

**THE PROBLEM WITH ALLIANCES
FOR THE ANTI- FRACKING
MOVEMENT ON THE ISLAND OF
IRELAND**

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ABSTRACT

This research looks at the role of alliances in the context of one of the largest collective struggles across the island of Ireland today, the anti-fracking movement. It presents the challenges facing communities directly opposing this new emerging industry and challenges them to critically reflect on their engagement with outside actors as they organise a collective opposition to it. This thesis explores how a green neo liberal hegemony controls the current 'environmental movement' driven by powerful elites; multinationals, the state and state actors, and official 'environmentalism'. With these one-time allies now largely absent, combined with the growing threat of globalisation which 'synergises' power at the top to work against social movements, has this left the anti- fracking movement fighting the fracking battle alone?

Drawing from the experiences of anti- fracking campaigners from the North West, Belfast and Dublin, and outside activists from Ireland and Alberta, Canada, this research seeks to explore how building a broad ranging alliance at the grassroots of these very actors can produce the most effective resistance to corporate power. In an effort to contribute to activist knowledge, this thesis aims to inform two main audiences; grassroots activists involved in the anti-fracking struggle and 'professional' environmentalists. In an attempt to make the findings as inclusive as possible and for it to be applicable to both audiences it was difficult to contain the word count of this thesis to twenty thousand words or indeed thirty thousand words!

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This research argues that a green neo-liberal hegemony controls power at the top, and largely controls the ‘official’ environmental movement and many of the ‘traditional’ alliances that were once useful to local movements. It explores how institutional environmentalism has not only alienated itself from local environmental issues and movements, but has become coopted by capital interests leaving them largely ineffective in dealing with corporate power. It argues that by aligning with such actors, local movements risk becoming professionalised, which can ultimately lead to cooption.

In this context, the question of alliances is an important consideration for social movements, given the power they have to potentially benefit or corrupt a campaign. Therefore, this research seeks to answer the question; do alliances have the potential to coopt the anti-fracking movement on the island of Ireland.

In exploring an effective response to this problem, this theory considers components of the environmental justice framework in recognising local power and network building at the grassroots as the key force against a growing tide of corporate power. It argues that building grassroots alliances between local communities is the most effective tool against a green neo liberal hegemony; challenging the systems that produce it and most importantly, producing the most effective tool against fracking.

How will this Research Inform Activism Practice?

This research question comes at an important time for the anti- fracking movement, which has members in both political jurisdictions; NI (Northern Ireland) and ROI (Republic of Ireland). Faced by the growing threat of fracking, concerned citizens whose area is targeted by prospective licenses, started to organise at a community level just over two years ago in what has become a ‘collective action’ (Tarrow, 1994) of local groups to create a loose national network, called No Fracking Ireland. As well as building solidarity at the grassroots, the campaign has depended on outside support, especially in engaging in political processes, which according to the ‘political opportunity structure’, involves the assistance of ‘influential allies’ (Tarrow, 1994).

However, this research shows that there is growing frustration within the anti- fracking movement that engagement in political processes are failing them and that ‘influential allies’ have become increasingly silent on the matter of fracking, particularly in relation to the negative impacts of this controversial extraction technique. Many politicians are using the rhetoric of big business calling for ‘safe’ fracking and largely ignoring the presence of any kind of resistance struggle. There are questions asked of NGOs and conservation organisations, who remain silent and those who engage using their own agenda, and not that of the communities whom they claim to represent. Research, funded at academia level is coming out in favour of ‘safe fracking’, with a severe shortage of research showing the harmful effects of this extractive process as reported by many communities who have suffered from the effects of fracking in the US and Australia.

This research question subsequently wants to draw the anti- fracking movement's attention, not only to the failure of some of these one- time allies, but to the possible damage in building alliances with them into the future.

Intellectual Implications

It draws on Gramsci's theory on hegemony (Gramsci, 1957) to argue that a green neo liberal hegemony controls environmentalism today, and that the state, state bodies and civil society organisations are the main actors in controlling it. It is particularly interested in one of the key components to hegemony which involves partnership between the state and civil society in controlling and maintaining this hegemony in return for economic/ material reward. The relevance of this theory can be reflected in the state forming alliances with professional environmentalists through funding mechanisms explored in my literature review. It also points the finger at professional environmentalists who gladly consent to such cooption in return for getting a seat at the decision table (Sperber, 2003).

It draws on environmental justice theory which is primarily concerned with recognition of the importance of class, gender, race and inequality in framing environmentalism (Allen. K et al, 2007). At the same time, it acts as a key critic to the 'environmental movement', particularly in relation to issues of cooption, power and elitism (Schlosberg, 1999). This aspect of environmental justice is important for this study which argues that professional environmentalism has been coopted by green neo liberalism. This research uses environmental justice as a theory to explore how power, cooption and elitism can work together to damage local movements. On the other hand, it looks to components of this framework in describing the merits of networking from below to challenge these forms of dominance. This research argues that networking at the local level is as important as the

outcomes that are achieved, with the emphasis on participation, equity and 'co-powerment', building power from the bottom, up. It argues that movements can best respond to the growing tide of corporate power by remaining autonomous to 'influential allies', in particular those who are already coopted.

Why does this issue matter to me?

This research question has evolved over time through my active participation in the NFD (No Fracking Dublin) group. As a climate change campaigner within a social justice INGO (International Non-Governmental Organisation) and 'institutionalised' environmentalist, I was originally interested in looking at the disconnect between global and local campaigning. I was frustrated at the lack of INGO engagement in local issues and was increasingly critical at the lack of engagement in social justice at home. This lack of dichotomy was particularly evident in INGOs pursuit of a strong climate change bill whilst at the same time, being silent on environmental injustices at a local level, such as events in Rossport and the growing threat of fracking in areas across Ireland. However, through my participation in the movement I became interested in the broader question of alliances at a time when the campaign is increasingly looking outward for support to grow and ultimately win. Institutional bodies and formalised organisations present a significant power imbalance in relation to social movements. In the case of adopting a more conservative strategy, different to that adapted by a social movement, the latter is in a weaker position to contest the NGOs approach given the power imbalance (Quinn, 2013).

My active participation in this campaign allowed me to frame my work within the values of Action Research which encouraged me take a bottom up approach to my research, starting with members of the current anti- fracking movement and activists from outside the

movement. Additionally, it encouraged me to talk to people who challenged my ‘institutional’ perspectives. I subsequently spoke with many experienced grassroots activists, some of whom were part of the anti-fracking movement and others, who were involved in other grassroots activism, namely Shell to Sea. Had I not taken an active research approach to my work, I would have limited this study to looking at alliance building from an INGO perspective rather than a social movement one and my research question would have been the same as it started out which was: ‘Would INGO activism benefit by being more aligned with local grassroots activism in an Irish context?’ Instead, PAR allowed the voice of the movement to be heard and through the participation of a diversity of voices from activists inside and outside the anti-fracking movement; the research participants contributed vital knowledge to this study.

What is Fracking and why should we be concerned?

Fracking, which is a short name for the technique used to extract shale gas, called hydraulic fracturing, is lauded as ‘major development in the energy industry’ by proponents of this industry. Although an early version of fracking was patented in America in 1949, its use has developed over the last decade with the advances of drilling technology¹. The controversial technique involves drilling a hole into shale rocks underground which contain natural gas using vast quantities of water mixed with sand and chemicals pumped at high pressure into the rock causing it to explode, releasing the trapped gas².

Despite it being banned in many states, America is the loudest voice in influencing the use of this form of energy around the world. Proponents of fracking in America are particularly

¹<http://www.aei.org/article/economics/benefits-of-hydraulic-fracking/> (accessed 10/09/2013)

²<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2011/apr/20/shale-gas-fracking-question-answer> (accessed 20/06/2013)

pleased that it has freed the country of Gulf oil dependence, and therefore act as an important tool in shifting geopolitical power back to America³. Proponents around the globe say this newfound resource is so much bigger than anticipated that it can help drive economic growth nationwide for years to come⁴. This powerful rhetoric of strengthened economies and geopolitical power has attracted the attention of other countries to look at it as a viable option. The EU is eager to promote the idea of self-sufficiency among EU member states for ‘fear of getting left behind in the global race’⁵.

What proponents of this industry don’t always highlight is the risks involved and the growing evidence of contaminated groundwater and air pollution caused by fracking. In the US, fracking is currently exempt from the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act and Safe Drinking Water Act, causing a red light on the effects on water quality⁶. These risks have caused hydraulic fracturing to come under increased examination internationally and have caused states in America and some countries in Europe to ban the practice or put in place temporary moratoriums pending further research into its environmental and health and safety impacts (F. Scully, 2013).

As early as 2010, governments in ROI and NI invited applications for onshore licensing (desktop studies of licensing areas and shallow drilling) and petroleum licensing (deep test drilling and fracking) respectively. A year later in 2011, four different companies were awarded exploratory licences in NI across four basins (involving counties Antrim, Derry/Londonderry and Fermanagh). This allows the companies to “search for, bore for and get”

³<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2012/nov/15/shale-energy-implications-geopolitics-america> (accessed 15/05/2013)

⁴<http://www.economist.com/debate/days/view/934> (accessed 29/08/2013)

⁵<http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/business/energy/130529/gas-fracking-hydraulic-fracturing-saudi-arabia-europe> (accessed 21/07/2013)

⁶<http://www.economist.com/debate/days/view/934> (accessed 12/05/2013)

petroleum and gas. Around the same time three companies were awarded option licences for two basins in ROI (covering the counties of Cavan, Donegal, Leitrim, Mayo, Monaghan, Roscommon, Sligo, Clare, Cork, Limerick and Kerry). In ROI, the Minister for Energy, Pat Rabbitte has confirmed that no Exploratory Licences will be issued until after the EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) directed research study “The Environmental Impacts of Unconventional Gas Exploration and Extraction (UGEE)” is completed and considered, which may take up until 2016. The NI government have refused to state that it will wait until the research is complete before allowing drilling or fracking and may go ahead with its work programme in Fermanagh at any time⁷.

In response to the issuing of onshore licencing across the island of Ireland, communities from the areas potentially affected by this controversial process, started to organise over two years ago, initially to find out the truth about this industry but very quickly, that inquisition turned into outright opposition as the truth behind this pollutant industry slowly emerged.

Evolution of the No Fracking Ireland Network

This sub-section gives the reader a brief introduction to the evolution of the No Fracking Ireland network as reported by the participants of this research. Participants began their interview process by describing their involvement in the campaign. This sub chapter has been developed based on these collective accounts and offers a window into the No Fracking Ireland Network as it stands at the date of when this research was carried out (in the first quarter of 2013). It does not attempt to speak on behalf of other local groups or active individual campaigners who are not represented in this research.

⁷<http://goodenergiesalliance.com/fracking-areas> (accessed 20/11/2013)

A year after governments in ROI and NI had sought applications for Option licences and Petroleum licences respectively, communities started to become informed about the negative implications of living in an area which is hydraulically fractured/ fracked. This information did not come from the government but from grassroots communities in America.

A member from BNFS (Belfast Not For Shale) who is a native of NI, had been living in Seattle when she first heard about exploration licences being granted in Fermanagh and was absolutely appalled by it, given the negative press that was starting to emerge on the airwaves where she was based in the US. Deeply concerned about the situation, she contacted people in Fermanagh, started a petition, and continued to feed information about what was happening to communities in America, back to the NI community.

The first knowledge about the dangers of fracking coming to people in the North West was when people from Clare brought 'Gasland' (documentary film on fracking in the US by Josh Fox) to show in the local cinema in Drumshambo, Co. Leitrim. This film, which has acted as a catalyst for many people's involvement in the campaign in Ireland, triggered one local woman to create a facebook page the day after her cinema experience. A few days later in May 2011, six local women met in Drumshambo coffee shop and in doing so formed the first anti- fracking group in ROI. After a few meetings, the decision was taken to expand the group into a larger think tank to make important decisions such as deciding on the name and logo of the campaign. The decision to expand the group wasn't a unanimous one, as some members felt that these organisational key decisions should be made before including others. This led to the first storming session in a series of storming's one would expect in the forming of a national movement.

These initial open meetings held in Leitrim attracted over seventy citizens from all over the North West; Leitrim, Fermanagh, Donegal, Sligo, Roscommon, and Clare. A great deal of information sharing went on during these meetings, mainly sourced from independent studies in the U.S, and particularly in relation to the harmful impacts of this industry on human health. These meetings attracted a diverse range of ideologies and personalities; people who grew up in the local area, those who had moved to the area from Europe in the 1970s and 1980s, farmers, artists, community workers, professional experts, and political activists. This created a hot pot of dichotomies, different needs and different expectations, particularly when people were from different areas and jurisdictions. This 'chaotic' structure left it difficult to control and people were anxious to start mobilising in their local area and inform their local community. Before branching out into different groups in autumn 2011, No Fracking Ireland had been established as an umbrella network for campaigners in the country.

As explained by one member of CAF (Carrick Against Fracking), No Fracking Ireland is a movement comprised of an open group of people whose common goal is to ban fracking on the island of Ireland. How individuals and groups go about it is up to them but the responsibility is on each person affiliated with this group to be pro- active in achieving this goal. This form of organising which moves away from the traditional committee structure organised around a chairperson, treasurer, secretary, etc., was contentious for some members due to the concern that by opening the group, this might leave it vulnerable to sabotage. The counter argument was that the campaign needed to grow and in order to facilitate that, a movement was more necessary than a formal working group. There was also a danger that the campaign would remain local and isolated to a Leitrim issue when it was a national one.

Subsequently, small groups emerged depending on geographical spread, differing opinions on how to organise, and the autonomy to do what they thought was important. Some groups

like LL (Love Leitrim) decided to take a pro-development stance in naming their group as they didn't want to 'portray a negative message' in their communication. It organised along a non-formal structure where decisions are made collectively. According to a member of LL, it was important for the group to establish a professional reputation in order to communicate effectively with the local rural population. According to this member, it was important not to seem 'radical' or 'offensive' because in doing so might have turned locals against their message. Using this approach, LL was able to build relationships with local farmers and farming institutions, businesses, and councils etc. whom may not have been friendly to a 'negative' approach.

Most other groups in my research adopted names directly related to their goal such as CAF (Carrick Against Fracking), NWNAF (North West Network Against Fracking), NFSB (Not for Shale Belfast), and NFD (No Fracking Dublin). These groups like LL remained non-formal in terms of how they organised, but some adopted an autonomous approach to decision making, preferring individual action. According to a member of NWNAF, this allowed her greater freedom to use critical messages and a confrontational approach towards decision makers. These different ideologies caused tension between groups and individuals which often developed into distrust hampering cross communication and collaboration.

Others decided to organise along more professional lines. GEAI (Good Energies Alliances Ireland) was established at the end of 2011, whose members decided to focus on broader energy solutions as well as a ban on fracking. This was set up as a company limited by guarantee, with the idea being that it could take up legal challenges. A member of GEAI told how it was formed by members who were interested in advocacy and working within a professional structure to tailor their message to the decision makers at a national level. However, this created another 'storm' in the movement's evolution evoking an 'enormous

backlash' from within the movement. According to a member of GEAI, the organisation was viewed as 'competition' against No Fracking Ireland, where both organisations were comprised of members who were affiliated to both groups, which caused hurt to the member's concerned and distrust within the movement. Members of GEAI engaged in a robust education programme in the North West and across the country, educating people about the issue so that they can decide for themselves whether to agree or not.

Despite these storming episodes, communities, whether collectively or independently carried out activities targeting decision makers and informing the larger public; representatives of different groups in the North West meeting Pat Rabbitte and speaking on TV3 morning show; as well as swapping leaflets, sharing petition stands, and collaborating for local demonstrations. They played a vital role in educating schools, businesses', farmers, people they work with, their families and by doing so, the oil and gas rhetoric got diluted to give people the chance to make an informed decision and not one that is thrust upon them clouded with promises of jobs, and easy cash. Online communities were continuing to build a campaign through social media, through the websites that were created, the Fracking Ireland newsletter and establishing the google group mailing. Today the online opposition to fracking consists of at least 20 facebook pages and groups, 5 websites, at least 5 blog posts in ROI and NI, an all- Ireland newsletter, and google mailing list (as accessed on 27 January 2014). Offline the national movement has grown beyond the communities who are directly impacted by the potential threat to fracking to include groups like No Fracking Dublin. Since then No Fracking Ireland has amassed 7094 online members on Facebook (as accessed on 20/01/14).

In response to external political processes, local groups and individuals came together to discuss the EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) consultation (into the terms of

reference for the next research study on unconventional gas exploration and extraction). In order to do this, attempts were made to organise at a national level again, and again the question of how this was to be done caused conflict with some members wishing to establish a formal organisation comprising of two representatives from every group. A meeting was organised to vote on it and the attempt to organise a formal structure was rejected. Some of those disappointed with the outcome and the process, left the movement, leaving more scars on the campaign as another storming episode calmed.

Efforts in 2013 were being made to bring together a national network, much similar to the original concept of No Fracking Ireland, except that it has grown substantially since it started. More groups are now involved (No Fracking Dublin), a lot of work has been done at local level informing local communities, and groups have changed and evolved with some people taking needed time out due to disagreements or for personal reasons and yet others joining and bringing fresh ideas. At the date of this publication a loose national network exists which meets approximately quarterly per year. Local groups and individuals continue to work independently and jointly when the occasion arises. They are involved in the campaign for different reasons and different motivations all with their own hat to wear; a concerned member of the community, an activist, an environmentalist, a lobbyist, a researcher, an educator, a communicator, a fund raiser, a farmer, a parent or a child. Despite what hat they use, people who represent the No Fracking Network share one goal: that is to ban fracking.

The political practise of networking is central to the environmental justice framework, which is explored in more detail in the literature review. Schlosberg argues that this form of organising ‘proposes a remedy to the limitations of the conventional model [centralised organisations], but is also more able to confront changes in the nature of power, capital, and

the political oversight of environmental problems' (Schlosberg, 1999). Communities here have shared information, skills and resources; solidified at a local level, and networked across the movement in order to strengthen the resistance from below. This horizontal sharing is an important aspect of building and strengthening grassroots knowledge and skill. International 'cousin's' shared vital research that helped communities to educate each other here. Only for skill share across the network, campaigners would be reinventing the wheel as many pointed out. If groups and communities remain closed off to the network they will be fighting 'a very lonely, remote battle'.

Limitations to this study

This research is interested in exploring Gramsci's counter hegemony and the role of the 'organic intellectual' in creating it and sustaining it through forming alliances at this intellectual level. Making these connections is explained using the metaphor of the rhizome (Schlosberg, 1999) which is a type of root system that, rather than sprout up in one location, spreads out underground and sprouts in various locations. This metaphor describes the process of linking local groups along a network structure and linking local issues between different social movements. In following on from the success of Carnsore, this study was interested in exploring how green neoliberal hegemony can be effectively challenged by building alliances across radical social movements including Corrib (Cox, 2011).

Unfortunately the theory of creating a counter hegemony could not be developed to the extent I would have liked to in this thesis due to time pressures and the constraints of a thesis study framework which adheres to a limit on word count. Social transformation is one of the key components to PAR (Participatory Action Research) which ensures that the learning process doesn't end with the thesis (Dillon, 2010). Chapter six details how I aim to feed back the

results of this study to people within the anti- fracking movement and interested parties from other social movements.

The Structure of this Thesis

This chapter aims to introduce readers to the subject of this thesis which looks at how alliances have the power to coopt the anti- fracking movement on the island of Ireland. It introduced the conceptual frameworks for this research. For background information, it looked at the current situation in relation to fracking in respect to the proponent's rhetoric and the opposition voice and organising strategy. The next chapter (two) is the literature review which reviews current theories on hegemony and environmental justice to explore how 'synergy' at the top promotes a green neo liberal hegemony which has captured many environmental organisations and institutions. Chapter three is my methodology section which explains how I used a qualitative approach to collect my data, informed by Action Research using components of PAR (Participatory Action Research). Feminist Epistemology was drawn on to consider the ethics to my research. Findings for this research are found in chapter four which have been organised in line with two significant themes which emerged in the research process; A) How cooption happens and who the key players are, and B) Building a network, starting with the community, which seeks to answer questions arising in section A. Chapter five analyses these key themes and in response to the original research question (Do alliances have the potential to coopt the anti- fracking movement on the island of Ireland?), attempts to answer it under two key themes: A) The danger of engaging in political processes, and B) The danger of putting too much trust in traditional alliances. The concluding chapter suggests what implications this study has for the anti- fracking movement on the island of Ireland and for the theory I used in this research. Due to the wide ranging acronyms used in this research, an acronym glossary has been included at the end of this thesis for the readers benefit.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, Irish communities defended themselves against pollutant giants in the chemical industries acquiring many successes and many battle wounds along the way. These communities used whatever means possible to seek justice but relied on their own skills and building crucial alliances with each other to defend against the growth of a chemical industry and the complicity of the state (Allen, 2004). Today communities around Ireland are opposing a new pollutant, the process of hydraulic fracturing, or ‘fracking’ which seeks to extract unconventional natural gas from shale gas areas. It is set to take place in fourteen counties across the island of Ireland⁸ and communities are looking outside for support to fight this ‘Goliath’. This chapter investigates how ‘synergy’ at the top is supporting a pro fracking agenda, driven by neo liberal policies and examines the limitations in relying on political engagement to win this campaign.

Section two of this chapter looks at the Irish and international context to investigate how power and cooption has de-radicalised the environmental movement, as a result of the alliances they formed with funders, politicians, and the corporate polluters they were

⁸Licences have been awarded which cover the following counties: Cavan, Donegal, Leitrim, Mayo, Monaghan, Roscommon and Sligo, Clare, Cork, Limerick, Kerry, Antrim (including Rathlin island) Derry/ Londonderry, and Fermanagh (<http://goodenergiesalliance.com/fracking-areas/>). Three more counties (Tyrone, Armagh and Down) could be affected if another basin is awarded in NI which has mysteriously disappeared from the DETI website.

originally set up to oppose. In exploring an effective response to this problem, this research draws on environmental justice theory to argue that building grassroots alliances at the local level creates the most powerful resistance to green neo liberalism as well as the actors who drive it. It is clear is that communities are not simply contesting a local pollutant. They are also taking on the might of globalisation which has coopted many traditional allies that social movements once relied on.

Gramscian theory (1957) is useful to this research in considering the relationship between power and politics. He argues that politics exercises power in its own right, depending on the degree of support it enjoys from various sections within society. This power is also exercised by civil society which Gramsci suggested was under the spell of capitalism and the ruling elites. These powerful alliances form a hegemony which for the purposes of this research can be located in green neo liberalism. In locating Gramscian hegemony in Ireland, Cox describes the shift from the hegemonic alliance of “Dev’s Ireland” to the beginnings of neo liberalism, which he recognises as;

A shift to an IBEC led by multinational interests, with national capital and even more so small business definitely subaltern; a long-term ditching of the church in order to make a “liberal”, modernising alliance with the new service class and with women; two decades of conflict with labour and working-class communities followed by two decades of partnership from which we are now emerging. (Cox, 2011: p11)

Gramsci suggested that the first component to hegemony was coercion, which is present in the form of an underlying threat, rather than being a dominant characteristic. Cox, Allen and others situate state violence against communities in Ireland, specifically in relation to the community in Corrib, in their struggle against Shell’s pipe line. In a broader context, Gramsci suggested that the state uses coercive measures all the time in order to enforce authority and discipline;

The apparatus of state coercive power “legally” enforces discipline on those groups who do not “consent” either actively or passively. (Gramsci, 1998: p12)

The second component to hegemony is the universal acceptance of certain ideas and values which differentiates between consent as a result of 'State coercion' and

...of a "spontaneous" consent given by the great masses of the population to the direction imprinted on social life by the fundamental ruling class, a consent which comes into existence "historically" from the "prestige" (and hence from the trust) accruing to the ruling class from its position and its function in the world of production. (Gramsci, 1957: p124)

A third key to hegemonic consent, identified by Gramsci is the need for a ruling class to form alliances with other sectors of civil society in order to maintain its hegemonic domination.

Here, incentives of a material or economic nature may have a part to play.

The fact of hegemony undoubtedly presupposes that the interests and strivings of the groups over which the hegemony will be exercised are taken account of, that a certain balance of compromises be formed, that, in other words, the leading group makes some sacrifices of an economico- corporative kind... (Gramsci, 1957: p155)

This third component to hegemony is particularly relevant to this research in considering the danger for social movements to build alliances with civil society organisations that are funded by the state and industry which is explored in more detail later in this chapter.

Environmental justice theory critiques civil society actors within environmentalism for coopting the environmental movement and suggests that network building at the grassroots helps prevent against cooption and capital power. According to Kim Allen et al (2007) the origins of the environmental justice movement can be traced back to the Shocco Township, North Carolina. In 1982, the state decided to bury soil laced with toxic PCBs in their community. Shocco Township has the third lowest per capita income in the state, and is 69 percent non-white and it was at this time, that 'environmental racism' was identified, and the environmental justice movement was born. Activists who were part of the 1991 National People of Colour Environmental Leadership Summit where hundreds of people of colour were involved in many different dispersed local groups working in isolation, came together to develop the Principles of Environmental Justice. This helped to reshape environmental

politics by producing a new discourse for environmentalism which involved social justice and the environment, as reflected by this quote,

Instead of wildlife and “nature”, the environment came to mean, “where we live, work, and play”.(Kim Allen et al, 2007: p118)

Up until this point activists felt excluded from environmentalism which they thought of as representing white people and their issues. In identifying this narrow discourse and the weakness in the structure of these national organisations, movement leaders made the decision to organise along a network structure where local campaigns would receive support from regional network organisations, creating horizontal alliances, rather than reproducing the hierarchical structures of said environmental organisations. By choosing this method of organising, the environmental movement demonstrated how community empowerment was just as important a task as resolving the environmental issue. They felt that a local and regional alliance of local campaigns was more effective in dealing with oppressive systems instead of building national level organisations. Schlosberg (1999), in his analysis of the US Environmental Justice Movement, assesses how many grassroots environmental groups, in using this approach, are tactically stronger in challenging political and corporate interests. In analysing this networking structure he discusses the strength of this bottom- up form of organising in preventing alienation of local issues and views, and instead argues that plurality and diversity in movements is a real strength. He believes that a participative approach to organising not only leads to better harmony in movements but the diversity of tactics employed and multiple frames adopted can present many different solutions for different issues. R.Allen (2004) reflects on the importance of radical roots in environmental movements in the following quote;

A green movement that is eco-social or a mixture of green (ecologist and environmentalist), red (socialist) and black (anarchist) based on grassroots autonomous assembly would be a powerful force against globalisation.(R. Allen, 2004: P221)

This awareness of local power relationships extends to awareness of how power links issues. Where groups start out with a single issue in mind, but over time make connections with other forms of domination. Making these connections is explained using Schlosberg's metaphor of the rhizome which is a type of root system that, rather than sprout up in one location, spreads out underground and sprouts in various locations (Schlosberg, 1999). He argues that the Environmental Justice movement has a two- fold outcome; not only linking local socio- environmental issues but building a broad ranging alliance between the groups and organisations that make up the network and developing co-operation between them.

Where national organisations don't have the political clout to impose restrictions on capital for reasons outlined in section one, networks have the flexibility to respond in different ways and numerous areas. With globalisation reducing state power, and NGOs being too slow to respond to the fast growth of multinational power, networks are in a stronger position to do so (Scholsburg, 1999). Building a base in such a way helps best respond to direct action at a local level. Its flexibility in adopting a diversity of tactics and targets allows it to work on the global level, targeting duty bearers. Its ability to network across each of these levels is important to respond to the flow of capital which works at each level. Scholsburg argues that the social base of these networks is important because they are rooted in local knowledge and the experiences of individual's and their communities. They evolve from already existing social networks, such as family, neighbourhood, work, school, religion, racial and ethnic identity (Scholsburg, 1999). This distinguishes networks from organisations that build their social base through mailing lists and have a database of supporters compared to organic networking that happens at a community.

As can be recalled from the introduction chapter of this thesis, this form of organising reflects how the anti- fracking movement has evolved from already existing social networks within

local communities. This network approach allows the anti-fracking movement to rely on their natural strengths within the movement so that they are in a stronger position to delegitimise power, co-optation and elitism. It allows the movement to set its own agenda without being influenced by the agenda of powerful elites whose strategies no longer work, as explored in more detail in this chapter.

However, this research argues that framing this issue as an environmental one is limiting, as is trying to frame it within a particular paradigm. Like any new knowledge, environmental justice brings its own language and values which may be different to that which is understood at the grassroots. This research identifies the problem in labelling this issue an environmental one when so many other factors should be considered, such as health, socio-economic, energy, etc. Framing it as a community rights issue sends out a strong signal to those outside who want to lend their support that they do this according to the needs of the community and not according to the needs of outside influences. It argues that local communities need to control the narrative of the anti-fracking campaign so that it is not limited to looking at the environmental impact of fracking but it is about community rights.

Section 1: Synergy at the top

Ireland's reputation for being a 'pollution haven' for the toxic, chemical, and pharmaceutical industries since the early 70's is well documented by Allen who believes that state complicity was a major factor in corporations getting their own way, as reflected in the quote below;

The history of industrialisation in Ireland has been about lies, obfuscation and secrecy from the state and industry and about ignorance and stupidity from those with political agendas, but perhaps that is the reason that the industries of hazard ... have been able to dictate their own agenda from the first day the state welcomed them to Ireland. (Allen, 2004: p252)

The IDA (Industrial Development Authority) which formalised in 1970 and the state agency responsible for foreign direct investment, was opening doors to hazardous industries long before any regulatory body was established to monitor their activities. It was little wonder companies who found it difficult to set up in their own countries due to stricter regulatory standards, found Ireland an attractive location given that it was one of the most profitable industrial locations in the world during the 1970s and 1980s (Allen, 2004). The government were so intent in getting jobs into the country with no regard for the health and safety of its citizens that dissenters were marginalised and those who experienced serious health problems as a result of chemical pollution ended up fighting the battle for justice alone. One farmer in South Tipperary, John Hanrahan bravely went to the courts to prove that the pollution emitted from the chemical corporate Merck Sharp had killed hundreds of his livestock and put his family and neighbours health at risk. Despite an out of court settlement by the company, it proved impossible to link the chemical industry to the pollution and subsequent illnesses. And while communities were finding ways to challenge the companies, either through use of the planning and legal processes, the companies used their political lobby to ensure the state closed the loopholes, increasingly blocking community dissension and increasingly polluting the environment and risking human health with backing from the state. It wasn't until twenty years after they started operating, that companies started to spend money on environmental control and started to talk about environmental regulation (Allen, 2004), at a time when there was still no state regulator in place.

Around this time in the early 1990s the state saw opportunities in the countries oil and gas reserves and aimed to use these to 'turn Ireland from a "net importer" into a "net exporter" of oil and gas (Dublin Shell to Sea, 2012). Having opened the door wide to chemical and toxic industries since the 1970s, the state transferred almost full control of oil and gas resources to private companies in the 1990s in order to access these resources but in doing so, left the state

with almost no share of the revenue from the sale of these resources. The overall benefit to Ireland is non-existent according to the terms listed in this booklet:

- Ownership and control of that oil or gas is transferred in full to the company;
- No royalties are paid to the State;
- The company can choose to export the oil or gas;
- They do not have to land the resources in Ireland or use Irish services of personnel;
- Even if the companies decide to sell in Ireland, the full current international price will be recovered from the consumer;
- Ireland has no ability to limit extraction in light of the link between fossil fuels and climate change. (Dublin Shell to Sea, 2012: p3).

Although the government argue that favourable terms are necessary to attract expertise to extract from difficult terrain, today with improved technologies and huge increases in the price of oil and gas, these terms are even more attractive to foreign companies to locate here, who will reap phenomenal profits (Dublin Shell to Sea, 2012).

With Ireland's poor history of regulation and environmental control, combined with the benefits that the oil and gas industry enjoy in Ireland, it is easy to see why companies like Tamboran and Energi oil are so eager to invest here and why communities should be worried that pollution from this industry will not be prevented by Ireland's regulatory body or by the companies themselves.

Coopted by green neo liberalism

Mullally argues that there is a direct link between globalisation and institutionalisation 'creating new constraints on collective action' (Mullally, 2006). Professionalisation affected

many different sectors that were once green. On top of a move towards specialisation, Jamison talks about how academics left social movements due to '[neo]liberalisation and new professional regimes in the universities' (Jamison, 2001). This was happening in Ireland with the introduction of Social Partnership Agreements taming sectors that had once stood by social movements such as the Trade Union sector (Leonard, 2007).

As neo liberal policies were starting to take hold of environmental organisations and experts, a neo liberal discourse was starting to emerge with the emergence of new language, such as 'sustainable development' and 'ecological modernisation'. Sustainable development focused on a new set of global issues for environmental organisations- climate change, ozone depletion, and biodiversity which replaced local problems (Jamison, 2001). With the growth of neo liberalism in the 1980s, 'it strongly influenced environmental politics by shifting responsibility over decision making directly into the hands of the corporations'. Business and government with the help of professionalised environmentalists 'would work together in order to achieve a kind of socio- economic development that took environmental costs and use of resources in to account' (Jamison, 2001). A new greener sustainable development discourse emerged. Outside of the sector, environmental concerns were being implemented across the realms of business, science and technology producing 'ecological modernisation' which aimed to bridge the gap between business and the environment, resulting in corporations being responsible for their regulation policies. This entrepreneurship extended to universities, government ministries and local governments where environmentalists, in an effort to secure employment, take up jobs in institutions coopted by green neo liberalism (Jamison, 2001).

Goldman relates this 'green neoliberalism' to the operations of the WB (World Bank) which partners with states and NGOs to push through 'sustainable' capital investments across the

world, but particularly in the global south. In the WB's agenda, development, particularly green development only makes sense if it's economically viable, e.g. hydroelectric dams for energy, soya plantations for fuel export, securing land for logging, etc. These green 'sustainable' projects are attractive to governments due to the economic incentives, much of which will be used to repay the loans to the WB. Indigenous populations obviously don't have a voice in this green neo liberal agenda. They get displaced, or as described by the WB, resettled because their way of life is unsustainable. The WB hasn't been acting alone in pushing this green neo liberal agenda. In order to get this bank style development into government agendas, civil society activities and the global political agenda, it needs a lot of professional support. The state uses its power to force NGOs to shut up, get out or shut down. NGOs are subsequently choosing to stay in countries where the World Bank are implementing their capital green projects and instead of being excluded have agreed that their capacity would be better served being part of World Bank projects. In doing this, they have made the job of the WB much easier.

How Fracking has been coopted by Green Neo-liberalism

In the introduction chapter of this study, I catalogue the growing popularity of fracking as a process to extract unconventional natural gas as an alternative energy source for many developed countries around the globe. Finewood and Stroup (2012) look at Pennsylvania's North-eastern Tier of the Marcellus Shale which has been a hotbed of natural gas production since 2007. This area is known for its gently rolling mountains and valleys, low population densities, clean and accessible water resources and pastoral farming; an all too familiar description of the areas identified for fracking in Ireland, particularly in relation to the complex water ways.

To by-pass water regulation acts in 2005, the US Congress passed the Energy Policy Act which exempted fracking from the Safe Drinking Water Act, and often referred to as the “Haliburton Loophole” (Finewood& Stroup, 2012). This was in response to an EPA report (USEPA 2004) finding that there was *no* risk of ground water contamination from fracking, despite the lack of research carried out to prove this. By 2009, 25% of all natural gas production in the US occurred through fracking compared to less than 1% in 2000. One can ask how this happened so rapidly, using a controversial process protected from regulation, and absent of thorough research. This could not have happened without the help of a neo liberal pro- fracking discourse which emerged to defend economic growth and to normalise the impacts on communities and resources as argued by Finewood & Stroup (2012). They catalogue the following list to be the main pro- fracking arguments,

...it generates a “green” low carbon emitting fossil fuel; it is a domestic energy source that can replace foreign oil; it can supply growing energy demands; and it can spur local economic development. (Finewood & Stroup, 2012: p74)

Proponents suggest that current and future US energy consumption necessitates the use of this controversial technique, touting national energy needs, energy security and rural economic growth. Similarly, proponents of green neo liberalism argue that environmental protection would best occur through market mechanisms and economic needs. With limited state regulation in place, oil and gas companies become experts on the environmental impacts of fracking as well as the expert to counter opponent voices.

Despite the fact that increased accounts of methane contaminated drinking water wells in the vicinity of fracking has forced US state agencies to review their policies, opponents of fracking are positioned as ‘irrational and unwilling to absorb necessary costs that would benefit their neighbours and the nation as a whole’ (Finewood & Stroup,2012). This tactic

not only pits a rational group of economically minded people against ‘irrational environmentalists’ but also helps to populate the hegemony of green neo liberalism.

In May 2012 the Irish EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) published a preliminary report on hydraulic fracturing, completed by the University of Aberdeen, who is funded by Halliburton, the company who patented fracking⁹. Concerns were also raised about the impartiality of this report due to the author of the report, Dr David Healy, who publically states on his staff webpage, received funding from Total E&P and BG International, both of which are oil and gas companies¹⁰. The report also based its conclusions in part on a study from the University of Texas at Austin which found that fracking did not contaminate groundwater, a study which has since been discredited due to undeclared conflict of interest on the part of the study’s author, Charles Groat- he was on the board of a fracking company for several years¹¹. Both authors were compromised by their associations with the oil and gas industry and demonstrate the level of cooption of universities by oil and gas interests. We learned earlier how in response to a report published by the US EPA in 2004 finding that there was no risk of ground water contamination from fracking, got an act passed exempting fracking from the Safe Drinking Water Act. Universities, the USA EPA and other regulatory agencies are still perceived to be credible sources of information, and any source which is not institutionally bound, is not.

What about those countries who have ‘best in the world’ regulation but are still allowing gas extraction to happen against the wishes of their citizens? This question challenges us to look beyond the state to see what powerful forces are controlling the pro- fracking agenda. One

⁹<http://www.abdn.ac.uk/news/3739/> (accessed 13/10/2013)

¹⁰<http://www.thejournal.ie/fracking-author-links-to-gas-535504-Jul2012/>(accessed 20/11/2013).

¹¹<http://www.thejournal.ie/calls-to-exclude-fossil-fuel-industry-from-all-fracking-research-595100-Sep2012/> (accessed 12/11/2013)

mechanism is international trade agreements which are being pushed through in secret to insure corporations have control over governments in countries where they want to invest. The Trans- Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) is one such treaty which is less about trade and more about deregulation and liberalisation, as reflected in the quote below;

TTIP is the next wave of a neoliberal deregulation drive, serving powerful corporate interests and undermining democracy and parliamentary government.

(Maier, 2013: p118)

Maier argues that these agreements are part of a wider agenda to promote deregulation and liberalisation in the wake of financial crises' across the US and EU countries and countries who want to attract new markets are happy to sign up. Because it is investor driven, corporations use their seat at the negotiation table to lobby for more deregulation while governments are side-lined. Corporations therefore become the defect 'unelected technocrats' who can veto anything the state doesn't like. Investors enjoy immunity from prosecution outside democratic legal systems, which enforce investor protection. Companies are already suing governments through these legal mechanisms if they pass policies to reduce their activities, to the cost of anticipated profits of the company. A US company (Lone Pine) demanded \$250 compensation from Canada after Quebec put a moratorium on fracking (Maier, 2013). These secret agreements which it takes whistle blowers to uncover, results in the demise of democracy and the demise of green policies as deregulation becomes more common. For those countries who can't afford to pay out, communities around the world have to face globalisation alone, without the protection of the state.

With four times more water resources on a per capita basis than most of the countries in Europe (Allen, 2004), it will be challenging for a high performing regulatory body to prevent pollution in the complex water ways of Leitrim and Fermanagh which is the home of Ireland's lakes and the location of the Lough Allen gas field. With Ireland's poor track record of regulation, backed by more powerful international forces driving deregulation and

liberalisation, communities will be left to monitor the cost of fracking to human health and environmental degradation in their area. On top of this, international agreements are sidelining states to decide their own rules, turning democracy into an illusion.

As a result of ever weakening democracies, communities fighting fracking in Ireland need to consider the cost of political engagement today. Instead, communities need a radical approach in order to directly challenge globalisation and need help to do it. To this end, social movements need to build alliances with actors who are not compromised by green neo liberalism. The problem is finding them. Section two explores how alliances can be damaging, especially when they are top-down and explores how professionalization has de-radicalised many of the ally's social movements once depended on.

Section 2: Is professional activism getting in the way of real change.

The professionalisation of the Irish Environmental movement

The success of the radical nature of the anti-nuclear movement inspired other radical movements in Ireland at the time in opposing new mining and toxic industries coming to Ireland (Allen, 2004). These were identified as 'populist environmentalism', linked to single issue protests predominantly located in rural Ireland, who were critical of and worked in opposition to the state (Mullally, 2006). One of the most successful of recent autonomous struggles in contemporary Ireland is Rosspoint and the reason for this success is threefold according to Cox (2011);

1. Pitting itself against a multinational and achieving huge success (costing the project 4 times its initial budget, and 11 years overdue)
2. Generating a wide ranging alliance combining different sections of the local community including, 'radical ecologists, trade unionists, socialists, nationalists, intellectuals and international solidarity' (Cox, 2011: p18).
3. Exposing a morally corrupt state influenced by a neo-liberal agenda, and subsequently bringing about a political shift in people's attitude to the state into a more radical space.

For the purposes of identifying where the environmental movement ‘failed’, I’d like to consider the other strand of environmentalism which became more widespread than populist movements and which moved away from these radical roots. Tovey labels this process of professionalisation or institutionalisation ‘official environmentalism’ where ex- activists took up positions of expertise in environmental organisations where institutionalised modes of resolving conflict were preferred over collective protest (Mullally, 2006). The environmental movement which was on the same side as the radical ‘new left’ social movements in the no nukes campaign became ‘mainstreamed; transformed into institutions which are no different to ‘corporatism, that is, integrate themselves into the reductive apparatus of the state’ (Tovey, 1999). Tovey goes as far to say that we are now a post- environmentalist era with the establishment and normalisation of ecological discourse indicates the end of radicalism in environmental politics (Tovey, 1999). The professionalisation of environmentalism is an important consideration for the anti- fracking movement at this time as it builds strategies and alliances for the future. It needs to critically reflect on how these strategies and alliances could professionalise the movement to the point that it becomes mainstreamed into an ineffective institution that poses no threat to the state or corporate power.

In Ireland, environmental organisations mushroomed throughout the 1980s as professionalization grew. On the one the one hand this meant establishing environmental issues on the public agenda resulting in environmentalism being no longer a marginalised issue but being brought into the mainstream influencing environmental policy at a national level (Mulally ,2006). Green expertise was also channelled into green politics with the beginnings of a Green Party in Irish politics, a situation that was reflected across Europe with Green parties emerging in the 1980s (Jamison, 2001), hoping to influence policy change but at the same time ‘abandoning popular mobilisation to the right’ (Cox, 2010). This is further

compounded by the fact that many of these organisations became dependent upon funding and policy access from the state and institutions that they once challenged. Referring to the growth of environmental NGOs in the 1980s and 1990s in Ireland, Allen argues that Ireland's ecology and its environment was getting worse with the growth of industrialisation during the same era, questioning the role of Ireland's increasingly professionalised environmental movement in preventing this from happening (Allen, 2004).

How professionalization can lead to cooption

In the article “‘civil society’ versus social movements”, Esteves et al argues that by choosing this path of professionalisation, organisations make a choice not to listen to grassroots pressures which might sway them in a different direction (Esteves et al, 2013). Sperber argues that cooption is also more likely once distance emerges between leadership and its members or the grassroots, leaving it easier to make decisions behind closed doors (Sperber, 2008). This alienation from the grassroots was inevitable as organisations became more and more professional, employing staff that had the appropriate qualifications to lobby and advocate at policy level, rather than employing those who were directly affected by the issues but who lacked the appropriate qualification. As a result of such exclusionary practices, organising at the grassroots was not prioritised. In adopting a top down approach, professional organisations tended to look up to lobby their targets (governments and corporate polluters) and in an attempt to avoid alienation from decision making themselves, formed partnerships with powerful elites to be able to influence from ‘the inside’. This may have earned organisations credibility as well as a few concessions on the one hand but ultimately coopted the leadership, leaving them unable to oppose decisions outside the negotiating table. In fact, many of these organisations became mirror images of the institutions that they originally set out to oppose, lacking accountability, transparency and the

capacity for critical self-awareness (Sperber, 2003). To this extent they have become addicted to respectability and lost the ability to disrupt or pose any significant threat to the state (Cox, 2013).

Coopted by funding

Sperber, in looking at the mechanics of cooption, argues that if funding is dependent on a top-down stream, the chances of cooption are greater (Sperber, 2008). He argues that funding can be reformist in the sense that it is given to less radical organisations, ignoring structure-less movements who compose of more militant groups or radical projects, as reflected in the quote below,

Acceptability and serviceability to the capitalist system are the operative criteria for the funding of proposals for “environmental action”. (Sperber, 2008: p22)

Sperber warns that acceptability and credibility is dangerous as it results in environmental organisations functioning as ‘microsoms of corporate decision- making, carriers of corporate ideology, and extentions of state and corporate policies’ (Sperber, 2008). This agrees with Gramscian’s interpretation of how hegemony is maintained by civil society actors who, in return for economic reward, support the capitalist system and ruling class.

Although there is no shortage of awards to big organisations, there is a great deal of shortage when it comes to accountability. According to Sperber, there is a culture of immunity for these organisations as they rarely get criticised by those above them or their contemporaries so there is no real incentive for self – examination (Sperber, 2008).

Grant makers in the US gave at least \$10 billion in grants to big greens in a 9 year period, while 15% of grant dollars were awarded to marginalised groups between 2007 and 2009¹². This discrepancy leads to an imbalance of power where large organisations are in a stronger position to dominate the discourse of a popular movement. At the same time, this amount of funding ‘translates to compromises and watered down actions’ leaving it hard to imagine them initiating a popular uprising (Belalia, 2013).

Andrea Smith in her introduction of *The Revolution Will Not be Funded: Beyond the Non-Profit Industrial complex*, in summarising essays which make up this anthology, presented the obstacles to movement organising within the context of the non-profit system in the US, which receives most of its funding from foundational grants. She points to how the foundational system in the US acts as a "shadow state" constituted by a network of institutions that do much of what government agencies are supposed to do with tax money in the areas of education and social services (Smith, 2007). Smith argues that these programmes influence movements to become institutions of policy makers and bureaucrats instead of organisers. She highlights that to build a mass movement means the involvement of millions of people, most of who cannot be paid. Smith highlights the negative impacts of social movements gaining funds from benefactors rather than constituents. This top down framework means that social movements who are accountable to these benefactors, are ultimately protecting the needs of the elite, and the capitalist system of power which ensure their survival. Mac Sheoin's example highlights the market approach taken by NGOs, whose campaigns have a short shelf life, leaving social movements high and dry in their wake. He finds that the campaign was successful to a point but before the campaign goals were

¹²http://www.ncrp.org/files/publications/Cultivating_the_grassroots_final_lowres.pdf (accessed 15/12/2013)

achieved, Greenpeace had moved to another campaign due to funding conditions (T. Mac Sheoin, 2012).

Co-opted by Power

Mac Sheoin uses the case study of Greenpeace's relationship with a local movement in India over the Bhopal disaster to consider the power imbalances between both. In his synopsis, Mac Sheoin pointed to power imbalance within the coalition formed as a result of the significant differences between the two actors with the result of Greenpeace not only claiming credit for the success of the campaign but also following different aims to those of local organisations and activists (Mac Sheoin, 2012).

Allen explains how Greenpeace dominated the campaign at Du Pont in Derry/Londonderry and tried to win it on science grounds whereas the community were concerned about broad ranging issues (social, economic, political and emotional) and the community ended up winning it on economic grounds. Greenpeace failed to understand that the issues weren't just about environmental rights; they were also about human rights and social conditions. Allen highlights how Greenpeace's campaign approach was in conflict with 'local autonomous democracy' where their attempts to dominate the campaign could potentially have lost it (Allen, 2004).

The failure of the green movement to recognise social, economic, political and emotional factors in its campaigning, repeatedly, has allowed detractors to discredit its arguments, particularly because few environmentalists take radical perspectives or can argue credibly about how the country should be run. Local autonomous democracy is not an integral aspect of their campaigning. (Allen, 2004: p220)

In light of these power imbalances, environmental organisations should not dominate the anti-fracking narrative, at the risk of the message being watered down, or framed within the narrow lens of an environmental issue. Through partnership arrangements with the state and influential donor's, these organisations are in a weaker position than social movements to

contest systems of power. Allowing them to dominate the campaign leaves social movements vulnerable to their actions which can de-radicalise a movement as demonstrated by the examples above.

Section 3: How neo liberalism and cooption can work together to silence local activism

Abuse of power and the ability to coopt exists at all levels of society including the local. Susan Crate (2002) looks at how citizen activism can be silenced in the face of natural resource exploitation in the Vilyuy Sakha region north- eastern Siberia, Russian, in the of the former Soviet Union which is an area twice the size of Alaska. The region has a rich source of minerals and other natural resources, with diamond mining becoming the main bone of contention among local citizens. From the outset, environmental degradation was caused by early exploration processes leaving rivers polluted and the construction of the Vilyuy dam exasperated the problem by spreading these toxins into local eco- systems, as a result of flooding. Between 1974 and 1987 the Soviet government performed many underground nuclear explosions resulting in contaminated soil. In 1989, local people formed the Vilyuy Committee, a regionally based citizen action group concerned with dissemination information, educating local inhabitants, and lobbying policy makers to improve environmental conditions of the Vilyuy region. This group initially had much support from the media and government representatives and had successfully organised at the local level in villages across the Vilyuy region. A key member was Pyotr Matinev who joined the committee in 1993 and under his vision and leadership introduced the committee to pursuing legal processes in ensuring safe technology be used for diamond mining and that the local communities should be appropriated a percentage of the diamond explorations.

After Matinev's untimely death in 1997, the Vilyuy Committee suffered a severe setback and with the loss of their main leader, many committee members left. At the same time, mining companies began to actively propagandise. Between 1997 and 1999, companies were threatening citizens that they would lose their state salaries, subsidies and pensions if they continued to protest. The result over this time was that citizens were effectively silenced.

In 2000, the Vilyuy committee personnel changed and transformed from 'an environmental NGO focused on involving citizenry in environmental activism, to a bureaucratic board of local officials who gather privately to discuss their plans' (Crate, 2002). The mining companies managed to successfully co-op the opposition. This change in personnel can be reflected in Gramscian's 'organic intellectuals', representing the former committee who were aligned to the communities needs transforming into 'traditional intellectuals' a new committee who saw themselves autonomous to the local community, steering social change according to their own beliefs (A. Morton, 2007).

I agree with Crate's conclusions that this cooption was partly due to the committee's focus on one person (Matinev) for the drive of the movement. This has implications for the anti-fracking movement in Ireland which is currently a loose network of groups and individuals working together to educate, lobby and mobilise against fracking. Not only is it a warning of the threat posed by companies who in this instance took advantage of the Vilyuy committee when they were at their weakest- after Matinev's death. This example also shows the weakness in relying on 'traditional' alliances who have the power to coopt a social movement from the 'inside'. These groups or individuals, in attaining control of a movement can de-radicalise local opposition to the point of silencing it as happened in Vilyuy.

Crate argues that the campaign partly failed due to the lack of Committee representation in the state capital, Moscow. Ireland is a smaller country than Russia geographically so the state capital's (Dublin & Belfast) are much closer to anti-fracking activists than Siberia was to Moscow. It is also where groups such as Not for Shale Belfast and No Fracking Dublin have a responsibility to represent the movement, growing awareness outside of fracking areas and using their lobby power to influence national policy on the issue.

Crates remark that building alliances with international NGOs would have made a difference is perhaps true but this sub chapter has outlined how professionalization can lead to cooption at an NGO level as has happened with many NGOs who started from populist roots.

Conclusion

This chapter investigated how neo liberalism and deregulation controls power at the top, while a green neo liberal hegemony controls the 'official' environmental movement and many of the 'traditional' alliances that were once useful to local movement. It uses environmental justice theory to explore how institutional environmentalism has not only alienated itself from local environmental issues and movements but has become coopted by capital interests leaving them largely ineffective in dealing with corporate power. It demonstrates the danger for the anti- fracking movement to build top down alliances at the risk of being coopted by them and being driven down a path that will de- radicalise the movement. Instead the movement should reflect on the success of 'populist' movements, like Shell to Sea who are critical of and work in opposition to the state, and whose success can be attributed to building a broad ranging alliance of different sections of the local community. This chapter explored the benefits of organising along a network framework which links local communities and

local issues creating the most effective resistance to forms of dominance, cooption and power and ultimately the biggest threat to a neo liberal hegemony that is determined to see that fracking goes ahead.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter explores the methodology paradigm I used to research this subject area. It takes its influence from elements of different 'participatory research' paradigms, and has been determined based on the chosen subject area which looks at the impact of alliances on the Irish anti- fracking movement, and how the research has been interpreted by me, as an activist within this movement. I will explore why I choose this qualitative approach and describe the methods I used to complement participative research as far as I possibly could, given the constraints I was under; lack of time, inexperience as researcher, challenges and balancing my personal role as activist and researcher. I will explore how being reflexive was essential to my research in terms of informing the direction of this research and informing my ontological journey; understanding the new worlds of hydraulic fracturing, social activism and alliance building, informed by the participants of this research and the dual role I played as activist and researcher. Informed by feminist studies, I will explore how ethics played an important part in conducting the research process encouraging active participation of the researched, promoting equality and enabling empowerment (Oakley, 2000).

Why (Participatory) Action Research?

In approaching my research topic looking at alliances within the anti- fracking movement, it became important that I use 'Action Research' due to my personal participation in this

movement and the need to do research that was useful to the movement. As an active opponent to fracking, I believe strongly in this campaign and want to see it grow in subsequent years and ultimately succeed. Barker & Cox make a distinction between intellectual and movement intellectuals, interpreting different kinds of knowledge and being different kinds of producers. According to them, academic theorising is limiting to the extent that it,

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

(Barker & Cox, 2002: p2)

By comparison, they argue that a movement intellectual will approach research in a different way, guided by the researcher's active engagement in the movement 'with relation to the social world within which those movements move, and which they seek to transform' (Barker & Cox, 2002: p4).

As an activist in the anti-fracking movement, I was eager to understand the impact of alliances on the campaign to date and hoped to challenge the movement in considering what alliances they needed to build going forward. Many of those who participated in the research from inside the movement commented on how well timed the discussion was as they felt the question of alliances hadn't been given a lot of attention. Some of those with previous experience inside the movement and activists from outside the movement reflected the importance of this topic in considering the role outside actors can play in colonising, corrupting and subordinating social movements. These different set of views reflected the importance time plays in movement knowledge and struggle. Through combining both sets of experience and knowledge, this thesis hopes to set the ground for 'not making the same mistakes' and hopes to set in motion action for change. I wanted to use a methodology that

afforded a voice to people within the movement to generate practical knowledge that was useful to activists to undertake action for change. In doing so, I hoped that this research would not only produce knowledge *about* the anti- fracking movement, but would be used *for* the purposes of the movement at this time.

Given my background in development education and global justice campaigning, I wanted to carry out research that complimented my involvement in the movement and map my praxis as an ‘environmentalist’ and a ‘political activist’. PAR’s emphasise on critical reflection helped me do this. Creswell describes this as a ‘personal lens’, reflected in the following quote;

The personal-self becomes the researcher-self. It represents honesty and openness to research, acknowledging that all inquiry is laden with values.(Creswell, 2003: p182)

Engaging in a continual process of critical reflection for this research had a profound effect on its development in addressing the issue of power and position of hierarchical alliances, caused me to radically re- focus the research topic so that it came from a bottom up perspective, rather than a top- down one. Informed by the PAR module in this course and subsequently, listening to a range of dissenting views encouraged this process, reflecting the nature of movement praxis. As such, this piece of research involved a deep epistemological journey, in understanding that the research process would inform the ‘knowledge status’ of this thesis and more importantly, challenge the ‘self- knowledge’ of me as researcher.

Reflexivity: My personal learning journey

Critical reflection is key concept of PAR and having worked for some time as a campaigns officer in an NGO working on global issues such as climate change, I welcomed the opportunity to become involved in the anti- fracking movement knowing that it would challenge my praxis as an ‘environmentalist’ and political activist. As such I started out my

research with the question; ‘Would INGO global activism benefit by being more aligned with local grassroots activism in an Irish context?’ with the aim of talking to people both in the sector and in the movement. Through increased action research and critical reflection I was able to see the weakness in this initial perspective which was top- down. I realised that my focus needed to radically re-shift to a bottom up perspective and prioritise grassroots activists as central to this production of knowledge.

I had considered myself an ‘environmentalist’ through my engagement in climate change campaigning with an NGO. Upon learning about fracking at the grassroots activist gathering in Galway 2012, I disagreed with shale gas extraction based on this environmental perspective and my concern for global warming targets and the worrying threat of industrialisation of Ireland’s green environment. It wasn’t until I started to talk to campaigners within licenced areas, that I realised my ‘environmental’ focus was too narrow and profoundly limited in meeting their concerns. When one campaigner in Leitrim told me that she doesn’t sleep at night for worrying about the threat of fracking going ahead in her area; the threat to her health caused by ground water pollution, the threat to her livelihood which depends on tourists, the threat to her brother’s livelihood which depends on farming and the social threat posed to the delicate ecosystem of her rural community (caused by local people leaving coupled with influx of ‘outside’ labourers employed by the industry moving into the area). Understanding that framing the anti-fracking struggle as an environmental issue, regardless of the terminology used (including environmental justice) can be potentially damaging. The anti- fracking movement is not fighting the issue through an environmental lens alone. It also concerns issues of health, socio- economic, and livelihood. Limiting the activities of No Fracking Ireland to advocacy has the same effect as limiting the issue of fracking to one banner/ paradigm or model, when it is a multi- faceted issue and means different problems to different people. Coming to the realisation that this issue should

be framed by the communities alone was an important shift in my ontological understanding of the limitations of framing this issue as an environmental one and framing the No Fracking Ireland movement within an environmental justice paradigm.

Feminist Epistemology

This research was informed by feminist research which reflects my ontological standpoint as a female researcher and the ontological perspectives of nine of thirteen participants of this research who are females. This is significant in relation to the part gender plays in the creation of knowledge and how a feminist epistemology (theory of knowledge) has greatly influenced the contribution to knowledge of this thesis. Allen discusses that social opposition to toxic development in previous decades came from rural populations and that women in particular played a central role in these local movements (Allen, 2004). We know from chapter one of this research that five local women from the North West, concerned at what they seen in Josh Fox's film, collectively organised to start what has become the No Fracking Ireland network.

Complementary to PAR, feminist epistemology defends experience and experiential research. Oakley (2002) argues that most experiential methodology is quantitative and therefore most masculine, where 'experts' are relied on for research- doctors, teachers, social workers, politicians, economists, health educators, psychotherapists, lawyers, organisations, etc. Oakley challenges the reader to question why these experts are any more a credible source than socially marginalised groups who are speaking from experiential knowledge (Oakley, 2000). For this reason, I changed my focus which had originally set out to talk to NGOs and explore their relationship with social movements to speaking only to grassroots activists who were directly involved in this campaign or a similar one. Taking a year off from professional activism and joining the anti- fracking movement allowed me greater freedom to take on the role of co- learner in this research process. In doing so it affected the politics of the research

where instead of coming to the movement from an NGO perspective, I was engaging in this research process as a fellow activist. This approach allowed me to engage with participants as equals in the process, using their personal experiences in creating knowledge. Being new to the campaign I was keen to link in with the existing network and make sure that the No Fracking Dublin group was aligned with the wider network. Building such relationships from the 'inside' helped to build trust with individuals who would be part of this research and created opportunities to work together on the campaign, strengthening the network. This helped create a dialogic process between me, the researcher and participants learning together and being 'co- producers of learning' (Oakley, 2000).

By carrying out in-depth interviews, each one lasting approximately two hours, it allowed me to understand activist's experiential knowledge of alliances, affording an opportunity to discuss a topic that is often taken for granted and not always given enough reflection. It afforded an avenue where campaigners could think more critically about alliances and endeavour to change practices. Many of those within the movement commented on how well timed the discussion on alliances was at this point in the campaign and how dialogue and reflection helped to devise future strategies at a local level.

To this end, my research was conducted in a non- hierarchical and non- exploitative way, reflecting the qualities of feminist epistemology. This democratic approach to research develops the most reliable forms of knowing in order to bridge the gap between us and others and to ensure that those who intervene in other people's lives do so with the most benefit and the least harm(Oakley, 2000).

Approach to Research

Qualitative research

The methodologies described above are the philosophical paradigms that I took influence from. In line with the principles of these paradigms I used qualitative methods of inquiry to best suit this project. Mason argues that qualitative research is not a ‘prescriptive set of principles’ or based on one philosophical position but that its strength comes from the diverse approaches chosen by the researcher that best suits their research (Mason, 2002). Qualitative research suited this project best as it complements PAR in many ways, one being that it is interested in ‘interpretivist’ philosophy, concerned with how alliances are understood, experienced, and interpreted by participants in this research and based on methods of data generation which are both flexible and sensitive to the social context in which data are produced (Mason, 2002), which can be demonstrated below. As stated earlier, I started out with a testing hypothesis that subsequently expanded, emerging from a bottom- up approach. This change in approach was fundamental to my praxis and vital to the emergent research encouraging me to actively seek dissenting views from my own.

Data collection methods

Oakley (2000) outlines five methods for ‘qualitative’ research: participant observation, interviewing, case-studies, life history methods, and group interviews. In researching this topic I found the in- depth interview and the semi- structured interview as most appropriate methods of data collection, as it elicits ‘conversational partnership’ which allows people’s feelings, thoughts, and experiences’ to emerge (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). I used this approach for eight individual interviews and one group interview. The group interview was conducted with experienced activists who had an ‘outsider looking inside’ perspective on the movement.

This group had different experiences from many of the independent interviews conducted and which input provided rich data to an action research project.

My interviews took place between January and April 2013 which involved multiple trips to Leitrim which I tried to coincide with national meetings, one trip to Belfast and the others were carried out in Dublin. The interviews were carried out in a range of places dictated by the participants of the research. Venues ranged from people's homes, hotel lobbies, in a community centre in Manorhamilton and a social centre in Dublin. They were carried out using an informal approach and conversations were recorded using a digital voice recorder owned by the researcher, which did not inhibit the conversation, as a pen and paper perhaps would. The semi structured interview questions were used as an aid to guide the conversation and were provided in advance of the interview and a hard copy was given to the interviewee before the interview to read through.

I followed the National University of Ireland guidelines in explaining my research and sought signed consent forms, both to protect the participants and myself. All those who participated in my research were assured anonymity which allowed people to speak openly and candidly.

Data from semi- structured interviews and the interview group was gathered using a recording device and stored under password on a personal laptop. These audio records were then transcribed and shared with the participants whom they applied to who were invited to make changes to their submission if necessary. These (in some cases, revised) transcriptions were then coded using a two stage process of initial coding and focused coding (Charmaz, 2006) and analysed for meaning. Given the large content of data generated by this study, I used Max QDA, a qualitative data analysis software programme, to assist me in this task.

Who to talk to?

For this research I was interested in the experiences of members of the anti- fracking movement who were members of existing local group in both NI and ROI. Although there are three active groups in NI and approximately twenty active groups in ROI, my research was limited to including a member of one group in NI; Belfast Not For Shale and representatives from six local groups in ROI; Love Leitrim, North West Network Against Fracking, Carrick Against Fracking, No Fracking Dublin and GEAI.

After my first interview with a member of LL, I realised I needed to get a more critical perspective on alliances, not only for the richness of the research, but to inform my own praxis, and the opportunity came with a visiting activist from Canada who had experienced many years of fracking in her own country, and who kindly agreed to share her experiences of the dangers for communities in building outside alliances. This encounter influenced me to get more perspectives from ‘outside’ the movement from experienced activists, many of whom were involved in Shell to Sea. I interviewed these participants as a group given their similar experiences and knowledge. I choose individual interviews for those inside the movement as I wanted people not to be inhibited by the divergent views that exist within the movement.

The data gathered from experienced activists spoke more to the theory on cooption and to building alliances at the local level as catalogued in my literature review. The views in my research which did not express similar views were held by activists who, in some instances, are new to grassroots activism. Therefore, I see the implications for this study to be particularly relevant to this latter group of people within the anti- fracking movement in

Ireland. The combination of inputs from those with activism experience and those with less helped challenge my personal praxis and the overall production of knowledge to this thesis.

Challenges to the research

There were many challenges to this research, the primary one being time! Data gathering and data coding was the biggest challenge to me as researcher. Given that many of the individual interviews were up to two hours each, the transcribing process took a great deal of time, as did the coding of these collective transcripts, as was feeding the transcripts back and encompassing those changes. This research process was incredibly time intensive, leaving no time to engage in a participative approach to the analysis, an important component of PAR. Dillon warns about the time and resources challenges in undertaking participatory research (Dillon, 2010).

The ‘mountain’ of data gathered described in the processes above was another significant challenge to me as researcher to fit it into the narrow confines of a thesis project. This project subsequently focuses predominantly on the data gathered relating to ‘problem’ alliances, excluding the data gathered on the role of mainstream media which was a significant actor in silencing the voice of the opposition. Unfortunately due to the constraints of a thesis, particularly in relation to word count, I could not include this section, or the section dealing with new media, which is seen as playing a significant role in helping to build alliances at the grassroots. These omissions not only weaken the arguments of this study but omit compelling views produced by research participants. The time factor left it impossible to carry out participative analysis which has meant that my voice and ontological position has a bigger presence in this research than I would have liked, compared to if I had a more collaborative approach to the research. Due to this issue, I was conscious of the role my

personal language played in framing situations. An example of this is the ‘anti- fracking movement’ which refers to the collective action against fracking in Ireland. I was also conscious of the role paradigms play in imposing frames on local movements. I discuss this elsewhere in the thesis in relation to the limitations of an environmental justice paradigm. Overall, time constraints, the word limit of this study, and personal inexperience of carrying out social science research were factors that contributed to the limitations of this study.

Conclusion

As explored in this chapter an action research paradigm was used to carry out this research project, to reflect my praxis as activist and researcher during this process. This role presented challenges in carrying out participatory research, with time being the limiting factor in preventing this research from being purely participatory. As discussed in this chapter, reflexivity as a researcher played a key role in shaping this study to how it ended up. Choosing research participants with dissenting views not only challenged my praxis, but played a huge role in creating knowledge to inform this project. The qualitative approach to my methodology was greatly influenced by feminist studies from an ontological perspective and for the role it played in complementing Active Research. Committed to principles of PAR and committed to the belief that praxis means social change, I aim to feed this research back to the two audiences I have targeted for this research in a participatory format, as detailed in the concluding chapter of the this thesis.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

Introduction

Section one of this chapter looks at how ‘synergy’ happens between powerful actors at the top, including politicians, the state regulator, environmental organisations, local institutions and industry. It explores the difficulties participants of this research involved in the anti-fracking struggle identified in engaging in political processes to date; in opposing a growing pro- fracking rhetoric, having limited engagement in decision making on licensing options, and having problems getting environmental experts and organisations to support them. Much of this engagement has been hard fought and has not always produced positive outcomes, despite the time, effort and energy invested by the movement in engaging with them. It shows how communities in the North West have defied cooption by Tamboran and rejected cooption by the EP (Environmental Pillar) in its attempt to control the voice of the movement. Section two of this chapter demonstrates how important it is for local communities to control the narrative of the anti- fracking campaign so that it is not limited to looking at the environmental impact of unconventional gas extraction but it is about community rights. It argues that outside actors dominating a local campaign can risk diluting the narrative and imposing their own language, and behaviour on communities which can lead to local cooption. This section argues that by building a broad ranging alliance between local and international anti- fracking groups and developing co-operation between other social movements, such as Shell to Sea, creates the most effective resistance to forms of dominance, cooption and power and ultimately presents the biggest threat to the oil and gas industry here.

Section 1: How Cooption Happens and Who Are the Key Players?

Oil and Gas Cooption

The issue of cooption or “‘synergy’ at the top”, with problematic alliances are identified by participants of my research as being common to all of these actors in varying degrees.

Building an alliance with the politicians, the regulators, and the oil and gas companies is what they call Synergy Alberta... That’s what they do. They all create alliances. They all come to the table.

An activist from Alberta, Canada, warns against the process of ‘synergising’ in the quote above, which goes on between the power elites at the top, where the state, regulators, and institutions are ‘captured’ by the oil and gas industry and the rhetoric that ‘fracking can be done safely’ has been used by these alliances in Alberta, despite water contamination caused by fracking in her community.

A member of Love Leitrim (LL) believes that Tamboran Resources (the company awarded one of two Options Licences for the Lough Allen Basin, which covers parts of counties Cavan, Donegal, Leitrim, Mayo, Monaghan, Roscommon and Sligo) were determined to ‘fast track’ the process in the North West by gaining community approval just after being granted an Option License for the area. He claims that they did this through networking with local business and community groups, raising awareness at community hall meetings and through the local and national media, denouncing environmental damage by promising regulation and most importantly, job creation. In an effort to show commitment to the area, they vowed to pay two million on local projects, of which €20,000 was taken by the local business forum in Manorhamilton. According to this member of LL, the decision by the business forum caused much consternation among opponents to the project in the area, and particularly those in Love Leitrim. This member of LL remarks on the irony involved in members of the local opposition groups benefitting enormously from this open dialogue as they were able to use the information provided by Tamboran and the resources (such as area maps with the potential frack well extent) to build their own counter argument.

Problems with Political engagement at state and state regulation level

Political Ignorance

Whilst some of those I interviewed thought politicians were naively ignorant to the threats posed by the industry and needed to be educated, others felt let down by their elected officials. InNI, a member from BNFS (Belfast Not for Shale) found politicians to be frustrating for not speaking out, but put this down partially to their lack of knowledge on the issue,

I really do believe on a personal level they don't understand what they're getting themselves into, a lot of them. Because there's no real need for most of them to even read up that much on this. They'll just be given a quick summary or whatever and then they'll be given the money that can be made out of it.

Members feel frustrated and angry that despite educating politicians on the issue, they are not doing enough. A member from LL adds,

There's a lot of fear around. People [are] very, very frightened. People feel very let down. We did expect and we do expect our government to protect us and to voice our wishes without us having to work night and day to have that done. We elected them, we pay their salaries, and it's up to us to ensure that they do their job.

This member of LL expresses her tiredness and disappointment of elected representatives who don't do their job despite the work that volunteers in the community have done in educating them;

Sometimes I feel overwhelmed with responsibility and I get tired. That goes for everybody. And I just wish our elected representatives, some do, would take their responsibilities seriously, that's what they're paid to do. We're all volunteers struggling here.

Political distancing

Anger at political distancing was voiced by many members that I interviewed who felt that ignorance was deliberately playing into the hands of the oil and gas industry. During a meeting with a delegation of campaigners from the North West in 2011, Pat Rabbitte (Minister for Communications, Energy & Natural Resources) challenged the delegates to prove that there were health risks associated with fracking, an act that not only distances the state from responsibility but puts that responsibility on communities, knowing that it can't be proven in an Irish context. Minister Fergus O'Dowd has proved to be equally elusive according to a member of LL,

Fergus O'Dowd has been promising to come to Leitrim for nearly a year and a half at this stage and he hasn't turned up. And we have been speaking to his diary secretary and given him a list of names. We talked about dates but still, he hasn't come like.

When he finally was nailed down in the Dáil by campaigners from the North West who door stopped him, he reported that he'd been to Pennsylvania on a field visit and didn't come across any concerns in relation to fracking there, as reflected by this member of LL who was at the meeting,

I was very concerned about that conversation. Again he didn't say it wasn't going to happen. He said that he'd been to Pennsylvania and he'd seen fracking and he didn't seem that concerned.

Campaigner's later found out the health officials have started a database on the increasing prevalence of cancer clusters in the Pennsylvania area which many believe is related to fracking activity.

Since these initial meetings, campaigners in the North West complain that the parties in power in the ROI are increasingly distancing themselves from the communities affected whilst increasingly using rhetoric which approves of regulated fracking. One member of GEAI (Good Energies Alliance Ireland), through her political engagement is learning that Ireland's influence on fracking is minimal due to bigger international players dictating the scene. She claims that due to signing up to European treaties on energy policy, Ireland

cannot make energy policy without reference to Europe. She also believes that US [oil and gas] corporations and financial institutions like the Troika, yield huge power and influence that affect decisions here, as reflected in this quote,

I mean Pat Rabbitte was so much more inclined to be so cautious about unconventional gas but then when he went into the meeting with other energy ministers and he came out speaking the speak... I think the United States, em the corporations that are based there are hugely powerful and I think we don't actually know the level of influence that they have on the decisions that are made for us locally here at all, you know and that has been quite a shock to me really...

This sentiment is expressed by a member of Carrick Against Fracking (CAF),

... he [Pat Rabbitte] didn't get there and this government isn't there because they're standing up for the people of Ireland...they're there to enforce an agenda that's going on and it's going on right across Europe...

There were many examples of political desertion from Shell to Sea activists relating to the situation in Corrib, where independent TD's and opposition parties were very supportive of the campaign until the guards started to use coercive force against the local community and parties previously publically supportive of Shell to Sea went into government and became silent as happened with the Green party as reflected in the quote below,

When parties are in opposition, they're looking for votes, they'll say what people want to hear but once they're in power they actually get in charge of implementing. Emm, and particularly for... Shell because it's such a huge industrial or industry thing. Like, there's so much money tied up in it, you know, it would take a major transformation to imagine them going against that and fracking's the same thing really. It's not a minor thing that they can make a minor decision on. It's a vast amount of wealth so it's going to be very deeply imbedded.

Green party cooption

According to a member of NFS, the NI Green party has been very helpful in providing strong support to the opposition voice in Stormont. However, anger is expressed by a campaigner in the North West over the Green Party's involvement in the license application process in ROI when application for onshore licensing options were invited by both governments (in the case of NI, the application was for Petroleum Licenses) in 2010 long before communities were aware that their area would be potentially fracked. A year later, gas companies were meeting

politicians behind closed doors before licences were granted. In ROI, this all happened under the watch of Eamon Ryan, the then Minister for Communication, Energy and Natural Resources, and member of the Green Party and astonishingly no opposition to this process was publically questioned or opposed by the Green party whilst in power. This is an example of green- synergy with the following actors being responsible for the demise of the environmental movement, according to a member of CAF,

The Environmental Network and the Pillar [Environmental Pillar] and the Green Party in Ireland have a lot to answer for when it comes to the environmental movement in this country.

Sinn Fein's divisiveness

Opposition parties such as Sinn Fein have publically called for a ban on fracking and local Sinn Fein TD for Sligo and North Leitrim, Michael Colreavy has been very vocal in his support of the opposition campaign, raising the issue in the Dáil on numerous occasions and inviting members of the movement, including No Fracking Dublin to a meeting in the Dáil with his deputies to discuss the EPA submission (see information further). A member of BNFS raises the issue of Sinn Fein in NI and the impact of their position for the 'no' side,

Sinn Fein are very divisive in the north and initially when I heard they were on my side, I thought, oh good because they're pretty powerful but that's actually been more of a problem than a help, it really has. It's been a problem because it has polarised the campaign; Protestant, Catholic, was the last thing we need. It's not really Sinn Fein's fault, that's just the reality of Northern Ireland.

Far left 'negative' domination

Although the anti- fracking movement in ROI have had minimal interaction with far left politicians or parties, interactions with the Northern Ireland Socialist's party and others on the political left have been disappointing according to a member from BNFS. This member expressed the fear of aligning to certain political messaging, which supports 'negative' messaging, for fear that this would alienate the campaign against appealing to a broader

public. More frustrating for this member however is the tendency for far left politicians to support the campaign in words but not offer any meaningful help, as reflected in the quote,

Plenty of talk: lots and lots of talk: lots of long and eloquent speechifying talk, but no actual action.

A member from NFD, complained about the Socialist Workers party in ROI, who he claims gets involved in every campaign in an attempt to take over the campaign for their own gain, as reflected below,

There are groups that use you for their own modus operandi and they are never explicit about that. If a campaign becomes popular you'll get political groups who want to join because they'll gain from that.

EPA: not up to standard

There was real concern expressed by a member of LL of environmental regulators not being up to the task of regulating unconventional gas extraction because of the multitude of problems that could arise when regulators don't have the experience or capacity to respond adequately. This member fears that it will be the community who end up regulating this industry if it goes ahead,

At the moment nobody's checking anything. Well, that's a very general statement but it's quite hard, they don't have the staff, they don't have the personnel. For known sources of contamination, you know if a cement truck keels over or there's a diesel spill. There are no people to come out. Who's going to come out for frack fluid that we don't know the composition off? How much damage is going to be done to human, animal and environment before someone will say whoops, this is leaking? The fracking companies aren't going to tell us. They'll get their coffers and get out of dodge as quick as they can.

There were many concerns expressed about the limits of the final terms of reference for the EPA- led research study (The Environmental Impacts of Unconventional Gas Exploration and Extraction, UGEE) which is limited to looking at environmental impact but does not consider the impact of unconventional gas exploration and extraction on health, water, air, land, wildlife, farms, industry, tourism, and agriculture. Of particular concern is the exclusion of a Health impact Assessment (HIA) which campaigners see as a grave omission.

Others expressed concern about the EPA's exemption from prosecution and expressed caution about entering into consultation as long as the EPA was protected by this immunity clause. An activist from Canada stated the following,

The report and exemption from immunity, well, I think the consultation shouldn't be happening until that's cleared up, until the report is comprehensive, until health impact assessment terms of reference are written and socio economic impact assessment has to be done as well, not just health. Health is very limiting. It's got to be way more than that. And then, the immunity clause. Two paragraphs have to be struck from the EPA act I think. I don't think there ought to be any consultation at all until that's been done.

Advice from this activist warned that by engaging in public consultations with state bodies, it allows the state to use these submissions to claim that concerns identified will be mitigated against with 'best in the world regulation' and thereby manipulating people's concerns by turning them upside down into solutions for making the industry more safe, as explained below,

I believe now that all of these things are set up to get our consent. So if you send in a submission even if you object to fracking, your consenting to allow it to go ahead because what the companies and the government will do is say, 'well you said no to fracking and you wanted a health impact assessment so we'll do best practices to protect health and that mitigates against air pollution, soil and water pollution so everything will be fine and you have given consent because you've entered a submission'.

A member of CAFshares her concerns about the level of cooption between industry, government and state bodies, as expressed by this quote,

You have major ties between industry, government and state bodies – major ties and these people all know each other, they network, they all know each other and with the UK, that's been written about quite well and extensively and that's a major problem, where there's a blurring kind of sorry you're a politician yet you've investments or you work in a body that has brought out a pro-industry document and this isn't anything new, we know this. Like in the States, president Obama has just selected a guy who worked for the oil and gas industry as his energy advisor and he's a major pro-fracking guy. I mean this just like - these are described as democracies: United States, Ireland the UK. It's a joke, it's a complete joke! So that's the situation with state bodies, they're 'yes' groups for the government advisory boards.

This member also expressed exasperation with the first EPA research being carried out by Aberdeen University whose author is heavily funded by the oil and gas industry as well as the

university having close economic ties to Halliburton, the company who patented fracking, exclaiming,

... it stinks to high heavens when you have that sort of research being handed over as independent.

Members of Shell to Sea agreed that by engaging with state bodies may earn the movement concessions but will not ultimately stop the industry from winning, as quoted by an activist below,

I think one of things that's been really clear about engaging with state bodies like the EPA and Board Pleanála and stuff is that when it comes to the environmental ones, the planning ones, you can definitely win compromises out of them but you will not win the issue.

For those individuals with previous campaign experience, they talk about their experience of dealing with this 'synergy' at the top,

... people who are familiar with the experience in North Mayo would think it might be worth engaging with political, well, political lobbying and engaging with state agencies, regulatory bodies and so on. Em, and that is, well, I think a lot of us would see huge difficulties with that, ah, problems with doing that because, em, that legitimises you know the Environmental Protection Agency or just the processes off government are legitimised and if you're seen to put your faith in them, you kind of have to go on with them and they inevitably decide against or decide in favour of the project or the companies and it can just sap your energy, and your time and it can actually be hugely damaging. That's an experience from Corrib.

Those with previous experience in campaigning are under no illusions about the lack of political will there is to really challenge power. They see friendly politicians useful to get questions asked in the Dáil or raise the issue in governmental committees but would not be surprised to see them deny any involvement in the campaign in two years' time when they get into government. Some activists believe that compromises can be won by engaging with state regulators but they will not win the issue. In the example of Corrib, the current pipeline is 'nowhere near that of the original one' according to a member of Shell to Sea, due to concessions won by regulators, such as An BordPleanála ruling in 2009 that the onshore pipeline posed a risk to local people. The resounding advice from the group interview was

that although political engagement with state bodies and politicians might be useful in promoting your cause, they are certainly not going to win your campaign.

Environmental Cooption

Many of those within the movement expressed frustration at the lack of local experts in the fields of environmental science and geology to lend their support to the campaign. There are fears that there aren't enough independent experts (economists, geologists, toxicologists) in Ireland who are willing to speak out against the oil and gas companies which some campaigners put down to issues of funding and culture. One geology scientist in the campaign says that science pertains to have a culture of neutrality but in practice many are funded by oil and gas companies. A member of the NWNAF claims that many geologists are employed by the petro-chemical industry and others don't want to speak out on the issue due to being 'captured' by convention, in an effort to protect their job and their lifestyle. Similarly, a member from CAF questions the role of professionals,

Once people have a few letters after their name in Ireland; I don't know what happens to them. Do they fall into some sort of black hole where they can never come out of?

Many participants in this study spoke to the example of Aberdeen University who the EPA commissioned to carry out initial research into fracking which itself, is funded by Halliburton, the company who patented fracking, the technology. With such cooption at institutional level, a Shell to Sea campaigner, (who has a background in environmental science) believes it is inevitable that whistle blowers and people who challenge the system of power risk their job by speaking out or raising their head above the parapet. She recognises the irony of the culture of 'neutrality' that exists within environmental science, where it's seen as unprofessional to have an opinion about environmental issues because in practice many are funded by oil and gas companies so neutrality is already jeopardised.

Environmental organisations have engaged with the movement to varying degrees. One of these is the EP (Environmental Pillar) which is a coalition of twenty seven national environmental NGOs and is one of Ireland's five national social partners. Some members commended the organisation for their involvement with the movement early in the campaign, specifically for facilitating workshops to communities in the North West on the subject of the Aarhus Convention (UNECE Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters). However according to a research participant in the North West, the EP made a grave mistake in its efforts to get involved with the EPA consultation (terms of reference of the second research report, as referred to in the section above) and has cost the organisation dearly in terms of its relationship with the anti- fracking movement. According to her, the EP tried to facilitate the government in its attempt to channel the voice of the movement by attempting to convince a select handful of people (including this member) to participate in a closed consultation within a matter of weeks, proposing that the EP would then feed this input back to government. As pointed out by this member, instead, they should be working with the communities insisting to the government that the communities themselves need to be in charge of what happens in their communities, and not acting as a middle person, as explained in this quote,

... what they should have said was, 'when you want to deal with this issue about fracking, we'll be alongside these communities and we will be bringing them *with us* – we'll organise a meeting if you want, but we want *these people* to be in charge of what you're trying to do within *their* communities'...

Enraged by this proposal, this member told others in the movement and a meeting was subsequently organised to vote on it collectively. At the meeting the proposal was rejected by the movement as a whole, and went as far as enraging some members. As a result of the community's decision to reject the closed consultation, the movement secured a public consultation and the EP became irrelevant in the equation where initially they had had a central role.

This participant highlights the risk of these organisations forming alliances with the state, through funding mechanisms which make them part of the system,

I've no doubt that something does happen after a while, if your networking with those sort of people, and within those structures that are corrupt and that are flawed, then after a while, unfortunately, your part of the system.

In contrast, this participant talks about the effectiveness of the anti- fracking groups who have been operating without funding but have gotten the issue to where it is today,

We literally have no money, but yet, all the people who have been involved in this campaign, on no money, have gotten this issue to where it is today.

Some people interviewed complained that although fracking is the greatest threat currently posed to the environment in this country, very few NGOs are actually engaged in it in a meaningful way. The sentiment among many campaigners in ROI is, 'where are they?' Some people put this down to the fact that many NGOs are not mandated to publically campaign on issues, which one campaigner thought needs to be seriously looked at if NGOs want to be relevant for social movements.

A Shell to Sea activist suggested that organisations are more likely to support communities who see themselves as 'victims' rather than 'resisters', demonstrated in this quote:

I think part of that story is a lot of those groupings are quite fond of people in the role of victim but not so fond of people in the role of resisters often, so as long as it's something that's being done to people, that's OK, you know, they're comfortable talking about it. But when there's any sort of successful fight back at all, they then'll start to back away from it.

Shell to Sea campaigners use the example of An Taisce in prioritising their own motivation over the needs of the community. Although earlier experiences were positive, the community later felt betrayed by the organisation when it settled a Corrib judicial review case with the State out of court in October 2011 against the community's wishes. According to the

interview group, the community also felt cheated at the An Taisce's misleading communications with the community prior to the court case.

Good Energies Alliance Ireland (GEAI) was formed in late 2011 and one of its main objectives is to oppose fracking after a few residents in the North West first learned about it by attending community meetings in the area, according to one of the founding members of the organisation. A member of GEAI remarks that as well as opposing fracking, the founding members were also interested in looking at the wider energy debate on alternative solutions to fossil fuel extraction. According to this research participant, frustrated by the lack of structure and direction to the movement, GEAI was founded to engage in awareness raising activities and advocacy work at a national level, but was met by a 'huge backlash' by the anti- fracking movement. According to a member of LL who is also a member of GEAI, the formation of GEAI was viewed with suspicion and hostility by members of the campaign as being seen as a competing umbrella group against the movement. This initially led to distrust within the movement and hostility directed at members of GEAI who were also part of local groups. This member praised the work of GEAI in raising initial awareness in Leitrim in schools, universities and among politicians and local institutions. However, comparing GEAI to LL, he remarked that if GEAI wants to stay committed to its founding principles of alliance building, it needs to be organised more democratically, rather than having one person driving it.

According to one of the founding members of GEAI, they see GEAI being a useful resource to the anti- fracking movement, especially in terms of information sharing. This member sees GEAI as a NGO working on sustainable energy and influencing energy policy. According to this member, GEAI needs to be perceived as credible and respectful in order to be influential among their target groups (politicians, universities and schools). For this reason, GEAI

decided during the foundation that the organisation would not engage in unlawful activities in order to stay ‘credible’ to these groups. This member is learning however that having such a ‘credible’ voice does not matter when the target group doesn’t have as much influence as she originally thought,

As this campaign has proceeded, certainly my trust, personally, in the political system in Ireland, in the way that the state structures operate, has changed.

This member is also learning that in order to be part of a social movement, GEAI must operate in a democratic way.

Some participants of this research were grateful to FOE and AFRI who hosted speaker events in ROI, allowing local and international campaigners a platform to bring the issues of fracking to a broader audience. A LL member commended FOE for telling him early in the campaign that the community in the North West should develop their own campaign without FOE’s leadership, in case they are branded ‘environmentalists’. This member, referring to how it encouraged his participation, remarked that he probably wouldn’t have got involved in the campaign if FOE were part of it. According to a member from BNFS, FOE NI has been very engaged with the grassroots movement working alongside Not for Shale Belfast in local activism and mobilising their own supporters around the issue.

A member of No Fracking Dublin who is also involved in Gluaiseacht explains that organisational motivations should be put aside and organisations must respect the fact that they are equal to everyone in the campaign if they are to be a true ally to a social movement. Shell to Sea campaigners believe that NGOs should be a resource bank for the movement providing help at the community’s request. People within the movement explained how this was being done by organisations such as AFRI, Gluaiseacht and Friends of the Earth.

Dealing with 'beardies'

According to more experienced activists in the campaign, solidarity activists are stereotyped using all sorts of names, from the more banal; beardies, hippies, crusties, foreigners to the more sinister: infiltrators, trouble-makers, violent thugs, etc. A member of No Fracking Dublin (NFD), who classed himself as a solidarity activist, said they include a range of different people who have at least one thing in common; they want to protect the environment, normally using non-violent direct action approach.

According to members of the group interview, Shell to Sea depended on anarchist groups such as WSM (Workers Solidarity Movement) and Eirigi (Socialist Republic Party) for support when state violence arrived and all other political parties, including those on the left, had deserted them. A member of NFD explains that anarchist groups and individuals are an asset to a campaign because their motivation is about supporting rights and is not masked behind political party operandi which can be self-serving,

If a campaign becomes popular you'll get political groups who want to join because they'll gain from that. Whereas anarchists are not interested in elections so you can always trust their motivations straight away. I'm not an anarchist myself but I would have that tendency obviously but I always had great time to work with them because I never had a time when I went, Jes, what are they up to now? [laughing]. They're always straight down the line. If they don't agree with you, they'll tell you. If they agree with you they'll work with you and that's fair enough.

This member also pointed out the benefit of activist gatherings such as climate camp, Ecotopia, and other international gatherings where process is as important to the learning as content and where people learned how to organise using a consensus based decision making process. He believes this learning has trickled down to grassroots organising structures, particularly today's social movements and that it is no coincidence that Shell to Sea was organised in this way and that many of the anti-fracking groups also use this democratic consensus based approach to organising that moves away from the traditional hierarchical decision making process.

Although activists groups have not directly engaged with any of the groups in ROI, the Peace People of Northern Ireland are friends of BNFS, and have had thirty years' experience of activism fighting for peace in Northern Ireland. According to a member of BNFS, this alliance provides advice and moral support to the group. It is one of a number of other movements in Belfast which help disseminate information for BNFS and have pledged their support for when it's needed down the line,

There's a lot of people like 'Occupy Belfast' and 'Ban the Bomb' people and who are still active. There's lots and lots of activists in Belfast doing lots of different things. Women's groups and things like that. [and they say], 'when the day comes and you're tying yourself to the rig, we're there'. We've had a lot of that. Em, I think there's a lot of support that is going to come out of the woodwork when it's needed.

According to a member of Shell to Sea, different types of solidarity will be needed throughout the lifeline of this campaign. Alliances that share information or influence political processes may be important now, but down the line and if direct action is needed, solidarity activists may be more relevant to the campaign then. Like friendly experts however, solidarity activists are guests to the campaign and therefore must respect the mandate of the local movement.

According to a member of Shell to Sea, social activists get labelled according to how they go about their activism and how they form relationships with the community they stand in solidarity with. According to Shell to Sea campaigners, some solidarity activists from the UK caused problems in Corrib when they came with the idea that 'they know what's best for the local community'. One member of the group interview pointed out that 'huge awareness [is] needed of what people's motivations are; experiences, privileges, where people are coming from'. In a community where 'radical beardies' might threaten the 'credibility' of the local movement, these concerns must be taken seriously by outsiders and before they

assume solidarity a member from Dublin Shell to Sea said, they should first ask if they are wanted and second, ask what role they should play.

Cooption at local level

Local organisation's in the North West which have been approached by community activists remain silent or keep their doors firmly shut to lobbying. A member from CAF explains,

They may have tight structures but they've massive membership. We're meeting brick walls when we try to get into those groups. Again, a lot of them are politically appointed and they run a tight ship.

Senior representatives from the tourism agencies in the North West, whose industry would be decimated if fracking went ahead, have not engaged, despite being approached by a member of LL whose livelihood depends on the tourism industry,

People I've spoken to at senior level haven't engaged which I was dreadfully disappointed about, dreadfully disappointed about because we have no future if there's fracking in Donegal, Sligo, Leitrim, Fermanagh, Cavan. We have no future if this goes ahead in tourism.

The local IFA (Irish Farmers Association) is another important institution whose industry is threatened by the risk of fracking but who have been a difficult organisation to engage with according to one research participant in the North West. According to this member, farmers have a vital role to play in blocking the gas industry from developing in rural Ireland.

He proposes that past exploration projects in the area which proved profitable for some of the local population may have been a factor in organisations like the IFA refusing to meet with local opposition campaigners,

People would have worked in the past on oil and gas exploration projects, and got great money and worked and you know it was a ... it might have been the only work ... I think it started way back, going back (I don't want to say the wrong thing) to the 30s even, and then again the 50s and the 80s, so there would have been a reasonably good relationship between people [and the industry], and the idea that people would have had towards exploration would have been positive. So there would have been people in the IFA that would have been easy enough to spin a story to.

According to this LL member, after much persistence and growing membership concern, members of LL from a farming background (some local campaigners were refused an

invitation) were invited to meet senior officials from both the Cavan and Leitrim IFA divisions in advance of the EPA public consultation to advise the IFA on their submission. This member of LL believes that pressure from the grassroots of the IFA forced the senior officials to take concerns seriously and examples like Jessica Ernst's (visiting activist from Alberta, Canada) talk in the local community hall was key to this education, as reflected in the quote below,

Jessica Ernst would have been very important. She filled the hall in Glenfarne. There were about 700 people and a lot of those people were farmers they were starting to realise that it was significant... the message came through but it took a long time.

Despite grave warnings of the threat posed by fracking in subsequent meetings, the Leitrim branch of the IFA submitted a weak entry down-playing the size of the agricultural industry in the area, which was a huge disappointment to this research participant, who is a farmer, and who had spent a great deal of time and energy lobbying them. He puts the weakness of local organisations down to their organisational structure,

They are a very insular group... Like in Ireland we have a lot of centrally controlled organisations where one person or two people ... like our Government is centrally controlled , maybe six people running the country, and if you have national groups that are also centrally controlled, Leitrim will be sacrificed. I think that they need to understand that. That the local branches understand that they could be sacrificed

According to Shell to Sea activists, manipulation and cooption at a local level by the oil and gas industry is not new. In Corrib local businesses and GAA clubs received funding. This caused deep conflict within such a small community. Local parish priests came out in favour of the project by blessing the platform and publically espousing their support for it. This deeply hurt people in the community who saw the Church as a moral institution who represented the needs of the community. It caused further divisions in the community, polarising the pro- and anti-side. Similarly, according to an activist from Alberta, Canada, the Church is an important ally to consider in the equation, especially given her experience of them backing the oil and gas industry. The Church in Alberta has gone as far as publically

stating how ‘great oil and gas is for farming and for Albertans’. She went further to say those independent priests who speak out on the Tar Sands issue get chastised by bishops.

Coooption pertains to local level ‘experts’ which in Rossport, included politicians, doctors, teachers, and other professionals who attempted to de-radicalise the campaign, telling the local community that they were bringing the violence on themselves. According to Shell to Sea members, this had a devastating impact at the community level, turning people away from the campaign and therefore causing further divisions in the community. According to Shell to Sea activists, professional ‘experts’ involvement in the campaign ended up being ‘extremely damaging’ such as Jerry Cowley (an independent politician at the time, solicitor and GP). At a time in the campaign when the community experienced state cohesion and increased intimidation, he reportedly used his position of authority to de-radicalise the campaign, telling the local community that they were bringing the violence on themselves, according to one member of Shell to Sea,

He actively stopped the campaign in any way he possibly could from being in any way radical. He just didn’t want anything that was damaging. He actively argued that all the blockades should stop, that local people were bringing the violence upon themselves and meetings were so overwhelmingly damaging to Shell to Sea in Mayo at the time. In 2006 and 2007 he was exceptionally damaging. So it’s not just that they’re [politicians] a little bit useless, there are times you actually just have to tell them, ‘get out of our faces, leave, we don’t want anything to do with you’.

Another example of damage caused to the Shell to Sea campaign by a local ‘expert’ involved a Shell to Sea spokesperson, and academic, who wielded considerable influence in the community and who threatened to desert the campaign if a particular decision didn’t go in his favour. Other professionals such as doctors, solicitors, teachers who had influence in the local community, used this power to de-radicalise the campaign at a crucial time in its life-span, according to members of the group interview.

Despite the barriers and challenges in dealing with local institutions, many campaigners in the North West acknowledge the importance of reaching out to community institutions who have built walls to protect their fortresses. These local institutions which depend on the local environment for their livelihood have a responsibility towards informing their members given the future implications of industries like agriculture, tourism, and food production which all depend on a clean water supply, clean air, and uncompromised land. This sense of collective vision is communicated by a member of Love Leitrim,

... we all want the same thing... We want the economy improved here, we want the environment unspoilt, we want people to come here, we want to create jobs. What do you guys want in the business forum? You want more customers, you want sustainable jobs. We're actually after the same thing here, so, you know, why don't we combine forces. So, sometimes, the person you think is the enemy isn't really the enemy. When you stop and think, we want the same thing.

Section 2: Building a network - starting with the local community

The most important alliances for our campaign are really between our own community and our own campaign groups. That's vital. If we're disconnected from our own community where our group is in, then we're not really functioning because there's a disconnect... we're not just suspended out of the community, we're first community and second, a group within the community.

This quote from a member of CAF reflects the reality of many of the groups in the North West; being first community, then campaigners in their community.

An activist from Alberta believes that power lies in the community and greater power lies in communities coming together all around the world.

Having lots of flea bites from all different directions and that big dog is gonna go nuts. If you have all the fleas on one part of your knee and they're biting you all there, oh well, you'll probably cover it with duct tape and the rest of you is not getting bitten. So I think the people on the ground and people on the ground in other countries.

A member of the interview group reflected on the importance of building solidarity networks locally, nationally and internationally to effectively challenge corporative power,

Without building up solidarity, locally, regionally, nationally and internationally, I find it very difficult to see how you can win against the state and against global massive corporations. I find it very difficult to understand how you can do, like how the media frame the Rosspport stuff it as in a David versus Goliath. Well like, actually what we're doing is building a Goliath to fight Goliath. Like David doesn't fucking win against Goliath except for in fictional books. Do you know like, that's not how that works, you know, em. So I think without... without building up solidarity networks, I just find it very difficult to see how it's actually possible to do that.

Many campaigners see this as a 'globalisation of environmental issues' and are eager to stand in solidarity with communities like 'Lock the Gate' in Australia, 'Save the Karoo' in South Africa, the tar sands of Canada, and other marginalised communities in Latin America who are fighting extractive industries. They see the importance of fighting multinational's on a global scale and believe what happens in relation to fracking legislation in neighbouring countries will have reverberations here; what happens in Europe is important to this island, what happens in the UK is important for NI and what happens in NI will be important for ROI. They believe it is important to build grassroots alliances between these countries and jurisdictions, uniting communities across borders against the multinational corporations.

One member from CAF expressed the importance of helping the campaign in NI, not only because the licensing is at a more advanced stage but because 'the North is a political quagmire' and there's a fear that the campaign will be pinned to political divisions; if you're for fracking, you are a Unionist- if you're against it you're a Republican. Advice for campaigners in the North from a member of CAF is not to play 'their game' of 'sectarian politics' but put the focus back on the real issue of the future of a green, clean Northern Ireland. Standing with communities in the North over this issue is imperative for the South 'because that's where it's at now'.

A member from NWNAF calls for more fearless 'whistle-blowers' like Jessica Ernst to be voice in the campaign,

We need to build alliances with groups and individuals who are able to speak out and not be told that they can't say anything or they're not stifled by funding and they're not captured.

Many campaigners claim that the global anti- fracking resistance has fed the local resistance in Ireland since the beginning. Others say that in fact the local campaign has almost entirely depended on international activists to survive since then.

A member of CAF reflects on how important an alliance Shell to Sea has been to the anti-fracking movement,

We've a lot to learn from the Shell to Sea campaign. The Shell to Sea campaign you know is ... I have just admiration for the people who have been involved in that. They have been up against exactly, all the things that I have been talking about and dealing with this over the last number of years; the media blackout, emm, being totally misrepresented in the media and then being, just, because of that, then being totally ignored by politicians.

Respecting the local narrative

A member of the group interview explained the importance for outside actors to respect the communities' position and approach to dealing with the situation rather than imposing their own strategy or controlling the local situation. She warned against the threat posed to language and how a story can be told in different ways depending on who's telling it, or manipulated in a way to suit particular interests,

... when Shell to Sea started to nationalise, people came in and put new language, different language on what was happening to suit their values and their interests and different alliances formed depending on how you talk about it. It's about more than alliances really. It's about how the whole struggle is going to be framed and how the story is going to be told... Like using different words, like environmental justice like, is not something ever used but that's how it would be termed by international NGOs and, yeah, maybe, yeah, I guess that's the same for alliances as well, if you want to tell the story a particular way then maybe you need to be careful of who your allies are.

A member from CAF explained that it's important not to pigeon hole the anti- fracking campaign as an environmental one due to the limitations of this label. The problem exists,

when the fracking issue is labelled as an environmental issue, which it isn't just an environmental issue and I think, that's another thing, it's very important to explain to people, this is a health issue, sociological issue. This is an energy issue.

A member of Dublin Shell to Sea supported this view adding that Shell to Sea was not seen as an environmental struggle, but a community struggle. According to him, this is an important distinction both for people inside the movement to recognise that this campaign is fundamentally about community rights but also for those outside who want to offer support, and that they do this from a community perspective and according to the wishes of the community,

alliances are obviously very useful but there's a danger of compromising your message or being dictated to by other groups or by being used by other groups. You just have to approach other organisations and approach alliances with caution and as [interviewee 4] said, trust in your own ability as well, and not see yourselves as helpless or in need of support and guidance by outside organisations. Engage them and use alliances but don't be compromised by them.

Creating local experts

This is the advice from an activist from Alberta who argues that individuals are the most powerful in any campaign. Based on her experience, she claims that much can be done at the individual level even though people think they need 'a lot in front of them, behind them, beside them, on top of them, below them'. She uses the example of citizen's in British Columbia, Canada, in protesting vehemently against Shell's project to extract methane in the area, wrote over a thousand personal letters which they delivered en masse to Shell by hand. Subsequently the government cancelled Shell's permit and the area was not fracked. She believes that individual personalised letters represents votes to politicians so a negative one can cause fear. She argues that standard letters/ e-actions, normally produced by organisations such as NGOs, do not have the same impact which is part of the reason that NGOs get funded by the state. Her advice to activists here is, 'There's power in numbers but stay unique'.

According to Shell to Sea activists, they believe that local people who become local experts are more important than professional experts. They spoke about how local people in Rossport educated themselves to be research experts and collated data and presented it at An BordPleanála hearings. A member of the interview group acknowledged that people involved in the campaign know the issue in depth but tend to underestimate their own capabilities,

There's a tendency to really underestimate the talents within a community, within your own group and the effect of people trusting in their own abilities and the fact that they are the most passionate people about it and means they stick with it.

Shell to Sea activists expressed caution in building alliances with professional organisation's or individuals at the risk of compromising the communities message, which could be turned upside down and used against them by outside interests, adding,

Trust in your own ability as well, and [do] not see yourselves as helpless or in need of support and guidance by outside organisations. Engage and use alliances but do not be compromised by them.

Conclusion

Section three of this chapter shows how important it is for local communities to control the narrative of the anti- fracking campaign so that fracking is not limited to an environmental issue but that it is about community rights. This section reveals how grassroots alliances have been vital to the anti- fracking movement; acting as a resource bank, sharing information, standing in solidarity and giving advice upon request. This support has played a key role in radicalising people to challenge systems of power and dominance. What is clear from this research, is that different tactics will be needed at different times in a campaign lifecycle and different solidarity will be required. The anti- fracking movement needs to plan for the future when direct action may be required to stop the industry in its tracks. Section one argues that 'synergy' exists between powerful elites and has captured many of the 'green' actors which has resulted in them being an extension of state apparatus. It argues that

alliances have the power to coopt when they don't respect the autonomy of the local movement and instead, start to impose their own narrative and strategies. To this end, the anti- fracking movement needs to thinkcarefully about the critical aspect of alliance buildingto ensure they don't build alliances today which could de- radicalise them in the future when they are facing 'Goliath'.

CHAPTER 5: ANALYSIS

Introduction

This chapter addresses the problems and answers which emerged in the data which were largely informed by my data. This chapter supports the argument that a green neo liberal hegemony propagated by industry and supported by the state and civil society actors, controls environmentalism and many of the professional actors within it. On this basis, section one looks at the limitations in engaging in political process as a means to stop fracking. Section two considers the danger of putting too much trust in ‘traditional’ alliances, based mainly on the learnings of environmental justice theory. Section three extends components of environmental justice theory to argue that building a broad ranging alliance between communities affected by fracking, the national network and other social movements is similar to the ‘rhizome’ effect which links issues and provides the most effective tool to challenging a green neo liberal hegemony. Through these alliances, communities against fracking can delegitimise the structures of power and pose a formidable threat to the oil and gas industry.

Section 1: The danger of engaging in political processes

Engaging with the state

... this government isn't there because they're standing up for the people of Ireland...they're there to enforce an agenda that's going on and it's going on right across Europe...(Member of CAF)

It is clear from this research that synergy happens between industry and systems of power, driven by a powerful green neo liberal hegemony. It will be recalled from the literature review that Gramscian hegemony argues that the state apparatus wields power and authority to

control a pro capitalist agenda and does this depending on how much support it receives. We know from research that international policies make it easier for multinationals to carry out business regardless of state decisions. This research also makes reference to Ireland's open door policy to oil and gas investment, supporting the role of multinationals to act as environmental regulators and pollution 'experts'. This study shows how green-neo liberalism was happening between the Green party in ROI and the oil and gas industry when they were part of the previous power sharing government.

It can be recalled from my research how the Irish environmental movement failed throughout the recent decades by moving away from its radical grassroots tactics which it was linked to in the 1970s to becoming more professionalised and institutionalised up to the present day. My study reveals how, under the watch of a Green party in government in ROI, exploration licences for hydraulic fracturing were awarded to companies in areas of shale gas as early as 2010 without communities from those areas being consulted and without any concern raised by a Green party whose vision is built on the principals of sustainability.

Since then, and with the help of Tamboran's PR campaign, political parties in power, including key politicians such as the environmental minister and Labour TD, Pat Rabbitte and Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment MLA, Arlene Foster have been using a pro-fracking discourse, which speaks to economic development and energy security, whilst delegitimising environmental and health concerns. We can see that despite a growing opposition, politicians in power are increasingly distancing themselves from fracking opponents despite the delegations who travelled from the North West to meet with Pat Rabbitte and Minister Fergus O'Dowd early in the process. In sync with shutting out the opposition voices, there has been a marked increase in pro-fracking discourse as political representatives in ROI collaborate with energy ministers in European countries and US

officials on field trips. To this end, this research has shown how opposition concerns have been assimilated by the state who has increasingly adopted a pro- fracking discourse, framed by ‘safe fracking’ rhetoric.

It can be recalled from my research that international trade agreements between the EU and the US enforce a deregulation and a neo liberal agenda. It has been discussed how companies enjoy investor protection and immunity from prosecution while states who deny them face huge compensation fees. It is little wonder that Irish politicians in power are distancing themselves from opponents and marginalising the opposition voice as international pressure increases.

Engagement in state regulatory processes option

I think one of the things that’s been really clear about engaging with state bodies like the EPA and An Bord Pleanála and stuff is that when it comes to the environmental ones, the planning ones, you can definitely win compromises out of them but you will not win the issue. (Shell to Sea activist)

This research detailed the problems associated with two EPA processes relating to recent research carried out on environmental impacts of unconventional gas exploration and extraction, including a preliminary study in 2012 as well as the process involved in devising a terms of reference for the next piece of research. These concerns related to the limitations of looking at this issue in terms of environmental impacts, and not in terms of health or socio-economic impacts. There were serious concerns raised about the EPA’s immunity clause which has been on the government’s agenda to address for some time, as well as the ties it has to coopted research institutions like Aberdeen University. My research reported on the collaboration between the government, state bodies and industry to cross pollinate personnel and skills.

This supports my theory in relation to green neo liberal cooption at the top, where business and government with the help of professional environmentalists work together to produce 'ecological modernisation', shifting responsibility over decision making directly into the hands of corporations.

Experienced activists warned that engaging in state processes such as the last EPA consultation, the state will claim that concerns were identified and will be mitigated against with 'best in the world regulation' and thereby manipulating people's concerns by turning them upside down into solutions for making the industry more safe. One could argue that by engaging in state regulatory processes, not only legitimises them but also drains the opposition who have invested a lot of energy mobilising people to engage in a failed process. Despite the current moratorium on fracking, in place in ROI (until the next research project is carried out), it is acknowledged that in the absence of a similar moratorium in process in NI, exploration drilling can happen as early as 2014 in the Lough Allen basin which straddles both sides of the border in the North West. Fracking and the impacts of the process do not discriminate between borders and if shale gas is found, it will be near impossible to stop Tamboran fracking the entire basin.

As seen above, compromises can be won, but communities will always be on the back foot responding to conditions placed upon them and limited to responding to narrow frames that don't go far enough in addressing their concerns. Putting all the movements' energy into engaging with these systems of power can be draining and can weaken the movement to the point of diluting the message and interfering with the democratic process of the movement. These processes can be all consuming and limiting. They prioritise individuals in the campaign creating systems of power within the movement and influence local knowledge to fit within their parameters. Engaging in these processes leaves movements unable to

effectively challenge these systems of power. Where it may be useful to engage as opportunities arise, movements need to remain ‘outside’ these processes in order to effectively challenge them (Cox, 2010).

Section 2: Danger of putting too much trust in ‘traditional’ alliances

Environmental organisations

The Irish Environmental Network [IEN] and the Pillar [Environmental Pillar] and the Green Party in Ireland have a lot to answer for when it comes to the environmental movement in this country.(member of CAF)

The EP’s (Environmental Pillar’s) involvement in the anti- fracking movement in 2012 was positive when they were acting as a resource bank to the movement but as soon as they tried to impose their decision making process onto ‘local autonomous democracy’ (Allen, 2004) and act as a middle person between the state and the social movement, they were rejected outright. This sent a clear message to the EP that communities themselves should control decisions which directly affect them instead of organisations that are removed from the grassroots and removed from the democratic decision making processes at a local level. A more serious situation similar to this arose in my research when An Taisce’s acted on behalf of the community in Corrib when it settled a Corrib judicial review case with the state out of court, going against the wishes of the community and leaving the community feeling betrayed by the organisation.

Both organisations are receiving state funding to varying degrees, which, according to my theory increases the chance of cooption. Gramsci’s theory on hegemonic consent is dependent on top down streams of funding which lead to watered- down compromises and organisation’s acting as extensions of the state. My theory points to examples of

Greenpeace operating in a similar manner when they followed their own aims and processes rather than those of the social movement they were in partnership with. It also raises the issue of power balance and the danger of power weighing towards the NGO and culminating in a situation like Greenpeace in India who claimed credit for the success of the Bhopal campaign; discrediting the local organisations; followed different aims to those of local organisations and activists; and abandoned the campaign prematurely due to funding conditions (Mac Sheoin, 2012). Had the community in Derry not rejected Greenpeace's campaign (which tried to argue on science grounds) they would have potentially lost it. By taking back control of their campaign the community won on economic grounds, preventing Du Pont from building an incinerator (Allen, 2004). Similarly, campaigners in the North-West rejected the EP's attempts to have a closed consultation on the terms of reference for the latest EPA study, and instead demanded an open consultation, dispelling the role of the EP.

For organisations currently working with the anti- fracking movement, but who have decided not to engage in unlawful activities in order to stay credible to their target groups, this study challenges them to critically reflect on the risk of becoming professionalised and turning into yet another ineffective NGO who becomes tied to forming partnerships with those who coopt an organisation into being 'credible' in exchange for sitting at the decision table or for funding purposes. To this end, a parallel could be drawn with the Vilyuy committee who transformed from 'an environmental NGO focused on involving citizenry in environmental activism, to a bureaucratic board of local officials who gather privately to discuss their plans' (Crate, 2002). In creating a professional arm to the movement, it helps to reinforce the distinction between unorganised 'radical activists' who only engage in direct action and 'credible professionals' who engage in advocacy and awareness raising. We can draw from the situation in Corrib which saw conservative influences dominate the campaign at a critical

time, turning their supporters away from radical grassroots activism and because that was the last resort, it turned people away from the campaign altogether.

Contrary to environmental justice theory's strong critic of the official environmental movement, some NGOs have been quoted in this research as being useful to social movements for remaining grassroots focused. FOE NI has been highly commended for their participation in the Northern Ireland campaign for adding their voice to the opposition, taking part in local activism and engaging their own supporters in the campaign and for being a resource bank to the anti- fracking movement (Not for Shale Belfast holds meetings in the FOE office). These NGOs act as a resource bank for the campaign, putting their own motivations aside, providing help at the community's request and became involved at the community's invitation. This is more possible with a democratically structured NGO which is committed to equal partnership, not just on paper, but through their engagement with a social movement. FOE ROI has lent their voice to the opposition (albeit on a smaller scale than NI) and organised some joint events with anti- fracking groups in the north-west (jointly with AFRI) and in Dublin but ironically FOE ROI have been commended for *not* being so involved in the North West, as it has mobilised a community member to be active who didn't think that would be the case if an NGO was involved and doing the job for him. FOE in this case advised a community activist to organise and develop the local campaign without FOE's leadership in case they were branded 'environmentalists'. This raises similar concerns to my research in limiting the issue to an environmental one, which is explored in more detail in the final section of this chapter.

Political allies

These political actors were cited in my research as helpful or useful to the anti- fracking movement. Unlike politicians in power, these political allies currently support the opposition campaign and use their influence to actively challenge the pro-fracking discourse and raise the profile of the opposition voice which is welcomed by many activists. Sinn Fein party in ROI officially support the ban on fracking and independent Sinn Fein TD's in the North West work with the opposition, collaborating with anti- fracking groups like Love Leitrim. Similarly Sinn Fein in NI who are one of the largest parties in the NI assembly have officially called for a ban on fracking (contrary to Labour and Fine Gael in ROI who share political power in ROI) and Sinn Fein politicians in the North West work closely with activists in the area. However, campaigners are concerned that due to the divisiveness of NI politics, Sinn Fein's support may split the campaign along sectarian lines. Another left leaning party which supports a ban on fracking is the NI Green party which is a young party and which has a strong affiliation with BNFS (Belfast Not For Shale) in working together to oppose fracking at the political level and raising awareness at the grassroots. It remains to be seen if the NI Green party follow the trajectory of the Green Party in ROI in their approach to Shell to Sea. The situation in Corrib demonstrates that cooption remains a threat if politicians are given too much influence. Left leaning political allies were supportive of the Shell to Sea campaign until the state started to use coercive force against the local community. Opposition parties who were previously publically supportive of Shell to Sea (including members of the Green Party) after going into government; became silent on the issue, and subsequently deserted the Corrib community.

At this time in the campaign when the community experienced state coercion and increased intimidation, independent politician Jerry Cowley (solicitor and GP) used his position of authority to de-radicalise it, telling the local community that they were bringing the violence on themselves. This had a devastating cost at a community level causing divisions in the community and turning people away from the campaign. Such internal conflicts play perfectly into the hands of the oil and gas companies, saving them the job of doing it. Professional experts who have considerable influence in a campaign and who wield considerable authority at community level can cause serious damage when they use their influence to de-radicalise a campaign at a crucial time in its life span as shown by the examples above. Jerry Cowley fits the description of Gramsci's 'traditional intellectual' who lead the campaign according to his own beliefs and in doing so, de-activated a large number of the community.

These examples demonstrate how the anti-fracking movement can be weakened by depending on political allies and particularly allowing them to control the opposition campaign. Most importantly, it demonstrates why the movement needs to stay 'outside' the state to be in a stronger position to oppose it. The opposition voice has the potential to be watered down which has a devastating cost at the community level. Community desertion can happen at a time when a campaign needs radical action but if those leading it becomes de-radicalised, their supporters will become inactive and radical voices will become more marginalised or, as in the case of Corrib, those activists will become criminalised. This example poses a serious warning to fracking communities who potentially face community division if they allow 'traditional intellectuals' to lead the campaign into conservative paths. In attaining equality in social movements, Cox says their 'natural strengths lie in the power of numbers, in their capacity to delegitimise the structures of power, and in the ability to disrupt "business as usual" (Cox, 2012). The anti-fracking movement will equally come against

more testing times and although political lobbying might be a useful tactic in the planning phase of unconventional natural gas exploration, it is important to consider what kind of allies will be useful if fracking is approved and extraction licences are granted. If political allies assume too much control at this stage, there is a risk they will leave at that crucial juncture, and more worryingly, take their supporters with them.

Local ‘professionals’

Local institutions seem like a natural alliance for the campaign due to their dependence on the local environment, such as the case with the IFA (Irish Farming Association) and the local tourism board and to less extent, the local business forums (who depend to some extent on tourism). All of these industries will be adversely affected if fracking is allowed to go ahead and therefore should share a like-minded concern to protect the area from fracking but have proven very challenging to lobby and in some cases the oil and gas company have already succeeded in their lobbying (the local business forum in Manorhamilton received funds from Tamboran). Other important local institutions in the Irish context are GAA clubs and the Church, both of which depend on members/ congregations to survive and therefore should be answerable to their supporter networks. However where oil and gas industry is already operating such as Corrib and Alberta (in relation to the Church only), these institutions have been coopted by commercial interests and subsequently divided communities as a result of their actions. ‘Supportive professionals’ can also hugely influence a campaign which can be beneficial when they use their power to educate, lobby and communicate the issue *with* the wider movement. However, as discussed above, these ‘traditional intellectuals’ can also be hugely problematic when they choose to follow their own conservative agenda and throw their power and influence behind this agenda which de-

radicalises the campaign. This had a devastating impact in Corrib and has the potential to happen in the anti-fracking campaign as mentioned before.

All of these institutions have the power to yield huge local support and there-in lays the danger. These institutions due to their hierarchical structures and conservative ethos pose a huge threat to de-radicalise a campaign due to their vulnerability to cooption by the oil and gas industry. In the case of the local institutions, my literature review argues that cooption is more likely to happen when distance emerges between leadership and its members which can happen with a hierarchical structure which engages in a top- down decision making process (Sperber, 2003).

Solidarity activists

A green movement that is eco-social or a mixture of green (ecologist and environmentalist), red (socialist) and black (anarchist) based on grassroots autonomous assembly would be a powerful force against globalisation.(R. Allen, 2004: P221)

Solidarity activists fall under different hats; political activist, environmental activist and anarchist, as well as the stereotypical titles, such as “beardies” and “radicals”. Alliances with solidarity activists haven’t featured within the anti- fracking movement yet but Not for Shale have been assured that “when the day comes and you’re tying yourself to the rig, we’re there”. That was the case in Corrib when the state started to use violence against the communities, anarchist groups such as WSM and Eirigi were there to support the community while political support deserted them. This example demonstrated the rights based approach of anarchists, while the politicians were more concerned with following their political party operandi. It can be argued that activists’ communication strategies have leaked into the anti-fracking movement where groups and meetings are organised using a consensus based

approach rather than the traditional hierarchical approach favoured by committees, institutions, academia and the state level.

The approach taken by solidarity activists supports environmental justice theory which promotes network building at the grassroots. My theory discusses the strength of this bottom-up form of organising which celebrates plurality and diversity, adding that these values give a movement extra strength. It argues that the multiple frames adopted and diversity of tactics employed by networks gives it more power than NGOs who are constrained as a result of their partnership with the state and who, therefore don't have the political clout to impose restrictions on capital. This research argues that building a network of alliances at the grassroots helps promote the 'rhizome' effect which links local socio-economic issues.

This research also critiques social activists who impose their own agenda on communities which may differ from the agenda of the local movement. It argues that, like any alliance, they must respect the mandate of the local movement. As guests they need to ask if they are welcome and as a resource, they need to ask what role to play. They can't assume that they are wanted or needed if the community feel they would be compromised by their presence. Respecting local knowledge and identification and becoming familiar with how it is defined by the local movement is vital. Like any new knowledge, environmental justice brings its own language and values which may be different to that which is understood at the grassroots. This research identifies the problem in labelling this issue an environmental one instead of a community rights issue. Framing it as a community rights issue sends out a strong signal to those outside who want to lend their support that they do this according to the needs of the community.

Section 3: Building the network, starting with local communities

The most important alliances for our campaign are really between our own community and our own campaign groups. That's vital. If we're disconnected from our own community where our group is in, then we're not really functioning because there's a disconnect... we're not just suspended out of the community, we're first community and second, a group within the community.

This study agrees with environmental justice theory which argues that this networking strategy build at the grassroots helps to confront systems of dominance and creates the most effective resistance to green neo liberalism. As we have seen from the literature, 'populist' movements are not new to Ireland with communities organising at the grassroots to defend against Shell in Rossport. New communities are now facing a new industry and due to the growing influence of green neo liberalism on traditional allies, they need to create their own space and knowledge outside of realities created by the state, the mainstream media, and institutions.

This means creating local experts and people believing they are experts. This avoids the need for support, guidance and skills coming from outside organisations and avoids the risk of being compromised by the language they impose on the local movement or dominating local strategies. Local people are more passionate about the issue because they experience it, and therefore will 'see the job done'. By building up local resistance, local communities are less likely to rely on outside alliances for support, and therefore less likely to be compromised by them. Whilst the environmental justice paradigm is useful theoretically, it has practical limitations in that it does not go far enough in protecting the autonomy of the local narrative.

Conclusion

This chapter supports the argument that a green neo liberal hegemony propagated by the state and industry, controls environmentalism and many of the professional actors within it. We have seen how a neo-liberal agency controls power at the top leading to political engagement becoming an increasingly weaker tactic to use. Section two explores the danger of putting trust in traditional alliances by exposing the weakness of institutional environmentalism which has not only alienated itself from local environmental issues and movements but has become coopted by capital interests leaving them largely ineffective in dealing with corporate power. In exploring an effective response to this problem, section three of this chapter elaborates on the answers found in chapter four of the previous chapter in arguing that the most effective alliances for participants of this research are those that been established at the grassroots; between their local communities, their international ‘cousins’ who are have helped inform the local struggle and between Shell to Sea who have acted in solidarity with the movement. A central theme of environmental justice is the necessity to build alliances between different communities and social movements which is a key finding to this research. The limitation of environmental justice theory for this study is that it does not go far enough in respecting local knowledge and identification. This chapter shows how important it is for local communities to control the narrative of the anti- fracking campaign so that it is not limited to looking at the environmental impact of unconventional gas extraction but it is about community rights.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

Communities living in shale gas basins, live with the daily threat of what this industry, if allowed to go ahead will do to their health, their livelihoods, their way of life and their local environment. Exploring Leitrim for one of the first times as researcher I was struck by its rugged beauty. Walking through the beautiful Glenfarne forest, visiting the birth place of Sean McDermott (Irish Republic Freedom Fighter), learning the colourful history of the ‘Ballroom of Romance’ and driving on roads that used to be closed due to the ‘troubles’ are all distinct features of this culturally rich area. The signs of a rebellious past were evident in those people who defied oppression long ago, and in more recent years during the ‘troubles’, when communities were split down the middle due to a disputed border. Ironically, it is fracking and joint mobilising against it which today brings those communities back together after many decades of separation. Perhaps community activism is such a formidable force in Ireland due to our turbulent past, making communities resilient and protective of their environment and local heritage. We know that people have risked much in the past to protect their right to self- determination. Communities today are again organising to fight an equally important battle concerning their right to citizenship and the protection of their local resources against pollution.

Implications of this study

This research has aimed to answer the original question of this study: do alliances have the potential to coopt the anti- fracking movement on the island of Ireland. It chose to focus predominantly on the critiques of alliance building to expose the dangers in creating professional alliances at this important juncture of the anti- fracking struggle. It’s almost three

years ago, since concerned citizens whose area is targeted by licensing have successfully organised at a community level to create a loose national network, called No Fracking Ireland. They have build solidarity partnerships with international activists, many of whom are fighting fracking at a more advanced stage and more and more, they are turning to Shell to Sea and other social movement neighbours who organised their own grassroots resistance to corporate power. Subsequently this question comes at an important time in the movement's life cycle as it prepares for more potentially challenging times ahead.

Gramscian hegemony was explicit in this research in the prevalence of green neo liberalism. My research shows how environmentalism is largely controlled by actors who promote this hegemony, by industry, at the political level and civil societal levels. We've seen how economic reward is a primary factor in creating 'synergy' between these actors. This research shows how multinationals are controlling the environmental agenda and normalising the impacts of pollution on communities and resources to defend economic growth. International trade agreements like TTIP is an example of the growing prevalence of deregulation and neo liberalisation. Through these trade agreements, multinationals who are the offenders of environmental pollution, become their own judge and jury, over-riding state decisions and compromising democracy, while they remain immune to prosecution. This research discussed how countries who defied multinational investment paid heavily in compensation fines. Instead, they become the experts on environmental control by manipulating the debate so that it becomes more about using our natural resources to protect our delicate economy and therefore normalising the impact on community and the environment. This rhetoric gets populated and institutions and organisations, who are funded by industry, do it on their behalf. As we've seen with our own EPA, these coopted institutions are subsequently relied on for 'credible' research. We have seen how for twenty years, toxic industries were allowed to operate in Ireland without environmental regulation,

causing many of the illnesses Irish people suffer today. Ireland's history of being a 'pollutant haven' and its open door policy to oil and gas is prevalent in the discourse of politicians today supporting a pro- fracking rhetoric. Faced by this level of globalisation, the anti-fracking movement should critically reflect on the time and energy it puts into political processes and political engagement, when this research reveals the limitations of the state in controlling multinational power. At some point communities need to ask whether following a political engagement strategy is really just a way to assimilate the opposition voice, turning it upside down to suit their own agenda.

This research draws on environmental justice theory to explore how power, cooption and elitism control the current 'environmental movement'. It argues how professionalization has de-radicalised the environmental movement in Ireland. By forming partnerships with elites through top down funding mechanisms, NGOs largely work inside the system. It argues that 'traditional' alliances dominating a local campaign can risk diluting the narrative, imposing their own language, and strategies on communities which can lead to local cooption. The anti- fracking movement needs to plan for the future when direct action may be needed to stop fracking in its tracks, making sure that traditional actors are not in a position to control the situation, and risk jeopardising the campaign.

To this end, this research suggests that the anti- fracking movement engages in critical reflection of the implications of these findings. In light of what environmental justice theory teaches us, local movements should engage in critical analysis of alliances, asking important questions to safeguard against cooption, such as those in the list below.

- Is our message being watered down via professional representatives?
- Have 'traditional' actors assumed positions of dominance within the movement and subsequently are in a position of control?

- Are hierarchies starting to develop within the movement that has potential to alienate the grassroots and marginalised voices?
- Are local communities and groups no longer in control of their own narrative, strategy and values due to influential forces from outside?

In exploring an effective response to this problem, this theory considers components of the environmental justice framework in recognising local power and network building as the key force against a growing tide of corporate power. It argues that building a network across the anti- fracking movement and building strength at the local level is the most effective tool against a green neo liberal hegemony; challenging the systems that produce it and most importantly, produce the most effective tool against corporate power.

Environmental justice theory was useful for this research to an extent but as seen by my findings, language can act as a dominating factor which can manipulate the narrative of the local movement. We have seen how friendly allies bring their own language to a campaign as well as their own strategies and motivations which might not be welcome at a community level or might not benefit the local movement. We have seen how some members of this research do not want to be branded as environmentalists or do not want the issue being confined to this frame. Suggesting that the movement adapt an environmental justice paradigm contradicts the assertion that communities themselves need to be the authors of their own activism, and creators of their own narrative. This research argues how important it is for local communities to control the narrative of the anti- fracking campaign so that it is not limited to looking at the environmental impact of unconventional gas extraction but it is about community rights.

Follow up work

Informed by Action Research, my praxis (action- reflection) does not end with the end of this thesis but will be a continued process of learning. For the material in this thesis, this is not the end of the road for it either. According to Dillon (2010), a key component to PAR (Participatory Action Research) is that ‘research leads to action and social transformation’. To this end, the research will be fed back to the participants of this research first and foremost and to members of the wider anti- fracking movement.

As stated in chapter three, this study focused predominantly on ‘problem’ alliances due to time constraints, word limits to this study, and personal inexperience of carrying out social science research. The findings do not accurately reflect the data I gathered in my research which could not be included into the study for the reasons explained. This data included rich material on media ranging from a critical perspective of mainstream media’s black out of the opposition voice to the positive experience of the role new media plays in helping to build alliances at the grassroots. This material will be used to write an article for an appropriate publication yet to be identified. More importantly, it will be fed back into the anti- fracking movement through the ‘show and share’ process detailed below.

It has been recommended by research participants that by presenting the findings using a ‘show and share’ approach is more accessible than a thesis format. Therefore I aim to use the findings from this research (including those excluded from this thesis) to create a leaflet on ‘Building Alliances for the Future’ which will be fed back to participants of this study and local movements more broadly through a workshop format. This format facilitates participative discussion around some of the key findings of the data and allows for critical reflection of a topic that often gets taken for granted. This workshop(s) is planned to be

done in collaboration with other research activists whose work contribute to grassroots organising. This format allows knowledge to be shared between different community campaigners- Shell to Sea and No Fracking Ireland in particular, creating an opportunity for people to learn from each other. One of the key principles to PAR is the emphasis is on empowering participants of the research to be the producers of knowledge facilitated by the research process (Dillon, 2010). The researchers in this case will act in the role of facilitators, using our research topics to frame the discussions.

This research acts as a wake- up call to NGOs, the sector I took a year out off to complete this piece of research. Having returned to work after this study, I have a duty to challenge professional activism within the sector which I aim to do on a continual basis. At a practical level, I hope to facilitate a workshop among staff in the organisation I work, to discuss the issues of power, cooption and elitism as challengesfacing NGOs in their work towards creating equal partnershipswith grassroots communities.

Self- reflection

Since taking a step out of the formal development sector, I've had a chance to engage in the anti- fracking movement which is my first meaningful involvement in a local grassroots movement. Given my professional background, my interest was to look at how best alliances could support local movements, more specifically exploring the partnership approach of NGOs and the anti- fracking movement to win this campaign. Through critical reflection in the research process I have experienced an ontological shift from understanding the value of alliances to understanding the danger of them. Communities, through their interaction with this campaign, are going through their own critical pedagogy and acquiring critical awareness of their own oppression and marginalisation at the hands of the state and a powerfully backed

fracking industry. They turned down the Environmental Pillar's (EP) request to have a closed consultation, and instead demanded an open consultation, dispelling the role of the EP. They have actively met with cross party politicians in the Dáil on numerous occasions independently of any NGO representatives. They create their own media through social network and community media so as not to be at the mercy of mainstream media. Without any professional campaign experience, communities have become experts in communication, advocacy and public campaigning/ awareness raising which are shared across the network. The anti- fracking movement has taught me the value of community development and reminded me of the importance of sustainability and living in harmony with our environment and our communities. Without a collective community opposition response, the oil and gas industry will frack Ireland backed by a green neo liberal hegemony affecting professional spaces in Ireland are subsequently in no position to oppose it. It's down to the 'ordinary' people of Ireland to stop fracking.

The last paragraph tells us something about where the anti- fracking movement wants to build our alliances in future. In the absence of political will and a compromised set of 'influential' alliances, it proposes an alternative strategy, which challenges green neo liberalism from below by forming and building solidarity at a grassroots level. Resistance means recognising the limitations of these powerful institutions that are ultimately compromised by the interests of oil and gas companies and accepting that unequivocal trust in these political processes and named institutions can no longer be taken for granted. It's about having realistic expectations as to the limited extent of influence these alliances have towards meeting the needs of a social movement. It suggests growing and strengthening the anti- fracking movement at a national level, expanding the number of groups around Ireland, particularly in the areas where prospective licences have been granted. It advocates for the movement to cross pollinate with other crucial campaigns, such as Shell to Sea for knowledge sharing on

these alternative strategies. This expansion and joined up thinking will strengthen the campaign from the bottom up, being in a better position to best challenge a neo liberal hegemony most effectively.

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GLOSSARY

AFRI (Actions From Ireland)

BNFS (Belfast Not For Shale)

CAF (Carrick Against Fracking)

EU (European Union)

EPA (Environmental Protection Agency)

EP (Environmental Pillar)

FOE (Friends Of the Earth)

GAA (Gaelic Athletic Association)

GEAI (Good Energies Alliances Ireland)

HIA (Health Impact Assessment)

IDA (Industrial Development Authority)

IEN (Irish Environmental Network)

IFA (Irish Farmers Association)

INGO (International Non-Governmental Organisation)

Max QDA (Qualitative Data Analysis software)

NFI (No Fracking Ireland)

NFD (No Fracking Dublin)

NFSB (Not for Shale Belfast)

NGO (Non Government Organisation)

NI (Northern Ireland)

NWNAF (North West Network Against Fracking)

LL (Love Leitrim)

PAR (Participatory Action Research)

PCB (Printed Circuit Board)

ROI (Republic of Ireland)

TD (Teachta Dála- a member of Dáil Éireann)

TTIP (Trans- Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership)

UGEE (Unconventional Gas Exploration and Extraction)

USEPA (United States Environmental Protection Agency)

WB (World Bank)

WSM (Workers Solidarity Movement)