

Evidence submitted on campaign groups

POWER

An independent inquiry
into Britain's democracy

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Introduction

The Purpose of this Theme Book

The Power Inquiry has generated a great deal of original evidence – approximately 1,000,000 words worth, equivalent to 3,000 pages of text. This is primarily made-up of:

- the seven Commission witness sessions;
- the 130 witness interviews;
- the 1,242 submissions from members of the public or organisations;
- the six reports of research projects and initiatives commissioned or conducted by the Inquiry.

Clearly, Commissioners could not plough through this amount of information in an unstructured format. The seven Theme Books which will be presented over the next few weeks allow Commissioners to read all the evidence submitted to the Inquiry but under themed headings and with summaries provided by the Research Team. This will make for evidence that is far easier to navigate and understand than it would be if presented as one mass of text.

Each Theme Book presents the evidence relevant to one of the major subject areas agreed by the Commission last year:

1. Political Parties
2. The Executive and Parliament
3. Elections
4. Local Government
5. Political participation: the perspective of marginalised groups
6. Civic Associations and Pressure Politics
7. The Media

The Structure of This Theme Book

This Theme Book deals with campaign groups and their impact on democratic participation.

- The Theme Book has three parts: the first describes campaign groups; the second analyses their relations with institutional political actors - political parties, national government, and global bodies; the third considers the impact of campaign groups on the political system. Each part is divided into chapters and sections to give a sense of the different outlooks, ideas or attitudes that have arisen within the evidence.
- The Theme Book starts with an 'Overall Summary' which provides a broad outline of the main issues and points of debate with respect to campaign groups' activity.

- Each section also begins with a shorter summary providing the same information but about a specific topic. These summaries can only provide a rough guide to some of the key points of agreement and disagreement arising from the evidence. For a more detailed account of particular viewpoints or ideas it is necessary to read the evidence itself.
- Each section provides relevant extracts of evidence drawn from the following sources:
 - witness interviews
 - Commission witness sessions
 - a seminar with the London Civic Forum (LCF)

Commissioners may note that this book is smaller than other theme books. This is because the research team felt that some of the evidence collected for the 'civil society' strand, in particular on the operation of community groups, sits better in the local government Theme Book. Furthermore, no specific question on campaign groups was included in the list that was used to elicit public submissions.

LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

Kate Allen	Director, Amnesty International UK
Ron Bailey	Director, Active Citizens Transform (ACT) & Co-Director, Charter 88
Brendan Barber	General Secretary, Trade Unions Congress (TUC)
Robert Berkeley	Deputy Director, Runnymede Trust
Tony Breslin	Chief Executive, Citizenship foundation
Karen Chouhan	Chief Executive, The 1990 Trust
Steve Crawshaw	Policy Officer, Human Rights Watch
Alison Dean	Policy Officer, YMCA England
Kat Fletcher	National President, National Union of Students (NUS)
Paul Flynn	Member of Parliament for Newport West (Labour)
John Gardiner	Deputy Chief Executive, Countryside Alliance
George Gelber	Policy Officer, Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD)
Vicky Hook	Policy Officer, Women Acting in Today's Society (WAITS)
Neil Jameson	Director, TELCO Citizens
Jill Johnstone	Senior Policy Officer, National Consumer Council
Harriet Lamb	Executive Director, FairTrade
Chris Lomax	Chair, Liberal Democrat Youth and Students
Jonathan Mail	Policy Officer, Campaign for Real Ale
Lord Mancroft	Countryside Alliance Board Member & Conservative Peer
David Marquand	Professor, University of Oxford
Arzu Merali	Policy Officer, Islamic Human Rights Commission
Margaret Mythen	Chief Executive, New Health Network
Peter Owen	Senior Policy Advisor, Department for International Development
Matt Price	Policy Officer, Envision
Simon Reddy	Policy Officer, Greenpeace
Adam Sampson	Director, Shelter
Charles Secrett	Founder, Active Citizens Transform (ACT)
Moira Stanley	Member of The Commission on Poverty, Participation and Power
Peter Tatchell	Civil Rights Campaigner; co-founder of the direct-action group OutRage
Steve Tibbett	Policy Officer, Action Aid
Lord Tyler	Liberal Democrat and former Member of Parliament for North Cornwall
Hilary Wainwright	Editor of <i>Red Pepper</i> magazine; Senior Research Associate at the University of Manchester
Martyn Williams	Policy Officer, Friends of the Earth
Simon Woolley	Founder, Operation Black Vote
Clive Wright	Policy Officer, Groundwork
LCF (F and M)	Female and Male Participants at the seminar organised with the London Civic Forum

OVERALL SUMMARY

The realm of civil society is wide and diverse; it encompasses at least three broad categories of organisations:

- issue and interest groups (also known as campaign or advocacy groups), which champion a particular issue at a local, national and often global level;
- mutual support organisations, which pursue common interest of their members, and are often based around communities;
- service providers, which deliver social services in an alternative to public and private companies way.

The activity of campaign groups is most relevant to the concerns of the Inquiry and forms the subject of this Theme Book.

While issue and interest groups have been part of political and civic life in Britain for many decades, their ability to mobilise support and influence policy-making has arguably significantly increased in recent years. There are two suggested responses to the rise of campaign groups. One approach sees them as a problem which has to be removed by strengthening the institutions of representative democracy. Another approach calls for a profound rethinking of the political system to formalise the role of campaigning organisations in it.

The Inquiry's major findings, however, do not fall into either of these approaches. The evidence presented here suggests that campaign groups provide important lessons about the way people participate in political and social life and they can make a unique contribution to policy process by providing valuable expertise and attracting attention of decision-makers to certain social concerns. Campaigns do not necessarily need to or want to be decision-makers themselves. The overall conclusions drawn from our evidence, therefore, are as follows:

1. People join campaign groups if they can make a direct and tangible input into their work;
2. People would rather support campaigns on specific issues rather than all-encompassing ideologies or manifestoes;
3. People have greater trust in organisations they perceive as devoted to moral causes rather than political advancement;

4. The principal contribution of campaign groups into policy-making is the research and expertise they can provide;
5. A formalization of campaign-government relations might be needed only with respect to improving transparency rather than improving democratic engagement;
6. While campaigns can influence the policy agenda, it is undesirable to formally involve them in decision-making.

Part I. CAMPAIGN GROUPS: DEFINITIONS, SOURCES OF GROWTH, SUPPORTERS.

Summary

We start the theme book by considering what campaign groups are and how they operate. We define campaigns as organisations that take up issues beyond the party political agenda and bring them to the attention of policy-makers. Campaign groups enjoy strong popular support, which often rests on the fact that they promote specific issues rather than all-encompassing ideologies. In addition, they allow their members to have a direct and tangible input into campaigns' work and extensively use new communication technologies. Campaigns' supporters come predominantly from the higher income, higher status social groups. There are three essential elements to campaigns' successful operation: good expertise on the subject, substantial popular support, and backing of the media.

1. Definitions

Although campaign organisations are often referred to as single-issue groups, it is important to understand that they often embrace a whole complex of concerns and therefore develop a substantial and multifaceted expertise on a series of issues rather than concentrate on any one particular problem.

Hillary Wainwright: I have to question this notion of single issue because I think actually what's more interesting and newer is the development of social movements that in a sense are developing a wider politics with a small p. And that what's most challenging to political parties because in a sense there have always been single issues.

Kat Fletcher: I'm not sure anything's really single issue because everything is interim and connected.

John Gardiner: To call the countryside an issue, yes it is an issue, but in a sense it's the wrong word; Our whole raison d'être is to get a better understanding as to why the countryside is important to the nation as a whole; that the countryside is a jigsaw puzzle and if you start plucking pieces out of it actually you destroy the whole. So cherry picking 'I like that bit but I don't like that other bit' is, in our membership's view, not the way to proceed.

Colin Crouch: There is a new level of international activism by social movement organisations, and at the present time there's this curious word NGO that's used to define this kind of activity, which is a strange thing, it just defines organisations as non-governmental so it's a totally residual category right, it's actually social movement organisations, lobbies of various kinds and various things coming out of society.

Charles Secrett: I think there are three types of NGO. You know, whatever sector you look at or wherever, you know, whether they're a sort of businessy type NGO or a community type NGO or a... you know, membership based charity or campaign NGO, and in no particular order. The first is a service provider that actually does things on contract to someone, might be on contract of membership, it might be on contract to government, it might be in partnership with a company. If you had a pie chart, this would be a big chunk maybe two fifths or something would be service type NGO's, practical doing type NGO's, about two fifths by in large would be lobbying type NGO's but NGO's that, very much are on this armchair basis, whether they're business federation lobbying or whether they're a charity lobbying, and that's very much within the system. Treading the corridors of power, doing it on a representative basis, same sort of fault therefore, in terms of the target politics we're trying to... we do it on your behalf, don't worry you can trust us, we'll communicate with you blah blah, we have a mandate in that respect. But it's a close behind the scenes, behind closed doors, cosseted relationship. And then the third type is the more, stand outside, hold to account, we're radically different, bully, pressure, embarrass, you know, try and kick start through publicity or direct action or mass activism of some sort or another. And they're the minority.

George Gelber: Advocacy for us means lobbying supported by research and campaigning to change the context in which our partners have to operate. Here are some examples: If the European Union is dumping subsidised food in developing country markets, it undermines the ability of farmers to earn a livelihood. If drug companies are able to set prices of life saving drugs too high because of intellectual property rules, this impedes the ability of our partners working in health to respond to the HIV AIDS crisis. If countries have to spend all their hard currency on servicing very large debts, then governments can't invest in health, education and infrastructure and so on. These issues are part, a very important part, of the context in which the programmes we support have to function, and if that context is unfavourable, then the programmes are not going to be as successful as they might be.

2. The role of campaign groups

Campaign groups address issues that belong to political realm but are often beyond political party agenda. They thus attract attention of policy-makers to the problems that might not be considered otherwise.

John Gardiner: It's why it's so potent is that at the end of the day if I ask that something be done, I have got to make sure that what I'm asking to be done resonates with people who are volunteers, who've got busy lives, busy jobs and at the same time are prepared to give their all to a cause. To them it's a cause. I remember before the first rally in July 1997, Robin Hanbury-Tenison and I about 8 o'clock in the morning looking at each other and saying: 'I wonder if people are going to come', but then suddenly people came. Tens of thousands people came from all over the country. It was a very moving occasion. I'd never been on a platform before and seen 120,000 people. I couldn't see anything other than the faces of people. Something obviously burns very bright somewhere if people are going to come a long way. We used the words liberty and livelihood. These harnessed the energies of people as to why they wanted to come to the rallies, the marches, we organised a lot of rallies regionally as well as in London. They felt strongly that something wrong was being done, that the liberty of people to choose the way they live their lives was being infringed, that electrified the issue.

The Countryside Alliance was forged because there was a view that the countryside wasn't properly prepared for what people could see was a growing hostility to some activities, particularly hunting and shooting. There were pressure groups that were determined to prohibit those activities. There was also a much wider gulf of understanding about how the countryside ticked, how it's managed. Agriculture is at the very backbone of the countryside in terms of the landscape and of course man's interaction with it all. There was a growing feeling that not just country sports but the countryside itself needed a champion.

Simon Reddy: We've been working on climate change for ten years. People thought we were nutty ten years ago when we said, we need to reduce CO2 emissions. We need to stop drilling for oil. We need to look at a low fossil fuel economy. And that was when everyone was saying climate change wasn't reality. Well now everyone is saying climate change is reality and they're saying all the things that we were saying five or ten years ago. And all of the campaigns, whether

we're working on deforestation and forest degradation, whether we're working on the decline in our oceans, whether we're working on nuclear power, whether we're working on nuclear weapons, all of these things are having massive inherent problems for the planet and people recognise that.

Jonathan Mail: I think we campaign about issues which people, our members really care about and feel passionately about. I think it's an issue that people are in sympathy with. Traditional methods. It's not just beer; it's the whole food industry. Food production is becoming much more industrialised, hence the huge enthusiasm for organic products, and craft products. As an organisation we've benefited from that trend. Maybe a key to getting people involved is to do something from a local level to approach them. A lot of our campaigns are about saving one individual pub or one individual brewer, so to that extent, those are local issues. Maybe the key to getting people involved is to look at local issues rather than some of the bigger national issues. Or if you are looking at the national issues to look at them in a local context.

Steve Tibett: I think the environment is a pertinent issue to many people. Obviously some people feel very strongly about foxhunting and I do think there's a sort of urban-rural tension there. I see these issues as more urban, to some extent, not necessarily the environment, but development. I think on level people will act when something affects them personally and they get angry, and on another level they will act on something that they can see there's an injustice or there is something that needs to change. I mean the abolition of slavery is probably one example, and apartheid is probably another of if you like truly international campaigns, and certainly with slavery, I don't know whether there was much of it in terms of public support or whether that was an elite debate, I don't know, we've never studied it, but even apartheid, that was an international movement of people who said that's wrong, stop that. Again, with landmines, there was a great public campaign, and debt relief, you know, that's being going on for 10 years.

Martyn Williams: We obviously have to have an ear to the ground for local issues and we will get involved and support local groups, in fighting separate issues if they match the priorities that we've got. We've got a team of people whose job it is to know their regions, we have regional staff who will know the south west and will know the south east and there's a London regional member of staff, who will be networking, not just for Friends of the Earth groups but all the other environmental groups and activity groups and voluntary sector and so on, so they will be well plugged in at those levels and then there have been occasions where we've felt it very important to try and establish a local Friends of the Earth group and I've put a lot more time in through our members of staff going to those areas to work with local people to see if they can support them in setting such a group up. For a long time we employed a community worker in Teesside to work with some fairly good sized communities and among the most polluted in the country really, around Teesside and looking at the impact of the industrial pollution there.

Kat Fletcher: To engage young people, you push the right button, it's very simple. you need to find it, on an individual issue. I don't believe students are apathetic, everyone always tells me that students are but I know they're not and that's because, for example, I went to Leeds University, that's where I studied, we had an Annual General Meeting where the students would come together and debate policy, in quota year after year, Leeds have 500 have to be quorum. They're in quorum until the year that I was there and I think in my first year and the youth leader of the BNP was a lead student and tried to overturn the no platform policy in the union and all of a sudden 1,500 students were at the Annual General Meeting because they're button

had been pushed. And I think we all have a duty that when we don't... when we organise something and we don't get the amount of people we wanted to get to it or we haven't quite involved people in the way that we thought we would have done, we need to look at our messages, at our materials, at our campaigns, and go why have we messed this up? It's not about them not engaging with us, we have failed to engage them with us, that's our fault, we need to find the right button.

Brendan Barber: The Trade Unions exist to represent people at work and most of their key functions are carried out at workplace level. They negotiate with employers; they bargain collectively to influence pay and other conditions of employment, pensions entitlements, health and safety standards in the workplace, all the things that matter to people at work, including those things that impact on the quality of working life, the length of working hours. So it's those factors that really influence workplace culture and stresses and strains of working life.

Harriet Lamb: I suppose at the beginning it was about a consumer movement and it was about enabling the public to exercise, to use their purchasing power in a very simple way to be able to change the world.

3. Sources of growth

Campaigns engage public support in a way that reflects social evolution and technological progress. They organise their work in a way that allows people to express their support for the organisations' causes in a flexible and often immediately tangible way. Such an opportunity for a direct engagement is said to be one of the chief reasons for large popular support that campaign groups enjoy.

Social evolution

John Palmer: One reason why the public are doing this is that they're being pushed into the same political telephone box by broader global economic and social forces. Now I don't mean conspiracy forces, I mean facts of life. And I think we are very much in the situation today where people were at the beginning of the movements for national independence and national democracy in the 18th and 19th century when they were discovering that local action wasn't enough and they needed to form some kind of national politics, national democratic politics. If you look at the Chartist Movement in this country and other movements it was all about saying, 'You can't do it in the North East by yourself or in the South West, we need to come together, there needs to be politics at the British level'. It's quite a radical idea for people who've lived in relatively small contained communities.

Colin Crouch: What I meant by Post Democracy was a society in which all the institutions that we associated with democracy remain beautifully in place and possibly even greater pruned and more effective but where somehow the part of the heart of it comes out because the forces within the society that make democracy work as a somewhat prickling and difficult system, weaken. I'm actually talking about a very specific kind of weakening of democracy that takes place within the intact shell and it's the weakening of the ability of middle and low socio-economic groups to develop their own political agendas. There are other kinds of identity which are actually quite vigorous, women's identity, issues around the environment, it's not

really an identity; identities around cultures, whether one's thinking of the racism of the natives or the cultural adaptations of ethnic minorities, but there's a very, very lively vigorous world around that whole set. So I think I overstated but I think in contrast with these bits of liveliness in the polity it's that decline in the autonomy of lower socio-economic groups to define autonomously through their own institutions, a political agenda and the passing of that agenda to the control of professionals in parties and think tanks and associated with that, the shift of power out of the whole system towards private concentrations of global wealth, so that's post democracy.

Steve Tibbett: It is to do with globalisation as well I think. I mean partly the breakdown of that simple working class-Labour Party relationship came from the changing, evolving relationship both between classes and the world, so you basically have more and more of a labour force moving to the third world, just in simple terms. People appear more middle class and they have a different worldview than the traditional working class would have, I would have thought. People are a lot more atomised now. They live in smaller family units, they don't necessarily feel a part of a class in the same way that they used to. So they identify with issues and they identify with lifestyle choices etcetera much more than they do with the task. I heard someone say the other day, I mean this guy, I don't know what his background was, but he was saying I like to hang out with fabulous people, I like fabulous people, and it's that the younger people who associate with a social class group.

It hasn't been very difficult in the sense that it's not like we've created something. It was blatant when we brought it out. I do think basically economics is prime in terms of change. So, the way I'd see it is that there are big movements. Globalisation is obviously the biggest one at the moment, and there is lots of fallout from that in different ways. Of course individuals can make a difference, but I don't think you can just say because NGOs are more successful, I think that's too simplistic. So rather the space has opened up, more people have joined these organisations, more people have joined because they feel disconnected in their lives, in their working lives and in their personal lives from the wider world, but they know that they are connected and they need to find a connection somewhere so they've joined organisations like ours, and that's how they've engaged with it.

Perry Walker: People are no longer engaged by being able to turn up to meetings three times a week, and they are engaged by issues.

Use new communication technologies

John Gardiner: In addition we have what we call the grass e-route, and that is the email facility to get to tens of thousands of people. It is one of the reasons why we can press a button and within 24 hours' notice we can get 4,000 plus people to London, and with a few months' notice we can get half a million. In other words modern communication has inevitably enabled us to communicate more effectively and fast.

Adam Sampson: Some of the most successful activity that's around at the moment and certainly activity that Shelter's trying to build on is built around the use of technology. The anti-Capitalist stuff is all fermented through the Internet, Shelter's campaigning increasingly is Internet driven.

Karen Chouhan: You know Blink is our website? 1.7 million hits per month is what we have on Blink. So it is our mouthpiece, and it is where we put news articles daily,

all of our information, all of our reports; so it's very open obviously because it's going out to everybody. But we know we are hit by a lot of the black community organisations, a lot of individuals. We know that India, Africa, the US all regularly hit the link. Students, researchers and, interestingly, enough a lot of government departments; we get phone calls from all sorts of civil servants saying what was that about so we know that they regularly look. So that's what I mean, it is central to everything we do.

Harriet Lamb: We of course have a website, we send information out, we try to communicate as much as possible with the public, and actually also to communicate to people a little bit when there are problems.

Individual input is more tangible compared to party political engagement

Harriet Lamb: I suppose one of the distinctions is that through FAIRTRADE you can do something yourself, and I guess maybe you've lost that. You can join a political party, but then what do you do? You join a political party, you can go to the meetings, but most people find the meetings bureaucratic, boring, not very interesting. They feel disempowered in the political process. Well, I know only about how the Labour Party operates, and certainly of course there was a time when the local membership of the Labour Party were I think very fired up and they did come with real inspiration and a feeling that they could contribute locally and nationally, but of course I think some of the changes in the party have meant – the good news is – that the Labour Party has power, but the downside is that I think the local grass root back of it has felt disempowered. There were also things that we can all do in our daily life. We all buy tea and coffee, and whatever the government decides to do, we can, in our little way, make a difference by the tea and coffee we buy, and at the same time by using this consumer power, not only would you enable us to make a difference and you'd make a difference here and there to the lives of actually millions of farmers, but you actually then bend the political will because we now can say to the government the public clearly want trade justice because they're ready to buy it every day.

It might be interesting for the people because it is tangible and concrete, and it's something anybody can do and anybody can get a result. So, obviously it starts with you could buy your bananas or your coffee. The next step you can do if you want to get more involved is talk to your supermarket manager, and you could say: "I would really like it if you stocked FAIRTRADE bananas". The main thing is that I think people are not aware enough of the power that they have. I think people feel very overwhelmed by the problems of global poverty or by the size of the companies like a supermarket like Tesco, and what our experience is, is that actually companies listen extremely carefully to what their customers are telling them, and that's exciting because that means if you and I go and talk to our supermarket manager, and enough other people do it, next thing you will find Fairtrade bananas are in our store, and that's an incredible victory and you can think: yes, I've done something. Then the next thing people do is they go to their local council and they say well why don't you have Fairtrade tea and coffee at all our local events, and again, they can score a success.

If everywhere you turn you hear of bad practice, bad things, then you maybe become very cynical and maybe you give up, and I think what's great about Fairtrade is that it is positive. It's really something that everybody can engage with, big corporations, small companies, little tiny companies, and the public, and I think that might be one

of the reasons why it has been growing so fast, and that it is energising and positive and exciting. People can feel good if they can feel change in the way they do things. I think it's that, because otherwise people feel overwhelmed by how many problems there are in the world.

Because Fairtrade is very understandable, we think we're a very good way in for the public to these issues. They buy Fairtrade because everyone can understand it, everyone buys these products, and what we hope is that they will then get more involved in the campaigning with other organisations such as the World Development Movement, and CAFOD are really leading them.

Martyn Williams: If you announce that's what your philosophy is going to be, then the people who want to be active locally will come to you. You've got a different environmental organisation which just sees its local groups as being people who can just shake tins and earn the money; they're going to attract a different type of person, so I think inevitably, if you set out your philosophy and are fairly successful in doing so you will find you attract people. I think we have attracted people who started off working for a different environmental organisation at a local level and got frustrated really with only being allowed to collect money for them in cans on the corner. They want to do something about their local environment. The way in which our groups have formed, there's probably a different story for every group. We've got a local group now but we also have a system of national supports and they're running parallel really, you can be a national supporter and not a member of your local group, you can be a member of your local group but a national supporter.

People go into political parties believing they're joining the political party to have a part in the power structure of this country. I think people join organisations like Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace and WWF not thinking this is a major exercise of some power that they've got to make a change, but thinking that they're giving a bit of money to a good cause and I think that's the reason so I think you can add up the 100,000 we've got as against the 80,000 I think it is that the Liberal Democrats have got, but the Liberal Democrats, those people have gone into it, not every single one, but expecting to serve on a local council, or at least support the local council or aim to become an MP or whatever. They just approach the whole thing with a different mindset.

Matt Price: Politics itself is a bit messy, there's hundreds and hundreds of different separate goals that may be attached to it, there's lots of compromises, whereas if you want to promote fair trade or if you want to get rid of nuclear weapons, then it's a single aim although actually when you break it down you realise it's far more complicated. Also I think maybe one of the things that makes it attractive is because young people are involved, then it becomes attractive in itself because there's other young people involved as opposed to politics where it's much older people who seem to be involved.

One of the problems with politics is that you are meant to subsume yourself to the end so okay I am doing this for the Labour Party or for the Conservatives, whereas a lot of our students are really doing it for themselves and then they're doing it for the team because there's a big sense of community. The team comes up and they do potentially have a sense of higher purpose, I think that's one thing that politics does often give people, is a sense of higher purpose which is important, although I don't think it will be something that engages them but it potentially sustains them and they feel they're part of a vision so there are other students all over London doing maybe not the same thing, maybe not even that similar but they are going out and doing

things. Yes, it's a kind of community of change, people changing things. I guess the other thing with politics is there's potentially a fraternity or a fellowship of people who are trying to make a difference, even though they might be doing completely different things. Maybe one team wants to really concentrate on homelessness, the other team wants to concentrate on fair trade but there's not going to be antagonism between them, whereas in politics if you're a Lib Dem, are you going to be pleased if there's this really engaged person who is a Tory? At some levels you possibly are, I mean when it comes down to community politics and probably in local government, you probably realise that actually just anybody who's engaged is a good thing but on other cases maybe you're just going to be really annoyed with them.

When we go in and present Envision, we really present it as an opportunity for them to make a difference, to make their mark on the world, so we don't come in and say that we're talking about politics and we don't come in and say we're talking about other issues, for example the environment, although we might give examples of those things. I mean if something is directly political, we wouldn't necessarily give an example but if something is directly environmental, we would be giving examples of like recycling or green areas of the school or even something like improving the environment for the school such as the common room or something like that, those can be construed as environmental and so we give examples of them in our presentation, in our engagement presentation. So we wouldn't say this is an environmental project because just the word 'environment' is a bit like the word 'politics', if you said it's political then I think it would turn students off. Things like sixth form gardens or gardens for the school in general, that's improving the environment, a graffiti wall, a mural wall which one school is doing at the moment because the school is quite concretey and they want to paint it, partly to improve the environment to the eye but partly to give different people a chance to express themselves, to make the school their own by putting their own pictures. Fair trade, is an interesting one because that has definite political connotations to it and that is very popular among a lot of teams because we try and encourage them to do practical things that they can actually see the benefits, they can see the impact on the local area but fair trading is more you're raising awareness, you're encouraging your peers to eat fair trading, to understand the benefit of what fair trading means to people but you're also actually benefiting people in another part of the world and also it involves chocolate!

Jonathan Mail: I think people join CAMRA because they believe in what we stand for. And through campaigning we deliver that. I think maybe government doesn't. Certainly not in such a clear way. The non active members receive their monthly newspaper. They'd probably attend their local beer festival, and maybe another beer festival every year. That's probably the limit of most members' involvement. We're trying to get those non active members more involved by making things easier of them.

Kate Allen: I think what we managed to do as Amnesty is to seriously engage individuals and give individuals the ability to make a difference, whether by paying their membership money and knowing that that goes to the work and the research and the campaigning of Amnesty or by actually taking action. I think that one of our key successes, at the heart of Amnesty, from the very start was that kind of engaging of individual members so that they could – they don't all by any means – a significant proportion of them take action. Here in the UK out of our 257,000 something like 30,000 will be regularly active and taking specific action in a campaigning sense. It allows a broad range of input so you can pay your subs or you can spend a significant proportion of your life working on Amnesty campaigns and a lot in between. I think that's been important. I think that it has engaged people because it's

been based on working for individuals too and obviously our work has moved into some big thematic work. The heart of Amnesty is the engagement with particular individuals who find themselves on the receiving end of abuse by their governments and others. It's a very emotional content as it really does appeal to people. I think that that involves people.

It is also the fact that our members organise locally and they do have contact with their local MPs. They do talk to their MPs on a regular basis about issues and about concerns. We organise castings quite often at election time. Particularly at the last European elections we organised some very successful hustings around the country providing a platform for MEPs with an Amnesty person as the chair to engage candidates with their views and their responses to questions based around human rights issues and those were very successful, packed out meetings. I don't think anybody was having packed out meetings at the European elections in this country and ours were. People were very engaged.

Simon Reddy: We have different levels of membership. It's not that you pay for different levels of membership, but people have the option if they wanted to get involved. We have an incredible active supporter network. Some people just like to give money to Green Peace, if they like the work that we do and, therefore, they support us. And other people like to get more specifically involved, i.e. active supporters might want to write letters to MPs, to lobby their local MP, to go and see the local Council, to carry out work on the High Street talking to the public about issues. Not with a view to increasing membership but simply talking to people about the issues that we work on. And the next step is members might actually want to get involved in some of the activities that we carry out in direct action on environment.

Margaret Mythen: It's really people self-selecting. Our members came to us because they are interested in a particular piece of work. They have something to offer. People then get involved; they don't see themselves as members because they're not actually signing a bit of paper or exchanging money. But they would come to us with their ideas or come to us wanting to help out by hosting a seminar or they have an excellent piece of good practice that they can contribute to the debate.

George Gelber: We're a Catholic organisation and if you look at the body of writing and thinking, which is called collectively Catholic Social Teaching, it has a lot to say about the moral and social obligations of human beings to their fellow human beings. This is the foundation on which we build. People who go to church, or indeed to the Mosque or other places of worship are a minority of the population, but they do expose themselves to religious teaching that tells them that life is more than just your immediate family, getting ahead, fulfilling personal ambitions and making a living.. We find that Catholics in general are an outward looking group who are sensitive to the conditions of life of their fellow human beings and prepared to take action.

The ability to make a direct and personal impact is crucial for obtaining popular support

Hillary Wainwright: I think that appeal of Amnesty and quite a lot of other genuine single issues has long been there, that you can do something direct.

Harriet Lamb: I think one of our core concepts in Fairtrade is about empowerment. Now, most of what we are doing is of course about empowering producers. It's enabling them to strengthen their position in the supply chain, because normally they are the weakest link in the supply chain. Any price cut or any demands go all the way down the line to the farmer. The farmer can't pass them to anyone else. The farmer takes the price cut, you've got to make your bananas spotless, you've got to have this sanitary measure, you must have this health and hygiene. It all gets passed down to the farmer and in Fairtrade we are trying to change that completely and empower the farmers through organisation so that they can strengthen their position, supply chain, and get a better price, find new markets etcetera. But what is very interesting I think is that we are also empowering the consumer because it is enabling the consumer to push for these changes from the supermarkets, and actually in the same way, just as the farmers have to be organised, consumers, it's the Fairtrade towns movement, it's about organising consumers. People are coming together and saying let's go and see our local business and persuade them to stock Fairtrade or something. And so it's also empowering internationally as well. I toured Britain with someone from Costa Rica once, a coffee farmer, and he spoke about "if you buy Fairtrade you are supporting democracy in our country because you are helping build communities", and I said to him "you are so inspiring", and he said "no, actually I am inspired when I see what people are doing throughout Britain from Fairtrade, it's really amazing". So it was very interesting that link.

Matt Price: There's the fact that if you do something on a local level, then you see people act. If you're part of a big campaign and it's successful, then you're probably going to feel good, particularly if you were at the culminating event where Gordon Brown announces yes we're going to drop the debt, we are going to drop £10 billion, you are going to feel good about that but on the other hand if you set up an anti-crime day in your school and you see 100 people from the Year 11 go through that day and have a really good time and potentially come out through it with a positive message from that and you were one who organised it, you and your friends made it happen and all the other people, the teachers are really impressed and everybody's impressed then I think that's going to probably have more of a positive impact on you as an individual and okay dropping the debt and running a workshop on crime in a Hackney school, obviously the debt is going to have a far more positive impact on the world but what part did you play in dropping the debt as opposed to the part you played a major part in this project yourself and I think that might be one problem maybe with politics, potentially what we're doing is doing small scale things and we also put in a lot of support to ensure that they happen. That's one of the things, if we just say you can go out and make a difference and then left them to it, I don't think a lot of projects would work.

Our agenda is to empower young people, to get them out there and be included in the world, we want to help them get a self-belief that if they want to change something in the world, they probably can, they can go about and try and they've learnt through our programme things like working in teams, the difference between having an idea and actually trying to put it into action, but when we go into a school we don't say "hey this is a youth empowerment programme, you guys are going to learn so much from it, you're going to be able to do all these things at the end of it" because that's again promising them a long term good that's at the end of the tunnel which isn't that exciting or interesting and so what we're doing is providing something that they would be quite interested in doing next week. Well firstly our presentation's quite exciting, it's got flashes, it's got examples about young people doing projects, doing things, so they think well okay that sounds and looks good and then quite quickly we engage them with actually thinking about what they would want to change and helping them to practically go about changing it.

4. Supporters

A campaigns' supporters usually come from the more educated, higher status social groups; they also often attract people who are interested in political life but do not support any particular political party.

Jonathan Mail: It tends to be social classes A and B, unlikely middle class. We do have a lot of push and there's younger members. And also a third of our members are women.

Kate Allen: Our profile is ABs and that is not surprising really. That means that we appeal to people who have more money in the sense that they have disposable income. One of the things that we've been less good at is being able to have a very good profile of our members. I think that some of that profile is changing at the moment. We're increasingly attracting younger people. We do know that we have a job to do, which is reach out to black and ethnic minority communities in this country. I think that one of the ways that we're looking at this is generational approaches, to get in to and work alongside the students in colleges and children in schools alongside some of the campaigning issues that we, as Amnesty, take up.

Steve Tibett: I think you get different types of organisations would attract different people. So you know, you might have more activist type organisations that will attract younger people. We attract lots of young people as well, but we also attract people in their kind of 30s and 40s who are busy professionals basically who feel something about development and the third world and want to be part of it but don't have the time.

Matt Price: It depends because in schools you have totally different situations but in some cases I would say sometimes they're more middle-class students probably for single issues and sometimes just because they have more... it's not always the case but sometimes they have more aspirations to actually change things, they think yes that is my job, to go around and change things, to make things better for other people. So that is in fact one of the ways in which we've changed our message, in our very first year we would say we might help to make things better for other people, that would probably give the message and that really resonates for middle-class. If you say changed the message to make a difference, make your mark, really prove your worth as a person, that you are changing things, that you have changed something, I think that maybe is a more wider ranging message. I don't know, prove your worth is not actually what I would say but protest yourself, show that you can do things.

Campaign supporters are often party opt-outs

Moira Stanley: No I don't belong to a political party. I would never join a party. I suppose I don't want to be constrained by that, you have to believe that, you have to go with the flow, a bit like, if you don't do it this way, you can't be in this party. Wales had a very interesting situation where the Labour MP for Gwents went independent because the local party had positively discriminated and put five women candidates up, to make sure that a woman would get voted in. He objected to that and I object to that, I don't think that is fair and so he decided he wouldn't stand for Labour, and he

has been a Labour Councillor and has been in the politics for many years. He went independent and the electorate went with him and they voted him in, so Labour has lost one of the most important seats they have ever had. That has been one like the founding fathers came from South Wales, big figures in the Labour movement came from that constituency and it has now been lost through them, through their own stupidity really, so Peter Law is now in Westminster as an independent and not a Labour... but what is happening now is that the local Labour party is going to expel all those people who voted for him. That is what they are saying. So you see I would never put myself in that situation. So although I think of myself as a socialist, I have always voted Labour apart from one rare exception, that was for the Welsh party, but my Labour party, that I would vote for is the old Labour party that used to be, it is not this New Labour that Tony Blair has manufactured.

Lord Chan: Alternatively you have to be a very active card carrying member of the party and it has to be the Government party because the opposition party, well they can jump up and down and criticise but they really have no power do they?

Vicky Hook: I think people can identify more with organizations like ours, than political parties. I mean you've only got to look at the popularity of Amnesty or Greenpeace to see that kind of community activism is very, you know engaging for people. people see more excitement and more energy I guess around single issue campaigns or communities of interest such as ourselves.

LCF F6: For me I wouldn't join a political party because it means I'd have to tow somebody else's line and I'm not doing it. I'm interested in the issues more but if people have joined it's their prerogative to join a political party but people that argue against each other just because they're from two different parties, even though they may in principle agree on the same issue, and to me that's wasting time. if you are dealing with issues at the local level it's the issues that matter for me, not the partisan part, and if I want toilets open I don't care if a Conservative opens them or a Liberal Democrat. I don't care who opens them as long as they're open. So my priority is more about the issue than the particular political thing. But I realise you have to understand how politics works at the local level to get anything done, because it's like a big game.

Alison Dean: There's no confidence in any of the parties really. Because they see it as grown up people in positions of power being quite child like in terms of campaigning against each other. Young people want to see that whatever party were convinced, 100% convinced in what they were saying and what they say they're going to deliver, they deliver as opposed to spending 50% of their time developing policies and strategies and the other 50% trying to destroy the other parties around. HD Parties try and do is claim to be able to deliver and achieve more than what's actually physically possible. There is strength in numbers in terms of parties but I do feel as though they spread very thinly what they can kind of invest into particular issues so for me at the minute it's fairly 50/50. I think if we had various issues and they were led by strong people who were convicted and basically did what they say there were going to deliver, then I would probably opt for that as opposed to investing into a party that doesn't really know what way they're going and at any blow of the winds they can change the policy to suit what you know, so I think I would probably be more inclined to go with the single issue.

Brendan Barber: It's a relatively simple thing to identify with a single issue campaign. If you like real ale or if you have a sporting interest or a particular political interest on an issue like amnesty or poverty which Oxfam or War on Want or some of the other NGOs may focus on. And that's not a complex relationship; that's

expressing an affiliation, an interest, a commitment, wanting to show support in some tangible way by paying a membership fee or whatever. The relationship with political party is more complex because political parties have to deal not just with one issue, from a particular standpoint. They have to deal with all the complex morass of issues and particularly, when they get power, they're faced with very hard choices. And power is hard. Opposition is very hard of course because of the frustrations and the impotence but in other ways it's easy because you don't actually have to make the decisions and then see the consequences of those decisions come down the track. Power is hard. But whether you're in opposition or in power it's a much more complex relationship with the political party with all the uneasy compromises. Maybe you'll like this bit but you're less comfortable with that bit or that policy.

5. Modus Operandi

Campaigns operate on the basis of three pillars: they provide expert knowledge on the issues of their concern, they draw popular support to convince policy-makers of the importance of the issue, and they also use the media to attract popular attention to their work and also influence policy-makers.

A. Expertise

Jill Johnstone: I think single-issue groups have a very valuable role to play because they will do detailed work and produce detailed analysis on issues that are of public interest. The public discourse in the UK will be an awful lot less vibrant without them. They are contributing those perspectives. I mean it should be heard. They are usually representing the un-represented in a different sort of a way. I mean if you think about the environmental organisations, you said they're representing future citizens. They are representing an important public sort of area of public interest, which would not be represented without them, animal welfare organisations, development organisations, as well as doing some very important delivery work in developing countries, they are producing vast amounts of really useful information which needs to be put into the political process.

Adam Sampson: When I was Deputy Director for the Prison Reform Trust, I used to appear on the radio and write policy papers and get the Home Secretary out of bed in the morning to get on the radio and somehow nobody ever questioned why the hell it mattered what I said. But there's a sense in which Shelter and a lot of other voluntary sector organisations have no locus, we have no democratic locus, why should government listen to me any more than listen to a representative? There is no constitutional reason why they should, none whatsoever and it's not even as though... okay Shelter's a moderately large organisation and we actually deliver a significant number of services but in a pure campaigning organisation I've still got quite a lot of access to Ministers, we weren't delivering money, we weren't delivering votes, we weren't delivering services, what the hell locus did we have? And it seems to me the locus that we had is information, we had information and expertise and that is the key that gives you power. We live in an information age, if you know stuff and you can marshal arguments well and if you can marshal arguments in a way and know information in a way that can be sold onto the media and so on and so forth, that gives you power and what we have in the campaigning sector is we have information and that is what backbencher MPs don't have and that's what makes us powerful.

Kate Allen: I think the reasons why we're effective with government are also the reasons why we continue to have a good membership and growing membership, which is that we put great store by impartiality and our independence. We're separate from governments and from party politics and religious affiliations. We set huge store by that and work hard to maintain and protect that. I think that that's hugely important. The credibility of our research is at the heart of what we do. The combination of impartiality and effective research, I think, makes it very difficult for governments to say we don't know what we're talking about or that we're biased. What comes out of our research gets more attention and we're able to use that to campaign very effectively.

Margaret Mythen: What we want to do is make sure that the people who are developing policy have exposure to all that information and knowledge and experience that we know is out there already and that they're not just getting their messages from one or two people that they might use as advisors. It's widening the base of where they're getting their information from.

Jill Johnstone: One of our strengths and one of the reasons people listen to us is the quality of our research. The quality of the work that we produce, the research and the policy analysis we do is good. But that research goes wider than consumer research. But it's also analytical research. I mean examining markets for popular competition, making complaints to the IRT about markets that need investigating. Sometimes we know this is an area of consumer concern, I mean these things come up as consumer concerns through complaints, but it goes much wider than that.

B. Public support

Simon Reddy: The reality is that if you want to bring something to the attention of a Government or bring something to the attention of policy makers, you have to have public with you. If I were to walk in there with a membership of myself and no others they wouldn't listen to me. Our membership and the fact that we create public awareness about environmental issues is what, hopefully, makes the politicians listen because they listen to the public. Globally membership is, I think, about 2.5 million. I need to check that figure. And the UK it's about just over 200,000 I believe. Comparable to the Labour Party membership? I think considerably more at the moment.

I should also say obviously the Government or politics plays an important role in the work that we do. But I like to think that we're not just about everything that we do is focused on Government. I think also a lot of what we do is also just focused on raising public awareness. That is as important. Sometimes you can have a situation whereby you can sideline Government over an issue. If a Government isn't prepared to take on an issue and deal with an issue and you can actually achieve the same objective by raising public awareness and working with industry and the Government then becomes completely sidelined. And so eventually you end up in a situation where while we're not necessarily pressuring Government to make policy changes, but everyone has changed the way they behave and the Government's actually running to catch up.

John Gardiner: The Countryside Alliance is its membership. We're sitting in an office here in London, and whenever I go and speak at meetings and someone says what's the Countryside Alliance doing about this or that, and I turn round and say the

truth is the Countryside Alliance is everyone in this room. In other words its strength is its deep-rooted membership who are the life blood of the movement. You cannot have a political movement unless you have motivated and energetic people. They feel that way because they believe in something. One of the reasons why the Countryside Alliance is a vibrant organisation is if you go to any of our demonstrations overwhelmingly young people are there. If you looked at any of the photographs in the papers, the profile of our membership covers the entire range. We've just started a free membership for under 19's because we feel it is important to encourage the next generation to fight and work hard for the countryside. So I think it's about believing in something. That is the potency.

Kate Allen: On the membership front, we're now almost two million members worldwide. Here in the UK we have 257,000 members, which is certainly more than the Labour Party has at the moment. I think that membership's been increasing over the last few years and particularly here in the UK.

Martyn Williams: Ever since we were set up Friends of the Earth has very much believed that, it's worked on the philosophy that you're only going to make these changes if you have some sort of mass movement behind it. We have around about 100,000 members.

Jonathan Mail: In politics it's not just about being right, it's about having public support behind you; you have to have a very convincing argument. We have 75,000 members.

Kat Fletcher: Since 1920s, which was a handful and of higher education elite, middle, upper middle class men mainly coming together, we've grown to become the biggest and strongest National Union of Students in the world and now represent 5.2 million people in 700-ish colleges and Universities. we're the biggest democratic organisation in the United Kingdom, we're bigger than any political party, the trade union, pressure group, anything, we've got 5.2 million individual members, which gives us access to high level of Government in a way that other people don't have.

Harriet Lamb: The FAIRTRADE Mark is only as good as the certification system that lies behind it, and only as good as the public recognition of it, so then especially in the early days, the communications team was absolutely essential to this office, and what we have is somebody who works on press, someone on the web and talking to campaigners. So, we have a communications team whose function is to help build consumer understanding of the problems of world trade, understanding that Fairtrade is a solution, and we do a poll every year, and half the public now recognise the FAIRTRADE Mark, half the population. Half the people have seen the Mark before and half of them recognise it. We think it's an international development issue, which is normally a high priority. So half the people recognise it and then we ask the types of questions like where you have seen it before, and again, we ask people "how did you know about it?", and a quarter of people have heard about it by word of mouth, which again goes back to the campaigners. So, the communications team and what they do is absolutely vital.

Steve Tibbett: The government can't act without the public support, so we do need that fulfilment of their needs as well. I mean the other point about it is that the government needs us in order to move, so just very simply, if they want to increase development aims, they need to show they are up for the constituencies, the health service, education and other spending partners. They need to be able to say well

look, this is an important issue not just for the Labour Party, but in the public mind's eye, that is really important as well.

Lord Tyler: Some campaign groups have a huge membership, and the classic being the environment, the RSPB. I can't remember how many hundreds of thousands of members they've got, but it's bigger, I think, than all the political parties membership put together.

C. the media

Martyn Williams: We have a lot of media output, an enormous amount, again if you compare it to other organisations who don't do very well in the media. And that's both at national level being quoted in The Guardian but also at local level. We've got ex journalists, and we have our own publications so we do have people who do interviews for Friends of the Earth supporters' newsletter, but I'm not sure if you'd call that journalists really.

Simon Reddy: Of course media is important! First of all, the key thing is you should always try and do direct action because you actually want to have an impact. You want to actually try and stop something. You shouldn't ever really embark on direct action simply to achieve the media. But if you do embark on a direct action to stop something happening that is wrongfully happening, then you should also use the media or use the media interest in that to generate public debate about the issue that you are highlighting or the issue that you are raising. And so yes we will take media with us. We will have cameras taking pictures. We will invite the media to come with us if they want to or we will provide them with the footage.

John Gardiner: our organisation has been very much like a brand is with the media. If you were to go into Google and key in Countryside Alliance there are probably a vast number of media acknowledgements; references to the work of the Countryside Alliance; the Countryside Alliance pioneering and pushing forward issues from A to Z in terms of rurality So the media is a very important aspect of getting the message across. You could say the countryside punching hard within the media, trying to get a better hearing and understanding for rural people.

One of the great advantages in a sense is that we can put people on the television screens and people on the streets. In terms of the recent election campaign there is no doubt about it that thousands and thousands of people from rural areas worked in the General Election in a way they probably would not have done 20 years ago.

Jonathan Mail: The four people who had the idea of CAMRA got together and formed CAMRA were national journalists, and so in its early days, CAMRA had excellent media coverage, which I think gave us the edge and enabled us to attract thousands of members, which is now 75,000. Without huge media support and support among MPs, many government departments would ignore organisations like ourselves. You've got a government that's sensitive to what's in the media and even if you have a couple of well placed articles in the national papers, that can affect government policy.

Peter Tatchell: T I think there is a problem in that there are some social movements which are not very media aware and not well organised. The issues they're raising are fundamentally important but they don't get a voice because they don't present

well. A classic example I'm working with is whole question of Zimbabwean exiles and asylum seekers. They've got an incredible moral case for justice yet, despite all the help and advice, they will persist in calling demonstrations outside of media hours, in the middle of the night when no-one's going to be around to cover them. And sometimes I want to scream but that is a real issue and a real problem. But it's just about really a learning curve. All I can say is that Outrage hasn't got an office, we haven't got any staff, none of us get paid, we haven't got any organised funding, we do everything on about £3,000 or £4,000 a year yet we've got global media coverage about our issues and campaigns. So there ways that even small, under funded organisations can do things, providing they learn the basic tricks of the book, so to speak. And I think it is a really important question of empowering people and making the democratic process accountable and to make sure that those people have those skills so that they can get the media coverage, get the access to politicians that Outrage and other social movements have over time learnt how to do.

Steve Crawshaw: Human Rights Watch employs only 200 people around the world, yet we manage to maintain a visible public presence through our communications work and work with the media.

Jill Johnstone: We use the media extensively. We have not got any power of persuasion, so we will try and get a lot of media attention to things that we wish to say. For us it will be working with and persuading policymakers, and that's wider than the government. Media is in a sense a way of assisting you in doing that, you know, drawing attention, making the issue a high profile issue, which means it's more likely to get attention.

Karen Chouhan: The media is our friend really. A lot of the tabloids we despise for what they do around race equality, but for the most part the media is a channel for cultural influence. If we can work with the media, and we can for large sections of it, to change that cultural discourse in Britain I think they can be very, very powerful allies. We know that they're also quite dangerous in that because they're so powerful, one of the things I told you at the beginning that what I want to do is change the way in which we even discuss race in Britain, we need the media on board for that to happen because that's the way in which you create hegemony, you use the cultural tools that are available to you. And we've got to be able to do that. I prefer to see them as friends; I prefer to see them as people that we should be able to at least have a mature relationship with. But there are some newspapers that I would always back off from until they showed me something different

What makes a good campaign

George Gelber: It must address a genuine issue. We must have some chance of success. We must be able to unite with others. For development agencies as for everyone else, unity is strength. And the campaign must be well designed. We must suggest to people actions that they are able to carry out. That's just about it. So, it's a question of the issue and the objective must be achievable in some degree. If you have an impossible objective people get very discouraged. It must be a realist view; it must be achievable. It must be something that people can do. We don't ask people to do things that they are unable to do. Sending a postcard may seem a small thing, but it is something that most people can do. And we bear in mind that in asking people to send a postcard to the Prime Minister, we are asking them to to put themselves on the line. We must be truthful and we must be able to substantiate whatever we ask people to say.

We have to demonstrate that current policies are not working, or they're not working as well as they should, that objectives that they have set themselves, such as the millennium development goals will not be achieved, and what makes this persuasive is if you can show them convincing research, evidence and case studies. Good research lies at the bottom of a lot of advocacy. Second, it helps if you can show that ordinary voters actually care. Clearly for ordinary voters in the normal run of events what is important to them are the bread and butter issues that affect them, health, education, taxes, law and order. These issues, it almost goes without saying, are at the top of the political agenda, but we have been successful – I mean we the development agencies – have been successful in raising the profile of development issues, which are about the lives of other people far away who don't vote in the UK.

Simon Reddy: Well you have to identify what the campaign is or what the problem is. You investigate that. That might be nationally. That might be internationally. So our forest campaign works on a number of fronts. It works not just in the Amazon. It also works on ancient forests, so it's not just looking at the destruction of the Amazon, the tropical rain forests. It also is looking at the destruction of a forest in Finland and in Sweden and in Canada, The Great Bear rain forest is something that we've been working on for a long time. So you look at the problem, you look at how big the problem is, you look at where the problem is and you gather, you investigate, you gather all the information together and then you look at it strategically. And, obviously, you then analyse what's the best strategic pathway for raising these issues and for achieving certain objectives within the campaign plan. So you have an overall objective, which is to protect ancient forests and that might be a ten year objective, and you can have a five year objective or you can have a number of one year objectives that will get into a five year objective. So it's analysing, strategizing and then there'll be different strands and there'll be public objectives and political objectives, identifying political forum that we could feed into. And all of that changes as well as different parties come in and different countries or public awareness is changed in different countries and you might have to alter the strategy to meet with that. So you're constantly re-checking and looking. Then there'll be a market strategy to it as well. So yes it is quite complex.

Steve Tibbett: There are five organisations so we have come together and what we have done is agreed a common programme, and the ways we get to government, I mean very direct lobbying, trying to get access through those channels to Ministers, the Prime Minister, senior civil servants, special advisors, students of the servants, and we've had many, many lobbying incidents, but that's through the structure of make poverty history. So, that's a very direct way, lobbying, and we had a manifesto, which we published, of our demands, and then throughout the year various activities to highlight those demands. So we had public events, actions, texting, we used celebrities a lot to sort of endorse those messages, and then we had sort of big public events like the rally last week in Edinburgh. There were a quarter of a million people, and then at a very big level we had the Live Eight concerts, which kind of gave it that very broad public backing.

Kat Fletcher: We run national work with Ministers, lobbying, setting up key allies, coordinate MPs to run our campaigns and be our voice in Parliament and do all that national work and they're sitting in those meetings and debating hour after hour and then we run engaging campaigns that engage our student unions into doing work locally and nationally, so that's about them taking on individually, individual MP's, political candidates etc in a variety of different ways through their surgeries or through demonstrations etc and then we coordinate them into national action where we bring them together as a mass voice so when we came within three votes when

we were dealing with top up fees we had a national demonstration that year of 40,000 students, specifically on the issue of top up fees. We'll aim to bring them together to do mass lobbying work and coordinate generally the students getting their voice across in all those different sort of routes.

II. WHAT IMPACT DO CAMPAIGN GROUPS HAVE ON THE POLITICAL SYSTEM?

Summary

Campaigns are seeking new forms of engaging people in politics. Whereas several decades ago civil society organisations used to be linked to particular political parties, which accumulated and represent their concerns, campaigns deliberately eschew association with any political party, so as not to limit the circle of their supporters. Instead, they seek to engage directly with principal decision-makers, such as national governments and also powerful actors on the global level. They seem to generally receive good access to the executive, as the government embraces the campaign's agenda as a proof of their engagement with society.

1. Broken connection with political parties

While issue and interest groups have existed for centuries, the nature of their involvement with the political arena has recently changed. Traditionally, such groups were intrinsically linked with political parties, or tried to influence politics through the medium of Parliament. Currently, however, campaigns groups seem to deliberately avoid direct association with political parties. They argue that issues they champion can appeal to members of all parties. They still engage with MPs, but political parties as such are not the primary route through which campaigns seek to promote their agenda.

Issues and interests cut across party lines

Tony Breslin: the interesting thing is that the single-issue campaigns of the past tended to have a root to formal political representation. The trade union movement had broadly a flow through to the Labour party and a range of more business focused bodies tended to have a flow through to the Conservative party. Now, if one takes, for instance, all of the people that might be involved in a very broader sense, in green issues, from animal welfare to global warming, there isn't naturally a flow through for that cluster of issues to a political party. I think one of the things that the political parties have not done, is ask themselves, what are the new alliances built around, because in a sense when the alliances were around - to put it in the old language of the Left - capital and labour one did at least have political parties that one could say at some level reflected this distinction. But if one takes, as I say, the alliance of issues that we now have around green matters, the alliance of issues that we now have around health matters, the alliance of issues that we have around the countryside, which somewhat ironically is rather different often to the green agenda, how are the political parties remodelling themselves to in a sense capture those bigger constituencies?

Politically, we've always been a very broad church: Andrew Phillips is a Liberal Democrat peer, our Chair, Michael Maclay, is a former adviser to Douglas Hurd, the Conservative Foreign Secretary, Cherie Booth is one of our Trustees; so we've always had a wide political breadth and we engage politicians from across the spectrum in projects such as the youth parliament and political journalism competitions. One of the things we've sought to do is to build a consensus around the importance of education for citizenship across the political parties. Crick's Committee - on which we were represented, and which developed the proposals that were to lead to the National Curriculum order - had this political breadth. People like Kenneth Baker, the former Conservation Education Minister were on it as were key Liberal Democrat and Labour figures.

If we go back 25 years, 50 years, - and I don't want to paint the picture of a golden age -, we find a lot of local political institutions that were somehow tied into the national political picture, for instance the affiliation of lots and lots of working men's clubs, through the CIU to the trade union movement and hence to the Labour party; we find chambers of commerce, we find active local trade union's branches, we even find groupings such as the Free Masons; we find a range of faith linked organisations such as the women's group that my mother belonged to, the Union of Catholic Mothers. All of these kinds of groupings were much more vibrant. All of these kinds of

groupings have now declined in size and influence. They played a key educative role.

Lord Mancroft: My organisation, the Countryside Alliance, has historically been associated with the Conservative Party more than the others, and we spent ten years distancing ourselves from the Conservative Party and trying to attract support from the Labour Party.

John Gardiner: the Countryside Alliance is punctilious in being an apolitical movement. Our interests are supported by people of all political persuasions within our own set-up. We have a Labour peeress as our president, we have members of the board who are of a particular political persuasion but their focus is on rurality and the interests of rurality. We have members of all political parties. We wish to remain apolitical for very sound reasons that if the Countryside Alliance is to do its job properly in the end we must break through the misunderstandings and perhaps the prejudices and work hard to get a better grasp of why the countryside and its activities are important. A example of this is the Hunting Act 2004; I think the evidence will show that this legislation has been bad for rural communities. Some people suggest this was an animal welfare measure, which of course I don't believe it was, the Hunting Act does actually adversely affect wildlife, and its proper management, which, again, is a great national asset and resource. So for all those reasons we need to send our message to all political parties. We want all political parties to understand and reflect rural interests. We have certainly not felt it appropriate to become a political party. We think that would actually sideline the rural interest because we think the rural interest should be at the bedrock and mainstream of all political parties and therefore we have dialogue with all political interests and will continue to do so. We have strong and great supporters in the Conservative party, in the Liberal Democrats, and some notable parliamentary supporters in the Labour party; but the Labour Party at the moment has people representing constituencies who really have been deeply prejudiced in the way they have defined the whole hunting battle. Again, it goes back to why there is resentment in the countryside; about the way they've been handled and dealt with by parts of the House of Commons.

I cannot envisage a situation where we would want to form a political party. Our membership is made up of people of all existing party political persuasions and I think it would be a distraction for us, as a political movement, to get ourselves in a position where we are seeking to supplant the political parties. I think we think that the interests of the countryside are better served by seeking a continual dialogue with the political traditions and the party political interests of the country. That I think is the best way forward for an organisation like ours.

Martyn Williams: There is a very big role to play in putting pressure on parties through public mobilisation and by getting people to contact collective parties directly. And that's very important to move all of the parties forward rather than either forming a party yourself or taking that one forward or joining into an existing party and trying to make differences to that ones policy, and actually there is no particular reason why either the right wing or the left wing or the euro sceptics or the europhobic party should be interested in protecting the environment and the other side of the argument shouldn't be, it's one of those things that ought to have resonance right across the board.

Kate Allen: There was always that sense of being above and beyond ideology. That translates into individual countries as ensuring not party political allegiance. There is a very British thing about that. I think that many single issue and movement type

organisations like Amnesty, for example, have wanted to ensure that all political parties have their concerns at their heart so that they wanted to influence all political parties about human rights so that when any of them are in government they're putting human rights, hopefully, high up or at the centre of their concerns. To us it's straightforward. The way to do that is not to be identified with one party because it damages your ability to have influence with other parties. That's our history, while also recognising that what we do is extremely political. The content of what we're doing, the relationship with the State, with the individual is very political content but it doesn't have to be party political.

Vicky Hook: We don't align ourselves with any party, we're independent but we... the overall aim of WAITS as I said is to get women to engage with and help, work with decision makers and policy makers, so the people that are making decisions in their lives and in that respect we do work with politicians and we do get them to listen to the views of the women that we're working with.

Jill Johnstone: We are very careful never to be partisans. As an independent public interest organisation we don't align. We will of course seek to align politicians with our perspective, but we would not align ourselves with a particular party. You have to be seen to be independent. It's terribly important for your strength, but also you are putting your organisational future at risk when there is a change of government. We are partisan to consumers but not being aligned to a political party is incredibly important.

Simon Reddy: There are lots of people in the sector that do work with political parties in their own personal right.

Brendan Barber: The TUC has 69 affiliated unions. Of those 70 or so affiliated unions most of them do not have a party political affiliation. Most of the bigger ones do and in total, I think, the last estimate I saw was that we have this arrangement in Britain whereby to have a party political involvement and relationship, a union has to have a political fund and individual members of the union are entitled to opt out of paying that political fund contribution when they pay their union subscriptions. So, having taken all that into account, about half of the trade union members in Britain pay a political levy to support the Labour Party. So about half the trade union members do not pay a political levy. For the TUC we've never had a direct affiliation relationship with the Labour Party because our membership is some who are affiliated and some that aren't and we've always been independent of the Labour Party. Though, of course, we've always had a much closer relationship with Labour than with the other parties. There's much more shared territory in terms of policy standards and our overall objectives are clearly much more in harmony with Labour than with the other parties. But we try to ensure that trade union issues are communicated to all the parties and we make briefings available to Conservative Party people, the Lib Dems and the other mainstream parties. They get in touch with us sometimes and we make sure they are briefed on our concerns and if you go back a little while, before Mrs Thatcher's term of Government, it was often said that when the Labour Party went into opposition that didn't mean the Trade Union Movement went into opposition in the event of a Conservative Government being elected. Because our legitimacy does not come from a political relationship with the Labour Party; it comes from the fact that we have a representative capacity in the workplace. It was only Mrs Thatcher who really treated us as if we were a political opposition rather than a legitimate interest group with a legitimacy that comes from our representative capacity looking after people in workplaces. The previous Conservative Governments had accepted that the Trade Union Movement had an established seat at the table on relevant issues.

Political parties are not the primary focus of a campaigns' activity

Jonathan Mail: Through MPs we interact with political parties. But not directly. I think it's quite difficult to access the party headquarters. I don't think political parties make themselves easy to interact or deal with. If you look at the party conferences, that's the primary opportunity for a political to interact with the voluntary charity, not for profit sector, but organisations like ourselves are excluded from those events because of the costs. To organise a party conference would be beyond our organisation. To run a reasonable event, a party conference, at least £15,000. You could do it cheaper, but it wouldn't be a good event, it wouldn't have the impact you need. I think it would be better spent elsewhere.

Kate Allen: One that I would say is that I think that political parties need to engage with some of these single issue and social movements that are taking place. I think that too often we see an attempt to manage those movements rather than engage with them. What is the connection between the decisions that are potentially going to be made in terms of G8 and debt and the movements that have been arguing for that? It feels like one is trying to manage the other rather than one is fully engaged with the other. We work with political parties as well. More around election time we tend to do that to make sure that the manifesto reflects our issues. In the past we've been very unsuccessful at that, but this time we have been very successful. But that was really because these issues are so high up the agenda it's politically important for the government to have them.

Steve Tibbett: There is the perception that if issues get prompted by political parties in some ways, then they take the impetus out of the campaign.

Martin Davies: We work more with policies, either directly with the government itself or trying to engage perhaps more with individual MPs rather than trying to influence party line.

Simon Reddy: If the Government is ignoring Parliament, then there's no point in me concentrating on Parliament. I need to concentrate on the Government. I approach it very pragmatically. If I can have the access to the one that's making the decisions and I can influence those decisions, then that's a lot simpler from my perspective, in terms of the amount of effort I have to put in. And in terms of the amount of people I have to employ to achieve that. The downside is that that party is more powerful and so I have to work harder to get it to hear my point of view. So there are pluses and there are minuses.

George Young: I think that there is a problem in that a lot of the interests are, as you say, single issue interests. The trick...is for the political parties to identify with these single issue organisations. It's something which the Labour Party did very well up to 97 and they had a sort of umbrella coalition which embraced a lot of these single issues. The single issues groups are never going to elect their own members of parliament; but members of parliament will never have legitimacy unless they relate to the single issue groups, so you've got to ...build the bridge between the single issue group – the RSPCA for example – and the political parties; and I think both are groping towards each other. It's a rather difficult dialogue because the single issue groups want to remain non partisan and the political parties don't want to be captured by the single issue groups, so the terms of trade are rather difficult ones and we do

need a much more effective dialogue and a great confidence between the two. I'm not sure we've got that balance absolutely right at the moment.

2. Focus on the executive at the national level

Campaigns generally get good access to policy-makers; this is despite there being no formal procedure for that purpose. The government is responsive to campaigns, because it allows the policy-makers to claim that they are alert and responsive to popular concerns. There is a debate among campaign activists about the extent to which campaigns should engage with the government: some say that it is important to preserve their independence and position in all circumstances, whereas others seem to accept that they must make concessions for the sake of establishing stronger cooperation.

Access to policy-makers

Access to government: good

Martyn Williams: I would imagine, and it is something of a stab in the dark, but I would think probably every couple of weeks some of our policy officers meets a minister, and it's not always the same one. But I would think that's a sort of reasonable guess. I would think probably at least twice as often there'll be contact with civil servants and at times the contact with the civil servants might be very close if there's something they're particularly interested in and we've been campaigning on and have a lot of information, there can be very close relationships between particular civil servants and experts here in exchanging information over a short period of time and there may be a period where there isn't any.

Steve Tibbett: As NGOs we have good access anyway, so generally speaking we meet with government people on an almost weekly basis, and that would just be across the sector, the big agencies, the BOAG agencies, CAFOD, Oxfam and Save The Children. The five directors of those organisations were sometimes the policy directors at my level would meet with Hillary Ban anyway on a monthly basis, and they would often meet with Gordon Brown, occasionally meet with the PM, and then at other levels in the organisation, we've had regular meetings. So you know, there are regular meetings and then there are specific subject meetings. So, building up to the millennium summit, which is coming up in a few weeks, we'll meet them a few times to discuss what we are going to be lobbying for and what their agenda is to see where they overlap and see where there are differences.

We have always had a reasonable access to the department of international development, but the old international development department wasn't very powerful. I wouldn't say it's just about the Labour party, I think we now had a Conservative government, I think international development could be a lot higher on the agenda, but in terms of NGOs or charities or the third sector as lobbyists, I mean I didn't spend a long time as lobbyists before '97, so I don't have a great instance to compare, but my sense is that yes, we've got much better access under the Labour government, partly because it's a Labour government and there's a lot of two-way traffic between this sector and the government, and mainly it's people who work in

this sector that go into government, but it also goes the other way. The head of research at Oxfam at the moment used to work with DFID and before that he worked with CAFOD. So, there's a lot of revolving door stuff, and lots of people do that. It tends to happen more at the bigger agencies. You know, at Oxfam particularly there's a lot of three-way traffic there.

John Gardiner: Certainly we have relations with ministers and officials and we endeavour to get our message across. Our interchange with the government is obviously with DEFRA; the government department for which indeed we campaigned. We campaigned for a department which encompassed rural affairs, because while everyone in the nation, from town to country, wants good schools, good hospitals etc, rural affairs needed to be looked at in a more rounded sense so therefore we were very pleased that a department covering rural affairs was formed. So we have a dialogue with DEFRA and we're involved.

Simon Reddy: We submit to Government reviews. We have regular meetings with Ministers. We work with special advisers. We meet with Civil Servants. All the NGOs in this country have access to Civil Servants, to policy people, to Ministers, in that they are able to go in there and make their case. That is the reality of it, that we have built a name around Green Peace that I like to think has earned a lot of respect both publicly and politically. And so if we asked to meet with politicians or with Civil Servants to discuss issues of policy or issues of the environment then they are happy to meet with us.

Kate Allen: We do get good access. We talk to government in the sense that we have a range of contacts from ministerial level through to senior civil servant level to ambassadors going overseas. We provide briefings for each new ambassadorial posting. We provide training on human rights to foreign staff from the service level through to senior cabinet ministers. We have that access in terms of government.

Alison Dean: A lot of our work tends to be reactive. Any kind of Government initiative and that, they get in touch with the YMCA. They will identify the most appropriate person to feed into and if that's actually getting a group of young people together then through various youth workers then we can do that, but it does tend to be more reactive as opposed to proactive at the moment. The youth participation and youth governance agenda pushed the last 18 months/12 months, then in the near future we are looking to have much more of a vocal and a more proactive approach in terms of how we engage with political institutions.

Margaret Mythen: We don't have, like other organisations, a government affairs structure so our interaction would be by just inviting people to our meetings. So they come because they feel that the issues that we discuss are of relevance to them and our meetings sound interesting. We would have civil servants and ministers and advisors come and others who are associated to other organisations. What we don't do is say, right, this is what we want to get out of government and so we're going to have this meeting and specific cases are going to be made. Instead, we are trying to influence thinking before legislation is made. It's more about the influence that the government has in the implementation of legislation. So it's the messages that are around how it's implemented.

Harriet Lamb: I think the government is generally supportive and the Department of International Development correctly identified that Fairtrade was an easy and

accessible way to raise issues about development with the public, because obviously the Department of International Development needs the support of the public. They need the public to care about tackling international poverty, and I think they identified correctly very early on that Fairtrade was a way to take those messages out so that every time you go shopping you are given a way to think about these things. The government give us financial support, and the Department of International Development, DFID give us a major grant. For years they've given us grants. So some of it is the communications work, something like Fairtrade Fortnight, our major activity, they give us money to produce the leaflets for example. Now they have given us the money that's helped the Fairtrade towns work, and they also have given us a major grant to develop new products.

Peter Tatchell: We also sit down and negotiate with government ministers, the police and so on and so the stunt is just the beginning of the process. And we marshal a whole reservoir of research and case histories to substantiate what we're arguing for so that we come to sit down, and people in power who often think perhaps we're rather lunatic, dangerous people, are often surprised that we actually have very practical, tangible, concrete proposals that make a lot of sense.

Access to government: bad

Jonathan Mail: At the moment we face a huge challenge to get government departments to recognise our legitimacy and listen to what we say.

Access to parliament: good

Martyn Williams: We all give evidence at select committees. We do, environmental groups do, we all give evidence. I mean organisations quite often are maybe attached to committees as experts for particular enquiries. I ought to tell you what we do with each; the difficulty is we don't have a very centralised system, I'm the Parliamentary Officer, but I'm not the only one who goes down and talks to MPs in parliament, we've got lots of experts on particular subjects who will also spend quite a lot of time talking to people.

As far as parliament is concerned, from a sort of national sitting in head office point of view, I mean there is an awful lot of contact with members of parliament but actually that's the smallest part of it, because most of the contact that goes on from Friends of the Earth to members of parliament goes on through our members and supporters writing to their member of parliament rather than us sitting here and writing to them ourselves. So again, maybe once a week or so, someone from head office would meet a member of parliament or have a chat with them on the phone, or they may phone up to ask questions about what's going on in the select committee or something like that. But really if you ask members of parliament how often they hear from Friends of the Earth they would think it's a lot more than that, and probably I'd suggest we're one of the most regular contacts with them, but I think most of it comes from our local group.

Jonathan Mail: We also probably work more with individual MPs as a whole to put pressure on Whitehall and ministers to listen to us. And it's almost always the case that we use MPs to enable us to get a foot in the door, to get a meeting with ministers. As a campaigning organisation, often if we write to ministers and ask for a meeting we won't get a meeting. If we ask a MP to act on our behalf, we will get a meeting. The most difficult thing is actually getting to speak to ministers. People can lobby their own MPs. Two things we've had big successes with, by producing lobby

postcards and getting members to send them to their individual MPs, and another has been setting up an online lobby system, so people can go online and E-mail their MP form the CAMRA website. That's worked incredibly well. We encourage all the branches who hold beer festivals, to invite MPs along to open the beer festival, to come and do a judging at the beer festival, so they have a relationship with their local branch.

Kate Allen: In terms of parliament we have a huge range of access and relationships with different MPs, all parties, and through parliamentary committees. We give evidence, for example, to the House of Commons' foreign affairs committee on an annual basis. We're usually invited to give oral evidence as well. I think that we can bring pressure at the local level as well as at the national level. When we've surveyed MPs about their attitudes to Amnesty it's been very interesting because they've commented both in terms of their relationship with us as a central organisation and the lobbying that we do and they've commented about the lobbying that happens at a local level within their constituency. They've talked about both.

Barriers: to access

Martyn Williams: The barriers to just one of our local group members, writing to their MP and saying will you support this campaign, I think there's a few there. I think one is that for some MPs, they don't agree with us, that's fair enough; they're entitled to not agree with us. There are a lot of MPs for whom the barrier is all to do with their position in the party, whether they agree with us or not, it's a bit difficult to say but they don't feel they can stick their necks out on this issue because it might affect their promotion or it might make life difficult for them within the party, or the whips have told them not to, or whatever the reason might be. So that's a huge barrier. But it's just an institutional barrier, most MPs whether they're on side or not, they're dealing with a lot of stuff, their natural response is to fudge an issue. Do you support this, natural MP language will come back saying; I think you've raised a very important issue and I'll certainly bear this in mind in future, and that way they've not committed themselves to supporting it or not supporting it so they've got you off their back and hopefully you'll go away. That's a huge barrier.

There's a barrier of the way in which parliament works. Only this week, we've been asking our local members to write to MPs to ask MPs to sign an early day motion, and someone wrote back and said my MP said he can't sign early day motions, and I had a look on the website, and my initial thought was well parliament's only been back a week, he probably hasn't signed any, but I'll see if he signed any last year and let them know. I had a look at this MP and parliament's been sitting for something like six days and the MP had signed 32 EDMs and yet he writes to his constituent saying I can't sign EDMs. So the constituent who doesn't understand parliament, he doesn't know what a bloody EDM is, they just think I've been led up the garden path by Friends of the Earth, he can't, parliamentary rules prohibit him, so therefore I can't blame the MP. So there are all sorts of barriers in all sorts of places.

With ministers, there are barriers on money, there are barriers on, well you might get the Environment Department on side, but not Trade and Industry. Government is being lobbied by counter pressure on many of the things that we are fighting for. Where we think there should be much better energy efficiency in houses, house builders don't want to spend the money making new houses more energy efficient, so they're fighting on one side and we're fighting on the other and the Government doesn't seem to be happy, if it can upset both of us it thinks it must be about the right

place, in the middle, so it's those sorts of things, so there are endless lists of barriers I think.

Tony Breslin: I think one is that you learn that there is a bureaucratic process that I think is probably as difficult for the politicians as it for us, that overlays - and I think it overlays rather than underpins - the whole process of Government. You learn that policy is much more socially constructed and reinvented continually. A lot of our work is supported through the corporate sector, through business, through charitable foundations and so forth, but when we speak to Government one of the things that is the most encouraging is also the most concerning.

Barriers: to influence

George Gelber: The difficulties are that essentially we are a single-issue group and government is bombarded with messages from other single-issue groups and the government has to decide the priority which it gives to competing demands from different groups, and it is the government's job to trade off these demands. One recognises, perhaps not in public, that we will not always get everything we ask for because it is the government's responsibility to balance out these competing demands. But we also seek to persuade the government that is about more than balancing demands from competing interest groups and that development is a strategic, long-term issue that is important for the UK and its citizens and is a moral issue in its own right.

Jonathan Mail: The obstacle is that there are competing priorities for the government attention and there are also people lobbying against what we're lobbying for. For example, licensing reform, CAMRA supported it as a consumer organisation, the industry supported it, but there were big health lobby groups, which opposed licensing reform. On an issue you will have organisations that will support a change, and you will always have, on whatever issue, organisations and individuals who will oppose change. Our members lobby MPs on our behalf, so there will be people in their constituency who are lobbying them with our message. We're very successful in getting MPs to support our campaigns. The problem we face with ministers and with back row is actually getting access and getting into see them.

Kate Allen: I think that our difficulties these days are around the way in which the government is seeing the post 11th September agenda in terms of human rights. There is the danger that we point out to the government again and again that the UK's approach to human rights is hugely influential in terms of the way in which the world responds to these issues and so the fact that the UK government has inactive legislation in the UK around anti terrorist legislation, control orders does set a bad precedent in terms of influencing the world. These are some of our current concerns at the moment, that the security agenda is being pursued at the expense of human rights and not incorporating human rights and that that can lead to the UK government's role in terms of human rights being not as positive as it could be.

Simon Reddy: The difference, I guess, between us and Government is that the Government has to serve many, many masters. They have to remain in power and therefore they have to keep everybody happy and that therefore have a lowest common denominator problem. We don't so we can seize on an issue or a campaign on something that is happening that is wrong and we are in a position to make people see why it is wrong.

Government engages with campaigns and seeks their approval.

Martyn Williams: Again, on a small number of occasions, because they think we might know something they don't know, on a probably larger number of occasions, they listen to us because they think... they don't listen, they get us in to talk to us, and then they can say well we're talking to Friends of the Earth about this, probably carry on doing the same thing, it won't make any difference. And on an even smaller number of occasions I think they talk to us because the pressure which has built up from the campaigning which we're done has got to a situation where they feel they have to listen to us, they have to respond to...

Jill Johnstone: I work quite closely with American colleagues and they don't have the same entrée that we do in the UK. They have to shout on the outside, is the way I express it, while we have the opportunity to be on the inside as well, and obviously NCCs you could say is quite privileged because we have been set up by organisation, but others have earned their own respect basically. It has been growing, but I don't think there has been a sudden jump. I mean I think you have had a growth, particularly in the '90s, and it's quite interesting to look at the environmental movement I think when you look at this, because a lot of groups started off very much as pressure groups, and particularly in the environmental movement, telling business and policymakers everything they were doing was terrible. Some of their arguments started to become mainstream and so then policymakers say right, well what should we be doing then, and actually the environmental movement found that a little bit hard because they had been so used to nobody taking any notice of anything they said at all that it took them a little while to adapt to actually adapt to being part of the policy protest and coming up with positive recommendations about how to change things. So I mean I think it has been gradual and maybe it's recognition that life is more complicated, but I mean also the organisations themselves have in a sense earned the respect and earned the respect for their ideas and arguments. NCC I would say by the time you got to the end of the '80s, things were changing quite a lot. In a sense there was general recognition that there was validity in having all these public interest people involved. I think it was non-governmental organisations becoming better at their job, you know, becoming much better at engaging, you know, growing up, and if you think it has been a huge process of change over the last couple of decades. When I think about the way policy was made, it was business and business with government and occasionally the Unions, and nobody else.

Adam Sampson: Actually one of the rather bemusing truths is that I realise that I have more power, political power in my job now than I would have if I were a backbench MP, that's what it feels like to me. I've probably got more liberty to get access to Ministers, senior Ministers now than I would have and that stuff has been said to me by backbench Labour MPs who are interested in issues. So in other words if I want to say something, if I want to influence government policy on housing, there are two or three backbench Labour MPs who are fantastically good on housing issues, much better than me, much, much better than me but if I wanted to influence the Minister or officials, if we decided it would be me that would do that because I've got a bit more power than they have which is very curious because I have absolutely no locus whatsoever.

Anonymous: We've never had such an interest from government as we have this year, so many phone calls. I suppose the bottom line is for those politicians that prioritised our issue this year, last year, they know that those on the left are looking at

the NGOs for the sort of expert analysis of what is delivered. They need us to say yes, it was a good deal, so that they can take the praise and the points. Senior politicians put huge amounts of time into this effort

Jonathan Mail: This is obviously a simplification, and clearly there's always shades of grey but the ones who are broadly sympathetic and who want information to help them make a speech in parliament say will contact us, they are the ones who will phone the office in the middle and they're on side, they agree with not every dot and cross of what we say, but they broadly think we have some useful ideas and they want to be able to use that in a debate and that's a fairly small number of MPs, if it's rounded up, you're probably talking 50 or 60 MPs. The rest of them I think listen to us because I think that it's not us centrally that's contacting them, it's their constituents and I think that's a really important part of it, they need to listen to the people who they then want to vote for them; they need to listen to their local group, because they then think their local group is going to do a newspaper story setting out where the MP's position on a particular issue is; if they want to hold a public meeting and get the MP along to talk at it, all those sort of things, so the reason they listen to them is because they really are their constituents.

Alison Dean: The voluntary sector particularly within the last 5 years has been given a lot more credibility and a lot more kudos than what initially they used to have. I think it was always perceived as the poor relation whereas now you know, the statutory sector and private sector actually recognise that voluntary organisations do have a really valuable service to provide and that they've got a long standing history of working with particular groups in particular ways, so I think the voluntary sector has actually probably increased its influence and its power within the last 5/10 years, particularly the last 5 years. Also coupled with that is the emergence of children's Trusts where the voluntary sector will have quite a strong voice and this whole way of working with other services, the whole way of commissioning role, so again the voluntary sector fits very well there, so your organisations like NYA, all the major kind of voluntary organisations have got more weight in what they say now. I think the statutory sector now is starting to sit up and think, our partners are voluntary sector, we really need to work much more closely because in actual fact we could kind of jump ahead and leave the statutory sector falling behind because they're not prepared to work with innovative ways and kind of learn from our ways, our methods and what we've delivered over a number of years, which have been tried and tested. That's why we're most successful in terms of what we say we're going to deliver, we deliver and usually exceed. I think it does because again, through Kevin Williams is our National Secretary and through our parliamentary department, we do have a say because nationally we are one of the largest youth organisations and internationally one of the largest youth organisations so I think politically we can influence because we have the expertise and we have staff that are working on the ground that can comment on particular issues or particular agenda items and targets that are set in the Government to say, yeah that's actually what we're looking at or that's completely detached from what's actually happening in reality. So I think politically we do have quite a strong voice. It can always be improved and I think we are looking to improve that but it is something that I think we do give a lot of time to and try and influence as much as possible.

Charles Secrett: I don't think that service provision, lobbying or stand outside and shout, actually increases accountability. It more highlights what and where the problems are.

Campaigns as allies or critics of policy-makers: debate

Ron Bailey: NGOs often have more members than political parties and they're underplaying their use. They're not saying you politicians, you do this and we're going to hurt you, you do this and we're going to chuck you out. You broke your promise and that's it. And they're not doing it and there are very few exceptions when that happens. It's influence by deference and it doesn't work. It's not about making sure the news editor gives you a ring, or imaginary corridors of power, and most of the NGOs are completely hung up on that. Mustn't criticise Patricia Hewitt too much because she's actually on our side, blah blah blah, and if I do she won't invite me to these meetings again, so I'll lose my position of influence. It's complete bollocks. What should happen is you should have the strength to say well I'm glad you criticised that white paper because it leaves room for development of nuclear power. And I'm using that as an example but it may not be the point. It's a perfectly good example. The people who are saying it are against nuclear power. Mustn't say too much about the white paper being dreadful because that might annoy them, annoy our contacts with the civil service and annoy the ministers who are on our side. Crap. That's influence by deference and it doesn't work, and nuclear power is going to come to the Commons agenda right now because they didn't say that then. It doesn't work. And we need influence by clout and we haven't got any clout. When I was in Friends of the Earth in 1997, I actually said that Friends of the Earth say that the biggest thing facing, in 1997, facing this planet is climate change. The Labour government ignored that. Thing on the biggest problem facing them, and they all pack up and go home. And they're going to fail by a third. And the environment movement has failed. And unless it gets people and mobilises them it will fail.

Simon Wooley: In 2005 you're allowing the government of the day to implement such profoundly racist policies, precisely because you bought into the system and you're no longer independent enough to say that this is wrong. In many ways this is what happened with the war. If it was a Conservative government there would have been four million people on the streets and yet what happened was exactly the same thing with the Labour Party. For me there's always a danger when you get too close to power. Of course you want to get close to power to lobby but if you allow yourself to spiritually and professionally get too close to power you become compromised. It's having that independence. A classic example that I see with such brutal independence is Helena Kennedy, as a matter of fact. When the new government came in she was sent up to the House of Lords with a title and that should normally silence you – that's it, you're finished – but her integrity was such that when she saw things that were wrong she said they're wrong and she's become a thorn. Why is she the exception to the rule? Most people that accept these are too close to power and then are silenced because they feel that they owe a debt of gratitude. You cannot run a country with this kind of patronage politics, this debt of gratitude that allows you to keep quiet on such fundamental issues as war, ID cards, immigration and asylum.

Simon Reddy: The thing is that being involved in these things has its pluses and it has minuses as well. Because sometimes it's easier to stand on the outside and tell people what you think they should be doing, than it is to be involved in the process of how they should achieve it.. The more you get involved in the debate, well sometimes you can't see the wood for the trees if you're involved on the inside. Whereas on the outside, you can look at something and say, this is inherently wrong. You cannot fish the world's fisheries' resources to the point of collapse. This is crazy. So you stand on the outside and you can say, well you must be mad. And you can make that point publicly and you can make that point politically. Then to get involved in a discussion, well how do you address it then? And how do you give it all

up and how do you make it work? How do you restrict things, etc., etc? It's very, very time-consuming and you could argue that's it's not the role of Green Peace to get involved in that detailed policy discussion as to how you achieve the objective. Politicians will go: yes we're going to deal with it. And then what we actually come out with at the end is a load of rubbish. Because they've sat there in a room and they've deliberated for hours on end and they fail to agree so they come up with a fudge. Whereas if you could have sat in the room with them, you could have kept saying, no you've got it wrong, you should be doing it like this. So yes, in many cases, but it's finding that balance between, one, not being so involved but it takes all of your resources and all of your money and all of your people to actually effect that decision. But, two, not to be so far away from the decision making or the policy formulation process that what they come out with at the end of the day is something that is completely unsatisfactory, because then you're back to square one again.

Anonymous: We set quite a high bar in terms of our goals somewhere down here. We need to tell the truth and we need to have credibility, and we wouldn't have credibility if we say oh, everything the government did was fantastic. So it's always important that we have distance between the government and ourselves. Not everyone agrees with this point of view by the way. Many people think it should be a lot nicer to the government.

Karen Chouhan: We're looking at people power. We're looking at ordinary people doing extraordinary things. Political power yes, we can't be naïve, we can't say that we'll just operate totally outside of everything; we can't. It would be really good to have allies in terms of MPs and Lords and peers. It would be equally good if they felt they needed us more than we needed them, and that's the kind of thing that we would hope to build.

Anthony Barnett: Single-issue campaigns, which have grown phenomenally and are now extremely wealthy, and many more people are members of these than are members of political parties, and many more people are signed up for make Poverty History than have actually become, in any way, active in the last two general elections. But, these campaigns still have to go into a policy making process where, if you like, priorities are established and decisions are taken, and *that* process has now escaped the kind of democratic accountability of a party process. It is therefore highly open both to the interests of Government administration and Government departments themselves and their mentality, and to corporate and other vested lobbies. Now, the lobbying of the single-issue campaign is, if you like, a democratised version of that lobbying, but it still generates a dependency upon power and, indeed, with the G8, what we see at the G8 Summit is almost a glorification, a celebration, literally, a celebration of that power as a means of then saying –'your so wonderful and powerful' now do something, something to make people better. But it is the political, the choices and the priorities and the consequences and the building of that. Where does that go? And *that*, if you like, is democracy.

Paul Flynn MP: the first question I put down in '97 to Tony Blair was to publish a register of all the contacts he has, formal and informal, with lobbyists and similar organisations. He turned it down but I think it would've helped to at least make that transparent, to know who's tugging the arm of government, who's persuading them.

3. Campaigns are global actors

The issues taken up by campaign groups often cross the boundaries of nation-states, and campaigns therefore operate on the global level. They seek to ensure that their issues are represented at global and international fora, and also seek to ensure accountability of global actors.

Global reach

George Gelber: If the European Union is dumping subsidised food in developing country markets, it undermines the ability of farmers to earn a livelihood. If drug companies are able to set prices of life saving drugs too high because of intellectual property rules, this impedes the ability of our partners working in health to respond to the HIV AIDS crisis. If countries are having to spend all their hard currency on servicing very large debts, then governments can't invest in health, education and infrastructure and so on. These issues are part, a very important part, of the context in which the programmes we support have to function, and if that context is unfavourable, then the programmes are not going to be as successful as they might be.

Simon Reddy: We are a global organisation and we tend to focus on global implications of nuclear proliferation and environmental degradation, separately to, say, in terms of the earth. We tend to work on global issues.

Steve Tibett: I think there's an inevitability about this as the world moves closer together and as we are aware of these connections a bit more, we travel more but also people come here more and we have cultural globalisation, we have economic globalisation, we have in some ways political globalisation through the UN. Many of us in this sector don't necessarily see politics at a national level. I mean we sort of think more of ourselves as global actors, so in that sense if you start to think globally, then you start to see – just very crudely – poor people in this country are not as poor as people elsewhere, and so you suddenly have a different view, you set a different prioritisation. That's not to in any way undermine campaigns in this country for bond loans etcetera. You know, most people are very sympathetic to that. It's just their priority would be a global kind of view. So, we know that the actions our government take are actions that can't speak for other countries.

Harriet Lamb: We can make a huge difference but we need changes to international trade laws as well. I mean that is absolutely vital that we make international trade rules fairer, and we would always say that Fairtrade is if you like showing the way and what we need is governments to then reform international trade rules so that we really have the trade justice, which at the moment trade laws are incredibly unfair. We are part of the whole Trade Justice movement, a coalition of over 60 I think NGOs, and they are doing the lobbying, and we are part of that bigger network. We have a head office in Germany, and something like a third of our budget goes straight to the international level. We are quite an international movement, and we then employ inspectors throughout the world who visit the producers to check that the producers are organised and that their use of the premium and the extra money they get from Fairtrade is decided upon democratically.

Jonathan Mail: We're a member of the European Beer Consumers' Union, an organisation set up by CAMRA, it has representation from 14 or 15 countries. That's

go members of Consumer organisations in other European countries are now members of that. So through our membership, we can talk on behalf of European beer drinkers. We first address the European parliament, secondly the Commission.

Martyn Williams: Friends of the Earth is an international network rather than a body which was set up at some global level and then opened up offices in various countries so we're a network of organisations that's spread throughout the world. We actually have more groups in the developing world than we do in the first world, or the developed world or whatever you want to call it. So it's spread bit by bit, and sometimes it's been new organisations that have been set up in order to form a Friends of the Earth group in a particular country, and other times it's been a group which has very much shared our aims which has joined the network which already exists. About 100 countries are covered by the network.

Martin Davies: We engage a lot because we're part of an international movement. ATD Fourth World is an umbrella body for ATD Fourth World national organisations in about 27 countries and so we link up a lot, especially at a European level and work in tandem with ATD Fourth World in France, Belgium, Germany, Spain. I would say more than anything, at European level, it's mainly to learn from one another. For example in Luxembourg, a very tiny country where you don't imagine there's any poverty, those who are living in poverty are even more excluded because everyone knows each other in Luxembourg as it's so small. But one of the things they really concentrate their action on is culture and the importance that people in poverty attach to being able to participate in cultural life. And so we took part in a meeting that was between ATD representatives in Luxembourg and Holland and France and the UK and each country presented why culture is important to people who live in poverty. And it was essentially people living in poverty who explained that and also explained the different ways in which they carry that out. So, for example, in Luxembourg they run a lot of painting workshops, in France they presented a choir. And so that really is an opportunity to learn from what other people are doing and be inspired by what they're achieving. It's especially being able to exchange practice, exchange information, exchange knowledge and learn from each other and be inspired by each other.

Representation at the global and international fora

Simon Reddy: We have observer status on the UN and numerous international and regional conventions. So we have access to all the UN meetings and to things like the International Whaling Commission and the commission on trade in endangered species, United Nations informal consultation process on the oceans, the UN Fisheries and Agricultural organisation, we can go to any of those meetings. We actually have a flag, so to speak, or a plaque. So at the Ospar convention we actually have a plaque that says Green Peace and we sit in the same room next to the countries that are going to be represented at the Ospar convention. The Ospar is quite a progressive convention. And so when I put the Green Peace flag up the request to speak will be taken in the order of who put them up. Not, 'you're an NGO you've got to wait until after every country has spoken'. One of my jobs, prior to this one, was as a political adviser for Green Peace International.

Martyn Williams: We would be lobbying at G8 summit, we've lobbied at all the Kyoto meetings and all the various meetings which have gone along. When we've lobbied the WTO, I mean any of these global institutions that does exist, we are likely to be

involved with the network, not just Friends of the Earth from England, Wales and Northern Ireland, but using the network to put pressure on those global governance things

George Gelber: There is a programme of international events. We know that the World Trade Organisation has a ministerial meeting every two years, that there will be a crucial meeting in Hong Kong at the end of this year and another meeting in two years' time. The World Bank has its spring meetings and annual meetings in the autumn where it discusses issues of interest to us. The G7 Ministers, or the G8, meet every year. Each time these meetings take place there are certain things on the agenda, which the government is going to have to address because they are on an agenda which is not under its own control. So, that gives us an opportunity to say to the government what we think its position should be at these international meetings. The European Union also has its own set of international meetings, Councils and Ministers and so on.

Martin Davies: ATD has a delegation at the European Union and so we feed into the work that they're doing and influence what the European Commission's priority should be eradicating poverty.

Jill Johnstone: We are members of the European Consumer Organisation. It's members are consumer organisations in all the Member States and we all pay membership fees to them, but they also get a substantial grant from the European Commission, which in a sense is the Commission saying it's important to have this voice heard, and a lot of the time we work very closely with them. They're a small team but we're incredibly effective, and you will hear industry this week complaining about effective they are, which is a real compliment to these 20 people. So we will work them, but we'll also establish our own relations. One of my roles is to make sure that we have good relations with DG SANCO and with other parts of the Commission that are working on areas. So you build up trust and respect by doing good quality work and maintaining those relationships.

You try and keep in touch with UK MEPs, particularly on the committees that are important to us. I mean it's a long time ago now, but we did take a competition case to DT Competition in the early 1990s. They refused to investigate and we took them to the European Court, and in doing so we established that we have standing to take them to the European Court and we also won the case, not that it had any impact on consumers, but it was important. So, I mean within the European institutions there's a recognition of the validity of the consumer voice being heard, and as I say in the case of the Commission, there's money on the table to help that happen.

Harriet Lamb: The agencies who set up the Fairtrade Foundation (Oxfam and Christian Aid among others) are also and always have been lobbying for bigger changes in global trade rules. At the time it was the GATT, now it's the WTO or the British government or the EU, and they've always been lobbying for changes in the big political parties for the policies on international trade.

Campaigns contribute to accountability of global actors

Colin Crouch: Now of course within that world one has got a whole range or the whole total spectrum of political activism but the ones that we're particularly in are those that actually try to fill what I talked about earlier as the very thin regulatory space of the global economy in that they are targeting large corporations, challenging them, sometimes naming them, sometimes working with them and there is

developing an interest in certain experiences now, mainly concerned with the oil industry because this is the one that is exposed at the maximum number of levels and the exploration of oil as an extraction industry usually does very little for the economic infrastructure of the society it's in, it tends not to, just have a spin off in a lot of other economic activities. It generates enormous amounts of wealth that normally lead to an exaggeration of existing disparities of wealth within the society. It creates filth and muck in the environment and it just so happens that oil tends on the whole to be found, with the exception of Norway, in places with appalling human rights records anyway. So the oil companies find themselves in the midst of all the awful issues of our time. And some of them, a few of them, British Petroleum deserves special mention actually, it had tried to respond in a kind of positive way to that and actually do listen to what the movements are saying and do sometimes recognise that the movement organisations can tell them things that they can't find out for themselves actually. And then one sees also some voluntary bodies and charitable organisations, Amnesty would be an interesting example, developing particular corporate departments that deal with the issues of what global companies are doing. Now in the grand scheme of things this is all a very small bit but it is something and it's an interesting development and worth watching.

George Gelber: Most people who have studied those issues would say there's now a democratic deficit at the global level that global economic institutions such as the World Bank, the IMF, the WTO are quite strong, but there is no global decision-making or political decision-making. We have the United Nations only, which is much weaker than the global economic bodies that I mentioned, and we are struggling to bring global economic activities and rules under some sort of democratic accountability. I don't think we're going to get a global parliament, and we have genuine problems. I think it was Daniel Bell who said nation states – and he was talking about states, not about global institutions – are too big for the small things and too small for the big things. High tech companies, or companies which incorporate a lot of research and technological development in their products, invest so much in developing their products that they need to have access to virtually global markets. If you are going to launch a new car, you want to be able to sell it in every country in the world, or a new computer product, because national markets, even the biggest of them like the United States, are still too small.

Martyn Williams: I'm not immediately attracted to the idea that we're the only voice of a civil society, because actually most of the ministers in there ought to be the voices of people, they are democratically elected on the whole. But I do accept that there does appear to be a huge distance between those negotiations, just the way they've been run, the secrecy that has surrounded many of those organisations. I know that they are changing and being forced to open up, but even G8 at the minute, you can't approach anywhere near, you've got to be miles away, you're being checked up on. Even if it doesn't make any difference to the way the actual G8 is run, even if you say, Jacques Chirac and George Bush wouldn't be very impressed by a bunch of people marching past the door it's not going to make any difference and they'll see it on the telly anyway even though they're a hundred miles away. It does give that impression doesn't it of some sort of global elite going away and making deals behind closed doors without the rest of us being able to see it and I think that's very dangerous, so yes I think there probably is a need for some other way of involving people at those levels, because at the minute the way people get involved is by having riots, smashing the place up which isn't very useful.

I don't think there necessarily has to be an open boardroom, I certainly think there do have to be changes in whom corporations are answerable to and being answerable not only to shareholders and having a duty only to maximise that profit which is what

their legal situation is at the minute, is just not sustainable. Whether you have people sitting round the boardroom table who represent those things or whether you have a new set of directors' duties that says they have a legal duty to wherever possible minimise the environmental impact, minimise the impact on societies and to consult with people who are affected before they make major decisions which will affect them, and all those things could be enforceable through the courts and those people don't have to sit in the boardroom, but if they're not going to be consulted they will be able to put a hold on those plans in some way. So I think it's extremely important that we know and hear who they're accountable to but whether it's through the boardroom or not, I'm less convinced that's the solution.

Chris Lomax: I work for a large company myself in my full-time job and I think our law on companies is still based around treating them as an individual, very much in the same way as a person would be treated in law and that I think is a big problem when you have a company which spans different countries and has operations in many different areas, that's not something which an individual can do and I think that we really have to understand and interpret a company which can do that in a different way to an individual which can't and the companies are now bigger than the state. Certainly the relationship in the past has been designed and defined in terms of a company being underneath the state in terms of its level of power, now that's not the case and I think we do have to start looking again. The kind of things we should be looking at I think are more corporate responsibility, so companies not just reporting on financial matters but also reporting and being held to account by their shareholders or by a wider group of people than just their financial shareholders and that's in terms of their environmental performance, in terms of their social performance and also in terms of their financial performance. It would have to be done through some kind of regulation. Some companies are already doing this voluntarily so some mutual companies are doing this voluntarily, actually inviting other people and their shareholders, people who have say a position in the local community or they'll have a representative board from all backgrounds. There are lots of ways in which companies have a very direct impact on the social fabric of society and the fabric of the planet basically which I don't think is taken into account despite the world numbers themselves. The Co-Operative tends to have that kind of engagement.

Arzu Merali: Recently we embarked on a campaign against Oxfam, this sounds really dastardly, but it was against an agreement they had with Starbucks, and that is not just ourselves, quite a few organisations, sort of became involved. Oxfam has terminated that contract so they listened to the protest, of what seemed a very uncomfortable in a kind of mild way in the relationship between an organisation with such sort of profound moral values as Oxfam and a company like Starbucks and for us it seems to be, you know we did not particularly go for Starbucks, as Oxfam was sort of saying, can you please re-evaluate your interaction with this organisation because I don't think any of us thought that we could have any impact on Starbucks which seemed to be quite ridiculous sort of idea to even think that you could speak with a moral voice to companies that are kind of, I think in most people's perceptions completely unaccountable and really in many ways driven by everything except for ethical policies regardless of what they might say. So it was at the point where they interacted with society and again that might be with Government where you actually kind of hold out some hope and some kind of, I hope not pretence, but some hope that there is some kind of structure that either was there or could be revived or some value that you could hold on to, to say well hang on, please stop please, you know, re-evaluate but it is almost like legitimising the power of multi nationals by going to them direct and we have all been quite wary of that.

III. WHAT DOES THE RISE OF CAMPAIGN GROUPS MEAN FOR DEMOCRACY?

Summary

The final section draws on evidence relating to the impact of campaign groups on democracy in general. Following from the previous section about changing relations with principal political actors, the evidence presented here suggests that campaigns have acquired political weight and that they also encourage political participation in general. Further, we expose the debate about whether campaigns signify the failure of the representative system or are pioneers of an alternative mode of policy-making and participation.

We further take evidence on the change to the nature of political representation which campaign groups may induce. Finally, we list the arguments about the institutionalisation of campaigns, and demonstrate that while they want to have an opportunity to voice their concerns, they do not necessarily wish or seek to participate in decision-making in general.

1. New political actors?

Campaign groups are not new, but the fact that they have a direct and independent political weight is a new phenomenon, which needs to be recognised.

Tony Breslin: For me, the interesting thing is that the single-issue campaigns of the past tended to have a root to formal political representation. The trade union movement had broadly a flow through to the Labour party and a range of more business focused bodies tended to have a flow through to the Conservative party. Now, if one takes, for instance, all of the people that might be involved in a very broader sense, in green issues, from animal welfare to global warming, there isn't naturally a flow through for that cluster of issues to a political party. I think one of the things that the political parties have not done, is ask themselves, what are the new alliances built around, because in a sense when the alliances were around - to put it in the old language of the Left - capital and labour one did at least have political parties that one could say at some level reflected this distinction. For me, the interesting thing is that the single-issue campaigns of the past tended to have a root to formal political representation.

Ron Bailey: I've been involved in civil campaigning since the late '50s, 1959, but before then there have been citizens' movements. The suffragettes' movement was a citizen's movement; the Chartist movement was a citizen's movement. It may be that the nature of the citizen's movements has changed somewhat. Certainly the environmental movement is a new phenomenon that didn't exist 50 years ago, and secondly I think that the big movement, and I suppose I would say this wouldn't I

because I was the initiator of it, but I think direct action is a part of civil society, and the squatters' movement was started in 1969 and direct action on housing matters has been a big feature of the last 30 years or so. But it's not true to say that citizen's movements are new. Inevitably they're going to change and in 50 years time we'll look back and there'll be other new things. And the big new things are squatting, housing, direct action, feminist assemblies' movement and the environmental movement. So they're not new but they may have changed. But what there hasn't been of late is a citizen's movement in relation to the state of our democracy.

Martyn Williams: It depends how far back you go, there's the Diggers and you go back to the '70s and you see CND as a very major pressure group acting outside a political party, you can go back a bit further and see the squatting movement and how that affected our housing provision. If you go back far enough you can go back to the Diggers who were the squatters the first time round, so I'm not much of a historian but I don't really think it's new, I think that there are obviously different styles of things, the changing nature of media and the changing nature of public relations, means that we act in a different way to the way the CND did, but at the end of the day, it's all just pressure being brought by non party political organisations, by citizens groups trying to put pressure on the government.

2. Campaigns are proponents of political participation

Campaigns groups encourage participation in political process.

Martyn Williams: Local campaigners always have a thirst for knowledge that will back up their arguments and as they start to say 'well look, we can't build this road because it'll stop us taking our dog for a walk', that's not a very good argument, therefore what else is going on, they've already built one road and the traffic seems just as bad, that's funny look at what happened up the road in Birmingham, the same thing, happened, we can make common cause with those people, so they might start off being bothered about not being able to take their dog for a walk but fairly rapidly they see the flaw in the whole transport policy going down to building those roads and they want to get involved, and once the campaign for their road is over they're interested in GM crops and they're interested in climate change and everything else and it spreads.

Chris Lomax: We run a huge schools event ourselves every year and we've run it for the past twenty years. It's called Westminster Day and we generally get people who have been studying politics at 'A' level although we sometimes get the whole year of 'A's levels and we have about 3,000 people down, young people down into Westminster where we have a whole day of events and debates which they can participate in and ask politicians questions and we used to do tours of the House of Commons but unfortunately we're not allowed to do that anymore, security is too much of a risk.

Robert Berkeley: In terms of BME communities or certain BME communities, there has been a long tradition of getting engaged in politics around single issues, especially if it's racism or fascism, yet if you look at the history of activism around race, it's largely those communities that are most under attack at the time. So in the 70s and 80s African-Caribbeans set the agenda; the Asian communities were more involved throughout the 1990s; and in the 2000s you've got the Muslim groups. It's

almost that to actually stop being politically engaged or politically active is a statement that you've achieved some goals.

Clive Wright: We have changed the park there, by involving people so it becomes their park, getting their views about what should change, getting support through the statutory sectors, but local authority getting them behind that, is creating a feeling that it is our park, taking a strong lead from what people want to see and building them the capacity then there, so that they can start managing those things going forward, so that particular example I am talking about we have got young, viable groups meeting together to look after the environment, the work being with the adults, that is another viable group set up there. That they are influencing the ball courts. We have helped them put ball courts in the park and managing how they are used, there is no graffiti, the teenage people keep away from the toddlers, they don't vandalise that. Anyone can change landscapes, landscape contractors and designers can do it, but what Groundwork has really done is used the environment to bring people together and make them believe in the place that they live in and make them feel better about that place as well as all the other sort of exercise and other civic responsibility issues.

Alison Dean: At YMCA we were involved with the Access All Areas. It was a YMCA initiative that was funded through Sky and we basically we worked with young people from all across the country and they would attend either the Labour, Conservative or the Lib Dem Party Political Conferences. They would go there, and whether through a play or a conversation or a presentation, they would kind of get their message across and again you would have a mixed audience of people so they've been sort of isolated events but what we try and do with any of the information that we get through our Public Affairs and PR departments and try and feed that information so they can feed in information that's been given directly from young people themselves but we're trying to refine that mechanism so it's water-tight and much more fluid. It works, I'll give you another example which is based on an international level. In the North East of England we've got a core of the global reps and they very much have a voice of what happens within YMCA's but they're also aware of what's happening nationally politically and they attend national, European and international events and they speak on behalf of kind of young people from the UK within a kind of a YMCA environment. They're working with young people from the States, from Africa, from Asia, you know from all over really, so that's a sort of a top level example. It goes back to what I was saying before about a change in the adult community to let go of the purse strings, because they assume that they've got the age and the experience and the knowledge and if we give them the kind of responsibility over budgetary control or you know major strategic decisions, say if it goes wrong, say if it you know falls flat on its face, so it is about kind of, I'd say up-skilling the young people that they've got the confidence and they can completely deliver that but also changing the mindset, you need to let go, the young people have got the skills and they can do that. We do it with young people on a very small level. If you're organising a residential or a programme and you might have a budget of £500 and the young people decide on how the money is spent. But it's to have a much greater impact, it's about cultural change, it's about kind of two forms of education and fusing the two together, ones that are of various levels.

Stephen Kearney: We are building democracy, because we're taking action; we're not just talking about it. We're building. We're getting people to develop projects but we're also teaching them to analyse power and, as I say, link personal, local and wider society. We have got a kind of crosscutting process that engages people in communities, and it engages them in such a way that they are going to build on what they love about the community; they are going to tackle the concerns and the issues

that they've got and they're going to aspire to a dream or to a vision, and possibly even build projects to do all of that, and it's been done in quite a concentrated and strategic and well thought out and well planned way. The whole purpose of our work right from the very beginning, from starting to come together as a group of individuals who were going to change things, has been about a real invigoration of civil society. We perhaps didn't use those particular words, but it was all about democracy; that there is no real democracy, and something needed to be done. Something needed to be done around the organisation and the development of citizens and people to enable them to actually engage with the system, because if there's no engagement, it's dead. And we thought that back in the 80s in terms of our experience in communities, and to some extent within structures, so all of our work has been designed to get people involved, to get people into action in a way that is effective, perhaps looking at confrontation, which can be useful at times but which often fails, and how you actually move into a more transformative approach, and what we developed in that time through thinking and acting and reflecting has been a systematic process which works.

Ann Stewart: I think it's almost like reclaiming a public political space. It almost feels like you've given away all of that power somehow and it's been funnelled in particular ways but it feels to me now that groups, people like ourselves, have to try to reclaim that public space where we have power and we should be using it but we have to work, there's a lot to do before we can reclaim that public space I think, which is a political space but maybe we let it go too easily. But I think it's a big challenge to us as well, we can't just say well it's out there. It is our role as well to try to reclaim that space if you understand what I mean.

Neil Jameson: We teach that politics is good, a good thing, the more people who participate rather than the less, and that everybody has a right to be heard and have an opinion and that politics are the best non-violent way of creating change and you don't need a university degree to sort it out.

Karen Chouhan: The whole point of the UK wide black led alliance that we're trying to build is that: more participatory approaches, more people taking decisions about what affects them for themselves. 'Nothing about us without us' is the slogan, and that's one that we would like to adopt ourselves. We're taking the lead from but not entirely copying the rainbow push alliance in the United States which is headed up by Jesse Jackson. What they do is it's black led but it's a broad alliance of all sorts of civil institutions and their slogan is a more perfect union, because they're looking at employment, building in trade unions and all the rest of it. That's kind of what we would like to do here. The idea is that we have in each region a regional coordinator, they would then organise at the regional level and then there would be local towns or cities or even rural areas, little hubs as well. And we would from the Trust or from the visionary programme do the distilling of what national policy is and the analysis of national policy, work with the regions and the local to say how does this effect you, what's going on in your regions, what do you think about it; have regional conferences, have national conferences which start to actually pull that together into a more community led analysis of that. We're then starting to call the shots. So the first couple of years will be that process of just understanding what's out there and how it all ties together or not. And then starting to call the shots and saying this is what we think will work. I think just the head of steam that will be built by people doing that will be enough to make politicians listen to what's going on. That can then transform into much more real decision making at a local, regional and national level. I think the first few years will be about building up the infrastructure but also building up the substance of what it's about and the engagement of different communities. So if we've got an issue, say for example some home workers in Rochdale have got

an issue with people bugging them about something or other, we can bring the weight of the alliance to bear to work with the women in Rochdale. So I think that is the way to go.

Jill Johnstone: We have got a very large stream of work involving users in public services, and I mean involving users in other areas with the private sector, but particularly with public services. As part of doing that work of trying to sort of spread the message to public service providers on the importance of it, there are times when we will do a pilot project about making it happen, but in a sense we won't be staying out in the fields. It will be a project to show people how you can involve people in decisions about public service provision and providing tool kits or other sorts of tools for providers to take that forward.

John Gardiner: In a flourishing democracy, participation is a prerequisite. If it isn't, if participation is very begrudging, then you're not going to get a vibrant and flourishing truly democratic scenario and therefore, yes, it's got to be addressed. Very often this comes down to inspiration and leadership. One of the reasons why perhaps we've been quite successful is there's been inspiration, there has been leadership; and those are things which tend to draw people to believe in something. It's not just leadership in London, I mean leadership in the countryside, in the rural communities, people rallied, people responded to the call, people were putting their heads above the parapet and were saying we're going to London - are you going to join me - and people did. This isn't about one person being like some sort of Messiah, this is about, in the rural communities people with the guts saying this has all gone far too far; enough is enough; we want to do something.

Adam Sampson: It's about money, it's risk taking, it's empowerment. Sorry I come back to groups like mine and I use Shelter as a metaphor here, we get £40 million a year through my hands and I sometimes ask myself whether or not actually it wouldn't be better just to give the £40 million direct to the beneficiaries of the charity and say there you go, go and spend it, let us not spend it on your behalf and tell you what would make you happier or better people, go off and spend it yourself and if you blow it, you blow it. Now there's a question in my mind about whether or not that's a greater strategy that government itself ought to use. Again if you think of community regeneration, at the moment regeneration is something that is done to communities, government gives money to large corporations or bureaucratic structures go in, find out what the community wants and go away and do it for them, are there are other models whereby and I know this is highly risk taking and I know 90% of it will fail but aren't there other ways of simply bypassing bureaucratic structures, giving money to some representative groups themselves and saying it's your money, get on and do the stuff.

Kate Allen: It is also the fact that our members organise locally and they do have contact with their local MPs. They do talk to their MPs on a regular basis about issues and about concerns. We organise hustings quite often at election time. Particularly at the last European elections we organised some very successful hustings around the country providing a platform for MEPs with an Amnesty person as the chair to engage candidates with their views and their responses to questions based around human rights issues and those were very successful, packed out meetings. I don't think anybody was having packed out meetings at the European elections in this country and ours were. People were very engaged.

3a. Position: Growth of campaign groups is a sign of a failure of representative system

Lord Mancroft: Someone made a comment about campaign groups being part of the democratic process. They're not part of the democratic process; they are in response to a part of democratic process falling apart. They are a reaction to that. They are aimed at the political establishments and the governments in power on that day. And what they are doing is: it is a group of people who got together saying our issue is not being addressed or is being addressed badly or in the wrong way. And we are feeling aggrieved. And they feel they can express themselves through that way because they cannot express themselves or cannot get their grievances addressed, either rightly or wrongly. And I think a lot of people feel like that and that is one of the reasons that single issue groups have arisen.

I think one of the foremost things is that there is a widely held perception that traditional democratic processes in this country simply don't deliver. People find them immensely frustrating and they see one government come and another go and they never see any change. And the issues of the single issue groups, which may not be seen as one issue but may be seen as a range of connected issues. The Countryside Alliance is not all about hunting; it is about a range of rural issues which we may come back to.

If they're not media savvy, if they can't make their issues sexy, they don't get heard and that is their real problem. There used to be a process for doing it; you used to write to your MP and he would raise it with a minister and in the old days members of both houses had immediate access to ministers. They don't have it anymore; that's denied so you can't bring issues that are raised. They're not raised to peers; they're raised to constituent MPs; they don't get through. And I'll give you a classic example: do you remember when the Red Cross produced a report on the prisoners being abused in Iraq? Why did that not get to Geoff Hoon's desk? Because the process which existed for years whereby junior ministers committees went to middle ranking ministers and all these issues got filtered out, the really serious ones found their way to the Private Secretary or the Secretary of State's desk. Everything was dealt with; nothing fell off the table. They dismantled that process completely because it interferes with their focus in government. Therefore where you've got awkward issues like that, or less awkward issues, domestic issues arise and they fall through the gaps. That's the problem.

Well one of the things that the single issues groups can do is grab headlines and that's fine. But having grabbed headlines and therefore grabbed the attention of the general public and the political establishment, those two groups have got to decide whether that issue is worthy or not and everybody has to exercise their judgement on these matters which you do every time you read an article in the new papers on a particular issue. You read the article and decide whether or not it's rubbish. That's what we do and, ultimately, when we go to the ballot box, that's what we do again. We cast our judgement on one person or another; we've been listening to the arguments. What a single issue group can do is take a single issue or a group of issues and throw it into the public's attention, to the political establishment's attention. What those two groups choose to do with it then is different matter.

Chris Lomax: Whether that's a symptom of anything else, I think it's most basically a symptom, a fact that people just don't feel their views are being represented in the Westminster parliament.

Martyn Williams: When you come round to comparing political parties, I think it's a very interesting question. If you compare the broader green movement to all the political parties, you've got more members than they have, not Friends of the Earth alone but Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace and WWF and all the others, and they [parties] run the country and we try to make fundamental changes but we [movements] tend to end up achieving little bits of change around the edge.

Hillary Wainwright: There are the particularities of the blockages in our political system, the sort of feeling that politics is so much fought at the centre that the kind of ideas, innovations and visions coming from outside the centre are not reflected and therefore a feeling that the only thing to do is to take direct action. And again there's a sense of direct action like creating women's centres that are directly addressing the problem and direct action which is about protest and influencing the state. And the former one is the one that's new where people discovered new ways of solving problems that didn't rely entirely on the state. I think what's happening now is, in a way, politics from below which is challenging to the idea of the political parties. In a sense single issues always left the political parties in charge of politics; they didn't actually challenge the monopoly of parties over politics and I think the new movements that we've seen really, since 1968, have been and are developing a wider view. The latest is the 'Anti-Globalisation' movement, which is about a vision of a different kind of economic and political order and I want to really distinguish between the limits of political parties as such and people's experiences of those limits here in Britain.

John Gardiner: The Countryside Alliance has been a very interesting organisation, indeed a political movement in many ways. In a sense, we answered the call of people that they wanted to say and do something; and I think if we hadn't been there we would have had to have been invented. The Countryside Alliance is punctilious in being an apolitical political movement.

LCF M1: with the way our democracy works, the only time you actually get to tell your MP what to do is once every four or five years so at least through joining a lobbying organisation when it's working on an issue that you're interested in, you can have an ongoing impact.

Robert Berkeley: Such activity fills that gap but really, ultimately, those kind of civil society organisations that are trying to do that representative work should be aiming to hand over at some stage.

3b. Position: The growth of campaigns signifies the emergence of a new political system

Charles Secrett: This is why you ask whether or you answer the question is the glass half full or half empty? Are the trends making everything worse or have we reached threshold time and actually we're on the verge of enormous change that could be extraordinarily positive in terms of what we're implicitly saying we'd like to see the answers to these questions to reform. You know, whether it is a mechanism or process or outcome. And I'm extraordinarily positive I think that we are reaching that point where it is possible to catalyse that critical mass that lead to these fundamental changes. Fundamental changes of relationship, solutions in terms of mechanisms and a different embedded culture that gives rise to all the shapes of our politics and how it's manifested at elections and between elections. Whether that's local, national or global in its scope or effect. And this is why I think the role of NGO's is so important as well as the roles of media because I think that NGO's are not coming forward with contributions that help create confidence amongst their

members and amongst their, you know, all their members that go in parallel with each other around a specific issue reform agenda, understanding how much they have in common in terms of what needs to happen if any of these specific issue, or specific sector solutions are going to come about.

Peter Tatchell: One of the reasons why the parties are not tuned to these issues is because of the corruption of the political system where only about a million votes actually count in a general election, the million votes in the most marginal constituencies. So the parties are constantly scrambling for those votes; they go to the middle ground of consensus and don't want to raise any uncomfortable issues which may alienate those voters. So that's part of the reason why so many issues are always kept on the margins and if we change the political system so votes really count and so that the minority parties have a place in our parliament, then perhaps we will get much better representation of these single issues and minority campaigns. I believe that one of the reasons for the growth of single issue politics and the disenchantment with mainstream orthodox parliamentary politics is because more and more people feel that their vote doesn't count, and the classic example of that was the last election.

In my experience I think historically politicians or parliament is often the last place to jump onboard the changes in society. A good example of that was that from the early 1990s overwhelmingly public opinion was in favour of lifting the ban on lesbian and gay people serving in the armed forces. Polls were consistently showing 60% to 70% support ending the ban but neither the then Conservative Government nor the subsequent Labour Government would act and indeed, despite promising to lift the ban, when Labour came to power it actually fought tooth and nail, spending public money, to maintain the ban by fighting a case in the European Court of Human Rights which thankfully Labour lost. And you've got to ask yourself why is it that faced with clear public support for the ending of a grave injustice, these two different governments both insisted on maintaining that discrimination. And it does seem to suggest that social movements and public opinion is often way ahead of politicians and that the political process encourages timidity, encourages caution and actually pre-empts change even when it has considerable popular support.

Tony Breslin: The protests, and I'm not in any sense stating a position on the war, but the protests against the Iraq war, the biggest political outpouring on to our streets in recent years, only served to reinforce the notion that the big politics is dysfunctional, that the Westminster village is not delivering. And one sees the same with the emergence of the whole countryside movement and the fuel protests. These are not necessarily issues that political progressives might feel comfortable with but again and again what they all show is an interest in political issues *and* a concern about how politics appears to be done.

Lord Tyler: What they do is providing the most erudite and very argued, and accessible, evidence on everything from climate change to building motorways, and everything in between. That level of input into the decision-making process is very difficult to write a prescription for, but it is absolutely vital, and the fact that it can occasionally stir up a public widespread reaction, and internationally, Green Peace etc, I think that's an incredibly important aspect of the mix and match that we have. The last thing I would like to happen would be for us to give so much emphasis to localism and to representative Government that you could cut that out, because if

people are taking decisions, they need access to and influence from the best minds wherever they are, and some of them will be well outside the political system

4. The changing nature of representation?

Since the government pays attention to a campaigns' agenda on the basis of their claims to popular support (which sometimes is often substantial and exceeds the membership of political parties), this begs the question if campaigns are changing the nature of representation. While all organisations seek popular support, and many claim to have a very democratic and open structure, this is not necessarily a rule for all campaign groups, and some even argue that claims to representation would be counterproductive to a campaign's purposes.

Campaigns claim representation on the basis of public support they receive

Harriet Lamb: If the public are ready to put their money where the needs are, surely the government should follow.

Lord Mancroft: If members don't pay their annual dues single issue groups won't exist. We happen to be a membership organisation that has a democratic board of directors but you're right, single issue groups are not accountable which is a danger and the parliamentary democratic process is meant to be accountable. But, for the reasons that Peter was saying, it is not as accountable as it should be.

Martyn Williams: Well it's an interesting thing to say whether they're representative or not and you're right, people don't vote for them, it's not like Friends of the Earth can claim any number of supporters or whatever. I do think that, and this usually comes up in comparison with companies so we're slightly going back a bit when you quite often find that big companies claim that Friends of the Earth isn't democratic, and they've got as many customers as we've got members and all the rest of it. I do think there is a difference because, if you take an organisation like Friends of the Earth, we exist because people give us money. If those 100,000 people decide that we're not doing something important, then they'll stop giving us the money. If we campaign for something they don't care about they'll stop giving us the money, and we will either fold or have to change until we find something to campaign on that people do. That's a bit different to somewhere like the RAC or AA, the Automobile Association, who campaign all the time for new building of roads, and also for changes for drivers claiming they have hundreds of thousands of members who support this. Till fairly recently I was a member of the AA and the reason I was a member of the AA was not because I agreed with their transport policies it's because if my car broke down, I wanted them to come and rescue me. Supermarkets are forever speaking for consumers, consumers want this they want that, and we know because we've got ten million customers. Again I'm a customer of a supermarket but I don't think on the whole the supermarket policies that come forward are ones that I disagree with, it's just that I've got to buy my food somewhere, and the supermarket's round the corner. I think if you compare us to a lot of the people who are acting in the political sphere, we are far more democratic, or far more legitimate. They pay around £20 a year

We used to say that 90-95% of our money came from people paying £20 a year, and then the small amount left, we get money from the Joseph Rowntree fund every now and then, to run particular projects and other charitable trusts and we do have some people who give us larger sums of money, some high donors who are prepared to fund stuff, but the vast majority of it, it's a fairly good financial position to be in of course, because if you're reliant on a few big donors and one decides to transfer the money somewhere else, you are in trouble. We have a very stable base of a large number of sponsors giving us small amounts of money

George Gelber: I think we're effective because we do not try to represent everybody. We represent a constant of public opinion. We are representative in the sense that this sector of public opinion is growing, if you compare it with what it was 10 or 15 or 30 years ago. We focus the energies of a particular group of people who are sufficiently numerous to impress politicians on a particular issue. You can say for instance for every person who turns out to demonstrate on any issue, whether it's the war on Iraq or the international debt, there are possibly another 10 people who sympathise with them but who – for whatever reason – have not moved themselves to demonstrate. So our tangible support, in terms of the numbers of people who have participated in some way in a CAFOD campaign, are the tip of an iceberg of public opinion.

Anonymous: I don't think you have to be representative in the narrow sense in order to be providing a useful role in the political process.

Claim to be democratic because of an open internal decision-making structure

Kate Allen: The way of identifying the key issues and then putting the resource behind the consultation and the organising of the debate is very fundamental to that. We could all discuss the shape of the candle or we could discuss what the position for Amnesty on use of force might be to ensure that they do find the key areas and that we put the resource and creative thinking into the ways in which we do that. That will go to the annual general meeting. The decisions at the annual general meeting go to the board. The board is accountable to the next annual general meeting in its implementation of that. The board itself is elected by a process of one person one vote. All of our members have the vote. It's probably something like 20% of our individual members would vote in that postal ballot. We're looking at ways to try and increase that participation.

To give you an example, one of the issues that we, as Amnesty, are talking about at the moment is our policy as a movement worldwide about the use of force. This is not generated through the war in Iraq. It comes from the genocide in Rwanda. As a movement we traditionally had a position in terms of the use of force that we take no position. We've never advocated or objected. We've stayed very firmly with the human rights consequences or the human rights situation. We're engaged in a movement wide discussion about whether that is the policy that will take us through the next years and that debate is taking place internationally and being potentially concluded at an international meeting in Mexico later this year. Here in the UK we have a road show of meetings, eleven regional meetings around the country, with our members. We've had website contributions. We've had website discussions. We've taken this into our youth membership as well as our traditional membership organised around a regional basis and culminating in feeding back the response of all of that to our annual general meeting which then had further discussion and took decisions about the kinds of positions that we'd like the UK section of Amnesty to take into the international debate.

In terms of Amnesty as a membership organisation, we really are an organisation that has its membership at its heart. Our processes are ones that are about the democracy of the movement, whether it's our AGM or whether it's our input to our international, global partner which meets every two years. It really is that the big policy issues are driven by members. I think one of the things that we have tried to do in that process is to identify the major and movement-transforming, potentially, policy issues and engage our membership really effectively in a discussion about those.

Martyn Williams: As long as we are a network internationally, we are a network of local groups and we have about 200 local groups across the country. They elect our board, they have a conference every year where they pass motions telling the staff what they should be doing, and the staff are ultimately answerable to the board. So we're a fairly democratic organisation and they are the thing which marks us out from most of the other environmental organisations, in that we're founded on a fairly widespread number of people who are very active locally, and campaigning for these things, whether it's go out on the street, or go and visit their MP or write letters or whatever it might be, they will be there campaigning and making the case for us on the ground.

John Gardiner: We have a board, and part of the board is elected by the members, and We can also co-opt people onto the board who can reflect particular interests. And as I say we've got an AGM coming up in a few weeks time. The Board rotate, so that you cannot stand for more than two terms, you then have to have a break So you've got the two term scenario; It is healthy because obviously it means that the membership, the grass roots, have that ability to mould and guide the composition of the board. We have a regional county structure. It goes back to identity and why I believe that our county structure is creative and helpful. People have an affinity with their county.

Jonathan Mail: CAMRA is a volunteer led organisation so we involve volunteers in every decision we make. We're also a bottom up organisation so we have very active branches. What we do very well is recruit people at local levels. Many of our members are recruited by our local branch, rather than by a national initiative. We have an annual conference and every member of CAMRA is entitled to turn up, they're entitled to one vote, and that conference debates policy and makes CAMRA's policy, so all the big issues will be discussed at that conference. The second strand is a number of national committees who look after individual areas. That national committee structure must involve 200 to 300 individual members. It also gives them an individual stake in what we're doing.

Alison Dean: There's a load of mechanisms that we've begun to introduce. Do you understand the YMCA makeup? How it works is we have YMCA England and that's sort of the umbrella and then we have 147 local associations that affiliate to YMCA England. But outside of that we also have the European alliance, all the YMCA's in Europe and an international alliance or world alliance. And what we do is, on a local level, what we do is we encourage young people, whether they're residents or involved in activities, to have their say in terms of how services are introduced, maintained, planned, so that puts the message across on a local level. On a national level what we're trying to do within the regions, within the 9 regions, is to get steering groups, a combination of young people that can actually begin to influence kind of what decisions are made within the region and that has only just begun to happen in the last 18 months.

Not all have an open structure or deem representation essential

Simon Reddy: The structure itself is very different and it probably isn't very democratic. Our Board members are not elected by a membership. I think we would find it very difficult to do the wide range of campaigns that we do if we had a membership elected Board, etc. We do have a Board and the Board has one Executive Director and the Executive Director appoints the Directors and etc., etc., etc. Internally I think we're very democratic. We're very open and we discuss everything between all the departments and internationally as well. Internationally we work very well together, I would say, that we have regular international meetings and the Executive Directors internationally get together. The Board members internationally get together on a regular basis. The campaign Directors meet of all the offices in 36 different countries all get together once a year to discuss campaign priorities and what the priorities for the organisation are, etc., etc. Membership get involved in our campaigns and membership feed back to us on our campaigns, but we don't have a formal mechanism whereby our membership has a vote or a role to play in the direct day to day running of the organisation.

Robert Berkeley: we're not elected and I think that's important to recognise. I strongly believe in democracy and I want to have an influence on that, but permanent roles seem unfair. For example, if we've interviewed five people for a job at our organisation based on their research and policy skills and appointed somebody, and then they're on a consultative committee to the House of Lords! There's got to be a better way of choosing someone. I think our role is to provide the research and the background and some of the thinking to help people and policymakers make their decisions. A consultative committee with advisory powers, if it's established, would be great to be on, because it helps to make our issues less opaque, but I'd be very wary of getting too close to the decisions. I certainly wouldn't want to be making decisions. That's somebody else's job.

There's a huge range of civil society organisations and lots of different approaches. I'll talk about us because that's what I know. We're very clear that we're not representatives for any community, and even though a lot of our research has been about hearing what people have to say and what they think about a set of issues, we maintain the right to try and understand them through a framework that we would believe operates. Other organisations do claim to represent people. We would never be in the situation of saying 'we are the voice of the Black voluntary sector', or that 'we represent the grassroots organisations that work in a certain community', because you'd never get a unanimous decision and you'd never get legitimate leadership from that level. I think more could be done to reflect people's views but ultimately an organisation is going to have to take a political decision at some stage and say 'this is what we want to assert', even if that flies in the face of what 25 groups of people tell you.

I think you could end up continually polling, which is always going to be only an approximation anyway. It's almost better to give up polling and recognise that your position is a position, and that other people will have to take that on board and decide whether they like it or not, or how they respond to it. The problem comes when some organisations have more power than others or more access to the media, and are more listened to than others; but if you keep on saying things that are patently silly, people stop listening to you and they should. No I can't think of any credible civil society organisation that could claim to be representative of the whole BME community.

Negative views on campaigns' claims to representation of popular concerns

Adam Sampson: One of the things that I'm interested in is the role of the voluntary sector in being a problem in further alienating our client base, even though we purport to be representatives in a real way of the communities that we serve, in practice there's no way that we are.

Anonymous: In the voluntary sector as far as I'm concerned we have to be honest about our strengths and our weaknesses, from the strength point of view yes we are closer to our clients than the commercial interests and than the state and we probably are at least different from those two in the sense that by in large and I'm not sure this is going to last very long but by in large our primary motive, the primary criteria by which we judge our behaviour is: 'does it benefit the beneficiaries of the organisation?', not: 'does it make money?', 'does it deliver to a political process?', but 'does it benefit the beneficiaries?'. So in that sense we are the good guys still but I think one would have to look very cynically and repeating what I said, one would have to look very cynically and questioningly at the extent to which charities truly consult and represent the beneficiaries that they seek to serve and the extent to which they allow those beneficiaries to have genuine power over decision making. How many charities really decide what it is that they're going to do, how they're structured with reference to the beneficiaries? How many charities actually genuinely hand power over to the beneficiaries to determine? Now it's an open question of whether we should, I mean you cannot frankly run a decent campaign if every time you have a decision to make about what policy line you use, you try and consult... you just can't, it's too slow and there are questions genuinely about the extent to which your average homeless person is going to be able to advise you on your reserves policy or where you invest money. Nevertheless there is a real danger that by occupying the space that we do these days, by speaking, purporting to speak on behalf of the poor and dispossessed, we not only fail to do that but our existence gets in the way or stems the ability of those individuals to represent themselves, do you see what I'm saying? We occupy the political space, if a journalist wants to find out how poor people think and feel, they can come to middle-class interpreters on behalf of the poor, you don't have to go to the poor themselves.

David Marquand: it would be a mistake to run away with the idea that this is a substitute for conventional, territorially based representative politics because, who belongs to these groups? To what extent are they actually, if you like, representative of their members? Last year I think it was, there was a fascinating series of lectures here in Oxford University about different NGO's environmental NGO's and how they operated internally and it was quite clear that some of them operate 'Friends Of The Earth' for example, seems to operate very much in a very 'Democratic' way towards its own membership. Green Peace is not at all, Green Peace is more like a kind of company trading in the market place and you don't, as it were, join Green Peace, you send it money and then you watch and see what it does and you withdraw your money if it doesn't do what you like. So NGO's are not in themselves necessarily democratic and they don't necessarily represent their own members, they are self appointed in the sense champions, of course, negatively you can say, well if they weren't doing what anybody wanted then they wouldn't have any money and they would soon fold up so there's in that sense they may be representative, but it is a curious kind of representation.

I think that the, again we see in NGO politics the same weaknesses as we see in party politics and electoral system which is essentially all anything you could remotely describe as a large or mass membership organisation has a passive

relationship with its' supporters. The NGO does things on behalf of its' supporters, and this goes in fact you can see this most clearly in the organisations that are the most active themselves, by in large. Take Green Peace for example, or Direct Action, peace or direct action organisations, I mean certainly anything that approximates a large membership organisation is one that does things on behalf of. So it's an armchair support and attempts by NGO's...by those sorts of NGO's over the last 10 years to mobilise their membership comes down to the classic 10% problem which is that of any group of people you'll get about 10% who are willing, if one of those things are right, to regularly do things on behalf of whatever the cause, the organisation is. You get 20-30% of people, and this is a supporter base, you know of the active constituency base, whatever that might be, who will do things occasionally and then you get 70% or 60-70% of people who are passive and agree that these people should be doing those things because that part of what... but they won't do it themselves, for whatever reason. And that 10% problem is a critical one of how you actually catalyse more widespread engagement. Whether you're talking about an NGO, whether you're talking about a party political membership, an activism there, or whether you're talking about a government and the electorate generally, or party politics and the electorate generally. This is why I think that it's very important that NGO's understand that if they're going to be catalytic in this process of changing our political culture, they themselves have to change, and the way they work because at the moment they are reinforcing what the problem is; this passivity, this we'll do it on your behalf, and it's not about participation.

Perry Walker: There is a danger with interest groups which is that they as it were, freeze the interests of their members and in a way which makes politics harder, so supposing I have Parkinson's Disease, there's the Parkinson's Disease Society that is campaigning for more resources for treating people with Parkinson's. Now it might be the case that if I heard arguments for other ways of spending the money as a member of this group, I would say, having listened to these arguments, I think there's a better use for the money than spending it on Parkinson's Disease. Now, with an interest group representing me, I never have a chance to say that, in the same way that I never have a chance... it's very hard for my values to influence how my pension is invested. It's a similar representative process, so I think again, there is a case for more direct involvement of members if possible, and I think also that this process is exacerbated because of a system whereby somebody like the Parkinson's Disease Society lobbies and ministers decide, and I think as much as possible, we will have to be put into the position of the politician trying to understand what the trade offs are, because I think that's much more grown up.

5. Institutionalization of campaigns

Some argue that campaign groups should be given a fixed voice and place in the political system, so that their activities can be transparent and the system can engage with those bodies that are successfully encouraging political engagement. However, while some campaign groups do want more access to government and more responsiveness from decision-makers, they do not want to participate formally in decision-making (at least at national level). They see their primary role as providers of expertise and information, and would not want to exercise power as such.

Campaign groups want a permanent process by which to voice their concerns to decision-makers

Jonathan Mail: Government departments at ministerial level, there should be a minister responsible for listening to campaigning pressure groups, to try and help, because as pressure groups we represent our members. By listening to pressure groups, government will actually get a greater input from individuals.

Arzu Merali: As soon as you start ascribing roles, you start to manipulate or create barriers and we have been quite conscious not to sort of advocate that. Again it is kind of trying to ensure that there is participation across the board. For example civil society have got, or has got, you know, incredibly expert organisations or individuals within organisations who have got a lot to contribute and where the dangers lie is when they become the only voices and the only people who get involved in consultation and even that can be quite accidental, it is something I was commenting to a colleague the other day, that increasingly on a personal level, I am bumping into people, that I was at University with, which I went to Oxbridge so again there is an over-representation in the sort of Government and civil service and civil society unfortunately of people from those Universities. The people I went to school with, I went to a Grammar School, it wasn't particularly top flight, you know, public school or something. You start seeing prospective parliamentary candidates, you went to school with or someone in another NGO or someone working in the Foreign Office and you think OK, the world is becoming a lot smaller. How is that any different to what you are fighting against 20 years ago in a sense of trying for it to be more inclusive you have actually just transformed yourself, not to be bullied but you have ended up within a certain elite. That kind of runs counter to the project of actually trying to open up political space and it seems to be almost, it's a very emotive word, it is almost like a monster out of control, you know, you can't reign something in to become more inclusive and I think there is a problem that we are not very aware of that happening and it is just the awareness of that, that is a starting point now.

Matt Price: In terms of young people, if the House of Lords was reformed and then we were in the House of Lords I don't know whether that would make the House of Lords more exciting and make it more approachable, it could do, particularly if they'd been part of Envision, that's what the new House of Lords means and actually taking people like Envision into account but not that many people know who we are.

Alison Dean: Given the nature and scale of the movement I would hope that YMCA would be involved at some degree, whether that's a permanent seat or whether that's a regular feed in of information that can actually help shape and influence and inform on a regular basis because the whole thing about youth culture and youth participation is it's constantly changing and we need to be aware of the culture trends and ways to engage with young people so I think the YMCA would most definitely be a vital tool or a vital asset to engaging with the political kind of debates and agendas and targets more importantly really.

Karen Chouhan: I think that's a really good idea to give organizations an institutionalised voice, but I think you'd need to have what we're trying to build: a wider meta-alliance that stands outside. You need the outsider-insider influence because it's too easy to get sucked into the bureaucracy and the way things operate, and I've seen it both ways. I think that's why we're looking at a meta-alliance where

we're not connected to government but we could bring pressure to bear. One of the things we've asked for within the new equalities bill is for a race committee, and one of the reasons we've asked for that is that it can have 75% at least representation from black community organisations, it can set strategic objectives for race equality and monitor race equality, but that is still going to be an elected committee from internal processes, we still want an alliance outside of the equalities commission which can hold the whole lot to account and that way I think it could work. Yes, you're right I do believe that it would make a real difference to have some kind of standing forum for community organisations or representatives, but they also need the outsider influence.

In a sense public interest organisations have kind of won that right to be heard without it being specified.

But Campaign groups do not want to play a formal role in policy-making

George Gelber: It's not our mandate to put forward opinions about how the government should be running the economy.

Kate Allen: I think that Amnesty sees itself as providing the pressure, providing information, providing the impetus and the solutions as well to some of the issues that are raised by human rights rather than being the implementer of these things. We would always want to have and I think you always do need to have organisations that exert pressure but don't exert power. We speak to power but we don't want to exercise power.

Adam Sampson: There's Richard Best, there's Victor Adebawale from Turning Point, there's Derek Morgan for Breakthrough with Breast Cancer, particularly in the last few years, senior people in the voluntary sector have started taking their positions in the House of Lords but I think again we should be very questioning about the extent to which that's viewed and changed. If you look at who occupies jobs like mine, they are people like me, here are white, middle-class straight Oxbridge educated males, how can you look at people like us and say it would be radical and different to have us in places like the House of Lords? I mean forget it.

David Marquand: A very well known boring old point is that somebody at the end of the day has to aggregate for all the different pressures and things and that I guess is why in the end you have to have Elections and Governments and things like that.

LCF M1: Political parties are about forming governments and running countries. Green Peace and Friends of the Earth are working on issues and often have to interact with policy makers, but they're doing different stuff. I don't know how you can compare it.