Anti-golfers across the world unite!
Global and local forms of resistance to golf course development

In the previous three chapters we illustrated how and why members of the golf industry changed their environment-related practices over time. We focused especially on the strategies industry members used to frame and promote their now dominant ‘light-green’ position. One of our key findings was that industry was especially effective in their attempts to position light-green responses to environmental problems as the ‘only’ reasonable responses to these problems and, in turn, to position golf industry members as natural leaders in the quest for improved environmental outcomes. In this way, it would appear that representatives of the golf industry – along with a legion of other sport management environmentalists – have effectively incorporated and redefined environmentalism. In other words, a light-green consensus has emerged; the activities and perspectives of more ‘traditional’ (i.e. darker-green) environmentalists are effectively cast aside.

Yet darker-green forms of environmentalism have not disappeared, even if they now exist in a complex environmental landscape where claims of environmental leadership abound. In this fourth section of *The greening of golf*, we explore how these darker-green environmental groups have responded to golf in general, and to golf’s ‘green’ credentials in particular. We focus in this chapter on movements against golf involving either resistance to particular golf-related development projects or, more radically, to the very idea that golf should exist. Our examination of these ‘anti-golf’ responses includes a description of key groups mounting such responses, an outline of their undergirding assumptions, and commentary on how anti-golf messaging has been ‘framed’ – that is, how it has been presented to key audiences such as the public. We also consider the level of success that golf protest groups have achieved and strive to explain why these groups may or may not have attained their desired outcomes or level of influence. This chapter, in other words, is devoted to ‘industry unfriendly’ environmental stances and their successes and failures.
In carrying out this analysis, we focus on two anti-golf movements in particular: the Global Anti-Golf Movement (GAGM), a very broad and flexible movement against golf; and Tripping up Trump (TUT), which arose in response to one particular course development project. GAGM is noteworthy, as we shall see, for its staunch and outright rejection of golf. TUT presents an interesting case too, first in its high-profile nature. Indeed, at the centre of the TUT controversy was celebrity businessman (and, recently, US Presidential candidate) Donald Trump, who hoped to build a championship-level golf course on the Scottish coast, and in the process encountered an entrenched group of protesters concerned in part about the environmental impacts of Trump’s proposed development. GAGM and TUT are furthermore indicative of golf’s global ‘journey’. For GAGM, this much is suggested in the movement’s very name. The TUT case involved an American entrepreneur venturing back to golf’s ‘homeland’ in Scotland to build a course that could attract tourists from across the world. In addition, the Trump course, now completed, can be considered an archetypal ‘glocalized’ development: by integrating generic standards of golf course beauty with a distinctly Scottish landscape, the course is both familiar and unique at the same time. The confrontation between Trump and TUT was likewise a classic encounter between local and global forces. Altogether, this chapter helps advance our interest in this book in assessing golf’s environmental implications and their relationship to globalization.

The Global Anti-Golf Movement: a virtual movement and a ‘movement of movements’

With its official launch on what they proclaimed to be ‘No Golf Day’ in April 1993, GAGM became a recognized critic of the golf industry and positioned itself as the only sustained social and environmental movement focused specifically on golf (to our knowledge). Although we suggest later in this chapter that GAGM is in some respects an unofficial ‘movement of movements’ – and we say ‘unofficial’ because not all of the movements that resist golf explicitly associate themselves with GAGM or GAGM’s values – GAGM itself has become a reference point for many who have written about golf-related problems of all kinds because of its ability to keep its message ‘on the radar’. This follows from the movement’s early adoption of the Internet for promoting its message, as well as its clearly defined mission statement and set of objectives. People may not agree with all of GAGM’s viewpoints, but for anyone searching online for anti-golf initiatives, GAGM cannot be ignored.
So, just what is GAGM, and what does GAGM (hope to) do? The GAGM website explains that the movement emerged “following a three-day conference on Golf Course and Resort Development in the Asia-Pacific Region in Panang, Malaysia from April 26 to 28, 1993”, and that the movement was initially sponsored by three organizations: “the Global Network for Anti-Golf Course Action (GNAGA) based in Japan, the Asian Tourism Network (ANTENNA) based in Thailand and the Asian-Pacific People and Environmental Network (AEN) based in Malaysia” (as summarized in Jarvie, 2006: 247). The GAGM website contains a manifesto that includes an overview of social and environmental concerns related to golf along with a set of proposed changes that follow on from these concerns. As sociologist Grant Jarvie recounts, for GAGM:

(i) golf courses and golf tourism are part of a global package that is capitalist-oriented with most of the money being exported out of the locality; (ii) the speculative nature of the industry makes it a high-risk investment for small countries and localities with many golf courses, resorts and companies becoming bankrupt; (iii) the environmental impact of golf course development is negative in that it facilitates water depletion and toxic contamination to such an extent that the golf green is fraught with ecological problems; (iv) [golf] promotes an elitist and exclusive leisure class with the globalisation of this lifestyle encouraging wealthy urban elites to absorb a particular way of life regardless of the environment and other members of society; and (v) in the face of growing criticism the golf industry is falsely promoting the notion of pesticide-free, environmentally friendly golf courses in the knowledge that such a golf course does not exist. (Jarvie, 2006: 247)

This last point – that the golf industry falsely promotes environmentally friendly golf courses – is particularly noteworthy in light of what we know from previous chapters about the golf industry’s comprehensive campaign to publicize their leadership on environmental issues. GAGM offers more specific criticism on this matter, contending that

the creation and maintenance of the “perfect [putting] green” comprising exotic grass inevitably requires intensive use of chemicals [and that] the increasingly touted integrated pest management system as an alternative to the use of pesticides on golf courses is not a solution [because] application of pest control through IPM is impossible to achieve and should be viewed as nothing more than a hollow attempt to make golf courses appear less toxic than they are.¹

For GAGM, IPM is easily discreditable: “the danger is that IPM will be taken seriously by officials involved in the approval of golf courses.”²
These are pointed critiques. The recommendations contained in GAGM’s manifesto are equally drastic. These recommendations include: a call for an immediate moratorium on new golf course development projects; a public environmental and social audit of all existing courses; the conversion of golf courses into public parks or, where they lie in forests, wetlands, or on islands, their conversion back to their natural state; prosecution of members of the golf industry as appropriate (for example, in the case of illegal occupation of public land); and laws banning the promotion of golf courses and golf tourism. These recommendations of course mark a radical departure from the moderate and golf-friendly environmental strategies that are promoted and implemented by many golf industry members themselves. GAGM essentially has no tolerance for industry-led solutions to environmental problems. They are flagrantly distrustful of ‘green’ initiatives such as IPM and indeed have been for some time – remembering that GAGM emerged on the scene in 1993. GAGM furthermore calls on governments to take on greater responsibility in regulating the golf industry. This is especially noteworthy in a context that has seen the emergence of voluntarism as a regulatory mechanism, as described in Chapter 7.

What kind of social movement is GAGM?

With its manifesto in tow, GAGM is a ‘social movement’ in a general sense: it is ‘a political entity that aims to create social change’ (see Staggenborg, 2008; Wilson, 2012b). More specifically, GAGM can be deemed a ‘new social movement’ – a general form of movement dominant since the 1960s. New social movements are unlike ‘older social movements’ in the sense that older movements are concerned primarily with economic matters, while ‘newer’ ones are generally interested in politics and power in a wider sense. Harvey and Houle offer a useful definition of new social movements that includes reference to both the structure and broad mandates of these sorts of groups. They say they differ from older ones in that they:

(a) are not linked to specific economic interests, (b) work towards change in society’s values, and (c) work for the collective good. They are fluid, their membership diverse, they take different organizational forms, and they vary in size, composition, and forms of actions. They are often active at local, national and transnational levels in the form of loose networks of groups and organizations. (Harvey and Houle, 1994: 347)

More recently, Harvey et al. (2009) examined the anti- and alter-global social movements emerging from dissatisfaction with neoliberal globalization and its
promotion of deregulation and the near-unimpeded ‘flow’ of labour and capital. Harvey et al. depicted these anti- and alter-globalization movements as largely devoid of hierarchical structure and as focused less on state-level issues and more on those that span from ‘the local’ to ‘the global’ (i.e. they adhere to what sociologist Alain Touraine (1977) has called the principle of ‘totality’). Harvey et al. (2009) include ‘ecological’ movements alongside those associated with, for example, civil rights, peace, human security, workers’ rights, and children’s rights among those fitting this description.

GAGM fits the new social movement label well. Its concerns transcend economics. It aims to change how golf is valued socially, especially in comparison to spaces that in GAGM’s view better serve the collective good (such as public parks). Having been founded by the Global Network for Anti-Golf Course Action, the Asian Tourism Network, and the Asian-Pacific People and Environmental Network, GAGM’s structure now appears quite fluid (or, at least, it seems quite easy for people and groups to affiliate with GAGM). Most of all, and as noted above, GAGM moves from local to global concerns in addressing golf, making reference to specific protests against course construction while also delivering broad and bold claims about golf that in their view apply irrespective of context. GAGM, therefore, is not just a political entity that aims to create social change – it is one that strives to do so without the easily discernable structure or approach of social movements of old.

What does GAGM ‘do’, and is it effective?

On 30 April 2008, the day following the fifteenth anniversary of the Global Anti-Golf Movement’s launch, sports journalist William K. Wolfrum wrote a short column for the Golf Channel’s WORLDGOLF website with the satirical title “The Global Anti-Golf Movement: golf’s ultimate enemy celebrates 15 years of having a manifesto’ (Wolfrum, 2008). Wolfrum’s column is based on the idea that while GAGM has outlined a forceful plan for taking on the golf establishment, the group has apparently been completely ineffective. As he states: “There has been a war going on right under your noses. For 15 years now, golf has been under a sustained attack. Not a very effective attack, mind you, but an attack, nonetheless.” Wolfrum goes on to say (satirically) that, in fifteen years, GAGM’s accomplishments comprised inclusion in Wolfrum’s blog post: “And that’s only in 15 years, mind you. Imagine what the next 15 years will bring” (Wolfrum, 2008). This is of course intended to be humorous, though Wolfrum does raise interesting questions about what GAGM has actually accomplished. Below, we discuss how we might evaluate the success of a movement like GAGM, and
consider how Wolfrum’s point might be complemented by a more in-depth and nuanced consideration of what GAGM has done, what it could do, and what could reasonably be considered ‘success’ for a movement of its kind.

Our evaluation of GAGM was aided by literature describing the various ways that social movements define success. Looking at success as a flexible concept is important in this context because success for these sorts of groups often (necessarily) means much more than directly and obviously influencing environmental policy or industry behaviour. Indeed, a more nuanced view of success is crucial for those who are working against the institutionalized interests and activities of dominant groups because challenges to the extant system are unlikely to lead to quick and readily apparent transformations. Moreover, those affiliating with new social movements might have differing goals and motivations among themselves, again making success harder to judge compared to ‘older’ social movements that, to a greater extent, speak in a unified voice. For example, some affiliating with GAGM may be concerned with golf’s environmental impacts near their own homes, while others may be focused more broadly on golf’s uptake of ostensibly ‘green’ practices such as IPM. Put simply, evaluating the success of a movement that is connected to so many issues and has a presence (or desired presence) in so many contexts is not so straightforward.

To be sure, Wolfrum’s dismissal of GAGM has merit based on a strict reading of GAGM’s manifesto. GAGM clearly has not inspired the complete abolition of golf courses in favour of public parks, for example. Yet below we outline a set of criteria that have been devised to help evaluate the success of social movements in more nuanced fashion (adapted from Wilson, 2012b: 94; see Staggenborg, 2008), applying these criteria along the way to the case of golf. Our intention here is not to celebrate GAGM, but to note that, in a complex environmental landscape, success (and failure) should equally be understood as complex in nature. These criteria are as follows:

- The movement raised awareness about golf-related social and environmental issues;
- The movement effectively promoted a sense of belonging and community for those involved in anti-golf resistance work;
- The movement has become a recognized representative for golf-related social and environmental issues;
- The movement offered inspiration and a sense of empowerment for those who have felt marginalized and/or oppressed by pro-golf developers, industry members and other golf advocates;
• The movement brought attention to an alternative approach to the practice of sport (e.g. to chemical-free golf);
• The movement’s activities led to desirable changes in government policies and/or changes in cultural norms and practices pertaining to golf’s environmental and social impacts;
• The movement interrupted the activities of powerful groups whose goals and actions are unacceptable to the activist group.

With these criteria in mind, it would be fair to suggest that although GAGM seems to be an often-dormant ‘group’, GAGM has also made progress on at least some of these fronts. GAGM’s positioning as a source of (radical) information on golf and its social and environmental implications is first noteworthy in this regard. The movement has, in one sense, been a subject of discussion among and source of information for scholars writing about golf’s social and environmental dimensions for some time (e.g. see Jarvie, 2006; Maguire et al., 2002; Stolle-McCallister, 2004; Wheeler and Nauright, 2006). So too have mainstream media outlets made reference to GAGM’s politics and practices since the movement’s early days. For instance, a 1995 article in the UK newspaper *The Independent* entitled “How about bunking off for the day? Best lie low in the clubhouse tomorrow: It’s World No Golf Day and the backlash is gathering strength” included a description and history of the then-nascent GAGM and an overview of various golf-related social and environmental concerns (Fox, 1995). Even William K. Wolfrum, in dismissing GAGM, still implicitly recognized this movement as a source of anti-establishment information. We feel safe in assuming too that a wider audience has also accessed GAGM’s online materials, especially given that these include materials on local protests around the world.

It is worth noting here that if GAGM had emerged pre-Internet, it would seem that their ability to have a sustained impact and presence would have been almost completely diminished. With this in mind, and as one of us has argued elsewhere, sport-related social movements – even smaller and poorly resourced ones – have unprecedented potential through the uptake of new media for disseminating information. This was especially the case in the years before corporate saturation of the web became so prominent (see Wilson, 2007). GAGM seems to have benefited immensely from their early adoption of online communication. That the scholarly and news media articles examining GAGM mentioned throughout this section appear to have drawn almost exclusively on the same resource – GAGM’s webpage – is testament to this.
Perhaps more significant than this awareness-raising is the extent to which GAGM has indeed interrupted – or, at least, helped interrupt – the activities of powerful groups whose goals and actions they deem unacceptable. As we have seen, GAGM is certainly directed towards this end. The final statement of the updated GAGM manifesto – a take on the famous line of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engel’s *The Communist Manifesto* – speaks to the goal of inspiring, uniting, and resisting: “Anti-golfers throughout Italy, Europe and the world, unite!” (translated from Italian; see www.antigolf.org/storia.htm). As Horne (1998) recounts, by the late 1990s GAGM’s original leader, Gen Morita, had claimed responsibility for halting the construction of more than a hundred courses in Japan. Tactics for accomplishing this included electing anti-golf sympathizers to government positions, raising awareness among the public on the local impacts of golf, and adopting a standing tree trust that prohibits the development of the land on which the tree stands (Horne, 1998: 178). Stolle-McAllister gives another example along these same lines – one that speaks more to GAGM’s wide-ranging influence. GAGM was one of several groups, along with Greenpeace, the Sierra Club, and others, that supported anti-golf activists in Tepoztlán, Mexico by providing information on golf’s environmental impacts and by publicizing the activist campaign in Mexico City. “Tepoztlán became, for a while, a center of regional ecological activism and a national and even transnational symbol of resisting unsustainable development projects” (Stolle-McAllister, 2004: 150). GAGM, it can be added, was acting on its manifesto.

Local anti-golf movements: ‘tripping up’ golf?

Beyond the Tepoztlán case, even a cursory search for local, golf-related activism reveals that collective action in the face of golf-related developments has been plentiful over the years, and has emerged in various regions of the world. Indeed, the ‘relevant links’ part of the GAGM website shows movements in Italy, the UK, Crete, Japan, Canada, Greece, China, and the Philippines. Journalists especially have covered and offered commentary on golf-related conflicts and issues in these regions.

Take one confrontation from the Philippines as a case in point. A 2009 article entitled ‘Turf wars’ in *Australian Golf Digest* recounted the tense encounter that emerged around a major development planned in the coastal village of Hacienda Looc in the 1990s. The plans included a luxury beach resort, a new subdivision, and a yacht marina. Four championship golf courses would also be built, in the
process demanding a ‘moulding’ of the hills around the village. Todd Pitock, the article’s author, described the situation:

Greg Norman and Jack Nicklaus were on board. Hacienda Looc would be the next hot spot. Everyone loved the plans. Everyone, that is, who didn’t already live in Hacienda Looc. No one had bothered to ask the 7,000 farmers, fishermen and villagers who faced eviction from ancestral lands in what the project’s critics say amounted to a nefarious land grab orchestrated by corrupt officials and unscrupulous developers. (Pitock, 2009: 91)

Pitock went on to describe the conflicts that followed the proposed development:

Hacienda Looc residents organised themselves, first rebuffing bulldozers by forming human chains. Eventually they formed an organisation called “Break Free” and mounted legal challenges. Then things got ugly. The government sent in military and police, and the developers hired their own para-military personnel whom villagers say harassed and assaulted them. Then, in two separate incidents, three of Break Free’s leaders were shot dead. Two shooters, the developer’s private guards, were arrested, then released without charges being filed. No one was accused in the third killing. The events engendered outrage and threats of retaliation from a guerrilla movement called the New People’s Army. As the stakes and the embarrassment heightened, the plans were scuttled, and for more than a decade residents have continued to fight off developers in Philippine courts. (Pitock, 2009: 91)

Seemingly less dramatic but still significant conflicts have been identified in China, where a golf course development boom has been taking place in recent years. An investigative report in the UK’s Guardian described how the tropical island of Hainan in the southeast of China, a region known to be a “a rare conservation success story in China” with clouded leopards and black gibbons among the 300 endangered species in this area, has become an area for golf course development – though not without controversy (Watts, 2010). The article describes the dissatisfaction and concern expressed by local villagers, although it appears that locals were collectively unable to alter the direction of developers:

In Changyong village on the edge of the course, residents said they have been flooded for the past two years by water than runs off of plastic sheeting under the huge course. “It’s had a huge impact,” said Deng Zhenhe. “We never had flooding in the past. Now it comes three months every year. The water comes up to our waists sometimes. Cars can’t get through.” At Bopian village, a crowd gathers to express their grievances. “The golf club has cut down many big trees
and the lychee and longan trees we used to farm. Our sheep and cows have nowhere to graze,” said a man who gave only the surname Wu. “I was cheated of some of my land.” (Watts, 2010)

This example, along with the case in the Philippines, is effectively the tip of the iceberg. The golf industry has faced resistance of this kind many times over.

Our main concern here, though, is not with the number of anti-golf movements of this sort, nor with the precise places in which they arise – but instead with questions about what we can learn about local forms of citizen resistance through focused examination. We are especially interested in the processes through which local movements might be more or less successful in their attempts to resist what they see as imminent social and environmental threats. Looking at these processes can offer in-depth insight into some of the ‘big picture’ questions we posed about golf and development in the introductory chapter of this book – especially questions about how and when it is that hegemonic groups are able to generate consent for particular ideas and activities and, equally, how and when counter-hegemonic groups are able to successfully challenge the status quo. Here we employ a second case study, this time of the aforementioned group Tripping up Trump, as a way into these issues. The following examination of TUT is informed by a range of materials, including media coverage, the TUT website, and especially our own interviews with Michael Forbes – key adversary of Donald Trump – and others affiliated with the TUT group.

**Tripping up Trump: backstory**

In 2006, planning for the development of a resort known as ‘Trump International Golf Links’ was initiated. The proposed location for the resort – which was to include two golf courses, a collection of hotel rooms, villas, residential units, and a resort village – was Menie Estate on the North Sea Coast of Aberdeenshire, Scotland. In 2007, the initial proposal was rejected by a local planning body representing Aberdeenshire Council known as the Infrastructure Services Committee. This was not an uncontroversial decision. Councillor Martin Ford, who was Chair of the committee at the time and cast the deciding vote to reject the proposal, was subsequently ousted from his Chair position through an emergency meeting of and vote by the Council. The BBC reported that the ousting was justified by councillors who felt that the economic benefits of Trump’s plan outweighed its potential environmental costs,
and that Ford was not acting in the best interest of the region by opposing the course proposal (BBC, 2007). Ford argued – and still maintains – that the Infrastructure Services Committee's position was sound, as the new development would effectively destroy what was a legally protected Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI): a unique and dynamic dune system on the site of the proposed development. Ford spoke to his decision in an interview for the documentary You've Been Trumped:

You could apply the tests of sustainable development to the Trump proposal and it failed them, it failed them in spades. It [Trump's proposal] was predicated on people flying across the Atlantic … playing a few games of golf and flying back over the Atlantic. It was predicated on utilizing an irreplaceable and diminishing resource, effectively natural habitat. (Baxter, 2012)

The Scottish government did not see things this way, which is why government officials decided to designate the Trump proposal an issue of national importance. In doing so, the decision to reject Trump's proposal by the Infrastructure Services Committee became reviewable in the national parliament, and thus reversible. In 2008, the Scottish government made the decision to overturn the Committee's verdict, thus allowing Trump International to continue with development plans.

The tensions between Trump's team and TUT continued into 2010, when Trump International came into conflict with local fisherman and farmer, Michael Forbes. Forbes’s house is located on a parcel of land that Trump desired for the development. Despite buyout offers, Forbes refused to sell. The conflict became hostile as Trump claimed that Forbes lived like a “pig” and that his property was a “slum”. Forbes indicated in response that he did not care what Trump thought, and was quoted as saying that Trump could “shove his money up his arse” (Miller, 2010). Trump's team subsequently raised the possibility of requesting that Aberdeenshire Council forcibly purchase Forbes's home and those of his neighbours (which would all be resold to Trump International for development purposes) under what is known as Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) legislation. According to the Scottish government website, CPO legislation makes it possible for “organisations to acquire land without the owner’s permission, if there is a strong enough case for this in the public interest” (The Scottish Government, n.d.). The point of debate around this issue was whether Trump's development would bring enough benefits to the region to justify a CPO intervention. Although the CPO was never formally commenced by Trump's group, making formal government deliberations unnecessary, the threat of CPO was a
significant concern for Forbes and the wider anti-Trump movement (Dennys, 2013).

Indeed, the activist group TUT was proactive on this issue. In an attempt to undermine the CPO before an order was initiated, Forbes sold a plot of his land (given the name 'the Bunker') located in a place of particular value to the development project to a range of TUT members and others. This tactic – one that would complicate any attempts to proceed with a CPO – is reminiscent of the standing tree trust tactic noted above in relation to GAGM. An article in The Scotsman offers a succinct description of the background and rationale for the response:

Tripping Up Trump (TUT) said it had implemented the same legal framework used by the Heathrow [airport] anti-expansion protesters to buy a plot of land near the airport to block the construction of a third runway. TUT spokesman Martin Glegg said Mr Forbes had sold the group a plot of land on his estate. Thousands of members of the public will have the chance to sign up and have their names placed on the deeds, creating a major legal headache for any compulsory purchase plans. (The Scotsman, 2010)

In essence, the sale of the land to multiple people would mean that each person would need to be dealt with individually for a CPO to be approved. It would appear that this strategy was effective, or, at least, that its intended outcome was achieved, as the CPO was not pursued.

In recent years, Trump’s group has expressed concern about proposals to build wind farms off the coast of Menie near the Trump International Golf Links course. Trump himself indicated that the massive energy-generating windmills were a noise nuisance and visually unappealing and that, as such, they would negatively impact tourism around the course. Trump has (unsuccessfully) attempted to stop the windmills through legal action (Carrell, 2014). In a February 2014 press release from the UK’s Green Party, it was reported that Trump’s organization had “withdrawn its planning application to build a second golf course at Menie and has abandoned its scheme to construct a large golf resort at the site” (Kennedy, 2014). The release included comments from Green Party member Martin Ford – the same Martin Ford who led the committee that recommended rejecting the development in the first place. In Ford’s words:

Of course, the Scottish Government should never have stepped in to grant Mr Trump planning permission in the first place. We have lost an important and beautiful natural area that was legally protected as a Site of Special Scientific Interest. Our duty, as I saw it, was to hand this natural heritage over to following
generations intact, so they could enjoy it and wonder at and better understand nature. Instead, it has become a golf course. The justification for allowing this damage to the environment was the jobs and economic benefit the proposed golf resort would bring. While the scale of the economic benefit promised by Mr Trump was clearly ridiculously exaggerated, there is no doubt that, had the resort gone ahead, there would have been some job creation and economic activity as a result. As it is, the north-east has got the worst of all possible worlds. We have lost our irreplaceable, natural, mobile dune system – for negligible economic return. (Kennedy, 2014)

The Trump golf development saga is ongoing in the sense that further development in Menie remains a possibility – Trump could still choose to pursue the CPO – and in that Menie residents and those sympathizing with their cause continue to voice their displeasure, especially online. Having said this, however, the ‘high point’ of the Trump-TUT confrontation seems to have passed. To the extent that Trump International Golf Links now welcomes golfers the world over, Trump seems to have won.

Assessing the successes and failures of Trump and TUT

Again, though, we would emphasize the importance of recognizing nuance in assessing success and failure as they pertain to (new) social movements. Both Trump and TUT gained support at different times in their quarrel. To understand how they each accomplished this, it is useful to evaluate how each group ‘framed’ their position – especially as these positions pertained to the environmental impacts of Trump’s golf course development. Frame analysis helps us see how particular versions of reality are strategically mobilized, leaving other realities in the background or ‘outside the picture’ entirely. Entman put it this way in his foundational article on framing:

To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text. Frames, then, define problems – determine what a causal agent is doing and costs and benefits, usually measured in terms of cultural values; diagnose causes – identify the forces creating the problem; make moral judgments – evaluate causal agents and their effects; and suggest remedies – offer and justify treatments for the problem and predict their likely effects. (Entman, 1993: 52, 55)

To be sure, framing is not all there is in confrontations such as this. Important too is the ability among different groups to mobilize resources in support of their work and to take advantage of political opportunities (Wilson, 2012b). Yet
focusing is key in making an issue intelligible in particular ways and thus in arriving at desired outcomes. This is true for both Trump and TUT.

**Trump’s frames**

On the one side, then, were Trump’s frames (or, at least, the frames of those affiliated with the Trump project). When it comes to the environment, Trump and his team attempted to offset critiques of the development’s environmental impacts by suggesting that his golf course would not only be constructed with environmental principles in mind, but that it would, in fact, be helpful for the environment. For example, Trump was quoted in one instance as saying, “from an environmental standpoint, it is in a much better situation than it was before we bought the site.” On another occasion he indicated that his group “saved the dunes” (Baxter, 2012). Trump’s framing in this case thus included a novel spin on the impact of this development on the dynamic sand dune system, which he proudly claimed to have stabilized. This is an intriguing (and from an environmental perspective, dubious) spin in the sense that the very reason that the dunes were classified as a Site of Special Scientific Interest was because they were a dynamic system. Trump framed the dunes as follows: “I’ve stabilized the dunes. That means the dunes will be with us forever and that’s good, because dunes can be gone with the wind” (Baxter, 2012).

Perhaps unsurprisingly, Trump and his team also emphasized the economic benefits of their proposal. In early coverage of the controversial development (before it was approved), Trump and his team mentioned the “one billion pound development” (instead of just ‘the development’) when referring to the project. Linking the development with a large monetary sum would seem to be a strategy for highlighting the vast economic implications of the project – as well as the major economic downside of not catering to Trump’s requests. A BBC report in 2007 offers some early evidence of this interpretation of Trump’s economic frame: “Mr Trump’s spokesman George Sorial had warned failure by Aberdeenshire Council to endorse £1bn golf resort plans on Wednesday would put the entire project in jeopardy” (BBC, 2007).

In another effort to frame the proposed development as beneficial for the local region – and, perhaps, in an attempt to counter TUT’s protests and any support TUT was accruing – Trump also stressed the robust ‘popularity’ of the proposal. In an interview appearing in the ‘Tripping up Trump’ documentary, Trump contends that “this [the development] is a very popular project, we’ve had...”
great support from the Council, [and] great support from the political leaders” (Baxter, 2012). Indeed, this is true! It was only with the Scottish government’s decision to overturn the local Infrastructure Services Committee’s original verdict disallowing the course that Trump International Golf Links was made possible. Elsewhere in the ‘Tripping up Trump’ documentary, Trump claims that his group had “tremendous support from the environmental groups”. To buttress these assertions of support, Trump framed Michael Forbes, his main public rival in building the course, as ‘unpopular’ – indicating in one instance that he had come to learn that “Forbes is not a respected man among the people that he lives with” (Baxter, 2012).

**Anti-Trump and anti-development frames**

Just as Trump and his team framed the development as favourable for the environment, TUT and its allies offered strategic messages intended to highlight the negative environmental impacts of the proposed project. A main strategy was to consistently use the term “Site of Special Scientific Interest” (SSI) when describing the proposed development area, since the dynamic dune system had in fact received this designation.

What does it mean to receive SSSI designation? Scottish Natural Heritage, the public body that represents the Scottish government on environment- and conservation-related issues and that verifies and offers this designation, describes SSSIs as “those areas of land and water (to the seaward limits of local authority areas) that Scottish Natural Heritage considers to best represent our natural heritage – its diversity of plants, animals and habitats, rocks and landforms, or a combinations of such natural features” (Scottish Natural Heritage, n.d.). The goal of giving particular areas SSSI status is to “[make] sure that decision makers, managers of land and their advisers, as well as the planning authorities and other public bodies, are aware of them when considering changes in land-use or other activities which might affect them” (Popham, 2012). SSSIs can, therefore, be developed for reasons that are considered crucial and in the public interest – which is how Trump’s course ultimately received approval. Yet by consistently referring to the dunes as an SSSI, anti-Trump activists were reframing the proposed golf course and the wider development as an environmental threat. The film *You’ve Been Trumped* includes interviews with environmental experts like Dr Jim Hansom, a geomorphologist at the University of Glasgow, who is quoted as saying that the dunes “are our [i.e. Scotland’s] equivalent of the
Amazon Rainforest” (Baxter, 2012). Although Hansom is positioned as a scientist who is simply offering an assessment of what the dunes represent, equating the Amazon and the dunes is precisely the kind of powerful imagery that is helpful in the process of framing. In discussing the Trump course, Hansom also attests in the film to knowing of “no credible environmental organization that favoured such a development” (Baxter, 2012). It is relevant here that You’ve Been Trumped’s director Anthony Baxter is described as a “friend of TUT” on TUT’s website. Baxter indeed turned out to be an excellent resource for the TUT campaign.

Another tactic used by TUT and anti-Trump protesters was to mobilize a discourse of authentic Scottish heritage. In this case, those standing up to Trump were framed as ‘locals’ defending their turf in the face of an American billionaire tycoon. This frame is significant in its capacity for drawing support from people who may not be concerned with environmental issues, but are moved by their concern for the rights of local people. It is the classic David and Goliath story. One of the ways that TUT developed this frame was to feature stories about the local residents impacted by Trump’s development on their webpage and in a newspaper/newsletter created by TUT called Menie Voices. One excerpt from the newspaper describing the experiences of some of those near the Trump development reads as follows:

Homeowners described how their water had been turned off for ten days and now security guards drive through and past their property 24/7, almost every day. One resident Susan Munro described how the events had affected her. “I feel helpless; it seems nobody wants to know. You phone the council and nobody wants to speak to you or hear your questions. Even the police seem to be on Trump’s side.” Michael Forbes of the Mill of Menie also had to watch as Trump’s men and heavy machinery forcibly removed his salmon nets from land his family had used for generations. (Anon, 2010)

A powerful portrayal of the history and culture of the residents in and around Menie was also offered in Baxter’s You’ve Been Trumped, which includes interviews with and life histories of some of those negatively impacted by Trump’s development. It offered a brief history of salmon fishing in the area – a history that included Michael Forbes and his ancestors. The film invokes a sense of nostalgia for a simpler moment when global mega-developments were not so common.

Of course, such histories are always socially constructed in the sense that people are necessarily selective and partial when choosing what to include in and what to exclude from their messaging. With this in mind, scholars such as
Nauright and White (1996) have shown how these stories and how nostalgia itself can be tools for those attempting to retain or defend a cultural artefact or institution – a stadium about to be razed, for example, or a sports team that may be moved or disbanded (see Wilson and White, 2002). What the Trump protesters were effectively mounting in this regard was a ‘collective action frame’: a narrative told and retold in an attempt to create a connection with potential social movement members, and to remind existing movement members of the injustice they are responding to (and who is to blame for the injustice). Through a message of collective past experience, Menie’s residents are framed as the rightful inhabitants of the Menie area – even as its stewards – while Trump and his team are made to be uncaring and avaricious outsiders. As noted above, it would appear that this story was designed to provoke an emotional response among those who see Trump and his team as bullies, and the Menie residents as courageous underdogs. Researchers interested in understanding the characteristics of successful acts of resistance recognize the importance of this sort of emotion – what Italian social theorist Antonio Gramsci (1971) called ‘emotion-passion’ – when attempting to generate consent for a particular (in this case counter-hegemonic) position.

The championing of Michael Forbes as an anti-Trump figure was especially crucial to this framing of the ‘local and authentic’ residents of Menie as preferable to the ‘global and ostentatious’ Trump. TUT strategically mobilized images of the heroic Forbes as a principled man standing up to an incorrigible bully. The first image one sees when landing on the TUT webpage is a close-up of the stoic Forbes standing against the backdrop of his Menie property, accompanied by the caption “a voice for the local residents and a community of people who care.” In his documentary You’ve Been Trumped, Baxter included an interview with TUT member (and former producer for the British band The Clash) Mickey Foote, who nicely encapsulates TUT’s preferred framing of Forbes:

A lot of local people don’t see Michael as a particular problem [i.e. the problem Trump makes him out to be]. They see him as standing up for what is rightfully his, and they don’t believe in all the claptrap that Trump’s PR machine put out. (Baxter, 2012)

Baxter’s You’ve Been Trumped further dramatized the David and Goliath story of Forbes versus Trump by inserting clips from the 1983 film Local Hero throughout his documentary. Local Hero, directed by Glasgow-born Bill Forsyth, is about an American oil company that sends a powerful executive “to Scotland to buy up an entire village where they want to build a refinery.” The film champions
the Scottish locals, who resist the advances of the executive and the company he works for. Through this frame, the Trump confrontation becomes a case of life imitating art.

Evidently, the framing of Forbes as a noble underdog resonated beyond the protest movement, as Forbes won the ‘Top Scot’ award in 2012 at the renowned Glenfiddich Spirit of Scotland Awards. The award, given annually to recognize a Scottish person who “has made the greatest impact in furthering Scotland’s reputation at home and abroad”, has also been offered previously to people such as tennis star Andy Murray and author J. K. Rowling (The Huffington Post, Inc., 2012).

Mobilizing resources and pursuing political opportunities

As noted above, beyond framing, resource mobilization and political opportunism are important to the success of social movements as well. The same could certainly be said of those whom social movements are opposing, though in social movement studies it is more common to consider how less powerful groups mobilize resources and political opportunities since these groups are often working ‘against the grain’ and must be especially entrepreneurial to make political and social inroads. In hindsight, there were indeed key instances where TUT and their supporters made especially astute political manoeuvres to either act on their mission and/or call attention to their cause.

One key instance in this regard was the creation of the ‘Bunker’, the aforementioned plot of land sold to a host of course opponents to subvert a potential CPO on Forbes’s land. The Bunker idea was also publicized at a strategic (i.e. a politically opportune) moment, as TUT spokesperson Martin Glegg noted in our interview with him:

We released the Bunker the day Trump was coming to town … He was in a press conference, and everybody was saying, you know, “what’s all this?” … Then that [the Bunker and Michael Forbes’s farm] ended up being the story. (Personal interview, July 2012)

Another example in this regard is TUT’s response to the announcement that Donald Trump was to receive an honorary degree from Robert Gordon University in Glasgow. Leading up to the announcement, TUT was contacted by a former Robert Gordon Principal (a high-ranking position in the university) who had decided to hand back the honorary degree he had previously received
from the university as an act of protest against Trump's honour. In an interview, TUT spokesperson Martin Glegg described the situation, and how TUT took advantage of the opportunity:

Trump got offered an honorary degree before he'd actually basically delivered anything in Aberdeenshire … A lot of people didn't think that was right, even people that thought the golf course should go ahead. Well … one of the ex-principals [of the university] phoned up Tripping Up Trump … and I spoke to him on the phone and he said, “listen, I’m gonna hand in my honorary degree, I’m gonna hand it in – how do you want to do this?” So we were like, “ok, brilliant”, so it was like, we phoned David Milne and David Milne and him met outside the university one day and we organized it … [We] got the press down and there was just, there was a lot of energy then, and when Trump got his honorary degree, that was the same day we released our papers [highlighting the problems with the Trump development]. So the camera crews were out already – otherwise, we might not have got it [the coverage of TUT and their concerns].

(Personal interview, July 2012)

The media attention that the anti-Trump campaign received also brought celebrity supporters into contact with TUT, including actress Tilda Swinton, Brian May of the band Queen, and director David Puttnam. Glegg explained how TUT was strategic in their attempts to utilize celebrity support:

We just got quotes from them specifically. Like [we'd ask them], “could you give us a quote?” and say, you know, that you support the campaign … and then it'd be like, “oh, Tilda Swinton” [supported us] … It was kind of fun as well what was going on. But obviously the seriousness of it behind it was kind of there as well.

But if we put information that was dry, that was just kind of fact-based, or, well that wouldn't get in the papers. (Personal interview, July 2012)

TUT also benefited in this sense from the work of Scottish artist David McCue, who held an art show in a barn on Michael Forbes's property. The show included various paintings celebrating Forbes and TUT's resistance campaign, as well as paintings that depicted a “very angry, very self-motivated, very self-interested” Trump (from an interview with Mickey Foote in You've Been Trumped; Baxter, 2012). Along with these paintings, the exhibit included an interactive 'mini-golf' hole that invited people to putt a golf ball through a large dollar sign (painted in United States red, white and blue) into the mouth of an image of Donald Trump. The exhibit was also featured in You've Been Trumped, along with an interview with McCue – who described the Menie locals making up the resistance campaign as “lovely, genuine, honest, authentic people” (Baxter, 2012). The exhibit
itself, in bringing together like-minded members of the community, served as a ‘resource’ in the wider anti-Trump movement.

Conclusion: anti-golf in light-green times

In many ways TUT can be considered a successful social movement. Most obviously, and in much the same way that GAGM’s very existence puts anti-golf messaging ‘on the radar’, TUT became the voice of opposition to Trump’s development project – a unique and still lasting position. In framing Trump’s course in counter-hegemonic ways and in mobilizing resources and political opportunities in furthering their cause, we feel it safe to say that TUT raised awareness not only around issues pertaining to Trump International Golf Links but on golf’s potential social and environmental impacts in general. The campaign’s work was also crucial in supporting the families impacted by the threat of the CPO. That Michael Forbes and others remained in their homes despite the spectre of the CPO can certainly be construed as a ‘win’, even if Trump’s building of the course was a ‘loss’ given TUT’s overall objectives.

In assessing its successes and failures, our examination of TUT in this chapter is in some ways reminiscent of research by the few others who have studied golf-related resistance movements. For example, based on her research exploring golf-related protests in Greece, Briassoulis contends that social movements gain momentum when sometimes diverse interests are intentionally or accidentally aligned. She adds that context is of high importance when trying to understand when and how these synergies emerge:

Opposition does not arise in a vacuum; it concerns specific proposals for golf development in often ecologically and culturally valuable locations. Specialist and nonspecialist signees [of the petition against the golf development] alike did not react to abstract images but to an elitist, exclusionary image of golf and golf tourism in conjunction with the negative environmental, social and economic impacts of golf development at the particular location. (Briassoulis, 2009: 308, emphasis in original)

The Trump case, as we have seen, brought together many narratives – from the course’s environmental impacts to the perceived invaluableness of local heritage to Trump’s purported inauthenticity in comparison to Michael Forbes, among others. It thus presented TUT sympathizers with many contextually specific reasons to rally around the TUT cause. In this regard, by keeping a wide focus, new
social movements have the ability to pull together and harmonize a range of different voices. This becomes crucial when the time arises to (for example) have supporters purchase a share of ‘the Bunker’ in defending against a looming CPO.

And yet, while we came to better understand the dynamics of a ‘somewhat successful’ social and environmental movement by looking at TUT, this same case aptly demonstrates the barriers that new social movements can face, and why it is that such movements sometimes fail to achieve key goals. Most of all, TUT protesters failed to protect the dynamic dune system on the Scottish coastline. The most direct explanation here returns us to the concept of ‘environmental managerialism’, discussed in the preceding chapter as well. The decision made by the Scottish government to overrule the initial decision by the committee working on behalf of Aberdeenshire Council to deny Trump’s request for permission (an initial decision based on a sustainability assessment of the proposal) would seem to be a clear example of a government weighing economic against environmental concerns – and coming out in favour of the former. This point is (unintentionally) confirmed by Alex Salmond, Member of Scottish Parliament at the time, in his explanation for his support for the Trump proposal: “we can see social and economic benefits, I think, that outweigh environmental concerns” (from Baxter, 2012)

What many critics are noting in retrospect is that Trump’s promise for a billion pound development remains unrealized, partly because of Trump’s frustration about the wind farms near the golf course. Perhaps, in cases like these, a precautionary approach should also be taken towards economic as well as environment-related decisions. Even though Trump himself was commonly portrayed as the villain in this context, it is important to keep in mind that the decisions to support the development proposal were ultimately made by government, and that Trump’s attempts to secure further profits are understandable and should be expected.

In another sense, the very ways in which the environment is typically perceived can be deemed a barrier to groups such as Tripping up Trump as well. As one member of TUT said to us in an interview, the threat of the CPO was a crucial force in rallying public support around Trump’s cause:

I had people coming up to me after seeing that documentary [describing the CPO] saying, “we didn’t realize how bad it was”; and I said, “well I’ve been telling you for long enough,” you know? “That’s terrible, that’s terrible putting people out of their homes for a golf course”, and that won people. People who had either never thought about [the Trump course] or had said, “well, it’ll be a good thing,” actually came and said, “no, he’s gone too far.” And I think when he realized …
he was losing sympathy, I think that’s when he [Trump] backed down about the Compulsory Purchase Orders. I think he always hoped it would go away but in Scotland too, you just have to mention pushing people out of their own homes and, you know, it’s kind of a really emotive stuff. (Personal interview, July 2012)

A backlash against the CPO is understandable, as an order of this kind would indeed move local people off their land. But the Trump course was to have quite significant effects on the coastal sand dunes as well, at least in the view of course opponents like TUT. Thus, in achieving success on the CPO but not on the sand dunes, TUT was ‘winning’ mainly to the extent that environmental concerns aligned with the concerns of people. This is not quite the manifestation of a Promethean discourse – the idea that humans have an inherent right to manipulate the earth, as discussed in Chapters 3 and 4. But it is a ‘light-green’ inclination; the ‘darker-green’ idea that the environment is inherently valuable is outside the frame. The point for these purposes is that this is a barrier in the sense that groups like TUT are working within this wider context, and so some issues with which they are concerned may be less likely to resonate from the outset. To say this another way, if we grant the above account from our interviewee, Trump only went ‘too far’ in the eyes of much of the public when his development aspirations impacted on people like Michael Forbes. In this case the environment itself has no voice – no agency – in the matter.

Looking across this chapter, our analysis herein speaks ultimately to one of the main foci of this book: the relationship between golf, environmental issues, and globalization. Indeed, the two primary cases outlined above shed valuable light onto this relationship. The very decision by the Scottish government to support Trump’s proposal aligns with a neoliberal style of governance that sees the opening of borders to the movement of capital (i.e. Trump’s US dollars) as highly beneficial. Meanwhile, as we have seen, TUT framed the process of a US businessman putting his imprint on the Scottish coastline through a different lens – one stressing the direct impacts of this on the local context and its deep-rooted history. GAGM is, at the same time, a global movement by definition. GAGM itself embodies aspects of globalization in the sense that its website is an attempt to link anti-golf advocates from around the world.

What all of the conflicts outlined in this chapter have in common is that they are between those who support golf-related developments and those who resist them. The question remains: what about ‘radical’, darker-green responses to golf’s environmental problems that include golf? Does an ‘alter-golf’ alternative exist that is not reformist (i.e, largely industry/chemical-friendly)? We explore this possibility in the next chapter.
Notes

2 Same as note 1.
3 Same as note 1.
4 According to a 2010 update of GAGM's website, an Italian journalist named Andrea Atzori – whose background includes a political science degree from the University of Cagliari and a Master's thesis on the politics of the environment – took over from Mr Gen Morita of Japan as figurehead and leader of GAGM. This change meant that the 'base' for the movement moved from Japan to Italy. We say the movement may be dormant because the website's latest update appeared to be in 2012, and an email we sent to the contact address of Atzori received no response. We also used the term 'group' tentatively here since the website seems to be run, ultimately, by Atzori, and it is unclear how involved others are in the day-to-day or even periodic operations of the movement.
5 A 2010 article in The Guardian indicates that Jack Nicklaus claimed the country is planning to build 1,400 public courses over the next five years (Watts, 2010).
6 There appears to be some uncertainty over whether Trump and his group actually applied for the CPO. Martin Ford quotes Trump as saying he never applied for a CPO, but Ford also says that this is untrue – that Trump's lawyers wrote to Aberdeenshire Council on 4 March 2009 asking the Council to exert its CPO power on behalf of Trump International Golf Links Scotland (Ford, 2011). At the very least, the potential of a compulsory purchase was a very real threat to those residents of Menie who might be affected by it.
7 See http://www.trippinguptrump.co.uk.
9 The TUT website also includes interview footage with Michael Forbes's mother, Molly Forbes, who shares the challenged land with Michael and his wife. The interview begins with Molly saying "My name is Molly Forbes, and this is my home, which I call paradise," followed by Molly's emotional reflections on the difficulties she and Michael have met in their dealings with those working on Trump's development. This includes comments on the frequent drive-by visits of security from Trump's property and the cut-off of water on Forbes's property because of the development – both well documented in Baxter's film (see http://www.trippinguptrump.co.uk/molly-forbes-interview).
10 To view the paintings, see http://www.davidmccue.info.