

1 **Camping, Climbing Trees and Marching to Parliament: Spatial Dimensions of**  
2 **Environmental Protest in New Zealand**

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Thomas O'Brien

5

Cranfield University at the Defence Academy of the United Kingdom

6

[t.obrien@cranfield.ac.uk](mailto:t.obrien@cranfield.ac.uk)

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Environmental movements are key actors in challenging social and political

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constructions of the physical environment. A wide variety of protest campaigns have

9

been undertaken in New Zealand, from local issues of pollution and road building

10

through to national opposition to native forest logging and genetic engineering (GE).

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The aim of this paper is to examine the scales at which environmental protest in New

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Zealand have taken place and the impact upon the actions and durability of

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environmental campaigns. Through an analysis of a catalogue of protest events over

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the 1997-2013 period, this paper describes patterns of actions, before examining the

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campaigns against GE field trials and mineral extraction in more detail. The findings

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point to the importance of cross-scale operations in enabling campaigns to capitalise

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on and respond to changes in the external environment including governance

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structures, resources, and countermovement actors.

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20 *Keywords: protest event analysis, genetic engineering, mining, scale*

21

22 **Introduction**

23

24 On 11 April 2004, a group of 20 university students hiked three hours to the site of a

25 proposed mine site in upper Waimangaroa's Happy Valley on the West Coast of the

26 South Island and set up camp. The camp was broken five days later when mine

27 workers chased them out, but a sustained campaign against Solid Energy, the state-  
28 owned enterprise behind the mine, had begun. Over the next five years, people linked  
29 to the group Save Happy Valley (SHV) staged hunger strikes in trees, climbed Solid  
30 Energy's headquarters and hung banners, disrupted meetings, and chained themselves  
31 to earth moving equipment. They dressed as snails, native birds, and Santa Claus and  
32 marched through Christchurch, Auckland and Wellington, to Parliament. After initial  
33 occupations failed, the group established a camp near the mine site in April 2006,  
34 remaining there until they were evicted in April 2009. Following the end of the  
35 occupation the campers relocated to the Solid Energy headquarters in Christchurch for  
36 a night, before breaking camp. Although the campaign generated significant publicity,  
37 it was not welcomed by the local community and struggled to maintain impact  
38 following the eviction.

39

40 Occupation and manipulation of particular places present a challenge to formal  
41 authority and can potentially point to alternate ways of using space (see Pickerill and  
42 Chatterton, 2006). Recent attempts by the Occupy movement to establish self-  
43 governed spaces present a clear example of this challenge (Pickerill and Krinsky,  
44 2012). The diffusion of this particular form of action during 2011 also demonstrates  
45 the rapidity with which ideas and actions are able to spread (Tarrow, 2013). However,  
46 protest campaigns remain rooted in social contexts and their likelihood of success  
47 depends on support in this context in order to sustain action. The SHV campaign  
48 generated substantial support and a national profile, but the regional economic  
49 significance of mining (Conradson and Pawson, 2009) prevented the generation of a  
50 local support base. Issues of scale and the ability of campaigns to operate across  
51 scales or move between scales is important in their likely durability and chances of

52 success when faced with changes in the external environment.

53

54 This paper uses a protest event catalogue to examine patterns of environmental protest  
55 in New Zealand over the 1997-2013 period. The aims are: (1) to examine the scales at  
56 which environmental protest has taken place, and (2) to assess the ability of  
57 campaigns to adapt to changes in the external environment by moving between scales.

58 The paper is divided into four sections. The first section outlines the core concepts of  
59 space, place and scale and the role they can play in the formulation of contentious  
60 politics, it also briefly outlines the character of environmental action in New Zealand.

61 In the second section, the protest event analysis methodology used in the paper is  
62 detailed. The third section presents findings from the PEA catalogue over the 1997-  
63 2013 period to identify broad patterns in environmentally focused protest. The final  
64 section considers the campaigns against genetic engineering (GE) and mineral  
65 exploration, considering the role of scale in their respective trajectories.

66

### 67 **Locating the New Zealand Environmental Movement**

68

69 Social movements emerge to challenge and upset the existing order by addressing  
70 particular areas of concern. In order to advance their interests these movements are  
71 characterised by significant diversity in form, action and goal, leading to the adoption  
72 of varied repertoires (Tilly, 2008). Within the broader field of social movements, the  
73 environmental movement has emerged as a key representative of issues concerning  
74 the protection of the physical environment. Outlining the character of the movement,  
75 Rootes (2007: 610) argues:

76 an environmental movement may be defined as a loose, noninstitutionalised network

77 of informal interactions that may include, as well as individuals and groups who have  
78 no organizational affiliation, organizations of varying degrees of formality, that are  
79 engaged in collective action motivated by shared identity of concern about  
80 environmental issues.

81 The loose nature of the environmental movement means that actors associated with it  
82 adopt tactics best suited to the issue and in ways that will maximise the likely impact.

83 The context in which social movement actors operate plays an important role, with the  
84 potential to affect change being shaped by the institutional environment (Toke, 2011),  
85 resource availability (O'Regan, 2001), and the presence and strength of  
86 countermovement actors (Gale, 1986).

87

88 The character of the New Zealand environmental movement has changed  
89 considerably since the 1960s when environmental issues first entered the national  
90 political agenda in a consistent manner. Opposition to a hydroelectric scheme on Lake  
91 Manapouri in the late 1960s and early 1970s led to a national campaign that resulted  
92 in the project's cancellation (Mark et al, 2001). Campaigns at this time shared a focus  
93 on protecting the natural environment and a reliance on large national campaigns.

94 This approach was taken as avenues for participation were limited and the relationship  
95 between state and movement was highly adversarial (Bührs, 2003; Downes, 2000).

96 With the introduction of the Resource Management Act in 1991 and subsequent  
97 institutional developments, governance of environmental issues have increasingly  
98 been depoliticised and devolved. This shift away from top-down policy to a more  
99 negotiated and local approach has "encouraged localised coalitions, grounding  
100 movement groups in community concerns." (Downes, 2000: 487; see also Memon  
101 and Weber, 2010). The result has seen the decline in the prominence of large national

102 organisations<sup>i</sup> and the emergence of small-scale, locally focused groups (see O'Brien,  
103 2013a).

104

105 When taking action environmental movement actors need to be conscious of the the  
106 role of space and place in ordering and determining what actions are possible and  
107 effective. Space is socially constructed, as Tuan (1979: 389) argued, “The space that  
108 we perceive and construct, the space that provides cues for our behaviour, varies with  
109 the individual and cultural group.” The result is that understandings of social practices  
110 in space are shaped by past events and norms of acceptable behaviour that regulate  
111 and discipline and have developed over time (Endres and Senda-Cook, 2011). These  
112 structures are significant for social movement actors who seek to “restructure the  
113 meanings, uses, and strategic valance of space.” (Sewell, 2001: 55) By contesting  
114 existing practices, such actors seek to question and challenge accepted behaviours or  
115 threats to community values through transgressive behaviour (see Griffin, 2008; Seijo,  
116 2006).

117

118 By contrast, place has a physical form, with Cheng et al (2003: 89) arguing that its  
119 “meanings encompass instrumental or utilitarian values as well as intangible values  
120 such as belonging, attachment, beauty and spirituality... [which] acknowledges the  
121 subjectivity of people’s encounters with places.” This socially constructed perspective  
122 of place builds on Tuan’s (1979: 412) distinction between places as public symbols  
123 “that command attention” and fields of care that “evoke affection” by drawing on  
124 lived experience. Social movement actors seek to appropriate these forms of place in  
125 various ways. Endres and Senda-Cook (2011: 266) point to:

126 three ways in which social movements use place tactically: (1) building on a pre-

127 existing meaning of a place, (2) temporarily reconstructing the meaning of a place,  
128 and (3) repeated reconstructions that result in new place meanings

129 The ability to challenge existing interpretations of specific places in these ways can be  
130 seen as a measure of the resonance of a protest action.

131

132 Places that represent state or corporate power can serve as targets for protest actions  
133 seeking to link grievances to particular actors. In this way “Social movements often  
134 seek to strategically manipulate, subvert and resignify places that symbolise priorities  
135 and imaginaries that they are contesting” (Leitner et al, 2008: 161). The effectiveness  
136 of this strategy is shaped by the fact that the “material structure of a place is often the  
137 result of decisions made by the very powerful to serve their ends.” (Cresswell, 2008:  
138 136) This means that the ability of protest to challenge place meanings is shaped  
139 significantly by the degree of organisation and the strength of the opposing force. The  
140 recognition that places serve as the context and the stakes in social movement actions  
141 (Sewell, 2001) is particularly pertinent in relation to environmental protest. A focus  
142 on the physical environment means that success will result in a specific place being  
143 saved or rehabilitated. While the immediate benefits may appear to be geographically  
144 limited, they have the potential to reshape and shift accepted norms and associated  
145 practices. As Cheng et al (2003: 101) argue:

146 the politics of place is not merely a battle between environmentalists and industry. It  
147 is an evolving effort to create more equitable, democratic ways of defining,  
148 expressing, and valuing places and, in the process, transforming how people form  
149 group identities.

150 Fostering change in the use of a place enables a broader reflection on associated  
151 identity, which in turn has the potential to reformulate broader understandings of  
152 space within society.

153

154 Alongside considerations of place and space, scale plays an important role for social  
155 movement actors in formulating challenges and determining what is possible.  
156 Mamadouh et al (2004: 458) note that “In the process of formulating and enacting  
157 scale strategies, actors frame the problems they want to address, the solutions they  
158 propose, the actions of their opponents and their own at specific scales.” Scalar  
159 relations are often concerned with the hierarchical relationship between levels of  
160 interaction from the local through to the national and global. In seeking to control  
161 scale MacKinnon (2011: 24) argues that “powerful social actors... seek to command  
162 ‘higher’ scales such as the global and national and strive to disempower... [subaltern  
163 groups] by confining them to ‘lower’ scales like the neighbourhood or locality”. The  
164 ability to contain oppositional groups at lower scales is important as the material  
165 resources and ability to frame issues will necessarily be constrained (Jonas, 2006;  
166 Mamadouh, 2004).

167

168 The struggle to overcome containment at lower scales results in challenges being  
169 presented through strategies focused around moving scales or reinterpreting  
170 meanings. Leitner et al (2008: 159-60) argue that “social movements often engage in  
171 scalar strategies. Some involve overcoming the limitations through scale jumping,  
172 turning local into regional, national and global movements to expand their power.”  
173 Moving between scales in this way enables social movement actors to maximise  
174 opportunities for input where they exist (Marston, 2000). These attempts to overcome  
175 constraints can also see actors down scale to seek refuge from unequal struggles in  
176 response to closing opportunities at higher levels (Sewell, 2001). The possibility of  
177 moving between scales points to their interconnected character, as scales are relational

178 and cannot exist without each other (Mamadouh et al, 2004). Moving between scales  
179 is a complex process, involving mechanisms of diffusion, brokerage, emulation, and  
180 attribution of similarity (Tilly and Tarrow, 2007). This is significant in the context of  
181 social movement actors, as maintaining a presence at multiple scales suggests a  
182 greater likelihood of being able to shift scales in response to changes in the external  
183 environment. Campaigns and actors that are unable to shift scales may be less  
184 sustainable and effective. These considerations of the role of scale and perceptions of  
185 space and place in shaping environmental protest behaviour in New Zealand are  
186 examined below.

187

## 188 **Methodology**

189

190 This paper uses protest event analysis (PEA) method to identify and categorise  
191 environmental protest actions over the 1997-2013 period in New Zealand. PEA  
192 involves an examination of newspaper stories for events that fit within set parameters,  
193 with relevant events identified being coded and catalogued (Koopmans and Rucht,  
194 2002). The benefit of this approach is that it provides “solid empirical ground for  
195 observing protest activities in large geographical areas over considerable spans of  
196 time” (Koopmans and Rucht, 2002: 231). The specificity of the search parameter also  
197 allows for a more narrowly focused consideration of events in a particular field, in  
198 this case environmental issues. Fillieule and Jiménez (2003) further argue that it can  
199 allow for identification of change in form and frequency of protest events over time.  
200 Reliance on newspaper sources can present a distorted view of the extent of activity.  
201 However, as Rootes (2003) argues, such a source can provide the clearest overall  
202 picture that is possible, provided the limitations are taken into consideration. The



203 stories that are presented in newspapers are shaped by reporting practices and editorial  
204 policies as well as the broader social context in which the events are taking place  
205 (Earl et al, 2004).

206

207 The analysis in this paper draws on a dataset collected through a PEA of all stories  
208 reported in the main regional and national New Zealand newspapers from 1 January  
209 1997 to 31 December 2013 (see Appendix for source details). The search parameters  
210 selected were broad, in order to create a sensitive search strategy, these involved a  
211 search of the sources using the terms “*environment\**” and “*protest\**”, with “\*”  
212 representing wildcard variations on the keywords. The search was validated using  
213 alternative terms for the events; the additional terms did not result in any significant  
214 variation (see O’Brien, 2012). The search returned 8492 stories in total, with sorting  
215 and closer analysis of the stories resulting in 357 unique events. Each event was then  
216 coded to capture information on location, issue and level of focus, actors involved,  
217 and actions taken. The final event catalogue was analysed to identify patterns in  
218 protest actions over the period.

219

## 220 **An Overview of Environmental Protest Patterns**

221

222 Levels of environmental protest varied over the period under consideration,  
223 responding primarily to changes at the local or national scale. Issues of local concern  
224 included protection of trees and animals, waste management, construction and  
225 pollution. At the national level campaigns around native forest logging, GE field  
226 trials, and mineral (coal, oil and gas) exploration dominated (O’Brien, 2012). Figure 1  
227 shows the number of protest events that targeted local, national and international

228 issues over the 1997-2013 period. Local issues featured most strongly over the period  
229 until 2009 when national protests increased in relative importance.

230

231

*Figure 1 here*

232

233 An examination of the relationship between issue area and scale enables identification  
234 of patterns in the protests observed. Although the majority of the protest actions  
235 captured occurred at the local or national scale, there is significant variation across the  
236 issues (see Table 1). Issues that impact more clearly on local communities  
237 (development<sup>ii</sup> and pollution/waste/water) were more likely to see protests at this  
238 scale.

239

240

*Table 1 here*

241

242 Actions recorded as being undertaken range from marches involving the display of  
243 banners and costumes, through to clandestine attempts to infiltrate and occupy mine  
244 sites and uproot GE field trials. Figure 2 shows the prevalence of different forms of  
245 action over the period, with the four categories identified by Tarrow (2012) to capture  
246 the distinct approaches.<sup>iii</sup> The pattern of protest actions was relatively uniform across  
247 the scales, as it could be argued that those involved adopted the methods that most  
248 suited the available opportunities. The data also show that the places targeted varied  
249 slightly depending on the scale. The main target of protest actions at all scales were  
250 urban areas, with 45.3% of all events located here. Local protests showed a greater  
251 likelihood of targeting official buildings (26.7%) than national protests (11.1%),  
252 although this is possibly corrected in the higher number of national protests (11.1%)

253 targeting Parliament than those focused on local issues (1.2%). Actions at the local  
254 and national scale involving coastal locations (10.3% and 13.0%) and workplaces  
255 (10.9% and 13.0%) showed the importance of these settings. Finally, other settings  
256 (such as farmland, forests and wetlands) featured more in local actions (17.0%).

257

258

*Figure 2 here*

259

260 The data presented suggests that protests operate across the three scales, with a  
261 relatively even split between the local and national scale. Decisions made by actors  
262 involved in protest about the scale at which to stage actions will be determined by the  
263 nature of the issue and the targeted actor. Although Table 1 shows differing  
264 approaches to scale adopted by issue area, the data does not provide any indication of  
265 change over time and the willingness or ability of the actors involved to move  
266 between scales. Examining changes in scale over time (scale jumping or dropping) is  
267 important and may point to variations over time as movement actors are forced to  
268 adapt to the external environment, capitalising on opening and closing opportunity  
269 structures.

270

### 271 **Shifting Scales in Environmental Protest Campaigns**

272

273 Fluctuations in environmental protest actions outlined show the importance of scale.  
274 In seeking to challenge actions by the state or other actors, protests have been targeted  
275 where they will have the most impact. Governance structures in New Zealand give  
276 regional and local institutions significant authority to manage environmental issues  
277 (see Jackson and Dixon, 2007). Issues of development, pollution, and waste are more

278 immediately identifiable as tangible concerns to local communities, potentially aiding  
279 the development of durable networks (Teo and Loosemore, 2011). This immediacy is  
280 significant, as it enables the community to organise and use localised pressures to  
281 challenge those seen as responsible, as they reside in the same community. By  
282 contrast, issues that occur at the national or international scale are more likely to be  
283 dominated by professionalised, technocratic decisions (see Bührs, 2003), with the  
284 actors involved in opposing and supporting the issue more dispersed.

285

286 Protests organised by local people over local issues are likely to have a more  
287 immediate impact on decision-makers. The ability to affect change in this way is  
288 central in the notion of instrumentality and the use of protest to block certain actions.

289 However, as Kelloway et al (2010: 20) argue:

290           perceived instrumentality is not limited to the potential to right a wrong or necessarily  
291           restore distributive justice in a tangible way. Rather, protest activities... can be viewed  
292           as instrumental when they serve to express dissatisfaction with the current state of  
293           affairs or draw attention to unjust practice.

294 Protest actions at the local scale are able to call more readily on this sense of  
295 instrumentality, through obstructing planned construction or demolition activities and  
296 through presenting more direct challenges to those making the decision, on the  
297 understanding that their proximity makes them less able to neglect the concerns of the  
298 community (see Klandermans, 2002).

299

300 The challenges of operating primarily at the national scale are illustrated by  
301 campaigns over GE and mineral extraction. The potential economic importance of  
302 new technologies and natural resources mean that they are under the control of the

303 national government when decisions about their application are being made. The  
304 national scale of these policies also means that they are often less geographically  
305 focused, requiring opponents to operate at this level.<sup>iv</sup> There may also be cross-scale  
306 challenges, as opposition at the national level may not be supported locally, as the  
307 community may rely on the income generated in the absence of other options,  
308 potentially setting up a conflict between locals and ‘greenies’ (see Walton, 2007). To  
309 effectively understand the ways in which protest campaigns manage issues of scale  
310 the paper now turns to consider opposition to the introduction of GE (primarily field  
311 trials) and mineral extraction. These issue areas are significant, as they saw sustained  
312 and widespread protest actions over the period and divergent approaches to issues of  
313 scale.

314

### 315 *Genetic Engineering*

316 Public opposition to GE first emerged in 1998 with two protest gatherings at scientific  
317 seminars being held on the new technology. The number of events increased  
318 significantly in 1999 as the issue entered the political agenda and media, resulting in  
319 the first crop trashing, marches and gatherings outside hearings into applications  
320 being held by the Environmental Risk Management Agency (ERMA). This  
321 expression of concern led to the establishment of a Royal Commission on Genetic  
322 Modification (RCGM) in July 2000 and the imposition of a moratorium on field trials  
323 (Wright and Kurian, 2010). Reporting back in July 2001, the RCGM recommended  
324 allowing commercial field trials (Weaver, 2010), going against the majority of  
325 submissions and public opinion (Henderson, 2005). To allow time to develop the  
326 necessary regulatory frameworks, the government put in place a temporary  
327 moratorium on field trials until October 2003 (Weaver, 2010). In the face of the drive

328 towards the likely resumption of field trials, protests continued through 2001 and into  
329 2002.

330

331 In September 2003 there was a surge in protest events as activists sought to push the  
332 government to make the moratorium permanent. This period also saw a change in the  
333 character of the protests with organisations such as Greenpeace and Mothers Against  
334 Genetic Engineering (MAdGE) taking the lead in staging large, colourful protests in  
335 the major centres and at Parliament. Despite opposition, the moratorium was lifted at  
336 the end of October. This event saw a fall in the number of protest events, as attention  
337 shifted to ERMA and its responsibility for approving applications for field trials. The  
338 change presented a challenge as the issue shifted from being political in nature  
339 (maintaining or lifting the moratorium) to becoming a technical and regulatory matter.  
340 Although sporadic protests continued, involving sporadic crop trashing and protests at  
341 ERMA hearings, the number of protests declined substantially.

342

343 *Figure 3 here*

344

345 The form of protest across the local and national scale during the GE campaign can  
346 provide some insight into why the number of protest events faded so quickly. As  
347 Figure 3 shows, opposition to GE was primarily targeted at the national scale. Events  
348 between 1998 and 2003 were centred on the establishment of a Royal Commission  
349 and then making the moratorium permanent, actions that were decided by the national  
350 government. When the moratorium was lifted the campaign was unable to move to the  
351 local scale, as less attention had been focused here, preventing the application of  
352 effective local networks. Although the character of the issue had changed, the

353 regulatory practices did not preclude operation at this scale, given the necessity for  
354 hearings and notifications. From this perspective it could therefore be argued that the  
355 fall in the opposition to GE resulted from the absence of a network (or potential to  
356 build one) locally.

357

### 358 *Mineral Exploration and Extraction*

359 In contrast to the opposition to GE, protests over mineral exploration and extraction  
360 show a more varied picture. The first major series of protest events recorded over this  
361 period involved the actions of SHV in opposition to coal mining on the West Coast of  
362 the South Island. This group engaged in a series of actions over the 2004-2009 period,  
363 ranging from occupation of the proposed mine site to organised marches in the major  
364 cities. This campaign was significant as it challenged a major state owned enterprise  
365 and also resulted in accusations of infiltration by paid informers (see O'Brien, 2015).  
366 Although the campaign focused on the preservation of an ecologically sensitive area,  
367 it was also linked to groups and actors focused on issues of climate change. The  
368 location of the mine on the remote West Coast meant that there was little local  
369 support, as mining was seen as a necessary industry following the end of native forest  
370 logging in the region (Conradson and Pawson, 2009; Memon and Wilson, 2007). The  
371 inability of the campaign to generate local support coupled with the economic  
372 importance of mining in the region in part explain why it was ultimately unsuccessful  
373 in halting the operation.

374

375 With the exception of the SHV campaign, mineral exploration did not feature in  
376 environmental protest actions until 2010. Plans by the National-led government  
377 (elected in 2008) to prioritise mineral resources as a means of generating economic

378 growth resulted in some highly contentious policy positions being advanced,  
379 generating widespread opposition (Rudzitis and Bird, 2011). One of the most  
380 contested was the decision to open the national parks estate for mining, which saw  
381 large-scale, widespread protests, including the largest protest gathering recorded in  
382 the catalogue on May 5 2010 when 50, 000 people marched through Auckland  
383 (NZPA, 2010). This reverence for protected areas echoes Tuan's (1979: 413)  
384 observation that "Wilderness areas in the United States are sacred places with well-  
385 defined boundaries, into which one enters with, metaphorically speaking, unshod  
386 feet." The suggestion that the state could violate these protected places was seen as a  
387 challenge to national identity.

388

389

*Figure 4 here*

390

391 The wave of protest actions that followed the proposed plans to mine in national parks  
392 saw the government back down and refocus its attention on other forms of mineral  
393 extraction. As Figure 4 notes, the level of opposition to exploration and extraction of  
394 minerals, gas and oil was maintained at the national scale. However, there was also an  
395 increase at the local and international scales. This was driven by the range of actions  
396 the state was planning to undertake in relation to mineral extraction, involving off-  
397 shore oil drilling (O'Brien 2013b), mining (Rudzitis and Bird, 2011), and fracking  
398 (Walter, 2012). In contrast to the earlier protests involving SHV, the more recent  
399 actions targeted planned projects that threatened to impact local livelihoods (farming,  
400 tourism, fisheries) and involved large foreign companies seeking to bring new  
401 technologies. The change in the nature of the protest actions should therefore be seen  
402 as an attempt by the actors involved to shift scale (both up and down) in response to



403 changes in the external context.

404

405 The campaigns around GE and mineral exploration demonstrate the importance of  
406 scale in environmental protest actions. Opposition to GE and the widespread  
407 campaign this engendered was unable to withstand a change in the opportunity  
408 structure. Opposition to GE field trials was more heavily focused on urban settings,  
409 official buildings, Parliament and workplaces, due to the uncertain location of the  
410 proposed future trials. The lack of places to target restricted the ability of those  
411 involved to down-scale to engage in more localised campaigning after the moratorium  
412 was lifted. By contrast, the opposition to mineral exploration and extraction was able  
413 to operate across scales, shifting to localised protest actions as actions shifted from  
414 planned operations to implementation. It also operated targeted a wider range of  
415 places, staging a number of protests in coastal and rural settings, drawing on the  
416 resonance of these places in terms of identity and also attempting to highlight the  
417 specific places that would be damaged. The contrast between the actions of SHV and  
418 the later protest actions is also illustrative, as SHV's inability to cultivate local  
419 support prevented it establishing a base at that level, allowing it to be portrayed as a  
420 group of outsiders unconnected to local issues.

421

422 Placing these protest campaigns in the context of environmental protest over the  
423 period also adds to our understanding of the importance of changes in the political  
424 opportunity structure. Protests became more pronounced at the national scale in 2009,  
425 coinciding with a change to a right-of-centre government focused on economic  
426 development. As Figure 1 shows, prior to this point the majority of protests were local  
427 in scale, with the exception of 1999 and 2003 due to campaigns around native forest

428 logging and GE. The change in government led to a closing of avenues for  
429 participation and consultation, as the focus changed to extraction of natural resources,  
430 which is illustrated by the creation of the Ministry for Primary Industries in April  
431 2012, merging the Ministry for Agriculture and Forestry, Ministry of Fisheries and  
432 New Zealand Food Safety Authority (Duncan and Chapman, 2012). Faced with  
433 closed opportunity structures in particular issue areas (GE and mineral extraction)  
434 protest actions made use of demonstrational actions (Figure 2). The prevalence of this  
435 form of action reinforces the importance of WUNC (worthiness, unity, numbers, and  
436 commitment) as a means of generating legitimacy and support (Tilly and Wood,  
437 2009).

438

## 439 **Conclusion**

440

441 The environmental movement in New Zealand has demonstrated a diversity of  
442 approaches during the 1997-2013 period. Actors engaged in a wide range of activities,  
443 ranging from large colourful marches through to clandestine acts involving  
444 occupation and crop destruction. The control and determination of spatial  
445 understandings by formal authorities makes transgressive actions more effective in  
446 presenting a challenge to accepted understandings of social ordering.

447

448 Actions that fall within the prescribed boundaries can also be effective if they are able  
449 to demonstrate WUNC, primarily in the form of marches and demonstrations. In  
450 addition, issue areas saw variation in spatial scale (from the local to the international)  
451 depending on the issue being pursued. Social movements engage with these issues of  
452 scale in a variety of ways, all of which seek to advance the perceived significance of

453 and support for their claim. Scalar strategies play an important role in shaping the  
454 ability of environmental campaigns to express claims and advance interests. The data  
455 examined show that the level of local scale protests remained relatively stable, while  
456 that of nationally focused actions was more erratic.

457

458 Although there was consistency in the form of actions undertaken across the issue  
459 areas, there was more variation in the scale at which protests took place. To a large  
460 extent this was governed by the character of the issue, with issues of pollution and  
461 development operating overwhelmingly at the local scale, whereas protests around  
462 climate change and GE were governed more clearly at the national scale. Where the  
463 geographical focus was less obvious or where the site of the action was less hospitable  
464 to the claims being made there was potential to shift scale to generate new allies and  
465 modes of challenge.

466

467 The ability and willingness of campaigns to shift scales was clearly seen in the  
468 different trajectories and experiences of campaigns over GE and mineral extraction.  
469 Opposition to mineral extraction was initially focused at the national scale,  
470 challenging government plans to open mining in particularly important places  
471 (national parks), but was able to generate support at the local scale as exploration (for  
472 gas and oil in particular) started to take place. This stands in direct contrast to the  
473 experience of the campaign against GE, where the focused nature of the issue (lifting  
474 of the moratorium) meant that it was more difficult to shift scales as the regulatory  
475 environment changed. The national character of the GE campaign limited the ability  
476 to move to the local scale to capitalise on opportunities at this scale by organising  
477 challenges to ERMA hearings and field trials in diverse settings.

478

479 The findings of the analysis therefore suggest that scale is a significant consideration  
480 in shaping environmental protest. Decisions made by actors on where to target claims,  
481 how to express these claims, and what actions to take are conditioned by the external  
482 environment. The ability of actors in a campaign to move between scales is essential  
483 in enabling them to capitalise on opportunities and operate at the scale where their  
484 impact will be greatest and opposition can be best managed.

485

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<sup>i</sup> Grey and Sedgwick (2013) also note that funding for the non-profit sector generally has been severely curtailed by the political environment.

<sup>ii</sup> Development includes protest actions over planned subdivisions, cell towers, road building, and demolition.

<sup>iii</sup> Up to four actions were coded for each protest event, resulting in 812 actions in total. The four categories are broken down into – Appeal – present, address; Demonstrational – gather, display, march, perform, costume, replant; Confrontational – disrupt, chant, enter, obstruct, occupy; Violent – damage.

<sup>iv</sup> Although it could be argued that GE crops and mine sites have physical locations, their dispersed nature and distance from population centres means that they are less immediately accessible.

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632

633 **Figure 1** Annual protest events by scale

634 **Figure 2** Forms of protest<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The figure considers the combined actions at the local, national and international scales, as there was

635 **Figure 3** GE protest events by scale

636 **Figure 4** Mineral exploration protest events by scale

637

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no significant difference between them.

638 **Table 1** Frequency of protest event by issue group and scale (1997-2013)

Issue	Local	National	International
Animal Rights	52.9 (9)	41.2 (7)	5.9 (1)
Climate Change	22.2 (6)	40.7 (11)	37.0 (10)
Development	91.2 (31)	8.8 (3)	0.0 (0)
GE	8.5 (5)	84.7 (50)	6.8 (4)
Mining/Oil/Gas	28.2 (22)	65.4 (51)	6.4 (5)
Pollution/Waste/Water	78.9 (45)	14.0 (8)	7.0 (4)
Forestry/Fishery/Conservation	55.3 (47)	28.2 (24)	16.5 (14)
Total	100 (165)	100 (154)	100 (38)

639

640

641 **Appendix** News source, availability, and circulation

642

Source	Start	End	Circulation (2012)†
The New Zealand Herald	Apr-94		162,181
The Evening Post*	Dec-95	Jul-02	..
The Dominion*	Dec-95	Jul-02	..
Waikato Times	Jul-96		34,843
Sunday Star Times	Jul-96		131,196
Taranaki Daily News	Jan-97		21,511
The Press	Jan-97		75,034
The Timaru Herald	Jan-97		13,147
Manawatu Standard	Feb-97		17,000
The Southland Times	Mar-97		26,765
NZPA§	May-97	Aug-11	..
Nelson Mail	Jul-97		14,197
The Dominion-Post	Jul-02		79,438
Otago Daily Times	Aug-02		38,064
Marlborough Express	Jan-05		7,969
Bay of Plenty Times	Jun-05		18,504
The Daily Post	Jun-05		9,343
Hawke's Bay Today	Jun-05		23,161
The Northern Advocate	Jun-05		12,777

643

644 † Source:

645 <http://newspaper.abc.org.nz/audit.html?org=npa&publicationid=%25&mode=embarg>

646 o&npa\_admin=1&publicationtype=19&memberid=%25&type=%25 [accessed 17

647 May 2013]

648 \* Replaced by *Dominion-Post* in 2002

649 § *New Zealand Press Association* – closed August 2011

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