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**An Examination of Organisational Issues in Third  
Sector Organisations which Undertake Nonviolent  
Direct Action**

Malcolm Clive Carroll

A Thesis submitted for Doctor of Philosophy

Aston University

April 2008

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### **SUMMARY**

This thesis is an examination of organisational issues faced by Third Sector organisations which undertake nonviolent direct action. A case study methodology is employed and data gathered from four organisations: Earth First!; genetiX Snowball; Greenpeace; and Trident Ploughshares. The argument commences with a review of the literature which shows that little is known of the organising of nonviolent direct action. Operational definitions of 'organisation' and 'nonviolent direct action' are drawn from the literature. 'Organisation' is conceptualised using new institutionalism. 'Nonviolent direct action' is conceptualised using new social movement theory. These concepts inform the case study methodology in the choice of case, the organisations selected and the data gathering tools. Most data were gathered by semi-structured interview and participant observation. The research findings result from theory-building arising from thick descriptions of the case in the four organisations. The findings suggest that nonviolent direct action is qualitatively different from terrorism or violence. Although there is much diversity in philosophies of nonviolence, the practice of nonviolent direct action has much in common across the four organisations. The argument is that nonviolent direct action is an institution. The findings also suggest that new institutionalism is a fruitful approach to studies of these organisations. Along with nonviolent direct action, three other institutions are identified: 'rules'; consensus decision-making; and 'affinity groups'. An unanticipated finding is how the four organisations are instances of innovation. Tentative theory is developed which brings together the seemingly incompatible concepts of institutions and innovation. The theory suggests preconditions and then stages in the development of new organisational forms in new social movements: innovation. The three pre-conditions are: the existence of an institutional field; an 'institution-broker' with access to different domains; and a shared 'problem' to resolve. The three stages are: unlocking existing knowledge and practice; bridging different domains of practice or different fields to add, develop or translocate those practices; and establishing those practices within their new combinations or novel locations. Participants are able to move into and between these new organisational forms because they consist of familiar and habitual institutional behaviour.

Key words: New institutionalism; Nonviolent direct action; Innovation; Third Sector; New social movement

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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

My thesis is an examination of organisational issues in Third Sector organisations which undertake nonviolent direct action. The first sub-heading of this chapter introduces the thesis in broad terms. As I introduce the thesis I will also outline how the argument will flow through the subsequent chapters. The second sub-heading commences a review of the available literature relevant to the organisations and issues in my area of study.

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

I will introduce my thesis by: describing the gap in knowledge I seek to address; drawing boundaries around my study; giving broad definitions of the terms I use; and concluding with a sketch of the argument as it develops in each chapter.

The gap I seek to address is: how is nonviolent direct action organised? Organisations which undertake nonviolent direct action are found predominantly in the environment, peace and civil rights movements (Dalton & Kuechler 1990). These organisations are variously described as 'voluntary organisations', 'NGOs' 'social movements' and more. I will use the generic term 'Third Sector' as it is as broad as possible. However, I will need to refer to a body of literature known as 'new social movement literature' (della Porta & Diani 1999) so 'social movements' will feature in the text. I will also refer to 'organisational literature' and note that, within it, the voluntary sector literature, rather than NGO, has the greater focus on issues of organisation (Lewis 1999a). To avoid confusion, I keep to 'organisational literature'.

Nonviolent direct action organisations often come to popular notice. These are organisations worthy of study as they often grab headlines, may get their participants arrested, bring about significant social change and sometimes are referred to in terms associated with terrorism (Castells 1997; Eyerman & Jamison 1989; Hooley & Saunders 1993; Seel et al 2000).



Scholarly interest has come from perspectives such as media studies (Eyerman & Jamison 1989) and rights-based political science (Foweraker & Landmann 1997). Another vast body of academic literature which attends to the phenomenon of nonviolent direct action is new social movement literature (Beck 1992; Castells 1996, 1997, 2000; Giddens 1990; Habermas 1981a). However, little is known about these organisations, nor if the term 'organisation' is appropriate (Jordan & Lent 1999; Milofsky 2001). One known aspect is that many participants committing themselves to nonviolent direct action are volunteers (Carroll 2001b; Carroll & Harris 1999; Dalton 1994; Wall 1999). Although nonviolent direct action has been researched from many perspectives, there is a gap in knowledge: what are the issues of organisation in Third Sector organisations which undertake nonviolent direct action? This question has not received scholarly attention up to now.

I now draw boundaries around this study to focus on the existing academic research. My interest is in social organisation but that is virtually as broad as the whole field of sociology (Berger & Berger 1976). More specifically, my interest is in that social organisation which produces the outcome of nonviolent direct action. Nonviolent direct action is a new social movement phenomenon (Dalton 1994) so I will draw on that literature. I have assumed that there will be organising of some sort to produce the outcome, so I will also draw on organisational literature.

There are a few terms that I will use frequently and which are central to the argument of this thesis: 'new social movement', 'nonviolent direct action' and 'issues of organisation'. Operational definitions of the last two terms will be given after reviewing the literature. At this point I will give broad definitions to focus the argument. By 'new social movement' I mean that broad phenomenon encapsulated by those movements, ideologies, organisations and practices which emerged from the late 1960s. This is more than a distinction in time from 'old' social movements such as those founded on class (Melucci 1996). 'New' social movements are new in many ways including ideology

(Dalton & Kuechler 1990), identity (della Porta & Diani 1999) and structure (Castells 1997).

One key characteristic of new social movements is their logic of action, an expressive logic: 'nonviolent direct action' (Melucci 1996). I use this term frequently throughout this chapter and through the data chapters as it was the term of choice of most of my interviewees who often referred simply to 'nvda'. By nonviolent direct action I mean practical action which has the ideology, identity and expressive logic of new social movements (della Porta & Diani 1999). It is thus qualitatively different from violent direct action. Later in this chapter, I discuss 'nonviolence' in order to contrast it with violence and terrorism. By 'nonviolence', I mean the underlying philosophy of nonviolence; by 'nonviolent direct action', I mean the practice of nonviolence which is imbued with that philosophy.

By 'issues of organisation' I mean that I intend to understand a social phenomenon through organisational concepts. At this point it may be helpful simply to state what I have in mind by using the word 'organisation'. I mean a social structure with tangible and regularly occurring features which help to shape participants' behaviour (Child 1984). By using the term 'issues' I intend to remain open to what emerges from the field (Stebbins 2001; Wolcott 1995). Within the context of 'organisation' as given by Child above, by 'issues' I mean organisational characteristics, or organisational challenges, or practical organisational issues as may emerge.

I now outline the argument of this thesis and, in doing so, introduce the chapters. I begin in this chapter with a gap in scholarly knowledge as the literature review will show. I then examine scholarly knowledge on the issues of organisation in Third Sector organisations which undertake nonviolent direct action. So, in the rest of this chapter, I review new social movement literature and organisational literature relevant to the organisations and issues I seek to address.

This chapter shows that much material in the new social movement literature discusses macro-social issues such as ideology and identity (Giddens 1990). There is also much descriptive material on what new social movements do (e.g. Jordan & Lent 1999). The greatest bulk of the literature discusses what new social movement activity means, whether for modernity or for the individual (Giddens 1990; Lent 1999). Very little material relates to how new social movement activity is organised (Carroll & Harris 1999). From new social movement literature, I draw an operational definition of nonviolent direct action.

This chapter then reviews the organisational literature. This literature provides much material that, at first sight, relates to how such activity is organised. However, the vast bulk of this literature assumes the default model of the 'firm' (Milofsky 2001) and very little relates to my area of interest. From the organisational literature, I draw out an operational definition of 'issues of organisation' which will further shape the research. This operational definition draws on new institutionalism (Scott 1995). I then bring together the literature on new social movements and the organisation literature in order to review the current state of empirical and theoretical knowledge. Some scholarly works synthesise the two literatures (e.g. McAdam et al 1996) and I discuss whether that approach will illuminate my study.

This chapter concludes with a summary of where the review has taken the argument. There is a statement of the gap in knowledge. Then I give a summary of the operational definitions of nonviolent direct action and of issues of organisation. These operational definitions provide the initial theory (Hamel 1993) which, along with the gap in knowledge, form the basis for establishing the research approach.

My research addressed that gap through an empirical study as I found very few organisational studies in the literature relevant to my research area. So, in the second chapter, I present the research approach by which I gathered empirical data. The chapter begins with a brief outline of some general issues in qualitative research including the

reflexive nature of research and the personal values brought to qualitative research (Schwandt 2000; Thorpe 2001).

The second chapter then shows how I came to choose a case study approach and then details what I mean by 'case study' (Yin 1994). I chose to explore a single case, that of the issues of organisation, for which I gathered data from four organisations (Hamel 1993; Yin 1994). I then set out how I went about the analysis of the data. In brief, with scant scholarly work in my research area to draw upon, I used a grounded theory approach (Silverman 2000). Firstly, this was to let the data speak for themselves and then secondly to use an inductive process to draw theory from the data. The second chapter concludes with an account of the pilot study (Carroll 2002; Hamel 1993).

Chapters 3 and 4 present the data gathered during the case study field-work. I gathered data by two main methods: interviews and participant observation. Interviews provided the chief source of data, thus chapters 3 and 4 are liberally sprinkled with quotes which reflect the main themes which emerged from the data and/or which offer special insight. Participant observation was sometimes a source of data but more often it served to contextualise interviewee statements. For example, when a Trident Ploughshares interviewee mentioned "confrontation with the police" I observed that it was a considerably more ordered and peaceful encounter than when Earth First! interviewees used the same phrase. Interview and participant observation data were collected by social interaction between interviewees and myself (Holstein & Gubrium 1999). I accept that, through social interaction, there will have been some degree of construction and implicit interpretation (Holstein & Gubrium 1999). I therefore present these data in two full chapters to let actors' voices emerge, thus giving an empirical account of issues of organisation relating to nonviolent direct action.

In Chapter 5, I set out my analysis and discussion of data presented in chapters 3 and 4. Although I used an inductive analytic method I did not start with a *tabula rasa*; new social movement theory and new institutionalism had helped operationalise the research. I return to that initial theory in the light of my empirical material and seek to cast further

light on nonviolent direct action. Likewise, I return to new institutionalism which did help explain what I found, but did not explain everything. I therefore draw upon other theories to aid explanation. I began this research with a gap in knowledge, so in Chapter 5 I conclude with a summary of where I believe I have addressed this gap and made some contribution to knowledge. I also indicate where further research is needed to build upon that knowledge.

## **1.2 LITERATURE REVIEW**

I will now review the scholarly literature relevant to the gap in knowledge outlined above. My review will first be an over-view of relevant bodies of literature, then a detailed account of research and theorising addressing issues of organisation relating to organisations which undertake nonviolent direct action. From new social movement literature, I will draw out an operational definition of 'nonviolent direct action'. From the organisational literature, I will draw out an operational definition of 'issues of organisation'. I then critically review the existing knowledge in my area of study by bringing together the relevant new social movement literature and organisational literature. Some authorities synthesise the two bodies of literature to operationalise their research. I discuss the implications which this has for my own research.

### **Overview of the Literature**

By reviewing literature, I mean the process of selecting, evaluating and critically discussing literature (Girden 1996) relevant to issues of organising nonviolent direct action. I found numerous bodies of literature which made reference to instances of, or the impacts of, nonviolent direct action, but I restricted my search to that which addressed issues of organising such action. Search engines for on-line databases yielded material, with searches by author being more productive than by subject words. 'Hands-on' journal research at the LSE library was very productive, as was picking up references given in published studies, seeking advice from known experts, and obtaining 44 papers following

international conferences. In such searches I looked for that sort of literature which embodies scholarly knowledge, that is, which offers theoretical or empirical insight and is written in such a way as to enable me to engage critically with it.

Scholarly studies were evaluated by examining their relevance, rationale, research design, analysis and conclusions (Girden 1996) and their use by other scholars in the field. Critical discussion of these texts is of great importance to this review, unlike Fink (1998) who evaluates then merely accumulates published studies. Critical discussion leads to the identification of a gap in knowledge and the operational definitions given later in this chapter. I excluded impressionistic accounts and prescriptive guides unless they were under-pinned by theory. For example, there are many campaigning 'cookbooks' with recipes for different forms of direct action (Evans 1998; Lattimer 1994; Rose 2005; Shaw 1994). The pick of these is Rose, whose guide does have some theoretical structure, unlike the handbooks of Shaw and Lattimer.

The first observation arising from my overview is that new social movements are major players in global civil society (Gamson 1975; Hooley & Saunders 1993; Wapner 1996). Some scholars look to them as the harbinger of a new society (Jordan & Lent 1999; Touraine 1983) and other scholars look to them for new organisational forms or other innovations (Rao et al 2000). The social movement literature is vast and I will draw some boundaries around it. By social movement I mean

*"a collective attempt to further a common interest or secure a common goal, through collective action outside the sphere of established institutions."*  
(Giddens 1997: 511).

Properly, my interest is in new social movements (Melucci 1996), which I now describe.

Dalton (1994), Dalton and Kuechler (1990) and Melucci (1996), drawing from studies of European collective action, identify a number of distinctive features of new social movements. These features cast light on what is 'new' in new social movements which I list, not in any particular order:

*A tendency to ignore the political system*

*Fluidity of membership*

*Greater significance given to ideology (rather than class or geography)*

*Common ideological bond*

*Transnationalism*

*The espousal of a global commons*

*Identity oriented nature*

*Typically, new social movements challenge cultural codes*

*Non-negotiable goals*

*Activity is characterised by an expressive logic*

*Solidarity is seen as an objective in itself.*

The above list of features contrasts with both old social movements (such as those based on labour) and poor people's movements (e.g. those studied by Piven & Cloward 1977). Usually, these old social movements are particular groups based on class (della Porta & Diani 1999) which seek to further that group's interests through bargaining. 'Old' social movements tend to have a rational-economic logic of action (della Porta & Diani 1999) from which the identity-oriented expressive logic of the new is a clear departure.

An important sociological difference between 'old' and 'new' social movements is rooted in the concept of 'power', a highly contested concept in the social sciences (O'Donnell 1997). I will briefly introduce the way in which I use the concept as it corresponds to the sense in which I use 'new social movement'. Given a liberal view of the state, where power is the ability for one actor to carry out his own will despite resistance, then 'old' movements will act as pressure groups to gain access to power and win resources (O'Donnell 1997). A traditional Marxist view would see power in class terms, where power lies with the class which has ownership of the means of production, so social movements are class struggles, for the pressure group model would simply legitimise that class already in power (O'Donnell 1997). A resource mobilisation view of social movements fits within the concepts of power operating within a liberal state (Dalton 1994) whereas critical theorists view social movements within a re-interpreted Marxist analysis (Habermas 1981a). By contrast, 'new' social movements tend to draw on concepts of power which by-pass statist concepts, including those of class and capital. That is not to say that there are no political activists

in new social movements – far from it - but to draw attention to new concepts, which help to identify what is ‘new’ in new social movements.

Two important concepts of power that come to the foreground in new social movements are the power of the ‘personal-local’ such as alternative co-operatives and autonomous zones (Lent 1999) and the ‘power of identity’ (Castells 1997). Both concepts fit well with post-modern thinking such as Foucault’s link between power and knowledge: the capacity to make people behave in ways other than they would have done had those in power not delivered a convincing narrative, delineating the terms of the debate (Foucault 1979). The ‘personal-local’ brings to the fore expressive rather than instrumental actions such as changes in values and lifestyles. Unlike a pressure group fighting for concessions, the ‘personal-local’ is an alternative, lived out in the present, exhibiting lifestyle choices which, deliberate or otherwise, resist and subvert the power exercised by the state and the market (Lent 1999). Begg (2000) makes a case for this sort of concept to be the basis of Green party ‘power’. It would not be sufficient for greens to seize the levers of power but necessary to rebuild the whole machinery of power. He replaces concepts such as ‘power over’ and ‘power to’ by use of the term ‘power with’. This, he argues, can be achieved through the process of building a diffuse network where there is power between people, rather than power residing in certain individuals or groups (Begg 2000). The ‘personal-local’ expression of new social movement power has been criticised by scholars such as Touraine, who see the lack of a state critique leaving such movements open to utopianism (Touraine 1983).

The second concept, the ‘power of identity’, has some relation with the ‘personal-local’, but scholars such as Melucci (1996) see an exercise of power that can challenge society but in ways both beyond and beneath the state, by challenging and changing the cultural codes. Following Castells (1997), I take ‘identity’ as people’s sense of meaning and experience, and I take ‘meaning’ as the symbolic identification by a social actor of the purpose of his action. The power of identity refers to those who build a new identity which redefines their position in society and which seeks transformation of social structures. The power of the state is not confronted directly, rather, power is exercised



through challenging and changing cultural codes which can have the effect of re-defining citizenship and de-legitimising the state along the way. This cultural power is conveyed through symbol, narrative, spectacle and so is markedly different from Habermas's concept of power in new social movements, where such identity politics is a rational (modernist) approach in which redistribution of resources remains part of the project (O'Donnell 1997).

I will illustrate the contrast between old and new movements. A guide-booklet from the Institute of Public Relations warns of the threat to business from activists (Deegan 2001). Deegan's proposals to mitigate against that threat are premised upon negotiation, that is, upon a social movement logic of action which fits the old rational-economic model. New social movements do not seek negotiation. Instead, they seek and often embody radical alternatives and as such present an altogether different cultural code (Melucci 1996). Examples of such non-negotiating organisations arising from new social movements include genetiX Snowball – the total eradication of GM crops, and Trident Ploughshares – the dismantling of the UK's nuclear deterrent. More bluntly, Earth First! often has a strap-line: no compromise in defence of Mother Earth. I use 'social movement' in the sense of the 'new' and it is this particular literature I reviewed.

The new social movement literature is itself vast. Writers come from diverse philosophical schools and from around the globe. With such diverse approaches, it is no surprise that social movement organisations receive many labels (e.g. pressure group, single interest groups etc.). One study came up with 69 different terms (Jordan 1992). Confusingly, 'social movement' can mean a whole historic movement, such as the peace movement, or can refer to a particular organisation, for instance as used by Laws (1997) to describe an Elder's interest group. Further to the clarification above, I am going to follow McAdam et al (1996) in reserving the term 'social movement' to refer to a movement or field, and simply use 'organisation' to mean an organisational entity within that movement or field.

By bringing in the word 'organisation', I introduce another vast body of literature which covers organisational theory and behaviour. This literature reflects diverse philosophical stances and comes from scholarship around the globe. As Klandermans & Tarrow (1988) had previously found, I too had discovered two consistently relevant bodies of literature. Social movement literature relevant to my research interest was generally of European scholarship. Relevant organisational literature tended to be studies of social movement organisations from North American scholarship. Whereas I had to draw boundaries around the social movement literature, limiting my review to the 'new', the organisational literature was limited simply by relevance, the scant material on issues of organisation relating to nonviolent direct action. This literature is discussed later in this chapter.

### **1.3 NEW SOCIAL MOVEMENT LITERATURE**

In reviewing new social movement literature I address research and theorising which casts light on issues of organisation relating to organisations which undertake nonviolent direct action. I also go on to draw out an operational definition of nonviolent direct action. But first, I will address three abstract concepts which emerged from this literature which affect my approach to this study – reflexivity, post-structuralism and critical theory. Reflexivity introduces the effect that both the researcher in particular and social science in general may have on the object of that research (Osborne & Rose 1999) and also the opposite effect, that of the object of research on researcher and social science (Beck 1992). Post-structuralism can mean many things but I take its main effect on my research to be epistemological (Potter 2000). Critical theory will introduce the values I bring to this research. These three themes are developed in the next chapter on my research approach but merit introduction here as they feature in the social movement literature in a pronounced way. I will then tighten the focus to discuss new social movement literature which addresses the organisations within them.

Reflexivity, post-structuralism and critical theory are discussed alongside social movements in social theory texts such as Giddens (1990) and the Castells trilogy (1996,

1997, 2000). Although such macrosocial theory is outside the prescribed literature review technique assumed by texts such as Fink (1998), I take Potter's (2000) view that such philosophical matters should be addressed before commencing research. One further reason for looking initially at macrosocial texts is that social movements and their organisations are often used in social theory in a substantive, not illustrative manner (so for instance Castells (1997) on Greenpeace and Earth First!).

The first theme is reflexivity. Here I merely introduce relevant literature. I consider reflexivity to affect my research approach so the discussion is developed further in the next chapter. To introduce the theme of reflexivity, I draw on Beck (1992) and Giddens (1990). They have their differences but are taken together here because both have a constructivist epistemology, both argue that social knowledge in the social realm can be emancipatory, both see social movements in that light. They argue that social movements not only challenge political structures but also challenge knowledge structures. The clearest example is women's studies, no longer an object of research but a challenge to the epistemologies of all social science research (Beck 1992; Potter 2000). Thus they are not passive subjects for researchers to research but a challenge to the legitimacy and the terms of that research.

Beck and Giddens employ the concept of reflexivity to describe how social knowledge spirals in and out of the universe of social life, reconstructing both itself and that universe as an integral part of that process (Giddens 1990: 15-16). Even 'hard' sociological data is subject to reflexivity. One instance is how divorce rates affect people's attitudes to marriage; as attitudes to marriage change, this can affect divorce rates (Giddens 1990). A further instance is how opinion polling has formed an opinionated public (Osborne & Rose 1999). So the social movement literature, not just methodological literature, features the concept of reflexivity. The implications for my research are discussed in the next chapter.

The second abstract theme is post-structuralism. Again, I introduce it at this point as there is much relating to this theme in the social movement literature<sup>1</sup>. Post-structuralism seeks to deconstruct the dominating power structures in society. These structures, like society as a whole, can be read as a 'text', the discourse of the dominant (Lyotard 1992). Social movements are often held up as a challenge to this discourse, presenting alternative stories, perhaps with an emancipatory thrust as those marginalised and oppressed are given voice (Touraine 1983). For instance, if

*"history is written in a way which assassinates the poor"* (Gutierrez 1984: 6)

then research deconstructing the dominant discourse can reveal their text. So, social movements can be part of the process of deconstruction (Lyotard 1992; Potter 2000). I take post-structuralism to have some relevance to epistemology and I return to this theme in the next chapter.

Critical theory, the third of the abstract themes I introduce, attempts to apply the possibility of emancipatory knowledge to society in its totality (Delanty 1997). In recent times, perhaps the intellectual leader of critical theory has been Habermas (Giddens 1996), and Giddens places himself as a "critical critic" of Habermas (Giddens 1996: 161). Critical theory asserts that, wittingly or unwittingly, the social actor has a commitment to some world-view (Thorpe 2001). Thus there is no view from nowhere, only from a commitment to some world-view (Thorpe 2001). Critical theory, then, seeks to understand the power relations linked to theory and to expose how some views are positioned within or against the dominant interests in society.

Habermas uses Weber's purposive-reality (Zweckrationalitat) and argues that this has become the dominant rationality which is colonising the life-world (Lebenswelt) (Habermas 1981a). Habermas portrays this reality as fundamental to the 'dark side' of the Enlightenment (Habermas 1981a). The dominance of Zweckrationalitat, he argues, has

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<sup>1</sup> An example of nonviolent direct action as post-structural action: in 2006 there was a protest at an airport. Shortly after I received this message: "You are on the syllabus at Warwick Uni. Sermon on the Runway is apparently crucial to study as an eg (sic) of 'post modern' protest using performative aspects to blur distinctions between the real and symbolic in order to be more reflexively aware of its own theatricality". This is much in keeping with Foucault's depiction of the "spectacle" as an event through which a "whole mass of discourses" can arise (Foucault 1979: 68).

opened the way for the ascendancy of capitalism, for industrialisation, for consequential social stratification and for the objectification of nature as resources to be manipulated (Habermas 1981a; 1981b; Potter 2000). A picture of this colonisation is painted by Klein's popular book 'No Logo' (2000). Now while social movements are positioned against dominant interests, much science takes place within and reinforces the hold of this rationality. The question, then, is where am I positioned – within a scientific community that tends to reinforce this dominant rationality, or positioned against it? This question of researcher position is addressed in the next chapter.

I now move from Castells, Giddens and Habermas who discuss social movements by light of the wider project of modernity. I focus on social movement literature researching social movements themselves. These are in fact vast literatures reflecting diverse paradigms. These are as different as Foweraker and Landmann (1997), arguing from a political science rights-based perspective, della Porta and Diani (1999) from a European political and cultural challenge perspective, Eyerman and Jamieson (1989) foregrounding a structural and (post-) critical perspective, and Melucci (1996) highlighting issues of identity and representation. At this point in the thesis, my review of the literature is to discuss current knowledge on how social movement organisations organise. Although some of the literature is highly abstract, there are some tantalising threads.

At first sight, new social movement studies offer exciting new organisational insights. Four examples are, firstly, that the organising of nonviolent direct action can be understood as neo-tribalism (Mafessoli 1996). Secondly, that such organising is best understood through network theory (Jordan 1999). Thirdly, that new social movements show new forms of organising such as virtual communities (Castells 1996). Fourthly, and in contrast to virtual communities, some new organisational forms exhibit the identity-expressive nature of new social movements, examples of which are personal-local groups (Lent 1999).

Social movement scholars often argue that it is not possible to draw boundaries around social movement organisations and reduce them to discrete, isolated entities (Fitzpatrick

1999). Indeed, for Melucci (1996), an organisational focus is a false *a priori* assumption about collective action. He argues that social movements are solidarity networks operating at several different levels of the social system simultaneously. Offe (1990) goes further and asserts that social moments arise in an institutional vacuum. This has implications for my study of the organising of direct action, that I may encounter innovation, new organisational forms, or the possibility of organising arising within an institutional vacuum (Offe 1990; Rao et al 2000).

Having shifted the focus from the traditional organisation, some scholars see new organisational forms within new social movements. I will explore three of those mentioned above in greater detail: the network, the neo-tribe and the personal-local group. Network theory seeks to explain plural understandings of social action and movements; its perspective is from the actions that movement members take, thus refusing to reify collective action (Melucci 1996). These actions and individuals existing in networks are spread throughout society but are not easily visible (Castells 1996; Diani 1992; Jordan 1999; Melucci 1996). Should I therefore conceptualise new social movement organisations as networks and draw on network theory? Research has shown that there is fluidity of membership across organisational boundaries (Dalton & Kuechler 1990). Dalton and Kuechler argue that new social movement participants adhere to a common (movement) ideology and show less attachment to any one particular organisation. One example is the anti-roads movement, where different organisations and different tactics have been used with considerable interchange of personnel (Field 1999). Dalton and Kuechler's research (1990) shows this fluidity extends across issues as broad as peace, anti-poverty and environmental concerns.

Whilst perhaps rightly critiquing the reductionism inherent in much organisational study, the network approach has its own weaknesses. The 'network' is illuminating at the macro-social level, examining how activism weaves in and out of the social, economic and cultural plurality of globalising society (Castells 1996). The critique of reductionism favours an approach which seeks to understand organising and organisations within their environment. The concept of network also manages to explain how a movement with an

inherent distrust of bureaucracies can nevertheless include such agencies within the movement (Diani 1992). Nevertheless, new social movements do contain organisations, some of which are large Third Sector organisations - Oxfam, Amnesty International, Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace. These organisations are large formal entities well beyond a meaningful sense of network. Although the network approach operates well at an abstract level, it fails to operationalise much empirical research. Thus, when it comes to issues of organising, leading and managing, the theorising becomes surmising.

Neo-tribalism is a different way of conceptualising the recent phenomenon of effective but loose-knit, decentralised, leaderless agencies (Huq 1999; Mafessoli 1996). Neo-tribes are formed as ideas rather than integrated social bodies, characterised by vagueness, mobility, experience and emotional life (Huq 1999). Neo-tribalism presents the same strengths as network theory, in particular, a way of conceptualising fluid movements such as anti-globalisation groups at a macro-level. But it also presents similar weaknesses to the 'network' concept. First, the 'neotribe' concept does not capture the large NGOs listed above, second, there is little empirical description of the 'neo-tribe' and thus, third, little theory robust enough to drive my research.

Along with network and neo-tribe, there are several other new organisational forms indicated in the social movement literature: the (dis)organisation, DIY groups, and personal-local groups (Jordan & Lent 1999). A further novel element may lie in the claim that these groups inhabit 'the fifth sector' which, unlike the sectors of government, business, voluntary and informal, exercises a critical autonomy against the state (Fitzpatrick 1999). 'Reclaim the Streets!' and Earth First! have both been described as (dis)organisations. DIY groups include squats, vegan groups and others (Fitzpatrick 1999). The 'personal-local' is used by Lent (1999: 176) to describe what he sees as a completely different social movement response to social conditions, that activists must change themselves and their immediate environments thus bypassing concerns such as relationships to power structures. As examples he cites some elements of rave culture, organisations in the women's movement such as Riot Grrrls and also Earth First!

Lent's personal-local group is helpful in his discussion of social movements like Earth First! as transformatory, temporary or personal-local social forces. But Earth First! is hardly local when its activities include activists parachuting into the middle of a Canadian wolf hunt and many similar actions (Davis 1991). Perhaps there are other better examples of the personal-local, but although there may be a new ideology, is there a new concept of organisation here? Lent sees such groups as a rejection of formalised collective action, yet he himself suggests the organisational antecedent is the co-operative. Once again, although new social movements do contain 'personal-local' groups, they also contain formal Third Sector organisations.

Where has the review of new social movement literature taken me thus far? I can draw from such literature the possibility that, amongst networks, neo-tribes, (dis)organisations, DIY and personal-local groups, there may be new organisational forms and therefore new conceptualisations. However, even with the notion of the autonomous zone, where groups form to operate outside the orbit of the state, McKay's (1996) study of such groups found no correlation between new ideology and new organisational form.

Compared with the organisational literature, which I discuss later, social movement literature has a far greater number of references to the sort of organisations I want to study. However, the empirical evidence on *how* these groups do what they do is slight and very rarely does the discussion engage with organisational theory. *What* they do is portrayed and discussed at length, an activity which is characteristic of new social movements (Dalton & Kuechler 1990; Melucci 1996) – nonviolent direct action. Using the social movement literature, I now conceptualise nonviolent direct action.

### **Operational Definition of Nonviolent Direct Action**

Whilst the above literature has not cast much light on how nonviolent direct action is organised, it is my source for an operational definition of nonviolent direct action. This is the first of two 'operational definitions' which help to set out the argument of the thesis in social science, rather than descriptive, terms. The second is 'issues of organisation',



which is discussed later in this chapter. By 'operational definition' I mean to conceptualise these phenomena in social science language. The research design can then flow from that and the research process can then be judged by the wider social sciences. Thus the definition is operational in the sense that it contributes to initial theory (Hamel 1993) and helps operationalise the research. I will also explain what I mean by 'definition'.

I am researching an area hitherto unexplored, so why pre-judge matters - should not a framework or definition come from the field rather than be taken to it? On the other hand, I cannot pretend to go out with an empty mind; our perceptions rest on us carrying operational definitions of the world no matter how unconscious or inappropriate they may be (Polyani 1958). Deutsch (1966) discusses two kinds of definition, structural-functional (or structural-operational) and substantive. The first can be given in a sentence; the second is discursive and far from final. The structural-functional definition has been used with great success in the Third Sector and has spawned its own industry with the Salamon-Anheier project of global Third Sector classification (1997). Indeed, these two authors assert that definition lies at the heart of all social analysis (Salamon & Anheier 1997). So I will explain why I am not seeking this sort of definition.

The structural-functional approach, which can be traced back to biology (Deutsch 1966), seeks to capture a phenomenon by asking 'what does it look like?' and 'what does it do?' - structure and function. I have three problems with it: that it captures a phenomenon but only using second-degree evidences; secondly, that in gathering such evidences there is a tendency to reify social processes and assume rationality; and third it tends towards descriptivism and so has a descriptive rather than a theoretical rigour. A substantive definition seeks to capture the phenomenon in itself no matter how messy. It uses social science theory as its reference point and also acknowledges the non-rational component of social life (Selznik 1947). Here, then, is a critical distinction between a structural-functional definition and a substantive definition. A substantive definition is conceptual and forms part of the initial theory I take forward into the research.

So, I seek a substantive definition of nonviolent direct action but is it distinguishable from violence and terrorism? Smith (1995) argues that the Third Sector has a 'dark side'. Whilst direct action can be the nonviolent activity of Sarah Hipperson who engaged in fence-cutting and was camped at a nuclear missile base for 10 years, or whilst there was Martin Luther King and the organised breaking of segregation laws, there was also Andreas Baader of the Baader-Meinhoff group for whom direct action was bank robbery, kidnap, bombing and acts of terrorism (Carroll 2001a).

Within this 'dark side' there is scholarly disagreement. For example, some scholars place Earth First! within nonviolent direct activism (Wall 1999) but Lee (1995) tries to paint Earth First! as a terrorist group. Indeed, the label of terrorism has been used in several other contexts. One case was where it was suggested to road protestors that they could be charged under the Prevention of Terrorism Act (Cathles 2000). Another is that nonviolent direct action groups can nevertheless be charged under the terms of the Terrorism Act (2000) for damage to property or electronic damage (Clarke 2001; Knight 2001). On top of this, the FBI has a definition of terrorism in which violence is not a necessary element (Taylor 1998).

Is there any way to segment direct action? Drawing mainly on new social movement literature, I think it is possible to separate out terrorism (Carroll 2001a). Then, although I have to take issue with some Third Sector assumptions, I think it will be possible to distinguish theoretically between 'violent' direct action and 'nonviolent' direct action.

I will first address the issue of terrorism. There are over 100 definitions of terrorism (Ganor 2001) but the key factor emerging from the more scholarly discussions is that violence becomes terror when it is deliberately targeted against an (innocent) third party mainly for its effect on those other than the victims (Frey & Morris 1991; Ganor 2001; Schmid & de Graaf 1982; Wilkinson 1979a, 1979b). Within this there are varieties of terrorism, for instance, the nationalist terrorism of ETA and the Real IRA and the millennialist religious terrorism of Al Qaeda and Aum. Similarly there are different types of damage which the parties seek to inflict, and to different degrees. I think

terrorism can be distinguished from even the most violent direct action because it is something other than violence between two parties: it is terror because it targets a third party (Schmid & de Graaf 1982). Direct action, for want of a better word, is direct. Direct action is designed to change conditions around the protesters or to face the culprits directly (Doherty et al 2000). I seek to research action which will be direct. 'Direct' still covers violent or nonviolent, so I now draw from the literature a conceptualisation which can distinguish one from the other.

Three concepts which occur frequently in the literature make it difficult to distinguish theoretically between violence and nonviolence. These are 'cycles of protest' (Tarrow 1994), 'instrumentalism' (Gamson 1975) and that nonviolence and violence exist on the same continuum (Taylor 1998). I will briefly introduce these concepts here, then discuss them at length, to work towards an operational definition of nonviolent direct action.

The concept of cycles of protest (Tarrow 1994) indicates that violence is part of the cycle, that groups are born out of violence and then moderate, or the reverse, that the failure of a once moderate group leads to splitting, violence and terrorism (della Porta and Diani 1999). Is the degree of violence a function of the age of the group and the stage in the cycle? In which case, as it matures and bureaucratises an organisation may find it has too much to lose through violence. This has been said of Friends of the Earth (Doherty et al 2000). The second concept is instrumentalism, that the use of violence is an instrumental choice, a cost-benefit analysis (Gamson 1975). Whether violence is used or not depends on what would yield better results. The third concept is the violence continuum, that what starts off as nonviolent can mature into terrorism (Taylor 1998: 9). The assumption here is that nonviolence, violence and terrorism are different only in quantity.

### *Cycles of Protest*

Cycles of protest (Tarrow 1994) is a process where intensified conflict leads to collective action, developing tactics of direct action and new interpretative frames, and perhaps provoking counter-mobilisation. This is taken to explain the degree of violence, how violence is sporadic at the outset then becomes planned during which extreme tactics may

be formed. The cycle ends with both institutionalisation amongst moderates and with the spin-off of violent groups (della Porta & Diani 1999). This construct is usually applied to movements, such as the 1960s student movement, not so much to the career of individual organisations. It may have reference to the organisations I am studying as it is a common assumption that the main impetus behind the emergence of Earth First! was Greenpeace and others going mainstream (Castells 1997).

### *Instrumentalism*

Nowhere is the case for instrumentalism better made than in Gamson's classic study of 53 challenging groups (1975). It is not that he sets out to make that case, simply his finding that, overall, violence works. Violence users have a higher success rate. He argues that violence is not the product of frustration or the last resort but is used instrumentally to hasten the pace of change:

*"It is the spice, not the meat and potatoes"* (1975: 82).

To be fair, he points out that the data are insufficient to claim violence is a successful tactic, but it does throw great doubt on the assumption that violence is self-defeating (Tilly et al 1975). This seems to contradict the Tillys' (1975) findings from their examination of a rebellious century. But there are clear differences in units of analysis, the Tillys looking at major social movements and Gamson at identifiable groups.

### *The violence nonviolence continuum*

While this is not any one scholar's construct, it is a pervasive underlying assumption found in popular commentary and academic work (Gamson 1975). If nonviolence lies at the end of a continuum and violence at the other, then violence and nonviolence are linked as functions of quantity. Nonviolence is therefore the absence of violence. If this is the case, then nonviolence can be charted as a degree of violence. The continuum could be said to consist of activities like the list below, in descending order from extreme violence:

*terrorism: violence against an innocent third party*

*direct violence including murder*

*indirect violence (risk of collateral damage) e.g. arson*

*violence of many sorts but the result of provocation: "people acting excitedly being responded to stupidly"*  
(Williams 1989: 64)

*violence against machines but not people, not risking collateral damage*

*civil disobedience and non-cooperation*

*banner-hanging, marches and rallies*

Is nonviolence merely the absence of violence, or can it signify the presence of a different logic of direct action? I accept that nonviolence, as much as violence, can be seen as a tactic for the powerless:

*"lacking sufficient political and economic power, Negroes used the only form remaining to them - their bodies" (Laue 1968: 86).*

In this instance it may be that nonviolence was sometimes a matter of instrumental choice, but the writings and speeches of Martin Luther King show that nonviolence as part of the Black civil rights movement was also laden with ethics, morality and values (Laue 1968). I also accept that it can be a stage in a cycle, for instance where a group, having come to the public's attention through violence, has access to the corridors of power and now eschews violence as it has too much to lose.

I think it is possible to depart from the concepts of cycles of protest, instrumentalism and the violence nonviolence continuum as there is a qualitatively different approach, rooted in what is 'new' in new social movements. New social movement literature does in fact present a nonviolence and thus a nonviolent direct action which is qualitatively different (Rucht 1990). In presenting this qualitative difference, I am also here in this paragraph giving a substantive definition. The qualitative difference includes a critique of modernity, not least modernity's violence (Melucci 1996). In practice, it shows as expressive behaviour where the means are the ends in the making (King 2006).

Nonviolent direct action can be used to address civic space, seeking not negotiating rights but challenging the terms of the debate - the grammar of the forms of life (Habermas 1981b; Swidler 1995). Nonviolent direct action can have a rationale without the need for outside targets and can be represented through personal-local lifestyle. Nonviolent direct

action is often portrayed as identity-building where identity is a strong feature of new social movements (see further della Porta & Diani 1999).

So, I think there is a qualitatively distinct form of direct action, nonviolent because it has an expressive logic behind it, and that this sort of direct action is different from terrorism and from violence. My operational definition is the above paragraph but, in summary form:

*Nonviolent direct action is qualitatively different from violence; it is identity-oriented, expressive, addressing civic space and challenging cultural codes rather than negotiating or demanding rights or benefits.*

This conceptualisation rules out the 'dark side' and I will therefore restrict my research to Third Sector organisations which organise nonviolent direct action. I will look to research in a field and amongst organisations where this sense of nonviolent direct action operates. This conceptualisation draws boundaries around the organisational literature. My focus is on organisations exhibiting the kind of nonviolent direct action defined above. Such organisations are part of new social movements. Thus, my main interest will be in studies of organising and organisations within such social movements.

#### **1.4 ORGANISATIONAL LITERATURE**

So, the second area of literature I discuss focuses primarily on the study of the organisations within social movements. This includes the North American tradition represented by McAdam, McCarthy et al (1996) and other Third Sector organisational studies. The classic text, almost the start of organisational studies of direct action groups is Gamson (1975) "Strategies of Social Protest" which looked at the careers of 'challenging groups'. Since 1975, studies have been conducted in groups as varied as transnational social movements (Princen & Finger 1994) and elders' groups (Laws 1997). Other areas of interest have included the legal treatment of Third Sector advocacy organisations (Randon & 6 1994), cross-national comparative studies (Klandermans & Tarrow 1988), and the study of movement culture (Lofland 1995). These studies are few

compared with those in Third Sector service delivery organisations, and within this small body, studies of direct action groups are fewer still.

McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald (1996) bring together organisational research from many leading scholars in this field over the past 20 years. In seeking to study organisations within the context of social movements, the editors attempt to synthesise three traditions: political opportunities; resource mobilization; and framing processes. 'Political opportunities' are the constraints and opportunities facing a movement unique to a national context (McAdam 1996). This tradition shapes Young's (1992) discussion of international advocacy organisations and Randon and G's (1994) study of legal constraints on campaigning. The other two traditions have strong organisational implications and I will now discuss whether they impact upon my own research.

The second and dominant tradition is 'resource mobilisation' (McAdam et al 1996; McCarthy & Zald 1977) which puts the focus on organisational form. It is postulated that "entrepreneurs" mobilise resources such as participants, money and social institutions to address a grievance (della Porta & Diani 1999: 7). These entrepreneurs create an organisational structure in pursuit of clearly identified goals (Della Porta & Diani). Resource mobilisation is widely used by Third Sector scholars (Billis 1993a).

While resource mobilisation has been able to cast light on organisational issues, the downside is its problematic emphasis on instrumentality and reductionism (della Porta & Diani 1999). Numerous studies present critiques of resource mobilisation, for example: research in women's suffrage in North America and Switzerland (Banaszak 1996); a teachers' movement in Mexico (Cook 1996); peace movements in North America (Solo 1988); anti-nuclear movements in Europe (Rudig 1990); and the German environmental movement (Bludhorn 1995). These studies present the following criticisms of the resource mobilisation approach. Resource mobilisation fails to identify the 'resources' and fails to account for non-mobilisation of resources. The approach fails to explain the everyday life of participants and neglects expressive and solidarity aspects. The approach is generally used without regard to issues of identity and ideology characteristic of new

social movements. In general, the approach assumes a social world of rational actors populating a quasi-economic organisational society (Dalton 1994).

The third tradition is 'framing processes', that is, the ways in which social movements develop metaphors, images and definitions of the situation that support their alternative view of the world (Snow & Benford 1988). Resource mobilisation deals with organisational factors whilst framing can bring ideological factors into account. By using framing, McAdam et al aim to bring European social movement scholarship into harmony by addressing issues of identity, ideology and the non-rational. This use of framing is itself criticised by Melucci, who describes framing as:

*"the discursive representation of collective action organised according to the position of the actor in the field"* (1996: 348).

For Melucci, framing is a way of producing meanings, of identifying issues, shaping actions and engendering mobilisation. It is an approach to identify the nature of collective action but it is not an organisational tool as in McAdam et al (1996). McAdam et al reduce 'ideology' to organisational culture and reduce 'framing' to a process by which an organiser can shape that culture. McAdam et al gloss over Melucci's new social movement perspective on framing and instead the term is commandeered by the dominant organisational paradigm. However, much of McAdam et al's theorising relates to the world of organisations, and much of it is built on empirical research.

Tightening the focus, I note that some direct action organisations have received scholarly attention as organisational entities, for instance Christian Aid (Butler & Wilson 1990) and Greenpeace (Bludhorn 1995). However, no studies have focused on issues of organisation with respect to direct action. Some literature has focused on direct action events, such as the Greenpeace action against the Brent Spar (Jordan 1998; Tsoukas 1999) but in these cases the discussion is not on direct action itself but on issues such as political strategy, media studies and risk production. Gamson and Meyer (1996) suggest direct action can be understood as a means by which a campaign group maintains its legitimacy in a social movement. The authors once again turn to Greenpeace as an



example, describing it as standing on two legs, one within each of the camps of institutional and extra-institutional protest.

There are a few studies of activists (Carroll 2001b; Carroll & Harris 1999; Wall 1999; Wapner 1995). Only Wall focuses specifically on direct action, and none gives a full account of organisational issues. Wall's research shows how little is known: even amongst direct action volunteers there is no common agreement as to what direct action actually is. Thus far I have not uncovered any *organisational* research exploring the organising of direct action.

However, Third Sector theory does exist on the organising of voluntary organisations of many different sorts and undertaking many tasks. Third Sector scholarship has built up a rich understanding of issues of organisation in service agencies. This body of knowledge has been widely discussed and empirically tested and has stood the test of time. It critically evaluates and draws in concepts such as formalisation (Chapin & Tsouderos 1956), oligarchy (Michels 1962), routinisation and bureaucracy (Weber 1947), new institutionalism (Scott 1995) and isomorphism (DiMaggio & Powell 1983; 1991). Organisational reality enters the world of even the most idealistic of anti-organisers, as shown by Landry and colleagues who reveal the organisational struggles of small-scale Left wing organisations (1985).

Third Sector organisations range from the anti-organisational to the association, from the association to the formally constituted agency, then different models of bureaucracy (Billis 1993a). The problems of blurring and that organisations have of uncontrolled sliding into change have been perennial features of Third Sector research (Billis & Harris 1996). The slide towards bureaucratisation is not inevitable, whether for formal agencies or co-operatives (Billis 1993b; Sommer 1984). Another of the perennial distinctive features of the sector is around governance (Billis & Harris 1996). There are many forms of governance appropriate to organisations which are shaped by factors such as age, size, activity, staff/member/volunteer composition and so on. Theorising and research have

produced models of governance for the sector (Harris 1993). However, as has already been noted, the gap remains – the organising of direct action has not been addressed.

### **Operational Definition of Issues of Organisation**

I now move on to the second operational definition to come from the literature review: issues of organisation. It may not be possible to predict what issues I may find as this field has not been explored. However, I will present what concepts I have in mind when using the term ‘organisation’. I want a conceptualisation of ‘issues of organisation’ that can apply to organisations as varied as the large bureaucratic structure of Greenpeace and the neo-tribalism and (dis)organisation of genetiX Snowball and Earth First! My conceptualisation will need to apply to commonalities of behaviour in these organisations and help explain how they come about and how they operate. I opt for an approach which operates on the meso-level of institutions and organisations and which has been applied to fields of varied organisations as well as individual organisations: new institutionalism (DiMaggio & Powell 1991; Scott 1995). Although not the only possible approach, I think this is the most appropriate line to take in addressing my research question. I will first outline what I take new institutionalism to be, then explain why I think it the most appropriate conceptual lens for examining issues of organisation.

New institutionalism theorises about organisations and organisational behaviour by looking beyond the obvious structures of authority and work technology that may, on the surface, appear deterministic, and looking to behaviours shaped by conventions other than the rationalist (Scott 1995). Thus organisational behaviours (including how the organisation, its field, and people within it behave) may be a result of any or all of factors such as written rule, social convention (how we do things around here), or cognition (culturally-bound socially constructed taken-for-granted perceptions). Irrespective of how these behaviours come to be constructed, legitimised and sanctioned, they become part of the social fabric and assume the guise of impersonal and objective reality (Scott 1995).

Institutionalised behaviour is patterned behaviour, with an institutional logic for replicating that behaviour which is usually hidden from the actor (DiMaggio & Powell 1991). There are different logics which Scott assigns to three headings. Regulative: a social realist mind-set where the behaviour is assumed to be rational and to maximise preferences. Normative: socially embedded action governed by the logic of appropriateness. Cognitive: a social constructionist perspective where actors' identities and preferences are constructed (1995). These, then, are the institutions in question, and a broad definition can be offered:

*“Institutions consist of cognitive, normative and regulative structures and activities that provide stability and meaning to social behaviour. Institutions are transported by various carriers - cultures, structures and routines - and they operate at multiple levels of jurisdiction”* (Scott 1995: 33).

Drawing on DiMaggio & Powell (1991) and Scott (1995), I have constructed a table to further explain what I mean by new institutionalism. Table 1 compares the regulative, normative and cognitive drivers of institutionalisation. I have made comparisons in terms of the different mechanisms by which such behaviours are encouraged: coercive, normative, mimetic (DiMaggio & Powell 1991). The table also compares the different bases of compliance, the underlying logics (Scott 1995), the different bases for legitimacy, and the different indicators that apply.

**Table 1. Regulative, Normative and Cognitive Institutionalism**

	<b>Regulative</b>	<b>Normative</b>	<b>Cognitive</b>
<i>Mechanism</i>	coercive	normative	mimetic
<i>Basis of compliance</i>	expedience	social obligation	taken for granted
<i>Logic</i>	instrumentality	appropriateness	orthodoxy
<i>Basis of Legitimacy</i>	legally sanctioned	morally governed	culturally supported, conceptually correct
<i>Indicators</i>	rules, laws, sanctions	certified, accredited	prevalence

Source: drawn from DiMaggio & Powell (1991) and Scott (1995).

I will now explain why I think new institutionalism is the most appropriate lens to study issues of organisation. First, I have critiqued one such lens, the resource mobilisation school as over-playing the rational-economic hand and underplaying the cognitive. Similarly, I have critiqued the European identity approaches as not providing sufficient organisational theorising sufficient for a lens. New institutionalism allows me to conceptualise around organisations and organising without having to accept, reject or synthesise these two approaches. Second, new institutionalism provides a way of studying organisational behaviour which can exist across organisations and the institutional field. I accept that 'institutional field' is an approximation for a social movement field, but the point here is that this approach can capture extra-organisational behaviour. New institutionalism is not restricted to the study of discrete practices in discrete entities but can focus on the organisational environment.

Third, new institutionalism has a social constructionist ontology and epistemology which fits with the organisations as presented in the literature and also with my own stance.

Fourth, this lens has been welcomed in Third Sector research:

*"the importance of the institutional environment and the belief systems adopted by members of the organisation cannot be over-emphasised"*  
Hasenfeld (1992: 33).

Along with human service organisations (Hasenfeld 1992), this approach has been used for a variety of Third Sector organisations (Rao et al 2000) including the study of congregations (Harris 1998). However, fifth, this lens has not been used, to the best of my knowledge, in studies of organisations which undertake nonviolent direct action, so the research will apply, for the first time, an accepted social science examination to an important set of organisations.

## **Discussion of the two bodies of literature.**

Thus far I have reviewed two bodies of literature: new social movement and organisational. I have identified a gap in knowledge. I have drawn an operational definition from each body. These operational definitions help to give a conceptual framework to the research. I will now discuss whether that conceptual framework can be taken forward by synthesising the two bodies of literature, for just such an approach is taken by numerous scholars from both organisational and social movement fields.

Can these two bodies of literature be synthesised to give a conceptual framework, as has been done by scholars in both fields (Eyerman & Jamison 1989; McAdam et al 1996)? Whilst I could study individuals or organisations or institutions or narratives or structures, could I not study some combination of them? Is there any essential difference in studying one level of social interaction and not another? Eyerman and Jamison observe how each of these different levels of social interaction can have different social ontologies (1989).

Reviewing social movement research, Eyerman and Jamison (1989) identify three main philosophical traditions behind such research. These three are 'collective behaviourist', for which they point to Parsons (1951) and Tilly (1975), 'resource mobilisation' for which they reference McCarthy and Zald (1977) and new social movement theory (Giddens 1990; Habermas 1981a; Touraine 1983). I have extended their thinking to include a fourth tradition - post-structuralism (Foucault 1979; Lyotard 1992; Jordan 1999). These four traditions cover the underlying philosophies of the literature in my review. I have constructed a framework to compare these main traditions which lie behind both the new social movement and the organisational literature previously reviewed (see Table 2).

**Table 2. Philosophical Tradition and Social Ontology in Social Movement Research**

<b>Philosophical Tradition</b>	<b>Proponents</b>	<b>Social Ontology</b>
<i>Collective Behaviourist</i>	Parsons, Tilly	Atomistic - individual freedom - autonomy
<i>Resource Mobilisation</i>	Zald, McCarthy	Institutionalist - economics - rational actor
<i>Post-Structuralism</i>	Lyotard, Foucault, Jordan	Plural - 'little narratives'
<i>New Social Movements</i>	Giddens, Habermas, Touraine	Structural - historicity - structural change

The first philosophical tradition in Table 2 is the collective behaviourist approach which, it can be argued, is the classic sociological approach of Parsons (1951). Eyerman and Jamison argue that the philosophical roots are in Hobbes and Locke and the social ontology is atomistic (Eyerman & Jamison 1989). The second is resource mobilisation which is hardly a philosophical tradition per se but belongs to what is perhaps the dominant sociological paradigm and the dominant rationality of modernity, the economic rational approach (Dalton 1994). Eyerman and Jamison trace the philosophical roots to Adam Smith and J. S. Mill. Resource mobilisation tends towards a social realist ontology where mediating structures such as organisation and institutional mechanisms predominate (Eyerman & Jamison 1989). Third, there is post-structuralism, with philosophical roots in Foucault (1979) and Lyotard (1992) positing a plural social ontology represented by multiple voices (Potter 2000). Fourth, there are European new social movement studies. Many philosophical traditions are within these studies but for ease of comparison, I note one with philosophical roots in Karl Marx (Habermas 1981a). The social ontology is historico-structural, focusing on macrosocial forces where new social movements are seen as carriers of social forces (Castells 1996).

The different social ontologies compared in Table 2 are different ways of envisioning social reality which therefore lead to differing logics of action. For example, how one acts in a rational world is likely to be based on rational process – the logic of action is therefore instrumentalism. How one individual acts in a post-structuralist social world should not be taken to represent how another acts, so the logic of action is plural. In the same way that the logic of action differs, so these different philosophical traditions lead to different focal points at which action takes place – the level of praxis. For example, if social movement organisations are seen as collectivities of individual actors (collective behaviourist) then the focus will be on a much smaller and particular level than if social movement organisations are seen as carriers of historico-social forces. I will add to the previous table the two themes just introduced – logic of action and level of praxis. In Table 3 I have abbreviated social movement organisations to SMOs. Table 3 compares and contrasts the different traditions. I will use the table to address the issues I face.

**Table 3. Philosophical Tradition, Logic of Action and Level of Praxis in Social Movement research**

<b>Philosophical Tradition</b>	<b>Proponents</b>	<b>Social Ontology</b>	<b>Logic of Action</b>	<b>Level of Praxis</b>
<i>Collective Behaviourist</i>	Parsons, Tilly	Atomistic - individual freedom - autonomy	Instrumental	Micro SMOs as collectivities
<i>Resource Mobilisation</i>	Zald, McCarthy	Institutionalist - economics - rational actor	Instrumental	Meso SMOs as mediating structures
<i>Post-Structuralism</i>	Lyotard, Foucault, Jordan	Plural - 'little narratives'	Plural	Narrative SMOs as representational text
<i>New Social Movements</i>	Giddens, Habermas, Touraine	Structural - historicity - structural change	Expressive	Macro SMOs as carriers of broader social forces

The issues are, firstly, do I accept strong leads in the literature which suggest social movement and organisational approaches can be synthesised, which would give me a neat conceptual framework? Second, and this would have a direct bearing on my research in the field: do I see a social world dominated by free-thinking logical individuals, or of institutional processes, or multiple voices, or historico-structural forces? In other words, is my level of analysis to be the individual, the organisation, the narrative or movement?

I think that the groups I seek to study can be positioned in the row in Table 3 labelled 'new social movements'. What they do is best understood on an historic-structural plane. But my research is to understand something more pragmatic - how they organise to do it. The main body of organisational knowledge has been developed more within the rational-economic tradition of which resource mobilisation is a strong example. The level of praxis is organisations and institutions, but the literature here often presents a reified and rationalised account which new social movement thinking, which includes the groups I want to study, seeks to unpick.

So, I first address the question of synthesis, which I came across numerous times in my reading. Some scholars compare and critique social movement studies along with organisational studies and then offer a synthesised approach (Banaszak 1996; Rudig 1990). Three attempts at finding a middle way are Klandermans and Tarrow (1988) 'consensus mobilisation', the use of the 'framing' concept in McAdam, McCarthy and Zald (1996), and the use of 'cognitive praxis' (Eyerman & Jamison 1989). As the framework at Table 3 suggests, to synthesise these approaches would mean synthesising an approach to the social sciences in general. Such a grand unifying theory has not emerged and syntheses at best reduce incompatibles to fit the author's paradigm.

There are several examples of attempts to marry the incompatible. 'Framing' could be used in a historico-structural discussion but is in effect reduced to an organisation tool in McAdam et al (1996). Likewise, 'cognitive praxis' could be used to try and capture elements of resource mobilisation but Eyerman and Jamison's (1989) approach is still that of critical realists. della Porta and Diani (1999) do not synthesise but simply staple



into their European work a chapter on organisation straight out of McAdam et al. Perhaps their approach is wise; attempted syntheses add to confusion by making a “category mistake”, taking a concept which fits one logical system and using it in a different context where the set of ways in which it has to be used are no longer logically legitimate (Ryle 1949: 8). For this reason I have not attempted a synthesis of the new social movement and organisational literatures.

A further issue which arises from the multitude of approaches to Third Sector organisations is that adopting different approaches will generate different outcomes. For example, Eyerman and Jamison (1989) present a study of Greenpeace filtered through a political opportunity lens. This leads them to assert that Greenpeace’s aim is to influence government policy. They therefore conclude that spectacular actions are conducted to increase membership, for, as member size increases, a pressure group gains more lobbying power. By contrast, Wapner (1996) takes a social movement approach, arguing that Greenpeace is not a membership organisation, that much of its activity is related not to government but the public sphere, and that spectacular actions are aimed at changing people’s perceptions about particular issues.

There are different approaches, I can only adopt one. The best solution to the puzzle, I think, is an organisational study as my question is about how groups organise, but at the same time to carry in mind a critique of the philosophical paradigm that dominates it. Not only do I draw on the organisational literature for the research approach but also it will be the social science language in which I will present any contribution to knowledge.

I accept and will now acknowledge the sharp critique from social movement scholars who question the interpretation paradigm. Resource mobilisation is predicated upon a “quasi-economic model” of organisational behaviour (Dalton 1994: 249). They contend that campaigning organisations should not be assumed to be rational actors with an instrumental logic of action (Dalton & Kuechler 1990). They point to an inherent contradiction in imposing a quasi-economic model of organisations on movement participants who embrace an ideology which is a direct challenge to quasi-economic

reductionism (Melucci 1996). However, the social movement approach has its own conundrum at the level of organisation. It helpfully gives prominence to movement, participants, culture and ideology, but framing, as conceptualised in the social movement approach typified by Melucci (1996) is too broad an approach for organisational study.

I also accept the assumption in new social movement theory that organisational structure is presumed to be an expression of ideology, and there is some support for this in studies of women's and peace groups (Landry et al 1985). Other studies point the other way. Dalton (1994), researching amongst the leaders of social movements, discovered that oligarchy is:

*"the sin they strive to avoid"* (Dalton 1994: 9).

But sin they do. Dalton found 81% of national 'ecological' groups (ideologically linked to an alternative social paradigm) were actually built around centralised structures. As well as providing this critique of the main organisational literature, I will draw on new social movement studies for a sociological understanding of 'nonviolent direct action' – the social phenomenon these groups organise to do.

An important question, raised in the discussion prompted by and illustrated by Table 3, relates to the level of praxis. The point at issue is whether social reality is best studied at individual, organisational or institutional level, through narrative or through social forces. As I am not synthesising the literatures I think this question is now resolved. I intend to study issues of organisation and will do so, using an operational definition drawn from new institutionalism, which indicates research at the level of organisation and institution, that is, the organisational entity but not as a discrete entity but rather with attention given also to the organisational field.

## **Conclusions**

My research is an examination of issues of organisation in Third Sector organisations which undertake nonviolent direct action. In this chapter I have developed the thesis in the following four ways. I have selected and reviewed the two consistently relevant

bodies of literature and have established a gap in knowledge. Secondly, I have presented an operational definition of nonviolent direct action. Thirdly, I have presented an operational definition of issues of organisation. Fourthly, I have critically reviewed the scholarly attempts to synthesise the two bodies of literature and, through that review, have set out some implications for my own research approach.

In both the social movement and Third Sector literature there are very few studies of organisational issues in organisations which undertake nonviolent direct action. Other than my own literature review, corroborating evidence comes from Smith (1997) and Carroll & Harris (1999) who note that the attention given to campaigning organisations in general is slight compared to that given to service delivery organisations. This is the gap in knowledge I intend to pursue.

I drew on new social movement theory for a social science conceptualisation of nonviolence and nonviolent direct action. I presented a discursive operational definition which, in summary, is:

*Nonviolent direct action is qualitatively different from violence; it is identity-oriented, expressive, addressing civic space and challenging cultural codes rather than negotiating or demanding rights or benefits.*

There is much unknown about nonviolent direct action and disagreement as to what nonviolence means even amongst activists (Wall 1999). For many, the line between violent and nonviolent is blurred and a disturbing perplexity is that some authorities, including the FBI, can look at an organisation like Earth First! and label it terrorist. I have argued that nonviolent direct action is qualitatively differentiated from various kinds of violence, therefore I can focus legitimately on those organisations only undertaking nonviolent direct action.

My primary interest is not what these organisations do but how they organise to do it. The main theoretical meat is in the area of organisation. I explained why I chose new institutionalism as the theoretical framework to guide the research and order my thinking. From new institutionalism I generated an operational definition of issues of organisation.

Again, the definition is substantive and discursive so I here give it in summary form by stating my conceptualisation of the institutions in new institutionalism:

*Institutions consist of cognitive, normative and regulative structures and activities that provide stability and meaning to social behaviour. Institutions are transported by various carriers - cultures, structures and routines - and they operate at multiple levels of jurisdiction.*

I reviewed the divergent approaches to the study of new social movement organisations. I rejected a synthesis of different literatures and chose to examine organisational issues using an organisational lens. This approach begins to shape the research design in the following ways. First, new institutionalism means I can look for patterned behaviours which cut across and may be common to organisations. It therefore makes sense to study a range of organisations - big, small; with obvious hierarchy, choosing to forego hierarchy; paid staff, volunteer-only; new, old. Second, I have presented a definition of nonviolent direct action so I can now research whether it itself is institutionalised or whether, as Gamson (1975) argues, it is a matter of rational choice.

A third way the review shapes the research is that it provides clues for gathering data. For instance, behaviour, in new institutionalism, coalesces into roles. Thus I can interview participants about their roles in their organisations. Another instance is the significance of the 'taken for granted'; this suggests the use of observation as well as interview to gather data. People are, by definition, unlikely to articulate the taken for granted, yet it is a key social phenomenon (Adler & Adler 1987). So, observing, not just asking, will gather such data (Adler & Adler 1987). Fourth, I choose an approach which allows me to explore the organisational environment and to be open to institutional behaviour which exists across or outside organisations, and fifth, to explore the possibility that social movement organisations are creating new organisational forms. If there are new forms, I will be able to explore how they came to be: *creatio ex nihilo* (so Offe 1990) or the assembly of a new shape from a field populated with institutions (so Morris 1999).

A sixth implication for my research approach is that new institutionalism throws light not so much on individual behaviours but on the behaviours of the organisation. Such

behaviours include those intended to maximise resources and legitimacy (Hasenfeld 1992). Many behaviours arise from pressures beyond the organisation, arising from the institutional field (DiMaggio & Powell 1983) such as isomorphism. Seventh, although it does not resolve the perplexity, I have opted for an approach which provides a conceptual and practical way forward between the rational-economic resource mobilisation school and the European identity project. I need align myself with neither, nor feel I have to synthesise the incommensurable, but can draw from the insights of both.

The research question is:

*What are the issues of organisation in Third Sector organisations which undertake nonviolent direct action?*

## CHAPTER TWO

### RESEARCH APPROACH (INCLUDING METHOD)

This chapter shows how I went about addressing the research question: ‘What are the issues of organisation in Third Sector organisations which undertake nonviolent direct action?’ I will first address the three issues arising from the literature review but deferred to this chapter. All three relate to the ‘I’ in qualitative research: the need to account for the ‘position’ of the researcher (Silverman 2000; Thorpe 2001). These three themes were noted in the previous chapter as they feature in the social movement literature in a pronounced way: reflexivity, post-structuralism and critical theory.

Reflexivity introduces the effect that both the researcher in particular and social science in general may have on the object of that research (Osborne & Rose 1999) and also the opposite effect, that of the object of research on researcher and social science (Beck 1992). Post-structuralism can mean many things but I take its main effect on my research to be epistemological (Potter 2000) and the challenge to epistemology if knowledge is produced not so much by science but by power - the powerful in society (Foucault 1979). Critical theory introduces the values I bring to this research. Discussion of these three themes will indicate what impact my presence may have had on the field, my stance on the production of scholarly knowledge, and what values I may have brought to the field in which I researched.

I will then explain why I decided to undertake a qualitative inquiry and will discuss what I mean by ‘qualitative’. There are many different research methods which fall into the qualitative paradigm so I will explain why I chose a case study methodology. I also explain how I came to choose the organisations which formed the case study. Working within both an epistemological paradigm and a research methodology, I had to decide how best to gather data. ‘Data’ is an awkward concept in some qualitative thinking so I next explain that I sought ‘thick description’ (Geertz 1999) in order to best answer the

research question. This leads forward into an explanation of how I gathered the kind of data I sought, which was primarily through semi-structured interviews and participant observation. One weakness of the interview is that it tends to excavate the individual from social life (Grills 1998b). Since I wanted to capture social relations, I observed as well as interviewed (Grills 1998b).

I then present how I analysed these data. I decided to follow an approach which was close to grounded theory, but not following fully its rather process-oriented scheme (Eisenhardt 1999). I decided I would use the generic qualitative analysis of Silverman (2000) and the theory-building from case studies in Eisenhardt (1999), Hamel (1993) and Yin (1994). I describe the analysis as having six steps. The first step was to reduce the data to text, then further steps established broad themes emerging from the data (Silverman 2000). The final steps were to draw out explanation in theoretical terms and emergent theory from the data (Eisenhardt 1999).

The above sets out the research approach as I came to the field. The chapter concludes with comments arising from the fieldwork such as when I launched a pilot study to test the research design but found the pilot study to be the commencement of research. I give a brief summary of the data gathered then go on to give an account of methodological issues arising from the fieldwork.

## **2.1. POSITION OF THE RESEARCHER**

### **Reflexivity**

I was aware that there would be instances where my presence would mean, to some degree, an impact on the field (Silverman 2000). Similarly, the social interaction necessary in gathering the sort of data I sought would have an impact on me (Adler & Adler 1987). I give just one instance below where I think a methodological issue arose. When I commenced the research, I was employed by a large faith-based organisation but, in my spare time, a volunteer with Greenpeace. This was one of the four organisations

chosen for the case study, the others being Trident Ploughshares, Earth First! and genetiX Snowball. By the time I came to complete the writing-up, I was an employee of Greenpeace. I chose Greenpeace for the pilot study as I thought my close involvement with one organisation compared with others might undermine the validity of my research. I found three things as the pilot study unfolded. Firstly, as I began interviewing Greenpeace staff and volunteers, I discovered they were also participants with one or more of the other organisations. Indeed two interviewees, both Greenpeace staff members, were respectively co-founders of Earth First! and genetiX Snowball. Thus I began to discover I had similar closeness to all the chosen organisations. Secondly, I found this closeness – being known and trusted – gave me access through interviews and participant observation to rich data that would otherwise be unobtainable (Adler & Adler 1987; Waddington 1984). Thirdly, I found the pilot to be a complete turn of the research cycle, that is, valid and useful empirical research within the wider case study (Hamel 1993). Because of this, I re-thought the role of the pilot study in constructionist social research (Carroll 2002) and this re-thinking is explained later in this chapter.

### **Post-structuralism**

This theme arose from the literature as not only is it an epistemological approach to social inquiry (Potter 2000) but is said to be how new social movements impact upon the social world (Princen & Finger 1994; Seel et al 2000). How might this impact on my research?

First, post-structuralism posits a plurality of narratives in which minority voices – such as social movements - can be drowned out. One example of this would be where the voice of social movement reform is drowned out by the personal or institutional agenda of the researcher (Potter 2000). My research was, in a sense, the production of knowledge (Foucault 1979), yet the production of knowledge was sharply critiqued by some of the new social movements about which I sought to produce research-based knowledge. Should not my research have sought to foreground the voice of the other, the minority struggling against normalising power-related knowledge (Papadakis 1993)? Although the



actors' voices were important to my understanding of qualitative study, I acknowledge that I did have a research agenda: to argue a thesis for a PhD. Also, whilst respecting the emancipatory voice of social movements, my focus was much tighter, researching an organisational issue.

A second potential impact is that social movements not only challenge the dominant discourse of powerful organisations but the discourse of 'organisation' itself (Potter 2000). For example, individual identity, the nature of the organisation and the accepted mechanisms by which agreement in organisations is reached have all been interrogated. Should I not then abandon the conceptual work I have done on 'issues of organisation'? Even with the above criticism, post-structural studies have examined social movements in organisational terms in both international nongovernmental organisations and small alternative groups (Princen & Finger 1994; Seel et al 2000). Again, I acknowledge that I was in a position of power in the production of knowledge of a particular sort; my chief interest was to articulate the voice of the researcher.

### **Critical Theory**

The third element on researcher position arising from the social movement literature is critical theory, a values-laden approach to social inquiry which is often said to be that of new social movements (Giddens 1990). Critical theory posits a dominant rationality – Zweckrationalität – which represents the dominant interests of the elite (Habermas 1981a) Further, Zweckrationalität is taken to demean moral meaning and freedom in everyday life, and to commodify and diminish nature (Potter 2000). So, critical theorists posit alternative rationalities, especially that of communicative reason, which carries an evolutionary emancipatory interest.

The organisations I wanted to study sought to reconquer the Lebenswelt through communicative reason (Habermas 1981b). They were not merely a dissenting voice in the argument but were seeking to change the terms of the debate, contesting, in Habermas's concept, the grammar of the forms of life. More graphically, one of the Greenpeace

founders talked of throwing ‘mind-bombs’ into the public arena, presenting a picture which challenged the way people thought about an issue, about power, about their relation to nature (Hunter 1980). A critical theorist, undertaking social research, may want that research to be a catalyst in social change (Fay 1993). Fay argues for social theory which is scientific, critical and practical. The role of social science is then to unstitch “false consciousness” and promulgate communicative reason (Fay 1993: 36).

Although there are criticisms of the critical stance and what appears to be the hope of emancipation through reason (see further Giddens 1996; Lyotard 1992; Potter 2000), critical theory encapsulated the sorts of values I carried. Nevertheless, I undertook this research as an academic project, not an emancipatory one. My philosophical stance was such that I did not accept the possibility of a position of researcher absence or disinterest. However, unlike Touraine (1983), I have not used the research as a political opportunity. Instead, I have discussed and acknowledged my necessary closeness, both proximity and ideological values, with the research field.

## **2.2 QUALITATIVE INQUIRY**

Sociology has been portrayed as that branch of science with the greatest number of methods and the least results (Dillon-Malone 1998). Against this, it can be argued that there are only two overall methods, exploration and confirmation (Stebbins 2001). The literature review has shown a dearth of empirical or theoretical knowledge in my chosen area. My approach, then, is not to confirm or disconfirm a hypothesis. In the broad sense used by Stebbins, my approach is exploratory. By ‘exploratory’, I mean that I wanted to capture as much data as possible to begin to build up a picture of what these organisations actually did. Then I wanted to build theory from the data which would begin to explain social phenomena in the language of social science. Thus I chose an inductive rather than deductive approach.

Lacking empirical material from other scholars, I set out to gather data from the actors themselves. This meant gathering data in the field. Fieldwork was also an opportunity to

collect data in context, not merely the words of actors but those words in the context of the social settings from which they arose. Such data would be conversation, observation, text, images and artifacts (Lofland 1995). Whilst there are examples of processes which seek to analyse such data quantitatively (Oakley 2000), I decided that a qualitative approach would provide the best fit. First, it was one overall approach to answer the research question. Second, it would fit the conceptual work I had done, where both new institutionalism and new social movement theory sit comfortably with qualitative inquiry (Dalton 1994; Scott 1995). Third, a qualitative approach fitted my own stance.

The term 'qualitative inquiry' encompasses numerous epistemologies, so I will explain in some detail what I mean by the term. First, I want to distinguish between broadly realist and broadly constructionist approaches, then go on to indicate the epistemological approach that I adopted to address the research question. By realist I mean those who assume a social universe governed by general laws and properties. Whether that social phenomenon can be seen or not, it still has those same properties, will still operate under the same laws, and those laws are the same no matter who, where or when the phenomenon is observed. Law, in the realist universe, is a general proposition which holds good in all observed and all unobserved instances, all possible as well as actual instances (Ryle 1971).

By constructionist, I mean those who assume a social universe constructed by the participants (Blaickie 2000). The actors, not outside causes, construct order, explanation and meaning, and so construct a social reality to make sense of the social phenomena of which they are part. They may well have some laws but of a different sort, contingent upon who, what and when. Such laws may well have explanatory properties but the constructionist would not claim immutability or inevitable causality. There are in-between positions, for example critical realism which prefers the world of general and causal law but acknowledges the validity of knowledge gained by other means; likewise 'mild constructionism', which is similarly accommodating to knowledge gained through the realist paradigm (Schwandt 2000: 202).

Some branches of hermeneutics and phenomenology helpfully open up the subjective and intersubjective world and the general approach of interpretivism (Collingwood 1984) but still, it is argued, the subjective meaning of action can be presented in an objective manner by a disinterested researcher. Philosophical hermeneutics (Heidegger 1978) challenged these Cartesian separations and addressed the subjectivity of the researcher (Schwandt 2000). Drawing on philosophical hermeneutics, social constructionists critique ‘meaning realism’, that meanings can be understood separately from the actors, and so reject what Schwandt terms the:

“*representationalist-empiricist-foundationalist nexus*” (Schwandt 2000: 198).

Constructionist epistemology will seek understanding through interpretation, perhaps going as far as to accept rules, laws and theories in a provisional sense but rejecting any realist definitions of them. The researcher is implicated in the social world and it is generally assumed that the knowledge a researcher brings has values, interests and politics attached (Schwandt 2000). Strong constructionists may have an epistemology that leads towards nihilism or relativism; ‘mild constructionists’ will look to build accounts which offer explanatory theory (ibid: 202). My qualitative inquiry is as a mild constructionist.

I have explained how I chose a qualitative approach and labeled it as ‘mild constructionist’. What does this mean in epistemological terms? Following Ryle (1971), I will pose a series of questions which bring together my overall approach. *What was the subject matter I sought to explore?* I saw it largely as a socially constructed universe. In part, that view was not a stance taken on rational grounds but a commitment to a worldview which I take to be built into the structure of perception (Polanyi 1958). *Were there different ways of building knowledge of this subject?* I think yes, the classic two were deduction (testing assumptions drawn from theory) and induction (drawing theory from empirical research), although there were many variant and mixed approaches. My approach was inductive. *Were there different kinds of evidence that I could have sought?* Yes, even though I was researching a social world that the actors themselves constructed, some scholars have used numerical data to do that. I sought the contextualised voices of

the actors. Further, I accept the challenge to that Cartesian split, that, accepting the subjectivity of the social world, the researcher cannot then absent him/herself from that world. My evidence, then, were data, but not numerical and quantified, but constructed and interpreted.

This led inevitably to a method of data analysis which sought to work from the voice of the other to draw out theory, building theory rather than imposing theory (discussed later in this chapter). What would make that knowledge ‘warrantable knowledge’, and so fit with ‘proper’ scientific knowledge (Henwood & Pidgeon 1993: 16)? A broad answer is that, having generated a research question by using social science knowledge, and having developed a research design using existing theory, then, from the data, I should be able to launch a theoretical discussion in those theoretical terms (Eisenhardt 1999). There are more specific answers to do with the warrantability of research-based knowledge which rest on the robustness of the research design, discussed later in this chapter.

### **2.3 CASE STUDY**

I wanted to capture the rich and complex social phenomena implicit in my research question, the phenomena of issues of organisation. I considered three research methods: action research; ethnographic study; and case study. I thought through action research, attracted by its practitioner-focused methodology and the robustness of an epistemology which tests emerging new knowledge to see if it ‘works’ in practice (Cairns et al 2007; Robson 2002). This did not fit, I was not beginning with a practitioner concern nor would I have time to be able to test tentative theory. I thought about an ethnographic study as this would provide a picture of organisational culture. Although this would capture data in depth in their cultural setting, I would only have time to study one organisation at such depth (Wolcott 1995). As my question related to an issue cutting across numerous organisations, I chose a case study approach (Yin 1994).

I saw several advantages to a case study approach. A case study can focus on and preserve the unitary character of the social phenomena (Blaickie 2000) and is a method

which allows research to take place in the naturally occurring setting (Yin 1994). This naturalistic dimension was consistent with my constructionist approach. Little is known of the issues of organisation I chose to study, therefore I sought to gather data from these organisations in their fields rather than draw a line around them. Another advantage is that case studies have been shown to be a productive method for studying organisations (Yin 1994). I discussed above the sense in which my research approach was exploratory; case studies have allowed unforeseen patterns to emerge (Yin 1994).

I accept that the terms 'case' and 'study' are indistinct (Stake 2000). In brief, my use of 'study' is best understood in terms of my discussion on epistemology; my use of 'case' refers to the particularities of this research method which were designed in order to answer the research question. I took 'case study' to be more than the object of study (so Stake 2000) and other than an analytic tool (Becker 1992) but a distinct research strategy (Yin 1994). Invoking the words 'case study' does not answer questions of quantitative or qualitative, deduction or induction, what sources from which to seek data, or how they may be interpreted. So, one of the distinctive benefits of case study design was that I was able to develop a research design that fitted both the theory and the practicalities of the particular case. Another benefit was that a case study could be both theoretically focused but practically flexible, allowing the researcher to gain as much as possible from the setting without being committed to just one data gathering tool (Stebbins 2001).

## **2.4 ORGANISATIONS CHOSEN FOR THE CASE STUDY**

My case study was developed from my conceptual work on 'issues of organisation', which I saw in terms of new institutionalism and 'nonviolent direct action' which I conceptualised in terms drawn from social movement theory. Rigour in the development of this initial theory allowed for a choice of case which was sociologically representative (Hamel 1993; Yin 1994). I wanted to explore one case: 'issues of organisation'.

I decided that a study of several organisations was indicated, where contrast and comparisons could emerge (Gill & Johnson 1997). I chose four organisations for my

research, so should I not describe my approach as a “multiple” case study (Gill & Johnson 1997: 121)? I take multiple case study to mean researching more than one case (Yin 1994). My intention was not to commence case studies of four organisations. My approach was designed to answer the research question: I chose to examine one case, one social phenomenon (Hamel 1993). The case was that of organisations organising nonviolent direct action – but that this would best be illuminated by looking at it across several organisations chosen to fit the theoretical approach which emerged from the literature (Hamel 1993).

To bring ‘issues of organisation’ to the fore I selected a number of organisations on the basis of their differences on known organisational grounds. Difference, in organisational terms, included organisational shape such as vertical or flat (Billis 1993a; Zwert 1986), network (Jordan 1999), neo-tribe (Maffesoli 1995), personal-local (Lent 1999), co-operative (Lent 1999; Sommer 1984). Further differences were age (Stinchcombe 1965), size (Gamson 1975), life-cycle (Tilly 1975), membership (Dalton 1994), degree of bureaucratisation (Billis 1993a), governance (Billis & Harris 1996), mix of paid staff and volunteers (Billis & Harris 1996), charitable status (Randon & 6 1994), targets (Gamson 1975), form of action (Wall 1999), degree of success (Gamson 1975), degree of factionalism (Gamson 1975; Lent 1999). I trawled through all the organisations known to me which, on the face of it, were likely to be undertaking nonviolent direct action and to which I would also be able to gain access, and came up with the following list:

*Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament*

*Christian Aid*

*Earth First!*

*genetiX Snowball*

*Greenpeace*

*Hunt Saboteurs*

*Reclaim the Streets*

*Road Protest*

*Trident Ploughshares*

*World Development Movement*

I chose four contrasting organisations: Greenpeace, Trident Ploughshares, genetiX Snowball and Earth First! Greenpeace, at the time of the study, was a very large international bureaucratic organisation with an elected board and with a UK office in London. It worked on numerous issues in both the environment and peace fields and was the oldest of the selected organisations. It employed about fifty paid staff and had a large budget. It had a nationwide network of volunteers in local groups. As I commenced research, I was unclear as to its charitable status.

Trident Ploughshares operated nationwide. It had an office, bank account and had two people working full-time but unpaid. It had volunteers working in affinity groups and was able to mobilise dozens, or even hundreds, of people for blockades and camps. At the initial stage of my research, it seemed to have the tightest membership where core members literally pledged to act, and act in particular ways. It was a new organisation with a clear and single target.

genetiX Snowball was a very small organisation. It had no staff, one small office and a small group which governed the organisation, trained others and provided the main activists. It had a distinctive form of action: the symbolic uprooting of a few genetically modified plants having first informed the farmer, community, media and police.

Finally, there was the self-proclaimed anti-organisational movement, Earth First!, which had branches internationally and hundreds of active volunteers in the UK. It was a flat structure and my initial reading gave no idea as to where governance lay. It was the organisation most liable to factionalism and, at the commencement of the study, seemed the least successful, with participants moving on to other groups such as anti-globalisation networks and Reclaim the Streets.

I have introduced the four organisations which enabled me to pursue the research question but it was also a matter of expediency as the practicalities of fieldwork took hold. Most of all, the research would have been stronger the greater number of organisations in which I could examine the case in question. But I had to accept the

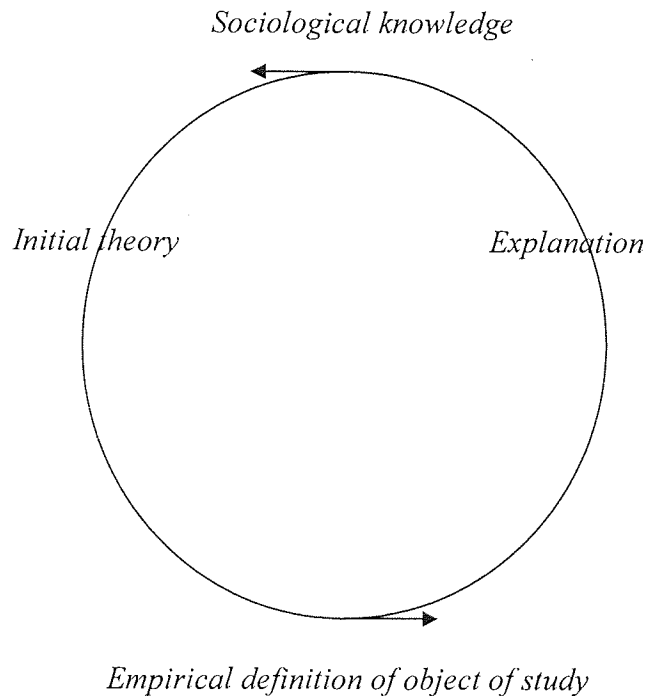


limited scope of a doctoral project. I had to discount Christian Aid and the World Development Movement which were not, at that time, undertaking nonviolent direct action. I did not have friends who were hunt saboteurs and I came to see that access would have been unnecessarily problematic. I then discovered that Reclaim the Streets and Road Protest overlapped and were likely to be encountered whilst researching Earth First! After preliminary discussions, I decided to rule out the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND). Whether it fitted with new social movement organisations was one problem, another was the suggestion that it was not a direct action organisation and that when CND members did participate in 'actions' (see Glossary) it was usually under another flag and not as CND.

How did this research design work epistemologically? The case study enabled me to clarify my thinking to produce an epistemologically sound approach. I had gathered some sociological knowledge from the literature review. From this I had drawn out initial theory concerning 'nonviolent direct action' and 'issues of organisation'. I have shown above how this initial theory was used to develop a research method. I intended to gather an empirical description from the field. I would then seek to explain the research findings in order to make a contribution to knowledge. My case study was designed to bring the theoretical and empirical into relationship. I have represented my thinking diagrammatically at Figure 1.

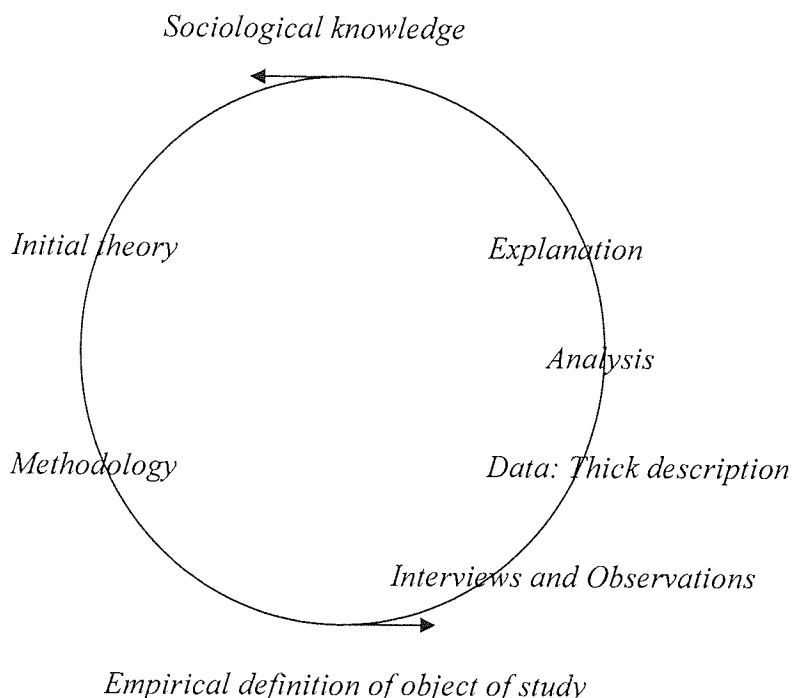
The research process was designed to move anti-clockwise, proceeding from and ultimately contributing to sociological knowledge. Figure 1 was not some case study template advocating the only way to conduct case studies, rather it represented the process which best enabled me to address the research question and produce sociological knowledge. By sociological knowledge I mean the generalisable world of scientific knowledge which has the language of the abstract (Hamel 1993). This would mean that both the initial theory and my explanation would be free of the particularities of the study. At the same time, though, I needed to get into the field, to work in the empirical world, observing and recording in the language of everyday life the sense-making of the actors. The case study provided the research elements for this.

Figure 1. Case Study Epistemology



Whilst Figure 1 links the theoretical and the empirical, I want to set out how I intended to move from the descriptive to the theoretical. One of the most contentious points in qualitative research is the move from initial theory to explanation (Silverman 2000). The first aspect is in the nature of the data I sought: contextualised and open to some interpretation. From these data, explanation would be sought. This would mean attention to emerging themes and patterns. I have shown this diagrammatically at Figure 2.

Figure 2. Case Study Epistemology and Research Method



Although all the elements are linked diagrammatically in Figures 1 and 2, I will discuss ‘initial theory’ to demonstrate this linkage. I was rigorous in the development of initial theory so as to choose a case which was sociologically representative (Hamel 1993; Yin 1994), that is, although not statistically representative of a population, I chose an approach which was drawn from accepted social science concepts concerning the social phenomenon. A similar approach is developed by Henwood and Pidgeon who use the term “theoretical sampling” (1993: 24). My initial theory consisted of the discursive substantive operational definitions: ‘nonviolent direct action’ and ‘issues of organisation’. These concepts were drawn from new social movement theory and new institutionalism respectively. Generalisability of findings would not be achieved by some epistemological device at a late stage of research but by establishing and keeping to that initial theory in keeping with a sociologically representative case (Hamel 1993; Yin 1994).

My initial theory contrasted sharply with the usage of theory in a hypothetico-deductive model where theory is tightly defined to be tested by experiment and subject to confirmation or disconfirmation. In that model, 'theory' links to general and causative laws. Instead I used initial theory in the sense of explanatory and contingent. I theorised sufficiently to drive the definition of the object of study and the methodology, which in turn drove the selection of the case. My aim was to get to the point where I was able to theorise once again but this time having drawn theory from the data. 'Explanation', in Figures 1 and 2 is how I have termed that inductive theorising. A prior step before explanation was a process of data analysis, which here I called 'Analysis'. The analysis sought to reduce the data in order to synthesise and find patterns but not to ignore the voices or the social contexts or the implicit interpretative work. This in turn was qualified by a particular sense in which I used 'data', a sense that, like other elements, was designed to fit theoretically and epistemologically and it is to the nature of these data that I now turn.

## **2.5 DATA: THICK DESCRIPTION**

I set out to collect qualitative data in response to the research question. That meant that I collected data in the field, contextualised by the social setting, as this was the best fit with my research approach described above. It also meant that, as a mild constructionist, there was likely to be some element of researcher interpretation (Schwandt 2000). There are two full chapters of research 'findings' – my 'data' (I use the two terms interchangeably). Further, these findings – data – would also indicate how to gather and how to analyse such data. So I explain the sort of qualitative data I sought, data which would throw light on my research question and which would fit my research epistemology. I think such data are best described as 'thick description' (Geertz 1999).

The term 'thick description' is used liberally in research writings and reports. For instance, in Denzin and Lincoln's (1994) qualitative research handbook, thick description is used in eight differently authored pieces without a unifying definition (Carroll 2000). Wolcott critiques the notion of pure description as "immaculate perception" (1994: 13).

He prefers thick description but notes that there is no consensus on what it is except that it must be preferable to thin (Wolcott 1994). Geertz's 'thick description' has been heralded as the epoch-making contribution of a disciplinary master (van Maanen 1979) but also the work of an "epistemological hypochondriac" (Gellner 1998: 175). I think it is clear that collecting numbers, instances of things, would not be the data I sought, but capturing the actors' voices and actions in their social settings. Such data, within the qualitative frame described above, would necessarily carry some degree of interpretation. It is also clear that, given the disparity of view between van Maanen (1979) and Gellner (1998), I need to make clear what I mean by thick description: the nature of the data sought.

So I now expand on the different uses of 'thick description'. I considered numerous texts using the term. After excluding those which use the concept without any definition or explanation, I had the following 12 texts: Atkinson & Hammersley 1994: 258; Blaickie 2000: 240; Denscombe 1998: 220; Denzin & Lincoln 1994; Geertz 1999; Gellner 1998: 175-177; Henwood 1996: 27; Ryle 1949: 73, 89; Ryle 1979: 36, 47f; Sanjek 1990: 401; Schwandt 1994: 123; Strauss & Corbin 1994: 274).

I drew out from the above four different categories of use each carrying a different epistemological notion of data (Carroll 2000). These categories were thick description as:  
*extra data* (Denscombe 1998: 220)  
*contextual data* (Henwood 1996: 27)  
*interpretation of data* (Atkinson & Hammersley 1994: 258)  
*the actor's original intentions.* (Blaickie 2000: 240).

The idea of thick description as merely extra data was a long way from Geertz's intention. The second was more apposite. I sought to gather contextual data, not just extra. At the least, I intended that my observation of the context would add to the sense. With the third category, there is an epistemological shift, as attention moves somewhat from the data to their interpretation. Geertzian thick description is not a neutral and external act, it is the interpreter interpreting (Geertz 1999). As for the fourth category, I

was convinced early on that one cannot observe *why* anyone does anything (Denzin 1997; Ryle 1949; Schwartzman 1993). I set out to gather data in the second and third senses, to generate a data-set which would incorporate contextual data. Although that data-set would be available to any researcher, it would never be free of me. I did not seek to interpret on the hoof but I do accept that the constructionist will have been constructing, the interpreter interpreting, in the course of data collection (van Maanen 1979).

I will give an illustration to show what sort of 'data' I set out to collect to answer the research question. Ryle (1971) first developed the concept of thick description. In Ryle's terms, there is, first, a thin description, the rawest piece of datum. But on each thin description, numerous thicks can be parasitic upon that one thin host. Ryle used the example of winking. The thin description of winking is voluntary or involuntary eye spasm. The thick descriptions could include the wink as a greeting, a signal, mimicking how someone else winks, a sign of group-belonging, and so on. How would a researcher choose one thick over another? It would be by gathering contextual data so that the thin datum could be understood in the midst of the social setting in which it arose.

The recording of such data, be they visual or conversational, would therefore be subject to researcher interpretation. My intention, in keeping with the sense of 'thick description' discussed above, was to reserve seeking understanding until after the fieldwork was complete. Such an approach would contrast with Denzin's (1997) strategy of researcher involvement and creativity, which I think would have been a possible strategy had I undertaken an ethnographic study. I did take into the field an intention to keep the research interest as broad as possible for as long as possible, described by Wolcott (1995: 10) as:

*"openness to openness."*

## **2.6 DATA GATHERING**

How then to gather this sort of data? I wanted to gather contextualised data: the social actors in their setting. I therefore chose semi-structured interviews and participant

observation as prime methods. I drew on my initial theory to prepare interview questions and observational schema. I was also expecting to collect documentary material, both text and visual, and any other material relevant to the case (Yin 1994). My intention was to interview 11 people in each of the four organisations and to observe at a nonviolent direct action event and at decision-making events for each - Earth First!, genetiX Snowball, Greenpeace and Trident Ploughshares. Case study strategy permits the collection of data from multiple sources and by various methods (Yin 1994). I wanted actors' accounts and I wanted to observe actors acting within this particular case of organising nonviolent direct action. I will now discuss 'interview' and 'participant observation'.

### *Interview*

I developed a simple schema for semi-structured interviews which would prompt me to steer conversation along the lines of inquiry needed to address the research question (Appendix 1). By semi-structured, I mean that I was not seeking direct answers to direct questions, that 'tell me something about how decisions get made' would be enough to uncover rich material (Bell 1993). I also opted for semi-structured interviews which fitted my theoretical framework as there was insufficient existing knowledge to draw up formal questions. An advantage of the semi-structured interview over the formal is that the latter risks creating a hierarchical relationship between researcher and interviewee (Finch 1993). As a way of finishing the interview, I included a request to hear the participants' account of a 'champagne moment' and/or 'banana-skin' moment in their experience of direct action. The aim here was to elicit anecdotes and to end the interview on a positive note.

I tried out the schema on a colleague to iron out infelicities such as ambiguity, imprecision, researcher assumption, presuming too much of interviewees' memories or knowledge, leading questions, logical flow (Bell 1993). The same colleague, reflecting on her own fieldwork, warned me of the pitfall of being the interviewee's 'next best friend' – the nature of the relationship needed prior thought. Oakley, through her interviews with mothers, developed relationships to the extent that, four years after the research, she was still in touch with one third of her interviewees and four had become

close friends (1979; 1982). I kept watch on the quid pro quo of the researcher-interviewee relationship (Finch 1993).

As can be expected from qualitative inquiry, where the interview is seen as a social activity (Grills 1998b), I noted that the researcher must assume a consciously interactive position with the interviewee (Klein 1983 after Kurt Lewin). Thus the interactions, as well as conversation prompted by questions, could also provide knowledge (Holstein & Gubrium 1999). This was why I intended to take notes during the interview even when the interview was being recorded. The interview setting can present a power imbalance in favour of the researcher (Reynolds 1993). Issues such as power, gender, culture, and especially the interactive nature of the interview, are social issues likely to result in something other than 'pure' - numerical - data (May 1993). I intended to keep such issues in mind but have described above the sort of data I sought, so I was not expecting answers-to-questions abstracted from the social setting. Rather, my approach allowed for some degree of a "meaning-making" interaction (Holsten & Gubrium 1999: 107).

I sought interviews with a range of participants across the organisations and was open to prompts from interviewees about others they thought I ought to interview. This, in the methodological literature, is called 'snowballing', when, in the field, practical opportunities add momentum to the research (Collis & Hussey 2003; Silverman 2000). Snowballing can give unforeseen access, although the researcher must still make judgments about who to interview based on a theoretical guide (Warren 2002). My theoretical guide was the initial theory discussed earlier (Hamel 1993).

### *Observation*

I took with me a schema for recording data in the field. This was to enable me to write up notes as soon as possible after the observed event. It was also intended as a prompt to me to observe the social setting of any event but at the same time to keep my note-taking focused on the research question. As well as recording substantive events or comments, the schema prompted me to note the context and any processes in play (such as decision-



making). A further prompt was entitled 'self', to record my own participation in both social and emotional senses. A copy of that schema is at Appendix 2.

I observed in the main by being present and active at nonviolent direct action events. Having become reasonably known and trusted, I had access to some of the planning, preparation and training before such events too. I do not think I could have had such access without that trust. One strength of observation, which corresponds to a weakness in interviewing, is that I was researching a social world. Interviewing tends to remove the individual from social life, whereas I wanted to capture social actions, social relations and the inter-relation between the two (Grills 1998b).

'Observing' is a broad term, from the open, transitory participant (Scott 1965) to full membership (Adler & Adler 1987). There are records of a researcher's participation being to such an extent that they get swallowed up by the field and convert to the cause they were researching (Adler & Adler 1987). For some needy organisations, a researcher offers a resource to be captured by the organisation. At the same time, researchers have found that involvement is viewed with suspicion by the academy. Waddington (1994) tells of the pressures on him to do good research (which in his case meant positivist research) whilst he was participant-observing at a strike at a brewery.

Grills (1998a) has stated that research amongst the politically committed is highly problematic. Having stated this, his discussion draws on little theory and offers me little help. In the end, I chose to maintain a level of participation in all four organisations on the basis of the discussion in Adler & Adler (1987). They discuss levels of participation, from peripheral through to complete membership. Each level, they argue has distinctive implications for epistemology, the research exchange, role demands, the task of disengaging, and so on. In order to gather the data to answer the research question, and to maintain a consistent epistemological position, I chose what the Adlers term "active membership" (1987: 50). Such membership would give me the possibility of the same sort of access to organisational life open to all members. Unlike full membership, I would

not have the time to commit to expect to fully enter into those members' way of seeing the world (Adler & Adler 1987).

My active membership was intended to gather data of the sort discussed earlier. For instance, I intended to participate in the organisations' nonviolent direct actions, without which I would have little clue as to what it was these organisations did. I also wanted the credibility to gain access to decision-making processes. Active membership also meant I would have to manage the depth of my relationship with the organisations. My committed stance was such that my own values lay in sympathy with the overall aims of these organisations. However, I was not a full member and could not be assumed to be available for further nonviolent direct actions. Further to this, active rather than full membership would mean that I would be able to disengage from the field. I intended to act fully when present according to the actors' requirements. Other than being there, I did not seek to interfere in their actions by ethnomethodological interventions such as "Garfinkling", where the researcher manipulates the situation to study responses when conventional patterns are disturbed (Albas & Albas 1998: 126).

The epistemological implications of my active membership stance were of a piece with the epistemology of my whole research approach discussed earlier in this chapter. The main function of participant observation was to get clearer and more accurate thick descriptions of interviewee data. The research exchange (Adler & Adler 1987) was such that I intended to contribute to events and enter into social interaction with members. This would enable me to pick up the routine and mundane and be able to gain members' "first-order" perspectives (Adler & Adler 1987: 55).

One issue with the term 'observe' is that it has multiple usages. One can 'observe' in the sense of make a comment, or observe in the sense of seeing an object, or in the sense of social science research. In the rest of this thesis, the term is only used in the following sense: data gathered whilst in the role of a participant observer.

A strong benefit in using multiple methods of data collection is to help the validity of the research, that what will be presented will be a 'true' or accurate account of the phenomena (Stebbing 2001). The use of multiple methods has been common since the Chicago School of the 1930s - 1940s (Warren 2002). Using two or more research tools made it more likely that I was actually gathering data about what I thought I had set out to gather. Some have termed this triangulation, even "the rubric of triangulation" (Albas & Albas 1998: 133) which I find an awkward concept in qualitative research (see Oakley 2000).

Triangulation is using fixed points on a given map (or broadcasts from radio transmitters – Lincoln & Guba 1985: 305) to secure a position which can be represented numerically and which is generalisable to all map readers for all time. However, as a 'mild constructionist' researcher (see the discussion earlier in this Chapter and Schwandt 2000: 202), I consider the map itself to be under construction, provisional, negotiable. Nevertheless, I have chosen a method where two sorts of checks operate, checking out the consistency of data collected by different methods and checking the consistency of different data sources using the same method (Oakley 2000).

Another dimension of validity in qualitative research is to acquire an accurate picture of the phenomena (Stebbing 2001). I intended to seek access to key informants to provide rich and contextualised data (van Maanen 1995), to provide access to other interviewees within their organisation (Harris 1998) and to give their comments on emergent key findings (Stebbing 2001). Overall, generating data from multiple sources in multiple ways would help give descriptive validity and also theoretical (rather than statistical) validity (Miles & Huberman 2004).

## **2.7 DATA ANALYSIS**

I will now show how I set out to analyse these data, as the move from data to theory is a significant challenge in qualitative research (Hammersley 1999). This step in research

was presented earlier at Figures 1 and 2. My intention in analysing data was to move from an empirical, descriptive account through to explanation, where explanation means to give an a theoretical account.

Within qualitative research, analytic methods have ranged from using quantitative analysis of qualitative data (Oakley 2000), qualitative analysis such as grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin 1994), inductive analysis (Silverman 2000) and interpretative schemes which can include offering no other voices but the actors', or no other but the researcher's, who therefore writes an autobiography (Oakley 2000; Denzin 1997). I made a choice on the same grounds as the previous discussions on initial theory, data and selection of case. This was that I was keeping to a coherent epistemological approach and, within that, a consistent research design. I wanted to hear the voices of others within a social phenomenon which the literature had shown to be under-researched and under-theorised. At the same time, I had initial theory and wanted to answer the question by providing more than just a detailed descriptive study. Therefore I planned to do analysis and theoretical work within a mild constructionist frame (Schwandt 2002).

Epistemologically and practically I ruled out subjecting data to quantitative or pseudo quantitative analysis – words are 'fatter' than numbers and can carry multiple meanings (Le Compte & Schensul 1999). Makyt and Morehouse (1994), drawing on Strauss and Corbin (1994) present qualitative research strategies along a continuum. At one end is the lowest level of interpretation and abstraction, at the other is a much higher level conducive to theory-building. Although I found their use of 'interpretation' awkward, nevertheless it is helpful to show where I positioned my analysis. To answer the question, I wanted to draw out explanation which would be of the same sort and engage with the initial theory, that is, theory-building.

Had the literature review shown greater existing knowledge, then I would have been drawn more towards the full workings-out of grounded theory. Instead, I decided to follow an approach which was close to grounded theory, but not following fully its rather process-oriented scheme (Eisenhardt 1999). I decided I would use the generic qualitative

analysis of Silverman (2000) and the theory-building from case studies in organisations discussed by Eisenhardt (1999). Eisenhardt presents an approach by which theory built from case study can: aid internal validity; offer wider generalisability; allow for the possibility of novel theory; provide measurable constructs; offer theory from which hypotheses can be generated; and all the while remaining empirically valid (1999). I now set out the steps I took below.

As is typical with case studies, I amassed a very large quantity of data (Yin 1994). The first step was to reduce it all to text. Once in textual form, I had all the data available to me in a consistent form and ready for the next step. The interview data was already in text form both from notes taken at the time of the interview and through transcription of the tape-recorded interview. Field notes from participant observation were also in text form. I followed Lofland (1995) in reducing to textual form artifacts gathered in the field.

The second step was to aggregate consistent data, a step which resulted in what Le Compte and Schensul describe as “clumped” data (1999: 69). Such clumps were provisional but shaped by the initial theory which guided the construction of the semi-structured interview schedule. As noted earlier, openness to the unforeseen was an important strategy (Wolcott 1995). By aggregating consistent data, I remained open to counter-intuitive patterns (Wolcott 1995).

In the third step, I moved from clumped data to patterned data, to establish broad patterns or ‘themes’ (Silverman 2000). Patterns can be chosen from within-organisation data, one organisation paired with another, cross-case patterning (Eisenhardt 1999), emergence by sheer frequency, sequences and by other means (Le Compte & Schensul 1999). My study was an examination of issues of organisation so I looked for cross-case patterning: seeking to understand the case of ‘issues of organisation’ by looking at data from the four organisations. These broad themes were given a coding, noting the theme itself and noting the person and / or context producing it.

At this stage – the third step – I kept in mind my initial theory on nonviolent direct action and on issues of organisation. So, for example, I began to look for norms, mental frames and social constructs which would explain the organisational behaviour revealed by the patterns. However, I remained open to other patterns and other tentative explanations for anticipated patterns. I also kept in mind the organisation as a whole, to understand it within its environment, looking at the link between form and function, the significance of the informal as well as the formal (Harris 1998). I discarded some themes and patterns, keeping to those which cast light on the research question.

The fourth step was what Eisenhardt (1999: 136) describes as “cross-case pattern checking”, which forces researchers to look beyond initial impressions. In practice, this meant conducting a second trawl through the data. Eisenhardt’s thinking at this point is that the researcher should try to connect patterns and broad themes in different ways, or to find contradictory themes, or qualifying conditions affecting them, or to find instances that would disconfirm them.

The fifth step of theory-building was to refine constructs, going back repeatedly to the data to check, revise, disconfirm. The intention here was the careful checking of emerging theory against the organisations in the theoretical sample (Eisenhardt 1999). This part of the process is described by Eisenhardt as foundational to case study theory-building (*ibid*). The repeated reference back to the data overlaps with the fourth step outlined above. The overlapping of processes is noted as a feature of the iterative nature of qualitative research (Silverman 2000).

The sixth and final step was to examine the emerging concepts alongside the extant literature. I had anticipated that I would have some constructs which were similar to the literature but also may have others which were different. Where similar constructs were found, then that suggested internal validity (Eisenhardt 1999). This in turn enabled me to discuss findings at a higher level of abstraction and wider generalisability. Similar constructs also offered the potential for using novel empirical material by bringing together social phenomena not hitherto connected (Eisenhardt 1999). Contradictory

constructs led, first, to question the internal validity, but, having done that, to move on to discuss emergent theory that might revise current theory.

I decided not to use a qualitative software package for analysis. In short, the reason was the same as led me not to use an overly systematic approach such as grounded theory, that it was not the most appropriate way to manipulate the sort of data I intended to gather through particular sorts of social interaction in order to answer my research question. I wanted to be open to researcher creativity, to find a connection which, logically, especially by machine (numeric) logic, would not exist. I have already argued that my data would be the phenomena, in their social context, mingled with some element of researcher interpretation. I did use 'NUD\*IST 4' but for data storage rather than analysis (Seale 2000).

## **2.8 COMMENTS ARISING FROM THE FIELDWORK**

I have now completed setting out the research approach which I had in mind before the commencement of fieldwork. I conclude the chapter with comments arising from that fieldwork. First of all, I will discuss the pilot study. I launched a pilot study to test the research design but I found the pilot study to be the commencement of research. Secondly, I will give a brief outline of the data gathered and, finally, discuss methodological issues arising from the fieldwork.

### **Pilot study**

My final task before commencing fieldwork was to undertake a pilot study:

*“to get the bugs out of the instruments”* (Bell 1993: 84)

The pilot study would ensure that the data collection methods would actually yield the data required (Giddens 1997; Seale 1998). I chose to use Greenpeace as the pilot as I had been a volunteer with this organisation and had access to it in a way which would differ from others and could therefore skew data. Through part of 2001 and into 2002 I conducted eight semi-structured interviews and did participant observation, then began

the first stages of data analysis (see above). I found I had a conundrum which I shared with colleagues by presenting a paper (Carroll 2002). Although the instruments were appropriate, I found that the pilot had had an impact on other aspects of the research design.

One interviewee was herself a qualitative researcher and, incidentally, was able to tell me about her experience of the software package 'NUD\*IST 4'. Her data with regard to this influenced my thinking in as much as this strengthened my decision not to use software for data analysis. Of greater importance was that, part-way through my first interview with a Greenpeace employee, I discovered that she had been a founder of *genetiX* Snowball. Another Greenpeace interviewee was the co-founder of Earth First! (UK). Further, most interviewees had done some voluntary actions with the other organisations. One, for example, had been arrested with Trident Ploughshares; others had strong contacts across the organisations. I was offered quick access to the other organisations and informed of forthcoming events at which I could observe.

Perhaps the greatest conundrum was that I felt I had completed a turn of the research cycle and had found myself sharpening my thinking. To give a couple of examples, I had begun to find a much richer mix of nonviolence traditions than I had anticipated with my new social movement theorising. Secondly, my new institutional thinking on organisation had moved forward as I listened to interviewees with a loose or negative sense of being part of an organisation whilst at the same time talking about or exhibiting strongly institutionalised behaviours.

Gellner criticized Geertz for changing his epistemological approach over time (1998). I do not want to be an epistemological fidget or an epistemological hypochondriac (Gellner 1998: 175) but the pilot had taken me to an unanticipated place and so I need to account for the strategy I then adopted. I could have continued as planned, bracketing off Greenpeace data from the rest of the research. But this would mean ignoring the fact that I had already begun to research in the other organisations and had already impacted upon the field. A second strategy would have been to accept this full turn of the research cycle



and label it as stage one of the research. Although feasible, on reflection I chose a third strategy, which was to incorporate the pilot as part of the research. The research, then, commenced in full and proper fashion when I first entered the Greenpeace office to conduct interviews and found I had entered the field. Not only entered but had begun impacting upon it, and it upon me. I was already researching in all the organisations and now had opportunities for access.

There was an epistemological and methodological fit between this iterative research process and my design (Hamel 1993). So, from 2002-2003, I continued with the fieldwork. In qualitative research, the pilot can be more than an instrument check and it can allow unforeseen perspectives to emerge (Harris 1998). Also, in qualitative research, revision can be valued and progressive focusing embraced as part of the researcher's activity in the field (Silverman 2000). Indeed, based on a study of Yin's work, Robson (2002) has argued that one of the virtues of case study design is to capture and work with these emerging perspectives. So, with Robson (2002) and Silverman (2000), I left behind the view of a pilot as an instrument test, or a draft to be jettisoned, but viewed it as a valid turn of the research cycle, one of several iterations that would take place in the research (Eisenhardt 1999). To sum up, I chose this strategy because, although my pilot had not fitted with my preconceptions of what a pilot should be, it had achieved a fit with what authoritative voices have declared a case study can be (see further Eisenhardt 1999: 143; Glaser & Strauss 1967; Yin 1994). Further, it was in keeping with my epistemological frame and my particular case study design. It was part of the process by which data could be gathered to answer my research question.

### **Data Gathered**

I collected data from the four organisations simultaneously from 2001-2003. My intention was to interview 11 people in each of the four organisations and to observe at a nonviolent direct action event and at decision-making events for each. In practice, due to the smallness of one organisation and time taken up in opportunist participant observation, I interviewed a total of 36 participants either in the context of their

organisations or in their own homes. I spent around 36 days observing at numerous events, meetings and actions. I made use of documents produced by the organisations. Two organisations had 'Handbooks', both written by founders or co-founders and much used in their respective organisations.

Some important material was available through the web, including archived documents on the founding of the organisations, documents stating their espoused missions and video clips of iconic actions. I collected pictorial records, including photographs, videos and dvd footage of actions. I made written notes of such material so as to incorporate it in the data analysis. In addition, I gathered further information through artifacts, as these can add thickness (used in the sense of context by Albas & Albas 1999). Artifacts included posters, a hand-drawn commemorative plate and 'flyers' announcing related activities. The semi-structured interviews, especially when contextualised through participant observation, were the central method for gathering data to answer the research question. I have listed the data sources in Appendix 3 but give a summary in Table 4.

**Table 4. Data sources**

	Interviews	Observation	Handbooks	Documents	Web	Artifacts
Earth First!	10	12 days		yes	yes	yes
genetiX Snowball	7	4 days	yes	yes	yes	yes
Greenpeace	10	10 days		yes	yes	yes
Trident Ploughshares	9	10 days	yes	yes		yes

As stated earlier, the fieldwork took place from the autumn of 2001 through to the summer of 2003. This was the socio-temporal occasion of the research (Schwandt 2000). Circumstances were such that I researched four organisations contemporaneously rather than consecutively. I think this had an advantage in that the same socio-temporal conditions, including political opportunities and constraints, applied to all equally. There

remains the weakness that, not being longitudinal, I may have missed significant events, or mistaken unusual events for the norm (Brymer 1998).

In addition to these four organisations, I did conduct a long semi-structured interview and spent a day observation with the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND)<sup>1</sup>. I also examined the records of a local branch of CND; these records stretched back to the late 1950s. This followed a lead given by a key respondent and references to CND in early interviews. An excursion resulting from data from a key respondent has been used in case studies of organisations and has featured in some famous examples (Eisenhardt 1999). However, in my case, I was unable to confirm that CND would fit my theoretical framework as a Third Sector organisation which undertook direct action.

### **Methodological Issues arising from the Fieldwork**

I found that, in almost all cases, participants were very willing to be interviewed. I recorded interviews with their permission. A number did not want to be recorded. In any case I scribbled notes as interviews progressed. I was not seeking direct answers to direct questions, so 'tell me something about how decisions get made' was enough to uncover rich material. Partly to use as an ice-breaker or a light way to conclude an interview, I had included a request to hear participants' account of a 'champagne moment' in their direct action, and a 'banana-skin' moment. This proved to be very fruitful as stories and insights emerged which the other questions had failed to elicit.

One of my first interviewees turned out to be a lecturer in sociology, one who had published papers on qualitative research (see Reynolds 1993). She had been invited to the launch of NUD\*IST in the UK. She felt that not only was the name contrived, it also wrested too much control away from the researcher at this stage of the process (see further Fielding 2002; Seale 2000; Stebbings 2001). I wanted to use what this interviewee

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<sup>1</sup> This one day observation was the most striking example of researcher impact upon the field. I joined a CND march from Hyde Park to Trafalgar Square. A CND veteran was struggling under the weight of placards which she was trying to pass to other marchers. I helped pass them out. A smartly dressed woman asked me what the march was all about. Then I realized I was being interviewed for TV by a Chinese media team.

called the “off-the-floor” method (literally, with coded patterns spread out on the floor), one that would be amenable to intuition, to have capacity to move counter-intuitively. I had already decided against software analysis but this interview firmed up my thinking. This was the single greatest impact the field had upon me.

There was one further instance of Silverman’s (2000) technique of progressive snowballing. In this instance, refining the questions or the manner of asking to focus on an unforeseen but fascinating area. I was fortunate enough to gain access to founders or founder members of three of the organisations, not least in the very first interview. So I thereafter inquired about how each organisation was formed. This was the only refinement I made to the interview schedule.

On reflection, my notes taken during observation served best to contextualise interviewee data. There is little agreement amongst ethnographers as to standard practice for field-note taking (or reporting) (Van Maanen 1995). Jackson, based on interviews with 70 field-note takers, states that all found their notes had an ambiguous and liminal quality (1995). Nevertheless, there is a tendency for researchers to ‘fetishise’ their notes:

*“They quote their notes as text.”* (Jackson 1995: 65)

I refer to, but do not quote my notes in the data presentation, instead I quote the interviewees. In my case, participant observation was not my sole data-gathering tool and I did not find a distinction between that and interviewing, unlike Wolcott (1995) who describes interviewing as enquiring and participant observation as experiencing.

The observation schema was, in practice, little use as a physical tool. There were few opportunities to take notes during an action. At other occasions, such as decision-making meetings, I decided not to produce sheets of paper for note-taking as it would have been socially awkward and would have skewed the interactions I wanted to observe. For instance, I did not want people to feel insecure and therefore guard their comments. Instead, I kept a small notebook in which I noted down my observations when I could. I found I used the schema more as a mental guide before observing and again to guide the write up of notes, either from memory or from my notebook, which took place as soon as

practically possible after an event. Although not so useful as a practical tool, the schema helped me keep in mind what, with a researcher's eyes and ears, I was there to observe.

Even had I taken copious notes, it would have taken a team of researchers to capture the data, given the morass of social interaction, the medley of voices, arising from the phenomena in which I participant-observed (Le Compte & Schensul 1999). The greatest conundrum I found relating to participant observation was not addressed adequately in the literature. This was the pragmatic problem which for me became the inverse law of participant observation: the greater the richness of social interactions in which one observes then the lesser the opportunity to record the data. However, the single most important contribution of this data-collection method was to get clearer and more accurate thick descriptions relating to interviewee data.

I gathered artifacts which included DVDs, videos and an LP. I made textual notes of video footage and music. For instance I made written notes from an LP of music and speeches of Judi Bari of Earth First! Similarly, I produced notes whilst watching an hour-long video of a BBC Everyman programme which featured one of my interviewees.

When it came to data analysis, I found that I had a mass of data (Yin 1994). Consistent themes and patterns which cast light on the research question are presented in the next two chapters. By aggregating consistent data, I sought to be open to counter-intuitive patterns (Wolcott 1995). One example was the emergence of 'rules' – written rules – which I had not expected to find in new social movement organisations.

I chose a case study methodology for one main reason, to answer my research question. Was it the only way to answer? No, but was it a valid choice? I would have gained more in-depth and contextualized understanding from an ethnographic study (Grills 1998b). This would have given me much greater thick description and the ability to interpret one social phenomenon in the light of the cultural whole (Howard 1989). An ethnographic study of Earth First!, for instance, would be rich and detailed. But this would address one instance, how one organisation organises. My question was about a wider social

phenomenon, not an organisation per se, and case studies can capture complex, contextual and non-repetitive social interaction across organisations (Hamel 1993). For the same reason, and also because my research was not practitioner focused nor involved an intervention, I did not use action research (Scott 1965). The case study is a known method for generating both descriptive and analytical material (Yin 1994) and for doing so in a relatively unexplored area (Eisenhardt 1999; Harris 1998).

Validity can be established in different ways according to different social science paradigms (Oakley 2000). I think my design was valid because it was the best way to address the research question. The design was a fit both with that initial theory which could be drawn from a summary of existing knowledge and which would allow emergent theory to speak to extant knowledge. It would have been stronger had there been more organisations and a greater theoretical spread. It would, then, have been more sociologically representative (Hamel 1993; Yin 1994). I had to draw a boundary around research of a modest scale – that of the lone PhD student. How representative was the research? My case study did not offer statistical representation (different paradigm), instead it aimed for a theoretically representative sample (Hamel 1993). In the words of Stake:

*“The purpose of a case report is not to represent the world but the case”*  
(Stake 2000: 48).

How rigorous was the research? By this I mean that, if it was a valid way of going about it, then first, did I actually get data to answer the question and secondly, can others come after me to repeat the research (Schofield 1993)? Once again, data collection was driven by both the practicalities of addressing the case and also by the theoretical framework. My interview questions and observational schema were derived from theory. I had similar access to all four organisations, was usually given full and flowing interviews lasting more than an hour, and my participant observation included in each case an extended period of time with participants, upwards of a day at a time. Observation gave me an opportunity to reflect on interview findings and, if need be, to check with key informants that such a picture really was the one they had intended to paint, and to see

what their conversation meant in social interaction. I have made clear a weakness that by researching in the field, I was a social actor too. It would have been better had there been multiple investigators to repeat the interviews and observations (Eisenhardt 1999). Quite simply, a greater number of interviews and more days observing would have made it more rigorous. Again, there were practical constraints.

How generalisable are such research findings? I accept that it is logically impossible to both generate and confirm (disconfirm) hypotheses using the same data (Glaser & Strauss 1967; Stebbings 2001). Stake's (2000) view of the case study is that generalisability is not the goal. In his view, generalisability will be achieved by a second and independent study and that the case should be understood within its own world (Stake 2000). All the same, I would argue that I can look for some degree of generalisability because the research approach was driven by initial theory, and that same theory, drawn from the literature, provides the social science concepts which apply to sociological knowledge in general (Hamel 1993; Yin 1994).

I found I was able to draw out theory from the data which corresponded to and engaged with the initial theory and then with the extant literature (Eisenhardt 1999). The overall design (Figure 2) meant that having a sociologically derived framework, theory and sample, I could frame my final discussion in the language of social science. But this was a small-scale study. The main aspect of case study generalisability is that it can be assessed in social science terms rather than remaining at the realm of the descriptive. The emphasis then is on whether or not there is, as I do indeed claim, a theoretical contribution. This can be assessed in various terms, including whether the case study is a useful source of hypotheses, a universal generalisation, or the demonstration of a particular phenomenon which needs to be taken into account (Blaickie 2000: 223).

## CHAPTER THREE

### PRESENTATION OF DATA: THE ORGANISATIONS IN THEIR ENVIRONMENTS

This chapter is the first of two presenting my research ‘findings’ – my ‘data’. I use the two terms inter-changeably. These findings describe a social phenomenon: the organising of nonviolent direct action. The chapter is organised in blocks which are broad themes emerging from the data. Thus, in these chapters, I have begun the process of synthesis. These blocks, though, do not *explain* the issues of organisation in Third Sector organisations which undertake nonviolent direct action. Rather, they describe the phenomenon. In order to manage the data and organise the material, there has been some synthesis and initial analysis.

Discussion is reserved for Chapter 5 but there are some places in the text where I have drawn out a few points and presented a more conceptualised account rather than risk losing insights or leaving a muddled presentation.

Data are presented in accordance with the understanding of qualitative data articulated in the previous chapter. Thus what follows is neither quantitative, nor abstract (neither “statistical stuff” nor “heavy duty bullshit” (Mills, quoted in Brewer 2004: 326)) but focused on real challenges in society and exploring the connections between individual biography and social structure (Brewer 2004).

Most of the data came through semi-structured interviews. Further data came from my observations of interviewees’ relations, actions and the inter-twining of the two (Grills 1998b). I gathered some data from the organisations’ documents and websites. Where I make use of such data sources, I give a description in a footnote. The Handbooks of *genetiX* Snowball (*gX Handbook* 1989) and Trident Ploughshares (*TP Handbook* 2001) were often referred to by interviewees. Interview and observational data showed that these Handbooks were important to the organising of participants so I have drawn from both of these documents. They were both substantial and I have listed them in the Bibliography.



In places, the text of the next two chapters includes illustrative quotes from interviewees and comments made to me during observations. These are chosen because they are typical as well as illuminating (Silverman 2000). There is a glossary of some of the terms and organisations mentioned in these chapters. I have used a glossary to avoid breaking up the flow of the text. The glossary can be found immediately before the Appendices. Although my study is of four UK organisations, I do use material from EF! US as it was active in the US for a number of years before arriving in the UK and also material from the founding of GP in Vancouver.

The data are presented under a number of headings. These headings are provisional, reflecting the main blocks of data relevant to the research question. Most of the headings also reflect the way I approached the study by deriving initial theory from new institutionalism and new social movement theory. I have subtitled this chapter 'The Organisations in their Environments'. This subtitle is provisional, summing up five blocks of data which relate to the political and institutional environments. The five blocks are: political context; handbook; organisational context; founders and founder members; and founding myths. The next chapter is subtitled 'Organisation and Nonviolent Direct Action'. Once again, the subtitle is provisional, summing up six further blocks of data. These blocks are: structure; affinity groups; camps; rules; nonviolent direct action; and training.

First in this chapter, I will introduce the organisations individually to give them scope and comparative perspective. In most of its literature Earth First! was written with the exclamation mark. Where abbreviated in my text it appears as EF! In much of its literature, genetiX Snowball is written with a reversal of capitalisation of the first word: 'genetiX'. Hereafter, where I abbreviate I use gX. I came across two versions of the Trident Ploughshares name, often 'Trident Ploughshares' but sometimes its full and original name 'Trident Ploughshares 2000'. Interviewees used the shortened version or simply 'TP', which is the abbreviation I will use. For Greenpeace I use GP.

## Earth First!

The data which introduce EF! came from interviews, observations, its website and its voluminous, self-critical and anarchic journals – ‘Do or Die!’ Interviewees repeatedly told me that Earth First! avoided calling itself an organisation. In its own published words

*“Earth First! is an international movement composed of small, bioregionally-based groups. Earth First! is a priority, not an organisation.”<sup>1</sup>*

EF! in the US preferred terms such as ‘priority’, ‘movement’, ‘network’. EF! UK gave itself another term – ‘(dis)organisation’ (Do or Die! 1997). Interviewees in the UK described it as a network or movement:

*“I see it as a fluid movement of people who do stuff.”*

Earth First! was not a household name in campaigning. Instead its name was said to be better known to law enforcement agencies on both sides of the Atlantic (Parfit 1990). Rather than use organisational publications, it has been suggested this group could probably be better traced on court records and police blotters (Parfit 1990). In the US it has been depicted as a terrorist organisation (Lee 1995: 109). It was noted for acts of ‘ecotage’ (also known as ‘monkeywrenching’) – covert destruction of logging, mining and road-building machinery undertaken nonviolently. For more on ecotage and monkeywrenching, see the Glossary. One EF! interviewee, commenting on her activities trying to save a local wood, said:

*“we ended up putting sand in bulldozer fuel tanks, messing with locks.”*

The UK data did not give a picture of a discrete organisation. It had blurred boundaries with other groups and activities. I was told that some of these, like ‘Reclaim the Streets’, probably originated from EF! Some interviewees said that road protests (camps) were often linked with EF!

*“The thing I’m most proud of is the anti-road protest, the first action at Twyford obstructing the destruction of a railway bridge.”*

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<sup>1</sup> “How to Form an Earth First! group.” Unattributed. Available at [www.eartfirstjournal.org](http://www.eartfirstjournal.org) Accessed November 2002. Author has hard copy.

Another link was the 'Sea Shepherd Conservation Society' - "Earth First!'s navy" (Davis 1991: 15) which by 1990 had rammed, sunk or disabled 12 whaling ships (Parfit 1990).

I heard further examples of linked activities: aspects of the anti-globalisation movement, and individual acts of ecotage that were flagged with the EF! flag. Interviewees explained that there have been many other individual acts of ecotage not flagged as EF! One experienced EF! interviewee described this to me as standard EF! practice. No interviewee was a 'member' of EF! All interviewees named other organisations or activities such as road camps as organisational entities to which they belonged. Also, consistent with the 'flagging' practice described above, they told me of independent activities they had undertaken which were claimed as Earth First!

*"We do have a \*\*\* Action Group that will sometimes use EF! or ELF! to describe an action.. give it a bit more credibility – the media would otherwise label us as head-cases."*

A brief history can be gleaned from documentary data. EF! began in the US in 1980. In 1979, Dave Foreman quit his post as a Washington DC lobbyist for The Wilderness Society after it had a change in management. Along with four others, he founded EF! Foreman recognised that environmentalism needed some extremists to make the demands of The Wilderness Society and Sierra Club look moderate (Parfit 1990). Foreman saw three elements to EF! – ecological wilderness, civil disobedience and 'monkeywrenching' (ecotage).

To take out their message, they used 'roadshows' (Parfit 1990). By 1982, there were more than 2000 EF! adherents in the US growing to 10,000 by 1987 (Lee 1995). 'Gatherings' provided the movement with momentum and opportunities to network, notably the Annual National EF! gathering – the Round River Rendezvous (Mills 1991). These national gatherings were then supplemented by activists' conferences where tactics and focus were hammered out (Do or Die! 1997). For more on gatherings, see the Glossary.

A split in EF! in 1990 came about as a result of "the founder effect" (Davis 1991: 14). Success had brought into EF! an increasing diversity of people including

social change activists, animal rights vegans, wilderness hunting guides, monkeywrenchers and Gandhians<sup>2</sup>. The founders' focus had been on radical wilderness protection (Davis 1991) but these new interests brought a shift from camp-fires and ecotage to a place where:

*“everybody’s a vegetarian, eating soy cheese”* (Parfit 1990: 198).

Foreman left EF! in 1990 because of what he saw as a move to transform an ecological group into a Leftist group:

*“Too much diversity within one group can become counter-productive. When that occurs, energy and time is wasted debating contrasting styles, philosophies, worldviews, priorities and strategies... far better to... kiss a last time, file a no-fault divorce.”* (Foreman & Moreton 1991: 266).

This split was reviewed in hindsight as positive, showing EF! to be a discursive, not static movement (Do or Die! 1997). An interviewee said that the 1997 annual journal *Do or Die!* was produced that year in the UK at a time when EF! UK was being colonised by ‘Leftist’ rather than ‘deep ecology’ activists. Leftist, for this interviewee, meant politically active positions such as anarchism and Marxism whilst deep ecology was a rejection of human ‘species-ism’ and embracing the inter-relatedness of all life. (For more on deep ecology, see the Glossary).

#### EF!UK

10 years after its US parent, EF! began in the UK (1991). I gathered three divergent views of its beginnings. The first, from a scholarly source, that it arose at a time of disaffection with and overt hostility towards mainstream agencies – Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth (Seel & Plows 2000). The second was given in EF! UK’s own journal, that it was founded in 1991 by two 17 year olds, Jason and Jake (Do or Die! 1997). The third was in interview with co-founder, Jason, who recalled picking up an EF! US journal at a local fair in Hastings, subscribing, then obtaining a copy of ‘Eco-Defense’ from Dave Foreman (Foreman 2002).

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<sup>2</sup> “Why Earth First!?” Unattributed. [www.earthfirstjournal](http://www.earthfirstjournal) accessed November 2002. Author has hard copy.

The first gathering copied the US model and took place near Brighton in April 1992. Recruitment also followed the US model, with roadshows drawing in new adherents:

*“we invited some of the American EF! over and do a tour for us, toured around, 35 different locations, network spread like wildfire as a result.”*

Another of my EF! interviewees was drawn in through one of the first roadshows. She said that at the end of that roadshow people were invited to participate in an EF! ‘action’. (For more on this use of ‘action’ see the Glossary)

I was told that the first split followed shortly after the founding. An action against Fisons over peat bog destruction had resulted in machinery being destroyed. This led to discussions at the 1992 gathering. I heard that the eventual outcome was the naming of the ‘Earth Liberation Front’ as the clandestine destroyers of property and EF! for the public campaigning and civil disobedience actions (also Do or Die! 1997). There was an agreement between the two that EF! would neither condemn nor condone ELF ecotage (Seel & Plows 2000).

UK EF! had its own version of the founder effect when the two founders parted company with it. In one of the founder’s words, they “started letting go” as the deep ecology philosophy became drowned out by more broadly politicised and Leftist agendas. Another EF! interviewee described this episode in terms of a take-over by what he termed “the urban underclass”.

In 2002, during the time of my fieldwork, the January 2002 issue of the EF! Action Update gave a snapshot of UK activism under the EF! flag, that is, actions claimed by EF! 100 protesters charged the CBI Conference in Manchester. Protesters from ‘Rising Tide’ occupied the offices of an industry-friendly environmental consultancy. A BP garage was blocked in protest against a pipeline in West Papua. At an anti-road camp (Birmingham Northern Relief Road), five people were arrested occupying digger equipment. Birmingham Friends of the Earth and Rising Tide protested at the 2002 Motor Show. Finally, there was a report of an action which sabotaged vehicles used by a peat extraction company.

## genetiX Snowball

As with EF!, I found from interviewees some ambivalence as to whether and in what sense genetiX Snowball was an ‘organisation’. Again, the data will give some context to that question but for now I describe it in its own words drawn at this point from its Handbook (listed in the Bibliography as gX Handbook 1999) and an ‘Update’, a small pamphlet published by gX in 1999 which I refer to in the text as ‘gX Update’.

genetiX Snowball was a campaign of what it called ‘nonviolent civil responsibility’ (gX Handbook 1999). It encouraged and supported open and accountable nonviolent direct action to remove genetically modified plants from release sites and other parts of the food chain. (For ‘accountable’ see the Glossary). Descriptions of what ‘accountability’ meant for gX participants came from interviewees, such as:

*“It was 15 months leading up to the court case... [gX co-founder] was very sensitive to me going through a profound process, standing up in court to account for what you had done. I wore my mother’s medallion, she had been vilified as a German during the last war.”*

Its goals were to get a five year moratorium on the deliberate release of genetically modified (GM) plants in Britain, and the removal of all GM plants already in existence (gX Update). The Handbook stated that genetiX Snowball would be called off when these goals were met.

According to its pamphlet, gX was launched on 4th July, 1998 with an ‘action’ pulling up GM crops at Model Farm, Oxfordshire (gX update). There were five arrests, Kathryn Tulip being the first arrested, Rowan Tilly being another. Both were interviewees who told me that an aspect of ‘accountability’ was that they did not want to be anonymous. They described how gX was, at that time, an ‘affinity group’ of about ten people (for ‘affinity group’ see the Glossary). Kathryn Tulip said that this group had begun to form after holding a workshop on ‘Ploughshares’ (described under Trident Ploughshares) and road protests in 1997. I heard how a Handbook (1999) was meant to be a major component of the ‘snowballing’ of the

protest, with the expectation that local Friends of the Earth groups and EF! groups would take up the campaign. Interviewees said that the ‘snowball’ idea was that no ‘action’ was complete until others had been recruited to take forward the campaign. The intention was to write the Handbook first and use it for promulgation, but publication was delayed. An interviewee said:

*“We just decided we’d go ahead and do the action [Model Farm] and write the handbook later.”*

Further actions took place over the next ten weeks. The main target, Monsanto, responded with an injunction against gX. Then followed two further injunctions and a writ for damages. A summons for breach of a Monsanto injunction was heard at the High Court, 19th April 1999, and a hearing for contempt was heard later the same month. One week later an ‘injunction-breaker’ action took place against AgrEvo, another chemical company later to become Aventis and then part of the Bayer group.

In 1999, a large-scale Greenpeace action against AgrEvo took place, resulting in criminal charges against 28 Greenpeace protesters and front page coverage in the press (Carroll 2001b). gX had been targeting this same company and same field as another injunction-breaker action, hoping to achieve the Court response Greenpeace had achieved. A GP interviewee said that asking gX to step aside had been one of the hardest things he’d ever had to do. A gX interviewee said:

*“I thought it was outrageous that an organisation with all that power can come to a grass-roots group and say “excuse me, we’re first”.. I was extremely angry about that.”*

gX grew quickly to 50 local contact people and some active groups around the UK. Interviewees gave a number of reasons as to how it spread. It spread because gX was about how to participate in consensus decision-making as well as what to do on an action. It also spread because some of the first participants talked it up when they moved on to other things. Interviewees also described promulgation through workshops advertised in the press, through leaflets, and person-to-person.

Like all four organisations in this study, it was not a membership organisation. This was a problem for the chemical companies who wanted an injunction against

gX 'members'. The Courts agreed that evidence of membership was anyone possessing the Handbook. This prevented gX becoming the size of organisation described in that Handbook. Kathryn Tulip gave me an account of how growth was stopped by injunctions:

*"I can't say to somebody he won't be sent to prison for breaking the injunction, and our inability to say that meant that we had to – really – to stop inviting people to be a part of genetiX Snowball, and just invite them to form local groups of their own... knowing that they could rely on us for information, advice."*

It was intended to 'snowball' and grow big enough to have a 'spokes-council' to which constituent groups would send a representative and for which there would be consensus decision-making throughout. The legal situation was the main factor in inhibiting growth, but two further reasons were given by interviewees. First, the loss of some people for various reasons made it impossible for gX to develop as envisaged. Second, gX was somewhat displaced by Greenpeace taking over what would have been a gX action (see above).

Interviewees described how 'snowballing' continued, however, with members of the original affinity group giving support to autonomous groups and accountable but un-flagged actions around the country. Such groups received legal advice from Kathryn Tulip, nonviolent direct action training from Rowan Tilly and press advice from another. One interviewee who participated in a gX crop-pulling said:

*"It was obvious people doing this had previous experience.. it was tremendously well organised.. came across Rowan Tilly.. obviously part of the organisation of this event."*

I observed the outcome of an instance of this snowballing of gX actions at a Court case in Worcester. Rowan Tilly was present and provided legal support and moral support. The defendants were acquitted.

*"Those of us who were interested in continuing pulling up crops felt like, well you know, the methods are not tied to the name."*  
(Rowan Tilly)



## Greenpeace

Greenpeace was, at the time of the research, the world's largest environmental organisation (Castells 1997) and a household name in campaigning (NCVO 1995). According to a GP interviewee, it had:

*“a brand recognition of the same order as Coca-Cola”.*

In literature produced for the Glastonbury Festival, 2004, it depicted itself as a global campaigning organisation that used nonviolent creative confrontation to expose global environmental problems and to hold to account those responsible. It did not accept money from governments, corporations or political parties. An interviewee explained how the international office (Greenpeace International) and national offices (such as GP UK) together agreed annual global campaign priorities which the national offices were expected to follow.

GP was founded in Vancouver, 1971, protesting against a US nuclear weapons test programme to be conducted off the Alaskan coast (Castells 1997). It became an international movement, with national offices in 40 countries and an international office (GPI) in Amsterdam. According to its own literature, its supporters globally numbered 2.9 million. Castells (1997) depicts it as controlled by a council of country representatives, a small executive board, and trustees for major regions.

My interest was in Greenpeace UK. In 2004 it produced a 'Guide', giving details of the UK organisation. This was a gift for regular donors. According to the Guide, GP UK had over 200,000 financial supporters and

*“7,000 activist supporters who volunteer their time and energy to deliver our campaigns through a network of 100 local groups”.*

An interviewee described a more complex picture of activism. Amongst the notional 7,000 there were around 2000 likely to be active in street campaigning, giving time to, as he put it, “deliver” campaigns. Mainly amongst this 2000, but with a few others, there were several hundred ‘nvda-trained’ (see the Glossary) who could be called upon for arrestable actions.

Castells attributes GP's profile to three things. First, a sense of urgency derived from a North American Indian legend: "Warriors of the Rainbow" (Castells 1997: 118). Second, it drew on a Quaker principle of 'bearing witness' (see the Glossary), both as a principle for action and as a strategy for communication. Third, it was driven by a business-like and pragmatic attitude which Castells attributes primarily to one man, "Greenpeace's historic leader", David McTaggart (ibid). My interviewees, all from GP UK, did not usually give this picture of the complex international NGO but all referred to 'bearing witness' in some way.

### **Trident Ploughshares**

In its substantial Handbook, Trident Ploughshares (TP) was described as a peace organisation, formed in 1998, undertaking what it termed 'accountable actions' (see below and see Glossary) against the UK's Trident missile programme (TP Handbook 2001). Trident, according to the Handbook, was a US-designed and US-leased multiple independently targeted nuclear warhead delivery system launched from specially built nuclear-powered submarines. Although the UK fleet was a modest four boats, the potency of Trident with a possible total of 192 warheads kept the UK in the nuclear league. Only the USA, Russia and France had more warheads (TP Handbook 2001).

Interviewees described how the system was serviced by a vast infrastructure including bases for the boats in Scotland at Faslane (Gareloch) and at Coulport (Loch Long) where warheads were stored. Some interviewees also participated in 'Nukewatch', logging the movements of warheads around the UK. There was, for instance, constant movement of warheads for 're-tooling' between Faslane and Aldermaston. In the course of my research I found that warhead convoys passed 500 metres from my home when the convoy rested at RAF Stafford.

Interviewees said that the next generation of weapons was being developed at Aldermaston at the time of my research. A new group was forming called 'Block the Builders' to delay the building of a new laser and new computer. The boats themselves were being upgraded, involving many heavy industrial plants,

including Rolls Royce in Derby. The system was governed by command, control and communications bases including Northwood (Middlesex) and a USAF base in Yorkshire - Menwith Hill. All these were targets for TP actions. As part of an affinity group I observed as a participant in actions at RAF Stafford and Rolls Royce (Derby) and visited Menwith Hill and Faslane as part of larger protests.

The stated purpose of TP was to disarm, by peaceful and accountable direct action, the UK nuclear weapon system which was deployed on Trident submarines (TP Handbook 2001). If, at a political level, promises of meaningful disarmament were forthcoming, then TP would stop its practical disarmament activities. The Handbook enlarged on this central goal, that, as global citizens, they would openly, accountably, safely and peacefully disarm the British nuclear weapon system deployed on Trident submarines (TP Handbook 2001). TP required the British government to commit to a process of nuclear disarmament. This meant: taking the submarines off patrol; no new missiles to be purchased from the US; warheads to be removed from delivery systems and stored separately; no further deployment of US nuclear weapons in Britain; that Britain should work with Nato allies for the withdrawal of all nuclear weapons from Europe; that there should be a no first-use policy and a policy of non-use against non-nuclear states; and a commitment to a timetable for complete decommissioning by 2010.

Interviewees referred to 'accountable actions' and explained them as performing two functions. First, they were real acts of decommissioning. Second, because such actions were 'accountable', and this is partly what interviewees described as 'accountable', the case against nuclear arms could be argued through the judicial system:

*"What we want is to get Trident put in front of a jury"*  
A TP activist called River in a TP Newsletter<sup>3</sup>

River was one of the founder members and part of the core membership - TP "Pledgers".

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<sup>3</sup> 'Making Waves'. Newsletter of the Quaker Turning The Tide Training Programme. Issue 9, January 1999, p7. London: Quaker Peace and Service

TP had been operating less than ten years. The original TP project was to stop on January 1st 2000 (TP Handbook 2001). However, during my participant observation in 2002 and as late as 2004 it seemed to be performing the same kinds of activities and at the same level of intensity as pre-2000. It had no paid staff, no constitution, very limited funding, no leaders, little structure. It did have a bank account (Speed the Plough 2003). There was no head office but there was an address in Norwich, described as the “TP administrative address” (TP Handbook 2001: 167).

One of the members of the initial core group described how Angie Zelter founded TP by convening a core group and trawling for support in the peace movement, June 1997. This group sent a letter dated 18th March, 1998, to the Prime Minister, urging the Government to disarm Trident, pointing out that if the Government did not do it, Trident Ploughshares would. A copy of this letter was reproduced in the Handbook. Trident Ploughshares 2000 was then launched publicly on May 2nd 1998. An interviewee recalled that a video, leaflets, and the Handbook were produced and workshops were held, all around the time of the launch. Within months of its launch, according to an account in the Handbook, 100 people had been arrested and four held on remand. A similar picture was painted by River in a TP newsletter (see Foot-note 3):

*“over 100 arrests were made involving 60 protesters.”*

The police had been arresting then releasing people, only bailing people for a second offence.

After five months, in which there had been two camps with associated blockades and direct actions, a stock-take was held. A TP activist described the main issue at the stock-take:

*“Some felt we had wandered from the original blueprint – surely a ‘real’ ploughshares campaign would involve more serious attempts to disarm Trident than we had to date. The two swims to the submarine berths by Titanic Trident in August were all we had to balance against lots of comparatively low-level actions, most veering towards the symbolic end of the spectrum.”* (MacKenzie in the TP Handbook 2001: 54).

The consensus was to value these low-level actions as ‘minimum disarmament actions’ such as cutting the fence at one of the bases. Such activities

complemented 'maximum disarmament actions', aimed at disarming the submarines themselves. Angie Zelter was a participant in one of the successful maximum disarmament attempts.

Interviewees said that TP annually organised four major weekend camps, a weeklong camp and a summer fortnight camp, each with associated training and actions. At any other time there could be other actions against the military nuclear establishment. These ranged from blockading weapons factories, actions at the Atomic Weapons Establishment (Aldermaston), targeting transport vehicles, fence-cutting, incursions into bases and attempts to disarm submarines or damage equipment at bases such as Coulport, Faslane, Barrow and Devonport. The TP Handbook gave a map of 30 key sites.

2003 actions included an Easter blockade of the Trident submarine base at Faslane at which I was a participant observer. This was a large scale event where TP worked with Scottish CND to provide accommodation, food, transport and legal support for hundreds of activists. The Quakers made available their Meeting House in Glasgow as a reception for those arrested when released on bail.

In 2003 there were some maximum disarmament actions. One was the disabling of 30 support vehicles designed to service USAF B52 bombers at RAF Fairford. An interviewee described an action which did damage put at millions of pounds to an RAF Tornado at Leuchars, for which Ulla Roder, a Danish TP activist, was being held on remand. Interviewees described how 'maximum damage' actions would be planned and delivered by affinity groups whereas large scale actions were called for through TP publications, the web, and the wider peace network. Major actions usually took the form of big blockades, but affinity groups were free to carry out their own actions at any Trident-related site at any time.

I will briefly comment on this introduction to the four organisations. The data show there were clear differences, for instance in size, age, target, paid staff and so on. This was indeed as there should be, as I had chosen them for their differences as a theoretical sample to explore the case (Hamel 1993). The data also show connections and overlap which I had not anticipated, including overlap

of personnel across all four organisations. A clear example of overlap was Rowan Tilly's "shameless" (her word) borrowing of TP material to produce the gX Handbook, although these were two very different organisations, different size, different targets, operating in different fields (peace and environment).

The rest of the data presented in this chapter cuts across the organisations. The five sub-headings which order the material to illuminate 'the organisations in their environments' are:

#### **POLITICAL CONTEXT**

#### **HANDBOOK**

#### **ORGANISATIONAL CONTEXT**

#### **FOUNDERS AND FOUNDER MEMBERS**

#### **FOUNDING MYTHS**

These sub-headings present material relating to the origins of the organisations. What were the political contexts that gave rise to these organisations? I will present data which show that Greenpeace (GP) and Earth First! were founded partly in response to political issues of their day. Trident Ploughshares (TP) arose at a time when there was no change in the political landscape, instead the data suggest it was formed as a way of campaigning more effectively. genetiX Snowball was formed to explore a more effective way of organising.

Were there organisational antecedents, or have these organisations arisen *sui generis*? Interview data indicated that both GP and TP drew on rich organisational antecedents. gX drew largely on TP. EF! sought to differentiate itself from the hierarchical green organisations, so the picture painted by interviewees was of an activist group operating on the minimum of organisation. 'Founders and founder members' is not biographical as the focus is on what, organisationally, such individuals brought to these organisations. It refers to key individuals interacting with social structure. I was able to interview founders of two of the organisations (EF! and gX) and founder members of another (TP). By 'Founding myths' I mean those stories which, whether true or not, have come to have a sense-making function or even organising power (Weick 1995). Patterned organisational

behaviour emerges over time and these myths may capture something of the history by which re-occurring behaviour forms (Scott 1987).

### 3.1 POLITICAL CONTEXT

The EF! story, as told both by some interviewees and documents, was a reaction against (US) “namby-pamby” environmental groups<sup>4</sup>. Other interviewees and some of its less populist literature gave a fuller picture with a clear political context. With GP, the political context was frequently referenced – protests against US nuclear weapons testing arising shortly after the Vietnam war and a new group with new tactics bursting on the scene. No interviewee suggested any political reason for the emergence of TP. Although the issue of genetically modified organisms (GM) only arose in the 1990s, interviewees said that gX emerged with little sense of being pulled into being by political threats or opportunities. They said that the choice to engage in the GM issue rather than any other came long after its formation.

April 22nd, 1970, saw the first ‘Earth Day’ in the US (Smithsonian 1990). It mobilised more than 20 million Americans with ‘teach-ins’ and ‘trash-ins’ across the country (ibid). There were eco-fairs in Chicago and New York’s Fifth Avenue was closed down (ibid). This event, for the Editors of the Smithsonian, was the launching of the modern environment movement (ibid). The 1970 Earth Day had plenty of direct actions and pre-dates the 1971 founding of Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth. There were of course older societies, characterised by a preservationist or resource management approach, whose usual tactic was lobbying, such as The Wilderness Society and the Sierra Club. Interviewees brought out how modern environmentalism owed a debt to modern movements (i.e. new social movements such as the peace movement and women’s movements) around it rather than preservation societies before it.

The modern movement, I was told, was qualitatively different from the conservation lobby – elimination not management of environmental problems.

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<sup>4</sup> “Why Earth First!?” Unattributed. [www.earthfirstjournal.org](http://www.earthfirstjournal.org). Accessed November 2002. Author has hard copy.

Other new features included: nonviolent direct action as part of the repertoire; close links between movement values and personal lifestyle; and the foregrounding of expressive behaviours. Environmental activists were seen as sharing a common ideological bond across the new social movement field, including peace, women's rights, anti-poverty movements. Foreman, a founder of EF! was previously an employee of The Wilderness Society, and Bohlen, one of the Greenpeace founders, was Conservation Chair of the Canadian branch of the Sierra Club. Both, according to their own accounts, experienced an established organisation unable to respond to a changing political environment. Both also tapped into a new wave of activism (Bohlen 2001; Foreman & Moreton 1991).

The political context for Greenpeace was continued international protests against US nuclear testing from the 1950s onwards. The 1960s brought widespread student unrest and also anti-Vietnam War protests. Part of the resistance to the Vietnam War was draft-dodging, which is how a US scientist, Jim Bohlen (a GP founder) came to be in Vancouver in the late 1960s (Bohlen 2001). Bohlen's anti-war activities continued: he and his wife harboured draft-dodgers in their Vancouver home. The pair were linked to CAWO (Canadian Assistance to War Objectors) (ibid). According to another founder, Rex Wyler, Vancouver at that time:

*"contained hippies, draft dodgers, Tibetan monks, seadogs, artists, radical ecologists, rebel journalists, Quakers and expatriate Yanks; all in the one major city that happened to be closest to where the US were to test a bomb."*<sup>5</sup>

In 1969, Canadian peace groups organised a large public protest against US testing. Under the slogan 'Don't Make a Wave', 10,000 protesters blocked US-Canadian border-crossings. When in 1970 the US announced the test of a weapon five times more powerful than the 1969 test, Bohlen and others formed the 'Don't Make a Wave Committee' which applied for and received registration as a nonprofit corporation on October 5th 1970 (Bohlen 2001).

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<sup>5</sup> Rex Wyler. "The Founding of Greenpeace". [www.utne.com](http://www.utne.com). Accessed January 2004. All other references in the text as Wyler are drawn from this substantial on-line account.



As with Greenpeace, EF! also arose in the context of specific US policy. 1979 – 1980 saw the debacle over the RARE II programme which handed over many lands previously held in public trust to industry for logging, quarrying and general development (Do or Die! 1997). It enraged environmentalists but also led many, including Foreman, to question the resource-management approach of the large environmental organisations (Do or Die! 1997). An interviewee said that, unlike the UK, the US did at that time have some wilderness to preserve, and there was a political tradition of loving the wilderness for its own sake, as evidenced in the writings of Thoreau, Muir and Aldo Leopold.

Foreman quit his post as a Washington DC lobbyist for the Wilderness Society after it had a change in management. He was a wilderness-lover and enjoyed 'red-neck' life (camp fire, hiking and hunting) (Do or Die! 1997). After leaving his post he hiked in Mexico, read the aforementioned philosophers and also read Abbey's novel 'The Monkey Wrench Gang' (1991a). He returned with the idea of EF! (Do or Die! 1997; Parfit 1990). Foreman, as a former political lobbyist, also recognised the value of having some extremism in environmentalism to make the demands of the moderates appear more reasonable (Parfit 1990).

Both EF! and GP were brought into the UK. An EF! interviewee said EF! UK came about through two 17 year olds who had a clear vision of what they wanted to do – start a mass ecological movement. They invited some US EF!ers to do roadshows in the UK and followed the US model. But with Greenpeace, it was an established 'brand' (word used by interviewees) which came to the UK. After a period where different organisations had used the Greenpeace name to promote sometimes divergent interests, David McTaggart rationalised and re-organised. He brought different national offices under the one organisational roof and has some claim to be the founder of Greenpeace International – GPI (Castells 1997). In the case of the UK, an anti-seal hunt campaign was being run, even though this was against the wishes of the Canadian office as factory-scale slaughter had been ended. McTaggart arrived in the UK and, according to one interviewee, had sacked the UK Director, sacked the Board, and installed replacements virtually in one day.

With both gX and TP the political context appears to be of little significance. Although the planting of GM crops was heavily overlaid with political policy, interviewees made clear that, for gX, the founding idea was to form an ‘affinity group’ living out and promoting a distinctive and thought-through nonviolent activism:

*“we could easily have become a peace group or campaign on climate change, but GM came on the scene and that, in the end, was its focus.”*

TP arose without any noticeable shift in the political landscape. The UK’s commitment to nuclear weapons had always motivated peace activists. There was no major shift in policy which led to TP. A TP activist said that it was thought up by a peace activist prisoner being held on remand, reflecting on lessons learnt from a successful ‘maximum disarmament’ action. Whereas the political context is key to the development of GP and EF!, TP was an organisation tailored to do the same sorts of things in the same political context, only to do them more effectively. For gX, the political context was not the issue. It formed not around a problem but initially to experiment in a way of organising per se.

### **3.2 HANDBOOK**

I use this heading as I am not discussing all documentation gathered in the field but a theme arising from the data. So it is neither a conceptualisation on my part, nor an occasional comment from some interviewees, but a theme, a block of data. Both gX and TP had Handbooks which I observed to be much in evidence at their events. Interviewees referred to these for many things. At the Faslane blockade, a stock of Handbooks was available and that is where I purchased a copy. The Handbooks refer to themselves with the capitalisation of the first letter.

Both the gX Handbook (1999) and TP Handbook (2001) were substantial documents in A4 format, which facilitated photocopying. The TP Handbook predated the gX version. I was told this by a gX founder who said how, when writing the gX Handbook she:

*“shamelessly copied large chunks of it [gX Handbook]”.*

The Handbooks presented full accounts of histories, influences, organising methods, 'rules' and pro formas for media, legal work and more. Much of the data given by interviewees was supported in the Handbooks. Interviewees said that the first two editions of the TP handbook were largely written by TP's founder, Angie Zelter. The gX Handbook followed TP very closely, both in content and format. Just as the gX Handbook drew upon TP, so the TP editions drew upon historical and international traditions:

*"written by Angie Zelter who shamelessly copied and borrowed from all the texts referred to at the end of each section"*

(TP Handbook 2001: 3).

This meant drawing upon the Quaker Turning The Tide training programme (see Glossary), the War Resisters' League and Organisers Manual (1981), the Swedish Ploughshares movement, Faslane Peace camp, CND members and numerous CND papers, Trident Resisters Handbook (Robert Aldridge, no date given), and 'Co-operative and Community Group Dynamics: Or why your meeting needn't be so appalling' (Rosemary Rendell 1981).

I interviewed the author of the gX Handbook, participated in an action with Angie Zelter who wrote early editions of the TP Handbook and interviewed two contributors to the third edition. They told me how the Handbooks drew upon other sources (listed above) to flesh out and lay down what the organisations were about, how they were organised, and to set out basic rules for participants. I obtained a gX Handbook at a public meeting where two gX activists were participating in a debate. It was, at that time, the proof of membership of gX, sufficient for anyone in possession of it to be considered to be breaking injunctions issued against gX. An interviewee who had been prosecuted for a crop-pulling action recalled how:

*"she rang me up afterwards and sent copies of the gX Handbook"*

Interviewees described how the gX Handbook was supposed to have been in place before its first action. This did not happen as gX participants moved more quickly into anti GM actions. Also, because of injunctions and the risk to individuals of associating with gX, the Handbook did not fulfil its intended role to resource a large mobilisation. The gX Handbook gives due credit to the peace traditions

listed in TP, including that of the Quakers. A review of the Handbook appeared in the Quaker newsletter 'Making Waves' where it was described as

*"a brilliant and inspiring work"* (Making Waves 1999).

EF! did not have a Handbook but the EF! way of doing things was produced in narrative and discursively in its published material such as the 'Do or Die!' series. Some of this is discussed below under 'Founding Myths'. There were three other works which I discovered to be of relevance. Foreman edited a substantial book 'Ecodefense: A Field Guide to Monkeywrenching' (Foreman 2002). An interviewee said that this had served to a degree as a founding document for cells of activists. Unlike the TP and gX Handbooks, there was no material on how to organise.

A better sense of organising was conveyed in the two other works, novels by Ed Abbey, where group, roles, resources and rules are outlined (Abbey 1990; 1991a). The co-founder of EF! UK told me that he was familiar with both the Abbey novels and was probably one of the first in the UK to obtain Foreman's Ecodefense. Other EF! interviewees did not refer to Ecodefense much and never as an organisational manual, whereas TP and gX interviewees spoke of and used Handbooks as governing documents. For instance, the structure of TP as revealed by interviewees was as presented in the Handbook. Also, a TP training session I attended was literally 'by the book'.

### **3.3 ORGANISATIONAL CONTEXT**

The data show two organisations emerging from a rich soup of other organisations campaigning in the same field. Further, their founders were immersed in several of these other organisations. My reading of the early GP literature suggests to me how the 'Don't Make a Wave Committee' (to become Greenpeace) was a judicious selection of organising to fit the planned protest voyage. Interviewees described how Trident Ploughshares was a re-combination of various peace movement organising methods and tactics to produce a more tightly focused on-going campaign.

The other two - genetiX Snowball and Earth First! - drew on existing organisational practice but in different ways. Interviewees explained that gX began not as an environmental organisation but as an experiment in communal living. A gX founder stated to me:

*"we had no idea what the issue was."*

I observed an organisation which occupied a unique niche in anti-GM campaigning because it had taken the peace movement's organising and campaigning repertoire and applied it to the environmental field.

Earth First! emerged from the organisational soup but in reaction, wanting to organise otherwise, to campaign with a directness and freedom not available to an incorporated body. In the US it drew upon a wealth of 'wilderness' material to give philosophical and pragmatist direction. In the UK it drew initially on the US model. The UK founders had an agreed aim which was to create a mass movement. However, their sense of how to organise it was less considered. In a founder's words to me:

*"we just made it up as we went along".*

What began as direct copying of the US story quickly took new turns. EF! UK spun-off or catalysed new campaigning initiatives such as road camps, Reclaim the Streets and anti-globalisation groups. So, I heard from the founders how gX formed around organising, not an issue, whereas EF! UK had an issue but little idea on how to organise.

I continue presenting data on this theme – The Organisational Environment – but focus more on data which indicated the extent or depth of influence of antecedent organising on the emergent organisations. In the case of Greenpeace, three existing organisations figured strongly, Quakers, The Sierra Club, and the 'Don't Make a Wave' protest.

The debt to Quakers was acknowledged by some GP interviewees, although this was not so much through an understanding of the history but through training for activists, which is explored in the next data chapter. GP founder Bohlen and his wife met Stowe (another GP founder) and his wife on a Canadian Assistance to War Objectors (CAWO) march in 1967. The Stowes introduced them to

Quakerism. Bohlen declared himself motivated by the Quaker tradition of 'bearing witness' (Bohlen 2001). I heard this term frequently from interviewees. It was a stated value of the organisation reproduced frequently in its literature (Castells 1997). Several interviewees gave this explanation of 'bearing witness': that, having seen an injustice, one should accept personal responsibility to do something about it, ideally going to the source of that injustice and 'speaking the truth to power'. I came across the term and its practice during GP nonviolent direct action (nvda) training, which was a requirement before volunteers could enlist for direct actions.

There had been other support from the Quakers. Quakers helped finance the first voyage with a \$6000 gift from a US 'Meeting' (congregation). Quakers also provided the original idea, to sail into the nuclear weapon test zone, which came first from Marie Bohlen, recalling a Quaker ship named the Golden Rule, which had generated publicity by sailing to Bikini Atoll to protest against a nuclear test in 1958 (Brown & May 1989).

The second strong organisational influence was from a conservation organisation, the Sierra Club. Both Stowe and Bohlen were members of the Canadian branch of the Sierra Club. Bohlen recalls doing "citizens actions" with the Sierra Club. Of one such action he declares:

*"we had tasted our first victory, and, incidentally, the potential power of the press"* (2001: 26).

Bohlen had also tasted organisational realities both as one of the founders and chairing a major committee of the Canadian branch of the Sierra Club.

The third influence was the 'Don't Make a Wave' protest of 1969. In that year, 10,000 Canadians blocked the US-Canada border protesting against US testing at Amchitka (Mulvaney & Warford 1996). In 1970 the US announced it would test a bomb five times more powerful. Bohlen, as Conservation Chair of the Sierra Club, planned another blockade. The US parent objected, so Bohlen contacted one of the organisers of the 1969 protest, Paul Cote, and formed the independent 'Don't Make a Wave Committee'.

genetiX Snowball's Handbook states the three sources from which it drew inspiration and these were confirmed through interview data: the Ploughshares 'tradition', the 1980s Snowball campaign, and:

*"all inspiring nonviolent and accountable actions to protect the environment in Britain and throughout the world"* (gX Handbook 1999).

Interviewees told me about two further strands, firstly Quakers and spiritual traditions, secondly an action known as 'Seeds of Hope' (see the Glossary). Neither the Handbook nor interviewees cited environmental actions. Ploughshares activism is discussed later under TP. An interviewee described the original snowball campaign, which took place in Britain in 1984. It was a peace action and involved 3000 people in 42 locations protesting against nuclear weapons by – typically – cutting a strand of perimeter wire at a nuclear base. The first event was at USAF Sculthorpe on October 1st 1984. In all there were 2000 arrests with 1000 participants refusing to pay their fines (gX Handbook 1999).

Interviewees described the various links with Quakers and other faith-based activism. The Handbook noted a strong sense of spirituality, that many activists have been Christian and one of the resources it pointed people to was the Quaker bookshop in central London. Rowan Tilly, a founder, wrote in a Quaker journal and the Handbook was reviewed in that journal. She also told me that one of her great inspirations for nonviolence was Jesus of Nazareth. Just as Bohlen drew specifically on organisational links when needed, so too gX "unashamedly, nay proudly" (Tilly) helped itself to the methods and ideas of the peace movement. In particular, the organisation built itself around the organising method used for an iconic Ploughshares action: 'Seeds of Hope' (see below on founding myths).

Interviewees also told how Trident Ploughshares drew on the broader peace movement and specifically on an earlier US Plowshare campaign. It had links with CND from which it took much of the more learned material on nuclear disarmament. I was told of CND 'spin-offs' such as Greenham Common and Menwith Hill peace camps. Once again, I heard about strong links with Quakers and other faith-based activism. TP obtained technical material from CND but it was from peace camps and the US Plowshares campaign that it drew organisational ideas.

The Plowshare campaign began in the US as a faith-based movement in 1980. It had strong Catholic support which drew on an earlier Catholic piety (Herngren 1993). Its first action was on September 9th 1980, Pennsylvania, when eight activists entered a munitions factory and hammered on nose cones designed for nuclear missiles. The Plowshares eight received sentences ranging from 1½ – 10 years. The Plowshares organisation included the ‘Pledge’ (see below) and ‘affinity groups’ which were both copied by TP. This kind of accountable nonviolent direct action was also copied in the UK. The ‘Seeds of Hope’ action was very similar, including the use of a hammer.

Based on observation and interviews, the faith-based element in the UK seemed very strong, particularly Quakerism. At least four TP interviewees were Quakers. The TP activist training programme originated with the Quakers and one of the participant observation events was an evening’s training at a Quaker venue in the Midlands. Another event in which I participated, the ‘Big Blockade’ at Faslane, was followed by a meal at the Quaker Meeting House in Glasgow for those who had been detained. I found evidence of other faith-based elements including faith-based affinity groups (such as Corpus Christi). Examples of Catholic activism included TP activist Fr Newell who damaged warhead-carrying trucks at RAF Wittering (Big Issue 2001). Also, at the 2003 Faslane blockade, I observed Bruce Kent (ex-CND and ex-Catholic Priest) getting arrested. There was also a strong presence of Church of Scotland clergy.

I was told that Angie Zelter, the TP founder, trawled the broader peace network in 1997 from which a self-chosen core group emerged. This group produced the TP Handbook, its main aims and basic rules. The Handbook acknowledged the debt to other organisations. Angie Zelter referred to many other texts at the end of each section of the Handbook and acknowledged that she:

*“shamelessly copied and borrowed”* (TP Handbook 2001: 3).

Cross-links both with CND and various peace camps emerged during interview data. Faslane camp was an old one, over 20 years old. It was based on land bought by an ex-Greenham Common woman. Angie Zelter had also been at Greenham (Zelter 2002). The links between CND and direct action were less clear but, the picture I got from interviewees was that, throughout CND’s history, there have



been groups associated with the organisation and/or individuals who have taken direct action in ways that CND as a whole had not set itself to do.

Through CND and the wider peace network, TP had a debt to (and sometimes links with) the Swedish Plowshares movement, Nuke Watch, War Resisters and others. In the course of research I interviewed CND activists and participated in and observed at a major London CND march. The march culminated in a rally at Trafalgar Square. Although the TP agenda was not promoted at the rally, a notable speaker gained great applause when pledging herself to live at the Menwith Hill peace camp. Interviewees and observation showed that, although CND was often referred to, there was no reference to CND organising practice. By contrast, interviewees told of organising lessons learned from camps, such as the realities of decision-making by consensus. The Handbook noted that Angie Zelter also drew on some guidance on organisational matters from elsewhere: Freeman's 'The Tyranny of Structurelessness' (1984) and Rendell's 'Co-operative and Community Group Dynamics' (1981).

EF! data are thin on this theme of organisational context. EF!'s main founder, Foreman, had experience of a major environmental lobby group. As previously noted, he recognised EF!'s value to mainstream groups through the 'radical flank' effect (Parfit 1990). This is where a more extreme group makes the demands of the mainstream lobbyists seem more moderate. I was told that EF! adopted the minimum amount of organising necessary to service its direct action orientation.

To begin with, EF! UK simply followed the US model, such as recruitment (roadshows) and basic organising (e.g. gatherings). However, other influences came into EF! UK, albeit tangentially. For instance, I discovered that founders of two other organisations had significant input into EF! UK organising. This came through helping to organise and train EF! groups and through their presence at road camps. The two were Rowan Tilly (gX) and Angie Zelter (TP). Some EF! interviewees referred back to UK anarchic traditions, some used the term 'network' and some mentioned co-operatives, but not in any defined sense. EF! UK's comparatively slight drawing down of pre-existent organisational forms gave some substance to its self-description as a (dis)organisation (Do or Die

1997). This was reinforced by interviewees, most of whom acknowledged some structure but none of whom pointed to clear antecedents.

### **3.4 FOUNDERS AND FOUNDER MEMBERS**

It is well known that Third Sector founders can bring organisational experience, ability, fame or ambition with them (Barker et al 2001; Egri & Herman 2000). Zald uses the term “moral entrepreneurs” for such people (1996: 269). It is in this provisional sense that I use the term ‘founder’. Most of the Greenpeace founders are dead and I had no access to any survivors, none of whom reside in the UK. I have only interviewee accounts and secondary data to draw on, of which Bohlen’s autobiography is the most revealing (2001). His account is consistent with much other secondary data but often with an extra level of detail about the reality. Before even the idea of the voyage, he and others had spent long months as a committee. He acknowledges the organisational reality of applying for nonprofit status in Canada. His account also revealed the key role of women.

I was able to interview founders of both gX and EF! (UK). I interviewed founder members of TP and although I did not have an opportunity to interview its founder, Angie Zelter, I did participate with her at an action at Faslane. She and I were part of the same ‘lock-on’ blocking an entrance to the Faslane base. She took no organising role during the day, nor did I find people coming up to her for permission or advice. She participated in the blocking activity until arrested. I was locked to her daughter by ‘arm-tubes’ (steel pipes as long as two arms, inside which people lock handcuffs to each other within the tubes). Her daughter had organised this particular lock-on. This was one of those observation experiences where the data were thick but the note-taking opportunities thin.

The founders of EF! (UK) did not stay at the helm long and it had soon changed direction. The founder members of gX went different ways after injunctions prevented it functioning as they had originally envisaged, although Rowan Tilly in particular was able to snowball anti-GM activity through training and support for autonomous groups.

In the case of Greenpeace, some early participants presented themselves as founders. Paul Watson, founder and captain of Sea Shepherd claimed a role for himself as a founder of Greenpeace (Watson 1991: 38). In the data available to me Watson's name did not occur in any founding capacity, nor was he present during the first year of activity. Watson also claimed a founder role for Rob Hunter (ibid).

Hunter was a capable journalist with a vision and a flair for using the press proactively (Bohlen 2001). He was a known radical, so too was his UK-born wife who had been on an Aldermaston march. Hunter had been fixed on the idea of starting a radical ecological movement, provisionally called the Green Panthers (Wyler 2004). However, the committee which later became Greenpeace had been running for a year before Bohlen, recalling the power of the media from Sierra Club 'citizens' actions', cast around for suitable media people for the voyage (Bohlen 2001). It was at that point that Hunter was invited on board. I found a frequently reproduced photograph of the original crew of 11, including Hunter, entitled 'the Greenpeace founders'.

Castells links Greenpeace to one man "its historic leader" David McTaggart, who shaped it into an international force (Castells 1997: 118). Or who, in the words of Wyler (2004):

*"gave it [GP] a hard edge that balanced the soft cuddly stuff."*

McTaggart was drawn into Greenpeace in 1971, its founding year, but the founding had already happened. The voyage had taken place and then only after the ideas, organising and financing had been put in place. Bohlen was a co-founder of the Canadian Sierra Club and a section Chair when he and Stowe were forced to organise independently. Not only did they take the name of the previous year's Don't Make a Wave Committee protest, they recruited one of its organisers, Paul Cote. Those involved in DMAWC probably deserve the accolade as the founders of Greenpeace. It was not the eleven who set sail but those who sat as a committee who set the organisation in motion. A committee where:

*"long hours and several months elapsed with little agreement upon a plan of action" (Bohlen 2001: 28).*

Bohlen persuaded Cote to vote with him and remove Stowe from the Chair of the Don't Make A Wave Committee after which it was re-launched as the Greenpeace Foundation on May 4<sup>th</sup>, 1972 (Wyler 2004). The term 'Foundation' was Hunter's – he had read Issac Asimov's science fiction trilogy where the 'Foundation' is a radical group protecting the galaxies (Wyler 2004), which is to say Hunter's use of the term 'foundation' was not referring to any legal or organisational status.

The focus on the voyage, which came across in its promotional literature, obscured the role that women played in Greenpeace's founding. Marie Bohlen had the founding idea – to bear witness like the Golden Rule had done in 1958. Dorothy Metcalfe's house became the on-shore communications centre which was staffed by three women, one being Marie Bohlen. This house (de facto head office) was pivotal as all communications from the ship came to the house and had to be relayed to the Press. Bohlen also wanted a woman amongst the eleven aboard the ship, the Phyllis Cormack. The Captain (a fixture that came with the boat's charter) objected on the grounds that women bring bad luck (Bohlen 2001).

The founding stories of TP told to me painted a much simpler picture. Angie Zelter thought up the idea, then sketched out her plans whilst being held on remand for the 'Seeds of Hope' action (which is described later). She then drew in founder members, and I was able to interview a number of these, who turned out to be like-minded people from the same peace field. TP worked between three types of campaign actions: the CND-type 'big blockades', the 'camps', and autonomous actions carried out by affinity groups. Angie Zelter had prior experience in all these. She was present at Greenham. In the TP Handbook she acknowledges her debt to the Greenham Common camp(s). I was told that, after the rejection of males, the Greenham camp(s) became something of an experiment in non-hierarchical organisation and de-gendered decision-making.

Interviewees described the 'Seeds of Hope' peace action as iconic to the broader peace movement. As well as being a 'maximum disarmament' action, the whole process had been organised around an affinity group model. Rowan Tilly of gX told me of her roots in Greenham Common and how she was part of the peace network long before arriving on the environment scene. She too was a participant

in the affinity group action 'Seeds of Hope'. Rowan Tilly transferred this organisational model to the environment field.

I interviewed three gX founders. All had histories as activists which interwove peace with environmental activism. Whilst participant observing at an EF! gathering, I came across Rowan Tilly and another gX founder. At the time I interviewed Kathryn Tulip, she had moved on to be employed by Greenpeace. I came across another gX founder doing freelance work for GP as well as being a major influence in producing the independent video magazine Undercurrents. After my field work, I read of both Kathryn Tulip and Angie Zelter in the Middle East engaged in peace activism.

EF! in its founding both in the US and the UK, diverged from the above pattern of rich organisational antecedents. There were five co-founders of EF! in the US: notably Foreman, but also Wolke, Kezer, Koehler, Roselle. The US founders, especially Foreman, followed a path and philosophy curiously close to the Abbey novel 'The Monkey Wrench Gang' (1991a). Abbey drew on the 'wilderness philosophers' such as Thoreau (Stegner 1990). In a contribution to an EF! Anniversary volume he quotes with approval Thoreau's lament:

*"If I repent of anything it is likely to be my good behaviour. What demon possessed me that I behaved so well?"* (Abbey 1991b: 248).

Foreman's experience with the Wilderness Society was noted earlier along with his decision to break with an established Third Sector organisation.

Interviewees told me how, in the UK, the two 17 year old founders, brought little or no organisational experience to the mix. However, rainforest actions including the Rain Forest Action Network and radical protest in Australia gave them a relevant radical action repertoire. One founder went on to be an employee of Greenpeace. EF! promoted itself in the UK as a (dis)organisation. Some EF! interviewees connected the '(dis)organisation' notion to anarchist politics. All those I interviewed valued its lack of bureaucracy and hierarchy.

### 3.5 FOUNDING MYTH

I use 'myth' to denote a story that has meaning beyond itself, such as the way behaviours can be based on an unproven belief system (Hasenfeld 1992).

Founding myths are those stories which convey 'truth' about the organisation, its heroes and heroines, its values, its unique worth and thus an argument for its legitimacy (Weick 1995). The sense in which I use myth here is as a story which conveys an organisation's central aim, its values, or which casts light on its day to day practices.

With Greenpeace, there were two stories, myths, which were told in its promotional literature and which were generally repeated by interviewees. The archive material such as Wyler (2004) and the recent memoir of founder Bolen (2001) gave a different story. Interviewees from gX and TP recounted the same story, that of the 'Seeds of Hope' action. Both organisations had 'model' actions available, but these were not brought up by interviewees. EF! US had a novel form to tell the story of EF! whereas EF! UK lacked any mythic tale to tell. EF! UK interviewees had stories, but no one theme emerged.

I read and heard an account of the founding of Greenpeace which was full of strong imagery. This myth was re-told on its promotional literature, it was repeated by some interviewees, and was reinforced by iconic photographs and video footage. In essence, the common story was: *Greenpeace sailed the Rainbow Warrior into a nuclear test zone to prevent a nuclear test*. Interviewees sometimes made reference to this story and used words like 'inspiring'. Another referred to the story in terms of reinforcing the 'brand'. Interviewees told how it encapsulated the organisation's 'core values' such as nonviolence and 'bearing witness'.

By contrast, GP on-line archives and first-hand accounts from founders presented a messier picture. I did not find any GP publication that misled, but its promotional literature (such as The Guide 2004 quoted earlier) and interviewee accounts tended to reproduce enough glosses and gaps for the above myth to emerge.

It was not Greenpeace but the Don't Make a Wave Committee that first set sail (Bohlen 2001). The vessel was not the Rainbow Warrior but the rather less macho Phyllis Cormack (Wylter 2004). It did not prevent the test and was not in the test zone but sailing back to Vancouver when the bomb was detonated (Hunter 1980). And it was not quite the first voyage, which, as Bohlen recalled, was to sail in circles until the Press showed up to witness its departure from Vancouver (Bohlen 2001). As the Phyllis Cormack neared the test site at Amchitka it was arrested by the USS Confidence and escorted away (Hunter 1980). The US announced the test would be delayed by a month. Meanwhile, the Don't Make A Wave Committee had chartered a second vessel, named Greenpeace Too (Bohlen 2001). This had not reached the test site when the five megaton bomb was detonated on 6th November, 1971. This history does not communicate as the myth does. The myth account conveys a sense of what Greenpeace is about.

Less helpfully, the myth allows the idea that, at the beginning, Greenpeace had a 'hippie karma' way of doing things (Hunter 1980) until firstly the bureaucrats (Watson 1991) then McTaggart (Castells 1997) got their organisational grasp on it. But committee members had spent months organising, fundraising and obtaining charitable status (Bohlen 2001). For example, on the first voyage, ultimate responsibility was already decided. Bohlen, as holder of the DMAW Committee funds, had the final say on decisions about the mission. Cormack as captain of his vessel had the ultimate say on safety. Only then was everybody able to have a say in everything else. While there was a strong 'hippie' stream in Greenpeace there was also the patient organising of a group of middle-aged activists with long experience of committee life (Bohlen 2001).

The mythic story, as re-told by interviewees, captured the core values of Greenpeace (direct action, bearing witness, independence, internationalism). The actual voyage did also deliver tangible results. A despondent crew arrived back in Vancouver to find they had received massive publicity (Hunter 1980). Furthermore, this publicity was yielding the mass outrage they had first sought to generate. Also the name Greenpeace had been born (Hunter 1980). And they returned with an additional myth: that of the Rainbow Warrior.

A ceremony to honour the crew took place at Alert Bay, where a Cree Indian woman named Eyes of Fire gave this prophesy:

*“When the earth is sick and the animals have disappeared, there will come a tribe of people from all creeds, colours and cultures who believe in deeds not words and who will restore the earth to its former beauty. The tribe will be called ‘Warriors of the Rainbow’”* (Castells 1997: 118; Brown & May 1989).

This led to a 23 year old trawler being re-named the Rainbow Warrior (Mulvaney & Warlford 1996). Again, the archive and founder accounts are less clear. There are Indian prophecies with numerous references to ‘warriors of the rainbow’ and some are collected together in ‘Warriors of the Rainbow’ by Willoya & Brown (1962). I came across a photograph of the ceremony at Alert Bay. However, having read Willoya & Brown’s volume, although true to the sentiment, those words reproduced faithfully by Castells are not present, certainly not in that order. Of particular note is that, while it may be true that the prophesy was given them, a founder has now stated that they also took it with them – Hunter took a copy of the book on board the Phyllis Cormack and passed it round (Bohlen 2001).

Two organisations working in different fields shared the same myth. In interview, the founder and founder members of Trident Ploughshares drew on the ‘Seeds of Hope’ action. Also in interview, Rowan Tilly of genetiX Snowball drew heavily on this same action. Two other gX founders were also part of ‘Seeds of Hope’. The story, described to me by numerous interviewees, was as follows. An affinity group called ‘Seeds of Hope’ prepared itself for a peace action to disable Hawk jets bound for Indonesia. Tilly recalled in interview the great care that went into the development of the group, the months of planning, the trust, clarity of roles, preparing legal and media support. I viewed video footage of participants talking about their roles, planning meetings around a kitchen table, and further interviews on the train when those actually doing the disabling produced their hammers and gave a statement as to what they were doing and why. The video also included footage of them attacking a Hawk jet. The video telling the ‘Seeds of Hope’ story is one of the ‘Undercurrents’ videos, a video magazine of grass-roots activism. I was told the defendants made legal precedent by videoing their intentions, organisation and actions. They then presented the completed video as their statement upon arrest, which meant it had then to be played in court.



Interviewees repeatedly referred to this as an ‘accountable’ action, that, having done the deed, those disabling the jet would be arrested and argue their case in court. Damage was done and those doing the damage were arrested. After months held on remand, they were brought to trial. An interviewee explained that it had been a high profile action. They had planned ahead for media coverage and had planned the action around a case which allowed a defence argument. The Hawk jets were to be sold to Indonesia and were likely to be used by the Indonesian government against its own people. Sales of arms for such use was against the UK Government’s own declared policy. I was told that when the ‘not guilty’ verdict was declared, it was major news across the peace movement. One interviewee, a Quaker woman, outside the Court at that time, described that moment to me as “orgasmic”.

Two ‘Seeds of Hope’ participants drew much from this. A TP founder member said that Angie Zelter reflected on how to organise to keep on delivering more of this same kind of activity rather than as a one-off. Rowan Tilly described to me how she reflected on how to develop that kind of affinity group as a better way of organising per se. ‘Seeds of Hope’ was a successful action in its own terms, but the data illuminated its mythic power, that it showed how to *organise* to do such things. Its success as myth is indicated by the number of interviewee references to it and by the continuing availability of the story on video.

The first actions of both gX and TP were referenced in their respective Handbooks (1999; 2001) and could be viewed on video. The references suggest that they were intended to be exemplars. They turned out to be of little meaning to interviewees (amongst which I had founders and founder members). With gX it was their first action at Model Farm on 4th July 1998 which is recorded on video, could be viewed on line and is heavily referenced in the gX Handbook (1999). An interviewee explained how this was indeed a model action, capturing how these actions should be done. The main features of a gX action were covered. These included matters of organisation such as careful growth of an affinity group with assignment of roles. There were also matters of ‘accountability’: how to take responsibility for the action; preparing statements to give to the police and press

beforehand; informing the farmer, police and media ahead of the action; persisting with it until forcing an arrest.

With TP, its first two weeks at Faslane provided the three elements of its campaigning: actions delivered by affinity groups; the CND-type march or rally; and the camp. In August 1998, TP organised a camp at Faslane, building on the long-term peace camp there. The camp provided training, the base for affinity groups and support for the mass rally. I was told of numerous events. A blacksmith hammered a (model) Trident submarine into the CND symbol, then two days later, affinity group actions began. One of my interviewees was a member of The Woodwooses affinity group which attempted to cut a fence. Another interviewee described how the Adomnan affinity group ritually cleansed the base using bright coloured detergent after which a third affinity group plus three Swedish clergy (all members of a fourth – Corpus Christi) broke into the base.

After these events came TP's first rally with 300 people gathering at the base at the end of that first week. An interviewee recalled that the organising for the rally was done by Scottish CND. Interviewees said that there were then more affinity group actions, including one where three members of the Titanic Trident group, carrying hammers and glue, got within ten metres of a Trident submarine. These actions were referenced in the TP Handbook as a guide as to what to do, why, and how to organise to do it. Whilst I can piece together those first actions from TP interviewees, it was the 'Seeds of Hope' action that they more often referenced as the way to do such things. As with gX and the Model Farm action, 'Seeds of Hope' was the more powerful myth, pre-dating both organisations. It suggests to me that 'Seeds of Hope' led Angie Zelter to develop organising that could be more effective, and led Rowan Tilly to explore more effective organising.

The EF! data pointed in two different directions. On the one hand, EF! US had a strong founding myth which came across in its documents. On the other, EF! UK interviewees did not refer back to any one instance that could encapsulate what EF! UK was about. With EF! US the founding myth was developed as an art-form, literally: the novel.

Abbey's two novels 'The Monkey Wrench Gang' (1991a, first published 1975) and 'Hayduke Lives!' (1990) either marked out or followed a path close to EF! founder Foreman's wilderness account. 'Hayduke Lives!' is dedicated to, and names, the five founders. It has a cameo appearance of Foreman at an EF! gathering just before a massive act of ecotage which climaxes the novel. I will compare some of the founder and interviewee accounts with references from the novels, the latter are given in italics.

The five founders (Foreman, Wolke, Kezer, Koehler, Roselle) returned from some weeks' camping in the wilderness in 1980 as Earth First! "*By campfire under midnight stars three thousand feet below the rim of the Shivwits Plateau the Monkey Wrench Gang was born.*" Early on in his EF! career, Foreman met sociology professor Devall and thereafter deep ecology came to prominence. This is 'deep green' ecology in which humans are seen as no less and no more important than birds, trees or viruses. It contrasts markedly with the anthropocentrism of resource management approaches on which Foreman had turned his back. Abbey's anti-establishment anti-hero redneck Hayduke declares "*My job is to save the fucking wilderness. I don't know anything else worth saving.*"

Organisation in EF! is discussed in a later chapter but to abbreviate for now, it operated with a light touch, leaderless, anti-bureaucratic – 'gang' puts it well. "*Let's take a vote*", Hayduke said, "*What do you say, Doc?*" "*No voting*", Doc said, "*We're not going to have any tyranny of the majority in this organisation*". I observed that the no-rules EF! did have a rule – no violence to other living things, including people. Abbey's gang agreed the same: "*cardinal rule: no violence to human beings.*" Like the Model Farm action for gX and TP's first two weeks at Faslane, the Monkey Wrench gang is mythic. The novels offer teaching to would-be ecoteurs: the targets, tactics, best disabling techniques for heavy equipment, avoiding detection, wilderness living, and so on. The stories also conveyed just that amount of organising, including role allocation, which would enable the gang to function effectively.

EF! UK interviewees did not recount a founding myth. For one co-founder, I discovered that the US wilderness philosophy was meaningful to him and he could not believe I had not read a treatise by Aldo Leopold:

*“it’s a fucking classic, man”*

He had also read the Abbey novels and Foreman’s Field guide to Monkeywrenching (2002). But he and his co-founder had had a different aim which was to energise a mass movement around the environment. He described a large-scale action at Liverpool docks where the dockers came on their side. Although this action was large scale and a major success I did not hear interviewees repeating this. Instead, for other EF! interviewees, roadcamp myths predominated (Twyford, Newbury). Interviewees described how these camp stories carried lessons on how to organise, even of (road) camp ‘rules’. There was not a founding myth for EF! in the UK, no story to capture its central aim, its values, or to cast light on its day to day practice.

I will now sum up this block of data on founding myths. The mythic story of the first Greenpeace voyage was reproduced many times in its literature and, was followed, on the whole, by my interviewees. I abbreviated that story as: *Greenpeace sailed the Rainbow Warrior into a nuclear test zone to prevent a nuclear test.* The story I gleaned from its own archives and from the accounts of its founders is less clear. Analysis comes in a later chapter, but, it seems to me that the mythic story was not about how to organise but, in a word used by more than one GP interviewee, it was about the ‘brand’. They used brand in the sense of image and reputation.

TP and gX had their own founding actions (Model Farm and Faslane) which seemed to focus very much on how to organise. I examined their Handbooks, video footage and websites and gathered data which suggested to me how these actions were in part didactic. The material included helpful matters on the organisations’ aims, how they do things, the behaviours expected of participants. However, it was the ‘Seeds of Hope’ action which gX and TP founders and other interviewees took as their founding myth. Interviewees repeatedly drew on this independent action, not the didactic actions, to provide inspiration. A key element of ‘Seeds of Hope’, as told to me by interviewees, was the effectiveness of the

'affinity group' method of organising. It looked to me that there was a link here between the founding myth and issues of organisation whereas the Greenpeace myths conveyed no sense of how things were organised.

With EF! especially in the US, organisational story-telling reached its zenith - two novels (Abbey 1990; 1991a). These works were, I think, closely allied to the movement and its founders. Indeed, Davis (1991) goes so far as to identify the activist on whom Abbey modelled the fictional ecoteur 'Hayduke'. EF! had chosen not to be an organisation and so had none of the communication channels to would-be participants that an organisation like Greenpeace could use. It was these novels which could tell readers how to organise, methods of operation for monkeywrenching, and basic rules for the movement.

For EF! in the UK, I heard no founding myth, no story which would give the organisation a sense of identity or convey a sense of how to organise. Instead, its identity, aim and the desirable level of organisation were debated and contested through its ten volumes of 'Do or Die!'. I observed the basic aims, the nature of EF! up for debate at the 2002 gathering. Interviewees told me that this re-interpretation was ongoing. Some interviewees rued the way its environmental goals had, for them, been displaced by social ones driven by what one described as "Leftist political agendas". EF! UK's co-founder in interview was more sanguine. Although "he had let go" early on, he said that the lack of direction and organisation had facilitated organisational spin-offs such as road camps, Reclaim the Streets! and anti-globalisation groups. In contrast to TP and gX, a 'model' action to tell participants how things should be organised seems less likely when a co-founder states:

*"we just made it up as we went along."*

## **Conclusion**

To conclude, I will comment on the themes presented under the sub-headings, beginning with some general conclusions about the organisations. Greenpeace, Trident Ploughshares, genetiX Snowball and Earth First! all seemed to have

something exceptional or counter-intuitive about them. Greenpeace, with its bureaucracy, has been said to be the exception that proves the rule (of non-hierarchical structures) in the Green movement (Bludhorn 1995). gX eschewed accepted wisdom on organisations being formed for some purposive output (e.g. Perrow 1970), instead it formed to be an experiment in forming, an affinity group for the sake of affinity. Its name, like its campaign goal, was an afterthought. It suggests that gX was Gemeinschaft to GP's Gessellschaft (Tonnie's 1955). TP hit the ground running and delivered actions, mass rally and camps within a few months of its launch. EF! formed in the US with an anti-organisational mindset and in the UK called itself a (dis)organisation. EF! has been heralded as a new form of organising and the new politics of change for the new millennium (Jordan 1999).

### *Handbooks*

The two Handbooks were suggested by data as important for gX and TP (1999; 2001). They were practical tools, not constitutions, used for forming affinity groups and planning actions. They also carried material which suggested to me that they were used to help govern their organisations. Basic rules were set out, the way things were to be done was codified, such as guidelines on consensus decision-making and rules on behaviour. EF! with its light organisation had no founding documents or handbook, although Foreman's field guide to monkeywrenching was a practical guide. However, the Abbey novels instituted the kind of behaviour and stated the rules and mission of EF! Castells (1997) does not note Foreman's guide but identifies the role-modelling function of Abbey's novels and how Abbey provided a bridge from esoteric deep ecology to its logical expression at that time: monkeywrenching.

### *Political and Organisational Contexts*

One of the characteristics of new institutionalism is the attention paid to organisations in their environments (Scott 1995). The data reveal organisations deeply situated in and emerging from particular environments. These environments provided organisational resources and political and organisational opportunities. Greenpeace took organisational experience from both peace and environment movements. Its founders made a judicious selection from existing

organising practices, even to the point of recruiting a protest organiser. There may have been some of the 'hippie karma' way of doing things (Hunter 1980) but the data revealed that there were also committee meetings and middle-aged professionals (Bohlen 2001). Even Greenpeace's founding action was borrowed from past Quaker protests.

gX took organising principles from the peace movement and transplanted them to the environmental. It did this by lifting much from TP's Handbook, and drawing on the same affinity group peace action that inspired TP's founder. TP combined existing practice from camps, rallies and affinity groups from the peace movement. Its founder designed an organisation capable of continuing activity rather than one-off protest. gX and TP both seemed to arise without much linkage to the political context. In the US, EF! did have a political context, with the loss of wilderness and a founder's disaffection with existing green Third Sector organisations. EF! drew on past philosophy but consciously rejected, rather than selected, pre-existing organisational practices. Through roadshows, gatherings and an ethos generated by two novels, a sense of scope and direction was given to the movement.

It was an unexpected finding that Quakers constituted an important part of the story for three organisations: GP, TP and gX. The data showed that this one small denomination of the Christian tradition had been influential across the peace and environmental fields.

I expected to find a greater debt to CND which began peace campaigning in the early 1950s. TP drew heavily on CND literature and had founder members who were also CND members and who had attended many CND rallies.

Organisationally though, the only debt to CND was in the organising of the rallies, not in the day to day running of TP. (Of CND itself, data from interviews and gleaned from the records of CND activity at branch level showed an organisation run along representative committee lines familiar to Labour party and Union members). TP's design was built around the affinity group; data on this will be presented in the next chapter. It seemed that CND had reached an accommodation with those wishing to engage in forms of activism which would

put the organisation at jeopardy were it to officially sanction such action. Unofficially, CND provided people and material resources for camps and rallies.

### *Founders and Founder Members*

An issue new institutionalism does not bring into strong focus is how institutional practices are carried between organisations (Hensmanns 2003). The findings suggested that founders and founder members were very important carriers. There were numerous instances of the ways founders and founder members adapted, combined or translocated such practice. Another finding was the number of links between these few people across the four organisations. I think it is easier to represent this in table form. I interviewed three of the following people, and was on an action with the fourth. In Table Five below I have indicated a founder's presence with a mark: ●. An 'F' indicated their role as founder or founder member.

**Table 5. Links between Founders and Organisations**

	Greenham Common	Seeds Of Hope	gX	TP	GP	EF!	Other
Rowan Tilly	●	● F		●		●	'Green Gloves Pledge' - F
Kathryn Tulip	●		● F		● staff	● (US)	Middle East peace activism
Jason Torrance					● staff	● F	Transport 2000
Angie Zelter	●	● F		● F		●	Iraq Human Shield Faslane 365 - F

**Notes:** 'Green Gloves' was a grass-roots organisation where participants pledged to uproot any future GM plantings. Transport 2000 (now the Campaign for Better Transport) was a formal Third Sector organisation receiving government funding to lobby for sustainable transport. 'Human shields' in Iraq were volunteers who would occupy civilian sites such as power stations and water-treatment plants to try and prevent aerial bombardment. 'Muppet Dave', an EF! activist and an interviewee I refer to by name in the data chapters was one such 'human shield'. Faslane 365 was a year-long campaign to continuously disrupt operations at Faslane through 2007



### *Founding Myths*

New institutionalism has addressed the power of the story for an organisation both for instituting practice and as a claim for legitimacy (Weick 1995). Data relating to Greenpeace seemed to suggest a rich example of the founding myth. EF! had a myth which has worked to an extent in the US but which failed to translate to the UK. EF! US had the Abbey novels, the 'wilderness' motif and real wilderness in which to locate activities. EF! UK did not have a definitive founding story and had the least clear identity of the organisations studied. The data showed both this lack and a likely consequence - gatherings and publications where the mission and modus operandi of EF! UK were contested, such as whether it was an ecological or a political organisation.

On the face of it, that two different organisations (TP and gX) could share the same founding myth seemed unlikely. TP and gX both referenced their own early actions but interviewees spoke more of the 'Seeds of Hope' action which predated both organisations. Interviewees spoke not only of the 'Seeds of Hope' victory but also a sense that this was the right way to do 'accountable' actions. Angie Zelter then thought through systems to replicate and maintain such activity and founded TP. Rowan Tilly with two other 'Seeds of Hope' members refined the affinity group as normative existence and then transferred that model to a new field, from peace to the environment.

I have summed up the findings under the provisional sub-headings given at the start of this chapter. There is one further point to suggest in conclusion. The data, particularly interview data, suggested that existing institutional practices were drawn upon. Yet, at the same time, it seems that these organisations had been innovative in some way. Greenpeace drew on Quakers, the Sierra Club and the DMAW Committee. Perhaps its main innovation was to do what Quakers had previously done, to go and 'bear witness', but this time to use the mass media.

TP data showed Angie Zelter reflecting on a successful action and thinking out organising practices that enabled such protest to be sustained over time. She combined three traditions of peace activism: the camp, the large-scale blockade and the affinity group. gX copied much of the TP model, which does not seem

likely to lead to innovation. But I think it innovated by translocating that model into a different field. EF! was founded as a retro step, not to be the kind of bureaucracy that major US environment groups had become but to go back to a campfire way of doing things. If it innovated it was by developing the lightest possible organisational touches to enable it to function, the few rules, the gatherings, the founding myth repeated through the fictional adventures of a folk hero. This resulted in another wave of innovation in the UK which I think was largely by default. EF! UK lacked a focus on mission and practice and so seems to have provided space for new innovations to arise such as road camps, Reclaim the Streets and anti-globalisation protest. There had been innovation by development (GP), addition (TP) and translocation (gX).

## CHAPTER FOUR

### PRESENTATION OF DATA:

#### 'ORGANISATION' AND 'NONVIOLENT DIRECT ACTION'

In this chapter I continue the presentation of data. In order to manage the data and organise the material, there has been some synthesis and initial analysis. Discussion is reserved for the next chapter but there are places in the text where I have drawn out a few points and presented a more conceptualised account rather than risk losing insights or leaving a muddled presentation. Once again, the findings are presented in blocks under sub-headings, each of which emerged from the data, corresponding to initial theory drawn from new institutionalism and new social movement theory. Each block casts some light on issues of organisation for organisations which undertake nonviolent direct action. The first four sub-headings present data on 'organisation' and the final two present data on 'nonviolent direct action':

STRUCTURE

CAMPS

AFFINITY GROUPS

RULES

NONVIOLENT DIRECT ACTION – PRACTICE

NONVIOLENT DIRECT ACTION - TRAINING

The four sub-headings which arose from the data relating to 'organisation' were 'structure', 'camps', 'affinity groups' and 'rules'. Under 'structure', I present how interviewees described their organisations. The second sub-heading is 'camps' by which I mean the road camps and peace camps described by interviewees. The third sub-heading is 'affinity groups'. Interviewees described affinity groups as an autonomous group of people sharing some 'affinity' such as locality or faith-grouping. The fourth sub-heading is headed 'rules' which, once again, was a term used by interviewees.

The two sub-headings relating to nonviolent direct action introduce the practice of nonviolent direct action and training undertaken by participants. I present the different

accounts and descriptions of the practice of nonviolent direct action given by interviewees. The final sub-heading 'Nonviolent direct action – training' gathers together the data on the different nonviolent direct action training packages. Such training was often referred to by interviewees simply as 'nvda training'.

#### 4.1 STRUCTURE

I begin this first block of data which reveals matters of organisation with material that I have headed 'structure'. In order to avoid over-synthesis of data, material under this theme is presented on each organisation. Thereafter, I present data which cross-cut the four organisations. The term 'structure' might seem inappropriate when, as seen in the last chapter, some of the organisations were committed to consensual (i.e. non-hierarchical) decision-making and when some interviewees described their organisation as a network, or movement. One said:

*"I count myself as an independent activist, loosely structured basis, being networked."*

Another said:

*"Strong principle based in the co-operative [movement], anarchic, bottom to top approach, people taking responsibility for their actions."*

So I will explain what I mean by the term, for this was part of the initial theorising which, for example, helped frame the prompts used in my semi-structured interviews. I draw a definition from studies of large formal organisations, so by structure I mean all the tangible and regularly occurring features which help to shape members' behaviour (Child 1984).

According to Child (1984), regularly occurring features include the following list: 'basic structure' which is divided into organisational chart, job descriptions, governing body and constitution; 'operating mechanisms' which can be subdivided into standing orders, reward mechanisms, appraisal, planning and communication; 'decision

mechanisms' which include control and compliance; 'tasks' which include roles and specialisation; 'hierarchy' which includes reporting relationships and span of control; and 'authority' which includes delegation.

Students of organisational structure are likely to be familiar with the above generic list of themes. But the themes I have chosen for this chapter correspond poorly with this list for two reasons. First, I need to be true to my own findings, so my themes are particular rather than generic. Second, I am guided by the theoretical framework of new institutionalism. While of course I am interested in what aspects of structure the data reveal, I am also interested in how and why those aspects of structure come to be legitimised (Scott 1995). So my focus is one level deeper than description of structure, and deeper than whether it is formal or informal. My focus is whether it is legitimised or not. Whatever the organisational feature may be, it has been legitimised either by regulatory authority, through social norms, or socially constructed through a shared way of seeing the world. The themes I have identified emerged from my findings. Even if not standard themes in the normative literature they had normative functions within the organisations studied.

### **Structure of Earth First!**

The findings show people committed to non-hierarchical organising. Local groups, gatherings and camps were frequently referred to in interviews. I have also presented some data from the early days of both the US and UK versions of EF! As noted in the last chapter, there was some 'anti-organisational' element in the founding of both EF! US and EF! UK. EF! UK literature showed an aversion to the term 'organisation' and a preference for 'network' and 'movement'. I did not find a definition of either term, nor, unsurprisingly, did I find an organisational chart.

In earlier days, the US branch often used the self-nomenclature of 'tribe'. One of its US founders wrote:

*"When we formed Earth First! in 1980 we decided not to establish a formal organisation. We wanted a looser structure – without formal officers and the administrative overhead that goes with an organisation"* (Foreman 1991: 9).

But producing a newspaper and handling subscriptions, which EF! began doing early on, required formal organisation:

*“Our solution was for Pete to set up a sole proprietorship in his name for the newspaper as a separate entity within the Earth First! movement” (ibid).*

The UK branch did not develop even this modest level of formal organisation. My interviewees did not report any fund-raising activity, rather that there was no mechanism to handle subscriptions. I was told that EF! UK’s sporadic publications were produced by one of the larger local groups. EF! UK produced a formal statement on its organisation which I retrieved from one of its websites:

*“The general principles behind Earth First! are non-hierarchical organisation and the use of direct action to confront, stop and eventually reverse the forces that are responsible for the destruction of the Earth and its inhabitants. EF! is not a cohesive group or campaign, but a convenient banner for people who share similar philosophies to work under”.<sup>1</sup>*

There was no body or mechanism to control the use of the EF! name. Most of the material I came across was expressly ‘anti-copyright’.

The quotation in the previous paragraph was reproduced verbatim on two other EF! websites put up by larger local groups, reproduced with a non-substantive change on the front of the EF! Action Update and carried in the calling notes for the 2002 summer gathering. EF! UK literature, especially some editions of Do or Die!, contained ideological views of ‘organisation’, often distinguishing between a non-hierarchical consensus organisation and the organisations representing capitalism. This contrasted with the ‘how to’ practicalities found in the TP and gX Handbooks discussed in the last chapter. However, I was told of numerous instances of EF! *organising*, many of these from interviewees’ accounts of what actually had to happen for activism to ensue. The main organising entity was the local group. Links between groups would be informal or nonexistent. Within groups, some leaders would emerge:

*“No set roles.. but some people are natural leaders.”*

Interviewees presented a range of possibilities. Some leaders may have chosen the role, or it arose out of a recognised skill or experience. I was told that some leaders recognised that they had a temporary authority which they sought to pass on.

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<sup>1</sup> “Why Earth First!?” Unattributed. [www.earthfirstjournal.org](http://www.earthfirstjournal.org) Accessed November 2002. Author has hard copy.

Nevertheless, someone would have to take responsibility to make things happen. The website noted above stated:

*"The only leaders are those temporarily working the hardest and taking the most risks."*

The main body of participants was found in local groups: these groups were the loci of action. One of the founders told me that he and his co-founder had wanted what he called "autonomous" groups. Other interviewees presented the same picture:

*"EF! is based around independent local groups."*

Groups used the EF! name with varying degrees of attachment. At the weaker end was Leeds Earth First!

*"Virtually everyone who uses the name Earth First! in Leeds thinks the name is a bit crap and not at all representative of who we are and what we do."<sup>2</sup>*

The 2003 summer gathering typified a more balanced (dis)attachment to the name.

The literature for that event stated:

*"This gathering is for all those interested in struggling for social transformation and re-wilding the Earth through non-hierarchical methods and taking direct action. It doesn't matter whether you think the moniker 'Earth First!' is relevant or not!"*

One interviewee reported that, at one point, 60 or so local groups operated under the moniker 'Earth First!'. However, when I participated in the summer gathering of 2002, there was one session where we congregated in our regions and it was clear to me that the number of groups was considerably fewer. As well as local groups, I observed other entities which were listed as part of the group system at that gathering. They included an EF! training facilitator group 'Blatant Incitement' and another activist network 'Reclaim the Streets'. All interviewees stated that each group adopted consensus decision-making. Individual participants at that gathering varied considerably: unemployed and unregistered giving themselves full-time to activism; professionals; employees of other environmental NGOs; and academics. I met two PhD holders in my EF! fieldwork.

How each group functioned depended upon the constituency of each group. Although the US EF! website called them "affinity groups", I did not hear this term much from

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<sup>2</sup> "Fuck the Disobedient Let's Get Civil". Leeds EF! [www.infoshop.org/news5/snowball](http://www.infoshop.org/news5/snowball) Accessed November 2002. Author has hard copy.

interviewees. I found no discernable common pattern for the local group. Interviewees described how those individuals planning to undertake direct actions would typically withdraw from an open and public local meeting to continue plans over a meal or in the corner of a pub. It was at this point that I heard the term 'affinity group' used more often, referring to the body of people planning to do an action together. Affinity groups are discussed later in this chapter.

The individuals and local groups were networked in loose association through the annual summer gatherings and winter moots. Further unstructured networking occurred in many ways: through the web; through long-standing protest camps; through some large squats and co-operatives in a few cities; and major activities such as Reclaim the Streets parties. Interviewees reported that groups did not have a mechanism or requirement to communicate with each other, but some stronger groups helped shape the network. One interviewee said Manchester and Oxford were:

*"where a lot of national stuff came from".*

A great amount of information was communicated around a very diverse network of groups which included alternative communities, anarchist groups, ecological groups, peace groups and direct action groups. Whilst a participant in the field, my observation was that what related specifically to EF! was sometimes impossible to say. I picked up flyers which were a call for an 'action' against a target. These flyers did not have EF! calling for the action. Usually it would be unattributed or in the name of a temporary and specific alliance. These flyers seemed most in evidence at events or actions.

Some EF! communications were through websites and publications maintained by different local groups. Do or Die! was a substantial EF! journal (see Glossary). I was told that the local group producing an edition had an opportunity to construct a history and a temporary identity of EF! One volume was very much given over to the anti-globalisation agenda whilst deep ecology was sidelined, whereas another focused much more on GM crops, especially crop trashing, including advice on how to plan a covert action (Do or Die 1997; 1999). Do or Die! had an open editorial policy. I read some material written in an inflammatory style advocating violence. I did not find such sentiments reflected in the field. Two interviewees had produced an edition. They



told me of the realities of working as a collective to get the publication out. They were aware that they had used stories that were not substantiated:

*“At four in the morning - then finding a piece still missing, so ‘What proportion of cows have mastitis?’ – Er, this was not rigorously checked.”*

Both interviewees referred to Wall's book on Earth First! (1999) and laughed about an academic quoting as authoritative material they had scraped together at the last minute. (I have taken this into account in my references to Do or Die!). A more practical communication was the sporadic EF! Action Update which provided a gazetteer of what had happened and what would be happening. Interviewees said that these too were edited by a different collective each year to avoid the centralisation of power and information.

The most obvious manifestations of EF! were the local groups, summer gatherings (discussed below) and the anti-roads protest camps. Undoubtedly, though, the manifestation which most came to public attention was the road protest camp, which threw up minor celebrities like Swampy and Muppet Dave. The camps were a form of organisational life familiar to many EF! participants, even if the camps did not refer to themselves as EF! Some camps were long-standing, such as the Nine Ladies anti-quarry camp. Others combined issue-based protest (e.g. anti-road) with a thoughtful approach to long-term communal life, as Muppet Dave explained to me at the Birmingham Northern Relief Road camp, which was established in 1997.

Just over half of my EF! interviewees had participated in camps. After the camps, another public event, the 'street party' came to public attention: Reclaim the Streets. RTS would block roads and 'reclaim' them for use by the community, playing games, planting vegetables and, on one in Birmingham in which I participated, literally having a big party. RTS provided a different organisational challenge, producing a large-scale carnival event involving hundreds of people. I did not uncover how the planning of such events took place. None of my interviewees had been involved on the organisational side. My observation was simply that much organising had indeed taken place.

The summer gatherings were where, according to interviewees, decisions about the direction of the movement took place. I was told that the first gathering was by a hill-fort in Brighton, Sussex in 1992. An interviewee who had attended most of the gatherings said that, for the first years, about 70 people came, then numbers grew to around 400 and that by 1996 these had become week-long events. I attended the 2003 gathering where I estimated that 300 people were present. I attended camp-wide meetings where everything was up for discussion: the usefulness of EF!; the decline in local groups; whether there was an EF! network; and planning for future gatherings.

Forty-one workshops were advertised at the gathering but anyone could offer additional ones. I participated in workshops on foraging in hedgerows, on the 'Histories of EF! UK' and orienteering. Other workshops covered a broad range of interests: organising actions and campaigns; facilitation skills for consensus decision-making; community organising; and catapult skills. There was a large meeting and entertainment tent, with music and comedy acts, café, bar, library and other quiet spaces. The programme was very full, three days from 10:00 to 19:00.

The gathering was led by the local EF! group responsible for arranging it. Each day started with a morning meeting at which the areas for discussion were agreed. One respected figure, exasperated by late attendance, railed at participants telling them it was their organisation and this was their opportunity to decide what it would do. I also enjoyed the moment at 09:00 each morning when a child went around the camping field banging a saucepan to wake everyone in time for the morning meeting. It seemed to me a neat solution to the problem of how a non-hierarchical (dis)organisation could get people out of bed in the morning.

An interviewee said that, at one of the early gatherings, people felt there was insufficient space to discuss strategy and ideas. This was addressed by holding two weekend discussion workshops where the agenda was up to participants to decide. He described how discussion was started by a list of questions to which people wrote answers. These answers were then read out by others, to allow for anonymity. The topics included: whether the network should have a more ecological focus; effectiveness; and strengthening the network. Those attending the weekends decided there should be no more of these and, instead, a winter moot was considered the best

place to continue such discussions and to make them accessible to everyone in the network. The winter moot for 2003 in Nottingham was advertised in the EF! Action Update as the annual network gathering to discuss UK-based ecological direct action, EF! strategy, tactics, campaigns, communications and gatherings. It was open to anyone who identified with EF! and was interested in those issues (EF! Action Update 2002). As with the gatherings and the Do or Die! journal, the moot was organised by a local group. For the 2003 moot, it was an administrative network from the Brighton EF! local group. Any group or network could take the initiative and pull together other gatherings on topical issues such as road protests.

So what was the structure of Earth First!?! EF! UK's literature often used the term '(dis)organisation'. What I heard from interviews was that this was used polemically not analytically. One interviewee said how she was strongly attracted to EF!

*"by the fore-going of bureaucracy for the sake of getting on with it".*

She was one of the interviewees with a doctorate. The most common term from interviewees was "network":

*"I think of it as a network" and "being networked".*

The term 'network' was used without definition but there were two telling comments, first from a co-founder:

*"From early on we had a clear vision of setting up a mass network – how we were going to do it we had no fucking idea."*

The second comment fits with my observations and is my synthesis of some long reflections from an interviewee plus a direct quote from him. When talking about EF! he did not name any type of structure:

*"I see it as a fluid movement of people who do stuff."*

But over the course of the interview he described how networking was used as an organising strategy, a form of innovation through the re-combination of personnel.

## Structure of genetiX Snowball

Interview data and other material portrayed gX as non-hierarchical. Unlike EF! interviewees were clearer about its structure. A term used frequently by interviewees was “affinity group”. As explained earlier, most interviewees meant by this term autonomous, non-hierarchical groups of people sharing an ‘affinity’ of some sort. These groups were intended to undertake actions and their participants had regularly occurring ‘roles’ related to actions, such as legal support, media and ‘arrestables’. I was told that gX had no staff and no HQ other than the contact details for the founders. The founding affinity group produced a Handbook and had produced a video of the first action. It also published updates and had built a web-site. Interviewees described gX as self-financing:

*“we got £300 from Genetic Engineering Network, £1000 from Friends of the Earth, and a huge amount of money - £1,500 - from \*\*\*”*

One interviewee described the organisation as:

*“a close-knit affinity group.”*

Indeed, interviewees described the affinity group as the key building block throughout the organisation. It was described as the make-up of the founding group which had conducted the first gX action at Model Farm. It was also the expected structure of local groups. The founders told me that gX’s projected growth would still be around an affinity group model and that this was laid out in the Handbook (1999). The affinity group was described as the locus of decision-making as well as activity.

The Handbook (1999) set out a clear picture of gX’s organisation which I will outline here. The intention was for gX to consist of a ‘Co-ordination Group’, affinity groups and individuals (ibid). The Co-ordination Group had seven people on a ‘spokes-council’ model where each person was in one of the following spokes-groups: outreach, support, administration, resources or media. This representative would then feed back ideas or plans to their group and seek consensus there. This spokes-council (Co-ordination Group) was accountable for the whole campaign and to serve the needs of local affinity groups but it was not responsible for the action of those groups or individuals.

The Handbook suggested a maximum number of 15 participants for each local affinity group. How to develop such groups was discussed in the Handbook. Decision-making was by consensus. What this meant, how to use consensus and when not to use it were all, again, discussed in the Handbook. Affinity groups and individuals were expected to sign up to a Pledge committing them to 'ground rules' for behaviour on actions and codifying the sort of nonviolence required: symbolic, open and accountable (e.g. accepting the consequences of arrest and going through the courts). Although gX was avowedly 'non-hierarchical', the core group, the main aim, the method of operation were all prescribed; thereafter came the autonomy. Individuals were also tasked with 'snowballing' through each participant enrolling two more activists. Thus the gX campaign would grow.

However, as one of the founders told me:

*"It never really happened that way."*

The main reason, she suggested, was injunctive action by chemical companies.

Another of the founders suggested a more organisational reason:

*"That's the way we'd have liked it to become; we put this structure in place because we thought that would help people to take the action; it was too prescriptive I think for a lot of people."*

Founders told me they had expected EF! groups and Friends of the Earth groups to take up their idea. They envisaged gX as having a short life – seeing off the threat of GM crops.

In one sense gX did indeed have a very short life as the larger structure never developed. Either through fear of court action or an overly-prescriptive approach, local affinity groups ('snowball groups') did not appear. However I observed that local activity did. This, interviewees told me, was largely through the many days of consultancy and training given by the founders whose involvement ensured a common campaign approach. Interviewees described how the affinity group construct was robust enough for gX to pursue its aims by supporting autonomous local anti-GM groups. The support was described as both extensive and intensive: support in planning, training in legal, media and organisational skills, support through the court process. Because this support was offered by individuals, gX as an organisation was

kept at a distance. This prevented the chemical companies from obtaining injunctive relief against the local groups.

I interviewed people from two gX-supported affinity groups. Both interviewees said that a very large amount of work went into building the affinity group. The work included research, planning logistics and co-ordinating training. I also observed two very different groups in different parts of the country which were able to produce an action using affinity group organising. Interviewees from these groups said how they were able to get practical advice, training and support on how to form an affinity group. One participant said:

*"[We] had all seen the genetiX Snowball video and a lot of us had seen the Handbook, I suppose, yes, it was a kind of snowball action".*

What the gX Handbook set out could be described as a "franchise" (Handy 1993: 357), where each snowball group would act and behave in a similar way. What was described to me as the eventual practice was the core group of founders advising and training autonomous local affinity groups. I was told:

*"we decided to end Snowball as a campaign because.. anybody who did an action in the name of genetiX Snowball would inherit our legal trappings. We felt like, well, you know, the methods are not tied to the name, we can dump the name and continue the campaign in every way kind of thing. So that's how that worked."*

## **Structure of Greenpeace**

At the time of the research, Greenpeace was both a peace and an environmental NGO. Its stated goal according to promotional literature was:

*"to ensure the ability of the earth to nurture life in all its diversity"*  
(GP Glastonbury Mission Statement 2004).

I will present findings on GP by starting with the big picture – the international organisation – then focusing on the national office, then the organisation of actions and the role of volunteers. GP was the only organisation where interviewees, both staff and volunteers, used the word 'management'.

One interviewee, one of the UK office's senior management, gave an account of the

international structure and funding. There were, he said, around 40 National Regional Offices (NROs) - of which GP UK was one - and a further legal entity Greenpeace International (GPI). GP offices in the richer OECD countries paid 18% of their income to GPI. If their income was above a certain threshold then this further income was 'taxed' and further funds diverted to GPI. Offices in less economically developed countries were exempted from these payments. He described GPI as the equivalent of the head office. GPI maintained the fleet of ships and the strategic planning of the organisation globally. This same interviewee said that GPI had the right of veto over NROs on major campaign and strategic issues:

*"The ultimate sanction [for GPI] - it could if it really came to it dismiss the NRO's Chief Executive Officer."*

This happened once in the UK when the then CEO refused to end an anti-fur campaign. McTaggart (GPI) flew to London, did the sacking, and installed a new CEO (McTaggart 1978). My interviewee said that more recently, the Danish office had been told to end its sand eels campaign. He described the yearly planning process for NROs which was co-ordinated with GPI. NROs and campaigners "jostled for position" as campaigns were prioritised and the ships were booked out to campaigns and NROs. GPI, with the national CEOs, reserved the power to make last minute changes in order that the organisation could respond quickly to international issues.

Another interviewee, again in senior management at GP, referred to this structure in explaining the Brent Spar campaign of 1993. GP confronted Shell UK over Shell's proposed dumping at sea of an oil storage facility, the Brent Spar. GP won the campaign (Rose 1998; Tsoukas 1999) but had to apologise publicly for inaccurate research. My interviewee's explanation was that, in 1992, the NROs around the North Sea agreed to run a toxics campaign on North Sea pollution. Campaigns and actions were planned, ship time booked and resources committed. Then, unexpectedly, Shell (UK) announced it was going to dump the Brent Spar. This was a different ocean issue, dumping, not toxics. The UK office did not want to run the dumping campaign but was over-ruled. However, as part of a deal cut in the GPI office in Amsterdam, the UK campaigners were still able to look for mileage for their toxics campaign. They focused on toxic sludge which the Spar was presumed to contain. They botched the analysis and had to apologise, marring an otherwise classic GP victory. This account

gave me an organisational understanding of an event which was at variance with three accounts: GP's own (Rose 1998); a political science view (Jordan 1998); and a Beckian risk society view (Tsoukas 1999). All three glossed over the organisational processes and dynamics that helped explain events.

Another interviewee told me that GP UK was organisationally complex and that the complexity had arisen partly through the way the UK office developed and partly through wanting to protect individuals from legal sanction. The organisation which employed paid staff was 'Greenpeace Ltd'. It was owned by eight shareholders, but these shares were actually held by an organisation called 'Greenpeace UK Ltd'. GP UK Ltd had an appointed Board of 25 which elected the "real Board of about eight" which actually "governs" (my interviewee made speech quote marks with his hands) Greenpeace Ltd. This Board had regular meetings and had at least one clear function, to appoint the CEO (called the Executive Director). He added that there was a third organisation, 'Greenpeace Environmental Trust Ltd', which was the one part which had charitable status, received legacies and charitable tax arrangements. It therefore could not feed that money into campaigning. The sort of campaigning GP undertook was not a permissible activity for a registered charity at the time of my study (Randon & 6 1994). The Trust, he said, put resources towards education and research.

I was shown an organisational chart for Greenpeace UK. It showed high specialisation and hierarchy. Although there were lines joining all the paid staff and their activities together, the Board was adrift, floating around the edge of the structure. The chart is not reproduced here because the interviewee tore it up and dismissed it with:

*"It's just a management tool."*

He went on to say that an organisation like GP (around 70 paid staff in 2002) had to produce something like that. However, if someone had something to offer, a space would be found. How that person worked and the relationships they formed might have no relation to what was on the chart.

*"The chart tidies things up, the reality is people forming links to get their jobs done."*

He gave as an example the web team, which had been housed in five different sections in the space of a few years.



My chief interest was how nonviolent direct actions were organised. I saw a GP video which showed most of the senior management team holding a meeting before an 'action' where logistical, media and legal matters were assessed. An interviewee later described this as an 'inquisition' where a proposed action would be tested before the Executive Director or the Campaign Director:

*"signed off on it."*

Interviewees described how actions would usually involve an 'actions co-ordinator' who worked with the campaigner. Someone from the media unit would agree 'messaging'. Most actions that I observed involved volunteers who were under the care of the 'Active Supporters Unit'. I asked an interviewee about the 'Active Supporters Unit' (ASU) as the organisational chart had shown it under the remit of the Campaign Director. He said:

*"This was a major shift of policy for GP in 1995."*

He said that, until 1995, volunteers had been fundraisers. In 1995 they became campaigners. I was informed that, thereafter, the ASU had resisted volunteers giving time to fundraising.

Interviewees described how volunteers were organised into geographically-based local groups, about 100 around the UK at that time. Local groups were incorporated into what was described to me as a 'centralised structure' and not a federation (as with Friends of the Earth). An interviewee said that centralisation enabled tight co-ordination so GP could act as one organisation:

*"putting all its pressure on one crack in the wall."*

Another interviewee said that:

*"In the same way that NROs implement internationally agreed campaigns so the groups implement UK campaigns."*

The ASU, I was told, related to around 50 volunteers who were 'Area Networkers'. These people would 'cascade' information to the local groups. Interviewees reported a close relationship between groups and the office, including several mentions of 'the Greenpeace family' but this relationship was not a democratic one.

Nevertheless, I was told that there had been what one manager called:

*"a loosening up on structure."*

This loosening up was described as developing different strands of activism: trainers for campaigning skills and nvda; political lobbyists; investigators; and more space to develop new ways of working. One management interviewee was initially cautious about this loosening up:

*"I personally felt uncomfortable, my management style is more controlling, I went into this slightly apprehensively. Value of this [loosening up] – much more flexible way of the organisation manifesting itself."*

A further revision of the relationship between GP head office and volunteers saw attention being given to 'key activists'. Management interviewees described how, within the total of 7000 active supporters, there were 'key activists' who organised and who took responsibility:

*"150 -200 people who really make things happen."*

Management interviewees said that the ASU had targeted its resources at these 200 or so people and had hosted special training days for them and developed a web-based forum especially for them. This loosening up on structure was not commented on by interviewees who were volunteers in local groups. Most interviewees there described GP as highly centralised.

I was a participant observer at both a centrally organised action and what a manager called a 'devolved' action. The centralised action involved turning up at a venue for a full briefing. This consisted of a campaign briefing, an 'action' briefing (what people were being asked to do) and a legal briefing on likely charges and what the arrest procedure would be like. Most people at this action had been recruited by the ASU through its Area Networkers from amongst volunteers who were nvda trained. I observed a shared feeling of intense anticipation the night before. Then came two days of action seeking to disrupt activities at Menwith Hill (connected with the US 'Star Wars' initiative). This way of 'delivering' an action was described as the norm and as the 'traditional model', where head office would recruit people, then brief all of them at a central location. One interview described people after the briefing:

*"wrapped up in an energetic, frenetic buzz, often immensely stimulating."*

The same interviewee commented on a devolved action:

*" 'The Italian Job' (May 2002) broke the mould for the way we deliver actions."*

The 'Italian Job' was a simultaneous set of actions against Esso garages across the UK. These actions were organised on a regional basis and planned and led by volunteers. Through my observation I saw that GP had taken a risk: the central office had less control and had to rely on trust. At the same time, the campaign, target, and method of action were all pre-arranged. The risk that I observed was that various volunteer organisers were recruiting, researching and planning the logistics such as accommodation and transport. In the region where I was observing, there was no action co-ordinator or ASU staff member. I was told by a GP manager that it had been effective but extremely expensive. A GP volunteer described it as really empowering. From the point of view of office staff, I was told that this had had a different dynamic to centralised actions. There was a longer timescale but an improvement on the original action which came about by listening to volunteers in the planning stage. An interviewee recalled that there were some difficult communication management issues when dealing with volunteers. There was a need for:

*“soft interpersonal skills – mentoring, supporting, listening.”*

### **Structure of Trident Ploughshares**

I will present findings on Trident Ploughshares by first giving an over-view of structure. Then I will present findings on the 'Core Group' and 'Representatives' meetings. Decision-making and much activity took place within what were termed as 'affinity groups' so I next present findings on TP affinity groups. These groups could be found around the UK and although some were based on a geographic propinquity, no interviewee referred to a 'local group'. Finally, I present findings which show that some elements in TP were non-negotiable, including elements such as nonviolence, training and consensus decision-making.

TP did not have paid staff or a formal Head Office but the TP Handbook gave a contact address in Norwich. It had a bank account and I was told that people signing up to full participation - Pledgers - were asked to donate £10 each. Most TP activity was delivered through affinity groups. I was a participant observer in one such group. These groups were responsible for their own funds and for raising money to pay fines. However, I was told that there were a few centralised funds: affinity group support

fund; legal support fund; and prisoners' support fund. Applications to these funds were to be made through the Core Group or through the Norwich office. At the time of my study, TP had two newsletters, a 'Pledgers Information sheet' and 'Speed the Plough' which had a wider circulation. It also had a website and an e-mail discussion group.

TP actions were to be carried out at any Trident-related site (TP Handbook 2001). The definition of 'Trident-related' was broad. During my time with TP it included 'Star Wars' (see the Glossary) and Iraq War targets. 'Star Wars' referred to the US strategic defence initiative, particularly the USAF base at Menwith Hill, Yorkshire. Iraq War targets included RAF bases such as RAF Fairford in Gloucestershire being used by US long-range bombers. My affinity group did an 'action' at RAF Stafford protesting against the war. TP activists went against a broad range of Iraq war targets, including Command centres in Middlesex and elsewhere. One TP activist went to Iraq as a 'Human Shield' in order to occupy sites such as water pipelines and power stations to try to prevent bombing which would impact on civilians.

Interviewees described the two national decision-making meetings: the Core Group and the Representatives' Meeting. The Core Group consisted of 15 TP Pledgers. The names of the Pledgers, that is, those who publicly signed a Pledge committing to peaceful action to disarm Trident, were listed in the back of the Handbook. The Pledge was in fact two pledges, 'Individual Nonviolent and Safety Pledge', and 'Pledge to Prevent Nuclear Crime' (TP Handbook 2001: 20).

I was told by an interviewee who was involved at the launch of TP that the Core Group was in place before the launch. Interviewees said that the Core Group's purpose was to provide co-ordination and work out the overall structure. Core Group work included: producing materials; facilitating mass gatherings; press work; monitoring the police cells and court hearings; and acting as a focal point for information sharing. It met about twice a year. I was told that the 15 people serving on the Core Group were drawn from the registered affinity groups and that Core Group members were self-selecting rather than elected:

*"Any official TP Pledger who is willing to volunteer as a Core Group worker can ask the present group, and they will make a decision on the basis of workability...So far the Core Group has inevitably made many of the day-to-day decisions about the campaign as a whole."* (TP Handbook 2001: 15-16).

The other national meeting was the Representatives' Meeting. This again met twice a year. It was described to me as much bigger than the Core Group, with each affinity group encouraged to send one or two members. Interviewees said that decisions were made by consensus, including who should or should not be in the Core Group. An interviewee explained how the Core Group ensured decisions taken by the Representatives were carried through, such as adding the radar base at Fylingdale to the list of TP sites. Swedish TP activists challenged this decision-making structure within the first few months of TP's life, wanting 'thorough consensus' (where everyone has access to full decision-making on every issue), but:

*"we had decided not to go down the most thorough consensus route for pragmatic reasons"* (MacKenzie 2001: 54).

The main body of participants was found in the affinity groups. I was told that:

*"affinity groups were structured in from the beginning;"* and  
*"it's arranged in affinity groups"*.

This was stated forcefully in the Handbook too:

*"We are insisting that people work in affinity groups."*  
(TP Handbook 2001: 19).

The ideal size, according to interviewees, was between three and fifteen members. All members were expected to have completed the stipulated two day training:

*"I was in a group of four .. had two-day training provided by 'Turning the Tide' Quaker training programme."*

A Core Group member made the decision as to whether an affinity group could be registered with TP. As long as the groups stayed within the boundaries set out by TP, these groups were autonomous:

*"Remember, your group can make its own autonomous decisions so long as they are within the ground rules"* (TP Handbook 2001: 19).

Nearly all affinity groups undertook direct action but some did theatrical performing or practical tasks. For example, the Meals not Missiles group cooked for the annual camps (Speed the Plough 2003).

In TP's usage, 'affinity' referred to the bond between an affinity group's members. Various examples were given to me, from professional bonds to geographical bonds.

Some groups consisted of veteran peace activists. One interviewee was with a group that was disbanding because:

*"age caught up with us."*

Another interviewee had been a member of several affinity groups over the years. At the time of interview, she was a member of an active group called Disarmers Anonymous. She said that individuals who did not fit in with one group could contact the Core Group to be put in another.

Interviewees said that the two-day training required by the Handbook was usually arranged for a whole affinity group. This could be done using a 'Nonviolence and Safety Workshop Request Form' - a form was in the Handbook. Interviewees told me the training covered: sharing understandings of TP; exploration of nonviolence; personal fears and boundaries; individual and group commitment; group dynamics; group decision-making; group maintenance; and preparation for involvement in TP. The training was communicated through a variety of techniques including role play. The standard training was the Quaker Turning the Tide programme (see the Glossary). One of the trainers said that three Pledgers were Quaker Turning the Tide trainers.

The Handbook advocated consensus decision-making for affinity groups. The argument was that a decision which could end up with someone in jail needed everyone's full involvement, assent and acceptance of personal responsibility. There were suggested processes for decision-making. Just as roles were shared around a group for actions, so roles could be shared around for the consensus process: time-keeper; meeting facilitator; note-taker; '-ism watcher'; and 'vibe-watcher'. Interviewees said that '-ism watchers' alerted groups to issues such as genderism, ageism and racism whilst 'vibe watchers' picked up people's feelings of unease or other emotions which were not being verbally expressed. The Handbook suggested techniques to encourage full participation, like the 'go-around' technique and the 'talking stick'. When observing, I found such ideas were employed but the practice was not so formulaic. The Turning the Tide training programme and the Handbook offered guidance on when not to use consensus: when a quick decision is required; where there is no group mind; if the matter is trivial; where there are no good choices; or where there is insufficient information. There was advice on what to do if discussion was hung and a consensus flow-chart was available. Although a desired

way of doing things, I gathered that the practical difficulties of 'consensing' (interviewee term) were well known.

There was also a model for consensus decision-making by large groups which was to use a 'fishbowl' method. As described by interviewees, it seemed similar to the 'spokes-council' method of gX. In the fishbowl were representatives of participating groups: only these people could speak within the fishbowl. Sitting behind them and hearing the proceedings were the group members who could call out their representative at any time to discuss a point or make a decision after which she returned to the circle. I did not see this model in operation, nor its variant for very large groups - the 'embedded fishbowl'. I was told that the process could go awry, one interviewee recalled an evening meeting where the one agreement was to have coffee.

For those wanting full involvement in TP actions there was a list of non-negotiables enshrined in seven ground-rules on nonviolence (which I list later in this chapter when presenting findings on 'rules'). The first rule was:

*"Everyone must be part of an affinity group and have signed the Pledge and has to take part in a two-day Nonviolence and Safety Workshop" (TP Handbook 2001: 16-17).*

However, I observed participants on an action who were not members of an affinity group or who had just been drafted into a group for the day. I also observed that some had not done the two day training. On the action which I observed, the affinity group was not aiming at 'maximum damage', nor was it a long-standing affinity group. I observed two minimum requirements for participation in TP actions. First, that those participating in an action will have participated in training of some sort beforehand. Second, a new participant would be known well to a Pledger and members of an affinity group. So it was that I participated in an action after an evening's training but was already known to, and recommended by, a Pledger.

Two findings from the fieldwork are noteworthy. First, there was a seeming contradiction between consensus and non-negotiable rules:

*"... the overall framework and non-negotiable rules were already in place at the start of the project" .. many of the major decisions had already been made and were not negotiable" (TP Handbook 2001: 15).*

This was brought out by a senior TP Pledger who was a Quaker peace activist. She had agreed for me to interview her days before a trial at which she received a three month prison sentence for attempting to disable a radome at Menwith Hill. She had joined TP at the onset and described TP as:

*“the brainchild of Angie Zelter.”*

She went on to describe this “brilliant mind”, referring particularly to Angie Zelter’s organisational abilities. She described how Angie Zelter had done a great deal of preparation and written out much of the TP structure and the ground-rules. But this praise also served as a critique:

*“One person’s brainchild – not the best way of going about organising. Aims and aspirations should’ve been decided by the Core Group, not before it.”*

The second strong finding was training. Training seemed to me to be almost a structural feature. It was factored in as a requirement for entry to the organisation and for participating in actions. The favoured training was the Quaker Turning the Tide programme. Quaker logistical support came with this training package, including training venues, overnight stays at Quaker Meeting Houses and provision of food and transport. For instance, an interviewee described how five affinity groups from Oxford at the 14<sup>th</sup> February 2000 Faslane blockade had all trained the previous day in the Oxford Friends’ Meeting House. As noted above, the package included training in non-hierarchical decision-making. The training I received in Stafford and observed in Glasgow gave: entry into participation; training in techniques of action; training in the TP principles of organisation and decision-making; bonding opportunities (separate from the more formalised affinity groups); and an inculcation of values (who we are, how things are done in TP).

## 4.2 CAMPS

The second sub-heading is ‘camps’. Both this sub-heading and the next (‘affinity groups’) reflect use of these terms by interviewees. Camps and affinity groups were organisational sub-groups with characteristics which were common across the organisations. I have not combined the data on camps with the data on affinity groups as camp life presented a different proximity of association over time from the



associational relations of an affinity group. Also, the camp was in its situation an act of nonviolent direct action rather than an association to plan it.

The data did not suggest to me a generic conceptual heading for either of these sub-groups. So I am using the terms 'camps' and 'affinity groups' in my presentation here and in the discussion which follows in the next chapter. This presents a conundrum, as the same term is being used in two ways: reporting data, sometimes through direct quotation; and my use of the same term – everyday language - in conceptual discussion (Trusted 1987)<sup>3</sup>. I considered generating my own terms. The affinity group, for instance, seemed to me to be an 'associational action group'. This would have provided a tentative structural-operational definition (Salamon & Anheier 1997). However, I found that interspersing my term with the data at this point clouded the picture. In any case, the conceptual discussion in the following chapter does not develop from tentative definitions. I acknowledge the conundrum and will make it clear by the context whether the use of terms such as 'camps' and 'affinity groups' is a report from the field or my use in a conceptual discussion.

Interviewees used the word 'camp' mainly of peace camps and anti-road camps. Peace camps were sites of protest, close by the target. I observed at one of the two peace camps alongside Menwith Hill and at Faslane. Anti-road camps were usually found directly on the path of the proposed road. I observed at one anti-road site and one anti-quarry site: Birmingham Northern Relief Road and Nine Ladies anti-quarrying site. The findings on camps were important for four reasons. First, EF! and TP incorporated camps as part of their operational activity. Second, for some participants, the camp was their only experience of that organisation. Interviewees described the camps as, in themselves, direct action, not merely a base for promoting it. Third, there were findings suggesting that the camps had some element of organisation within them. Fourth, most interviewees described recurring organisational features which are presented below. The findings, then, shed some light on the issues of organisation in Third Sector organisations which undertake nonviolent direct action.

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<sup>3</sup> I accept the double conundrum of the difficulty of stating concepts in everyday language and how, at the same time, 'facts' are not concept-free (Trusted 1987:10).

I will give some data on peace and road camps. I will then present findings which revealed elements of organisation: “camps within camps”; size; leadership; and rules and their enforcement. But first, I will refer to a protest camp which began and ended long before my research: Greenham Common.

### *Greenham Common*

In 1979 there were numerous protests relating to nuclear power, nuclear weapons and international relations. In March, there was a near-catastrophic melt-down of a nuclear reactor at Three Mile Island (Carroll et al 2002). Thatcher and Reagan were elected the leaders of the UK and US respectively. Then, on 12<sup>th</sup> December, 1979, NATO announced that 572 American Cruise and Pershing II missiles would be sited in Europe (Ruddock 1987). Within a few weeks of that announcement, the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan and Reagan announced that he would not ratify the SALT II treaty limiting the development of strategic nuclear weapons (Ruddock 1987). On the 17<sup>th</sup> June, 1980, the British Government announced the location of Cruise missile sites which raised public opposition, culminating in an 80,000 strong CND rally in London. Within a year, ‘Women for Life on Earth’ had set up a peace camp at RAF Greenham Common, one of the Cruise missile sites. Towards the end of 1982, 30,000 women ‘embraced the base’ at Greenham Common to protest against the missiles, the first flight of which arrived in December of that year (Ruddock 1987).

The protest camp has a long history, longer than Greenham Common (McKay 1996). But I have given the above account because some interviewees referred back to their experiences at Greenham Common. Six were ex-Greenham, including the founder of TP and a co-founder of gX. I visited the Faslane camp, which had been running many years. Interviewees told me it was sited on land owned by a “Greenham veteran”.

### *Peace and Road Camps*

The large-scale Faslane blockades drew on the expertise of the Faslane camp. The Faslane camp became the base for training, for affinity group actions and to facilitate a one-day mass blockade. Interviewees described how temporary camps were held at key anti-Trident sites, lasting from a weekend to a fortnight. I also visited a peace camp at Menwith Hill. The camp was almost a continuation of Greenham Common. It was a women-only camp. I was invited inside a caravan into a space which an

interviewee called 'the sticky' from which, she said, males were usually excluded. She explained that, Greenham onwards, peace camps usually carried a critique of male ways of handling power and authority. Like Greenham, the Menwith camp was sited alongside the base. It initiated small-scale actions and facilitated regular incursions or blockades. It was also a resource for organisations such as GP, which used the camp's detailed knowledge of bye-laws and logistics concerning the base.

Environmental protestors have used camps against quarries, airport expansion, pipelines and roads. Interviewees spoke of famous camps like Newbury, Twyford and Manchester Airport and referred back to their experiences there. Some interviewees were veterans of several camps. Most road camps were short-lived compared to Menwith Hill or Faslane, although the Nine Ladies (anti-quarry) camp had been going about ten years.

#### *"Camps within Camps"*

My findings showed that there were, as one interviewee put it, "camps within camps". There were numerous camps within sites such as Newbury, Manchester Airport, and others. Interviewees used the plural - "camps" - even if their experience was of only one site. This was nothing new to the protest camp scene. Interviewees who were ex-Greenham women told me of different camps at Greenham, one describing "huge tensions" there. Another ex-Greenham interviewee said she got to the point where:

*"one questioned whether that kind of organising could achieve anything much and [I] moved on to found [an organisation called] Peace Watch, which systematically monitored movements of aircraft and munitions."*

Two Greenham women had decanted to Menwith Hill, but, said an interviewee, since the two did not get on, two protest camps had been established there.

Interviewees said that at Manchester Airport there were seven different camps, whilst at the Newbury (anti-road) camp, on eviction eve, there were 27. Interviewees said that multiple camps at a particular site meant that like went with like:

*"generally, people stayed with their friends."*

One of the interviewees referred to camps having "their own personalities". His camp was one of the seven at Manchester airport:

*"ours was a bunch of bloody hippies."*

Each camp within a camp was usually autonomous:

*"each could have... a different personality and take action in different ways".*

Another interviewee described the feeling of being a "tribe": that, after erecting barriers, the feeling that they had created a "temporary autonomous zone".

### *Size*

A veteran of Newbury and Manchester Airport held that the ideal size of camp was eight people. Interviewees said that numbers could dwindle and be very small, but before an eviction numbers would swell. When I visited the Nine Ladies anti-quarry camp, although there was no immediate threat of eviction, I counted several dozen people living at the site. Interviewees described how some camps had a site office (or an office elsewhere) and a legal support person. One interviewee said that, at Manchester Airport, the camps had had a "meta-structure" with an office 12 miles from the camp in which there was:

*"a clique pulling the strings."*

He said that this set-up enabled them to "manipulate the Press".

### *Leadership*

I observed what seemed to me to be a tacit structure to camps. Interviewee accounts confirmed that some elements of structure and leadership were assented to, usually for pragmatic reasons. For example, on my first visit to the Birmingham Northern Relief Road camp, I was escorted to a caravan housing 'Muppet Dave'. He was not the 'leader'. He was a committed anarchist and I observed him trying to empower others. However, he had experience and reputation; he accepted that, for the sake of getting things done, if only for a time, some would end up in a leadership role. Although the references were scant, interviewees did report training sometimes being on offer. One instance reported to me by an interviewee was the use of nvda training from Turning the Tide. Interviewees also said that at some of the earlier camps (Newbury, Twyford), Angie Zelter and Rowan Tilly had been present for a time.

An interviewee said that the Manchester Airport camp(s) had a "clique" organising things. Other interviewees referred to cliques and said how some cliques were useful. I was told of the "implicit hierarchy" of older and more experienced activists. But I was

also told about less helpful variants such as “the cabal of the karabiner” - “the tree-living elite”, with climbing harness as a badge of office (Do or Die 1997: 28, 75). Often, the first division was women from men. I heard several references to the problems caused by the “would-be alpha male”. Interviewees described how factionalism could become dysfunctional or terminal, as with the ‘Battle Star’, one of the camps at Manchester Airport. It had to deal with:

*“the macho, lairy, male, aggressive brew-crew culture.”*

My interviewee described how this culture had been forcing others out. But to take action against the ‘brew-crew’ would have required doing so without full consensus which was unacceptable, so people kept leaving.

An interviewee described the routine of camp life such as putting one’s name down for ongoing maintenance tasks and that there was a regular morning meeting to decide what to do that day. He referred to these features of camp life as:

*“the basic organisation.”*

A further interviewee described it as

*“a structured way of being anarchic.”*

For this interviewee, camp life was based on the co-operative, a bottom to top approach with people taking responsibility for their actions and taking action for themselves. Another interviewee, talking about the freedom of camp life, qualified what ‘freedom’ meant with the words:

*“There was a certain way that things were done.”*

One generally agreed way of getting camp decision-making done was by consensus. I observed the process and was given interviewee accounts. At the same time, interviewees reported that in some camps there were natural leaders such as:

*“those with heaps of experience.”*

### *Rules and Enforcement*

A camp reality was to deal with “lunch-outs” and “energy vampires” – people not contributing to the camp, having demanding needs or with mental health problems. At Newbury, it has been said that 15 people were sectioned under the Mental Health Act (Do or Die 1997: 31, 33). One interviewee stated camps had no set rules, but another

stated the rules operating in his camp – no alcohol during the day, no hard drugs. A further rule was nonviolence:

*“at Twyford, nonviolence wasn’t a rule it was a given.”*

Interviewees gave me instances of the ultimate sanction of the camp - exclusion. One interviewee had been involved with the eviction of six people from Manchester Airport camp. These were people with mental illness or heroin users. The evictions had often been co-ordinated with the police. An interviewee at Birmingham Northern Relief Road camp recalled how a disruptive person was given a lift to a city one night, then left there.

Overall, the findings suggest that TP drew on the experience of past peace camps and used them and their given way of organising as one element of its on-going anti-Trident campaign. It became clear from interviewees that camps provided key moments in EF!’s growth and work. It is difficult to apportion roads activity between EF! and other NGOs. The data show the road camps as a major part of the EF! canon. Just over half the EF! interviewees had direct experience of camps but, as one said:

*“EF! was more than a roads movement and the roads movement was more than EF!”*

The picture overall is that issues of non-hierarchical organising were common to both the environmental and peace fields.

### **4.3 AFFINITY GROUPS**

When interviewees from different organisations used the term ‘affinity group’ they referred to a consistent set of organisational features. Often, no further explanation was given: once the term ‘affinity group’ was used, it was assumed that everybody would know the roles and relationships in such groups. The function of the affinity group was to support one another in the organisation and execution of nonviolent direct action. The findings on affinity groups were important in the same way that those on camps were: for some interviewees, affinity groups were their main or sole experience of an organisation; affinity groups revealed recurring organisational features; and the findings shed some light on issues of organisation. I will briefly

outline the historical origins of the affinity group then review its place in the four organisations. I then present the organisational features of the affinity groups: 'affinity and membership'; 'size'; 'autonomy'; 'roles'; and 'decision-making'.

The affinity group can be traced back to at least the Spanish Civil War where anarchists resisted the classic military structure and opted for a different discipline by using autonomous groups (Begg 2000). It was at this time (pre-1940s) that the term 'affinity group' was used (Begg 2000). The affinity group within new social movement protest probably originated from US faith-based peace action, notably the Plowshares movement (Herngren 1993). 'Affinity group' was used of the 'Seeds of Hope' action, which was described to me as a Ploughshares action:

*"Plowshares movement.. it started in the States, 'Seeds of Hope' was the fifty-sixth action that happened, it was the third in Britain and yeah, I mean I'm drawing inspiration from that for what we're doing now".*

In reviewing the place of the affinity group across the organisations, the first observation is that a high number of participants across the organisations viewed the affinity group almost as the ideal unit of organisation:

*"It's very much about the method".*

EF! interviewees referred to affinity groups in the context of planning and executing nonviolent direct action. When describing regular EF! meetings or a geographic presence they would refer instead to a 'local group'. All gX groups were expected to follow the affinity group model. Interviewees in gX told me that the whole organisation was designed as an affinity group. The gX founding action at Model Farm was both videoed and put on the web. What it showed me was not just a gX action but an affinity group action. TP interviewees were members of affinity groups. Most had also participated in mass blockades and camps. TP interviewees described how affinity groups were the prime agents delivering the actions. TP was largely structured around supporting those groups. Interviewees said that when TP was launched, affinity groups had already formed and were in action immediately:

*"There wasn't much support at the first [TP] camp, [it was] up to affinity groups."*

TP interviewees described three variants of the affinity group. One explained:

*“In practice, three kinds of affinity group: for a specific action e.g. action [which is part of] a mass blockade; long-standing Pledgers’ affinity groups; and [affinity groups] for maximum disarmament actions e.g. a floating laboratory [at Faslane] where three women threw computers overboard – they came from three affinity groups”.*

GP interviewees did not refer to affinity groups. My field work produced data on local groups but none of these operated as affinity groups. However, a similar range of roles were found on actions, particularly ‘arrestables’, legal support and media. The findings showed that GP local groups did not usually plan ‘arrestable’ actions. Nor were groups, per se, recruited for such actions. ‘Nvda-trained’ individuals were recruited nationally by GP head office.

#### *Affinity and Membership*

TP and gX interviewees said that affinity groups required some sort of ‘affinity’, that being passionate about the cause was not a sufficient bond. A participant of a TP group called Disarmers Anonymous stated:

*“it does need to be a group of like-minded people.”*

Interviewees’ accounts suggested that the ‘affinity’ was very varied. I came across fairly common ‘affinities’ such as faith-based groups (Scottish Clergy, Pax Christi), women-only groups, and arts-based groups. The majority of affinity groups I encountered seemed to have had a geographic rationale. People’s changing circumstances meant that membership composition was not a constant. An example I was given was a member withdrawing after becoming pregnant. None was open to the public although I was told new people would be welcomed. The typical formation and selection process was simply:

*“[\*\*\*] got us together.”*

Interviewees said that ‘affinity’ conveyed a sense of looking out for one another:

*“building trust as a unit, and as a support mechanism for any who may be imprisoned.”*

Interviewees across the organisations reported the amount of time that had to be given to maintaining good personal relationships and an effective working group.

Interviewees said that having affinity was not the same as having affection. I was



given accounts of inter-personal issues leading to fall-outs and re-formation of groups. The intensive period of planning before an action was a likely time for differences to emerge. One EF! interviewee remarked:

*"I feel better now I've learned I don't have to love everyone. Can agree to dislike each other and then get on."*

A TP Pledger explained how self-selection, peer pressure and the opportunity for someone to walk away would generally ensure people kept to acceptable boundaries. EF! interviewees also spoke of 'self-selection' in groups, especially those undertaking actions. I both observed and was told how the affinity group provided a measure of compliance. In general, what I observed was that although the stated 'affinity' could be variable and weak, the strength of the affinity lay in people's like-mindedness, the peer nature of the group.

#### *Size*

I was told that the ideal group size was between three and fifteen members, assuming all those people to be active. I observed a variety of groups. The TP group Ceilidh Creatures, which was described to me as "a bit too large", consisted of fifteen members, but only five were active, and three others were wheelchair-bound. Another interviewee's affinity group consisted of four people:

*"[name], [name] and myself get arrested, the fourth doesn't want to".*

Interviewees' accounts of affinity groups showed some to be long term. TP interviewees said that some affinity groups consisted of activists sharing bonds that pre-dated TP. Other interviewees described a more fluid picture:

*"Current affinity group is different from first one, one dropped out, two moved to other campaigns, then I joined a Midlands affinity group which got big and [our current] affinity group split off."*

Some affinity groups maintained a constant size and composition, such as 'Seeds of Hope'. Others could remain a steady size over the long-term with occasional intense periods of activity. An EF! action against GM crops at Long Marston involved:

*"many weeks of preparation, meeting up to two or three evenings a week to coordinate activities with local people, obtain funding, sorting out intelligence and logistics."*

Overall, although size was variable, in general, the higher the risk of punishment, the smaller the size of the affinity group.

### *Autonomy*

Interviewees described affinity groups as 'autonomous'. I observed that this autonomy was taken for granted. However, affinity groups operating within TP and gX had autonomy but within boundaries, so I use the term 'bounded autonomy' to describe this. EF! group activity was invariably autonomous. I observed EF! actions targeted at roads, peace activities and anti-capitalism, with methods varying from occupation to clowning. Both TP and gX had pledges to sign, listing core aims and core behaviour. TP also had a further bounding of the group in as much as new affinity groups had to register with the Core Group. I interviewed one person looking to get her affinity group on the TP list. After getting 'head office' approval, the group's subsequent actions did not need permission:

*"when our affinity group blockaded the Derby Rolls Royce factory, the Core Group knew nothing until it had happened."*

### *Roles*

I observed that roles were specific and replicated amongst different groups and on different actions. The roles were divided amongst members and were described as basic elements for undertaking nonviolent direct action:

*"Its [the affinity group] practical application included dividing up the key roles for nonviolent direct action."*

The usual roles I observed included: 'arrestables'; legal observer and legal support; and media (one interviewee said "press officer"). There was often a role of 'moral support' and occasionally a dedicated role for prisoner support. EF! interviewees described many of the recognised roles found in affinity groups. On GP actions I saw many of these same roles but centralised and not under the auspices of a local group.

### *Decision-making*

EF! US described a role for what one US website called affinity groups.<sup>4</sup> With EF! US it was stated as the locus for decision-making. A successful group was seen as

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<sup>4</sup> "How to Form an Earth First! group". [www.earthfirstjournal.org](http://www.earthfirstjournal.org) Accessed November 2002

needing a 'contact' to establish a mailing list and a phone tree to help instigate actions. This same web site suggested setting up a local bank account and gave tips on fundraising. Interviewees from all the organisations described how the major decisions on a nonviolent action would be agreed by the affinity group in a process which involved all the members of that group. Interviewees stated that affinity group decision-making was by consensus:

*"[the affinity group] served as the basic unit for consensus decision-making, that, with the risks involved, the full consent of all participants must be achieved."*

Both gX and TP Handbooks had sections on consensus decision-making and both referred to lessons learnt in the field (e.g. at Greenham Common). Greenpeace did not use consensus decision-making in day-to-day activity, so it was ironic that the clearest picture I gained of such process was observation at a long legal planning session after a GP action in Dallas. I present these data from the US here in order to give a full picture of consensus in practice.

In Dallas, a group of around thirty had to agree a common legal strategy: what to accept in plea-bargaining and what penalties to accept. The decision-making process lasted several days. At each meeting, a 'facilitator' was chosen who, in effect, chaired the meeting. Another person was appointed to 'keep the stack', this being the list of people who wanted to speak. Everyone was allowed to speak with no interruptions. One could jump in rather than wait until called if one had cause to make a 'direct response'. The only other permissible interjection was a 'process point' such as being about to run beyond the previously negotiated end time. Hand signals were used in the following ways: hand up to indicate wanting to speak; wiggling of fingers to indicate agreement with a speaker; chopping motion with both index fingers to make a direct response; and making a triangle with thumb and fingers for a process point. I observed that, even with the respectful listening, there were people who had worthwhile views but were not sufficiently articulate or confident to express them. Their opinions needed careful extraction by the facilitator or another. When two participants disagreed they were asked to leave to resolve their differences before returning.

The group came to some decisions fairly easily. On occasion, it was dead-locked. If dead-locked for a length of time, the minority against a view were given the choice of

'blocking' or 'stepping aside'. 'Blocking' meant that a decision would not be made because there was no consensus. 'Stepping aside' meant that, having made their objection, they would go with the majority so that decisions could be made. I thought this was interesting as it was not consensus. I later discovered this approach in both EF! and TP. I also discovered some common frustrations, notably that much time was given to re-establishing at a meeting what everybody had consented to ('consented') at the last. There were no minutes and, given the nature of consensus, one had the freedom to change one's mind, within and between meetings.

TP and gX used a scaled-up version of affinity group consensus for camps, gatherings and blockades. I observed a scaled-up process at an EF! gathering. There were many dozens of people who had gathered in a large circle to discuss the future of EF! Under the name of consensus, a facilitator (chair) was acknowledged. He was a member of the local EF! group that had planned the gathering. By virtue of being an organiser of the gathering, this person was allowed to outline an agenda. Numerous contentious issues were raised for EF! such as: being more radical; more political; tackling mental health issues; and working with local authorities. Instead of seeking closure, once points had been aired, the facilitator urged people keen on an issue to put down their ideas on sheets of A1 paper. These sheets were displayed for people to add comments or to sign up for something. In short, I saw a consensus process but not pushed to the point of decision-making. Although the hand signals were different from those used in Dallas, they signified exactly the same things: wishing to speak; agreement; 'direct response'; and 'process point'.

#### **4.4 RULES**

The final sub-heading of the findings on 'Organisation' is 'Rules'. I use the term 'rules' not only because it emerged from the data but because I heard it frequently from interviewees. I will give instances that were either recounted to me or observed by me. In some cases, the rules were readily available in printed form. I will first outline what these rules were, then how they were practised.

One rule united the four organisations studied: nonviolence. A second rule was generally referred to by interviewees as ‘consensus decision-making’. This was described above. It was a stated rule for TP and gX and assumed for the non-hierarchical EF! GP did not practise non-hierarchical decision-making in its day-to-day operations nor on actions, although I experienced one instance of it with a group of GP defendants, which again is recounted above. Indeed, other than nonviolence, GP had no further stated rules, but interviewees described how volunteers worked in a context much more closely defined by the organisation. Interviewees gave a few other examples of rules, such as the ‘no hard drugs’ rules at some of the camps. Perhaps not strictly a rule, training was described to me as a requirement for TP, gX and GP. I observed that, at TP and GP training, the other rules were brought to the fore.

Nonviolence was a stated rule in the Handbooks of TP and gX and clearly stated in much Greenpeace material. EF!, the organisation with the lightest structure, had this rule written down for it in the Abbey novels. It was also stated in print as a rule for the EF! Navy – Sea Shepherd. Further, for EF! UK, one experienced activist leading a workshop on the development of EF!, stated:

*“key thing seems to have been this guy who.. wrote down some ground rules.”*

He said that nonviolence was one of these ground rules.

The most explicit statement of rules came from TP’s Handbook where seven rules and their interpretation are set out on an A4 page. I have abbreviated the seven:

- 1. Every activist shall be a member of an affinity group, have signed the Pledges, be registered with the Core Group and have gone through the Nonviolence and Safety Workshop.*
- 2. Our actions are built upon being open and public.*
- 3. Our attitude will be one of sincerity and respect to the people we encounter.*
- 4. We will not engage in physical violence or abuse toward any individual.*
- 5. We will carry no weapons.*
- 6. I (sic) will not bring or use alcohol or drugs.*
- 7. We will respect all the various agreements concerning the actions.*

(TP Handbook 2001: 18).

Training was another vehicle to convey organisational rules. I observed and was told in interview that such training was where the rule of nonviolence was most clearly laid out. Interviewees described how consensus decision-making was also presented as a

rule in TP and gX training. At a TP training session, the trainer, holding up a pre-prepared hand-written sheet of flip-chart paper said:

*“And these are the guidelines, .. well, they’re rules really.”*

GP nvda trainees watched a video showing senior managers planning an action. The video seemed to me to show how decisions were made for them.

I was interested in how these rules were practised. There were several mechanisms: signing up to the rules; self-selecting and self-policing groups; and exclusion. TP and gX had the ‘Pledge’ and I interviewed ‘Pledgers’ from both organisations. One literally signed up to the rules: nonviolence; no drugs on actions; and affirming the organisations’ basic aim. GP practised exclusion: interviewees told me it had a list of those who had received nvda training and that it also kept a list of those deemed unsuitable. I observed a GP training day in Manchester for 12 participants. At the end of this, the trainers compared notes on the trainees and two were deemed unsuitable. GP would invite people by name to an action so an unsuitable person would be excluded.

TP, gX and EF! interviewees described how, both in affinity groups and protest camps, the self-selecting and therefore what some called “self-policing” of a local group would operate. I was told that self-selection in EF! groups meant that:

*“there had not been serious dissent or nutters, instead a strong sense of respect and solidarity”.*

What this meant in terms of day to day social life was described to me in different ways. One experienced nvda trainer in the peace field referred to “Chatham House rules”, that with groups tending to be “monocultural”, people would tend to know what the rules were:

*“If we say something is the rule then it is; people keep to the rules of the game.”*

Self-policing was recognised by managers at Greenpeace, most of whom recognised the link between GP’s ‘core values’ and behaviour. I interviewed TP and gX trainers. They too were aware of the importance of the social setting, where the ‘social regulator’ was the affinity group:

*“being self-selecting and sharing an intense experience, members either had agreed the rules of the game or had left the group long before an action took place.”*

A few interviewees gave accounts of when this self-policing had not operated. One TP activist, who had hurried the process of building an affinity group, described his discomfort during a TP action at RAF Fairford. He said this of his co-activist, both of them in an arrestable role:

*“[his] behaviour was not exactly on the spot.. [he] did not have enough TP in him.”*

The ultimate sanction to uphold the rules was exclusion. This sanction applied to the large-scale blockades operated by TP. These large events of many hundreds were beyond the self-policing of the affinity group, although interviewees said many would attend within their affinity groups. I was told that, at such times, TP’s ultimate sanction would be exclusion:

*“The ground-rules are so strongly put that it would be difficult to remain if someone wanted to do something out of order, there would be intense pressure, possibly exclusion.”*

Road camps presented a similar scenario for EF!, that they were larger than the local (self-selecting) group and open to anyone. However, as described in the ‘Camps’ sub-heading, self-selection still applied because a camp broke down into numerous affinity group style camps. Interviewees also described the ultimate sanction of the camp – exclusion.

The findings suggested that ‘rules’ were assented to by those in gX and TP who signed up to them in the Pledge. Rules were written down and promulgated through training. For all four organisations, training provided a filtering process. The affinity group seemed to provide the locus for self-policing. This self-policing was linked to the self-selecting nature of these groups and by the broader peer pressure such groups applied.

## 4.5 NONVIOLENT DIRECT ACTION - PRACTICE

I now present findings on ‘nonviolent direct action’. My operational definition for nonviolent direct action, set out in Chapter One, was:

*Nonviolent direct action is qualitatively different from violence; it is identity-oriented, expressive, addressing civic space and challenging cultural codes rather than negotiating or demanding rights or benefits.*

I have sub-divided the data on nonviolent direct action to bring out the strongest themes which emerged doing analysis. The first was ‘Nonviolent direct action - practice’ and the second ‘Nonviolent direct action - training’. Under this first sub-heading, I will first present a brief history of nonviolent direct action, then present data particular to each organisation. Next I present data on the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) because by the time TP came on the scene, CND had been protesting nonviolently in the UK for 40 years (Minnion & Bolsover 1983). TP’s founder had strong links with CND. TP’s Handbook used a large amount of CND material. So I was interested to see how much of CND’s nonviolent organisational practice had been picked up. Fourthly, I present data on nonviolent direct action cutting across all four organisations. This leads, finally, to data on the dissensions about nonviolent direct action. What was a commonality could also be the issue that most divided these organisations. Ironically, differences over nonviolent direct action could lead to what an interviewee described as “shit-fights”. So, the data presented here are sub-divided as follows:

### NONVIOLENT DIRECT ACTION – PRACTICE

*History*

*Data Particular to Each Organisation*

*Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament*

*Cross-cutting Themes*

*Dissension*



## History

During research, I was told by interviewees something of the history of nonviolent direct action and also tracked down some early references. Interviewees often referred to historical antecedents, Gandhi being mentioned the most frequently. A number of interviewees were Quakers so it was no surprise to hear references to Jesus of Nazareth and an occasional mention that the early Christians refused military service. However, the earliest reference I found to a historical advocate of nonviolence was Mozi, a Chinese philosopher who pre-dated Jesus by 400 years (Kurlansky 2006). North American literature referred back to the American revolution, where there were records of those who, because of their religious belief, were conscientious objectors (Do or Die! 1999). One EF! interviewee talked to me about Thoreau (1817-1862), the North American philosopher, who was also a war resistor and, like Martin Luther King jnr some 100 years later, wrote on civil disobedience whilst in jail for an act of nonviolence.

I think it is helpful to disentangle a number of strands although in reality these strands do overlap: pacifism; civil disobedience; and nonviolent direct action. There is a long historical tradition of pacifism, and modern pacifist movements were referred to by interviewees from TP and, to a lesser extent, GP. Pacifism has been implicit in most major religions. Conscientious objectors have resisted military service, in extreme cases sacrificing their own lives rather than be implicit in taking another's (Kurlansky 2006). Some interviewees referred to civil disobedience, where the aim is not war resistance but other social goals such as independence or emancipation. One line of thinking within the civil disobedience tradition is that it can de-legitimise the state, as the state requires consent and voluntary compliance from its citizens. One interviewee described the 'Committee of 100' (1961) which organised what he – and it (Minnion & Bolsover 1983) – described as civil disobedience when there was an anti-nuclear weapon 'sit-down' protest at the Ministry of Defence, Whitehall, attended by 5000 people. However, there were on-going debates both in the Committee, in CND and the wider peace movement whether this was really civil disobedience or designed to get publicity. Further, if it was civil disobedience, was the aim to delegitimise the state or to delegitimise nuclear

weapons. The third strand was the more modern notion of nonviolent direct action, which covered everything from office occupation, street blockade, GM crop-pulling, GP actions and so on. Although this term was the most frequently used, and often incorporated the other two strands above, it too often had a distinct focus. As discussed in the first chapter, nonviolent direct action captured the identity-expressive nature of actions which were intended not only as resistance but the establishment of an alternative cultural code (Melucci 1996).

### **Data particular to each organisation**

Each organisation had its own language and participants generally kept to those terms: gX did acts of 'civil responsibility'; GP went out 'bearing witness'; TP undertook 'accountable actions'; and EF! did 'monkeywrenching' and 'pixie-ing'. The picture was not quite so neat but it does reflect marked differences which emerged from the findings.

#### *genetiX Snowball and 'civil responsibility'*

The birth of gX came through bringing together people from different nonviolent movements for a "learning exchange" (Making Waves 1999: 1). In short, principles of nonviolent direct action from the peace field were bundled and applied to the environment field. I interviewed founders who said that two key peace components were brought together: the Snowball and Plowshares (Plowshares) traditions. Plowshares arose from priests and nuns in the US resisting the Vietnam War in the 1970s through open and accountable actions. An interviewee said that Snowball in the UK was:

*"about encouraging large numbers of people to take low-level damage such as to fences and then giving themselves over to arrest".*

Interviewees said that these traditions emphasised openness, accountability and civil disobedience. Rather than plan for the action itself to have maximum impact against the target, it was through public debate and through the court system that victories would be

won. Thus gX actions were either 'low-level damage' or, more importantly for the participants, 'symbolic':

*"I get so angry [about GM crop plantings] that it's a great release to take direct action. But it's not vandalism, not spontaneous, reckless. Would never use fire: polluting and uncontrollable. Far from rejecting civil responsibility an activist is considering this more seriously than ordinary citizens. What I know of other activists is that they're more law-abiding than other people in the rest of their lives. Even a covert action [such as those undertaken by EF!] has to fit not just a campaign but conscience – a more severe judge than society".*

Such nonviolent direct action came with a tradition of how such actions should be organised: non-hierarchically and through affinity groups (Making Waves 1999).

Interviewees said that gX practice was a thought-through interpretation of tradition and an attempt to apply it to present day environmentalism. My findings suggest gX went further than this, not only studying these different practices for almost a year but reaching towards something additional:

*"some of us wanted to experience nonviolence as a way of life."*

gX founders told me they felt it inappropriate to describe their actions as 'disobedient'. At the same time they did not feel they sufficiently shared the beliefs of Quaker and Catholic piety to call their actions 'divine obedience':

*"divine obedience was not a comfortable notion for the anarchists among us".*

Interviewees said that they came up with 'civil responsibility':

*"to take personal responsibility - do what is right regardless of the legal consequences."*

The larger part of how to organise acts of 'civil responsibility' came from TP although gX actions were smaller-scale and symbolic. Evidence of this was how gX's Handbook was heavily indebted to TP's.

### *Greenpeace and 'Bearing Witness'*

GP interviewees often used the term 'bearing witness' and acknowledged this to be part of its Quaker legacy. Their use of 'bearing witness' did not refer to how GP organised but what that organising delivered – acts which could 'bear witness' to some wrong. Some

interviewees pointed out how that term linked present-day activists with those of the early 1970s. They also said that it was a core value and a rationale for direct action of a particular sort. I observed training where the trainer gave this definition:

*“One would bear witness if, when seeing an injustice, one did not walk away but took personal responsibility to confront the wrong-doer, acting directly rather than through intermediaries.”*

Interviewees said that this sense of personal responsibility meant that, although GP actions were planned covertly, the action would always be ‘branded’ as Greenpeace. Activists would accept being arrested, give their names to the police and always attend court. Having observed both TP and GP nvda training, one distinction was the behaviour after arrest. TP and gX activists would most likely give a statement to the arresting officer. There was even help on how to prepare that statement. GP activists were told to say nothing about the action to the police and to give a ‘no comment’ interview when formally questioned.

Some interviewees recalled discussions in GP about whether nonviolent direct action worked. I was told that, at one stage, a move had been made to virtually drop nonviolent direct action for the sake of ‘solutions campaigning’. That had been resolved and, at the time of my study, interviewees said that any major campaign was expected to have a mix of public communication, political lobbying, solutions and nonviolent direct action.

A couple of senior management interviewees subdivided Greenpeace nonviolent direct action into ‘direct action’ where the aim was to start or stop something and where media coverage would be good but not essential. Another form was ‘photo opportunity’, to get a message out to the public and where media coverage was essential. A third form was ‘direct communication’, addressing powerful stakeholders. Fourthly, ‘protest’, where the public understood an issue and where the action would give direction to feelings of anger. Running through all these was the theme of bearing witness.

As a participant, I observed this sense of bearing witness at a briefing for a GP action. The target was a Government building which was being refurbished using, so GP

claimed, illegally logged timber. Until that briefing, most participants did not know what the campaign would be, nor what would be asked of them. The full briefing the night before was in three parts. First, a campaigner gave participants the campaign objective, then the action co-ordinator described the actual activities. Thirdly, a 'legal supporter' gave a legal briefing covering the possible charges and consequences if convicted of those charges. The briefing process gave participants time to decide whether they wanted to commit to the event. At the briefing, it was said several times how it was fully acceptable for an individual to say 'no' and that GP would pay their travel back home. I did not see anyone withdraw.

#### *Trident Ploughshares and Accountable Actions*

TP exhibited a range of nonviolent direct actions. Interviewees told me their accounts and I experienced a 'blockade' action and small affinity group actions. Actions ranged from symbolic, to low-level damage, to blockades, up to attempting to achieve significant physical damage to equipment. TP interviewees said that, on a few occasions, TP activists had caused damage amounting to tens of thousand of pounds and in at least one case, millions. Interviewees also said that most arrests and convictions had been for blockade-type events. All TP actions were accountable, so, although an affinity group may plan in secret, they would, after their action, await arrest. I was told of occasions where activists had had to call the authorities to get arrested. Being in court was seen as part of the campaign event along with the action. Interviewees described how it was up to participants how to plead. If found guilty (the usual) it was up to participants whether or not to pay fines and so risk imprisonment. One interviewee had been in court several times:

*Yes it's about putting Trident on trial, arguing your case, pointing to international law – explaining your beliefs - in court. But it's more. I met Per Hengren [authority on peace movements] who said my activities were, in a Foucault sense, about power, and about society and the individual.*

Some interviewees said they had thought the central point of TP was to disarm the submarines, but had to re-think this when, after its first five months, only two attempts had been made to reach the submarines and do any disarming. There had been other

actions, but these had been lesser, some of them veering towards the symbolic (MacKenzie 2001). MacKenzie was introduced to me as 'media person' at the 2002 blockade at Faslane. Several hundred of us gathered for the blockade in a warehouse in Glasgow the night before. I observed a range of ages, including several student groups. David (MacKenzie) was greeting new participants. He felt he would be stretched as the sole media person, with limited time and several other responsibilities competing with it. I conversed with him there and at a subsequent TP action. I did not have the opportunity to record quotes from him during my participation (see Chapter 2), but his views have been recorded in the TP Handbook.

He explained that, although there had only been two attempts to reach the submarines, there had been many participants undertaking symbolic actions. These participants were prepared to argue their position in court. Such actions, he said, became incorporated into the thinking as 'minimum disarmament' actions. So the maximum disarmament and minimum disarmament actions were then brought together as one stream. He thought that this one stream provided a way in which a broad number of activists could participate rather than restrict TP actions to the very few who could contemplate months on remand and prison sentences. The overall aim remained, that TP would do what the British Government had failed to do and disarm Trident.

Some TP participants were articulate and explicit about how its nonviolent direct action was meant to affect the State and also affect the individual. At State level, TP's nonviolent direct action was an instrumental choice: the State knows how to deal with violence, but has little experience in dealing with nonviolence. Since Trident was inherently violent, TP's methods had to be consistent with a vision of the alternative. One interviewee said:

*"the means are the ends in the making."*

Accountable actions were aimed at the State. Interviewees said that their law-breaking was an act of conscience, an act of civil disobedience and therefore accountable. They gave me frequent references to Gandhi to explain their view. They explained that, since Trident was illegal in International law, such actions could be construed as upholding the

law. Nonviolent direct action meant by-passing the 'enemy' frame, not trying to defeat an enemy but:

*"seeking to transform the situation so everyone would win."*

Interviewees described how nonviolent direct action affected the individual. Interviewees explained how their nonviolent direct action was positive, not the absence of something but acting out a new way of relating to others. A similar view was given in the Handbook, that some would approach nonviolent direct action as an act of love (TP Handbook 2001). TP nonviolent direct action meant: agreeing to the ground rules (discussed earlier); consenting to the aims of TP; nonviolence; that soldiers, sailors and police were not the enemy; and that no weapons were to be carried, no drugs used and no alcohol consumed for the period of the action. Through observation at a training event, at a blockade and at actions at Rolls Royce and RAF Stafford, I saw a consistent practice of this sense of nonviolent direct action as 'accountable actions.'

#### *EF! Monkeywrenching and 'Pixie-ing'*

The histories of both the US and UK branches showed a marked range of views on nonviolent direct action and both branches had split between the more radical and the less. The stance was complicated by Sea Shepherd, which was EF! afloat and untypically had a written code, but one lying at the more radical and hard edge. Interviewees from various organisations used the words 'fluffy' and 'spikey' to describe actions. Spikey meant more confrontational – 'more full-on'.<sup>4</sup> Sea Shepherd had the spikiest statement:

*"Sea Shepherd is free to sink unattended whalers, and use arson: No explosives; No weapons: No injury to living things; No resisting arrest: Accepting the full consequences of one's actions."* (Watson 1991: 30).

Watson's words above were but the one statement. EF! publications had a free speech policy, so one could find articles in support of fluffy actions or, by extreme contrast, in support of the Unabomber (Do or Die! 1997). My interviewees would sometimes claim to have been involved in spikey actions. Some described evictions from road protest sites

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<sup>4</sup> 'Fluffy' and 'spikey' were also used by the police. Having been arrested at the Birmingham Northern Relief Road camp, the arresting officer, known to the protestors as Mick Belcher, asked me if I would keep the protest fluffy. I said yes and he immediately 'de-arrested' me.

where they had been treated violently. One described his injuries which included a fractured knee-cap and a fractured rib. No interviewee sanctioned the use of arson. One explained that it was not proportionate or controllable:

*"it [fire] cannot be called back."*

The general activity in the US tended to be between two poles. One pole was typified by the campaigning of North Coast EF! with fund-raising, public lobbying and accountability. The other pole was typified by 'ecodefense' – monkeywrenching to damage property, as practised by the founders. North Coast EF! Newsletter (EF! 2003: 16) declared:

*"Earth First! is outspoken in its opposition to violent methods.. We will not physically damage property."*

North Coast EF! laid down a nonviolent direct action code of openness, friendliness and respect toward all people and the environment: no violence, verbal or physical, toward any person; no firearms or other weapons; and not to bring or use illegal drugs or alcohol (EF! 2003: 16). This EF! network was heavily influenced by the attempted murder of EF! activist Judi Bari which at the time was a serious threat to EF! The authorities claimed Bari and her companion, Daryl Cherney, were blown up by their own pipe bomb. Many years later, Bari and Cherney won a \$4.4 million civil rights violation lawsuit against four FBI staff and three police officers. Thus, North Coast EF! nonviolent direct action was in marked contrast to 'ecodefense' (also known as 'redneck activism'):

*"We all know what needs to be done to an unattended bulldozer stumbled upon in an old growth forest" (Manes 1991: 128).*

This latter view is a different kind of nonviolent direct action arising from a 'deep ecology' philosophy (see Glossary). Having asserted the species-nature of humanity, that we are no more or less than other species, EF! came up with 'ecodefense', a sophisticated form of self-defence taking responsibility for the fate of the earth: the fate of the earth is ultimately the fate of the self (Mills 1991). Mills listed the methods of ecodefense as ecotage, nvda, and other more orthodox forms of ecological activism (ibid).



In EF! UK, interviewees described a range in nonviolent direct action similar to the above but excluding the arson of Sea Shepherd. I observed how, at a summer gathering, some were discussing conventional lobbying such as talking to local authorities. Others were discussing pixie-ing and talking through direct action against roads, quarries, pipelines and the aviation industry. Deep ecology was not much in evidence, nor did I hear the term 'ecodefense'. However, a similar repertoire of monkeywrenching was captured by the term 'pixie-ing'. The activity was much the same as the US 'rednecks': disabling equipment while avoiding harm to other living things.

Interviewees said that when EF! UK had split, those espousing greater activism formed a separate network – the Earth Liberation Front. I was told that ELF ('elf' - therefore 'elves' and 'pixies') was the root of 'pixie-ing'. Pixies, interviewees said, would pursue activities such as 'night-time gardening' (destroying GM crops) or 'unscheduled maintenance' (disabling a digger) whilst EF! would neither condemn nor condone such action. I observed what seemed to me a loose-knit network: where an open EF! action finished and a covert ELF one began was unclear. Some interviewees said that the distinction was between overt and covert; others drew a distinction between fluffy and spikey.

EF! was more likely to use nonviolent direct action as a first resort, rather than last:

*"Should illegal acts of environmental defense be undertaken only as a last resort when all methods of legal resistance fail? Not just no, but Hell no!"* (sic, Wolke 1991: 253).

Wolke argued that big corporations use process (legal, political, meetings etc.) to wear down activists. Whilst Greenpeace might have the capacity to engage with process and use direct action if all else failed, EF! had not the resources to do that. Additionally, EF! had a deep suspicion of anything that smacked of 'resource management' (ibid). Wolke, one of the five founders of EF!, harped back to Martin Luther King's mix of instrumentalism and self-purification: that whenever and however breaking the law in defence of the planet, it should be done with clarity of purpose and without egocentrism (Wolke 1991).

One of my interviewees described how she went to a roadshow about EF! which was followed immediately by an EF! action. She had gone on to participate in numerous actions and described what she called the “discursive” nature of EF! actions:

*“If public opinion is with you, quite easy then to justify covert direct action. If not, then civil disobedience, because in court you get to stand up and explain it to them. Lots of covert direct action out there. Public image of direct action as road protestors with dreds [dreadlock hair] – wrong, but quite a help to others who [like her] are older, higher income, a lot of experience, thinking and depth to the action”*

### **Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament**

I was interested to see how much of CND’s nonviolent organisational practice had been picked up by the four organisations. A large amount of data referred in some way to CND. Although not an organisation chosen for the study, it was a lead which needed to be followed through (Silverman 2000). Interviewees from TP and gX often referred to CND. The Handbooks of both TP and gX acknowledged a debt to CND. I observed a blockade at Faslane which was organised by Scottish CND. I also observed a protest at Menwith Hill and interviewed one of the organisers. He told me that Yorkshire CND had played a major role in organising that protest. So I present data which cast light on whether there were organisational shoots from CND’s roots.

Interviewees described a rich tradition of nonviolent direct action in the peace movement. I was told how Quaker pacifism in times of war had led to a tradition of nonviolent resistance. This became more organised in the First World War, where pacifism in the face of conscription led to imprisonment. Some pacifists developed nonviolent ways of disrupting the prison system. Others developed support mechanisms and events to raise public awareness. This resistance surfaced again in the Second World War. But then, as a CND interviewee who at one time was a full-time organiser put it, “a new wave of activism” emerged just after the War. It pre-dated the (US) Civil Rights movement, student unrest in the 1960s and new social movement activity in the 1970s. The new wave of activism mobilised around one thing - the Bomb.

UK campaigning came to public notice with groups such as the National Campaign Against Nuclear Weapons Testing (NCANWT) which organised a march and rally of 2000 women (1957) and the Direct Action Committee Against Nuclear War (1957) which organised the first Aldermaston March in 1958. From such roots grew the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND):

*“It was the local groups of NCANWT which contributed greatly to the formation of CND.” (TP Handbook 2001: 11).*

CND was founded in January 1958 and launched on February 17th of that year with a 5000-strong rally bringing together individuals and 100+ local groups (Minnion & Bolsover 1983). It reached a peak of activity in the early 1960s. One interviewee described the rise of anxiety, anger and activity brought about by the Cuban Missile crisis (1962):

*“That was a pretty scary moment, the Cuban missile crisis.”*

For a time there was what he described as “a quieter phase”. Then the deployment of US missiles in the UK resulted in the activism of the 1980s. An interviewee said that the peace camp at Greenham Common began in 1981, becoming a women’s camp the following year. She recalled that the Faslane Peace Camp began in 1982. 1984 saw the Snowball campaign during which protestors cut strands of wire at the nearest nuclear base then gave themselves up for arrest; 3000 took part in the Snowball protest, 2419 were arrested. An interviewee who was a CND veteran said:

*“CND developed a range of organisational strategies, some from existing organisations, but integrating them into a new organisation. New organisation because [it was] a fairly unique combination of moral protest, political organisation and elements of new cultural forms, especially youth culture.”*

During the research, I joined a CND march from Hyde Park to Trafalgar Square. I marched for a time with a woman in her late 60s who talked about the marches in the early days. She had once had a car driven at her. She recalled that the car included one of the McWhirters of the Guinness Book of Records fame. At Trafalgar Square there was a rally at which CND’s Vice President announced to loud acclaim that she was going to

commit herself to a peace camp at Menwith Hill. Some weeks later, I attended a 'Foil the Base' event at Menwith, where protestors were encouraged to fly aluminium kites to try and disrupt satellite reception. I observed that the event had, in large part, been organised by Yorkshire CND. During a mass walk around the perimeter, an EF! group suddenly produced a rope and attempted to pull down a section of fencing. This did not come as a surprise to one of the local CND participants. (Incidentally, he was also an interviewee). TP and CND, as organisations, often came into close proximity at 'Big Blockades' or large protests. At the Faslane blockade, I observed that much of the organising of the event and logistical support was from Scottish CND. There was also overlap of personnel at blockades and peace camps. My observations suggested that the peace camps had, at the least, tacit support from CND.

Interviewees told me that CND was 'committee-based' and used representative democracy, bringing together local groups, regions and the centre. I was told that this structure demonstrated its debt to the Labour Party of the 1950s and 1960s. Interviewees and the archived material of a local group painted a complex picture of the inter-relationship between CND and direct action.<sup>5</sup> Given that CND had been operating over an extended period of time, there had been strong voices for and against direct action. Interviewees and other material showed how a sub-structure, the 'Committee of One Hundred' (1960), came into being and organised actions. However, there was not any mention from anywhere or anyone in my field work that the Committee was an example of how to organise direct action. Although CND was present at peace camps and other protests, I observed that these had their own ways of organising (see above).

I observed that CND had given tacit support for actions and I observed CND members involved in nonviolent direct action. However, I did not find data which showed any diffusion of CND's organisational characteristics, even though it was the largest anti-nuclear weapons NGO in the UK. Key personnel in TP had close links with CND but this had not led to diffusion of organisational practice either. I had surmised before

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<sup>5</sup> CND records refer simply to 'direct action'. These records pre-date the rise of new social movements and the constant prefix of 'nonviolent'.

commencing the study that CND was distanced from direct action. The picture turned out to be considerably more complex.

### **Cross-cutting themes**

I now present data on nonviolent direct action which cuts across the organisations by using the conceptual distinctions of instrumental, expressive and affective behaviour (Dalton 1994; Gamson 1975; Mason 1996; Melucci 1996). I observed and discovered through interview that many activists had participated in actions organised by one or more of the other organisations. One interviewee, a teenager, had participated in all four. Some 'veterans' had participated in actions organised by many more than these organisations through the years:

*"On EF! things, I don't don an EF! personality, my core beliefs remain the same. So I stay away from Huntington Life Sciences [animal testing laboratory where protestors, animal rights, not EF!, have used intimidation against workers], don't agree with threatening behaviour".*

Interviewees from all the organisations painted a rich picture of nonviolent direct action. An example of this was when a GP manager in interview used the word "instrumental". She described an instrumentalist checklist, that in deciding whether or not GP should undertake an action, she would ask questions:

*"What can Greenpeace add? How will this action make something a public issue? Will it push things the next step forward? Does it catalyse change? Will GP be doing things that make people change their minds?"*

Her role in GP meant she would lead what she called "inquisitions". This was where a proposed action was tested to see if it would further the campaign objectives, if it would be feasible logistically and if the legal implications had been thought through. She then spoke about how meaningful nonviolent direct action could be for individuals and how people who shared an action could be bonded together. In other words, she stated the 'instrumental', 'expressive' and 'affective' dimensions. This multi-dimensional view was typical of most interviewees. An EF! interviewee described how an EF! action would take place both for the media and for the sake of doing it. A TP activist described how

her action at Menwith Hill was intended to engineer a court case where she could argue the issue, whilst at the same time it was a real attempt to disable a radome.

The expressive dimension of nonviolent direct action was reflected in many interviewee accounts. Whilst most comments related to the 'nonviolence' aspect, for some participants in all the organisations, the 'direct' aspect was important:

*"My first experience of direct action was with RTS [Reclaim the Streets]: not pleading with authority - one could achieve something without an intermediary."*  
One interviewee, a devout Catholic, said:

*"There is almost an ontological change that occurs when someone has crossed that line and performed an action.. I suspect the activist is a different person the next morning."*

A GP interviewee described his involvement in his first direct action as:

*"a spiritual awakening, a change of direction."*

An EF! activist said:

*"It's a therapy."*

Rowan Tilly, a founder of gX, told me that her experience of the 'Seeds of Hope' Ploughshares action was a watershed:

*"Life-changing experience, completely inspired me, changed my whole approach to social change."*

An interviewee who described herself as a feminist told me:

*"Protest isn't something I do, it's something I am."*

The affective dimension of nonviolent direct action was reflected in those accounts which described achieving something in the company of others. It was represented by the word one interviewee used when describing how participating in an action bonded one with others: "glue". Another interviewee became emotional when he described past actions and began to list names of individuals with whom he had formed lasting relationships. He described one action as a:

*"Quite high intensity social context.. I met my future wife and got talking to her actually on that [action]."*

Other interviewees told me of the:

*"bond between people.. solidarity."*

Another recounted the “tactile” behaviour of activists in a court trial, how they supported each other, watched out for each other:

*“The court case was a champagne moment. The action [pulling up GM crops] only lasted 45 minutes but the whole process in court, bonds between people, the moment we were acquitted – the champagne moment.”*

An interviewee used “solidarity” to describe the difference between the ‘Seeds of Hope’ action and an earlier action that had failed at Buckingham Palace: what was lacking in the latter, she said, was solidarity.

### **Dissension**

Although the data showed commonalities, it also showed differences. There was much dissension between and within organisations over the nature and practice of nonviolence. One interviewee referred to these internal and external divisions and described them as “shit-fights.” The following example shows how one group’s nonviolent direct action compromised the action – and safety – of a member of a different group. An interviewee told how he had been monitoring nuclear weapons convoys for many months with ‘Nukewatch’. He drove behind the convoy, noting the route. One day, the convoy was intercepted by Faslane campers who conducted spikier activities, such as running in front of the transporters to force emergency stops and then throwing paint at the windscreens. He said that this action brought about a change in Ministry of Defence policing, which also became more spikey. At one point he felt it endangered his life when his car was forced off the road by a Ministry of Defence vehicle.

The organisation with the greatest internal conflict, resulting in splits in both its US and UK branches, was EF! In the US it was wilderness preservation versus civil disobedience; that is, covert monkeywrenching which hurt industry and could delay or stop destruction (“CM” 1991) versus Gandhian accountability (North Coast EF! Newsletter 2003). In the UK, divisions fell between those wanting to engage in covert damage and those wanting to campaign accountably. The solution, interviewees said, was the formation of the ELF. I was also told that the split ‘happened’ rather than was

planned. No interviewee claimed to be an ELFer, although most EF! interviewees told me of some of their own pixie activities. I observed at a summer gathering that this settlement was still accepted: that it was allowable not to like covert actions but still be part of EF! Likewise, the hardened activists accepted the presence of those whose activism was expressed through traditional lobbying.

Interviewees described deep divisions between organisations. EF! literature was vitriolic about GP. Some of its recruitment literature was based on criticising GP by name as well as on a call for action against environmental destruction. The following is typical of such literature. The Sea Shepherd and the Greenpeace ship *Sirius* were both berthed at Reykjavik. Sea Shepherd field operatives destroyed a whale-processing plant by fire and sank two moored whalers known to have no crew on board. In Watson's version:

*"The ever dependable Greenpeace crowd condemned the act as terroristic, foolish, simplistic.. ad nauseam. I understood their position. After all, there are more anti-whalers employed in the world than whalers.."* (Watson: 1991: 32).

Some interviewees' described GP in similar terms, for instance as:

*"limp or ineffective in the roads campaign."*

One interviewee recalled a GP member of staff arriving at a road camp with a large sum of money. The campers had no warning and had no idea what to do with the money. I was told that it came in the form of a cheque and the camp did not have a bank account. GP went away again taking its cheque with it. From EF! interviewees, the complaints against Greenpeace were more about the type of organisation than its type of nonviolent direct action. In fact I observed several EFers participating in GP actions. In contrast, EF! criticism of gX was all about its nonviolent direct action. I have noted the surprise of a gX founder that EF! groups did not join with its campaign. I found, on the other hand, that some EF!ers thought gX actions were a parody of direct action.



An article from Leeds EF! entitled 'Fuck the Disobedient Let's Get Civil'<sup>6</sup> attacked gX and questioned the utility in causing minimal symbolic damage having first informed the police, chemical company and farmer. Rowan Tilly of gX told me how hurt she felt by this and wrote a rejoinder arguing that the gX approach was a valid form of nonviolent direct action, tracing its historical roots. My data suggested that, although both organisations were successful in their anti-GM actions, EF! never entered fully into the gX campaign, yet, as with GP actions, EF!ers had participated in gX actions. I was told of one case where some who "did a field" wanted to be accountable whereas others wanted to do maximum damage:

*"the Snowball types did an accountable action and got arrested. The others then went out that night and trashed as much as possible."*

I interviewed both accountable and covert participants of this action. Both sets of participants felt that this settlement had worked well.

Some gX interviewees, in their turn, were critical of GP actions. Again, I have data from the anti-GM campaign, where a GP action at Lyng using an industrial mower was seen by some in gX as violent. The damage, for one gX interviewee, was not proportionate. She said that, when gX activists simply use a hand trowel and Ploughshares nothing larger than a hammer, it was for moral reasons. Another gX interview said:

*"I'm quite critical of the way Greenpeace does direct action.. I feel that the way [it] does the organising is very hierarchical.. and it draws people from the grass roots and absorbs them into its own organisation."*

This interviewee referred back to CND:

*"I don't have a problem with the way that CND was orchestrating or organising direct action campaigns in the 80s because.. it was very much in touch with the grass roots."*

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<sup>6</sup> 'Fuck the Disobedient Let's Get Civil'. Leeds EF! [www.infoshop.org/news5/snowball](http://www.infoshop.org/news5/snowball)  
Accessed November 2002

## 4.6 NONVIOLENT DIRECT ACTION - TRAINING

The final sub-heading of this of the chapter sets out data relating to the role of training in the four organisations. 'Training' was a strong and persistent theme in the data. I participated in GP and TP training. Amongst my interviewees were trainers from all four organisations and from the 'Turning the Tide' programme. Some interviewees were experienced trainers and three referred back to CND. One interviewee had also led training for CND in the 1980s. I observed how TP, gX and GP required their activists to be nvda trained. EF! had no such requirement but I observed that training was on offer at the summer gathering and that individual groups could obtain training independently (Purkiss 2001).

Overall, these findings suggest that nvda training was not only a technique for an activity but an acclimatisation into the way the organisation went about its business. It patterned individual behaviour and also shaped organisational behaviour. I will present data on nvda training relating to CND, then present data for each organisation, then highlight the theme across the organisations - the way nvda training also imparted expectations of organisational behaviour.

### *Nvda training - CND*

Three interviewees had experience of nvda training in CND. One said that peace organisations had long felt the need for training. Another said that many elements in the nvda package were consistent "over decades" and across organisations. I discovered from interview accounts how some individuals appeared as trainers in one organisation then re-appeared to develop training in another. One interviewee recalled getting "unofficial" nvda training from CND in the 1980s. A second, in a voluntary capacity, gave nvda training for CND activists then went on to train the trainers. After CND, he became closely involved with the training package 'Turning the Tide' (TTT), which later resourced TP and was available at some road camps. He said that TTT had been used at Newbury and that there was a:

*"Little mini-manual on nonviolence for such groups".*

A third was at RAF Molesworth peace camp and described herself at that time as a trainer working with small groups and affinity groups in the 1980s. She went on to deliver training to gX groups.

*Nvda training – EF!*

There was little evidence of training for the US founders, but as the movement grew:

*“radical activists from the peace movement provided nonviolent direct action training sessions. People were inspired.”* (Chant 1991: 21)

Other than this, my EF! data on training related to the UK. There was no stated requirement in either its literature or from interviewees that EF! activists must be trained. However, most interviewees had undergone training, some of them with other organisations or for specific big actions. One experienced EF! activist, when describing EF! UK’s biggest action which took place at Liverpool docks declared:

*“I wouldn’t call it training but there were people there taking responsibility to make sure people were prepared.”*

An interviewee said how, in its early days, one local group of EF! UK had had a strong peace activist presence. She said that, partly from this group and through other networks:

*“training from the peace field had percolated more widely through to other EF! local groups.”*

Some EF! activists had experienced TTT training, a cut version of which had been made available to some road camps.

I observed how EF! activists could cherry-pick nvda training. At a summer gathering, I found the following advertised: Seeds for Change; Rising Tide; and Blatant Incitement Project (Blinc). Seeds for Change provided training and support to grassroots campaigners, NGOs, co-ops and community groups around the UK. I observed Seeds for Change training before the TP action at Rolls Royce, Derby. The training was on quick consensus decision-making. I obtained Seeds for Change training literature. It included training in basic organisational skills. Rising Tide was often listed as a manifestation of EF! At the time of my research, it was heavily committed to an anti-BP campaign. One of my EF! interviewees was a Blinc ‘trainer’ (my use of the word). He described how he was part of the co-operative running Blinc and told me of his personal commitment to

many forms of activism and his assumption that the organising for such activism would be non-hierarchical:

*"Blinc [has] supported setting up a direct action group, groupwork skills, and others such as street art and subvertising."*

I observed how, at the time of my research, Blinc was the training package most closely associated with EF! In the EF! update Blinc was described as:

*"a tool that belongs to all of us.. Blinc exists to empower people to organise themselves without hierarchy, for radical action towards social ecological change.."* (EF! Action Update 2002: 4).

Interviewees said that Blinc offered not just nvda training but action planning, non-hierarchical organising and consensus decision-making. My observation suggested that, in some respects, it was similar to TTT but had a different slant, more in tune with a political anarchist philosophy.

#### *Nvda training – Greenpeace*

Interviewees said that GP UK did not roll out a training programme until the first major use of volunteers for an action in 1995. Two interviewees were on the GP payroll at that time. They organised an action which had 600 activists lying down on the road in Whitehall. The action had been preceded by a national 'skillshare' which had included nvda training. One of these interviewees was a senior manager, another, at the time of interview, was responsible for the nvda training throughout the UK, which, she said, meant developing its content, and the development and maintenance of a network of trainers. A third GP interviewee was a trained trainer.

This third GP interviewee was an experienced GP activist and was experienced in activism generally. He described how he would deliver GP training to groups of between six to twelve activists. There would usually be two trainers. Interviewees said that trainees were invited to attend by the 'Area Networkers.' I observed a GP training session. Volunteers were given little sense of either the organisation nor its decision-making.

I was invited to look at the GP nvda training package. The package included a ring-binder with notes on facilitation and information to be communicated. There was a video, a tape of a model 'no comment' interview in the case of arrest and a set of photographs showing situations of differing degrees of nonviolence. The day's training included what one interviewee called "the practical stuff": voice control; physical control; and the role-playing of confrontational situations. The package explicitly laid out GP's non-negotiable core values: nonviolence; personal responsibility; direct action; internationalism; and independence. One piece of footage on the video showed how GP organised an action. It showed the 'inquisition' just before an action when the senior managers interrogated every aspect of the event.

At the conclusion of the training, I observed that the trainees filled in an evaluation form which, amongst other things, gave them the opportunity to state their readiness to participate in an action. I also observed the trainers discussing each individual in private and noting comments to pass on to the paid staff at Head Office and to the volunteer co-ordinator (Area Networker) for that area. Two trainees were deemed not suitable. One had not come across as mature enough and had not seemed a team-player. The other was the boyfriend of one of the participants. He was a 'bouncer' at a night-club and knew only one way to respond to hostility.

An interviewee described how GP training was aimed at producing activists who were:

*"focused, with a clear objective, calm, very professional, absolutely nonviolent, confronting the problem not the police."*

Such a concise and instrumental description of nvda could have come out of a training manual. Indeed it had, she was the author of it and was responsible for ensuring that this was consistently the package GP trainees received. She herself described it as:

*"showing people the Greenpeace way."*

#### *Nvda Training - Trident Ploughshares*

As set out in the Handbook, proper training for TP was usually a minimum of a weekend. The Handbook also stated that:

*"this is a requirement before you become a member."* (2001: 6).

Interviewees said that it included training in non-hierarchical organisation and consensus decision-making. I observed a TP training evening, which was an abbreviated version of the usual Quaker TTT programme. It was offered to those going to the 'Big Blockade' (annual blockade of Faslane). I interviewed the trainer and found the usual method was indeed to explore the practical nonviolent direct action behaviour and also to run through a brief list of TP requirements.

TP training was usually the TTT programme. Interviews with peace activists led me back to CND and to its 1980s nvda training. One interviewee who had been training trainers for CND in this period later became deeply involved in the development of TTT. He explained how TTT consciously drew on such antecedents when it was developed by the Quakers and rolled out in 1992/3. He recalled that what CND had offered at that time was not based on a manual:

*"Looking back, feels more like peer training."*

TTT was also what he described as "facilitated peer learning". Interviewees described TTT content: how to recognise violence; personal security; legal rights; practical role-play; and having observers at actions. It was:

*"Fairly demanding training, looking at motivations, trying to combine techniques from the 80s with a more sophisticated look at social change, broader agenda than anti-nuclear, peace."*

One interviewee, both a TP Pledger and TTT trainer, said that it was co-ordinated by two part-time staff at Meeting House (Quaker HQ in London) and delivered by 30 trained volunteers. She said that it was designed primarily for local Quaker groups. Another interviewee added:

*"TTT recognised [that] most of the people involved in direct action now [are] non-religious and younger than that Quaker stuff."*

Interviewees said that, for a time, TTT was delivered more widely as a travelling road show. An EF! interviewee, a practising pagan with no prior links to Quakers or TP, had come across TTT this way. She ascribed her radicalisation and nonviolent direct action

skills to the TTT road-show. An interviewee who had been a peace activist for 25 years and was a TTT trainer said:

*“TTT captured knowledge and experience to apply it to a new age.”*

When Trident Ploughshares came on the scene, Quakers debated whether TTT should be offered to TP. According to three TP interviewees, all Quakers, one of them a member of the Quaker National Assembly, this was contentious. At the Quaker Assembly (an annual gathering of representatives from local congregations), an interviewee recalled that concerns were expressed about TP methods being “too full-on”. He said that some Quakers feared they might be held liable in some sense, or worse, face conspiracy charges. According to one interviewee a few Quakers resigned over this. Another interviewee said that:

*“In the end, TTT did training [for TP] at a distance. Some Quakers left the Society [Society of Friends – Quakers] over TP going too far.”*

There was a review by the Quakers of this arrangement:

*“The first phase of Turning the Tides’ work for Trident Ploughshares 2000 has been reviewed and was found to have been effective in contributing to the understanding and practice of nonviolence by all involved with the project. The review has, however, highlighted a fundamental question for those who manage TTT on behalf of Quakers in Britain. How do we decide who we work with and who we don’t?”*  
(Making Waves 1999: 1).

#### *Nvda Training – genetiX Snowball*

One interviewee who I had observed advising and supporting a local gX action said this of herself:

*“I’d consider myself to be Greenham-trained.. well, I lived at Greenham for six months. Actually.. I’m probably more Ploughshares-trained.”*

The gX Handbook material on training was a fairly direct copy of TP’s, which stated its debt to the Ploughshares movement. Interviewee accounts show that gX training did not happen as laid out in the Handbook:

*“Okay, right, now do you want the vision or the reality?”*

Interviewees described how the vision was curtailed as gX was unable to develop as envisaged because of injunctions. Had that vision become reality, then a training technique developed in the context of peace activism would have been applied to the environmental field:

*"This idea of taking very accountable and direct action, and the risk of prison was new to me, completely new, and very scary, and so when Rowan [Tilly] came up with the idea of translating that to environmental action, which was my area rather than peace activities, it seemed very exciting."*

The reality, according to interviewees, was local groups approaching the gX founders:

*"knowing that they could rely on us for information, legal advice from me, advice on press work from [name], advice from Rowan on nonviolence training and so on."*

Interviewees said that, as with TTT, the gX training on offer was both how to behave nonviolently and organisationally, the latter point being non-hierarchically. Interviewees' vision, as in the Handbook, was of a 'snowballing' of affinity groups all working with consensus decision-making. A gX founder, in interview, reached back to her experience at Greenham Common:

*"nobody at Greenham that I experienced was helping people to make that, to take that step into high risk stuff, which I think is a shame really, and very important work."*

She said that lack was one of her motivations for being serious about training. However, in practice - the reality according to interviewees - because of the pressure on gX by injunctions, much of what happened, happened quickly. The training described to me by the co-founders was in terms that suggested they were called upon and offered themselves more as consultants.

Data across the four organisations suggested that training was more than information about nonviolent direct action. I had thought that nvda training would train people to behave nonviolently, much in the same way that one could attend a day's training on how to do 'Powerpoint' presentations. However, training was also intended to impart expectations on how to behave organisationally. I have already presented data on 'Rules'



in these organisations. Rules on nonviolence and decision-making were made explicit at training sessions. Trainers in interview used phrases such as:

*“imparting core values.. building a team.. building trust .. understanding how the organisation works.”*

The training sessions gave participants a picture of what one interviewee called:

*“the right sort of activist.”*

Another interviewee said that one would learn what would:

*“make the organisation laugh and what would make it angry.”*

For three organisations, the training was mandatory. For all four, it included elements of ‘how we do things around here’. For gX, this was how to set up and run an affinity group. For TP, training stated the rules of TP plus affinity group training. For GP, training imparted the core value of bearing witness and told how actions were planned. In the telling, it became clear that there was no volunteer involvement in decision-making. EF! training conveyed non-hierarchy and consensus decision-making from an anarchist perspective.

The different packages had the vast majority of ‘the practical stuff’ in common. When it came to nonviolent behaviour, I observed that one could be trained at one organisation’s nvda and participate nonviolently at another’s action. I observed many instances where activists who harboured deep misgivings about another organisation’s structure would happily participate fully in its actions. Each organisation’s training gave a picture of the ‘right sort of activist’ and yet gave enough of the common ‘practical stuff’ to train people for activism across the four organisations.

## **Summary**

In this chapter I have presented an account of the social phenomenon I researched: the issues of organisation in Third Sector organisations which undertake nonviolent direct action. In order to manage the data I have synthesised material. Also, rather than miss

important points, I have occasionally used conceptual rather than descriptive language. I will conclude this chapter with a brief resume of the findings. In the next chapter, I will seek to explain the findings in conceptual terms.

### *Structures of the Four Organisations*

There was a variety of structure. GP operated on a centralised model. Data on EF! suggested a network of local groups and the importance to interviewees of the protest camp. gX was founded to be an affinity group. TP was a combination of affinity group, big blockades and camps. Although TP and gX wanted to minimise structure and EF! to eschew it, all still showed behaviour with tangible and regularly occurring features (Child 1984). Further, these features helped shape members' behaviours (Child 1984). So, in the sense articulated by Child, the data showed much evidence of 'organising'.

TP took philosophical guidance from CND but did not take its organisational practices. There had been reasons to expect it: the CND histories of key TP members; the close proximity of the organisations at blockades and camps; the acknowledged indebtedness to CND in the TP Handbook; and the movement between the two of key personnel. Instead, TP looked to Greenham Common and, most of all, to the 'Seeds of Hope' action, for its organisational practice.

### *Affinity Groups*

What interviewees' termed the 'affinity group' turned out to be a persistent and favoured organisational unit or sub-unit. For EF!, it provided a method for operating when conducting actions. Although EF! interviewees did not use the term routinely, they would at least refer to the roles such as media, legal support and 'arrestables'. GP did not use such groups but the same roles were referred to for its actions. For gX, TP and EF! the affinity group was to varying degrees autonomous and so was a basic expression of structure. In TP, the data suggested three manifestations. The first was the standard long-term affinity group of the TP Pledgers. The second was a small group formed for a maximum disarmament action. The third was when groups formed over a weekend or on the day for one of the big blockade actions. These TP affinity groups all had what I

termed a 'bounded autonomy'. gX used the affinity group as its core organisational principle. The first aim of the gX founders was to be such a group. The associational strength benefited from the self-selecting nature of the group. Self-selection also led to peer pressure and self-policing. Not only was the affinity group a self-contained unit of organisation, in the case of gX it was the organisation.

### *Camps*

Camps showed the least evidence of tangible and recurring organisational features. However, the data showed that tacit organising went on in camps. Some worked fairly self-consciously on a co-operative model. Others could be very loosely organised yet still have their 'rules'. As with affinity groups, self-selection, peer pressure and walking away helped to prevent dysfunction. However, the number of camps at the one road camp protest suggested how difficult that could be. Camps, on the face of it, were the least organised structure, yet even they had had to find ways of day-to-day maintenance and enforcing the ultimate sanction – exclusion.

### *Rules*

The data showed the prevalence of rules. At various points, each organisation had rules written down. Enforcement came through the social level, through the self-selecting and self-policing of affinity groups and the broader peer pressure of the large camps and blockades. The tightest social regulation was the affinity group. Being self-selecting and sharing an intense experience, members either had agreed the rules of the game or had left the group long before an action took place. Road camps, the least organised manifestation of EF!, had rules, sometimes stated. As presented earlier, one interviewee had described such groups as "monocultural" with "Chatham House" rules:

*"If we say something is the rule then it is; people keep to the rules of the game."*

### *Nonviolent direct action*

There were different nonviolent practices. I gave these four headings. First, civil responsibility (gX) which was characterised by: openness; high personal and high civil

responsibility; and symbolic and thus low level of damage. Such nonviolence had a clear focus on the court process. gX nonviolence was delivered by fairly small affinity groups. Second, accountable actions (TP), which varied from maximum to minimum disarmament. Often these were covertly planned but were always accountable to police, workers and the public. Third, monkeywrenching (EF!), which was generally a covert action. Interviewees presented a strong sense of personal responsibility. There was a lesser sense of civic responsibility than gX or TP. EF! activities were the most mixed and thus hard to summarise. Although capable of symbolic actions, in general EF! interviewees tended to look for a higher level of material damage. The focus was on the impact of the action, not the injustice of the punishment. Pixie-ing was a term for unaccountable actions, that is, seeking to avoid arrest. This sort of EF! action was delivered by small groups, sometimes very small. Fourth, bearing witness (GP), which would entail covert planning to achieve impact and then would be more accountable. It carried a sense of both personal and civic responsibility. GP actions varied from high level of damage to symbolic, sometimes focused on engineering a court case, other times not. Unlike the other organisations, GP would always pay fines and costs on behalf of its activists if they were convicted. Usually, GP actions were delivered by large numbers of people.

I found dissension amongst interviewees over nonviolence. This had led to internal splits (EF!) and to public disagreements. There were, however, common features. In particular, 'the practical stuff' was common across the organisations. Dissension was over the underlying philosophy of nonviolence or over organisational structure. Nonviolent direct action, partly through its practice and particularly through the training, was a tool to shape organisational practice. Participants knew the rules of the game. The different organisational practices came bundled with the training. Through training, one was equipped not just to behave peacefully but to behave organisationally, in a manner in keeping with that organisation's way of doing things. Training, as reported earlier, was intended to shape:

*"the right kind of activist".*

## CHAPTER FIVE

### DISCUSSION

My thesis is an examination of the issues of organisation in Third Sector organisations which undertake nonviolent direct action. In the first chapter, I took 'issues' to mean practical issues. In the light of the data, this chapter will explain not only such practical issues; it will also attempt to explain some of the organisational characteristics of nonviolent direct action.

I will conceptualise nonviolent direct action as an 'institution' and then develop the argument by identifying additional institutions which have helped shape the behaviour of the organisations and their participants in this study. The argument then moves on to an examination of the innovation of organisational forms where I conceptualise these institutions as building blocks put in place by the founders of the four organisations in this study.

I began by examining the existing literature on new social movements and the literature on organisational behaviour and established that there was a gap in knowledge in relation to the organisation of nonviolent direct action. Neither bodies of literature have hitherto researched or theorised on the organisational issues relevant to the organisations I studied. From new social movement theory, I drew out an operational definition of nonviolent direct action. I used a new institutionalist approach to organisational research and drew an operational definition of new institutionalism from the literature. I conducted a case study across four organisations and examined the organisation of nonviolent direct action in the field. The previous two chapters presented the findings from that case study which gave an empirical account of the issues of organisation. In this chapter, I will attempt to explain my empirical findings.

To begin the chapter, I summarise the findings of the previous two chapters. Then I address what the studied organisations did: nonviolent direct action. The data showed a marked range of thought and practice on nonviolent direct action. I then re-visit the existing scholarly knowledge on nonviolent direct action and discuss where the findings

of this study support, add to or challenge that knowledge. This leads to a second stage in the argument where I seek to explain how these organisations did nonviolent direct action. I show that there was repetitive, patterned behaviour (Scott 1995) which can be conceptualised as ‘institutions’ and therefore that new institutionalist concepts can help explain the findings. I also discuss other ways of conceptualising the organisational characteristics which arose from the findings. The data suggested that institutional behaviours were carried across “organisational fields” (DiMaggio & Powell 1991: 64) and that this led to innovation. So a third stage in the argument is an examination of how institutions were used to promote, rather than inhibit, the innovation of organisations. I interviewed founders and co-founders in my field work. Their roles can be conceptualised as “institutional entrepreneurs” (Rao et al 2000: 240). I will draw a tentative ‘theory of innovation and institutions’ from the data showing how institutional entrepreneurship led to innovation.

The chapter then moves on to discuss the extent to which this research has made a contribution to knowledge. I set out the limitations inherent in my approach and, in conclusion, suggest areas for further research.

The layout of this chapter follows the argument outlined above by using the following sub-headings:

**SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS**

**NONVIOLENT DIRECT ACTION**

**INSTITUTIONS**

**INNOVATION**

**CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE**

## **5.1 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS**

First, I turn to the findings on nonviolent direct action. Nearly all my interviewees had some experience of such actions. There were different practices of nonviolent direct action which I called ‘civil responsibility’, ‘bearing witness’, ‘accountable actions’ and ‘monkeywrenching and pixie-ing’. Different philosophical understandings of nonviolence had led to dissension and splits within and between the organisations in my

study. Yet the findings also showed that many activists had participated in various organisations' actions. The data showed that activists shared common ideas about the practice of nonviolent direct action. Similarly, each organisation shared common expectations of activist behaviour. So another finding was a broadly common practice of what one interviewee called "the practical stuff". Whilst the philosophy of nonviolence could lead to division, there was also a common habitual practising of nonviolent direct action. Further to this, activists knew not only how to behave nonviolently on actions but also how to behave organisationally. In this respect, training was fundamental. It was through training that these nonviolent direct action and organisational practices were imparted and shared understandings developed. These practices were instances of habitual, patterned and taken for granted behaviour (Scott 1995).

Second, I summarise findings on 'organisation'. I gathered together data which described the organisations in their environments. These findings showed that there was much that each organisation built upon: the political context; the organisational context where pre-existing structures could be drawn upon; the handbooks which stated organisational practice; the founders; and founding myths. Data showed how they drew upon pre-existing organisations and lifted out institutional practices (Pagnuccio 1996). Institutional behaviour was communicated in several ways: nvda training (noted above); founding myths; and through the handbooks. I participated in one field event where founding myths were literally re-told around a camp fire. The more usual medium was the written word. The findings showed how training, founding myths and handbooks did at least three things: they aided organisational continuity by setting out the assumed way of doing things; they communicated the organisations' core values; and they gave weight to the legitimacy of each organisation – the 'sense-making' that the organisation had a right to exist and ought to do what it did (Weick 1995).

The findings on organisational structure revealed that the organisations were new organisations but not the new organisational forms sought by Jordan et al (Jordan & Lent 1999). Instead, there were instances of centralised bureaucracy, a network, and the participative democracy of the co-operative. Two sub-groups also had organisational relevance: the affinity group and the camp. Both were accepted ways of organising nonviolent direct action and both came with assumptions about organisational behaviour

such as the acceptance of rules and the practice of consensus decision-making. The data showed that the affinity group, in particular, carried assumptions about the purpose, size and roles within the group.

Finally, I summarise findings that describe innovation. By innovation, I mean the establishment of a new organisation (Rao et al 2000). Examples of such innovation were: the judicious networking of personnel; the addition of new practice to existing practice; the adaptation of existing practice; the combination of existing practices; and translocating an organisational structure from one field to another. EF! had used networking as an organisational and organising strategy which led to innovation through the combination of personnel. GP had innovated through the addition and adaptation of campaign practices, building upon both Quaker practice and public protest. TP innovated by combining the protest forms of the camp, the big blockade and the affinity group. gX had innovated by transferring the affinity group from the peace field to the environmental field. So the data showed innovation coming about in various ways but without one instance of creating out of nothing. I conclude the discussion by attempting to draw together the seemingly contradictory concepts introduced in this chapter: institutions and innovation.

## 5.2 NONVIOLENT DIRECT ACTION

I will seek to explain what these organisations did by conceptualising nonviolent direct action and distinguishing it from nonviolence as a philosophy. This can help explain both the dissension and the common participation.

I commenced research with an operational definition of nonviolent direct action. To this I will return later in the argument as it relates to organisational characteristics. Here, I introduce a further concept, that whilst nonviolent direct action was a common habitual practice, there was also a philosophy of nonviolence which contained contested views. So I will argue that there was a contested philosophy of nonviolence but also a common institutional practice of nonviolent direct action.



The data revealed that nonviolence was multi-faceted. Differences in philosophy were sufficient to lead to strong condemnations of one organisation by another. Each organisation held to a distinctive notion of nonviolence. Nonviolence was pluralistic because of these different philosophies rather than contingent upon circumstances peculiar to each action. Nevertheless, many interviewees had participated in actions organised by several of these organisations. I will first seek to explain the differences and dissensions which arose during my fieldwork then seek an explanation of the common practising of nonviolent direct action.

Difference and divergence are known features of the environmental movement of which three of my organisations were a part:

*“Collective action, politics and discourses grouped together under the name of environmentalism are so diverse as to challenge the idea of movement.”* (Castells 1997:112).

Castells presents a typology of environmental movements in which he identifies five types and gives as illustrations two of the organisations I studied. These are Conservationist, Nimby-ism, Counter-Culture (e.g. EF!), Save the Planet (e.g. GP) and Green Politics. Whilst I suggest this is overly reductionist, I also want to use this framework to understand the range of perspectives on nonviolence which arose from my data. Interviewees spoke of different philosophies of nonviolence and gave me references to long and rich traditions and beliefs. These included the Quakers, the peace movement, Gandhian civil disobedience, anarchist philosophy and the wilderness tradition. The four organisations carried different mixes of these philosophical traditions. These differences, although marked, are within and distinctive of new social movements (Castells 1997; della Porta & Diani 1999). One of those distinctions is the identity-centred nature of new social movement activity (Castells 1997; della Porta and Diani 1999; Seel & Plows 2000).

I have brought together in Table 6 the different nonviolence traditions in each organisation. I suggested in Chapter Four that each organisation adopted language to describe its own action rationale and I have also incorporated that into Table 6.

Table 6. Different nonviolence traditions and action rationale

	Nonviolence tradition	Action rationale
GP	Quaker Peace movement	'Bearing witness'
TP	Peace movement Quaker Civil disobedience	'Accountable action'
gX	Peace movement Civil disobedience	'Civil responsibility'
EF!	Anarchist (UK) Wilderness (USA) Eclectic	Material and/or cultural damage

(Adapted from Castells 1997)

Continuing the theme of difference in approaches to nonviolence, I can add to the above table some further differences. Each nonviolence tradition with its action rationale resulted in different emphases in the practice of nonviolence. I will follow (Rucht 1990) in labelling each different practice as a 'logic of action'. From the data in the previous chapter, I have drawn out three characteristics of these logics: degree of openness; degree of accountability; and degree of damage. By degree of openness I seek to capture how, for EF! for instance, actions were often covert and reflected an anarchist stream which was often expressive of the "temporary autonomous zone" and the anarchic identity (Wall 1999: 157). In contrast, the gX logic of action was a high degree of openness with activists undertaking overt symbolic action and awaiting police responses. By 'accountable', I mean accountable to the public and the courts. GP activists, for example, would always give their details to the police and there were GP actions where the campaign was taken forward more by a court case than the action which led to it. By 'degree of damage' I seek to compare how, for example, EF! actions tended to be aimed at material damage when, by contrast, within the civil disobedience tradition, the point of the action was the amount of damage the activist was willing to suffer rather than inflict, the point being to spotlight errant power in that the only resource the powerless possess is their body (Laue 1968). I have added these categories to the previous table to produce Table 7 where each logic of action is a different

combination of these three elements: degree of openness; degree of accountability; and degree of damage.

**Table 7. Different nonviolence traditions, action rationale and logics of action**

			'LOGIC OF ACTION'		
	Nonviolence traditions	Action rationale	Degree of Openness	Degree of Accountability	Degree of Damage
GP	Quaker Peace movement	'Bearing witness'	Closed before action then open	High: Actions often designed for court	Variable: from photo shoot to material damage
TP	Peace movement. Quaker Civil disobedience	'Accountable action'	Open, except for affinity group – closed before action	High: clear aim to 'put Trident on trial'	Variable from symbolic to maximum damage
gX	Peace movement Civil disobedience	'Civil responsibility'	Open	Required: main aim of action to express responsibility	Token - symbolic
EF!	Anarchist (UK) Wilderness (USA) Eclectic	Logic of material and/or cultural damage	Generally closed	Variable, but often non-accountable	Variable but not token

These different traditions may be linked to organisational differences such as: belief systems (D'Aunno 1992); tactics (Balsler & Carmin 2001); level of hierarchy (van der Pijl & Sminia 2004); and leadership (Barker et al 2001; Egri & Herman 2000). So, whereas I presented this data in the previous chapters as organisations criticising each other, another way of looking at it is to see that the different logics presented in Table 7 were at work. Behind these different logics, different identities were being constructed, represented and expressed (della Porta & Diani 1999). Disagreement was not in the main over a choice of action, but deeper-seated different behaviours and, deeper still, the identity-expressive nature of the action (della Porta & Diani 1999).

In my operational definition of nonviolence in Chapter One, I suggested that nonviolence was more than the absence of violence but qualitatively different, such as in its identity-expressive character. I suggest that my study supports the qualitative nature of nonviolence. The participants in my study had rich traditions of nonviolence to

draw upon. Further, the plurality of philosophies of nonviolence was striking. The traditions I have set out emerged from a study of just four organisations in the environment and peace fields. I selected them on the basis of difference but the filter had been organisational difference. This study suggests, then, that there is a breadth and depth to nonviolence and nonviolent direct action which has not thus far been adequately addressed in the literature.

My own emergent conceptualisation of nonviolence is at variance with others in the literature. The concept of cycles of protest (Tarrow 1994) for example, suggests that violence is necessarily part of the cycle. Groups are born out of violence and then moderate; or the reverse, that the failure of a once moderate group leads to splitting, violence and terrorism (della Porta & Diani 1999). However, my study showed that, for these new social movement organisations, the absence of violence was not a function of the age of the organisation or a stage in the cycle. The organisations in my study intentionally and explicitly espoused approaches to protest where violence was not in the frame.

Another alternative to my own emergent conceptualisation is instrumentalism: that the use of violence is an instrumental choice, a cost-benefit analysis (Gamson 1975). According to Gamson (1975), what was going on could be theorised in instrumentalist terms. In his study, he found that violence tended to be more productive, that the advantage goes to the unruly (ibid: 84). Similar to this is a third concept, the violence continuum, that what starts off as nonviolent can mature into full-scale terrorism (Taylor 1998: 9). The underlying assumptions of both instrumentalism and the violence continuum are that nonviolence, violence and terrorism are different only in quantity. Once again, my study indicates that, within new social movement organisations, there is a concept of nonviolence expressed in direct action that is qualitatively different from any degree of violence.

Table 7 above shows examples of the rich philosophical, religious, political and cultural traditions of 'nonviolence' as a philosophy and 'nonviolent direct action' in practice. The findings support new social movement theorists who argue that new social movement action is identity-oriented and expressive, more akin to Kantian deontological action than rational choice (Castells 1997; Melucci 1996).

Some scholars have conceptualised nonviolent direct action within a 'religious' frame. There has been research on social movements arising from religious traditions and faith-based organisational resources (Smith 1996). Lee (1995) argues that the activities of groups such as EF! can be understood in terms of religious movement. My data did not suggest links in this area, rather, that EF! had roots based in deep ecology, (English) anarchism and the notion of creating autonomous zones free from state control. This surfaced in groups closely related to EF! such as Reclaim the Streets and road camps (Begg 2000; Mackay 1996; Purkiss 2001). Lee (1995) places EF! into a millennialist typology and so explains its activism in militant fundamentalist terms. Taylor (1998), using a political science approach and based on substantial research, lists numerous reasons why EF! activists were unlikely to be drawn into extremism. I suggest that my research adds another aspect, that such nonviolence and nonviolent direct action had an expressive logic best understood through new social movement theory.

Notwithstanding the rich differences in the philosophy of nonviolence, the findings showed many instances of activists participating in the actions of several of the organisations. As stated earlier, my youngest interviewee, aged 17, had participated in the actions of all four organisations, acting in the main in the same way on every occasion. My findings showed how, on the one hand, there were different practices between the organisations, yet, on the other hand, how activists shared much common practical behaviour across the four organisations. The findings also showed that, through training, participants could pick up the 'rules of the game' for another organisation's action. Thus activists could act within the norms of each organisation, respecting those different organisational practices, yet, at the same time, in terms of the individual activist, much of "the practical stuff" (interviewee description) was standard and habitual practice. By standard and habitual practice, I mean that activists shared accepted and replicated ways of doing things (Scott 1995). In other words, data suggested that nonviolent direct action was an institution and it is to new institutionalism that I now turn.

### 5.3 INSTITUTIONS

I now discuss how the four organisations I studied organised nonviolent direct action. The data chapters detailed numerous instances of one particular theme: the prevalence of accepted ways of doing things. These accepted ways, I will now argue, were patterned behaviour: the taken-for-granted rules of the game (Scott 1995; Weick 1995). Some instances were: how the founders of the organisations drew on organisational antecedents; the power of the myth to convey the accepted ways of doing things; the adoption of what interviewees called the 'affinity group' with its implicit consensus decision-making and roles; the acceptance of rules; and the accepted practices of nonviolent direct action. Further, the findings show that the nonviolent direct action training given by the organisations also communicated the organisational rules of the game, both explicitly (as with nonviolent direct action) and implicitly (as with decision-making). The use of the concept 'rules of the game' probably goes back to Weber who used it in the context of the Third Sector - life in a voluntary association (Hughes 1972). Weber's context was broader and more important: he was discussing the legitimacy of the individual in society (Hughes 1972). The rules of the game are not merely about behaving to maximal efficiency, but behaviour which gains one legitimacy and which rests on a taken-for-grantedness about how one ought to behave (Weick 1995).

In collecting data, I heard language and observed practices which could be conceptualised as patterned behaviours (Scott 1995). These patterned behaviours were socially enacted and re-enacted (Meyer & Rowan 1991). They did not need explanation because how to behave was the regular way of doing things (Scott 1995). The empirical data contained four strong examples: nonviolent direct action; consensus decision-making; the acceptance of rules; and the affinity group. I discussed nonviolent direct action in the first section of this chapter. Consensus decision-making was taught as well as assumed, yet there were areas where decision-making was closed off to participants. GP was hierarchical, although I did observe GP consensus decision-making on one occasion. The data showed the acceptance of rules, even in non-hierarchical and consensus social interaction where the idea of rules was, in theory, anathema. Participants acknowledged rules, even having rules listed in handbooks and named in training sessions. The strongest rule was nonviolence. The affinity group was another assumed and accepted practice, with the exception of GP, where I observed the same

roles performed but within a hierarchical structure. The purpose of such a group, its size, decision-making and participant's roles were all taken for granted. I was given interviewee accounts and observed instances of the taken-for-grantedness of nonviolent direct action, consensus decision-making, rules and affinity groups. Likewise, the data also suggested evidence of the repetitiveness of these practices. I show how the above emerged from the data at Table 8.

**Table 8. Observed Practices and Two Characteristics of Patterned Behaviour**

<b>Observed Practices</b>	<b>EVIDENCE OF TAKEN FOR GRANTEDNESS</b>	<b>EVIDENCE OF REPETITIVENESS</b>
Nonviolent direct action	Praxis. Stated. Taught. Socialised in training events.	Training. Common behaviours observed at actions.
Consensus decision-making	Stated. Taught.	Common behaviour observed, no other observed except GP.
Rules	Praxis. Stated. Taught.	Same rules across the organisations.
Affinity groups	Stated. Socialised in training events.	Standard practice in the organisations except GP.

Along with taken-for-grantedness and repetitiveness, another characteristic of the four observed practices in Table 8 was the 'rule-following' behaviour exhibited by individuals. I do not mean rules empirically observed in the field and listed as an observed practice above. Here, I mean 'rule-following' as a conceptual understanding which applied to all the practices (Jepperson 1991). All were examples of rule-following, a deeper dimension to understanding such behaviours. Such rule-following included the "bracketing off" of doubt (DiMaggio & Powell 1991: 21) where the behaviours conflicted with certain ideological points (such as not applying consensus to

some areas of organisational life). I have added this concept to the previous table to produce Table 9.

**Table 9. Observed Practices and Three Characteristics of Patterned Behaviour**

Observed Practices	EVIDENCE OF TAKEN FOR GRANTEDNESS	EVIDENCE OF REPETITIVENESS	EVIDENCE OF RULE-FOLLOWING
Nonviolent direct action	Praxis. Stated. Taught. Socialised in training events.	Training. Common behaviours observed at actions.	Enabling and constraining behaviour.
Consensus decision-making	Stated. Taught.	Common behaviour observed, no other observed except GP.	Enabling and constraining behaviour.
Rules	Praxis. Stated. Taught.	Same rules across the organisations.	Sanction of exclusion if breached. Bracketing of doubt in regard to 'rules'.
Affinity groups	Stated. Socialised in training events.	Standard practice in the organisations except GP.	Sanction of exclusion.

I can build once more on this understanding as the data also showed how these patterned behaviours were reproduced by training. Training conveyed the need for, and practice of, nonviolent direct action. It also gave specific guidance on decision making. For TP and gX it also presented how to form an affinity group. I have added the characteristic of reproduction to the previous table (Table 9). What Table 10 now shows is a conceptual account of observed practices. Whilst these characteristics arose from the findings, they are also familiar in organisational theory (DiMaggio & Powell 1991). These practices were regularly occurring features which helped shape participants' behaviour.



Table 10. Observed Practices and Four Characteristics of Patterned Behaviour (2001). The notion of

Observed Practices	EVIDENCE OF TAKEN FOR GRANTEDNESS	EVIDENCE OF REPETITIVENESS	EVIDENCE OF RULE-FOLLOWING	EVIDENCE OF REPRODUCTION
Nonviolent direct action	Praxis. Stated. Taught. Socialised in training events.	Training. Common behaviours observed at actions.	Enabling and constraining behaviour.	Training. Self-selecting groups. Handbook.
Consensus decision-making	Stated. Taught.	Common behaviour observed, no other observed except GP.	Enabling and constraining behaviour.	Training. Handbook.
Rules	Praxis. Stated. Taught.	Same rules across the organisations.	Sanction of exclusion if breached. Bracketing of doubt in regard to 'rules'.	Training. Handbook.
Affinity groups	Stated. Socialised in training events.	Standard practice in the organisations except GP.	Sanction of exclusion.	Self-selecting groups. Handbook.

The organisational literature offers ways to help explain what I found. One way of conceptualising the taken-for-granted rules of the game is that of the temporary organisation (Schofield & Wilson 1995). A second way is to draw on organisational culture (Schein 1985). A third way is to use new institutionalism (Scott 1995). Each will be discussed in turn.

### Temporary Organisations

Many interviewees had taken part in the nonviolent direct action of more than one organisation. The phenomenon of working organisationally within one set of rules and moving, seemingly without conscious reflection, to work in another, has been studied. Such research is often presented under the label of Project Management or Temporary Organisations (Packendorff 1994). At first sight, this is counter-intuitive and there is literature which discusses how these transitions are not made but instead people carry

with them a previous model of organisation (Morgan 1986; Harris 2001). The notion of temporary organisation gives a scholarly understanding of successful transition. Similarly, a 'project' is a novel combination of people and resources to achieve a specific outcome within a limited time (Turner 1999). Many 'projects' have been found to function as temporary organisations, that is, a social system within or cutting across other social systems (Gareis & Rabl 1996). Temporary organisations typically have a minimum of hierarchy and generate their own knowledge and know-how (Lundin & Soderholm 1996; Schofield & Wilson 1995).

There were several respects in which my findings could be conceptualised as projects and temporary organisations. EF! seemed to produce temporary organisations, such as Reclaim the Streets! and the road camps. Greenpeace staff spoke specifically of projects. TP's big blockades could be conceptualised as projects. Nonviolent direct actions can also be construed as projects and temporary organisations (Carroll 2001b). One of the central concepts of the project in this sense is how it may have a different organisational structure from the parent organisation, whilst still being embedded in that organisation (Packendorff 1994). A participant in a project may have little or no experience of the organisational structure of the parent (Packendorff 1994). This is one way of explaining how my interviewees were able to move from one organisation's action to another's: the action was a project or temporary organisation and the participant was not directly affected by the parent organisation's structures.

Some actions took many months to conceive, sometimes with many meetings and working under pressure. Many such actions were planned and delivered by a common organisational unit – the affinity group. From the participant's point of view, the organisational structure would be similar from action to action. The organisational features of the parent organisation such as hierarchical relationships, concept of time, goal-orientation and more would be set aside when a participant entered the project or temporary organisation (Packendorff 1994). So it can be argued that participants did indeed move between two different organisational structures but in fact inhabited a common temporary organisation - a phenomenon researched in the for-profit sector (Packendorff 1994).

The concepts of project and temporary organisation do cast some light on my findings. One way that disparate organisations can draw on a common pool of activists for their actions is where those actions have a different organisational reality from the parent organisation. This can help explain how participants can keep to the rules of the game even where those same participants are critical of the parent organisation's philosophy of nonviolence or its organisational structure: the temporary organisation has its own 'rules of the game'. However, theorists of temporary organisations often reach to other schools of thought for further explanation, including organisational culture and institutionalism (Lundin & Soderholm 1994; Gareis & Rabl 1996) which I now discuss.

### **Organisational Culture**

My findings showed that, many times, people would accept a given way of doing things. This applied even when what was given seemed to contradict other principles. For example, two organisations advocated consensus decision-making, yet crucial areas such as the organisational goals and organisational values were not negotiable. Similarly, even amongst loose and anarchic networks there was nevertheless an acceptance of rules and their enforcement.

'Ways of doing things' is the language of culture (Schein 1985). Culture is a vast and loose concept with many hundreds of definitions (Lofland 1995). There are at least three major approaches in the study of the culture of organisations. The first is to see culture as supra-organisation, an approach which has been used of organisations within new social movements (Lofland 1995). The second is the classic text book such as Schein (1985) where culture is treated as a discrete feature of organisation. Although much of the literature is based on for-profit organisations, this approach has been used in Third Sector and new social movement studies (e.g. Conrad 2006; Golden-Biddle & Lindoff 1994). The third is to see culture as a sub-system of the organisation, which has tended to be the approach of temporary organisation theorists (Packendorff 1994). I focus here on the second, the organisational level and therefore focus on the system of shared meaning; that is, the patterns of beliefs, symbols, rituals, myths and practices which create shared understandings amongst participants as to what the organisation is and how its participants should behave.

There was a wealth of data about the influence of the founders and the power of myth, both of which are familiar to organisational studies focusing on culture (Schein 1985). Numerous examples of specific language ('affinity group', 'actions', 'nvda') also suggest an organisational culture (Schein 1985). 'Affinity groups' and camps could be seen as examples of self-selection which would operate to maintain the dominant culture (Fine 1995). Nonviolent direct action training could also be seen as promoting that culture through socialisation (Fine 1995).

Thus, the presence of strong organisational culture is another way of explaining some aspects of my findings. A strong culture would lead to predictable behaviour with higher trust and lower conflict than in a weak culture (Denison 1990). Similarly, a strong culture would lead to greater internalisation of controls and norms, lessening the need for organisational mechanisms (Denison 1990). This would help explain how participants could be expected to behave predictably but with the minimum of overt organisational control.

Whilst organisational culture does help explain some of my findings, there are a number of points of caution. Whether there is ever such a thing as a 'strong culture' is contested (Martin 1992) and substantiating a link between culture and some aspect of organisational performance is highly problematic (Siehl & Martin 1990). A strong culture would generate a strong collective identity (*ibid*), which would suggest that participants could not then move so freely from one organisation's action to another's. There is also a methodological problem in that I did not go into the field to collect data on organisational culture, as my focus was the case of organising nonviolent direct action. Thus I did not in fact look at all the phenomena which would have had to be included for a study of organisational culture (Howard 1988). Organisational culture, much like the concept of temporary organisations, provides therefore only a partial explanation of my findings.

## New Institutionalism

Table 10 depicted the reproduction of patterned behaviour. The table, drawn from empirical material, also, I would now suggest, showed the typical characteristics of institutional behaviour (DiMaggio & Powell 1991).

There is no unified concept of institution: the term is used of different societal phenomena at different levels of social interaction and from different social science perspectives. My understanding of 'institution' is from the new institutionalist approach where the level of interest is inter-organisational and where an institution is both a phenomenological process and a state of affairs (DiMaggio & Powell 1991). The new institutionalist approach is generally accepted as a starting point for organisational research because it represents one of the more robust sociological perspectives within organisational theory (Greenwood & Hinings 1996).

Can the behaviours I observed and drew from interview data be termed 'institutions' within the boundaries of new institutionalist theory? In Table 10 I listed what I termed 'characteristics' of patterned behaviour which arose from the data. These characteristics are those of the 'inter-organisational institution' (DiMaggio & Powell 1991) and are described in the seminal collection of works in this area (DiMaggio & Powell 1991; Jepperson 1991; Scott 1991; Zucker 1991). These scholars describe characteristics which include: that there is a phenomenon which can be observed; its reproduction in self-sustaining structures, scripts and schema (rather than norms and values); rule-following behaviour; and the bracketing of doubt. In my research, I observed social interactions which constituted a similar phenomenon – an 'institution'. Training provided a mechanism for reproduction. Non-reflective and collusive rule-following behaviour was observed. The data consistently showed non-reflective practice, indicative of the following of scripts, classifications, rules and schema (DiMaggio & Powell 1991). One test of an institution, although not definitive, is:

*"when it is sufficient for one person simply to tell another this is how things are done"* (Zucker 1991: 83).

I suggest, then, that nonviolent direct action, decision-making, rules, and affinity groups were *institutions* which patterned the social interaction of the organisations studied.

The existence of these institutions help explain ‘how they did it’ – how the organisations I studied implemented nonviolent direct action. The institutions were a frame for taken-for-granted social interaction. These institutions provided basic building blocks for behaviours. More than this, these building blocks provided scripted behaviour. By ‘building blocks’ I mean the programmed actions, the activity scripts which are accepted, assumed and culturally legitimate, in short, institutions (DiMaggio & Powell 1991). These are reliable, repetitive “actions within constraints” (Jepperson 1991: 146) which, on the one hand, enabled collective action and on the other, provided control.

This might not seem a discovery, as new institutionalism was part of the theoretical approach to my research. However, I drew on new institutionalism only to operationalise the research. I could have found that it did not explain things, or that I needed to develop new theory to explain behaviour. Indeed, I have suggested that the concepts of temporary organisation and organisational culture also have utility. My contribution to knowledge, at this point, is that new institutionalism has been used in an instance where it has not hitherto been applied. I have shown that, even where organisations have minimal hierarchy and structure, institutionalism is likely to be a productive tool for the organisational researcher. Additionally, even when, as with EF!, a group decried ‘organisation’, its very desire to be a (dis)organisation paradoxically became institutionalised. A radical organisation may be able to escape the iron cage of oligarchy and hierarchy (Michels 1962), but it seems that it cannot escape the cognitive cage of institutionalisation.

## **5.4 INNOVATION**

The next stage of the argument is gathered around the notion of ‘innovation’. At first sight it might seem an illogical step, having just discussed ‘institutions’. However, I suggest that my findings show that having a rich institutional environment in fact helped founders to innovate organisations: the patterned behaviours identified above, which from now on I call ‘institutions’, were ‘building blocks’ of new organisational structures.

The concept of 'innovation' is complex and contested (Walker 2006). The concept has generated much research and literature, including the idea of innovation related to Third Sector organisations (Osborne 1998). It is generally taken to apply to innovation resulting in better services, products, processes or legitimacy (Walker 2006). Here, I do not use the term in that sense. My data spoke of the development of new organisations. In the data chapters, I described how innovation seemed to have arisen. I will give a brief a resume of those findings before going on to suggest a tentative theory of innovation and institutions.

Innovation, I found, was brought about in various ways: by re-combination (TP); translocation (gX); addition and adaptation (GP); and development (EF!). TP was an example of re-combination as different aspects of peace campaigning were brought together in one organisation (camps, rallies, affinity group actions). An example of translocation was gX, which took peace activism principles and established them in the environmental field. GP drew from anti-Vietnam War, Quaker, public protest and Sierra Club traditions. GP also added to, and adapted, the Quaker notion of 'bearing witness' and turned this into organisational praxis. One organisation was an experiment in organisational structure (gX), another (EF!) was said to be an innovation and the new shape of radical protest (Jordan & Lent 1999).

In the previous section of this chapter I suggested that nonviolent direct action, consensus decision-making, rules, and affinity groups were *institutions*. I now suggest that the data show that these institutions were building blocks of new organisational structures. But by what process did a new organisation come about? I will draw on existing knowledge about new institutionalism to seek explanation. I will then draw tentative theory from the data to conceptualise how institutions can be 'carried' in such a way as to make innovation possible.

Table 8 gave four examples of institutions: nonviolent direct action; consensus decision-making; rules; and affinity groups. The findings gave many antecedents of these in the organisational environments from which the four organisations arose. For example, GP drew on Quaker, Sierra Club and for-profit antecedents. Thus GP nonviolent direct action was drawn from what Quakers called 'bearing witness'. I have brought together

these antecedents and the institutions in Table 11. This table shows the antecedent organisations or movements for each of the four institutions in the four organisations.

**Table 11. Antecedents of the Four Institutions (Listed by Organisation)**

	<b>Nonviolent direct action</b>	<b>Consensus decision-making</b>	<b>Rules</b>	<b>Affinity group</b>
<b>Antecedents of the four institutions - Greenpeace</b>	Quaker: ( <i>e.g.</i> 'bearing witness').	Not consensus. Sierra Club and For-profit: ( <i>e.g.</i> <i>centralised, hierarchical</i> ).	Quaker: ( <i>e.g.</i> <i>nonviolence, accountability</i> ).	Not affinity groups but local groups.
<b>Antecedents of the four institutions – genetiX Snowball</b>	Peace, including 'Seeds of Hope': ( <i>e.g.</i> 'civil obedience').	Peace and 'Seeds of Hope': <i>consensus</i> .	Peace: ( <i>e.g.</i> <i>nonviolence, accountability</i> ).	Peace: <i>affinity groups</i> .
<b>Antecedents of the four institutions – Trident Ploughshares</b>	Peace, including 'Seeds of Hope' and Plowshares: ( <i>e.g.</i> 'accountable actions').	Peace: <i>consensus</i>	Peace: ( <i>e.g.</i> <i>nonviolence, accountability</i> ).	Peace: <i>affinity groups, camps, mass protest</i> .
<b>Antecedents of the four institutions – Earth First!</b>	Anarchic and peace: ( <i>e.g.</i> 'monkeywrenching' ( <i>pixie-ing</i> )).	Anarchic and peace: <i>consensus, anti-hierarchical</i> .	'Deep ecology' and anarchic: ( <i>e.g.</i> <i>no harm to other living things, no hierarchy</i> ).	Anarchic and peace: <i>local group, affinity groups camp</i> .

When interviewees told how an organisation formed, or told stories of one of the great organisational events, or about the founding members, I realised that I was also hearing how these practices were 'carried'. I use the term 'carrier' here to describe mechanisms by which patterned, taken for granted behaviours, were re-presented, re-enacted, and all the while with their social and cultural legitimacy intact. The clearest carriers arising from the findings were the founders, founding myths and training. By founding myths I mean those stories told, shown or re-enacted in social settings. I am using 'myth' in a way that, in social science, goes back to Levi-Strauss (Gabriel 2000), that no single



version of a myth is the 'right' one and that myth works by conveying meaning, not fact (Gabriel 2000). The Handbooks of both TP and gX carry much of the desired practice in these four aspects of institutional behaviour. However, I have not named the Handbooks as carriers because I think the data showed carrying processes to be embedded in social settings. I have added the carriers of institutions to the previous table. Table 12 below shows some of the 'carriers' of institutions.

**Table 12. Carriers of Institutions (Listed by Organisation).**

	<b>Nonviolent direct action</b>	<b>Consensus decision-making</b>	<b>Rules</b>	<b>Affinity group</b>
<b>Antecedents of the four institutions - Greenpeace</b>	Quaker: (e.g. 'bearing witness').	Not consensus. Sierra Club and For-profit: (e.g. centralised, hierarchical).	Quaker: (e.g. nonviolence, accountability).	Not affinity groups but local groups.
- CARRIED BY	Founders. Founding myths. Training.	Founders.	Founding myths. Training.	
<b>Antecedents of the four institutions - genetiX Snowball</b>	Peace, including 'Seeds of Hope': (e.g. 'civil obedience').	Peace and 'Seeds of Hope': consensus.	Peace: (e.g. nonviolence, accountability).	Peace: affinity groups.
- CARRIED BY	Founders. Founding myths. Training.	Founders. Training.	Founders. Training.	Founders. Founding myths. Training.
<b>Antecedents of the four institutions - Trident Ploughshares</b>	Peace, including 'Seeds of Hope' and Plowshares: (e.g. 'accountable actions').	Peace: consensus	Peace: (e.g. nonviolence, accountability).	Peace: affinity groups, camps, mass protest.
- CARRIED BY	Founders. Training (Quakers). Founding myths.	Founders. Training.	Founders. Training.	Founders. Founding myths. Training.
<b>Antecedents of the four institutions - Earth First!</b>	Anarchic and peace: (e.g. 'monkeywrenching' (pixie-ing)).	Anarchic and peace: consensus, anti-hierarchical.	'Deep ecology' and anarchic: (e.g. no harm to other living things, no hierarchy).	Anarchic and peace: local group, affinity groups, camp.
- CARRIED BY	Founding myths. Founders.	Founding myths. Training.	Founders. Founding myths. Training.	Founding myths. Training.

Existing practices were carried into new organisational forms. By what processes were these practices carried forward and recombined? I will first draw on new institutionalism to conceptualise what was going on. Then I will draw out tentative theory on innovation and institutions.

### **New Institutionalism and Innovation**

That organisations in the peace and environmental fields should move to share common institutions sounds like 'isomorphism'. But the morphology of these organisations is not quite the same as that described in DiMaggio and Powell (1991) in that, in my study, the similarities apply to organisations in two different fields. Also, the similarities were not the more familiar processes of increasing size, or professionalism, or out-sourcing (ibid) but were new organisational structures consisting of the same building blocks: that is, the institutions noted in the above tables. Was this a different kind of isomorphism, one that happened in the founding stages of an organisation rather than during its continuing operation within the field? The standard approach to isomorphism assumes various isomorphic forces applying during the operational life of an organisation (DiMaggio & Powell 1991). My study suggests isomorphism at work in the founding stages of an organisation.

One way of explaining how isomorphism might shape the founding of an organisation is the concept of 'myth' (Gabriel 2000; Meyer & Rowan 1991). In a career-long study of the wider theme of organisational story-telling, Gabriel (2000) lists numerous functions that myths can serve. They can make the organisational experience meaningful to social actors, make characters such as founders come alive and build a sense of organisational community. The myth and its telling, according to Gabriel, is:

*"the institutional memory system of the organisation"* (Gabriel 2000: 19).

In this conceptualisation, myths can be important in understanding organisational and inter-organisational institutionalism. Gabriel sees the telling of myths as a reflexive process, which fits with my data. But whereas he sees this reflexivity continually recreating the past in the light of the present, my data suggested the opposite, the present being continually recreated according to the mythic past. I do of course accept Gabriel's argument of the re-working of the past but he misses what, in my study, was a function of the telling of myths. A better explanation of my data comes from Meyer and

Rowan (1991) who argue that myth and ceremony relate to the ways in which formal organisations adopt practices, policies and procedures to fit with their institutional environment rather than to achieve maximally effective processes. A good fit with the prevailing institutions, they argue, will increase legitimacy, help reduce turbulence and increase an organisation's survival prospects (ibid). So, the new institutionalist conceptualisation of myth is a helpful way of understanding how these innovations came about in the four organisations I studied.

However, what I found extends Meyer and Rowan's argument in two ways. The first is by applying their aspect of new institutionalism, which was developed in the context of large formal organisations, to a group of four Third Sector organisations, one formal (GP), one something of a mix (TP), one informal (gX) and one anti-formal (EF!). Using TP as an example, what I heard from interviewees was that TP brought together a judicious selection of existing peace practices to form the one organisation. Behind this, I heard and observed that people were familiar with, and comfortable with, these practices: all were already known and legitimate. The Seeds of Hope action provided a template for the affinity group, consensus decision-making and nonviolent direct action. Meyer and Rowan used as an example formal organisations adopting vocabularies of structure to aid legitimacy, thus the organisation would have a 'Personnel Department', or 'Econometrics', where these were adopted for legitimacy rather than efficacy (Meyer & Rowan 1991). I suggest that TP likewise adopted vocabularies of structure such as 'affinity group' and 'consensus decision-making' to achieve legitimacy, not efficacy. Although TP was a new organisation, it was at the same time a familiar set of ways of going about peace activism. Whether or not TP assembled the most effective set of practices I cannot gauge, but the data suggested that they were a good fit with the prevailing institutions.

The second way the findings extend Meyer and Rowan's argument (1991) is in the founding function of myth and ceremony. In my study, myth was used not only to re-create the present but to create the first instance of that organisation. TP was not an organisation adapting to its field but a new one emerging within it. The Seeds of Hope myth conveyed all that a peace activist needed to know to ensure that TP would have legitimacy and that participants could become active immediately as the institutions were already familiar. Similarly, EF!, TP and gX all drew on existing practice and

existing vocabulary as they were founded. So myth and ceremony could serve not only to re-present the case for an organisation as it is in the present, but could provide immediate legitimacy and habitual practices.

New institutionalism has helped conceptualise some aspects of the process of innovation, but this is pushing at the boundaries of new institutionalism as it is weak in its knowledge of how institutions are carried between organisations (Hensmans 2003). I will now present a theoretical discussion and a tentative theory of innovation and institutions, building on the data.

### **Tentative Theory of Innovation and Institutions**

There was, I have suggested, innovation: re-combination, translocation, adaptation and development. I earlier outlined different ‘carriers’ of the institutions which were building blocks for the new organisations (see Table 12). My findings enable me to take the argument another step by examining how the organisations found new ways, new structures, for the organising of nonviolent direct action. What were the mechanisms by which re-combination, translocation, adaptation and development could take place? It seems counter-intuitive and oxymoronic that institutions could be the basis for innovations. Yet the data showed that, somehow, familiar institutional behaviours were being re-combined. The careful construction of the new arose from the judicious re-combination of the old.

I will look in further detail at the process of ‘carrying’. They “brought the good news from Ghent to Aix” but in Browning’s poem we never hear the news that could save Aix: the epic is about the process of carrying. Likewise I attend now to process: what has to happen to pick up an institution and ‘carry’ it elsewhere? I will continue to draw on concepts in the literature but the data also suggested moving off in a new direction.

Two concepts in the literature are helpful: looking at the process of change on a large scale; and the opposite, looking in detail. The first hypothesises about the development of new organisational structures (Rao et al 2000), the other discusses learning in high hazard organisations (Carroll et al 2002).

The title of the paper by Rao, Morrill and Zald (2000) sounds central to my discussion: "How social movements and collective action create new organisational forms". In fact, their paper does not cover the same ground as my study for, although they write about the social movement literature, there is no reference to European scholarship and, consequently, little understanding of new social movements. Examples of the movements in their study include industry associations, consumer groups and an investors' rights watchdog. It is written from a market and rational choice perspective. Their argument that organisational and market failure precede social movements is weak in comparison to the scholarship on new social movements and was not reflected in the data from my study. The relevance to my study is their level of focus, a meso level of analysis: the organisational field. They also explore cultural and structural mechanisms by which social movements create new organisations. They put these things together:

*"Fields .. contain potential and realised forms of social control that can select or repress new organisational forms"* (ibid: 249).

"Learning from experience in High Hazard organisations" (Carroll et al 2002) was another title I could not ignore as I am studying what I suggest could be termed 'high hazard voluntarism'. The high hazard organisations in their paper are nuclear power stations and one in particular: Three Mile Island. The authors seek to account for a lack of organisational learning as the nuclear accident at Three Mile Island was expected: the same incident had happened elsewhere; the same equipment had failed previously; and operators had made similar wrong responses. Yet, even in an industry where failure could be catastrophic, the organisation had failed to learn (ibid). Their paper conceptualises some of the elements of organisational learning, in particular, the concept of 'bridging,' where a mechanism has to be found to take knowledge from one domain to another. Drawing on these two papers and from my data, I will now build a tentative theory of innovation and institutions.

To give an overview of this tentative theory, I will suggest that the findings showed three pre-conditions for innovation to take place and then that the process followed three stages. The three pre-conditions were: the existence of an organisational field; the common acceptance of a 'problem'; and the presence and activity of "knowledge brokers" (Hargadon 2002: 43). Stage one was to unlock existing knowledge and

practice. Stage two was to provide a mechanism to move that knowledge and practice to a novel combination or field. Stage three was to re-establish that knowledge and practice. This sounds familiar, for instance, Hsiao et al (2006) claim that there are three major concerns in knowledge management research: knowledge transfer; locating knowledge-holders; and knowledge re-use. However, Hsiao et al and much of the organisational literature does not address this aspect of innovation: the findings were on the founding of organisations, not organisational learning within them. I have presented the structure of this overview and thus the following discussion below:

*Pre-conditions for Innovation*

*Stage One - Unlocking*

*Stage Two - Bridging*

*Stage Three - Instantiating*

*Pre-conditions for Innovation*

The data suggested that there were three preconditions for innovation to take place. One of these was the existence of an organisational field with its institutions (see Table 12). By field, and following DiMaggio and Powell (1983) and Rao et al (2000), I mean something more than an aggregate of organisational actors. It is something which contains distinct rules of the game, relational networks and (for Rao et al in particular) resource distributions along with organisations. All the organisations I researched emerged from fields rich in organisational and cultural practices. My findings also revealed many examples of relational networks such as the activities of the founders and the fluidity of participants between organisations.

A second pre-condition was the existence, or rather, the acceptance, of a 'problem'; one which had become dominant and taken for granted. Within a mild constructionist social world, a social problem does not exist independently of social interaction (Hargadon 2002). It has to be constructed, talked about and agreed. A problem may be a threat or opportunity, a dramatic departure or development. In every case, it is socially constructed and someone or some social interaction begins to delineate that problem. The construction has to address a number of variables: it has to name the challenge; state the nature of the problem; gain acceptance that requires or enables action; and indicate the current state to move from and the desired good to move towards (Hargadon 2002). My point in problematising a 'problem' is to get beneath the surface

to indicate the social interaction that takes place, with the ensuing result that a problem – much like an institution – becomes taken for granted. The same set of circumstances could give rise to different constructions, yielding different problems to different social actors. But this pre-condition is that one view has become dominant and taken for granted.

The third pre-condition is what I have thus far termed a ‘founder’. In my study, there were key individuals who were able to construct the problem in ways which others understood and propose a solution which others would accept. I have named them founders or founder members; elsewhere in the organisational learning literature they are named “knowledge brokers” (Hargadon 2002: 43) and “institutional entrepreneurs” (Rao et al 2000: 240). From my data, I suggest that the founder’s role in the process of innovation I observed could be termed ‘institution broker’. I will briefly re-visit some of my findings which showed the activity of ‘institution brokers’.

The Bohlens gathered together a committee to repeat a mass anti-nuclear protest and a Quaker concept of bearing witness but combined these with the idea of getting the message out to a mass audience (GP). Angie Zelter wanted to capture the success of peace camps and big blockades. She also wanted to repeat the success of the Seeds of Hope action but in a sustainable way, with multiple groups acting independently yet on the one issue (TP). Rowan Tilly wanted to develop and explore the affinity group as a basis for alternative living and transferred peace practices to the environmental field (gX). Dave Foreman wanted to leave behind the organisational clutter of a large green NGO (the Sierra Club) and take direct action. Of course, in every case there was more to the story, other actors, other strands, not least that in every case there seems to have been a founding group. But, in each case, there was an organisational field rich in organisations, there was one dominant view of the ‘problem’ and there was a founder, an ‘institution broker’, who had personal legitimacy and access to multiple domains of knowledge and practice.

Having set out pre-conditions for innovation, I now move on to discuss the process of innovation. I follow my own data by suggesting there were three broad stages in the process: unlocking existing knowledge and practice in organisations; bridging activity

to move that knowledge and practice to another setting or level; and instantiating that knowledge and practice.

### *Stage One - Unlocking*

I deal first with the 'unlocking' of existing learning in organisations. It is generally accepted that learning in organisations ('single-loop learning') is difficult and learning that can break established patterns of behaviour ('double-loop learning') is especially difficult (Argyris & Schon 1978: 2). Uncovering where knowledge lies within an organisation is also problematic as it is usually held in different domains within the organisation. This knowledge is often tacit, contextual and locked up in other practices thus making it very difficult to extricate (Carroll et al 2002). Who has enough experience and legitimacy in an organisation to know about this knowledge and to gain access to it?

Some scholars have proposed a process of de-institutionalisation which can allow this knowledge to emerge as well as to make possible the taking on of new knowledge (Greenwood & Hinings 1996). Indeed, one answer, in some organisations, has been to develop paid roles whose sole purpose is to bring out this knowledge (Hargadon 2002). It is further accepted that a block to radical learning is the anxiety induced by loosening structures or courting ambiguity (Carroll et al 2002). Much of the above sounds like the 'unfreezing' of knowledge referred to by Lewin (1948). Learning and change in a social field is held to occur through three stages: the 'unfreezing' of a 'mind-set'; a transition stage where change occurs but which may be accompanied by confusion and resistance; and a third stage to 'freeze' the new knowledge (Lewin 1948). Here, rather than processes such as 'de-institutionalisation' and 'unfreezing', my data suggest a different process.

The 'institution brokers' in my study did not have to break old habits but could move those habits into a new organisation where they could be repeated. Rather than unlocking the tacit, contextual, knowledge locked up in practice, the innovative advantage was to take that block as a whole. By using institutional building blocks, the institution brokers were able to rely on rather than challenge assumptions. They colluded with, rather than confronted, the tacit. The development of new organisational structures was not through learning within existing organisations, or social actors



gaining knowledge, but the bypassing of this processes. Some of the organisations in my study were not only new but seen by scholars as qualitatively different enough to be termed 'challenging organisations' (Jordan & Lent 1999). Against this, my data suggested that they were established by not challenging conventional ways of doing things but, rather, by reliance on conventional, taken for granted and legitimated practices of social interaction. What I found was not de-institutionalisation but its reverse: 're-institutionalisation'. This process drew on the strength of existing practice to maintain the enabling and controlling power of an institution in which social actors non-reflectively repeated their patterned behaviour.

### *Stage Two - Bridging*

The second stage in the process of innovation was the brokering of new knowledge. This might seem akin to the concept of resource mobilisation (McCarthy & Zald 1977) but, although the end result was a new organisation, resource mobilisation was not the most appropriate concept in accordance with my data. 'Resource' relates only thinly to the institutions I have identified. Nor were institutions and the actors within them being mobilised as they were already active. At points in their discussion, Rao et al (2000) use the term 'boundary-spanning'. In the organisational literature, various boundaries are suggested: between different organisations in the field; between different professions; and between specialised segments (Currie & Suhomlinova 2006). 'Boundary-spanning' is a helpful concept but, once again, this does not fully accord with the picture in my study which was of boundaries being 'crossed' or 'transcended'.

Another way to understand what was happening at the organisational level is the concept of 'bricolage' (Hargadon 2002): that out of the available knowledge, a founder reassembles the knowledge in some appropriate form. A more appropriate concept, I suggest, is that of 'bridging' (Carroll et al 2002). The founders, who I have termed 'institution brokers', bridged not just different domains within an organisation but different organisations. GP founders could bridge across Quaker, anti-Vietnam, Sierra Club, hippy and Don't Make A Wave protest domains. The TP founder bridged different peace domains, drawing knowledge from CND but more importantly drawing organisational and behavioural practice from different elements of the peace movement and, once again, the Quakers. The link between CND and TP was initially a puzzle to me. CND was part of the history of the TP founder and founder members. It was

referenced in the TP handbook and surfaced in the data. Further, its bequest to other campaigners has received academic attention (see Mattausch 2000). One way of seeing this is in terms of networks, alliances or partnerships (Guo & Acar 2005; Powell 1990). However, the above conceptualisation, that an institution broker bridged different institutional domains, helps to explain the puzzle. Whilst the philosophy of nonviolence and the history of peace activism were transferred from CND to TP, TP took its institutional practices without modification from several different protest streams.

The main bridging of gX was to take a set of practices from the peace domain and plant them in the environmental. EF! tried to eschew existing practice but has drawn on different traditions in the US (wilderness) and UK (anarchist). For EF!, no single model of decision-making or nonviolent direct action was incorporated. Travelling light, it was able to move (or was co-opted) into various manifestations, especially in the UK. However, my data point to it having institutionalised its (dis)organisation status. I found this in the repetition of the term '(dis)organisation' in its literature, its assumption by activists, and the bracketing of doubt (DiMaggio & Powell 1991: 21) which enabled rule-following behaviour. EF!'s claim to be a (dis)organisation had become infused with value and thus it had moved down the path to institutionalisation (Scott 1987). For all four organisations, it was by bridging different organisational domains and working across an organisational field or fields that practices were transferred wholesale and recombined.

### *Stage Three - Instantiating*

The third stage of the process of innovation was the setting up of new patterns, instantiating a new pattern or structural form (Rao et al 2000). As far back as the Hawthorne studies, scholars in organisational fields have known that social groups do not always act in ways that are maximally efficient or rational (Adler & Adler 1987; Roethlisberger & Dickson 1949). There may be new knowledge, it may be eminently desirable that this new knowledge is diffused and adopted but, even in a nuclear power plant where such knowledge was about safeguarding against reactor melt-down, its diffusion and adoption could not be taken for granted (Carroll et al 2002). Diffusion requires "learning-in-use" (Hargadon 2002: 65). There is vast literature on individual learning and on organisational learning, indeed vast literatures as they come from different philosophical schools. One generally accepted area is that changes to taken for

granted knowledge or practice in social interaction will be more problematic than changes to peripheral knowledge or practices since the latter have not become imbued with value.

The organisations in my study provided training: training which not only purveyed knowledge but which also provided the dynamics of the process by which diffusion and adoption could take place. A conceptualisation of this process can be derived from 'sense-making' in organisations (Louis 1980; Weick 1995) because it resonates with the findings and captures both the elements of cognition and socialisation. 'Sense-making' seeks to elucidate the process by which individuals develop cognitive maps of their environment at both an individual level and in organisational activity. The more it is the latter, the more it is socialisation. The language Weick uses has been deployed frequently in my argument: interacting in pursuit of mutual understanding; patterning; and constructing meaning (ibid). Weick perhaps pushes the concept too far in seeking to capture a holistic understanding of organisations through the sense-making lens. Nevertheless, as well as capturing what I found from my data to be the twin dynamics of cognition and socialisation, it can also give another perspective of the activities of the 'institution brokers' (founders): "sense-givers" (Weick 1995: 10).

"Sense-givers" provided the consistent and coherent cognitive map and provided ways of doing so in social interaction which enabled the diffusion and adoption of that cognitive map. Here I suggest a critical departure from Weick's conceptualisation. Whereas for Weick the leadership of the sense-giver is to provide a different way of seeing (and therefore knowing, doing and saying), for those I called 'institution brokers', a large part of their sense-giving was to provide a familiar way of seeing albeit in a new setting or combined with other elements. For example, although gX and TP were new organisational structures, the know-how, the practice, the vocabulary and the social interaction was already familiar to participants. Picking up Hargadon's term (2002), diffusion through "learning-in-use" was accomplished by transferring institutional behaviour; the existing learning-in-use continued to apply, but to apply in a different setting. Participants were entering an unfamiliar organisation but the sense-givers had worked to make it a familiar institutional setting. One such example was the affinity group. Another example was the social interactive practice which was their

nonviolent direct action. The above conceptualisation can help explain an ‘instantiating’ of new organisational structures which avoided the pitfalls of ambiguity and threat.

To sum up these three broad elements of the process of innovation, I suggest that, firstly, knowledge was not unlocked from its context, nor was there a process of de-institutionalisation. I suggest the reverse, that knowledge within its social interaction context was used as a building block to innovate an organisation. The dynamic of this process operated at the organisational or meso (field) level. Secondly, the innovators were able to bridge across different parts of the peace field (TP) or bridge different fields (gX and GP). Other than writing handbooks, the founders created little; the dynamic rested on their judicious use of taken for granted and legitimated knowledge. Thirdly, the translocated or recombined elements did not need the sort of diffusion and socialisation referred to in much of the literature. They were instantiated through familiarity and immediate utility. I referred to this part of the innovative process as sense-giving. Through the sense-giving activity of institution brokers, translocation or recombination was successfully achieved as the cognition, socialisation and legitimation had been carried intact.

I have reduced these steps to a simple table, Table 13. It is not an ‘ideal-type’ model for all innovation, rather it is a tentative theory of innovation and institutions drawn from my data.

**Table 13. Innovation through Institution Brokering**

<i>Pre-condition 1</i>	Presence of organisational field
<i>Pre-condition 2</i>	Constructing a ‘problem’
<i>Pre-condition 3</i>	Presence of a founder – ‘institution broker’
<i>Stage 1</i>	Unlocking: unlocking existing knowledge and practice
<i>Stage 2</i>	Bridging: moving knowledge and practice to a novel combination or field
<i>Stage 3</i>	Instantiating: establishing that knowledge and practice Institution broker as ‘sense-maker’

## 5.5 CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE

In this final section of the thesis, I will first offer tentative answers to my research question. I will then acknowledge the limitations of this research after which I will suggest where the thesis has made some contribution to knowledge. The thesis concludes with implications for further research.

So, what were the issues of organisation in Third Sector organisations which undertake nonviolent direct action? My focus was on practical issues. As noted in Chapter One, 'issue' was an open term as the research was exploratory (Stebbins 2001) and I wanted to remain open to unanticipated data which might emerge (Wolcott 1995). I was open to new issues relating to 'high hazard voluntarism' but had expected perennial Third Sector issues to emerge such as volunteer recruitment, retention and motivation (Billis & Harris 1996).

I think my findings cast light on one aspect of 'issues' and show some organisational characteristics of nonviolent direct action. Rather than 'issues' in the sense of challenges of organisation, these issues are characteristics which, themselves, are primarily institutions. The concept of 'institutional behaviour' helped explain how both participants and organisations could undertake nonviolent direct action without significant challenges emerging. Institutions enable and constrain behaviour (Jepperson 1991). They provide a cognitive map which patterns behaviour and conveys a sense of the rules of the game (DiMaggio & Powell 1991). Moreover, institutions provide not only a sense of how things should be done but that they 'ought' to be done that way (Scott 1995). I suggest I found institutional practices which cut across the four organisations.

The argument of the thesis developed in the following way. I tentatively explained seemingly contradictory findings on nonviolent direct action. The findings showed how 'nonviolence' contained rich and contested philosophical approaches. Yet the findings also showed fluidity of movement of activists where many had participated in the nonviolent direct action of more than one of the organisations in my study. I distinguished between philosophies of nonviolence and "the practical stuff": nonviolent

direct action. The latter was a taken for granted way of undertaking nonviolent direct action. I went on to suggest that nonviolent direct action was an institution.

I then argued that there were other institutions arising from the findings and discussed four such instances: nonviolent direct action; rules, affinity groups and consensus decision-making. Other concepts were also helpful in explaining my findings and I discussed organisational culture and 'temporary organisations'. The flow of my argument, though, continued with new institutionalism. I applied new institutionalism to a new set of organisations: new social movement organisations. I also applied new institutionalism to a previously neglected phenomenon: nonviolent direct action. I suggested that, through training, institutional behaviour was promulgated through a 'sense-making' which combined elements of cognition with socialisation (Weick 1995). The nonviolent direct action training which I researched contrasts with the patchy understanding of training and provision in the Third Sector (Osborne 1996). I argued that new institutionalism could help explain how the four organisations could enable and control participants in what I termed 'high hazard voluntarism'. In general, new institutionalism helped explain some of the practical issues in Third Sector organisations which undertake nonviolent direct action.

This led to a further stage in the argument where I suggested that the presence of these institutions was not accidental but had resulted from the activity of the founders. They had acted as what I termed 'institution brokers' in the innovation of organisations. I presented a tentative theory of innovation and institutions which, I suggested, had three pre-conditions. There was, firstly, an organisational field populated with institutions; there was an agreed and taken for granted acceptance of the problem; and there were founders who acted as 'institution brokers' who had personal legitimacy and could move between different organisational domains. Following on from these pre-conditions, there were, I suggested, three broad aspects to the process of innovation: unlocking, bridging and instantiating. I argued that this process by-passed some of the deep difficulties of knowledge transfer. Institutions assume, rather than challenge knowledge. They are a patterned behaviour which, according to my study, can be transferred intact. Diffusion and the need for modifying learning-in-use are irrelevant as that learning-in-use continues without modification. Another answer to how do

organisations – including new ones – undertake nonviolent direct action is that they use proven, familiar and legitimated institutionalised behaviours.

### **Limitations of this Study**

I acknowledge the limitations inherent in research on a scale as modest as a doctoral thesis. Had there been teams of researchers in several countries researching over a much greater period of time, then much more empirical and theoretical work of greater reliability and generalisability would have resulted. My research was necessarily small-scale and focused. I identified a gap in knowledge and addressed that gap – What are the issues of organisation in Third Sector organisations which undertake nonviolent direct action? I showed that this was a neglected area for both organisational and social movement scholars (Carroll 2001b; Carroll & Harris 1999).

Given the lack of existing knowledge, might there be a completely different answer to the question? To give a couple of examples, I might have pursued a research track with a keener awareness of the varied role that political and legal structures can have in shaping institutional frameworks (Scott 1987). Or I might have focused on the biographies of the actors: to what sort of answer would that have led? I do not think there would be a different answer. Firstly, there is a mass of empirical material. This material is thick description (Carroll 2000) giving a descriptive and explanatory account of the organising of nonviolent direct action. Secondly, I went into the field with a thought-through theoretical approach and, at least within the terms of that theory, some sort of valid explanation has been made.

I chose a research design appropriate to the task. I will not reproduce the discussion on methodology set out in Chapter Two but give a brief summary. I chose a case study because it is known to be an effective method to capture both descriptive and analytic material from a complex under-researched area where data would need to be gathered in the field (Hamel 1993; Harris 1998; Stake 2000; Yin 1994). I think it was a valid approach as the data I wanted to uncover, and the multiple ways of gathering data, were all driven by my initial theory. I worked with a theoretically representative sample (Hamel 1993). Of course, a greater spread of organisations would have been stronger, but once again, initial theory allows for a case study to claim to be representative (Yin

1994). In the same way, I argued that generalisability was possible, even if modest, as I was able to draw out theory from data which had been gathered by that same initial theory (Blaickie 2000; Eisenhardt 1999).

How complete an answer did the data reveal? For example, my engagement with the field led me to uncover the role of founders and the significance of training. So, had I entered the field more fully, and for a greater length of time, might I have uncovered further important data? I do not think so because I was fortunate enough to interview leading practitioners in the field. So, first of all, I had respondents who gave full and authoritative answers. Second, I was able to check emerging findings with such respondents. I could of course have discovered more, but I do not think it would have been of a different sort or of a vastly different order.

Finally, there are limitations in the extent to which I can claim to have made a theoretical contribution. This was partly an inevitable consequence resulting from my choice of initial theory. New institutionalism has as its primary focus the organisational field (Rao et al 2000) but I was able only to focus on four organisations. The reasons why I thought it appropriate were given in Chapter One. My research approach was not about hypothesising on the basis of existing theory but gathering empirical data to build theory. There is, however, a limit on what theory can be built from and supported by research as modest as doctoral research. I have not added new sociological laws to the canon. I claim to have added some new conceptualising and theorising, but these remain to be tested. It is to the claims of contributing to knowledge that I now turn.

### **Contributions to Knowledge**

The first contribution is, I suggest, the identification of a gap in knowledge. I demonstrated how the ways in which new social movement organisations organise nonviolent direct action was under-researched and under-theorised by both new social movement and organisational scholars. Second, I engaged critically with the material and argued against those scholars who believe they have synthesised the different schools of (broadly North American) organisational and (broadly European) new social movement scholarship. I showed that different sociological paradigms lay behind the elements others sought to reconcile. Whilst a synthesis, or a meta-synthesis would have



been a claim, I think to have explained the nature of the puzzle is a contribution. The resolution of a perplexity is a discovery (Ryle 1971, after Aristotle).

Third, I conceptualised 'nonviolent direct action' and produced an abstract and discursive understanding drawn from new social movement theory. I was able to draw out a qualitative difference between violence and nonviolent direct action. I have presented this at a conference and in a (peer-reviewed) doctoral working paper (Carroll 2001a). I also distinguished between the different philosophies of nonviolence, which sometimes led to dissension, and the institution of nonviolent direct action which enabled and constrained behaviour when undertaking what one interviewee called "the practical stuff".

Fourth, I have made a methodological contribution in the work I did around 'thick description'. Having found numerous uses of the term, some of which contradicted the epistemological frames of the authors, I then uncovered the range of uses, where these matched different interpretive schemes, and I re-presented the original meaning of the term (Ryle 1971). This work has featured as both a conference paper and a doctoral working paper (Carroll 2000). Fifth, there was a further perplexity to resolve, which I think amounted to a modest methodological contribution, when I had to re-think the nature of a pilot study in qualitative research. This too has been published (Carroll 2002).

Sixth, the data provide a contribution to knowledge, as very little was already known about the organising of nonviolent direct action (Carroll 2001b; Carroll & Harris 1999). I researched a hitherto unresearched phenomenon. Some data were new but not surprising. For instance, I did not enter the field with the concept of the affinity group but it was likely that organisational sub-units would be present. So, some of the material describes empirical material in detail not hitherto available. Other data were not even blips on the researcher radar: the acceptance of rules; how nonviolent direct action training was also training in how to behave organisationally; and how strongly the data spoke of innovation. In some forms of field research, such descriptive contribution is a full and sufficient contribution (Stake 2000; van Manaan 1979). I have two chapters which give a thick description of the case (Stake 2000). But I entered the field with

initial theory and with the intention to draw theory from these chapters of data. So I now turn to the theoretical contribution I claim to have made.

I studied organisations, three of which were anti-hierarchical, typical of the anti-organisational ideology of new social movement organisations (Dalton 1994). It was an organisational field where scholars have seen potential for innovative organisational structures (Castells 1997; Jordan & Lent 1999; Maffesoli 1995; Touraine 1983). DiMaggio & Powell (1991) asked the question: *why are so many organisations so similar?* That question was asked of formal organisations (Farashahi et al 2005). So, a seventh contribution, I suggest, is that my study means a similar question can be asked of a different set of organisations in a fluid field. I found new institutionalism helped to explain what they had in common and how that enabled participants to move between individual organisations' actions. If institutionalism operated here, will it not operate in every sphere of human organisation? My findings were contrary to Offe (1990) who asserts that such social movement phenomena arise in an institutional vacuum. I applied new institutionalism to a novel arena as there were no prior studies of these organisations, in this way, at this level of analysis. According to Farashahi et al (2005), 81% of new institutionalist studies over the past two decades have been top-down, looking at the effects of large institutions on organisations. My study was bottom-up, gathering data from individual actors and drawing out a picture of institutionalism from thereon up. Further, even in the critical study by Farashahi et al (ibid) the focus is still the default model of the firm. My research was in organisations that were outside that model or – in the case of GP - exceptional for being that model but within the new social movement field (Milofsky 2001).

Eighth, I developed some new social movement theory around nonviolent direct action, developing the senses in which it is qualitatively different from violence. My research contradicted the view of Lee (1995) who argued that EF! was violent to the point of being terroristic. I suggested an additional dimension to the arguments for EF!'s nonviolent direct action as presented by Taylor (1998). Taylor, after detailed empirical research, showed that EF! had not employed 'violence'. My research showed that EF! was constructing an expressive identity where nonviolent direct action was more a matter of being than a choice of doing (della Porta & Diani 1999). This conceptual thinking about the qualitative dimension also led me to challenge some of the default

models in the literature: that the choice of violence is instrumental (Gamson 1975); that there is a violence-nonviolence continuum (Taylor 1998); and that violence is cyclical (Tarrow 1994). Wall (1999) asserts that there is no agreement amongst activists as to what nonviolence is. I think that is a superficial reading of what I found to be a rich picture. The data suggest a depth and breadth to a philosophy of nonviolence whilst at the same time suggesting a common institutional practice of nonviolent direct action. My study offered new empirical material but the meaningful contribution here was the conceptual material (Deutsch 1963).

A ninth contribution is a tentative theory of innovation and institutions. I drew from the data an explanation of the innovation of organisational structures in the new social movement field. Existing organisational theory has emphasised how new organisational structures can arise from technological innovation but has glossed over cultural innovation (Rao et al 2000). My theorising was more to do with cultural innovation. I found my data drew me away from theory such as Rao et al (2000) on innovation and Carroll et al (2002) on learning in high hazard settings. I found that the organisations in my study shared common stages in their formation. They arose within an organisational field where there was some accepted 'problem' to address. In every case, there was the presence of an 'institution broker' (my term). I say 'institution' rather than 'knowledge' or 'resource' because this was what came from the data. Rather than deal with the problems of unlocking knowledge and diffusing new practice, these brokers translocated and / or recombined institutional practices intact. There were basic building blocks, ways of doing things, which worked and which were familiar. I suggested that 'institution brokers' unlocked these institutional building blocks, provided a bridging function to translocate or combine them and then exercised a 'sense-making' function to instantiate them.

## **5.6 IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

A further contribution is where this study has implications for research. In an article on understanding radical organisational change, Greenwood and Hinings (1996) argue that it is when theorists research the interaction of organisational actors with institutionalised contexts that they will find new directions (ibid: 1048). My research explored such interaction.

I argued that it was possible to distinguish between different philosophies of nonviolence and the common institutional practice of nonviolent direct action. I studied only four organisations, so further research in other organisations undertaking nonviolent direct action would cast light on this theme. Three of my organisations had international links: GP, EF! and TP. Some findings showed how nonviolent direct action had been imported from the US, such as EF!, Plowshares and the 'Seeds of Hope' action. Interviewees sometimes referred to Gandhi when describing their philosophy of nonviolence. Is the institution of nonviolent direct action a Western phenomenon? Or is there a transnational practice that accompanies the transnational ideology of new social movements (Dalton 1994)?

I did not present a typology of nonviolent direct action, which, I suggest, further research could explore. My research findings suggest one perplexity to resolve through such research: my operational definition separated nonviolence from violence, yet some interviewees believed the actions of some other activists to be violent. To be sure, there were no data of harm to other humans but, for some interviewees, the large-scale destruction of a GM crop was seen as violent. At what point, if at all, does the destruction of property move from being nonviolent to violent?

There is little research on the four organisations employed in this case study. Some scholarly work has used one of the four organisations as a case study in political science or media studies but there is very little material presenting a holistic picture of these organisations. There is an argument, then, for ethnographic research, to capture the whole picture and understand the parts in the light of the whole (Wolcott 1995). Ethnography is a prime method for capturing such a picture and has stood the test of time: the first records of ethnographic fieldwork stretch back to Herodotus of Helicarnassus (c. 484-425 CE) (Kirk & Miller 1986). Ethnographic studies of Third Sector organisations are largely absent from the literature (Lewis 1999b). It is surprising that so little is yet known of these four organisations and much empirical material remains to be uncovered.

I chose to use new institutionalism to conceptualise my findings. I did, however, flag up other conceptual approaches which could provide a theoretical framework for further research. The data revealed the language and habit of organisational culture (Schein

1985). I did not use the concept of organisational culture as I had not gathered the breadth of data necessary for cultural studies (Lofland 1995), so such research waits to be done. I also presented data that could be conceptualised as network theory (Powell 1990). These data included: the links between the four organisations; data relating specifically to EF!; and the movement of founders across the organisations. Again, such research has yet to be undertaken. I also referred to the concept of the 'temporary organisation' (Milofsky 2001). Nonviolent direct actions could be conceptualised this way, as Carroll (2001b) shows in a micro-ethnographic study of the court case following an action. Moreover, the ways in which EF! seemed to spin off related movements such as road protests, Reclaim the Streets, anti-G8 activities and the rhetoric of the 'temporary autonomous zone' suggest that a temporary organisational concept would prove fruitful.

There are implications for further research related to the concept I did use: new institutionalism. I had assumed a default sociological model, that the level of analysis could be the individual, the organisational or the structural (Chapter One). Having researched organisations and discovered institutions which cut across them, that model needs re-thinking. Where do institutions fit in the individual-organisational-field model? Institutions operated as more than a sub-division of organisation and other than a component of a field. If institutions are "cultural controls" (Scott 1991: 181), what does that mean for the model? At what level do such controls operate and from which level do they originate? For instance, are institutions to be conceptualised at a meso-level or as some organisational sub-structure? Research across different fields would help uncover this.

Another research approach would be to address organisational fields (Di Maggio & Powell 1993). Organisational fields are more than an aggregate of organisational actors but contain distinct rules of the game, relational networks (DiMaggio & Powell 1983) and resource distributions (Rao et al 2000). Are the components of an organisational field in the Third Sector on a par with those in the formal sector? Are those components still on a par when comparing the formal sector with the new social movement field? I think comparative research across organisational fields would address these questions. Rao et al (2000) discuss innovation within fields, that a rigid field resists innovation whereas a permeable one aids diffusion. I found instances of innovation, so further

academic work could test the Rao et al hypothesis by researching across different fields in which differing degrees of innovation have occurred.

I suggested that there may have been a new sort of isomorphic pressure on the organisations in my study. The standard approach to isomorphism assumes various isomorphic forces applying during the operational life of an organisation (DiMaggio & Powell 1991). My study suggests isomorphism at work in the founding stages of an organisation. The drivers of the isomorphism suggested by my findings were not familiar drivers such as government regulation, increasing size, professionalism, or outsourcing (ibid). It seems that founders tended to innovate by using familiar and legitimate institutions: founder isomorphism. This could be researched by examining founders, their organisations and the organisational fields in which those organisations arose. This approach would be more illuminating when studying a number of organisational fields and giving a comparative perspective.

Another research approach which awaits exploration is to examine rationalised myths. Meyer and Rowan (1991) hypothesised that the greater the number of rationalised myths in the environment, the more formal the organisations. Myths arose from my fieldwork, so this hypothesis may have further explained what I found. I think it could best be explored by research across different organisational fields. Also, from Meyer and Rowan (1991), it could be hypothesised that in a highly institutionalised environment, organisational control is more likely to be through ritual conformity. My data suggested this, but, once again, research across different organisational fields would test it.

The data began to paint a picture of the organisations' structure. At an empirical level, further research can fill out the organisational structure (Child 1984). But a further research theme here is to interrogate the concept of 'structure'. What does it mean to draw a boundary around a collective enterprise and call it an organisation (Billis 1993a)? Can there be a structureless organisation? EF! aimed at being a (dis)organisation. In what sense did it achieve this? If not organisation, then what else was it? I suggested it had institutionalised its (dis)organisational stance and that, although it may have escaped the 'iron cage' (Michels 1962) it had not escaped the cognitive one. To adapt Michels: who says organising says institutionalising. Is this so?

Therefore, a further question on organisational structure is at what point, when institutions inhabit a field, does an aggregated manifestation of these same institutions amount to a discrete organisation?

Another implication for research relating to the concept of organisational structure is to interrogate the rational-economic approach which assumes the formation of an organisation is to achieve an output. The standard assumption is there is some purposive output when forming an organisation (Perrow 1970). However, gX was formed to be, rather than to do. With gX, neither the name nor the purpose had been agreed even when the group had been running some months. I think institutions pose a challenge, that there can be loose structure (*organisation*) but rigid *organising*. The challenge is that scholars may miss the substance of rigid organising by using the structural filter of organisation. So a research approach to explore this would be comparative studies of formal, informal and new social movement organisations.

I have proposed a tentative theory of innovation and institutions to explain the innovation of organisations in my study. If there is any utility in my theorising, then further research can develop that theory. My findings were on innovation of organisational structures in Third Sector new social movement fields. Further qualitative studies can capture data from other social movement organisations and other less formal organisations such as associations and community organisations (Cnaan & Milofsky 2007). Then it may also be appropriate for quantitative study to confirm or refute emerging theory. I think hypotheses could be drawn from the three pre-conditions and three stages suggested in my theory.

The first pre-condition was the presence of an organisational field. The first hypothesis is that the innovation of organisational structures is likely where there is an organisational field and less likely where there is not. Further, the richer with institutions that field, the more likely the innovation of organisational structures.

The second pre-condition was the acceptance of a 'problem', that is, a shared definition of a need to be addressed and a means of doing so. The second hypothesis is that the innovation of organisational structures is more likely the stronger the definition of the problem and the more that definition is shared. Therefore, the converse would hold, that

the innovation of organisational structures is less likely the weaker the definition of the problem and the less that definition is shared.

The third condition was the presence of a founder who I termed an 'institution broker'. The third hypothesis is that the innovation of organisational structures is more likely when an institution broker is present and that the innovation of organisational structures is less likely without an institution broker.

The first stage was the unlocking of knowledge where I suggested that institutions were transferred or recombined intact, thus by-passing the anxiety and resistance to "double-loop" learning (Argyris & Schon 1978: 2). The fourth hypothesis is that a new organisation is likely to have arisen with less anxiety and resistance the more that organisation is built upon familiar institutions and the more intact those institutions are.

The second stage was the 'bridging' activity of the 'institution broker' who I described as having personal legitimacy to gain access to multiple domains. The fifth hypothesis is that the innovation of organisational structures is more likely the more the institution broker has personal legitimacy and the more the institution broker has access to multiple domains.

The third stage was the instantiation of new organisational structures. I suggested that transferring institutions also indicated transferring "learning-in-use" (Hargodan 2002: 65). By drawing upon that learning in use and without modifying it, an institution broker by-passed the need for diffusion and that an institution broker acted as a 'sense-maker' by promoting the familiarity and legitimacy of institutional practice. There are numerous concepts here which could lead to several hypotheses, but, I will suggest one more hypothesis in order to test and develop the tentative theory I put forward. The final hypothesis is that the innovation of organisational structures is more likely the more familiar the institutions which are instantiated in the new organisational structures.

Finally, my research, plus any of the research approaches outlined above would be illuminated by repetition at intervals of time. I conclude the writing up of my fieldwork three years after its commencement. During this final year (2007) I attended the 'Camp for Climate Action' at Heathrow. The camp was designed to promote nonviolent direct



action against the aviation industries. This event was not in any way part of this study. The 'Camp' was a new (dis)organisation or temporary organisation. It had a different target and different tactics from the organisations in my study. Yet, at the camp, I met many of the people I had interviewed. Along with the familiar faces, I observed the familiar institutions of nonviolent direct action.

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## GLOSSARY OF TERMS USED BY INTERVIEWEES

**Accountable action:** when, if breaking the law, always staying at the scene, giving one's real name to the police, always turning up at court: holding one's self accountable to the public and through the judicial system.

**Action:** generic term for protest events designed to intervene, often illegal. Also *direct action*, which most actions are – confronting a wrong-doer rather than using an intermediary process like writing to one's MP.

**Affinity Group:** see the data in Chapter 4 and subsequent discussion in Chapter 5. This term was used by interviewees to describe an autonomous group which was basic unit of organising for actions in TP and gX. Some EF! interviewees also referred to an affinity group, which, in that context, meant a section of a local group involved in direct action. The term probably originated in, or came to common usage, in the Spanish Civil war.

**'Arrestable':** one of the roles within affinity groups and actions. As the term suggests, it refers to those willing to get arrested at an action.

**'Bearing Witness':** Greenpeace term used of its nonviolent direct action. The term originates from Quaker practice where, having seen an injustice, one does not walk away but takes responsibility to act or communicate it to others.

**Blinc:** Blatant Incitement Project, a training resource. Associated with EF! and offering training in nonviolent direct action, grass roots (non-hierarchical organising) and alternative campaigning such as using theatre.

**BNRR / Birmingham Northern Relief Road:** Anti-road protest site in Staffordshire, now the M6 Toll motorway.

**Camp:** A long-term protest camp sited on or near the target. Peace camps were sited close to the target, anti-road or anti-quarry camps would be sited directly on (or beneath) land where construction work was proposed. Anti-road camps, in particular, could have tree-houses, tunnels and other forms of barricade to resist eviction.

**Civil Disobedience:** direct action where the punishment rather than, or additional to, the action itself is likely to convey the message

**CND:** Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (Chapter Four).

**Deep Ecology:** also 'deep green ecology' in which humans are seen as no less and no more important than birds, trees, viruses. It contrasts markedly with the anthropocentrism of resource management approaches. It rejects human 'species-ism'. Often there is a spiritual element to it, which can be parodied as tree-hugging. Other deep greens are more into the politics of liberation. For instance, some issues of Do or Die!, the Earth First! journal, debate how red deep green should be.

**Direct Action:** see 'Action'.

**Do or Die! Voices From the Ecological Resistance:** Substantial annual journals produced by collectives for Earth First! Issues 8 and 9 were published with ISBN numbers and with 345 and 233 pages respectively. Many contributors, but articles are unattributed. The title is derived from Robert Burns:

*Lay the proud usurpers low!*

*Tyrants fall in every foe!*

*Liberty's in every blow!*

*Let us do, or die!*

**Ecotage:** usually non-accountable action to disable diggers, pull up GM crops and such.

**Ecoteur:** one who does the above.

**ELF:** Earth Liberation Front. A more radical wing of EF! UK.

**Fluffy:** an action designed to minimise confrontation and often to minimise possibility of arrest (see Spikey).

**Gathering:** Annual meeting of the EF! movements in the USA and UK. Often lasting a weekend or longer, the Gathering allowed the time and space to reach consensus on major issues.

**GPI:** Greenpeace International, based in Amsterdam (Chapter Three).

**Greenham Common:** September 5<sup>th</sup>, 1981 'Women for Life on Earth' set up a peace camp at RAF Greenham Common, a site for American cruise missile sites. Towards the end of 1982, 30,000 women 'embraced the base'.

**Injunction:** Injunctions can be granted against individuals and organisations to prevent unlawful protest. The burden of proof required is lower than in criminal cases. Injunctive relief is usually a ban on persons and organisations from certain areas and activities.

**Menwith Hill:** RAF base in North Yorkshire wholly run by the US military as a communications centre. Two peace camps were set up there. The base was thought to be essential for any US 'star wars' initiative.

**Monkeywreching:** see 'Ecotage'.

**Newbury:** iconic anti-road protest.

**NRO:** National Regional Office: Greenpeace structure, meaning the UK office, the German office etc. (Chapter Three)

**NVDA:** nonviolent direct action. Most interviewees used this abbreviation, e.g. 'nvda-trained'.

**Pixie:** Pixie and pixie-ing: covert acts of ecotage

**Pledge / Pledgers:** Especially a term in TP, although intended for gX. The Pledgers were those who signed up to the main purpose of the organisation and who signed up to a code of nonviolence.

**Reclaim the Streets:** anarchic kind of street party, anti-car, anti-capitalist, recreating some autonomous space.

**Rising Tide:** training and direct action group, strong connections with EF! but not EF!

**Seeds for Change:** training group offering courses in nonviolence, decision-making, campaigning.

**Seeds of Hope:** iconic peace action where an all-female affinity group damaged Hawk jets bound for Indonesia. The founders of TP and gX were members of the affinity group. Whilst being held on remand, Angie Zelter drew up the plans for TP. The defendants were found not guilty.

**Snowball:** A peace campaign which originated in the US. The 'snowball' refers to the way each participant is to recruit others and so help the campaign grow. genetiX Snowball's local groups were also known as 'snowball groups'.

**Spikey:** an action designed to be 'full-on', probably confrontational, high likelihood of arrest (see Fluffy).

**Star Wars:** US strategic defence initiative which used bases on UK soil, particularly RAF Menwith Hill and the radar base at Fylingdale. I was told by interviewees that Menwith Hill had become a target as it was seen as an attempt by the US to provide



legitimisation for nuclear weapons and as an excuse to develop new weapons and weapon delivery systems.

**TTT / Turning the Tide:** Quaker training programme, offered to TP. It drew on CND training and other methods from the peace movement. It was usually delivered over a series of weekends although shortened versions were made available. It was resourced by the Quakers, designed for their own Meetings around the UK. It was also taken on tour as a roadshow to offer training to any groups interested in nonviolent direct action.

**Twyford:** Iconic anti-road protest.

Semi-structured interview questions

tips

sit in their place - what is this interview like?  
can learn from when things go wrong  
can learn from the routine, looking for the taken-for-granted

Introduce self, purpose, confidentiality, tape

1. *Yourself.*

how you came to be involved

how long ago

what attracted you

[or straight to involvement in direct action]

1A *Other groups, actions?*

Ideological bond

1B

*Can you tell me what you do?*

roles, technologies, power, resources

2 Organisation

2A *How do things get done?* (to organise direct action)

technologies, power, governance, explanatory systems, legitimacy, participants

2B

*How do you get others involved?*

paid staff / vols

founding myth - what attracts them in

festivals

compliance

(Reg - coercive, Norm - normative, Cog - mimetic)

Semi-structured interview questions

2C

*Who decides what?*

governance, power

(goals - careful!)

*3 Direct action: your own involvement in direct action*

logics of action

alternative culture

historicity

with other groups?

*... impact of ...*

*4 Nice Way to Finish*

Champagne moments?

Banana moments?

Cork moments

semi-structured interview

Chronology

Context

Substantive Issues

Process

Self

DATA SOURCE

Observation



## APPENDIX THREE: DATA SOURCES

Primary sources of data were through interviews, participant observation and artefacts (Lofland 1995). The numbers and people listed as interviewees are those I interviewed using my semi-structured interview schedule. The schedule was drawn from the theoretical approach to the research. Most interviewees were happy to be recorded on cassette tape. Other conversations occurred at observation opportunities. None of these observation interactions were tape-recorded, nor are they counted amongst the interviewee numbers. Secondary sources were official documents and website material. I do not list all of these as there is much repetition and some are of limited utility. I do not list all artefacts, only those relevant to organisational issues. Much of these would interest a cultural cartographer (Lofland 1995).

### GENETIX SNOWBALL

Amongst the seven interviewees were three of the founders. I met two more founders at participant observation events. Two interviewees straddled several fields of activism and had been active many years. More than that, their philosophy of nonviolent direct action led them to be open and accountable and willing to tell me much. There were four days' observation. Two were at Worcester Crown Court. Another was a meeting in Telford where two of the founding affinity group were looking to 'snowball' the movement. The fourth day was being at a concert or, rather, a 'gig' by 'Seize the Day'. Some of the band had been involved in a 'GM crop-trashing' which I had seen on video. Of the documents, the most helpful to me was the Handbook. There was another published document, the gX update. Artefacts include video footage of gX's model action at Model Farm and similar actions carried out by local groups. Much of the gX story is carried on the series of independent videos 'Undercurrents'. Undercurrents 10 shows two of my interviewees – Kathryn Tulip and Rowan Tilly – and also Leo of Seize the Day. Leo was not providing a soundtrack but was talking to camera whilst smashing pots of GM plants.

## **GREENPEACE**

Amongst the ten interviewees were three senior managers. I also interviewed two people responsible for the local group structure and the nonviolence training package. My first 'Greenpeace' interviewee turned out to be Kathryn Tulip, co-founder of gX. I was given access to the volunteer network and interviewed volunteers who were activists, or who co-ordinated activists, or who trained activists. I spent a total of ten days observation. Two were on the 'Italian Job', which was an example of devolved campaigning. I was in Luxembourg for two days, when, like the Italian job, Esso garages were occupied and shut down. I spent five days in Dallas, again targeting Exxon-Mobil (Esso). I also participated in a day's nvda training in Manchester.

Much secondary data was available on the web. The short accounts of the early days by founders such as Bohlen and Wyler were illuminating. Artefacts included The Guide which was a 2004 Greenpeace publication designed primarily as a gift to new financial supporters. There was also a Greenpeace Mission statement (produced for Glastonbury 2004). There was a monthly newsletter for activists, where campaigns and 'get active' points abounded, but which almost always conveyed no information about organisational matters.

## **TRIDENT PLOUGHSHARES**

Amongst my ten interviewees were the youngest I met across the organisations, aged 17, and the oldest. I was able to interview two people who were very close to its founding and participated in an action with the founder. Ten days were spent on observation. There was a day's training in nonviolence in Stafford followed by a three day blockade at Faslane. On 29th April 2002 I went along with 'Trident on Trial' - helping a TP activist take his Faslane fine to court - many small personal cheques stapled to a cardboard submarine. Then in 2003 I participated in a day-long meeting in the first stage of forming an affinity group. Further time was spent on actions at RAF Stafford, at Rolls Royce Derby and on two visits to Menwith Hill Peace Camp. I was fortunate enough not to interview Flossie. She had been locked on to a radio mast inside the base with RAF police trying to talk her down. Until, that is, they found that Flossie was a life-size doll. I gathered a number of Flossie Mintballs artefacts including informative posters and a signed plate (Menwith). The Seeds of Hope action, videoed on Undercurrents 6 included much on TP founder Angie Zelter. Other videos included a

BBC Everyman programme on one of my interviewees and the training programme for TP.

### **EARTH FIRST!**

I gathered some helpful US material. Of greatest importance were the EF! founder's Field Guide to Monkey Wrenching, Abbey's Monkey Wrench Gang and Hayduke Lives! I also obtained a 12" vinyl LP with some speeches of early EF! activist Judi Bari who was seriously injured in a car bomb. Also of some use were an audio CD produced as an EF! fund-raiser and a newsletter from the Northcoast network (Spring 2003). The most important UK documentation were Calling Notes and Participant's Pack for the 2003 summer gathering, issues of Do or Die! (de facto EF! UK Journal), Reclaim the Streets leaflets and material relating to the BNRR site. I gathered many other leaflets to help trace the connections between the different manifestations or movings on of EF! such as the camps, training and Reclaim the Streets.

I conducted interviews with ten individuals. Two were activists from its early days and a third was a co-founder. As EF! had no named leaders or stated structure by which to identify interviewees, participant observation was particularly important (total of 12 days). The most productive single event was the EF! summer gathering, 14-17<sup>th</sup> August, 2002 in North Yorkshire (four days). Other observation events were a road protest camp, several meetings of an EF! and peace coalition trying to morph into a new activists network, a Reclaim the Streets 'party', and an anti-quarrying camp. The road protest camp was against the Birmingham Northern Relief Road, now called the M6 toll. Numerous visits provided me with conversational opportunities with participants, including 'Muppet Dave' and Revd David Shawcross (the Manic Tree Preacher). Participation opportunities included an attempted tree occupation followed by arrest and subsequent de-arrest by Sgt Mick Belcher, a sympathetic police officer. I also participated in three public communication events following the death from hypothermia of a protestor - 'Sorted Dave'. The first of these was the scattering of his ashes on the site of the proposed road and then two memorial services alongside the road near that spot, where his ashes had been joined by those of Sgt Mick Belcher.