

The evolution of environmental extremism in the United States

by

Danielle Marie Preskitt Muir

B.A., Clemson University, 2015

M.A., Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey, 2017

AN ABSTRACT OF A DISSERTATION

submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

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Abstract

The threat posed by environmental extremism is a product of the way in which the environment is presented to the public as well as the government's response. Through a comparative analysis of case studies, this dissertation argues that the US government's history of using repression in the form of decentralization strategies and rhetorical delegitimation has failed to stop eco-radicalism. A social, cultural, and historical analysis of the selected environmental movements' histories identifies the root cause of the transformation while warning that engagement has proven a superior tactic to repression in dealing with eco-radicals. ELF and ALF's decentralized nature, leadership structure, and the US government's failed repression strategies have facilitated the organizations' increased level of violence. On the other hand, Greenpeace's cohesive structure as well as their sense of collaboration and consensus shaped its relationship with the government as well as its decision to rely on consistently peaceful tactics. The concepts of transparency, consensus, and cohesion within Greenpeace and its interactions with the US government contributed to its longevity as well. While these organizations share common concerns, their approaches and philosophies differ greatly. In response to the US governments' actions, ELF and ALF turned toward violence in frustration while Greenpeace leaned further into lobbying and collaboration to promote lasting change. This dissertation goes beyond the current literature by seeking to answer the following research question: How does the government response trigger a change in tactics from nonviolent to violent in environmental groups? Rational choice theory provides insight into the decision-making process of the organization in response to the government. This dissertation further warns policymakers against relying primarily on repression in dealing with eco-radicals because it has proven counter-productive in the past.

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Approved by:

Major Professor
Andrew Orr

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Dedication

To my loving husband, selfless parents, supportive grandparents, and Mushu.

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Global concerns regarding the environment and its inhabitants are no longer limited to a small corner of the library or the fringes of society but have entered mainstream media and pop culture. Whether it is Meryl Streep starring in the new television show “Extrapolations” or a news outlet reporting on environmental activism, such as the recent pouring of vegetable charcoal into the Trevi Fountain, environmental activism and concerns have become a part of everyday life.¹ The environmental discourse in pop culture often focuses on the potential annihilation of humanity. This concept of annihilation can be found within the doomsday clock, the “Extinction Rebellion” activists, the ever-pressing 2050 countdown of rising tides, or the “Last of Us” playing on television.² Whether this is a strategy of fearmongering to increase ratings or a tactic to evoke change, it has successfully placed the conversation of the environment and its effects into the homes of millions across the globe. This discourse primes a new generation of onlookers to eco-radical attacks to be sympathetic to radicals and potentially more accepting of violence. The threat posed by environmental extremism is a product of the way in which the environment is presented to the public as well as the government’s response. This dissertation seeks to create a social, cultural, and historical analysis of the environmental movement to identify the root cause of the transformation in tactics from non-violent, peaceful protests to violent acts.

¹ Extrapolations is an American drama series created by Scott Z. Burns for Apple TV. The series premiered on March 17, 2023. BBC, “Trevi Fountain: Climate activists turn water in Rome landmark black,” BBC News, May 21, 2023, <https://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-europe-65666775>.

² The doomsday clock represents the likelihood of a man-made global catastrophe. Since 1947, the clock has been maintained by the members of the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists. The “Extinction Rebellion” is a UK-headquartered global environmental movement using civil disobedience to force the governments around the world to acknowledge the potential for biodiversity loss as well as social and ecological collapse. 2050 has been said to be the last chance for humanity to limit climate change and ensure Earth is habitable. Daniel Goldman, “The Climate Countdown to 2050,” Forbes, March 29, 2022, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbesbusinesscouncil/2022/03/29/the-climate-countdown-to-2050/?sh=4844a8d71de5>. The “Last of US” is an American post-apocalyptic show created by Craig Mazin and Neil Druckmann for HBO. The show is based on a 2013 popular video game.

For decades, scholars have underestimated the danger lurking within the environmental movement. Given the movement's decentralized nature, the threat has continued to grow amid an increase in difficulty of surveillance and prosecution. The complex transformation in tactics of environmental extremists sheds light on the issues related to social change, cultural narrative, and government response. This dissertation highlights ways in which the conceptualization of sustainability and environmental responsibility has affected the violent evolution of a subset of the environmental movement. With a history marked by death threats, arson, property damage, and kidnapping, the United States' eco-radicals calls for further analysis and attention. This dissertation shows evidence, through three cases studies using structured focused comparison, that the interactions, such as lobbying, compromise, direct action, repression, and lack of acknowledgment, between the government and an environmental group greatly affects the level of violence and tactics of the organization. The result produced from fracturing or splintering of an organization is determined by the way in which the organization relates to the government as well as handles internal dissent.

In doing so, this dissertation builds upon the existing sociological, political, and historical analysis of the environmental movement in the United States by examining how the US government's response triggered a shift in tactics within various environmental organizations. It further aims to produce new perspectives on this question by taking advantage of rational choice theory. Much of the scholarship on terrorism ignores the contextual relevance of media, literature, social climate, and environmental disasters. This dissertation traces the evolution of tactics within eco-terrorism through a more holistic approach. The literature review showcases the interdependent relationship between protesters and the governing authority. As frustration grows with the inaction of leaders toward climate change in the contemporary United States, it is imperative to no longer neglect the potential for a second rise of environmental extremism.

Eco-radicalism is a form of extremism that is limited to a small group within the peaceful mainstream environmental movement. Scholars have searched for patterns in the origins of extremism. One avenue of study is the interaction between the government and organization. When an organization believes there is little room for cooperation or compromise with the government, it may choose to abandon intrasystemic actions for extrasystemic actions. Extrasystemic actions are often associated with violence and are utilized when traditional and peaceful means prove unfruitful.³ Protests are a form of communication to the government and public within the intrasystemic space. Most protests are nonviolent, but when the government does not respond or responds with repression, violence often follows. Therefore, the interaction between the government and protest has an interdependent relationship with the tactics and level of violence.

This dissertation goes beyond the current literature by asking: How does the government response trigger a change in tactics from nonviolent to violent in environmental groups? Rational choice theory acts as a framework for understanding social behavior, assuming that the individual has preferences among the choices available.⁴ Individuals use rational calculations to make choices that are aligned with their desired outcomes. Rational choice theory provides insight into the decision-making process of the organization in response to the government. Through process tracing, I have found that both the Earth Liberation Front (ELF) and the Animal Liberation Front (ALF) resulted in an increase of violence and a shift in targeting and tactics. This transformation is linked to the organization's decentralized structure and disdain for the US government's

³ Intrasystemic action means it is occurring within the system, while extrasystemic is outside of the system or established institution. Scholars have utilized these terms in political science works, such as: L. M. Rafanelli, Promoting justice across borders. *Political Studies* 69, 2 (2021), 237-256 and A. Eskandari, J. Karami, & G. K. Siraki, Iran's Regional Role and Russia-US Rivalry in West Asia. *International Journal of Political Science* 12, 1 (2022), 81-100.

⁴ Karl- Dieter Opp, *The Rationality of Political Protest: A Comparative Analysis of Rational Choice Theory* (United Kingdom: Routledge, 2019); Mancur Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1965); and Russell Hardin, 1982. *Collective Action* (Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982).

response, including labelling as a terrorist organization as well as a lack of action, to the organization's protests and activities. On the other hand, Greenpeace's more compromising and transparent approach to the US government and internal dissent kept any dramatic shift in targeting or level of violence away.

Currently, the Earth Liberation Front (ELF) and the Animal Liberation Front (ALF) are loosely affiliated domestic terrorist organizations. This structure makes it difficult for authorities to connect attacks to their respective organization. There is no member list for either organization. Members often do not associate with other members, nor do they vocalize their unusual beliefs. A radical's only connection to environmental extremism may be online reading material, making it impossible for authorities to tie the attack to the organization. On the other hand, Greenpeace is a non-profit, tax-exempt organization. It is registered as a 501(c)(4), a campaigning and lobbying organization. Greenpeace relies solely on traditional and peaceful means to raise awareness and enact change. Therefore, the question is- How did these organizations differ so greatly in response to the US government's actions toward the environmental movement?

Process tracing of the studies has found that the Earth Liberation Front (ELF) and the Animal Liberation Front (ALF) case studies result in an increase of violence and a shift in targeting and tactics. Both organizations will transition from targeting property to targeting either animals or humans. This transformation is linked to the US government's response, including surveillance, arrests, and labelling as a terrorist organization, and to the organization's protests and activity. On the other hand, Greenpeace has not experienced a shift in targeting or level of violence. This consistency is strongly correlated with each party's, US government and the organization, choice to acknowledge and compromise with the other.

This dissertation is thus novel in applying the interdependence of decision-making to the environmental movement as well as aiming to identify the root causes of a change in tactics within

environmental groups. The context of testing is limited to the United States from the early 1970s until the immediate aftermath of the attacks on September 11th, since this day changed the counterterrorism security infrastructure and intelligence community. Most of the protests analyzed within the dissertation occur in the late 1980s through the 1990s. This ten-year period allows for controlling for political leaning of the government, prevailing national sentiment, and attitudes toward the environment.

There are four bodies of research that inform this project, including literature on the modern environmental political movement, strategies, government responses to dissent and protest, and group fragmentation. Each body of work is critical to understanding the progression of environmental organizations in the United States. The literature on environmental politics is best understood by dividing it into four periods, each period showcasing the evolution of environmental politics in ideology, values, and action. The movement and strategy portion highlights the mobilization of environmental action. The context surrounding the environmental mobilization, such as the Civil Rights Movement and Anti-war Movement, allowed environmental leadership to borrow tactics and strategies. As the movement progressed, the government's interaction, such as acknowledgment, compromise, repression, or no recognition, played a critical role in each organization's decision to continue peaceful protests or veer into violence. As this decision arrives, fragmentation or splintering often occurs. Fragmentation resulting from a change in ideology leaves members of the organization with various paths to take, one path being extremism.

Environmental Political Literature

Most of the early literature focusing on environmental politics was written by activists, who were devoted to generating public appreciation of the environment and raising awareness of environmental protection, such as *Silent Spring* by Rachel Carson.⁵ These works encouraged

⁵ Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring* (Boston, Massachusetts: Houghton Mifflin, 1962).

Americans to get outdoors, but also generated an appetite for policy change. The US government initially responded with the adoption of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in 1969.⁶ Although NEPA was a good first step, there was no clear or explicit formulation of a public responsibility for the state of the environment until the 1990s.⁷ Traditionally, environmental literature is divided into three parts: early (1960-1977), growing maturity (1978-1985), and contemporary (1986-2000).⁸ This literature review will be redefining the previous three eras and adding a fourth and final section to the literature- the individualist period (2001-2010). Each period of literature mirrors the way in which the public reacts to the environmental movement as well as their appetite for violence in its name.

Literature in the 1960s and 1970s was descriptive in nature, focused to consciousness raising among those interested in environmental protection.⁹ Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* introduced Americans to the effects of pesticides while empowering the public to learn about their environment.¹⁰ A few years later, in 1968, Paul R. Ehrlich predicted worldwide famine in his work *The Population Bomb*.¹¹ Both popular works gained a following and brought environmental protection and advocacy to the American people. Following these publications, an initial commitment to the environment from the US government was achieved during the early 1970s with environmental laws, such as the regulations of air contaminants, water pollutants, and

⁶ Lynton K. Caldwell, *Man and His Environment: Policy and Administration* (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), 23; James P. Lester, *Environmental Politics and Policy: Theories and Evidence*. 2nd ed. (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), 1.

⁷ Lynton K. Caldwell, *Man and His Environment: Policy and Administration*, 3.

⁸ James P. Lester, *Environmental Politics and Policy: Theories and Evidence*, 1.

⁹ James P. Lester, *Environmental Politics and Policy: Theories and Evidence*; Mann, Dean, Geoffrey Wandesforde-Smith, and Lennart Lundqvist, "Environmental Policy." In *Policy Studies in America and Elsewhere* (Lexington, Mass: Lexington Books, 1975), 88.

¹⁰ Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring*.

¹¹ Paul R. Ehrlich, *The Population Bomb* (San Francisco, California: Sierra Club, 1968).

hazardous waste.¹² This shift from admiration to protection of the environment was reflected in the literature as well.

As the 1970s progressed, literature on the topic primarily examined the role of the federal government.¹³ The literature placed the responsibility for the safety and protection of the environment on the federal government. By 1975, government officials, researchers, and members of the environmental movement criticized political science scholars for the lack of research and literature.¹⁴ In response, political scientists began to examine the relationship between politics and the environment as well as democracies and the environment. William Ophuls became a leading scholar of the movement focusing on ecological implications of modern industrial civilizations.¹⁵ His work on a return to scarcity represents a serious challenge to the American way of life.¹⁶ Ophuls attempted to illustrate how American political institutions, culture, and values are maladapted to the era of ecological scarcity.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the study of environmental politics broadened in both scope and depth.¹⁷ While a portion of American environmentalists became, often wrongly, associated with communists as both were on the fringes of society, an even smaller portion began to question their values and culture as it related to sustainability. In isolating the cause of environmental exploitation, the focus shifted from the federal level to the individual states. By the

¹² Mazmanian, Daniel, and David Morell, *Beyond Superfailure: America's Toxics Policy* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1992).

¹³ Paul A. Sabatier, "State and Local Environmental Policy," *Policy Studies Journal* 1, 4 (1973), 218.

¹⁴ James P. Lester, *Environmental Politics and Policy: Theories and Evidence*, 5; Mann, Dean, Geoffrey Wandesforde-Smith, and Lennart Lundqvist, "Environmental Policy." In *Policy Studies in America and Elsewhere* (Lexington, Mass: Lexington Books, 1975).

¹⁵ Alan Schnaiberg, *The Environment: From Surplus to Scarcity* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1980); Henry P. Cauldfield, *Environmental Politics and Policy: Theories and Evidence* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1989); Raymond L. Goldstein and John K. Schorr, *Demanding Democracy after Three Mile Island* (Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press, 1991).

¹⁶ William Ophuls, "Ecology and the Politics of Scarcity," In *Political Theory of the Steady State* (San Francisco: W. H. Freeman and Co, 1977).

¹⁷ Dean Mann, "Symposium on Environmental Policy: An Introduction," *Policy Studies Journal* 9, (1980), 323.

early 1980s, some scholars, businessmen, politicians, and part of the American public questioned the impact of environmental regulations on the economy. Gregory Daneke addressed the empty efforts and promises to reform environmental regulation in his research. He argued that the Reagan Administration's restrictions on the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) actions were not relieving the burden of businesses.¹⁸ Leading economists of the time, Robert Reich, Robert Haveman, and Gregory Christiansen argued that contrary to some political claims- environmental regulations did not harm economic growth. Christiansen and Haveman concluded that environmental regulations only accounted for approximately eight to twelve percent of the decrease in productivity growth. They also discovered that aggregate productivity impacts were lowest in the industrial sector, which was the focal point of environmental regulations.¹⁹ Robert Reich's research found that the amount of money spent by US firms on environmental controls was not unreasonable when compared to their Japanese and European counterparts. In fact, the Japanese and European counterparts spent more and were more successful in meeting their environmental objectives.²⁰

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, scholars focused on "basic questions as the nature and viability of modern industrial society, structure of political and economic institutions, and the effectiveness of their decision-making mechanisms" and the ways in which political ideologies affect our capacity to recognize and act on ecological issues.²¹ This change in approach altered the

¹⁸ Gregory A. Deaneke, "Whither Environmental Regulation?" *Journal of Public Policy* 4, 2 (1984), 141.

¹⁹ Gregory Christiansen and Robert Haveman, "Government regulations and their impact on the economy," *The Annals*, 459 (1982), 112-122.

²⁰ Robert Reich, *Aftershock: The Next Economy and America's Future* (New York, New York: Vintage Books, 2013).

²¹ Michael Kraft, "Ecology and Political Theory: Broadening the Scope of Environmental Politics." *Policy Studies Journal*, 20 (1992), 713.

conversation, bringing it to the local level.²² Scholars and activists both advocated for a broadening of the environmental movement's social base and championed thinking and planning globally but acting locally.²³

The environmental movement was now old enough for historians to begin analyzing its progress. In 1987, Samuel P. Hays, a historian of the American conservation movement, published *Beauty, Health, and Permanence*. His work viewed the emergence of the new environmental movement of the 1960s and 1970s as an illustration of a greater change in values throughout the United States since the end of World War II.²⁴ Historical analysis of this period provided a sense of what was achieved, what had yet to be achieved, and how the movement interacted with the American people. The late 90s brought a more international perspective to environmental politics literature. Scholars looked at environmental security in Africa as well as the European Union as an actor in international environmental politics.²⁵ This international perspective signaled a small sense of accomplishment in the domestic fight, spreading the attention globally.

As the contemporary era spills over into the post-modern period, Joel Jay Kassiola illustrates the renewed focus on the individual.²⁶ The scholars of this period believe the only way to avoid ecological disaster is to transform the dominant values, social institutions, and overall way of life. With 9/11 and the war on terror as fresh wounds in the nation, David Orr describes the

²² Robert W. Hahn and Robert N. Stavins, "Incentive-Based Environmental Regulation: A New Era from an Old Idea," *Ecology Law Quarterly*, 18 (1991), 1–42; John Dewitt, *Civic Environmentalism* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1994).

²³ Daniel Mazmanian and David Morell. *Beyond Superfailure: America's Toxics Policy* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1992).

²⁴ Samuel P. Hays, "From Conservation to Environment: Environmental Politics in the United States Since World War Two," *Environmental Review* 6, 2 (1982), 14–41.

²⁵ M.A. Salih and A. Hjort af Ornäs, "Ecology and politics: environmental stress and security in Africa," Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 1989; J. Vogler, "The European Union as an actor in international environmental politics," *Environmental Politics* 8, 3 (1999), 24–48.

²⁶ Joel Jay Kassiola, *Explorations in Environmental Political Theory: Thinking about What We Value* (Florence, United Kingdom: Taylor & Francis Group, 2002), <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/ksu/detail.action?docID=1982493>.

state of American politics against the backdrop of terrorism and ecological problems. In doing so, he attempts to unravel the deeper dysfunction underneath the partisan politics.²⁷ Other scholars follow in Orr's footsteps by highlighting the limitations of current neoconservative and cosmopolitan approaches.²⁸ For instance, Paehlke highlights the importance of the individual to a much larger extent by asserting that an emerging social science inquiry could make a significant practical difference to the future of human society.²⁹

The way indigenous cultures and societies related to the environment rapidly became a growing area of interest in the 1990s. Scholars wrote about indigenous peoples' environmental knowledge and conservation.³⁰ At the same time, works highlighted environmental protesters' civil disobedience by branding the environmental movement as a "liberation movement".³¹ This labeling created a sense of implicit justification for the means utilized to achieve their goals. By labeling the environmental group as liberators, the researcher was suggesting corporations, particularly those involved with mining and oil, are the villain. The environmental discourse also began to develop into a discussion on class struggle and environmental justice.³² In 2009 and 2010, the public, politicians, and scholars began to forecast prospects of sustainability of life on earth as well as projecting climate policies to mitigate disaster.³³ Sustainability of life is closely related to

²⁷ David Orr, *The Last Refuge: Patriotism, Politics, and the Environment in the Age of Terror* (Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 2004).

²⁸ John Dryzek, *Deliberative Global Politics: Discourse and Democracy in a Divided World* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Polity, 2006).

²⁹ Robert Paehlke, "Environmental Politics, Sustainability and Social Science." *Environmental Politics* 10, 4 (2001), 1–22.

³⁰ Shelton H. Davis and A. Wali, *Indigenous views of land and the environment* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 1993); R.K. Hitchcock, "International human rights, the environment, and indigenous peoples," *Colo. J. Int'l Envtl. L. & Pol'y* 5, 1 (1994); and S.J. Anaya and S.T. Crider, (1996). "Indigenous peoples, the environment, and commercial forestry in developing countries: The case of Awas Tingni, Nicaragua," *Hum. Rts. Q.* 18, 345 (1996).

³¹ J. S. Omotola, "Nigerian parties and political ideology." *Journal of Alternative perspectives in the Social Sciences* 1, 3 (2009), 612-634.

³² D. Layfield, *Marxism and Environmental Crises* (Arena books, 2008).

³³ P.G. Harris, "Beyond Bush: Environmental politics and prospects for US climate policy," *Energy Policy* 37,3 (2009), 966-971.

population and hunger. Genetically modified crops (GMOs) have been one avenue heavily researched to tackle hunger, the rising population, and climate change. Fredrick Buttel ironically pointed out that the movement against genetically modified crops and food was becoming “environmentalised.”³⁴ Throughout the decades, the literature on environmentalism provided insight into the public’s appetite for change as well as the government’s policies and involvement.

Definition of Eco-Terrorism

Environmental terrorism, or eco-terrorism, is a hazardous challenge to international security and sustainable development globally.³⁵ Eco-terrorism is a phrase often used to describe two very different concepts: the intentional infliction of major environmental harm and terrorism intended to protect the environment. Terrorism and vandalism against the environment consist of corporate exploitation, overfishing, poaching of protected animals, and other similar activities. Modern examples include the intentional destruction of infrastructure to cause environmental harm, such as Iraq military’s burning of Kuwaiti oil fields in 1991 or Russia’s destruction of the Kakhovka Dam in 2023. On the other hand, eco-terrorism includes acts committed by groups, organizations, or individuals in the name of environmental protection.³⁶

³⁴ Frederick H Buttel, “The Environmental and Post- Environmental Politics of Genetically Modified Crops and Foods,” *Environmental Politics* 14, 3 (2005), 309-323.

³⁵ A. P. Alekseeva, A.P. Anisimov, and A.J. Ryzhenkov, “Environmental terrorism, environmental radicalism and measures to counteract them,” *Environmental Policy and Law* 47, 1 (2017), 24-34, doi:<https://doi.org/10.3233/EPL-170008>.

³⁶ Ecotage is committed by environmental extremists and environmental terrorists. Eco-terrorism is committed by adherents to a radical ideology informed by a supreme concern for the environment that permits the use of violent action to attack the symbols of “corporate industrialism”. Donald Liddick, *Eco-Terrorism: Radical Environmental and Animal Liberation Movements*, (United States: Praeger, 2006), 56. See also: L.E. Likar, *Eco-warriors, Nihilistic Terrorists, and the Environment*, (United States: Praeger, 2011). While eco-terrorism is employed when addressing actions, eco-extremism refers to the ideological dimension associated with groups engaged in those acts. Terrorism is defined by “Title 22 of the U.S. Code as politically motivated violence perpetrated in a clandestine manner against noncombatants”. However, violent acts in the absence of political or social objectives are merely criminal. Therefore, terrorism is a strategy. For the purposes of this paper, terrorism “is the use or threatened use of violence, directed against victims selected for their symbolic or representative value, as a means of instilling anxiety in, transmitting one or more messages to, and thereby manipulating the attitudes and behaviors of a wider target audience.” This definition is from Dr. Jeffrey Bale, a retired professor at the Middlebury Institute of International Studies. The definition can be found at Jeffrey Bale, “Recommendations on the Development of Methodologies and Attributes for Assessing Terrorist Threats of WMD Terrorism,” Center for Nonproliferation Studies, accessed

The United States, Canada, and European governments use the term “ecological terrorism” to refer to the actions of environmental groups, such as sabotage, releasing animals, and threats. In contrast, Russian scholar, D.I. Tislenko, states that environmental terrorism is an “ideology and practice of violence of high public risk intimidating the population and committed through pollution of the environment, including with the aim to attract attention to certain views or to affect decision making or other action by state authorities, local government bodies, international organizations, legal entities, social groups, and individuals”. This Russian definition is an attempt to combine environmental terrorism with eco-terrorism.³⁷

Environmental Terrorism Literature

The concept of environmental terrorism is categorized in three very different ways within the literature: environmental harm during conflict, environmental terrorism, and eco-terrorism. Research on these topics can be widely found within various departments, particularly history, anthropology, and environmental studies. Environmental terrorism and policies of environmental harm can lead to a response from eco-terrorists.³⁸ Eco-terrorism is a response to the destruction of the Earth to raise awareness or halt the ongoing destruction.³⁹ Despite these distinctions, the terms and definitions, as discussed above, are often used interchangeably making the concepts harder to distinguish.

During times of conflict and war, environmental harm is often used as a tactic. For example, scorched earth methods, the act of burning down fields and forests, was utilized widely in campaigns throughout history. One of the most notable cases was United States Major General

March 20, 2023,

https://courses.cs.washington.edu/courses/csep590/05au/readings/Bale_Ackerman_FinalReport.pdf.

³⁷ D. I. Tislenko, "Environmental terrorism: Criminal, legal and criminological issues", at 9-10, Candidate thesis, 2012, Saratov State Legal Academy [in Russian].

³⁸ D.M. Schwartz, "Environmental Terrorism: Analyzing the Concept," *Journal of Peace Research* 35, 4 (1998), 483–496, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343398035004005>.

³⁹ P.A. Spadaro, Climate Change, Environmental Terrorism, Eco-Terrorism and Emerging Threats, *Journal of Strategic Security* 13, 4 (2020), 58–80. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26965518>.

William Tecumseh Sherman's March to the Sea during the American Civil War. Sherman attempted to break the Confederacy's will to fight by making life at home difficult for the families of those fighting. This policy was not only used in the past, but also in the 21st century. Most recently, in April of 2022, White House National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan accused Russia of the policy during the invasion of Ukraine. A senior Ukrainian commander said that Russian troops were using scorched earth tactics in Bakhmut. Despite the cultural differences and the years spanning each incident, the motivation is the same. While military strategies are typically used to defeat the enemy physically, a scorched earth policy is an attempt to break the enemy's will to fight, on the battlefield and on the home front. Scholars have characterized scorched earth and the intentional destruction of property as hyper-masculine and a release for soldiers under stress.⁴⁰ These methods also make life difficult on the home front which substantially decreases support for the war effort.⁴¹ Environmental harm has also been used by international terrorists, such as ISIS. By targeting water resources, the terrorist group hoped to leverage and control the population.⁴² During the Gulf War in 1991, Iraqi forces caused large oil spills in the Persian Gulf and set fire to Kuwaiti oil fields to inflict an environmental and economic catastrophe on Kuwait.⁴³ President George Bush classified these acts as a form of environmental terrorism.⁴⁴ This classification was the beginning of the modern debate of environmental terrorism.

Environmental terrorism is similar to environmental harm. However, environmental harm is most often attributed to corporations in modern-day society. Industries, such as logging, palm

⁴⁰ Ahmad Mahmoud, *The Scorched Earth* (Tehran, Iran: Mo'een, 1982).

⁴¹ Stephen E. Towne, "Scorched Earth or Fertile Ground? Indian in the Civil War, 1861-1865," *Indiana Historical Society*, 2001; W.Z. Goldman and D. Filtzer, *Fortress Dark and Stern: The Soviet Home Front During World War II* (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2021).

⁴² Marcus DuBois King, "The Weaponization of Water in Syria and Iraq," *The Washington Quarterly* 38, 4 (2015): 153-169.

⁴³ Roy Popkin, "Responding to Eco- Terrorism," U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, *EPA Journal* (July/August 1991).

⁴⁴ Daniel M. Schwartz, "Environmental Terrorism: Analyzing the Concept," *Journal of Peace Research* 35, 4 (1998): 483-496.

oil, and fossil fuels, are at the center of the debate. Scholars have attempted to study the toll these industries have taken on their respective environments. Improved practices of tropical logging can reduce the industry's emissions by 44% as logging currently emits 6% of tropical greenhouse gases annually.⁴⁵ Salvage logging has been an improvement to the industry as a way to create "economic returns" from forests affected by natural disturbances.⁴⁶ Palm oil has taken a heavy toll on the Amazon Rainforest, particularly in Brazil. While the environmental movement has consistently campaigned for global awareness of products that utilize this product, palm oil remains prevalent in everyday items.⁴⁷ Natural gas remains the most critical industry in both environmental hazard and unknown future. Although alternative forms of energy and electric vehicles continually improve each year, natural gas continues to drive societies across the globe. The conversation around natural gas is not limited to the ozone layer, but the oceans as well. As the climate changes, scholars are studying the effect of natural gas pollution on the ocean's rising temperature. Increases in sea temperature have the potential to destabilize methane hydrate, releasing methane into the atmosphere as well as the ocean.⁴⁸ Whether it is a discussion on the effects of ships on invasive coral species or oil spills on marine life, as the industry expands the absence of sufficient baseline data in these various ecosystems has made environmental management and evaluation challenging.⁴⁹ The awareness around these concepts has fueled eco-terrorism.

⁴⁵ Peter W. Ellis, et al., "Reduced-Impact Logging for Climate Change Mitigation (RIL-C) Can Halve Selective Logging Emissions from Tropical Forests," *Forest ecology and management* 438 (2019): 255–266.

⁴⁶ Simon Thorn, et al., "Impacts of Salvage Logging on Biodiversity: A Meta-analysis," *The Journal of applied ecology* 55.1 (2018): 279–289.

⁴⁷ Simon Thorn, et al., "Impacts of Salvage Logging on Biodiversity: A Meta-analysis."

⁴⁸ Juergen Mienert, "Signs of Instability: The Finding That Pools of Gas Hydrates--Compounds That Trap Natural Gas Emissions--in Ocean Sediments Are Deeper Than Expected Implies That the Hydrates Are Destabilizing, and Might Release Gigatonnes of Methane," *Nature (London)* 490.7421 (2012): 491–.

⁴⁹ Erik E. Cordes, et al., "Environmental Impacts of the Deep-Water Oil and Gas Industry: A Review to Guide Management Strategies," *Frontiers in environmental science* 4 (2016): 58–58; Dianne L McLean, et al., "Influence of Offshore Oil and Gas Structures on Seascape Ecological Connectivity," *Global change biology* 28.11 (2022): 3515–3536; Marcelo de Oliveira Soares, et al., "Shipwrecks Help Invasive Coral to Expand Range in the Atlantic Ocean," *Marine pollution bulletin* 158 (2020): 111394–111394.

Most research on eco-terrorism has revolved around public opinion and media interpretation as well as analysis on individual groups. Public opinion is important to both the politicization of the movement as well as the reception of direct action. Politicization can also prevent or skew the intended impact of the movement. Media coverage shapes and is shaped by the politicization of the environment and public opinion. Scholars, such as Paul Joosse, study the social construct of the “ecoterrorist threat” by investigating the articles published by the *New York Times*. His work illustrated the devaluation of the movement and the potential threat it posed by painting members and leadership as “dangerous clowns.”⁵⁰ Such language delegitimized the individuals while trivializing the threat they pose. This, in turn, fueled ecoterrorists to fight for their legitimacy in future attacks even as it discouraged government agencies from taking the threat seriously.

The analysis of terrorist groups particularly the Earth Liberation Front and Animal Liberation Front, focuses on their credit claiming, rhetoric, and organization structure. Credit claiming and rhetoric are similar as they both pertain to the writings and publications of each organization’s press office. Rhetoric and credit claiming does not solely depend on the words themselves but includes the timing and cultural context. The majority of this analysis focused on international terrorism until the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995. Studies have found that ELF’s voice was innovative and compelling, but the government’s rhetoric associating it with international terror typically triumphed. After the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995, environmental terrorism began to receive scholarly attention.⁵¹ According to Olson, the American people began

⁵⁰ Paul Joosse, “Elves, Environmentalism, and ‘eco-Terror’: Leaderless Resistance and Media Coverage of the Earth Liberation Front,” *Crime, media, culture* 8.1 (2012): 75–93.

⁵¹ Sean P. Eagan, “From spikes to bombs: The rise of eco-terrorism,” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 19, 1 (1996), 1-18, DOI: 10.1080/10576109608435993.

to lump ecoterrorists into the greater category of domestic terrorism.⁵² The Unabomber's writings, which contained environmental rhetoric, had a negative effect on the entire movement.⁵³ The Unabomber was viewed as unstable and isolated, this characterization combined with the association to environmental ideology discredited the overall movement.

Given its availability online, the Unabomber's Manifesto became the most well-known rhetorical artifact endorsing environmental extremism. Although the Unabomber's actions and writings sparked unwanted attention by law enforcement, they also acted as a catalyst for the environmental extremists. Kaczynski's rhetoric and message for anti-technology and pro-environment lived on despite his imprisonment. Particularly, his writing discussing the destruction of a man-made world and the promotion of a natural environment mirrors the writings of extremists within the current movement. Though the Unabomber was a lone wolf, his writing was a plea for like-minded individuals to follow in his footsteps. His writings further complicated the relationship between the environmental movement and the US government. He utilized his imprisonment to strike fear in his followers regarding the loss of freedom, use of government surveillance, loss of consumer choice due to the corporate takeovers, and the conglomeration of media increased tension and lack of trust.⁵⁴

The Unabomber is a perfect example of how a lone wolf can interact and influence the greater movement. The organization structure of decentralization and leaderless resistance within the environmental movement is often contrasted with other forms of domestic terrorism.

... leaderless resistance movements lack some of the typical obstacles of terrorist (and other) organizations, given their non-hierarchical and comparatively fluid natures. However, a new form of oligarchy develops in this type of movement, located in the

⁵² Jade Olson, "The Rhetoric of Eco-Revolutionary Activism: Constructing the Earth Liberation Front," ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 2017.

⁵³ Bron Taylor, "Religion, Violence and Radical Environmentalism: From Earth First! to the Unabomber to the Earth Liberation Front," *Terrorism and political violence* 10.4 (1998): 1–42.

⁵⁴ Brett A Barnett, "20 Years Later: A Look Back at the Unabomber Manifesto," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 9, no. 6 (2015): 60–71. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26297462>.

propagation of key ideological concepts/arguments/symbols, the assigning of target preferences, and the elevation or demotion of others within the movement broadly.⁵⁵

Gray argues that leaderless resistance replaces a charismatic leader with the ideology itself. These organizations present a unique challenge to law enforcement in terms of surveillance. The response and effectiveness of law enforcement and the government has been vastly understudied.

The United States' National Security Strategy Report of 2014 predicted that climate change would be a catalyst for political violence.⁵⁷ While the report suggested political violence would occur due to decrease of available resources, the report largely ignored the possibility of violence by people desperate to stop future environmental damage. Very little scholarship has been devoted to tactics and strategies utilized on environmental extremists. One of the scholarly articles on ecoterrorists' interactions with law enforcement analyzed the diffusion and displacement of ecoterrorists after police investigations. The resulting analysis found that eco-terrorists and animal rights terrorists are deterred, like common criminals, by conventional law enforcement actions.⁵⁸

Movement and Strategies

Many Americans in the 1960s believed the status quo was no longer acceptable, an air of change could be felt across the population from those feeling marginalized, misrepresented, or mistreated. The movements varied in approach and tactics, including both peaceful and violent means. The decision made by an organization's leadership between peaceful or violent tactics is highly affected by the relationship between the authorities and the protesters. If the relationship is

⁵⁵

Phillip W. Gray, "Leaderless Resistance, Networked Organization, and Ideological Hegemony," *Terrorism and political violence* 25.5 (2013): 655–671.

⁵⁷ Office of the Director of National Intelligence, *The National Intelligence Strategy of the United States of America, 2014 Report*, United States, 2014.

⁵⁸ Sue-Ming Yang and I-Chin Jen, "An Evaluation of Displacement and Diffusion Effects on Eco-Terrorist Activities After Police Investigations," *Journal of Quantitative Criminology* 34, 4 (2018): 1103-1123.

stable and amicable, then the organization is more likely to achieve its goal through peaceful means.

The civil rights movement demonstrated the power of nonviolent direct action, bringing national attention to racial inequality.⁵⁹ The tactics utilized by the anti-busing movements and gay rights were pioneered in the civil rights movement of the 1960s.⁶⁰ The founders of the Gay Liberation Front (GLF) were all active demonstrators against Dow Chemical Company, as well as part of the antiwar movement of the 1960s.⁶¹ Dow had become a symbol of the Vietnam War since they manufactured napalm and Agent Orange.⁶² Tactics, language, and strategy, such as street theater, stunts, and social engagement, were continuously borrowed by movements to better represent their own values and further their cause. “Hell no! We won’t go” signs were seen in antiwar protests as well as anti-busing and environmental protests.⁶³ The following paragraphs are divided into two sections: peaceful tactics and violent tactics. Each will explore the transformation and sharing of tactics and strategies utilized by protest movements within the United States.

Scholars argue that reform movements usually begin with peaceful means. Peaceful tactics bring credibility and legitimacy to the organization that violence often strips away, such as the Iranian revolution.⁶⁴ While previous scholars argued that the Iranian Revolution was the result of structural weakness, Chenoweth and Stephan argue that mass participation from various social classes due to the consistent nonviolent campaign was the source of success.⁶⁵ Peaceful tactics can

⁵⁹ M. Newman, *The Civil Rights Movement* (Praeger, 2004).

⁶⁰ S. Hall, “Protest movements in the 1970s: The long 1960s,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 43, 4 (2008), 659.

⁶¹ D. Clendinen and A. Nagourney, *Out for good: The struggle to build a gay rights movement in America* (Simon and Schuster, 2001), 41. S. Hall, “Protest movements in the 1970s: The long 1960s,” 661.

⁶² Dow, “Agent Orange,” Dow, <https://corporate.dow.com/en-us/about/legal/issues/agent-orange.html>.

⁶³ John Kifner, “South Boston, a ‘Town’ of Irishmen, Feels as If It’s a Persecuted Belfast,” *New York Times*, 1974.

S. Hall, “Protest movements in the 1970s: The long 1960s,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 43, 4 (2008), 664.

⁶⁴ David Snow and Robert Benford, “Master Frames and Cycles of Protest.” In *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory*, (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1992), 133-152.

⁶⁵ E. Chenoweth and M. J. Stephan, *Why civil resistance works: The strategic logic of nonviolent conflict* (New York City, New York: Columbia University Press, 2011).

include boycotts, sit-ins, marches, vigils, leafletting, picketing, and information warfare. These tactics do not interrupt or threaten the public, allowing the community to be more sympathetic to the cause. When the public is sympathetic, they are more likely to educate themselves on the cause, get involved, or join the movement.⁶⁶ The environmental movement is a diverse movement in terms of tactics, ideology, and membership. In the 1960s, the environmental movement was built on the idea of marching. Taking to the streets was the unofficial hallmark of these organizations. In doing so, individuals built a community out of the cause. Organizations held informal meetings and events to gather people encouraging the formation of bonds and the sharing of information. By publishing their ideology and values on pamphlets and newsletters, they expanded their reach and recruitment.

As years passed, technology changed as well as the narrative surrounding the environmental movement. While some organizations chose violence, such as ELF and ALF, others, like Greenpeace, utilized formal institutions to spread awareness. In the mid to late 20th century, well-funded non-governmental organizations, NGOs, consider lobbying politicians a key tactic for their movement. Olzak and Soule examined the influence of protest activities, congressional hearings, and political characteristics on environmental legislation in the United States from 1961-1990. The authors discovered that rates of environmental protest rise with increases in the amount of previous institutional activities. However, extra-institutional activities do not influence the protest rate.⁶⁷ Their findings suggest that protests have no direct effect on the passage of legislation. Yet, these protests significantly increase the number of congressional hearings on the subject. Despite the lack of success of environmental protests in the creation of new legislation, protests are viewed as

⁶⁶ David Snow and Robert Benford, "Master Frames and Cycles of Protest." In *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory*, (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1992), 145.

⁶⁷ S. Olzak and S. A. Soule, "Cross-cutting influences of environmental protest and legislation," *Social forces* 88, 1 (2009), 201-225.

effective in agenda-setting by the participants. The triumph of agenda-setting is temporary and inevitably falters as time passes. If the government response remains stagnant, violence can be considered as an alternative means to the organization's goals. Thus, was the case of ELF and ALF.

Study and Definition of Violence

The study of violence has grown to become a cross-disciplinary focus of study within sociology, political science, anthropology, philosophy, and psychology. Two primary conceptualizations of violence have emerged. The narrow definition of *violence* is used by political scientists, where violence is defined as the “unauthorized (illegal, unlawful) use of physical force”.⁶⁸ The narrow definition would limit this study, so I utilize the broad definition of violence within this prospectus and dissertation. The broader definition of violence includes the narrow definition, as well as “numerous phenomena, such as hate speech, structural and cultural violence, and other manifestations of latent violence, including iconic violence, media, and symbolic violence”.⁶⁹ It is critical to identify any departure from peaceful tactics, this is particularly important within a decentralized organization. Hate speech, such as posting the names of individuals associated with animal testing, instructs the cells to act on the information. Within a decentralized cell, planning and execution does not result from an in-person meeting. Instead, information is distributed and the attack is often implied. This definition allows the investigation of publications, press releases, as well as actions by environmental extremist organizations to identify emboldened behavior. The primary form of communication, writings, hate speech, and media, must be included as the publications of ELF and ALF evoke violence within the decentralized membership.

⁶⁸ Daniel Mider, “The Anatomy of Violence: A Study of the Literature,” *Aggression and Violent Behavior* 18, 6 (2013), 702–8.

⁶⁹ Daniel Mider, “The Anatomy of Violence: A Study of the Literature.”

Violence is born from a variety of circumstances, including protests and political activism. For example, *The Story of the Baader-Meinhof Terrorist Gang* discusses the journey of the West German terrorists who emerged from a nonviolent student protest movement in the late 1960s.⁷⁰ From elite backgrounds, the students, ironically, began killing in the name of “peace.” Known as “Hitler’s children,” the students were not only a product of Nazi Germany but were also fiercely against individual freedoms. Despite their personal prosperity, they identified themselves as victims of wars and oppression by Western imperialism. Their violent activity was steeped in an illogical attempt at self-expression. However, their dreams of leading a revolution were halted as the leaders were either murdered or arrested. In the end, the remaining leaders committed suicide in prison: the end of the Baader-Meinhof Gang.⁷¹

The Baader-Meinhof Gang’s violent escalation, relationship with authority, and surrounding narrative is similar to the environmental extremist movement in the United States. The Baader-Meinhof Gang turned to violence in 1968 after a young student, Benno Ohnesorg, was shot dead by police during a demonstration against the Shah of Iran’s visit to Berlin. This single repressive act from the German government sparked sympathy within the public while simultaneously enraging the members of the organization. The Baader-Meinhof Gang case exemplifies the possibility of escalation within seemingly innocent, nonviolent civil protests, as well as the danger lurking behind rebirth and transitions. This lesson should be considered in relation to the material in the subsequent sections of this dissertation, which identifies characteristics and patterns that signal a change in strategy and tactics within an organization.

⁷⁰ Jillian Becker, *Hitler’s Children: The Story of the Baader-Meinhof Terrorist Gang* (London, UK: Michael Joseph, 1972).

⁷¹ C. Farrell, *Terror at the Munich Olympics* (ABDO, 2010).

Conveying a narrative inside and outside of the organization is pivotal in both peaceful protest groups and violent terrorists. The narrative ensures that the membership remains focused on ideology and values while garnering sympathy or support from the public. As in the case of environmental extremism, groups, such as ELF and ALF, push a narrative of divine justice with a savior-like complex while Greenpeace distributes fear-mongering scientific research. Julian Preece researched how and why the German Student Movement influenced German writers more than any other period since World War II. Although left-wing terrorism in Germany did not bring about substantive change or kill many people, a fascination exists in Europe around politically motivated terrorism like the Baader-Meinhof Gang.⁷² This may be due to the “characters” the membership created to breathe life into the movement and the vilification of the opposition in the face of government repression. As the opposition begins to repress, it becomes much easier to create tension and defame authority in public.

Government Response

The outcome of a protest is dependent on government response as well as the group’s ability to overcome internal and external pressures. Violent protest organizations have proven to be resilient under repression from the US government.⁷³ Within a resilient trajectory, groups absorb and mitigate adversity. In response to the protesters’ actions, the government has three options for action: repression, compromise, or no action.⁷⁴ As the federal government began to respond to the violent actions of various environmental organizations, they labelled them as “terrorists”.⁷⁵ In doing so, the government repressed these organizations by surveilling members

⁷² Julian Preece, *Baader- Meinhof and the Novel: Narratives of the Nation/ Fantasies of the Revolution, 1970-2010* (New York, New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012).

⁷³ Isaac Prilleltensky, “Understanding, Resisting, and Overcoming Oppression: Toward Psychopolitical Validity,” *Community Psychology* 31, 1-2 (2003), 195-201.

⁷⁴ Jan Henryk Pierskalla, “Protest, Deterrence, and Escalation: The Strategic Calculus of Government Repression.”

⁷⁵ “FBI — The Threat of Eco-Terrorism,” <https://archives.fbi.gov/archives/news/testimony/the-threat-of-eco-terrorism> (February 12, 2002).

and arresting leadership. This section is divided into the government's choices of response: repression, compromise, and no action. This analysis is critical to understanding the interdependent dynamic between environmental groups and the United States. An interaction which triggered violence and a fundamental change in ideology in a portion of said groups.

Repression

Subjugation comes in many forms and varying degrees. *Repression* is the "behavior that is applied by governments in an effort to bring about political quiescence and facilitate the continuity of the regime through some form of restriction or violation of political and civil liberties".⁷⁶ This is one of the strategies used by a governing authority to maintain control over the populace. One example of governmental repression is the response to the 1992 Los Angeles riots. The unrest in Los Angeles began to settle only after the California National Guard, United States military, and various law enforcement agencies were deployed to the area.⁷⁷ Although the definition above is the legal definition, repression is subjective. The government may consider their actions as peaceful, while the organization believes they are being repressed. This dissertation is advancing the literature on repression by showing that a group's perception of repression has a major effect on their behavior and propensity to violence regardless of whether the repression meets a legal standard.

A broad range of actions fall under the category of repression.⁷⁸ When governments violate the physical integrity of their citizens, such as imprisonment or "disappearing", citizens perceive

⁷⁶ Escriba- Folch, Abel. (2013). "Repression, political threats, and survival under autocracy." *International Political Science Review*, 34(5). Mueller, C.M., H Johnston, and C Davenport. 2005. *Repression and Mobilization*. Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press.

⁷⁷ J. Darda, "MLK at the LA Riots: Civil Rights, Memory, and Neoliberalism in Charles Johnson's *Dreamer*." *Twentieth Century Literature* 60, 2 (2014), 197–221; M. Baldassare, *The Los Angeles Riots: Lessons for the Urban Future* (Westview Press, 1994); R. M. Fogelson, *The Los Angeles Riots* (Arno Press, 1969).

⁷⁸ W. H. Moore, "Action- Reaction or Rational Expectations? Reciprocity and the Domestic- International Conflict Nexus During the Rhodesia Problem," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 39, 1 (1995), 129–67; W.H. Moore, "Repression and Dissent: Substitution, Context, and Timing," *American Journal of Political Science* 42, 3 (1998),

this as a direct result of decisions made by politicians.⁷⁹ The timing and execution of the action is critical to how the opposition will respond as well as how the international community will react. A governing authorities may also choose to preemptively deescalate protesters. A preemptive action would likely be based on intelligence of the protesters' movements and agenda. This type of action would include an increased law enforcement presence at the protest location, closing streets or buildings, as well as setting curfews.⁸⁰ Although a preemptive action would impede awareness for the cause as well as salvage the reputation of authorities, it comes at great risk for escalation. More importantly, a preemptive de-escalation can garner future sympathy for the movement. With little effort, this sympathy can be transformed into propaganda and recruiting materials making preemptive strikes by democratic regimes not appealing.

Scholars have argued that although repression is a response to dissent in theory, it is often a harmful response because evidence shows the mobilized action rarely leads to the violation of rights by protest movements.⁸¹ Empirical studies have been able to document the effects of repression.⁸² Opp and Ruehl found that repression has a direct negative effect on a protest due to cost while repression has an indirect positive effect on the micro mobilization process.⁸³ This negative effect, or deterrent, influences resource mobilization and decision making. Rational choice theorists believe that if individuals expect repression, they will be less likely to join the

851–73; and W.H. Moore, “The Repression of Dissent: A Substitution Model of Government Coercion,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 44, 1 (2000), 107–27.

⁷⁹ Sam R Bell, David Cingranelli, Amanda Murdie, and Alper Caglayan, “Coercion, Capacity, and Coordination: Predictors of Political Violence,” *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 30, 3 (2013), 240–62.

⁸⁰ Nathan Danneman and Emily Hencken Ritter, “Contagious Rebellion and Preemptive Repression,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 58, 2 (2014), 254–79.

⁸¹ Emily Hencken Ritter and Courtenay R. Conrad, “Preventing and Responding to Dissent: The Observational Challenges of Explaining Strategic Repression,” *American Political Science Review* 110, 1 (2016).

⁸² Karen Rasler, “Concessions, Repression, and Political Protest in the Iranian Revolution,” *American Sociological Review* 61, 1 (1996), 132–52.

⁸³ Karl- Dieter Opp and Wolfgang Ruehl, “Repression, Micromobilization, and Political Protest,” *Social Forces*, 69 (1990), 521–47.

movement.⁸⁴ In addition, Lichbach's argument that inconsistent policies of repression and concessions intensify dissent holds true.⁸⁵ Repression sparks micro mobilization processes that expands the capabilities and capacity of the opposition.⁸⁶ The level of repression is dependent on a variety of variables, such as regime type, leadership, and the history of the state.

Leaders, within activist movements or governments, act as individuals based on their own experience, goals, and perceptions of their situation. As rational actors, under the strategic model, leaders must weigh costs and benefits. Leaders draw on their prior experiences to organize their preferences, thus they are not black boxes and are deeply affected by their social and political context.⁸⁷ Potential costs are often associated with government response and popular support, while benefits are often in the areas of government repression and agenda-setting. If the government responds with harsh repression, the organization can exploit this to heighten public dissatisfaction. More liberal governments often refrain from strong measures of repression in order to maintain their reputation on the international stage. In terms of cost, the death of innocent victims may be considered unjustified, leaving the public bitter. This resentment within the community breaks the bond between the members and their loved ones. Thus, increasing the risk of fragmentation. This bitterness results in fragmentation, which illustrates the importance of civilian cooperation to organization cohesion and longevity.⁸⁸

Compromise and no action

⁸⁴ Mancur Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965). Russell Hardin, *Collective Action* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982).

⁸⁵ Mark Irving Lichbach, "Deterrence or Escalation? The Puzzle of Aggregate Studies of Repression and Dissent," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 31 (1987), 266–97.

⁸⁶ Karen Rasler, "Concessions, Repression, and Political Protest in the Iranian Revolution."

⁸⁷ Austin C Doctor, "A Motion of No Confidence: Leadership and Rebel Fragmentation," *Journal of Global Security Studies* 5, 4 (2020), 598–616, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jogss/ogz060>.

⁸⁸ F. Fischer and G. J. Miller, *Handbook of Public Policy Analysis: Theory, Politics, and Methods* (Routledge, 2007); Karl- Dieter Opp, *The Rationality of Political Protest: A Comparative Analysis of Rational Choice Theory* (United Kingdom: Routledge, 2019); Mancur Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1965); and Russell Hardin, *Collective Action* (Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982).

Governing authorities also have the option to compromise in the face of opposition. Compromise consists of management, acknowledgment of grievances, as well as concessions.⁸⁹ At first glance, compromise can appear to be a result of a depreciation of power of those in authority. The women's suffrage movement is an example of the US government's ability to successfully compromise based on the grievances posed by the people. On August 18, 1920, the 19th Amendment was ratified. Peaceful protest had successfully led to social change and government concessions.⁹⁰ Compromise is not limited to concessions but includes acknowledgment and management. Although concessions are more direct and preferred by the opposition, acknowledgement and management allows the protesters to feel heard.

Lastly, the government has the choice of no action.⁹¹ A lack of response often aggravates the opposition, causing a continuation or escalation. A continuation would be a persistent use of tactics to garner attention for the movement's cause. This would continue until the protesters give up or decide to alter their tactics or until the government decides to acknowledge the movement. An escalation can vary greatly in form, ranging from a larger nonviolent presence to civil disobedience and terrorist activity. Factors such as time, resources, leadership, and ideology will affect the organization's decision to escalate.

The success of an organization's rebellions, protests, and terrorism is dependent on the response from their respective government. While much literature has focused on the actions and reactions between governments and dissident groups, another potential outcome of this interplay

⁸⁹ P. Balsiger, "Managing protest: The political action repertoires of corporations," *The Oxford handbook of social movements*, 2014, 1-11. Jan Henzyrk Pierskalla, "Protest, Deterrence, and Escalation: The Strategic Calculus of Government Repression."

⁹⁰ Corinne Porter and Kathleen Munn, "Forging a Path to the 19th Amendment: Understanding Women's Suffrage," *Social Education*, 248-255.

⁹¹ Thomas Carothers and Richard Youngs, *THE COMPLEXITIES OF GLOBAL PROTESTS* (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2015), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep12845>; and Isabel Ortiz, Sara Burke, Mohamed Berrada, and Hernan Cortes, "World Protests 2006-2013." *Initiative for Policy Dialogue and Friedrich- Ebert- Stiftung New York Working Paper*, (2013), 91.

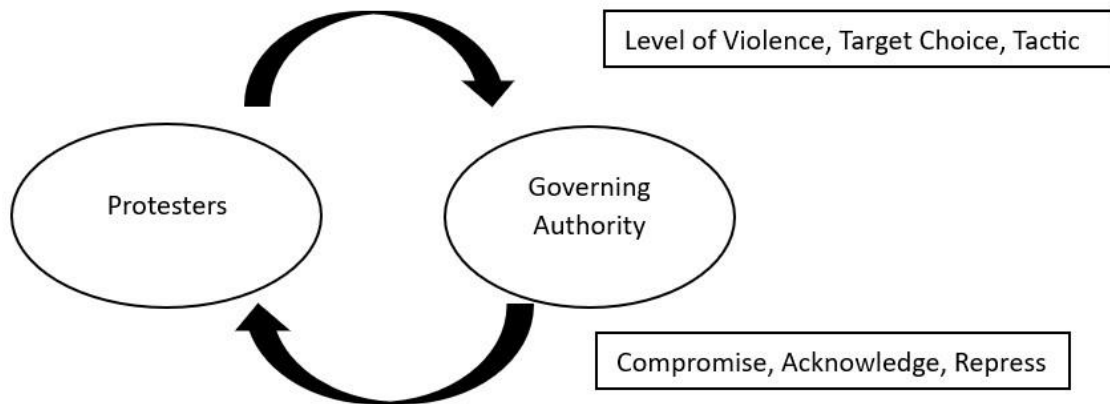
is that a group fragments because of their lack of success in pursuing their goals. In fact, governments that attempt to splinter groups through military or police action may unintentionally sacrifice any chance for lasting peace. In 2002, the US government responded to the escalating violent actions of various environmental organizations, including both ELF and ALF, by labelling them as “terrorists”.⁹² This action is a form of attempted splintering by a governing authority. In doing so, the organizations decentralized making it difficult to surveil further hindering attempts to create peace.

Approach

The figure below, figure 1, illustrates the interdependent or cyclical relationship present between environmental groups and the United States government in the 1960s.

Figure 1.1. Cyclical Relationship Model

⁹² “FBI — The Threat of Eco-Terrorism,” <https://archives.fbi.gov/archives/news/testimony/the-threat-of-eco-terrorism> (February 12, 2002).



The figure represents the governing authority's decision to compromise, acknowledge, or repress in the face of protests affects the level of violence, target choice, and tactics of the protesters' organization. Most studies that address the interaction between government and protesters do not account for the interdependent relationship between the actors. Studies that have examined the cycle include the effects of social media on the longevity and effectiveness of a

protest⁹³; the effects of regime type⁹⁴; the military's response⁹⁵; the influence on policy change⁹⁶; and the potential for escalation.⁹⁷

When examining the state's response as a dependent variable, most scholars have focused on the impact of repression.⁹⁸ Scholars often rely on rational choice theory to determine how citizens decide to protest a regime.⁹⁹ For example, Opp states that rational choice theory is optimal since a great deal of theorizing on social integration is compatible. "The choice to be politically active depends on the cost and benefits associated with political action"¹⁰⁰ On the other hand, Kircheli, Livne, and Magaloni sheds light on when mass protests are likely to spread and under what conditions they are likely to lead to authoritarian breakdown. Repressive regimes are more

⁹³ Tamara Kharroub and Ozen Bas, "Social media and protests: An examination of Twitter images of the 2011 Egyptian revolution," *New Media & Society* 18, 9 (2015). T. Poell and E. Borra, "Twitter, Youtube, and Flickr as platforms of alternative journalism: the social media account of the 2010 Toronto G20 protests," *Journalism* 13, 6 (2012), 695-713. Alexandra W. Segerberg and Lance Bennett, "Social Media and the Organization of Collective Action: Using Twitter to Explore the Ecologies of Two Climate Change Protests," *The Communication Review* 14, 3 (2011), 197-215.

⁹⁴ Sangmi Jeong, *Negotiation in the Street: Domestic Protests, Regime Type, and International Bargaining Outcomes* (ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 2019); Nam Kyu Kim and Alex M. Kroeger, "Conquering and coercing: Nonviolent anti-regime protests and the pathways to democracy," *Journal of Peace Research* 56, 5 (2019), 650-666; A. V. Korotayev, et al., "GDP per capita, protest intensity, and regime type: A quantitative analysis," *Sravnitel naia politka* 4, 25, 72-94.

⁹⁵ Aurel Croissant, et al., "Mass Protests and the Military," *Journal of Democracy* 29, 3 (2018), 141-155; Jacqueline Siapno, "Defect or Defend: Military Responses to Popular Protests in Authoritarian Asia," *Asian Journal of Social Science* 46, 3 (2018), 392-394; Terence Lee, *Defect or Defend: Military Responses to Popular Protests in Authoritarian Asia* (Baltimore, Maryland: John Hopkins University Press, 2014).

⁹⁶ Laurel Weldon, *When Protest Makes Policy: How Social Movements Represent Disadvantaged Groups* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2014); Katrin Uba, "Political Protest and Policy Change: The Direct Impacts of Indian Anti-Privatization Mobilizations, 1990-2003," *Mobilization* 10, 3 (2005), 383-396; Marco Giugni, *Social Protest and Policy Change: Ecology, Antinuclear, and Peace Movements in Comparative Perspective* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2004).

⁹⁷ Jan Henryk Pierskalla, "Protest, Deterrence, and Escalation: The Strategic Calculus of Government Repression," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 54, (2010), 117-45; Robert Futrell and Barbara G. Brents, "Protest as Terrorism?: The Potential for Violent Anti-Nuclear Activism," *The American Behavioral Scientist* 46, 6 (2003), 745-765.

⁹⁸ Jan Henryk Pierskalla, "Protest, Deterrence, and Escalation: The Strategic Calculus of Government Repression"; Sabine C. Carey, "The Dynamic Relationship Between Protest and Repression - Sabine C. Carey, 2006."

⁹⁹ Ruth Kricheli, et al., "Taking to the Streets: Theory and Evidence on Protests under Authoritarianism"; Karl-Dieter Opp, *The Rationality of Political Protest: A Comparative Analysis of Rational Choice Theory* (Routledge, 2019); Karl-Dieter Opp and Wolfgang Ruehl, "Repression, Micromobilization, and Political Protest," *Social Forces*, 69, 1990, 521-47.

¹⁰⁰ Karl-Dieter Opp, *The Rationality of Political Protest: A Comparative Analysis of Rational Choice Theory* (Routledge, 2019).

likely to dissuade mass protests from forming, but once the protest has started it becomes more threatening to repressive regimes than the same protest might be to a non-repressive regime.¹⁰¹ The assumptions of both rational choice theory will be utilized in my analysis of each environmental group's interaction with their democratic authority. Scholars in this literature have overlooked the unique interaction between the state and environmental protesters. In other words, little knowledge exists to help understand the interplay of this relationship and its impact on either de-escalation or escalation of environmental groups. By using process tracing, I have isolated and analyzed the necessary variables within each case study and contributed to filling these important gaps.

Fragmentation and terrorism

When environmental groups no longer feel they can achieve their goals through traditional and peaceful means, the group might make a strategic choice to stop or escalate their tactics. Often, a portion of the group radicalizes by altering their ideology for the utilization of terrorist tactics.¹⁰² While terrorism has existed for centuries, the way in which its practitioners achieve their goals has evolved. Terrorism is rooted in violence, emotion, and subjectivity. In relation to subjectivity, one group's terrorist is another group's liberator. Although cliché, the statement describes the confusion and passion terrorism connotes and the importance of perspective. While the methods and motivations are constantly changing, the presence of both external and internal challenges remains constant. A splinter cell emerges when a previously united organization divides into two or more separate cells due to a combination of organizational and contextual factors, such as government response and internal dissent. This framework will be used to explain the causes of fragmentation within the environmental movement, specifically, the splintering of non-violent

¹⁰¹ Ruth Kricheli, et al., "Taking to the Streets: Theory and Evidence on Protests under Authoritarianism."

¹⁰² R. D. Law, 2016. *Terrorism: A history* (John Wiley & Sons, 2016), 1.

protest organizations into both the Earth Liberation Front (ELF) and Animal Liberation Front (ALF). Utilizing rebel group and terrorist organization literature, the following discussion is divided into three sections: internal variables, external variables, and the longevity of a cell.

For the purposes of this dissertation, terrorism is not an ideology or organization, but a strategy. For example, protesters or activists can employ the strategy of terrorism.¹⁰³ This understanding is critical to the foundation of splintering. The classification of terrorism as a strategy allows organizations that engage in terrorism to be analyzed similarly to any other social or political organization, such as rebel or protest groups, as each organization is acting rationally and strategically to achieve their goal. The following quotation by Dr. Jeffrey Bale will act as the authoritative definition for this research:

Terrorism is the use or threatened use of violence, directed against victims selected for their symbolic or representative value, as a means of instilling anxiety in, transmitting one or more messages to, and thereby manipulating the attitudes and behavior of a wider target audience or audiences.¹⁰⁴

As seen in the above definition, an action does not have to deploy violence for it to be considered terrorism. Instead, terrorism can simply instill anxiety or terror through non-violent actions while manipulating the attitudes and behavior of a wider audience. This inclusive approach to the definition allows non-lethal acts of terror, such as vandalism, arson, hate speech, and threats to be considered terrorism.

Like the Baader-Meinhof Gang, the origins of eco-terrorism, or eco-radicalism, within the United States are rooted in non-violent student protests in Britain. Both ELF and ALF caused significant economic devastation within the United States, with actions ranging from death threats and vandalism to arson. This form of direct action was shocking due to their benign and peaceful

¹⁰³ R. D. Law, *Terrorism: A history*, 8.

¹⁰⁴ Jeffrey M. Bale and Gary Ackerman, *Recommendations on the Development of Methodologies and Attributes for Assessing Terrorist Threats of WMD Terrorism* (Monterey, California: Center for Nonproliferation Studies, 2014).

beginning in the United Kingdom. The lack of government response to non-violent and peaceful actions contributed to internal division and leadership differences.

The literature on rebel fragmentation provides insight into the violent transformation of ELF and ALF. Existing literature suggests that rebel fragmentation occurs due to a combination of both external pressures and internal pressures. External pressures consist of government action, social networks, and military capabilities, while internal pressures are often correlated to leadership and organizational structure. Fragmentation and splintering are synonyms. A splinter organization emerges when a previously united group divides into separate groups.¹⁰⁵ Splintering indicates a failure to maintain cohesion toward a common goal, while joining the political process suggests unity in the pursuit of goals by legitimate means. Internal variables encompass challenges due to organizational factors, while external variables are rooted in the environment and circumstance.

Fragmentation is significant for a variety of reasons. The fragmentation of rebel groups has a lasting effect on conflict severity, duration, and tractability.¹⁰⁶ Fragmentation is often linked with the organization's eventual demise. The hemorrhaging of resources due to fragmentation makes the greater mission unsustainable. It is also linked to increased levels of violence, not only among the insurgents themselves, but also against innocent civilians.¹⁰⁷ Therefore, the presence of internal or external variables warrants further surveillance to prevent violence and the proliferation of splinter cells.

¹⁰⁵ E. Mosinger, *Dissident Networks and Rebel Fragmentation in Civil War* (Irvine, California: University of California Press, 2017), 17.

¹⁰⁶ S. Otto, "The grass is always greener? Armed group side switching in civil wars," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 62, 7 (2018), 1459-1488; R. M. Wood and J.D. Kathman, "Competing for the crown: Inter-rebel competition and civilian targeting in civil war," *Political Research Quarterly* 68, 1 (2015), 167-179; K. M. Bakke, K. G. Cunningham, and L. J. Seymour, "A plague of initials: Fragmentation, cohesion, and infighting in civil wars," *Perspectives on Politics* 10, 2 (2012), 265-283; P. M. Atlas and R. Licklider, "Conflict among former allies after civil war settlement: Sudan, Zimbabwe, Chad, and Lebanon," *Journal of Peace Research* 36, 1 (1999), 35-54.

¹⁰⁷ M. H. Woldemariam, "Why Rebels Collide: Factionalism and Fragmentation in African Insurgencies," 2011, 21.

Greenpeace's transparency, focus on consensus, and cohesion within the organization and its interactions with the US government contributed to the group's longevity as well as prevented the level of fragmentation that occurred in ELF and ALF. On the other hand, ELF and ALF's decentralized structure and rigid relationship with the government contributed to fragmentation resulting in an increase in violence and a change in tactics. The nuances of which will be addressed in the coming chapters. These variables are analyzed in the coming chapters through structured focus comparison and process tracing to better understand the interdependent relationship between environmental organizations and the US government.¹⁰⁸

Internal variables

Internal variables that impact the cohesiveness of an organization include leadership, membership size, public goods or social services, media, and communication. Leadership is at the very root of splintering, both in the sense of incentivization as well as organizational continuity. Leaders are primarily divided into two categories: charismatic or non-charismatic. Charismatic leaders can capture political-social discourse, particularly discourse defined by religion and ethnicity.¹⁰⁹ Leadership style is not simply defined by charismatic or non-charismatic styles, but also by the extent of control leaders exert on the organization's members. For example, the Tamil Tiger leadership forced members to take an oath of loyalty and prohibited members from smoking, drinking alcohol, and having contact with their families. This leadership practice served to isolate the members from any external form of support, forcing them to lean solely on each other. While this type of leadership style can create an environment of overwhelming loyalty, it can also cause

¹⁰⁸ Marie Olson Lounsbery and Alethia H. Cook, "Rebellion, mediation, and group change: An empirical investigation of competing hypotheses," *Journal of Peace Research* 48, 1 (2011), 73-84; E. Mosinger, *Dissident Networks and Rebel Fragmentation in Civil War* (Irvine, California: University of California Press, 2017); and Michael Woldemariam, *Insurgent Fragmentation in the Horn of Africa* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

¹⁰⁹ R. J. Chasdi, *Tapestry of terror: A portrait of Middle East terrorism, 1994-1999*, (Lexington, Kentucky: Lexington Books, 2002), 25.

backlash from frustrated members leading to fragmentation. Maintaining some form of bond to the community strengthens the organization and decreases the chances for splintering. Therefore, utilizing that level of control by the leader is a risk.¹¹⁰

In addition to leadership, membership is another important organizational variable in relation to terrorist splintering. As the number of members grows, so do the organization's capabilities. However, large organizations are more vulnerable to internal division and fragmentation. The number of members directly corresponds to the differing opinions regarding target selection, level of violence, and strategy. While the capabilities brought by members strengthen the organization's ability to plan and execute attacks, more opinions can be divisive.¹¹¹ Cohesiveness is not always directly correlated with the number of members. It can also be tied to the structural organization of the group. The structure and democratic style decision-making of a large organization can maintain cohesion. Greenpeace's more traditional structure and democratic-style decision-making lent itself to a cohesive and united membership. However, ELF and ALF's decentralized model allowed for a stronger loyalty to the cause to replace the loyalty to the organization itself.

Providing social services or public goods enables a group to ask more of its followers. A loss of such services or goods, such as safety, food, or transportation, would be devastating to a member, creating a void and potential for organizational dissent. Social services or public goods can also provide a sense of informal legitimacy when a terrorist organization is not recognized by

¹¹⁰ R. J. Chasdi, *Tapestry of terror: A portrait of Middle East terrorism, 1994-1999*; Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, and Alastair Smith, "Leader Survival, Revolutions, and the Nature of Government Finance," *American Journal of Political Science* 54, 4 (2010), 936-50; Chris Dishman, "The Leaderless Nexus: When Crime and Terror Converge," *Studies in conflict and terrorism* 28, 3 (2005), 237-252. Paul Joosse, "Elves, environmentalism, and 'eco-terror': Leaderless resistance and media coverage of the Earth Liberation Front," *Crime, media, culture* 8, 1 (2012), 75-93.

¹¹¹ K. M. Bakke, K. G. Cunningham, & L. J. Seymour, "A plague of initials: Fragmentation, cohesion, and infighting in civil wars," *Perspectives on Politics* 10, 2 (2012), 265-283; Paul Stephen Staniland, *Explaining cohesion, fragmentation, and control in insurgent groups* (Doctoral dissertation, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2010); Livia Isabella Schubiger, "One for all? State violence and insurgent cohesion," *International Organization* 77, 1 (2023), 33-64.

the state. For example, in the case of the Muslim Brotherhood, the organization provided connection as it invested in students to build legitimacy.¹¹² This social legitimacy was soon utilized politically against Mubarak, proving the utility of the social network model. In the cases of ELF, ALF, and Greenpeace, social services and public goods took the form of community, friendship, as well as a sense of purpose.

External variables

Environmental groups lack the resources to compete with the state militarily. The radical minority within environmental groups criticize mainstream environmental groups for their lack of resources and will to compete in the political arena. A recognition of the preconditions furthers the understanding of a group's interaction with the government and third-party states, which plays a role in splintering or further radicalization. This is evident in Russian, Irish, Arab, and Israeli history. This imbalance of power and resources between organizations and the state results in the terrorists' frustration with conventional methods resulting in asymmetrical warfare or guerrilla-like tactics. However, why does an organization lack the potential to attract enough followers to succeed via traditional means? This is likely because the population does not share the group's ideology. This was true in the cases of the neofascist groups in Italy, Euzkadi ta Akatasuna (ETA) in Spain, and the Provisional Irish Republican Army (IRA) in Northern Ireland. While the Italians did not support the "strategy of tension" in 1969, ETA and the IRA appealed only to a particular minority. Thus, terrorist numbers are often limited and insufficient for achieving success through traditional means leading to a change in strategy, fragmentation, and radicalization.¹¹³

¹¹² H. Al-Awadi, *In Pursuit of Legitimacy: The Muslim Brothers and Mubarak, 1982-2000* (London and New York: Tauris, 2004).

¹¹³ Martha Crenshaw, "The Psychology of Terrorism: An Agenda for the 21st Century," *International Society of Political Psychology* 21, 2 (2000), 405-420; Ignacio Sanchez- Cuenca, "The dynamics of nationalist terrorism: ETA and the IRA," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 19, 3 (2007), 289-306; Peter Waldmann, "The radical community: A comparative analysis of the social background of ETA, IRA, and Hezbollah," *Sociologist*, (2005), 239-257.

Without the media, actions lack recognition from a wider audience, hindering the proliferation of fear or awareness of the cause. Terrorist groups allocate their resources to maximize their utility in terms of media recognition. For some organizations, this utility can increase with publicity for “the cause” as attacks promote the organization’s notoriety.¹¹⁴ In the same realm, communication difficulties can hinder leadership’s ability to present a strong, credible, and united image.¹¹⁵ When terrorists cannot count on the media to distribute their message, they utilize their own means of communication, typically in the form of communiqués. This is particularly true when government or counterterrorist intervention has resulted in a decentralized terrorist model. In this situation, particularly within ELF and ALF, autonomous cells must maintain some level of contact with the original organization to continue furthering their broader mission. As a result of the FBI’s decentralization techniques, eco-terrorist organizations brought their publications underground to encourage direct action among the members. On the contrary, Greenpeace’s publications could be spread without fear of intervention as they continually pursued more traditional and peaceful means.

Longevity of a cell

While fragmentation is signaled by both internal and external variables, the longevity and nature of a splinter cell is harder to predict. The events that occur before the splinter cell is established will have a lasting impact on the longevity of the cell. Therefore, it is crucial to understand the internal dynamics preceding organizational splits.¹¹⁶ Splinter groups forming around single-issue areas, such as the environment, have an advantage, in that they attract more

¹¹⁴ K. Gaibullov and T. Sandler, “An empirical analysis of alternative ways that terrorist groups end,” *Public Choice* 160, 1 (2014), 25-44.

¹¹⁵ M. Youngman, “Between Caucasus and caliphate: the splintering of the North Caucasus insurgency,” *Caucasus Survey* 4, 3 (2016), 194-217.

¹¹⁶ E. Perkosi, “Internal politics and the fragmentation of armed groups,” *International Studies Quarterly* 63, 4 (2019), 876-889.

homogeneous, preference-aligned recruits.¹¹⁷ Examples of splinter groups forming around a single issue includes both ELF as well as ALF.

An organization's membership size, at the time of a division, is the most important factor influencing their performance. "After a split, larger core groups are more likely to survive for longer periods and to advance within their broader nationalist movements than splinter groups".¹¹⁸ As a new organization, the splinter cell must secure some degree of legitimacy or failure is inevitable.¹¹⁹ Without legitimacy, such as Greenpeace's collaboration with the government and other activist groups, the actions are simply considered criminal. Therefore, not conveying a greater message to the public for the cause.

The nature of a splinter cell is difficult to predict, but the government can have a large role in influencing its future. One potential mode of influence is through government manipulation. Governments can manipulate the splintering processes of terrorist organizations to their advantage.¹²⁰ This manipulation is typically directed at the reduction of lethality rates.¹²¹ Lounsbury and Cook conducted an empirical study of the relationship between splintering and mediation. Their findings suggest that the policy of mediation increases the likelihood of secondary splintering. This is particularly true within the context of conflicts that reflect territorial disputes where "rebel groups have already undergone the splintering process or another change event".¹²²

¹¹⁷ E. Perkosi, "Internal politics and the fragmentation of armed groups."

¹¹⁸ C. W. Mahoney, "End of the cycle: assessing ETA's strategies of terrorism," *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 29, 5-6 (2018), 916-940.

¹¹⁹ H. Al-Awadi, *In Pursuit of Legitimacy: The Muslim Brothers and Mubarak, 1982-2000*.

¹²⁰ R. J. Chasdi, *Tapestry of terror: A portrait of Middle East terrorism, 1994-1999*.

¹²¹ R. J. Chasdi, *Tapestry of terror: A portrait of Middle East terrorism, 1994-1999*; David Collier, "Understanding Process Tracing," *Political Science and Politics* 44, 4 (2011), 823-830.

¹²² R. J. Chasdi, *Tapestry of terror: A portrait of Middle East terrorism, 1994-1999*. Marie Olson Lounsbury and Alethia H. Cook, "Rebellion, mediation, and group change: An empirical investigation of competing hypotheses," *Journal of Peace Research* 48, 1 (2011), 73-84.

The preceding sections concerning environmental political movements, strategies, government response, and fragmentation illustrated the current state of the literature as well as its relevancy to the topic. Each is critical to understanding the progression of environmental organizations in the United States. The periodization of environmental politics showcased the evolution of environmental politics in ideology, values, and action. The movement and strategy portion highlighted the mobilization of environmental action. As the movement progressed, the government's response played a role in each organization's decision to continue peaceful protests or veer into violence. As internal dissent begins within the group based on both external and internal factors, the group must foster consensus, much like Greenpeace, or encourage departure similar to ELF and ALF. Fragmentation resulting from a change in ideology leaves members of the organization with various paths to take, one path being extremism.

Sources and Methodology

Methodological difficulties are inherent in extremism research due to the danger and often covert nature of the activities and membership. Difficulties in obtaining interviews with environmental extremists are compounded by the very nature of finding and associating with terrorists amid a global pandemic. To compensate for the inability to interview, case studies have been developed to illustrate points from which broad conclusions can be drawn relating to the entire movement as well as protests in the United States as a whole.

A wealth of secondary resources exploring the environmental movement, movement strategies, government response, and environmental politics provides a strong foundation in exploring how the US government's response triggered a change in tactics within the environmental movement. Works such as Joosee's "Elves, environmentalism and 'eco-terror': Leaderless resistance and media coverage," Leader and Probst's "The Earth Liberation Front and

Environmental Terrorism,” and Pickering’s *The Earth Liberation Front, 1997-2002* will be used to compare and complete the primary sources narrative of the events in question. Such a strategy is necessary when reading primary sources used as propaganda to recruit members and encourage direct action. Primary sources are utilized as well, such as writings from founders and members of each group. However, ELF and ALF’s websites are no longer available online or on web archives.

Process tracing is a qualitative tool within political science. This method can add inferential leverage that is often lacking in quantitative analysis.¹²³ Process tracing analyzes trajectories of change and causation. However, this is only possible if the phenomena are adequately described. In doing so, process tracing addresses and sequences independent and dependent variables within each case study. Description is the foundation of process tracing, a view emphasized by Mahoney.¹²⁴ A narrative style of writing is used within each case. The narrative does cognitive work by “both facilitating the consideration of alternative hypotheses and clarifying the relationship between evidence and explanation”.¹²⁵ Process tracing allows the researcher to identify the reasons for an emergence of a particular decision through a variety of events is the method utilized to identify the root cause in the evolution of the movement.

The three following case studies utilize process tracing to uncover evidence on the response of the US government. Each case study is in a narrative format with an emphasis on description of events and acknowledgment of variables. Each case is organized by establishment, philosophy, strategies and tactics, writings, and government response. In doing so, the reader can trace the evolution of each organization. This consistent format makes it possible to compare cases.

¹²³ D. Collier, “Understanding Process Tracing,” *PS: Political Science & Politics* 44, 4 (2011), 823-830, doi:10.1017/S1049096511001429.

¹²⁴ James Mahoney, “After KKV: The New Methodology of Qualitative Research,” *World Politics* 62, 1 (2010): 120–47.

¹²⁵ Sharon Crasnow, “Process tracing in political science: What’s the story?” *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science Part A* 62, 2017: 6-13.

This dissertation follows John Lewis Gaddis's ecological approach to variables. Gaddis's ecological approach treats all variables as interdependent variables. This approach is built on accepting the inherent complexity of interactions within and surrounding human organizations. It does not treat all variables as having equal weight but recognizes that variables jostle with each other and that different variables may be the most important factor in different instances, due to differences in time, places, people involved, ideology, and other factors. An ecological approach is especially useful when applied to a small N study that relies primarily on textual sources. Placing the emphasis on the relationship among variables, as well as people and groups in the study, helps to expose easily overlooked factors that can only be found by tracing how each factor affects others. This approach can reveal unexpected influences and otherwise undetectable variables.¹²⁶

An investigation of the environmental movement has proven useful in understanding the decision-making process behind the actions taken by the state. This investigation also reveals how eco-radical leadership utilizes the government response to further their agenda and alter ideology and values. To properly investigate the violent acts, I used the FBI database, various local and national newspapers, as well as the publications by the organizations and their members. Congressional hearings, FBI press conferences, and newspapers were utilized to determine the level of response.

Overview of Cases

ELF and ALF were born from peaceful origins spreading community throughout the country while raising awareness for the environment. A lack of legislation and policy change created a growing frustration within the environmental movement. While some members prioritized their values and the means, others altered their values to accommodate a change in

¹²⁶ J. L. Gaddis, *The Landscape of History: How Historians Map the Past* (Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2002).

tactics. From the late 1970s to the early 1990s, the Earth Liberation Front and the Animal Liberation Front were known for preying on industries profiting from the exploitation of the environment.¹²⁷ Their actions included distributing personal addresses and pictures of employees as well as death threats and kidnapping. Originally created to promote sustainability while bringing community and purpose to the American public, this transition is shocking.

The targeting of industry leadership with threats and violence drew an unintended response from the government. Eco-terrorist organizations, such as the Earth Liberation Front and Animal Liberation Front, were labeled as domestic terrorist groups. The FBI utilized a decentralization strategy to hinder the eco-terrorist organizations' ability to coordinate and plan attacks. In the 1990s, the FBI successfully arrested key leaders of several eco-terrorist organizations. These actions had a large impact on the way the organizations would operate for the foreseeable future. ELF and ALF became loosely affiliated organizations due to the FBI's decentralization techniques in the 1990s and early 2000s. However, the members continued to be involved in direct action as they remained connected through the propaganda produced by the respective organization. The decentralization simply made it more difficult for the FBI to prosecute the crimes as they related to the organization and monitor the activity. With direct action, the activities are still motivated by the propaganda and ideology of the organization. The only difference is there is not an official member list. This trajectory vastly differs from the more traditional and compromising stance that Greenpeace consistently maintained with the US government, non-governmental organizations, and other activist groups.

¹²⁷ Stefan Leader and Peter Probst, "The Earth Liberation Front and Environmental Terrorism," *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 15, 2003, 37-58.

Three serious and unintended consequences of this decentralization strategy on ELF and ALF occurred. First, decentralization made surveillance of eco-terrorists and their communication and behavior more difficult, allowing the ideology to be deployed in lone wolf acts and direct action. This complicates linking this criminal activity to the larger organization since no official membership list existed. Second, lone wolf attacks have become increasingly violent since the beginning of the 21st century, costing millions of dollars and many human lives. Lone wolves strategically combine aspects of the environmental extremism ideology to justify their acts of violence. Lastly, the members exhibited resilience amid government repression by creating an internal infrastructure capable of overcoming future threats.¹²⁸

Case 1: Earth Liberation Front (ELF)

The Earth Liberation Front was founded in Brighton, England, by extremist members of the “Earth First! (EF!)” movement around 1992.¹²⁹ The members of EF! in Britain prioritized acting within the law to attract members and maintain a sympathetic audience. In the September–October 1993 issue of the *Earth First! Journal*, an anonymous article announced the creation of ELF in England, stating that ELF was a movement of “independently operating eco-saboteurs” focusing on direct action. This splinter, ELF, held the goal of protecting the environment over any values that would limit their means. The very first ELF action is unknown, but one of the more notable attacks was April Fool's Earth Night in 1992. When legal campaigners (Friends of the Earth) spent over two fruitless years boycotting *Fisions*, a peat company accused of destroying peat bogs, ELF decided to take matters into their own hands. In retaliation for the lack of progress from the government or industry, ELF targeted *Fisions* by destroying machinery on April Fool's

¹²⁸ Lauren E. Volpe, *Terrifying environmental, environing terrorism: An ecofeminist critique of the FBI's response to the Earth Liberation Front* (ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 2010); Chris Dishman, “The Leaderless Nexus: When Crime and Terror Converge,” *Studies in conflict and terrorism* 28, 3 (2005), 237-252. Stefan Leader and Peter Probst, “The Earth Liberation Front and Environmental Terrorism.”

¹²⁹ Leslie James Pickering, *The Earth Liberation Front, 1997-2002* (Portland, Oregon: Arissa Media Group, 2007).

Earth Night.¹³⁰ With almost £70,000 of damage, *Green Anarchist* publicized the communique claiming responsibility and stating demands from ELF in their magazine.

The history of ELF in the media is quite surprising. Despite being labelled as a top “domestic threat” by the FBI in 2001, the organization continued to garner domestic sympathy and support. *60 Minutes* did a special on the organization in 2005. The ideology and actions of the organization was spread to households all over the United States, essentially doing the recruiting work for the organization. In 2011, the documentary, *If a Tree Falls: A Story of the Earth Liberation Front*, won an Academy Award- nomination garnering the group an immense amount of attention.

Following each direct action, a communique would be released claiming responsibility and explaining the rationale. Although the communications were sometimes inaccurate, the Elves consistently claimed to be nonviolent in nature. This was not widely accepted due to the devastation left in their path after property damage and arson. The Earth Liberation Front believes that direct action is required to achieve environmental liberation. ELF’s case study illustrated the impact of the US government’s repression had on the increase in violence and choice of tactics. ELF’s organizational structure lent itself to a disjointed member list and a greater loyalty to the cause than to the organization.

Case 2: Animal Liberation Front (ALF)

The roots of ALF trace back to a Devon and Somerset Staghound event in 1962. John Prestige, British journalist, was assigned to cover the event. He was horrified watching the hunters kill a pregnant deer. In protest, he formed the Hunt Saboteurs Association (HSA). Over time, the organization evolved into groups of volunteers trained to blow horns and lay false scents to thwart

¹³⁰ Paul Joosse, “Leaderless Resistance and Ideological Inclusion: The Case of the Earth Liberation Front,” *Terrorism and political violence* 19, 3 (2007), 351-368. Paul Joosse, “Elves, environmentalism, and ‘eco-terror’: Leaderless resistance and media coverage of the Earth Liberation Front,” *Crime, media, culture* 8, 1 (2012), 75-93.

the hunts' hounds. In 1971, Ronnie Lee, a British law student, formed a separate cell of HAS.¹³¹ Met with little to no response for their actions, Ronnie Lee and Cliff Goodman, a fellow activist, believed that militant action was needed to achieve animal rights. Despite Lee and Goodman's pleas, HSA refused to accept more radical action. Lee and his friend splintered to join Bands of Mercy, an organization that utilized scare tactics, such as vandalism, window breaking, and tire slashing, to stop hunting. In 1974, Ronnie Lee was arrested in an attempt to free research animals from a British laboratory. Lee departed the prison with more radical ideas and a name change for his organization- Animal Liberation Front.

Accounts conflict of how ALF established itself in the United States. While the FBI believes the history dates back to the early 1970s, the majority of researchers believe the ideology arrived in the late 1970s. After a short period of peaceful activity in the United States, ALF began to alter its strategy to accommodate violence. Members started to target the general population with letter bombs and threats to contaminate the food supply. For the next ten years, ALF would firebomb fur department stores, bomb cars, raid research facilities, and target individuals profiting from animal testing or perceived animal cruelty.

In a 1993 report to Congress from the Department of Justice and Agriculture on the "effects of terrorism on enterprises which use animals," investigators called ALF the most significant "radical fringe" animal rights group and reported hundreds of incidents of break-ins, vandalism, arson, and thefts committed in the name of animal rights.¹³² In response to the government's statement, ALF created a press office in the U.S. by the mid-1990s, making the organization accessible to the general public and increasing the audience for their violence.¹³³ The case study

¹³¹ Steven Best and Anthony J. Nocella, *Terrorists, or freedom fighters?: reflections on the liberation of animals* (New York, New York: Lantern Books, 2004).

¹³² The 1993 report can be found at <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/212280.pdf>, while the Congressional remarks can be viewed here https://fas.org/irp/congress/1993_cr/h930915-terror.htm.

¹³³ The Animal Liberation Front Press Office can be found at <https://animalliberationpressoffice.org/NAALPO/>.

of ALF, similar to ELF, represents the interdependent relationship between the US government and organization. The lack of compromise and repression as well as the organizational structure increased the level of violence and tactics utilized by ALF.

Case 3: Greenpeace

Greenpeace is an independent campaigning organization, 501 (c) (4), that uses peaceful means to expose environmental problems as well as develop solutions for a greener future. Utilizing direct action, lobbying, research, and ecotage, Greenpeace has become a symbol of environmental justice. Its goal is “to ensure the ability of the earth to nurture life in all its diversity”. Founded by Irving and Dorothy Stowe, Canadian Quakers, Greenpeace splintered from the Sierra Club Canada due to the organization’s lack of action on nuclear testing. In 1971, the founders of Greenpeace set sail to Amchitka Island in Alaska to protest US nuclear testing off the coast of Alaska. Although the boat was intercepted by the U.S. Coast Guard, Greenpeace brought attention to nuclear testing and lasting change to the island. The United States abandoned nuclear testing plans at Amchitka Island the same year.

In 2007, six Greenpeace protesters were arrested for trespassing and causing £30,000 worth of damage to the Kingsnorth power station in England. At their trial, the defendants admitted guilt but argued that they were justified in their attempt to stop climate change. This was the first case where “preventing damage caused by climate change” was considered a lawful defense in court. The very existence of this court case illustrates the legitimacy given to Greenpeace from both the public and government that did not exist with either ELF or ALF. In December 2008, *The New York Times* reported the case was one of the most influential ideas of the year. Although various stances by Greenpeace are considered controversial or lacking a scientific understanding, their actions on deforestation, climate change, overfishing, whaling, GMOs, and nuclear testing have garnered attention and support worldwide. Despite legislative stalls and opposing policy changes,

Greenpeace has continued to use peaceful tactics intrasystemically to achieve their environmental goals. Greenpeace's decision to work with governments to protect the environment has kept the organization legitimate, credible, and peaceful. In doing so, they have changed laws and accomplished many goals within the overall movement. Unlike environmental extremist groups, such as ELF and ALF, Greenpeace's interaction with the US government led to productive and effective progress. The cohesion within the organization fostered consensus and transparency leading to a membership that maintained the values of peaceful means.

Conclusion

Several factors make an investigation of environmental extremism both timely and important. The way in which environmental ideology interacts with the public illustrates a fundamental misperception of the danger surrounding environmental extremism. The misrepresentation of this threat places US national security at risk. As global warming worsens and frustration rises, a resurgence of environmental extremism is likely. This type of activity would be deeply ideological and have few limitations; thus, wildly dangerous to at-risk sectors of the United States of America. It is important that the United States government understand the nature of the threat and be able to take appropriate and effective steps to prevent that damage.

In the coming chapters I will provide evidence that both the Earth Liberation Front (ELF) and the Animal Liberation Front (ALF) evolved with an increase of violence and a shift in targeting and tactics linked to the organization's decentralized structure and response to the US government's actions, including surveillance, arrests, labelling as a terrorist organization, and to the organization's protests and activities. On the other hand, Greenpeace's more compromising and transparent approach to the US government and internal dissent kept any dramatic shift in targeting or level of violence away. This dissertation is thus substantive in recognizing the

interdependence of decision- making as well as aiming to identify the root causes of a change in tactics within environmental groups.

In the case of Greenpeace, the concepts of transparency, consensus, and cohesion within the organization and in their interactions with the US government contributed to the longevity of the organization as well as prevented the level of fragmentation that occurred in ELF and ALF. On the other hand, ELF and ALF's decentralized structure and rigid relationship with the government contributed to fragmentation resulting in an increase in violence and a change in tactics. The nuances of which are addressed in the coming chapters. These variables are analyzed in the coming chapters through structured focus comparison and process tracing to better understand the interdependent relationship between environmental organizations and the US government as well as the differing evolution of ELF, ALF, and Greenpeace.¹³⁴

¹³⁴ Marie Olson Lounsbery and Alethia H. Cook, "Rebellion, mediation, and group change: An empirical investigation of competing hypotheses," *Journal of Peace Research* 48, 1 (2011), 73-84; E. Mosinger, *Dissident Networks and Rebel Fragmentation in Civil War* (Irvine, California: University of California Press, 2017); and Michael Woldemariam, *Insurgent Fragmentation in the Horn of Africa* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Cambridge University

Chapter 2 - Earth Liberation Front's Journey from Protesters to Elves

How does an organization go from students and teachers carrying signs with “love the Earth” painted on them to being labelled by the FBI as the number one domestic threat to the United States?¹³⁵ Eco-radicalism differs drastically from religious and political movements that have become the focus of extremism scholars in recent years.¹³⁶ Violent eco-radicalism is limited to a small group within a peaceful mainstream movement, although not unique, it differs markedly in scale and importance to its movements from groups like ISIS or Al Qaeda within Islamic extremism or Sendero Luminoso within the Peruvian Communist Party.

This chapter relies on a narrative analysis of ELF's origins and key moments in its evolution. Data analytics on the attacks committed by ELF would be problematic because there is no reliable and reasonably comprehensive database of the group's attacks.¹³⁷ In addition, analyzing what was attacked and when would provide few insights into this project's core goal: understanding why the group radicalized through a study of how government actions and ELF's internal dynamics combined to produce and sustain violence. Instead, I will discuss those attacks that have been conclusively linked to ELF's membership and marked as pivotal to the organization's transformation. By acknowledging the historical background of the organization's origins in Britain and evolution in the United States, I will explore the splintering of ELF from Earth First! as well as draw a contrast between ELF and the greater environmental movement. In doing so, I will highlight the radicalization process and role of the US government. Radicalization

¹³⁵ “FBI — The Threat of Eco-Terrorism.”

¹³⁶ Religious and political terrorism or extremism is found within the disciplines of political science, history, international relations, as well as security studies. Prominent historians of religion include John H. Arnold, Edward Gibbon, and Rudolf Otto.

¹³⁷ It is impossible to perform data analytics on all attacks. This would inevitably include attacks that were simply claimed by ELF, but not directed by the organization.

was a result of growing frustration with the U.S. government's response to mainstream activism leading to philosophical differences and tactical escalations. This interdependent relationship resulted in an increase in violence and change in tactics by ELF. The organization's decentralized structure fostered dissent and a lack of transparency among members while frustrating law enforcement's efforts to disrupt its activities. By 1998, the stage was set for the "elves" to shock the government with a dramatic attack in a high-profile location.¹³⁸

This chapter further aims to produce new perspectives on this question by taking advantage of rational choice theory. Rational choice theory acts as a framework for understanding social behavior, assuming that the individual has preferences among the available choice alternatives that allow to decide which option prefer given the context and their perception of their own goals and the capabilities of those they interact with.¹³⁹ This hierarchy of preferences is present within the membership as well as leadership of ELF. This propensity toward a violent response is found within ELF's decision to radicalize and splinter when faced with repression. Rational choice theory provide insight into the decision-making process of the organization in response to the government.

Glance at the Elves: Fire and Destruction in Vail

On October 18th of 1998, ELF took on its largest target to date. During the start of peak tourist season, several structures in the resort town of Vail, Colorado went up in flames. Five buildings, including the popular restaurant Two Elk Restaurant and four chair lifts were destroyed costing over twenty million dollars in damage. The economic damage was greater than the repair

¹³⁸ Elves is the colloquial name of the members within the Earth Liberation Front that partake in direct action. This name is referred to within the community as well as by the media.

¹³⁹ Karl- Dieter Opp, *The Rationality of Political Protest: A Comparative Analysis of Rational Choice Theory* (United Kingdom: Routledge, 2019); Mancur Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1965); and Russell Hardin, 1982. *Collective Action* (Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982).

costs as the loss of employment and negative media attention rippled throughout the Vail community.¹⁴⁰ Attacks of this nature had been utilized for the previous two years throughout the region. Yet, the scale of the fire shocked law enforcement.



The only known witnesses to the fire were four hunters awakened by the flames. This attack came five days after a local court ruled in favor of a Category III expansion into the Two Elks Roadless Area.¹⁴¹ Ancient Forest Rescue (AFR), a peaceful environmental group, led the initial opposition. Ben Doon of AFR noted in the May- June issue of the *Earth First! Journal*:

Twelve hundred logging trucks would be needed to haul away six million board feet of virgin spruce and fir. In return for the destruction of this pristine roadless area, the public would get back a pitiful 1.5 cents on every dollar made by Vail Inc. on the expansion, or less than \$1 for every \$56 lift ticket.¹⁴²

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¹⁴⁰ The timing of this attack also brought maximum amount of exposure to both the public and the media.

¹⁴¹ Ecotage is committed by environmental extremists and environmental terrorists. Eco-terrorism is committed by adherents to a radical ideology informed by a supreme concern for the environment that permits the use of violent action to attack the symbols of “corporate industrialism”. Donald Liddick, *Eco-Terrorism: Radical Environmental and Animal Liberation Movements*, (United States: Praeger, 2006), 56. See also: L.E. Likar, *Eco-warriors, Nihilistic Terrorists, and the Environment*, (United States: Praeger, 2011). While eco-terrorism is employed when addressing actions, eco-extremism refers to the ideological dimension associated with groups engaged in those acts. Terrorism is defined by “Title 22 of the U.S. Code as politically motivated violence perpetrated in a clandestine manner against noncombatants”. However, violent acts in the absence of political or social objectives are merely criminal. Therefore, terrorism is a strategy. For the purposes of this paper, terrorism “is the use or threatened use of violence, directed against victims selected for their symbolic or representative value, as a means of instilling anxiety in, transmitting one or more messages to, and thereby manipulating the attitudes and behaviors of a wider target audience.” This definition is from Dr. Jeffrey Bale, a retired professor at the Middlebury Institute of International Studies. The definition can be found at Jeffrey Bale, “Recommendations on the Development of Methodologies and Attributes for Assessing Terrorist Threats of WMD Terrorism,” Center for Nonproliferation Studies, accessed March 20, 2023, https://courses.cs.washington.edu/courses/csep590/05au/readings/Bale_Ackerman_FinalReport.pdf.

¹⁴² Lacey Phillanadum, “ELF Burns Down Vail,” *Earth First!*.”; “Greenfield Fortune City,” accessed April 18, 2023, <http://greenfield.fortunecity.com/tree/16/fire.html>.

The journal entry was not simply in defense of wildlife and the forest, but also a critique of free market capitalism. Ben Doon went on to criticize Vail Resorts, the parent company of Vail Associates. By controlling half of the Colorado ski market, Vail Resorts' net revenue for 1997 was \$291 million.

Since 1935, three of the four red lynxes, a yellowish- brown bobcat, sightings in Colorado had been documented in the proposed expansion. White River National Forest Supervisor Martha Ketelle had agreed to a consultation with the US Fish and Wildlife Service regarding the lynx's critical habitat. However, Vail Resorts and the Forest Service did not pursue the consultation.¹⁴⁴ AFR began to protest the decision, but ELF resorted to direct action.

Two days after the attack, The Earth Liberation Front (ELF) issued a communique to the press in which it claimed the fires were set on behalf of the red lynx. This arson attack was one of twenty fires in Oregon, Washington, California, Wyoming, and Colorado linked to a group dubbed the Family that straddled two radical environmental groups. The Family, a name with mob connotations, was a domestic terrorist cell of approximately twenty people linked to ELF and the Animal Liberation Front (ALF).¹⁴⁵ Members were predominantly middle-class and very few had criminal histories. The Family developed out of an environmental and anarchist community in Eugene, Oregon.¹⁴⁶ Committing a variety of criminal acts and ecotage in the Pacific Northwest and the western United States, the group garnered attention from the national media as well as the

¹⁴⁴ "Greenfield Fortune City."

¹⁴⁵ The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) employs the following definition for eco-terrorism: "The use or threatened use of violence of a criminal nature against innocent victims or property by an environmentally oriented, subnational group for environmental-political reasons, or aimed at an audience beyond the target, often of a symbolic nature." "Statement of James F. Jarboe, Chief, Domestic Terrorism/ Counterterrorism Planning Section Federal Bureau of Investigation," United States Sentencing Commission, accessed January 2, 2023, <https://www.ussc.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/amendment-process/public-hearings-and-meetings/20020225-26/jarboe.pdf>. You may also find this information at "Countering Eco-Terrorism in the United States: The Case of 'Operation Backfire,'" START UMD, accessed January 2, 2023, [START_EffectivenessofLECountermeasuresOperationBackfire_Sept2012.pdf](https://www.start.umd.edu/pubs/CounteringEcoTerrorismintheUnitedStatesTheCaseofOperationBackfireSept2012.pdf).

¹⁴⁶ Anarchism is the political theory advocating the abolition of hierarchical government structures.

FBI.¹⁴⁷ The Family's preferences were not limited to peaceful means but included violence under rational choice theory. The FBI estimated that between 1996 and 2001 the Family caused approximately \$40 million in damages and committed over 40 criminal acts ranging from arson to vandalism.¹⁴⁸ The scale and severity of the attack in Vail unwittingly placed the group at the center of law enforcement's priorities.

The FBI created a task force, named Operation Backfire, to pursue the Family.¹⁴⁹ However, the investigation into the 1998 Vail arson attack stalled for years until the FBI task force found a willing informant- Jacob Ferguson. Ferguson was a well-known local environmental activist in the Pacific Northwest with a pentagram tattooed on his forehead. Undercover, he persuaded members of the Family to discuss their crimes while secretly recording the conversations. Although Jacob was originally sentenced to only probation for his cooperation, he was later imprisoned for selling heroin. Operation Backfire's success was primarily attributed to a consolidation of numerous investigations under a central authority.¹⁵⁰ Since the crimes were committed in different states, the consolidation of material between jurisdictions was critical. This synchronization was the cornerstone of conviction as well as the continued analysis of ecoterrorist behavior.

The remaining individuals involved in Vail were either imprisoned for committing additional crimes in the region or fled the country entirely. Although these individuals were not

¹⁴⁷ The FBI's article, *After 12 Years on the Run, Joseph Dibee Has Been Apprehended*, was written in 2018 for a national audience. Additional information on the apprehension of Joseph Dibee can be found online: Domestic Terrorism — FBI. "After 12 Years on the Run, Joseph Dibee Has Been Apprehended," FBI News, accessed December 11, 2022, <https://www.fbi.gov/news/stories/domestic-terrorism-joseph-mahmoud-dibee-apprehended-081018>.

¹⁴⁸ There is a discrepancy, varying per source, in the number of attacks and years active depending on the source, ranging from 40 to 45 or 1996 to 1997. However, the following two sources were used above. "Fugitive in 'largest ecoterrorism investigation in US history' caught after 12 years at large," KATU, accessed November 4, 2022, <https://katu.com/news/local/fugitive-in-largest-ecoterrorism-investigation-in-us-history-caught-after-12-yrs-at-large>. "Countering Eco-Terrorism in the United States: The Case of 'Operation Backfire'," START.

¹⁴⁹ More on Operation Backfire can be found at START at "Countering Eco-Terrorism in the United States: The Case of 'Operation Backfire'," START.

¹⁵⁰ The key component of this consolidation was the sharing of information between law enforcement agencies.

caught by the FBI taskforce, the sharing of information was essential to their capture as well as the post-conviction analysis. The police who captured these individuals were aware of their connection to environmental organizations due to the labelling of such groups as terrorist organizations. This response illustrated both the loyalty to the cause and organization as well as the resources at the members' disposal.

In 2006, two individuals, Chelsea Dawn Gerlach and Stanislas Gregory Meyerhoff, plead guilty to federal arson charges. A plea deal granted their charges to be transferred from Colorado to Oregon so that they could be settled alongside their other cases.¹⁵¹ Joseph Dibee, on the run for 12 years, was apprehended in Cuba. Believed to have been in route to Russia, Joseph was extradited to the United States in August 2018.¹⁵² Another individual, Josephine Sunshine Overtaker, fled to Europe in 2001 and remains at large.¹⁵³ The alleged leader of the cell, William C. Rodgers, was running a bookstore in Arizona at the time of his apprehension. Authorities described him as a "Svengali-like guru and sexual predator who liked to call himself 'Avalon', after an island from the legend of King Arthur." Much like a cult, the Family, was led by a charismatic individual with a God complex.¹⁵⁴ William later committed suicide in an Arizona jail in December of 2005.

¹⁵¹ The apprehension was publicized in a variety of local, state, and national media outlets. The two primary articles were taken from CBS News and Fox News. "Four Indicted in 1998 Vail Resort Fires," CBS News, May 19, 2006, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/4-indicted-in-1998-vail-resort-fires/>. "Two Formally Plead Guilty to Firebombing Ski Resort in Vail, Colorado," Fox News, January 13, 2015, <https://www.foxnews.com/story/two-formally-plead-guilty-to-firebombing-ski-resort-in-vail-colorado>.

¹⁵² Joseph Dibee's arrest could be found in both local and national newspapers. The full article can be found at "'Environmental Extremist' Group Leader Joseph Dibee Pleads Guilty to Arson," NY Post, April 24, 2022, <https://nypost.com/2022/04/24/environmental-extremist-joseph-dibee-pleads-guilty-to-arson/>.

¹⁵³ Joseph Overtaker remains at large and on the FBI's most wanted list, "Josephine Sunshine Overaker," FBI Most Wanted, <https://www.fbi.gov/wanted/dt/josephine-sunshine-overaker>.

¹⁵⁴ A leader of a cult typically maintains the loyalty of his or her followers through isolation and manipulation. The profile of a cult leader combines a God-like complex with charisma and delusional thinking. The origin of William C. Rodgers' nickname, Avalon, can be found within the Animal Liberation Front's Press Office publications as well as "Guilty pleas unveil the tale of eco-arson on Vail summit," Denver Post, December 14, 2006, <https://www.denverpost.com/2006/12/14/guilty-pleas-unveil-the-tale-of-eco-arson-on-vail-summit/>.

The Family is an example of a violent organization born out of frustration from the lack of results through peaceful means. Although AFR did not participate in the arson, their utilization of the journal and lack of public condemnation became the equivalent of implied consent. The Family's large-scale arson in Vail was not seen as an attack by a new group, but instead was viewed by law enforcement as a part of the greater ELF movement. This placed the entire organization at the center of law enforcement's scrutiny and the public's disgust. The cult-like leadership paired with the devastation caused by the Family forced scholars and politicians to question the creation and transformation of the organization. An analysis and acknowledgment of a movement's beginning is critical to understand a subset's decision to divert their philosophies and escalate their tactics.

Evolution of the Modern Environmental Movement in the United States: 1970-2010

Birth of the modern environmental movement in the United States began in January of 1969. However, it was built on values that were brought to the American public through both John Muir and the Sierra Club in the 19th century.¹⁵⁵ These values are more commonly attributed to the conservation movement, not the modern environmental movement. The conservation movement focused on an appreciation for nature and how the environment can support human life. Modern environmentalism sees the environment as needing protection from mankind and calls for broader economic and cultural changes to achieve that goal.¹⁵⁶

On January 28th of 1969, crude oil covered the coast of California after an explosion on an oil rig off the coast in Santa Barbara. The spill spewed an estimated 3 million gallons of crude oil from a crack in the ocean floor. The 1969 oil rig explosion, later referred to as the "ecological shot

¹⁵⁵ Sierra Club, <https://www.sierraclub.org>.

¹⁵⁶ Brian David Crane, "Conservationism vs. Environmentalism: What is the Difference?" Spread Great Ideas, <https://spreadgreatideas.org/contrasts/conservationism-vs-environmentalism/#:~:text=Conservationists%20by%20and%20large%20see%20the%20natural%20world,in%20need%20of%20protection%20from%20harmful%20human%20influence>.

heard ‘round the world’ by the *New York Times*, forced the American people to confront the environmental concerns plaguing the nation while launching an environmental movement.¹⁵⁷ The movement may have been sparked by a manmade disaster, but the American people were primed by a variety of writings, including Rachel Carson and Paul R. Ehrlich, which detailed the environmental crisis and created a growing appreciation of nature.¹⁵⁸ In response to the oil spill and growing concern for exploitation of the environment, local organizations formed to clean up the beach, such as Get Oil Out (GOO) and the Community Environmental Council. Their actions culminated in the first Environmental Rights Day on January 28, 1970, on the first anniversary of the oil spill. The success of this event propelled Senator Gaylord Nelson of Wisconsin’s much larger dream of creating an annual event to celebrate and raise awareness of the environment- Earth Day.

Advertising the event on the front page of the *New York Times*, an estimated twenty million people from all walks of life hit the streets in celebration of the first Earth Day on April 22, 1970. The environmental movement sparked a number of legislative and policy achievements including the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Clean Water Act, California Coastal Commission, California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and the creation of the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).¹⁵⁹ However, even as the environmental movement

¹⁵⁷ This headline is discussed in detail within an article by the *Los Angeles Times* published on May 20, 2015. “The 1969 Santa Barbara oil spill that changed oil and gas exploration forever,” LA Times, May 20, 2015, <https://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-santa-barbara-oil-spill-1969-20150520-htlmlstory.html>.

¹⁵⁸ Rachel Carson documents the adverse environmental effects cause by the use of pesticides, particularly DDT. Her book accuses the industry of spreading false information to the American public. This book is often credited with advancing the global environmental movement. Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring*, (Boston, Massachusetts: Houghton Mifflin, 1969).

¹⁵⁸ If interested in reading more about the predicted famine, read the following bestseller. Paul R. Ehrlich, Dennis R. Parnell, and Al Silbowitz, *The population bomb*, (New York: Ballantine Books, 1971).

¹⁵⁹ For general information about the regulatory and legislative successes, visit the webpage of the respective agency or act. For a more academic perspective, see: Jack Lewis, "The birth of EPA," *EPA J.* 11, (November 1985):6; Robert W Adler, "The decline and (possible) renewal of aspiration in the Clean Water Act," *Wash. L. Rev.* 88, (2013): 759; David J. Breemer, "What Property Rights: The California Coastal Commission's History of Abusing Land Rights and Some Thoughts on the Underlying Causes," *UCLA J. Env'tl. L. & Pol'y* 22, (2003): 247; Sean Stuart

continued, the US government slowed environmental regulatory and legislative changes, causing a division within the movement's supporters.¹⁶⁰ Although Nixon is often credited with advancing the environmental movement in the United States and around the globe, he politicized the environment to accomplish his diplomatic agenda by forging a connection between environmental progress and the banning of weapons associated with environmental devastation.¹⁶¹ This politicization brought an unwanted layer to the dynamic between the environmental movement and the government as well as isolating a portion of the American public, while a lack of substantive achievements eventually exposed the superficiality of Nixon's environmental policies.

As the creation of new legislation stalled, the original intent and foundation of the movement became distorted. The vast majority of people in the movement remained steadfast in their beliefs of peaceful means, but a small faction grew sympathetic to violent strategies to achieve environmental change, leading to the birth of eco-radicalism. This case study traces the evolution of ELF out of the Earth First! Movement and in the face of subsequent government repression.

The Role of Literature on ELF's Philosophical Transformation

ELF's intellectual history influenced the group's decision to radicalize based on the US government's response. The early literature on environmental politics had a deep effect on the environmental movement's philosophical foundations, which shaped its tactics and openness to

Varner, "The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) after two decades: Relevant problems and ideas for necessary reform," *Pepp. L. Rev.* 19 (1991): 1447; and Alvin L. Alm, "NEPA: Past, present, and future," *EPA J.* 14, (1988): 32.

¹⁶⁰ Flippen wrote about this in his 2012 work, while Gottlieb wrote about this in his 2009 work. More information can be found online on the ALF website, animalliberationfrontline.com. Also see: Ingrid Newkirk, *Free the Animals: The Amazing Story of the Animal Liberation Front in North America*, (New York: Lantern Publishing and Media, 2012); Peter Daniel Young, *Animal Liberation Front: Complete Diary of Actions- the First 30 Years*, (Warcry Communications, 2010); Craig Rosebraugh, *Burning Rage of a Dying Planet: Speaking for the Earth Liberation Front*, (New York: Lantern Publishing and Media, 2004); and "Basic Principles of Deep Ecology," Semantic Scholar, accessed October 10, 2022, <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/The-Basic-Principles-of-Deep-Ecology-Naess-Sessions/f86087fb8ed78a6a974f499c6102a34737895bb6>.

¹⁶¹ The environmental decade, 1970-1980, began with the passing of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) signed by Richard Nixon on January 1, 1970. In 1972, Nixon addressing Congress regarding the expansion of his environmental agenda.

violence. Generally written by activists, the early literature was devoted to creating a public appreciation of the environment while raising awareness of environmental protection, such as Rachel Carson's work *Silent Spring*.¹⁶² As years passed, the US government began to take responsibility and ownership for the quality of the environment with the adoption of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in 1969.¹⁶³ Traditionally, environmental literature is divided into three parts: early (1960-1977), growing maturity (1978-1985), and contemporary (1986-2000).¹⁶⁴ A fourth and final era is blatantly missing. An individualist period (2001-2010) brings the organization into the 21st century. However, the first two periods of literature had the largest impact on the philosophical underpinnings of the Earth Liberation Front.

The early period, literature in the 1960s and 1970s, was descriptive in nature- focusing on consciousness raising among those interested in environmental protection.¹⁶⁵ Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (1962) introduced Americans to the effects of pesticides while empowering the public to learn about their environment. A few years later, Paul R. Ehrlich predicted worldwide famine in his work *The Population Bomb* (1968). These popular works gained a following and brought environmental protection and advocacy to the American people. An initial commitment

¹⁶² Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring*. Published in 1962, the book became widely popular within the United States. Carson wrote about the effects and harm of pesticides on the environment.

¹⁶³ To learn more information about the regulatory and legislative successes, visit the webpage of the respective agency or act. For a more academic perspective, read the following: Jack Lewis, "The birth of EPA," *EPA J.* 11 (1985): 6; Robert W. Adler, "The decline and (possible) renewal of aspiration in the Clean Water Act," *Wash. L. Rev.* 88 (2013): 759; J. David Breemer, "What Property Rights: The California Coastal Commission's History of Abusing Land Rights and Some Thoughts on the Underlying Causes," *UCLA J. Env'tl. L. & Pol'y* 22 (2003): 247; Sean Stuart Varner, "The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) after two decades: Relevant problems and ideas for necessary reform," *Pepp. L. Rev.* 19 (1991): 1447; and Alvin L. Alm, "NEPA: Past, present, and future," *EPA J.* 14 (1988): 32. I also strongly recommend Caldwell's work in 1975 and Lester's work in 1995. Lynton K. Caldwell, 1975. *Man and His Environment: Policy and Administration*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1995). James P. Lester, *Environmental Politics and Policy: Theories and Evidence*, 2nd ed. (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1995).

¹⁶⁴ James P. Lester, *Environmental Politics and Policy: Theories and Evidence*.

¹⁶⁵ Mann et al's 1975 work go into detail about the descriptive nature of the time and its effect on the public's perception of environmental protection. Dean Mann, Geoffrey Wandesforde-Smith, and Lennart Lundqvist, "Environmental Policy," in *Policy Studies in America and Elsewhere*, (Lexington, Massachusetts: Lexington Books, 1995).

to the environment by the US government was achieved during the early 1970s with environmental laws, such as the regulations of air contaminants, water pollutants, and hazardous waste.¹⁶⁶

This shift from admiration to protection of the environment was reflected in the literature. As the 1970s progressed, literature on the topic primarily examined the role of the federal government.¹⁶⁷ The literature placed the responsibility for the safety and protection of the environment on the federal government. This is no small transition. The initial commitment from the US government in the early 1970s encouraged an ongoing role and expectation from the public. In a sense, this change in perception put pressure on the interaction between the environmental movement and the government. The primary audience was no longer the American people, but instead was the US government.

By 1975, experts criticized the movement for a lack of political science scholarly research and literature.¹⁶⁸ In response, political scientists began to examine the relationship between politics and the environment as well as democracies and the environment. William Ophuls became a leading scholar of the movement focusing on ecological implications of modern industrial civilizations.¹⁶⁹ Ophuls' work (1977) on a return to scarcity represents a serious challenge to the

¹⁶⁶ Mazmanian and Morell's 1992 work illustrates the success through regulation of the movement at the time. Daniel Mazmanian and David Morell, *Beyond Superfailure: America's Toxics Policy*, (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1992).

¹⁶⁷ Sabatier's 1973 work focus on the federal government. Without the federal government, change remained small and ambiguous. Historically, the safety and protection of the people was placed on the federal government. This literature also placed the safety and protection of the environment on the federal government as well. Paul A. Sabatier, "State and Local Environmental Policy," *Policy Studies Journal* 1, no. 4 (1973): 217-226.

¹⁶⁸ Dean Mann, Geoffrey Wandesforde-Smith, and Lennart Lundqvist, "Environmental Policy," in *Policy Studies in America and Elsewhere*. James P. Lester, *Environmental Politics and Policy: Theories and Evidence*. University Press. Mann et al and Lester highlighted a gap in the literature- political science. This perspective and analysis

¹⁶⁹ Schnaiberg (1980), Cauldfield (1989), as well as Goldsteen and Schorr (1991) state Ophuls as a leading scholar. Ophuls has a PhD in political science from Yale University. He joined the Coast Guard and later the Foreign Service before becoming an independent scholar focusing on the challenges, including environmental, to the American way of life. Alan Schnaiberg, *The Environment: From Surplus to Scarcity*, (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1980). Henry P. Cauldfield, *Environmental Politics and Policy: Theories and Evidence*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1989). Raymond L. Goldsteen and John K. Schorr, *Demanding Democracy after Three Mile Island*, (Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press, 1991).

American way of life. Ophuls attempted to illustrate how American political institutions, culture, and values are maladapted to the era of ecology scarcity.

Ophuls' work highlighted a divide between the environmental movement's expectations and the capabilities of the US government.¹⁷⁰ Ophuls' critiqued individual liberalism that prioritized individual human needs. Instead, Ophuls believed that liberal democracies are unable to address or combat environmental challenges. Therefore, he advocated overhauling the entire way of life in America to protect a future on Earth. This type of original thought forced individuals deep within the environmental movement to question their motivation and philosophy.

Philosophically, ELF follows two schools of thought- biocentrism and deep ecology. Biocentrism regards all organisms as equal, deserving of moral rights and considerations. The wilderness and biodiversity are the standard of absolutely good.¹⁷¹ This philosophy is prevalent within both the animal rights and environmental movements. Unlike deep ecology, biocentrism is much more benign in terms of levels of violence and tactics. While Ralph Waldo Emerson led the transcendentalist movement, Henry David Thoreau brought the environmental perspective within the movement.¹⁷² Transcendentalism confronted free-market capitalism within the United States. Thoreau forced the American people to question their relationship with nature. John Muir, also known as "Father of the National Parks," was highly influenced by Thoreau and this philosophy. Muir advocated a mythologized relationship with nature, referring to it as God's cathedral.¹⁷³ Peter

¹⁷⁰ William Ophuls' works include *Ecology and the Politics of Scarcity* (1977), *Requiem for the Modern Politics* (1997), *Plato's Revenge* (2011), *Immoderate Greatness: Why Civilizations Fail* (2012), among others. William Ophuls, "Ecology and the Politics of Scarcity," in *Political Theory of the Steady State*, (San Francisco, California: W. H. Freeman and Co., 1977). William Ophuls, "Requiem for Modern Politics: The Tragedy of the Enlightenment and the Challenge of the New Millennium," *Foreign Affairs* 76, no. 4 (January 1, 1997): 148, <http://doi.org/10.2307/20048132>. William Ophuls, *Plato's Revenge: Politics in the Age of Ecology*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2011). William Ophuls, *Immoderate Greatness: Why Civilizations Fail* (Createspace Independent Publishing Platform, 2012).

¹⁷¹ Although grammatically incorrect, the relevant use of "absolute good" can be found in the following sources. Caitlyn Ryan, "Extremism Assessment Series: Earth Liberation Front (ELF)," *Rise to Peace*, November 7, 2019, <http://www.risetopeace.org/2019/11/06/eas-elf/cryan/>. "Countering Eco-Terrorism in the United States".

¹⁷² L.E. Likar, *Eco-warriors, Nihilistic Terrorists, and the Environment*.

¹⁷³ L.E. Likar, *Eco-warriors, Nihilistic Terrorists, and the Environment*, 79.

Singer and Tom Regan both extend human-to-human morality and behavior to all living organisms.¹⁷⁴ Their concept of strict species equality inherently opposed biomedical animal research and industrial animal production. In reducing the biblical notion of man as the steward of the Earth and animals, speciesism places all living things on the same plane.

The second philosophy, deep ecology, was popularized by the Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess. A radical alternative to capitalism, deep ecology called for a decline in industrialization to restore the ecological balance.¹⁷⁵ Naess' work, *Ecology, Community, and Lifestyle: Outline for an Ecosophy* (2001), postulated that human beings are connected with nature and any anthropocentric distinction between man and nature is harmful. Naess' work, *Ecology, Community, and Lifestyle: Outline of an Ecosophy* (2001), argued that nature has intrinsic value beyond the utility it provides humans. Therefore, nature should not be saved for mankind but instead for nature itself. Radical environmentalists often reference deep ecology as their philosophical foundation. Deep ecology can lead to violence against humans as the theory promotes the survival of the environment over mankind. Although deep ecology remains on the fringe of the larger environmental movement, it is often cited by activists who seek to justify such violent tactics. This philosophy is not the only crucial ideological underpinning of eco-radicalism. Anti-authoritarian anarchism is also part of the belief system of violent environmental groups.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁴ Peter Singer and Tom Regan are both philosophers arguing for the protection of animals. Singer's argument is formed through a utilitarian view, while Regan's is Kantian. Peter Singer P, "Voluntary euthanasia: a utilitarian perspective," *Bioethics* 17, no. 5-6 (2003): 526-41, 10.1111/1467-8519.00366. PMID: 14959723. Tom Regan, *The Case for Animal Rights*, (University of California Press, 2004).

¹⁷⁵ More on the need for a decline in industrialization can be found in Manes' (1990) work. C. Manes, *Green Rage: Radical Environmentalism and the Unmaking of Civilization*, (Boston, Massachusetts: Little, Brown and Company, 1990).

¹⁷⁶ Further information on the authoritarian anarchism train of thought within the movement includes: Borum and Tilby (2005), Leader and Probst (2003), and Taylor (2003). Stefan Leader and Peter Probst, "The Earth Liberation Front and Environmental Terrorism," *Terrorism and Political Violence*, no. 15 (2003): 37-58.

The heart of the movement saw capitalism as the greatest threat to civilization.¹⁷⁷ The “greening” of anarchism took place in the 1960s creating a large audience and potential membership as the environmental movement took root. Turning against everything Western, such as individualism, the culture within the cells relies on loyalty and community- strengthening the movement.¹⁷⁸ This culture was not isolated to the environmental movement, the feeling of the community and anti-Western mentality was pervasive throughout various movements and protest efforts in the 1960s and 1970s.

The Influence of Earth First!: Crossing the Pond

This section illustrates the path forged by government inaction resulting in fragmentation and, ultimately, radicalization. Despite the violence perpetrated by members of ELF in Vail, the organization was born from a strictly nonviolent system of beliefs known as “Earth First!” (EF!). EF! is an example of the larger modern environmental movement of the 1970s which had roots reaching back to 19th century Transcendentalists.¹⁷⁹ Founded in 1980 in the Southwestern United States, the movement’s student base included supporters of anarchism and free lifestyle while embracing using drugs to obtain spiritual enlightenment. Many found Edward Abbey’s book *The Monkeywrench Gang* inspiring. The book told the story of a gang of environmentalists who sabotaged various industries, including mining and farming.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁷ JB Foster, “Ecology against Capitalism,” *Monthly Review* 53, no. 4 (2002): 1-17; Derek Wall, “The Anti-Capitalist Resistance Within Environmental Movements: Origins, Significance, and Prospects,” *Environmental Sociology* 1, no. 1 (2015): 8-17.

¹⁷⁸ The strength of the movement and role of community can be found in Ackerman’s work (2003) on page 146. Gary A. Ackerman, “Beyond Arson? A Threat Assessment of the Earth Liberation Front,” *Terrorism and Political Violence* 15, no. 4 (2003): 146.

¹⁷⁹ Transcendentalism is a philosophical movement of the 1800s. The movement believes that people and nature are inherently good, while society remains corrupt. Therefore, people must become self-reliant in order to break away from society. In 2006, Liddick wrote about the movement’s roots of the 70s. More information can also be found at “Countering Eco-Terrorism in the United States: The Case of ‘Operation Backfire,’” START. General scholarly articles on transcendentalism include Philip F. Gura, *American Transcendentalism: A History*, (New York: Hill and Wang, 2007) and Joel Myerson, *Transcendentalism: A Reader*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

¹⁸⁰ The novel’s plot uses acts of sabotage to protest the environmental exploitation. The term “monkeywrench” was derived from this book and came to mean acts of sabotage in the name of the environment. The four main characters

EF! utilized mass demonstrations, civil disobedience, and advocacy to garner support and promote their beliefs.¹⁸¹ In doing so, it pioneered many aspects of the environmental movement that would continue long after its demise. The most influential aspect of the organization was their journal, named *Earth First!*. The journal was a forum for members and those of similar ideologies to share tactical information as well as applaud those environmentalists making a splash.¹⁸² The popularity of and material contained in the journal illustrated a greater appetite for violence within the membership and intended audience.

More importantly, the idea of Earth First! being a “movement” and not an “organization” continued to live on within various strains of the environmental movement in the United States. This decentralization emphasized the lack of formal membership and a commitment to a cause that was not bound by formal lines of authority. There were only individuals that ascribed to the views and philosophies of the movement. Despite the lack of formal leadership structures and membership, various organizations exist within the confines of the Earth First! movement including: Daily Planet Publishing, the Fund for Wild Nature, the Trees Foundation, and Earth First! Direct Action Fund. The Fund for Wild Nature was a tax-exempt organization. This was strategically designed to allow public officials and celebrities, such as Ted Turner, to be able to

were each from very different backgrounds including a river guide, a surgeon, a Jewish and feminist executive assistant, and a Vietnam veteran. Abbey strategically included characters of various occupations, status, and wealth to appeal to a wider audience. Edward Abbey, *The Monkeywrench Gang*, (Lippincott Williams & Wilkins, 1975). More information on the Earth Liberation Front’s affinity for this book can be found in the following source. Paul Lindholdt, *Explorations in Ecocriticism: Advocacy, Bioregionalism, and Visual Design Ecocritical Theory and Practice*, (Lexington: Lexington Books, 2015), 93, ISBN 978-0739194997.

¹⁸¹ Mass demonstrations, civil disobedience, and advocacy each fall under legal and peaceful means. These are often organized and orchestrated in combination with the sympathetic public and broader membership. However, these public events garnered much more attention than other strains of the environmental movement.

¹⁸² The *Journal* included a variety of works on various topics. The tone of each work differed greatly from nonviolent and passivist sentiments to a call to violence. For instance, in the same issue, a reader could find both of the following articles: “Why I set a fire at Romania Chevrolet” and “The Nonviolent Use of Gunpowder”.

donate to legitimate “charities” without the accusation of funding an organization that writes about and condones acts of violence and extremism.¹⁸³

Although the Earth First! organization advertised itself as a “movement”, the struggles within the leadership greatly affected membership. Rumors surrounded the founder and leader of Earth First!- Dave Foreman. According to Ron Arnold’s book *Trashing the Economy*, the Sierra Club approached Foreman in the late 1970s offering to fund a more radical environmental organization, Earth First!, to publicly contrast the Sierra Club.¹⁸⁴ In doing so, the Sierra Club hoped their own demands and actions would appear more credible and legitimate. Ten years after conception of Earth First!, Dave Foreman, previously associated with the Wilderness Society, retired. His statement in *Smithsonian Magazine* only furthered rumors surrounding his connection to the Sierra Club, “A major accomplishment of Earth First!... has been to expand the environmental spectrum to where the Sierra Club and other groups are perceived as moderates”.¹⁸⁵ Later in 1982, Foreman stated, “When I call the Sierra Club ‘namby pamby,’ that is done consciously to negate what [Secretary of the Interior James] Watt says when he calls them extremists”.¹⁸⁶

EF! in the United Kingdom and the United States functioned differently based on their respective cultures. Two founders, Jake Bowers and Jason Torrance commented on these differences, “We knew EF! US’s original headline ‘rednecks for wilderness’ attitude wouldn’t appeal here, so we set out to build a group that combined radical action and social justice to protect

¹⁸³ Ron Arnold and Alan Gottlieb, *Trashing the Economy: How Runaway Environmentalism is Wrecking America* (Alexandria, Virginia: Merrill Press, 2010). Dave Foreman, *Confessions of an Eco-Warrior*, (New York: Crown Publishing Group, 1991).

¹⁸⁴ Ron Arnold and Alan Gottlieb, *Trashing the Economy: How Runaway Environmentalism is Wrecking America*.

¹⁸⁵ The quote was part of Foreman’s book, *Confessions of an Eco-Warrior*. Published in 1991, the book was dedicated to his life within the movement. It chronicles his time spent as a New Mexico lobbyist for The Wilderness Society in the 70s to co-founding Earth First!. Dave Foreman, *Confessions of an Eco-Warrior*.

¹⁸⁶ Watt refers to the Secretary of the Interior at the time.

Britain's few remaining natural places".¹⁸⁷ Earth First! did not gain the anticipated popularity and attention that other groups had achieved, such as the Animal Liberation Front and Greenpeace. Instead of orchestrating financially- devastating direct action or coordinating numerous acts of resistance, the organization limited itself to "pixieing", low cost and low impact actions-such as vandalism.¹⁸⁸

As time passed, rumors surrounding Earth First! leadership continually fueled the already present frustration within the movement. While the Earth First! movement did garner attention, substantial changes to the way in which society or the government functioned were far from their grasp. The significant lack of trust between the membership and the former leadership only fueled this need for transformation. The enraged members, within the United States, splintered in 1992 from the greater organization to create a group that prioritized results over legitimacy. The Earth Liberation Front (ELF) was born.¹⁸⁹ Established in Brighton, England in 1992 under the name "ELF," the organization targeted university students and middle-class individuals looking for a greater purpose or meaning to their life.

The first major ELF direct action in the United Kingdom occurred in December of 1991, a year before the organization was formally founded. At the Port of Tilbury, protestors prevented cranes from lifting tropical hardwood onto the dock. The event did not get much attention from the media, public, or law enforcement. Later that year, the Earth First! conducted a "roadshow" around the United Kingdom. A group of members traveled to various parts of the country to spread the organization's mission.¹⁹⁰ The formality and peaceful approach to a roadshow was a deliberate

¹⁸⁷ Jake Bowers and Jason Torrance, "Grey green," *The Guardian*, (2001).

¹⁸⁸ Pixieing is a term used when describing low cost and low impact direct action attacks. Unlike arson or threats to safety, pixieing does not cause harm to others or extensive damage. All acts of pixieing would be considered misdemeanors if convicted. This form of low cost and low impact direct action is discussed extensively by Molland in 2006. N. Molland, "A Spark that Ignited a Flame: The evolution of the Earth Liberation Front," in *Igniting a Revolution: Voices in Defense of the Earth*, S. Best and A. Nocella, (San Francisco, California: AK Press, 2006).

¹⁸⁹ Leslie James Pickering, *The Earth Liberation Front, 1997-2002*, (Portland, Oregon: Arissa Media Group, 2007).

¹⁹⁰ A roadshow was a group of individuals travelling together to spread information and recruit for the cause.

attempt to garner more members as well as a greater audience for future direct actions. As the roadshow ended, its success was apparent at future road protest camps throughout the country as hundreds of people attended.¹⁹¹ Despite the increase in attendance, the events did not garner change within the government or society creating a feeling of discontent and frustration among members.¹⁹²

A Violent Transformation

This section will show how ELF's internal culture and organization combined with government repression aided the radicalization process and shaped ELF's response of continued violence. The choices available to members included violent acts due to the values and priorities of the organization under rational choice theory. In the 1990s, a splinter group of Earth First! formed the Earth Liberation Front. This new organization took a much more militant approach to environmental protection and activism. Tactics of Earth First! included tree sitting, blockades, and protests.¹⁹³ Ten years after the establishment of Earth First, the Earth Liberation Front was inspired by the tactics of other radical environmental groups like the Animal Liberation Front.¹⁹⁴ ELF advocated the use of arson, sabotage, and other forms of property destruction. There are a number of factors, both psychological and sociological, that contributed to the transformation from the nonviolent Earth First! movement to the violent Earth Liberation Front.

¹⁹¹ The Newbury Bypass is a 9-mile stretch of road in Berkshire.

¹⁹² Judi Bari, *Timber Wars* (Monroe, Maine: Common Courage Press, 1994); Jennifer Price, "The Politics of Radical Environmentalism," *Annual Review of Political Science* 9 (2006): 255-271; Kirkpatrick Sale, "Environmentalism is Dead: Long Live Environmentalism!," *The Nation*, September 14, 1992, 269-272.

¹⁹³ Dave Foreman, *Ecodefense: A Field Guide to Monkeywrenching*, (Tucson, Arizona: Ned Ludd Books, 1991). Taylor Bron, *Ecological Resistance Movements: The Global Emergence of Radical and Popular Environmentalism*, (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1985).

¹⁹⁴ Steven Best and Anthony Nocella II, *Igniting a Revolution: Voices in Defense of the Earth* (Oakland, California: AK Press, 2006), 214.

This transformation in tactics was primarily driven by a perceived failure of the mainstream environmental movement to achieve progress toward protecting the environment.¹⁹⁵ Jennifer Price, a historian of radical environmentalism, argues that the movement emerged in response to the failure in addressing the root causes of environmental destruction. This perceived failure was further emphasized by the urgency of the environmental crisis. As climate change and environmental catastrophes were increasing throughout the United States and given more media attention, financial and human costs were viewed as necessary. Jeffrey L. Lewis and Andrew T. Guzman, legal scholars, argue that this change in ideology made the members of ELF want to distance themselves from the ineffective and more moderate environmental groups that they saw as accomplices willing to compromise with both industry and government.¹⁹⁶

Psychologically, researchers have suggested that members engaging in radical environmental activism may be motivated by power and control. The members also develop a community among themselves that is appealing to all, particularly young adults or those feeling isolated.¹⁹⁷ In a way, violent acts assert dominance over the target and society. Violence can also be a form of individual catharsis, releasing anger and frustration.¹⁹⁸ The group's tactics became more extreme as the group became more organized and a larger membership. This supports the theory of "group think" as well as "identity fusion" within psychology. William B. Swann Jr. and Jeffrey J. Sherman, social psychologists, discuss the concept of identity fusion within their work. The authors believe that individuals who engage in radical environmental activism may be motivated by a desire for power and control, as well as a need to feel part of a cohesive group with

¹⁹⁵ Dave Foreman, *Confessions of an Eco-warrior*. Jennifer Price, "The Politics of Radical Environmentalism," *Annual Review of Political Science* 9 (2006): 255-271.

¹⁹⁶ Jeffrey L. Lewis and Andrew T. Guzman, "Crimes Against the Environment," *The Yale Law Journal* 112, no. 7 (2003): 2159-2235.

¹⁹⁷ Robert Gifford, "Environmental Psychology and Activism: From Attitudes to Action." In *The Oxford Handbook of Environmental and Conservation Psychology*, edited by Susan D. Clayton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

¹⁹⁸ Leonard Berkowitz, "Aggression: Its Causes, Consequences, and Control," (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1993).

a shared identity.¹⁹⁹ On the other hand, group think occurs when a group of individuals prioritize harmony and conformity over critical thinking.²⁰⁰ While identity fusion can contribute to group think in some cases, they are distinct concepts that operate differently in the context of group behavior, such as radical environmentalism.

The language utilized in ELF's communiques mirrors the group's appetite for violence. While the group has consistently used strong language implying impending doom, the tone has become increasingly aggressive. The more militant language signals to others that ELF is not interested in either compromise or incremental change. Examples of violent language in ELF communiques includes words such as "war" and "fight". Claiming the attack on a lumber mill in Oregon, ELF stated "Our attack is just a warning. Our next attack will be much more severe".²⁰¹ After the arson attack in Vail, "We are fighting for life on Earth. We will use every means necessary to stop this war on the Earth."²⁰² This quote illustrates a lack of moral boundaries in the divine fight for the Earth. And finally, after an arson attack on a timber company in California, ELF stated, "Our message is simple: we will not stand by while the earth is destroyed. We will take action, we will fight back, and we will win."²⁰³ Radicalizing from within, the last quote shows a sense of cohesion as well as the impending physical actions in the name of the movement.

¹⁹⁹ William B. Swann Jr. and Jeffrey J. Sherman, "Identity Fusion: The Interplay of Personal and Social Identities in Extreme Group Behavior," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 96, no. 5 (2009): 995-1011.

²⁰⁰ Irving L. Janis, *Victims of Groupthink: A Psychological Study of Foreign- Policy Decisions and Fiascoes* (Boston, Massachusetts: Houghton Mifflin, 1972). M.E. Turner, A.R. Pratkanis, P.W. Probasco, and C. Leve, "Threat, Cohesion, and Group Effectiveness: Testing a Social Identity Maintenance Perspective on Groupthink," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 63, no. 5 (1992), 781-796.

²⁰¹ Earth Liberation Front, "Communique: Liberation Arson at Superior Lumber Company," North American Earth Liberation Front Press Office, May 25, 1997, <https://www.animalliberationfront.com/ALF-Communiques/ELF/25May97.htm>.

²⁰² Earth Liberation Front, "Communique Vail, Colorado Ski Resort Arson," North American Earth Liberation Front Press Office, October 19, 1998, <https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/earth-liberation-front-communique-vail-colorado-ski-resort-arson>.

²⁰³ Earth Liberation Front, "Communique: Pacific Lumber Company Arson," North American Earth Liberation Front Press Office, September 6, 2000, <https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/earth-liberation-front-communique-pacific-lumber-company-arson>.

The Earth Liberation Front is a transnational, decentralized network of clandestine cells that utilize direct action in the name of the environment.²⁰⁴ These cells employ economic sabotage and guerilla warfare, often referred to as ecotage. Operating under a leaderless resistance model, members attempt to eliminate the motive and profit from environmental destruction.²⁰⁵ Although born from a predominantly peaceful organization, ELF quickly made a name for themselves as a violent group that would not compromise. In March of 2001, ELF was classified as the top “domestic terror threat” in the United States by the FBI.²⁰⁶ This period is referred to as the Green Scare.

In the September- October issue in 1996 of *EF!J*, the writer, Tara the Sea, explained the membership and structure of the Earth Liberation Front. “ELF has no command structure or solid network. Each group is independent. There is no press office or office, so the authorities have nowhere to trace or focus their eyes and ears.”²⁰⁷ Each cell functions without the support of financiers or weapon procurers. The only components shared between each cell are the tactical knowledge, ideological beliefs, and commercially available literature from the organization’s press office and broader movement. This structure, lack of membership list and decentralization, was

²⁰⁴ Clandestine cells are those that are illicit and secretive. Direct action is the use of strikes, demonstrations, and other forms of protest to accomplish one’s goals. Michael Loadenthal discusses the role of direct action in his 2013 work. Michael Loadenthal, “Deconstructing ‘eco-terrorism’: rhetoric, framing and statecraft as seen through the insight approach,” *Critical Studies on Terrorism* 6, no. 1 (April 2013).

²⁰⁵ Paul Joosse, “Leaderless Resistance and Ideological Inclusion: The Case of the Earth Liberation Front,” *Critical Criminology* 22, no. 4 (2014): 491-505. Derek Wall, *Earth First! And the Anti-Roads Movement: Radical Environmentalism and Comparative Social Movements* (New York: Routledge, 1999). A leaderless resistance model is one that does not have a single leader, but instead each cell acts independently. This is often referred to in a group as a covert cell or a singular individual as a lone wolf. Paul Joosse and Derek Wall wrote about leaderless resistance within the Earth Liberation Front in their writings noted above. Other scholars, such as Simson Garfinkel, Chip Berlet, and Miroslav Mares have also written about this model.

²⁰⁶ More information on this classification can be found in the FBI Archives online. You can also find further information on the press release and the public’s response within local newspapers. “FBI — The Threat of Eco-Terrorism,” FBI, February 12, 2002, <https://archives.fbi.gov/archives/news/testimony/the-threat-of-eco-terrorism>.

²⁰⁷ Tara the Sea, *Earth First! Journal* 2, (1996).

strategic and mirrors many other forms of terrorism and extremism throughout the world.²⁰⁸ The decentralization prevented any planning of attacks being leaked, while the lack of membership list made it hard for an incarcerated member to reveal the group's entire membership.

While the members of EF! in Britain stood in contrast to Greenpeace and others in terms of size and publicity, ELF would further separate itself by promoting “a radical political agenda and repertoires of sabotage”.²⁰⁹ In the September–October 1993 issue of the *Earth First! Journal*, an anonymous article announced the creation of ELF in England. The article stated that ELF was a movement of “independently operating eco-saboteurs” focusing on direct action. The journal was one of many aspects of Earth First! that continued to live on within ELF. It became a way to advertise direct action, garner support, and spread their values. The Earth Liberation Front was formally introduced during the 1992 Earth First! Round River Rendezvous. At this event, the new generation of activists debated the effectiveness of civil disobedience. Elders of the Earth First! movement gave their blessing to this newly formed strike team known as ELF.²¹⁰

ELF prioritized their objective, protecting the environment, over values that would ethically limit their means. At the 1992 meeting in the United Kingdom, it was discussed and decided that the Earth Liberation Front would:

1. Cause as much economic damage as possible to a given entity that is profiting off the destruction of the natural environment and life for selfish greed and profit.
2. Educate the public on the atrocities committed against the environment and life.

²⁰⁸ Joel Brinkley, “ISLAMIC TERROR: Decentralized, Franchised, Global,,” *World Affairs* 176, 2 (2013): 43–55, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43554779>; A. Berzinji, L. Kaati and A. Rezine, "Detecting Key Players in Terrorist Networks," 2012 European Intelligence and Security Informatics Conference, Odense, Denmark, 2012, 297-302, doi: 10.1109/EISIC.2012.13; and Nathan Brant Hamilt and David H. Gray, "Decentralized Terrorism: Ramifications for a Centralized International System," *Global Security Studies* 3, 2 (2012).

²⁰⁹ In 2004, Plows et al wrote about the radical ideology of ELF as well as to the extent the organization differed from Earth First!. Alexandra Plows, Derek Wall, and Brian Doherty, “From the Earth Liberation Front to Universal Dark Matter: The Challenge of Covert Repertoires to Social Movement Research,” paper presented at the Workshop on Democracy and Extremism, European Consortium for Political Research Joint Sessions, April 6–11, Grenoble, France, April 6-11, 2001.

²¹⁰ Craig Rosebraugh, *Burning Rage of a Dying Planet*. (New York: Lantern Books, 2004), 20.

3. Take all precautions against harming life.²¹¹

The very first ELF action is unknown, but one of the more notable attacks was April Fool's Earth Night in 1992 in Brighton, England.²¹² After legal campaigners, also known as Friends of the Earth, spent two futile years boycotting *Fisions*, a peat company in the English countryside, accused of destroying the peat bogs, ELF took matters into their own hands. ELF targeted *Fisions* in retaliation for the inaction of the government, industry, and the company itself. The elves destroyed machinery and vandalized the work yard causing approximately £70,000 of damage.²¹³

The *Green Anarchist* published the following communique claiming responsibility:

All our peat bogs must be preserved in their entirety, for the sake of the plants, animal and our national heritage. Cynically donating small amounts will do no good. The water table will drop, and the bog will dry out and die, unless it's preserved fully. FISION MUST LEAVE ALL OF IT ALONE- NOW.²¹⁴

Despite the economic damage incurred from the attack, the media almost fully ignored the direct action. This was partly due to simultaneously occurring events. This occurred only one week before elections in the United Kingdom.²¹⁵ American security agencies did not notice the

²¹¹ North American Earth Liberation Front Press Office, "About the Elf," accessed January 3, 2022, <http://www.elfpressoffice.org/theelf.html>. The list of principles can be found at the ELF Press Office website at the following address: <http://www.elfpressoffice.org/theelf.html>.

²¹² The Earth Liberation Front (ELF) website is regularly taken down by the FBI. Therefore, the URL is subject to change. You may utilize the internet archives to find previous articles published by the organization.

²¹³ Joosee wrote in detail about April Fool's Night in 1992. His works were published in both 2007 and 2012. Paul Joosee, "Leaderless Resistance and Ideological Inclusion: The Case of the Earth Liberation Front," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 19, no.3 (September 2007): 351-368. Paul Joosee, "Elves, environmentalism, and 'eco-terror': Leaderless resistance and media coverage of the Earth Liberation Front," *Crime, Media, Culture* 8, no.1 (April 2012): 75-93.

²¹⁴ *The Green Anarchist* is a popular outlet for all involved in the environmental movement. The membership ranges from those committed to social responsibility to those that want to combine aspects of anarchism with environmental politics. Communiques from environmental and animal rights movements can typically be found in the outlet.

²¹⁵ The 1992 elections in the United Kingdom occurred on April 9th. The elections ended in a surprising result with the fourth consecutive victory for the Conservative Party since 1979.

seemingly isolated attack in Britain and their attention was soon refocused on domestic threats when the Los Angeles' riots began a few weeks later.²¹⁶

Communiques and the Media: If It is Not Published Then It Did Not Happen

ELF's communiques and relationship with the media illustrate ELF's ability to adapt and remain effective during repression. Communiques and publications were critical in both the Earth First! movement as well as the Earth Liberation Front. The terminology used within communiques creates a world outside of reality. This places followers into a different frame of mind where they are more susceptible to violent acts and are not considering consequences.²¹⁷ This otherworldly dimension is evident in the very first communique published by the Earth Liberation Front.

We take inspiration from... the little people- those mischievous elves of lore. Authorities can't see us because they don't believe in elves. We are practically invisible. We have no command structure, no spokespersons, no office, just many small groups working separately, seeking vulnerable targets and practicing our craft. Many elves are moving to the Pacific Northwest and other sacred areas. Some elves will leave surprises as they go. Find your family! And let's dance as we make ruins of the corporate money system.²¹⁸

The perceptions ELF wants to portray regarding the systems of power, Earth, and the organization itself are found within the deliberate word choice. Referring to the elves as "little people" referenced the diminutive physical stature of the mythical creatures and their role in the power structure. The Earth was referenced as "sacred" to illustrate the importance of the mission and the divine calling. The phrase "find your family" reached out to isolated would-be activists promising them a sense of belonging within the organization.

²¹⁶ The Los Angeles' riots includes a variety of instances in both April and May of 1992. Unrest began in South Central Los Angeles on April 29, after a jury acquitted four police officers charged with using excessive force in the arrest and beating of Rodney King. The outrage was critical in Los Angeles but was present throughout the country as the case maintained national media attention. The riots resulted in 63 deaths, thousands of injuries, and almost a billion dollars in damages.

²¹⁷ Shannon Baldo, "Elves and Extremism: The Use of Fantasy in the Radical Environmentalist Movement," Young Scholars in Writing at Transylvania University.

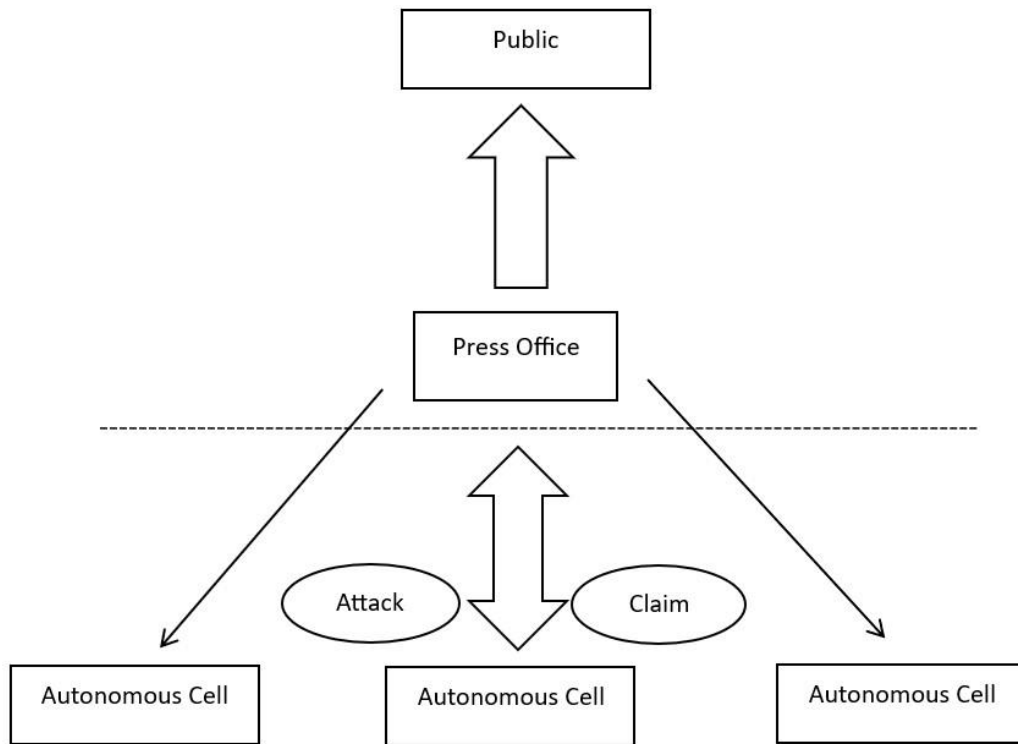
²¹⁸ "Earth Liberation Front," *Earth Liberation Front's First Communique*, (III Publishing, 1997).

Claiming responsibility and explaining the rationale for direct action was a critical part of ELF's *modus operandi*. This type of communication allowed the members and the organization to feel connected to the environmental community as well as the public.²¹⁹ In doing so, they hoped to garner sympathy and potentially attract new members. The two levels of membership in the organization- underground and aboveground- coordinate harmoniously often without person-to-person communication.²²⁰ The underground level is responsible for planning, coordination, and execution of direct action, while the aboveground helps to publicize attacks, coordinate aid to imprison members, and develop and distribute propaganda. The figure below illustrates the relationship between the two levels as well as the public.

Figure 2.1. Organizational Flow of Information

²¹⁹ Stephen Hess and Marvin Kalb, *The Media and the War on Terrorism*, (Rowman a& Littlefield, 2003). David L. Paletz and Alex P. Schmid, *Terrorism and the Media*, (SAGE Publications, 1992).

²²⁰ This symbiotic relationship is further described in Loadenthal's 2018 work. Michael Loadenthal, "The Earth Liberation Front: A Social Movement Analysis," *Radical Criminology* 15, no. 46 (January 2013).



The figure represents the level of separation between the public and the organization. The public press office crosses over the barrier to interact with the autonomous cells. The autonomous cells then coordinate and execute an attack covertly. After the attack, the press office can claim ownership. Although the communications are occasionally inaccurate, the Elves consistently claim to be nonviolent in nature. This was not widely accepted due to their history of severe property damage and arson. “Nonviolence” was a subjective term that the public, law enforcement, and the Elves did not agree upon. The Earth Liberation Front believes that direct action is required to achieve environmental liberation. Its members believe the devastation and exploitation of the Earth is a much more severe form of violence than any direct action the elves committed, which, to them, renders the Elves’ violence merely self-defense.

ELF’s communique on December 19th of 2000 is an example of texts embodying their ideology. In the fall and winter of 2000, ELF repeatedly targeted housing developments in Long

Island. The below communicate is the most detailed communicate ELF has ever released that was associated with an attack.

... Our earth is being murdered by greed corporate and personal interests. The rape of the Earth puts everyone's life at risk due to global warming, ozone depletion, toxic chemicals, etc. Unregulated population growth is also a direct result of urban sprawl. There are over 6 billion people on this planet of which almost a third are either starving or living in poverty. Building homes for the wealthy should not be a priority... The time has come to decide what is more important: The planet and the health of its population or the profits of those who destroy it... we are but the symptoms of a corrupt society on the brink of ecological collapse...²²¹

The above communicate illuminates a juxtaposition between urban sprawl and capitalism and the environment. By defining humans as both victims and oppressors, the organization is creating a divide in the population. In doing so, ELF is drawing on Marxist-socialism by connecting environmentalism to class struggle.²²²

The history of ELF in the media is quite surprising. Despite being labelled as a top "domestic threat" by the FBI in 2001, the organization continued to accumulate domestic sympathy and support. To combat the government's claims, ELF participated in *60 Minutes* special in 2005, spreading the ideology and actions of the organization to households all over the United States. In a way, this special essentially recruited for the organization.²²³ In 2011, the documentary, *If a Tree Falls: A Story of the Earth Liberation Front*, won an Academy Award- nomination reaping the group an immense amount of attention.²²⁴ This attention was critical as the elves only

²²¹ Leslie James Pickering, *The Earth Liberation Front: 1997-2002*.

²²² While some members preferred a more anarchist ideology others prescribed to Marxist-socialism. In doing so, they drew on ideas of class and social justice. By combining these thought patterns, the members could appeal to a larger audience, particularly those of the younger generation.

²²³ "President Simmons, The Earth Liberation Front, Nothing More to Worry About?," *60 Minutes*, season 33, episode 37, CBS, June 24, 2001.

²²⁴ Marshall Curry, "If a Tree Falls: A Story of the Earth Liberation Front," Oscilloscope Laboratories, 2011. The documentary tells the story of activist Daniel G. McGowan of the Earth Liberation Front. Following his time in the organization from arson attacks in 1996 to his 2005 arrest by the Department of Justice, the film makes the audience question the definition of terrorism.

hope of expansion and growth is to inspire copycats through the establishment of additional cells and execution of attacks.

ELF on a Shelf: Direct Action Within the United States

Some of the first evidence of ELF in the United States consisted of a string of spray paint and glue attacks in Oregon in 1996. This first attack in Oregon occurred on October 14, 1996, Columbus Day or Indigenous Peoples' Day. The day was likely strategic to send a larger message against Christopher Columbus. Targets consisted of a public relations office, a Chevron station, and a McDonalds. All three buildings were spray painted with political messages and the locks glued together.

Attacks quickly escalated within a few months to arsons in Michigan, Washington, Northern California, and Indiana.²²⁵ On November 29, 1997, ELF activists claimed credit for an attack in the United States for the first time- an arson attack on the Bureau of Land Management horse corral as well as the release of captured wild horses designated for slaughter.²²⁶ The following communique was ELF's first in the United States, often known as the Beltane communique. Beltane comes from the ancient Gaelic holiday that marked the beginning of summer, by the 1990s it was one of the most important neo-Pagan and Wiccan holidays and was commonly associated with bonfires and celebrating nature.²²⁷

Welcome to the struggle of all species to be free. We are the burning rage of this dying planet. The war of greed ravages the Earth and species die out every day. The ELF works to scare the rich and to undermine the foundations of the state. We embrace social and Deep Ecology as a practical resistance movement. We have to show the enemy that we are serious and about defending what is sacred. Together we have teeth and claws to match our

²²⁵ For more information on the escalation within Michigan, Washington, Northern California, and India can be found in Parson's (2008) work. Sean Parson, "Understanding the ideology of the Earth Liberation Front," *The Journal of Ecopedagogy* 4, no. 2 (2008).

²²⁶ North American Earth Liberation Front Press Office, "Frequently Asked Questions," NAELFPO, accessed October 1, 2022, <https://www.naelf.com/faq.html>. NAELFPO, "Frequently Asked Questions," is the source for all historical and background information on the Earth Liberation Front.

²²⁷ The communique and subsequent analysis can be found in Parson's (2008) work. Sean Parson, "Understanding the ideology of the Earth Liberation Front".

dreams. Our greatest weapons are imagination and the ability to strike when least expected...²²⁸

Few in law enforcement could have suspected the communique marked the beginning ELF being declared “the most active criminal and extremist element in the United States”.²²⁹ The North American ELF Press Office, NAELFPO, became a de facto “diary of actions” consisting of over 700 entries from October 1996 to November 2009.²³⁰ The following data illustrates the division of targeting. Within the diary the following patterns emerged:

- Automobile: 29%
- Company vehicles: 11%
- Phone booths: 17%
- Homes in construction: 12%
- Industrial equipment: 10%
- Business property: 5%
- Agriculture: 2%
- McDonalds: 2%

Similarly, a US Department of Homeland Security (DHS)- commissioned study carried out by Helios Global Inc focusing on attacks by ELF and ALF from 1981-2004 found that the primary targets were commercial enterprises related to housing and urban development. Helios found that ELF’s militant tactics consisted of:

- Vandalism: 45%
- Theft: 23%
- Harassment: 15%
- Arson: 10%
- Bombing: 7%

Leader and Probst discovered similar findings with vandalism being the most utilized tactic.²³¹

With such time and resources going into this escalation in targeting and tactics NAELFPO was

²²⁸ Leslie James Pickering, *The Earth Liberation Front: 1997-2002*, 18.

²²⁹ This declaration can be found within the FBI archives as well as local and federal newspapers. Lewis quoted in Henry Schuster, “Domestic Terror: Who’s the Most Dangerous? Eco-terrorists are now above ultra-right extremists on the FBI charts,” August 24, 2005, <http://www.cnn.com/2005/US/08/24/schuster.column/index.html>.

²³⁰ Michael Loadenthal, “Eco- Terrorism? Countering Dominant Narratives of Securitisation: A Critical, Quantitative History of the Earth Liberation Front (1996-2009),” *Perspectives on Terrorism* 8, no. 3 (2014).

²³¹ S. H. Leader and P.S. Probst, “The Earth Liberation Front and Environmental Terrorism,” *Terrorism and Political Violence* 15 (2003): 37-58.

established to ensure that both the public and environmental community would be notified of such attacks.

Tactics of the Earth Liberation Front have been critiqued. Critics have argued that property destruction and sabotage alienate the public and are counterproductive to the cause. Some acts have also been criticized as hypocritical since a portion of the acts rely on fossil fuels. The mainstream environmental movement was also concerned that the use of violence would give ammunition to those who oppose environmental causes.

The North American ELF Press Office published pamphlets to be distributed across known networks as well as college campuses. The communiques published by the NAELFPO not only spread ideology, but also claimed attacks and called on others to make war against a particular industry. Campaigns against fur farming and urban development were conducted in the United States and Canada after a communique was sent throughout the movement. In the Pacific Northwest, a war on timber was declared and successfully executed.²³²

In a 2001 pamphlet, NAELFPO published “if an individual believes in the ideology and follows a certain set of guidelines, she or he can perform actions and become a part of the ELF”.²³³ Although there is no authority figure to the organization, this form of direction provides guidelines to all those that partake in the belief. The guidelines are as follows:

1. To cause as much economic damage as possible to a given entity that is profiting off the destruction for the natural environment and life for selfish greed and profit,
2. To educate the public on the atrocities committed against the environment and life,
3. To take all necessary precautions against harming life.²³⁴

²³² William R. Brown, “The War on Timber in the Pacific Northwest,” *Pacific Historical Review* 87, no. 1 (February 2018): 67-92.

²³³ North American Earth Liberation Front Press Office, “Frequently Asked Questions”. This quote came from the North American Earth Liberation Front Press Office (NAELFPO) in 2001. More information on the press office can be found at: Michael Loadenthal, “Earth Liberation Front A Social Movement Analysis”.

²³⁴ Michael Loadenthal, “A Social Movement Analysis,” in *Green is the New Red: An Insider’s Account of a Social Movement Under Siege*, by Will Potter (San Francisco: City Lights Publishers, 2011), 111-139. North American Earth Liberation Front Press Office, “Frequently Asked Questions”. Further information on the guidelines can be found at Earth Liberation Front: Michael Loadenthal, “A Social Movement Analysis” and the 2021 NAELFPO pamphlet in the Frequently Asked Questions section.

Although NAELFPO's website is often taken down, the propaganda can be spread through a variety of other channels. Bite Back Magazine, War on Society, and Contra Info are just a few examples of popular websites within the community.²³⁵ These options do not primarily focus on ALF but provide coverage for ELF as well. *Green Anarchy* and *Species Traitor* are green anarchist magazines that praise and report on ELF. Keeping in mind that all literature, such as communiques, was made public, the authors acknowledged the importance of not alienating the public. In doing so, standards were stated throughout communiques to increase legitimacy and boost public support. In the rare instance that the saboteurs did not issue a communique, a calling card is often left at the scene.

Within the literature and communiques, there are significant inconsistencies. As a result of the autonomous nature of the organization, there was very little agreed upon. The press office facilitated some dialogue between cells as well as acted as a judge. The press office would also condemn any harm to a human being. Critics may say that this is inauthentic due to the public nature of the condemnation, but purists believed that the press office attempted to maintain the standards and credibility of the organization.

Government Response and Leadership Changes

In a survey conducted by Simone, Freilich, and Chermak in 2008, approximately 75% of state police agencies reported that environmental and animal rights groups posed a major security threat, ranking them second only to that of Islamic Jihadists.²³⁶ The attacks of September 11th not only brought increased surveillance on extremists but also a new generation of experts focusing

²³⁵ Bite Back Magazine, War on Society, and Contra Info are each eco-radical, anarchist publications. If they cannot be found active online, each publication can be discovered within the internet archives.

²³⁶ Jennifer Varriale Carson, Gary LaFree, and Laura Dugan, "Terrorist and Non-Terrorist Criminal Attacks by Radical Environmental and Animal Rights groups in the United States, 1970-2007," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 24, no. 2 (2012): 295-319; Joseph Simone, Joshua Freilich, and Steven Chermak, "Surveying State Police Agencies about Domestic Terrorism and Far-Right Extremists," [Research Brief] (College Park, MD: National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and responses to Terrorism 2008).

on terrorist analysis. Unprovoked attacks by law enforcement were seen as a justification for direct action in ELF literature.²³⁷ Labelled as the Green Scare, the state began to utilize repressive measures against both environmental and animal liberation groups after the terrorist attacks of September 11th.²³⁸ The Federal and state government used repressive tactics, such as legislation, informants, surveillance, and raids to hamper ELF's activities.²³⁹ These repressive tactics did not halt ELF. While decentralization made it harder to prosecute individuals and tie them to the greater organization, repressive tactics elicited a violent response.

In 2010, the first unbridled attempt to kill occurred in response to the Green Scare. On September 1st at Discovery Communications headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland, James E. Lee, entered the lobby and took two employees and a security guard hostage. During the four-hour takeover, Lee was armed with what law enforcement believed to be two pistols, had an explosive device strapped to his body, and carried boxes and a backpack. This was not the first time Lee had been to the Discovery building, he had previously protested on the streets outside the building due to the lack of shows designed to save the planet and reduce the human population.²⁴⁰

During negotiations with the police, Lee was vocal about his fearlessness toward death. As the police entered the building, they saw what they assumed was Lee pointing a pistol at a hostage. In response, the police shot Lee causing the explosive device to detonate. Police determined that

²³⁷ Unprovoked attacks and increased attention from law enforcement seen as a justification for direct action is described in detail within Ackerman's (2003) work, particularly on page 146. Gary A. Ackerman, "Beyond Arson? A Threat Assessment of the Earth Liberation Front".

²³⁸ Michael Loadenthal, "The Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act: The Rise of Anti-Activist Legislation in the United States," in *State Repression and the Domestic Democratic Peace*, edited by Christian L. Boulanger and Peter Marcus Kristensen (London: Routledge, 2013), 53-72; Amy Lovitz, "Radical Environmentalism and the Punishment of Eco-Terrorism," *Punishment & Society* 12, no. 1 (2010): 91-112; Will Potter, *Green is the New Red: An Insider's Account of a Social Movement Under Siege* (San Francisco: City Lights Publishers, 2011); Don Slater, "Earth into Property: Colonization, Decolonization, and Capitalism," in *The Environmentalism of the Poor: A Study of Ecological Conflicts and Valuation*, edited by Joan Martinez-Alier (Northampton, Massachusetts: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2011), 128-157.

²³⁹ An example of such legislation is the Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act and the Ag-Gag Legislation.

²⁴⁰ Previous protests can be found within the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette (2010). Sarah Brumfield, "Police Kill Suspect in Discovery Channel Siege," *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, September 2, 2010, A-6.

what they thought were pistols were starter pistols.²⁴¹ Starter pistols are designed to make noise without discharging a projectile and thus cannot harm anyone. Lee's acts were considered terroristic, but not suicidal as he did not detonate the explosive himself.²⁴²

Thoughts regarding the seriousness and urgency of the climate and environment did not come solely from terrorists or radicals but also from mainstream organizations and scientists. In May 2010, the National Academy of Sciences issued three reports outlining the problems caused by global warming and recommended that countries around the world act before it was too late. The National Academy called for an 80% reduction of US carbon emissions from 2012 to 2050.²⁴³ A 2005 Rand report predicted that the environmental movement would start to focus on the evils of corporations and the government's role in enabling said corporations.²⁴⁴ Liddick, in his book on ecoterrorism, stated that the ideological framework of the radical environmental movement combined with a belief in overpopulation could form a justification of attacks on people to save the planet.²⁴⁵

Conclusion

While leaders continue to make decisions based on their perceptions of their political interests and their countries' national interests, the environment continues to present an international and multifaceted security challenge that has baffled the international stage. The threat posed by environmental extremism is a product of the way in which environmental issues are

²⁴¹ Alex Johnson, Elizabeth Chuck, Bob Sullivan, Thomas Roberts, and Peter Alexander, "Sources: Discovery Suspect Had Starter Guns," NBC News, September 2, 2010, 1-6, http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/38968317/ns/us_news_crime_and_courts/.

²⁴² National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START), "Background Report: Discovery Communications Building Hostage-Taking," September 1, 2010, 3, <http://www.start.umd.edu/start/announcements/announcement.asp?id=205>.

²⁴³ Thomas H. Maugh II, "Science Society Urges Strong Action to Battle Warming," *Pittsburg Post-Gazette* 83, no. 293 (May 20, 2010), A-2.

²⁴⁴ Peter Chalk et al., "Trends in Terrorism: Threats to the United States and the Future of the Terrorism Risk Insurance Act," (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2005), 50-52, <http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG393.html>.

²⁴⁵ Donald Liddick, *Eco-Terrorism: Radical Environmental and Animal Liberation Movements*, 19-21.

presented to the public as well as the government's reaction. This project creates a social, cultural, and historical analysis of the environmental movement to identify the root cause of the transformation in tactics from non-violent, peaceful protests to violent acts.

While the lack of action taken by the government to address climate risks has heightened frustration and urgency creating a sympathetic audience, the government's response to the Family paired with the increase measures against counterterrorism post- September 11th forced the organization completely underground. Underground cells of ELF are currently active in over 17 countries. Although law enforcement may have hindered the organization's capabilities, ELF was born of desperation and continues to see itself as the vanguard of a revolution. Despite the organization's size, each member is considered to be acting alone and not a reflection of the greater organization. This was a direct response to protecting both the reputation and integrity of the organization from actions not reflective of the respective values of the organization as well as law enforcement. ELF was able to make the transition easily and efficiently since the role of the press office had previously been so prominent. Forcing the organization underground makes both surveillance and tying the crimes to the greater organization impossible. Radicalization was a result of growing frustration with the U.S. government's response to mainstream activism leading to philosophical differences and tactical escalations. This interdependent relationship resulted in an increase in violence and change in tactics by ELF. The organization's decentralized structure fostered dissent and a lack of transparency among members while frustrating law enforcement's efforts to disrupt its activities.

Chapter 3 - Animal Liberation Front's Transformation from Liberators to Terrorists

At the time of the Earth Liberation Front's (ELF's) founding, it derives much of its name and guidelines from the Animal Liberation Front (ALF). As a result, ELF drew progressively closer to ALF and further way from Earth First, from which it had splintered. This new dynamic was forged with an informal agreement and was accepted amongst the movement in both Britain and the United States.²⁴⁶ Both ELF and ALF were born from activists' frustration with the perceived pace of environmental progress, both splintering from non-violent organizations illustrating the potential dangers of charismatic leadership, lack of policy change, and media distortion.

While the Earth Liberation Front is a collection of autonomous cells using economic sabotage, ecotage, to halt environmental degradation, the Animal Liberation Front chose to engage in direct action to liberate animals.²⁴⁷ Despite the minor difference in motivation, both organizations use similar violent tactics to raise awareness, scare, and cause economic loss to those profiting from animals or the environment.²⁴⁸ The US media's portrayal of eco-terrorism remains disconnected with the ideology creating a dangerous and false representation of the potential threat.²⁴⁹ An analysis of the media-eco-terrorism provides insight into the influence of American

²⁴⁶ Rik Scarce, *Eco-Warriors: Understanding the Radical Environmental Movement* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

²⁴⁷ Peter Singer, *Animal Liberation: The Definitive Classics of the Animal Movement* (New York: Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 2009).

²⁴⁸ Steven Best and Anthony J. Nocella II, eds., *Terrorists or Freedom Fighters?: Reflections on the Liberation of Animals* (New York: Lantern Books, 2004), 71-93.

²⁴⁹ Paul Joosee, "Elves, environmentalism, and 'eco-terror': Leaderless resistance and media coverage of the Earth Liberation Front," *Crime, Media, Culture* 8, no.1 (April 2012): 75-93. Stephen Hess and Marvin Kalb, *The Media and the War on Terrorism*, (Rowman a& Littlefield, 2003). David L. Paletz and Alex P. Schmid, *Terrorism and the Media*, (SAGE Publications, 1992).

media on the population's perception of a threat, as well as the role of the population's perception in the creation of policy.²⁵⁰

Similar to chapter one, I will present a thorough review of the origin and transformation of the Animal Liberation Front. I will not be doing data analytics on the attacks committed by ALF because, as with ELF, there is no reliable and reasonable comprehensive database of attacks to analyze. Instead, I will discuss those attacks that have been conclusively linked to ALF's membership and marked as pivotal to the organization's transformation. By acknowledging the historical background of the organization's origins in Britain and evolution in the United States along with the Earth Liberation Front, this chapter will explore ALF's radicalization process and role of the US government in ALF's evolution. This chapter will show that the ALF grew out of a minority of activists' frustration with the government's response to mainstream activism which created philosophical differences within the environmental movement and led to tactical escalations. Violence in the name of those that were unable to fight for themselves, such as animals, followed shortly after. Similar to ELF, this interdependent relationship of ALF and the US government resulted in an increase in violence and change in tactics by ALF. The organization's decentralized structure fostered dissent and a lack of transparency among members as well. The decentralized nature made the members disjointed, their loyalty was too a small group of members and the cause- not the organization as a whole.

ALF at a Glance: All in the Name of Love

In January of 2000, the Animal Liberation Front reached a new level of violence and economic damage. Although its founders had emphasized nonviolence, ALF executed three

²⁵⁰ Irving L. Janis, *Victims of Groupthink: A Psychological Study of Foreign- Policy Decisions and Fiascoes* (Boston, Massachusetts: Houghton Mifflin, 1972). Lynton K. Caldwell, 1975. *Man and His Environment: Policy and Administration*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1995). James P. Lester, *Environmental Politics and Policy: Theories and Evidence*, 2nd ed. (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1995).

separate attacks in California during a single month. In response to the government's lack of action, ALF expanded their preferences, under rational choice theory, to include violence. The attacks consisted of arson, destruction of property, breaking and entering, and the use of explosive devices.²⁵¹

Beginning on January 3rd of 2000 in Petaluma, California, ALF set fire to buildings and trucks at Rancho Veal's meatpacking plant resulting in over \$250,000 in damages.²⁵² Veal, a meat from a calf instead of an older steer, remains a controversial topic among the animal rights community and portions of the general population. The calf has limited movement during its short life to ensure the meat is as tender as possible. Twelve days later, on January 15th, ALF claimed credit for placing five explosive devices in offices and trucks at Petaluma Farms, a family owned and operated egg farm in Sonoma County.²⁵³ According to ALF, Petaluma Farms enslaved chickens for their eggs. Two trucks were destroyed during the attack.²⁵⁴ Although the chickens are housed humanely and not harmed during the retrieval process, they are used for their eggs. This represents a radical version of a vegan-inspired mindset that attributes a full spectrum of human rights to animals.²⁵⁵

²⁵¹ The exact press release has been taken down from the ALF website. You can find additional communiques and press releases on the North American Animal Liberation Press Office. North American Animal Liberation Press Office, "Communiques and Press Releases," accessed January 10, 2023, <http://www.animalliberationpressoffice.org/>.

²⁵² Southern Poverty Law Center, "Eco-Violence: The Record," last modified July 12, 2022, accessed October 1, 2022, <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/ideology/eco-terrorism>. There is also additional information on the attack within ALF's website.

²⁵³ Petaluma Farms remains a family-owned operation in Sonoma County. Their website is <https://www.petalumaeggfarm.com/>. "Petaluma Egg Farm," accessed January 7, 2023, <http://www.petalumaeggfarm.com/>.

²⁵⁴ Additional information on this attack can be found on the FBI's website, ALF website, as well as a variety of local newspapers.

²⁵⁵ Patrick J. McDonnell and Eric Bailey, "Egg Farm Attack is Linked to Animal Activists," *Los Angeles Times*, January 16, 2000, sec. A, 16. Paul Payne, "Egg Farm Attacked: Animal Liberation Front Claims Responsibility for Release of 8,000 Chickens," *The Press Democrat* (Santa Rosa, CA), January 16, 2000. Oscar Horta, "What is Speciesism?" *Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics* 23, 2010, 243-266.

The third attack took place on the 24th, ALF claimed credit for attempting to burn down Primate Products.²⁵⁶ Primate Products manages captive primates in Redwood City, California. This facility also provided services and equipment for other surrounding research facilities. Primates are similar to humans in terms of DNA, sharing 96% of humans' genetic code. This similarity in DNA makes primates a widely used option for animal testing as they provide a preview of future human trials or once the product hits market. These three attacks were not only an increase in violence, in terms of both tactics and targeting, but they also illustrated a reprioritization of results over philosophical values.

Foundations of the Animal Rights Movement

The foundation of the animal rights movement influenced ALF's philosophical underpinnings. The animal rights movement has roots as far back as the late 18th and early 19th centuries. During this time, philosophers and scientists questioned the morality of animal exploitation. These individuals were highly influenced by the Enlightenment era's emphasis on using empirical observation and reason to understand the world. One of the most prominent Enlightenment scholars, Jeremy Bentham argued that the ability to suffer, not the ability to reason, should be the basis for determining moral worth.²⁵⁷ This perspective encouraged humans to include animals in moral considerations. Henry Salt, a social reformer, furthered Bentham's ideas by arguing that humans had a moral responsibility to protect animals from harm and

²⁵⁶ Information on this attack can be found within the Anti-Defamation League website at: <https://www.adl.org/resources/report/ecoterrorism-extremism-animal-rights-and-environmentalist-movements>. Anti-Defamation League, "Ecoterrorism, Extremism, Animal Rights and Environmentalist Movements," accessed December 5, 2022, <https://www.adl.org/resources/report/ecoterrorism-extremism-animal-rights-and-environmentalist-movements>. James Sterngold, "Animal Rights Activists Strike California Research Centers," *The New York Times*, January 25, 2000, <https://www.nytimes.com/2000/01/25/us/animal-rights-activists-strike-california-research-centers.html>.

²⁵⁷ Jeremy Bentham, *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, ed. J. H. Burns and H.L.A. Hart (London, United Kingdom: Methuen, 1970).

exploitation.²⁵⁸ His writings inspired the formation of both the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) in England and the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) in the United States.²⁵⁹ Both organizations were originally established to prevent cruelty. Over time, they advocated for broader protections for animals.

Several other cultural events, such as the anti-fur movement, contributed significantly to the growth of the animal rights movement. The anti-fur movement of the 1980s and 1990s increased awareness of the cruelty within the fur industry. Not only did this lead to a significant reduction in the demand for fur products, but it also forced the general population to consider the welfare of animals in their consumption.²⁶⁰ Another event was the Bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE or mad cow disease) outbreak in Britain in the 1990s. BSE is spread by eating contaminated meat. Investigations revealed that British cows had become infected with BSE by being fed food that included meat and bone material from infected cattle. This link led to increased scrutiny of the meat industry. In doing so, the public learned about the intricacies of the meat industry creating a growing awareness of the ethical and environmental problems associated with raising cattle for human consumption.²⁶¹

The animal rights movement began with philosophical and moral questions about animal welfare. Various cultural events forced the public to consider the role of animals in their everyday lives. While the majority of organizations within the movement participate solely in peaceful forms of protests, a small portion participates in violent direct actions. Groups, such as ALF, represent the minority of the movement but are at the forefront of media attention.

²⁵⁸ Henry Salt, *Animals' Rights: Considered in Relation to Social Progress*, (New York, New York: AMS Press, 1971).

²⁵⁹ The relevant information can be found in chapter four of Andrew Linzey's work. Andrew Linzey, *Animal Rights: A Historical Anthology*, (New York, New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 75-80.

²⁶⁰ Sandy Black, *Eco-Chic: The Fashion Paradox* (London, United Kingdom: Black Dog Publishing, 2008), 50-58.

²⁶¹ M. Salazar-Bravo and J.W. Ironside, *Mad Cow Disease and Related Spongiform Encephalopathies* (New York, New York: Springer, 2004).

The Origins of ALF

The origins of ALF not only show how the organization was established but also its evolution in tactics and strategies based on the response from the US government. The roots of ALF trace back to 1962. In 1962, John Prestige, a British journalist, was assigned to cover a Devon and Somerset Staghounds event.²⁶² At the event, Prestige watched hunters kill a pregnant deer. What began as a journalist assignment became a pivotal moment in both Prestige's life as well as the animal rights' movement. In protest, he formed the Hunt Saboteurs Association (HSA).²⁶³ The organization evolved into various groups of volunteers trained to thwart the hunts' hounds by blowing horns and laying false scents. The mission and values of the organization solely focused on stag hunt. Ten years later in 1971, a British law student, Ronnie Lee, formed a cell of HSA.²⁶⁴ After a year, Ronnie became frustrated with the tremendous amount of time and energy expended on the cause without progress. In 1972, Ronnie Lee and fellow activist, Cliff Goodman, decided that militant action was needed to achieve HSA's goals. When HSA refused to accept more radical action, members splintered off with Lee as their leader. Lee and his friend joined Bands of Mercy, which was an organization that utilized scare tactics, such as window breaking and tire slashing, to stop hunting.²⁶⁵ The mission and values of Lee and his friends quickly extended past the prevention of hunting into other areas related to animal welfare. In 1974, Ronnie Lee was arrested for raiding a British laboratory to free animals. In prison, he went on a hunger strike, demanding

²⁶² Although stag hunting, was banned by the Hunting Act 2004, the Devon & Somerset Staghounds have continued to meet multiple times a week throughout the season in order to manage the deer, as well as monitor the numbers, distribution, and health of the herd. To learn more about the Devon & Somerset Staghounds, visit their website at <https://www.devonandsomersetstaghounds.net/>. "Devon and Somerset Staghounds," Devon and Somerset Staghounds, accessed November 9, 2022, <https://www.devonandsomersetstaghounds.net/>.

²⁶³ Freeman Wicklund, "Direct action: Progress, peril, or both?," *The Animals' Agenda* 18, no. 4 (1998): 22.

²⁶⁴ Stephen R.L. Clark, "Origins and Development of the Animal Rights Movement," In *Animal Rights: A Historical Anthology* edited by Andrew Linzey and Paul Barry Clarke (New York, New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 1-20.

²⁶⁵ The transformation from activism to terrorism in the name of animal rights can be found on the ALF website at "Direct Action History Lessons: The Formation of the Band of Mercy and ALF from No Compromise Issue 28." Animal Liberation Front. Web. 22 Sept. 2010.

vegan food and clothing. After his release in 1976, Lee departed the prison with more radical ideas as well as a name for his new organization- the Animal Liberation Front.²⁶⁶

ALF's philosophy was originally one of nonviolence, though its members had a very particular definition of violence. The organization believes that violence can only occur against sentient life forms. Therefore, the organization focused on property destruction and the removal of animals from laboratories and farms. Despite this non-violent value system, the economic disruption affected many human lives. In the first year of ALF, their actions accounted for more than £250,000 (\$3,000,000 in 2023 dollars) worth of damage in the United Kingdom.²⁶⁷ However, these early ALF raids were received quite positively by many environmental activists who viewed ALF members as heroes. Robin Webb writes that ALF volunteers were viewed as the "Robin Hoods of the animal welfare world".²⁶⁸ This portrayal and perception of ALF was short lived. In the mid-1980s, ALF began to lose its ethical foundation as it broadened its targets and members sought personal revenge against social injustice. As this evolution occurred, the organization lost public support and became increasingly isolated and ineffective in the United Kingdom.

Crossing the pond, ALF's membership and criminal activity in the United States increased due to public sympathy and frustration. There are conflicting accounts of ALF's emergence in the United States.²⁶⁹ While the FBI believes the history dates back to the early 1970s (before it was founded in the UK), many researchers believe the ideology crossed the ocean in 1979. Ultimately,

²⁶⁶ Ronnie Lee told his story in an interview with John Sorenson. The interview can be found at: John Sorenson, "Interview with Ronnie Lee," *The Brock Review* 12, no. 1 (2011): 184-190.

²⁶⁷ This figure can be found in Monaghan, Rachael. "Terrorism in the Name of Animal Rights", in Taylor, Maxwell and Horgan, John. *The Future of Terrorism*. Routledge 2000, pp. 160-161.

²⁶⁸ The quote can be found in Steven Best and Anthony J. Nocella, *Terrorists or freedom fighters?: Reflections on the liberation of animals*.

²⁶⁹ Keith Mann is a key member of the Earth Liberation Front. He has authored a number of books, but his book *From Dusk 'til Dawn: An Insider's view of the growth of the Animal Liberation Front* discusses the move from England to the United States. To learn more, read: Mann, Keith. *From Dusk 'til Dawn: An Insider's view of the growth of the Animal Liberation Front*, Summary of Dates, Puppy Pincher Press, 2007. Additional information regarding the FBI's statements on ALF can be found in their online archives- "Trends in Animal Rights and Environmental Extremism," Terrorism 2000/2001, Federal Bureau of Investigation.

there is no definitive evidence detailing when, how, and why ALF came to the United States. The only thing for certain is that ALF's philosophies, values, and actions eventually came to the United States- and led to a campaign of violence.

ALF in the United States was quite similar to the early years in the United Kingdom. Its actions were limited to the destruction of property, liberation of captive animals, and utilization of scare tactics. In doing so, the organization did not garner much attention from law enforcement. They also did not receive pushback from the public as the criminal activity did not affect the lives or livelihoods of more than a handful of Americans. Much like the sentiment of British citizens in the 1980s, the average American saw this low-level activity as harmless. American love for animals was also on the rise during this period. From 1988 to 2020, pet ownership in the United States rose from 56% to 70%. Emma Bedford has argued that pet ownership altered the way in which society viewed the role of animals by the positive impact pets have on their owners' health and quality of life.²⁷⁰

Despite favorable currents, ALF faced opposition to its anti-animal testing campaign from some scientific and medical leaders who argued animal testing was essential to save human lives. The quality and longevity of people's lives has greatly increased due to animal research in the development of vaccinations and pharmacology. The following quote by congressional gold medal winner and surgeon, Michael DeBakey, discusses this very contradiction.

It is the American public who will decide whether we must tell hundreds of thousands of victims of heart attacks, cancer, AIDS, and other dread diseases that the right of animals supersede a patient's right to relief from suffering and premature death.²⁷¹

²⁷⁰ Research on pet ownership in the United States can be found published by Emma Bedford in Statista. Emma Bedford, Statista, "Pet ownership by generation in the United States from 1988 to 2020," accessed March 10, 2023, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1130651/pet-ownership-by-generation-us/#:~:text=Household%20penetration%20rates%20for%20pet%20ownership%20in%20the,in%201988%20to%20a,pproximately%2070%20percent%20in%202020>.

²⁷¹ This quote was found within the *Skeptical Inquirer*, Volume 32, No. 3, May/ June 2008.

As the organization progressed in tactics and advertised their more extreme values, ALF had a very difficult time garnering additional support due to this very contradiction.

After a short period of low-level criminal activity, ALF began to expand its targeting to the general population by letter bombs and threats to contaminate the food supply. For the next ten years, ALF firebombed fur stores, bombed cars, raided research facilities, and targeted individuals profiting from animal testing or perceived animal cruelty. In a 1993 report to Congress from the Department of Justice and Agriculture on the “effects of terrorism on enterprises which use animals,” investigators called ALF the most significant “radical fringe” animal rights group and reported hundreds of incidents of break-ins, vandalism, arson, and thefts committed in the name of animal rights.²⁷²

Before ALF established a press office in the U.S., ALF activities were publicized by People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA).²⁷³ This illustrated the strong bond at the time within the animal rights community between both lawful and unlawful activist groups. This is only an example of many formal and informal connections between the two organizations.²⁷⁴ PETA did not fear its reputation or credibility being associated with ALF. ALF began to handle its own publicity in the United States by the mid-1990s after an activist, Katie Fedor, founded its North

²⁷² The 1993 report can be found at <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/212280.pdf>, while the Congressional remarks can be viewed here https://fas.org/irp/congress/1993_cr/h930915-terror.htm. National Institute of Justice, “NIJ Research Report: Defining Law Enforcement’s Role in Protecting American Agriculture from Agroterrorism,” June 30, 2005, accessed January 2, 2023, <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/212280.pdf>. Federation of American Scientists, “Terrorism in the United States,” Last modified on September 15, 1993, https://fas.org/irp/congress/1993_cr/h930915-terror.htm.

²⁷³ The relationship between PETA and ALF can be found within the FBI archives- <https://archives.fbi.gov/archives/news/testimony/animal-rights-extremism-and-ecoterrorism>. You can also view PETA’s current opinion of ALF on their website under FAQs. Federal Bureau of Investigation, “Animal Rights Extremism and Eco-Terrorism,” accessed January 2, 2023, <https://archives.fbi.gov/archives/news/testimony/animal-rights-extremism-and-ecoterrorism>. People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, “FAQs: Frequently Asked Questions,” accessed November 2, 2022, <https://www.peta.org/about-peta/faq/>.

²⁷⁴ Matthew Galkin, director. *I Am an Animal: The Story of Ingrid Newkirk and PETA*. HBO, 2007.

American press office in Osseo, Minnesota.²⁷⁵ The office publicized the details of direct actions which it received anonymously.

Philosophy

The intellectual history of ALF mirrors how the organization chose to portray itself to the American public from their North American press office. The first report of animal rights direct action in the United States occurred in 1977, by a group referred to as the Underground Railroad. The group released two dolphins from a marine laboratory at the University of Hawaii. The liberation of animals would become one of the most popular tactics utilized by animal rights groups for the coming decades. ALF's long-term goal is to end all animal suffering. This suffering ranges from pet ownership, meat consumption, and the fur trade to medical testing on animals. In the meantime, ALF is committed to saving as many animals as possible by disrupting the practice of animal abuse. According to ALF's website, the organization has four primary goals.²⁷⁶

1. To liberate animals from places of abuse, i.e. laboratories, factory farms, fur farms, etc., and place them in good homes where they may live out their natural lives, free from suffering.
2. To inflict economic damage to those who profit from misery and exploitation of animals.
3. To reveal the horror and atrocities committed against animals behind locked doors, by performing non-violent direct actions and liberations.
4. To take all necessary precautions against harming any animal, human, and non-human.

Animal welfare and animal rights are two terms often used interchangeably but mean very different things. Animal welfare refers to the idea that humans have a responsibility to care for animals and for their wellbeing, often referred to as "acting humanely." Animal rights describes a belief that

²⁷⁵Katie Fedor became a spokesperson of the North American Animal Liberation Front. A report made by ADL reference Katie Fedor's role in the founding of ALF's North American press office here <https://www.adl.org/education/resources/reports/ecoterrorism>. Anti-Defamation League, "Ecoterrorism," accessed March 2, 2023, <https://www.adl.org/education/resources/reports/ecoterrorism>.

²⁷⁶ MIPT Terrorism Knowledge Base, "Animal Liberation Front (ALF)," accessed November 1, 2022, <https://www.tkb.org/group.jsp?groupID=4107>. Ingrid Newkirk, *Free the Animals: The Untold Story of the Animal Liberation Front and Its Founder, Valeria* (Chicago, IL: Noble Press, 1992).

animals possess inalienable rights. Animal rights are at the core of ALF. In fact, it is an ongoing war according to a leader of the organization- Tim Daley.

In a war you have to take up arms and people will get killed, and I can support that kind of action by gasoline bombing and bombs under cars, and probably at a later stage, the shooting of vivisectors on their doorsteps. It's a war, and there's no other way you can stop vivisectors.²⁷⁷

In said war, lives are not simply a human life but refer to the lives of animals as well. Jerry Vlasak of SHAC said, "I don't think you'd have to kill- assassinate- too many [doctors involved with animal testing]. I think for 5 lives, 10 lives, 15 lives, we could save a million, 2 million, 10 million non-human lives".²⁷⁸ This mentality of violence was not part of the original tenets of ALF. However, tactics quickly escalated to include harming human beings when previous methods, such as outlandish antics, were fruitless.

Outlandish Antics and Direct Action

The direct actions of animal rights were committed by singular cells. The decentralized nature of the organization allowed for each cell to have its own flare. This, in turn, created a lack of unity among the organization as a whole which had the potential to facilitate fragmentation. Such antics appear absurd to the greater population, such as billboards encouraging children to drink beer instead of milk. PETA even wrote a letter to Timothy McVeigh, responsible for the Oklahoma City bombing, urging him to stop "killing at his dinner plate and to request a vegetarian

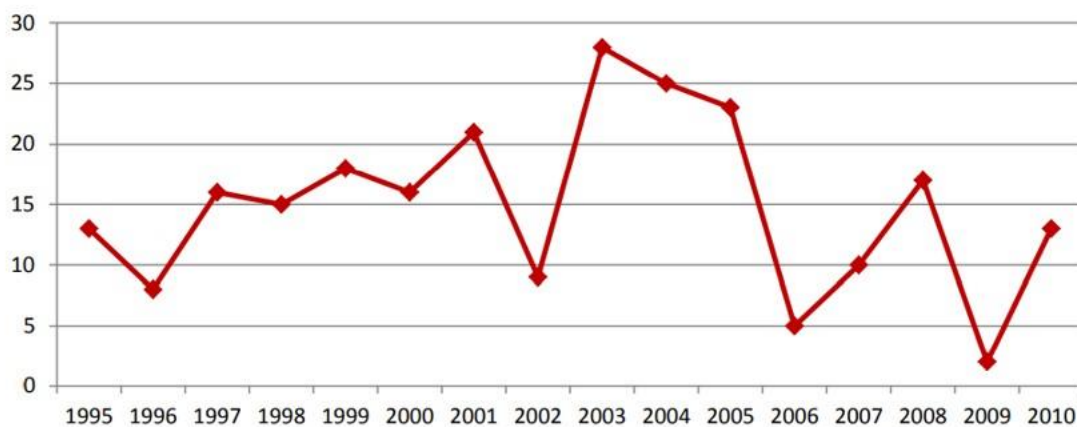
²⁷⁷ *Skeptical Inquirer*, Volume 32, No.3, May/ June 2008. and Dora Lovitz, "Animal lovers and tree huggers are the new cold-blooded criminals?" *Journal of Animal Law* 3 (2007), 81.

²⁷⁸ *Skeptical Inquirer*, Volume 32, No.3, May/ June 2008; Steven Best, "Who's Afraid of Jerry Vlasak?" North American Animal Liberation Press Office, April 21, 2008.

dinner for his last meal.”²⁷⁹ Although on the surface these acts seem outlandish, they garner great attention of both the media and the population.²⁸⁰

Outlandish antics quickly transitioned to direct action resulting in millions of dollars in economic damage. From 1979 to 1993, there were over 313 incidents of break-ins, vandalism, arson, and theft committed in the name of animal rights in the United States.²⁸¹ These pale in comparison to the number of attacks in the mid-90s. The tactics utilized changed drastically as well. Between 1995 and 2010, there were approximately 239 arson and bombing attacks alone committed by animal rights or environmental extremists. Over 45% percent of the attacks were committed by animal rights organizations, such as the Animal Liberation Front.

Figure 3.1. ELF and ALF Arson and Bombing Incidents Per Year (From START)



Of the 313 incidents reported in “The Report on the Extent and Effects of Domestic and International Terrorism on Animal Enterprises” by the Department of Justice and Agriculture, 160

²⁷⁹ This story can be found in a variety of local and national newspapers. However, the Oklahoman was the particular source I used. Scott Greenberger, “McVeigh responds to PETA request that he have vegan last meal,” *The Oklahoman*, April 16, 2001, <https://www.oklahoman.com/story/news/2001/04/16/mcveigh-responds-to-peta-request-that-he-have-vegan-last-meal/62150647007/>.

²⁸⁰ *Skeptical Inquirer*, Volume 32, No. 3, May/ June 2008.

²⁸¹ Animal Liberation Front, “ALF, 1979-93,” Animal Liberation Front (September 14, 2004), accessed January 3, 2023, [https://animalliberationfront.com/ALFront/History/ALF%20History%20\(1979-93\).htm](https://animalliberationfront.com/ALFront/History/ALF%20History%20(1979-93).htm).

were acts of vandalism and 77 involved the liberation of animals.²⁸² The institutions hit hardest by animal rights activity included research institutions, universities, and agriculture. 66 university facilities and 21 private research laboratories were hit, totaling \$6.5 million in damages. 76 businesses, involving animal agriculture, food production, etc, were hit for approximately \$1.1 million in damages. The most active group was ALF, committing over 60% of the 313 acts.²⁸³ The consequences of such actions, particularly at universities and research institutions, resulted in loss of research progress, delays in testing, as well as a deterrent for future trials and research.

ALF leaders, who were charismatic and hierarchical in nature, became convinced that the targeting and endangering of humans was a necessary evil to accomplish their goals. This is a critical shift within the organization as it illustrates a change in tactics mirroring a greater change in values. One such attack took place in 2006, a Molotov cocktail was intended to be placed outside of the home of Dr. Lynn Fairbanks, Director of the Center for Primate Neuroethology at UCLA's Neuropsychiatric Institute.²⁸⁴ However, ALF members accidentally threw the device outside of the home of Dr. Fairbanks' neighbor. The device failed to ignite. A year later, a group referred to as the Animal Liberation Brigade claimed responsibility for placing an incendiary device next to a car parked at the home of Dr. Arthur Rosenbaum, Chief of Pediatric Ophthalmology at UCLA's

²⁸² Additional information about this report can be found at <https://www.naiaonline.org/articles/article/report-to-congress-on-the-extent-and-effects-of-domestic-and-internati#sthash.72mGUTK4.dpbs>. The report can be found within the Congressional archives. NAIA, "Report to Congress on the Extent and Effects of Domestic and International Terrorism on Animal Enterprise," last modified March 28, 2005, accessed January 20, 2023, <https://www.naiaonline.org/articles/article/report-to-congress-on-the-extent-and-effects-of-domestic-and-internati#sthash.72mGUTK4.dpbs>.

²⁸³ Animal Liberation Front, "Costs run to millions as researchers and others cope with arson, bombs, and animal releases," last modified March 27, 2002, accessed January 2, 2023, <https://www.animalliberationfront.com/ALFront/ALFTXTer.htm>.

²⁸⁴ A Molotov cocktail is an incendiary device consisting of a bottle filled with flammable liquid as well as means of ignition. This news story can be found within a variety of publications. For the purposes of this work, I utilized Newsweek at <https://www.newsweek.com/animal-activists-vs-ucla-94047>. Sharon Begley, "Animal Activists vs. UCLA," Newsweek, July 21, 2008, accessed December 1, 2022, <https://www.newsweek.com/animal-activists-vs-ucla-94047>.

Jules Stein Eye Institute.²⁸⁵ While the device had the potential to cause harm, it did not ignite due to faulty construction. Despite the two failed attempts, ALF did have some victories. Dr. Dario Ringach, a UCLA neuroscientist who tested on primates, and his family were harassed incessantly by ALF. In exchange for peace, he promised to stop his research on monkeys. He emailed the organization, “You win.”²⁸⁶

Writings and Publications of ALF

The North American Animal Liberation Front Press Office (NAALFPO) is a vital part of ALF’s operations and strategies, despite being organizationally separate. NAALFPO exists to provide information to the media about the philosophy and activities of the Animal Liberation Front in both the United States and Canada.²⁸⁷ NAALFPO received communications from ALF members anonymously and uses the reports to publicize ALF’s direct actions and other operations.

Similar to the *ELF Journal!*, ALF has a quarterly publication called *The Final Nail*. The first issue was in the summer of 1996. The publication contained fur farm raid reports, how to updates, security updates, and information on new farm openings and closures.²⁸⁸ Before *The Final Nail*, *The Militant Vegan* advertised and promoted ALF’s direct actions. ALF members used their publications to criticize the lack of attention their actions were receiving in the media. The publication contained a diary of actions, calls for support, news releases, tactics, and writings by members.

²⁸⁵ The LA Times was one of many local and federal outlets to publish this crime. Rick Orlov, “UCLA targeted by animal rights activists,” Los Angeles Times, June 29, 2007, <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2007-jun-29-me-ucla29-story.html#:~:text=A%20Woodland%20Hills-based%20group%20called%20the%20North%20American,device%20and%20does%20not%20know%20who%20was%20responsible>.

²⁸⁶ David Epstein, “Throwing in the towel,” *Inside Higher Education*, August 22. The Huffington Post also published an open letter to ALF regarding this event. Bruce Shapiro, “An Open Letter to the Animal Rights Movement, HuffPost, March 25, 2010, https://www.huffpost.com/entry/an-open-letter-to-the-ani_b_477797.

²⁸⁷ North American Animal Liberation Front Press Office, 2021 Year- End Direct Action Report, January 12, 2002.

²⁸⁸ Animal Liberation Front, “Supplement #1, Fall 1996,” accessed January 3, 2023, https://www.animalliberationfront.com/Special/ALF_1996Supp1.htm.

The two predominant books focusing on ALF were written by Peter Daniel Young and Ingrid Newkirk- both animal rights activists and members of ALF.²⁸⁹ *Animal Liberation Front: Complete Diary of Actions- The First 30 Years*, by Peter Daniel Young, is a timeline of ALF's clandestine history, while Ingrid Newkirk's work *Free the Animals: The Amazing True Story of the Animal Liberation Front in North America* describes the American woman's struggle against systematic animal abuse. These individuals' works illustrate the sense of self-importance and divine responsibility that exists among the membership and leaders of ALF. Such characteristics can lend themselves to splintering and fragmentation as the members are more likely to remain loyal to the individual than to the organization as a whole.

In *Animal Liberation Front: Complete Diary of Actions- The First 30 Years* Young claims to chronicle every US ALF criminal action since 1979. The book does not solely focus on ALF, but instead covers all groups working outside of the law in the name of animal rights. *Free the Animals: The Amazing True Story of the Animal Liberation Front in North America* is a best-selling novel following a young woman's activist journey. The book begins with the woman's horror in discovering the abuses animals face in laboratories. As time passes, the woman turns to direct action to change the lives of the animals affected after she realizes that the government will not be acting on the animals' behalf. Although these works are quite different in approach and style, they each view direct action as morally justified and indeed imperative.

ALF's publications, similar to their antics, contain word choice and phrasing that is both controversial and extreme. They often equate the raising of chickens for human consumption with the Holocaust and compare the use of animals in circuses to slavery. In doing so, ALF is not

²⁸⁹ Both Peter Daniel Young and Ingrid E. Newkirk write about animal welfare as animal rights activists and members of ALF. Peter Daniel Young is an American animal rights activist. He was indicted by a federal grand jury in 1998 on charges related to fur farm raids in Iowa, South Dakota, and Wisconsin in 1997. He was released from jail in 2007. Ingrid E. Newkirk is a British activist and the president of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals.

curtailing their beliefs to appease the greater population, which often does not share ALF activists' belief structure. ALF activists often believe human needs conflict with animal needs and that animal rights must prevail.

Animal Welfare Philosophies in Academia and Law

There is a direct correlation between animal welfare and the planet's health. Therefore, ALF maintains a relationship with ELF. Observers have noted that radical animal rights supporters are also often attracted to socialists and other groups seeking a leftward or anti-capitalist shift in society.²⁹⁰ Profit and accumulation of wealth at the expenses of species are seen as anathema to ALF. Animal rights is a topic overlapping many areas of study. From biology classrooms to law reviews, animal rights have been consistently disputed. Many of these debates involve the contest concept of speciesism. Speciesism is defined as "the unjustified disadvantageous consideration or treatment of those who are not classified as belonging to a certain species".²⁹¹ For instance, American culture places dogs above cows. While dogs are treated as pets and part of the family, cow meat and byproducts are regularly consumed in society. The result of speciesism is the belief that humans have the right to utilize animals.²⁹²

Two philosophical approaches, utilitarian and rights based, resulted from the Animal Rights dispute and are debated within the halls of academia, research, and governments. The difference between the two philosophies deals with the consequences of human acts versus the

²⁹⁰ Christian Bernhold, Daniel Werding, David Muller, and Michael John Addario, "The Marxist turn in animal liberation?" *MR Online*, April 24, 2019, <https://mronline.org/2019/04/24/the-marxist-turn-in-animal-liberation/>. Ted Benton, "Animal Rights: An Eco-socialist View," In R. Garner, *Animal Rights: The Changing Debate* (London, United Kingdom: Palgrave Macmillan, 1996).

²⁹¹ Jeroen Hopster, "The Speciesism Debate: Institution, Method, and Empirical Advances," *Animals* 9, 12 (2019), 1054.

²⁹² Amy J. Fitzgerald and Nik Taylor, "The cultural hegemony of meat and the animal industrial complex," 2014, In Nik Taylor, *The Rise of Critical Animal Studies* (London, United Kingdom: Routledge, 2014). Adam Weitzenfeld and Melanie Joy, "An Overview of Anthropocentrism, Humanism, and Speciesism in Critical Animal Theory," 2015, In Anthony J. Nocella II, John Sorenson, Kim Socha, Matsuoka Atsuko, *Defining Critical Animal Studies: An Intersectional Social Justice Approach for Liberation* (Bern, Switzerland: Peter Lang Inc., 2015).

acts themselves. Utilitarianism judges an act by its consequences while rights-based philosophies focus on the principle or motivation behind the act. Peter Singer, professor of bioethics at Princeton University, is the founder of the modern utilitarian approach. In 1975, Singer released a book, *Animal Liberation*, which provided the moral foundation for many future animal rights activists. Singer is a preference utilitarian which means that he judges an act by the extent to which it satisfies the interests of those affected. The suffering of animals is the basis for Singer's application of equal consideration. In a way, suffering is considered a universal language crossing all barriers of species. According to Singer, the ability and extent of suffering is a way to compare species' rights.²⁹³ Another core utilitarian, Martha Nussbaum argues that animals have rights to a life, their environment, play, companionship, and health.²⁹⁴ This is similar to the concept of life, liberty, and happiness present within the United States for humans.

While Singer argues for the improvement of standards for the treatment of animals and accepts the possibility of instances that animals can be used to improve humans' lives, Regan believes animals should be treated the same as humans. Rights-based philosophy has been furthered by Tom Regan and Gary Francione. Tom Regan, professor of philosophy at North Carolina State University, argues in his work, *The Case for Animal Rights*, that nonhuman animals are what he calls "subjects-of-a-life". Therefore, bearing the same rights as humans.²⁹⁵

In parallel to the ethical debate, animal law is often taught in law schools. Gary Francione, a law and philosophy professor at Rutgers Law School, supports the extension of basic legal rights

²⁹³ Peter Singer, "Animal liberation," *The New York Review of Books* 20, no.5 (April 5, 1973): 19-20. Peter Singer, *Ethics into Action: Henry Spira and the Animal Rights Movement* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2000). Peter Singer, 2003, "Animal Liberation at 30," *The New York Review of Books* 50, no. 8 (May 15). Peter Singer, "Ethics Beyond Species and Beyond Instincts," in *Animal Rights: Current Debates and New Directions*, edited by Cass R. Sunstein and Martha C. Nussbaum (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press), 192-211. Peter Singer, *Practical Ethics* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

²⁹⁴ Martha Nussbaum, "Beyond Compassion and Humanity: Justice for Nonhuman Animals".

²⁹⁵ The Vegetarian Site, "Tom Regan: The Case for Animal Rights," Retrieved November 2, 2022.

that accompany personhood to non-human animals. However, this type of argument is controversial among animal rights activists who view it as discriminatory. The animals most often considered in these arguments for personhood are primates. Some animal-rights' academics support this because it would break the species barrier, but other scholars fervently oppose this school of thought because it dictates moral value based on mental complexity. Francione believes that currently animal welfare is weighed against the interests of human beings.²⁹⁶

Francione's *Animals, Property, and the Law* was the first jurisprudential work on animal rights- becoming the foundation of animal law.²⁹⁷ Similar to the word choice and comparisons present in extremist groups, Francione compares the situation of animals to the treatment of slaves in American history. He condemned the United States Animal Welfare Act as solely symbolic legislation which left animal slavery intact. It was only intended to reduce concern and is almost impossible to implement properly.

Government Response and Evolution of the Organization

ALF's reaction to government response is similar to ELF's response. Both of which illustrate how the organizations' ability to adapt and remain effective in the face of repression. Animal welfare in research became a topic of interest within the US government. Like ELF, ALF's internal culture and organizational structure combined with government repression aided the radicalization process and shaped ALF's response of continued violence. ALF's transformation in tactics was primarily driven by a perceived failure of the animal rights' movement to achieve

²⁹⁶ Gary L. Francione, *Rain Without Thunder: The Ideology of the Animal Rights Movement* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Temple University Press, 1996). Gary Francione, *Animals as Persons* (Columbia, New York: Columbia University Press, 2008). Gary Francione and Robert Garner, *The Animal Rights Debate: Abolition or Regulation?* (Columbia, New York: Columbia University Press, 2010).

²⁹⁷ Gary Francione, *Animals, Property, and the Law* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Temple University Press, 1995).

progress.²⁹⁸ Therefore, the organization reacted by expanding their preferences to include violent acts in an attempt to address this perceived failure.

The first federal law regulating research was the Laboratory Animal Welfare Act, passed by Congress in 1966. This law covered all aspects of animal research, including transportation, sale, handling, and licenses.²⁹⁹ These laws are not guidelines, but strictly enforced by the United States Department of Agriculture. Despite this law focused on the welfare of laboratory animals, it allowed for animals to continue to be used in testing. At the same time, the government was also forced to address terror. A study was ordered as part of the Animal Enterprise Protection Act. An act passed by Congress in response to radical acts on behalf of animal rights. The joint report, “The Report on the Extent and Effects of Domestic and International Terrorism on Animal Enterprises,” by the Department of Justice and Agriculture concluded that the bulk of incidents were considered vandalism. However, three incidents did meet the classification of terrorism.

From the late 1970s to the early 1990s, both the Earth Liberation Front and the Animal Liberation Front prospered in terms of their following, media coverage, as well as the number of attacks executed within the United States. ELF and ALF preyed on industries profiting from the destruction and exploitation of the environment. Both organizations began with milder tactics, such as the destruction of property. As time passed, they began to commit arson and target the leaders of said industries. The targeting of leadership drew an unintended response from the government further illustrating the interdependent relationship. The group’s tactics became more extreme as the group became more organized and a larger membership. This supports the theory of “group think” as well as “identity fusion” within psychology. Individuals who engage in radical

²⁹⁸ Dave Foreman, *Confessions of an Eco-warrior*. Jennifer Price, “The Politics of Radical Environmentalism,” *Annual Review of Political Science* 9 (2006): 255-271.

environmental or animal rights activism may be motivated by a desire for power and control, as well as a need to feel part of a cohesive group with a shared identity.³⁰⁰ This need for control likely developed out of frustration and helplessness that resulted from a lack of governmental action.

The government quickly labelled ecoterrorist organizations, such as the Earth Liberation Front and Animal Liberation Front, as domestic terrorist organizations.³⁰¹ The Animal Liberation Front prompted the US Congress to enact laws, including the Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act, allowing for the prosecution acts of terrorism in the name of animal welfare.³⁰² Despite this classification, the leadership of both ELF and ALF continued to disseminate manifestos to preserve the ideology and movement as a whole by recruiting new members and garnering sympathy of potential allies. With the classification as a domestic terrorist organization, the FBI began to devote more time and resources to prevent future attacks. The FBI utilized a decentralization strategy to hinder the eco-terrorist organizations' ability to coordinate and plan an attack. In the 1990s, the FBI successfully decentralized several eco-terrorist organizations by arresting key members and increasing surveillance.³⁰³ These actions had a huge impact on the way the organizations would operate for the foreseeable future. ELF and ALF continued to garner sympathy and support from large portions of the American public.

Unfortunately, two serious and unintended consequences of this strategy would cost human lives. First, decentralization made surveillance on eco-terrorists, their respective ideology, and actions even more difficult. This allowed the ideology to be utilized in lone wolf acts and direct action making it impossible to link the criminal activity to the organization. Lone wolf attacks

³⁰⁰ William B. Swann Jr. and Jeffrey J. Sherman, "Identity Fusion: The Interplay of Personal and Social Identities in Extreme Group Behavior," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 96, no. 5 (2009): 995-1011.

³⁰¹ To read the full congressional testimony refer to the congressional archives. James F. Jarboe, "Congressional Testimony: The Threat of Eco-Terrorism".

³⁰² Gus Martin, *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Terrorism, Second Edition*, June 15, 2011.

³⁰³ The government response to both ELF and ALF can be found throughout the FBI archives, ELF website, ALF website, as well as academic writings. Daniel Amoroso, "The US Government Response to the Animal Liberation Front."

have become increasingly more violent in recent years, costing millions of dollars and many human lives. Lone wolves do not necessarily fully support the ideology. Instead, the lone wolves strategically combine aspects of the extremist ideology to justify their violent actions. Second, the FBI's actions had a large impact on the public's perception of the eco-terrorist, often portrayed as victims. This nexus between eco-radical publications and FBI actions is the emphasis of victimhood.

ALF raised the stakes and altered its targeting and level of violence when its members firebombed the animal research laboratory at Michigan State University in 1992. Rod Coronado, a veteran animal rights advocate, was convicted for his role in the firebombing and served a three-and-a-half-year prison sentence. Coronado was previously active in the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society, a Vancouver-based group founded to protect marine mammals through various direct actions, particularly the sinking of whaling ships. Upon his arrival at ALF, Coronado firebombed an animal research laboratory due to the perceived inhumane treatment of animals. His actions did not lead to any policy or legislative changes on the use of animals in laboratories. However, the story was reported in various newspapers across the country raising awareness of animal welfare. Although the national newspapers, both conservative and liberal, reported the incident accurately, the focus was split between the damage to the lab and the welfare of the animals. Journalists' failure to acknowledge the act as an act of terrorism endangered human lives by creating a more sympathetic audience that would be willing to tolerate future acts.

Coronado's violent act and prison stint solidified his reputation within the movement as a hard-core activist and true believer. After his release, he became one of ALF's public representatives. He has lectured dozens of times around the country on behalf of ALF. In an interview with a Michigan State University newspaper in 2017, Coronado defended his past actions. "I wish I could do it again," he said. "I have absolutely no regrets, and I hope the same

thing continues to happen at MSU and every other college campus that does animal research." His time spent lecturing about his actions shows his confidence in not only his values, but also his crimes. His speeches are represented in various newspapers with a focus on the individual, not the attack or destruction of research. A refusal to hold him accountable, while giving him a continuous platform illustrates a fundamental lack of appreciation for the threat posed by eco-terrorists by the American media and population. In 2003, a speech in San Diego was particularly troublesome as Coronado described how he built the Molotov cocktail used during the 1992 firebombing at Michigan State University.³⁰⁴ This speech was covered for four years without any legal action. Finally, in 2007, Coronado was held responsible for distributing explosive devices while on trial in San Diego.³⁰⁵

Conclusion

On April 22nd of 1970, millions of American people called for environmental rights while celebrating the beauty of the Earth. The protests were nonviolent and inclusive. The relationship between government, media, and ideology was symbiotic as the protests led to the creation of environmental legislation and increased regulations. Less than ten years later, ecoterrorist attacks ravaged the United States leading to economic devastation and terror. As criminal activity progressed, government intervention began in the form of arrests, increased surveillance, and press conferences in an attempt to change the narrative.

Since its birth, ALF has been active in various countries around the globe including the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, France, Germany, and Japan. While ALF's peak was from the 1990s to the early 2000s, the organization continue to commit direct acts. As the lack of

³⁰⁴ A Molotov cocktail is an incendiary device consisting of a bottle filled with flammable liquid as well as means of ignition.

³⁰⁵ Andrew Keatts, "Activist Goes to Trial for Giving Explosives Instruction," Voice of San Diego, September 6, 2007, <https://www.voiceofsandiego.org/topics/government/activist-goes-to-trial-for-giving-explosives-instruction/>.

action by the government continued, ALF illustrates a propensity toward violence. In August of 2013, ALF released approximately 2,000 minks from their cages at Oshinoya fur farm in Morris, Illinois.³⁰⁶ ALF claimed responsibility for their action, stating that it aimed to disrupt and oppose the fur industry. In June of 2020, Canadian animal rights activist Regan Russell was hit by a truck while peacefully protesting a slaughterhouse. Animal rights' activists retaliated by liberating animals and performing acts of sabotage. This was one of the last large- scale multiprong attacks.³⁰⁷

COVID has had a positive impact on the Animal Liberation Front as more Americans adopted pets as companions during the pandemic. The increase in adoption rates has a significant effect on the way the public views both the rights of animals as well as the actions committed in the name of animal rights. This could potentially set the stage for a comeback within the movement.

The media have continued to report ELF and ALF activities through a sympathetic lens. The way in which environmental ideology interacts with the media illustrates a fundamental misperception of the danger surrounding environmental extremism. As the government succeeded in hindering the organization's ability to communicate and plan, direct action became the new strategy. The ideology continues to grow stronger as the movement makes its final transition.

Both cases, focusing on ELF and ALF, have revealed that the decentralized nature lends itself to a disjointed membership. This lack of unity can expedite the splintering or fragmentation of the organization as the members are not loyal to the group but instead loyal to their small cell as well as to the cause as a whole. These elements combined with the US government's response

³⁰⁶ Kathy Mather, "Minks released in El Segundo again," *Los Angeles Times*, July 10, 2014, accessed May 16, 2023, <https://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-in-el-segundo-minks-20140710-story.html>.

³⁰⁷ Animal Liberation Front Press Office, "Animal Liberation Front Retaliates for the Murder of Activist Regan Russell," *IndyBay*, July 24, 2020, accessed May 16, 2023, <http://www.indybay.org/newsitems/2020/07/24/18835321.php>.

to ALF have proliferated the fragmentation of the organization as well as the level of violence and choice in tactics. The following chapter on Greenpeace will contrast the transformation of ELF and ALF further illustrating the effects of these characteristics on level of violence and tactics.

Chapter 4 - Greenpeace's Peaceful Nature

As the grandfather of the environmental movement, Greenpeace was critical in shaping the modern environmental and animal rights movements. Through its campaigns for climate change, marine conservation, and nuclear nonproliferation, Greenpeace has illustrated the power of peaceful protests and collaboration. While the Earth Liberation Front derived much of its name and guidelines from the Animal Liberation Front, they were both built on the principles and acts of Greenpeace. Rik Scarce, an environmental sociologist and academic, compared ELF and ALF to Greenpeace in his work *Eco-Warriors: Understanding the Radical Environmental Movement*.³⁰⁸ While these organizations share common concerns, their approaches and philosophies differ. ELF and ALF turned toward violence and splintered from larger organizations in frustration, while Greenpeace leaned further into lobbying and collaboration to promote lasting change.³⁰⁹ Greenpeace's preferences were limited by their strict values of nonviolence.

ELF and ALF were labeled as domestic terrorists while Greenpeace leaders were headed to Capitol Hill. Greenpeace continually relied on public persuasion campaigns and lobbying as part of a democratic process. This was made possible by Greenpeace's instance on nonviolence as well as the media which crafted Greenpeace into a prominent force within the global environmental movement. Due to its commitment to non-violence, Greenpeace has been able to continually engage with a broader audience, garner more supporters, and sustain an active network.

Following the structure of the previous two chapters, this chapter will analyze the origin and establishment of Greenpeace. I will use this chapter to contrast the evolution of Greenpeace

³⁰⁸ Rik Scarce, *Eco-Warriors: Understanding the Radical Environmental Movement* (Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 1990).

³⁰⁹ Southern Poverty Law Center, "Eco-Violence: The Record," last modified July 12, 2022, accessed October 1, 2022, <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/ideology/eco-terrorism>. There is also additional information on the attack within ALF's website. Paul Joosee, "Leaderless Resistance and Ideological Inclusion: The Case of the Earth Liberation Front," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 19, no.3 (September 2007): 351-368.

with ELF and ALF. Unlike ELF and ALF, Greenpeace has refused to participate in violent acts. I focus on the organizations' philosophy and values, especially the role of Quakerism, which influences the priorities available to the organization within the rational choice theory.³¹⁰ An analysis into Greenpeace's campaign against oil drilling in the Arctic will illustrate the movement's diverse strategy and tactics. Concluding with the government's response to Greenpeace, I will highlight the high level of collaboration present within the organization and contrast it to ELF and ALF. In doing so, I strengthen the argument that ELF and ALF's decentralized nature, leadership structure, and relationship with the US government impacted the organization's level of violence and choice in tactics. On the other hand, Greenpeace's united structure and sense of collaboration and consensus impacted their decision to rely on consistently peaceful tactics.

Greenpeace at a Glance: The Voyage

Although Greenpeace was originally established in Canada, it immediately began working in the United States. In the early 1970s, anti- nuclear activism brought like-minded individuals together who eventually founded Greenpeace.³¹¹ These individuals gained international recognition by sailing vessels into nuclear testing zones to disrupt the ongoing testing and raise awareness of the potential dangers to the environment and mankind. One of the most notable achievements was the voyage of the *Phyllis Cormack*, later renamed *Greenpeace*. This voyage marked the birth of Greenpeace while igniting a global movement against nuclear testing. Most

³¹⁰ S. L. Green, "Rational choice theory: An overview". In *Baylor University Faculty development seminar on rational choice theory* (May 2002), 1-72.

³¹¹ Lawrence S. Wittner, *The Struggle Against the Bomb: Resisting the Bomb- A History of the World Nuclear Disarmament Movement, 1954-1970* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1997). Jeffrey Louis Cohen, *The Nuclear Freeze Campaign: Rhetoric and Foreign Policy in the Telepolitical Age* (Lansing, Michigan: Michigan State University Press, 1994).

importantly, the American public's response to this voyage cemented the non-violent values that would become the foundation of the organization.



³¹²

In the late 1960s, the US government planned a series of underground nuclear tests on Amchitka Island which is part of the Aleutian Islands of Alaska.³¹³ In response, a group of activists came together to form the “Don’t Make a Wave Committee.”³¹⁴ The group intended to raise awareness for the dangers of these tests. The group decided to intervene by using a boat to enter the danger zone around the island to prevent the test.

In 1971, they sailed the fighting boat *Phyllis Cormack* to Amchitka Island to protest the nuclear testing.³¹⁵ Despite the rough seas and engine issues, the journey was successful. The ship did not reach the island itself, but gained international attention and sparked a global conversation. The original members of this journey, such as Bob Hunter, continued their activism and Hunter became a co-founder of Greenpeace. Bob Hunter explained:

I wanted to go to Amchitka because I believe that if a handful of people stood up against something they thought was wrong, and no one else did, then who would?³¹⁶

³¹² This image was taken from the Greenpeace website. “Crew of the Greenpeace - Voyage Documentation (Vancouver to Amchitka: 1971) - Greenpeace USA,” Greenpeace USA, July 1, 2015, <https://www.greenpeace.org/usa/save-the-arctic-a-new-chapter-of-the-greenpeace-story/crew-of-the-greenpeace-voyage-documentation-vancouver-to-amchitka-1971-2/>.

³¹³ Dean W. Kohlhoff, *Amchitka and the Bomb: Nuclear Testing in Alaska* (Washington: University of Washington Press, 2002).

³¹⁴ Rex Weyler, *Greenpeace: How a Group of Ecologists, Journalists, and Visionaries Changed the World* (Emmaus, Pennsylvania: Rodale Books, 2004).

³¹⁵ Robert Hunter and Rex Weyler, *Making Waves: The Origins and Future of Greenpeace* (Vancouver, Canada: New Society Publishers, 2002).

³¹⁶ Bob Hunter, *Warriors of the Rainbow: A Chronicle of the Greenpeace Movement* (New York, New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1979), 126.

Our campaign on Amchitka was the start of something big for Greenpeace. It was the first time we put ourselves on the line to stop an atomic bomb and the public response gave us the courage to carry on.³¹⁷

On the journey to Amchitka, Bob Hunter brought with him a book, *Warriors of the Rainbow*, which would later be the source of inspiration in both name and topic for his own book. *Warriors of the Rainbow* was a compilation of native American prophecies and myths collected and interpreted by Vinson Brown, a nature writer, and William Willoya, an Alaskan Indian who visited dozens of tribes throughout the northwest to gather material for the book.³¹⁸ This would heavily influence both Bob Hunter's role in Greenpeace as well as the Greenpeace's relationship with the Native American community. As time progressed, Greenpeace members would see themselves as messengers between "the destructive White Man" and the ecological Indians.³¹⁹ This was foundational for Greenpeace's social justice aspect of the organization's values.

Dorothy Stowe, an American- Canadian activist, and Ben Metcalfe, a Canadian journalist, were two additional founders. They would later publicly speak about their journey, marking the founding of Greenpeace as a pivotal moment in their lives. Stowe was not quite as visible as the other founders. Her role was primarily an organizer behind the scenes.³²⁰ Ben Metcalfe became Greenpeace's first chairman. While living in Canada as a reporter at the *Winnipeg Tribune*, Dorothy Stowe met journalist Ben Metcalfe. Their careers in journalism heavily influenced their role in Greenpeace. During the first Greenpeace campaign, Dorothy converted her home into a radio room. She relayed radio reports from Ben, while onboard the *Phyllis Cormack*, to the

³¹⁷ Bob Hunter, *Warriors of the Rainbow*, 43.

³¹⁸ Vinson Brown and William Willoya, *Warriors of the Rainbow: Strange and Prophetic Dreams of the Indians* (Taranaki, New Zealand: Normanby Press, 1962).

³¹⁹ Frank Zelko, "Warriors of the Rainbow: The Birth of Environmental Mythology," *Arcadia Collection: Global Environmental Movements* 16, (2013), <https://www.environmentandsociety.org/arcadia/warriors-rainbow-birth-environmental-mythology>.

³²⁰ Dina Ni, "The Women at the Start of the Greenpeace Journey," *Elle Canada*, September 16, 2021, <https://www.ellecanada.com/culture/society/the-women-at-the-start-of-the-greenpeace-journey>.

media.³²¹ These broadcasts were the first form of a rudimentary press office. It showed the importance of not just the act itself, but also the audience. However, Ben left his post as chairman when Greenpeace shifted focus from nuclear weapons to whaling and seal hunting.³²² These individuals did not see themselves as the saviors of mankind nor did they desire to attract a following. Their belief of personal responsibility would become the foundation of the movement for decades.

Influence of Social Justice and Birth of Greenpeace

During this time, many of the social justice groups heavily influenced the movement. The peace movement, civil rights movement, anti-nuclear movement, indigenous rights movement, and the feminist movement each played an important role in the establishment of Greenpeace as well as how the public perceived the organization. Greenpeace was founded amid the anti-war and peace movements. The founders were inspired by these movements' commitment to non-violent resistance. At the same time, the civil rights movement and feminist movement demonstrated the commitment to environmental justice for all communities and genders.³²³ The anti-nuclear movement was the most vital to Greenpeace. In the 1970s and 1980s, the anti-nuclear movement focused on the dangers of nuclear weapons testing and nuclear power plants. This movement was a jumping off point for Greenpeace and helped them gain a preliminary following and audience. As Greenpeace expanded their campaigns to include oil drilling in the Arctic, the indigenous rights movement's emphasis on land rights and traditional knowledge took a leading role.

³²¹ Dina Ni, "The Women at the Start of the Greenpeace Journey."

³²² Wolfgang Saxon, "Ben Metcalfe, the Founder of Greenpeace, is Dead at 83," *New York Times*, October 18, 2003, <https://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9F0CE1D6153EF93BA25753C1A9659C8B63>.

³²³ R. D. Bullard, "Dumping in Dixie: Race, Class, and Environmental Quality," *Environmental Justice and Environmentalism: The Social Justice Challenge to the Environmental Movement* (1990). Pellow, "Environmental Injustice and the Colorblindness of Mainstream Environmentalism," *Social Justice* 27, 2 (2000), 79-100.

Greenpeace traces its origins to the “Don’t Make a Wave Committee,” where a group of activists protested nuclear testing in Alaska. Since then, Greenpeace’s primary objectives have expanded to protecting biodiversity and preventing environmental degradation while promoting peace and disarmament. Climate change, deforestation, overfishing, pollution, and nuclear weapons are some of the organization’s top concerns. Greenpeace explicitly rejects violence. Instead, their campaigns often involve protests, lobbying efforts, scientific research, and grassroots organization.³²⁴

The key founders of Greenpeace were Irving and Dorothy Stowe, Bob Hunter, Marie Bohlen, Ben Metcalfe, Bob Cummings, and Paul Cote. Residing in Vancouver, Canada, Irving Stowe was a lawyer and his wife, Dorothy, was a teacher. They were both very active in the peace and anti-nuclear movements within Canada. Bob Hunter was a journalist covering the anti-war protests. He met Dorothy and Irving at an event he was covering. Marie Bohlen and Ben Metcalfe were both social justice advocates. Bob Cummings and Paul Cote were activists as well as sailors. These individuals made up the core group of activists that would establish Greenpeace. Their backgrounds greatly influenced the values and trajectory of the organization.³²⁵

Irving and Dorothy were both Quakers. As Quakers, they embraced the ideals of non-violence, equality, and social justice. This deep belief prevented them from being able to justify the means by the result. Instead, they were insistent that their efforts adhere to strict values of transparency and integrity. The way the members interacted with each other was also derived from Quaker ideology.³²⁶ Unlike ELF and ALF that had a decisive leader before becoming

³²⁴ Greenpeace, “About Us,” Greenpeace International, accessed May 1, 2023, <https://www.greenpeace.org/international/about>.

³²⁵ Rex Weyler, *Greenpeace: How a Group of Ecologists, Journalists, and Visionaries Changed the World*.

³²⁶ Peter Willcox, *Greenpeace Captain: My Adventures in Protecting the Future of Our Planet* (New York, New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2013).

decentralized, Greenpeace's organizational structure promoted unity. A consensus-based process includes inclusivity and collaboration for both big and small decisions.

As Greenpeace expanded its scope beyond anti-nuclear campaigns, marine life became their primary focus. In 1975, Greenpeace launched its first anti-whaling campaign. The organization sent a small boat, *Greenpeace II*, to confront a Soviet whaling fleet off California. A year later, the organization protested a seal hunt in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Greenpeace also campaigned against toxic waste dumping into oceans. In 1978, the organization confronted a ship, named the *Korpa*, to prevent it from discharging toxic waste into the sea. Following the success of the early campaigns against nuclear testing, whaling, and toxic waste dumping, the organization expanded to the United States from Canada with Greenpeace USA.³²⁷

Philosophy

The way in which Greenpeace portrays itself publicly mirrors its internal values and philosophy. Greenpeace strives to promote a sustainable and equitable world for both people and the planet. Taken from its Quaker influence, these goals can only be achieved through peaceful actions. Their core values include:

1. Nonviolence
2. Environmental stewardship
3. Independence and autonomy
4. Global solutions
5. Scientific integrity
6. Justice and equity
7. Grassroots³²⁸

Greenpeace believes in nonviolent action, such as protest and advocacy. The organization emphasizes the importance of protecting and conserving the environment for future generations.

³²⁷ Peter Heller, *The Whale Warriors: The Battle at the Bottom of the World to Save the Planet's Largest Mammals* (New York, New York: Free Press, 2007).

³²⁸ Greenpeace, "Values," Greenpeace International, accessed May 1, 2023, <https://www.greenpeace.org/international/explore/about/values/>.

Although lobbying is a large part of the organization's actions, the group maintains independence from political, economic, and governmental interests to ensure impartiality. The organization relies on individual donations and avoids financial ties that could compromise Greenpeace's perceived integrity or independence.

Environmental challenges are complex and require collaboration. The organization seeks to foster international cooperation, policy changes, and the promotion of sustainable practices to tackle international environmental problems. Scientific research and evidence-based decision-making are critical to the organization. Scientific expertise informs all campaigns, policies, and advocacy efforts. Maintaining credible and accurate information ensures the public's favor. Citizen engagement requires citizens and communities to take responsibility for their respective environments, leaving a positive impact. Greenpeace has a more developed ideology of social justice change than the Earth Liberation Front and the Animal Liberation Front. Greenpeace acknowledges that there is a disproportionate environmental impact on marginalized communities. According to their mission, all individuals should have equal access to a healthy and sustainable environment.

Part of Greenpeace's philosophy is to reach all portions of the population, not only those interested in sustainability or environmental activism. Celebrities, such as Jane Fonda, regularly write blog posts on their US website as well as attend rallies and events.³²⁹ Greenpeace strategically utilizes various celebrities' influence and audience to reach parts of the population they may not otherwise attract. The philosophy behind this strategy is very much in line with Greenpeace's peaceful, multiprong advocacy.

Strategies and Tactics: Oil Drilling in the Arctic

³²⁹ Jane Fonda, "The 5 #CreateArtforEarth Images Inspiring Me Right Now," Greenpeace, May 8, 2020, <https://www.greenpeace.org/usa/stories-victories/>.

The antics of animal rights and environmental groups in the United States often became a punchline instead of creating lasting change. Greenpeace has attempted to alter its tactics toward a multiprong approach to facilitate lasting change. For example, Arctic oil drilling has been at the heart of the movement due to the risks it poses to the fragile ecosystem and climate. Instead of threatening workers or burning the equipment, Greenpeace facilitated sit-ins, filed lawsuits, raised awareness, and collaborated with indigenous communities. Greenpeace's anti-Arctic drilling campaign shows clear differences between ALF and ELF's methods of operation.

Even when activists question if they were making any real progress, Greenpeace's leaders decided to not limit themselves to intrasystemic measures. This was evident in their 2008 Greenpeace International Review where they opened the review by quoting Professor James Hansen of NASA.

Civil resistance is not an easy path, but given abdication of responsibility by the government, it is an essential path... Direct action is necessary because the democratic process is not bringing about policy change fast enough.³³⁰

They expanded their multiprong approach to include direct action and demonstrations. This expansion was a risk, but the group was aware that to maintain their multiprong approach they could not alienate themselves from the US government or NGOs. Unlike ELF and ALF, Greenpeace decided to maintain their legitimacy and credibility. The membership and leadership were mindful that any form of demonstration, protest, or direct action could not injure or kill anyone. In doing so, the group continued to remain open to negotiations as they protested and demonstrated to ensure that communication was continually open with authorities. This is evident in the 2014 demonstration with the *Fennica* highlighted below.

³³⁰ Greenpeace International, "Annual report 2008, Greenpeace, June 1, 2009, <https://www.greenpeace.org/international/publication/19714/annual-report-2008/>.

In 2013, activists scaled an oil rig operated by Shell in the Chukchi Sea, off the coast of Alaska.³³¹ Greenpeace members staged a protest to highlight the dangers associated with drilling. Although the protest did raise awareness, no lasting change or policy decisions resulted from their actions. A year later, Greenpeace's ship, *Esperanza*, confronted a drilling support vessel, the *Fennica*, which was located at Portland Harbor in Oregon. The *Fennica*, a Shell vessel, carried essential equipment designed to contain oil spills. Greenpeace hoped to block the ship's path and create a high-profile spectacle.³³²

During the confrontation, Greenpeace activists suspended themselves from St. John's Bridge by inflatable boats. This suspension prevented the *Fennica* from passing under the bridge to reach the open sea. The activists acted as a human barrier and held banners with messages opposing drilling. These actions attracted significant media attention. The US Coast Guard and local police monitored the situation but did not intervene. After several days, negotiations allowed *Fennica* to pass and continue its journey to the Arctic. Greenpeace members were subsequently arrested for public disturbance, but the arrests were part of Greenpeace's strategy. Illegal protests made drilling more difficult and sparked media attention while arrests generated more media attention and opportunities to leverage sympathy for the arrested activists to boost fundraising.³³³

Confrontations and protests were not designed to stop oil drilling in the Arctic. Instead, they were used to garner additional attention and create public outrage. In line with their

³³¹ "Greenpeace activists board Arctic bound oil rig," *The Guardian*, July 15, 2013, accessed May 1, 2023, <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/apr/07/greenpeace-activists-board-arctic-bound-oil-rig>.

³³² "Hope floats: the Greenpeace *Esperanza* retires after two decades, but the light shines on," Greenpeace, February 14, 2022, accessed May 1, 2023, <https://www.greenpeace.org/international/story/52277/hope-greenpeace-esperanza-retires-light-shines/>.

³³³ "Shell Oil icebreaker moves past protesters to Arctic," *USA Today*, July 31, 2015, accessed May 1, 2023, <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2015/07/31/shell-oil-icebreaker-moves-past-protesters-arctic/30921529/>.

multiprong approach, Greenpeace utilized the law to create lasting change.³³⁴ In 2015, Greenpeace, along with other environmental organizations, filed a lawsuit against the US Department of the Interior's approval of Shell's drilling plans in the Arctic. The lawsuit argued that the government failed to consider environmental risks and impacts associated with drilling. Three years later in 2018, the Nordic chapter of Greenpeace filed a lawsuit challenging the legality of new oil licenses granted in the Barents Sea. The prosecution claimed that the Norwegian government's decision violated the constitution's right to a healthy environment as well as the Paris Agreement.³³⁵

Collaboration is a core principle of Greenpeace. Whether the collaboration is with likeminded organizations, governmental institutions, or indigenous communities, the additional support and resources provides further credibility. The "Save the Arctic" campaign worked closely with indigenous communities in the Arctic, such as the Inuit and Gwich'in. This campaign demonstrated the impacts of oil drilling while advocating for the protection of the Inuit land as well as their traditional way of life. In doing so, Greenpeace attempts to amplify the voices of Inuit leaders. By collaborating on policy submissions, Greenpeace recognizes the value of traditional Inuit knowledge in understanding the Arctic ecosystem. The facilitation of dialogues between Inuit elders, scientists, and campaigners contributes to informed decision-making on both a local and international level.³³⁶ This strategy also increases the public's participation as individuals concerned with the environment as well as civil rights are more likely to donate or monitor the campaign.

³³⁴ Alison Preece, "Leaders in Environmental Law: The Greenpeace International Legal Unit," Law Dragon, December 20, 2021, <https://www.lawdragon.com/news-features/2021-12-20-leaders-in-environmental-law-the-greenpeace-international-legal-unit>.

³³⁵ "Greenpeace Nordic and Others v. Norway," Climate Case Chart, 2021, <http://climatecasechart.com/non-us-case/greenpeace-nordic-assn-v-ministry-of-petroleum-and-energy-ecthr/>.

³³⁶ Chris Baraniuk, "The Inuit knowledge vanishing with the ice," BBC, October 11, 2021, accessed May 1, 2023, <https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20211011-the-inuit-knowledge-vanishing-with-the-ice>.

Greenpeace's strategy of cooperation was different from ELF and ALF's approach. Cooperation was designed to boost chances of success by bringing allies into the struggle and maximizing a united effort. For example, Greenpeace's fight against GMOs led to extensive lobbying efforts. These efforts in the European Union have led to the maintenance of strict regulations against GMOs despite the acceptance of their use throughout other parts of the world.³³⁷ Therefore, Greenpeace responded to frustration and failure with greater cooperation while ELF and ALF responded by resorting to violence. In doing so, ELF and ALF segregated themselves from other activists, US government officials, lobbyists, NGOs, and law enforcement. The central leadership and organization of Greenpeace allowed for negotiation and coordination. ELF and ALF's struggle to coordinate, compromise, or reach consensus was compounded by their lack of leadership structure.

For example, in 2008, the Greenpeace International Review published a response to internal criticisms of Greenpeace's strategy.³³⁸ The letter addressed concerns about the lack of transparency, accountability, and responsiveness to members.

As a result of this, during 2009 and 2010 we are overhauling our international operational policy base, considering changes to our programme evaluation cycle, and are making amendments to our internal and external reporting practice to better support our transparency commitments.³³⁹

This response promised members a different approach in the future, illustrating the leadership structure, organization style, and tendency toward compromise within Greenpeace. The 2012 "Arctic Ready" campaign was organized by Greenpeace members and heavily criticized

³³⁷ Vincent Oria, "How European Union restrictions fueled anti-GMO voices and hunger in Global South, and mainly Africa," *Genetic Literacy Project*, July 11, 2023, <https://geneticliteracyproject.org/2023/07/11/how-european-union-restrictions-fueled-anti-gmo-voices-and-hunger-in-global-south-and-mainly-africa/>.

³³⁸ Greenpeace International, "Annual report 2008," Greenpeace, June 1, 2009, <https://www.greenpeace.org/international/publication/19714/annual-report-2008/>.

³³⁹ Greenpeace International, "Annual report 2008."

Greenpeace for their timid approach toward Arctic oil drilling.³⁴⁰ The organizers created a fake website mocking the Shell website as well as Greenpeace.³⁴¹ Such actions would not have occurred within ELF or ALF as these organizations were decentralized autonomous cells and did not reward or even acknowledge dissent or differences in values.

Greenpeace's actions have had varying degrees of success regarding Arctic oil drilling. However, Greenpeace has been successful in delaying specific drilling projects. By applying public pressure, the organization played a role in companies abandoning specific projects. For example, in 2015, Shell announced that it would no longer be drilling in the Arctic after several years of legal battles, public scrutiny, and protests. Although Greenpeace did not have an active role in the Paris Agreement, it contributed to shaping the discourse surrounding fossil fuel. Safety standards and environmental impact assessments (EIAs) remained top concerns.

Internal Dissent

Social movements can have a lasting impact or be a fleeting headline.³⁴² Internal dissent, a key component to an organization's efficacy and longevity, is a phenomenon within various organizations ranging from non-profits to terrorist organizations. It occurs when members disagree or oppose the organization's goals, strategies, leadership, or decisions. Examining dissent provides crucial insight into how an organization can adapt under rational choice theory. The way in which an organization handles internal dissent and frustration is vital to its longevity as well as its capability and efficacy. The organizations that do not attempt to reach a compromise leave

³⁴⁰ Greenpeace, "Greenpeace Launches 'Arctic Ready' Billboard Campaign Outside Shell Headquarters," Greenpeace, June 19, 2012, <https://www.greenpeace.org/usa/news/arctic-ready/>.

³⁴¹ Matthew Yeomans, "Social media #fail: how Greenpeace let Shell off the hook over Arctic drilling," *The Guardian*, August 3, 2012, <https://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/social-media-fail-greenpeace-shell-arctic>.

³⁴² Paul Burstein, "Social Movements and Public Policy," in *How Social Movements Matter*, eds. Marco Giugni, Doug McAdam, and Charles Tilly, 3-21.

frustrated members with little choice but abandonment.³⁴³ However, those groups that attempt to reach consensus and work toward compromise are more likely to maintain membership and peace.³⁴⁴

In order to understand the management of dissent, the motivation must be addressed. The following figure illustrates the various motives of dissent from an organization or group setting.³⁴⁵

Figure 4.1. Motivations for Deviance and Defiance (From Jolanda Jetten and Matthew J. Hornsey)

Motive 1: disengagement, disloyalty, or disrespect for the group
Motive 2: loyalty and concern for the group
Motive 3: moral rebellion—when personal moral convictions take precedence over group norms
Motive 4: desire to express difference, individuality, and uniqueness
Motive 5: tangible rewards and instrumental gain derived from dissent and deviance

The various motivations deal with both internal and external causes. Motivation 1 and motivation 2 are concerned with the individual's changing attitude toward the organization, whether disengagement and disrespect or loyalty and concern. Disengagement and disrespect would likely occur if the individual feels wronged, while dissent due to loyalty and concern would occur if the individual believed the organization was taking a turn away from its foundation. Motivation 3, moral rebellion, is similar to motivation 2 in that both are concerned about the values of the organization changing. Motivation 4, in the case of environmental extremism, would occur if the individual wanted to be in charge and created something of their own- a form of legacy. Finally, motivation 5 is similar to motivation 4 in that the incentive would be that of personal glory. Unlike

³⁴³ Martha Crenshaw, "Theories of terrorism: Instrumental and organizational approaches," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 10, 4 (1987), 13-31.

³⁴⁴ Maryann Barakso and Brian Schaffner, "Exit Voice, and Interest Group Governance," *American Politics Research* 36, 2 (2008), 186-209.

³⁴⁵ Jolanda Jetten and Matthew J. Hornsey, "Deviance and Dissent in Groups," *Annual Review of Psychology* 65, January 2014, <https://www.annualreviews.org/doi/abs/10.1146/annurev-psych-010213-115151>.

ELF and ALF which often had more of motivation 1 and motivation 4, frustrated members of Greenpeace felt they could air their grievances to the organization. These frustrated members, often having motivation 2 and motivation 3, felt they needed to express their concern for the organization. This open culture combined with a foundation built on peaceful values prevented the organization or members from expanding their preferences to include violence.

An example of a movement that became home to frustrated members of Greenpeace is Rising Tide.³⁴⁶ Rising Tide is a grassroots environmental network that originated in the United Kingdom. Greenpeace members that felt the dangers of fossil fuels were not given proper attention splintered to create Rising Tide, a single-issue organization focusing solely on fossil fuels.³⁴⁷ The remaining members of Greenpeace prioritized their desire for a wholistic organization that addresses various aspects of sustainability and the environment. Rising Tide maintained many of the elements and strategies of Greenpeace, such as consensus decision-making and education. However, Rising Tide adopted a decentralized organization and structure, much like ELF and ALF.

These individuals that joined Rising Tide were in the minority of Greenpeace. The primary difference between those that splintered from ELF or ALF is the motivation behind splintering and the relationship with the government. Whereas ELF and ALF members splintered out of frustration with the government, Greenpeace members splintered out of desire to focus on a single issue. ELF and ALF splintering resulted in an increase in violence and tactics in order to achieve their means and address their frustration. The members of Greenpeace, even those that splintered, did not have the same appetite for violence as those that joined ELF or ALF or the frustration with the government.

³⁴⁶ Action Network, "Rising Tide North America," <https://actionnetwork.org/groups/rising-tide-north-america>.

³⁴⁷ Richard Read, "Police arrest 16 as protesters delay tar-sands megaload near John Day," *The Oregonian*, December 17, 2013, https://www.oregonlive.com/business/2013/12/police_arrest_16_as_protesters.html.

Managing internal dissent can influence the level of violence within a group. Group research within psychology examines how dissent management strategies are influenced heavily by an organization's values and norms.³⁴⁸ Group members often view deviance and dissent as dangerous for the organization, while robbing the group of momentum.³⁴⁹ Organizations that promote open dialogue are more likely to handle dissent constructively while effecting the way in which members view defiance. For example, the tolerance that Greenpeace had toward its members' open dialogue affected the way in which the members responded. The social identity approach illustrates the importance of group identification in understanding conformity.³⁵⁰ Internal reform and adaptation acknowledge and accommodate the various perspectives present within the organization. In doing so, members are less likely to resort to violence as frustration builds. However, the values of nonviolence and consensus limits violence as even a choice, within rational choice theory, for members and leadership. Negotiation and compromise address voices of concern and foster a sense of ownership among members. Members must feel engaged in the decision-making process, therefore sharing ownership of the decisions and actions of the group. By pushing dissenters to the fringes, organizations alienate these individuals. ELF and ALF's decentralized nature can fracture cohesiveness and be alienating to members. These individuals are loyal to their small autonomous cell, but not that of the larger organization. Cohesive groups with strong social bonds are less prone to violence due to the internal cohesion.³⁵¹

Writings and Publications

³⁴⁸ Jolanda Jetten and Matthew J. Hornsey, "Deviance and Dissent in Groups."

³⁴⁹ S. E. Asch, "Effects of group pressure upon the modification and distortion of judgment," in H. Guetzkov, *Groups Leadership and Men* (Pittsburg, Pennsylvania: Carnegie Press: 1951) and L. Festinger, "Conformity and character," *The American Psychologist* 10 (May 1955): 191-198.

³⁵⁰ John C. Turner, *Social Influence* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1991).

³⁵¹ Xavier Fonseca, Stephan Lukosch, and Frances Brazier, "Social cohesion revisited: a new definition and how to characterize it, *Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research* 32, 2 (2019), 231-253.

The Earth Liberation Front and Animal Liberation Front relied heavily on publications to communicate their values to the public. However, Greenpeace diversified its writing to reach a wider audience. The writings utilized by Greenpeace included reports, position papers, magazine articles, blogs, opinion pieces, as well as campaign materials. Four years after the establishment of Greenpeace, Greenpeace established its first press office in the United States in 1979.³⁵² The press office was designed to handle all media relations and communications. As a point of contact for journalists, the press office plays a critical role in coordinating events, responding to inquiries, and disseminating news releases. Most importantly, the press office develops an overarching media strategy. This strategy will influence how the public responds to acts from the organization. While Greenpeace's press office resembles a corporate press office, the ELF and ALF press offices are quite different in terms of prioritization and information sharing. Unlike Greenpeace which acts as a point of contact to journalists and the media, ELF and ALF funnel information from autonomous cells to the greater organization and general public.

There are also several books published by members and leaders that provide insight into the founding of the organization as well as the mission. Bob Hunter, a founder of the movement, wrote *Warriors of the Rainbow: A Chronicle of the Greenpeace Movement* in 1979. Through a personal narrative, Bob Hunter takes the reader on a journey through the early days of Greenpeace.

Greenpeace, as it has evolved exists to make change. It provides a way for people to get involved in a cause they believe in, and it is that conviction that ultimately makes the difference. When enough people care enough to do something, they can change the course of history. That is the power of Greenpeace.³⁵³

Rex Weyler, one of the earliest members of Greenpeace, wrote *Greenpeace: How a Group of Ecologists, Journalists, and Visionaries Changed the World* in 2004. The book chronicles the

³⁵² Frank Zelko, "Scaling Greenpeace: From Local Activism to Global Governance."

³⁵³ Rob Hunter, *Warriors of the Rainbow*.

history of Greenpeace as well as the challenges the organization has faced along the way. The power of grassroots organization is highlighted throughout the work.³⁵⁴

Patrick Moore, a founder and leader of Greenpeace, wrote about his disillusionment and departure from the organization within *Confessions of a Greenpeace Dropout: The Making of a Sensible Environmentalist* in 2010. According to Moore, the organization became opposed to technological advancements. Moore also felt that Greenpeace was hesitant to pursue conversations with industry and government.

To a considerable extent the environmental movement was hijacked by political and social activists who learned to use green language to cloak agendas that had more to do with anticapitalism and anti-globalization than with science or ecology.³⁵⁵

Moore had hoped that Greenpeace would return to its more pragmatic and collaborative roots. After leaving Greenpeace, Moore did not return to the organization and became known as the “sensible environmentalist”. This is an example of a conservative environmental dissident, which differs greatly from the dissent by ELF and ALF members in chapters one and two.

An example of Greenpeace’s response to a more militant approach would be Paul Watson. Paul Watson was a prominent early member of Greenpeace. However, he left the organization in 1977 to establish the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society. The Sea Shepherd Society was organized to take a more direct approach to protecting of marine life.³⁵⁶

We are growing a navy that will one day be the strongest direct-action tool to fight battles across the world in the name of ocean conservation.³⁵⁷

³⁵⁴ Rex Weyler, *Greenpeace: How a Group of Ecologists, Journalists, and Visionaries Changed the World*.

³⁵⁵ Patrick Moore, *Confessions of a Greenpeace Dropout: The Making of a Sensible Environmentalist* (Vancouver, Canada: Beatty Street Publishing, 2010).

³⁵⁶ Gerry Nagtzaam, “Paul Watson of the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society from activist to iconoclast,” in *The Palgrave Handbook of Global Sustainability*, R. Brinkmann (ed.).

³⁵⁷ Nick Kilvert, “He’s walked the plank, but ousted Sea Shepherd captain Paul Watson says he’s building a ‘navy,’” *ABC Science*, November 28, 2022, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/science/2022-11-27/sea-shepherd-paul-watson-exiled-building-navy/101570694>.

According to Watson, Greenpeace thought Watson's beliefs and tactics were too confrontational. A US court described Sea Shepherd Conservation Society members as "pirates."³⁵⁸ Although Greenpeace could not condone or participate in Watson's vision, Greenpeace let Watson leave rather than agree to strategies that violated the group's commitment to nonviolent protest. The organization's transparency and clearly defined red lines helped prevent other members from leaving with Watson. ELF and ALF attracted more militant individuals making them less willing to compromise and more prone to violence.

Government Response

There are several instances in which Greenpeace activists were arrested for their participation in non-violent protests. These arrests were quite like the arrests of ELF or ALF members. Recent logging protests throughout 2022 and 2023 in the Pacific Northwest, such as the Tongass National Forest in Alaska, resulted in multiple arrests for trespassing and related charges. Greenpeace has also conducted protests against coal-fired power plants throughout the United States to draw attention to the impact of coal on the environment. Subsequently, law enforcement arrested activists in this instance as well.

However, engagement and collaboration with the US government has also occurred throughout the years. This is a very different relationship with the US government than that of ELF or ALF. This dynamic with ELF or ALF was not possible as both were labelled as domestic terrorist organizations. The relationship between the US government and Greenpeace is complex and evolving. Greenpeace has engaged with the US government and other environmental groups on various issues including climate change, renewable energy, and ocean protection. In particular, the collaboration on climate change has yielded significant results. Greenpeace's advocacy

³⁵⁸ BBC News, "Us court brands whale activists Sea Shepherd 'pirates,'" BBC News, February 27, 2013, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-21589352>.

influenced the US government's policies on emissions reduction as well as the US government's participation in international climate agreements. In 2019, the New York and Massachusetts Attorneys General joined Rhode Island, Colorado, Baltimore, Oregon, Washington, as well as numerous cities and counties in California by taking ExxonMobil to court. Greenpeace had a large role in this action by working for more than a decade to investigate and expose Exxon's role in the climate crisis and their alleged disinformation campaign.³⁵⁹ The successes of collaboration between Greenpeace and the US government are not only found in courtrooms but are found in speeches and support by individual politicians. Senator Cory Booker publicly praised Greenpeace as the gold standard for climate change activism during his run for presidential candidate in the Democratic debate.³⁶⁰

Joint efforts in research, public awareness campaigns, and advocacy have led to public and political support. An example of resulting policy development is the Endangered Species Act.³⁶¹ Greenpeace has also influenced the US government's actions on stricter regulations on marine pollution and the establishment of marine protected areas. Such examples of success were a direct result of lobbying, which has proven to be a vital component of the organization's strategy. Lobbying gave Greenpeace and its agenda credibility making it stand apart from the more violent organizations. Greenpeace's collaboration is not limited to the United States but is also global. The Amazon soy moratorium was a collaboration between activists, industry, and government.³⁶²

Despite collaboration, conflicts and tension have arisen between the US government, law enforcement, and Greenpeace. Greenpeace's reliance on direct action and civil disobedience

³⁵⁹ Jane Fonda, "2019: A Landmark Year for Climate Justice," Greenpeace, December 2019, <https://www.greenpeace.org/usa/stories/2019-a-landmark-year-for-climate-justice/> and Hana Vizcarra, "Understanding the New York v. Exxon Decision," Harvard Law, December 12, 2019, <https://eelp.law.harvard.edu/2019/12/understanding-the-new-york-v-exxon-decision/>.

³⁶⁰ Jane Fonda, "2019: A Landmark Year for Climate Justice."

³⁶¹ U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, "Endangered Species Act," December 28, 1973.

³⁶² FAIRR, "Amazon Soy Moratorium," <https://www.fairr.org/investor-statements/amazon-soy>.

clashes with the US government's traditional avenue of policymaking to create change. In addition, the influence of corporate interests in policymaking has also led to disagreements and conflicts.

Conclusion

Individuals involved in ELF, ALF, and Greenpeace all have the same goal- to sustain the environment and its inhabitants. However, the tactics and level of violence they are willing to employ vary greatly. These choices greatly affect their relationship with governments and law enforcement as well as the level of support from the public. The relationship between government, media, and ideology has been symbiotic. By exploring Greenpeace's ideology and reactions to dissent, this chapter showed how Greenpeace's values of nonviolence, consensus, and compromise prevent violence as even a preference for leadership and members.

Ecoterrorist attacks in the United States have caused economic devastation and terror, leading to both ELF and ALF labelled as domestic terrorist organizations. As criminal activity progressed, government intervention began in the form of arrests, increased surveillance, and press conferences in an attempt to change the narrative. Arrests were not limited to these organizations. However, committing acts of violence often prevents any potential for future collaboration. Such collaboration is not only more successful but also provides immense credibility to the organization. Greenpeace is an example of a multiprong approach which yields more effective results. The reputation of Greenpeace as peaceful and rational has proven invaluable to their efforts.

Chapter 5 - Conclusion

The investigation and comparison of environmental extremist groups within this dissertation is critical to relevant political science and history literature as well as US national security. As global warming worsens and frustration rises, a resurgence of environmental extremism is possible. This type of activity would be deeply ideological and have few limitations; it would be especially dangerous to the agriculture, energy, and biological sectors of the United States of America. It is important that the United States government understand the nature of the threat to take appropriate and effective steps to mitigate. The United States must be proactive, not reactive to the looming environmental threat. This dissertation offers insight into the ideological values of the environmental movement in the United States as well as the movement's interdependent relationship with the government.

Purpose and Findings

This dissertation developed a social, cultural, and historical analysis of the environmental movement to identify the root cause of the transformation in tactics from non-violent, peaceful protests to violent acts. As a form of communication to the government and public, protests are typically nonviolent. When the government does not respond or responds with repression, an increase in violence and tactics has potential to follow. Therefore, the interaction between the government and protest has an interdependent relationship with the tactics and level of violence within the environmental movement. This dissertation builds upon the existing sociological, political, and historical analysis of the environmental movement in the United States by examining how the US government's response triggered a shift in tactics within ELF and ALF under the assumptions of rational choice theory. Greenpeace acted as a contrasting case study to ELF and ALF as it remained consistently peaceful.

Each case study is in a narrative format with an emphasis on the description of events in a consistent presentation across case studies. Each case is organized by establishment, philosophy, strategies and tactics, writings, and government response. In doing so, I traced the evolution of each organization. This consistent format made it easy to compare each case. In doing so, the Earth Liberation Front (ELF) and the Animal Liberation Front (ALF) exhibited an increase of violence and a shift in targeting and tactics linked to the organizations' response to the US government's lack of action and repression. On the other hand, Greenpeace's more compromising and transparent approach to the US government prevented any dramatic shift in targeting or level of violence. Greenpeace has, however, experienced splintering linked to a minority of members' frustration with what they perceive as the group's failure to win vital concessions from the government.

ELF and ALF's decentralized nature, leadership structure, and relationship with the US government facilitated the organization's increased level of violence and tactics. On the other hand, Greenpeace's cohesive structure as well as their sense of collaboration and consensus shaped its decision to rely on consistently peaceful tactics. The concepts of transparency, consensus, and cohesion within the organization and in their interactions with the US government contributed to the longevity of the organization. While these organizations share common concerns, their approaches and philosophies differ greatly. In response to the US governments' actions, ELF and ALF turned toward violence in frustration while Greenpeace leaned further into lobbying and collaboration to promote lasting change.³⁶³

This dissertation went beyond the current literature by seeking to answer the following research question: How does the government response trigger a change in tactics from nonviolent

³⁶³ Southern Poverty Law Center, "Eco-Violence: The Record." and Paul Joosee, "Leaderless Resistance and Ideological Inclusion: The Case of the Earth Liberation Front."

to violent in environmental groups? Rational choice theory provided insight into the decision-making process of the organization in response to the government. By recognizing the varying values and culture of each organization, rational choice theory acted as a framework for understanding social behavior by assuming that the individual has preferences among the available choice alternatives to decide which option is preferable.³⁶⁴ The theory illustrated how a group's values expand or limit the group's preferences for decision making. In terms of ELF and ALF, their lack of nonviolent core values expanded their preferences to include violent tactics. On the other hand, Greenpeace's Quaker core values limited their preferences to nonviolent acts.

Why Now?

Concerns about global warming and sustainability are now entrenched into politics and everyday culture throughout the country. These conversations permeate pop culture, popular landmarks, restaurant advertisements, clothing brands, and family dinners. Activists and demonstrations are no longer considered to be extreme but are received fairly well by the public as a fight for the greater good. Governments and corporations, not the consumer, are continually vilified as being the root of the problem. This vilification makes the dynamic between the potentially radical environmental groups and governments more important to analyze.

Within the last five years, a new urgency has been present in the movement. A large portion of the environmental discourse in pop culture is centered around the potential annihilation of humanity. This concept of annihilation can be found within the doomsday clock, the "Extinction Rebellion" activists, the ever-pressing 2050 countdown of rising tides, or the "Last of Us" playing on your television.³⁶⁵ This urgency is simultaneously creating a more sympathetic public as well

³⁶⁴ Karl- Dieter Opp, *The Rationality of Political Protest: A Comparative Analysis of Rational Choice Theory*; Mancur Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action*; and Russell Hardin, *Collective Action*.

³⁶⁵ The doomsday clock represents the likelihood of a man-made global catastrophe. Since 1947, the clock has been maintained by the members of the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists. The "Extinction Rebellion" is a UK-

as fueling extremist ideology. It makes it more likely that frustrations with slow or non-existent government action to combat climate change will radicalize environmental groups.

Policy Implications and Further Research

A sympathetic and more accepting audience for violent acts has been created among the public as the concepts of sustainability and climate change have permeated popular culture. The ever-looming debate of annihilation and the concept of a ticking time bomb only expands the preferences, under the rational choice theory, available to ecoterrorists. As time passes, the preferences are continually pushed to include more and more violent acts. Unlike the ecoterrorists discussed in the previous chapters, which focused primarily on industry and individuals exploiting the environment or committing acts of environmental terrorism, the new wave of ecoterrorists could also expand their targeting to include average American citizens.

It is my hope that this dissertation has not only shed light on the potential for a violent evolution within the current environmental movement but has also illustrated the importance of the dynamic between the government and the environmental organization. For the environmental group that is considering violent actions, this dissertation provided evidence that the key to sustainable environmental change is communication and compromise with the governing authority. At the same time, consensus and transparency within the organization yields longevity and consistent membership. The governing authority should acknowledge and communicate with the organization to prevent further violence. Any attempt from authorities to isolate the organization, ignore, or delegitimize has the potential to spark an urgent demonstration of capabilities from the ecoterrorist organization. Repression is not limited to the legal definition but

headquartered global environmental movement using civil disobedience to force the governments around the world to acknowledge the potential for biodiversity loss as well as social and ecological collapse. 2050 has been said to be the last chance for humanity to limit climate change and ensure Earth is habitable. Daniel Goldman, "The Climate Countdown to 2050." The "Last of US" is an American post-apocalyptic show created by Craig Mazin and Neil Druckmann for HBO. The show is based on a 2013 popular video game.

is subjective. The primary concern should be the organization's perception of government actions as repression. Tactics, such as decentralization, can result in unintended consequences such as an increased difficulty for the FBI to prosecute the crimes as they relate to the organization and monitor the activity.

The vast amount of writing from the environmental movement lends itself to great potential for future scholarly research. Additional analysis of the writing and publications of ELF and ALF would result in informative findings on how language choice predicts attacks. A coding on word choice, tracing the evolution from nonviolent language to a more aggressive tone and word choice, compared to a timeline of attacks could show how environmental publications could predict future attacks.

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