This chapter argues that a key dilemma facing the producers of *Make Poverty History*’s communications was whether to adopt a more moderate-insider approach that was supportive of the government, made the most of an opening in political opportunities and promoted dialogue or a more radical-outsider approach that was critical of the government and favoured protest. As I touched on in the previous chapter, there was disagreement in the coalition over the stance to take towards the UK government and the G8. The marketeers were more moderate and wanted a consensual and supportive approach to those in power – an insider strategy. The campaigners were more radical and were pushing for a critical approach to power that tended to preclude dialogue with government – an outsider strategy. It could be argued that branding and marketing, with their positive and simpler approaches to communications, lend themselves more easily to being uncritical and supportive of power, while campaigning, with its more antagonistic and problem-focused approach, is by nature radical and critical. These different insider-outsider approaches to the political process had direct impacts on the production of the movement’s central communications. However, it is also important to note that there was a range of opinions on this radical-outsider to moderate-insider spectrum, with some members of campaigning groups showing more moderate viewpoints and vice versa.

I will start by looking at the disagreements between the radical-outsider and moderate-insider elements and how these affected the negotiation of the campaign’s communications. My aim is to describe how these elements affected the campaign’s attempts to portray the government
and G8 actors as heroes or villains and how the campaign responded to the opening of political opportunities provided by the Labour government and 2005. Many key elements of the coalition recognized that the government was open to its ideas on global poverty, but admitted that this created difficulties, such as the need to demarcate the campaign’s demands from the government’s announcements. This posed a difficult communication problem, with research showing that members of the public often thought that the campaign was a government initiative, leading to debate within the coalition over whether it had been coopted by the state or spun by its public relations machine.

Research for this chapter comes from semi-structured interviews with campaign leaders, participant observation of working groups, meeting minutes and documents, and public media.

The insider-outsider dilemma

Many social movements face the insider-outsider dilemma (Sireau and Davis 2007) and the strategies they adopt in this regard affect their communications. Insiders have regular and often institutionalized contact with the government or with other power centres. In some instances, the government even partly or entirely funds them. As insiders, the social movement actors have closer access to the decision-making and feel they can influence it more. Yet this access also brings with it some constraints. The government is more likely to be setting the framework of the debate and any challenges must be kept within what those in power deem legitimate. The threat of cooption and assimilation is a real one. Outsiders, however, have more independence in their approach and feel that they can challenge the government or power centres more vigorously. They are less constrained by the institutional framework. Yet their impact on policy making may be much more limited as they have little direct influence over decision-making apart from through their mobilization attempts.

The choice of an insider or outsider approach will have an impact on a social movement’s communications strategy through the choice of a target audience, although we can safely assume that all ultimately aim to influence power elites. Insider groups will tend to focus directly on elite audiences such as decision-makers and political bureaucracies, using private, routine or institutionalized forms of communication such as lobbying and formal written submissions. Outsider groups will focus more on influencing wider public opinion and political