IDEOLOGICAL DIVERSITY AND ALLIANCE BUILDING IN SOCIAL MOVEMENTS:

THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST SHELL IN IRELAND

ST.JOHN Ó DONNABHÁIN

Submitted in part fulfilment of the requirements for the

MA in Community Education, Equality and Social Activism

Departments of Adult & Community Education and Sociology

National University of Ireland, Maynooth

2014

Supervisor: Dr Laurence Cox

ABSTRACT

This thesis asks the question: How can social movement alliances manage to acknowledge and work across difference in conflict situations? It seeks to add to deeper understandings of movements by examining a complex multi-group movement context in which complicated and very layered tensions were at issue. It seeks to investigate these issues through a case study of tensions between movement actors within the campaign against Shell in North West Mayo, Ireland, between English ecological activists, Dublin and Cork Shell to Sea groups, and Irish members of the Rossport Solidarity Camp. The issue of how to acknowledge and work with difference is a hugely important one for the building and maintenance of contemporary movement alliances for practitioners, and is also an area of interest for social movement scholars. Connected with this, alliance is largely accepted as increasing a movement's chance of success, and is usually something which is also seen as desirable by movement actors. I undertook my research within a Participatory Action Research (PAR) frame. As such, my research was a highly involved process, within the frames of looking at dynamics of alliance formation, and saw its main themes emerge from the research participants.

The tensions that emerged in the campaign were organised around a discourse of colonialism put forward by members of Dublin and Cork Shell to Sea, but the issues also encompassed differences between ecological and class-based ideologies, as well as significant differences between political cultures of direct action, and ones based around political organising. This work is done with the aim of making movement participants intelligible to each other, to widen movement perspectives, and it attempts to begin a process of dialogue and discussion between actors in the campaign against Shell, who have struggled with these issues.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Firstly, I would like to thank my supervisor Laurence Cox for his engagement, deep interest and analysis, and for always pushing me to take the research further. I would also like to thank everyone involved in the CEESA programme for an excellent year, with lots of different perspectives and new ways of looking at familiar problems. Thanks to Cristina Flesher Fominaya for a very interesting debate, and for lots of new thoughts. My deep gratitude is also extended to the research participants, who were very generous with their time and who made huge efforts to grapple with tensions that are often politically and emotionally challenging.

Thank you to Jeff, Benjamin, Tony, Kelly-Anne, Claire, Cathal and John – your voices were invaluable in getting through this thesis. My housemates Amy, Fergal and Richael were always understanding and supportive, as were my quasi-housemates Fergal and Finbar. Among many good and encouraging friends, Marianna stands out for her positivity and solidarity. Thank you to my wonderful family, who kept me going from near and far, and to my brilliant proof-readers, Mick and Josie. Finally, and most importantly, thank you to Siân for your positivity, formatting, care, proof-reading, support, analysis and for keeping me on the tracks when derailment felt inevitable. There is no way that I would have made it through this without you – your love and care are hugely appreciated. Thank you.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1

Introduction Part I

This thesis is about alliance in social movements: how they can fail to work well, and how we can try to make them work better. Specifically, it looks at tensions that arose around a discourse of colonialism, which combined with political differences between English ecological activists, members of Dublin and Cork Shell to Sea (DC), and Irish members of the Rossport Solidarity Camp (RSC), within the campaign against Shell in North West Mayo, Ireland. I have been a participant in this campaign over a long period of years, including living on the RSC for 20 months in 2009-10, and was involved in discussions around these tensions in that time. As such, this thesis is autobiographical in part, telling the story of a very personal struggle to understand these tensions, and to look at how they might have been handled better.

My specific drive in undertaking this research was to attempt to address a question which had been bothering me for some time: why were there so many tensions between ecological campaigners from England on the one hand, and Dublin and Cork Shell to Sea on the other, in the campaign against Shell's Corrib gas project – what were the problems that were making this alliance very difficult to sustain? On the surface, the answer was quite easy: each group had different political priorities, and there was the issue of the after-effects of colonialism being seen to have an impact on how the campaign was being run. At the same time, all shared the goals of stopping Shell's project in the proposed form and supporting the community, and they held these goals very strongly, which could have been seen as sufficiently strong to keep them working together towards these common goals. There was also an element of collaboration between the two groups over the years, but I would argue that this was limited, as will be explored during the course of this thesis.

This line of inquiry led me to my research question: 'How do social movement alliances manage to acknowledge and work across difference within conflict situations?'During the course of undertaking the research, I maintained my orientation towards movement building, which has been an important guide throughout this process. The orientation of the project has, however, been tempered by the realisation of the depth and complexity of the tensions as experienced by the participants. This has led me to re-adjust the boundaries of the project, making intelligibility between the groups into a primary focus, as well as looking at ways that we can avoid some of the problematic practices in the campaign, as much as how we can seek to do things better. I feel that this amounts to a reflexive recalibration of the project through the Participatory Action Research

(PAR – explored in the Methods and Methodology chapter) method which I am using, in response to the participants' views and the unfolding nature of the research.

1.1 Background information

The campaign against Shell in Mayo has sought to stop the building of an onshore pipeline and refinery for the exploitation of the Corrib natural gas field, 80 kilometres off the west coast of Ireland. The campaign also seeks a larger state share of the benefits from the field. This was originally mostly a local campaign, until five men (who became known as 'the Rossport 5') were jailed for their opposition to the project. This saw a galvanising of support for the campaign around the country, and internationally. The following are the five main groups involved in the campaign, which can be broadly characterised as follows:

- **Mayo Shell to Sea**: A local group, opposed to development on land, who call for a greater share of state ownership of natural resources. Their focus is both local and national, and their political perspectives are united by a strong local sentiment.

- **Pobal Chill Chomáin**: A local group, open to on-land development, as long as it takes place at an isolated and unpopulated location. They have no position on ownership of the gas, and are in favour of lobbying. Their focus is largely local, and their political orientation is similar to the above, but with a more reformist outlook.

- **Rossport Solidarity Camp (RSC):** Live locally, but made up of people from outside the area (mainly from Ireland and England, but people from a large number of other countries have also lived there). They have similar goals to Mayo Shell to Sea, with more of an emphasis on the environment, and they also aim to support the local community. They focus largely on local affairs, with some attention paid to national issues. The camp is a very broad home to people of eco-anarchist and left-libertarian backgrounds, among other environmentalists and social justice activists.

- **Dublin and Cork Shell to Sea (DC)**: Based in Dublin and Cork (didn't live on the RSC). Opposed to development on land and call for a greater share of state ownership of natural resources. Economic concerns are focussed on heavily, and their focus is mostly national. They come from a broadly left-libertarian perspective, with a strong platformist anarchist element.

- **Ecological activists from England**: Stay locally, (some live) at the Rossport Solidarity Camp; they are from England (a number of whom have Irish backgrounds). Aim to support the community, and to argue for a more environmental focus in the campaign, as part of a vision for a wholesale change in society. Their focus is local, as well as global, and they are broadly eco-anarchist.

1.2 My Assumptions

Some of the main assumptions that I have made in undertaking this research are as follows:

Assumption 1 – These tensions are a worthy topic for research: The campaign against Shell has been one of the most significant social movement struggles in Ireland over the last decade, mobilising large numbers of participants and posing huge opposition to Shell and the Irish state over a sustained period of years. Within this campaign there were a number of different groups, of which English ecological activists, DC, and Irish members of the RSC would have been some of the most significant (along with the local groups Mayo Shell to Sea and Pobal Chill Chomáin). As such, the tensions between the groups had a significant impact on the campaign as a whole. The differences that were involved in these tensions are also ones that are significant in many contemporary movements: tensions between ecology and socialism; between political organising and direct action cultures among others. They are also overlaid with a disputed discourse of colonialism, making for a fascinating case study which combines wide-ranging movement concerns with a concrete, complex, and very much contested movement reality.

Assumption 2 – That issues around a discourse on colonialism were an important part of these tensions: This issue was a very live debating point within the campaign against Shell for a significant period of time. It was advanced, for the most part, by members of DC, who felt that there were problems with the way that English people were behaving in the campaign in a number of different respects. This was understood and discussed in a discourse around colonialism, and its after effects. The issues that they raised were accepted as having a validity by other participants in the campaign, including participants from England – none of my participants dispute the existence of this as an issue or problem. However, a number of different points were made countering the criticism, in full or in part, as well as implications drawn within it. These will be explored more fully during the course of this thesis. Importantly, there were notably different (though both critical) reactions from English activists at the RSC and Irish participants there, along with very different ways of understanding the tensions in the campaign, and these will also be more fully explored.

Assumption 3 – That the part of the alliance against Shell composed of DC and the English ecological activists didn't function: In common with the overwhelming message from my participants, I will contend that this part of the alliance against Shell didn't function. By this, I mean that the balance between tensions and positives in regard to the relationship between DC and English ecological activists was heavily balanced towards dysfunction, and that positive examples of these groups working together were few and far between. The Irish members of the RSC are somewhat in

between these two groups, maintaining different levels of relationships with both. All of these issues will be explored throughout the course of this thesis. This is not to contend that the alliance against Shell didn't function as a whole – it often did – or that the groups mentioned didn't work well with other groups in the campaign – they did. However, the best arguments that can be put forward for the specific part of the alliance that is being examined are that these groups worked separately on different aspects of the campaign; that they participated in many of the same protests and gatherings, and; that conflict was not always expressed and there was no formal split or leaving of groups from the campaign. While emphasising that both DC and English ecological activists worked well with other parts of the campaign, these arguments do not convince that these groups functioned in alliance with one another. To be clear, this is definitely not an argument that they could not have worked together; rather that they did not. This is emphasised in order to bring the seriousness of the tensions in the campaign into focus, and to show that there is both a major issue here and a very significant scope for improvement.

Assumption 4 – That my participants are intelligent, rational actors trying to deal with a difficult situation: This may seem like an obvious contention at first glance, but I feel that it is important to emphasise that the research participants are people doing their best to engage with, and make sense of, many different variables and motivations which are often in competition in a complex movement context. Emphasising their rationality does not imply a lack of emotionality – rather these two functioned in concert with one another rather than in competition. None of the participants are by any means dupes or simply slaves to ideology or context, though all are influenced by both of them. They actively create their own theories and understandings in the movement context, moving beyond conventional explanations in many cases (Cox 2003).

1.3 Use of terminology

In such a contested situation, it is important to be as clear as possible in relation to the terms used, as different terms have power, and can be used by activists with subtly or significantly different meanings. As such, I will here lay out some explanations of some key terms which I will use:

'**Colonialism'**: This term will be used to refer to the discourse put forward by members of DC that asserted that the historical legacies of Ireland's colonial relationship with England continue to have an effect in the present day, and one that is little understood by most English activists when they first arrive in North West Mayo. Responses to the colonialism discourse will also use the term colonialism, as this was the term and discourse that was debated within the campaign.

‘**Direct action’**: A broad definition of direct action would hold that it is any action that directly affects one’s opponent, typically by stopping or blocking work from happening. In this case, I will associate direct action with particular tactical repertoires which can be seen as strongly associated with the radical ecological movement in England in recent decades. On the (few) occasions when the term is used to refer to different forms of direct action, this will be specified.

‘The campaign against Shell’: This phrase is used throughout this research to encompass all of the groups involved in the campaign. At first glance, this is an obvious phrase to use, but it is important to note that it has implications. That is, some members of the campaign use ‘Shell to Sea’ to refer to the entire campaign, while others use that term to refer to DC, or specifically to the local Shell to Sea group. Similarly, the phrase ‘the local community’ is used by different people in the campaign in a variety of ways. Even the phrase ‘the campaign against Shell’ is somewhat problematic, as it has been sometimes taken to imply a wholesale rejection of Shell (in opposition to the compromise of Shell to Sea), a position that would be seen as ‘belonging’ to radical ecological activists. This latter is not the intention in my use of the phrase. I chose it as a phrase that is not seen as strongly belonging to any side, and because I could not find a better one that was not seen by some actors as even more belonging to one point of view.

1.4 Why does this matter? Personal aspects

I have been involved in a number of different social justice groups over the last 10 years. Over that course of time, my participation has evolved to the point that I currently focus a significant proportion of my energies in passing on my experience to other campaigners, alongside involving myself in campaigning work. This approach has come from seeing huge loss of knowledge and experience over time, due to combinations of unsustainable working practices, discord and infighting within groups, changes in people's life circumstances, and many other reasons – and the sense that our movements can be made more fulfilling and more effective if we can improve the ways in which we pass on experience and how we organise. This ethos is reflected in this thesis, which attempts to gather movement knowledge to the benefit of both the immediate participants, and also others involved in movement participation. I feel that this research constitutes a contribution to movement practice and knowledge, and this is something that is fulfilling to me personally as a long time movement activist.

1.5 Why this matters intellectually and for movements

To me, the intellectual importance of this research is strongly intertwined with its significance for movements. The issue of how to acknowledge and work with difference is a hugely important one for the building and maintenance of contemporary movement alliances for practitioners, and is also an area of interest for social movement scholars. Alliance is largely accepted as increasing a movement's chance of success (Laumann and Knocke 1987 quoted in della Porta and Diani 2006), and is usually something which is also seen as desirable by movement actors. The very idea of working in alliance is itself an expression of the tension which is at the heart of this research question: alliance implies a willingness to cooperate, but is also an assertion of difference (Rucht 2004). As such, alliances are not necessarily easy affairs, and can fail as often as they succeed. This piece aims to contribute to the literature on social movement alliances by examining a complex movement situation made up of made up of individuals and loose groups in a fluid movement context, which is notably different to the organisational context examined in much of the social movement literature on alliances. Hand in hand with this, it aims to hold a mirror up to participants in this particular movement, to disentangle a complex situation, and to learn from the tensions over difference in this context to the benefit of future movement alliances. This latter goal aims to improve the effectiveness of movements, through working on the (often significant) impediment to movement work of internal tensions and disputes.

1.6 Limitations placed on the scope of the research

This study faced a number of limitations, primarily around the time available to complete is as part of an MA.While this thesis talks *about* the community, I didn't talk *to* the community in my research. This isbecause the tensions and difficulties that I've chosen to study only tangentially involved the community – these were tensions between English activists, Dublin and Cork activists, and the RSC. While certainly I would like to have interviewed members of the local community, I defined a research question and attempted to pick the most relevant people for it. I'm very much limited by time in this research and have had to limit my numbers of interviews. I intend to interview local people in future PhD research, along with numerous other activists. While it may be somewhat uncomfortable (as one of my participants stated) to have had this debate largely away from the community, that was largely the reality of how it took place. I do not think that it lessens the importance of looking at these tensions, or the potentials for learning which I feel are part of this situation.Some of the other areas largely omitted included studies of the impact of gender and class on these tensions. While both are briefly discussed, considerations of time obliged me to concentrate on other elements of the project. I feel that in order to properly discuss the implications

of either of these elements in the campaign would require a significant dedication of space and time which I do not have. I plan to return to them in future research, as part of the aforementioned PhD.

1.7 Structure of the thesis

This thesis is structured around the research question: 'How do cross-movement alliances manage to acknowledge and work with difference within conflict situations?'The next section, 'Introduction Part II – Background', outlines some fundamental context to this research project. This section is required in order to help enable the reader to navigate their way through the way different aspects of this multi-dimensional work. The Literature Review outlines the most relevant academic research on social movements which relates most closely to my topic. It should be noted that I found relatively little academic literature which was directly related to the type of complex alliance situation made up of informal and community based groups that I was researching – this led me into a broad search, encompassing a range of different literatures which each have a bearing on my topic. The Methods and Methodology chapter goes on to outline the methods used in my research, along with the issues I struggled with the most appropriate way to best research this campaign and these issues. In the Findings chapter, due to the complexity of the data, I developed a number of sub-questions upon which to anchor the findings. They are:

- How did different movement participants see the tensions?
- How did people understand the discourse of colonialism put forward?
- What were the barriers to working together in alliance?
- How important were political differences in this situation?

This Findings chapter attempts to outline and untangle the complex and contentious nature of the tensions within the campaign, and to put the different discourse around those tensions into relation with one another, by exploring participants' views and attempting to contextualise them. The Discussion chapter continues this process by reflecting on the findings outlined in the previous chapter by anchoring the analysis around the following sub-questions:

- What did these tensions mean for the alliance within the campaign?
- Why did different ideas of diversity cause problems?
- How did people's political views and position in the debate influence their ideas of the local community? And of solidarity?
- How did the groups contest the meaning of colonialism, and what does it tell us?
- What can we learn from the positions of Irish campers?

- What emotions did people feel in these situations, and why is it important?

In dialogue with my participants, this Discussion section aims to go deeper into the causes and interactions between people, ideologies and often very different conceptions of the tensions in the campaign. This is done to produce a coherent analysis of why these tensions emerged and worked in the ways that they did, and attempts to make the different perspectives expressed intelligible to each other.

The closing of the thesis has two sections, entitled 'Reasons for hope?' and 'Conclusion – Implications'. The first of these attempts to outline some potential steps towards new ways of working in alliance, steps which balance the reality of the very significant problems faced with a hopeful orientation towards the possibilities of doing things better in the future. The latter section attempts to tie together the implications arising from this research, its relation to existing knowledge and practice, and actions that are planned arising from it.

Chapter 2

Introduction Part II – Background

This second part of the Introduction aims to give a range of background information which is necessary for the reader to be able to grasp much of what follows – the tensions examined herein are complex, and the campaign against Shell is equally so. Having a sense of a number of the key issues explored in this section is crucial to following this work overall. This section will firstly outline a number of groups that were significantly involved in the campaign and in the tensions that will be explored in this research. This is followed by an summary of what I will term 'The transition period'; a period of huge difficulty, change and flux in the campaign against Shell, and one which is necessary to understand as part of the contextualisation of the tensions examined in this work. This is followed by a brief situation of this as a social issue, in interaction with the individuals involved, and then an exploration of the concept of 'community' in which this campaign must be understood. The final section outlines a very broad overview of the dispute which can be referred back to, in order to aid the reader in navigating this multi-dimensional work.

2.1 Explanations of groups

Earth First! (EF!) UK is a radical ecological network based in the UK. It is particularly associated with the anti-roads protests in England in the early 1990s; in more recent years it is much less active as a network. Its importance in this piece is as a 'starting point' for much of the ecological direct action culture examined in this research. A number of research participants have also been active in EF! In more recent years, Climate Camp has been a much more prominent group on the radical ecological scene in the UK. It is also important to note that many of the English ecological activists involved in the campaign against Shell were not associated with EF! before their time in North West Mayo – many of them became involved in it afterwards.

Éirigí are a tightly organised left-republican political party who have been heavily involved in Dublin Shell to Sea. They were formed after a breakaway to the left from Sinn Féin, calling for the creation of a 32-county republic on socialist principles. They are heavily involved in street protests and take direct action as part of these. They are oriented towards the working class.

The **Workers Solidarity Movement (WSM)** are a platformist anarchist organisation. They work within a closely organised group and are dual organisationalists, meaning that they aim to be active in both their own organisation and in the main organisations of the working class (rather than setting up their own campaigning organisations), such as trade unions and community struggles –

such as the campaign against Shell. They are primarily urban based, with branches in Dublin and Cork that were strongly involved in the local Shell to Sea groups, and are usually oriented towards the urban working class.

2.2 The transition period

What I will refer to as 'the transition period' throughout this piece was a period from the end of 2006 until the start of 2008, when a number of hugely significant and often traumatic events took place in the campaign against Shell. These would go on to have important long-term effects on the campaign. The first major events of this transition period is the calling off of a Day of Action – a large and militant protest – in October 2006. Days of Action were called by the campaign on a regular basis throughout the autumn of 2006. These involved blocking the roads and serious levels of confrontation between large numbers of protestors and the police – this form of direct action can be distinguished from the above definition by virtue of the fact that it did not involve innovative tactics associated with ecological movements, but was more about blocking roads through direct physical confrontation with police. The protestors were from the local community, the RSC, buses of activists from Dublin and Cork, and other activists from around the country. These protests continued with escalating levels of police violence, culminating in a baton charge on 10 November, when a number of protestors were hospitalised. Due to fear of a very serious injury, the following Day of Action was called off by the local community, without consultation with DC (which would have been standard at that time). This decisionis felt by members of the latter groups to have drastically weakened the campaign – at the time they felt disbelief and were very unhappy with the way the decision had been taken. This also totally undermined the DC strategy of bringing busloads of people down to protests in Mayo, which had been having success in radicalising people. During this period and in the months thereafter, most of 'the first generation' of long-term members of the RSC left the campaign – they would go on, in time, to be replaced by a 'second generation'. This was made up of smaller numbers of Irish activists from an ecological background and English ecological activists, many of whom were recruited through contacts there and through a number of recruitment tours undertaken to the UK. In turn, this had the effect of bringing a large number of activists who had little familiarity with the situation into an RSC that was weak and had very little capacity in terms of structures or numbers to incorporate them properly. It also introduced a much more significant element of regular change of people living on camp, especially in the summer months, as there was a very high turnover of English activists. This 'second generation' had an outlook on the campaign that was often very different to that of the first – this difference, and how it was negotiated, is one of the central dynamics of this thesis.

In November 2007, three priests from the Kilcommon Parish (where all of the protests were taking place) published a letter calling for a compromise – they called for the refinery to be built at a remote onshore location, rather than at the proposed Bellanaboy site. Their suggestion was that it should be built at Glinsk. This was done in consultation with some members of the local community, and caused a split in the Shell to Sea group between those who favoured this strategy and those who continued to call for Shell to refine at sea. Shell to Sea continued to operate, but the members who supported the Glinsk proposal left to form a new group, Pobal Chill Chomáin ('Kilcommon Community' in Irish)[1]. These events also had a serious damaging impact on the trust and working relationships between members of the local community and activists both in the RSC and in DC.

A third major event of this period was the eviction of the RSC from the Glengad sand-dunes in October 2007, where it had been for over a year and a half. This was done due to an environmental complaint by Monica Muller, a local resident opposed to Shell, but unaffiliated with either group mentioned above. This, along with dwindling numbers, called the continuing existence of the RSC into serious question. However, a house was offered to RSC members to live in during the winter of 2007, and more people came to spend significant periods of time on camp in the spring of 2008, many of them English ecological activists. Together, these events constituted a period of huge change for the campaign, leaving it looking very different. In particular for RSC, the change in location and people effected understandings of the campaign.

In a broader contextual sense, 2008 would be the year of the global financial crisis, which was particularly pronounced in Ireland. This was utilised particularly by Dublin Shell to Sea to make arguments and produce publicity which emphasised the economic aspects of the campaign, arguing that natural resources off the West coast of Ireland could be a way out of the crisis. This meant that they were spending more time working on the economic side of campaigning at a national level, at the same time as the RSC was becoming more ecologically oriented.

2.3 Between the social and the individual

Talking about the tensions within this campaign is a challenging task. Considering the many differences between individuals' backgrounds, orientations, political understandings and many other factors, it would be very possible to reduce the discussion to one about the differences between individuals. I believe that the differences explored in this thesis are largely social in nature, and that examining them as such can add much to our understandings of these tensions. That said, I do not wish to erase the individual differences between participants, and it is important to attempt to

[1] Another group, Pobal Le Chéile ('Community Together') was also formed at this time, made up of local business owners opposed to the project. This group worked closely with Pobal Chill Chomáin.

negotiate a position between that, and total individuation. Many of the participants who I define as 'English ecological activists' had different familial or personal connections to Ireland – this category is useful and should be understood as constituting membership of a political 'scene' or subculture which is located in a specific place at a specific time, and as being influenced by the wider society in which it is embedded. The same is true for participants that I define as 'Dublin and Cork Shell to Sea members', some of whom had connections with England, and who were part of specific groups, but also of wider movement milieu in Ireland at a specific time. All of this means that people's views were far from uniform within their groups, and that this can be understood in terms of social factors as well as individual preferences.

2.4 What is 'community'?

The following sections discuss one of the most contested and slippery terms and concepts used in the campaign against Shell, that of 'community'. While the subject matter of this thesis does not directly involve people living in the immediate area of Shell's development (in that I didn't interview any local people for this research, and they were largely external to these debates), it is crucial to have an understanding of both the concept of 'community' that was used in this context, and the ways that people positioned themselves in relation to their idea of what 'the local community' was.

Firstly, what is community, in this context? The idea of rural community which is prevalent in Ireland is heavily dependent on nationalist myths of what a 'real Ireland' is. That is, the idea that small, isolated rural communities, often in the West of Ireland, constitute the essence of what it is to be Irish, rather than, say, people living in cities or those living in large towns. There is a very strong equation of authenticity connected with rurality, one which is mobilised very strongly by groups like the Irish Famers' Association (IFA) to validate their claims. This discourse was also mobilised by the campaign against Shell to good effect – the idea of small farmers and fishermen opposing the oil giant is a very evocative one, and one which draws heavily on nationalist idea of what community is, and the importance of this idea to the sense of what Ireland is, for its power. This is also based on an idea of rural populism which associates urban areas with wealth and rural ones with poverty.

The picture needs to be tempered by the knowledge that in reality rural Ireland's communities are often very strongly influenced by local elites. Curtin and Varley (1995) identifies this as a crucial distinction from urban community organising, which is more commonly along class lines. Schoolteachers, to take one example, were very prominent in the campaign against Shell in Mayo, and education was identified as an important hierarchy within the local campaign by one

participant. Generally, rural movements are spearheaded by elites and act in their interests; at the same time, there is often significant participation from poorer social groups. All of this is said not to denigrate the campaign, but to contextualise the situation better.

Another important factor in thinking about community in Ireland is to explore how many Irish environmental campaigns have been local-based and led throughout history, and continuing in the present day. This includes campaigns against chemical companies in Cork, incinerators around the county and many other examples (Allen 2004, Leonard 2006, Tovey 2007). These groups have also managed to mobilise many of the nationalist myths and ideas which have proven so potent in the fight against Shell. It is important to note that these types of campaigns have been very prominent in Ireland, making up a large part of the environmental movement here. The leadership shown in these campaigns from a local base is in marked contrast with much of the 'outsider' led English environmental movement in recent times.

All of this discussion culminates in the question: what impact does this have on the tensions between DC and English ecological activists? The answer lies in how the people in the local area were seen by each group, and thus how they sought to work with them. Both groups generally saw the local community as 'a good thing', and the goal of solidarity with them was very high up on their respective agendas. That said, there were serious differences with regard to what 'solidarity' meant to each – and indeed, what exactly the local community represented and how working with them was to be gone about. While this is not a cast-iron statement, people in DC *tended* to look at local people as people to work with and campaign alongside, and while this is also broadly true for English activists, a romanticised vision of the local community was more pronounced here. The discourse of rural community mobilised in Mayo must be seen as an important factor in this, as must the smaller amount of experience movements in England have had of working with local communities. The question of circumstances and changes within the campaign is a very important variable to this statement, but I believe that it holds firm nevertheless, and I will explore it further in the coming chapter.

2.5 Outline of the tensions examined in this thesis

As will be described in the Findings chapter, the tensions which this research project engages with were multi-faceted, emerging over a period of time, and were understood in very different ways by different participants. This outline is included to give a very broad overview of the respective points of view of different participants, and to help guide the reader through the rest of this complex campaign and research – it can be referred back to as needed. It is not intended to be

definitive, and the below-expressed opinions will be challenged, compared and analysed during the course of this research. It is also inevitably filtered through my own perceptions of the tensions, though I have attempted to be as faithful to the data as possible.

The DC version, in very broad strokes, is as follows: The camp was set up in 2005, very much in partnership with the local community. DC were closely integrated with the camp and the community at that time, and there was a large degree of commonality between the politics of the RSC and DC (indeed, many members of the RSC were comrades in the same organisations (such as the WSM) as members of DC, and there would have been a significant history of working together there over the course of years). The Day of Action was called off in November 2006, and the split followed, and many of the early campers left (see 'The transition period' section above). The campaign was very damaged by all of this. Over time, these early campers were replaced by politically inexperienced Irish newcomers and a larger influx of English ecological activists. The new camp was much more ecologically focussed, and was less about thinking about working alongside the community (in the DC view), or networking nationally in one campaign. These were big changes. Many of the English people who came over were also seen as arrogant and unaware of the context of Ireland and the campaign. This was manifested in an attitude that was interpreted as 'colonial arrogance' or 'colonial privilege', and it caused very significant tensions particularly with DC, who felt that English ecological activists were 'taking over the camp', and thereby heavily influencing the direction of the local campaign. Tensions over these issues built up over a period of time. Attempts were made to address this through talking about the issues with people, and most notably through a number of workshops on Irish history run at annual June gatherings. Despite these efforts, the issue continued to persist, and be a source of tension and distance between the groups.

The English ecological activists' version, in broad strokes, is as follows: People from England were involved in the RSC from the start, but much more people became involved after the recruitment tours in the UK in 2007 and 2008. This was when the campaign was at quite a low ebb. The campaign was seen really positively, as very much integrated with the community (an observed weakness of much ecological campaigning in England), and it came at a good time too, after the 'takeover of Climate Camp by middle class liberals' which was seen by some of the participants. The colonialism discourse started to emerge from DC in 2010, though there had been clashes before, especially at the 2009 summer gathering. The issue was talked about quite a lot, and a workshop was held at the gathering about Irish history, which was seen as very positive and raising awareness, where lots of people stated that they'd learned a lot. But the issue persisted, and people grew tired of it. There was an accepted problem with the perceived ignorance and arrogance of many English

people, but it wasn't the only one; other issues around gender, class, urban-rural differences, and so on, emerged, but were much less discussed. It was also very much seen as an issue of DC losing control, and not knowing how to deal with that; the situation had changed locally, the campaign in Mayo was no longer the same. However DC did not acknowledge that things had changed. The issue of the concentration on nationalisation and economics was also a big difference between the groups, and not something that most people from England were interested in –and it was seen as strange and confusing for anarchists to be so interested in having a state-oriented campaign. There were efforts made from both sides to bridge the gap, but the differences seemed to be significant. There were also issues with Irish campers in terms of the 'colonial' discourse, though much less on the economic side of things.

The Irish campers' version: Working closely and living on camp with the English ecological activists, a significant level of trust had built up between them and the Irish campers. There was a clear commonality between ecological politics, as well as the shared experience of being down in North West Mayo on a day-to-day level, fighting Shell. There was some perception of English arrogance, which could be annoying – P4 refers to this as 'the Climate Camp organising attitude'. Irish campers also felt that some of the criticism from DC was well-founded, but in generally the campers main priority was to get on with things. DC were seen as sometimes over-emphasising matters, and there could be lots of differences between the politics and the ways of doing thing of people on camp and DC. There was more of an emphasis on emphasising Irish culture (for example through Irish language evenings), rather than saying that English people on camp are a problem. Money, economics and bringing about wider political change were much more of a concentration for DC than for the people, Irish and English, living on camp.

Chapter 3

Literature Review

This is a complex and multi-dimensional issue upon which lots of different literatures have a bearing. it appears that tensions of this particular nature are undertheorised in the literature – a search of broad overviews of social movement theory such as 'The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements' (2004) and della Porta and Diani's 'Social Movements: An Introduction' (2006) offer little by way of direct comparison. In addition to this, there is a relative lack of literature on the campaign against Shell as a whole, and much of what does exist is attempting to communicate or advocate in favour of the campaign and thus a very sympathetic standpoint (McCaughan 2008, Siggins 2010) as opposed to an analytical one. With some notable exceptions (Allen 2004, Leonard 2006, Tovey 2007), there is also a relative paucity of literature on rural environmental camapigns in Ireland.

As such, this Literature Review by necessity ranges across a diverse group of literatures, in an attempt to gain different perspectives on a number of the different dimensions of the tensions in the campaign against Shell. These include: collective identity in social movements; processes of attempting to work in alliance across difference (including boundary making); the 'red/green debate'; international solidarity activism and postcolonialism, and; emotions in movement. This has led me to a wide-ranging literature search, attempting to glean relevant insights, with regard to different aspects of the tensions between the two groups, from a range of different areas.

3.1 Social movements and collective identity

During the 1960s, a significant shift from previous collective action which was strongly associated with Marxism took place in social movements. Many (though by no means all) of the movements that emerged at that time concentrated less on economic and material issues and the emancipation of the working classes from need, and are more associated with such issues as global justice, environmental rights and individual and collective identity. Marxist and other social movements still exist, and continue to be often powerful political actors – this should not be construed as an argument that one 'replaced' the other. The importance of the shift in movement approach, and of much of the social movement analysis of that followed it, lies in its placing of movement actors centre-stage and its concentration on the innovative traits of movements which were no longer centred around an analysis of control over the means of production (e.g. Melucci 1989, Touraine 1981).

These groups are theorised within two dominant traditions of approach within social movement theory. The approach associated with Europe is strongly connected to developments in critical and cultural theory within the changing class structures of contemporary capitalism. The tradition associated with America is more concerned with analysis of explicit movement goals, strategies and resource mobilisation. This work is related to the former tradition of thought.

Work in this tradition has put forward an analysis of movements as communities and networks of people building group identities within a wider social identity that they reject, rather than being just tools which instrumentally bring about social change – these groups actively construct the identity and solidarity that they fight for (Melucci 1989, Touraine 1981). In the groundbreaking and hugely influential social movement theory put forward by these two major theorists, everyday values and ways of living are as important as social movement organisations in understanding how social change is brought about. This forms an alteration of how reality is perceived; it is now as much through shared experience of 'living ones values', as much as through participating in demonstrations or campaigns. 'Cultural networks' of connections and relationships grow up around shared activities in which values and ways of living and being are cultivated, creating an understanding of 'the political' whose borders stretch far past the boundaries of explicitly political behaviours (Melucci 1989). Exploring the interactions of the formal goals and practices with these 'cultural networks', and the multiple understandings that grew up around these interactions, is a crucial area of investigation for this thesis.

The interpretation of culture advanced by Eyerman and Jamison (1991) locates social movement actors as producing new forms of knowledge (as well as new knowledge) which challenge and renegotiate dominant notions of 'reality', altering their understandings of the times they live in. As such, a static understanding of social movements is very limited and limiting; it omits the fluidity and constant recreation of both its individual actors, and the comparable processes that take place within groups, collectives and campaigns (Crowley, 2011).

Looking at movements in this way takes us past ideas of what social movements simply 'are', and into more useful terrain around how we can see them as dynamic sites of contestation, negotiation and constant change. While complete agreement is not needed on ideologies, beliefs and interests in order to work together, at the same time a feeling of collective identity defines groups and regulates the prerequisites for membership. This creates a nexus between group identities and individual feelings of belonging, commitment and identification which it can be quite challenging to disentangle (Flesher Fominaya, 2010a) – this is the task which this thesis attempts to

undertake in relation to the tensions outlined in the tensions outlined in the campaign against Shell in North West Mayo, Ireland.

3.2 One theory for examining different collective identities

In this case, two quite different ways of seeing the world come into contact. Flesher Fominaya (writing in the critical European tradition and as a movement-sympathetic scholar) outlines a schema of 'verticals' and 'horizontals' in contemporary movements which has potentially useful parallels with the situation in North West Mayo:

	Political-instrumental	**Social-expressive**
Relation to state	Transform	Resist
Target of protest	State	Society
Relation to mass media	Work closely	Avoid, create alternative
Importance of mass for movement	Very important	Not important/shouldn't be important
Importance of direct action	A critical method among many forms of protest	The method
Tactics/ideology/culture	Separable	Inseparable
Primary frames/attraction to movement	Environmental/Green	Direct action/communal and alternative lifestyle/anarchist

Table 7.1 (Flesher Fominaya, 2013, p.115)

This is clearly not fully applicable to the differences between DC and the RSC – one of the obvious ways in which it departs is that DC's primary frames were certainly not environmental or green. That said, much of the distinctions in approach and underlying principles outlined here are potentially useful in looking at difference in the campaign against Shell. They will be applied to the data in the Discussion chapter to enable analysis of where existing knowledge is confirmed, and where this research departs from it.

3.3 Processes of attempting to work in alliance across difference

Different tactics and methods are undertaken by movement actors in the process of negotiating attempts to work across difference. These seek to negotiate the difficult tension which is an inherent expression of one of the central issues around working in alliance – the simultaneous pulling together (co-operation) and pulling away from one another (maintaining separation, i.e. not merging) that working in this fashion implies (Rucht 2004). This can be seen as an 'accepted' view of social movement research, given its inclusion in the major 'Blackwell Companion to Social Movements'. Implicit assumptions about unity that can underpin mobilisation are thus often challenged by difference, obliging attempts to negotiate how best they can work together. One example of this is the taking-on of broadly distinct roles within 'separate streams' in the campaign, helping ensure that different participants take on roles that correspond with their interests, and which can still all be beneficial for the campaign (Beamish and Luebbers 2009). This makes a virtue out of difference and separation, utilising the varying interests and expertises which are possessed within the campaign to fight a number of different aspects of the campaign in a range of ways – and also minimising friction between potentially contending elements by creating a useful distance between them.

Another approach emphasises the importance of the conscious undertaking of 'coalition work' by movement actors (Staggenborg 1986, quoted in della Porta and Diani, 2006). That is, significant formal and informal work is done, often 'behind the scenes', to ensure that collaborative efforts can take place. For example, the organisation of meetings, conflict resolution, and the building and maintaining of communication links are just some examples of 'coalition work' that can contribute to the ability for movements to work across difference effectively. This approach laid out in these two examples is potentially of use, but it is somewhat limited by the fact that it is very much situated in the American tradition of social movement research, and as such concentrates on formal social movement organisations – this is less useful for the kind of complex movement alliance with informal and community based groups explored in this piece.

Related to the above, one practice which has been observed by social movement scholar Flesher Fominaya to aid in the creation of alliances is through undertaking action together, thus building up closer working ties: "Participating together in protests [and risks] generates bonds between activists and builds up a shared history and memories that can sustain movements even in periods of low activity or abeyance" (2010a).

The flip side of that is that the absence of such shared participation may lead to the absence of such bonds – this means that differences may become expanded and difficult to deal with, in a way that might not be the case if there were strong links between the groups. In these cases of contact across difference, another significant phenomenon which has been observed is the change that contact with different political knowledges and movement traditions obliges, forcing reflection and adaptation in the contact between new approaches (which is not to say that merging takes place) (Cox and Flesher Fominaya 2009).

3.4 Boundary-making

'Boundary-making' is a strategy undertaken by groups within social movements to delimit difference between them and others within movement, and to counter the sometimes flattening assumptions that can have a tendency to emerge in large groups or campaigns. Boundary work is an important process in delimiting a 'we' – it also necessarily involves a process of defining what 'we are not' in a process of creating reciprocal identification between group members. As such, while boundary making helps with recognising commonalities with others within the newly-defined group, it can simultaneously lead to fragmentation, as strong group identities and/or different understandings of collective identity can work against attempts at building alliances between movement groups (Flesher Fominaya 2010a). Thus boundary-making is undertaken to enhance the visibility of a group's concerns, and can be used as an exercise of power in refocusing the attention of participants on an issue which had not been prominent up to that point. The visibility which these initiatives give also serves to further the legitimation of the discourse of colonialism in activist discourse in the campaign against Shell (through a form of boundary-making), and emphasises the difference of people's specific experiences, undermining ideas of sameness. Activists living on the RSC also undertook boundary work, defining the tensions as existing between the RSC (as a whole) and DC. A similar dynamic is observed by feminist scholar Roth, bringing together social movement theory with feminist concerns in her study of ACT UP/LA (1998, p.137). Foregrounding this issue can be seen in itself as an action taken to counteract the felt negative effects of these dynamics, as it raises awareness of the issue, obliging engagement with it by people who may not even have been aware of its existence. This counters the 'we're all in this together' ethos which poses the danger of eliding difference, and communicates that people's knowledge is incomplete (Roth 1998). Having said that, the very fact that this issue could be raised with the (realised) expectation that it would be respected and listened to by all exhibits the fact that a shared value context of respect for difference and opposition to oppression exists in the campaign – this can be crucially important to creating solidarity across social barriers (Ostrander 1999, p.640).

3.5 Red/green debate

The anti-Shell campaign fits within a well-established tradition of rural opposition to unwanted development in Ireland (Allen 2004, Leonard 2006, Tovey 2007 – these scholars' work is characterised by being community-focussed, an unusual feature in social movement theory), but is unusual and particularly interesting for a number of reasons, some of the most notable of which are: it has continued for almost 15 years, nine as a broad alliance; it has brought together a wide range of actors and supporters and successfully kept them together, forming a formidable opponent to the multinational company, and; these actors have come from a number of different ideological positions (Cox, 2011b) – one of the most notable of these was the difference between, broadly speaking, ecological and socialist perspectives.

There is a significant history of attempting to bring 'red' and 'green' together in alliance in recent decades (notably during the 1980s and 1990s), both in terms of political initiatives and in terms of theorising movements. These attempts are rooted in the shared radical and anti-capitalist politics of radical ecology and socialism, and the sense among many participants and scholars that there should be ways for them to work together – but equally, that differences in values and approach cause them to often encounter problems. For example, in 'Ecosocialism', David Pepper attempts to bring the energy and contemporary relevance of ecological social movements under the wing of an 'old social movement' socialism which is in favour of Enlightement rationality, in arguing that many environmentalists see social values as more important than social structures, such as capitalism, and thus accuses them of 'political wooliness'. The counterpoint is argued by movement participant Plows, who says that values are perpetuated by structures, and as such, they are both part of a wider whole (both in Plows 1997, p.5). The differences between these perspectives simultaneously exemplify both some of the difficulties encountered in attempting to bring these perspectives together, and the continuing strength of the impulse that argues that attempting to do so is important and necessary political work.

Contemporary radical ecological movements can be considered as examples of 'new social movements', the boundaries of whose concerns extend beyond the traditional boundaries of 'the political', with their goals extending into changing culture and values in society. As such the forms of action they undertake are very much connected with the sense of building group identities within a wider social identity which it rejects, as discussed above. While it is important not to attempt to create a simplistic dichotomy, many groups and individuals who would primarily identify as socialists would be less concerned with these forms of cultural action, and more with direct attempts to bring about social change more instrumentally.

As such, it can be seen that ecological and socialist politics take place in quite different 'political cultures'. Different political issues and perspectives can often be very much bound up with specific political cultures, which can cause difficulties as least as serious as the actual political distance and differences between them. For example, debates over seeking to bring about cultural change vs. trying to enable/force structural change by institutions which took place in the anti-nuclear movement in Ireland during the 1970s (Dalby 1984) can be instructive in attempting to understand how political differences can manifest in tensions within broad campaigns (it is important to note here that despite these tensions and the three-way split in the campaign, they still managed to stop the advent of nuclear power in Ireland). Furthermore, the centrality of the ethos and the use of certain forms of direct action to the identities of many people coming from the radical ecological tradition is also very important here – it can be seen as 'suffusing movement culture and identity, making up part of what it means to be a direct activist' (Plows, Wall and Doherty 2004, p.213).

The problem of distance between movement actors and the rest of the population is a regular issue among many movements, and can particularly be an issue for new social movements which can lack roots in particular communities or workplace settings that would be the staple starting point for many 'older' movements. The article 'Give Up Activism' was a hugely influential movement piece written in 1999 about the separation that the self-designation of 'activist' – seen as 'a specialist or expert in social change' – created between movements and 'ordinary people'. Originally a pamphlet, it was reproduced in 'Do or Die' (Anonymous, 1999), the journal of radical ecological group Earth First!, and much discussed and contradicted in radical movements, including ecological movements, in England and further afield during that period. It created debates around the forms of action taken by movement actors which continue to resonate to this day (the article itself also remains popular with movement actors). This gives us a sense of both the continuing difficulty that these movements experience with regard to engaging with people outside of their existing cultures and networks, and the parallel continuing attempts to improve on this situation in movement practice.

This distance has been observed as leading to difficulties in many protest camps in England, which were often set up by groups or individuals from outside of the immediate area of the protest, with little if any local input. These may have had greater or lesser levels of support (or even antagonism, on occasion) from local residents, but were rarely initiated by the community (see for example, Clements 2008). Put simply, in many cases the local community supported the ecological

protestors' campaign; in contrast, in North West Mayo, the protesters supported the community's already-ongoing campaign.

This is not necessarily the case throughout the UK – movement organiser and social movement scholar Scandrett has observed that some direct action activists in Sotland are making links between activities causing environmental damage and problems of social injustice. This has led to some alliances being formed between radical ecological activists and local community-based groups (2012). While this is a very welcome development, it must be seen as an uneven and uncertain process. And even in a case like the campaign against the M77 in Glasgow, where protestors from outside the area worked closely with the local community, this imbalance seems to have persisted. While there had been many long years of campaigning by local groups in the 1970s and 80s, this campaign was largely dormant by the time the Pollock Free State was set up by ecological campaigners in 1994 (Robinson 1999, pp. 349-50). This sparked the local community back into action, and even to some of them setting up their own Corkerhill protest camp. But it is clear from reading articles in the EF! journal, *Do or Die*, and in interviews conducted by movement-sympathetic author Seel (1997), that the view of many of the protestors was that, while it was great that the people in the area had 'got on board', they were very much seen as playing a supporting role. This should be understood in the context of the fact that the majority of ecological activism in England at that time was not community-based. England is where EF! UK was formed and was strongest, thus influencing EF! in Scotland.

3.6 International Solidarity activism

If we remember that the process of international solidarity is, like revolution, a question and not an answer, then it too can realize its capacity to be an exploration in the creation of dignity. (Ryan 2011, p.211). Decades of International Solidarity work have taught many lessons to participants in these movements, of which the most relevant to the present discussion are problems of inequalities between activists from the global South and those from the North. These experiences can offer interesting perspectives on the problems which can emerge between people from very different backgrounds when they are working on political campaigns together, and can help explore some of the pitfalls and problems that have been encountered by people over the course of time, and the differing attempts to address them.

In 'Zapatista Spring', Irish author and movement participant Ramor Ryan explores some of the difficulties around this type of international solidarity when working on a water project in Chiapas, Mexico. He explores the idea of 'a solidarity that swings both ways, but not a reciprocity',

putting forward the idea that a sharing and a generosity can take place, and that bonds of solidarity can be built up; but at the same time, there are limitations to this, in that the participants are neither equal nor the same, and that even when they come together, their struggles are different ones (Ryan 2011, p.189).

A comparable dilemma has arisen in relation to international anarchists supporting the Palestinian struggle for national self-determination: "the tension between anarchist's anti-imperialist commitments on the one hand, and their traditionally wholesale rebuttal of the state and nationalism on the other, would seem to leave them as an impasse regarding the national liberation struggles of occupied peoples" (Gordon 2008, p.152). An attitude of participation as followers and supporters, rather than as equals (let alone leaders) is advocated. Furthermore, other ways for people to overcome this felt contradiction in solidarity of this type include: having an understanding that solidarity is more important than the contradiction; offering strategic support on the way to a better future in a longer-term struggle, and; arguing that support for the community's goals is the only practical way to support them (Gordon 2008, p.154-56). These tactics can potentially be of use in examining the difficulties faced by activists involved in the campaign against Shell, and for building understandings of ways beyond the difficulties and contradictions experienced by people. It is important to situate this work in the context of Gordon's personal participation in these movements, his commitment to anarchism, and the movement-friendly nature of his academic work, which particularly in this case, attempts to develop its theory from the practice of movement actors. This work is of particular use in understanding how each of the groups interacted with the local community in North West Mayo – an understanding of which is an important part of exploring the tensions between the two groups – but it captures only this one of the numerous dynamics which drove the tensions between them. The challenges faced in attempting to work together are very neatly summed up by Ramnath (another anarchist scholar), who simultaneously offers a direction towards better relations of solidarity:

> "Relationships of solidarity should not be uncritical from either side. If practiced on a level ground of mutual respect and two-way dialogue, there should be neither romanticising nor paternalism." (Ramnath 2011).

This is particularly relevant in the tensions explored in this thesis, as accusations were directed at English ecological activists of not working with the local community as equal partners, while accusations of attempting to impose their visions on the RSC, and on the campaign as a whole, were made against DC – these will be explored in the following chapters.

The exploration of efforts to negotiate towards solidarity emphasise the importance of recognition of difference and of the reality of often very different contexts and understandings of political action. Writing in a Workers Solidarity Movement[2] publication on the concept of solidarity across difference – in a general sense, rather than specifically about international solidarity – Bowman usefully explores the knotty concept of solidarity, looking at how the elaboration of difference, alongside a commitment to alliance-building can help us to move beyond the idea of the "solidarity of the same" (2013), towards a respect for diversity of background, history, ideology and understandings of the world.

The following two sections explore potentially relevant theories emanating from postcolonial and feminist theory respectively. Many of their roots can be found in deconstructive literary criticism, and as such, there can be something of a disconnect between them and the study of movements – and certainly not all aspects of these theories can be applied to movements . Despite this, I feel that if they are carefully applied in a reflexive manner, these theories can possibly contribute to the examination of the many different perspectives brought by participants, which made up the complex and multi-layered tensions in the campaign against Shell examined herein.

3.7 Postcolonial theory

Salem offers a fascinating example of the complexity of subjectivities when talking about feminist activist and scholar Angela Davis' renowned essay 'Women in Egypt', in which the latter forces herself to question her assumptions, and to adapt to the change that came about by virtue of her moving from a marginal positionality as a black woman in the US to someone who was privileged by virtue of being from a powerful, wealthy and imperial country when in Egypt. Thus, 'her positionality changed from one location to another, emphasising the importance of positioning oneself within structures of power in specific locations' (Salem 2014).

Emerging from postcolonial theory, the idea of a process of 'Othering', where everything is understood in relation to the primary referent, the former imperial country, may be of use here. In this case, it can be very difficult for both insiders and outsiders to think of Ireland without reference to Britain, which in turn affects the bases of politics and culture (Bush 2006, p.135). Cultural 'Others' can be formed into homogenous groupings due to this process, with little enquiry into difference or understanding of specificities. They can be understood as backward or 'politically immature', in need of instruction (Mohanty 1988, p.334). This is an accusation that members of DC would have

[2] WSM – an activist organisation which was very heavily involved in DC.

levelled at many of the ecological activists from England involved in the campaign against Shell, and one which will be interrogated in the Discussion chapter.

3.8 Insights from feminism

Postcolonialist theory notably shares the deconstructive ethos with feminism, and feminist understandings of problems of inequality within social movements offer fascinating insights into dynamics between participants within social movements. While this work does not have the space to explore gender issues in a full fashion, I feel that elements of the deconstructive feminist ethos offer useful tools for understanding how power dynamics work (and can reproduce oppression) within social movements which profess their opposition to oppression.

For example, an interesting approach within feminism with a bearing on the present research is the one that explores the presentation of issues in terms that are unfamiliar to people (such as the unfamiliarity of the terms of the discourse around 'colonialism' put forward by DC to English activists, as will be explored during the course of this thesis), can cause discomfort and even fear. For example, it is much easier for many people to engage with somebody of a different political ideology – say, a debate between ecology and class – than to engage with someone who puts forward their claims in unfamiliar and often very personal terms. In this sense, movement participants argue that it is often simpler to talk about what we oppose – Shell – than to work around these complex issues that demand a lot in terms of personal engagement (activist 'Barry' quoted in Ó Donnabháin 2006). Again looking at it from a feminist perspective, Nicolson explores the often very knotty process of the disruption of masculine subjectivity, which can be difficult in terms of a loss of identity (1996, p.92). This perspective may be of use in the situation being looked at given the disruption of subjectivity caused by an often unfamiliar discourse of colonialism being advanced, and the particular desire of many activists to transcend these sorts of prejudices.

In a broader sense, this fits closely with the feminist pedagogical perspective advocated by Hackman, who emphasises the importance of 'focusing on information from multiple, non-dominant perspectives, and seeing these as independently valid and not as an add-on to the dominant, hegemonic one' (2005, p.106). This approach seeks to break down ideas of gender as a total identity or as essentially experienced in one way, building a 'more relational and dynamic view of power' (Naples 2009, p.568).

3.9 Emotions

Gaining a wide understanding of emotions within the campaign against Shell as a whole would be a mammoth task, and one which space will not allow here. That said, a level of exploration of emotionality in the campaign as a social phenomenon, and one relating to organisations and relationships with the world as well as obviously with people (Calhoun 2001, p.53), can help us understand better the reasons behind important dynamics and differences between Dublin and Cork Shell to Sea and ecological activists from England. This writer can be seen to as writing from the mainstream of the study of collective action and social movement theory, with the work quoted here forming part of a major collection assembled by Polletta and Jasper.

In looking at the strikes and agitation of the newly-formed Solidarnosc (Solidarity) proto-trade union in Poland in 1980-81, socialist and movement scholar Barker examines the 'tumultuous process' where "latecomers may move to the fore, bringing new impulses to a movement, just as 'early risers' may be displaced from their initially central role" – there are very strong parallels with the campaign against Shell here. These kinds of turning points are often crucial within campaigns:

> "A turning point can provide excitement, provoking curiosity and potential creativity, energising people towards new ways of looking at the world and themselves, and fostering new projects. It can equally depress and de-energise, promoting negativity, withdrawal, cynicism, disappointed hopes. It can gain hearing for people and ideas, previously more marginal and ignored" (Barker 2010, pp.20-21).

Similar dynamics to these can be seen in the campaign against Shell, where Dublin and Cork activists were clearly de-energised by the problems in that period, while English activists (a large number of whom became involved in the campaign at this time) occupied the space which this de-energisation offered in later years to advance their perspectives.

A repeated theme that emerges from the interviews with Dublin and Cork Shell to Sea is the sense that they felt 'sidelined' by this whole process – a felt lack of recognition can be seen as an important factor in these tensions, as is the case in many movements (Calhoun 2001, p.54).This felt lack of recognition can also be seen in relation to English actors discussing theire ecological views.This can be connected with Roth's argument with regard to the relative importance of numbers in discussions and debates around ideology within movements, as "power in institutionalised settings comes from amassing numbers both within and without." (1998, p.143). Furthermore, when the critique of English activists arose from 2009, and particularly 2010, onwards, this was extremely disruptive of the everyday self-understandings of many English ecological activists living on the RSC. From my experience of living on the RSC, I feel that much day-to-day

campaigning can become routinised – this can be seen as a kind of 'activist status quo'. When this is disrupted, its existence becomes clear in the upheaval caused: "We have huge emotional investments in the everyday status quo. It may look like we are relatively unemotional as we go about our tasks, but disrupt the social structure in which we work, and our emotional investments in it will become evident" (Calhoun 2001, p.54).

Many of the people interviewed expressed their difficulties with these tensions in very emotional terms and emotional ways. The difference between how activists experience movement participation emotionally is hugely significant, not least to the prospects of movement success: "A positive emotional experience of movement participation can keep activists involved even when the group is not meeting its political goals, whereas a hostile environment can dissuade activist participation even when their commitment to the cause is strong." (Flesher Fominaya 2010a, p.395). And while solving problems can lead to a feeling of empowerment, the opposite can also be the case: "There are situations...where a crisis in movement development is revealed but no adequate answer is found. In such a condition, cognitive-emotional turmoil finds no solution, there is less and less to celebrate ritually, and the bonds of previous solidarity weaken. There is less to affirm" (Barker 2010, p.24). I feel that this is what took place in the anti-Shell campaign with regard to the tensions explored in this work, with nobody satisfied, and serious implications for the campaign.

Chapter 4

Methods and Methodology

I undertook my research within a Participatory Action Research (PAR) frame. As such, my research was a highly involved process and, within the frames of looking at dynamics of alliance formation, saw its main themes emerge from the research participants (Cox and Flesher Fominaya 2009). This constitutes an attempt to contribute to the movement through my research, taking on the double identity of researcher and activist (Fuster Morell 2009). The methodology used is central to this project, placing movement actors at the centre of the question, process and outcome, and putting the needs of the movement for 'useful knowledge' at its heart (Gordon 2007).This knowledge has in turn been analysed and will be offered to movement actors, to help address the questions which are meaningful to our practice, with the hope of making a contribution towards addressing these questions and needs – as will be explored in this chapter.

4.1 Data collection

I did 10 semi-structured interviews for this project. I felt this method would be the most suitable to my project, allowing space for interviewees to participate in the shaping of the interview's direction, while still granting me the scope to ensure that the discussion remained in my chosen topic area. These included members from each group (four ecological activists based in England and three members of either Dublin or Cork Shell to Sea, as well as another activist who was also close to the Shell to Sea groups), to ensure that their perspectives were brought to the fore, as well as two Irish members of the RSC, due to their perspective as at once engaged with the issues being discussed, and at the same time slightly removed from them, not fully identified with either broad perspective. All of my participants were white, they were divided equally between women and men, aged between 20 and 40, and most (though not all) of them were educated to third level[3] – which makes them broadly representative of the campaigners against Shell from outside North West Mayo. It is worth noting that DC would identify more closely with the working class, due to their explicit socialist politics, than most RSC campaigners would. All of the interviewees have also all been heavily politicised in various radical social movements for a significant amount of time. The intention was to gain a broader insight than would have been possible by speaking to any one group, or by limiting my inquiry to any one place – aiming to gain a deeper understanding of people's

[3] It is worth noting here that Ireland currently has the highest level of third level education completion in the EU, according to Eurostat (Learning.ie 2013). The percentage of people enrolled is considerably higher than the equivalent figure in the UK.

political and social realities, and then to see how these realities were altered or challenged by their interactions with the campaign in Mayo in general, but more specifically with one another and with the ideas that each of them brought with them. These were explored with the participants in an attempt to better understand the situation, with a view to finding better ways for us to work together across difference in this and in other campaigns.

As a long term participant, I also have a large amount of ethnographic data to draw on, as well as movement documentation. I lived on the RSC for 20 months during 2009 and 2010, participating in the campaign on a daily basis through a wide range of different activities. These included taking part in everything from meetings and organising, to protests and direct actions (in both the camp and the campaign at large). I was heavily involved in media work, communications with other groups in the campaign, and the preparation of submissions for quasi-judicial hearings into the project, to name just a few. To put it simply, I was totally immersed in the campaign during that period. I have also worked with the campaign in the years both before that time and since, generally in a much less immersive way. All of this is discussed to emphasise the fact that I have a wealth of primary data to draw on in the undertaking of this project, including both my large amount of experience in the campaign, and also a huge range of movement documentation, such as minutes from meetings, movement documents (such as planning documents), and email discussions and debates. Along with the above discussed research interviews, this data will be used throughout the course of this thesis to explore, examine and interrogate the many different facets of the tensions within the campaign against Shell.

4.2 The connection between my role as a participant and my data collection

My interviewees were all deliberately chosen as people who have been heavily involved in the campaign over a sustained period of time, and who have also been engaged in some way in the debates which arose from these tensions. This ensures a common level of familiarity with the debates, and that many of my participants have engaged in sustained reflection about the issues over a significant period of time. My role as a participant gave me an in-depth knowledge of the campaign and the people in it, enabling me to identify the most appropriate participants, those who had been centrally involved in both the campaign and in the debates which this thesis examines. Furthermore, my position in the campaign also meant that people trusted me and were willing to give sometimes very personal interviews. Even though a few of them were not keen on talking about the tensions – which were often difficult – nobody refused be interviewed. In relation to the tensions, participants from England may have perceived me as open to the colonialism argument, but also close to them as a former resident of the RSC with ecological political interests. DC

participants would probably have seen me as one of the campers most willing to engage with their issues, but still very much part of the RSC. Campers were likely to see me in a similar way to themselves, as attempting to negotiate a position, one which was responsive to both – though I was closer to DC than many of them. These perceptions are overlaid onto the fact that I also have warm and close personal friendships with many of the participants from across the different groups and perspectives.

4.3 Consent

I provided consent forms to all of my participants, along with an information page to support their decisions on the provision of informed consent. One of the aspects of this process which I emphasised was that the research would be confidential, something which was important to many participants, and which visibly relaxed a couple of them. Their right to withdraw, in full or in part, at any time up until publishing was another aspect which a number of people engaged with – this was also seen as a positive by a number of participants, and served to enhance the sense of safety I was attempting to create around the process. The interviews were recorded, and lasted from roughly 50 minutes to just under two hours; each was then transcribed verbatim and sent to the participant for their amendment (if required) and approval.

4.4 Follow-up

Following the completion of the interviews, I sent out typed transcripts, receiving a number of amendments in return. I also continued my interaction with participants, meeting up with one of my first interviewees on a second occasion to explore a number of issues that came up in the wake of our interview, while specific follow-up questions by email with four participants has elicited some fascinating and very useful insights. My final, supplementary, interview with my tenth participant was also undertaken in response to one main theme – the importance of recruitment tours to England and Scotland – which emerged very strongly in the course of my earlier interviews, along with some smaller issues. These examples show the iterative nature of my research practices, acting on my participants' responses and their engagement with the topic, and changing and expanding my approach with reference to the findings which emerged. While I did not have sufficient time to send my analysis to participants for their feedback before the submission date, I intend to do so afterwards to fully involve them in the PAR process, and to include their responses in the document or website which I will publish for a wider movement audience.

4.5 Deciding on the topic and creating the question-themes

My choice of this issue

The choice of this issue arose from a shared perception among movement participants that there were serious issues and tensions in the campaign, which had become grouped around debates around the concepts of colonialism. This was, and is, very much a disputed concept, and debates around it came to encompass other differences within the campaign, most notably around what solidarity with the local community meant, and the place of ecology and socialism in the campaign. These were hotly debated topics at times, and caused a lot of consternation and difficulties within the campaign, and also persisted over a long period of time. It is with the hope of illuminating and picking apart these issues that this research is being undertaken, with a view towards exploring what lessons can be learned from this experience.

As such, this research very much arose from the movement problem of tensions within the campaign, and seeks to address the felt need in the movement to deal with these better. This desire within the movement can be clearly seen in the fact that a series of workshops were organised on the camp to discuss Irish history and the impacts of this in the current day – these workshops were also very well attended and much discussed, showing the high level of engagement of movement actors with the topic. Furthermore, the example of the inductions run in the early years of the RSC to bring newcomers up to speed with the campaign on arrival, were also a response to the felt issue of the lack of familiarity with the campaign and the context of many people arriving for the first time. Another example of this kind of attempt to converse and to share information is the publication of 'Outside Agitators: Voices from across the water', a pamphlet which was initially published with the aim of explaining the motivations of many English people getting involved in the campaign to the local community, and would go on to be distributed in England and used to explain the context of the campaign to other activists before their arrival. Each of these examples will be explored more fully in the Findings and Discussion chapters – they are included here to emphasise the fact that this issue, and attempts at addressing it, were significant felt needs that arose from within the campaign, and to which this project is very much connected.

4.6 Considerations of the context in which the interviews took place

As a participant in the campaign and someone who has been engaged in discussions around this issue, I brought a familiarity with the issues to my choice and framing of question-themes in the interviews. Given that my participants are highly politicised and experienced activists, my approach to the interviews was to be a very light presence, allowing them as much rein as possible to explore

around the issues, while remaining on the research question that I had defined. The familiarity with meeting contexts and with the requirement to explain one's ideas to others, allied with people's political engagement, meant that they were highly capable of and experienced in exploring and explaining their perspectives. The fact that understandings of some concepts and political ideas (such as colonialism or postcolonialism) varied widely and were not very precise in their application, was something that my participation in the campaign had alerted me to expect. The debates examined in this thesis are also situated in a dynamic interaction with one another (and with other debates), which both gives the debates depth and context and also helps to illuminate topics which are being debated by participants in a movement context at the moment. This fluidity and a level of indeterminacy was a very important part of my approach to the interview process. I wanted to allow people to trace their own interpretations of the different ideas that were in use in the debate, as well as their different views of some of the disputes which arose between the groups in the course of the campaign.

Given that quite a lot of people were engaged with these issues at different times, my choice of interviewees was down to each having had a particular involvement in some aspect of these debates, whether by presenting workshops on colonial legacies in Ireland, being strongly involved in debates on the issue over a sustained period of time, or one of a number of other factors. As such, these were the largest differences in the way I structured my themes in the interviews, encouraging people to explore these issues. In many cases, I had very little prompting to do, given the level of resonance of the issues to people, and their wish to talk about them. For the more reticent participants, I attempted to bring out their opinions by reference to themes brought by other interviewees, or by talking about events which they had participated in or to discussions with other campaigners over the years.

4.7 Analysis

Having collated my interview data, I used techniques from Grounded Theory to analyse it. My process, which emerged from the data during the course of my time immersed in it, was to group themes together around the intention of the speaker, and then to further break down these categories and to group them according to the various subjects and opinions expressed (Urquhart**,** 2013). This approach was taken because, once I had collected a long-list of themes from my interviews and begun to attempt to see which of them fit together, the intention and the message which people were attempting to argue for emerged in the early stages of the data examination as a number of clear poles around which the themes gathered quite naturally. That is, the participants shaped the definition of the categories used. For example, activists from Dublin and Cork Shell to Sea

argued that the after-effects of colonialism were visible in the campaign against Shell, while many people from England problematised this argument, either overall or in the way that it was seen to be being applied. These participants were engaged and conceptually politicised, something which was brought out by the use of PAR processes of research. These were two of the clear poles which emerged, around which I grouped my themes. This was a process of analysing themes on an individual and group level, looking at the specific ways of talking about the campaign against Shell, movement actors in the other group, and the tensions which emerged. The intention of 'thinking against myself' was retained at the forefront of my research throughout, as a corrective to any tendencies towards assuming that I knew this topic fully, in my role as participant.

I have adopted my approach from feminist epistemologies, as they speak to my role as a reflexive participant in movements in general, and to my research in this movement in particular. These approaches place the researcher's part in constructing the research front and centre, opening that up to scrutiny rather than attempting to obscure their central role by concentrating solely on the research topic. The following list by Stanley and Wise explores some of the most central epistemological principles of these types of methodology:

> "...recognition of the reflexivity of the feminist researcher in her research as an active and busily constructing agent; insistence that the 'objects' of research are also subjects in their own right as much as researchers are subjects (and objects of other people's); acceptance that the researcher is on the same critical plane as those she researches and not somehow intellectually superior; and, most fundamental of all, no opinion, belief or other construction of events and persons, no matter from whom this derives, should be taken as a representation of 'reality' but rather treated as a motivated construction of version to be subject to critical feminist analytical inquiry" (quoted in Crowley 2011, p.31).

My approach very consciously attempts to democratic in its ethos and to democratically involve the participants in as much as is possible in the processes by which it is carried out.

This analysis then suggested how to link and bring the two groups together for further analysis (as will be explored below), moving from there into a discussion of the reasons behind the dispute. Once in these groups, the themes were arranged around repeated references to particular topics, incidents or ideas. The use of theoretical memoing has been particularly useful in gaining depth in the examination of themes, and their regrouping throughout (Urquhart 2013, p.127).

4.8 Challenges and changes emerging from this process

This process resulted in the *existence and boundaries of the* groups which I had chosen to study – English ecological activists, and Dublin and Cork Shell to Sea – being confirmed in some respects, but also undermined in a number of others. The obvious example is in the cases of the Irish

RSC members interviewed, who crossed these boundaries by virtue of their closeness with the English activists while still being critical of the perceived mentality arising from the after effects of colonialism. Further to this, there were also a number of interviewees who were willing to go into significant levels of self-criticism and criticism of their groups, as well as arguing in favour of the other group on occasion. This added richness to the exploration of the themes, allowing comparison and contrast between the views expressed by participants of others, or of themselves, and the perception that they had of how others see them, in an interplay of themes that undermines simplistic explanations and enables us to go deeper into the various less spoken dimensions of this debate – I have thus been prepared to abandon previous assumptions in the light of different directions and lines of inquiry which have emerged from the data (Peters 2014). I have also endeavoured to foreground people's own words and ways of expression by including sometimes extensive quotes – this increases fidelity to the different ways of expression and approaches to the topic taken, gives often excellent insights into the complexity of the topic, and aims towards the ideal of creating a new space for dialogue and re-examination of the tensions here, with the goal of looking at how alliances across difference can work better.

This was a process of thinking about the nature of the relationship between different concepts, a process of constant comparison between themes labelled in the same way in order to explore both the connections and the dissonances between them. This is an aid in exploring and unveiling new concepts, foregrounding what the participants' data suggests, making for a bottom-up process which enabled me to move towards theoretical saturation (Bryant & Charmaz 2007, p.265). An approach of this nature has resonance for me in putting together this project, particularly in feeling that the group has the best understanding of the situation, and thus is likely to contain many of the resources and knowledge needed to address their issues (Urquhart 2013, pp.7-9).

4.9 Negotiating my position close to participants in the research, and the challenges this brings

As a movement participant, I feel a natural solidarity with others similarly involved, many of whom are also good friends – this is something that I have to grapple with in this work, avoiding allowing feeling of personal warmth towards particular participants from dictating the direction of the research. I also take on the identity of researcher in this process, rigorously applying my critical scrutiny to their opinions. During this process, I also have to simultaneously look to bridge the gap between researcher and researched, with an ethos of maximising benefit and minimising harm (Oakely 2000).

Using narrative analysis to look beyond people's words and the direct meaning of their statement also imposes a duty of care on me as a researcher to use my judgement and to respectfully explore beyond the direct meanings expressed. While I am in the privileged position of being very close to the campaign and thus deeply familiar with it and with the people involved, enabling excellent insights into dynamics which would be invisible to others, this imposes an equal duty on me not to assume too much, and not to construe meaning in people's words just in order to support my arguments (Denscombe 2010). This also highlights the fact that given that I am obliged to omit the majority of the content of my transcribed interviews, thus robbing them of much of their context. While I have tried very hard to be loyal to the sentiments expressed, nevertheless this in turn implies that my arguments are supported by my chosen extracts, rather than proven by them in some definitive way. This bottom-up process of inductive research allows me to be more guided by my participants – this is consistent with both my own politics and those of many of the research participants around non-hierarchical processes and working against oppression in the ways we conduct our politics and our daily lives.

4.10 My positionality

4.10.1 Campaign problems experienced in a personal way

As discussed in the Introduction, my particular motivation in undertaking this research was to attempt to address the following question: why were there so many tensions between ecological campaigners from England on the one hand, and Dublin and Cork Shell to Sea on the other, in the campaign against Shell's Corrib gas project – what were the problems that were making this alliance very difficult to sustain? This may have seemed like a relatively simple question, with the answer relating to a discourse around the after-effects of colonialism impacting on the campaign, as well as political differences between the groups. But they continued to work in a common campaign with the same goals, and there was also clearly more complexity to the tensions than the surface view expressed above.

My relationship to these tensions was similarly confused. I lived on the RSC from spring 2009 until autumn 2010. There, I lived together with and worked side by side with other members of the RSC, including lots of people from England. My roles in media work and as a contact person for Shell to Sea groups (there were several groups – the numbers would fluctuate, but usually around six during my time on camp) around the country also put me in strong, regular contact with people from the Dublin and Cork Shell to Sea groups. So, when these tensions started to really come to the fore from the summer of 2009 onwards, I was in a position to hear both perspectives on a regular

basis in an 'uncensored' way, given that I had built up strong personal connections with people in both groups.

But neither groups' perspective convinced me fully. I had a great deal of trust in and respect for the English activists at the RSC from working closely with them, but I felt that they, and the camp in general, lacked a wider perspective (or certainly motivation) on the necessity for working together with other groups in a concerted way to build a movement of resistance beyond the immediate locality. I would argue this in meetings on the RSC, and the opposition to it frustrated me hugely. The issues which people were bringing up around the after-effects of colonialism also resonated with me. On the other hand, while I identified with many of the issues brought up by members of Dublin and Cork Shell to Sea, I felt that the ways that they were understood or expressed weren't necessarily always fair or fully consistent with my experience of living at the RSC, and I sympathised with the tough time that the main recipients of the criticism were having. I feel that at that time I distanced myself from or avoided dealing with the criticism by Dublin and Cork Shell to Sea, and was able to do so due to the fact that I lived on the other side of the country from them (and the fact that I wasn't the subject of much of the criticism). This wasn't the case with regard to the issues that DC had brought up about the direction the camp was taking, and the part of English activists in this. (while I realise this isn't a particularly consistent or defensible position, I feel in retrospect that it was the one I took).

On a personal level, what made it hard to be in between the two positions was the fact that I was losing the debates with other campers at the RSC about the need for a broad perspective and a concerted effort to build up a wider movement. Others felt that we should be concentrating on local issues and that it was difficult to work with DC in any case – and these debates were leaving people with a sour taste afterwards. On my part it was because I felt people weren't really engaging with the issue, that they ultimately rejected it; on their part, my perception is that the English activists felt like they were having their hard work on the campaign thrown back in their faces by their friends and fellow activists, and many campers felt that it was difficult (at best) attempting to work with the very different perspectives of DC. Nobody really left the discussions very satisfied, and given that nobody felt the other side was really attempting to move towards them at all, trust and confidence was undermined.

4.10.2 My experience of burnout

This left me feeling quite isolated on the camp, and I feel it contributed a good bit to my growing sense of disillusionment with the camp and the campaign at that time. This sense that the

group rejected the idea of broadening the campaign that I was trying to argue in a reasonable way, that they rejected it totally, without seeking to accommodate it in some way, that really made me question my position in the group, question my value to myself and in the eyes of other people in the group, and I suppose, ultimately weakened my confidence in myself, in my position in the group, and in the group in general. This can be difficult enough when you're working with people in a group in a city (for example), but when you also socialise, eat, and live with people (in an isolated place), it becomes even more difficult to take, as work and life simultaneously become difficult, and it's also difficult to take space in order to take stock of things in this type of situation. I feel that this sense of isolation was a significant factor (though far from the only one) in my experience of burnout and leaving the RSC in 2010.As debates of this nature are far from unique to this protest camp situation, I hope that the experience and learnings taken from this campaign might be applicable to other similar situations. This experience has political implications, as the loss of experience that comes with participants dropping out of movement activity due to burnout has very real political consequences for our movements. Internal disputes, conflict and criticism have been noted as significant factors in demobilisation in movements (Cox 2011, p.14), and as such, addressing these types of issues is important political work that is needed for forming strong and lasting movements and alliances, and relates closely to this research topic.

Since then, the conviction that there's more to this situation than what was being expressed and understood by people at the time, and that it could have been dealt with better has stuck with me, and provided me with the motivation to undertake this research. This places me at the heart of the research. I don't make any claim to impartial neutrality, as to do so would be to claim to 'speak from nowhere' (Kuhling 2004) or to state that knowledge can be understood independent of its situatedness – this is directly against the engaged PAR perspective which I am taking in this research.

4.11 The impact of my positionality on the interviews, and my role in current debates

My past role, in which I had a sympathetic ear to the positions of both groups, meant that interviewees were generally open to me. I didn't generally express the difficulties I had with each group very strongly when I lived on camp, and certainly not in the depth outlined here, although there were discussions between individuals and in a number of meetings. This means that all interviewees are likely to have been only dimly aware of my positionality, as explored here, or may have had varying impressions of it.

I feel my role in this situation is to make the differing perspectives intelligible to each other and to deepen understanding; to bring them into conversation with one another, with a view to

building mutual understanding. I also want to break down the discourse of inevitability around the tensions over difference which is expressed by some participants, and to look at ways in which things could have been done better. This is not in an effort to diminish the problems explored here, but rather to accept them as significant and important, and to give them the attention they require, in concert with an orientation towards alliance building. In this sense, I also hope to contribute to wider discussions around how alliance building can work.

4.12 The importance of framing

As I have discussed, I am an engaged participant in this campaign, and in the debates around the tensions – I am not neutral in this debate, I do not 'speak from nowhere', and I make no claims to. This extends to my choice of research question, and the areas which I have chosen to concentrate on in it. Among these are an orientation towards alliance-building, the choice to concentrate on these tensions and not on some other aspect(s) of the campaign, and indeed the choice to look at this campaign at all. The main reason for all of these was in the belief that things could have been done better in this case. Further to this, the way I framed the question and my choice of primary research subjects/how I chose my research subjects was predicated on my particular understandings of the campaign. Much of the interest in this case comes from the fact that there is an intersection, but not a clean overlap, between the political differences and the 'cultural/national' differences between DC S2S and English ecological activists. That is to say, there were Irish ecological direct action activists involved in the campaign who did not have the same cultural differences with DC as English ecological activists did:

> "I would like to emphasise that I don't see it as an English versus Irish, that doesn't neatly overlap with the political - cos there was an issue with, I felt, with people coming from England no matter what their politics were - it was nothing to do with their politics, in terms of the campaign. It was just in terms of English activism, and I've experienced that in English activism in terms of, like, socialists... And I think a lot of the critiques of, the things that - I've had loads of arguments with people who live in Ireland about those, like the social versus the environmental thing." (Participant 1)

I want to emphasise that two important, but different, cleavages emerged in the campaign. These were certainly far from always black-and-white distinctions, but at the same time, they were important differences that had significant impacts on the campaign, and I felt that they would benefit from further analysis. One section of the campaign – the Irish campers – largely cross over the division that I drew in my initial research question by concentrating on English ecological activists and DC STS, which complicates the story, but also very much enriches it.

I feel that my framing of the issue in the interviews has somewhat contributed to a certain framing of the issues being foregrounded. This was not my intention, but it has been a result nevertheless. I have come to feel that the formation as 'looking at tensions between DC and English ecological activists' (rather than, say, 'looking at tensions between DC and RSC', or 'between organised political groups and direct action activists') has favoured one group's discourse, a discourse that was implicitly seen by all as 'belonging to' DC. This can be clearly seen in the immediate comfort of most, (though not all) of my DC interviewees with the research question being presented – they proceed immediately into exploration and discussion. While on the other hand, often the immediate reaction of interviewees who are English ecological activists or Irish RSC members was to question the way I had presented the differences, to present an alternative interpretation, or to critique the ideas put forward by DC members.

While in retrospect this may have been foreseeable, given the highly emotive nature of the topic and the debates around it, I am not sure I would have been able to approach the topic in a way that would not have annoyed some participants. This very emotiveness was one of the reasons why I felt the topic and debate to be something worth examining, as it very clearly was important to and impacted on a large number of people in this important campaign. This can be seen as a positive development, as it gives all aspects of this debate a chance to be heard, to express themselves as clearly as they wish, with an element of safety granted by anonymity, and for different perspectives to come into contact with one another, and with an orientation towards learning.

The important point to emphasise is that the framing of the tensions in the way I chose to structure the debate is a comfortable direction for many DC participants, while it generally provoked a reaction among others – but as I feel this was done within interviews that allowed and encouraged their opinions (contrary to the above and otherwise) to come to the fore, I don't feel that they were silenced. Certainly there +were many contrary opinions expressed, as will be explored in the Findings and Discussion chapters. Furthermore, this involved seeing my initial standpoint as constructed, in tandem with seeing the other views expressed in a similar way, as also being constructed, and moving to a position where I seek to question all of the perspectives brought to the research project.

4.13 'I'm sick to death of liberals telling our stories'

One participant told me (in another movement context, outside of this research) that they're 'sick to death of liberals telling our stories', and that we should be telling them ourselves, and telling our stories from a radical perspective. Following on in the spirit and intention of this

point, another centrally important aspect of the thesis is the fact that it has always been conceived of as being with and for movement participants to read, learn and act on this learning – the goal of the thesis is to contribute towards movement learning. It foregrounds the experiential knowledge of the participants – this political perspective takes the view that knowledge produced by experience and within the movement is of the highest possible value, and needs to be appreciated as much and more than any other form knowledge, such as 'expert' knowledge (Oakley 2000).

Further to this, it is also very much an intervention in movement practice which attempts to change not just the way that people *think* about the movements that they are involved in, but also the ways in which they *act* in these movements. It seeks to challenge 'taken for granted' ways of seeing these tensions and this movement, and to provoke both reflection and action. As will be more fully discussed in the 'What next?' subsection at the end of this chapter, I will bring these perspectives into action through a process of engagement with other movement actors through dissemination of my findings in published formats, and through a series of discussions which I plan to hold with relevant groups.

My experiences formed the basis of my knowledge of this topic, as well as my motivation for looking at it. From there, I began interrogating different aspects of the research question through a simultaneous process of exploring the literature to examine attempts at alliance-building, and also writing shorter essays to look at specific aspects of these tensions more closely. All three of these formed the basis of knowledge for my data collection in semi-structured interviews – these in turn evolved my thinking and my approach throughout the course of the research project.

4.14 My choice of the PAR frame

Following on from this, I wanted to connect my orientation towards movement learning with the belief that much of the knowledge needed to address the issues already exists within the movement which I examined – this belief led me to the choice of the PAR frame, which I feel to be very compatible with this approach. Therefore, this will form a very important part of my analysis, comparing and contrasting the various ideas around how to improve the situation which are advocated by the participants. This will be combined with elements of narrative analysis, looking for the multiple meanings and intentions within the data, to gain a deeper understanding of the structure and social implications of the text (Denscombe 2010). This is consistent with the fact that my experiences and views are very much a part of this project, that these issues form part of a personal narrative which is intimately related to the group narrative explored here. This allows linking of my personal narrative, the very varied narratives of the interviewees, and the activist and

academic theories together, where each is valued. The varying angles and interpretations provided allow for a rigorous interrogation of the claims made by each in a process of triangulation (Denscombe 2010). This method allows for a more robust, deeper understanding of the research topic – rather than seeking to simply prove a particular analysis of the situation, it constantly compares and contrasts different views experiences and social realities in a way which is respectful of each, but which at the same time seeks to push the boundaries of individual understanding.

4.15 Intellectuals and Movement Intellectuals

In this research, I have to balance a respectfulness to my participants with a willingness to critically challenge them and their perspectives with the goal of providing insights into how better to deal with these type of issues in movements, to politicise the processes around working together and to place the need for focus on how we can work together in alliances front and centre in political organising. In this vein, following Barker and Cox, I would distinguish between intellectuals and movement intellectuals – for them, difficulties with academic theorising include the fact that it:

> "…produces certain types of theorising, whose strengths (at their best) include a broad conceptual armoury but whole weaknesses (from an activist point of view) lie in the tendency to treat what are, precisely, movements as static 'fields', to embed their understanding in an uncritical acceptance of the givenness of those institutions which movements often set themselves against, and to marginalise the position of the actor". (Barker & Cox 2002, p2).

On the other hand, I would identify with the idea of the movement intellectual, seeking to pursue my political movement work 'with relation to the social world within which those movements move, and which they seek to transform'(Barker & Cox 2002, p.4). Working as a movement intellectual is very much about intervening in the concrete realities of social movements – discussing, debating and always questioning how movement work is being undertaken, what is being forgotten or omitted, and how we could seek to do things better. This situates me very much as a consciously and actively constructing actor within wider debates in movements, and it is from this position that I undertake this research – I seek to change the way that movement practice is currently undertaken.I have attempted to be continually reflexive in my self-positioning in this research, remaining aware of the place from which I'm coming along with my political motivations, while at the same time being both open to and aware of the changes that have come about in my views during the process of creating this research. The analysis of this process of change in the thesis is an important part of being transparent and open about my own place in the research, and the fact that my values and interests are inevitably and unavoidably central to the analysis contained in the thesis (Denscombe 2010).

4.16 Difficulties experienced due to my past experiences in the campaign

One of the notable features of the interview process was the fact of many people struggling to acknowledge and respect the views and contributions of people from the other cohort, while at the same time also holding fast to many of their own views and expressing a lot of anger or disappointment (or both) at the perceived lack of acknowledgement and response to their issues on the part of the others – many issues arose from or were connected to the personal.While there were people of whom this was not true, it was a strongly recurring theme in the majority of the interviews – it also resonates strongly with my own personal experience as outlined above. This would tend to support the idea that an improvement in communications could have improved the situation, and that there was a will there to do so, but a lack of useful dialogue – the question that then arises is why this had not already taken place? This thesis attempts to look at the reasons why. This involves exploring the interaction between personal and political issues, and their interaction with a number of blocks to communications which have been identified in the research which will be examined over the coming chapters, primarily the Findings and Discussion ones.

4.17 Acknowledging and struggling with my biases

The research process is a messy and difficult one, constantly moving and changing in terms of approach, and filtered through my prejudices (Oakley 2000). In the process of making sense of this period and the personal difficulties which I associate with it, my opinions have changed quite a lot. By the time I took on this research question, already four years later, I had thought that my perspective had shifted over time to one of critical engagement with each argument. While this is a position I have attempted to maintain, my annoyance from that earlier time – particularly over the issue of the after-effects of colonialism – has resurfaced to a degree. I also need to be very careful about mapping my own experience exactly onto my broader analysis of the campaign and the issues which arose between the groups. I don't feel that either of these control my perspective, but I do think that they inform it strongly – this is something that requires constant questioning. For example, dismissive, ill-informed or stereotypical views of Irish people talked about in the interviews annoy me to a significant degree. This has obliged me to constantly 'think against myself' (Finnegan, seminar discussion, 3 June 2014), and to creatively explore the limitations and possibilities of this position. This requires me to question the conclusions that I reach and the directions I take – it will be up to the reader to decide to what degree I am successful in this.

4.18 Dealing with outlying perspectives

Another one of the most difficult aspects of writing this piece has been attempting to ensure that all of the voices which have expressed themselves are fully respected and included in the final thesis. For example, I have struggled with an aversion to including opinions which undermine the project's premise as a whole, such as the one which argues that it is impossible to improve on the difficulties experienced in the campaign against Shell (P2), or the one that seeks to minimise the tensions between the groups, to the point almost of disappearance (P7). In the latter case, despite creating a magazine partially to explore the differences between ecological points of view held by many from England, and the Shell to Sea principles, this person does not see these differences as important – instead, they see community solidarity as central. This is difficult personally, as it feels like a rejection of the project, which I feel an ownership of, and in which I have invested significant amounts of time and energy. It is also difficult politically, as it jars with much of the rest of the research. I have attempted to explore these issues in the writing, with the former as an outlier in a tendency within the analysis offered by Dublin and Cork Shell to Sea, while the latter can be explained by a combination of the time period in which this person was very active in the campaign, and an aversion to a topic on their part that isn't seen as very pleasant and which does not sit well with a positive view of the campaign. These challenges are part of a wider need to be reflexive and aware of the dangers of simply filtering the data to find statements which support my opinions; instead remaining attentive to the broad trends, the subtleties within them, and also the dissonances which are presented, is crucial.

4.19 Conclusion

As discussed above, I came to this project with an orientation towards alliance building. While this has stayed with me, the data that I have collected has shown that people have understood this issue in a variety of different ways, and have likewise sought to engage with it differently, from accepting some criticism and attempting to adapt behaviours, to an emotional rejection of issues brought up; from a rejection of the possibility of alliances working at all, to celebrations of what has been achieved by working together in the campaign against Shell. It is also important to situate this debate in the context that many activists, though not all, now experience the campaign as having failed in its ultimate goal (despite numerous smaller victories along the way). This can be seen to influence the perspectives of many of the participants – a common feature of defeated campaigns. The significance of this factor in relation with other important ones will be assessed in the Discussion chapter, examining how the tensions between these two groups played out.

I feel that this research can be important in the context of continuing struggle in Mayo and over the topic of natural resource extraction in Ireland, both onshore and offshore, and including campaigns against fracking. I also note the resent setup of Earth First! Éire as a new actor in the Irish ecological movement, and the links which have been built up between Irish and English radical movements, offering the possibility of further collaboration in the future. In this context, I think these is a lot of potential for future alliances, and I feel that learning from some of the issues experienced by another struggle can only be beneficial to these movements. The rise of comparable community campaigns is certainly a feature in Europe at the moment (La ZAD in France or NO TAV in Italy, for example), and hopefully the lessons explored here would also be of interest and of use to other movements seeking to work in alliance across difference. I intend to attempt to contribute to these movements through disseminating, discussing and debating this research, as will be discussed below, in the final section of this chapter.

4.20 What next?

For me, this research constitutes the beginning of a wider project of interrogating difference and possibilities for working together better across it – a project which I plan to continue in the coming years in the course of PhD study and as part of a wider movement project to document the learnings to be taken from years of resistance to Shell.The immediate next step is to continue this specific project – I plan to send this thesis to my participants for their feedback, and to follow that up with further revisions improvements in discussion with their views on it. Following on from that, I will edit and publish this research. Given the size of this thesis, I would like to release it in a series format, either on a blog or in a number of pamphlets on particular different topics. These would then be followed up with discussions or debates with participants' groups, for example at RSC gatherings, with Earth First!, Dublin and Cork Shell to Sea, or the WSM.While all of this remains in the realm of intention for the moment, I feel certain that the end of this thesis is better understood as a staging post in a much wider process of group and self exploration around how we can work together better and build strong and more sustained movement alliances. This is no small task, but I feel that both its size and the huge possibilities and necessity of this work are highlighted by this research.

Chapter 5

Findings

This findings chapter will take you through a number of different elements which are crucial in understanding the tensions which arose between ecological activists from England, and Dublin and Cork Shell to Sea. This is organised around answering three questions:

- What was the colonialism discourse made up of?
- How did people on the RSC understand the discourse of colonialism put forward, and what were their responses to it?
- How important were political culture differences in this situation?

The criticism which gave rise to the debate came from Dublin and Cork Shell to Sea, and this chapter will firstly look at the different aspects to the criticism levelled by them, and then examine the responses to it and alternative interpretations which were offered by activists from England, as well as by other activists from elsewhere in Ireland who also lived on the Rossport Solidarity Camp. This involves exploring where they feel the tensions originated and how they functioned, from a variety of viewpoints.

What was the colonialism discourse made up of?

5.1 Discourses around colonialism

This opening section attempts to paint a picture of the discourse of colonialism that was advanced by members of DC. This is very much a multi-faceted discourse in a complicated campaign with many different constituent parts, and many different relationships between those parts. This section attempts to lay the ground-level understanding of this discourse, in order that a more complex and relational understanding can be outlined later on in this chapter.

5.1.1 Examples of problematic expression by English activists at the RSC

The following section explores a number of examples of behaviours by English activists at the RSC that were felt to be problematic by other campaign participants, and which fed into the construction of the colonialism discourse by members of DC. They concentrate on attitudes which display a very low (if often unthinking) opinion of campaigners in Ireland, and one which numerous activists, particularly from DC, found very difficult to accept. A number of the examples cited here

also relate to the political differences between activists from DC and those from the English ecological movement – these differences will be more fully explored in later sections of this chapter.

5.1.2 Assumptions of ignorance

The following quote talks about the perception of an assumption of the ignorance of Irish protestors by English activists getting involved in the campaign:

> "thinking that Irish people couldn't engage in direct action, or didn't know how, it's like, 'well you're involved in a campaign, that if you actually asked anyone, there's loads of people involved in this campaign who've been involved in way more militant stuff', and I'm not advocating that, but y'know, you're not like - it was kind of like people were coming over like almost as *missionaries* to tell us. (P1)"

This attitude is firmly rejected by this participant, who is angered at the high level of ignorance of the campaign and the people involved in it – they later connect this with a high level of disinterest in Ireland and its specific context which is seen as linked to mainstream English society being 'culturally imperialist'. This theme is continued by another activist, referring to the same example referenced above:

> "And it just seemed preposterous that this young English girl was giving the workshop ... it was embarrassing, I suppose. I mean, I think [activist] was the one that pointed it out, I remember her just coming up and going, 'for fuck's sake, I can't believe this is happening'. (P3)"

The sense of disbelief at this level of unawareness is clear to see in this statement, as is the sense of anger that accompanies it. This idea of the assumption of ignorance is also connected with the idea mentioned by one interviewee of many English campaigners 'parachuting in' to the campaign – joining a campaign to do what they felt was right, but with very little reference to the local community or any other parts of the campaign involved in the struggle.

The attitudes outlined here by members of DC are seen as culminating in a very problematic attitude towards solidarity with the local community in the campaign:

> "I kind of feel that... in hindsight now that, the struggle, the local people's struggle was in some senses appropriated by, activists from an eco-anarchist background... I think that they also had, along with the camp at times, a propensity to disempower local people, unintentionally of course... I don't think that there was enough engagement with the community from people coming over from the UK and nor was there a willingness to communicate or to organise with them. (P2)"

This is a very strong charge, arguing that the practice by English ecological activists of conducting the campaign in ways that came from practices of politics in their movement culture which they were familiar with, had the effect of thoughtlessly taking power away from local people (despite good

intentions). This is very much a critique of the small-group direct action ethos which is seen as coming into the campaign from English ecological political culture, which is put in opposition to the ways in which the RSC organised the campaign hand-in-hand with the local campaign in the early years. It is worth noting that Irish campers ('the camp' in this quote) are also included as a cause of this change in ethos, but significantly less responsibility for it is attached to them – the genesis of the changes is seen as coming from England. Irish campers are generally seen by DC members as more flexible in terms of their ecological views, with the 'core' of the ecological politics seen as coming from the English ecological scene. They are also seen by DC as much more embedded in the community, due to the generally long and continuous periods spent on the camp, and also a feeling in DC that Irish campers understand the local community better than their English counterparts.

5.1.3 Feelings of being patronised

There is a strong sense from a number of interviewees that they felt that the knowledge that they had brought to the campaign and that which they had built up through involvement in it, was being ignored by many English activists who were getting involved in the campaign:

> "it felt really disrespectful when people came in and were like, 'no, yis are completely wrong'. And it's like, 'well, what the fuck do you know, you've just arrived - you stay here for five years and see how you feel at the end of it' [laughs]... rather than coming in presuming that people's politics are a bit backwards or they're old-school or that they're not really considering this very well - I would say come in with the presumption that that has already been considered, rather than coming in and maybe making people feel patronised who've been there for years. (P5)"

This statement uses a claim to knowledge of the campaign based on longevity of involvement to question and refute the claim that the campaign is 'completely wrong' (this refers to the fact that ecology was largely absent from the campaign's goals and campaigning). This is seen as very much based on a problematic presumption that there has been a lack of consideration for the environment, which is combined with the sense that many English ecological activists may have made the – incorrect, for this person – assumption that it hadn't been considered, and that people are 'a bit backwards'. It was felt by many in DC that the place of ecology in the campaign had already been debated previously, and the fact that this debate was being brought up without any reference to previous decisions (or even knowledge of them) was very much resented by this person.

This annoyance at a felt patronising attitude can be seen in the context of a lack of knowledge about how solidarity had been undertaken within the campaign which is displayed by numerous English activists:

> "I don't know how many times I heard people say 'it's so good the local community come out and protest with you' [slightly goofy] - it's like, 'can you hear yourself talk? Like, why are you even here?' [annoyed, disdainful] (P5)"

This lack of knowledge of a facet of the campaign which is seen to be fundamental to it (the community leadership of the campaign), provokes irritation in this campaigner, and can also be seen as connected to the difficulty they express with the patronising attitude explored below. Both display a lack of knowledge of the campaign, but also – and just as importantly – a sense that this lack of knowledge is not felt to be an important issue by many English activists, when this person feels strongly that the opposite is true.

5.1.4 Romanticisation

Another important facet of the problematic understandings and ways of expression of English activists in the campaign is the idea of romanticisation of the local campaign and the area. A hugely positive view of the small local community and of the local natural environment, are recurrent features of the way that many English activists talk about the campaign in North West Mayo. The former can be seen as coming from the highly impressive resistance to Shell, but also from an ethic in favour of small-scale, 'untouched' rural living evident in much English activist discourse: "Like many who heard of events from afar, I was inspired by the romantic image of a small rural community successfully fighting back" (Rossport Reflections, Outside Agitators, p.37). The discourse of rural beauty is a recurrent theme:

> "Spending time on Glengad beach, swimming in the bay, walking along the Glengad road in summer when the hedgerows are bursting with colour, watching the patterns of the sand in the estuary change with the tides, and all the incredible sunsets." (Rossport Reflections, Outside Agitators, p.38).[4]

The same person talks about the area as a "sanctuary", and "inspiration" and a "place where I had the time and space to grow again", when discussing the natural surroundings. This romantic and idealised vision of the natural surroundings is something that can be seen as quite problematic to any idea of working together as equals in the campaign against Shell, and in a landscape that is certainly seen in a different way by most of its occupants.

[4] See p.33 for more on this pamphlet.

5.2 Colonial after-effects, historical amnesia

5.2.1 Very low levels of awareness of difference by English activists in Ireland

One of the primary frames through which members of DC understood these tensions was through the idea of colonial after-effects, of a sort of historical amnesia which meant that people involved with the campaign from England were often highly unaware and/or unreflective about the legacies of English colonial domination in Ireland:

> "the thing that really astonished me was people actually had no idea at all. Like, you'd ask people 'what do you think of the North?', and it's like, 'the north of where?', like the north of Iraq. But it was like, people could talk to you about East Timor, or they could talk to you about intricate details about British imperialism in India in the nineteenth century, but they didn't actually, they couldn't tell you about the British situation in the North, about, y'know really basic things like Bloody Sunday or the Good Friday Agreement. (P1)"

Surprise is here mingled with disbelief at the lack of knowledge and/or engagement with Irish history and politics that this person sees in numerous English activists. This lack of knowledge is further emphasised by comparison with the knowledge many have of other situations. It is felt that it is incumbent on them to find out about the different society they find themselves in, in order to be able to engage properly with the campaign against Shell. This belief is very strongly held, and the fact that the importance of these issues seems to be invisible to many English activists is a significant problem and source of tension – this is experienced as problematic and disrespectful.A repeated inability or unwillingness to see the differences between the two countries, going as far as seeing Ireland as part of England, was also something which annoyed a number of interviewees:

> "I mean, some people didn't seem to really care that they had crossed borders into a completely different territory with a very, very different history and different politics. And I mean, I remember the first weekend I was up there, there was a discussion about private prisons and one person from the UK was saying 'they have them here now', and...I was perplexed, I was saying, 'look, we don't have private prisons here', and the response was, 'well, y'know in the UK', and emm, for me, I was startled that he could be so nonchalant about it... it shows that there was a tendency to homogenise both Ireland and England, and it also shows that people wouldn't be aware that the politics that they practiced in their environment may be subject to different problems while doing it here. (P2)"

Again here, this person has a sense that English people are wilfully ignoring or erasing the differences between the contexts of Ireland and England, something which causes a mix of annoyance and disbelief. This is significant to this participant due to the fact that it elides the wider historical and political differences between the two societies (and their impacts), and implies that Ireland is a subsection or a part of England – which is very much against this person's view. It further

implies strongly that there has been no consideration of the different political cultures in operation this campaign, and how they might be different from those that they were used to in England.

5.2.2 Tension, and 'nationalism'

> "It definitely created an awful lot of tension, y'know. It's like, talking to other people down there, I remember talking to [Irish camper, and they] saying that 'spending time in Mayo made you more nationalistic', y'know what I mean? (P1)"

This is a very interesting quote for a number of reasons. By 'more nationalistic', this person doesn't mean an attitude which automatically rejects English people, or something of that nature. Rather this attempts to communicate that they, firstly, become more aware of themselves as an Irish person and were obliged to think about what that meant to them when they found themselves in a relational context with many English people at the RSC, and; secondly, they are annoyed by some of the behaviour of English activists, and its felt disregard for the differences in the situation in Ireland, thus in turn making them feel more self-aware and aware of the differences between people's backgrounds and approaches.

In response to some of the issues which members of Dublin and Cork Shell to Sea felt were impacting on the campaign, a number of workshops were held at June Gatherings (a kind of annual large meeting of the campaign and its supporters) to address gaps in knowledge of Irish history and to explore its relevance to the campaign in North West Mayo:

> "I mean nearly every major historical event in Ireland over the last 200 years relates to England, or to Ireland's relationship to England. And then lots of cultural stuff does too, but… then you have... it [the workshop] was kind of to put all that stuff in context, and also to highlight the fact that there's a rich experience in Ireland of resisting. So it's like that we want people to come over and struggle with, not kind of come over and teach us how to do it. (P1)"

This quote connects the history of Ireland with current understandings of resistance. It also explicitly rejects a perceived superior attitude with regard to movement knowledge on the part of many English activists, putting forward the view that there has been and is much of this knowledge in Ireland. Furthermore, it advocates a more equal relationship, rather than one of 'teaching'.

5.3 Further cultural differences

Intertwined with the above idea of colonial after-effects around historical difference and its impact today, was the idea the people who came from Ireland often had a significantly different way of expressing themselves to people from England, where Irish people were less direct and more 'people-centred'. The participants' and the group's feelings were prioritised at least as highly as the goal of the meeting cited below – this was seen as being in contrast with many of the activists from England. The following quote talks about a meeting on the RSC which was made up almost exclusively of activists from the RSC and DC (there were few, if any members of the local community there) – as such the difference they are talking about is between ways of operating in English and Irish movement cultures:

> "this particular session was run by somebody who was going for the really efficient kind of method. And I remember at the end of it, three of us were standing around going, 'oh my God, that was awful'. And we realised that two people were standing next to us going, 'oh my God, wasn't that fantastic! Didn't we do really well', the people that had been doing the facilitating. And we turned around and went 'oh my God, no. That was just dire, that was pushy', bullying people basically, into coming into this result y'know, with very little thought put into what people actually needed to say or needed to express or needed to feel, even. (P3)"

This statement can also be seen very much as a statement of values, pushing forward a certain idea of how meetings should be run, which was seen as compatible with the campaign in Mayo. It also highlights how out of sync people were with one another, how priorities were evaluated in quite different ways, and how there was often a serious level of incomprehension between people coming from different places.

How did people on the RSC understand the discourse of colonialism, and what were their responses to it?

5.4 Countering and changing the colonialism discourse

The following section attempts to bring the above-described discourse of colonialism into discussion with the responses that it sparked in activists on the RSC. They engaged with the concept in a variety of differing ways, from agreement with significant aspects of it and a gratefulness for having learned from it, to rejection of significant aspects of it or of how it was understood or communicated. And indeed, many of these positions were simultaneously held by individual people, as will be explored more below. It is important to emphasise the fact that, while there was a serious level of engagement and complexity brought by English and Irish members of the RSC to the discourse of colonialism, there was also a very strong level of rejection of many aspects of it. These

included arguments that it was over-emphasised, that it silenced people, up to an outright rejection of its existence. This section attempts explore these, and to broaden the reader's sense of the many different understandings and challenges that were attached to the concept of colonialism in the campaign against Shell, and how they played out in the campaign.

5.4 Responses from Irish members of Rossport Solidarity Camp (RSC)

Irish members of the Rossport Solidarity Camp (RSC) are in a unique position in relation to looking at the issue of the impacts of colonialism in the present day on relations between groups in the campaign against Shell. They often report being aware of the manifestations of these dynamics of the after-effects of colonialism, but are also highly sympathetic to activists from England, as they have lived and worked closely with them for extended periods of time at the RSC. They also feel their politics to be often closer to those of the ecological kind advocated by many from England, rather than the class-based/strategic/political organisation politics of Dublin and Cork Shell to Sea (this issue will be explored more fully later on in this chapter, in the section entitled 'Collective identity'). This first example shows the ambivalence of many campers on this issue, and the sympathy shown in relation to it:

> "we'll call it the 'English Climate Camp organising attitude' [laughs]. And like, so there is some off-putting elements [laughs], attributes, which you can't help but see, of, maybe trying to take too much control over something without maybe being involved too much. But I think that was only maybe, like did that happen maybe one or two times that groups were up, so that maybe there was, maybe there was a view of it that it was all the time. (P4)"

This quote starts with a willingness to critique some aspects of the culture of ecological activism in England mentioned – the 'English Climate camp organising attitude' is seen as something which can lead to attempting to take more power in meetings or protests than their sometimes limited participation merited. But the participant is equally keen to show loyalty to English activists, who they have worked alongside for sustained periods of time at the RSC. Another significant dynamic in this quote is the evident desire to differentiate their softer, more conciliatory critique from the tougher one put forward by members of DC. This difficult position between the two groups is negotiated by agreeing with both, to a degree – but then retreating from agreeing too much. Another interviewee engages more fully with the colonial critique of English activists, connecting it to a problem with importing certain defined models of organising and seeking to enact them in a quite different context:

> "So, yeah certainly UK activists would have certain ways of organising that had become well-established through a longer-running… experiences of this kind of direct action camps... I think [those models] would've caused tension and friction of not allowing Irish people to come up with their own ways or use established ways of organising... there

> was valid reasons for the friction, but as happens a lot, when they came out on the surface, egos on both sides would have inflamed the friction, and the friction was maybe more damaging than it had to be. (P10)"

There is a strong sense here of attempting to be accepting and open to the different perspectives offered by both English ecological activists and DC. The former are seen as having a certain form of knowledge which can be useful, but there is also a parallel acceptance of the view that the way of doing things brought from English ecological political culture may also be problematic in terms of attempting to apply them in a different campaign and a different context. They also identify the fact that problems arose when people had difficulties taking on board different perspectives, leading to personal issues and hurt feelings.

5.5 Responses from English activists on the after-effects colonialism

5.5.1 Acceptance of a problematic engagement with the campaign by many English people

Many long-term English activists accepted that the attitudes and approaches brought to the campaign against Shell by numerous others who were involved in the radical ecological scene in England were problematic – this was not only an issue put forward by DC. There are repeated references to 'arrogance' and 'offensiveness', and the importance that is was 'called out' in the campaign during the course of the interviews. As will be explored over the coming sections, this was combined with a refutation or a questioning of a number of aspects of the colonialism discourse. But it is important to emphasise that there was always at least a degree of acceptance of this discourse by many long term English activists on the RSC.

For example, the following quote explores the process of how assumptions made by English activists about the community in North West Mayo came about:

> "I think that people assumed that because... people spoke English, or they didn't know the history of... Irish struggle, that they were coming across to a community that was quite naive, in many ways... There's definitely an ignorance of history... and I thought a lack of awareness of where people of rural cultures - so a lot of people from Britain were from cities and from queer scenes and stuff, and they did create a bubble, without reeeeally questioning how that fitted within the community" (P6).

There are a number of significant elements to this statement – part of the lack of recognition of difference is put down to either 1) the fact that English is the language the vast majority speak on a daily basis, thus making the differences between Ireland and England somewhat less obvious or, 2) that there was a problem around ignorance of history, or a combination to the two – the latter clearly echoes the sentiments of earlier parts of this chapter. A subcultural self-distancing from the community by many English activists is also put forward as a problem that the engagement between

the two groups was problematic, to a significant degree. The fact that the RSC made serious efforts to be a 'safe space' for many queer people is an important element here, as this would not be the case in many campaigns. Unfortunately, issues of space mean that this issue cannot be discussed in full here.

5.5.2 A double movement of acceptance and changing the discourse around colonialism

The following passage follows a similar path to that of the activists from the RSC above – it struggles with the topic of colonialism – accepting some things, and attempting to nuance the discussion by introducing the topic of social class. These sections – previous and current – introduce an alternative, challenging discourse which attempts to disrupt the discourse of colonialism put forward by DC. This thesis does not attempt to decide which of these is correct, but rather to compare and to bring them into a real dialogue with one another, something that was often sorely lacking in the campaign against Shell.

The first section of this quote displays gratefulness for the learning that this person has made with regard to the after effects of colonialism, while at the same time seeking to adjust the discourse around it to include more of a differentiation between social classes in England:

> "I think there was some really good conversations happened about colonialism and English activism - like one particular seminar that [activist] did on a camp. And it was brilliant, it was really good, there was lots of discussions, and there was lots of talk about class; people were saying, 'y'know, I go all funny if I hear a posh English accent', and an English person went 'so do I!' [both laugh]. Y'know, and it was really good to widen it out to be, this isn't just about 'the English', there's also like, class stuff going on as well. But it was really good to – y'know, I hadn't massively thought about my effect as someone coming from England, cos I don't feel I'm part of a… the colonial class [laughs]. So, I don't, yeah I didn't really think that I had that baggage, and all that, but I do get it now, I'm really, really appreciative of those conversations and those dialogues we had about privilege and, where you come from, and all kinds of assumptions you have that come with politics, y'know, come with your background and stuff. (P8)"

This person struggles with attempting to come to terms with a level of acceptance of the colonialism discourse put forward by members of DC, and expresses a feeling of gratefulness for this learning, as well as stating that the fact that dialogue was had was a very positive thing (even if it's clearly not a comfortable discussion for them). They simultaneously complicate the situation by referencing the centrally important nature of social class in the differences and the 'over-empowerment' (in the words of another participant) of some English activists. The following section goes on to put forward an alternative discourse around patriarchy as an alternative way, and also a simultaneously a supplementary way, of seeing the tensions that existed in the campaign:

> "But I also felt quite, like I… one of my clashes that happened, I thought, I took to be patriarchy, I took to be them being, someone being a sexist twat, basically, and I said this to his friend, I said, 'well I took that reaction to be, because he was being sexist', and he was like, 'he's not sexist, it's because you're English!' [mock shout] [both laugh]. I was like, a) still not alright to treat me like that, but he was like, 'how dare you', he got really angry with me for saying that it was sexism – like, my first call of oppression, in my experience, is patriarchy. So if a bloke acts like that to me, I'm going to assume it's patriarchy – I might be wrong – but that is… my first, kind of, call. (P8)"

This outlines how this person negotiates a position where they don't necessarily reject the discourse around colonialism, but they reject the way in which it is seen as being used to excuse behaviour which they feel is very problematic. The final sentence points towards a willingness to engage with the discourse around colonialism, and to interrogate their own behaviour in that light, but also a maintenance of the importance of patriarchy as a way of understanding this situation. This final paragraph complicates the situation further, proposing gender as at least as equally important as colonialism in the dispute in question, and arguing that the latter was used to silence discussion of patriarchal behaviour:

> "And the fact that I wasn't allowed to bring up – cos I think there was a lot of patriarchal issues in the camp... and that was never allowed to be discussed. Whereas the English thing got discussed and discussed, and then by the end of being there... like, I felt really attacked for it, I got fucking fed up of conversations about it... And I get why, because of obviously the much wider politics about colonialism, but it got to the point..where I found it quite inhibiting, and quite upsetting, and tiring. (P8)"

This section goes on to further develop on this person's interaction with the tensions in the campaign, and their feeling that over time, as the colonialism discourse was felt to be continually over-emphasised, that it developed to the point where they felt it was used to attack her and others. This quote contains a very strong sense of struggling between a very strong attempt to engage with the (broadly accepted) concept of colonial after-effects, and a sense that it was being applied in an unfair manner. The negative effects of this unfairness on this person's ability to engage with the campaign are then outlined in the final sentence.

Another campaigner (this time a self-identified male) also engages with the topic of patriarchal attitudes that were seen in campaigners from DC – but his attitude is much less forgiving and less open to engagement with the discourse around colonialism, which he rejects, perceiving:

> "a particularly anti-English attitude. So, people who were doing the same [making statements which were ignorant of Irish history] from elsewhere weren't being called-out in the same way, and it was also being used to cover up other... dodgy practices, so like, patriarchal attitudes were being used, were being justified in the name of, republicanism. So there's quite a lot of... women who had come through the Earth First! movement, who dealt with a lot of shit, who were quite strong, but who were being told that their voices didn't count simply for being English, and with them completely

ignoring any gender aspect... That also, well like, is this… this again is somebody's own agenda overriding everybody else's, and that's a bit disingenuous. (P6)"

This quote echoes the sense of unfairness outlined above, and connects it with a 'republican agenda' which he distrusts wholeheartedly rejects (see section entitled ''Republican agenda' underplaying the achievements of the campaign' below for more on this). There is also a very strong sense of anger in this statement, which is connected to the final line – the reference to disingenuousness in the final sentence is in reference to the feeling that English people coming to get involved in the campaign against Shell were not informed of the discourse around colonialism before their arrival, leaving them often at a loss to understand it (see 'Problems with publicity tours to the UK' towards the end of this chapter).

5.6 Questioning a colonialism narrative which is seen to be simplistic

Another approach that is taken to problematise the idea of colonialism which is seen as being put forward by Irish campaigners – this activist feels that the real story is more complicated than the one put forward, and that Irish people's agency gets lost in a narrative that is seen as simplistic:

"yes, broadly the British Empire was clearly a very bad thing – y'know, I'm not an apologist for that – but I think the important thing – in order to understand the complexity of things like power, oppression, class, however it's manifested - is to look at the subtleties and nuances of stuff... you can't just talk about it in terms of a history of victimhood, because people have agency and people have ways of fighting back... one of the things that inspired me was the fact that people in the local community have clearly got this history of… I think radicalism that they draw on, I think not unproblematically, but it's certainly part of Irish language and culture in a way that it's not part of English culture. (P9)"

They also engage with the present-day effects of this colonial history, connecting the past with the way that people engage with politics today. The interaction of power and resistance with one another is a central part of this quote, problematising the idea of a simple, uni-directional exercise of power and domination. It should be noted that this type and style of academic knowledge and engagement was of course not the norm for British people coming to the campaign against Shell; equally, this person was not unique in this respect.

Furthermore, in other sections they reject how they feel that a simplistic idea of ignorance was attached to them, despite their engagement with the issue of colonialism. That is, they reject the assumption of an ignorance of dynamics of colonialism and of Irish history of them as an English person, as they don't feel that this is true or accurate – it is seen as a blanket assumption which is not true of them. However, this reflection is done in a very personalised way, with less engagement

with the issue as it manifested among English campaigners in Rossport as a whole – this is reflective of a generally more individual discourse among this cohort of interviewees. That is, while interviewees from Dublin and Cork were much more likely to talk about groups and organising – about a 'we' – those from England and Irish campers talked about personal experiences rather than groups, and were notably more unwilling to generalise their opinions. This can also often be reflected in their way of looking at how politics is and should be practiced, insofar as DC are very much focussed on collective organising as a primary goal and focus of their political work, while personal principle was cited much more often by activists on the RSC, both Irish and English.

5.6.1 'Republican agenda' underplaying the achievements of the campaign

This rejection of the colonial narrative is taken further by another interviewee, who feels that it underplays the (considerable) achievements of the campaign. This passage is also notable for its rejection of the sense of a controlling story which did not allow for debate or disagreement, as noted in the earlier refusal to engage with gender:

> "I thought there was no space to question that politics, there's no way to actually say it, and the way it was being presented was 'poor Irish, poor Irish, poor Irish', which really wound me up, and I remember having to do a rant at the end, 'can we please stop patronising ourselves, and claiming this victim cos it's blatantly bullshit', am, and I think that was part of that [Republican] agenda. To me, Rossport was this amazing space, that Ireland was actually on the international map, in a way that few places are, and it was being really denigrated implicitly. (P6)"

This person totally rejects 'the Republican agenda', which they see as an insidious nationalism which in incompatible with their anarchist principles. They also feel that issues around the after effects of colonialism in Ireland are primarily linked to the situation in Northern Ireland. This person has very strong personal and political connections with both Ireland and England; as such they refer to both Irish people and English ecological activists as part of a (different) 'we'. This is significant because they feel a part of both groups, which may help explain them feeling empowered to contradict the discourse of colonialism advanced by members of DC (many English activists did not). They state that their background has given them a clear antipathy to republicanism, and they also reject any suggestion that the histories and experiences of Northern and Southern Ireland were the same (they feel that this was implied by people from DC).

It should be noted that there was a much less expressed view that tensions between English and Irish people were not a big issue. As is seen in a number of interviews, these tensions became a majorly debated issue in the campaign in 2009, and remained so for a number of years – the

importance given to them is very closely related to the time period that people were heavily involved in the campaign against Shell.

5.7 An alternative interpretation of the tensions – RSC different to DC

A different, and countering, discourse was put forward by a number of members of the RSC, both Irish and English, to the one centred on colonialism's after effects advocated by DC. This alternative discourse suggested that the tensions within the campaign were instead coming from differences between DC and the camp as a whole, rather than specifically the English members of it. It also located much of the genesis of the tensions in DC approaches and attitudes, rather than in problematic behaviour by English activists – while at the same time acknowledging that the latter could be an issue. Some of the ways in which this was expressed and understood will be explored in this section.

5.7.1 'From a living on the camp perspective'

This Irish camper argues 'from a living on the camp perspective' against the idea of the differences between English and Irish people on camp as being seen as a significant factor, seeing issues being accentuated by people who visited the camp ('people who came up on a temporary basis' refers to Dublin and Cork Shell to Sea) rather than people living at the RSC:

> "I would see that it was said more, like my time on camp I didn't see a big massive divide, between and English people and Irish people... and I, usually I heard more of it from people who come up on a more temporary basis, that I would have heard more of it from. (P4)"

> "It was like city people coming – the power suits coming from Dublin, to kind of tell you what to do in the country!? Y'know, and there's that dynamic... in the campaign. (P8)"

These quotes very consciously contradict the idea that the differences between Irish and English people were the most important source of tension in the campaign. Later on, they go on to state that "I'm saying it'd be closer to [an] environmental versus political [organising] divide" in terms of the most significant difference between DC and the RSC – and this is the way that they frame it, as difference between those groups and their ways of organising and seeing the world, rather than (and in opposition to) the interpretation of the campaign that states that the most important difference is based on the after effects of colonialism.

The following quote takes this distinction further, attempting to explore why there were significant differences between the approaches taken by DC and those taken by the later generation of campers, and locating it in the different priorities of 'different types of people':

> "there's resistance in me to getting into describing certain types of people. But, I guess in me head it's undeniable, it seems a natural progression for me that people who're into environment and earthy stuff would be drawn to living on a camp in a bog, in benders [a type of semi-permanent tent]. And people who're interested in national organisational structures and organisation of how the economy is run, and I guess more politicised nationally – not just nationally, but large political organisation – might be, maybe not less likely to want to live on a camp, but more likely to wanna stay in a city. (P10)"

This is interesting for a number of reasons. Firstly, it very explicitly connects personal interests with the forms of political action chosen. It also contrasts preferences for undertaking political organisation with living on the earth in the RSC – this implicitly contrasts a sense of the smaller and more intimate, personal scale of the campaign in Mayo, with the idea of wide-scale structures on a national level (DC would feel that the RSC should have a very different role to this, as a crucial node in a wide whole). Many of these differences will be explored in the later part of this chapter. Most important for the current issue is the delimitation of quite different political interests being represented in the RSC on the one hand, and DC on the other, and the differentiation drawn between the political approaches that are seen as related to these different interests by this camper.

5.7.2 Ecology prioritised over money

This theme is taken on and explored in the following two quotes, which are (first) by an English camper and then an Irish one. They both express the view that the concentration on economic issues put forward by DC was not something that motivated them personally, or many other members of the RSC:

> "I think individuals, y'know, got on and stuff, but I don't think the camp worked well with Dublin, particularly. I think it was partly to do with - well I think most English people were not interested in national Shell to Sea, in the whole resource issue. They were much more interested in the local, supporting the locals, and trying to stop the place being trashed." (P8)

Ecological considerations and supporting the community are given higher importance here than campaigning on the issue of Irish ownership of the natural resources in the Corrib gas field (and other finds)[5]. They are careful not to say that all campers are uninterested in the natural resources issue, as there was a higher level of engagement with that issue by Irish campers. That said, in my

[5] *Another potentially important factor in the years after the transition period was how DS2S (particularly) focussed their campaigning on linking the issue of Ireland's natural resources with the recession which began at that time, marking a shift towards campaigning focussed on the cities, rather than organising buses of people up to Days of Action in Mayo. This was also certainly down to the changes in the local and national campaign brought about the split and that whole period. It is interesting to note that this change in campaigning was not discussed by any of the DC members interviewed, suggesting that it was either not seen as a big change for them, or that it was not seen as a relevant element in the political differences between them and the RSC.*

research the issue of natural resources was certainly not Irish campers' top priority, with ecological and social justice issues consistently being stated to be more important than economic considerations by them:

> "I found Dublin Shell To Sea quite hard to..access for me – and it was, for me a lot of the time the focus was very much on the nationalisation and the kind of money side of things, which didn't have a particularly strong appeal to me. (P10)"

There is clearly a distance expressed here between the personal priorities of this camper and those of DC, which are seen as having very little appeal.

5.7.3 Ecological politics poorly understood, and not accepted

The following quote connects the difference between DC and the RSC with the view that the former groups had a limited view of what radical ecological politics was about, with the fact that the lack of discussion on the topic limited understanding between the groups, accentuating differences:

> "I felt a bit shy to have, to be able to have those conversations [about the importance of political and class analysis in ecological politics] cos I felt quite attacked...I didn't feel confident enough, that's my own, my own stuff was that I just didn't feel confident enough to just have a good political discussion about it. Because I felt, like, the Dublin lot were quite, kind of academic anarchists, and I don't feel like I am, from the heart and the guts kind of politics, and I didn't feel like I could hold my own in that kind of discussion. Yeah, part of that problem was lack of communication, and lack of discourse, and lack of just having it all out. (P8)"

This is then in turn connected with a sense that ecological politics were under attack, that they had to be defended – that there was a pre-existing negative disposition towards them among many in DC. The reference to 'from the heart and guts kind of politics' can also be seen as a difference between many campers and the DC groups, contrasting emotional engagement with political activism with the latter groups seeing themselves as much more analytical or detached in terms of their political views, valuing strategy highly. Issues around difference on the topic of ecological politics will be explored later in this chapter, as will the connections and disconnects between the colonialism discourse put forward by DC and their views of ecological politics – but the primary importance of its inclusion here is to emphasise that there were multiple ways of understanding the tensions in the campaign. This section has attempted to explore the alternative ways of looking at the tensions within the campaign which was put forward by Irish and English campers, largely in opposition to the discourse around the after effects of colonialism put forward by DC.

How important were political culture differences in this situation?

5.8 Different political cultures

Having explored the many different perspectives around the discourse of colonialism in the campaign against Shell, this final major section attempts to bring a number of the different concepts explored into relationship with one another. That is, many of the various elements of difference between English ecological activists, DC, and Irish members of the RSC that interacted in the tensions that arose around the discourse of colonialism are looked at here, to attempt to disentangle the many strands of those tensions. The final section outlines a number of different options that participants put forward as potentially fruitful ways to address or avoid similar issues in the future.

5.8.1 Different political backgrounds

Different people involved in the campaign against Shell came from often quite different political backgrounds, from focussing on the environment to prioritising economic or social class issues (all saw themselves as being there in solidarity with the local community – the different ways they saw this are explored in the Discussion chapter, in the section entitled 'Collective identity'). Following on from the previous section, these political differences will now be explored, and how they led to varying approaches to how best to run the campaign, and often confusion and rejection of one another's approach.

This can be clearly seen in the below quote, which explores the view of many from Dublin and Cork that the ecological politics put forward by many people from England was disrespectful to decisions already made and to the ethos of solidarity with the community which had been built up in the early years of the campaign:

> "So you had people who were quite into taking action and standing in solidarity with local people, but may have had very different opinions around the oil and gas side of it, which was something that we had already kind of… and it's kind of funny, cos I remember at some stage someone saying to me, y'know, 'the burning of the gas is the elephant in the room', and I was like, 'it's not the elephant in the room, we've actively and openly discussed that years ago. It's not an elephant in the room, that's a decision that was made to stand in solidarity with local people and not come in and dictate our politics'. So yeah, I think that was probably one of the biggest things, one of the biggest factors, and I think it was quite difficult for a lot of people from England to understand why a lot of people from Dublin and Cork were arguing so strongly in favour of allowing the gas to come in. Because actually what it was, it was arguing really strongly around solidarity and what solidarity is within local communities.(P5)"

This quote shows the anger and frustration of the speaker at the lack of awareness and comprehension seen in activists from England of their idea of solidarity, which is central to this person's (and DC's) understandings of the campaign. The reference to a discussion that 'we had years ago' is significant here. Firstly, it references the person's longevity (and thus felt credibility) in the campaign – in contrast with the person they're debating against; it also shows the strong difference between the early years of the campaign and the more recent ones. Furthermore, it claims authority in a decision which has already been discussed and taken in a collective fashion – this can also be seen as an implicit criticism of the felt bigger focus by many English activists on personal principles. Lastly, it contrasts the felt assumption by the other person of the campaign's ignorance of ecology with their experience that it had been discussed at an earlier date – this in turn shows that person to be ignorant of this aspect of the campaign, turning their assumption back on them.

5.8.2 Ecological politics connected to colonialism discourse

> "And I guess for me as well, cos I come from cos I work within community development, the core of radical community development is that communities know what's best for themselves. And the community had really thought about – I mean, there was a presumption that the community – it was kinda, it was nearly the similar presumption where the community 'weren't really educated enough to think about the implications of burning fossil fuels'. Which was a complete nonsense; the community had done enormous amounts of research into all sides of oil and gas. So yeah, I guess I found that really difficult, was that there had been decisions – those debates and those discussions had happened, and there'd been decisions around them, and then new people come in and go, 'well no, that's bad politics'. It's, 'well, maybe coming over to Ireland from England and asserting that you're right, is bad politics. (P5)"

This person feels that this presumption that others are ignorant of environmental issues from many of the English participants in the campaign, is quite patronising of the community. Dublin and Cork Shell to Sea's work with the community is then combined with this, making the feeling of being patronised a personal one (as well as to their fellow campaigners in the community) – this is also problematised politically. The last sentence shows how political differences can often became mixed up and were combined with some of the views of colonialism expressed earlier.

This is an important point, as the felt imposition of ecological politics by English activists is connected with the discourse of colonialism, thus expanding that discourse. It is connected with assumptions that are seen as prevalent throughout English society, and while there may be an element of that here too, the stronger feeling is one of a supposedly 'superior' political culture which is imposing itself on the campaign. Thus, the felt forcing of ecological politics becomes part of the discourse of colonialism. This is a significant point, as the mixing of these two issues is something

that English activists often try to avoid or to question (as do some DC activists, but less regularly), as part of redefining the tensions and differences as being between the RSC as a whole, and DC.

5.9 English activists' views of the place of ecology in the campaign

5.9.1 Leave it in the ground

> "The compromise of 'Shell to Sea' makes me very uncomfortable. I don't want the gas refined at sea; there will also be huge ecological devastation out at sea. I want the gas left in the ground' (article entitled 'Leave it in the ground', 'Outside Agitators', p.28).

The idea of 'leaving it in the ground' (i.e. not exploiting the Corrib gas field at all) is a recurrent one in this pamphlet, and fits with the wider ecological political culture and perspective of most of the English activists who participated in the campaign against Shell (Plows, Wall and Doherty, 2004). The foregrounding of environmental concerns, specifically around climate change, is clearly very important to English activists, and putting forward this perspective can be seen as one of the reason for which the 'Outside Agitators' pamphlet was created:"To me Rossport is the line in the sand. It's the front line in the battle against climate change." (Leave it in the ground, p.28).

The secondary nature of these types of issues in the regular discourse of the campaign is noted on a number of occasions, and the limited nature of the Shell to Sea goals[6] is repeatedly emphasised:

> "If I'm honest, under pretty much any other circumstances there is no way that I would be actively supporting people who were essentially campaigning for a multinational company to extract and process gas, as long as it happens at sea, and a greater proportion of the profits go to the state." (Rossport Reflections, p.38).

Given that Dublin and Cork Shell to Sea both made campaigning on the issue of state ownership of Irish natural resources the central plank of their campaigning (this is clearly seen in the production and distribution of the 'Someday Independent' and 'Liquid Assets', publications which concentrate on the economic aspects of the campaign), it's not difficult to see the stark divergence of views on this subject. Put simply, climate change was towards the top of the agenda for many English activists, while it was well down the list of priorities for Dublin and Cork Shell to Sea.

[6]The Shell to Sea Campaign has three main aims:
1)Any exploitation of the Corrib gas field be done in a safe way that will not expose the local community in Erris to unnecessary health, safety and environmental risks.
2) To renegotiate the terms of the Great Oil and Gas Giveaway, which sees Ireland's 10 billion barrels of oil equivalent* off the West Coast go directly to the oil companies, with the Irish State retaining a 0% share, no energy security of supply and only 25% tax on profits against which all costs can be deducted.
3) To seek justice for the human rights abuses suffered by Shell to Sea campaigners due to their opposition to Shell's proposed inland refinery.

5.9.1 The place of the state and countering DC, from an ecological perspective

Another significant tension for English ecological activists with regard to DC is explored in the following quote:

> "The corrupt nature of the state is highlighted again and again. But somehow, when it comes to discussion of where profits from the gas should go, the state becomes a benign entity. In 'Shell to Sea' publicity [this refers to the Dublin Shell to Sea booklet, the 'Someday Independent'] the implication is made that if the state gets the profits from the gas the money will go into schools and hospitals. There is little to justify this leap of logic." (Rossport Reflections, p.39).

It is suggested that these types of profits might instead go into deploying extra Gardaí, into corrupt political payments, or into the military (this last statement displays a very limited understanding of the small size and relative lack of importance of the Irish armed forces). The above writer acknowledges a level of validity in the argument that a strong, winning social movement could have the power to insist on socially progressive spending, but "the gains will only ever by limited concessions from those with power. This is not something that I will actively struggle for." (Rossport Reflections, p.39). This tallies closely with Gordon's assertion that for groups like this "a politics of demand…extends undue recognition and legitimation to state power…a strategy far removed from anarchism" (2008). By way of contrast, a member of Dublin Shell to Sea argued to me that they too were somewhat dissatisfied with the compromise goals of Shell to Sea, but had agreed to come on board with the campaign despite this. They were very unhappy that a number of English activists were seeking to work outside these boundaries (which they felt the English activists had also agreed to) – this was seen to be both unhelpful to the campaign's ongoing work, and an attempt to break with the hard-achieved compromise.

There is a continual tension recognised in a number of the pieces in 'Outside Agitators' between advocating a new perspective for the campaign, and respecting the existing direction of the campaign, both in how it has done things and in what it has achieved. From the introduction to the British edition:

> "If you come from an eco-anarchist perspective these [Shell to Sea] aims are clearly pretty limited. But really, what aims do you expect to be agreed upon by a random rural community? Demands that the gas stay in the ground, a transition to a low-carbon society and an end to capitalism?"(p.14).

The differences between this position and some of the ones outlined earlier are distinct, and underlines the debates taking place between many English activists.There is also a clear pressure felt by the English campers coming from other radical ecologists.

5.9.2 Lack of respect for ecological views

In contrast with the views expressed by the DC members in the previous section on Political differences, this English activist feels that their ecological politics were not respected. And while a particular organisation is referenced here, this can be seen as relevant to much of DC:

> "I felt like there was no respect for anyone having political views about ecology, environment - amongst some people from the WSM. Like, people said to me, like 'climate change isn't an, isn't our issue cos it's gonna be sorted by capitalism' - I totally remember somebody saying that to me, 'it's not an anarchist issue, cos it'll just be sorted out, there's other things we need to do'... And that isn't the analysis now, at all, like, I think things have really changed, but... so yeah, that was quite a clash, that was a massively, completely different view to me. (P8)"

Incredulity at this level of disregard and poor analysis of ecological issues is the sentiment of this quote. Here, ecology is a centrally important issue that has been pushed aside without much thought – this is in marked contrast with the discourse put forward in the previous section, where ecology has been considered and decided to be secondary to the idea of solidarity put forward by DC. These quotes may not be as incompatible as they first seem though, given that both strongly imply a lack of/poor communication between different points of view, especially the former one, which posits that the English person spoken to was unaware of earlier decisions. They also implicitly reference different periods in the campaign. The DC person references a decision which would have been from the early years of the campaign with the assumption that it still applies in the same way, and/or as a challenge to the idea that it might no longer apply. On the other hand, the English activist quoted here is clearly referencing the years after the transition period (see p.10), when the RSC was more ecologically oriented and saw itself as largely autonomous from both the national campaign and from decisions made in earlier years, due to the changes in the campaign brought about by the transition period.

5.10 A significant change in context around the time of the transition period

5.10.1 Distance between the cities and the RSC in later years

A number of people from England would view solidarity in a different fashion to DC, prioritising being physically present and putting themselves in the way of Shell's construction work:

> "when I was there, there seemed to be little communication or, like there was very few national Shell to Sea meetings, emm, that was just a project they were doing. We were going out standing in front of trucks, day-in, day-out, or going to court, and that really was what was feeling real at the time. The time I was there was pretty much for, when Aughoose, the whole Aughoose thing was going on, so it was fairly full-on, 'go stand in

front of trucks, go pick people up from the jail, from the Garda station, go stand in front of a few more trucks'. (P6)"

There is a strong sense of disconnect expressed here, alongside an explanation for the lack of communication. The disconnect is put down to the very strong sense of different priorities and experiences between the groups. The lack of communications is linked with this, along with an expression of priorities (blocking trucks comes first) which means that there is very little time for building connections, which are seen as being of secondary importance.

He then goes on to explain that the work that was being done in the cities felt distant and irrelevant to their experience living on camp, which is talked about in a much more engaged and fully present way than the work of political organising and research. This different experience is combined with political differences in the following quote which begins by exploring the fear expressed by a number of ecological activists from England that the problems of the community were being pushed into the background by the (over) concentration on the natural resources issue:

"I've always felt that the local people would be shat over if it was nationalised – so I didn't see how that would help the locals... And yeah.. and being from another country, it's really hard to feel passionate about; I found it really hard to feel any passion about that side of the campaign, about the resources and all that, I just didn't – and that's partly because I believe in leaving it in the ground. So like, nationalising the resource, I was like, 'no, I just want it left in the ground, I don't want it exploited', so I guess there's quite a difference there, and I guess that might have come from kind of my more ecological background. (P8)"

The issue of the priority of the community is here mixed with a felt distance from the national campaign (i.e. the natural resources concentration of DC) because of its connection specifically with Ireland. This in turn is then linked with their own ecological principles; all three motivations are interwoven with each other, supporting one another – these are clearly seen quite differently from the way the DC activist recently quoted sees the campaign. They then go on to explore how this attitude of distancing from the national campaign may have impacted on people in that campaign, attempting to be understanding of their views, while simultaneously putting forward the view that personal differences were a significant factor in the tensions in the campaign (rather than political differences):

"But I think that lack of interest in the wider campaign, y'know, irked people in that campaign, obviously, and understandably, but I also think that a lot of people who left, who weren't so involved locally any more..mainly, I think, through burnout, clung to the kind of national campaign, as their way of being involved - which is fair enough -.. but I felt like, and then they would have got really [exhales heavily]..cos it, this is where I think it becomes, it's more, it's not just about difference in politics between the people, I think it's quite personal. I think the crossover came when a lot of people were burnt out,

> and with that comes a loss of control, so there was like, whereas people were, trying to learn how to be involved in the campaign without getting battered all the time, without having to be there - that's when a load of English people came in, who were up for being battered, and being there, and were seen as taking over, and it was like, it happens in any group, in whatever nationality or whatever background, there's always that crossover of people burning out and having to learn to lose control, and let new people step in. And I think that dilemma was happening, and I think that would be really fucking difficult, whatever, whoever it was - but because there was this perception of, so that was when more English people came involved, who perhaps come from a different - come with different ideas, come with different reasons... I think that obviously created a massive political clash as well. But I think there was an underlying personal thing going on, that was never massively - or never acknowledged. (P8)"

The tensions and differences in the campaign are seen as very much linked to the experience of burnout perceived among the 'first generation' of campers, who were very strongly connected to DC. This is then connected with this person's previous experience of campaigning, and specifically camp-based action – their analysis thus combines that experience with their observation in the RSC. This also offers an alternative interpretation of why many people from Dublin and Cork were annoyed with the changes in direction of the RSC in the later years of the campaign, and of the campaign in general. This in turnis connected to the following sections, which look at the alienation felt by many activists from the cities after the very important transition period around 2007-08. (See 'The transition period' on p.10).

5.10.2 An alternative narrative of why the camp changed – contextualising the transition period

A camper who was there during the transition outlines their view of how the context changed radically for the RSC during that period, and some of the reasons behind the new direction it took after that:

> "the whole lock-on, tripods thing, did come from English direct action, Earth First!, anti-roads protests and stuff like that, so it was...it was directly influenced by English organising, y'know... But that was also at a time that I think the camp was...was at a weak point, I'd say it was at the weakest that I've seen, the camp was - around the Pobal thing but like before the Pobals thing, the winter 2007 was when we got evicted, like that was touch-and-go, the camp was almost closing, and then around the time of the split, it nearly closed down...but still the spring of 2008, early 2008, was weak enough, so I...yeah, there wasn't loads of organising coming from around the country at that stage either, maybe more English activists came over, summer 2008... (P4)"

This presents, and foregrounds, the importance of the specific context in which the campaign found itself in 2007-08 (during and just after the transition period – see p.10), which is felt to be an important part of any understanding of the different campaign and the different RSC that emerged in their aftermath. Juts how difficult the period was is emphasised, and in a way that emphasises the

feeling that this was not taken into account by DC.Below, the heavy consultation which was very much a feature of the early part of the campaign is seen as being shifted by the huge changes of the transition period, from the split in the local campaign to the larger presence and influence of English ecological activists on the campaign:

> "But yeah, there was a big change, in that it did change from, you had to really heavily consult with the local people to, like, just, to change that you could go and do actions... but there probably could have been more done to, maybe involve and...get full blessing, if that was it - so like, that's probably somewhere where the criticism is stemming from I suppose, but that also doesn't take into account that the protests were waning, and that the amount of local people coming out was waning, and the people turning up to the trailer to walk down the road, y'know, that Shell trucks were going in...more or less unimpeded because of the violence of the cops...so there was a change of tactics and, like there probably wasn't enough analysis of that on the camp, y'know, or like then probably, but like the camp was weak when that changed, and I think the national campaign was weak, and then it became stronger again, the camp y'know. I suppose a lot of that was the English activists starting to come over more, y'know. (P4)"

This explores a change in how solidarity was practiced, and an accompanying shift in the balance of power in the campaign towards the RSC and away from the community. This quote explains that shift in terms of the exhaustion of the community and the departure of most members of the 'first generation' of campers, the weakening of DC, but also in how the only source of energy within the campaign at that time was seen to be English ecological activists coming over in larger numbers (due to a number of recruitment drives around that time). They acknowledge the problematic lack of analysis of this shift, but don't accept the version they feel is put forward by DC that this was forced on the campaign – they also feel DC criticisms implicitly assume the campaign not to have changed in a significant way.

Cultural differences also had impacts on people from Dublin and Cork in a more personal way, leaving some feeling as if they were isolated from the campaign and finding it very difficult to relate to the people at the RSC, and the activist culture which had become the norm there. One long-term member of Dublin Shell to Sea relates their experience of feeling out of place in a space that he had taken to be familiar:

> "I remember being at two Bank Holiday Weekends [Annual June Gatherings of the campaign] in a row where I felt, like, completely alien on the camp, and just finding that the weirdest experience, being like, 'this is very weird'. And all of these people had arrived for that weekend, and most of them would go home a week later and never come back, were completely comfortable in the space – and those of us who had been involved for years were like, 'this is a bit weird', and finding excuses to not have cans on camp, y'know? (P5)"

This explores a very palpable distance and lack of belonging from the RSC in later years. This must be understood in the context of the camp having felt very much like somewhere that was comfortable and familiar in earlier years, due to the predominance of friends, close political comrades and others who were part of a similar political culture to them at that time. This is seen as having changed to a political culture that they are not familiar with at all.

An important common theme among many of the interviewees which comes up is the sense of personal hurt experienced by people when their views are ignored or they feel that they or their political beliefs are being unfairly sidelined – and the rejection of the other's point of view which can often follow this. This is also reflective of the change in the RSC culture and approach which took place from around 2007 onwards – this change will be the subject of the next section.

5.11 Direct action culture in the campaign

5.11.1 Two very different views on direct action

One interviewee talks about how the culture of making direct action the centrepoint of campaigning by many people on the RSC after the transition period was detrimental to the campaign, taking energy away from other tasks where it was felt to be needed. This is connected with the belief that this kind of action was not likely to be successful in defeating Shell and that a more strategic or political approach was more appropriate:

> "Like, I'm not saying there's not a role for that kind of stuff [direct action on tripods, lock-ons, etc], and I know that it sounds like, that I'm pitching one against the other - but for times, it was. I think to organise things like days of action, that kind of stuff, a huge amount of planning needs to go into them, and they took a lot of time to deliver.
>
> ...I guess it probably comes down to, what's the end goal? Ultimately, could these lock-ons and road blocks and all that, stop that project? I don't think it could, I don't think it could five years ago, ten years ago, don't think it can now – like, Shell just have too much money... for that. But I think what it needed to be was [building mass] direct action forcing major, a big political crisis in the country. Like with hundreds of people involved on some level, getting to the point of thousands, and I think big days of action helped to do that, rather than the kind of constant – like, what would it have taken for direct action to stop that project? (P1)"

This quote starts off struggling with how to envisage a compatibility for political organising and small group direct action. It then moves on to a combination of critique of that type of direct action, along with an advocacy for a form of political organising that he classifies as connected with a socialist politics, rather than an ecological one. In this way, one political direction is advocated over another by means of an appeal to the pragmatism and effectiveness that they feel is represented in their approach.

He then goes on to outline how this crisis could, possibly, be brought about through political organising, while stating that he struggles to imagine how it could be done by regular small-group direct action. And rather than this form of direct action being a chosen strategy of people coming over from England, it was strongly identified as the form of action that they took, as part of the protest culture and scenes they were part of. A number of them were also participants in roads protests in England during the 1990s, which managed to defeat the majority of the Tory's 'Roads to Prosperity' programme through these forms of direct action – these tactics are thus viewed as powerful tools.

This approach to direct action contrasts with the view of this activist from Britain who argues in much more personal terms; terms which change the way of conceiving of political action:

> "I'm not very ideological in the way that I deal with things. And for me, the beauty of direct action is this kind of visceral - our world is fucked up, messy and difficult and complicated, it's really rare, as an individual to have a moment where I feel really strongly about - I could do something about this, I could actually at this particular moment make a difference. And I think for me to be able to capture that, is the importance of being able to work with that as my starting point - the important thing is that we're able to work together to stop this thing from happening. (P9)"

The emotional element of campaigning is very present here, and is connected with a sense of empowerment and effectiveness which can be given by successful direct action. They go on to draw a significant distinction between their view of action and that of many other people involved in the fight against Shell, including many members of DC:

> I'm not a campaigner, I'm an activist; and for me that's a really big difference. And I think people who're campaigners perhaps have to think about that broader strategic stuff – I'm not interested in that, I've never been interested in it. It was a relief when I worked that out ... that's not me. (P9)"

While this is a particularly strongly held view, it does express something of the strong moral and personal rejection of the wrongs being done by Shell and the accompanying strength of motivation to attempt to stop it. The immediacy of the latter part of the quote resonates with the views of many ecological activists, as well as its different view of the importance of strategy to them in the context of the campaign as a whole.

5.11.2 Direct action culture seen as problematic by DC – two different views on political organising

This in turn was felt by members of DC to be detrimental to the potential of the campaign, diminishing its chances of winning and simultaneously isolating Shell to Sea groups in the cities from the campaign in Mayo. This was felt to apply particularly to the new generation of Irish campers, but can be equally seen as characteristic of the political culture around ecology and morally motivated

political action many of them shared with campaigners from England. This is seen as disconnected from the culture of political organising in DC which is oriented towards the working class and bringing about widescale change in society through organising mass movements:

> "And the people that were running the camp [in the early years] had all had quite a lot of political experience in other, were very, very experienced in other campaigns as well - perhaps very much, yeah, involved in political campaigns I suppose, rather than purely 'eco-warrior'type campaigns. So, yeah, I think things started to... there was definitely a new phase around that time, because it was just a totally different… like up til that last day of action was cancelled [November 2006], people actually believed that the campaign could make a serious dent on Shell's… plans, I suppose. And it was after that time, 2007, when people locally were not willing to take that stand – and I'm not, Jesus, I can totally understand why, d'you know? ... And when people saw that, it made people quite..disheartened, I suppose. (P3)"

The emotional difficulty of the cancelling of the Day of Action in October 2006 [see 'the Transition Period, p. 10'] for members of DC, and for the organisations themselves which were seriously weakened, is evident here – they had invested a lot in getting the campaign to that point.

> "Whereas people coming in from other places, other countries, often weren't even aware of that, let alone feeling that it affected them very much. For them it was just a campaign..and they wouldn't have seen that as such an issue at all. So there was this chasm between, yeah, between people who'd been involved up until 2007, and it worked on a nation[al] - like up until that time we had a really, really strong national network. (P3)"

The primacy of the idea of political organising and networking is put forward here. This is seen as a very large gap between the understandings of the campaign in the early years; the energy and sense of possibility at that time is seen as something which many of the later generations of campers didn't know anything about, and were also uninterested in due to their orientation towards ecology rather than political organising. It is also worth noting that many English ecological activists would have had experience mostly of situations where working closely with local communities was not a significant part of campaigning. An alternative view of this is given by an Irish member of the RSC, who compares the political desire to make the campaign against Shell the bedrock of a mass movement with their own ecological motivations:

> "When Éirigí had to come down, they had to justify why it was worth their while coming down if there wasn't going to be hardly any local people out, whereas I would justify like any day where you stop Shell is a good day for the environment, y'know! And Éirigí did, they did stay involved for a long time, I've an awful lot of respect for them, but they have to justify it, why is it worth it, is it a campaign that's high profile, and is it a campaign that's going anywhere, whereas maybe individuals maybe don't necessarily have to see that. (P4)"

In many ways, these last two quotes are mirror images of one another, but with different implications drawn from them. Both accept the differences between political and ecological approaches to the campaign, and both accept that there was a transition from one to the other during 'the transition period'. At the same time, they are obviously arguing for different approaches. The possibility of political change is put forward in the former, while the latter gives an understanding of, and appreciation for, the 'staying power' of the ecological activists in a context where overall victory rarely looked likely, in the later years of the campaign. It could be argued that these contrasting positions were indicative of their approaches to/ways of talking about the campaign in later years: DC were oriented towards better days gone by, which were unfavourably contrasted with the later generations of the RSC. On the other hand, continuing the resistance, keeping up the fight, was very much a centrally important merit for campers.

5.12 Lessons learned

There are a range of lessons which can be learned from this situation, but there are also very different interpretations between the participants, as ever. Interviewees explored a range of different lessons that they had learned from the experience of the tensions between the groups, with a large degree of overlap between them, and between the suggestions that people made as to how we could potentially attempt to work better together in the future.

The workshops on Irish history which have been explored above are one example of an initiative that was seen as very positive, with its 'non-confrontational' nature welcomed by a number of people. That said, the following quote suggests improvements, while simultaneously highlighting one of the issues that came up repeatedly – the problem of the high turnover of people at the RSC (this is an issue explored in more detail in the 'What is the local community, what is solidarity with them?' section of the Discussion chapter):

> "with such ever-changing groups and group dynamics, it's something that, yeah, very much needed to be a continual process. It probably still needs to be a continual process with those kinds of groups working together. (P10)"

The same person goes on to suggest that the issues should have been addressed a long time before they actually were, that the group needed to discuss the problem much earlier:

> "Like I think by the time it had got to [activist] having that discussion [workshop], that tensions had already been building for a long time."

They also talk about how the tensions were invisible or below the surface for a lot of people, and that the depth of anger or annoyance from people in Dublin and Cork Shell to Sea would then come as a surprise to many when it would flare up in a disagreement. This is indicative of a number

of things, including the lack of communications or connections between the groups, the poor/lack of expression of the tensions that DC people felt, and a lack of attentiveness to difference and the impacts of one's action by many English campers.

5.12.1 Problems with publicity tours to the UK

A number of tours around the UK were arranged by Irish campers in conjunction with activists from England in 2007 and 2008 to attempt to recruit people to come to North West Mayo. These were mentioned as being very problematic by a number of people, presenting a simplistic picture of the campaign, without any mention of the complexities around the discourse of colonialism:

> "And I think… part of the issue was people were coming along and suddenly finding themselves have to deal with this. Sooo... people were going doing tours... around Britain – talking about stuff, but presenting this thing, 'it's wonderful, come across, we need you!', this very welcoming, 'please come', the meeting was like, 'we need people' and this meeting was 'please come'... but bringing people across with that message, and then suddenly saying 'by the way...' is disingenuous... , I think it should have been raised more explicitly and it should have been pointed out to people at the start. (P6)"

This problem was identified by numerous interviewees; the un-nuanced message of 'please come' that was put forward can be seen as representative of a gap between the new generation of campers and DC. The experience of the early years of the campaign and the fact that a particular structure had been put in place was also pushed into the background on these tours, leading to a serious disconnect between the expectations of new arrivals and the people who had run the campaign on the RSC and in the cities in the early years:

> "one of the first tours of the UK was done by somebody who shouldn't have been allowed to do it, and we allowed him to go off and do it. And people were given an introduction to it which was 'come over and do what you want', and that had never been said before, it had always been 'come, but understand there's really strict parameters here. And they're really frustrating; but come and debate the parameters, don't come and push them or break them'... if people had actually been given proper inductions from the start, I think most of the people who came over were very well-meaning, they were radical activists, so if you sit and have a conversation like that with people, they get it... people were given a false impression of what they were walking into in the beginning. (P5)"

This passage also reflects the feeling from Dublin and Cork that there was a very specific culture and ways of doing things in the campaign, and that moving from that was not something that they wanted to do.

This also speaks to the loss of control mentioned earlier in this chapter. But it nuances that position by arguing that the influx of ecological activists from England wasn't a problem in and of itself, but rather that the talks were poorly done, giving a false impression of the campaign. This again refuses/fails to accept that there had been a breakdown of the parameters that they discuss during the process of change in the transition period, and that the nature of the camp had changed from that of the early days to one which was organised differently, and oriented much more towards the individual (as part of a collective) and the ecological. Alternatively, this statement can be seen as an attempt to push towards a renewal of that approach within the campaign, pushing against this later change.

5.12.2 Lulls in the campaign

> "One of the things we learned, y'know, was a lot of people just wanted the whole thing to stop [the campaign, as well as Shell's project]...they were guilt-ridden, they were exhausted… I had a chat with two locals, long-term people there, and one of the things that they said was, they were broken, it was affecting their lives, they had nothing else to give, aaand, some other people who had also spent a lot of time came out with something similar, and it's just like, and the question we ended up asking was, 'was being there actually helpful anymore?' [voice gets very soft]. (P6)"

This camp activist outlines just how incredibly difficult many local people were finding the situation, and this causes them to wonder about the effectiveness and use of their presence in the area in terms of supporting the community; insofar as the RSC found itself in a conflictual situation which had been going on for a long time, and had little prospect of victory or end.

It is interesting to note that the above quote is mentioned to show knowledge of a situation that DC were felt to be unaware of. The opposite was also true – DC members were aware of this, and felt the RSC not to be aware, showing the poor communication between the groups – as this DC member outlines:

> "I think at times, in hindsight, we should've just let there be big lulls. I don't think we achieved anything by – in the long term – like, in the short to medium term, certainly things were slowed down, and certainly some people in the community, it was a relief to them that somebody else was doing it. But I think that overall, in the long term, we didn't stop Shell – massively delayed them. It may be stopped by something at some stage, but maybe if we [had] let people recoup their batteries – I mean, we just don't know what would have happened. (P5)"

This quote outlines a suggestion for taking breaks within the campaign as a way of both stopping the local community from having to deal with the constant and invasive presence of large numbers of police and private security, and also as a way of potentially reinvigorating the campaign through

giving people time to recover energy. It is important to note that this quote is clearly putting this opinion forward in opposition to the continuous small-group direct action of the RSC in the later years of the campaign, and forms part of a wider argument that feels that this action is not a positive way of running the campaign – and that the model from the earlier years of the RSC was more positive.

5.13 Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to give a sense of the tensions in the campaign against Shell, in all of their contested complexity. Some of the key themes explored in this chapter include:

- Outlining of the discourse on colonialism that was advanced by members of DC, the problematic expression by numerous English people that is used to explain where it came from, and how it was understood and expressed in terms of the after effects of colonialism.
- That this was engaged with in a very different way by both English and Irish members of the RSC, who put forward a counter-discourse in which the tensions in the campaign were between the RSC and DC (rather than between English ecological activists and Irish campaigners). Parallel to this, there was also an engagement with the idea of colonialism, which involved a range of responses, from levels of acceptance to outright rejection.
- The different political cultures and ideologies involved in these tensions – including ecology and class, political organising and direct action cultures – and how each was understood in different ways by participants, is that final theme in this chapter.

Some of the key literature that I will draw on in to aid in reflecting further on these themes in the Discussion chapter include the following: the importance of collective identity in social movements, and how different collective identities interact and understand themselves and each other (I will look at Flesher Fominaya (2010a) and Melucci (1989) here); research undertaken by Barker (2010) and Calhoun (2001)in relation to emotion in movement, and; literature which explores processes of boundary-making in movements, and the significance and power of these processes (Roth (1998) and Flesher Fominaya (2010a)).

Having outlined the varying different themes brought up by my research, the following section will go on to analyse the implications of these findings for the prospects of acknowledging and working together across difference.

Chapter 6

Discussion

This discussion chapter attempts to reflect on the findings which have been examined, further deepening the exploration of the tensions in the campaign against Shell. This is done in through an analysis which includes literature examined earlier in this work and also further data to enable a full examination of the issues, the motivations, and the political contexts behind them, in dialogue with the research participants. This is organised around answering the following questions:

- How did people's political views and position in the debate influence their ideas of the local community? And of solidarity?
- What emotions did people feel in these situations, and why is it important?
- What did these tensions mean for the alliance within the campaign?
- What was the impact of different collective identities on the campaign?
- How did the groups contest the meaning of colonialism, and what does it tell us?
- What can we learn from the positions of Irish campers?

The discussion chapter utilises these questions to examine a number of different issues within the campaign to attempt to throw further light on how these tensions were understood, the dysfunction of the relationships between these groups, and the impacts which these had on people's ways of acting in the campaign.

How did people's political views and position in the debate influence their ideas of the local community? And of solidarity?

6.1 Contested ideas of 'the local community'

6.1.1How was the community seen by these groups?

The local community was seen in a wide range of ways by the people interviewed for this research: they were a source of legitimacy, an inspiration and a primary referent; somebody to be worked with, not for; and as a group understood better by my group. They were seen as a victim and a powerful actor, as a group full of contradictory views, and as one not necessarily represented accurately by the radicals within; also as holders of a long-standing history and culture of radicalism, to name just a few examples. This short list is a reflection of the diverse nature of the community, but it is more so an example of people projecting thier own views onto that local community, depending on the range of perspectives they bring to a campaign like this one.

Exploring contested ideas of the local community in the campaign against Shell offers rich insights into the differences and the tensions which arose. I have already briefly looked at the many meanings of the word 'community' (Introduction, Part II), but this section will go much further into the different views of and roles for the local community in North West Mayo, from the different perspectives of DC, English ecological activists and Irish campers.

6.1.2 What is the local community, what is solidarity with them?

Members of DC were generally quite clear about seeing the local community as people to work with, as partners in the fight against Shell. As seen in the Findings chapter, this is strongly connected with the histories of political action with communities of both individuals and of groups such as the WSM and Éirigí. This is seen in the quote on p.64 of the Findings chapter, where working together and in solidarity with the local community was seen as indivisible from working closely with their agreed goals.

This can also be strongly connected with a long history of community-led environmental campaigning in Ireland on matters that are seen to threaten the health or safety of that community, and an understanding of this type of campaigning as a legitimate and often a very strong actor on the political landscape. Some examples of this include fighting toxics around Cork Harbour and anti-incineration struggles in numerous areas during the 1980s and 90s (these took place after the

Carnsore Point anti-nuclear campaign in the 1970s, and before the more recent campaign to save Tara and anti-fracking work (Allen 2004, Tovey 2007, Leonard 2006). This was generally a difference that played out between campers and DC, but not always.

It is difficult to say that a similar such history or understanding can be said to exist in ecological groups in England. And as such, radical ecological groups have very little experience of working with community groups in rural areas, despite the desire to do so expressed here:

> "it was one of the things that came out of the end of almost every Earth First! gathering I ever went to was, 'we need to organise more in our communities', and nobody *knowing* how to do that, there was always the big gap of knowledge - we knew we needed to do it, we didn't know how to do it, and suddenly there was Rossport, which was a campaign *in* the local community, for once, focussing on *that* community" (P6)

This gives a sense of the 'outsider' nature of much ecological protest to that point (i.e. not generally strongly connected with or working with local communities), the difficulties they had adapting to working with local groups (Clements 2008), as well as the positive orientation to this type of partnership. The newness of this type of partnership can be seen as an important contributory factor in the difficulties experienced by many English ecological activists adapting to the situation in this campaign:

> "there was a big clash over one action, which was this lock-on thing that we did, a small thing. This was discussions and arguments about that, aaand, that was really eye-opening for me, it was about working with the community, what the community wanted...and I think it appeared like some English people were really pushing, and I think they *were* really pushing for the lock-on to happen... there was definitely, in hindsight, an arrogance, of like, 'we're English activists who do lock-ons, and do this, that, and the other, and we would like to roll out our way of doing things, cos we're so great' [exaggerated, 'military' voice], there was definitely that [laughs], which was obviously awful." (P8)

This is very clearly a learning experience as to a new way to approach campaigning, and one which had an important impact on this participant, (who arrived first in 2007 during the transition period). In a problem repeatedly mentioned in the interviews, there was a very high turnover of activists coming to the camp from England (largely as a result of recruitment tours undertaken by RSC activists), and many had little opportunity to learn about how the community and the camp related together in solidarity. There was also a lapsing in the induction process for newcomers, leaving them to decide their first impressions of how things worked:

> "Whereas when the camp was set up, you were met at the gate by two people from the camp who went and did an induction process with you that took about 40 minutes. And there was loads of stuff covered in it, like stuff around camp rules, safe spaces policies; but there was also stuff about the community and about the national campaign. So people got this snapshot first impression, whereas that over the years, people would

> just arrive and would be welcomed and it would all be really warm – but they were left to make *all* of those first impressions themselves." (P5)

This lack of a clear presentation of how the campaign worked (which was the norm in the wake of the transition period) and the very high turnover of people may have combined with the simple, evocative image of the campaign often presented by many in the campaign and by people from the local area that it was 'farmers and fishermen' opposing Shell (rather than the multi-faceted campaign it was involving people from all parts of the community, along with campaigners from a range of backgrounds from other places), to produce a tendency to romanticise the community among many people from England (they were far from the only group to do this, but it appears to have been quite pronounced among this group).

6.1.3 Romanticisation of the local community and the area – Ideas of 'the countryside'

> "I might not agree with some of the goals of Shell to Sea, but I feel that there is a, usually unsaid, commonality of non-hierarchical resistance to corporate control, a passion for nature and landscape, of valuing community and friendship, and a realisation of responsibility: we cannot rely on state, church, or capitalism to fight for what's right; it's up to us and no-one else." (Leave it in the ground, p.29)

As well as outlining the reasons for the writer's involvement in the campaign against Shell, this statement could equally be read as a list of values which are common to many ecological activists from England. A hugely positive view of the small local community, and of the local natural environment, are other features of this statement. As outlined in the 'Romanticisation' section of the Findings chapter, these views are intimately connected to both the impressive resistance to Shell, and to an understanding of politics which paints a very rosy picture of 'untouched' rural living, which is embedded in a discourse of pastoral beauty.

6.1.4 Difficulties caused by romanticisation

Combining this romanticisation with the fact that many English people visited irregularly, didn't return or stayed for very short periods (there was a *very* high turnover, particularly in the summer months of each year), can be seen to form a problematic form of engagement with the struggle by many English activists who came to North West Mayo. Therefore, many people who visited from England would come with a very romantic view of the campaign as seen above, and wouldn't necessarily stay for long enough to build a more nuanced picture of the campaign in itself, how it worked and the different elements to it:

> "yeah, I don't know how many times I've had English people say to me over the years on the camp - and I don't mean people who were there long-term, cos I think people who were there long-term had very clear understandings of how the dynamics worked - I

> mean people visiting from the UK maybe for gatherings or for specific weeks of action or whatever; I don't know how many times I heard people say 'it's so good the local community come out and protest with you' [slightly goofy] - it's like, 'can you hear yourself talk? Like, why are you even here?' [annoyed, disdainful]". (P5)

The fact that this assumption that activists were running the campaign was a continuously recurring theme can be clearly seen as something which annoyed people from DC. This can be understood as coming from this being their experience in the English ecological scene. This experience combined with romantic views, very high turnover and a lack of regular induction into the campaign (see Findings chapter for the latter) and it can be seen as something which contributed to a growing frustration in DC, something which was easily triggered by any thoughtless remark. This cannot be seen in isolation, but it was a significant factor, and other contributory factors will be explored in the coming sections. The differentiation between long and short term campers is also an important fact to be noted here. It is important to also note that there was a marked difference between long and short term activists from England in regard to these kinds of dynamics, one which was recognised by activists from both England and DC.

This shows the respect built up between people who had been working together for a long time (despite differences between them), and also reflects how the absence of that kind of working relationship makes for a stark contrast between relationships between long and short-term English activists on camp. This is in accordance with the idea of common action (Flesher Fominaya 2010a) being an important part of building and sustaining relationships within campaigns.It should also be emphasised that the differences that both groups had from the local community were very significant – larger than the differences between them, in fact. This combined with the fact that it takes a long time to get to really understand how things work in these communities, to mean that all of the people coming to the area to act in solidarity had to undertake a lot of learning as part of this process. This simultaneously points towards greater possibilities for alliance (in long-term, well-established relationships) and to the very real difficulties that can come about in a situation where it may be difficult to build those relationships, due to lack of time combined with other differences.

6.2 Political difference influencing definitions of solidarity

There were also other important differences within the campaign around definitions of what solidarity is, which can be seen as stemming from the political differences that people brought with them into the campaign. In fact, different political backgrounds can be seen as clearly inclining people towards different definitions of what solidarity *is*:

> "I've always felt that the local people would be shat over if it was nationalised[7] - so I didn't see how that would help the locals... I found it really hard to feel any passion about that side of the campaign, about the resources and all that, I just didn't - and that's partly because I believe in leaving it in the ground. So like, nationalising the resource, I was like, 'no, I just want it left in the ground, I don't want it exploited', so I guess there's quite a difference there, and I guess that might have come from kind of my more ecological background." (P8)

This quote describes how solidarity with the community is the first priority, but with an understanding that the environment has to be part of the picture too. The negotiation that people from an ecological perspective (particularly those from the radical environmental movement in England) had to undertake is summed up by one activist as 'we came over as environmental activists and left as community activists' – this reflects a rebalancing of priorities (though it should not be taken as an abandonment of ecological principles). This perspective on the situation, and this manner of connecting issues is also very much connected with the collective identity and radical ecological political culture that this person is part of (Flesher Fominaya 2010a). This willingness to move their position and adjust their priorities is recognised and respected by this Irish camper:

> "we'll say that some of the English people involved, that there was no climate analysis down in Mayo, that it just wasn't talked about, which I know they had an issue with, and a lot of them, I mean, bit their tongue, decided it was still worth fighting Shell, rather than, but like accepting that wasn't any, there wasn't hardly no climate mentioned at all, climate change mentioned." (P4)

The complexity of this process of negotiating between ecological and community principles is often a very difficult one, made even more so by the existence of the Shell to Sea goals, which call for the refining of the gas at sea –whereas the position of many ecological activists, particularly those from the radical DA ecological 'scene' in England, would be that the gas should not be extracted at all. Following that line would leave many of them feeling like 'a hypocrite'. (it is less easy to discern a regular position among Irish ecological activists: some are in favour of non-extraction, some content to work with the position that if the gas is to be exploited that the proceeds would be used to fund a

[7] The negative association that many English activists may have had with nationalised industries (for example, see the miner's strike) may also have been significant here – though my experience of this debate would lead me to wonder at the level of memory of these events among this political scene.

transition to a sustainability, some with other positions). It should be noted that a number of people mentioned that other campaigners in England had said that the campaign against Shell was 'not ecological enough' – this left many English campaigners in Mayo in the difficult position of having to simultaneously defend themselves against charges that they're not ecological enough, *and* that they're too ecological (from DC) from different allies:"that thing of challenging some people's views [from within the ecological movement]... in UK activism, about their criticisms of it." (P7). This is an active process of reconstructing the priorities which are to be afforded the highest level of importance in ecological struggle (Melucci 1989), in rejection of a view that is seen as too narrow. In many cases this difficulty was negotiated by taking a position of supporting the community, but not supporting the Shell to Sea goals – but equally not opposing them either. This lead to a position in which they could support the campaign without feeling personally compromised. While this is obviously something that was discussed between people, the way that it was discussed by the participants in this project indicates that it was a decision that was taken on an individual basis.

6.2.1 A less defined idea of solidarity

In response to criticism from DC about their type of solidarity (which will be explored more in the following section), a number of arguments are put forward by English activists and other RSC members. Some argued that environmental issues were already part of the local discourse and discussions, before anybody came from England or elsewhere with strong ecological politics:

> "it was definitely, a discussed thing, more discussed perhaps. But I don't think it, it wasn't like it was never discussed anyway, like people didn't know! [laughs] When you think about it, that would be incredibly patronising! [laughs]" (P8)

This argues against the contention that English people 'forced' or 'imposed their politics on local people or on the campaign. This would be seen as very bad practice, and must also be understood as part of a response to DC claims to the contrary. At the same time a level of influencing of the community is accepted, having been put forward in a respectful way, but this is seen as being legitimate in light of the energy put in by this person and others. An important addition to this comes in the differentiation between the relative importance or legitimacy granted to DC by this English activist, in relation to the larger amount granted to members of the local campaign and Irish RSC members:

> "S: Sorry, who's ceding power to who?
>
> P7: I'd say [English activists would cede power] on camp, to the community, and then, to longer term Irish activists. But with Dublin, I guess because, maybe because on camp you didn't necessarily see all the stuff the national campaign was doing, and maybe to

> them, and maybe in reality, they were doing loads of stuff all the time, that I never had any involvement in, and didn't necessarily know about." (P7)

This can be seen as expressing a sentiment shared with many other English activists, and one which emphasises the distance between the groups in terms of personal relationships, but also in terms of political culture (Flesher Fominaya, 2010a) – the work that DC were undertaking was not valued, as it was not connected to the way of campaigning that this person valued. When criticisms are made by DC of how the RSC (with some, but not full, emphasis on English people) work with the community, another common response is to assert the primacy of the relationship with the community, and the primacy of the goal of solidarity with the community as being above all other considerations:

> "whatever people are coming from, in general, like it was to support the community campaign, and to do things to further that, and that was..whatever ideological basis people were coming from, that was how people's actions manifested themselves." (P7)

The main issue which is posed by this, and many other campers and English activist statements in this area is that there seems to be very little thought of just what 'solidarity' means, beyond unequivocal support for the community. This would fit with the general historical lack of community involvement in ecological campaigns in England, as discussed above. This means that the process of learning how to do so was very much a new thing for most activists coming from England (a discourse which is repeatedly put forward by DC) – it should then come as no surprise that there were difficulties for many English people in this learning process. With regard to Irish campers living on the camp in later years, this lack of definition is often put down by DC to the relative lack of political experience of many of them. This lack of definition is problematic, as it suggests a lack of thought and reflection on how best to work with the community, and on possible alternative models for doing so. The following quote talks about learning from the campaign in Mayo about working with the community and adapting to their preferences, but it is questionable to what degree the community are actually involved in the Coal Action Scotland campaign that they discuss, in the decisions around how it's done, and in the actual physical act of protesting (if this quote is to be taken at face value):

> "So they [ecological direct action activists] worked out a way where they can still do...what they enjoy doing [small group direct action]...But whenever they were doing actions, also reaching out [focussing on health issues]." (P6)

This discourse intimates that this activist's wishes to involve the local community in their own (activist) campaign, rather than seeking to work with them on their own terms, in the local campaign or in a more clearly defined alliance or coalition of some type. The emphasis on 'they can still do' is also something I find problematic, in that it suggests that the type of action had been chosen

beforehand and then applied to the campaign, rather than choosing the type of action depending on the approach and needs of the campaign itself.

6.2.2 Change over time – different impressions of changing solidarity

This idea that the camp was acting more autonomously was one that was shared by many participants, but with often very different views of what this meant for the campaign. DC participants put forward the view that this change was a detrimental one, that it was taking power away from the local community – and that it was directly opposed to the fashion in which they'd set up the campaign in 2005. This is strongly connected to the idea that the model of working closely with the community and as part of a network around Ireland, and to a lesser degree abroad, was *the* model for working in solidarity and building a strong campaign:

> "that's a decision that was made to stand in solidarity with local people and not come in and dictate our politics. So yeah, I think that was probably one of the biggest things, one of the biggest factors, and I think it was quite difficult for a lot of people from England to understand why a lot of people from Dublin and Cork were arguing so strongly in favour of allowing the gas to come in. Because actually what it was, it was arguing really strongly around solidarity and what solidarity is within local communities." (P5)

This also clearly relates to the position taken by DC in relation to the environment, which was very much a secondary consideration for them – they see the decision to make environment secondary as one that had been arrived at in discussion with the community. This is a form of boundary-making, defining their position as connected with the community (thus enhancing it), while English ecological activists are placed as disconnected from the community (Roth 1998). The sense that many people on the camp and from England were attempting to change this decision thus caused resentment among DC in a significant sense because they felt that it was against the particular ethos of solidarity they had worked on and put a lot of energy into. This was mixed with the sense that, while there were Irish environmentalists involved, much of the ideas and thrust behind the more ecological direction of the campaign was coming from England: "I think the...the core of that idea was probably best articulated when they started to come in" (P1). This change is not appreciated, being seen as externally driven, as well as contrary to the type of solidarity they advocated.

6.2.3 A contrary view, 'from a living on camp perspective'

A different view of what working with the community meant in later years is advanced by this Irish camper:

> "that I think the camp was... was at a weak point, I'd say it was at the weakest that I've seen, the camp was - around the Pobal thing but like before the Pobals thing, the winter 2007 was when we got evicted, like that was touch-and-go, the camp was almost

> closing... but still the spring of 2008, early 2008, was weak enough, so I... yeah, there wasn't loads of organising coming from around the country at that stage either, maybe more English activists came over" (P4).

This is clearly not just a simple transfer of power, but a messy process which took place unevenly over a significant period, and one which was very much during a time of flux (the transition period is more fully explained in the 'Introduction Part II'). This quote undermines DC understandings of the situation in later years – DC critiques contain the often implicit assumption that solidarity could have worked in the same or similar ways in the years after the split, whereas this person calls that assertion into question. They paint a picture of a hugely changed campaign, and a much weakened one, where pretty much the only significant amount of energy was coming from people from England at that time – there was a lot of change around the local campaign due to the split, the RSC was low on members and threatened by being evicted, and DC and other local groups were similarly very weak at that time (by their own admission). This fits strongly with the idea of 'turning points' in a campaign which was explored during the Literature Review – these can be positive experiences, but "can equally depress and de-energise, promoting negativity, withdrawal, cynicism, disappointed hopes." (Barker 2010, pp.20-21). The split between the issues of local safety and natural resources among people in the local area can be seen as allowing space for a redefinition of what the camp *is* – this became more locally focussed (rather than national), with the idea that 'we support *all* the local community who oppose Shell'. Following from this, people no longer felt wedded to the politics of either of those groups any longer – there is therefore a virtue to leaving behind a concentration on natural resources (which goes with the already existing desire to do so). The limiting DC approach in the early days was no longer able to be as strict later on, due to the contraction of that group and their much smaller presence on camp and less regular presence of group members in Mayo. Changes could now be brought about in the RSC approach.

With that new energy coming in, it is thus not very surprising that, as the campaign was reinvigorated to a large degree by energy from English activists, along with a numerically smaller new generation of Irish activists, that their shared politics should become more prominent in the ways that the RSC expressed itself, and likewise that their idea of solidarity – connected to those politics and the political culture in which they were embedded – should also come to the fore. An element of this is therefore an example of 'latecomers' to the movement, whose ideas were previously marginal, providing the impulse for a new direction (Barker 2010). There is also a level of difference expressed by many campers with regard to the fact that DC were seen as having wider goals than just supporting the local community, goals around the campaign being at the heart of a social movement which could cause wider political change:

> "When Éirigí had to come down, they had to *justify* why it was worth their while coming down if there wasn't going to be hardly any local people out, whereas I would justify like any day where you stop Shell is a good day for the environment, y'know! ... but maybe if you don't have that environmental perspective then what are you coming down for, like is it changing, isit causing political change in Ireland? Like you had quiet days of action there where you had 30 people, was that causing political change in Ireland, y'know?" (P4)

This reflects a sense that the local community may have been somewhat secondary to this goal, and a level of distrust around that (as well as an implicit favourable comparison with themselves). It can also be seen as connected to campers' ecological politics. It also shows a feeling that community and camp are in sync, but DC are out of step. This can also be connected to the fact that much of the way in which DC were seeking to direct the campaign – in terms of nationalisation and the bank bailout – was very much connected to the ways in which they were generally directing their campaigning energies in the later years of the campaign.

6.2.4 Redefinition of the campaign and of solidarity in a new context

In this period from 2008 onwards, there was also an element of redefinition of the campaign undertaken by ecological activists living on the RSC. Prior to 2008, Shell to Sea had been the entire local campaign, so solidarity with Shell to Sea equalled solidarity with the local community, and it also meant working with the Shell to Sea goals. After the split and the advent of Pobal Chill Chomáin, the situation was no longer as clear cut. There were attempts made to make sense of this new reality by campers, which reached a consensus that 'solidarity means solidarity with all of the local community, regardless of what group they're involved with' –. In practice, my experience was that campers generally worked more closely with Shell to Sea, as they had much more regular meetings, organised events, and as the more radical group, were closer to the camp's direct action instincts. What this meant for ideas of solidarity with the local community was that the people on camp who were uncomfortable or in disagreement with the Shell to Sea goals of refining the gas at sea (and who favoured non-extraction) had a space opened up in which they could, for the first time, support the community but not the goals of Shell to Sea.

This quote is based on the belief that DC didn't really understand the situation 'on the ground' in Mayo in later years of the campaign. This is a point at which the two competing claims for legitimacy, both based on reference to 'a better understanding of the community (than the other)' collide. DC claim that their idea of how to work with the community is better due to the fact that they feel that the campaign worked well in the early days, and that it was based on sound principles of organising with community; campers (Irish and English) base their counter-arguments on the fact that the situation had changed significantly, and that they had sought to change with it,

as well as feeling that the fact of their residence in Mayo and work there had earned them the right to voice their opinion within the campaign. This can be seen as an example of how boundary-making between groups can cause difficulties or fragmentation within campaigns, as strongly defined collective identities and can work against attempts at alliance-building within campaigns. Simultaneously, quite different conceptions of group identities are clearly also at play here (Flesher Fominaya 2010a).

Another important point put forward by English activists is that both the first generation of campers, mostly from DC (as well as the local community) were suffering from burnout, and finding it very difficult to let go of the campaign despite having moved away:

> "I think the crossover came when a lot of people were burnt out, and with that comes a loss of control, so there was like, whereas people were, trying to learn how to be involved in the campaign without getting battered all the time, without having to be there - that's when a load of English people came in, who were up for being battered, and being there, and were seen as taking over, and it was like, it happens in any group, in whatever nationality or whatever background, there's always that crossover of people burning out and having to learn to lose control, and let new people step in. And I think that dilemma was happening, and I think that would be really fucking difficult, whatever, whoever it was - but because there was this perception of, so that was when more English people came involved, who perhaps come from a different - come with different ideas." (P8)

This takes a contrary view to DC, arguing that control and power are the most important issues, rather than the stated problems and issues with different forms of solidarity and with the after effects of colonialism in English people. It also highlights the issue of burnout, and the potential political implications of poorly handled internal disputes (Cox 2011c). I feel that this contention of burnout is probably directed at a small number of prominent DC people, but the issue of loss of power can be seen as a significant issue for all of DC in these disputes. This participant also argues that personal differences were also a hugely important factor in these disputes, and one which was unacknowledged.

Furthermore, each group's views on how the transition from camp-supporting-community to the other way around came about, is reflective of their political positions. That is, campers see it coming about naturally, because the community was exhausted, while DC feel that it was because the camp (and especially English activists within it from a strong culture of direct action) was pushing the change to their favoured/most familiar ways of protesting (lock-ons and other forms of direct action) and acting on their own initiative. Each group's perspective adds felt legitimacy to their views and course of action. Again, we can see how one's assessment of the situation is filtered through their existing political views, which can lead to radically different views on the same situation.

These different views of solidarity represent a significant disjuncture between the two groups, and show how 'working in solidarity with the local community' can mean very different things to different people, and that much of these differences can be seen as being rooted in the political beliefs and backgrounds that people brought with them to the campaign. The positive intentions towards acting in solidarity are clear with regard to all, but the political difference between them can make for very different interpretations of the situation, and different choices as to what the best form of action to take is.

What emotions did people feel in these situations, and why is it important?

6.3 Emotion as a prism to understand the situation better

Emotion is an ever-present part of movement activity, and it can often be very strong. People make deep emotional investments in campaigns they work on. This is certainly true in the case of the campaign against Shell, and this section will attempt to explore the part emotion played in the tensions and difficulties that arose in the campaign against Shell.

6.3.1 Feelings of being dismissed

There was a very strong sense from a number of interviewees that they felt dismissed by the different groups. In the case of a number of activists from England, they felt that their passion for ecology was dismissed as unimportant by people from Dublin and Cork:

> "I felt like there was no respect for anyone having political views about ecology, environment - amongst some people from the WSM. Like, people said to me, like 'climate change isn't an, isn't our issue cos it's gonna be sorted by capitalism' - I totally remember somebody saying that to me, 'it's *not* an anarchist issue, cos it'll just be sorted out, there's other things we need to do'." (P8)

There is a clear sense that in rejecting a principle which is very important to this person, there is a feeling that activists from Dublin and Cork are also rejectingthe person themselves. This results in a parallel defensiveness or dismissiveness being shown towards many Dublin and Cork activists with regard to this issue, and more generally, they are certainly less receptive to opinions from that quarter. The importance of the lack of felt recognition is pronounced here, and this can be seen as a significant factor in the tensions which emerged (Calhoun 2001, p.54).

A similar dynamic can be observed in the reverse situation. In this case, this activist from Dublin and Cork S2S clearly feels hurt due to the fact that they feel that the learnings that they and the early campers (who were strongly connected to Dublin and Cork) brought have been dismissed:

> "I think for a lot of people who were involved for a long - like since the beginning of the really national campaign, it felt really disrespectful when people came in and were like, 'no, yis are completely wrong'." (P5)

This explores how this person feels that their practices and hard work have been unappreciated, and that they are having to deal with the combination of seeing a campaign that they had a large hand in building, go in a direction that they "consciously decided not to", and which they feel quite powerless to change (given that the 'centre of power' of the campaign is acknowledged to be in Mayo, and there is no functioning national campaign structure to counter-balance that fact.)

6.3.2 Under threat

In this case, both people feel that they are under threat from (criticism or change by) the other, making for a mutually defensive situation which makes it very difficult to undertake any kind of open dialogue together. These feelings are combined with a sense that power within the campaign is not being distributed fairly, and that this is connected with how solidarity within the community is seen by each group. What I mean by this is that each talks about how the actions of the other take power away from both themselves and the community.

For example, Dublin and Cork activists felt that an over-concentration on direct action ('direct action culture') took away power from the local community by changing to forms of action that were not accessible to most members of the local community. This was also the sentiment with regard to not being concerned with the wider campaign (which was felt by Dublin and Cork to offer the best or only chance of defeating Shell). By way of contrast, as noted above in the 'Political difference influencing definitions of solidarity' section, the feeling held by many of myEnglish ecologists interviewees was that the concentration on the issue of natural resources was taking the focus away from local suffering and the local campaign, and relegating the latter issues to secondary status within the campaign.

Both groups made significant emotional investments in these positions, combining the feeling that they were doing the right things, with reference to the local community to help back this up – and likewise undermine the other position by reference to its supposed failure to take the local community properly into account. This emphasises the inherently social nature of these tensions, and these emotional responses (Calhoun 2001). This makes dialogue very difficult because a) people are often talking about quite different things when they criticise one another, making it hard to find

a place where the parameters of the discussion are sufficiently agreed to allow dialogue, and b) they have made large emotional investments (as well as time and thought) in the ideas and actions that they are talking about, and which they feel are being disregarded, making it often difficult to begin any discussion from a position that is not closed to change or to listening.

6.3.3 Physical distance

It is important to note here the importance of the physical distance between the groups as a contributor to the distance between their positions – while all of the people I interviewed were heavily involved in the campaign for a significant period of time, the length of time the campaign has gone on means that these were often not at the same time. What I mean is that people were usually not in the same place at the same time, and when they were, it was usually for short, intensive bursts of time, such as annual gatherings or days of action, which were brief but significant. My personal experience on RSC and in the campaign leads me to the opinion that people's views were often confirmed in the echo-chamber of their own groups, and that they often came to these larger campaign gatherings with their 'backs already up'. They felt that their concerns were unheard because they largely were, due to the irregular nature of these events and the fact that organised networked communication (by phone or national structure) functioned poorly. With a few exceptions, there was not enough time spent of people working alongside one another to build up the bonds of trust and the shared history that would have helped them to deal with their difficulties better.Dublin and Cork activists were prominent on the camp in the early days when the campaign was more intensively networked; at that time there were relatively few English ecologists heavily involved. As the 'first generation' of campers left – those with strong DC connections – the second one which was made up of Irish and English ecological activists moved to the fore. The point is that there was no significant period of overlap. Long-term Irish ecologists usually avoided distance from DC by the fact of their continuous presence (rather than intermittant, like many English residents on camp) and the fact that they often had some level of pre-existing connections with members of Dublin and Cork.

6.3.4 Unity in busyness, or sweeping things under the carpet?

Following on from the more individual assessment of the importance of emotions in these tensions, this section will look at how emotions also worked on a more collective level to shape how the difficulties were seen and expressed in different ways.

Some have argued that being busy had a unifying effect on the campaign, and that differences were put aside in times of high activity, and times in which, importantly, it was felt by all

that there was a real prospect of winning. The flip-side of that idea is, that in times of defeat and/or demobilisation, when the prospects of winning seem distant, there can be a tendency for people to focus inwards, on winnable battles against allies with whom they have differences within the campaign. On one level, this argument is attractive, as it seems to speak to the experience of Dublin and Cork after that 'transition period', when a significant demobilisation took place amid an experience of defeat (Barker 2010). But in another sense, there are problems with this idea too; the most notable of these is the fact that the tensions emerged notably strongly in 2009, in a period when mobilistation was quite good, and in the aftermath of the victory of stopping Shell's Solitaire ship from laying its pipe in 2008. (That said, it should be noted that a notable flashpoint in the rise of the tensions arose from an unsuccessful protest in 2009, one that was seen as botched by many). The point is that while it was not a context of victory, niether was it one of defeat, although a significant defeat did follow later that summer when the Solitaire successfully laid its pipe. Two alternative explanations which draw on this idea of turning inward will be looked at here to add to this understanding.

6.3.5 Deep running tensions suppressed

One alternative interpretation is that while differences were suppressed during busy times, this was not helpful to the campaign on the whole, as it meant that tensions that existed were not discussed, and thus became more entrenched, and sometimes quite bitter, for want of an outlet for discussion and debate:

> "I think that discussion was quite healthy to have it, and that if we hadda been able to call that and name it a lot earlier, then possibly, yeah, it could've made for a healthier learning environment for people coming from all different sides of the thing" (P10).

This was overlaid with the fact that once the tensions emerged, Dublin and Cork couldn't oblige the RSC to change, due to its distance and the power balance in the campaign (this is clearly a case of 'early risers' being displaced from their initially prominent place inthe campaign (Barker 2010, p.20)). At the same time, people from the camp became frustrated at the regular criticism from Dublin and Cork groups that were seen as negative, not contributing significantly to the huge amounts of work on the ground in Mayo, and wedded to an unchanging idea of the context of the campaign which argued for the same form of action as the early years of the campaign in a situation that was seen to be changed. DC criticism was also overlaid with the understandings of colonialism's impacts in one discourse.

This was combined with the other differences between the groups, multiplying the problem. Dublin and Cork S2S groups were largely composed of the same main active members from 2008

onwards, while the population of the RSC changed more regularly, with English activists being a very changeable section within that. This meant that new people coming would often not be aware of the colonialism issues and would make unintentionally offensive comments that were taken as colonial in nature by Dublin and Cork people – and new people coming was a constant feature of the campaign. This in turn meant that the issue of colonialism was regularly an annoyance at the forefront of people's minds, and there would often be a reaction against this from members of Dublin and Cork Shell to Sea, either in terms of complaining about it, but also putting on workshops about Irish history at annual gatherings.This also had the consequence that long-term English activists on the RSC would have heard these complaints regularly, and grew sick of them.

6.3.6 A clear and unchanging vision

Another way of looking at these issues of unity or otherwise is to look at it from the perspective of examining the impacts of Dublin and Cork's largely clear and unchanging vision throughout the course of the campaign. In the early years of the campaign there was conflict between them and local politician and GP Dr.Jerry Cowley, and they wanted the campaign to be more radical and also for it to be more directed by the wishes of the community:

> "And there was basically one local politician who was, y'know, running all the meetings and totally manipulating the situation. I suppose there was that as well, trying to get the best possible communication going on between all the - the point when we had really great communication going on between nine or ten groups around the country, and the local group, was a kind of span of - I can't remember how long it was, but maybe up to a year; probably right up until the end of 2007 [sic – 2006]during that blockade where, yeah, the communication had been very very good, in felt like the whole thing was much more democratic." (P3)

Later on, when Dublin and Cork came into dispute with members of RSC, including from England, over the best direction for the campaign, this vision of a certain clear view of networked solidarity was also present, as was the clear belief that it was the correct way to work with the community. The clarity and assertiveness of this vision (it wasn't as clear for other groups) obliged those other groups to take positions, for or against, or in some other relation to it. As we have seen, this post-2008 period was one of diminishing influence in the campaign for Dublin and Cork, which must have been an immensely frustrating experience. This can be seen as the disruption of an 'activist status quo' (drawing on Calhoun 2001) by the change in direction of the RSC and the campaign as a whole in the years after the transition period – this was not an easy process for DC members to deal with. Nevertheless, they held strong to their views of how the campaign should be organised – this time the concentration on the issue of the natural resources was the one which was the point of contention with the RSC, especially with many of the English activists in it.

Frustration with political issues like this is mixed with an anger at the ignorant and offensive comments or approaches by a significant number of English ecological activists, to make the latter group into the embodiment of much of what had gone wrong with the campaign for Dublin and Cork, and thus the target for much of their frustration (by way of comparison, Irish ecological activists living at the RSC were generally granted much more lattitude with regard to their environmental views by Dublin and Cork, in my experience). This was also conntected with the quite different political culture around direct action protest which many English ecological activists brought with them to Ireland, one which was quite different from the political culture of Dublin and Cork Shell to Sea, as was discussed in the 'Collective identity' section.

What did these tensions mean for the alliance within the campaign?

6.4 How dysfunction worked

In looking at the interaction of these different dynamics, one wonders what attempts did people make to improve this situation? There were a number of attempts made to continue/ improve communication and interaction between the groups in the later years of the campaign, but these had limited success.

6.4.1 The national campaign

National meetings were held throughout the course of the campaign between the different groups in the campaign, with the aim of communication and deciding on common directions for the campaign. The differences and tensions between the groups were, unsurprisingly, also reflected here. Other differences, such as between DC and the local community in the early days, were also a feature of the campaign – space constraints do not allow me to examine these here. Looking back over minutes from the last few years of the campaign, the divergence of views on the correct direction for the campaign is stark (minutes of the campaign consulted by the author). This was very clearly felt by the participants, who did not talk of national meetings with anything approaching fondness, and who saw them as places of conflict, rather than its resolution. This is an example from an English ecological activist:

> "I can remember there was quite a lot of frustration with the national campaign from some people, I know that some people on camp, and locally, and I felt like it was kind of a little bit of a..dead weight. Like, it wanted all this control and discussion, but nothing really came from it, so, just get on with stuff." (P8)

This quote sees the meetings of the national campaign as actively unhelpful, as simply a drain on energy and time that could have been used on campaigning in Mayo. A comparable conclusion is reached by this campaigner from Dublin and Cork:

> "I'm not sure that people coming from the UK had any idea that there was a national campaign, or how that operated in reality. And I dunno how you'd explain to anybody, I couldn't explain how the bloody national campaign operated! [laughs] Yeah, and I also think that the camp, and Dublin and Cork had stopped communicating with each other properly." (P5)

The national campaign here is seen as a way of communicating, networking between the groups, but one which wasn't functioning properly; this is seen as something that should be improved, but there is an exasperation around it, and little send of a likelihood of it happening. This can be seen in comparison with the sense of how the campaign had been run in the past – the regular phone contact which had been a feature of the early years of the campaign no longer had anything as much of a part of in the day-to-day activity of the campaign. This is explored by a member of DC:

> "but I think it was really tragic that, that the camp was very, very well networked with a hundred other groups - that's not an exaggeration - in the early days. I mean, gradually that got less and less. Just because more and more people were there a lot of the time who were from other places and just didn't have those connections or those networks. But I think more unfortunately was they didn't seem to see the importance of that." (P3)

This shows the difference in attitudes towards the importance of communication to the campaign, but it is also reflective of that changed situation – the smaller amount of communication can be seen as a result of the less closely linked campaign, and simultaneously as a cause of the weakness of its links and its inability to resolve problems. The value of this type of networked campaigning is also much more clearly articulated by DC, and their ethic in faviour of 'political organising' – the 'direct action culture' of many residents of the RSC would value this much less highly, prioritising the importance of living ones values above the idea of this type of political networking (Melucci 1989).

It is important to understand this dysfunction in the context of the already discussed problems that arose from political and cultural differences and tensions. In fact, there is a symbiotic relationship between them, where communication problems both cause and are caused by political and cultural differences – they are reflective of wider problems within the campaign. This is not very surprising, and it functions as a valuable corrective to simplistic beliefs that a particular system or method of communication could solve all of these issues, which can be deeply entrenched and require engagement and work from the participants in order to attempt to go beyond their differences and find ways that they can work together across them.

What was the impact of different collective identities on the campaign?

6.5 Different collective identities

Speaking from the radical end of Social Movement studies, Flesher Fominaya discusses the distinction between 'vertical' and 'horizontal' orientation, actors within the global justice or anti-globalisation movement. This was seen as a fundamental tension, but one which that movement was able to successfully bridge through alliances across this divide, and across ideological and tactical diversity – as such, it can potentially offer interesting parallels with the differences and tensions between the groups in North West Mayo, and also possibly offer ideas for how people can better work together across difference, which is one of the main goals of this project.
See Table 7.1 in Findings chapter, p.19 (Flesher Fominaya 2013, p.115).

While this model of 'political-instrumental' versus 'social-expressive' clearly does not map directly onto the distinctions between Dublin and Cork S2S and RSC activists, it does offer some interesting parallels. First of all though, where it does not work – Dublin and Cork (on the political-instrumental side of the table) were not working within an environmental/green frame, and it was not their primary attraction to the movement.

This adds much to our understandings, but it fails to account well for the Workers Solidarity Movement (WSM), a platformist anarchist organisation and an important part of both Dublin and Cork Shell to Sea groups. The WSM can be seen as acting in many of the ways seen here as characteristic of the 'Institutional Left', such as foregrounding the collective/union (though not the party) as the ideal political actor, their organisation is permanent, and they have an explicit ideological base. But at the same time, their organisational structure is horizontal and participatory, and they organise around multiple identities. This indicates to me a limitation in the use of this model. Difficulties can also be found in applying this to the ecological activists from England, who often emphasised the central importance of the goal of stopping Shell and supporting the community (thus softening their ecological stance around the means). I feel the most useful element of these distinctions is that they represent quite a good picture of what each group thought – and feared – about the other. This can be seen in terms of Dublin and Cork reacting against a perception of 'too much' concentration on the environment, while many English activists reacted against the economic concentration of Dublin and Cork Shell to Sea, and were critical or sceptical about the

prospect of a mass social movement forcing change on the state, and seeing Dublin and Cork as too state-focussed (as well as potentially losing focus on the local community) in that move.

Most members of Dublin and Cork S2S would also see themselves as much more radical than environmental groups, such as Friends of the Earth, who are typically represented on the 'political-institutional' side of this table – and also much more horizontal than socialist parties such as the Socialist Workers Party also represented here. But at the same time, their adherence to the S2S goals means that they correspond to a significant degree with many of the other characteristics outlined. It should be noted that this stance is seen very much as one of solidarity with the community's goals, and that many/ most of the members of Dublin and Cork would personally hold more revolutionary goals that these. Nevertheless, while the goal may have been to *force* the state to change through collective action, rather than to 'ask' it to, the target of the protests was very much the state; and changing the state's politics around around the Corrib Gas project:

> "I can envisage what maybe a mass-based campaign could potentially have [stopped the Corrib gas project]... I can see a situation that, it's being debated in the Dáil cos people are getting injured on protests bla-blabla blah, and someone eventually goes, 'alright, look, just stop this for two weeks', get people to a table - then you're winning, dya know what I mean?" (P1)

This is also very clearly connected with a view that this is seen as the most pragmatic way of winning, and contrasted with ecological activism, which is seen to offer no such prospect. The state is an adversary, the target of protest, and bringing about a change in the state's position is the goal. This must also be connected with the wider goal of many members of DC to create a strong and winning social movement which could potentially change society as a whole.

The state is seen in a very different way by members of the RSC:

> "but I never really saw why, when the state was sort of facilitating massive oppression against the community, why if all the money went to the state, suddenly that it would go to useful social projects - and I know that there was an argument that it would be on the back of a strong campaign, so, maybe the state would be more pressured to put it to good use, but I dunno, I never really related to that argument much." (P7)

The state is very much seen as the enemy here, as something to be resisted; this contrasts with the idea of the state as an adversary, but one where change can be forced. The idea of how change can be ultimately won is generally more vague among these activists, who hope for their action to inspire others and society at large to become involved. There is much less of a sense of change being won at a particular time and with a particular victory; rather there is a sense of change as a continual process, and one also contained in small everyday acts (Melucci 1989). They also – very importantly – see the act of resisting as a good and a goal in and of itself, and who find motivation in

the continual opposition to environmental destruction: “every day we stop Shell is a good day for the environment” (P4).

6.5.1 Principle vs. strategy

This is closely connected to the division drawn between principle and strategy by a number of activists, such as this Irish camper:

> “Yeah for me it was more important to appeal to people who felt strongly and passionately about opposing injustice and protecting the environment, than appealing to people who were worried about the money and economy.” (P10)

This activist rejects the appeal to economic self-interest in DC’s concentration on this issue of the share of the profits from the exploitation of the gas, instead arguing that the campaign should attempt to attract (perhaps smaller numbers of) people committed to principled or ‘purer’ political campaigning, which to them means getting people to travel to North West Mayo and participate in the campaign. This can be seen as an attempt to build a different kind of collective identity to the one advocated by DC, one which is at odds with the wider (mainstream) view of society, which they reject (Melucci 1989).This view of the situation is shared by another campaigner from DC, who explains the differences by reference to the change between the first and second generations of campers:

> “that was their [second generation campers] first campaign - they had absolutely no previous experience whatsoever. So I think things changed *big-time* then. Because they didn't have that ... particular interest in doing politics or looking at the..bigger picture or any strategies or any of that. Y'know, it was more like, 'this is wrong and we're gonna stop it'.” (P3)

This quote contrasts the moral orientation of the later generation of campers with the political orientation and experience of the earlier generation of campers, who were much more closely connected to DC. This earlier generation thought of their political work as more closely connected to working against political systems (and the state) as they encountered them, rather than rejecting these systems and the state and seeking to prefigure the new society that they wished to bring about in the present one.

6.5.2 Media orientation

In terms of relation to the mass media, while both groups did work on trying to engage with the mainstream media, this was a much more integral part of the campaigning done by DC, especially by Dublin. This was partly an issue of convenience, due to closer connections with the media, much of which is based in Dublin, and media expertise contained within that group. But it is

also a reflection of the fact that media work was seen as very important by DC, while there was a much more ambivalent attitude towards it on the RSC, ranging from a positive orientation towards it all the way through to different levels of hostility. While this is a fascinating area it its own right, this piece does not have the scope to cover it due to space constraints.

6.5.3 Importance of direct action

The relative importance given to direct action as a method of protest is another important distinction which was visible within the campaign. There is a distinction between the ways that people conceive of themselves taking action, with direct action very much as one means among many which is part of taking action for DC, while it very much holds a more central role for members of the RSC:

> "Now I do think that direct action, things like lock-ons and stuff, can be brilliant in terms of building up to a day. If you've got a day of action coming up on a Friday, and the media starts to talk about it, and all that week, Shell is being hampered and it's in the media...that's the sort of thing, that's where it really works." (P1).

This quote explores the combination of direct action with other forms of political organising, seeing space for both of them but with direct action very much one part of a wider strategy and approach. This activist also differentiates between different forms of direct action –lock-ons and tripods (which is the way 'direct action' is generally used in this piece) should be, in their view, secondary to political organising and used as part of larger protests. They continue:

> "I think to organise things like days of action, that kind of stuff, a huge amount of planning needs to go into them, and they took a lot of time to deliver. I, for example, think it would have been better, that sometimes if there were days of action coming up, rather than going up on a tripod, to be leafleting - like, how many times was Mayo leafleted? It happened once when I was there. That kind of, public meetings done around the county - I mean, you just do that to death, but you just keep on doing it, and doing it." (P1)

This quote explores the opportunity cost involved in taking one form of action over another, and that while they may not be mutually exclusive in principle, the time and attention required to do either one well makes it very difficult to do both. This then requires a choice, and one which reveals the priorities and orientations of different activists.

A very different way of looking direct action is explored by this activist from England:

> "And for me, the beauty of direct action is this kind of visceral - our world is fucked up, messy and difficult and complicated, it's really rare, as an individual to have a moment where I feel really strongly about - I could do something about this, I could actually at this particular moment make a difference." (P9)

This is a much more personal orientation towards direct action, one which fuses the personal experience with the interests of society ('stopping the bad thing'). This view very much places direct action as *the* method of taking action. Furthermore, it links the idea of direct action with this person's identity as an activist – taking this form of action is not one choice among many potential options, it is a form of action that makes up part of what it *means* to be a direct activist (Plows, Wall and Doherty, 2004). Social action is seen as very much about shared experience of 'living ones values', much more than through participating in demonstrations or campaigns (Flesher Fominaya 2010a).

It is worth noting that this is less clear-cut with regard to Irish ecological activists living on the RSC after the transition period, many of whom were also in favour of campaigning on the issues of natural resources – there were also many who were not open to this approach. This can be seen to be down to the fact that many (though by no means all) of these people came to the campaign as individuals rather than as members of well established political 'scenes', making them feel less constrained by the predominant positions in these groups as my experience living on the camp showed me. They also held a position which was often in-between the positions of DC and that of the English ecological activists, being more accepted by each of these groups (though probably closer to the English activists) that either of them were to the other.

6.6 Political diversity as a way beyond these differences?

When looking for ways to work together beyond these tensions, a number of Irish and English members of the RSC were in favour of allowing for a diversity of approaches – that each part of the campaign could follow the approach that it deemed the most important. The following quote also has parallels with Beamish and Luebbers idea of 'separate streams' (2009) within a campaign as a way to deal with difference, although it is more individually focussed than their organisational study:

> "there certainly had to be some amount of respect of people approaching it from different angles. For me, what it felt like was, 'ok, so if Dublin Shell to Sea for example...want to make that argument, that's fine; I'm more interested in *this,* so I'll probably end up more working with these people. But just trying to find the common ground, 'ok, so we're coming at it from different angles, but what do we agree on, and how can we work together?'." (P10)

This argument acknowledges that there is merit to each of the differing approaches, and allows space for people to pursue the one that they see fit. This can be seen as fitting with the more individual orientation of these activists, and with the moral approach to political action – in this view it would be wrong for 'force' your view on another member of the campaign.

This, however, did not fit with the view of DC. In their view, the campaign should be (and was in the early years) all part of a whole, with different parts contributing to a singular goal within one strategy. They did not see individual parts of the campaign as acting autonomously from one another:

> "the broader church is really important, that you have things that - no-one has the right to tell someone, 'you can't be involved in this cos you don't agree with the programme'. That's not what, that's wrong. But I think a campaign going ' this is the central plank of this campaign'...So I think that's what you need, I think you do need a core message". (P1)

In this view, the kind of diversity advocated by members of the RSC is not possible, as it cuts across the campaign's ability to organise as a whole, undermining its efforts – this is very clearly connected to the differences between the collective identities with which each group feels connected. Again, this is strongly connected to the principle of the importance of the collective actor taking primacy over the individual ideas of participants, and the orientation towards a strategy which they believed could win the campaign. It's important not to stray into simplistic ideas that DC would have tolerated anything to achieve their aims, but with that said, it is clear that strategic considerations were their primary focus, rather than the ability for all individuals to express their own politics in their action. This is a very clear line of division between the collective identities of the groups, and while it cannot be said to apply simply to all members of each group, the differences between the groups are clear.

How did the groups contest the meaning of colonialism, and what does it tell us?

6.7 Understandings of colonialism in the campaign

The discourse of colonialism and the discussion which took place around it are key to understanding many of the tensions between different groups within the campaign. As discussed earlier (Findings chapter, section entitled 'Discourses around colonialism'), problematic statements by campaigners from England were a regular feature at the RSC. This can be seen as connected, as least in part, to the fact that one of the major occasions when people from DC were on camp in large numbers was at annual June gatherings, which was also when there was the largest numbers of new and uninitiated English ecological activists came to the camp. While obviously not equally an issue

for all, the huge level of turnover mean that the learnings about the Mayo and Irish contexts that were certainly gained by longer-term English campers, were often not the case for shorter-term visitors, who would thus often repeat problematic behaviours and statements due to their lack of experience of the campaign against Shell. This in turn made this problem a very difficult one to solve (despite efforts made through workshops etc), and a persistent irritant. But this difficulty/irritation took place within a wider context of DC's background and how they were relating to the rest of the campaign in the later years of the campaign. An understanding of that context is crucial to getting a wider idea of what was happening in the campaign at that time.

6.7.1 Republican backgrounds and understandings of politics

Many members of DC were influenced in their politics by republicanism of the left. These would obviously include people who explicitly define themselves as republican, such as members of Éirigí, but it would also include other members of DC who self-identified primarily as anarchists or socialists. The latter groups, in common with the vast majority of radical leftists in the South, understood the conflict in Northern Ireland in terms of imperialism or colonialism (which could mean strong support for armed struggle, but may also involve a strong critique of republicanism). One participant outlines some of the understandings which flow from this context as follows:

> "The British state etc developed a far more complex rationale for its conquest. This was generally two fold. Firstly it was the denegration of the colonial subjects in this case the Irish - so in the 19th century we were animalistic or in the 20th century we were intensely violent people. This nicely leads to the second point is that they need to intervene for good reasons - to save us from ourselves. Be in it in the 16th century or in the 1980s the fear of what would happen if they went here was always wheeled out. This lead in my view to a deeply superior attitude in British culture of all strata from the working class upwards." (P1)

As such, this person's understanding of politics in general is informed by this understanding of history. This can be seen as a regular feature of left politics in Ireland in general, which is often/usually expressed and/or understood in republican terms. This was not the case for all of my participants however; but even for those for whom republicanism was not explicitly an important part of their politics, a different understanding of the contexts in which people had grown up is put forward as leading to their broader understandings of politics:

> "there was a lot of people whose political backgrounds wouldn't have been necessarily very well understood, and may not have been respected. Where you had people coming over who maybe grew up as kids or teenagers during the London bombings era, who have all this learned stuff about republicanism, that they may not ever have needed to ever try and decipher before, or uproot." (P5)

This attempts to give a sense of the background understandings of colonialism or imperialism from which many members of DC drew their views on the origins of the problematic comments made by numerous English campaigners while on camp. DC members' analyses of the tensions were thus inevitably understood through these lenses of the historical after effects of colonialism. While for some participants this can be seen as a background understanding of politics, for some it is a significant part of their political identity.

It is important to further nuance this situation by reference to the position of Éirigí in the campaign. This was clearly the most republican group that was heavily involved in the campaign, and they were at pains not to propagate a simple association of republicanism with 'anti-Englishness'. I remember one example where a member of Éirigí was made quite upset by the contention from an English activist that they were 'against English people', which the Éirigí activist felt to be very unfair. Their position is backed up by this quote from another English activist:"I always felt like republicans were really, like 'hello, why are you here, what else do you do in England?', like, really sound." (P8). This friendliness from Éirigí is then contrasted with other members of DC, notably from the WSM. The reaction of the latter is seen as doubly unfair due to the fact that they are not seen as explicitly republican, while those there is no issue perceived with those who are explicitly so.

What can we learn from the positions of Irish campers?

6.8 Different positions of later Irish campers on the issue of colonialism

6.8.1 Similarities with English activists

Many of the Irish campers of the 'second generation' were politicised in a quite different way to the activists of DC – rather than being politicised on the Left and with many of the influences just outlined, they were often motivated by environmental and human rights concerns. This meant that republican influence on them was often markedly less than on activists from DC, even allowing for the more background influence of the context in which people grew up, which was discussed in the previous section. This Irish RSC participant initially rejected the criticism of English people brought by DC members, but came to feel that it had merit:

> "And at the time, I would have felt that people were just making it for the sake of making issues, I couldn't really see it. But there was one point where there was a workshop done, and having sat through that workshop or that discussion helped me to see.. people's side of it,…there was reason behind arguments for why" (P10).

This participant saw their position as initially naive, but was open to the contextualisation of the issue in Irish history offered in the workshops given at annual June gatherings on the campaign. However, this person also problematised the way in which the issue was presented, and the fact that a particular group of English activists who were offering a number of workshops – 'too many', according to some members of DC – at the gathering in 2010, were seen as unfairly receiving much of the criticism:

> "I had issue with the way that some of the people coming from the UK were being treated, and anger and frustration was being directed towards them, and I feel they were coming in with good genuine intent." (P10)

This makes an important distinction between agreeing with some of the criticism in a general sense, while wanting to be very careful about how it is applied, particularly towards friends and fellow-activists who they had worked closely with, and who they trusted and respected.

This last is another crucial point in understanding the differences between the reactions of Irish campers and those of DC to English activists – the fact that through working closely together, the above quoted activist had built up strong bonds of trust and shared experience enabled and empowered them towards a positive reaction to that group of English activists, even in the light of criticism that they saw as justified. Another important factor in this is the shared political culture between many (not to say all) ecological activists from Ireland and England, many of whose subcultures were recognisable to each other, thus enabling easy communication through shared understandings and methods of self-expression (Barker 2010). The same cannot be said for the relationship between DC and the group from England, meaning that they had no similar positive relationship to fall back on when there was as a disagreement between the groups; it was easy for the tensions to grow from this point.

6.8.2 Differences between Irish and English ecological activists

Despite this, it is important to note that the colonialism discourse was also understood and utilised by Irish members of the RSC, though generally not to the same degree as by DC. This English activist talks about:

> "It's just, I remember talking about the English thing once, and saying how I felt a bit inhibited and held back, and how it can be quite difficult, and at times when you're feeling sensitive, it kind of upsets you, and she [local campaigner] said, well, she mentioned those

> people there – they're not a*nti-English,* but…talk about not wanting English activists to represent the camp at certain things, and that kind of thing." (P8)

This gives a sense of alienation from the camp due to the regular talk of colonialism there. While not seeking to diminish this, it should be understood in the context of the very difficult closing down of the camp, when there were numerous disagreements between campers. It is also interesting to note that when one of the people discussedas having a problemstic relstionship with English people in the above quote, was interviewed for this research, they very consciously and notably played down the importance of colonial tensions. This again points to the complex relationships that people had, and to the difficult and changing nature of how people understood the issues and tensions within the campaign.

6.8.3 Bonds created between ecological activists, but not with DC

I feel that the fact that there were bonds created between the Irish members of the RSC and this English group, but not with DC, is not simply an accident, and also not simply down to time spent together and experience shared when living on camp. Shared ecological politics and a strong orientation towards direct action are commonalities between them, enabling a quite quick recognition and political solidarity with one another – they both felt part of the same 'scene' or political culture. This can be linked with Flesher Fominaya's distinction between different orientations of movement actors, as discussed in the Literature Review, 'Collective identity' section. From there it was easier to form the bonds of trust discussed above, and easier to take a sympathetic position towards one another. None of this is true for DC activists. This fact is recognised by an activist from DC, who relates a serious message in a humorous story about meeting another DC activist on arrival at the RSC for a gathering:

> "And he turned around and he went 'look at all these people, how in the name of Jesus do they think anyone can relate to them?' [both laugh] - and he spanned his hand over 30 English activists, environmental activists, who of course had dreadlocks and looked mad and all wore black, and it was really funny. And I mean, he was being disparaging, but he was also just, 'oh thank God somebody from within my political culture has arrived', y'know? And now we can go and have a pint in peace." (P5)

While this activist explicitly relates the differences to English people, many of the cultural differences that they note are relevant to many ecological activists on the camp, both Irish and English. These two quotes also represent a concern that subcultural appearance and English accents posed the danger of alienating potential support or allies from the campaign. Another fear would have been that stories in a generally unsympathetic media would accentuate the 'outside agitator' element to attempt to undermine the campaign. These concerns would also play into the well-worn activist

debate around 'lifestylism' vs. socially oriented activism, although it should be said that participants generally sought to avoid explaining the issues in these terms.

In this sense, the criticism of the thoughtlessness or ignorance of many English activists can be sometimes blurred with the political issues that they have with the change to a more ecological politics on the camp. While the issues are explicitly differentiated by some DC activists (see p.40 in Methodology section), some also identify 'the core' of the ecological ideology as coming from England, it can be seen that a kind of archetypical English ecological activist came to personify all of the issues that DC had with the camp and with English people involved with the campaign. With the exception of the longest-term English people, this is how many of these activists came to be seen by DC. It is likely that many people in DC will disagree with this assertion, and it is certainly not true all of the time in the interviews I did, and there are many times when a sympathetic view is taken. However, in an overall sense and certainly in less sympathetic moments, there is a strong sense of English ecological activists being at the heart of a lot of the problems.

This is connected with capture another important element, that of losing a sense of the possibility of victory by DC, and the anger and disappointment for this being directed towards English ecological activists (see 'Emotion as a prism to understand the situation better'). This is also connected with Barker's (2010) idea of the emotional importance of turning points.

6.8.4 English ecological activists' reaction to the 'blurring' of issues

This blurring of issues was identified by one English activist, who feels that personality differences were one of the key sources of tension, but feels that they were unfairly mixed with the colonialism discourse.There is also very much a sense that while having differences between ecological and socialist principles is interesting and can make for a good debate, when it is mixed with issues around the colonialism discourse, it becomes part of a wider attempt to attack them, rather than an attempt to discuss and learn. The sense of hurt and unfairness is also clear. It gives a sense of attempting to grapple with unfamiliar issues, and while talking (elsewhere) about learning from some of the workshops on colonialism, the following quote feels that the mixing of the different issues is not fair. This sense of unfairness in turn makes this person less likely to listen or attempt to build bridges with DC.

6.8.5 Rejection of criticism

> "I think I am using it [colonialism] as a shorthand for a process to describe cultural differences between UK and Irish activists, which in part is reflected through a historical lens. The reason I'm uncomfortable with word colonialism is actual colonialism is a much more invasive thing and its own specific baggage which is not necessarily appropriate

> here, though it does reflect various people's feelings. However, cultural differences is too weak by itself as it ignores as significant aspect of Irish-UK history, which was also being played out in the struggle against Shell as well." (P6)

The relation of this person to this discourse is very interesting, as they have very strong connections with both Ireland and England – they have been involved in radical ecological movements in the latter for many years. As such, they find themselves somewhat in between the two groups, though their sympathies are generally much closer to English ecological activists in this research – their position is similar in some ways to that of many Irish ecological activists on the RSC.

The above statement neatly sums up an important part of the dilemma for activists based in England–many feel stuck between an acknowledgement of the validity of some of the criticisms made in the colonialist discourse by DC, while simultaneously problematising or challenging others. For example, the issues of arrogance and lack of understanding which have been seen at the RSC are balanced with a sense that 'colonialism' has a very specific meaning which is misused or confused by the use of this word in relation to the problems experienced at the RSC. This also underlines how difficult this situation would be for many English people considering these issues for the first time: while most Irish radicals would have been obliged to consider their position on these issues at some point, they were often entirely new for people coming from abroad. With this in mind, it is a serious proposition to be able to engage with issues around colonialism to the extent of being able to accept parts, while rejecting others – the achievement of some English activists in grappling with this should be recognised here.

One of the most valuable things that is added to the discussion at this point is a more intersectional understanding of the dynamics of the campaign – gender and class issues which impact on and in the campaign are brought into relation with the issues of colonialism, adding to our understandings of each. Patriarchy is put forward as an alternative or supplementary way of understanding a clash between an Irish man and English woman that some activists argue is down to colonial issues. Many of the issues of 'overempowerment' (in the words of P9, a participant from the English ecological scene) are also put down to social class, and stated to be problems that are faced within ecological movements in England also, rather than being characteristic of English activists as a whole.

The same activist who discusses this issue also feels that they learned from some of the discourses around colonialism, but later they reject them. While not wishing to concentrate too much attention on one person's inconsistencies (as all interviewees had them), there is an

interesting tension between these two views. I would argue that it was possible to hold these positions simultaneously due to the fact that the discourse of colonialism was not a stable one. Whereas people could talk about issues around gender or class and have at least some sort of a shared understanding of what the categories meant, this was not the case with colonialism. While one person could mean unawareness of Irish history, another could be discussing an English person speaking too much at a meeting, and a third could be referring to the fact that direct action tactics that had come from England were being used in the campaign more than they would like, and these categories could also blur across into one another. As such, it was often difficult to have a conversation on the topic where everyone was talking about the same thing. This in turn brings us back to the lack of bonds built up between the groups over time by common action or a functioning national campaign, either of which could have helped build spaces where these kinds of issue could have been discussed, along with the sympathy for one another to attempt to do so together (Flesher Fominaya, 2010a).

Chapter 7

Reasons for Hope?

So, in the light of all that has been discussed so far, are there reasons for hope in this situation, and if so, what are they? This is clearly quite a serious set of tensions between allies in the campaign against Shell, but at the same time, the campaign did manage to pose serious resistance to Shell over a long period of time, which is not an insignificant achievement.This can be contrasted with the position in much US social movement writing (e.g Benford 1993), which emphasises that meaningful alliance across difference is virtually impossible This section will attempt to explore how the situation could have been improved on, and what lessons we can take from this experience for future campaigns and future attempts to work in alliance across difference.

Another important consideration is that while I came to this project with an orientation towards alliance building and I retain that, I have to be very conscious of not trying to force this orientation on the data which I have gathered. An opposing consideration that also exists is the sometime difficulty I have of seeing past the immediacy of the problems discussed, to try to identify possibilities for improvement.

7.1 Shell to Sea: and alliance of separate groups or a single campaign?

As with many issues in the campaign against Shell, different ways of conceiving of the campaign were reflective of the different positions and political cultures from which people came or where they situated themselves. This meant that people in DC were then judging the RSC on very different standards to those on which the RSC judged themselves; the reverse is also true. This can help explain some of the tensions, insofar as people were speaking past each other, rather than to each other. The criteria for judging one another came from within their own group or political culture, and was very much *of* that place too (Flesher Fominaya 2010a). Furthermore, it can help explain much of the confusion and lack of comprehension expressed by participants at the behaviour of others, such as the repeated assertion by English activists that they could not understand why DC anarchists thought that the state getting the proceeds of tax income or royalties from the Corrib gas field would help the campaign.

7.2 The nature of alliances

As Rucht (2004) has written, alliance implies a willingness to cooperate, but is also an assertion of difference. As such, alliances are always about that tension between working closely together, while also maintaining one's own separate identity. In this case, I've come to the conclusion that both members of the RSC and members of DC felt that their own self-identity was put under threat by the other, which left each feeling obligated to reject the other's point of view. In concrete terms, members of DC felt that their vision of collective mass action through political organising was under threat from the RSC's more personal, moral and environmental orientation. This became specifically identified with the figure of the English ecological activist; also to a significant degree due to regular problematic remarks and approaches by English people (especially new ones) marking out a further difficulty and difference. The distance between the groups mean that there was the possibility of addressing issues was also diminished. On the part of members of the RSC (Irish and English), while their idea of diversity allowed for DC to hold *their* views and *their* ways of action, the idea of acting in a collective fashion which would oblige further compromise on/movement away from their principles constituted a threat to their sense of autonomy and identity, and was thus rejected (feeling that had already compromised in relation to environmental issues). While the groups did work together (to a degree) over time, this was usually quite limited in the time after the transition period, and the distance between them would go on to be crystallised and exacerbated by the advent of the colonialism discourse, which would go on to be understood in the conjunction with the differences around ecology and political organising (even though attempts were often made to keep them separate, there was significant overlap happening). One example of this occurs in the Findings chapter on p.64.

Ecological differences are here seen in relation with ideas around colonialism, with ecological ideas seen as being imposed in an arrogant and unthinking way, which is seen as characteristic of English ecological activists' involvement in the campaign (as well as a threat to this person's view and DC's views on how the campaign should be run).

It may be helpful to think of people encountering 'familiar adversaries' – new people, but familiar differences across a 'red/green divide'. One participant talked about seeing things in this fashion:"I don't think it was actually the issue whether you were an anarchist or a socialist or a republican was the dividing thing, I think it was more socialism versus environmentalism or ecology" (P1). This gives a sense that the interviewee is familiar with understanding political difference in this way, giving him a well-formed way of understanding the tensions within the campaign that does not necessarily require a totally new way of understanding the world. They feel familiar with many of

the arguments being put forward, and have well understood ways of thinking about them – indeed, they can be seen as familiar debates. It is arguable that this may, at times, lead to broad-brush understandings being applied by participants to different issues. Many of my experiences in the campaign would back up this contention.

7.3 Turning points

Marxist academic Colin Barker talks about how turning points in campaigns can be positive and uplifting experiences, acting as launching pads for future action (2010); but they can also be difficult and trying moments, draining energy from participants. His focus here is the Solidarnosc (Solidarity) movement in Poland, which is a different context from the present one, and he is clearly writing with a socialist lens and with a very positive focus on workplace militancy, but I feel many of his observations are relevant to this situation nevertheless. The transition period is one such turning point in this campaign, and a hugely significant one. For ecologically motivated activists, there was undoubtedly more space for their ideas after the transition period (even if the period was obviously not an uplifting experience for them). It is important to note here that one of the participants felt that there was a lack of knowledge of this period among many English activists who arrived after it, and thus felt that it didn't affect them directly. This would fit with my own experience, and is probably true to a degree ofmany Irish long-termers who arrived after this period too.

Looking at the DC perspective however, I think Barker's approach is useful. The repeated references to this period, particularly the calling off of the Day of Action in November 2006 and the split, mark it as a really difficult time for them, a cataclysm for the campaign, when their best chance of winning receded into the distance, or even disappeared. This flows into very regular comparisons between the later setup and priorities of the RSC with the years before the transition period, comparisons which are unfavourable to the current campers' approaches. This combines both a certain understanding of how the campaign should be undertaken with a pain at the sense of lost opportunity from that earlier period, a pain which can arguably be seen in their frustration with the campaign, and reactions which they acknowledge could be seen as 'aggressively defensive' (P5). While this dynamic is seen by some participants, and clearly led to the demobilisation of many people in both Dublin and Cork, a clearer engagement with the effects of this frustration on their action by DC in later years could have been helpful to efforts to work across difference in the campaign as a whole. That is, acknowledging that this frustration may have impacted on how they approached the campaign, and the way they critiqued the RSC and its English activists, could have been of help in working in the campaign together.

Likewise, RSC members could certainly engage more with a questioning of their approaches towards campaigning and how that changed at this time. This is acknowledged by this Irish RSC participant:

> "so there was a change of tactics and, like there probably wasn't enough analysis of that on the camp, y'know, or like then probably, but like the camp was weak when that changed, and I think the national campaign was weak, and then it became stronger again, the camp y'know. I suppose a lot of that was the English activists starting to come over more, y'know." (P4)

While this is a reflective and self-critical statement after the fact, in many cases I feel that criticism from DC generally caused a defensive reaction from RSC members (Irish and English) at the time, and a following closing-down towards the thoughts put forward by the former group. This is reflected in the problems experienced within the national campaign, as discussed in an earlier part of this chapter.

A further example of this can be seen in the suggestion put forward by DC that more inductions of new people into the campaign would have been helpful, and that the lack of these (as well as poorly thought out talks and tours) gave new people the impression that they 'could do whatever they wanted'. While this would have helped to a degree to give some level of understanding of the campaign, it also poses a number of questions: What kind of induction? What's the content, and what's its political orientation? The kind of induction favoured by DC members is clearly akin to the inductions which were carried out in the early years of the campaign, emphasising DC's views on how the campaign should be run (which would have been largely synonymous with the RSC's views in the early years of the campaign). It is obviously far from a given that this would have been the type of induction which would have been undertaken on the campaign in the later years, if they had been done. If an agreement could have been found on what kind of induction to give, this could have been helpful – but this question leads us back to how to deal with the differences between the groups. It also brings the issue of building up connections and bonds of trust through shared experience as a hugely important factor in being able to work closely together across difference. While this is clearly something that cannot be easily replicated, the very recognition of this issue is already an important start in this direction, as well as the orientation towards building connections which is expressed by a number of participants.

7.4 Some suggestions to begin a conversation / Positive tendencies

7.4.1 Space

Space to discuss issues of this type was noted by a number of participants as something that was lacking in the campaign. Or, more precisely, the will to make space and time to talk about difficult issues, and the ability to resist the inclination to work on more obvious and immediately campaign-related issues:

> "I suppose it's that; activists and left-wing people tend to get involved in things as an emergency response to a situation, and there's never - or people are saying - there's never time. I suppose in my personal experience I think it's really important to make time." (P3)

While there were workshops held that were generally seen as a positive development, these were not made into a regular part of the campaign. The limitations of the campaign's communications structures (which must also be seen as a difficulty of will, and an inclination to avoid conflict) can also be seen as a serious difficulty when talking about creating this kind of space. Given the time and effort put into the tensions discussed here, I would argue that giving space to addressing them would probably have been a much more productive use of time.

7.4.2 Presumption of similarity a problem – and we should expect issues

Presumptions made by, or perceived as being made by, others was a common theme that participants talked about as a significant problem:

> "I guess it's important for people who're coming into campaigns that have been vibrant and around for a long time, to be aware that there's been huge - to come to it with the presumption that there's been huge learning and huge debates within it already. And the presumption that there's a diversity of voices." (P5)

The perceived presumption of the opposite of this was felt to be patronising and very problematic, as explored elsewhere. It is important to note that this was not felt to be something unique to the campaign against Shell at all, but rather a factor in many radical campaigns. An approach emphasising clarity and openness about one's politics is put forward as a positive one:

> "I think that assumption that everybody else..is kind of from the same place is always a bit of a danger, it can cause problems in any kind of even organisation, but necessarily an activist or political situation, but business even. It's very good to look at honestly where people're really coming from and what their agendas are." (P3)

> " I think, if you accept that it's inevitable that there are going to be differences, rather than making the assumption that if there are differences that it's a failure - the fact is that people, for a long time under a lot of stress held it together enough to present enough of a united front to be able to mount effective resistance." (P9)

This can be seen as an important first step in working out ways to work across difference – clarity about one's political motivations can break down presumptions of both similarity and divergence, and can help form a surer ground from which to begin attempts at working together better. On its own, this is clearly not enough, but I would argue that it is a necessary step to take early on in attempts to work together better. In a campaign like this, which was so long-running, it is something that would need to be done repeatedly to involve new members and to (re)affirm group understandings of itself. This certainly also requires the will of participants to undertake this work, but a positive orientation towards this was expressed by a large majority of participants. (It is important to also note that a smaller number of participants held out little or no hope of working together, and also questioned the possibility or potential value of this – there was not a sense of unanimity of the subject). The distinction between long and short termers is potentially an important one in helping these understandings – sharing the learnings from long termers with new arrivals who may be experienced activists, but who were not familiar with this campaign (and to whom the most obvious differences would be between the local community and the solidarity campaign from outside the area as a whole).

7.4.3 A parallel campaign on natural resources

An imbalance of power between North West Mayo (RSC and the community) and the rest of the country (primarily DC) was a recurring issue identified by participants, and a problem that was not easily solved:

> "I think that was one of the problems with Shell to Sea, there was never that clear, the structure to it, so where decisions were being made was often - there was a dictatorship of the doers, which is generally kind of useful, but then there was kind of, then there's problems that it couldn't factor in, it didn't have a national structure, so obviously people on ground up there had, like, *way* more influence over day-to-day - now they *should* probably but - the fact that that wasn't very obvious, when you have that situation it needs to be clarified and codified, and it never was in Shell to Sea, and I think it was a big problem." (P1)

This is seen as simultaneously inevitable and partially desirable, but also a difficulty in that it meant that people were not able to work as equals, and that there was an ambiguity about how exactly the

different parts of the campaign should relate to one another, if that imbalance was to continue. One suggestion that was put forward by an Irish RSC member which attempts to address this imbalance is as follows:

> "Like I know that's kind of dividing the Shell to Sea brand kinda, but I wonder would that have been better if you had Shell to Sea as part of a 'Reclaim Ireland', or I dunno what. But where it's voice wasn't necessarily stronger...and set up as something else, and that Shell to Sea Mayo fed into that network on a more equal footing to work of things, like, nationally y'know." (P4)

The specific suggestion of an alternative group to concentrate on natural resources was put forward by this camper (indeed, it should be mentioned that there were a few efforts in this direction within the campaign, none of which ever really fully came to fruition). This is in response to the imbalance in power within the campaign, which is weighted in favour of Mayo. This form of boundary-making (Roth 1998) would allow for an equalising of power in this area of the campaign (the economic part), while still allowing local issues to be at the forefront of RSC and local focus. While there would certainly be objections to this proposal, it does bring the crucial issue of this imbalance of power into focus, and could potentially begin a fruitful discussion around how the different parts of the campaign relate to each other. This can be seen as something that was missing within the campaign, with unresolved disputes at some national meetings around the primacy of environmental issues vs. natural resources a recurring theme (as can be seen in the meeting minutes) – this proposal could instead shift the discussion to one around power, balance and the accommodation of the primary goals of each group in a different way

7.4.4 Learning transmitted to movements

A final positive which can be taken from these tensions is the sense of learning which the encounter with difference caused. In the 'Lessons Learned' section of the Findings chapter, different learnings that people had taken from the campaign were outlined, with different perspectives outlined on how the recruitment tours to the UK proved problematic for the campaign in their aftermath, and also reflections on how people might have approached the possibility of lulls in the campaign. In the case of the person below, they felt they learned a lot about historal context and its echoes down the years from the campaign, and especially about how to work with communities:

> "and I think Rossport had a massive effect on that, in terms of English activists. I think it's massively...it's really benefited the British activist movement, people being involved in Rossport. Like, partly for just being the most amazing, inspiring place and, just having the craic, the laugh - but also like, really looking at your own politics, your own tactics, and our movement, and yeah, the criticisms - the right, y'know, correct criticisms of it - and I think that can only help us to be more..I dunno, hopefully more inclusive and interested in, just more open to other ideas and other ways of doing things." (P8)

These are certainly experienced as a positive learning experience, one for which this person is very grateful, and one which has changed their approach. There is a wish to reciprocate and to broaden understandings of ecology in DC too (which is difficult, but which could offer different ways to think about the campaign – this is regretted as a 'massive missed opportunity for debate').Furthermore, this learning is something that they are actively passing on to other members of the English ecological movement, where the experience of campaigners in North West Mayo is seen as having had a significant impact on the way that people approach alliances with communities, for example. In this way, the lessons learned are amplified much beyond their initial group, having impacts across England, and showing the value of learning in a movement context.

Chapter 8

Conclusion – Implications

This work set out from a recognition of problems and an orientation towards alliance building in social movements. These have changed and grown during the course of undertaking the research, as part of my own learning journey, immersed in the topic. Some of the other aims which have emerged over the course of the last year include a desire to make movement participants intelligible to each other – to build comprehension of the other very different understandings and interpretations brought by activists to situations that may feel very familiar, even routine, to all. This attempts to break through the fog of often very differently understood tensions and to bring out the opinions and knowledge of movement actors, putting them into contact with knowledges that are different from their own, and sharing the many learnings that have been built up during the course of the years campaigning against Shell.

This is done with the aim of beginning a process of dialogue and discussion between actors in the campaign against Shell, who have struggled with these issues, as well as challenging the discourse of inevitability which can sometimes surround the tensions explored in this work. I also feel that the issues explored herein have many significant implications for other attempts to work across difference in social movements. The section preceding this one – 'Reasons for Hope? – attempts to tentatively point towards ways in which these issues might have been addressed more productively in this campaign, which may also be of interest to activists in other campaigns.

Furthermore, this thesis seeks to add to deeper understandings of movements by examining a complex multi-group movement context in which complicated and very layered and textured tensions were at issue. The personal nature of my connections with other movement actors has allowed for the collection of interpretations of fascinating depth in the data, which will hopefully be of use in both my own further research and to other movement scholars. It has also involved a large amount of questioning of myself and of the views that I brought to the undertaking of this research, making this into a project which is also partly autobiographical in nature. In this way, practice can help illuminate social movement theory, while theory can be interrogated, nuanced and developed further in relation with new knowledge about movement practice.

8.1 Existing knowledge and practice

The ways in which this research confirms and departs from existing knowledge and practice are intimately interlinked, often forming a sort of 'double movement' – this is consistent with Rucht's exploration of how alliance simultaneously implies a willingness to cooperate and an assertion of difference (2004). What I mean by this is that while the difficulty of working in alliance across difference in social movements was confirmed to a significant degree, it was also simultaneously challenged.

On the side of the confirmation of existing movement knowledge and practice, the depth of these tensions and the complicated and multi-layered nature of the problems were confirmed. Poor communications also allowed them to fester, and blocked off a potential route towards working across difference. The depth and the subtlety – and consequent difficulty – of working across difference is further emphasised in this case (starr 2006, p.377). Where this study departs from existing knowledge and practice in movement is where it brings a number of different knowledges and understandings in movement into conversation with one another, in a way that proved extremely difficult to do in the campaign against Shell, and one which is undertheorised in a social movement literature which is very much oriented towards alliances between formal organisations. Further to this, it brings 'cultural' (i.e. the discourse around colonialism), ideological and political culture differences into dialogue with one another in a layered way which attempts to take account of each and of the differences between them in a way this is very much situated in this specific campaign, but one which I feel has echoes which are relevant to many other movements also.

8.2 What does this research enable me to say now to other participants?

The answer to this question is in fact better understood as what it enables my participants to say to one another, and to others in the campaign. Or, put another way, it enables participants to get a fuller sense of one another's views and perspectives in a way that I feel has only happened in a very limited way to some individuals in the campaign, and which was certainly not widespread.

As part of this, I feel that I am also enabled to put forward the view that many of the difficulties that people raised which led to tensions were very similar – for example, there was a repeated feeling of being disregarded or not listened to expressed by participants. This was intertwined with the view that others were attempting to impose their views or ideologies on the campaign. This is significant because that feeling of being sidelined was a major problem put forward by participants, and one of the chief reasons given for the inability and/or lack of desire to work across difference. Connected with this was a notably high level of misunderstanding between actors

– there are repeated instances in the data where the view that a participant felt that another group held, was in fact in direct contradiction with views expressed by that group – for example, see 'Lulls in the campaign' in the Findings chapter. While there are more than one possible reason for this disparity (such as actors' different ways of self-presentation), this certainly indicates a noteworthy level of misunderstanding.

Furthermore, this suggests that there is significant learning to be had in others' perspectives – nobody had 'the whole story', and this suggests that there is significant benefit to be found in the wider perspectives offered in this work. The research also enables me to state that, **contra** some views, these tensions are not reducible to any one factor – issues around the colonialism discourse, ideology, political culture, and the ways that these were dealt with, were all overlaid and mixed together, and all of them played a role in the tensions within the campaign.

I also feel enabled to make two further, final, points to my fellow participants, which are also interconnected. An awful lot of time, emotion and energy was used up (or in my opinion, and that of a number of participants, wasted) on these tensions, which I feel could much more productively have gone into campaigning work. While there were a number of commendable efforts made to address this issue, my data would suggest that more time was put into talk and boundary making which reinforced negative views. I would also suggest that more energy invested into efforts to address these tensions would have been helpful.

8.3 Next steps?

The next steps for this project are at once clear and oblique. There are number of concrete initiatives which I plan to take over the coming months to refine, disseminate, and debate this research, and which will be outlined below. At the same time, this has been a process of discovery, of questioning both myself and others, and many of the assumptions that we carry around with us and bring to our movement work all the time.

On a slightly more prosaic level, after my submission date I will return this thesis to my research participants for their opinions and feedback, informing them that their views will form part of the continuation of this research process. I will then edit the research into a number of pamphlets and/or blog articles which will be distributed to as many movement participants as possible in the campaign against Shell. Furthermore, it will be distributed among relevant groups such as the Earth First! network and to the WSM and Éirigí. I will then organise a series of discussions with these relevant groups to further debate the research. I hope that this process will lead to a lot of interaction with other movement actors, perhaps some controversy, and a number of new

perspectives and avenues for the research to continue down during the course of the PhD which I hope to be studying in the coming years. This will also be linked in with a wider process of documenting and reflecting on the campaign against Shell in whole which is currently getting off the ground.

In a wider sense, the process on inquiry is something which I have undertaken as part of this research project, but it also extends well beyond its boundaries to many other questions about alliances in social movements, and more fundamentally, about how we work together and what this means for our movements on a whole range of levels. This is an ever-changing and ever-challenging question, and one which refuses static interpretations and easy answers. As such, I plan to continue this process of interrogation, but I am unclear as to exactly the end destination, or indeed if such a goal is even desirable – at the moment it feels more like an open question and an indeterminate, fulfilling process.

Bibliography

Allen, R. (2004). *No global: The people of Ireland versus the multinationals*. London: Pluto Press.

Ainger, K., Chesters, G., Credland, T., Jordan, J., Stern, A. & Whitney, J. (Eds). (2003).*We Are Everywhere: The Irresistible Rise of Global Anticapitalism*. London: Verso.

Andrew, X. (1999). Give up activism. *Do or Die*, *9*, 160-166.

Anonymous.(2008). *"Outside Agitators": Voices from across the water – reflections on resistance in rossport.* Footprint Workers Co-Operative (pamphlet/zine).

Anonymous / Glasgow Earth First! (1996). "Pollok Free State lives on!" In*Do or Die* 5, 7-10.

Barker, C. (2010). Crises and turning points in revolutionary development: emotion, organization and strategy in Solidarnosc, 1980-81. *Interface*, *2*.1, 79-117.

Barker, C., & Cox, L. (2002). What have the Romans ever done for us?. In *Academic and activist forms of movement theorizing. Conference on Alternative Futures and Popular Protest.* Manchester:Manchester Metropolitan University.

Beamish, T. D., & Luebbers, A. J. (2009). "Alliance building across social movements: Bridging difference in a peace and justice coalition." In *Social Problems,* 56.4, 647-676.

Benford, R. D. (1993). "Frame Disputes within the Nuclear Disarmament Movement." In*Social Forces,*71, 677–701.

Bowman, P.(2013). "Beyond the "solidarity of the same" - Solidarity, class and empowerment", available at http://www.wsm.ie/c/solidarity-solidarity-class-empowerment [accessed 16 December 2013].

Bryant, A., & Charmaz, K. (eds.). (2007). *The Sage handbook of grounded theory*. London:Sage.

Bush, B. (2006). *Imperialism and postcolonialism*. Harlow: Pearson Education.

Calhoun, C. (2001). Putting emotions in their place. *Passionate politics: Emotions and social movements*, 45-57.

Clements, B. (2008). "Promoting Environmental Citizenship? A Critique of the Moral Persuasiveness of Direct Action Environmental Protest." In *Seeking Environmental Justice,* 46, 179-202.

Cox, L. (2003). *Eppur si muove: thinking 'the social movement'*. Manchester: Manchester

Metropolitan University.

Cox, L., & Flesher Fominaya, C. (2009). "Movement knowledge: what do we know, how do we create knowledge and what do we do with it?" In*Interface: a journal for and about social movements,*1.1, 1-20.

Cox, L. (2011a). "Gramsci in Mayo: a Marxist perspective on social movements in Ireland." *Proceedings of New Agendas in Social Movement Studies Conference*.

Cox, L. (2011b). "There must be some kind of way out of here: social movements and the crisis in Ireland." *CrisisJam/New Left Project*.

Cox, L. (2011c) *How do we keep going? Activist burnout and personal sustainability in social movements.* Into-ebooks (http://into-ebooks.com), Helsinki.

Crowley, S. (2011). *'Turf Wars and Food Riots: Conflicts in Ireland's Food Movement',* unpublished thesis (M.A), NUI Maynooth.

Curtin, C., & Varley, T. (1995). Community action and the state. *Irish Society: sociological perspectives*, 379-407

Dalby, S. (1984).*The nuclear syndrome: victory for the Irish anti-nuclear power movement*. Dublin: Dawn Train, 3.

de Sousa Santos, B. (2006). *The rise of the global left: the world social forum and beyond*,1. London: Zed Books.

della Porta, D. (2013). *Can democracy be saved?: participation, deliberation and social movements*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

della Porta, D. & Diani, M. (2006).*Social movements: An introduction*. 2nd edition. Oxford: Blackwell.

Denscombe, M. (2010). *The Good Research Guide for Small-Scale Social Research Projects.* Fourth edition. Berkshire: Open University Press.

Eyerman, R., & Jamison, A. (1991). *Social movements: A cognitive approach*. Penn State Press.

Flesher Fominaya, C. (2010a). Collective identity in social movements: Central concepts and debates. In *Sociology Compass*, *4*.6, 393-404.

Flesher Fominaya, C.(2010b). Creating Cohesion from Diversity: The Challenge of Collective Identity Formation in the Global Justice Movement. In *Sociological Inquiry*,80.3, 377-404.

Flesher Fominaya, C. (2013). "Movement culture continuity: the British anti-roads movement as precursor to the Global Justice Movement." In Flesher Fominaya, C. & Cox, L. (Eds). In *Understanding European movements: new social movements, global justice struggles, anti-austerity protest*. London: Routledge.

Fuster Morell, M. (2009). "Action Research: Mapping the Nexus of Research and Political Action." In*Interface: A Journal for and about Social Movements*, 1.1, 21-45.

Gordon, U. (2007). "Practicing anarchist theory: Towards a participatory political philosophy." In *Constituent Imagination: Militant Investigations/Collective Theorization*,276-287.

Gordon, U. (2008).*Anarchy Alive!: anti-authoritarian politics from practice to theory*. London: Pluto Press.

Hackman, H. W. (2005). "Five essential components for social justice education." In*Equity& Excellence in Education,* 38.2, 103-109.

Kuhling, C. (2004). *The New Age ethic and the spirit of postmodernity*. New Jersey: Hampton Press.

Learning.ie (2013) *Ireland tops class in third level attainment*. Available at: http://www.learning.ie/eurostudent-survey-ireland.html [accessed 9 July 2014].

Leonard, L. (2006). *Green Nation: The Irish Environmental*. Drogheda: Choice Publishing.

Lichterman, P. (1996).*The search for political community: American activists reinventing commitment*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

McCaughan, M. (2008) *The price of our souls: Gas, shell and Ireland*. Afri.

Melucci, A. (1989). *Nomads of the present: Social movements and individual needs in contemporary society*. London: Hutchinson Radius.

Mohanty, C. T. (1988). "Under Western eyes: Feminist scholarship and colonial discourses." In*Feminist review*, 61-88.

Murray, M. (2003). *Waste Management in Ireland: A Case Study on the Impact of Transnationalisation on Governance,* Ph.D. Thesis: NUI Maynooth.

Naples, N. A. (2009) "Teaching intersectionality intersectionally." In *International Feminist Journal of Politics,* 11:4, 566-577.

Nicolson, P. (1996). *Gender, Power and Organization: a psychological perspective*, London and New York: Routledge.

Nunes, R. (2005). "Nothing is what democracy looks like." In *Shut Them Down! The G8, Gleneagles 2005, and the Movement of Movements.* Leeds and New York: Dissent and Autonomedia.

Ó Donnabhain, S. (2006). Openness or Essentialism: Democracy and Gender in New Social Movements. *Irish Feminist Review – Women's Studies Centre*, *2*, 74.

Oakley, A. (2000). *Experiments in knowing: Gender and method in the social sciences.* Cambridge: Polity Press

Peters, I. (2014). *Too abstract to be feasible? Applying the grounded theory method in social movement research,* 247. GIGA Working Papers.

Phillips, A. (1993). *Democracy and Difference*, University Park, Pa: Pennsylvania State University Press.

Plows, A. (1997). "Roads Protest/Earth First! and "multi-issue" New Social Movements: beyond the dualisms of the "red/green" debate." In Barker, C. & Tyldesley, M. (Eds). *Alternative Futures and Popular Protest 3, conference proceedings*, 2.

Plows, A., Wall, D. & Doherty, B. (2004). "Covert repertoires: Ecotage in the UK 1." In *Social Movement Studies,* 3.2, 199-219.

Ramnath, M. (2011). *Decolonizing Anarchism,*Edinburgh: AK Press.

Robinson, A. (1999). "From NIMBY to NOPE: Building eco-bridges." In*Contemporary Politics,* 5.4, 339-364.

Rose, F.(2000). *Coalitions across the Class Divide: Lessons from the Labor, Peace, and Environmental Movements.* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Roth, B. (1998). "Feminist boundaries in the feminist-friendly organisation: The Women's Caucus of ACT UP/LA". In *Gender & Society*,*12*.2, 129-145.

Ryan, R. (2011). *Zapatista Spring: Anatomy of a Rebel Water Project & the Lessons of International Solidarity*. Edinburgh: AK Press.

Rucht, D. (2004). "Movement allies, adversaries, and third parties." In *The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements*, 197-216.

Salem, S. (2014). Decolonial Intersectionality and a Transnational Feminist Movements. In *The Feminist Wire*. Available at http://thefeministwire.com/2014/04/decolonial-intersectionality/ [accessed 14 May 2014].

Salter, K. & Sullivan, S. (2008).'*Shell to Sea'in Ireland: Building Social Movement Potency*. London: LSE Non-Governmental Public Action Programme.

Seel,B.(1997). '' 'If not you, then who?' Earth First!UK'' In *Environmental Politics,* 6.3, 172 – 179.

Seel, B. (1997). "Strategies of resistance at the Pollok Free State road protest camp." In *Environmental Politics,* 6.4, 108-139.

Shantz, J. A.& Adam, B. D. (1999). "Ecology and class: The green syndicalism of IWW/Earth First Local 1." In *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy,* 19.7/8, 43-72.

Shantz, J.A. (2002). "Judi Bari and 'the feminization of Earth First!': the convergence of class, gender and radical environmentalism."In*Feminist review* 70.1, 105-122.

Shell to Sea Campaign Aims, http://www.shelltosea.com/content/campaign-aims [accessed on 24 March 2014].

Siggins, L. (2010). *Once Upon a Time in the West: The Corrib Gas Controversy*. Random House.

Snow, D. A., Soule, S. A., & Kriesi, H. (eds.) (2008). *The Blackwell companion to social movements*. John Wiley & Sons.

starr, A. (2006). "Grumpywarriorcool: What Makes Our Movements White." In Best, S. & Nocella, A. (Eds).*Igniting a Revolution: Voices in Defense of the Earth*. Oakland, CA: AK Press.

Tarrow, S. (1994).*Power in movement: Social movements, collective action and politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Touraine, A. (1981). *The voice and the eye: An analysis of social movements*, 10. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Tovey, H. (2007). *Environmentalism in Ireland: Movement and activists*. Dublin: Institute of Public Administration.

Urquhart, C. (2013). *Grounded theory for qualitative research: A practical guide*. London: Sage.

Young, I. M. (1996). 'Communication and the Other: Beyond Deliberative Democracy' in Benhabib, S. (Ed).*Democracy and Difference: Contesting the Boundaries of the Political*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press,120-136.