

**PROTEST FROM BELOW: ACTIVISTS EXPERIENCE OF THE STUDENT PROTEST  
DUBLIN, 2010.**

**LIATH VAUGHAN**

**Submitted in part fulfilment of the requirements for the MA in Community Education,  
Equality and Social Activism**

**Departments of Adult and Community Education and Sociology National University of  
Ireland Maynooth**

**2015**

**Supervisor: Dr. Fergal Finnegan**



## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Firstly, I would like to thank the activists who took part in my research. I would like to extend thanks to my supervisor, Dr. Fergal Finnegan, for his guidance throughout the research. I would also like to thank all the CEESA lecturers, Dr. Brid Connolly, Dr. Theresa O'Keefe, Dr Laurence Cox, Dr. Michael Murray and Dr. Bernie Grummel, for their dedication and encouragement throughout the year. To my amazing classmates for their friendship, support and knowledge; Ciara Fitzpatrick, Niamh Malone, Eoin Wilson, Niamh Mongey, Ada Christi Eloji, and Philip Finn. Finally to my parents, Martina and Joe, and boyfriend Steve-thank you for believing in me, when I did not believe in myself. Your unwavering support kept me going, without it this research would not of been completed.

## Abstract

This thesis was written as a way of advancing our knowledge of how activists experience a protest event and protest policing. The Union of Students in Ireland (USI) protest in 2010, against the raising of registration fees and the cutting of the maintenance grant ended in violence, and clashes between students and an Garda Síochána. This study analyzes activists' accounts, in an attempt to understand how they experienced and conceptualize the protest and policing that day. This was achieved by interviewing five students from the radical group Free Education for Everyone (FEE), who were heavily involved in the event. The analysis of these interviews shows that these activists represented the protest and subsequent breakaway and occupation, as an opportunity to do something significant and of merit, and they were motivated to act due to the 'failure' of the USI to take significant action in the fight against the raising of fees. FEE activists contextualised the protest and brutal policing as a 'show of strength by the state' and a deliberate attempt to scare and deter people from taking to the streets to protest austerity. Activists describe the policing that day as brutal, focused and excessive, and talk angrily of the police behavior on the day. From my research of this protest, the event affected FEE as a group significantly, and it is apparent from my interviews, that the group was not capable of 'dealing and responding' to what had happened after protest. The failure to put in place a mutual care plan, and talk openly about what had happened was also cited. Although some of my participants spoke of the 'fear' and 'trauma' caused by the event on an individual level in the months after, all participants stayed politically active. In researching activists' accounts of this protest event, this thesis hopes to counter some of the dominant narratives which have been put forward through the mainstream media, by the police.

## Contents

Chapter One -Introduction	P.5
-Outline of Study	P.7
Chapter Two-Context Chapter	
-Introduction	P.9
-Background to Protest	P.9
-Education not Emigration	P.14
-March and Occupation	P.18
-Ombudsman Investigation	P.20
-Conclusion	P.22
Chapter Three-Literature Review	
-Introduction	P.23
-Policing Protest, International Theory	P.23
-Policing Literature in Ireland	P.30
-Treatment of protesters in Ireland	P.36
-Politics of Knowledge	P.39
Chapter Four-Methodology	
-Introduction	P.43
-Research Question	P.43

-Qualitative Methods	P.46
-In-depth Interview	P.47
-Sampling	P.49
-Secondary Research	P.51
-Ethics	P.52
-Analysis	P.54
-Conclusion	P.54

#### Chapter Five-Findings

-Introduction	P.55
-Motivations	P.56
-Tactics	P.57
-USI Reaction	P.59
-Policing of the event	P.59
-Ombudsman	P.65
-After Effects	P.66
-Main Stream Media	P.69

-Conclusion	P.70
Chapter Six-Implications	P.72
Bibliography	P.77

## **Chapter One - Introduction**

This thesis, focuses on a specific event, the Union of Students in Ireland (USI) protest in November, 2010, which was held in opposition to the proposed raising of student registration fees and the cutting of the annual maintenance grant for students by the government. The protest was large, estimated at 25,000, and peaceful but ended in violence when the police force of Ireland, An Garda Siochana, used force against a breakaway group of protesters which had occupied the offices of the Department of Finance on Kildare St.

Within Ireland there has been little research work on the policing of protest and policing of social movements. With this research I hope to give voice to an articulate, politicised group; to examine their motivations for participating in the march and their involvement in direct action; to reflect on their efforts to understand the behaviour of police on the day; and to consider why media reporting of the events conflicted with their experience of the event. I also hope to contextualise why, in order to disperse a peaceful crowd involved in a good humoured, legitimate protest, the use of force superseded other means available to the police on the day.

Through accounts from student activists involved, this thesis examines how they experienced the event and answers the following questions:

1. explain why these activists were at the march,
2. why they decided to break away from the main protest,
3. their thoughts on the policing of the protest
4. and how the protest event affected them personally, and as a group as a whole.



This was achieved by interviewing five students from the National University of Ireland (NUI) Maynooth branch of the radical group Free Education for Everyone (FEE), who were involved in the event. This thesis attempts in no way to give a definitive account of this protest but is an attempt at giving activists the opportunity to tell their version of the days events and to examine their reaction to what they experienced on that day. In doing this my thesis hopes to counter some of the dominant narratives about the days' events, which were put forward by the police through the mainstream media, and also hopes to provide key findings to aid other movements and activists for similar events in the future.

My conclusion is that the police response was consistent with a pattern of policing protest in Ireland, where extreme prejudice is applied by the police to certain types of protest, especially in the context of a political agenda pursued by a government, in this instance austerity measures weighted against the more vulnerable sectors of Irish society - pensioners, unemployed, students and marginalised communities, urban and rural. I also conclude from my interviews that my participants considered that FEE were ill prepared for the consequences of the direct action which they supported and should have had more support resources in place, for example legal, medical and counselling services to assist participants post event. The experience of the ombudsman complaint system was unsatisfactory for the students and while the report on the protest by the Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission (GSOC) was damning of police behaviour at the event and of their lack of cooperation subsequently, there were no prosecutions. The experience of my activists was also at odds with the portrayal of the event by mainstream

media and confirmed to them that the police action was part of a broader political agenda, supported by conservative forces within the state.

### **Outline of study:**

Chapter two-will be a context chapter, and will provide the background information needed to set my participants accounts in some context. This chapter will detail the economic conditions of Ireland which led to the protest, and the effect government austerity was having on the population. The groups involved in organising the student march, and the political groups who participated in it will be detailed within this chapter. It will provide a profile of the group FEE, who are at the center of my research, and give a history of the group. A brief overview of what happened that day will follow, and a summary of the Garda Ombudsman Investigation

Chapter three-reviews the literature corresponding to this research topic. This chapter will discuss some of the literature on protest policing internationally, firstly and will then focus on the policing of protest in Ireland. The role of the mainstream media in relation to protest will also be looked at. It will discuss the psychological impact of protest on participants, and the trauma protest can cause.

Chapter Four-will present the methodological approach undertaken in this research study. It will discuss the aim of the research and research question, the data collection methods used, how and why the sample was selected and how the data was analysed. It will also discuss the ethical considerations and finally, the limitations which this study posed.

Chapter Five-will present the findings obtained from the data collection and analysis. The different themes which emerged through data analysis will be presented with supporting citations from the narratives.

Chapter Six-will put forward an interpretation of the findings obtained, why the findings are relevant to the research and the how the findings related to other research carried out.

## **Chapter Two- Context**

### **Introduction**

This section will illustrate the political and economic landscape of Ireland, which led to the student protest of 2010. It is important, before I go any further to give some necessary background on the protest event I am researching. It will firstly look at the financial climate that led to the protest, why the protest was organised, the main groups involved and a synopsis of how the event unfolded. This is done in order to situate my findings and activists accounts within a context, and show what else has been written on this protest.

### **Background of Protest**

Post-war Ireland saw the Irish economy significantly underperform compared to its European neighbours. The country remained a rural society of smallholdings, heavily reliant on agriculture and fisheries. Its lack of natural resources such as coal and steel meant that industrial output was confined to traditional industries such as textiles and footwear, which were heavily protected by trade tariffs. From the 1960's government policy concentrated on expanding Ireland's economy on a number of fronts. European Union membership was actively sought, and the government committed investment to the promotion of Agriculture and Tourism abroad and to Education at home. The Industrial Development Authority was founded to actively seek Foreign Direct Investment from multinational companies abroad. As a result of this, Ireland's economic situation improved dramatically from the 1960's and by the mid-1990s economic growth picked up and began to outpace other European countries. A number of factors including demographics

(a young well-educated workforce), high productivity due to early adaptation to the emerging technological revolution in microprocessing and a business-friendly environment, with low corporate tax rates and the acceptance of anti-union HR practices, enabled Ireland to position itself well as an English speaking gateway to EU markets, particularly for US foreign direct investment (Finn 2011). Between 1993 and 2000, Irish GNP grew by an average of 9 per cent a year and unemployment had almost disappeared by the close of the century (Finn 2011:7).

Ireland became the model for the post-Soviet economies of Europe. Influential business magazines such as the Economist and the business press led by the Financial Times rushed to praise the Irish economic model as a miracle which all of Europe should be following. As Finn states, neo-liberal pundits from Thomas Friedman to George Osborne were quick to urge the rest of Europe to copy Ireland with its 'low taxes, light regulation and flexible labour market' (2011:7)

The expanding economy of the new century saw an increasing demand for housing for first time buyers. A generation that would formerly have emigrated was now demanding entry onto the property ladder. Successive governments from the foundation of the state had been reluctant to regulate building land supply or to engage in rent control on the grounds of constitutional references to the rights of property. However Fianna Fail, which had been the main party of power was also closely associated with the Construction Industry, developers and holders of land banks close to the major urban centres. A feature of this lack of regulation of land use and planning meant that land could appreciate hugely in value merely by the granting of planning permission by the local council. As the demand for entry level housing increased, the cost of money in Ireland decreased as interest rates within the Eurozone were consolidated. Irish banks

could borrow at low interest rates and lend to developers and borrowers at reasonable rates. Money flowed from European banks into the Irish construction industry. A combination of unregulated housing planning, low interest rates, unregulated lending and increased money supply pushed up land and housing values and caused Ireland to turn into a nation of property developers, dependent on the housing market, which now became the backbone of the Irish economy (The Economist 2011). On the back of strong property related taxes, successive coalition governments led by Fianna Fáil from 1997 to 2011, committed to a model of Social Partnership Agreements where wage increases were agreed between the social partners of government, unions and industry in return for industrial peace. A system of 'benchmarking' was adopted whereby public sector earnings were tied to equivalent grades in the private sector. This tied the government to a huge Public Sector wage bill, in an economy now importing labour due to shortage of supply and which was primarily linked to a spiralling property bubble. The economy was based on a consumer driven, high wage, low tax regime, heavily reliant on windfall property taxes all in the context of light-touch regulation of the property or banking sectors (Fraser 2013; Donovan and Murphy 2013). As Frédéric Royall states the political leaders did not recognize and/or heed the danger signs because the prevailing 'neo-liberal economic ideology suggested that the financial market could regulate itself' (2014:4). By 2007 the US economy required government intervention in this market in order to stabilise the entire banking system. Many banks were allowed to fail, culminating in Lehman Brothers one of the largest banks in the US, being liquidated in 2008. European banks had bankrolled much of the worldwide economy and were now themselves in danger of collapse. This had worldwide consequences and caused a reevaluation of the Irish housing market which had reached its peak

in 2007. Property prices in Ireland began to slide, now leaving Irish banks hopelessly exposed to both property developers and to borrowers. Property bubbles were not confined to Ireland however and peripheral countries such as Spain, Portugal, Italy and Greece were now in danger of default on national debt repayments. In Greece austerity policies implemented by the conservative government were violently rejected by street violence and a rise in anti-European sentiment from the right and the left. In response to fears of a run on the banks, in September 2008, the Fianna Fail/Green coalition government issued a blanket guarantee of the banks liabilities worth €400 billion at six financial institutions and committed to recapitalise them using public funds. By January 2009 the numbers of people living on unemployment benefits had risen to 326,000, the highest monthly level since records began in 1967. Despite the guarantees, economic growth fell sharply by 2010, the debt to GDP ratio rose to over 100% and unemployment increased sharply (Royall 2014). As the guarantees proved to be insufficient, the government was left, they argued, with no alternative, but to apply for an emergency €85 billion rescue package in November 2010 from the so-called troika: the European Commission, the European Central Bank, and the International Monetary Fund (Royall 2014:4). Under the EU-IMF programme the government had to reduce its budget deficit to below 3 per cent by 2015. The Fianna Fail and Green Party coalition, committed themselves to implementing €12.4bn in austerity measures over the next four years. The government's decision to prioritize European-imposed austerity policies rather than economic stimulus policies, meant that they were forced to deal with a rising tide of dissent within the country (Royall 2014:6). Anti-austerity protests began to take place across the country and 120,000 people marched in Dublin on February 21, 2009, and 100,000 marched on November 27, 2010 to vent their anger

at the Irish government's plans to impose a pension levy on 350,000 public sector workers. (Royall 2014). A General Election was held in Spring 2011 which resulted in a coalition government of Fine Gael and Labour, both of whom had campaigned on an anti-austerity platform committed to re negotiating with the Troika. According to Royall, number of union-led protests dropped significantly during 2011, and were replaced by some civil society-organized demonstrations, most of them single issue (2014). These protests focused essentially on individual elements of the government austerity plans: the reduction in the number of people entitled to medical cards, the reinstatement of third-level fees, the cuts in pension entitlements, the reduction in the number of substitute teachers and special needs assistants made available to schools, the closing of local hospitals, the reductions in child benefits. 25,000 students demonstrated on November 3, 2010; 2,000 people marched in an anti-austerity protest in Dublin on November 27, 2011; and, one year later, 10,000 people participated in another (Royall 2014:10)

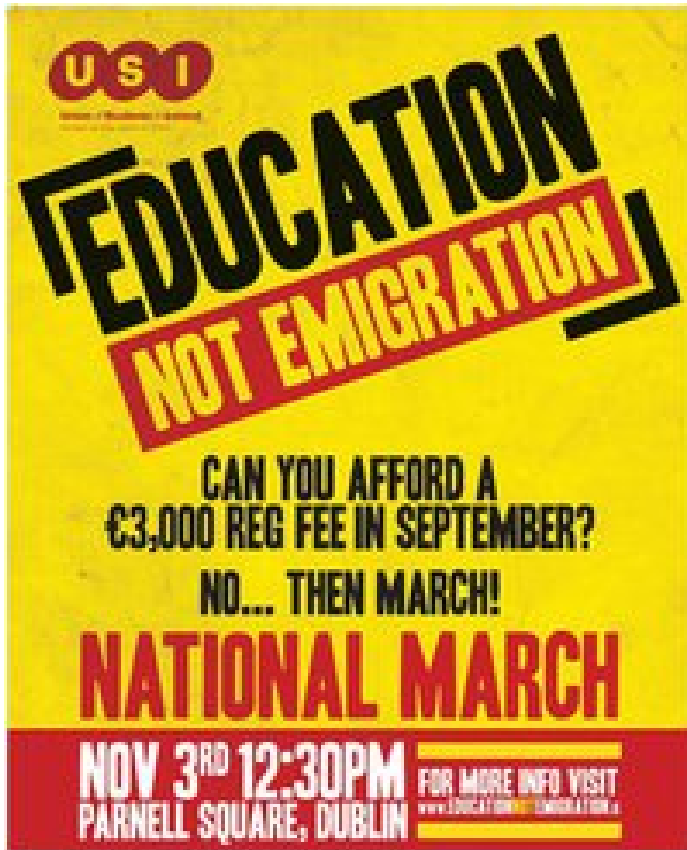
University tuition fees for undergraduates had been abolished in Ireland in 1996, with students required to pay a small fee on registration. A Labour party initiative, this was at the time presented as a redistributive measure, though as both rich and poor could take advantage of it this was always a matter of opinion. Over the years since, registration fees for students had been gradually increasing as government believed that they could increase this fee at little political cost for the most part. By 2008/09 charges were on average €850 per student. Indications were that the Budget would propose to raise fees to €1,500 per student for the 2009/10 academic year. With the Government expected to announce a decision on third-level funding on December 6, and rumours of another substantial increase in fees and a cut in grants by 10%, the Union of



Students in Ireland (USI) decided to organise a march on November 3, 2010, to protest the government's decision. Although most sections of the country was suffering due to the government's austerity measures, young people were hit particularly hard by the recession in Ireland. As reported in the Financial Times, one in three men under 25 was unemployed and tens of thousands of other young people had been forced to emigrate to the likes of Australia, Canada and Britain (Smyth 2011).

### **Education not Emigration**

The Union of Students in Ireland are the sole national representative body for third-level students' unions in Ireland. Founded in 1959, USI now represents more than 354,000 students in over forty colleges across the island of Ireland according to their website (2013). The stated goal of the USI is to work for rights of students and a fair and equal third level education system in Ireland. The USI along with students unions from around the country encouraged students to take to the streets in order to help halt government plans. They hurriedly launched a campaign 'Education not Emigration' and planned a mass demonstration containing students from all around the country on November 3, 2010.



The march was also to highlight the soaring levels of graduate unemployment and emigration and the current Government's ongoing failure to tackle these problems. Contained within students marching that day was a specific 'left bloc' which had informally arranged to march en bloc. In advance of the protest Free Education for Everyone (FEE) had issued a call to meet up to form a Socialist bloc at The Ambassador Theatre. FEE, was a grassroots group campaign consisting of students and college staff, set up in 2008 to fight the reintroduction of fees. It was founded in University College Dublin (UCD), by student activists looking to build a mass activist grassroots student campaign to oppose fees and fight for genuinely free education, open to all. The movement based itself on a previous campaign run in UCD, the Campaign for Free Education (CFE), which defeated the then government's attempts at reintroducing fees in

2002/2003 (Free Education for Everyone 2009). The CFE were known for their use of direct action and militancy in the active fight against the reintroduction of fees. Ministers visiting UCD campus were met with 'militant protest' (Free Education for Everyone 2009). Protest, occupations, blockades and strikes were all used by the CFE to protest the re introduction of fees. In October 2002, the then minister of Education, Noel Dempsey, was blockaded into a building by 600 students. After a year of CFE protest, the threat of fees was taken off the agenda. Although this was due to not only the student protests, their actions were considered to have contributed significantly to the governments decision. However a failure of the CFE, was that it never branched outside of UCD, and failed to make links with other campuses. When FEE was founded in UCD, the group was determined to build a similar movement but this time to expand across country. They sought to create an active alliance of college students, college workers and school students. FEE succeeded in this, and had groups in five of the main universities in the country - National University of Ireland Maynooth (NUI Maynooth), National University of Ireland Galway (NUI Galway), University College Dublin (UCD), Queen's University Belfast and Dublin City University (DCU). Its campaign aims were to stop the reintroduction of fees in 'any form': direct fee, loan or by stealth increases in the registration fee. On the FEE website, they stated that they wanted the government to extend and increase the grant system to reflect the cost of living and an end of the 'commercialisation of education and business involvement in education which will result in the scrapping of subjects that aren't seen as 'profitable' (2008). Its first demonstration was organised on 14 October, 2008, in conjunction with the USI, after the Minister for Finance, Brian Lenihan announced an increase in the annual college registration fee by €600 on budget day (Irish Independent 2008). Since this event, FEE had been active in a

number of occupations and blockades on university campuses and political offices. Previous protests had included resisting the appointment of former Taoiseach Bertie Ahern, by NUI Maynooth as an Honorary Professor and opposing visits by ministers to campuses including Belfield and NUI Galway. In 2009 members from the UCD branch of FEE occupied Green Party spokesperson on education, Paul Geraghty's, office. FEE's tactics of direct action, marked them out from the USI, whose policy was to rely mainly on mass demonstrations to defeat fees. FEE members had little faith in the tactics used by the USI, when they launched their campaign in 2008. They stated on their website 'lobbying or photo-stunts will not be sufficient to defeat fees', a clear reference to the tactics preferred by the USI (2008). FEE believed in order to fight fees effectively, direct action needed to be taken. They believed the campaign against fees needed to 'ramp up activity', and that campuses across the country should become a 'battleground against fees with banners and activity on a constant basis, raising awareness (Free Education For Everybody 2008). Any time a government TD comes on campus, they should be met by ferocious opposition of hundreds, if not thousands' (Free Education For Everybody 2008). They were one of the key groups involved in the student march of 2010, and had a significant presence at the march on that day.

This block also consisted of members of the Workers Solidarity Movement (WSM) - a socialist anarchist group; Eirigi, - a revolutionary, 32 County republican socialist political party, established in 2006. Eirígí took part in the demonstration as an act of solidarity and in support of the demands for a free and fair education system; Ogra Sinn Fein took part in the march also. Like Eirigi, Sinn Fein is a republican party, whose central aim is creating a united Ireland. Sinn Féin is considered a democratic socialist or left-wing party; and The SWP, an Irish Trotskyist

political party. This block was disgruntled with the leadership and direction of USI, and wanted to send a message, to the USI president at the time, Gary Redmond, a member of ógra Fianna Fáil, who was seen as tacitly accepting the government's austerity agenda which promoted the idea that ordinary people should pay for this economic crisis. The USI were seen as softening their demands and in a way selling out the student movement by not calling for an outright abolishment of fees. The intention of the left block was to show their opposition to this, and make their presence felt.

### **The March and Occupation**

The Garda Síochána had prior warning of the event and had been involved in the planning as is normally the case. The protest was planned to occur in Dublin on 3rd, November, 2010 with participants scheduled to assemble from 12:30 hrs. at the Garden of Remembrance/Parnell Square North and East and proceed to Dáil Éireann/Government Buildings at Merrion Street by an agreed route. About forty minutes into the march, the left block, left the main march route at Nassau Street and headed directly for Dáil Éireann's front gates on Kildare Street. Around three to four hundred followed the breakaway to the front of the Dail. According to one of my participants, it was when they were walking to the Dail, the group walked past the Department of Finance, which had no Gardai outside it 'as we were going around we noticed that the Department of Finance doors were open and unguarded and it was decided to walk in and sit down'. According to the Ombudsman report into the student march between 30 and 50 protest participants gained entry to the lobby area of the Department of Finance (2013:1). Police responded rapidly to prevent any further access to the Department of Finance foyer. More

uniformed gardai arrived on the scene quickly and these were later joined by mounted police, riot police and armored vehicles. Gardaí managed to remove close to half of those occupying the foyer, and barricaded in those remaining. The students remaining outside began a sit down protest in solidarity with the students occupying the building. A group of several hundred now gathered outside the building, with a line of gardaí at the entrance between them and the protesters inside. A Garda horseback unit and three vans arrived, dividing the group outside in half. The protesters began a sit-down protest in front of the horseback unit. Gardaí in full riot gear arrived and took up position between the other gardaí and protesters. The police now began to remove the protesters remaining in the lobby. As they emerged some of these protesters displayed evidence of visible injury (Nihill 2010). One female protester was removed unconscious from the building by a member of an garda. Several other people sustained injuries with at least one student requiring medical attention and hospitalization. The riot squad then pushed forward against the crowd and the protesters were moved back from the Department entrance. Riot police then baton charged, followed by the unit on horseback, pushing the crowd further back to a spot adjacent to the Shelbourne Hotel, according to one Irish Times report (Nihill 2010). There were countless witnesses, video and images showing injuries as a result of the police actions. Images and videos show police horses being run directly into the crowd. Protesters sitting on the ground were visibly beaten with batons. Police dogs were also used to attack the protest. Witnesses recalled the police swearing and verbally threatening students, one student remembering the garda saying they would 'knock the fucking shit out of me if I didn't move' (Workers Solidarity Movement 2010).

The USI president, Gary Redmond, condemned the breakaway march. Redmond and USI released a statement stating: ‘USI is saddened by the actions of a small minority of people who staged a sit-in protest at the Department of Finance, shortly after the USI protest march today. This anti-social behaviour was completely separate from USI’s demo,’ (Workers Solidarity Movement 2010).

Newspapers the next day ran with headlines stating that republicans had ‘hijacked’ the student protest and it was an ‘anti- social, hooligan element of the student movement’ that had lead the occupation. The RTE Six One news of November 3rd, the day of the protest, failed to show any footage of students in the sit-down protest being beaten, and failed to mention that protesters had suffered any injuries. RTE news finally aired footage of Gardai beating students, six days after it occurred and after it became widely available on social media.

### **Ombudsman Investigation**

There was a subsequent investigation into the protest by the Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission, and its report heavily criticised the police for providing ‘misleading’ and ‘inaccurate’ information during its investigation into the behaviour of four gardaí at the student protest in 2010 (2013:2). The Ombudsman also points to unaccountable delays in information requested from gardaí by the investigation, including some 60 statements by gardaí and footage from helmet cameras. Following the protest, the GSOC received 40 separate complaints about the behaviour of gardaí present. There were “unnecessary delays” in relation to the provision of

material that was requested from gardaí which were ‘exacerbated by the provision of information by the Garda Síochána that proved to be inaccurate’ (2013:2). The Gardai are required to send information requested by the GSOC within 30 days. According to the report despite several requests since late November 2010, documentation had still not been made available in March of 2011. The investigation by GSOC clearly shows how members of the gardai who were there on the day, and some that were not, hindered the investigation by refusing to give evidence, or by giving false statements to GSOC, in order to protect themselves or other members of the force. Video evidence taken by Gardai inside the Department of Finance, mysteriously disappeared. There is extensive video evidence online ( <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aPnoAY1wXfl>, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wDvjw5GrR88>, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XQLEoK5boO4>), showing the events of the day. In these videos it can clearly be seen that some members of the Gardai were not displaying numbers and identification, as required of them under section 4.8 of the ‘Dress Code for Gardai and Civilian members Handbook’ (2013:4). Two conflicting and inadequate baton reports for the day were submitted to GSOC. Neither baton report contained detail as to the number of baton strikes, the number and identity of the Gardai involved and the identity of members of the public that may have been struck (2013:7). From the abovementioned videos, it is clear that a significant number of Gardai had used their batons throughout the day. In the report, the Ombudsman expressed concern about the low number of baton reports completed after the protest compared to the number of gardaí evidenced drawing and using their batons on the crowd in the independent video footage. It said the baton reports did not contain ‘sufficient evidence to



identify those gardai' who used their batons nor those whose actions may have been subject to allegations of misconduct (2013:7).

## **Conclusion**

This context chapter aims to give an overview of this protest event. The protest took place as austerity measures imposed by the troika began to be implemented. The government of day had lost its mandate. Having enjoyed international and local acclaim throughout their tenure in office since 1997, the Fianna Fail/Green coalition was about to be set upon by the electorate. Decisions had been taken to protect what was widely regarded as a golden circle of influential bankers, property developers, higher civil servants and politicians at the expense of the general population with future generations and the weaker in society inevitably taking a disproportionate hit. Internationally street protests in Greece had led to violent clashes between police and protesters, with widespread rioting and property damage and an increase in support for marginal anti-European parties of the right and left. Clearly those with vested interests in the Irish establishment, including the conservative political party system and the broader media were fearful of contagion. Street protest by disaffected students and the radical fringe was to be discouraged. The level of independent supervision of Garda activity by GSOC under then current legislation was in common with much regulation in Ireland in the category of 'light touch'. Police clearly did not consider themselves to be accountable to GSOC as can be seen from the GSOC report. The Garda hierarchy considered themselves solely accountable to the government of the day, reported directly to the Minister for Justice.

## **Chapter Three- Literature Review**

### **Introduction**

This literature review will discuss the existing research which has examined protest and protest policing in Ireland and internationally. I will look at the international literature around the early theories of the policing of protest, and then demonstrate how the theory of protest policing has developed, and been accounted for within the literature. This review will then move on to Ireland. Irish academic research lacks substantial literature on protest policing and policing in general. I have supplemented my research with the literature emerging from the websites of protest groups and independent media. I will look at how protest has been policed in Ireland to date, and will show how certain powerful groups, such as the farming lobby, can be disruptive with immunity while other groups on the fringes of society are subject to heavy handed police tactics and prosecution.. I will take this opportunity to give a rare voice to the experience of activists who have witnessed police violence at first hand.

### **Policing Protest, International Theory**

This section will look specifically at recent theories that focus on policing styles, with regard to the policing of protest. Repression and the question of those groups that get policed aggressively will also be examined. I will also examine the media's reliance on official sources and how this reflects the manner in which the mainstream media frames protest events.

Protest and the right to peaceable assembly, express grievances, and demand solutions to social problems is a cornerstone of democratic society. Social movements are seen as challengers of the power of the state and rely mainly on protest and direct action as a means of putting pressure upon decision makers. Protest events are the front line of action in social movements (Ratliff

2011). Movements take to the street in order to challenge power and question the state's right to impose its monopoly of force (Della Porta 2013:152). During protests, interactions with the police are common. Interventions by the police at demonstrations are not automatic and the reasons why police respond is due to a number of factors. For many years, examination of the policing of protest was neglected within social science literature. Scholarly interest in state repression of protest developed out of the protest cycle of the 1960's according to Davenport, and research began focusing on who was protesting, what their target was, the implication of their claims and the power structures they threatened (2011). Quantitative research based on large scale cross national protests have documented some of the causes of police repression (Della Porta 2013; Davenport 1995), while others looked at the effect of this repression (Della Porta, Moore 1997, Francisco 2005). Ethnographic research using case study approaches have contributed to analysis of police behaviour by examining the motivations for different police styles in dealing with different social and political groups (Waddington 1994; Waddington 1992; Critcher and Waddington 1996; Waddington and Critcher 2000; Waddington, Jones and Critcher 1989). Different effects of repressive behaviour have been related to the timing of police intervention as well as characteristics of affected social and political groups according to Della Porta (2006:3). Waves of protest also have an important effect on police strategy and organisation of the police.

Recent studies have focused on the three main policing styles - escalated force, negotiation management and strategic incapacitation (Gillham and Noakes 2007; Soule and Davenport 2009).

The first of these styles is escalated force policing, which dominated the sixties and early seventies. Escalated force, gave low priority to demonstrators rights and used force to suppress even small violations of law and ordinance (Della Porta 2006) Escalated force strategy developed from a theory put forward by French social psychologist Gustave Le Bon 1895, and was based on the presumption of the irrational crowd. Le Bon believed that, shielded by anonymity, large numbers of people abandon personal responsibility and surrender to the contagious emotions of the crowd (1895). A crowd assumes a life of its own, stirring up emotions and driving people toward irrational, even violent action. This assumption lead authorities to be intolerant of political participation and highly suspicious of any gatherings (Della Porta 2013:155). The implementation of this method can be seen in the policing of the 1968 protest cycle, for example fire hoses being used on African Americans in the 1960's and National Guard troops firing on and killing protesters and bystanders at Kent State University on May 4, 1970 (Ratliff 2013). As police attempted to stop unauthorised demonstrations they adopted a hard line approach to civil disobedience tactics which had been embraced by the European student movement in imitation of the U.S civils rights campaign.

This method persisted throughout the 1970's, and it was not until new social movements emerged in the 1980's that the police adapted their strategies. Police strategies during the 1980's were designed instead to reduce coercive methods and promoted police negotiation with protesters prior to the protest event (McPhail 1998). Modes of controlling protest in Western democracies became more tolerant and excessive force less frequently seen when dealing with protest. Police forces implemented new public order strategies based on 'search for dialogue' with new social movements, marked by less force and growing tolerance to new forms of protest

(Della Porta, Peterson and Reiter 2006.) As social movements became more institutionalized, the authorities looked for new ways of policing. The presence of media at protests also influenced policing methods. The press became more critical of tough police interventions and the mere presence of journalists appears to have had a de-escalating effect on police (Della Porta 2006). Although police strategies towards protest tended now to be softer and more cooperative, there are cases of variation in police response to individual political protests or demonstrations (Della Porta 2006). There are still individual cases from the last thirty years where the police have used excessive force when dealing with protests, which can be attributed to institutional and local factors.

In the new millennium, with the increase in transnational anti-globalisation protest events, many would argue, we have seen a return to coercive strategies by police when policing protest (Della Porta 2013). Many police tactics that are used presently against transnational protest have a high resemblance to the escalated force method used in the 1960's. This takes the form of pre-emptive, intelligence led tactics designed to limit protest by strategic incapacitation. Police surveillance powers have increased, as has international cooperation between forces on operational matters and policing of protest has become increasingly militarized. Current policing methods have been characterised by pre-emptive arrests, implementation of zoning restrictions and the increased use of what are called 'non lethal' weapons (Gillham and Noakes 2007).

Comparative research on transnational protest by della Porta, Peterson and Reiter have shown police forces and special units intervening against protesters, donning heavy anti-riot gear like SWAT teams or army (2013:169). Weapons including chemical sprays, water cannons, tear gas and shock grenades have been increasingly used by police at protests. Live ammunition was used

in both Gothenburg, (2001), with three protesters injured, and Genoa (2001), where a protester was shot dead by the police. (Della Porta 2013:156). These developments mark a significant departure from the protest policing of 1980's and early 1990's. Alongside the use of more force, the police have started try to deter protesters from attending protests, by closing down public spaces to activists and the tightening of border controls in an attempt to stop activists getting to protest (Della Porta 2013: 159). Fernandez and Scholl observed a protest site stating its not 'hyperbole to say that the space becomes a war zone, with officers dressed in sophisticated military gear and accompanied by armoured vehicles the closer you get to the protest zone, the more militarized the zone becomes (2011:84). Scholars have linked these methods to the increasing use of intelligence led policing which has been facilitated by expansions of police preventative powers (Della Porta 2013). Terrorism laws have been used to intimidate and surveil activists, who now run the risk of severe penalties for minor violations (Della Porta 2013).

Another area of interest is the question of the policing of particular social groups, the treatment particularly of minority groups and whether these groups are more violently engaged than others (Earl 2003 and Davenport 2011). Davenport (2011) found police are more likely to be at events where African American are present, and were also more likely to use force at these events.

According to Waddington the question of police response, harsh or tolerant, is down to how the police see the institutional standing of the protester and police distinguishing between 'good' and 'bad' protestors (1998:131). 'Good' protestors are those seen as ordinary decent people protesting for a concrete goal that benefits themselves. According to Della Porta police are more tolerant to 'minor law breakers' and use soft tactics when confronting good protesters who

engage in predictable demonstrations (Della Porta and Peterson 2006). Police are far less tolerant of demonstrations staged by bad protestors whether they are permitted to protest or not. 'Bad' protestors included political protestors and those seen as pursuing abstract goals.

Police see themselves as the 'protectors of order' entrusted to maintain the law and protect private property from lawless protestors. They view most bad demonstrators actions as illegitimate and individual protestors as deviant. Within the escalated force model, there is no negotiation before, during, or after a protest and contact with protestors is reduced to arrest, arraignment and confinement (McPhail and McCarthy 2004). The primary tactic used in this method include beatings, the use of attack dogs and indiscriminate mass arrest and the goal is to suppress dissent by all means possible (McPhail et al.1998). As a result, protestors suffer violations of freedom of speech rights as well as more serious injury and psychological trauma. While this approach can inhibit mobilization, it can also have significant counter-productive consequences for the establishment in generating public sympathy for the protestors.

P.A.J.Waddington (1994) shows that negative media coverage sometimes results in public outcry and can have serious consequences for the establishment. If the public views such overt violence as illegitimate, leaders may suffer unpleasant consequences. However, increasingly, the media have come to be seen as promoters of law and order and a conservative agenda.

The issue of mainstream media coverage has become increasingly a contentious issue. Past research on media coverage of social protests has shown evidence of a 'protest paradigm', a news coverage pattern that typifies mainstream media coverage (McLeod and Hertog 1999, Chan and Lee 1984). Mainstream coverage of protest generally diminishes the role of protestors (McLeod 2011). Getting media attention puts many protest groups in a precarious situation. A

peaceful protest that focuses on articulating issue positions is not likely to fit established news conventions for what makes a good news story, and, protest groups often find themselves in a double-bind: be ignored by the media or resort to drama and risk that these events might be used to delegitimize the group (2007:186). Based on their review, McLeod identified the following protest characteristics news frames, which is to select ‘some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described’ (2007:186). Several different frames have been associated with the protest paradigm. Among the frames that are commonly used in the coverage of radical social protests are the "crime story," the "riot," and the "carnival’ (2007:187). As Della Porta states the business of news production can produce a biased image of protesters and focus more on telling a good story, than the real picture (2006:20). The second part of protest paradigm is press reliance on official sources for information and news stories. When journalists are dependent on sources from the police and other public officials, for day to day news, they tend to downplay the perspective of the person who is challenging powers (McLeod 2007). The police are among journalist’s preferred sources and they are given ample space to give their account of disorder (Della Porta 2006: 18). McLeod states that the mainstream media also makes generalizations about public opinion. McLeod states ‘more common for reporters or the sources they quote to make generalizations about public opinion on protest issues or about public reactions to the protesters’ (2007:186). For radical protests, these assertions typically are used in a way that frames protesters as ‘an isolated minority’ (2007:186). Mainstream public opinion is demarcated by the invocation of social norms, violations of which are an indicator of deviance. In the protest



paradigm, news stories often pay considerable attention to the appearance and behaviors of protesters in a way that draws attention to their 'deviance' from social norms (McLeod 2007:187) Delegitimization is also used and mainstream media often fail to adequately explain the meaning and context of protest actions and are often characterised by the media as futile, pointless or irrational (McLeod 2007:187). In its coverage of radical protest, the media may create "moral panics" by exaggerating threats, and over hype the presence of a dissident or sinister element within the protest. Similarly, McLeod and Hertog found that media coverage emphasized the violence and a prominent feature of protest coverage is a focus on the negative consequences of the protest, such as the violence, property damage, traffic congestion and the cost of law enforcement that result from the protest (2007).

### **Policing Literature in Ireland**

This review will give a brief overview of the academic literature on policing in Ireland. It will then examine the literature on protest policing in Ireland. This review will also pay particular attention to how certain minority or fringe groups are often met with violence by the police, while others are not. The media's influence on the reportage of protest will also be looked at.

Conway states that empirical research of the Gardai has not been conducted by many academics, due in part to the still nascent state of criminology in Ireland and an unwillingness on the part of the police to engage in such research (2013:6). Research of policing in Ireland is dominated by a number of key scholars, Vicky Conway (2013, 2010), Peter Manning (2012), Dermot Walsh (1998, 2009b), Conor Brady (2000) and Barry Vaughan (2008). Although other authors have

written occasionally on policing within the Republic of Ireland, these scholars dominate the academic field. They have looked at policing within the country from a range of different perspectives and all have added significantly to this developing field. Dermot Walsh (1998, 2009) offers the field a legal perspective on policing, and provides an in depth legal analysis of policing within the Republic, focusing especially on the constitutional status of the police and the accountability of the force. Vaughan and Kilcommins (2008) have looked at accountability within the force, and have worked alongside Hamilton to examine different aspects of the role of police and how they interact with the criminal justice system (2008). Peter Manning has written on trust and accountability in relation to the Irish police and has looked at the societal position of the Garda within Ireland, stating that they occupy a position that is both sacred and legitimate as a result of their 'connections to the origin of the state' (Manning 2012:346). Vicky Conway (2013, 2013) has written on police accountability within the Republic of Ireland and her most recent book highlights the high level of political and media support given to the police in Ireland. 'Policing Twentieth Century Ireland: A History of an Garda Siochana', has been a substantial effort in providing the field with a history of the development of policing in Ireland in the twentieth century with a particular emphasis on how social change alters the nature of policing (2013).

Scholars have been successful in providing an in depth historical analysis of the history of policing within Ireland (Brady 200, Allen 1999 and McNiffe 1997). Conor Brady focused on the early decades of policing within the country in his book *Guardians of the Peace* (2000). Although these accounts have been useful in examining the historical development of the police force in Ireland and they recount some of the reasons for structural problems within the force, they fail to

address issues with regard to accounts of people's interaction with the police at moments of conflict. Social groups and organisations, alongside independent media have added to the field of literature on protest policing with pamphlets, articles and social media websites detailing police abuses and questioning the received consensus. The Workers Solidarity Movement, Shell to Sea, Indymedia and Rabble have all provided invaluable literature on the rights of protesters and links to video footage of incidents, unreported in mainstream media, which conflict with official versions of events

([http://www.indymedia.ie/article/75227?search\\_text=sean%20ryan&comment\\_order=desc&user\\_language=ga&save\\_prefs=true](http://www.indymedia.ie/article/75227?search_text=sean%20ryan&comment_order=desc&user_language=ga&save_prefs=true), [www.shelltosea.com/sites/default/files/frontline\\_corrib\\_gas\\_report.pdf](http://www.shelltosea.com/sites/default/files/frontline_corrib_gas_report.pdf)). These sites provide a useful resource to research on this topic and they have given the field a collection of links, witness accounts and video footage of abuses by police during protests which are contrary to official Garda versions of events and conflict with much of the news coverage of the mainstream media.

The security issues caused by the Troubles must be addressed when researching policing in Ireland. The Irish Republican Army (IRA), the armed military organisation which refused to recognise the legitimacy of the 26 county 'Free State' have been the main concern of the state security system throughout the life of the state. Many Gardai tactics used in response to policing the republican movement has been carried over into policing of political conflicts and policing of protest within the South (Garda Research Institute 2013; Conway 2013). Republicanism has been demonised, much like communism in the US and the mere allegation that republicans are involved in a movement is enough to smear it in the eyes of many and to legitimize any violent behaviour on the part of the police (Garda Research Institute 2013). The policing of the troubles

saw a huge legislative response by the Irish government. The government responded by increasing the numbers of Gardai and changing the legislative framework in order to utilise the criminal justice system in as much of a 'preventative and controlling way as possible' (Conway 2013: 100). Adjustments were made to the Offences Against the State act of 1939 which made IRA membership illegal and also allowed Gardai to arrest anyone suspected of an offence against the state and to search and detain them for 24 hours (Conway 2013: 101). The Emergency Powers Act 1976 granted gardai the power to detain suspects for up to seven days. The Criminal Law Act 1976, extended garda powers further when failure to provide information such as your name and address became an offence. Gradually over time anti terrorist policing had become normalized, as powers through emergency legislation were increasingly used in response to non paramilitary crime (Garda Research Institute 2013:14). Gardai were allowed to police republicanism by any means necessary. The Garda Special Branch was developed during this time and it's use of dubious interrogation tactics and the extraction of confessions 'by verbal, physical or mental abuse' under emergency powers was widespread (Garda Research Institute 2013: 15). Rights and freedoms afforded to citizens in peacetime were suspended and emergency powers were renewed by the Dail on an annual basis. Thus, the conflict in Northern Ireland deflected criticism from the force and legitimised a policing system that relied on emergency legislation, unaccountable powers and a complicit non-jury special criminal court system (Garda Research Institute 2013).

Cox and Ni Dhachaigh (2012) explore the topic of violence at protests and more importantly how this violence is legitimised by the state and the media. It detailed how and why the police choose to legitimise violence against certain protests and not others. They show how the media

and public condemned some incidents of violence by the police on occasion, and not others. The author's general argument is that police officers commit violent acts and are sometimes licensed to do so and that it is hard to know where the decision to use violence comes from as some 'policing decision will never be recorded' and others will only be discovered in the 'event of legal inquiries'(Cox and Ni Dhorchaigh 2011: 242). According to Cox and Ni Dhorcaigh the question of whether police use violence or not at events 'has to do with a range of social actors, notably the media, courts and politicians' (2011:242). The question of whether this police violence is justifiable or not will divide opinions. Cox and Ni Dhorcaigh state that a particular act of violence may 'originate with a strategic decision by senior police management or indeed a general directive by politicians (2011:242). It may also be a decision by the immediate commander or it may indeed represent a loss of 'command and control' over individual officers' (2011:242). Given that some policing decisions will never be recorded and will only be discoverable after the event and are brought to light by independent legal inquiries or the release of state papers, problems arise when attempting to research police acts. It is due to this that researchers have to draw on the available evidence and make reasonable arguments about these in order to present a picture of an event. According to Cox and Ni Dhorchaigh 'in other words, as citizens or (sociological) researchers, we have to do the best we can to understand why, when citizens protest, they are occasionally attacked, legitimately or not, though we remain aware that in some cases we may never know the answer (2011:243). Comparable limitations, of course, apply to events in the past, where the data is also limited (albeit differently) and researchers also need to rely on chains of evidence, assumptions and reasoning to make convincing arguments about the reasons for particular acts' (2011:243). As a researcher this then leaves us relatively in

the dark over who is making these operational decisions. Prior to the 1994 Criminal Justice Act, the 1787 Riot act was the legislation used for popular gatherings. The reading of the Riot Act by police was sufficient authority to criminalise the gathering and for the police to act under its archaic authority. In 1994, the Criminal Justice Act, made riot an offence in itself. This law gives the authorities the right to determine an assembly as riotous with a low threshold of proof and firmly handed power of prosecution to the state and the Gardaí. The authors claim that this act gave the state the power to 'legitimate its use of violence against social movements and criminalise participants 'just by saying so' (Cox and Ni Dhorchaigh 2011:244). Due to this there seems to have been a dramatic change in how protest is policed from around this period.

The Workers Solidarity Movement pamphlet entitled 'Making Policing History: Studies of Garda Violence and Resources for Police Reform (2013), has given us one of the most significant alternative histories of the Irish police. Composed by local resident groups, community workers and educators with first hand experience of Garda violence, this pamphlet was compiled to examine the role of the Irish police in the community and also to encourage debate and discussion regarding those communities targeted by the police. The pamphlet outlines the communities in Ireland which are targeted by the police including, working class areas with high unemployment; stigmatized minority groups such as travellers, asylum seekers, refugees, Romas and certain fringe political groups (Garda Research Institute 2013:4). It concludes that the group most likely to experience police violence is that of young working class men. It also details cases of the political policing of radical republican groups and looks at how the policing of protest over time in Ireland has attempted to encroach on protesters rights. Many of these selected groups lack 'resources and influence' to fight gardai misconduct(Garda Research

Insitute 2013:4). The pamphlets implicates the media and the judicial process in it's unquestioning support of Gardai. Media willingness to accept Garda accounts of particular events confirm the sense of isolation of the marginalised community by confirming a narrative at odds with their experience of the police behaviour.

### **Treatment of protesters in Ireland**

Within the last decade or so there has been a deliberate attempt by police to forcibly attack any form of protest they see as not legitimate (Cox and Dhorcaigh 2011;Garda Research Insitute 2013). Events where there has been mobilisation of farmers, taxi drivers and pensioners have been allowed for the most part to police themselves, with no confrontations being reported at these events. Countless farmer protests, using methods of obstruction and civil disobedience, have been met with no police violence. In June 2014, farmers were allowed to unload haybales outside the department of agriculture and stage a sit in, with little problems from the police. Conversely, other kinds of political protest notably republican events, working class marches, Traveller events and environmental protests have been met with a massive and coercive police presence as a matter of course (Cox and Dhorcaigh 2011: 245). Travellers are one of the most marginalised groups in Irish society and historically relations with the settled community have been characterised by considerable antagonism and hostility (Helleiner 2000; Fanning 2002). A survey commissioned by Amnesty International in 2001 on the experiences and attitudes of ethnic minority residents of Ireland included a number of questions on policing (O'Mahony et al. 2001). It revealed considerable levels of mistrust on the part of respondents towards the Gardai, attitudes which were strikingly divergent from the received wisdom that public attitudes towards

the police are uniformly positive and supportive. It also found that 25 per cent of respondents indicated that they had been discriminated against by Garda officers at least once.

Political protesters according to *Making Policing History* (2013), are policed in a similar way to the working class, and marginalized groups. We can see from the evidence that the policing of protests which question government policies and resist the capitalist agenda have been met with unrestrained force. Reclaim the Streets, held in 2002, marked a shift in police approach to dealing with protestors within the anti capitalist movement. Witnesses claim this was one of the worst baton charges seen in the country, with police ‘knocking people to the ground and continuing to baton charge and kick people once they had gone down’ (Cox and Ní Dhorchaigh 2011:248). A May Day protest at an EU summit in Dublin in 2004 saw police control of space escalate in line with international practice. The centre of Dublin was transformed into a fortress as both police and soldiers sought to prevent protestors from gaining access to gathering politicians. It was clear from these measures that Ireland was in line with international trends, in responding to mass anti-summit protests by the creation of exclusion zones and the deployment of a militarised police presence (Garda Research Institute 2013:4). The right to protest was suspended by the police two days before the protest and the gardai warned ‘any attempt to assemble’ would be suppressed by the riot squad.

The protests against the Shell project in Mayo has also been seen as an example of Garda policing of public space to the exclusion of the local community, in the interests of a private multinational corporation, supported by government ministers and the local District Justice system. The local Garda Superintendent Joe Gannon boasted of the use of a no arrest policy in order not to create martyrs. The human rights organisation Global Community Monitor (2007).



found that there was evidence of excessive physical force by Gardaí against peaceful protestors who were prepared to be arrested. Support from media and courts has enabled them to legitimize their violence against the protestors. However, the use of cameras at protests and witnesses from human rights NGO's and other independent observers have documented deviant police behaviour which has weakened the police's attempt at coercive policing.

These examples show how protest policing in Ireland has encroached more and more on protestors rights and space, with certain types of protest get a heavier response from the gardai than others.

There is also a perceived media agenda against protestors, demonstrators and dissenters with mention by security sources of foreign agitators and anarchists present at the Dublin May Day protest in 2004 and talk of 'republican dissidents' leading the Rossport protests. Finally there has been continuous legislative responses to protest, with legislation increasingly encroaching on civil and human rights. In combination with the lack of an adequate mechanism to handle complaints from members of the public (until the creation, in 2005, of the Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission and the Garda Inspectorate, itself a limited and now discredited framework), this gave rise to a context where a culture of impunity could emerge. Justice Frederick Morris, who chaired a tribunal of inquiry into Garda misconduct in Donegal, reported in August 2006 that: "The Tribunal has been staggered by the amount of indiscipline and insubordination it has found in the Garda force. There is a small, but disproportionately influential, core of mischief-making members who will not obey orders, who will not follow procedures, who will not tell the truth and who have no respect for their officers" (Tribunal of Inquiry, 2006, para. 6.09).

## **Politics of Knowledge**

The concept of the notion of knowledge, has recently been subject to intensive study which has transformed our understanding of how knowledge is created, distributed, and used (Weiler 2009). This process has shown links between knowledge and power. Understanding of this linkage is crucial to any attempt to formulate a political theory of knowledge and its production.

According to Weiler, there are hierarchies in the production of knowledge. These hierarchies signify and give order to knowledges, allowing some to dominate and subordinate (2009).

Wherever this occurs, it reflect structures of authority and power and thus, the essence of politics. Different forms and domains of knowledge are given unequal status, Weiler states that the less 'exact' forms of knowledge are considered to be of lower ranks of prestige (2009:2).

Knowledge that is more grounded in local and regional traditions and knowledge cultures does not carry the same weight as the knowledge that marches to the 'tune of universally validated standards and prescriptions' (Weiler 2009:8). The knowledge acquired by social movements about the social world are still considered to be amongst this lower rank of prestige, because they have been perceived as producing 'knowledge from below', information about society which is inconvenient and resisted by those above: the wealthy, the mighty and the learned or states, corporations and academic disciplines (Cox and Fominaya 2009:1). A crucial aspect of movement practice is making known that which others would prefer to keep from public view, be that practices of torture, surveillance and extrajudicial executions, the effects of individual pollutants and the costs of global warming (Cox and Fominaya 2009:1). As Eyerman and Jamison (1991) have highlighted, movements are engaged in a constant process of generating

counter expertise, sometimes from their own resources and sometimes through pushing the creation of new forms of knowledge. In recent years, academic fields such as women's studies, adult and popular education, peace studies, Black Studies, post-colonial studies, working-class studies and so on testify to this (Cox and Fominaya 2009). For example the rise of indigenous movements in the Americas, the revelations by survivors of institutional sexual abuse in Europe and North America and the Dalit movement in India are generating their own bodies of associated research. This process of learning from experience is generating a body of knowledge for modern social movements, which insist on the validity of personal experience and is summed up by the statement 'personal is political' (Cox and Fominaya 2009:2). Hilary Wainwright's (1994) socialist feminist analysis brings attention to the processes by which social movements bring together and articulate the fragmented tacit knowledge of individuals in ways that challenge official understandings of reality. The relationship between knowledge from below and action from below is then a central one in this understanding. It is within this social movement literature that I place my thesis, as my focus will be on the experience of activists. I seek to facilitate voices of dissent, as they recount their experience of a pivotal event in their personal and group consciousness. Listening to and learning from, activists is vital in trying to understand their truly lived experience. If we want to learn about how activists experience policing and its effects on participants, we have to ask them. Social movements have produced accounts of activists detailing police assaults on nonviolent, unarmed protesters (On Fire, We Are Everywhere). Activists have the opportunity to counter mainstream narratives created by the police and media in this way. By talking to and listening to activists, we get a true sense of the

extent of the personal trauma, fear of arrest and physical danger which attend modern political activism.

Activist-Trauma Support (ATS) was developed in 2005 in order to provide support during and after the G8 mobilisations in Scotland. Previous experiences had shown that while self-organised medical support for victims of police violence was quite well organised, there was a serious lack of assistance on a psychological level (2006). The programme was set up to help not only those who suffer from injury during a protest, but anyone needing the service subsequently.

Experience of previous actions had shown that although the injured were generally supported, several others suffered from varying degrees of psychological trauma and did not get the support they needed or deserved (2006: 256). While 'post-traumatic stress' (PTS) is now recognised and taken seriously in mainstream society and it is standard practice for the emergency services to be trained in identifying and coping with it, activist groups had not dedicated resources to deal with PTS (2006: 257). PTS can affect an individual for many years after the trigger event, with feelings of isolation, depression, anxiety, suicidal tendencies leading to substance abuse, dropping out, disappearing, or feeling excluded (Mayo Clinic Staff 2014). Inside social movements a deeper understanding of these processes is beginning to emerge and the importance of recognising that emotional wounds often continue to hurt and debilitate long after the physical wounds have healed, and that people who don't get physically hurt can still suffer serious psychological damage (2006:) Lack of support within the movement can exacerbate the trauma. If the police threaten, it's hardly a surprise; but it's really devastating to feel let down by our

mates afterwards. It can cause ‘secondary traumatising’ (2006: 256). From this, there is a clear need for understanding and support: solidarity is a fundamental part of our politics.

## **Conclusion**

It is clear from examining key protests within Ireland, that the policing of protest in Ireland has developed on an ad-hoc basis, with certain minority groups being treated differently to groups from influential interest groups. Increasingly we have seen a greater control of space by police and evidence of pre-judgement by police as to the nature of protest that they consider legitimate. Policing of protest in Ireland has evolved in the last decade into a neoliberal model of policing, similar to what is visible internationally (Garda Research Institute 2013). Most scholars agree that we have a politicized force, with limited mechanisms of accountability, which has a detrimental effect on the general standard of policing within the country. Scholars have advocated for increased accountability within the force, but these calls have not been considered by the main political parties when in power. Recent events have shown the systematic abuse of authority within the ranks of the Garda Síochána in their exercise of police duties and displays a reluctance by members of the Garda Síochána to accept even the minimal oversight provided by current legislation.

## **Chapter Four-Methodology**

### **Introduction**

This chapter outlines the key issues that arose in the process of choosing and implementing a methodological approach that would best facilitate my research. This chapter will first look at the research questions. It will then explain why I adopted a qualitative approach for this research and how this benefited my study. A discussion will then follow on the social research methods that I employed which was semi-structured in-depth interviews. I will explore both the advantages and disadvantages associated with these methods and my actual experience using them in the field. My next section will describe the process of sampling used in the research, purposive sampling in my case. The importance of ethics will also be discussed in detail in this section. And finally how I analyzed my data.

### **Research Question**

Throughout my research, I tweaked and modified my research questions. It is important to point out at this stage, that my research was influenced by the thesis I completed for my bachelors degree, which was an investigation into the policing of the Shell to Sea campaign in Mayo. My BA thesis focused on how, as I saw it, the Garda Síochána embodied or adhered to theories around hegemonic masculinity when dealing with protestors in Mayo. Having completed this research, I wanted to continue researching the topic of policing in Ireland, having found that there was very little research on this topic to date. I felt that perhaps I had brought preconceptions to my earlier thesis, based on existing theories and that perhaps I had forced my

findings around these theories. I decided that this time I would use an inductive approach to research, starting with observations and proceeding with interviews, with the formulation of theories towards the end of the research as a result of these observations or interviews in my case (Goddard and Melville, 2004). Inductive research involves the search for patterns from interviews and the development of explanations and theories or those patterns (Bernard 2011:7). In other words, no theories apply in inductive studies at the beginning of the research and the researcher is free in terms of altering the direction of the study after the research process had commenced. Although I was approaching the research with my own opinions and feelings, I was determined not to let this direct my findings and research. By recognising my subjectivity as much as is possible, I tried to recognise and prevent bias from entering the process of gathering data. The practicing of personal reflexivity allowed me to generate an awareness of how I was I shaping the research, and I tried to maintain this throughout the research process (Willig 2001:10).

Having, originally wanted to interview both activists and members of the police. I tried to gain access to police members of the public order unit, however, these efforts proved to be unsuccessful. I went to Templemore, the Garda Siochana training facility, but no officer would go on record for me in relation to any of my questions. The fact many members were unwilling to go on record even when promised anonymity around this topic is telling. My personal experience confirms that the blue wall of silence is not a myth, and it is nearly impossible as a researcher to secure taped interviews with members of an Gardai Siochana, especially in relation to protest, and contentious events. My original intention was to interview both members of the Gardai and protesters. However, it became impossible to do this, as although I had a connection

and contacts within the Gardai, none of those contacted would go on record in relation to my research. In my experience, members of the police force will happily talk about public order in an abstract way, but when asked about specific protest events, and tactics the conversation is shut down quickly. When talking about these issues, they were not willing to be taped even with the promise of anonymity.

As a result of this, I decided it might be interesting to look at activists accounts of the policing of protest in Ireland and use their voices to examine issues concerning the policing of protest and the impact on activists of police actions.

The research questions that I used in this study were initially broad and became more focused as my study progressed (Strauss & Corbin 1998; Charmaz 2006). The initial research questions set out to examine how activists broadly experience protest policing. As the study progressed, however, these questions were modified in responses to emerging themes from the data collected. The following four questions were used to guide the study:

1. explain why activists were at the march
2. why they decided to break away from the main protest
3. their thoughts on the policing of the protest
4. and how the protest event affected them personally, and as a group as a whole.



## **Qualitative Methods**

Touraine (1981) speaks of a 'voice' in his action-research inspired, *The Voice and the Eye*. I sought to uncover a voice within my research. Qualitative research methods enabled me to illuminate a series of 'voices' that provide a representation of how FEE activists experienced the student protest. Crucially, the unit of analysis for this research is the '...individual actors and their experiences' (Coffey and Atkinson 1996:113). I chose qualitative research as my means of conducting this investigation as I wanted to examine how protesters experience protest and protest policing. Qualitative methods emphasises the importance of a reflexive and dialogic approach to research and it is the only method truly appropriate for examining people's experiences, thoughts and feeling. Qualitative research methods were 'designed to capture social life as participant experience it' rather than categories predetermined by the researcher (Schutt 2006). The strength of qualitative research is its 'ability to provide complex textual descriptions of how people experience a given research issue (Mack 2005). The role of the researcher within qualitative research is neither passive nor entirely objective. The qualitative researcher as Bogdan points out, 'acts like a sieve which selectively collects and analyses nonrepresentative data' (1975:12). My interviewees were members of a unique research sample group - third level educated, politicised and articulate, who themselves wished to engage in the process of understanding these events and I considered this a vital opportunity to add to the literature and collective knowledge by highlighting their voices. I concluded that the qualitative research method of in-depth interviews would be the most appropriate for my research questions.

## **In- depth interviews**

In-depth interviews are optimal for collecting data on individuals' personal histories, perspectives and experiences, particularly when sensitive topics are being explored. The semi-structured interview affords the researcher a means of engaging with its participants in a sustained, intimate and detailed manner. Using less formal, semi structured intensive interviews, allowed me more freedom and flexibility as a researcher to adapt my questions to each interviewee depending on their responses. By being able to adapt my questions and using less structured forms of questioning, my goal was to develop a comprehensive picture of the interviewee's background, and actions in his or her own terms (Schutt 2006:311). Intensive interviewing really engages the researcher and the interviewee actively, and this is why I choose this method as it will engage me more actively than survey research would. I was able to ask interviewees for further explanation of answers or in depth examination of their comments. For an intensive interview relationship to be successful, it is best conceived as a 'fair and non-threatening two-way dialogue' between the researcher and subject (Moran 2011). As my interviews were semi-structured I had some basic questions going into my interviews, however for the most part, I allowed my interviews to flow and this format allowed for a large amount of flexibility to facilitate and allowed the interviewee freedom to discuss what they wanted. In this way I got much richer data, and insight into my interviewee's opinions and how they see things. This allowed the participant to focus on what they wanted to, and my pre prepared questions were only used if there was silence. Something a person said off topic, which at the time may not seem specifically relevant, may on reflection prove to be relevant in the research. Intensive interviewing involves open ended relatively unstructured questioning in which the interviewer

seeks in depth information on interviewee's feelings, experiences and perceptions (Schutt 2006:287). I tried to keep my interviews based around central themes such as their observations of policing and their personal political involvement prior to and subsequent to the march. I did prepare some questions going into each interview, however, I did not adhere to them very rigidly in order to allow my interview to flow better and due to this my interviewees helped direct my questioning. Here is an example of some of the questions I had prepared :

1. Tell me about your involvement in the USI march 2010 against the raising of third level fees?
2. Why did you decide to attend protest?
3. Had you been politically involved previously?
4. Have you been involved in other protests?

These questions changed depending on what my participants focused on. For example, when asked why they were going to the march, some responded by talking about personal reasons for attending, while others talked specifically on the reason FEE were attending and what FEE stood for. I would then ask questions around the organisation of FEE, if they considered it as important.

I tried to adapt my interview technique to best suit each interview and tried to make my interviewees as relaxed as possible by maintaining a conversational atmosphere throughout. When carrying out my interview I allowed for pauses of silence as these encouraged my participants to talk longer on a topic. I listened to all my interviewee's responses intently, and made sure to ask them to elaborate further on some topics in order to generate as detailed a

response a possible in order to help my findings. I also took notes during my interviews to note striking features made by the interviewee during each interview, and I found these notes particularly helpful when it came to organising my findings. From using the intensive interview approach I engaged with respondents to the best of my ability and have generated informative and valuable responses by using this approach.

My interviews varied in length from around twenty minutes to one hour. For all of my interviews, I let my participant decide the location as I wanted them to be as comfortable as possible. Four of my interviews were in public areas of their choice. One of my interviews was carried out on Skype, as meeting in person was not feasible at the time. I recorded all the interviews on my phone, which has a built in microphone. However they were transferred to my computer immediately after the interview, into a password protected zip file, and deleted off my phone.

### **Sampling**

As I wanted to interview specific members of society, members of the student group FEE, I used the non probability sampling method, purposive sampling. I wished to interview members of FEE, as there is a tendency within social movement research to ignore less visible groups, and look at the actions of more visible groups. Members of FEE played a significant role in the decision to stage a breakaway and subsequent occupation. The group used direct action methods in their previous actions against fee increases and it was due to this that I thought they would have a unique insight into the protest that day. Although purposive sampling is constrained as it does not produce a sample that represents a larger population it did satisfy my purpose, which

was to give voice to a limited but coherent group within the protest (Schutt 2006:1). I am aware drawing from a smaller, non-representative sample effects generalisability of findings to the wider population , however, I am not concerned with generalisability, but rather understanding the world through the eyes of the participants. For my research, I wanted to gain an understanding into how these activists account for the policing of protest that day and the impact it had on participants. Of the protestors I interviewed, four were male, and one was female. As I promised anonymity to my participants, I have ascribed a number to my participants and they will be known as Student 1-5 for the purpose of this research.

The first of my participants was a male who was not part of the occupation in the Department of Finance. He was taking photographs on the day, and was a student in NUI Maynooth at the time and a member of FEE (Student 1).

The second was a male who was a member of FEE, and was part of the occupation of the department (Student 2),

My third is a female who was also involved with FEE, and was part of the occupation (Student 3),

The fourth interviewee was with another prominent member of FEE, who was not part of the occupation, but participated in the sit-down outside the building (Student 4),

The fifth interviewee was a student who was also outside the Department of Finance, and also part of the sit down protest on the day and was also a member of FEE (Student 5).

## Secondary research

As well as conducting primary research, I also used a number of secondary sources when researching my topic. There were numerous recordings of the protest, recorded by both students and journalists that day, all of which are available on YouTube(

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aPnoAY1wXfl>,

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wDvjw5GrR88>,

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XQLEoK5boO4>).

Many of these videos show the police using violence on protesters. They demonstrate the physical abuse activists in my interviews had recounted. Arguably, YouTube and the use of video technology has helped activists to counter mainstream media accounts of protest events, which in Ireland is usually very unsympathetic towards protesters (Cox and Ni Dhorcaigh 2012). Media attacks on protesters have been consistent in Ireland, reflecting the fact that much of the broadcast and print media is owned either by the state or by individuals with interests in the status quo. Many journalists assigned to report protest events, are crime or security reporters who are normally heavily reliant on the police for ongoing information. As Cox's and Ni Dhorcaigh state, the use of video technology and the careful documentation of police behaviour, has become extremely important in attempts to limit coercive policing (2012: 260). I also use the Garda Ombudsman Report, 'Report in accordance with section 103 of the Garda Síochána Act, 2005 ("the Act") relating to the policing of the Union of Students in Ireland Protest March on 3 November 2010', a review of the 40 separate complaints regarding the actions of gardaí that day. Other sources used were newspapers covering the days events which helped give an insight into how the protest was being portrayed within the mainstream media. I

found websites like Indymedia.ie extremely useful in providing an hour by hour account of the protest, and which also provided pictures and links to videos from the day. I used websites like FEE.ie (<http://free-education.info/>) and WSM.ie (<http://www.wsm.ie/>) for press releases from its members after the event, which helped add depth to the analysis of the protest. I looked at both mainstream media and social movement literature of the days events, in an attempt to provide context and background to the protest. All these documents were examined to provide meaning around the topic.

## **Ethics**

It was vital, that my research put the least physical and psychological risk to activists participating as possible. In order to minimize the risk to my participants, I made them fully aware of the level and nature of risks before they agreed to participate. This was achieved by ensuring written consent from all participants, and by giving them an information sheet which explained that they were under no obligation to take part and that they were free to withdraw at any time from my study. Prior to the interview, I gave the participants details of the layout of the interview and proposed questions to ensure full awareness of what they were agreeing to. My participants, were promised full anonymity and told no clues of their identity would appear in the thesis. Any extracts and quotations in the thesis were to be entirely anonymous. My thesis topic is a sensitive one, as many of the people being interviewed had suffered both violence and intimidation by police and some feared repercussions if their name and details were to be published. I was also conscious of data security. I had recorded my interviews on my mobile phone. I then deleted them off my device after putting them in a hidden local folder on my

laptop. The identity of my participants was always kept confidential and I used a code number to identify interview data.

As a researcher, I had to consider how adverse events will be handled i.e who will provide care for a participant if injured in this study. These are important considerations and I looked into these in detail before carrying out my fieldwork. There were provisions made to provide anyone of my participants, if needed, with contact details for counsellors if anyone was finding the information they were divulging too difficult. It was agreed that if anything like the above was to happen that I would immediately stop the interview and not force participants to continue.

Another possible worse case scenario I had to consider, prior to my fieldwork, was the possibility of authorities requesting my research material as it may contain sensitive information that would be of interest to the police. Although this may seem drastic, it has happened previously where the police have requested intellectual property. The Belfast Project, which is a collection of Irish Republican and Loyalist paramilitaries oral histories gathered between 2001 and 2006, is an example of this. These archives were to remain in the Burns Library in Boston College, and could only be released to the public upon the death of the interviewees. In 2011 British authorities instigated a legal bid to gain access to these archives, and successfully obtained 11 interviews of IRA veterans, discussing the 1972 abduction of Jean McConville. These tapes have been used to arrest suspects as part of the McConville investigation. I was aware of the possibility of my research being sought as part of the ongoing police investigation. I sought legal advice on the matter to ascertain my rights should the authorities seek information.



## **Analysis**

Bogdan and Biklen define qualitative data analysis as ‘working with data, organizing it, breaking it into manageable units, synthesizing it, searching for patterns, discovering what is important and what is to be learned, and deciding what you will tell others’ (1982:145). The first thing I did was read all my data. I typed all my transcripts out manually, which was time consuming, but, by doing this I was connecting with the data, and immersing myself within it. After transcribing, I printed out all five of my interviews, and read through them at least three times, I attempted to look for categories and themes as I read over my data. Originally, I kept these themes as broad as possible. I highlighted various themes in each of the interviews with different colour highlighters and this helped identify the strongest themes. The strongest themes which began to emerge were - motivations for attending the march, protest tactics, USI response to the breakaway, political policing, needless police escalation of violence, lack of faith in the complaints process, police media management and after effects, fear and trauma.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter discussed the methodological approach undertaken in the research. As a central concern of this research was to focus on how activists experienced the policing and protests I used qualitative research methods. I outlined the research questions, and how this developed throughout my research. The research process was detailed, and I discussed how I intended to conduct my research interviews with my interviewees. This chapter outlined the main ethical considerations I had to be mindful of through my research, and how I protected my participants confidentiality.

## Chapter Five - Findings

### **Introduction**

For the participants of this research, protesting, occupying and policing were not new concepts. Although some of my participants had been politically involved before, not many had experience of a protest event developing in the way it did. Most contextualized the police response as not surprising however, having had activist friends share stories with them and being aware intellectually that the police could react in an aggressive manner. In their accounts, they were recalling details and trying to make sense of them, to themselves firstly, and then to me the researcher. While some struggled to recall exactly how the day unfolded, the task was easier for others. The time gap between the event and this thesis is nearly four years. Some pilot interviews preceded the main interviews and short follow up interviews were conducted afterwards. This thesis is not about proving anything or stating that these accounts are the definitive truth, it is purely about showing how these activists experienced the days events, and the effects this has had on them personally and on the group as a whole subsequently.

Through these activists' accounts it is clear that the police handled the occupation of the Department of Finance and the breakaway demonstration, in an extremely violent and heavy handed way and they unilaterally decided on a course of action without dialogue with either those occupying the Department of Finance or their supporters outside the building. Although all of my interviewees had been involved in politics and had been at demonstrations before, all were

shocked at the police response and level of violence that day. FEE activists contextualised the protest and brutal policing as a 'show of strength by the state' and as a deliberate attempt to scare and deter people from taking to the streets to protest austerity. Activists describe the policing that day as brutal, focused and excessive and still talk angrily of the police behaviour on the day, years after the event. My research of the protest has found that the events of the day affected FEE as a group significantly and it is apparent from my interviews that the group was not capable of 'dealing and responding' to what had happened after the protest. The failure to put in place a mutual care plan, and to provide a forum in which to talk openly about what had happened was also cited. Although some of my participants spoke of the 'fear' and 'trauma' caused by the event on an individual level in the months after, all participants stayed politically active. This chapter will show the main themes and findings which arose out of the interview process and subsequent data analysis. The key themes that emerged from data analysis are; FEE: motivations, tactics, USI reaction, impact and affect the protest had on both FEE and students on an individual level, Policing, excessive and deliberate.

## **Motivations**

Although it may seem obvious why members of FEE, were on this march, I thought it was important to allow them to explain in their own words the reasons they were protesting. The primary objective of FEE as a group was opposition to the notion of the commodification of education and most of the students I interviewed supported participation in the march as a way of achieving this objective:

'...the whole reason for me being on the march, I had been unemployed and I was practically forced onto a FAS scheme...so I was in education and most of my friends were in education and

the idea of them raising the fees just really really annoyed me because I did eventually wanna go back to college and I didn't want that to happen to me. I didn't want a fee to stand in my way to get an education when I was ready to get one...people should be free to learn at their own time and their own pace and not have to be held back by not being able to afford it. thats the main reason why I was on the march ..em so beyond that it was just basically just agreeing wholeheartedly with the idea of not paying fees and putting a price on education it should happen. (Student 3)

## **Tactics**

All FEE activists discussed why they had decided to separate themselves from the main march and how the occupation of the building came about. While the mass mobilization of students by the USI was certainly a step in the right direction, FEE activists felt the USI were not going far enough with the march. Simply marching students from point A to point B and listening to speeches from members of USI would achieve nothing. FEE wanted to make their presence felt with a show of action separate from the organised event. One FEE activists expressed their feelings towards the protest:

‘Yeah em I don't really know what people expect to happen when em you have a big march and then everybody goes home em I don't know I guess like theres like some sort of like em faith in the democratic system and its kinda like if you can show that there is this many people who are willing to go out on the streets to do this then the government will go oh wow there this many people who are rejecting of this we will do something else instead’ (Student 2).

‘..a lot of USI stuff would of been very kind of choreographed’ (Student 5).

FEE activists were particularly aggrieved by the USI who were seen as softening their demands by only demanding a cap on the registration fee, rather than full abolition. It was due to this that a specific left block was called by FEE, as a way of separating themselves from the main march:

‘...we decided to call a left block together, to get everybody from FEE and left aligned students and left political groups to all march together em and yeah there was a plan to a sort of vague plan to sort of break away and do something maybe if the time came to em and yeah thats basically what happened..’ (Student 2).

It is clear that FEE activists wanted to establish a separate identity for themselves within the main march and that they were prepared to take any opportunity that may come about for an occupation or breakaway:

‘I was calling for something in the lead up to it, but I did not know exactly what...if we should sit down in the city centre was the best idea or if we should occupy a Fianna Fail office in Lucan or Clondalkin, something they wouldn't expect. On the day we did not know the proper strategy going into that day...I think it was probably the right tactic executed badly’ (Student 4)

FEE had a history of direct action in the form of occupations, sit-ins and blockades in their campaigns since 2008. An occupation was not specifically planned but they were prepared for direct action if the opportunity arose:

‘the government department was occupied I was very much taken by surprise actually it was not planned..it was not planned by FEE....but its interesting the proportion of those in the building were members of the socialist workers party. So I think they had intended to do it...after it happened we had to run with it. we couldn't disown it because that would look amateur’. (Student 4).

‘we weren't there to cause trouble, we were there to make a stand and for them to actually listen to us because you know yourself they lead you marching up and down a street. Unless you actually do something’ (Student 3)

The building happened to be the Department of Finance, a coincidence, but it was symbolic of the fight against fees:

‘to occupy a building the occupation was kinda the point of it sort of symbolic sort of direct action like it was like you know we are disrupting the business if we were or were not. and like to be able to say eh you know this is an institution involved in em you know government austerity in deciding on our cuts to education and stuff like that eh yeah so that was basically it.’ (Student 2).

## **USI Reaction**

FEE activists have justified their actions for the occupation, due to dissatisfaction with the USI leadership and their weak opposition to the fight against fees and their broad support of government policy. They felt that the USI response to the occupation vindicated their position. USI president, Gary Redmond and the USI leadership immediately condemned the breakaway students for their action, which confirmed to FEE activists in their attitude to USI. They were amazed at Redmond's failure to condemn the police violence and many of my participants saw this as the USI actively supporting brutality against members of their union:

‘And I was sort of surprised at how blatantly like the treacherous it was, and how blatantly he just like, fuck these people they're not USI they're not anything. I have to be concerned with their trouble makers you know? Em but like the exact same thing happened in London with the stuff that happened a couple of weeks later, and seems to happen everywhere’ (Student 2)

‘...do you know it was pathetic. I wasn't shocked but you'd always be disappointed by your union em letting you down like that..do you know?’ (Student 5)

‘USI has always stood by students, even on occasions when they have been in the wrong with demonstrations. I was surprised at how quick they cut us adrift at the time. they didn't investigate it, no one called us and asked what happened. In fact it was denounced when it was actually going on. I remember that while the occupation was going USI had denounced it to the media. ..I was convinced that there was kinda a Fianna Fail element to the union at the time. Which has been proven right in retrospect’. (Student 4).

## **Policing of event**

Some of my participants had been at protests prior to this one, but none on the scale of this student protest. When asked about the policing of the event, many used examples of previous protests where violence had broken out and used these as a comparison. Participants contextualized the policing of the event, by referencing the policing of other protests like May Day, Reclaim the Streets and the policing of the Shell project in Rossport, Mayo. Some student's

stated they had seen pictures and footage from the May Day, 2004 protests and although that was before they began their political involvement, they were aware of the possibility of police violence. Two of my interviewees mentioned the policing of the Shell project in Mayo as a reference point, stating that, although they had not been down in Mayo, that they were aware of it through media reporting, particularly from independent media. When speaking about the policing they experienced that day they contextualised and compared it to the the violence in Mayo:

‘..Rossport had been going on along time, and we all knew about that...’ (Student 5)

Another student compared the policing of the event to how the gardai police League of Ireland football matches which he had previously attended:

‘the worst violence i've ever seen by gardai, is not at protest, its at league of ireland matches you'd have young hooligans or skooligans or whatever you want to call them fighting each other and gardai wading it to them. It reminded me of that, it was a total free for all’ (Student 4)

It clear that FEE activists had no illusions about the role of the Gardaí in terms of the suppression of dissent. Their references to recent events which had seen massive police brutality against protesters shows this. Comparing the policing of the occupation to other events they had witnessed or had friends witness, I think many of my participants attempting to put the violence experienced that day in some sort of context, not just for me, but also for themselves. However although they had a knowledge of police violence at past protest events, many still expressed shock and surprise at the extent of violence used against students.

‘It was weird cause, I knew intellectually what the police were for...But I never experienced it em yeah it was a bit of a shock (Student 2)

‘I was surprised by the heavy handed response of it’ (Student 4)

Two of my participants recognised police officers from other demonstrations they had been at:

‘there was yeah that big fella from Pearse street...Yeah I can't remember his name but he does all the marches and all the security’ (Student 5)

‘Inspector \*name removed\* was there a (now)retired big tall garda out of Pearse street. He was there that day, and I would know of him from being involved in the left for many many years ehh and i think he'd been looking at him that day and a couple of gardai and it did run amock’ (Student 4).

All my participants distinguished between ordinary rank and file officers, mounted police and the public order unit:

‘Like so you'd have, riot cops here and then you'd have guards just plain clothes, not plain clothes but uniform guards...and the riot cops would break and the normal guards would come out and try and grab someone’ (Student 5)

..I think we in maybe 45 minutes to an hour before em the public order unit showed up. Em .....you know normal uniform reinforcements down very quickly to block the entrance and so know one else to get in (Student 2)

When speaking about the policing of the event FEE activists described it as political, deliberate and excessive. Three out of the five activists believed that the violence used was deliberate and a

‘show of strength by the state’. The government were anticipating larger protests as they

proceeded to implement cuts and this was a deliberate show of force to counter mobilization:

‘...you know the IMF was just after coming in and they kinda of you know in a very kinda mechanical way did what they expected you know.. is loads of resistance like there is going to be riots in the streets theres going to be all this stuff happening. And like they probably you know wanted to sort of send out a signal like how this shit wont be tolerated and the students were a soft enough target’ (Student 2)

‘it was the consensus that the main reason they were attacking the students on the demo and how forcefully the came down on us, remember there were people sitting on the street that had never been on a demonstration that were being battered over the head they didn't care, the reason for it was because they knew there was going to be a huge massive IPTU demonstration a month



later...and they wanted to tell workers if you do if you go down this line this is what you will have to expect. We are going to be even worse with you. You know and it was a way of scaring people off demonstrations' (Student 3)

'And I think there was kinda a certain amount of we will wait for the opportunity, like the pensioners had been out I think the week before....you can't do that to the pensioners do you know?' (Student 5)

FEE activists believe the Gardai at no point attempted to calmly handle the occupation and immediately resorted to the use of violence. Within minutes of the occupation mounted police were deployed to control the crowd and not long after personnel carriers arrived with riot police (Independent, 2010). They stated police did nothing to de-escalate or monitor the situation and the police at no point talked to any of the occupiers. Protesters state that they were never asked to vacate the building, or told of the consequences of continuing the occupation:

'we were inside the building we weren't being told anything.. not once did the guards talk to us at first they were inside the department laughing and joking amongst themselves at one stage so it was very calm' (Student 3)

My interviewees state that there was no reason for the police reaction as they had given the police no cause for provocation. Students had remained non violent throughout the occupation, and were not there to cause destruction, but were simply attempting to attract attention for their cause:

'...there was no violence in us' (Student 3).

'no one was there with the attitude I want to throw a rock at a guard or want to throw a bottle at a guard even the people who were occupying the building were like we want to occupy the building to make a statement that will attract attention but they weren't like I'm going to throw a bottle none of them went there wanting to get arrested' (Student 1).

The two students in the occupation also noted that they believed the police were targeting

‘political’ students within the occupation.:

‘...what they did as well they got most ordinary students out and left some of the political people in so it could be seen yes, so it could be seen that it was only the political people that were in building and they deserved it’

Student 2 had a similar experience when he and another student tried to leave of the own accord:

‘And myself and another guy were the last left in and we sort of said there’s no point in like fighting this because there is only two of us here and so we were like will we just walk out em so we like tried to just walk out and they wouldn’t allow us to just walk out they just grabbed me and started shoving me’

FEE activists believe this represents a deliberate attempt by the police to create a narrative that anyone remaining in the building deserved to be attacked, and that their violence was legitimate.

When speaking about the policing that day, many described the police actions as excessive and describe the gardai as the instigators of the violence:

‘...like em guards were i suppose aggressive as well. Definitely needlessly so with the extent of people kinda like who were just kinda standing there would be getting shoved and kinda like shouted at...’

The Gardai entered with their batons already drawn and were ‘kicking, biting and pulling’ at occupiers:

‘.. they ran in some of them had their batons already drawn by the time they got into the building and they were just hitting kicking biting pulling anything you can think of! One of my friends who was not political at all ..has asthma and what they did is they pulled him out of the corner, he usually wears a tie, and a hat right this is the kind of person that he is. They pull him out and they choke him with the tie until it snapped’ (Student 3)

Student 2 described something similar, stating he too witnessed the police with their batons already drawn entering the building and them ‘hitting’ and ‘grabbing’ people:

‘like normal uniform guards..about 20 of them ..like started, some of them had batons out and started hitting people some of them just like grabbing people...like one guy was grabbed by his beard there was like other people like like they were quite seriously hurt people and kicking people and stuff like that and then they'd push them out of the door and pushed them through this channel of POU’

Student 3 went spoke at length at how severely injured she was that day. She was knocked unconscious in the fracas.

‘and they were trying to pull another young fella out and I was holding on to his waist and i got kicked in the face..I remained conscious, I was dragged onto the middle of the floor and thats all I remember....But there was a good friend of mine, her name is \*name removed\*, and she was the one who actually seen the guard hit me over the head, just there...I had a huge lump.. actually you can still feel it...huge lump where the guard had hit me over the head with the baton..knowing that I was already down and all they had to do is take me out. That wasn't good enough. Hit me over the head’

Student 2 was seriously injured after the attack, and was hospitalized for two days after the event:

..I actually went to my GP right...my pupils were still dilated from the largeness of the concussion that I had. He said he hadn't seen a thing like it because it was nearly 24 hours after the event and I was still showing serious signs of concussions so I was rushed to hospital. And spent two days in hospital..

‘ they wouldn't allow us to just walk out they just grabbed me and started shoving me through this tunnel made of guards and like fucked me out onto the street on my face and like em yeah’

Other students described the scene outside the building, and how the police cleared the street:

‘about ten minutes guards started to like beat people of the streets we got and it was kinda a situation where we were weren't going to be able to walk out it would of been quite difficult to walk out...the public order unit started basically trying to drag individuals out of the sitting down when that work they basically you had the line of people who were like hammering at them then you had the vans and then you had another line of like guards behind that and when they pulled someone out of the crowd they'd bring them kinda back that way and dumped them out through the back line of guards so away from the main problem. (Student 1)

‘like there was one or two people who came back, with their heads battered’ (Student 5).

## **Ombudsman**

Student 3 brought a formal complaint to GSOC regarding police behaviour that day. The experience was not a positive one, and she stated that she felt she was under investigation rather than the police:

‘I went into the ombudsman eh two days after the event i think it was, and they kept me there for six hours. It was more of interrogation than an interview. For six hours they kept me there. There was two cameras in the department of finance, two cameras in that lobby and mysteriously there is no video footage ...so what I was told basically by letter two and a half three years later was that there was no proof whatsoever of any wrongdoing or illegal activity of the guards, because they wiped the tapes’

FEE organised a campaign to get members to write to the ombudsman after the incident, and provided literature on how to make a complaint and the process:

‘there was organised campaign of writing to the ombudsman I think dozens of people really ..complain to the ombudsman. People began getting replies , months later, in fact we had nearly all forgotten about the thing..when the first replies started coming into people. The matter was being investigated ect ect. nothing ever came of it unsurprisingly. Nothing came of it.’  
(Student 4)

Complainants merely received a letter acknowledging receipt of the complaint and stating that the matter would be investigated. The ombudsman report was published three years after the event was damning of the police actions that day. However, no members of the gardai were prosecuted.

Student 2 states that he did not bother to send in a complaint to the ombudsman, as he had no faith in the system;

‘and was kind a policy of FEE to report any incidents. On our literature we gave details on how to contact the ombudsman i just didn't think there was much point myself because i don't have much faith in the capacity of the state to regulate the police like like thats not how it works.’

Student 1 shared a similar sentiment:

‘no. i didn't think there was much point and thats kind of been shown to be the case I mean eh most people's complaints didn't even make it to the stage of being considered and then the ombudsman put out a report september last year’

### **After Effects**

One of the most stark findings I found was how FEE activists were still suffering from the protest after the event itself. One of my participants states that she was followed by police who were involved in the policing that day:

‘...everytime i go into town now, there is two lads from Store Street, eh that were on the demonstration and they watch where I go. They actually follow me. Very, very sneakily and very, very calmly, they will follow me..and I noticed that.

Student 4 talks about a FEE member being arrested months after the protest, and how this frightened a lot of members:

‘Months and months and months after it happened, one FEE activist was picked by gardai at home, and he was arrested and taken in and questioned about it at length. And I remember being very frightened at that time. Because I had been on the megaphone outside, and had been involved in the demo to the garda station,

Another student states that all these factors caused trauma, that lasted for weeks:

‘..what was worse is that every time because of the arrest as well it took me a few week to kinda adjust to the fact that they are not going to come knocking on my door and arrest me, for something ..for something that was completely lawful. Em but every time I saw a cop car I would freeze. Everytime Id hear sirens I would freeze. Whether it was rational or not ..but I knew they weren't going to stop and pull over just to give me hassle...it didn't matter. There was a trauma there for a few weeks’ (Student 3).

Student 4 also talked of fearing arrest after this, being frightened, that he too would be arrested so he stayed in a friends for a few nights:

I actually stayed two nights in a friend of mine's house in case they showed up at my house. Because they hadn't taken this guy's name and address or anything, but they showed up at his door...I never heard anything or no one else did, he was never charged with anything eh but yeah, it was scary it was, I remember being quite frightened actually when he got arrested because it was months later eh they came into his house at something like 7 in the morning and I think it was designed to provoke...he was arrested and taken in and questioned about it at length. And I remember being very frightened at that time....So that was kinda like quite worrying'

One member of FEE was arrested, charged with assault of a garda and illegal occupation of the building. Although the charges were later dropped and nothing came of this, it was still an intimidating experience for FEE activists, who had to deal with the effects of the protest for months after the event:

'..it was quite an intimidating experience...quite an intimidating experience and he was held for a good few hours at the time. It worried us quite a lot' (Student 4)

After the protest FEE disintegrated and many of my participants attributed this to the protest and the lack of a 'mutual care plan' in place to deal with the experience of the day. FEE members state, that after the event, there should have been a forum to evaluate and analyse the experience of the day.

'..and the other is like in terms of like mutual care and stuff and responding emotionally to what was quite an intense experience for everyone like there was really none of that at all which I think was a big mistake. Like we never sat around and talked about what happened' (Student 2)

After the protest, FEE were in disarray and although the action had created momentum and publicity around FEE, interviewees felt that FEE did not have the resources or capacity to deal with the fallout and were in disarray because of a lack of trust:

'..you know everyone was blaming different people for what had happened..blaming the SWP for going out with it. And we didn't particularly want to work with each other anymore at that point'

They had trouble turning the momentum into advantage in their struggle, and were not capable of responding to the event:

‘we didn't really know how to capitalise on what had just happened and how to turn that into momentum into another struggle and all these people were getting in contact with us like oh we want a branch of FEE we want to be part of this, and we just were not capable of responding to it’

Despite this, all of my participants have stayed involved politically. Student 3 states that her experience that day has made her more determined to stay politically involved:

‘what it actually did was my rationale my answer was can you really live in a world are you happy to live in a world where stuff can like this can happen, and nobody says...boo about it...like how can you be happy with that? ..you know, so I have remained politically active and Im still going and I have been even out in Maynooth I have been involved in the Feminist movement the students movement out there. I was actually class rep last year for English. So em Im still going with em politics in a range of different ways..i'm still active with people before profit alliance i'm still active with with different groups...so i'm still very very active but i think its important as soon as i loose that , the minute i give up.

Student 2 also remained politically involved:

‘yeah i have i joined the workers solidarity group fairly shortly after that and i have been involved in that since and i stayed involved in FEE as long as that lasted’.

And student 3, although not as heavily involved as he once was has stayed active in local campaigns:

‘Im not really involved in anything anymore ..bar the greyhound stuff locally and local councillor, with a local councillor’

## **Mainstream Media**

The papers the next day, especially the tabloids were clearly trying to create a certain narrative of the day. They claimed that the march had been hijacked by ‘violent’ left groups who threw bottles and bricks at the police, and the police ‘were forced to baton charge a group of protesters’

(The Star). Student 4 stated how it was strange that Eirigi were being portrayed as the perpetrators of the breakaway in the media:

‘The funny thing is a lot of the media focused on eirigi, eirigi had no clue that was happening, they had no involvement with it whatsoever and had very few people there on the day. The media ran with the story of eirigi more than anything else republicans make a good boogy man..yeah they do, they do . So Eirigi over the coming days on Joe Duffy etc, they were the ones who were denounced a lot..which was funny and if you were there and had eyes you could see it was the SLP. Well known faces’

By portraying the students as the instigators of the violence, the students believe the media were trying to create a narrative and by aligning themselves to the police were fulfilling their side of a bargain of mutual benefit, whereby they rely on police sources for crime reporting in return for soft reporting of Garda violence. The Six One news on November 3rd following the protest failed to show any of the footage of students in the sit-down protest being beaten, and failed to mention that protesters had suffered any injuries. The first footage of the event shown on RTE news was six days after it occurred. after videos of the police violence went viral on YouTube. Student 2 states that the media reaction did not shock him, and that they tried their best to counter these through using social media and uploading videos and images of the days events:

‘no again it was kinda surprising at how blatant it was especially like the headlines the following day em just really like negative towards us eventually we managed to get the story out there through social media the videos you couldn't watch the videos and not come to the same conclusion thats like the mainstream press and eventually RTE had to show it. That was actually the day before the policing protest. it was either the day before or that very day they started showing the actual footage of what happening’.

It is only due to alternative media and social movement accounts that we see another side of this protest. The importance of social media in contradicting this narrative has become a feature of modern media management. Social movement accounts and alternative media accounts of the day, tend to differ significantly from the mainstream narrative driven by police sources.



## **Conclusion**

The purpose of this chapter was to highlight the findings which emerged on account of the interviews that were carried out. It is clear from the findings of this research study that members of FEE, sought to separate themselves from the main march, as they felt the USI tactics would achieve nothing in the fight against fees. They defended their tactics and were critical of the USI response afterwards which they felt represented a selling out of the student movement.

As the narratives of the policing of the protest have shown, participants felt it was deliberate attempt by the government and police to suppress protest. FEE activists felt that the police in no way tried to deescalate the situation before resorting to force. My findings show that their experience of the complaints process to the police ombudsman was negative and of little use, and was a disappointment to those activists who choose to submit complaints. There was a sense that they were under investigation and the publishing of the final report while extremely critical of gardai, did not result in any prosecutions and merely confirmed their lack of confidence in the process.

The after effects of the protest on the protesters was one of the most profound findings. Many of those involved continued to be affected months and years after the event. They were clearly traumatised and critical of the lack of support resources available after the event from FEE. The police arrested and questioned many participants in the weeks and months after the protest. They felt that they were isolated and without practical support in the form of counselling or legal advice. Mainstream media reporting of the event conflicted directly with their personal experience of the day and added to their feelings of isolation and persecution.

## Chapter 6 -Implications

### **Introduction**

The goal of this study was to capture and describe the experience members of FEE involved in the 2010 student protest. It was not to prove or disprove theories about policing and protest. However, several of the research findings in this study were broadly consistent with previous research on the policing of protest in Ireland and abroad. What will follow will be a discussion of the main areas activists focused on when detailing their experience. The experiences detailed by the participants echoes other research regarding the policing of protest in Ireland.

As previously mentioned in the literature review, Cox and Ni Dhorciagh 2011 and Making Policing History, Pamphlet 2013 have examined the history of how protest has been policed in Ireland. Certain marginalised groups are subject to a coercive policing style seemingly aimed at discouraging protest especially among minority groups - the working class, stigmatized minority groups such as travellers, asylum seekers, refugees, Romas and certain fringe political groups (Garda Research Insitute 2013:4). When describing the policing of the event the activists described the style of policing as a deliberate attempt by the state to use force on them in an attempt to discourage others from protesting. Activists that day, described the aggressive policing - Student 3 stating the police were 'kicking, biting, pulling anything you can think'. Cox and Dhorcaigh (2011) have shown us how for example farmer protests, using methods of obstruction and civil disobedience, have been largely met with police cooperation, despite citywide traffic disruption and occupation of Government buildings. Conversely, other kinds of political protest have been met with a massive and coercive police presence as a matter of course

(Cox and Dhorcaigh 2011: 245). There is a pattern emerging of a violent police response to groups which question government policies and resist the capitalist agenda. Reclaim the Streets (2002), May Day (2004) and the policing of the Shell (2005-present) project in Mayo are all testament to this. Two of my participants mentioned that they believed the gardai were targeting certain people on that day and allowed non politically aligned students to leave the occupation. This indicates the use of intelligence by the police, who seemed to be aware of the identity of some activists which adheres to the logic that 'respectable' people are not subjected to police violence and 'non respectable' groups receive more forceful policing than 'routine protests' (Garda Institute 2013). Members of FEE broke away from a routine protest, in order to make their presence felt, and in this logic they were deemed non respectable by the police, who forcefully attacked them. As mentioned in the literature, Waddington stated that the question of police response, harsh or tolerant, is down to how the police see the institutional standing of the protester and police distinguishing between 'good' and 'bad' protestors (1998:131). 'Bad' protesters included political protesters and those seen as pursuing abstract goals as stated previously.

These activists' accounts unfortunately show the need for radical social movements to be prepared for unprovoked violent police response to protest. The police in Ireland have been politicised through having to deal with violent republicanism throughout the lifetime of the state. A results culture was encouraged in a legal environment which suspended many of the foundation blocks of civil liberties. The limitations of the legislation which introduced the GSOC complaints system in 2005 has been clearly shown in recent times. The GSOC investigation of the student march in 2010 and the subsequent report in 2013 is an indictment of the legislative

framework introduced by the Fianna Fail/Green coalition. Clearly a culture of low accountability exists within the Gardai. The Morris investigation of events in Donegal confirms this for the Donegal district but Garda attitudes towards GSOC as confirmed by the GSOC report of 2013 must raise questions about discipline and attitude to supervision within the general ranks. Gardai do not seem to consider themselves subject to standards of supervision and practice considered the norm in other jurisdictions. International police practices have increasingly applied a militarised model to the policing of protest, especially anti-globalisation and environmental protest and this model has been increasingly been adapted here in Ireland. A compliant media has encouraged a narrative which considers the presence of fringe political groups on the protest as a subversive act in itself.

Support from media has enabled the police and state to legitimize their violence against the protesters (Cox and Ni Dhorchaigh). From the activists' accounts and from reviewing a number of daily newspapers in the days after the event, the media followed a long established pattern after the student protest. They ran with headlines stating that 'republicans' and 'sinister elements' had hijacked the event. USI issued statements broadly along these lines. One of my participants stated that Eirigi had nothing to do with the occupation, but were still used as a 'boogeyman' to legitimize the police violence the next day. It is clear that this tactic has been used at other protest events in Ireland to discredit groups in the eyes of the public - eg reports from unattributed sources of 'foreign agitators and anarchists' present at the Dublin May Day protest in 2004 and talk of 'republican dissidents' leading the Rossport protests (Cox and Ni Dhorchaigh 2013). Republicanism has been used to stigmatize protest within Ireland, as Communism has been used in other countries and the allegation that republicans are involved in

a movement is a common thread through the media in the days after a protest event that involves violent behaviour on the part of the police (Garda Research Institute 2013). The literature has also shown how mainstream media discredits activists, through what Mcleod calls the 'protest paradigm'. When journalists are dependent on sources from the police and other public officials, for day to day news, they tend to downplay the perspective of the person who is challenging powers (Mcleod 2011). The media downplayed FEE's involvement in the protest, and hyped the participation of Eirigi, Sinn Fein and SWP. Television news from RTE was slow to show video of the event which contradicted the dominant themes of protester violence. Video footage of police action was not shown on RTE until Youtube videos taken at the scene were uploaded and had gone viral. The only way activists can counter this media onslaught is to be aware of the tactic and through the use of video technology and the careful documentation of police behaviour to be prepared to counteract the anti-protest agenda. One participant stated that although the media was very negative, FEE managed to counter some with the help of social media 'the headlines the following day.. really like negative towards us eventually we managed to get the story out there through social media'.

The dissatisfaction with the complaints process available to citizens was a common theme among the activists. Some of my interviewees did not bother to use the Ombudsman and those that did said that they were made to feel as if they were under investigation. The Ombudsman's report into the day is extraordinary. Garda are accused of delaying tactics, non cooperation and of lying to the Commission yet there were no prosecutions due to 'lack of evidence'. Although the Ombudsman report (2013) was damning of the gardai, it was published three years after the event and was of little comfort to those involved. There was only minor disciplinary actions

brought against one member of the Gardai, despite over 40 complaints being lodged. This shows that the gardai do not feel accountable to GSOC, and the oversight body is not powerful enough to force the police to cooperate with them. Some of my participants said that they did not bother to hand in complaints, as they did not believe in GSOC's capacity as an oversight body and the report confirms their views. This level of unaccountability throughout the ranks of the Gardai increases the risks to protesters where local officers can make operational decisions, free from independent statutory supervision and with a compliant press buying into their version of events. The Morris Report expresses shock at the lack of discipline within the ranks of Donegal Gardai, but the style of policing of protest and independent evidence gathered at events from Mayo to Dublin displays a lack of regard for human rights, and a tendency towards violence within the police force which proves to many that the findings of Morris could be applied throughout the jurisdiction.

There were repercussions felt by many participants long after the event. Activists were being arrested and questioned months after the event, which had a profound effect on FEE as a group. My interviewees felt that they were ill prepared for this aspect of the protest. Literature on activist trauma has shown the need to provide support for not just the physically injured, but also that activists could suffer symptoms of Post Traumatic Stress (PTS) long after the events. My findings show that FEE did not have the proper procedures in place to deal with the aftercare of their members and this contributed to the decline of membership of FEE. 'Like we never sat around and talked about what happened' (Student 2). PTS can affect an individual for many years after the trigger event, with feelings of isolation, depression, anxiety and suicidal

tendencies leading to substance abuse, dropping out, disappearing, or feeling excluded (Mayo Clinic Staff 2014). Inside social movements a deeper understanding of these processes is beginning to emerge and the importance of recognising that emotional wounds often continue to hurt and debilitate long after the physical wounds have healed and that people who don't get physically hurt can still suffer serious psychological damage (2006) Lack of support within the movement can exacerbate the trauma. 'If the police threaten, it's hardly a surprise; but it's really devastating to feel let down by our mates afterwards. It can cause 'secondary traumatisation' (2006: 256). Lessons should be learnt by FEE and like minded groups involved in Direct Action. The example of the Activist Trauma Support unit after the G8 mobilisations in Scotland should be adopted by activist groups as an act of support and solidarity for their activists in the days and weeks following actions. In Mayo, Shell to Sea and associated groups continue to hold occasional weekend education seminars and maintain a web presence long after the peak of protest actions. They continue to provide solidarity and practical support to environmental protest groups and to provide educational material and information by their presence. Some sort of mutual care and trauma support plan also needs to be in place prior to the event and information and experience should be shared by a presence on social media and world wide web.

The experiences of the activists that I interviewed and the research of protest in Ireland to date clearly shows that Ireland is a hostile environment for political protest. An unaccountable, politicised police hierarchy is devoted to an escalated model of protest policing, certain of the political support of the party political system which continues to advance a conservative neo-liberal agenda through it's politics. Special powers legislation and a District Court system

which is largely founded on the uncontested evidence of gardai does not give comfort to the activist being prosecuted before it. Allied with this is the support of a mainstream media either tied to the state or consolidated into a handful of private media organisations with a vested interest in the status quo. Activism must adapt to the circumstances and be prepared for confrontation by being flexible, creative and media savvy. Protest groups must also be aware of the consequences of actions on the welfare of the individual activist and not forget the importance of solidarity and empathy with their fellow protester after protest events.



## Bibliography

Allen, Gregory 1999. *The Garda Síochána: Policing Independent Ireland 1922-1982*. Dublin: Gill and Macmillan.

Brady, Conor. 1974. *Guardians of the peace*. Dublin: Gill and Macmillan.

Bogdan, Robert and Taylor. Steven J. 1975. *Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods: a Phenomenological Approach to the Social Sciences*. London: Sage.

Bogdan, Robert C. and Biklen, Sari Knopp 1982. *Qualitative Research for Education: An Introduction to Theory and Methods*. London: Sage.

Chan, J. M., & Lee, C. C. (1984). The journalistic paradigm on civil protests: A case study of Hong Kong. In A. Arno & W. Dissanayake (Eds.), *The news media in national and international conflict* (pp.183–202). Boulder, CO: Westview.

Charmaz, Kathy. 2006. *Constructing Grounded Theory*. Sage: London.

Conway Vickey. 2013. *Policing Twentieth Century Ireland: A History of an Garda Síochána*. London: Routledge.

Conway, Vicky 2010. *The Blue Wall of Silence: the Morris Tribunal and Police Accountability in Ireland*. London:Routledge

Cox, Laurence and Ní Dhorchaigh, Ealáir 2011 ‘When is an assembly riotous, and who decides? The success and failure of police attempts to criminalise protest’. Pp. 241-261 in In: *Riotous Assemblies*. Mercier Press

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

(<http://interfacejournal.nuim.ie/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/interface-issue-1-1-pp1-20-Editorial.pdf>).

Davenport, Christian. 1995. "Multi-Dimensional Threat Perception and State Repression: An Inquiry into Why States Apply Negative Sanctions". *American Journal of Political Science* 39: 683-713.

Davenport, Christian. 2000. *Paths to State Repression: Human Rights Violations and Contentious Politics*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Davenport, Christian, Sarah A. Soule, and David A. Armstrong II. 2011. "Protesting While Black? The Differential Policing of American Activism, 1960 to 1990." *American Sociological Review* 78(1):152-78

Della Porta, Donnettella. 2013. *Can Democracy be Saved?*. Oxford: Polity Press

Della Porta, Donnettella, Peterson, Abby and Reiter, Herbert. 2006. *The Policing of Transnational Protest*, Aldershot: Ashgate.

Della Porta, Donnettella, and Reiter, Herbert. 1998. *Policing Protest. The Control of Mass Demonstration in Western Democracies* Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press.

Earl, Jennifer. 2003. "Tanks, Tear Gas, and Taxes: Toward a Theory of Movement Repression." *Sociological Theory*. 21:44-68

Earl, Jennifer. 2004. "Controlling Protest: New Directions for Research on the Social Control of Protest." *Research in Social Movements, Conflicts and Change* 26:181-202.

Earl, Jennifer, and Sarah A. Soule. 2006. "Seeing Blue: A Police-Centered Explanation of Protest Policing." *Mobilization* 11:145-64.

Earl, Jennifer, Sarah A. Soule, and John D. McCarthy. 2003. "Protests under Fire? Explaining Protest Policing." *American Sociological Review*. 69:581-606.

Earl, Jennifer, Andrew Martin, John D. McCarthy and Sarah A. Soule. 2004. "The Use of Newspaper Data in the Study of Collective Action." *Annual Review of Sociology* 30:65- 80

Eyerman, Ron. and Jamison, Andrew. 1991 *Social Movements A Cognitive Approach*. Pennsylvania :Pennsylvania State University Press

Fernandez, Luis A. 2008. *Policing Dissent: Social Control and the Anti-Globalization Movement*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Free Education For Everyone. 2010. "VIDEO: RTE finally shows footage of Garda brutality at the National Student Protest". Retrieved July 4, 2014.

(<http://free-education.info/rte-finally-shows-footage-of-garda-brutality-at-the-national-student-protest/>).

Free Education for Everyone. 2009. "Student activism in 2002/3 – the Campaign for Free Education" Retrieved February 12, 2015.

(<http://free-education.info/student-activism-in-20023-the-cfe/>

Free Education for Everyone. 2009. "Remembering the Campaign for Free Education: Basis for the future". Retrieved February 12, 2015.

(<http://free-education.info/remembering-2002-03-basis-for-the-future/>)

Free Education for Everyone. 2010 USI disowns members, ignores Garda violence at National Student Demo Dublin. Retrieved July 12, 2014.

(<http://free-education.info/usi-disowns-members-ignores-garda-violence/>)

Free Education for Everyone. 2010. "Free Education for Everyone: A statement regarding events today at the Dept. of Finance". Retrieved July 10, 2014.

(<http://free-education.info/press-release-a-statement-regarding-events-today-at-the-dept-of-finance/>)

Free Education for Everyone. 2010. USI disowns members, ignores Garda violence at National Student Demo Dublin. Retrieved July 10, 2014.

(<http://free-education.info/usi-disowns-members-ignores-garda-violence/>).

Front Line Report 2010, "Breakdown in Trust: A Report on the Corrib Gas Dispute". Shell to Sea, Retrieved March 10, 2013

([http://www.shelltosea.com/sites/default/files/frontline\\_corrib\\_gas\\_report.pdf](http://www.shelltosea.com/sites/default/files/frontline_corrib_gas_report.pdf))

Francisco, RA. 2005 *Repression and Mobilization* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota

Garda Research Institute. 2013. Making Policing History: Studies of Garda Violence and Resources for Police Reform.

Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission. 2013. *'Report in Accordance with Section 103 of the Garda Síochána Act, 2005 ("the Act") relating to the policing of the Union of Students in Ireland Protest March on 3 November 2010'* Retrieved April 14, 2014

([http://www.gardaombudsman.ie/docs/publications/Student\\_Protests\\_Section\\_103\\_Report.pdf](http://www.gardaombudsman.ie/docs/publications/Student_Protests_Section_103_Report.pdf))

Gillham, Patrick F. and John A. Noakes. 2007. "More than a March in a Circle": Transgressive Protests and the Limits of Negotiated Management." *Mobilization* 12(4):341-57.

Global Community Report. 2007. "Report of an International Fact Finding Delegation To County Mayo, Ireland," Global Community Monitor, Retrieved March 14, 2012

(<http://www.gcmonitor.org/article.php?id=598>).

Goddard, Wayne and Melville, Stuart. 2004. *Research Methodology: An Introduction*.

Lansdowne: Juta and Company.

Helliner, Jane. 2000. *Irish Travellers*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Indymedia Ireland. 2010. "VIDEO: Police attack Student demo in Dublin 3rd November 2010"

Retrieved July 10, 2014.

([http://www.indymedia.ie/article/98084?comment\\_limit=0&condense\\_comments=false#attachment1000055760](http://www.indymedia.ie/article/98084?comment_limit=0&condense_comments=false#attachment1000055760))

Indymedia Ireland. 2010. "Students Occupy Department Of Finance" Retrieved July 10, 2014.

(<http://www.indymedia.ie/article/98070>)

Indymedia Ireland. 2010. "Interviews with students on Wednesdays march". Retrieved July 10,

2014. (<http://www.indymedia.ie/article/98095>)

Indymedia Ireland. 2007. "Your Rights & How to Deal with the Gardaí". Retrieved October 20, 2014. (<http://www.indymedia.ie/article/82108>)

2009. "Students to protest against threat of fees reintroduction". The Independent October 22. Retrieved 30 October, 2014

(<http://www.independent.ie/breaking-news/irish-news/students-to-protest-against-threat-of-fees-reintroduction-26486567.html>)

Kilcommins, Shane and Vaughan Barry 2008: *Terrorism, Rights and the Rule of Law: Negotiating State Justice in Ireland*. Devon:Willan Publishing

Le Bon, Gustave. 2006. *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind*. New York: Cosmino.

Manning, Peter K. 2012. "Trust and Accountability in Ireland: The Case of the Garda Síochána." *An International Journal of Research and Policy*. 22:346-361

McCarthy, John D. 1997. "The Globalization of Social Movement Theory." Pp. 243-259 in *Transnational Social Movements and Global Politics: Solidarity beyond the State*, Studies on Peace and Conflict Resolution, edited by J. Smith, C. Chatfield, R. Pagnucco, and C. Chatfield. New York: Syracuse UP.

McCarthy, John D. and Clark McPhail. 2006. "Places of Protest: The Public Forum in Principle and Practice." *Mobilization* 11:229-247.

McCarthy, John D., Clark McPhail, and Jackie Smith. 1996. "Media Bias in the Coverage of Washington, D.C. Demonstrations." *American Sociological Review* 61:478-99.

McLeod, Douglas, M. 2007. "News Coverage and Social Protest: How the Media 's Protect Paradigm Exacerbates Social Conflict". *Journal of Dispute Resolution* Volume 2007 (1): 185-194

McPhail, Clark. 1991. *The Myth of the Maddening Crowd*. New York: Aldine de Gruyter.

McPhail, Clark, David Schweingruber, and John D. McCarthy. 1998. "Protest Policing in the United States, 1960-1995." Pp. 49-69 in *Policing Protest: The Control of Mass Demonstrations in Western Democracies*, edited by D. della Porta and H. Reiter. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

McNiffe, Liam 1997. *A History of the Garda Siochana: a Social History of the Force 1922-1952 with an Overview for the Years 1952-1997*. Dublin: Wolfhound Press.

Moore, M.H. 1992. "Problem-Solving and Community Policing." Pp. 99-158 in *Modern Policing*, edited by M. Tonry and N. Morris. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Moran, Niall. 2011. *The Grassroots Pro-Asylum Seeker Movement in the Republic of Ireland: A Social Movement Perspective*.

Mulcahy, Aogan and O'Mahony, Eoin. 2005. *Policing and social marginalisation in Ireland*.

Dublin: *Combat Poverty Agency*. Retrieved September 10, 2014

([www.combatpoverty.ie/publications/workingpapers/2005\\_02\\_WP\\_PolicingandSocialMarginalisation.pdf](http://www.combatpoverty.ie/publications/workingpapers/2005_02_WP_PolicingandSocialMarginalisation.pdf))

Nihill, Cian. 2010. "Student march: timeline of events" The Irish Times, November 4. Retrieved 10 July, 2014 (<http://www.irishtimes.com/news/student-march-timeline-of-events-1.672200>)

Ratliff, Thomas N. 2011. *On the Stage of Change: A Dramaturgical Approach to Violence, Social Protests, and Policing Styles in the U.S.*

Royall, Frédéric, 2014. *Anti-Austerity Mobilizations and Occupy in Ireland*. Retrived 14 Septemeber, 2014  
(<http://ecpr.eu/Filestore/PaperProposal/5cae7e54-0c4f-436e-b430-d107a4f4d628.pdf>)

Schutt, K. Russell. 2006. *Investigating the Social World: The Process and Practice of Research*. California: Sage

Smyth, Jamie. 2011. "Students protest in Dublin over fees" The Financial Times, November 16. Retrieved July 14, 2014.  
(<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/0dad558c-106b-11e1-8010-00144feabdc0.html#axzz3HNELX0jl>)

Soule, Sara and Christian Davenport. 2009. "Velvet Glove, Iron Fist, or Even Hand? Protest Policing in the United States, 1960-1990." *Mobilization* 14(1):1-22.

Starr , Amory, Fernandez, Luis A. and Scholl Christian. 2011. *Shutting Down the Streets: Political Violence and Social Control in the Global Era*. New York: NYU Press

Strauss, Anselm and Corbin, Juliet M. 2001. *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*. Sage: London



Vaughan, Barry. 2004. "Accounting for Diversity of Policing in Ireland." *Irish Journal of Sociology*. 13.1:51-72

Waddington, P.A.J. 1998. "Controlling Protest in Contemporary Historical and Comparative Perspective." Pp. 117-40 in *Policing Protest: The Control of Mass Demonstrations in Western Democracies*, edited by D. della Porta and H. Reiter. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Walsh, Dermot. 1999. "Who Guards the Guards?" *An Irish Quarterly Review*. 88:154-163.

Weiler, Hans. N. 2009. "Whose Knowledge Matters? Development and the Politics of Knowledge". Pp. 485-496. in *Entwicklung als Beruf*. Baden-Baden edited by Theodor Hanf, Hans N. Weiler and Helga Dickow: Nomos, 2009.

Wells, Ida B. 1995. "Lynch Law in All Its Phases." Pp. 80-99 in *With Pen and Voice: A Critical Anthology of Nineteenth-Century African-American Women*, edited by S. W. Logan. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press.

Willig, Carla. 2001. *Introducing qualitative research in psychology Adventures in theory and method*. Buckingham:Open University Press.

Workers Solidarity Movement 2010. "WSM condemns police violence against students"

Retrieved September 15,

2014. (<http://www.wsm.ie/c/wsm-condemns-police-violence-against-students>)

Workers Solidarity Movement. 2011. "Thousands of students demonstrate in Dublin against Education cuts but USI attack their own members". Retrieved October 10, 2014.

<http://www.wsm.ie/c/students-demonstrating-dublin-education-cuts-usi-betrayal>).

Workers Solidarity Movement. 2010. "WSM says support student protest against garda brutality". Retrieved October 10, 2014.

<http://www.wsm.ie/c/support-student-protest-garda-brutality?page=8>)

YouTube. 2010. Merrion Row Clashes - Dublin November 3rd 2010. Retrieved July 20, 2014.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aPnoAY1wXfl>)

YouTube. 2010. Garda Attack Student Protest, Dublin, November 3rd, 2010 Retrieved July 20,

2014 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wDvjw5GrR88>).

YouTube. 2010. Student Protests Dublin 3/11/2010 - Violent Clashes between the Gardai and protesters. Retrieved July 20, 2014. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XQLEoK5boO4>)



