effects upon movements. As Rootes (2003b: 137) suggests, in his second and more convincing attempt to account for British exceptionalism, that changes in the nature of British environmental protest are better explained by

consideration of the legacies of other protest campaigns, more general changes in political culture, and by the contingent openness or closedness of governments to *particular issues* than by reference to political opportunity structures, *since the formal structures of the political system have remained relatively unchanged*. (my emphasis)

The reduction of direct action 1997–2007 can be explained by the government's withdrawal from the roads program, anticipation of the arrival in power of a potentially more environmentally conscious Labour Party, and the Labour Government's ability, at least at the start of its term of office, to defuse issues before eruption (Rootes 2003b). Tentative support for this is found in evidence that, by 1998, 54 per cent of the public believed the system of governing Britain 'could be improved' 'a lot' or 'very much', down from 76 per cent in 1995 (Ipsos MORI 1998). Similarly, shortly after the 2010–11 'winter of discontent' marked by a range of protests against government plans to reduce public sector spending, 55 per cent of the public were found to be dissatisfied with the government's performance (Ipsos MORI 2011⁷).

Since 2007, there has been a spell of direct action on climate change. Contingent political opportunities can also help to explain this. Activists, drawing on the failure of

the anti-capitalist summit-hopping protests of the early 2000s to build an enduring movement (Mueller 2009, see also, Chapter 3), sought a new focus. Climate change provided them with just that. Activists were motivated to create the direct action focused Camp for Climate Action by virtue of what they perceived to be a disjuncture between the UK government's policy proposals and policy action (see Saunders 2012). While the input 'structures' allowed a Bill initially drafted by Friends of the Earth to become instituted in law (the Climate Change Act 2008), the output 'structures' are yet unable to deliver promised cuts to greenhouse gas emissions.

The case for looking at organizational strategy and status

The global/broad brush approach, as it stands, is barely useful for explaining interaction among environmental organizations, though the weak approach, which focuses on context and contingency is very useful. Dalton's (1994: 171) study of environmental organizations in Western Europe, for instance, concluded that local level factors which shape political opportunities – based on environmental organizations' external identity, ideologies and strategies – were more influential in determining the variety of movement activity within counties than macro-political opportunity factors were at explaining variation between countries. For instance, the lack of political acceptance of the radical environmental group, Earth First!, is more or less consistent across Western industrialized countries despite different political opportunity structures. Hence, political opportunities might be more accurately applied at the organizational level, rather than at the movement level.

Fortunately, we are not left in a theoretical abyss. The distinction between 'insiders' and 'outsiders', derived by scholars of pressure groups, provides a model which can be used to help fine-tune political opportunities theory. Environmental organizations can, like pressure groups have been, be categorized according to the extent to which their strategies reflect archetypal 'insider' or 'outsider' behaviour. Insiders are considered legitimate, are widely consulted by government and have access to the executive, whereas outsiders lack access (Grant 1989). Grant, however, has been criticized by Whiteley and Winyard (1987) for ignoring the differences between status and strategy – status can vary according to the strategy a group is pursuing, and may also depend on the political salience of issues being addressed.

For instance, in some of my early work (Saunders 2000: 74–5), I showed how the status of Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth varies according to strategies deployed and receptivity of the governmental department targeted. The contrasting views of the late Department of Trade and Industry and the Exports Credit Guarantee Department towards Friends of the Earth are shown as an example in Table 5.2. In

Table 5.2 The variable status of Friends of the Earth

	Example 1 : Friends of the Earth as legitimate	Example 2 : Friends of the Earth as incriminate
Department	Department of Trade and Industry	Export Credit Guarantee Department
Quote from Minister	<p>‘Friends of the Earth have an extremely important role to play in helping to shape policy on environmental issues. I value the contribution they are making to the debate on future waste and recycling measure legislation . . . I am determined to build on the good communication links that exist between Friends of the Earth and the DTI’</p> <p>Consumer Affairs Minister Nigel Griffiths, 27 April 1998</p>	<p>‘Far from being a secretive or clandestine process, as alleged by Friends of the Earth, our approach to the Ilusi Dam project has from the outset been open and balanced. All the misinformation involved has flowed from Friends of the Earth, who at no point have sought a meeting with me or my officials’</p> <p>Minister for Trade, Brian Wilson, 2 July 1999</p>

Source: Saunders (2000)

Example 1, Friends of the Earth pursued an insider strategy, resulting in favourable treatment from the Department of Trade and Industry. In Example 2, it deployed an outsider strategy, challenging the decision to fund the Ilusi Dam. The Export Credit Guarantees Department was put on the defensive and outwardly attacked Friends of the Earth, brandishing it a liar and awarding it contingent outsider status. As well as illuminating the importance of strategy for determining political opportunities available for challenging groups, this example also illustrates the importance of a more nuanced conception of political opportunities. Those challenging policy can rely on the receptivity of particular government departments or county/local councils as much, if not more, as on aggrandized nation-wide political opportunity structures.

By distinguishing between status and strategy, and appending the additional category of ‘thresholder’ to describe organizations using a mixture of insider and outsider strategies, like Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace (as suggested by Baggott 1995), some of the problems associated with oversimplifying the ‘insider/outsider’ dichotomy are reduced.

An ideal-type insider group has a favourable status with the government, has access to the executive and works bureaucratically – in a manner amenable to the polity itself. Its strategy would largely be comprised of negotiations and consultations with ministers and it would deal with small-scale issues already on the policy agenda. It is to this type of organization that the polity, whether local or national, or a particular department, will be most open. At the opposite extreme, ideological outsiders would be met with a closed polity. They would be ideologically opposed to the state and therefore would have an unfavourable status. Their strategy bypasses the state – they may be a small violent group, or seeking self-directed change. Issues concerning them would be broad ranging and incompatible with bureaucratic polities (Table 5.3). This approach is useful for showing that groups facing an open political structure as ‘insiders’ (Grant 1995: 18–23) are likely to moderate their tactics. For such groups it becomes important to ‘not jeopardize their relationship with government by attacking public policy openly’ (Baggott 1995: 10). For this reason, ideological outsiders that regard the state as their adversary, and insiders who deem the state an ally and partner can be expected to dissociate.

This theory is reflected in what we already know about the environmental movement. Rawcliffe (1998: 17), for example, notes that the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) is an ‘insider’ environmental organization. As a result of its status, the RSPB is considered unlikely to network with radicals like Earth First!. Similarly, in their study of networking among environmental organizations in Alabama, Lhotka et al. (2008: 237) found that politically neutral groups chose to avoid working with activist groups to prevent themselves from being labelled as ‘anti-business’.

Thresholders meeting a relatively inert set of political opportunities can be expected to network most extensively due to their unconstrained status and use of strategies. Greenpeace, for example, which uses mostly thresholder strategies, has denied any links with Sea Shepherd, a radical splinter group, so as to not further impair its already controversial reputation (Pearce 1991: 30–1). Although allying with a more radical group may be beneficial to Greenpeace through the radical flank effect – by making its own demands appear more practical and compromising – groups will also be likely to be wary of the ‘negative radical flank effect’, in which counter-movements or the state tarnish entire movements as deviant (Haines 1988: 167). This is likely to have implications for the way in which more radical groups are received by the mainstream movement, as well as on how the polity reacts to demands from the movement as a whole. In practice, a range of tactics across the insider-outsider spectrum can give social movements strength, even if it does provide tensions over credibility and funding (Spalter-Roth and Schreiber 1995).

Table 5.3 Implications for interaction in environmental networks based on strategy and status

Contingent opportunity 'structure'	Type of challenger	Status	Strategy	Issues	Network implications
MOST OPEN	Insider	Legitimate	Negotiates with ministers	Seeks piecemeal, small incremental gains on issues already on the policy agenda	Few network links
		Has access to executive	Works as a consultee		Some ties to insiders and thresholds
		Bureaucratic and professional			Distanced from (ideological) outsiders
	Thresholder	Sometimes has insider status	Uses a mix of insider and outsider strategies	Works on issues that are usually already on the policy agenda	Has strategic ties with others at all levels
		Sometimes has outsider status		Seeks to put new uncontroversial issues on to the policy agenda	Is most central in networks due to flexible status
		Semi-professional			
	Outsider	Not legitimate	Media, non-violent direct action	Seeks support for issues new to the policy agenda	Has links with thresholds and ideological outsiders
		OR, lacks skills/knowledge	Works to change public opinion	Many of these issues will be controversial	
		Amateur			
MOST CLOSED	Ideological outsider	Ideologically opposed to the state	Direct action, possibly violent	Works on issues outside of the state's remit	Small alienated cliques
			OR, seeking self-directed change	Seeks radical social and/or political change	

Note: This model is based on categories of pressure groups suggested by Grant (1989) and Baggott (1995) but I developed the content.

Political opportunities and interaction in environmental networks: The London data

This section of the chapter takes a look at the findings of the survey of environmental organizations in London, and illustrates them with interview quotes as appropriate. It begins by looking at the extent to which organizations that use different types of strategies – as insiders, thresholders and outsiders – cooperate with each other, before turning to consider the extent to which status, measured by organizations' perceived relationships to local and national government, seems to determine patterns of collaborative networking. The section on status is split into two further subsections, looking at local and national governance in turn. The discussion of status with each of local and national governments begins with some contextual information gleaned from qualitative interviews, which illustrate the variable extent to which environmental activists consider local and national governance to be 'open' to their demands. This background information is included because it helps to further demonstrate why broad-brush approaches to political opportunities can be inappropriate, and helps explain why environmental organizations have a variety of types of relationship with local authorities and national governments. It also allows us to circumvent another issue with political opportunities theory. Objective political opportunities matter little if organizations and activists within them are unaware of them (Snow and Soule 2010: 84). As McAdam et al. (2001: 43) state: 'No opportunity, however objectively open will invite mobilization unless it is (a) visible to potential challengers and (b) perceived as an opportunity'. Thus, the emphasis here is on perceived openness rather than on any objective measure.

Organizational strategies and inter-organizational networking

In practice, very few organizations (only three in my sample) are pure outsiders. Even the radical anarchist environmental organization surveyed claimed in its survey response to engage in occasional lobbying. Unfortunately, this means that we are unable to draw particularly concrete conclusions about the behaviour of ideological outsiders. Nonetheless, consonant with expectations, all of the three collaborative ties that outsider groups admitted having to other environmental organizations were directed towards thresholder organizations. More importantly, *none* were with insiders. Of thresholders' 140 ties, a high majority (86%) were directed towards other thresholders (Table 5.4). This is likely to be because thresholders have similar political viewpoints and strategies. As they are not insiders, they are more likely to require support from allies and, unlike some radicals, are pragmatic enough to cooperate. This finding is supported by Poloni-Staudinger's (2009) research: Of

Table 5.4 Collaboration network by balance of activities

INITIATORS OF TIES (i)	RECEIVERS OF TIES (j)							
	Insiders		Thresholders		Outsiders		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Insiders	6	26	17	65	0	0	23	100
Thresholders	17	12	120	86	3	2	140	100
Outsiders	0	0	3	100	0	0	3	100

Note: the initiator of a tie is always the questionnaire respondent and receivers are the organizations that the respondents nominate.

all environmental protest collaboration reported in the Reuters Business Briefings 1980–2004, lobbying – a thresholder strategy – makes up 50 per cent of all cooperative protest acts. In contrast, only 8 per cent of the collaborative acts identified by Poloni-Staudinger were protest-based (an outsider strategy).

Collaborative ties from insiders to outsiders are missing, but we would not expect questionnaire respondents to admit to dealings with outsiders, at least not the most radical of them. Indeed, previous research has shown collaborative links have existed between radical outsiders and their more moderate counterparts, although the moderate parties are often unwilling to admit so. Seel and Plows (2000: 119), for example, noted that ‘Greenpeace . . . sometimes gives “under the counter” financial assistance to local Earth First! groups or particular issue campaigns’. Yet Greenpeace is virtually silent over this cooperation. It may also be that thresholders perceive their links with insiders to be more important than their links with outsiders, thus the results might be considered to be partially an artefact of the question asked, which focused only on the top five collaborative links.

Relations with local borough councils

Open or closed?

Organizations within the same borough have different perceptions of the openness of local government. For instance, while Greenwich Friends of the Earth has, at best, a contingent relationship with Greenwich Borough Council (GBC), Plumstead Common Environmental Group, a conservation organization has a constructive one. The coordinator of Greenwich Friends of the Earth (Bates, interview February 2001) claims that ‘to be frank, they [GBC] are barking up the wrong tree’, that

GBC deprioritizes the environment by placing the economic agenda at the heart of decision-making, and views Greenwich Friends of the Earth as a 'thorn in their side'. Commenting on Plumstead Common Environment Group's constructive relationship with the council, Julia Cowdell, the group coordinator suggested in interview that 'they [GBC] are quite receptive to us, and they know us very well now and they do trust us, which is good to have'. Consequently, the group has seriously considered adopting a more formal partnership (Cowdell, interview, September 2003).

Environmental organizations in northwest London equally have contrasting views of the 'openness' of their local authority. In the Borough of Ealing, the Local Agenda 21 (LA21) group claimed that LA21 in Ealing amounted to 'words and not action' as annual pollution reports had not been produced by the council since 1997. This group is clearly dismayed by their local authority's apparent lack of concern for the environment. Yet a local conservation group, Friends of Blondin Park, has a very productive relationship with the local council, having won an Ealing Council Green Award for two years running.

Relationships with local polity and impacts on inter-organizational networking

The 69 organizations that were respondents *and* a part of the collaboration network⁸ answered a survey question on their relationship with their local authority. Of these, 15 claimed to have a constructive relationship, 20 were ambivalent, 13 contingent and 11 had no relationship with their local authorities. Interestingly, not a single organization claimed to have a negative relationship (see Chapter 2 for the operationalization of constructive, ambivalent, contingent and negative relations with the polity). Of the 23 ties initiated by environmental organizations with a constructive relationship to their borough, the majority (44%) were directed towards organizations that lack a relationship with their local governors and 35 per cent towards organizations with an ambivalent relationship to them (Table 5.5). This collaboration network includes the national, regional and local groups, which is why such a high proportion of groups are claiming no relationship with their local authority – most national environmental organizations focus on the national level.

Although the relationship between the No Third Runway Action Group and Hillingdon Borough Council is best classified as 'ambivalent' because of the Council's initial reluctance to support the campaign, it is indicative of how an environmental organization's positive relationship with local government can constrain its activities *and* its network links. Hillingdon Borough Council had reportedly provided at least £50,000 for the anti-third runway campaign (Longhurst and Nadel 2002), including the funding of the anti-airport expansion group's road show that took to the streets

Table 5.5 Collaboration network by relationship to local authorities

INITIATOR OF TIES (i)	RECEIVER OF TIES (j)									
	Constructive		Ambivalent		Contingent		Non-Existent		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Constructive	2	9	8	35	3	13	10	44	23	100
Ambivalent	8	28	12	41	2	7	7	24	29	100
Contingent	7	44	3	19	0	0	6	38	16	100
Non-Existent	2	9	2	9	12	55	6	27	22	100

after the 2003 aviation White Paper was released to raise awareness of the issues. Because the group was dependent upon funding from its local council, it

can't actually do anything illegal because if we do anything illegal, the council will cut off the money. At the same time, we appreciate the frustration of the people who want to take direct action, but we wouldn't at this stage want them on our committee, purely and simply on the grounds that . . . [the group] is funded by the council. (Sobey, Coordinator, anti-airport expansion group, No Third Runway Action Group] interview February 2004)

Being constrained by council funding in this manner caused a rift between those who wanted to take direct action, and those sought to abide by council rules. According to a local anti-third runway campaigner with Longford Residents' Association (local campaigner, LC):

LC There were some people who really wanted to get up and be a bl***y pain in the arse and do things that the airport won't like. But you see the group itself didn't want to, and it split up a bit in that way. I was prepared to be one of those that was militant, but I kept on the ground and I said to the others, 'if you've got anything you want done, like being really militant, I am there with you'. So I tried to keep on both sides a bit.

I What do you mean by being militant then?

LC I mean if they wanted somebody to go and block the airport up, or drive really slowly around, or put posters up or, or just driving around the roads at 5mph for hours and hours in the morning. (interview, January 2004)

Although the anti-airport expansion group is somewhat constrained in what it can do as a coalition, this has not stopped its members from being highly supportive of direct action. Members have, for example, supported the court cases of direct activists who occupied the construction site of Terminal Five. However, even if the local council did not fund the group, it would probably continue to use conventional insider techniques because this allows for the possibility of a contingency plan should the development go ahead:

If, in the final analysis, we lose, we have got to work with those blighters across the road, we have got to get all sorts of different types of facilities and amenities for the people left . . . the association has always been careful to keep the lines of communication open with BAA and people like that. (Sobey, coordinator, No Third Runway Action Group, interview, February 2004)

The highest figure in Table 5.5 is 55 per cent. It provides some indication that organizations lacking a relationship with their local council tend to select allies with a contingent relationship to it. National and regional organizations often lack a relationship with their own local borough councils, but if they have local groups, they are able to impact upon local authorities via these rather than through a centrally coordinated effort. For example, a branch of national Friends of the Earth in northwest London claims that national Friends of the Earth is one of its top five collaborative partners, but national Friends of the Earth itself has no contact with Hillingdon Borough Council either because of its more national focus or because it leaves this kind of work for its local groups. For instance, in their anti-GM campaign, Friends of the Earth called upon local Friends of the Earth groups (that mostly have contingent relationships with their local councils) to engage with their local councils to persuade them to become GM-Free Zones. By 2003, over half a dozen local authorities had voted for the exclusion of GM crops in their area.⁹

Greenpeace undertook a similar strategy in its Incineration Busters campaign (summer 2001–spring 2002). It produced postcards for on-street signing, asking local councils for more emphasis to be placed on the reduction, recycling and composting of waste as an alternative to incineration. Groups of Incinerator Busters were formed throughout the country, consisting mostly of pre-established non-Greenpeace incinerator action groups. Resources and training were provided for local activists. After long and thoughtful research, Greenpeace drew up a pro forma *Zero Waste Strategy*.¹⁰ All local activists had to do was to change the details – for example, the total amount of waste produced by the local authority, the population size, the nature of local industry – and the result was a Zero Waste Strategy applicable to each district or county where activists participated in the campaign (Greenpeace 2001). The Zero Waste Charter that emerged from the Strategy was

the result of wider collaboration involving Friends of the Earth, Communities Against Toxics and the UK Zero Waste Alliance. In England, at least one local authority (Bath and North East Somerset) and one county council (Essex) have adopted a Zero Waste policy. These successes are clearly the result of collaborative ties between (national) organizations that lack a relationship with their local council and local organizations that have at least a contingent relationship with them.

Relations with national government

Open or closed?

Just as with local governance, environmental campaigners' perceptions of national government vary according to organizational type and issue focus. According to a marine campaigner for Greenpeace:

The UK government is pretty good from a climate change point of view. [They are] really up for pushing wind power and . . . when we did our No Nukes, Yes2Wind campaign, their White Paper changed completely . . . they decided that they could go with wind and that it was a viable alternative and . . . we were quite surprised at how good it was. (Dory, in interview January 2004)

But, on other issues, including wood procurement – for which the organization had embarrassed the government by exposing its use of illegally harvested wood from Cameroon to rebuild the Cabinet Office – and GM foods, the government were considered 'really, really bad'.

In terms of aviation, the policy arena is viewed as relatively closed by campaigners because the 2003 White Paper has left decisions more or less in the hands of the aviation industry. In his opening address to the Post White Paper Airport Watch conference, John Stewart, told the audience that:

I think something fairly significant has probably happened as to who we will be focussing on post White Paper. We were focussing on government and civil servants because they were drawing up the White Paper . . . But post White Paper I think is different because we know what the government has said, it feels it has done its bit. It is now saying it is up to the aviation industry and developers to come up with proposals . . . And it seems to me that the key focus now of our campaign needs to be on the developers and the banks and the construction companies. (in interview 2004)

Even prior to the release of the White Paper, anti-airport expansion campaigners were sceptical of the government's stance on aviation. Mike Fawcett (then advisor for the Department for Transport) comment to the Airport Watch Conference in 2001, that 'Blair is committed to sustainable development', was met with raucous laughter from the audience.

The airport lobby have seemingly convinced the government of aviation's importance for the economic growth of the country, despite some contrary evidence. Friends of the Earth, for example, draw on the research of Professor Whitelegg, which illustrates that greener alternatives could bring greater economic return and employment (Whitelegg 2000). According to a Paul de Zylva, head of Friends of the Earth England:

The government is supposed to have green ministers, but they rarely meet, have no weight and aren't reflecting green policies within their departments as they have to deliver on other, often contradictory, policies. Nor are there enough green departments. It is ridiculous having a single department to focus on the environment, which in itself is not green enough. The Department for Trade and Industry, the Department for Transport and the Treasury have few if any environmental and sustainable development concerns and are probably the worst culprits in the government. They are completely ignoring the sustainable development agenda or at best they are seeing sustainable development as a negative anti-progress ideology, which it is not. Either that or they hijack sustainable development so that it ends up meaning all the unsustainable things we are doing now i.e. 'sustainable development means building more runways'. (interview, January 2004)¹¹

In line with the critique of macro political opportunity structures proffered earlier, these interview quotes neatly demonstrate that the openness of the government varies according to the organization involved, the nature of the issue, and the department being targeted. Additionally, we should bear in mind that individual activists' perceptions of the openness of the polity also matter for the actual uptake of political opportunities. I now turn to look at how perceived relationships with the national polity impact upon networking among environmental organizations.

Relationships with the national polity and impacts on inter-organizational networking

Of the 59 organizations in the collaboration network that answered a survey question about their relationship with national government, 6 claimed constructive ties, 7 were ambivalent, 11 contingent, 6 had a negative relationship and 29 had no relationship. Six organizations with constructive relations with the government have only a total of five ties directed to other organizations (at least one of them had no ties at all and the others averaged only one tie each), four to contingent ones and one shared with another organization with a constructive relationship to the government. This indicates tendency for those with constructive relationships with the government to work alone. Perhaps they have less need to collaborate because they are not, like thresholders, seeking to influence public opinion or generate a

groundswell. Additionally, their status in policy circles is already assured. However, the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE), which has a constructive relationship to the government – as a well-known saying goes: ‘Ministers never refuse to meet CPRE’ – works extensively with organizations with a contingent relationship to the government including Friends of the Earth (especially on the Planning Campaign) and the Campaign for Better Transport (then called Transport 2000) (David Conder, Campaign to Protect Rural England, in interview with Debbie Adams, June 2000). However, the Campaign to Protect Rural England, like other ‘insider’ organizations is unlikely to be more outrageous than this in its campaign alliances because its constructive relationship with the government makes it feel awkward about criticizing government schemes. As a staff member told me in an interview:

You have to tread a very thin line when you have this type of relationship with the Government . . . When we are overly critical of their schemes, such as the Deputy Prime Ministers’ Sustainable Communities Plan, it doesn’t go down too well. (Rosy White, Campaign to Protect Rural England, December 2003)

Of the collaborative ties that organizations with a constructive relationship with the government extend, none of the ties are to organizations with a negative relationship to the government. The Campaign to Protect Rural England, for example, would avoid all contact with those with a negative relationship to the government. It was even concerned about working with Friends of the Earth, which has an ambivalent relationship with government, on a campaign to prevent dilution of planning laws. Paul de Zylva, head of Friends of the Earth England considered this clash between the organizations to be due to the Campaign to Protect Rural England’s desire to protect its respectable political reputation:

in government circles . . . CPRE is clearly the ‘respected voice’ and it felt that . . . Friends of the Earth was rocking the boat a little by being straight-up and forward about the issues . . . CPRE felt that their cosy relationship with the government may be threatened by . . . Friends of the Earth’s approach. (interview January 2004)

Along similar lines to the Campaign to Protect Rural England’s wanting to preserve its carefully crafted political reputation, the Environmental Direct Action Group tactfully decided not to be a formal part of a campaign coalition against the Baku Ceyhan oil and gas pipeline project so as not to tar the credibility of the coalition:

Well, we discussed it within the campaign whether they should be officially part of the campaign and the decision was, that for both the coalition and for . . . [the Environmental Direct Action Group] it would impose restrictions. . . . [the Environmental Direct Action Group] wouldn’t be able to behave in the ways they wanted to in terms of any dodgy stuff like office invasions or stuff

that might . . . run foul of the law. They wanted the freedom of not having to tell us every time they were going to do an action . . . obviously because of the way . . . [the Environmental Direct Action Group] works, it is on the spur of the moment and you can't cope with an approvals process on decision-making that takes ages. Partly for purely pragmatic reasons and I guess there is a whole thing about who might be liable for illegal actions. (Nic Rau, Climate Campaigner Friends of the Earth, in interview, January 2004)

In the same vein, while Friends of the Earth allegedly had great sympathy and admiration for the anti-capitalist demonstration in Seattle in 1999 (reportedly, Charles Secrett, then director, was 'really impressed by Seattle because it was such a broad range of people out in the streets'), it will not 'touch May Day [anti-capitalist demonstrations in London] with a barge pole' despite the fact that the organization has become

very interested in [the] anti-capitalist/globalisation . . . issue. In fact that has been the basis of some of our big campaigns. I mean . . . [our organisation] are of course very wary of throwing rocks at windows and getting lots of police out and any of that sort of thing, and as a big organisation, I think they have to be. (Sheila Freeman, post and volunteers coordinator, Friends of the Earth, February 2004)

Data in Table 5.6 further confirms that organizations with a flexible approach in their dealings with government have extensive inter-organizational linkages. Although organizations with a contingent relationship to government have many

Table 5.6 Collaboration network by relationship to national government

INITIATOR OF TIES (i)	RECEIVER OF TIES (j)											
	Constructive		Ambivalent		Contingent		Negative		Non-Existent		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Constructive	1	20	0	0	4	80	0	0	0	0	5	100
Ambivalent	1	13	2	25	3	38	0	0	2	25	8	100
Contingent	6	22	2	7	13	48	3	11	3	11	27	100
Negative	1	10	1	10	5	50	0	0	3	30	10	N/A
Non-Existent	0	0	1	3	9	29	0	0	21	68	31	100

collaborative links with other organizations, most of their ties are directed towards other organizations like themselves. This may be because the contingency of their relationship with the government is a result of their range of insider and outsider campaigning strategies. Organizations with a contingent relationship are likely to be multi-issue, and therefore have more scope for collaborating. For example, as a multi-issue organization, Friends of the Earth cooperated with Stop Esso, the Campaign Against Climate Change and the Environment Direct Action Group on climate change, and WWF and Greenpeace on genetically modified food (The Five Year Freeze). In addition, each campaign team has a multitude of additional linkages. If it were a single-issue organization, it would likely only cooperate with one of those sets of partners.

While few organizations claimed a negative relationship with the government, there are actually 11 ties between these 6 organizations and groups with different configurations of relationships. But most of the links that such organizations have are directed towards organizations that have a contingent relationship to government. Contingent organizations make good allies when they are campaigning with organizations that have a negative relationship with the government on issues that the government is failing to address, and this is likely to be the case when outsider strategies are most appropriate and most popular.

The only striking relationship that organizations with an ambivalent relationship to the government have is with those with a negative relationship to the government. A quarter of their collaborative ties are directed towards organizations lacking government recognition, or preferring to campaign in different ways (Table 5.6). To refresh from Chapter 2, those with an ambivalent relationship to the government have contact with it but always initiate the contact themselves. Thus, they are likely to be whistle-blowers, bringing new issues to the attention of government. This makes others focusing on new or controversial issues likely allies.

Among organizations lacking a relationship with the government, 68 per cent of their collaborative connections are to other organizations like themselves. This is a meaningful percentage because there are 31 ties in this category – a little over 1 per organization. This is largely because of their local focus – of the 66 organizations that claimed to have no relationship with the government, all but 16 were local. Others were internationally focused conservation organizations like Save the Rhino, Rainforest Concern and regional reformist or conservation organizations (London Friends of the Earth and London Wildlife Trust), and radical organizations (e.g. London Anarchist Federation and Platform). There is, however, a high degree of collaboration between organizations with a constructive and contingent relationship to government. This is likely to be at its highest when those with a contingent relationship to the government are on favourable terms with a certain department, or are campaigning on relatively non-controversial issues.

Concluding remarks

This chapter has demonstrated problems that arise in comparative cross-national studies that use the 'strong' approach to political opportunity structures due to conflation of structures and contingent political variables, and the difficulty of prioritizing and operationalizing these concepts. This is not, however, to be totally dismissive of the broad-brush approach to political opportunity structures. Clearly, a polity that represses all protest movements will create movements much more sect-like and underground than one which facilitates them.

However, as I have shown, structural variables alone would wrongly predict that Britain's environmental networks be entirely moderate, given the relative ease with which environmental groups are able to make their representations heard (Rootes 1992). Although this is true for some environmental organizations, others are much more radical than would be predicted using a broad-brush approach. Generally speaking, when comparing environmental organizations *within* as well as *across* countries, it seems to make more sense to consider political opportunities based on strategies and status rather than on structures, or other features of the polity.

The chapter has also, importantly, illustrated that despite enduring and permanent political opportunity *structures*, individual activists have different perceptions of the openness of a particular polity, whether local or national. While some organizations and activists might believe that the polity is performing to the best of its ability and may be easily appeased by its rhetoric, others will scrutinize the gap between rhetoric and action. Yet when policy contradictions or inadequacies become widely known across environmental networks, things change. Upon reaching a perceived democratic dead end as formal routes for political participation fail, activists can come to view policy windows as closed. Upon perceiving few other worthwhile courses of action, direct action can become a matter of course for activists from many different persuasions. This is exactly what happened in the anti-roads campaigns and what has begun to happen in campaigns against climate change and against aviation.

As predicted by the modified theory, which incorporates pressure group theory, this chapter has shown that, within environmental networks, thresholders have the widest variety of ties across the insider-outsider continuum. Insiders and outsiders widely collaborate with thresholders. This, however, is at least partly due to the skew in the data towards thresholders (most respondents were thresholders). Nonetheless, the No Third Runway Action Group provides a textbook example of a local insider being constrained in its relations with outsiders due to fear that it will lose its income and status should it break the law or be associated with criminal activity. Similarly, the Campaign to Protect Rural England was wary about taking an aggressive stance in its campaigning and so was concerned about Friends

of the Earth's more direct approach in the campaign to revoke the Planning Bill. Consequently, most organizations that have a constructive relationship with the government tend to work in relative isolation. The finding that organizations with a constructive relationship to the government rarely chose those with a non-existent or negative relationship as collaborators is congruent with expectations. As do strategically minded organizations (Chapter 4), insiders are concerned to protect their reputations.

In contrast, organizations with a contingent relationship collaborate with one another to a much greater extent. This is most likely to be because they have less need to be concerned about their reputation, which is flexible and issue/strategy-dependent or because their multi-issue focus makes them more likely collaborative partners on a wider range of campaigns. Friends of the Earth, for instance, has consultative status on waste issues and collaborates mostly with insider agencies, but has a radical agenda on 'corporates' with ideological (if not actual) links with the more radical anti-capitalist agenda. When outsiders collaborate with organizations with a contingent relationship to government, this is likely to be on issues that the government is failing to address, or which have become critical (Saunders 2007c). Organizations with an ambivalent relationship to the government appear to sit on the fence, and are in a position to keep radicals relatively content while maintaining a semi-cosy relationship with the government.

Perhaps the most important lesson to learn from this chapter is that a dynamic approach is required. Environmental networks focus on a range of issues, some of which are more warmly welcomed by the government than others. Furthermore, instead of looking just at governance as a target, it would be an interesting exercise to focus on other targets. For example, what effect does the type of relationship that environmental organizations have with *corporations* have on their status, strategies and networking patterns?

We should take note that there is also an emerging global political opportunity structure, focused on international financial institutions like the World Bank and World Trade Organization (van der Heijden 2006) that should be considered. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), for example, is especially relevant to climate change protest (Chapter 3). Furthermore, we could take a leaf out of Melucci's book and begin consider 'cultural opportunities' (Melucci 1985) so much as political ones; never forgetting, of course, that movements are rarely, if ever, homogenous entities. On this note, I now turn to look towards those more cultural aspects of social movements as they relate to new social movement theory.