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MONASH UNIVERSITY
THESIS ACCEPTED IN SATISFACTION OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

ON..... 7 December 2004.....

Sec. Research Graduate School Committee

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Amendments

p.9: 1 st paragraph	Delete 'on social identity perspective'
p.13: 3 rd paragraph	Insert comma between 'culture' and 'as'
p.15	'Eeva' not 'Eva'
p.23: 3 rd line	'cites' not 'cited'
p.23: 2 nd paragraph	'he is' not 'he was'
p.30: 3 rd paragraph	insert 'the' between 'with' and 'theme'
p.30: 3 rd paragraph	'section' not 'chapter'
p.31	Italicise <i>The Australian Journal of Anthropology</i>
p.36	'mean time' not 'meantime'
p.37	'residents' not 'residents''
p.38	move 'into' to last line
p.39, 43, 45, 46	'Merrel' not 'Merrell'
p.41	'in' not 'it'
p.46	'Hanrahan's' not 'Hanrahan'
p.61: 2 nd paragraph	'had driven' not 'had drove'
p.68: 2 nd paragraph	'or any part' not 'or the any part'
p.69: 1 st paragraph	'as a serious consideration' not 'as serious a consideration'
p.69: 2 nd paragraph	lines 2,4,11,14 'who' not 'that'
p.78, 86, 95	ditto
p.69: 2 nd paragraph	By using the term 'non-political' I am referring to the way in which the single issue groups discussed were not formed around a uniform set of ideological beliefs but, rather, had sprung up as a reaction to a
p.71: 2 nd paragraph	'whose members' not 'who themselves'
p.83	'faired' not 'fared'
p.85: 3 rd paragraph	'has a small population in relation to its physical size' not 'is small in relation to its overall size'
p.93, 109, 118	'Green's' not 'Greens'
p.96: 5th line	, quotation 'they're' not 'there'
p.102: 3 rd paragraph	Delete 'the' from last line
p.104: 2 nd paragraph	'allowed' not 'allow'
p.105, 214	'University College of Dublin' not 'University College Dublin'
p.108:	Delete from 'Eder submits that environmentalism' ... to ... 'mankind's expressive relationship with nature'.
p.112: 1 st paragraph	'too' not 'to'
p.113: 2 nd paragraph	Start new sentence at 'However'
p.122: footnote 8	remove underscore
p.136:	'Bourdieu' not 'Bordieu'
p.146, 164, 197	'effected' not 'affected'
p.152, 153, 224	'can not' not 'cannot'
p.160: 2 nd paragraph	Delete 'Phys ically'
p.160: 3 rd paragraph	Insert 'spatial' after 'particular'
p.168: 2 nd paragraph	'Chapter One' not 'Chapter Two'
p.174: 2 nd paragraph	Delete last 'in' in 6 th line
p.174	'participant's' not 'participants'
p.176: 3 rd paragraph	Delete 'Firstly'
p.178	'O'Connel street' not 'O'Connell Street'
p.179: 1 st paragraph	'for Sean' not 'for him'
p.187: 1 st paragraph	Insert '(one of the two largest mainstream political parties in Ireland)' after 'Fianna Fail'
p.192	'Green peace' not 'Greenpeace'
p.198: quotation	'too' not 'to' in second line.
p.202: second line	Insert 'be' between 'letters to' and 'written'

p.203	'lit' not 'it'
p.207: first line	'this chapter' not 'these next set of chapters'
p.208: 2 nd paragraph	Comma, not full stop, after 'method'.
p.214: 2 nd paragraph	The term 'council tenancy' describes a high density public housing estate.
p.214: footnote 11	'4.1.1' not '4.1a'
p.218: 2 nd paragraph	'many' not 'much'
p.219, 246	'lets' not 'let's'
p.220: 3 rd quotation	Insert 'a' between 'rise to' and 'certain extent'
p.224: 2 nd paragraph	'who' not 'that'
p.229	'there' not 'their'
p.230	'TDs' not 'MPs'
p.234	'Polit Bureau' not 'Politbureau'
p.251: 2 nd paragraph	'number' not 'amount'
p.252: 2 nd quotation	The term 'Guardi' refers to members of the Irish Police Force.
p.253: 4 th paragraph	Insert 'is' between 'interest as it' and 'an unexpectedly'.
p.256: 2 nd paragraph	'who' not 'that'

CONSIDERING THE IRISH GREENS:

An Ethnographic Approach to Identity and Environmentalism.

A dissertation in fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

at Monash University, Clayton, Melbourne, Australia

Michael Patrick O'Kane

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Table of Contents

Table of Contents	i
Abstract	iii
Declaration	v
Dedication	vii
Acknowledgements	ix
List of Abbreviations	xi
Introduction	1
Chapter 1: Engaging with Environmentalism	7
1.1 Anthropology and Environmentalism	7
1.1.1 Milton, K.	9
1.1.2 Berglund, E.	15
1.1.3 Brosius, P.	19
1.1.4 Comments on Brosius	24
1.1.5 Brosius' Reply	27
1.2 An Anthropological Model of Discourse, Identity and Conflict.	30
1.3 A Brief History of Environmental Groups and Conflicts in Contemporary Ireland	58
Chapter 2: Being Green	75
2.1 Dublin	75
2.2 The Greens as Intellectuals	86
2.2.1 Eileen	94
2.2.1a Decentralisation	97
2.2.1b Education	99
2.2.1c Opportunity	103
2.2.2 Joe	105
2.2.3 Neave	114
2.2.4 Tim	122
2.2.5 Fiona	131
2.2.6 Sean	138
2.3 Summary	147
Chapter 3: The Kilmeanagh Landfill Dispute	157
3.1 The Dump: A Case Study	157
3.2 Day One	161
3.3 Day Two	164

3.4	Epilogue and Analysis	168
Chapter 4: The Party at Work		173
4.1	Organisational Structure	173
4.1.1	Local Groups	174
4.1.2	Regional Groups	180
4.1.3	The Co-ordinating Committee and the National Council	183
4.2	Policy Formation	184
4.2.1	The Question of Drug Abuse: A Case Study	188
Chapter 5: The Election		207
5.1	Initial Difficulties	207
5.1.1	The Other Parties	209
5.2	The Campaign	213
5.2.1	The Dublin South Campaign	214
5.2.1a	3/2/1997 – Election Strategy Meeting	215
5.2.1b	17/02/1997 – General Meeting	216
5.2.1c	3/3/1997 – Election Strategy and General Meeting	221
5.2.1d	7/4/1997 – Election Strategy and General Meeting	224
5.2.1e	21/4/1997 – Election Strategy and General Meeting	227
5.2.1f	The Question of Coalition	228
5.2.1g	Campaign Donations	231
5.2.1h	6/5/1997 – Election Strategy and General Meeting	232
5.2.2	The Dublin Central Campaign	237
5.2.2a	12/03/1997 – Election Strategy and General Meeting	240
5.2.2b	07/05/1997 – Election Strategy Meeting	250
5.2.3	Dublin South West Campaign	254
5.3	Canvassing	257
5.4	Election Day	262
Conclusion		267
References		277

Abstract

Recent debates concerning anthropology's engagement with environmentalism contend that an invigorated approach is needed to strengthen the presence of the discipline in this field. The thesis aims to discuss certain issues raised by these debates. Namely, that an anthropological approach to culture, discourse and ideology offers the study of environmentalism a unique perspective not readily afforded by the other disciplines. The thesis is therefore an ethnographic study of the Irish Green Party based on twelve months of fieldwork conducted between 1996 and 1997 and its focus is the creation and maintenance of identity within the Party during this period. Particular attention is paid to the socio-cultural, historical and political context in which the Irish Green Party has evolved and the way in which these contextual factors effect the Party's members perceptions of their role as environmental activists.

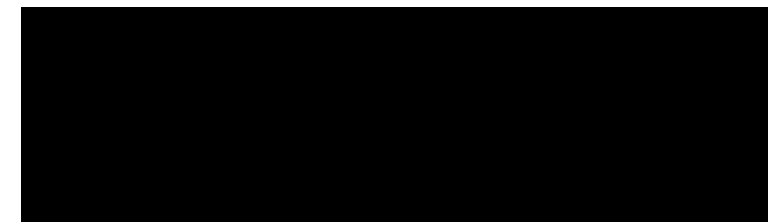
The thesis discusses the ways in which members of the Party came to be involved in environmental activism. It presents them as intellectuals participating in a distinctive intellectual community within the sphere of environmentalism. The Irish Greens are active participants in the wider Irish society and practice a form of environmentalism that is directly influenced by Irish cultural dispositions. The thesis also discusses the use of discourse in the creation of knowledge and observes that the Irish Greens believe that being educators is the key to their role as environmental activists. The thesis contends that, while engaged in the process of knowledge creation and dissemination, the Irish Greens are developing an emergent ideology that, although it is still fluid, contains identifiable features which are uniquely 'Green'.

Finally, the thesis follows the Party's progress through the election campaign of 1997 and pays particular attention to the experiences of three Dublin based local constituency groups

during the course of the campaign. This demonstrates the way in which ethnography can bring an understanding of the lived experiences of its subjects to the study of environmentalism in a way that is unique to anthropological fieldwork. The thesis contends that it is precisely this depth of ethnographic analysis that constitutes anthropology's most practical role in its future engagements with environmentalism.

Declaration

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other institution. To the best of my knowledge this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

A large black rectangular box used to redact the signature of the author.

Michael P. O'Kane

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my mother, Mary Elizabeth O'Kane (nee Cooke). As fate would have it, Mum was taken from us on the 7/11/2002 and thus did not live to see the completion of this work. There are no words for the loss felt by myself and my family at her passing and I can find no poem or line of verse that could express how much we all miss her. I would simply like to say that without her love, strength, dedication, devotion and faith I could never have attempted this thesis. Although it is not nearly enough to thank you for all you have given me, this is for you Mum. You taught me to grit my teeth and get on with it. Wish you were here.

Acknowledgements

If I knew what doing a Ph.D thesis was going to be like, would I still have taken the scholarship? That is a question I wouldn't like to think about for too long. A far easier question to answer would be - could I have done this without the extraordinary support that I have received from my family and friends? The answer to that is 'absolutely not'. Dad, I thank you for being there for me when I really needed your help and at a time when you had more than enough on your plate. You and Mum have given me so much that I could never repay you, all I can do is thank you and tell you I love you. Terry, no-one has a brother like you. Thank you for your loyalty and your friendship. You and Marta have never turned me away when I needed help or someone to talk to and I thank you both. Lisa, thank you for caring, worrying and all the advice big sister. Your wayward little brother would never even have made it through first year without your support and he has not forgotten it. Thanks for your faith in me.

To my partner Erin, I love you and I thank you for putting up with me. No-one else in the world knows just how hard this has been to complete because no-one else has had to put up with me worrying and stressing about this thesis day and night. Thank you for loving me and being you. Let's have adventures and then lots of children.

To my supervisor, Dr Michael Stevenson, I thank you for the way in which you have helped and guided me. Without the benefit of your experience and support through what have proven to be some of the hardest years of my life, this thesis just may have killed me. I thank you for supervision and your friendship both.

I thank the staff of the School of Political and Social Inquiry for their professionalism and for their understanding. I also thank the School of Political and Social Inquiry in its previous

incarnation as the Department of Anthropology and Sociology for granting me the scholarship that allowed me to perform the research upon which this thesis is based.

I thank my friend (soon to be Dr) John Martino for his speedy and thorough proof reading. John, one day one of our schemes will succeed and then we won't know what to do with ourselves.

I thank all of my friends for standing by me these last years. You know who you are and my door will always be open.

Finally, I thank the members of the Irish Green Party/Comhaontas Glas for allowing me to conduct my fieldwork among them. I believe that there is nothing so noble as to strive to make the world a better place. That is exactly what the Irish Greens are doing. They are sacrificing their time and energy for the betterment of their society. I thank them for their friendship and their trust.

List of Abbreviations

CGM	Cork Green Movement
CNIAG	Cork Noxious Industry Action Group
DCU	Dublin College University
DLP	Democratic Labour Party
DRC	Dublin Regional Council
EOLAS	Gaelic acronym for the Irish Science and Technology Agency
ETF	Election Taskforce
FoE	Friends of the Earth
GANG	Green Action Now Group
GBI	Guaranteed Basic Income
IDA	Industrial Development Authority
PDs	Progressive Democrats
TD	Teachta Dala (Member of the Irish Parliament-Dail)
UCD	University College of Dublin
UCG	University of Galway
WVPA	Womanagh Valley Protection Association

Introduction

This thesis aims to provide a further contribution to the engagement by anthropology with the phenomenon of environmentalism. My reasons for undertaking this project lie in my belief that anthropology offers the study of environmentalism perspectives and expertise not readily found amongst the other disciplines interested in the area. Chief among these is the art of ethnography, for ethnographic research allows the people who are its focus the opportunity to speak with their own voices and in their own words throughout the finished work. This is not the place to expand upon the many achievements of ethnographic fieldwork. Nevertheless, I wish to highlight the way it provides a space for those who read the ethnography to compare the researcher's perceptions with the discourses of those being studied. The readers, while interacting with the text, are also able to connect with the people whose experiences are recorded in it, regardless of the subjectivity of the author. It goes without saying that the author is compelled to selectively present the discourse of the subjects, and that these selections will be guided by the author's theoretical framework.

The reasons I undertook anthropological fieldwork in Ireland with the Irish Green Party were threefold. First, I have a longstanding theoretical interest in exploring the way in which the environmental movement has employed social and environmental theory. In my Honours thesis I concentrated on a discussion of the synthesis of socialist and ecological theory which appears in the 'Red-Green' movement. I wanted to determine if this synthesis constituted a new theory in itself or was rather an adaptation of an older theory. While formulating my doctoral research proposal, I realized that I had become less interested in the ongoing theoretical discussions concerning the genesis or viability of the environmental movement than I was in the people who called themselves environmentalists and who were willing to give their time and effort to the environmental cause. I decided to study a 'Green Party' as an expression of a politically active environmental movement because I thought its members

would display high levels of participation and commitment. I was becoming more interested in praxis.

The other crucial aspect of Green parties, as examples of environmental activism, is their engagement with mainstream politics. On the whole their members are not people living on the verges of society, rather they are engaged in it on all levels. In short, they are not radicals whose primary purpose is to overturn the social order, and often they have gained substantial benefits from the societies in which they live. Furthermore, while performing the ethnographic fieldwork, I hoped the social position of Green Party members would enable me to gain broader cultural insights into the way in which activists saw themselves, while avoiding the complications that exist when trying to contextualise a marginal or subterranean social group within a greater socio-cultural whole. In Ireland I found that this approach helped me to position the Green Party activists in contemporary Irish society and culture thereby enabling me to portray the unique aspects of the Irish Greens.

The second reason that I was drawn to the study of a Green party as an expression of environmental movements is that I agree with their aim of discovering ways in which human beings can create social structures that are sustainable and humane in both environmental and social terms. I feel I must point out here that this does not mean that I am ideologically committed to their cause or that I feel any need to defend, or apologise for, their beliefs or actions. I do, however, have a great deal of respect for any group of people engaged in a cause which they feel will benefit, not only those that they personally know and care for, but all of humanity. After all, we as a species can not survive the fall of the other species upon which our existence depends. Coming to my own perspectives on environmentalism and sustainability through Marxist and socialist thought, I found myself at times at odds with the Greens, especially in relation to issues of class differentiation and the functions of the capitalist market. I have striven in the writing of this thesis to raise their voices above my own as it is my opinion that the only benefit that comes of mentioning my own subjective views is

to warn the reader that ethnographics are a deeply subjective enterprise. Accordingly, along with my reservations about the environmentalist movement I feel it only fair to say that I applaud many of their aims and all of their passion for finding a better path than the one we appear to be sliding down at present.

The third reason for my choice of the Green Party in Ireland is possibly the most personal of the three. I come from an Irish Australian cultural background, being the descendant of convicts on one side, rebels on the other and all shades of heroes and villains in between. This means that, while I am deeply rooted in my own culture and nationality, there is a sense of coming from somewhere else, a place of origin, which I believe descendants of immigrants everywhere feel. There has always been much curiosity about Ireland in my family and I suppose that this effected my own sense of identity in my formative years. Maybe I would have been able to grow out of this fascination with Ireland but my parents saw to it that I would not be able to forget my ancestry when they gave me my name. So it seems that Ireland and I were thrown together by accident of birth and, as an Irish Australian trying to decide where I might conduct a twelve month fieldwork research on Green parties, I found the Irish Green Party an obvious choice. It presented me with the opportunity to experience and be part of a movement that I see as critical in humanity's future relationships with its environment while immersing myself in a culture in which I had long been curious.

Structure

I have divided this thesis into five chapters, not including the introduction and the conclusion. The first chapter begins with a discussion of anthropology's engagement with environmentalism, and it is particularly concerned with an ongoing debate between a number of anthropologists regarding the relevance of anthropological research to the study of environmentalism. I have focused upon the thoughts of Peter Brosius, Kay Milton and Eva Berglund who are engaged in this discourse in order to provide a theoretical context for my work and to position the research in the greater field of anthropological research involving

environmentalism. The chapter then continues with a discussion of a number of works by Aodhán Mac Fíneáin in both Ireland and Australia. I have focused on Mac Fíneáin's work as he provides valuable insights into both the study of environmentalism and the study of Irish culture. His discussion of discourse, identity and conflict introduces several important themes to the thesis and has significantly informed my own approach to my fieldwork data. Lastly, the chapter concludes with a brief history of the environmental movement in Ireland from the 1960s to the present day. This is intended to provide further context for the thesis and to introduce the Irish Green Party to the reader.

The second chapter is concerned with a study of identity in relation to the membership of the Irish Greens. The chapter begins with a discussion of Dublin in 1997 and my impressions of it during my fieldwork. Dublin was and remains the central base of the Greens in the Republic and, as such, was the site of most of my field research. Therefore, the discussion is meant to shed light on the particular urban environment in which most of the Party's members lived and worked. The next section of the chapter is a discussion of identity concerning the Irish Greens. I have concentrated upon six members who I felt represented the range and diversity of the membership as much as possible. Each of these members has had their own path to joining the Green Party. My intention here is to present these individual case studies in order to form some broader statements about the membership's understandings of their own identities as politically active environmentalists within the socio-cultural context of contemporary Irish society. In the summing up of this discussion, I present the Greens as a community of intellectuals engaged in the production and dissemination of a certain kind of knowledge. Furthermore, I make the case that they do not exist as a community in isolation but are deeply entwined with the other intellectual communities with which they co-exist. I also point out that there is, evolving within the Irish Greens, evidence of an emerging ideology that has yet to coalesce into an independently recognisable form.

The third chapter is based upon a case study of a dispute which arose around a proposed landfill development in Galway. It is concerned with a two-day council hearing in which parties on both sides of the dispute debated the viability of the development in a public hearing. I have included this case study in order to demonstrate the way in which the Party served as an advocate for both the environment and the people objecting to the development regardless of their credentials as environmentalists. The point I make here is that one of the Greens most important roles, as an intellectual community, is to provide leadership and expertise in conflicts concerning the environment by engaging in, and attempting to have command over, the various discourses of science and technology employed by their adversaries.

The fourth chapter deals with the various institutions that constitute the organisational structure of the Party. The institutions discussed are those of the Local Group, the Regional Group, the Co-ordinating Committee and the National Council. This discussion describes the mechanics of the Party and the largely decentralised nature of its body politic. The chapter then moves on to an account of policy formation within the Party and attempts to explain the way in which the Greens' policy direction has evolved over time. It concludes with a case study on a contentious policy issue, dubbed the 'Drugs Policy' by the members, in order to provide an example of policy formation at work within the Party.

The fifth chapter is a discussion of the Party's journey through the election campaign of 1997. After providing an overview of the election campaign and a description of the other parties contesting the elections, the discussion follows the three local groups that I was most involved in through their experiences during the campaign. It is intended to give the reader an insight into the way in which the Party operated at ground level while giving context to the complexities and themes discussed earlier in the thesis regarding the sense of identity within the Party, the various roles played by the active members and the way in which they were perceived by the public.

While it is not appropriate to discuss my conclusions at this point, I feel it is necessary to state that I am interested in the Greens ideas and perceptions because I see them, first and foremost, as people actively involved in striving for a better world. I have consciously striven to represent them as a group of multi-dimensional, complex and complicated individuals who exist within their own social, cultural, historical, political and economic context. While I strongly believe that comparisons with other such groups will, and indeed must, be made, I would like to preface the rest of the work with the thought that ethnographies are specific to the time, place and socio-cultural context in which the people they centre upon live.

Chapter 1: Engaging with Environmentalism

1.1 Anthropology and Environmentalism

In recent years there has been much discussion about the relevance of the discipline of anthropology to the various emergent discourses on the environment. Among those researching in the area, reason for concern has been confirmed by a failure to make themselves heard as experts over the growing din of the other branches of social research passionately pleading the case for the relevance of their respective disciplines. This is evidenced to some degree by the lack of anthropological literature in the field of environmentalism, and comes into stark relief when compared with the extensive treatment of the area given by the political sciences. This chapter seeks to focus on reactions by anthropologists to this dearth of environmentally concerned research within the discipline over the last decade. The debate over the issues raised by this discussion has evolved principally between a small number of dedicated anthropologists and, while it is now spilling out into the wider anthropological community, it is from these scholars work that a path forward has been constructed.

Anthropology traditionally has strong links to the study of the environment through its focus on human interaction in environmental context. This basic connection is depicted by Milton, who says: "If one accepts the anthropological cliché that culture is the mechanism through which human beings interact with (or, more controversially, adapt to) their environment (Ingold 1992: 39), then the whole field of cultural anthropology can be characterized as human ecology" (1993: 4). In light of this, it is pertinent to ask why anthropology has not come to prominence in the study of environmentalists and environmentalism? Brosius addressed this by noting significant differences between "the ecological anthropology of the 1960's and early 1970's and what some are calling 'the environmental anthropology' of the present" (1999: 278). In mentioning ecological anthropology, Brosius is referring to the

meticulous work carried out by anthropologists studying the impact of human communities within the ecosystems they inhabited. These anthropologists used concepts such as carrying capacity and systems theory in order to discern, among other things, the relationship between ecological variables and cultural adaptations governing patterns of resource use. They were interested in bringing anthropology into line with the natural sciences in an attempt to legitimise culture as an empirical phenomenon. Brosius regards this as an inappropriate direction for anthropology, in hindsight, and brands it 'scientism'. Accordingly, he states that:

One does not have to be a post-structuralist to recognize the valorization of anthropology as a science, long a prominent element in our disciplinary self-identification (recall Radcliffe-Brown's efforts to establish a 'natural science of society'), reached a kind of rhetorical apogee in 1960s-1970s ecological anthropology as we borrowed one concept after another - ecosystem, adaptation, niche, carrying capacity - from ecology. (1999: 300)

According to Brosius and other like-minded anthropologists, this approach constituted a relegation of notions of culture to a series of competing strategies aimed solely at enhancing the chances of physical survival for the species. It is not clear as to whether or not the alternative approach was born out of the work of ecologically oriented anthropologists or as a response to it; however, a divergent stream did come to prominence in the 1960s and 1970s. This has come to be known as 'environmentalism'.

Brosius (ibid: 278) argues that environmentalism refers broadly to the field of "discursive constructions of nature and human agency". He makes the point that the study of environmentalism should encompass much more than an analysis of the different social movements involved and their various trajectories over time and space. As stated above, he feels that at the crux of environmentalism is the ongoing discourse about human beings and their place within nature. As a postmodernist thinker and an anthropologist, Brosius declares that the relevance of anthropology in this field of investigation is due to its unique concentration upon the phenomenon of culture. He urges anthropologists to see environmentalism as a "rich site of cultural production" (ibid: 277) and stresses that "a whole new discursive regime is emerging and giving shape to the relationships between and among

natures, nations, movements, individuals, and institutions" (ibid). It should be noted here that, although Brosius is thinking about environmentalism in terms of his work with discourse theory, the assertion of a more holistic approach by anthropologists to the study of environmentalism is not dependent upon the use of that branch of social theory. Discourse theory, which came to prominence with Macdonell's work *Theories of Discourse* (1986), has been aptly described by Torfing as "a *constructivist* and *relationalist* perspective on social identity perspective on social identity combined with an insistence on the heterogeneity of discourse" (1999: 3). Given this, Brosius' interest in the discursive constructions regarding nature comes as no surprise. What should be appreciated here is not the fact that anthropologists using discourse theory have become interested in environmentalism but that, as "a rich site of cultural production" (1999: 277), environmentalism offers anthropologists of all theoretical persuasions many avenues of worthwhile investigation. The following discusses the different directions in which anthropology has been taken by the study of environmentalism over the last decade.

1.1.1 Milton, K.

Kay Milton has made a number of important contributions to this area of anthropological investigation over recent years. In 1993 she edited a work, entitled *Environmentalism: The View from Anthropology*, which attempted to position anthropology more centrally within the multi-disciplinary study of environmentalism. Her introduction contains O'Riordon's assertion that environmentalism preaches "a philosophy of human conduct" and is also "a state of being" (1981: xi, cited in Milton 1993: 1). This, for her, is a crucial observation as it allows anthropologists to see environmentalism as a social commitment undertaken by social actors in complex multi-sited cultural settings. Milton goes on to express the belief that environmentalism is, in the main, "a quest for a viable future, pursued through the implementation of culturally defined responsibilities" (1993: 2). Obviously, these responsibilities vary between cultural settings but, observes Milton, they originate from the

recognition that environmental problems are caused by human interaction with the environment. She feels that the key to a viable future lies in a better understanding of human activity (ibid).

Milton also raises the issue of the potential conflict faced by anthropologists concerning anthropological research and environmental advocacy. Although not calling for all anthropologists to become advocates for the environmental cause, she does outline three main ways in which anthropological knowledge could further the cause of environmentalism. The first of these is through an approach centred upon human ecology but would only be of merit if the initial premise was that all human interactions with the environment took place "through the medium of culture" (ibid: 5). As with Brosius, Milton recognises the pitfalls of the ecological determinism of the 1950s and 1960s while also being aware of the dangers of cultural determinism which, in extreme cases, "can appear to deny the very existence of objective reality" (ibid: 4). Therefore, the benefit of this approach lies mainly in its attempt to investigate the way in which people culturally perceive their interactions with the environment. The second approach concerns the cross-cultural interpretation of the "meanings imputed to reality" which are the building blocks of cultural understanding (ibid: 5). Milton feels that this would be invaluable when formulating broad reaching environmental policies such as those implemented by the UN and the EU. An understanding of the cultural meanings and symbolism at work in particular cultural contexts would greatly assist the linkage of local, regional and global action concerning environmental initiatives. Thirdly, Milton notes that environmentalists could be well served by the anthropological study of environmentalism itself (ibid: 6). Importantly, in keeping with O'Riordan's notion of environmentalism as a philosophy of human conduct, she identifies it as a 'social commitment' gaining momentum through "the development and expression of ideas" (ibid: 6). It is in the analysis of what constitutes the environmentalist social commitment and the evolution of environmental theory that anthropology may further the cause of environmentalism.

Again, the notion of discourse features prominently in Milton's work and she defines it as follows:

A discourse is an area of communication defined purely by its subject matter. In this sense, environmental discourse is communication about the environment, and environmentalist discourse is communication about the protection of the environment. There is no indication here that a particular mode of communication is being used, or that a particular way of understanding is being generated. (ibid: 167).

She describes environmentalism as a trans-cultural discourse that, not being rooted in any specific culture, spans the local through to the global and now has become a specific cultural discourse existing within, although not bounded by, other cultural systems. Thus, environmentalism is perceived by her to transcend many traditional geographical and conceptual boundaries such as east/west, north/south, first world/third world and left/right. As Milton describes it, environmentalism incorporates "all culturally defined environmental responsibilities, whether they are innovative or conventional, radical or conservative" (ibid: 11). Furthermore, in her view environmental discourse does not merely articulate perceptions of the environment, it contributes to their formulation. In this way, the whole spectrum of thought is included in Milton's analysis because a pro-environmentalist stance is not required for discourse to be considered environmental (ibid: 8). If we also take into account Brosius' description of environmentalism provided earlier, we see that anthropologists have begun to discern environmentalism as being expressed through a myriad of social and cultural relationships and situations. Milton explains this well when she writes:

In this framework, social movements and political ideologies become specific cultural forms through which environmental responsibilities might be expressed and communicated. Instead of environmentalism being seen as a category of social movement or ideology, these forms of cultural expression become types of environmentalism. (ibid: 8)

Milton's *Environmentalism and Cultural Theory* (1996) extends and develops the ideas from her earlier work. Here she contends that anthropology is going through a time of fundamental theoretical change in relation to the concept of culture (1996: 11) and that this is evidenced by three different trends within the discipline. The first of these trends is what Milton describes as "dissatisfaction with the cultural relativist perspective which has characterized

anthropology in the post-structuralist era" (ibid). This harks back to her earlier (1993) discussion of environmentalism and advocacy within anthropology but indicates that, in her judgement, anthropologists are now less inclined to entertain notions of cultural relativity when confronted with their burgeoning ability to contribute directly to environmental debates. The second trend she identifies is "a widespread reaction, both within and outside anthropology, against the Cartesian dualisms of mind-body, thought-action, nature-culture, which are seen as obstructing progress in anthropological theory" (1996: 11). These dualisms, or dichotomies, were seen by Milton to have outlived their usefulness "as a framework for understanding the human condition" (ibid: 12). She singles out the nature-culture dichotomy as particularly unhelpful and notes that this is an area within which anthropological investigation has much to offer (ibid).

The third trend Milton points to is the increasing focus by anthropologists on the way in which cultural exchange is taking place in the modern world. Anthropologists have always been interested in how cultural influences are spread and Milton notes that, given the advantages of modern technology, the current high rate of cultural exchange "has led social scientists to ask whether it is appropriate to speak of a 'global culture'" (ibid). This is, she asserts, a direct challenge to the anthropological methodology of cross-cultural comparison. According to her, anthropology has only just begun to look at the cultural connotations of the world system theorised by scholars such as Wallerstein (1979), Nash (1981), and Chirot and Hall (1982) and is in danger of being marginalised in the debates about globalisation that have sprung from them. She goes on to urge anthropologists to refrain from assuming the relevance of the concept of globalisation to the analysis of environmentalism but rather to see the problematics that surround it (ibid: 13). This argument is crucial in understanding Milton's overall conception of anthropology's position within the study of environmentalism. She notes that "the debate on the environment has adopted the concept of the global as both 'motive and motif'" (ibid) and makes no secret throughout her book that anthropological

perspectives on culture are invaluable in the attempt to gain a clearer notion of what constitutes the 'global'.

Regarding anthropological perspectives on culture, Milton identifies a broad and a narrow view at work within anthropological theory. The broad view of culture, most common in the 1950s, encompassed "actions, ideas and material objects" (ibid: 17). She believes that this view was only appropriate while "anthropologists were mainly concerned with describing and understanding whole ways of life, 'whole systems'" (ibid) as the discipline attempted to understand cultures as constituting discreet systems in their own right. The obvious flaw regarding the inclusion of material objects being the inability of this definition to cope with the flow of artistic and technological ideas through and across cultures. By the late 1950s and early 1960s, anthropologists were beginning to "distinguish between what people do and what they think, feel and know" (ibid: 18). In other words, ideas were being separated from actions and material objects in an attempt to redefine culture. Milton argued that the benefit of this "was that it opened up the possibility of studying the relationship between them" (ibid). Thus, at this point anthropologists were now not simply interested in how people reacted within their societies, but also how they used culture to change them.

The notion of cultural relativity developed as a consequence of this new, narrow definition of culture as culture now began to be perceived as a way of knowing rather than a way of life. Milton pointed out that this had both positive and negative connotations for the study of culture. On the one hand it effected a significant decrease in discrimination and ethnocentrism while, on the other, its preoccupation with the contextual nature of culture problematised cross-cultural transmission to such an extent that that notion became theoretically impossible (ibid: 19-20). Additionally, it sparked off a debate concerning advocacy within the discipline that still exists to this day. Some anthropologists, inspired by the new degree of dignity afforded to indigenous cultures by cultural relativity, became advocates for the people they

studied while others, equally inspired by the cultural relativist standpoint, opposed advocacy as they perceived it as active interference by anthropologists into subject communities.

By 1996, Milton argued that perceptions of culture among anthropologists had again shifted. The post-structuralist distinction between the mental and the physical was now seen as a continuation of the mind-body dualism that had been prominent in the 1950s. She stated that:

In an attempt to eliminate the dualism, the term 'culture' is being used less to refer to what people know and think, and more to refer to the process by which that knowledge and those thoughts are generated and sustained. (ibid: 22).

Thus, the main thrust of Milton's discussion concerning the concept of culture is that it has begun to be seen as something that "exists in peoples minds ... consists of perceptions and interpretations (and) ... is the mechanism through which human beings interact with their environment" (ibid: 66). This has, in more recent decades, given rise to a more interpretive and less scientific perspective. As Milton explains:

Anthropologists have not given up the effort to explain cultural features, and some regard this as their ultimate goal, but since the 1970's many have seen their task as interpretive rather than explanatory (see Geertz 1973). Their role has been to reveal how cultural perspectives make sense, by showing how they are related to the activities of those who hold them, and how their various components – assumptions, values, norms, goals – relate to one another. (ibid: 102)

Milton employs this more interpretive and hermeneutic approach to culture to investigate environmentalism as a "cultural phenomenon" of global proportions (ibid: 142). She singles out Robertson's definition of globalisation because she feels it has the capacity to provide a framework in which the study of environmentalism as a cultural phenomenon can be seriously undertaken. Robertson's definition, states that "Globalization as a concept refers both to the compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole" (Robertson 1992: 8 cited in Milton 1996: 164). Milton understands the first part of this definition to refer to the process of linking the disparate parts of the world by economic, political and technological means and bringing each part under the influence, to greater and lesser degrees, of the others. She understands the second part of the definition to refer to the

way in which people are becoming aware of this interconnectedness and the changes that this awareness is bringing to people's perceptions about themselves, their own condition and that of others. In short, Robertson, for Milton, emphasises the cultural nature of globalisation and asserts that an awareness of this has been absent in, for example, the earlier theories of Wallerstein, Saurin and Giddens (ibid: 144-154).

I contend that Robertson's approach reveals that it is possible to see that relationships between east – west, north – south and first world – third world are not simply relationships where the more powerful and affluent sector influence the lesser while remaining unaffected. Here, for instance, Robertson indicates that the third world influences the first world significantly and that the power of the north has not made it invulnerable to the needs and demands of the south. I should point out here that neither Robertson nor Milton portray these relationships as being between equals. They simply stress that the suppositions surrounding them have been unchallenged for too long.

Thus, Milton advocates a role for anthropology in the study of environmental activism that is based around the notion of discourse and globalisation. For her, environmentalism is a transcultural discourse played out within and across the cultures of the globe but never rooted in any one of them. In this way environmental movements, and the discourses they gave rise to, can be studied by anthropologists as cultural expressions of a wider cross-cultural phenomenon. I have found this perspective to be particularly useful in understanding the Irish Greens and their perceptions of their identity as both environmentalists and Irish citizens.

1.1.2 Berglund, E.

Eeva Berglund is another anthropologist who wishes to establish anthropology as a legitimate participant in the study of environmentalism. Like Milton, Berglund notes the lack of anthropological involvement in this field. As she contends, it seems "curious that so little

attention has been paid by anthropologists to the ways in which people around the world have joined the chorus of voices who are constituting as well as contesting, the notion of the global environmental crisis" (1998: 4). In her book, *Knowing Nature, Knowing Science: An ethnography of environmental activism*, Berglund explores the role of what she terms "technoscience" (1998:4) in environmental discourse. Her fieldwork was conducted in a German city of approximately 220, 000 people which she dubbed 'Mittelstadt'. Situated near the eastern border of the former German Democratic Republic, Mittelstadt is the site of three different sustained actions by environmentalists that provided Berglund with the central case studies for her research. The first case involved a protest against the continued use of a landfill site containing toxic waste that was leaching into the local water supply. The second protested against the construction of a high speed motorway running through the local vicinity, while the third opposed the construction of high voltage overhead power lines. Her research was inspired by her observation that, within the ongoing debates concerning the environment, the theories and conclusions of the 'natural' sciences are frequently used to establish credibility and authority. Furthermore, in many instances participants with opposing viewpoints, yet using the same data, draw vastly different conclusions.

Importantly, Berglund was aware of the fact that, in modern western – or, alternatively, northern or industrial – societies, the language and symbolism of 'technoscience' carries much weight and authority as a direct consequence of the enormous influence still exerted within these societies by Enlightenment thinking (ibid: 6). However, science, she argues, is beginning to lose its sheen of invulnerability because, subject to multiple interpretations within the very public field of environmentalism, it becomes disputed terrain in a "contest between believing and knowing" (ibid: 10). This contest about the meaning and veracity of scientific knowledge was crucial to her research as an anthropologist interested in letting the social actors involved in her study speak for, and define themselves, in relation to their lived experience. As she sees it, her insights are gained by conceiving environmentalism as "a heightened awareness of the negotiability of human relationships" (ibid: 7). Science and its

discourse, 'technoscience', operate for her within this context as a conduit through which the struggle between believing and knowing is waged.

While Berglund, in mapping out the field of inquiry, acknowledges the significant contributions of social theorists such as Beck (1992), Giddens (1990, 1991), Bauman (1993) and Melucci (1989), her work addresses the lack of adequate case studies with which to augment and further the theoretical debates underway in the social sciences. Like Milton, Berglund feels that this is legitimately the realm of anthropological investigation given its pre-occupation with cultural interpretations of reality and the comparative nature of its analysis. She argues that this is so even though there is a dualism within the discipline in relation to the treatment of science (1998: 12). On the one hand, anthropologists have traditionally placed great emphasis on the way in which human beings interact with and within their environments, but this has been predicated on an ecological determinism which portrayed culture as little more than a reactive coping mechanism. For instance, much of the ecologically based anthropology of the previous era involved the study of exotic cultures that were analysed as complex whole systems engaged in adapting human populations to environmental necessities. Thus, the emphasis placed on the information given by those being studied was often devalued in the face of the theories of modern science. On the other hand, anthropologists have sought to redress this problem in recent decades by taking a much more relativistic stance towards culture and the legitimacy of the different forms of knowledge derived from it. There has been a sustained push within the discipline to write both the subjects of investigation, and the investigators, back into ethnographies with both being seen as social actors in specific contexts.

Berglund's approach to participant observation gives full recognition both to her identity as a researcher and as an activist. She declares that the "many insights I have gained through environmental politics have come through taking up a series of perspectives squarely within

the world I describe, even as having access to scholarly analyses distinguishes my experience from that of activists" (ibid: 13). Hence, Berglund's knowledge or reflexivity about being an activist and a scholar led her to seek to engage more closely with her research subjects and more insightfully with academic theory. However, more than simply adding case studies to an existing body of theory and empirical findings, Berglund seeks to redress the determinism inherent in the work of some of the more prominent social theorists.

Taking Ingold's criticism of social science's predilection for the creation of categories in which to place social and cultural phenomena (ibid: 13), she reserves particularly harsh criticism for Douglas and Wildavsky's social organisational grid theory (1982) in which the form of social organisation present determines the moral order of the day within each society. Interestingly, Milton is also uncomfortable with this deterministic approach on the grounds that it denied the possibility of change on any meaningful scale (1996: 97). For Berglund, their work "seemed like an almost trivial intellectual indulgence around eminently non-trivial issues" (1998: 179), and she feels that the placing of themselves within the most morally superior category "valuing resilience and an open mind" (ibid) was inspired by arrogance rather than any intellectual endeavour. This arrogance, she asserts, is a reoccurring theme within the work of western intellectuals as they consistently fail to see themselves as bounded by culture in the same way that they suppose other people to be (1998: 80). In many previous anthropological works the focus has been on the exotic 'other' with culture being something experienced by those 'others' but escaped by those who study it. Finally, through her study of the role played by modern western science in environmentalism, Berglund illuminates the ways in which people in modern western societies use different kinds of knowledge, many of them culturally specific, to understand their place in the world. Let us now return to Brosius and his article in *Current Anthropology* (1999) mentioned at the start of this chapter. I have paid close attention to this article and the comments that it generated¹ as it provides an overview of the engagement by anthropologists in the field of environmentalism which

¹ All replies are cited within the article and are referenced as Brosius (1999).

includes aspects of the past, present and future. It also explores this engagement in such a way as to contextualise the above discussion principally concerning Milton (1993, 1996) and Berglund (1998).

1.1.3 Brosius, P.

One of the most striking things about the anthropological study of environmentalism in recent times is the prominence of discourse as a method of analysis. As we have seen, Milton, Berglund and Brosius have all employed this term and its mode of analysis in their research but it is Brosius most of all who provides us with a rationale for this strategy. His approach is based "on the premise that discourse matters and that environmental discourses are manifestly constitutive of reality (or rather a multiplicity of realities)" (Brosius 1999: 278). This is an approach that recognises the fact that struggles within the field of environmentalism have been, will be and are being fought through discursive means. Whosoever can dictate the flow of information through discourse has an almost unassailable advantage in controlling the wider debate, and Brosius is well aware of the different agencies and institutions concerned with doing just that for many reasons (ibid). As to how these competing centres of discourse construction may be dealt with by researchers, he contends that:

Indeed, any attempt to understand the socio-cultural movement aspects of environmentalism must necessarily frame them within a larger set of questions about this wider discursive domain and examine the complex relationships which exist between historical and contemporary forms of domination, existing or emerging structures/institutions, the politics of representation, processes of discursive production, and emerging forms of political agency". (ibid: 278)

Thus, Brosius perceives the discursive aspects of culture to be the most productive way of understanding environmentalism as a cultural phenomenon. I should note here again that, although discourse theory is useful in the study of environmentalism, it is not the only valid approach. In fact, significant proportions of this thesis are intended to illustrate how a broad approach combining a number of theoretical points of view provide a range of analytical

possibilities worthy of further study by anthropologists. However, for the moment, I shall remain within the realms of Brosius' discussion.

Brosius feels that anthropologists have become interested in environmentalism, after a long hiatus proceeding the decline of ecological anthropology as a prominent field within the discipline, for three main reasons (ibid: 279). The first two he does not dwell on. They are, firstly, the discipline had been caught in the momentum created by other branches of the social sciences such as sociology, human geography, cultural studies and the political sciences and, secondly, the emergence of environmental groups within sites of fieldwork already under study. The third, a series of overlapping recent theoretical trends, he discusses more fully. He feels that the most noticeable of these is the move by anthropologists to redress essentialisations of Indigenous people by various civil rights groups interested in 'proving' their authenticity (ibid). Given that Brosius has spent much of his academic career studying and working with Indigenous people, particularly the peoples of the Sarawak in East Malaysia, this tendency to essentialise both habitat and inhabitant by human rights and environmental organisations must have struck him forcefully and had a profound effect on his own research. Brosius believes that the way in which anthropology has sought to redress the consequences of its late engagement with environmentalism has been to re-engage with the cultural critique of 'otherness' in what Marcus and Fischer have called "repatriation of anthropology as cultural critique" (1986: 111, cited in Brosius 1999: 279). This 'repatriation', asserts Brosius, was accompanied by, among other things, a renewed interest in the discourse/power/knowledge interconnections discussed by Foucault (1972, 1980b, cited in Brosius 1999: 279); innovative approaches to the study of resistance predicated on a reassessment of humanity's positioning within or outside nature (Brosius 1999:279); the rise of 'science studies' as a new field of investigation examining "the bases of scientific knowledge about nature" (ibid); globalisation studies; and finally, an effort to understand the environment as a locus for inequality within the field of political ecology (ibid: 280).

Brosius positions his own work in the context of a growing number of anthropologists studying environmentalism in relation to "globalization and the transnationality of these movements and discourses" (ibid: 280). As Brosius relates, these anthropologists are interested in the intersection of local concerns and global discourse (ibid: 281), and the way in which each is brought into the others sphere and becomes legitimated in the quest for information and funding. As he writes, anthropologists are now paying attention to how, within environmental movements, environmental discourses are "deployed, appropriated, transformed, circulated, and recirculated by variously positioned actors, as well as the ways in which environmental imperatives are framed and deployed with respect to claims about local authenticity, national sovereignty, or global significance" (ibid: 281). Indeed, he understood this kind of anthropology to be part of environmental praxis because anthropologists are bringing a critical perspective to environmentalism which can be used to refine the existing body of knowledge already in use by activists.

As part of this critical perspective, Brosius cites the further investigation of the significance of particular topologies, north-south and local-global, within environmentalism. He is particularly concerned that, just as topologies have been created within which to locate the environmental paradigm, so specific categories of inhabitants have been created in order to inhabit these spaces (ibid: 282). He feels that this is problematic when we consider that certain populations may become conceptually bounded by their habitat in a way that inhibits broader analysis through a comparative methodology. The example provided by Brosius is the valorisation of certain groups within the human populations living in the rainforests. The way in which Indigenous people have been portrayed in environmental campaigns has led to the widespread popular belief that only they, as "guardians of biodiversity", 'belong' in the forest while others, such as "peasants and migrants from urban areas" (ibid: 282) do not.

Brosius also calls for notions of temporality to be integrated into the study of environmentalism. He makes the point that dynamism is an important aspect of any debate

and that environmental discourse has evolved rapidly. As the creation of knowledge concerning the environment and environmentalism becomes more widespread the debates that employ this knowledge become more complex. They are multifaceted, theoretically sophisticated, and are continually being influenced by the most recent developments (ibid: 283). This also raises for Brosius the issue of momentum concerning environmentalist actions and he cites the campaign for saving the Sarawak forest as an example. During the early stages the campaign built up such momentum that those involved believed at times that success was certain but then suffered disappointment when that momentum was lost (ibid). I feel that the notion of momentum in environmental campaigns is a particularly relevant concept when we take into account the political processes through which many environmental organisations have chosen to operate. Here it is important to note that Brosius identifies the deeply temporal nature of environmentalism. I have found notions of temporality to be essential in the descriptions and analysis of my own fieldwork and have attempted, wherever necessary, to incorporate this within my work. One only has to look at the speed of the rise of environmental movements to appreciate the significance of this notion. Indeed, temporality does not only figure in the rise and fall of different environmental movements and campaigns, it also effects their form while in existence. Brosius feels that this is visible in the way in which most environmental debates seemed to progress through an initial emphasis on consciousness raising, typified by the actions of the more radical direct action group. The next phase is marked by the adoption of a more mainstream approach in order to promote and sustain long-term strategies.

Of particular resonance with my own research is Brosius' call for a deeper analysis of the effects of national political cultures on environmental movements. He notes that anthropologists have generally failed to include the nation-state in a meaningful sense within their ethnographies and puts this down to a disciplinary preference for either, a narrow focus on the locality of fieldwork, or a linkage of local realities to "the transnational realm" (ibid: 285). He notes the identification of national political cultures with their physical surroundings

and suggests that notions of national ownership can not be ignored in the study of environmentalism. Indeed, national political cultures effect vast areas of government planning and policy which in turn effect their physical, social and cultural landscapes. He cited Tsing (1993) and Rosaldo (1994) as two leading proponents of this area of study and proposes that anthropologists "have been so fixed on local social movements, transnational NGOs, and globalization processes that we seem to have forgotten about the need to understand how national political cultures might mediate between these" (ibid: 285).

In concluding the article, Brosius posits that environmentalism is "a series of transformative discourses" (ibid: 287) in which anthropologists have become legitimately engaged. Given this, he warns, anthropologists must be constantly aware of the effects that their participation might have on the actors they study and acknowledge that these effects may not necessarily be beneficial. He was concerned that anthropologists might become so single-minded in pursuit of their research goals and the advancement of the field of inquiry that they could jeopardise environmental movements, especially third world social movements also involved in struggles of resistance, by providing their opposition with intricate knowledge of their organisational structures and activities. Brosius calls on his fellow anthropologists to ask themselves 'why' they were studying environmentalism in the first place and to be conscious of the "politics of representing these [environmental] movements" (ibid: 287).

Brosius' article inspired a number of comments from fellow anthropologists engaged in the study of environmentalism. These comments span the full range of issues he broaches, of which I have abbreviated or omitted according to my needs, and offer suggestions on future research foci and constructive criticism concerning Brosius' own understanding of the field. The following is not intended to be a full exploration of each of the correspondents views but, rather, a discussion of the points made in these replies that resonate most with my research goals and material. The issues addressed will be chosen to give the reader a sense of the

direction taken by this thesis within the broader field of environmentalism. The relationship between anthropology and environmentalism will be held in mind.

1.1.4 Comments on Brosius

The first of these comments to be addressed concerns the issue of what Bavaskar calls temporality. Bavaskar (in Brosius, 1999), in addressing Brosius' comments on the way in which environmental debates are fluid and dynamic over time, warns that an over emphasis on the effects of temporality and dynamism in environmental debates would negate any meaningful analysis drawn from these discussions. He explains this by arguing that meaningful analysis demanded there be definite heuristic boundaries within which to examine data, make assumptions and formulate theory. If the passage of time erodes all certainty, then the analysis of data becomes impossible except in retrospect. Accordingly he wrote:

The heuristic need for stable topologies, reference points, and boundaries cannot be denied. This need is felt not only by members of environmental movements but everyone engaged in meaningful action. Practice demands working assumptions, temporary certitudes, and acts of faith. Where do we anchor practice if our conceptual shores keep shifting? (Bavaskar in Brosius, 1999: 288)

This statement, in addition to tying the practice of both environmentalism and anthropology to the necessity of a degree of temporal and conceptual stability, also reminded Brosius that, in that necessity, anthropology is no different than other social sciences. Bavaskar praises Brosius' "pithy review of themes in environmental anthropology" and observes that the "dilemma of interrogating categories even as one continues to use them is not exclusive to environmental anthropologists but shared with everyone who is sensitive to the political implications of academic practice" (ibid: 288, 289).

As Brosius does not specifically address these comments by Bavaskar in his reply, I will not speculate as to his position vis-à-vis excessive emphasis on temporality but it does appear to me to be a useful concept if applied thoughtfully. Similarly, Berglund finds much to

commend it because of Brosius' discussion of momentum and environmental campaigns. For her the concept presents the possibility of seeing "patterns in the highs and lows of activism which scholars would be better placed than those at the centre of the political action to document" (Berglund in Brosius, 1999: 289). She suggests that, due to the ease with which large bodies of information can now be sent across temporal and spatial divides, the activism inherent within environmental movements has the ability to move at speeds that could outstrip current research methods generally associated with the social sciences. In any case she poses the question as to whether this offers anthropologists an opportunity to make their expertise 'count' in the field (ibid: 290). Additionally, she stresses the importance of finding patterns by stating her belief "that anthropological insights can be extended to searching for systematicity across contexts without totalizing" (ibid). Here Berglund advocates a move towards a theoretical middle ground in which the postmodernist preoccupation with context does not rule out the possibility of commonality across socio-cultural divides with respect to experience and organisation in environmentalism. She states "There are huge similarities not only in the platforms but in the dilemmas faced by environmentalists" (ibid). This theoretical middle ground would, according to her, involve a new kind of ethnography that was "only contingently place-bound" (ibid) and could thus operate within a locus that included "regional, national, and global networks" (ibid). Notably, Berglund makes the statement:

I would be delighted if more fieldwork-based material on environmentalism as a political commitment were available with the help of which I could begin to consider anthropology (along with disciplines such as cultural geography and media and communication studies) as compelling in its claims about environment-focused anxieties. The concept of momentum suggests one promising way for discerning connections between unique situations and systemic outcomes. (ibid: 290)

Escobar began his comments by identifying Brosius as a poststructuralist who focuses on "social movements as privileged spaces for the production and contestation of discourses of nature and culture" (Escobar in Brosius, 1999:291). He commends Brosius on this focus as he feels that the study of social movements, as an area, has been insufficiently addressed by anthropologists in the past but holds the key to a future meaningful engagement with environmentalism for the discipline. In his words, social movements "are the key actors in the

production of environmental discursive regimes and should thus be a primary focus of anthropological investigation" (ibid). However, he notes that Brosius, during his discussion of the disjunction between the anthropological approaches of the 1960s and 1970s and today's poststructuralism, ignores the contribution of those anthropologists whose work is not largely informed by notions of discourse or power. To address this oversight, Escobar calls for a "renewed dialogue" between the various environmental and ecologically based forms of anthropology practiced throughout the discipline. He does not stop there. Importantly he notes that:

This need for dialogue also applies, in a different way, to the majority of Marxist and political-economy approaches that have made only superficial overtures towards the poststructuralist concerns with power, knowledge, and discourse. These themes would also have to be mapped into Brosius' landscape of discursive regimes on the nature/culture interface. (ibid: 292)

Escobar also detects two trends emerging from anthropology's engagement with environmentalism. The first is the growing contribution to debates concerning sustainability and conservation made by anthropologists studying NGOs and 'grassroots' movements. The second is the increasing number of anthropologists articulating the discourses of environmentalism and struggling to theorise its social movements as evidence of "an entire political ecology" (ibid). He feels that these trends could be important factors in generating within anthropology a re-examination of the role of less traditional facets of the discipline, such as applied anthropology and anthropology based around advocacy and public policy formulation. These may well be taken to a more sophisticated theoretico-political basis than previously established (ibid).

In his comments, Hornborg finds common ground with Escobar with respect to the exclusion of non-discourse based anthropological research in Brosius' essay. He points out that, in theorising environmentalism through recourse to discourse models, the socio-economic realities upon which many of the debates concerning the environment rest have been neglected. He states that:

Money and the abstractions of economics are cultural vehicles of exploitation and should be quintessential targets for anthropological analysis and critique (cf. Hornborg 1998b, 1999). Such cultural categories intervene in very tangible ways in the 'physical and biotic' environment. (Hornborg in Brosius, 1999: 294)

When seen in the light of the comments made by Berglund and Escobar, this is a telling comment by Hornborg with regards to the future direction of anthropology's engagement with environmentalism. Hvalkof understands Brosius article to be, on a fundamental level, a call for the repoliticisation of anthropology through purposeful contextual ethnography "that is so much needed in our postmodern era of relative truths" (Hvalkof in Brosius, 1999: 295), while Stonich calls for theoretical and methodological perspectives in anthropology to include "ways to integrate the *political* (broadly conceived to include power and power relations) and the *material* into our studies" (Stonich in Brosius, 1999: 298).

1.1.5 Brosius' Reply

In reply, Brosius says Berglund makes a valuable contribution to the article by leading discussion about momentum in a direction that he had not previously contemplated. This prompts him to write "I share her concern for 'seeking systematic pattern(s) as a principle for scholarly practice ... without totalizing' and, in a time of reactionary antienvironmentalism, see the value in this as a form of engaged scholarly practice" (Brosius 1999: 299).

Additionally, he agrees with Escobar and Hornborg's comments concerning his preoccupation with discourse and notes that, while it is a popular approach to environmentalism in anthropology, discourse theory is but one of many valuable theoretical tools at anthropologists' disposal (ibid: 300). He also reiterates his concern that anthropologists be aware of their responsibilities to those whose lives their research affects. He refers to the way in which detailed ethnography can easily be used by forces antithetical to environmentalist causes, nevertheless he feels that the discipline has much to offer in the evolution of environmentalism regarding both advocacy and theoretical advancement (ibid: 302). As for

the benefits to be gained by the discipline through the study of environmentalism, Brosius declares:

For those of us engaged in anthropological studies of contemporary environmentalism, it is the very diversity of perspectives among and between various kinds of actors and the shifts that we continually see in their perspectives and positionings that makes this such a compelling topic of research. (ibid: 303)

The above discussion provides us with a map upon which we can trace the history of anthropology's engagement with environmentalism and the consequences of this engagement for the discipline as a whole up until the recently. The discipline has undergone several periods of change and seems to be fast approaching another. The functionalism of the 1950s gave rise to the structuralism of the 1960s and early 1970s which, in turn, resulted in a move away from structural analysis in favour of culturalist anti-metanarrative perspectives characterised by a deeply contextual focus on narrative². This has been accompanied by a parallel shift from scientific-ecological notions of culture, in which culture often seemed little more than a codification of survival strategies, to an understanding of culture as the medium through which human beings comprehend their physical and social environment. The anthropological study of culture has now been reconstituted as more than what we think and why we think it – it is also the study of how we think.

The study of environmentalism has had major, and in some cases unexpected, consequences for anthropology. One of the most significant of these is that the discipline has been compelled to seriously consider globalisation and its effects upon the theoretical and methodological fundamentals of anthropology. This has allowed anthropologists in the field to once again recognise the need for larger frameworks within which to place their observations while also seeing the dangers of over contextualisation arising from excessive relativism. Anthropologists engaged with environmentalism in its many forms seem to be leading the discipline out of its recent trajectory in which extreme cultural relativism and

² Nevertheless, many ethnographies throughout this period, in one way or another, still used or wrestled with the notion of social structure.

deconstructionism had begun to isolate it from the other social sciences. Anthropology now seems capable of attaining a new relevance within the social sciences based on cross-cultural methodology and knowledge combined with a deepening analytical and reflexive grasp of globalisation. Thus social anthropology can now play its part, along with the other social sciences, in furthering our understanding of modernity and its discontents.

Over the last decade, many anthropologists working in the field of environmentalism have used the study of discourse to investigate cultural phenomenon. In this context, environmental discourse contains both global and local aspects and incorporates many other discourses in its articulation. These two developments, the move away from the extremes of cultural relativism and the focus on global discourses, constitute major changes within the discipline but perhaps the greatest change is still to come. There is a clear call, within the ranks of those anthropologists engaged in the study of environmentalism, for a broader canvass upon which to portray their descriptions of those they observe. Milton (1996:164), using Robertson's definition, encourages globalisation to be seen as a phenomenon in which the interconnectedness of political, economic and technological spheres is more relevant than ever before to anthropological analysis. As a series of interacting discourses deeply embedded in globalising processes, environmentalism can not be analysed adequately without recourse to a greater framework than cultural relativism provides. Brosius notes that any future serious analysis of social movements linked to environmentalism needs to take into account the wider picture of history, power relations, and political agency in order to be worthwhile (1999:278). Berglund takes this a step further when she calls openly for a search for patterns within environmentalism in order to create a space for comparative analysis - this she refers to as systematising without totalising (ibid: 289). Escobar urges the resumption of meaningful dialogue between anthropologists employing Marxist and political economy approaches and those utilising discourse theory (ibid: 292). Hornburg calls for a greater emphasis to be placed in socio-economics in the future and Hvalkof (ibid: 295) and Stonich (ibid: 298) both point to the need to repoliticise anthropology.

The question before us now, having identified the need for a broadening of the theoretical foundations that underpin the study of environmentalism, is how will this be achieved? One possible answer has been supplied by Berglund who, in discussing environmentalism as manifested in social movements located within her research site, writes:

Like all social movements, environmentalism in Mittlestadt forges a space in which to discuss expectations, desires and access to decision making. Despite its ostensibly technical character then, environmentalism, like developmentalism (Watts 1995) is not only cultural, it is ideological. (1998: 188)

Thus, in keeping with theme of the need for a broader canvass upon which to articulate environmentalism as it occurs simultaneously in both local and global contexts, this thesis will include ideology as a conceptual tool in its analysis of the Irish Green Party. Used in conjunction with the other conceptual approaches mentioned above, ideology may well provide anthropological analysis the space it needs for a more robust treatment of environmentalism. However, we must put this aside for the moment in order to create a descriptive context within which to place further theoretical discussion. Having introduced anthropology's engagement with environmentalism, the following chapter is based on the work of Ade Peace³, an anthropologist who has engaged with environmentalism through extensive fieldwork in both Australia and Ireland.

1.2 *An Anthropological Model of Discourse, Identity and Conflict.*

In dealing with the problems posed by the anthropological analysis of environmentalism in Ireland I have found the work of Ade Peace (1997, 2001) invaluable. Peace's ethnographic fieldwork was conducted in rural County Cork during the mid to late 1980s and the in-depth knowledge of the cultural, social and environmental forms, relationships and contexts he gained in the field provides us with a solid basis for the various themes of this thesis. What makes Peace's work significant in relation to my thesis is his particular approach to the

³ This author has also published under the name of 'Adrian' Peace.

people in the environmental milieu upon which his research focussed. For Peace, the environment in which people live out their lives, in whatever capacity they interact with such environments, is of as much relevance as their social and cultural ties with each other. To put this in another way, his work demonstrates that the bonds formed within human communities are shaped to a great extent by the kinds of environments that they inhabit. Yet he is no environmental determinist. Although this section will, in the main, concentrate on Peace's two books *A Time of Reckoning: The Politics of discourse in Rural Ireland* (1997) and *A World of Fine Difference* (2001), I have chosen to start this section by briefly discussing two articles published in *The Australian Journal of Anthropology* (1996, 7:1, 43-60 and 1999, 10:2, 144-162) which focus on different aspects of the environmental debate in rural New South Wales. These two articles will introduce the analytical concepts which Peace employs in his larger works and allow us a greater understanding of how he perceives the forms of environmentalism he encounters.

The first of these two articles, 'Loggers are Environmentalists Too: Towards an Ethnography of Environmental Discourse' (1996: 43-60), is based on events which occurred during 1994-1995 when the contentious issue of wood chipping was brought forcibly to the public's attention by both environmental activists and the greater timber industry. Rallies and actions by environmentalists and conservationists were commonplace. Similar protests by those working in, or associated with, the timber industry were a much rarer occurrence. Nevertheless, the largest mass gathering of those opposed to the further regulation of timber harvesting and wood chipping took place in Canberra on the grounds of Parliament House and involved some six to seven thousand protesters. Among this number, many different groups from major corporations, trade unions and logging contractors were represented under the banner of the 'Timber Industry'. As Peace explains, his interest was not in the proceedings of the protest itself but rather in the social forces that led to a protest of this kind being possible especially given the antipathy shown by many involved towards mass protests in the past.

His focus was on protestors from one particular area in NSW whose participation in the protest seemingly ran counter to the staunch individualism which was usually characteristic of their conduct. Peace points out that his "concern is to detail the presence among the mass of protesters of a small number of contractors, sawmillers, loggers and hauliers, from the southern NSW coastal town of Ulladulla and the nearby inland town of Milton" (1996:44). He goes on to further explain his objectives by stating:

Clearly, I am not suggesting that the circumstances of those participants from the Milton-Ulladulla locale were somehow unique: they stood on the picket line cheek-by-jowl with timber workers drawn from small rural communities much like their own. The proposal is rather that by concentrating on a small and representative group, it becomes more feasible to unravel the factors which led them, among many others, to engage in this untoward course of political action. In other words, I seek to demonstrate the analytic contribution which social anthropology can make to exploring the novel political landscapes created by new social movements in postmodern society. (1996: 44)

Once again, we see the theme of discourse and its importance in the anthropological contribution to the study of new social movements coming to the fore, but Peace's article addresses the discourse of those on the other side of the environmental debate (contractors, loggers, sawmillers and hauliers) and, as such, makes us aware that environmentalism creates new forms of social opposition to its goals as much as it creates new ways to achieve them. It must be remembered that the politics of environmentalism also encompasses those movements and individuals antithetical to its success and their activism does indeed create space for novel political landscapes. Peace contends that the reason for this "self-avowedly apolitical, rural population" (ibid: 45) becoming involved in a protest of such large and organised dimensions lay in their recent initial confrontation with elements of the environmental movement in their own locale. The event so unsettled their community that, consequentially, "their occupational culture no longer held unchallenged sway over the forest which provided their livelihoods, and, second, the institutional power relations on which they had long depended were now subject to major realignment" (ibid).

The conflict arose in mid November 1994 after the NSW branch of The Wilderness Society declared its intention to halt logging in the Croobyar State Forest, some ten kilometres west of the towns of Ulladulla and Milton. One of the key claims made by The Wilderness Society was that the area to be logged was "relatively undisturbed", had a "high conservation value" and contained "large old growth trees" (ibid). Another was that, as no environmental impact statement (EIS) had been produced by the state government, there was a dearth of information concerning exactly what flora and fauna occupied the area let alone what impact timber harvesting would have upon this particular environment and its life forms. Although the ensuing protest was brief, lasting roughly three weeks, and relatively small, consisting of thirty to forty protesters on the logging site at any one time, the ramifications for local social relations were quite significant. In many cases protests such as this one have immediate and drastic economic consequences for the area in question but, in this instance, the effects were more social than financial. The implied threat to the cultural significance of the timber industry in the area and the social position held by those working in it was, in this case, of greater consequence than the immediate effects caused by the loss of any single potential contract.

Peace notes that the residents of the Milton - Ulladulla locale became polarised into those for and those against the continuation of logging (ibid: 46). Where once the populace would have been mostly local born and bred, the demographic of the area had changed in recent years to include retirees from urban areas and a burgeoning tourist industry had seen the region frequented by a growing number of tourists, some with an interest in settling. Conversely, the timber industry in the region had experienced a steady contraction since the 1970s and its influence, although still strong, was declining. Peace addresses the differences in perception throughout the district by emphasising the differences in the way the conservationists and the timber workers saw the forest itself. Whereas the conservationists regarded timber harvesting as something wholly detrimental to the well being of the forest and sought to have as little human interference in its ecosystem as possible, the timber workers had been operating

throughout the region for a number of generations and viewed claims by conservationists that the forest was 'relatively undisturbed' as highly misleading. Additionally, in stark contrast to the view of the conservationists that the forest was a resource for all, Peace notes that the timber workers viewed the forest as "exclusively and unambiguously their terrain" (ibid: 49). Thus the interpretive gulf between the conservationists and the loggers was so wide that each party objected to the presence of the other within the forest at all.

At the end of the third week of the dispute, a moratorium was put in place by the National Parks and Wildlife Service and the dispute came to a successful conclusion for the environmental lobby. This left the timber workers, and a large part of the local community, defeated and dejected. What rankled the timber workers most about their defeat and deeply concerned them was that their intricate local knowledge of the area, and its capacities, had been thoroughly overlooked by what they saw as a government eager to gain the Green vote. They felt that it had pandered to the whims of urban conservationists who displayed virtually none of the well honed skills and experience that they, as workers in the timber industry, had gained through generations of working in and living with the forest. However, what was more disturbing for the timber workers was that they felt that their relationship with the NSW Forestry Commission had changed from a respectful partnership to an uneasy association. It seemed to them that the main aim of the Forestry Commission throughout the dispute had been to appease the conservationists in the quickest possible manner and to direct the attention of the public away from the workings of the Commission with all possible haste (ibid: 54). Here Peace draws attention to the ways in which different discourses can wax and wane in relation to the amount of authority vested in them at any particular time by noting the anxiety caused among those working in the timber industry by the Forestry Commissions apparent lack of regard for their narratives and circumstances. For generations their discourse and their work had been accorded an eminent position concerning decisions made about the forest among the relevant government institutions but now their hegemony had come to an end.

As alluded to in the subheading, 'Towards an Ethnography of Environmental Discourse', Peace's article is not a report on a comprehensive ethnography but rather an exploration of a terrain he felt promising for anthropological investigation. Regarding his aims, he informs us that:

From an anthropological perspective, of course, the analytic concern is to establish how particular bodies of knowledge are socially constituted as authoritative and definitive, to examine, in other words how they are accorded a particular 'truth-value' by virtue of the social relations in which they are embedded. (ibid: 56)

With this in mind, the conservationist activism in the Croobyar State Forest and their subsequent success in bringing a halt to timber harvesting in that area had major consequences for the timber workers. For Peace, the most significant of these is that it "subverted some of the most important presumptions of their culture, and it did so in full view of the population at large" (ibid: 57).

The sequel to the article discussed above is entitled, 'Anatomy of a Blockade: Towards an Ethnography of Environmental discourse (2), Rural New South Wales 1996' (1999: 144-162). It focussed on the different kinds of discourse prevalent in the arena of environmentalism. Yet, this article differs from the first in that it discusses an environmental conflict from a point of view opposed to timber harvesting that took place soon after the Croobyar dispute. The article is based upon events that took place in 1996 in the Conjola State Forest, which is also in southern NSW but closer to Canberra than Ulladulla and Milton. The conflict had its beginnings in efforts made by some of the residents of the towns of Bendalong and Manyana to have a section of the Conjola rezoned as National Parklands in order to create a cordon of National Park which would, if the proposal was successful, extend to the south, west and north of their communities – to the east is the southern coast of NSW.

The application was made to the NSW Forestry Commission in 1988 and it entailed the ceding of a major part of the Conjola State Forest to the National Parks and Wildlife Services

so it could be incorporated into the Cudmirrah National Park. At the time the proposal was made, no objection had been raised by any concerned party but the relevant state and national authorities had been very slow to respond and the proposal had been bogged down in an overly bureaucratic process which was exceedingly time consuming. In November 1994 it seemed that the residents would be granted their wish but, just before the Minister for Forests was due to sign the necessary documents of transfer, the proposal was changed in such a way as to incorporate only two thousand of the desired seven thousand hectares into the Cudmirrah National Park. Shortly after this, the National Parks and Wildlife Service informed the applicants that it was no longer interested in acquiring control over the two thousand hectares still included in the proposal. In the mean time, the area had been earmarked for logging and the residents discovered that the regional authorities were proposing to construct a large waste dump in an area adjacent to the proposed National Park. At this point both the communities of Bendalong and Manyana began to coordinate organised local resistance.

The residents' apprehension first focussed on the way in which the initial logging of the area had been carried out. The many people living locally felt that the loggers had been excessively destructive in going about their work and, furthermore, suspected that this had occurred at the behest of the State Forests authority to whom they were under contract. They believed that the loggers were ordered to create as much devastation as possible in order to "diminish the ecological worth of the forest as a whole, and thus further diminish, if not put to an end, any prospect of its becoming a national park" (ibid: 150). They further surmised that the approval of the waste dump would then be a forgone conclusion. The opening of a log storage site near the sole road linking Bendalong and Manyana became, as Peace informs us, "a catalyst to collective action" (ibid: 150). In fact, the access track that had been bulldozed into the bush could be seen from the road and was a visual reminder of the authorities' plans for the area. Soon after a meeting was called which was attended by around two hundred angry residents. Those present decided that their best course of action was to initiate an

immediate round-the-clock blockade of the site which was to be kept in place until their demands were met.

Importantly, Peace notes that the blockade became, over time, so integrated in the residents evolving consciousness that the discourse associated with it was common parlance within weeks of the blockade's beginnings. It also instigated, what he calls "an overall broadening and deepening of social intercourse" (ibid: 152) which was the result of the different interactions between the various participating members and groups who would otherwise not have had the frequency of contact made necessary by the need to organise and stagger attendance in order to keep the blockade viable at all times during its existence. Peace claimed that the community came to perceive itself as taking on the mantle of the forest's protectors, a role which they saw the State Forests Commission as having clearly failed to fulfil. To this end he states:

In other words, State Forests lost all legitimacy in the eyes of the residents. Most important of all, since its commitment to forest conservation had been revealed as empty rhetoric, it became the community's moral responsibility to assume control and force recognition of the forest's enormous non-monetary value, a pronounced sense of moral obligation being, of course, one of the more singular indices of community identity". (ibid: 153)

Thus, the local residents set about "making the forest special" (ibid: 153), finding ways in which they could identify with the forest in an intimate and binding manner. As evidence of this, Peace notes that those on the blockade started to regularly explore the forest to identify the different species of flora and fauna which inhabited it. Although the ostensible motivation for this was to bring to light any endangered or unique species residing in the area, it also served as an initiation for activists and groups newly come to the blockade and it helped to foster solidarity between them and those participants in the blockade who had been there from the start. This practice yielded better than expected results as, apart from the discovery of important ecological findings, evidence of earlier sustained Indigenous occupation was found. This introduced a whole new aspect to the importance of the blockade and, when members of the Indigenous community became involved, gave the action significantly more political

importance than it had previously in the greater context of the incumbent NSW government's relations with the various Indigenous communities. In these ways, the community formed around the blockade became so intrinsically linked to the forest it was attempting to protect that it saw the threat to the forest as a threat to itself (ibid: 155). Another consequence of all this activity was to place the activists in a position in which they were able to threaten the government with political embarrassment by a combination of extensive data on the potential harm to flora and fauna by further logging, the introduction of archaeological findings in and around the site confirming earlier Indigenous occupation, and the weight of the local activists' reputation as solid, educated and law-abiding concerned citizens (ibid: 158).

This resulted in a compromise position being put forward by government authorities in which only small scale logging would be allowed under strict regulation. However, as the activists had sought a total end to logging from the start of the dispute, the offer was not accepted. The involved parties then entered into another phase of negotiation but this time with the direct involvement of the Minister for Forests himself (ibid: 159). As Peace does not mention a final outcome to the dispute, I am unable to convey whether or not the activists were eventually victorious and, if so, to what degree. Ultimately, questions of success or failure are not as important in the context of this work as how Peace shows how the residents, when they perceived themselves to be given no other choice, embarked on a course of civil disobedience designed to protect and conserve a part of the environment which they deemed to be important to themselves. He also shows how the creation of a discourse, and the incorporation of the forest into the social life of the local residents, led to such a strong identification with the forest that it became integral to the resident protestors' own sense of identity. Peace perceives this a successful attempt on the part of the activist residents to legitimise their concerns and actions both to themselves and to those living outside of their locale. In other words, they sought to justify their opposition to what they saw as a serious incursion into their way of life. As Peace puts it:

The elaboration of legitimising discourses (see Milton 1993, 1996, Descola and Palsson 1996) is precisely what local level populations constitute on their own account when talking between themselves and in specific opposition to rival groups within the same disputed political arenas. (1999: 145)

From these two articles we can see that Peace was concerned to illuminate the ways in which notions of identity and discourse are not only linked to each other but play an integral role in the creation of identity with reference to environment. Furthermore, his articles provide a clear insight into the ways in which different groups can come to perceive the environment in qualitatively different ways depending upon their own notions of identity and the relative social spaces which they inhabit within their own social milieu. We only need look at the different dispositions that prevailed among the protestors from Ulladulla and Milton and those amongst the participants in the blockade held in the Conjola State Forest. On both occasions the groups involved based their opposition on an intimate knowledge about their respective forest environments that had been gained through personal and collective experience. Additionally, the strongest points of contention arose in both disputes where notions of identity and ownership came to the fore. As we shall see, these are recurring themes in Peace's work on environmental issues. The next text to be discussed contains both of these themes but, unlike the two discussed above, is set in Ireland and is a full ethnographic account of an environmental dispute as it was lived by those social actors who committed themselves to it over an extended period of time.

Peace's work, *A Time of Reckoning: The Politics of Discourse in Rural Ireland* (1997), centres on the Merrel Dow dispute in East Cork and is based on fieldwork carried out by Peace in the East Cork area from 1988-89. In his ethnography, Peace expands his earlier interest in discourse and establishes this concept as key to understanding the lived experience of his informants at that time. He delineates three main meanings of discourse used throughout his ethnography in the following way. First of all he says that, "discourse becomes an essential resource in the explanation of relationships, the justification of social actions, and the legitimisation of beliefs" (Peace 1997: 8). By way of further explanation he observes; "A

discourse generally reflects and acknowledges the collective interests of a group or institution wedded to it" (ibid). The second dimension of meaning is that "Discourses are processual rather than pre-ordained" (ibid: 9). The third is that discourses cannot be understood in isolation. Thus, Peace states,

"In that the articulation of a major discourse concerns contentious issues within a given political milieu, so the central premises of each discourse are continually being challenged by others" (ibid). For Peace, these three aspects of discourse crystallise within, and to some extent constitute, a political arena in which the discourses used by the different participant groups vie with each other for dominance. In other words, "In analytical terms, a political arena becomes the terrain upon which agencies and institutions in conflict mobilise the information, knowledge, expertise, and other cultural resources germane to their interests" (ibid). The key physical setting for this political arena, as we shall see further on in this discussion, was the institution of the independent review held, in this instance, under the auspices of An Bord Pleanála (the Irish Planning Board). Peace's exploration of the way in which different kinds of discourse accrue varying degrees of legitimacy, in this seemingly neutral context, shows the way in which environmental disputes express the balance of political and cultural power expressed by those embroiled in them. As Peace puts it, the dispute became a struggle between "the political discourse of populist opposition against the chemical factory" on the one hand, and "the scientific and technical discourse of the proposals proponents" (ibid: 17) on the other. However before this can be discussed, the particulars of the case study need to be contextualised.

Peace presents this dispute as one which ultimately occurred between two classes in Irish society. How these classes came to be in conflict stems from the historical struggle in Irish history which saw the nation strive to overcome the dependencies of its colonial past by embarking on a campaign of aggressive industrialisation designed to put it, eventually, on an even footing with the rest of its European neighbours. In Peace's words:

The state assumed the role of coordinating the country's industrialisation in order to transform Ireland's peripheral status vis-à-vis the broader international order. In doing so, it unleashed an unprecedented array of class influences. (ibid: 18)

The two classes fighting in out in this conflict were, according to Peace, the political class – which he perceives as the political and bureaucratic elite who firmly control the decision making institutions within Irish society – and a small section of the petite bourgeoisie – the latter being comprised mostly of the small capitalists who make their living from the land, as well as resources or capital (fishing vessels and nets, farm machinery, and small businesses, etc) situated in the locales where they lived.

As Peace explains, the power of the political elite and their control over the industrial trajectory of the Irish Republic was born out of the economic realities of post-independence Ireland. When the Free State was proclaimed, Ireland was left as an economic backwater on the western periphery of Europe. What little manufacturing there was in the country was small scale, inefficient and survived only because of financial support from the government of the day. Among other things, this also had the effect of forcing large numbers of Ireland's workforce to migrate as there were few opportunities for employment in the private sector (ibid: 20). The nationalistic economic policies of the de Valera era, between the 1920's and the 1950's, had focussed on trade with America rather than with western Europe in an attempt to free Ireland from its economic dependency on Britain and to allow it to press its claims against that country for the return of the six counties within the ancient borders of Ulster that had come to be known as Northern Ireland.

After thirty years, the obvious failure of these policies to generate any real industrial or economic growth, Ireland, under a coalition government led by Sean Lemass and T.K. Whitaker, embarked on a policy of rapid industrialisation through a greater involvement with the economies of Western Europe. According to Peace, the four main aims of the industrialisation policy were:

to restructure and expand selected areas of the agricultural sector with extensive public capital investment; to expand existing, or to establish new State corporate enterprises, which could facilitate and direct the modernisation programme, the most important of these being the Industrial Development Authority (IDA); to encourage and develop by a wide range of measures modern manufacturing and industry; and to borrow from major overseas institutions such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank in order to finance the infrastructural reforms. (ibid: 21)

Owing to its geographical position and, as a consequence of the depressed state of the Irish economy and its small existing manufacturing base, the Irish government was able to offer potential investors access to western European markets, access to the Irish market, low wages, compliant trade unions and, "virtually non-existent environmental controls" (ibid). By borrowing heavily from foreign institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank, they were able to offer generous terms to potential overseas investors while providing ongoing financial assistance. As Peace puts it:

The terms of this invitation were extraordinarily liberal, including a zero tax on profits, lengthy tax holidays, major grants towards fixed asset accumulation, accelerated depreciation allowances, the ready repatriation of corporate profits, and a range of subsidies which would also be extended to Irish investors who advanced capital to foreign firms. (ibid)

Not surprisingly this policy was so successful that its aims were realised in a period of about twenty years. Peace notes that, by the 1980s, at least a third of the Irish population were employed by the manufacturing sector and the population had begun to show a regular increase for the first time since the Great Famine of the nineteenth century (ibid: 23). As for the policy's more negative effects, the foreign owned nature of Ireland's manufacturing industry saw a rise in unemployment during the eighties because companies retained the skilled roles in their production processes at home and simply used Irish labour in the non-skilled areas of production. Owing to the fluidity of global capital, Ireland also failed to develop an indigenous export oriented manufacturing sector as very little capital investment actually stayed in the country long enough to build up a base for it. This was compounded by a growing foreign debt and an increasing dependency on exported raw and semi-processed goods as successive governments became locked into its overgenerous bargains with foreign investors and could not offer similar concessions to its own agriculturalists. Finally, because

companies took up to 85% of their profits out of the Irish economy, the cost of keeping foreign investment in Ireland threatened to prove greater than the benefits of having it there in the first place (ibid: 24).

In its rush to accommodate foreign investment, the state allowed the wishes of foreign companies to influence its dealings with local governments and, in many cases, the demands of the IDA were given priority over the wishes of both local authorities and local populations. A political culture soon developed in which opposing developments sponsored by the IDA could be a serious impediment to any political career, especially if that career was dependent upon continued party support at the national level for advancement. This had serious implications for the everyday reality of Irish politics as it centralised power in the hands of those with access to development funds. As Peace explains:

Formal and informal decision making became contained within the corridors of Leinster House, while the majority of politicians played little more than the role of honest broker between their constituents and the welfare bureaucracies. Even at the regional level, the patron-client relations of elected politicians were divorced from fundamental policy making processes dominated by bureaucrats. (ibid: 26)

As a result, a number of government agencies, the most notable being the IDA, achieved a large degree of autonomy from the sphere of democratic politics and the bureaucrats that ran them became powerful political players in their own right. In the case of the IDA, it became so autonomous that it, not the government of the day, both directed and executed government policy in relation to industrial development (ibid). This was the case when the American owned company Merrell Dow first expressed interest in building a chemical plant in Ireland. As a subsidiary of Dow Chemical it could promise to invest large amounts of capital into whatever local economy it found itself situated in, and the size of the plant it would need to build to fulfil its production needs made it a perfect candidate for the IDA's approval. For its own part, Merrell Dow could look forward to all the benefits already enjoyed by other foreign investors in Ireland without the burden of strict environmental controls that had hampered its

operations at home in America. That the authorities involved and Merrell Dow were of one mind from the onset is attested to by Peace when he writes:

Throughout the conflict of 1988, the language of development to which the IDA, Cork County Council, and the management of the multi-national company were committed, took the construction of large factories, the generation of exports, the expansion of the GNP, and the pursuit of substantial profits, as unproblematic goals. If major costs had to be borne by others, so be it. In terms of their common corporate culture, these ends were beyond critical reflection. (ibid: 27)

Given this common corporate culture and the degree of cooperation each party could expect from the other, it would seem on the face of it that Merrell Dow's proposal to build a chemical plant at Killeagh in East Cork should have gone through to completion quite smoothly. What they failed to anticipate was the well organised and passionate campaign against them that was run by local residents concerned about their health, livelihoods, and local environment in which they lived their day to day existence.

As I have mentioned above, Peace presents this dispute, on one level, as one between the political class of Ireland and the petite bourgeoisie. Just as the evolution of the political class was influenced by Ireland's development policies, so too was that of the petite bourgeoisie. By the time of the dispute the nature of agriculture in Ireland had changed dramatically from what had traditionally been a culture of subsistence production in which a wide range of crops and produce were farmed. Instead, with government agricultural policy emphasising beef and dairy production, rather than the previously more common tillage, the resulting reduction in the need for farm labour had brought about a demographic shift in rural Ireland. Where the petite bourgeoisie had previously been just one group among many in the Irish rural landscape, it was, by 1988, the dominant force both economically and numerically (ibid: 28-29). As such, it could bring a level of cohesion to the ensuing campaign that both alarmed and confounded its opponents. Those responsible for the mounting of the opposition to the proposed chemical plant, chiefly the Womanagh Valley Protection Association (WVPA), were able to use common signals and signifiers to universalise their appeal to the wider community because precisely because the wider community was also dominated by small

capitalists such as themselves, regardless of their specific occupations. As Peace puts it, they "were able to utilise the material and cultural capitals which they possessed to impress upon the broader population that they were, at least potentially, effective spokespersons for the region" (ibid: 43).

The first signs of trouble broke out early in 1988 when information was leaked to the local community in Killeagh that Merrell Dow had purchased 90 acres of land from a nearby farmer. After confirming the sale and Merrell Dow's intentions regarding their plans for it, a local woman began to gather what information she could from the library and the Internet about the operations of Merrell Dow and its environmental record. The information uncovered was so disturbing that, armed with it, she managed to enlist a core group of local farmers and initiate what was to become the Womanagh Valley Protection Association (WVPA). Indeed, Merrell Dow's environmental record was so poor in America that the newly formed group had little trouble in further enlisting the services of an environmental scientist, Rory Finegan, who was known to them from the part he had played in the campaign to close down the 'Raybestos' asbestos processing plant in Cork in the early 1980's⁴. Finegan, acting as an independent environmental advisor, conducted his own investigations into the potential environmental impact of the plant and, when Merrell Dow filed its planning application and gave public notification of its intentions, he was able to effectively counter the company's claims of minimal impact.

These claims were based around an Environmental Impact Statement funded by Merrell Dow and carried out by EOLAS (the Gaelic acronym for the Irish Science and Technology Agency). The document was not made available to the public before the application was approved but the group had been warned of the biased nature of these reports in the past. As EOLAS routinely worked in conjunction with both the IDA and business corporations to produce favourable environmental impact statements, neither the group's members (WVPA)

⁴ This campaign will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

or Finegan were surprised when its document gave approval to the application. Peace explains:

EOLAS was accustomed to producing impact statements for American corporations in conjunction with senior officials from the IDA. In this instance, as was customary, Merrell Dow had funded the EIS and so owned the document. (ibid: 53)

With this information to hand, Finegan was able to translate the scientific terminology used in the EIS and explained that, in his opinion, the plant would represent a dire threat to both the local environment and the livelihoods of those who earned their living from it. Indeed his warnings of environmental catastrophe were so compelling that the WVPA was able to present their campaign to the broader community as one which involved all the citizens of East Cork, not just a few farming families in Killeagh. The campaign was given further impetus when a legal judgement known as the Hanrahan verdict, detailed in section 1.3, came down against a company trading as Merck, Sharp and Dohme and vindicated a family called the Hanrahan family in their struggle to bring that company to justice for the harm caused to them by pollution emitted from its chemical plant in Tipperary. As the Hanrahan's had been a respectable farming family rooted for generations in the land they farmed, their treatment at the hands of the American corporation Merck, Sharp and Dohme was held up by the WVPA as a compelling reason to resist the construction of the Merrell Dow plant in Killeagh.

To further connect the two disputes, the WVPA hired the same Dublin based legal firm that had represented the Hanrahan's to advise them. In order to counter this increasingly organised campaign to sway public opinion against the proposed plant, Merrell Dow opened an office in Cork city. It then embarked on a public relations campaign in which the company held a week of 'information meetings' for the purposes of assuring the public that all safety precautions would be taken and that the technology used at the plant would be "state of the art" (ibid: 62). Peace reports that these meetings were largely unsuccessful in swaying public opinion as the American project manager not only used the somewhat tarnished EOLAS report as the basis

of his claims but presented his case in a style more suited to a corporate meeting than a community gathering. As Peace explains:

Clearly the style of corporate American salesmanship grated in this milieu. The carefully organised and illustrated presentation of details was locally interpreted as an attempt to pull the wool over people's eyes: the emphasis on the financial dimensions of the development was seen as a strategy for turning attention away from important matters. But the influences involved were more substantial than this. Expressed in somewhat different terms, the tension of the August meetings provided a preliminary but emphatic indication of the cultural divide which existed between the corporate management from North America and the petite bourgeois property owners of East Cork. (ibid: 63)

Importantly, Peace notes that there was a basic ideological conflict underlying this situation.

The IDA, EOLAS and Merrell Dow were expressing the ideology of unbridled capitalist development and profit seeking that dominates the corporate world. In this, they were not seeking to 'pull the wool over' anyone's eyes but were in fact true believers in the ideology of capitalist industrial expansion. The project was seen as an uncomplicated 'good' for the company, the state and the local community because it would generate significant profits. That the lion's share of these profits would go to the corporation was, for them, only just as the corporation was the key investor in the project. In relation to this, Peace states:

Neither management nor government spokespersons were engaged in some deliberate contrivance or calculated fabrication. Their emphases were unproblematically derived from the model of economic progress to which such advocates are wedded: they were expressing the concerns which members of their class are driven to express. (ibid: 64)

Peace also sees the project's opponents as expressing concerns that people of their particular class and circumstances are driven to express. Theirs were the concerns of the small-scale entrepreneur whose chief capital investment was, in most cases, the land they owned and farmed, the fishing boats they worked themselves, or the small businesses they daily operated (ibid). Their capital investments were not fluid or transportable, rather they were firmly grounded in the local physical, socio-cultural and political environment. Thus, the way they articulated their opposition was with these concerns in mind.

While the opposition movement developed, so too did a discourse through which its members could express their concerns to each other and to those they were trying to persuade. Peace notes that there were frequent mentions of famous environmental disasters such as the Piper Alpha oil rig, Chernobyl, and Sellafield along with those closer to home such as the polluted condition of Cork harbour and the fate of the Hanrahan family (ibid: 70). These were all meshed together to provide the movement with a legitimate space within which to voice its concerns. An important part of this process is the development of a discourse in which the goal of the campaign can be presented as straight forward 'common sense' rather than a utopian or idyllic demand. Peace rightly comments that this kind of 'common sense' approach is universal to all environmental campaigns and that a claim can be made that it may be, in fact, a defining feature of environmentalism. In relation to the meetings held by the opposition subsequent to the Merrell Dow meetings, he notes that:

Many of these interpretations were rooted in 'common sense', which is never static, but always changing, never narrowly circumscribed, but always responsive to novel information (compare Berger 1969: 102). It does not sharply distinguish between what is 'going on in here' and what is 'happening out there' because its function is to provide practical guides to living efficiently in the social world. One moment people would be discussing chemical production in the proposed factory, the next, chemical pollution in Cork harbour; a discussion about diseased seals and fish with cancers would be followed by a discussion of a threat to their own livestock; talk about fire hazards in the proposed factory would lead to talk of explosions on the Piper Alpha. (ibid: 71)

The creation of this discourse of 'common sense' also afforded the movement's self appointed leadership, that of the WVPA, the authority to represent the many different groups and organizations that ultimately joined the campaign. Peace states that the discourse effectively created a populist myth about the "opinion of the common man" (ibid: 81) and that it was this myth and the leaders' ability to be perceived as the 'common man' that welded the movement together as an effective political force. Indeed this political movement was so effective that it succeeded in being granted its wish that the whole issue of the chemical plant and the legalities surrounding the Cork County Council's approval of Merrell Dow's application be brought before a hearing of the Irish Planning Board (An Bord Pleanála). Here

they thought their discourse of common sense would prevail, as the Planning Board at least could be counted on to give them a fair hearing and deliver an objective verdict.

The local politicians and the IDA, on the other hand, could not use this tactic once it had been so firmly adopted by the opposition so they had to resort to thinly veiled threats instead. While painting the WVPA as a group of self-centred, affluent, farming families, they made suggestions that they may not direct investment towards East Cork in the future if the hearing went against Merrell Dow. They were also able to rally the pro-development elements of East Cork to their cause. There were many people who felt that the plant would provide jobs for themselves and their children. These people were those who had, in the recent past, been the rural labour force which had worked as wage earners on the local farms. Not in possession of the capital required to own their own farms and suffering from unemployment caused to a great extent by the increasingly mechanised nature of modern agricultural practices, they feared a continuation of the cycle of emigration that saw many of their family members forced to seek work in other countries (ibid: 88-89). In short, many from the rural working class in effect supported the IDA and Merrell Dow as they were desperate for wage work.

When the time came, the hearing was held in the Cork Council Chambers and this, Peace found, had significant repercussions in relation to the kinds of discourse deemed appropriate in the dispute. To their dismay, the opposition movement found that their discourse of 'common sense' was not effective in the formalised setting of the hearing. The rituals and regulations that had to be observed left them unsettled and reluctant to speak in the face of the imposing officers of the tribunal and the various legal and technical experts present as part of the proceedings. In this way the relations of expressed power were strongly in favour of the corporation, the IDA, and their legal representatives. Even the spatial arrangement of the hearing was such that the Chief Inspector, the Merrell Dow management team, the solicitors and the Cork County Council representatives were all in the front facing the WVPA and other appellants seated at the back of the chamber (ibid: 106). Furthermore, the tribunal made it

clear from the start that the only kind of discourse that would be given weight during the proceedings was that based on scientific findings and technical expertise. Thus, right from the beginning of the proceedings, the power of the local opposition led by the members of the WVPA to represent themselves in their own language was taken away from them. Additionally, they could not direct the hearing towards issues that they wanted to discuss as the course of the inquiry was firmly in the hands of the inspectors. Personal opinion would be regarded as hearsay and all references to the environmental disasters, so central to the opposition's discourse, would be deemed irrelevant. From that point on they would have to rely, except when being directly questioned, on the skills of their legal representatives and technical advisors. As Peace puts it, the "inspectors had more than the authority to decide who should speak: they also exercised the power to determine what witnesses should speak about" (ibid). He further emphasises the significance of this in relation to the hearing when he writes:

Both inspectors were trained engineers. Although this information was presented matter-of-factly, it was of critical importance. It was a clear, preliminary signal that the language of technology would constitute the discourse of the hearing. Henceforth, the kind of cultural capital to be privileged would be qualitatively different from the populist discourse now current in rural East Cork. (ibid: 108)

What followed was a three-day hearing in which the testimony of the technical and scientific experts was presented to the inspectors as the only legitimate form of knowledge concerning the dispute. Those within the opposition movement were, when called upon to speak, encouraged only to speak of their own situations and the impact that the plant would have on them as individuals. Any reference to a broader community was not deemed appropriate and, thus, no strong collective solidarity within the community could be expressed. The movement's own environmental scientist, Rory Finegan, was disallowed from referring to Merrell Dow's poor environmental record at its other locations and was made to present his data as his 'opinion' rather than as a product of detailed scientific investigation. Similarly, expert representatives from other groups, notably the Irish Tourist Board (Bord Failte Eireann) and the Southern Regional Fisheries Board, were led by the inspectors towards detailing the requirements for a positive outcome for the IDA and Merrell Dow. Although the

evidence that they presented was quite damning, the inspectors focussed discussion on ways in which the negative aspects of the plants emissions might be minimised to allow the project to proceed (ibid: 113-116). As there already existed a culture of compromise within these agencies, the tactic was quite successful. In relation to the Irish Tourist Board (Bord Failte Eireann) and the Southern Regional Fisheries Board, Peace explains that these bodies "geared to the negotiation of compromise solutions through bureaucratically organised bargaining encounters" (ibid: 116).

For Peace, the efforts of the inspectors to procure the plant's future signified an even more fundamental force at play. The formalised setting, the priority given to the discourse of science and technology over that of the opposition movement, and the direction of the discussion towards the plant's facilitation were all made possible by the appearance of objectivity and neutrality fundamental to the hearing's legitimacy. That is why the WVPA and the rest of the opposition movement were so pleased when they heard that the Irish Planning Board (An Bord Pleanala) were going to conduct the hearing and settle the matter once and for all. They firmly believed that they would have a chance to present their case directly to a neutral party and, in doing so, would be able to let the facts speak for themselves. Unfortunately, the hearing played into the hands of the IDA and Merrell Dow and resulted in the approval of the chemical plant despite the obvious danger to environment from its emissions. As Peace informs us:

Once the political significance of the Merrell Dow issue was clear, An Bord Pleanala responded with alacrity. It committed substantial resources to ensuring that the politics of the conflict were quickly subordinated to its own bureaucratic rules and regulations. (ibid: 165)

Thus, once all parties involved had acknowledged the legitimacy of the hearing and the claims of neutrality of the inspectors, the outcome was never in doubt. The Irish Planning Board, in conjunction with the IDA, EOLAS and Merrell Dow, were able to use the authority ceded to them by the opposition movement to effect the course of the proceedings. In the end, the "authority of conventional and scientific discourse" (ibid: 167) was used by those with

political and economic power to override the legitimate concerns of the farmers, local businessmen and the fishermen.

Ironically, although Merrell Dow won the right to build its plant in Killeagh, the campaign against it was ultimately successful. The objections of the WVPA and its supporters caused nationwide public consternation and significantly disrupted Merrell Dow's timetable. While the dispute was raging, Merrell Dow's parent company, Dow Chemical had placed it under review for non-profitability. When Dow Chemical took over another, more successful and less controversial company in the same field, called Marion Laboratories, it decided that it would be a better vehicle for investment than Merrell Dow. Consequently the company had to abandon its plans for the Irish plant due to a lack of funding. Significantly, by the time this had occurred, the dispute had gained the attention of the national media and had become widely discussed throughout Irish society. Despite the legalities, the opposition movement had succeeded in making environmental politics a major concern for the mainstream parties and had, albeit unintentionally, prepared the ground for environmental movements such as the Irish Greens to establish their legitimacy in the Irish political spectrum.

Throughout the work, Peace raises many issues relevant to the modern practise of anthropology. To attempt to encapsulate them all in this section would not only be futile but would deny the scope and complexities involved in his treatment of ethnographic data. I have therefore concentrated on presenting the more important facets of the ethnography in relation to my own work. In this context, Peace's treatment of discourse offers a practical approach to the analysis of ethnographic data. It is presented as a fluid, context dependent concept that conveys meaning on many different levels in relation to diverse conflicts. Regarding that of the WVPA and the regional opposition movement represented at the hearing, his position is stated clearly when he writes:

Any oppositional discourse can be thought of as an ideational scaffolding which provides those who adhere to it with a framework for further action and the justification for protest; as with the physical scaffolding of construction sites, these

conceptual frameworks have their own central footings and points of critical purchase. (ibid: 95).

Peace creates a space in which he is not constricted by rigorous theoretical templates but is free to bring the identities of his subjects to life through an honest recounting of the language used by them and the situation in which they find themselves. This treatment of identity as a priority in his work is also extended to a number of different levels. Hence, the farmers of Killeagh are not seen in isolation but as part of a network, from local community to national institutions, that define their lived experience. They are petite bourgeois, agriculturalists, members of political constituencies, family members, friends and rivals, leaders and followers, powerful in one context and powerless in another. They may be, to an extent, defined by standardised political concepts but are all the more interesting when they elude definition. While very aware of the political economy at work in Irish society, Peace does not try to contain their essence within this single dimension. Their relationships with each other clash and mingle with those they form with the state, its institutions and the corporations they opposed. Peace reminds us that good social investigation starts at the level of detailed, thorough and perceptive observation.

He presents his work as "a challenge to those macro sociologists and political scientists who try to account for the complexities of local community action with *a priori* analytic labels and categories" and goes on to say that this "is a recurrent tendency in the literature of social movements, frequently erasing the intricacies and refinements of individuals constructing their own projects and social action" (ibid: 176). As an anthropologist engaged in the study of environmental issues and disputes, he does not link the local opposition movement to the broader opposition movement but still manages to provide insight into the diversity inherent in that loose collective phenomenon by suggesting its heterogeneity. He warns that the "range of political issues constructed around the defence of the environment ensures that the putative claims about order, pattern, and coherence built into the concept of social movement, will obscure precisely those qualities which distinguish such events from one another" (ibid). In

this manner Peace creates a space for a meaningful and productive encounter for anthropology with environmentalism.

The last of Peace's works to be discussed in this section is *A World of Fine Difference* (2001). This work is a product of fieldwork carried out by Peace in a small rural community in the south of Ireland in the mid to late 1980's. Indeed the community in question, given the name of Inveresk for the purposes of the study, was situated not far from Killeagh and it was while undertaking fieldwork for this book that Peace gathered the information that led him to write the work discussed above. However, unlike that work, *A World of Fine Difference* (ibid) presents a more traditional approach to ethnography in that it is a product of an extended period in the field and does not centre on a single event such as the campaign to stop the building of the chemical plant in Killeagh. Although Peace carries through with many of the notions discussed above, his main focus is on the sense of identity created and maintained by those in the Inveresk community and the ways in which they find communality by the articulation of difference.

In a broad sense, he investigates the ways in which the community's engagement with modernity expresses itself along the lines of traditional structures of division. The analysis presents modernity as a pervasive force that, ultimately, acts as both a threat to the community's cohesion and a stimulus for cohesion in the face of that threat. As the world closes in on Inveresk its inhabitants find it increasingly comforting to know that they may cling to a familiar social context in the face of massive external change. It allows them a degree of self-determination within the group identity which they would otherwise be denied. Peace brings to the fore the sense of belonging possessed by this rural community but does not attempt to extrapolate this on any larger levels. For him, assumptions of cultural homogeneity have been far too common in academic work in the Irish context (ibid: 6) and have, in the past, obscured the uniqueness of individual communities and denied the richness of context in the Irish socio-cultural landscape. Again, Peace defines the inhabitants of

Inveresk as a predominantly petite bourgeois population but explores the richness of difference at play within this context.

At the heart of his discussion is the notion that the community's identity is kept intact by the friction generated as the three main groups contained within it interact and compete with each other. Peace also pays close attention to the ways in which those within each of these three main groupings interact and compete with each other, often with much more enthusiasm than was apparent in intergroup interactions. Hence, the discourse Peace describes is multi-layered, continually fluid and dependent on established rules of engagement that were rarely broken as the consequences for disregarding these rules were immediately apparent in such a small community. Additionally, in this context, discourse was closely linked to the creation and distribution of knowledge within the community. At such close quarters knowledge becomes a valuable asset in which both personal and financial wellbeing are dependent upon. As Peace explains:

So the natural discourse of each domain comprises the condensed, coherent, and collective conversation which draws on, and adds to, the ever changing stock of knowledge shared by those involved in its prevalent means of livelihood. This is not an evenly distributed body of knowledge: certain residents are adept at keeping valuable information to themselves, and it is part of their local reputations that they do so. Knowledge may not be interchangeable with power within this small scale setting, but it is undoubtedly a valuable resource and has to be marshalled accordingly. (ibid: 41)

The three main groups dealt with in this ethnography were the farming families, fishing families and those families that lived in the town itself and ran the various businesses of the community. These groups abided in adjoining but distinct geographical areas which Peace called respectively the Country, the Pier and the Town. Each group possessed an intimate knowledge of one another and their livelihoods, although stemming from different resources, were intricately linked with each other.

Thus, Peace continues his concentration on the importance of discourse and provides a valuable launching place for the discussion of the discourse involved in my own fieldwork

based analysis. However, as the focus of his work is, in this instance, not concerned with the environmental movement in Ireland, I will forego any lengthy discussion of the work as a whole in order to bring the aspects of his discussion more relevant to my own work into greater illumination. Peace's work contains an insightful discussion of the attitudes towards politics and politicians at play in Inveresk. Although he warns of the dangers inherent in attempting to extrapolate too widely from one community to another, his analysis in this case does offer an insight into the way in which many in Ireland perceive their political leaders.

He points out that the existing literature in this field, while thoroughly discussing the history of modern Irish political parties and the strategies that they have employed over time, fails to address the different attitudes towards politicians prevalent in Irish society. He presents two aspects of this dearth of information as being particularly crucial to an anthropological understanding of Irish communities' relationship with the machinery of their political parties. In his words:

The first is how deeply unacceptable local people consider their encounters with party political and governmental apparatuses to be; the second, which is closely related, is how resentful they are of the broader structures of inequality and power of which these apparatuses are a part. (ibid: 109)

Peace points out that small communities such as Inveresk often do not rate much attention in political circles. The only real exception to this rule is during election campaigns as the Irish political system is run on proportional representation and allows competition between parties as well as candidates from the same party. It is only at these times that communities such as Inveresk, with approximately 450 adults, can become important in the scheme of things as their votes may be needed to tip the scales for one or another candidate. When this happens speeches are made and visitations are organised but the promises made are viewed with scepticism by the local people. As Peace notes, many constituents in Inveresk at least saw politicians merely as facilitators linked to different party machines. They could facilitate the delivery of services from the bureaucracy that were theirs by right in the first place. As Peace writes:

Notwithstanding an abundance of political rhetoric about representing the people, redressing the balance between rich and poor, making the process of politics more accountable, and so on, it is nowadays assumed as a matter of course that the political class is wholly geared to the interests of major Irish corporations and the large transnational companies which dominate key sectors of the Irish economy. Alternatively, it is devoted to maintaining the structural arrangements within the European Union which have proved, since the mid-1970s, such an indispensable source of the capital with which the political class can reproduce its regional power base. (ibid: 110)

In relation to this, Peace notes that, when seeking assistance, there were clear stages to be undergone if an individual or a community wished to have the good will of those in power on their side. The appropriate people at each level of power must be contacted and, indeed, even if this was done there was no guarantee that what was sought would be granted. With this in mind, he makes the point that even those at the lowest echelons of government may wield a great deal of power as gatekeepers to those above them and credits the close attention paid by the public to elections at all levels of Irish society as a direct consequence of this. As Peace put it, this "is why the election of county councillors as well as TDs is followed so closely in rural areas, for it is on such men and women that residents have to rely for assistance as they apply for improvement grants, pensions, health cards, fuel vouchers, and so on" (ibid: 118).

Finally, Peace's attention to issues of class is also helpful in the context of this thesis. As mentioned previously, he clearly identifies the people of Inveresk and surrounding rural areas as petite bourgeois and much of his fieldwork analysis bears out that their socio-economic positioning within the broader Irish community has substantial implications regarding the way they maintain their identity and relate to one another. Without again going into the detail of Peace's fieldwork, his use of class as an identifying category has shed light on many aspects of his subjects that would have otherwise gone unmentioned. Moreover, Peace feels that attention to class issues has been too rare a thing in the anthropology of Ireland and that many recent works have suffered because of it. In his words, "It has to be acknowledged that on the whole social anthropology has contributed but marginally to the interpretation of structural inequalities in the Republic, and this, one might propose, is one of the reasons for a decline in

its significance over the past decade or so" (ibid: 128). Indeed, he criticises the marginal contributions that have been made as denying the ground level experiences of the people investigated in favour of a more theoretical approach that is far less complex than the lives of those being studied. He also points out that Irish society, and indeed all societies, does not operate within well-defined parameters or by the operation of some transparent logic to which all prescribe. By assigning his informants the title of petite bourgeois, Peace is not suggesting that they act strictly in accordance with the various theoretical notions applied to that class but is rather using the category as a heuristic tool from which some useful analysis may be drawn. For him, the essence of modern identity can not be captured by the use of one label or another but useful categories serve as signposts in the attempt. In this vein he writes that much "closer attention needs to be paid to the details and specifics of class within this fragmentary and ill-defined structure" (ibid: 128).

Having discussed the debates and methodologies concerning the anthropological engagement with environmentalism, it is now appropriate that we situate the Irish Green Party within its own political context. In order to do this, we shall turn to the work of Susan Baker.

1.3 A Brief History of Environmental Groups and Conflicts in Contemporary Ireland

Baker's article, 'The Evolution of the Irish Ecology Movement' was published in 1990 while she was a lecturer in European business studies at the University of Ulster. Baker had conducted research into ideology and industrialisation in Ireland and one of her foci was "the relation between industry, the policy making structures and interest groups and, in particular, environmental issues" (Rudig 1990: 227). Her article contains a concise history of the emergence of environmentalism in Ireland and a thorough discussion of green politics in Ireland up to 1989. Baker eschews the more common term 'environmentalism' in favour of 'ecologism'. This she defines as "the political analysis of ecological deterioration, which

seeks a solution to environmental damage in political, social and economic action" (1990: 48). In reference to this thesis I have decided that the two terms are compatible and can be seen as representing the same concept.

Of particular interest to Baker were the interrelated issues of the rapid industrialisation of Ireland since the 1960s and the pressures this placed upon its physical environment. She suggests that the patterns of environmental destruction caused by industrialisation has "more in common with Third World countries than with its more developed European neighbours" (ibid: 47). That being the case, she acknowledges that the environmental movement in Ireland was shaped as much by its particular path to industrialisation as it was by its proximity to mainland Europe. As she explains:

This duality means that the study of the movement in Ireland offers unique opportunities. On the one hand, it can provide insights into the nature of the European movement and, on the other, can bridge the gap between analysis of First World environmentalism and that of the Third World. Furthermore, there is increased realization that the cause of environmental degradation lies with western anthropocentric models of economic development. (ibid)

While the relationship between First and Third world environmentalism is beyond the scope of this work, Baker's analysis of the political economy of the Irish state provides an interesting framework within which to initially ground the research. Nevertheless, in many ways, the discussion of the socio-economic parameters of the modern Irish state does uncover predicaments and realities familiar to many nations on the fringes of political and economic power centres.

Baker describes pre-1922 Ireland as a "classically' dependent country" (ibid: 50) which was ruled from Westminster as a satellite economy for the purposes of providing cheap agricultural and trading goods for the British market. This effectively created a state that was "economically underdeveloped and politically marginal" (ibid) with the economy based on subsistence farming and exports almost solely dependent upon raw materials. In this period, Ireland's economy was, by and large, based on the products of its agricultural industry that

grew out of the prolific fertility of the soil in its midlands. This dependency deepened after 1922 with the creation of the state of Northern Ireland which, after starting out as a nine county entity, was eventually whittled down to six by a referendum held twelve months after its inception. It was within these six counties of Ulster that the majority of Ireland's industrial capacity was situated and, while the Republic's economy was still linked to that of Britain, there was little chance of further development.

Poverty and economic dependency led the Fianna Fail government in 1958 to abandon the policy platform of economic nationalism, in which the Irish economy was used to facilitate the reunification of the island, in favour of policies designed to foster foreign direct investment by establishing agreements with multinational companies. As Baker further explains, this "policy of export-oriented economic expansion achieved through reliance upon foreign direct investment has subsequently remained the major plank of Government economic policy in Ireland" (ibid: 51). As a result of these policies, Ireland managed to industrialise rapidly in the 1960's but this has not served to rescue the Irish economy from the kind of dependency endemic within the colonial period. Baker points out that this dependency has simply been transferred to "multi-national companies engaged in export-oriented foreign direct investment" (ibid: 52). Regarding this situation, she states:

In short, the Irish economy has, in the last twenty years, changed from being a dependent underdeveloped economy to being a dependently developed one (Crotty 1986). That dependent industrialization has not resulted in the expansion of the home industrial base, and the industrial bourgeoisie remain economically weak (Bew and Patterson 1978).

McQueen (2001) presents an interesting discussion of this kind of phenomenon in his work *The Essence of Capitalism: The Origins of Our Future*. He describes the process by which corporations exert their vast economic influence upon nation states in order to create favourable conditions in which to conduct business. The nation states, eager for a share of the wealth generated by the activities of the corporations, make legislative changes that facilitate the corporations' entry into their markets. They undertake to create special conditions in

which the corporations are above the normal laws under which commerce operates. In effect, the state becomes the servant of corporate capital and protects it from the democratic processes of government in order to partake in the wealth of corporate economics. Although complicated in its application this simple tactic has lain at the heart of Irish economic policy for the last forty years and its effects have been significant.

Owing to the dynamism of the 1960s and 1970s, Ireland's population increased for the first time since the 1840's. A greater percentage of the Irish felt that the imperatives that had drove them year by year to emigrate in their thousands were no longer as valid as before, because with the growth in economic activity came benefits not previously experienced in Ireland. Along with more opportunities for employment, the standard of living rose, free secondary education was introduced, access to tertiary education was increased, television arrived in 1962 and the hold of the Catholic Church over Irish society decreased noticeably (Baker 1990: 52). Irish people now had increasing scope for broader outlooks and possibilities of travel and cultural exchange abounded. In the past cultural exchange had been a slow and unequal process in which far more of the Irish people and their culture had been exported than that of others imported. With affordable holidays an option for at least the middle class, cultural exchange could now happen on a larger scale and this, ultimately, led to the disruption of many older social patterns established in a more isolated era. Additionally, this growth spurt in the economy sparked a period of rapid industrialisation in which social and political norms were further undermined. Baker observes:

In particular, the scramble to 'catch up' with the development of its European neighbours through industrialization and modernization had disruptive effects on the accepted political and social processes and relationships that had existed throughout the island. Furthermore, entry into the modern industrial age was also to bring ecological destruction and with it an increased concern about the negative impact of the drive towards industrialization and modernization. (ibid: 52)

Not surprisingly, the most vocal in their concerns about the negative effects of this new direction in Ireland's trajectory were the increasing numbers of students in tertiary education. In the 70's numerous groups such as the Contraceptive Action Program, the Divorce Action

Group and the Gay Rights Group formed in response to social issues arising from these changes. Among these was the Irish anti-nuclear movement which was the "first movement to address itself to issues of an ecological nature" (ibid: 53). This led to the foundation of modern environmentalism in Ireland.

The impetus behind the movement came from the Fianna Fail policy to build at least one nuclear power plant in Ireland in order to meet growing electricity demands. The EEC supported this policy after Ireland's inclusion in 1973 and possible sites were selected. Fianna Fail, the dominant political party in Ireland at the time, used its influence to gain broad support among the other parties. Fianna Fail had been committed for some time to a policy of rapid industrialisation and the power plant was an important part of its strategy to shore up Ireland's new economy (ibid). As coalition partners, the Labour Party was also supportive of this policy throughout their time in government from 1973 to 1977 although there was a significant number of its members, including many in the union movement, that were antagonistic towards the prospect of nuclear power plants in Ireland.

The proposed power plant was to be situated at Carnsore in County Wexford along the eastern coast of Ireland. The response of the local community was initially very positive but this was counteracted by a wave of dissent that swept through Irish society and which brought many pertinent debates concerning nuclear energy out into the open. All of this generated considerable apprehension in the communities close to the site. Consequently, organized opposition appeared in 1974 in the form of the NSA or Nuclear Safety Action (ibid: 53). By 1978 the anti-nuclear movement in Ireland had evolved into a coalition of groups from throughout the Republic with representatives from many different political traditions. Ironically, it was this drive towards unity that created what was to prove a lasting schism within environmentalism in Ireland. Baker then describes the ensuing struggle within the fledgling movement concerning strategy and ideology.

The first of the two opposing sides consisted of groups committed to achieving policy change by working within the boundaries of the mainstream political institutions as well as conducting non-violent protest campaigns through ordinary legal and administrative processes. Baker cites the Friends of the Earth (FoE) as an example of this kind of group and notes that they "adopted traditional organizational structures, with executives, a chairperson, etc, and a formal membership, and were a branch of FoE Worldwide" (ibid). The second contained the various groups that were hostile to the creation of formal structures and unwilling to renounce any form of protest, violent or non-violent, that may be effective in attaining the goal of a nuclear free Ireland. It was from campaigners in the former group that the Green Party was to emerge, and Baker treats those on that side of the schism with considerably more understanding than those on the other. She sees those opposed to formal politics as a conglomeration of small groups representing the anarchist and far left political traditions concerned with environmental issues only so far as they are consistent with the wider aims of their respective political philosophies. Thus she states:

These groups wished to see a mass movement develop outside traditional parliamentary politics. Many were on the far left, had been in existence before the nuclear controversy developed or were active in issues other than the nuclear one, and saw nuclear power as but one example of capitalist technology requiring mass opposition. Furthermore, unlike FoE, they did not wish to become involved in campaigning for, or conducting research into, alternative sources such as solar or wind power. They saw this as a means of providing capitalism with a way out of its energy crisis. (ibid: 54)

While it is not necessary to enter into a discussion of the different individual groups involved in this struggle, which is provided for the most part in Baker's article, it is interesting to note her treatment of the various participants. Those committed to mainstream politics are presented as peaceful citizens with the health of the environment as their principal concern while those opposing them are framed as potentially violent subversives mustered together in a disorganised rabble with no other real goal than the downfall of the capitalist system. Baker's identification of leftwing and anarchist groups as being dismissive of wind and solar power are, without presenting any clear evidence, presumptuous and unfounded. What can be discerned from Baker's discussion is that the environmental movement faced, in its early

stages, an internal conflict borne out of the need to change social structures while not wishing to be co-opted and subsumed by those structures in the attempt. Those activists willing to organise themselves within traditional political structures felt that they could only bring change to the system from within while those unwilling felt participation in mainstream politics at that level meant joining the system and, thus, maintaining the status quo. This was an enduring issue for Irish environmentalism and continues to be a common one for non-mainstream political groups the world over. Indeed, this kind of struggle was evident within the Green Party at the time of research and arose from the need to compromise with a modern multi-party democratic system in order to bring about change without the benefit of an overall elected political majority. It was my experience that political viewpoints were rarely as fixed, or even as focused, as those described by Baker. Many committed Greens not fixated on the destruction of capitalism came from leftwing traditions and many of those who did not were deeply suspicious of multinationals and highly critical of venture capitalism. However, as this is dealt with later in the work, noting the division must suffice at this point.

According to Baker, the active anti-nuclear movement consisted of 102 local groups in both the Republic and Northern Ireland. These groups became involved in many different local campaigns including protests against the British Windscale/Sellafield nuclear reprocessing plant, the Dublin Clean Seas campaign and campaigns against courses teaching training in nuclear related industries and the use of radio-active medicine in Universities (ibid: 55). They were also successful, with the help of Petra Kelly, in involving the trade union movement in the anti-nuclear movement and this formed the basis of a formidable opposition to the government. Additionally, the movement broadened its concerns from a simple anti-pollution platform to matters involving a potential threat to Ireland's much treasured neutrality. They argued that Ireland would, by becoming a manufacturer of nuclear products, find itself involved in the arms race and thus the cold war if only as a potential source of radio-active material.

The site of the proposed nuclear power plant at Carnsore was one of the major focal points of the anti-nuclear movement and, in 1978, a decision was made to hold a series of festivals on the site in order to promote and popularise the campaign. These festivals proved successful, with a total of five being held. While providing a point of unity for the disparate groups within the movement, these festivals also widened divisions by introducing the movement as a whole to many new ideas and ways of thinking via the different representatives of anti-nuclear and alternative groups from continental Europe and the USA. The success of these festivals was such that they were a major factor in convincing the Fianna Fail government to hold an inquiry into the 'proposed nuclear power plant and in fracturing the unilateral support for it within Irish politics. When Fine Gael withdrew their support for nuclear power in 1980, the government first postponed and then withdrew the proposal without an inquiry ever being held.

Another direction in which the anti-nuclear movement evolved was in response to the policies of the Industrial Development Authority (IDA). The IDA drew investment into the Republic by rezoning Cork harbour as a suitable site for the manufacture of chemical and pharmaceutical products. Subsequently, Cork has both a concentration of chemical and pharmaceutical plants and a long history of opposition to them. Campaigns throughout the 70's were conducted by local groups airing mainly local concerns but in 1980 the Cork Noxious Industry Action Group (CNIAG) was formed and this, according to Baker, marked "the first signs of objections to the policy of attraction of foreign direct investment into Ireland" and gave the environmental impacts of this policy a national profile (ibid: 58). The CNIAG, originally composed of members of the Cork Anti-Nuclear Group, played a major role in the many environmental campaigns in Cork harbour at the time. The most significant of these was the campaign for the closure of a plant manufacturing asbestos products and owned by the American company 'Raybestos'. The CNIAG conducted a lengthy campaign along with 17 other local groups that culminated in the closure of the plant in 1980 (ibid: 59). For Baker, this represents a turning point for the environmentally conscious within the

Republic as it encouraged similar campaigns and "focused attention on another related issue, the disposal of the toxic by-products produced by factories already in operation in Ireland" (ibid). Accordingly, there followed a number of campaigns, notably in Arklow, Cork and Mayo, against the creation of toxic waste facilities with the most famous conducted in Tipperary against a chemical plant owned by Merck, Sharp and Dohme.

The plant opened in 1976 and two years later the first complaints concerning negative health impacts were made by the Hanrahan family who lived close by on property that had been in their possession for many generations. By 1980 there had also been a series of complaints made regarding a significant decline in the health of local cattle herds and other farm livestock (ibid: 59). The level of general concern within the community by this time was such that, in 1981, the Tipperary County Council bowed to public pressure and commissioned a report on the effects of toxic emissions emanating from the plant. The issue came to national prominence in 1982 when the Hanrahan family served the plant with a High Court writ claiming that the deaths of 67 of their cattle could be directly attributed to pollution caused by the plants operations. The Court case took three years and involved, in addition to the Harahan family and Merck, Sharp and Dohme, the National Farmers Association, the Tipperary County Council, the Minister for Agriculture, the Creameries and the Institute for Industrial Research and Standards (later known as Eolas). Much conflicting evidence concerning pollution levels and culpability was presented during the case and publicity surrounding the events reached new heights in 1985 when the High Court eventually ruled against the family and ordered the Hanrahans to pay one million pounds in court costs. This led to the sale of their property at auction and left them penniless. In 1988, the family won at appeal but the victory was pyrrhic as the family could neither regain their farm nor their previous lifestyle.

Although this episode had devastating personal effects on the Hanrahan family, Baker tells us that the real impact of this dispute was felt at the national level. The conflict captured the

nation's attention for a number of reasons. The Hanrahan family was deeply rooted in the locality and Merck, Sharp and Dohme could not easily dismiss their opinions. The family's occupation as dairy farmers meant that the National Farmers Association was brought into the dispute and it came also to be seen as a struggle between the interests of industry and those of agriculture. The dispute gave the farming community a voice within the arena of environmentalism that it had previously been denied. Additionally, one of the results of the publicity surrounding the case was that people started to question the efficacy of the existing laws regulating the emission of toxic waste and other forms of industrial pollution.

Concerning this, Baker writes:

Furthermore, the long drawn out legal proceedings pointed both to the lack of evidence and, when available, the conflicting nature of the evidence on the degree of and the dangers associated with the emissions from the Merck, Sharp and Dohme plant. This in particular highlighted the lack of knowledge by the policy makers and planning agencies who were charged with the industrialization of the Irish economy. This in turn led to the linking of concern with environmental protection to a critique of industrialization policy based upon the attraction of foreign industry investment, and forced a more general debate on environmental protection and the type of industry being attracted into Ireland by the IDA. (ibid: 61)

The case also created new strategies and precedents for the anti-toxic industry movement which in turn "widened the net of potential activists willing to become involved in opposition to toxic industry" (ibid: 61).

Baker also considers the Merrell Dow dispute in East Cork, discussed in the previous chapter, as a seminal dispute in the evolution of Irish environmentalism. As we have noted, the proposal to build a chemical plant in Killeagh led to the creation, by the local community, of the Womanagh Valley Protection Association (WVPA) who opposed the development on the grounds that the site was too valuable as agricultural land to risk being polluted by toxic industry. The WVPA initially wanted only for the plant to be relocated elsewhere but, as the campaign wore on, other groups such as the Concerned Citizens of East Cork and the West Waterford Citizens against Merrell Dow helped to change the focus from relocation to total abandonment. The campaign lasted until 1989 when the opposition coalition succeeded in

forcing an appeal to the National Planning board (an Bord Pleanna) resulting eventually in a High Court action. Possibly because of this campaign and the inevitable delays countering it would involve, Merrell Dow announced it had no further interest in Ireland as a plant location. However, its denial that the widespread opposition to its plans had any bearing upon its decision seemed to Baker to be unconvincing (ibid: 62).

Regardless of these successes, Baker warns against overstating the significance of the anti-toxic movement on the Irish political stage as most campaigns were unsuccessful and the movement as a whole failed to win over the trade union movement or the any part of the organised labour movement in general. She points out that the campaign often took place "within polarized communities" and that "within both individual groups and the movement as a whole, there can be different and sometimes conflicting interests" (ibid: 63). This being the case, she suggests that the protests of that era "should, therefore, be seen as indicative of the beginning of a questioning process within Irish society about economic and environmental policy [and] not as the end product of that process" (ibid: 64). This process of questioning was a turbulent time for those engaged with environmentalism in Ireland and was responsible for the creation of another split within the Irish environmental community. This division goes back to 1978 during the 'Raybestos' campaign during which there was conflict between those groups who wanted a complete ban on toxic waste disposal in Ireland and those who merely wanted the dumps moved to isolated, non-commercially valuable, sites. Those in favour of a state run short-term facility included FoE, the Bandon Valley Protection Association, Earthwatch and Greenpeace, while those opposed to the idea completely included CNIAG, Revolutionary Struggle, GANG (Green Action Now Group), The Alliance for Safety and Health and Action for Safety and Health (ibid: 65).

Plainly, after its initial successes, the movement contained serious internal fractures but these were resolved during the campaign against a proposed state run toxic-waste facility to be built at Dunsink near the Dublin suburb of Finglas. After encountering vocal, impassioned and

organised resistance to the idea of a dump within Co. Cork, the IDA conducted a survey of Ireland and settled on Dunsink as the most likely place to build a new facility. This gave rise to the creation of the Finglas Toxic Action Group (FTAG) by local residents who were promptly joined by the Clondalkin and Baldonnell Toxic Action Groups (CTAG and BTAG) in a strident anti-dump campaign. These groups were all firmly supported by the anti-nuclear movement and the campaign resulted in a moratorium on the proposal and the abandonment of any alternative site as serious a consideration (ibid: 66).

This action marked the beginning of a new phase in Irish environmentalism as it saw the involvement of a new kind of activist that emerged from the numerous local action groups that had been largely single issue focussed and thus, largely non-political in nature. Baker states that it was precisely this new type of activist that went on to later form the Irish Green Party within a few years of the campaign's conclusion. She further explains, "Their politicisation on the toxic dump issue is not only a direct response to the state plans for areas such as Finglas and Baldonnell but also a consequence of the very active support that the Irish anti-nuclear and toxic-industry movement gave to these groupings when they were fledgling concerns" (ibid). This is descriptive of a knock-on effect where the movement as a whole underwent a period of frenetic activity in which the forms of organization it produced waxed and waned rapidly but the movement itself solidified and matured. Those activists that were lost to the movement were mainly from single-issue groups focussed on local concerns or those who became involved in other campaigns such as nuclear disarmament or issues pertaining to conditions in the Third World (ibid). Those that remained in the environmental movement by the start of the 1990s constituted the membership of the three largest environmental groups in Ireland – Earthwatch, Greenpeace and Comhaontas Glas/The Green Party (ibid: 71).

The most successful of these three main organizations, the Green Party first formed under the banner 'The Ecology Party', and was founded by Christopher Fettes in 1981. Fettes was an

activist for animal rights, vegetarianism and the Esperanto movement and succeeded in gaining the attention of environmental activists interested in working to garner community support through conventional political means. As Baker writes:

The Party attracted support from the less radical wing of the anti-nuclear movement, most noticeably those who favoured a centralized structure as opposed to the loose network that the movement had evolved. The Ecology Party was formed specifically as a political party and, thus, its main concern was and is with parliamentary politics. This was a formation which stood in sharp contrast to the other groups' activities at the time. (ibid: 72)

True to its stated aims, the Party contested its first election in 1982 but received only 0.22% of the national vote. After this it formed an alliance with approximately 10 other groups and became known as the Comhaontas Glas/Green Alliance, a coalition which lasted from 1983 until 1986 when internal conflict broke it apart and resulted in the formation of several new groups, one of those being the Irish Green Party of latter times.

During its brief lifetime the Green Alliance had to struggle with internal division caused by friction between the two main ecological traditions that it contained. As Baker explains:

On the one hand, were those from within the anti-nuclear movement who were prepared to work inside the system, including groups such as the Tralee Anti-Nuclear Group. These groups were interested in parliamentary political activity, the formation of a centralized and highly organized group with formal membership and the development of a clear set of policies and manifestos with which people could be asked to identify with. On the other hand, Comhaontas Glas was also composed of radical groups, including the Green Action Now Group and the Cork Green Movement who had another vision of what constituted Green politics. (ibid: 72)

This 'other' vision of what constituted Green politics was the belief that the individual groups within the alliance should maintain autonomy of policy and action within the alliance and, hence, pursue any course of action they deemed appropriate through their own internal decision making processes without seeking approval from the other participants. Baker singles out GANG and the Cork Green Movement (CGM) for further examination and uses them as examples of the diversity contained within the Green Alliance for the duration of its lifetime. Although the alliance was not a lasting one, these groups brought with them a rich

tradition of environmental activism and made significant contributions to the forms and attitudes present in modern Irish environmentalism.

GANG was formed directly from the Dublin Clean Seas Committee (DCSC) who themselves formed to campaign for the closure of the Sellafield/Windscale nuclear reprocessing plant. The DCSC in turn were formed by the Research Action Group (RAG) who had organised the Leinster Anti-Uranium Group which, along with other similar groups in Donegal, Kilkenny and Carlow, campaigned successfully to stop plans to prospect for and mine uranium in Ireland. The RAG was influenced strongly by the anarchist tradition and, as such, saw involvement in parliamentary politics as unhelpful and ineffective. It was these anarchistic tendencies that led both GANG and the CGM to argue strongly against any involvement by the Green Alliance in formal parliamentary politics. Baker describes the situation thus:

The more radical groups believed that the alliance could be tolerant of its varying traditions and that different and even conflicting traditions could be held by its component parts. They believed, essentially, that the groups which composed Comhaontas Glas could retain a good deal of individual autonomy and that as an alliance it did not have to address itself primarily to parliamentary politics. The less radical wing, however, believed that common policies would have to be thrashed out and the more anarchist traditions brought to toe a party political line. (ibid: 73)

When the Green Alliance purged itself of GANG and the CGM in 1986 and started the move towards its eventual solidification as the Irish Green Party in 1997, GANG and the CGM formed the Alternative Green Network but this organization was not successful and became defunct in 1988 (ibid). As for the Green Party, it redefined itself and its policies and was successful in winning its first seat in the Dail in 1989.

Baker reports the Party's membership as being around three to four hundred in 1989 and as high as one thousand in 1990. I would note here that this seems unlikely as, in 1997, the Party's financial membership was around five hundred while the number of members who had become unfinancial was of a similar order. When speaking to various Party members during my fieldwork I found no evidence of this level of membership at any time during the

Party's existence and this was also confirmed by the Party's own records. Regardless of this discrepancy, further discussion of this point will be foregone as Baker's sources for this figure are not clear. The main thrust of Baker's discussion here is to point out that the Party enjoyed such growth as a result of its initial foray into parliamentary politics that its resources became stretched and its policy creation processes suffered. She explains that many of these new members had not previously been involved in politics or political activism and lacked the political experience and expertise needed to contribute meaningfully to the Party's decision making processes (ibid: 74). This meant that active members had to devote much needed time educating a rank and file membership who were largely ignorant of the Party's constitution while having, after a six month probationary period, full rights within it. By 1997, the Party's active membership had stabilized at around sixty to seventy active members throughout the Republic and its resources were stretched to the limit during the election campaign of that year. Accordingly, many of their policies were still underdeveloped in relation to those of the other political parties that they had to contend with but, nevertheless, the policy creation process was ongoing.

Baker's description and analysis of the roots of Irish environmentalism, which she labels Irish 'ecologism', provides us with a valuable introduction to the history of those active within the Irish Green Party in 1997. While members who had joined the Party after 1990 were common, many of those involved within the decision making processes within the Party had participated in the groups and the era that Baker describes. Notably, Baker strongly commends the study of the ideologies used by ecological groups as a key to understanding their future impact upon the Irish socio-political landscape. When seen in light of the calls by anthropologists such as Berglund (1998), Brosius (1999), Escobar (1999) and Milton (1996) for a greater focus within anthropology on ideological trends within environmentalism, Baker's following comments begin to contextualise the discussion of ideology, a theme within the latter parts of this thesis. She states:

However, from the point of view of the study of ecologism, what is interesting is whether or not the critique contains a transformational potential, that is, whether we are seeing the birth of a radical change in social, economic and political life as a whole. To answer this we need to turn to the ideologies of political ecology groups in Ireland. (ibid: 77)

In order to do as Baker suggests, we must necessarily examine the notion of identity among the Irish Greens because, as I intend to argue, the Greens do not yet have an identifiable ideological framework but rather an emergent one. This being the case, I feel that the best way to understand the still fluid emergent ideology of the Greens is to address the differing perceptions of identity within the Party's membership and the ways in which they perceive themselves in relation to their personal histories, their culture, their political aims and their perceived responsibilities as environmentalists.

Chapter 2: Being Green

2.1 Dublin

In this section of the thesis I will bring to the fore the ethnographic data gathered during my fieldwork period in Ireland. In concert with the discussion presented in the first section of this work, I hope to further advance my analysis of identity among the Irish Greens by discussing their perceptions of themselves and their lived experiences in the context of their historical, cultural and political realities. As identity is a fluid and extremely subjective concept, I must begin with my perceptions of the Greens and of Dublin as the main theatre of my fieldwork. Therefore, I will begin at the beginning in order to present the Greens as I found them in the hopes of creating the broadest canvas upon which to work.

When I first arrived in Dublin I was struck by its size. Having lived in Melbourne for eight years and after briefly seeing Singapore, Hong Kong and Frankfurt, the city of Dublin seemed a small place, not unlike the regional cities of Australia. I had heard so much about Dublin from Irish friends and acquaintances at home that I somehow thought it would be bigger than it was. I remember thinking that, with a population of only approximately one million people, Dublin was similar in size to Adelaide and might turn out to be much the same in other ways as well. It did not take long to be disabused of that notion as the full weight of culture shock set in. Being a first time overseas traveller, I did not know what to expect from my new home and found that, although many things seemed similar, nearly everything was different. For a start I discovered on my second morning in Dublin that, although it was December and the sun was shining in a blue sky, at two degrees Celsius the jeans and t-shirt that seemed appropriate garb from inside my cousin's house central heated house proved rather inadequate on the other side of the front door.

My first impression of Dublin was that it was a place of extremes. It was home to both the old and the new, the rich and the poor, the fast and the slow. There were council flats built in the 1960s right next to a church built in the 1500s, well groomed business people passed single mothers begging with their children in the snow, and every so often the new cars powered along the streets of the inner city would have to give way to a horse and cart carrying a load of produce, children, or both. It is not uncommon in the outer suburbs such as Tallaght and Ballymun for cars to run into horses roaming the streets at dawn or dusk in search of good grazing. I never tired of being able to have a pint in the pub where the Fenian uprising had been planned and then catching the Dart (train) home before dinner. It seemed to me to be a world unto itself even though I knew this was not the case. The best way I can describe my first sense of Dublin is by relating my first trip into the Green Party offices, which were located in Fownes Street in the Temple Bar district.

Soon after I arrived in Dublin and settled in, I caught the bus into the city to make contact with the Irish Green Party at their national office in the Temple Bar district. Temple Bar has the reputation of being the more bohemian precinct of Dublin's inner city and was home to many businesses catering to the thousands of tourists roaming through Dublin on any given day. The Green Party national office on Fownes St was situated across the road from a large square and right in the heart of the city so I had no trouble locating it on my first journey through Dublin city. Wasting no time, I rang the buzzer on the door and, as I waited for someone to come downstairs to let me in, I had no idea that things were already not going according to plan. What I had not counted on was that my contact among the Irish Greens had recently left for America, permanently, and had not told the rest of the Party that he had given me permission to undertake an extended period of fieldwork with them. As a result, when I tried to explain to Mary, the woman who answered the door and who was later to become a friend, that I was the anthropology student from Australia who had come to research the Irish Greens for his PhD, all I got was a confused look and a belated offer of a cup of tea. However, all was not lost as Mary quickly figured out what had happened and put a

contingency plan into operation in which I was introduced to the Party's general secretary and put in touch with the local Green Party group in my area. It was from that point that I started to gain some first hand knowledge of the place I was to do much of my fieldwork.

The Dublin I encountered in 1997 had split into two socio-economic identities separated by its traditional life source, the river Liffey. The first of these we shall consider are the areas south of the Liffey. These were inhabited mainly by the middle and upper classes and a vastly different atmosphere dominated. Housing was in better condition, rental and property prices were higher, educational facilities were of a higher standard, and the majority of people were gainfully employed in well paying jobs that allowed them a level of affluence that was simply out of the reach of their neighbours on the north side. In short, as often happens in societies where wealth disparity is not only entrenched but widening, the gap between rich and poor was expressed ultimately in the geographical location of the different socio-economic classes within the boundaries of the capital city. As I was based south of the Liffey, my first encounter with the Green Party was in the electorate of Dublin South, what could be called the Green's heartland as it was there that they won their first seat in the Dail in 1989. As luck would have it, the Dublin South Greens had planned an eco-fair to be held on the second week I was in Dublin. The site of the eco-fair was only a walk away from where I was staying at the time so I decided to go along and introduce myself.

What is most memorable about that day is the fact that, upon consulting my field diaries, my first meeting with the Dublin South Greens was also my first meeting with Dublin South. As I look back on it now, the eco-fair attracted the whole social spectrum that one could wish to encounter on that side of the river. The fair itself was held in a hall in the suburb of Dundrum and consisted of quite a large number of stalls of all sizes, each advertising or selling things such as recycled products, organic produce, or providing information about the aims of the Green Party and the other environmental groups they were affiliated with throughout Ireland. There were stands dedicated to solar energy and wave power alongside stalls vending hot

dishes made from organically grown produce. The Greens, and the volunteers that helped them, espoused the virtues of their philosophy while putting the case for wool over polyester and pushbikes over cars. In this setting they were very much a community based group and were confidently advancing the environmental cause to their friends and neighbours. This is not to say that all of their views were met with warm approval or even that there were no faces made by local children upon tasting their environmentally correct, nutritionally potent, delicacies. As I walked around I saw many wry smiles, secretive winks and small shakes of the head but, all in all, it seemed to me that the local residents, who were obviously affluent, had incorporated the Greens into their political ethos. As odd as some of their priorities may have seemed to the more conservative elements in that part of Dublin, I sensed that there was a shared experience, at least socio-culturally, between the Greens and those they were trying to woo in Dublin's middle class, affluent, south.

Unfortunately, on the other side of town the Greens were not received with the same understanding. My first introduction with the north side of Dublin was as a house hunter. As my accommodation at my cousin's house was not permanent, I was obliged to seek rental accommodation that was within my financial means. Before finally ending up in Stillorgan, I investigated a number of possibilities and trekked to various locales around Dublin. Thus, while in search of a place to live, I had reason to go to various places in the north side. What I encountered was a significantly different aspect of Dublin than that which I saw over the Liffey. There were far more Council Tenancy buildings and economically depressed neighbourhoods and not much sign of the affluence and social confidence permeating the Dublin South constituency. This was the home of the Dublin working class and, at that time, they were experiencing a raft of social and economic problems that were not uncommon in poor urban areas the world over. There was long-term and even generational unemployment, low wages, high crime and substance abuse. The housing was far older than that of the south and of a much poorer quality. As I came to understand more fully before I left Ireland, the working class in Dublin had failed to benefit from the investment in the information

technology industry that had buoyed the Irish economy in recent years and had suffered directly from that.

In relation to the Green Party, this level of poverty and social disenfranchisement presented a significant hurdle for the acceptance of their message. This was brought home to me during a conversation I had with the candidate for Dublin North West, Peter, at a Green Party election convention at Wicklow in February 1997. As part of the convention proceedings, the candidates were called on to outline the issues and contingencies specific to their constituencies and to discuss ways in which they might win support in their local area. Peter's presentation to the convention was interesting because, while he had been successful on a number of local council campaigns and had managed to create a favourable public profile, he was seriously hampered in his efforts by the size of his local group and an inability to gain new local members. Peter's local group was the smallest in the Party and consisted, at that time, of only himself and a friend.

When I questioned Peter about his situation, he reasoned that his main difficulties in persuading his electorate to support the Green Party were twofold. In the first instance he felt that, among the economically depressed neighbourhoods in his constituency, people were simply not in a position to take a chance on an untried candidate from a new political party. What they needed was someone with enough experience and bargaining power to achieve the kind of political outcomes that would directly and immediately address their main concerns. Understandably, the focus of these concerns were employment, education and welfare, and the prevalent perception of the Green Party as a group of well-meaning but eccentric middle class environmentalists did not inspire confidence among those whose immediate need was economic relief. In the second instance, and as a direct consequence of the first, Peter simply could not attract enough new members to his local group to effectively present the Green Party's wider policy platform to the constituency. With only two members, he had to rely on the good will of his family and friends in order to mount any campaign at all and even then,

only the bare minimum could be achieved. He mentioned that, from time to time, potential new members did contact him out, once they became aware of the sheer volume of time they would have to commit to the campaign under these circumstances, they uniformly walked away from such a burdensome commitment.

As we shall see, Peter's predicament was not unique within the Party and this raises a number of questions as to why the Green Party fared so badly in working class (and rural) areas.

Strandbu and Krangle (2003) argue that environmental movements are unpopular with working class people, at least in European countries, because of a basic difference in class based cultural perceptions. Their research into youth culture in Oslo found that young people from middle class backgrounds often had stronger pro-environmental attitudes than those located in the working class (2003:177). Using a previous survey in Norway (Skogen 1996), they report:

Compared to young working class people, the ones from the humanistic social fraction of the middle class⁵ were over-represented among the organizations' members. Furthermore, members of an environmental organization scored higher on measures of cultural capital. There were more books in their homes and their parents were more likely to like 'intellectual television' and were less interested in 'commercial television'. (Strandbu and Krangle 2003: 178)

Thus, Strandbu and Krangle argue that it is class cultural differences that present barriers to the western working class joining environmental movements in greater numbers than they have. If we ignore, for the moment, the obvious determinism that this approach evidences, it is possible to see that Strandbu and Krangle may have a point in so far as it would make sense that people from different socio-economic backgrounds would have different political agendas informed by their differing socio-economic priorities. They go on to suggest that, as western environmental movements have sprung from, and continue to be dominated by, the middle class, they use a discourse which contains class culturally specific signifiers which appeal more to those from middle class backgrounds than to any other class group. Still using Skogen's (1996, 1999a, 1999b) rather mechanistic theoretical conceptualisations, they further

⁵ Strandbu and Krangle define this as "public services, teaching, aesthetic work, etc." (2003: 177)

expand this line of reasoning by positing that the working class have production-oriented cultures, while the middle class have abstraction-oriented ones. Regarding this, they write:

The abstraction oriented culture acclaims flexibility and strategic thinking and is developed in the sectors of society where symbols, rather than material objects, are manipulated. In the production oriented culture, practical sense is preferred over remote speculations, and theory is only legitimate insofar as it is a generalization of practical experience. Practical use of nature and a feeling of affinity towards concrete activities in nature are assumed to be more typical of the production oriented culture. Aesthetic fascination and philosophical reflections on nature are more characteristic of the abstraction-oriented culture. The abstraction-oriented culture is therefore presumed to be intrinsic to the middle class based environmental movement. (2003: 179)

This theoretical framework is, in turn, embedded in Bourdieu's notions of symbolic capital, cultural capital and habitus (Bourdieu 1984, 1997). As summarised by Strandbu and Krangle:

Bourdieu uses the term symbolic capital to describe how certain people or institutions, certain forms of knowledge, and certain value orientations are ascribed respectability and prestige and command deference. Further, in this respect the concept of cultural capital encompasses familiarity and access to the legitimate and dominating culture. Cultural capital is an 'inherited' social competence that is unequally distributed in the class structure. Further, the theory of habitus explains how people, through socialization and cultural reproduction, acquire some basic dispositions for action, perception, feelings and interpretation. Habitus is not only cognitive, but functions just as much on a habitual, non-reflexive level. (2003: 178)

Here it is also worth noting that Bourdieu's notion of 'social space' (1998: 5) is also highly compatible with the framework set out by Strandbu and Krangle. Stemming from his work on habitus, 'social space' describes the way in which the possession, or lack of, cultural capital specific to the dominant culture may produce a cultural schism between different socio-economic groups. This, in turn, informs the decisions people make regarding their social and political allegiances and can also effect the range of possibilities they have to choose from in the first instance.

As Bourdieu points out, the level of economic and cultural capital possessed by an individual or group often serves to inform their life choices in relation to association, consumption, entertainment, etc. He writes:

Thus, at every moment of each society, one has to deal with a set of social positions which is bound by a relation of homology to a set of activities (the practice of golf or

piano) or goods (a second home or an old master painting) that are themselves characterized relationally. (1998: 5)

Underlying these choices and preferences in Bourdieu's reckoning is the idea that groups within society create gaps between each other predicated on the amount of cultural capital they possess. This notion of space, for Bourdieu, impacts directly on the way in which people create and maintain their personal and positional identities within society and it is for this reason that Strandbu and Krangle have found Bourdieu's work so useful in their analysis. As Bourdieu explains:

The idea of difference, or a gap, is at the basis of the very notion of *space*, that is, a set of distinct and coexisting positions which are defined in relation to one or another through their *mutual exteriority* and their relations of proximity, vicinity, or distance as well as through relations of order, such as above, below, and between. (Ibid)

Indeed, this type of analytical approach is used by Peace in his work (Peace 2001) based on fieldwork conducted in the south-western coast of the Republic of Ireland in the mid to late 1980s mentioned in chapter 1.2. Peace treats the country, the town and the pier in the community that he has named 'Inveresk' as separate domains within a small regional location. Each of these domains has its own specific cultural identity which is maintained by the open acknowledgement of difference between the three separate, yet neighbouring, locations. By manipulating, to a greater or lesser extent, the cleavages that exist between each other, these three groups of people also managed to maintain an overall identity which is both remarkably flexible and ultimately definitive as the respective domains gain significance and integrity through their relationship with each other and the outside world. Peace also reasons that the same can be said for relations within each of these domains. Taking this line of reasoning to its obvious conclusion, each of the three domains mentioned by Peace had their own social hierarchy and set of rules dictating social position and power. Just as external relations were defined by difference, so too internal relations rested on what Peace called "A world of fine difference" (2001) in which, like Bourdieu's definition mentioned above, economic and cultural capital was unequally distributed creating gaps between people and families which then became markers of identity.

Strandbu and Krangle make the point that these gaps, or fine differences, create cultural impediments which must be overcome before political incorporation can occur. They have named these impediments 'symbolic fences' (2003: 183) and, in relation to their study of the socio-cultural differences between working class and middle class youth in Norway, they produce identifiable symbolic differences between the two groups. In their words:

They are distinctions the young people interviewed here experienced and acted in relation to. The symbolic fences should not be considered as concrete obstacles or barriers, but they make the process of becoming a member more difficult for working class youngsters. The road to the organization is more straight-forward for middle class youngsters. (Ibid 2003: 183)

Strandbu and Krangle investigate two different youth groups. One is a working class dominated youth group involved in outdoor activities and the other is an environmentally active youth group involved in protests and actions revolving around environmental issues (ibid: 180-193). They present styles of dress, types of discourse habitual to each of the groups and accepted behavioural norms as examples of the kinds of symbolic fences that divide the two groups. They found that, while each group shared an interest in the environment, their focus was significantly different. The environmentally active middle class group were interested in drawing attention to the inherent worth of the environment while the activities based working class group saw the environment as a valuable recreational resource (ibid: 190-193). They took this as further evidence that participation in environmental movements is "socially situated" and that "notions of nature are socially embedded and are subject to cultural and social domination, as are other cultural forms" (ibid: 194).

If we return now to Peter's difficulty in gaining support within his constituency for the Dublin North West Green group, we can see that the above theoretical framework goes part of the way to explaining the lack of enthusiasm among the working class electorates in Dublin. Indeed, this also provides us with an indication as to why the Party fared worse in every electorate, both urban and rural, across the Republic that did not hold significant numbers of

middle class voters. However, habitus, cultural capital and symbolic fences cannot contain the full complexity of social behaviour and cultural forces that inform people's decisions regarding either the environment or political loyalties. The decision to become active in one group or another is, as we shall see, a real commitment of time and effort that is, for the most part, not made lightly and does not come without personal sacrifice.

The above theoretical constructs do much to illuminate the gaps that exist between different groups within society but do not mention the most simple of all reasons, time. We should remind ourselves that, owing to the competitive nature of late capitalism and the unequal distribution of economic resources that is definitive to the notion of class itself, people with less money have less time. Time taken to become involved and to participate in any group activities not directly related to earning income is, I suggest, a much more serious commitment for those people who do not have sufficient income in the first place. Likewise, time taken outside working hours for political activity is time taken away from the family unit and from much needed recreation. In Ireland, for many living on a minimum or low wage where time is a pressing issue, this was not a desirable or practical choice. Where people in these circumstances do commit themselves to political activism, it is usually for much more traditional class aims such as greater access to employment opportunities, wage increases, increases in the social security net, or matters relating to the nationalist ethic in the Republic and the situation in the six counties of Ulster called Northern Ireland.

Additionally, if we recall the latter part of chapter 1.2, Peace identifies Irish political culture as being defined by scepticism towards politics and politicians and suggests that, at least in rural areas, Irish people perceive their politicians as potential facilitators of bureaucratic machinery rather than agents of change within the political system. I would like to introduce the notion here that, if we extend that logic to the urban working class, the reason for the failure of the Greens to make significant electoral gains in the poorer areas of Dublin becomes clearer. With a pressing need for access to effective political facilitators, social change of the

kind proposed by the Green Party is seen as unrealistic and far less attractive than the promise of the alleviation of unemployment and the expansion of the social security net. In this atmosphere, and considering that the Green Party is still seen to be in its infancy in Ireland, it is a simple matter for the candidates of established parties to brush aside the Green Party candidates as being ineffectual and naive. Regardless of all this, there were indeed working class members active within the Green Party, although few in number, and the stories of their paths to environmental activism are particularly interesting. In the following chapter we shall see that, as always, there are exceptions that prove the rule and that theoretical constructs do not arbitrate people's behaviour, they merely try to describe the more obvious trends.

As for Dublin, I am tempted to say it was a strange place but it would be more true to say that all places are strange until one becomes familiar with them. How long this process of familiarisation takes and how deeply it goes is, however, another matter entirely. For myself, as both an Irish Australian and an aspiring anthropologist, this process was both exhausting and rewarding yet ultimately incomplete by the time I left. Dublin, and indeed Ireland, is not a place you can 'know' after any period of time. I certainly know what I experienced while in Dublin but these experiences do not easily translate themselves into print. The fact that I have an Irish name, come from a large extended Catholic family, and have been raised within a country where fully a third of the population claims Irish heritage had a significant impact on my perception of Dublin. So many things, for me, were culturally familiar that I found that cultural differences appeared in very stark contrast, much like a discordant note in an otherwise familiar melody. When I stepped off the plane I had definite ideas and preconceptions about Dublin but I think I may have lost them so completely that they are now hard to recall.

Dublin is at once small in relation to its overall size yet huge in relation to its place within the EU and its links to all of the other cities in the world where reside the tens of millions of people that make up the greater Irish Diaspora. It is divided by class, geography, politics and

the river Liffey but is united by pubs, sporting events, nationalist sentiment and history. In some respects I found that, as Dublin became more familiar, I became more of a stranger. Many times people only really took notice of me when I spoke as they had presumed I was Irish and were shocked at my Australian accent. There was even a moment when I was approached by a young woman in a pub in Stillorgan who informed me that I had the worst fake Australian accent that she had ever heard and that I should "stop it right now". I found myself in the odd situation of having to produce my passport to prove that I was indeed not "some chancer from the north side having us all on" but a 'real' Australian. Other than that, Dublin was dark, wet and cold in winter and light, humid and sticky in summer. What I mean to say is that hopefully Dublin will reveal itself to you as it revealed itself to me in the following chapters of this work for my knowledge of Dublin is intrinsically linked with the people I met there and the impact that they had on me both personally and professionally. With this in mind, it is time to bring the Irish Greens into clearer focus.

2.2 *The Greens as Intellectuals*

What does it mean to be a 'Green' in Ireland? How do the Greens perceive themselves and their place in the world around them? Given that they were participants in a new political movement, the members of the Irish Green Party had, of necessity, held other identities before they became Green. The act of becoming necessarily refers to a previous state from which members have changed in order to become Green. In 1997 the Party was only sixteen years old, and so there were still many members that had other political affiliations prior to the formation of the Party in 1981. I found this greatly interesting and, as I became more and more involved in the life of the Party, I also found that the disparate individual histories of the active members impacted significantly on its direction as a political organisation.

I have chosen to present an in depth discussion of the six Green Party members whom I felt were most indicative of the Party's range of identities. As a presentation of every individual

active within the Party is impossible, these members were chosen because their own sense of Irishness, belonging, and identity contained the main themes that prevailed throughout the active membership of the Party. This discussion strives to portray the people most central to this thesis, to see them as they hurried through the rain from the bus stop on Nassau St, took in a pint or a story or two at the 'Eagle' in Dundrum, or tried to relieve a young Australian of his ignorance about Irish culture, society, and politics on a rare sunny afternoon in Galway.

However, before entering into a discussion of these case studies, I wish to make clear my perception of the Irish Greens as a group of intellectuals engaged in a political struggle. Without recognition of this, any investigation of identity and ideology in relation to the Irish Green Party would be inadequate. For this reason, I will present a brief discussion of interpretations of Gramsci's theoretical modelling of the intellectual. For Gramsci, the intellectual plays a vital role in the continual struggle for hegemony that occurs within society. Equally, if the hegemony of a dominant group is to be challenged, then this task must also fall to the intellectual. As Holub explains:

Gramsci's concept of the 'intellectual', which equally resists definition, is a way for Gramsci to begin to conceptualise, not perhaps primarily the production, but the directed reproduction and the dissemination of an effective hegemony, a differentiated yet also directive and value-laden channelling of the production of meaning or signification. A counter hegemony would, as a result, also depend on intellectual activities. These would produce, reproduce and disseminate values and meanings attached to a conception of the world attentive to democratic principles and the dignity of humankind. (Holub 1992: 6)

While Gramsci's theorising concerning the role of the intellectual was specifically related to Italian society in the early part of the twentieth century, the relevance of his work in modern social thought has been widely recognised since the 1970s and the scholars who have been influenced by his theoretical constructs are too numerous to mention here. I have found certain discussions about his conceptualisation of the role of intellectuals in modern society to be useful when thinking about the Irish Greens. For instance, Crehan notes that:

In Gramsci's eyes, intellectuals are crucial to the process whereby a major new culture, one that represents the world-view of an emerging class, comes into being. It is intellectuals who transform the incoherent and fragmentary 'feelings' of those who

live a particular class position into a coherent and reasoned account of the world as it appears from that position. (Crehan 2002: 130)

Without wishing to pre-empt the following discussion, it is my view that the Greens may be seen as fulfilling this role in many instances.

According to Holub, Gramsci conceptualises the 'intellectual' as "a cultural and ideological producer" (1992:151). As such, it is important to recognise that knowledge production in this context is not limited to academics, governmental policy makers, or arbiters of cultural tastes. In the Gramscian sense, the intellectual is any individual possessed of specialised knowledge held to be legitimate within the confines and constructs of the knowledge producing socio-cultural institutions of his/her society. Furthermore, the possessor of this legitimated knowledge must also be 'accredited' with having gained some acknowledged degree of mastery in whatever field he/she is participating. This is in contrast to Gramsci's broader notion of the 'universal' intellectual in which every person is capable of intellectual reasoning "in as much as every person is a philosopher and a legislator at once, one who has the power, in the practices of everyday life, to propose views, to impose them on others, to insist on imposing them, or to refuse to impose them" (ibid: 25).

Holub's discussion of the "traditional intellectual: artist, philosopher, poet" (ibid: 153) provides a point of departure from the broader construct of the universal intellectual in Gramsci's thought. Drawing upon Gramsci's pre 1920's manuscripts (ibid: 154), Holub asserts that traditional intellectuals promulgate the dominant cultural values necessary for the continuance of the status quo. For Holub, this model of the intellectual is significant because it "speaks of the non-neutrality of ideas and knowledge, of the partiality, that is, of the producers and disseminators of knowledge, of the political role of the intellectual as part of a system of relations that is inscribed by power and domination" (ibid: 23-24). In this respect I would argue that all formally educated intellectuals operating within the dominant paradigm are, to some extent, traditional in their outlook, or are understanding of a traditional position.

Throughout the thesis we shall see that the category of 'traditional' can be used to describe a 'mode' of behaviour common to many of the Greens as social actors. This in itself is not surprising especially given that all of these actors bring to the Party formal training and qualifications attained through traditional forms of education and employment. However, Gramsci's conceptualisation of the intellectual becomes more complex when we consider the organic intellectual.

Holub writes of this form of intellectual in the following way: "In that every major social and economic formation produces its intellectuals, among other things functioning as legitimators of values and of the conditions on which an economic and social formation rests, feudalism and capitalism as well as socialism have each produced a category of organic intellectuals" (Holub 1992: 25). Thus, the organic intellectual has 'organic' links with, is 'of', a particular social and economic formation. Holub has further identified two forms of "organic intellectuality" linked to "a form of high capitalism challenged by the working-class movement" (ibid). These are the "critical specialist" and the "new intellectual" (ibid). In defining these terms, she writes:

The new (also 'organic') intellectual of capitalist formations is also a specialist, a technocrat who knows his or her role but not necessarily how that role is related to other aspects of a complex system of relations. The critical specialist, on the other hand, is able to understand his or her activity as a partial activity, yet in addition the critical specialist understands that precisely because the activity is partial, it is related to other activities in a system of social, political and economic relations. (ibid)

Holub concentrates on the critical specialist later in her discussion. For my purposes in this thesis, the category of critical specialist is important as it articulates the way in which the Greens advocate both their aims and their organisation. Consider Holub's statement:

So Gramsci's celebrated new notion of an 'organic intellectual', which I have called here 'critical specialist', participates in specialized forms of production, distribution and exchange, while simultaneously purviewing the place of this form of production and distribution in a system of relations. That model of intellectuality is not a technocrat of advancing capitalism, but a 'critical community' which, tied to processes of rationalization and technologization in the sphere of material and cultural production, does not forfeit attempts to grasp conceptually the system and subsystems within which rationalization and technologization take place. Rather, it

critiques such processes should the democratic project become jeopardized. (ibid: 168)

As the name would suggest, the critical specialist critiques the established wisdom of the time and questions the tenets and actions of the dominant paradigm when it is felt necessary by presenting alternative conceptualisations that may vie with accepted theory and practice for legitimacy. I intend later to show that much of the Greens activities can be defined in this way.

The relationship between the category of traditional and organic intellectual is also one of complexity. In Holub's account of Gramsci, the capitalist intellectual community may be both 'traditional' and 'organic', and 'new' simultaneously. In her opinion, capitalist economic and social formations create an intellectual community which "seems to be both organic, traditional and new at once" (ibid: 167). It is organic in that it has been, and continues to be, created by capitalist entrepreneurs. It is traditional in that it "embodies the predominant values and ways of seeing the dominant class", and it is new in that it "propagates intellectual progress, a technocratically functionalist future, and an instrumentalist rationality" (ibid). Hence, Holub sees these as aspects of intellectuality rather than fixed intellectual terrains.

Holub interprets Gramsci's conceptualisations of the intellectual as being positioned across the ideological spectrum – from those working within the dominant paradigm to those opposed to it – within "structures of feeling" (ibid: 155-160). These 'structures of feeling', while being impossible to quantify, produce a recognisable external form known as the "intellectual community" (ibid: 162). Intellectual communities are held together by a common epistemological language perceived by Holub as a dialectic. It is through the use of these dialectics that intellectual communities maintain their identities in relation to the intellectual communities that have solidified around other co-existent structures of feeling. Hence, as intellectuals, the Irish Greens are subject to the wider flux and flow of ideas that exist in the various kinds of discourse that they come into contact with, both as individuals and as a

collective. However, as politically active intellectuals, they are contesting the accepted wisdom of the dominant intellectual community and competing with other older and more established intellectual communities who, like them, are seeking primacy. In recognition of this contestation and of Gramsci's underlying political agenda regarding this theoretical model, she states:

In some ways it theorizes the conditions of the possibility of mobilizing traditional intellectuals for the democratic cause. Yet it also analyzes the conditions of possibility of mobilizing resistance to democratic change, not only on the part of the intellectuals as a sociological group, but also, and more importantly, on the part of the subaltern groups. (ibid: 24)

Here Holub is referring to the way in which structures of feeling linking intellectual communities may be a conduit through which consent or dissent for the ideas of the dominant group may be marshalled. She also refers to Gramsci's supposition that the subaltern are manoeuvred into unquestioning agreement to the terms of their own domination, known as 'spontaneous consent'. However, it is not my intention to discuss spontaneous consent or develop a fuller discussion of Gramsci's theory of hegemony. My aim here is simply to introduce the concepts of structures of feeling and intellectual communities as they are useful for my analysis of Green identities and emergent ideology.

Before returning to the main discussion, it should be noted that Gramsci's work on the role of the intellectual has been subject to many different interpretations and is the topic of much debate. By briefly looking at a more recent interpretation of Gramsci regarding the intellectual, we can see that the nuances placed upon Gramsci's writing by different thinkers produces these differing accounts of his work. For this I have chosen Crehan's (2002) interpretation of Gramsci as it presents a far more radical notion of the intellectual than is found in the work of Holub. Crehan sees the role of the intellectual in Gramscian thought as primarily that of an organiser. In this, she takes her cue from Gramsci himself when he writes:

By 'intellectuals' must be understood not only those strata commonly described by this term, but the entire social stratum which exercises an organisational function in the wide sense – whether in the field of production, or in that of culture, or in that of political administration. They correspond to NCOs and junior officers in the army,

and also partly to the higher officers who have risen from the ranks. (Gramsci 1971:97 in Crehan 2002: 132)

The most striking difference between the accounts of Holub and Crehan is Crehan's emphasis on the relation between intellectual and class groups. For her, the organic intellectual is one that not only has fundamental ties with a particular class, but has been created as "a class becomes a self-conscious entity, as it moves from being merely a class-in-itself to being a class-for-itself" (2002: 137). In this account, organic intellectuals either help to maintain the dominant position of their class or, should they have organic ties to a dominated class, help their class achieve dominance. This is done by both the generation of spontaneous consent and the creation of a coercive apparatus to enforce decisions should spontaneous consent fail (ibid: 138). In this way, intellectuals are responsible for "the transmission and reproduction of particular conceptions of the world" (ibid: 139).

Stemming from this, Crehan's interpretation of the traditional intellectual has a different emphasis on class than does Holub's. Crehan concentrates on Gramsci's assertion that traditional intellectuals were once organically linked to a particular class but have, over time, become a "crystallised social group ... which sees itself as continuing uninterrupted through history and thus independent of the struggle of groups" (Gramsci 1971: 452 in Crehan 2002: 141). Hence, in this account, traditional intellectuals see themselves as being largely autonomous from class struggles and as deriving authority from the continuity of their group. Obviously, in this context they present a barrier to any newly emerging group as they hold and maintain intellectual dominance. Crehan posits that they must not only be confronted by "the organic intellectuals of any newly emerging class" (2002: 141) but that traditional intellectuals must be co-opted to the cause of the newly emerging class in order for it to be successful. In her words, "A crucial task for any new class struggling to give birth to its own organic intellectuals is to win over and assimilate the existing traditional intellectuals" (ibid: 142).

Crehan notes that the 'winning over' of traditional intellectuals is, for Gramsci, one of the most important functions of the political party. As Gramsci writes:

It is within the political party that traditional and organic intellectuals are brought and ultimately welded together. Traditional intellectuals are merged and tightly linked to the group's organic intellectuals in the party. (Gramsci 1971: 15-16 in Crehan 2002: 150)

In this sense, the political party becomes the institution in which intellectuals themselves are organised and through which their skills are politically directed. However, in modern capitalist societies, a political movement may yet fail to succeed even after having co-opted traditional intellectuals within a party structure. This is because the movement must 'be of' and 'speak to' the mass culture of its day. As Crehan relates, "For Gramsci, only a political movement based in a popular, mass culture could have any hope of seriously challenging the power of a modern capitalist state like Italy" (2002: 156).

Milner's (1999) comments regarding new social movements and the intelligentsia are pertinent to the discussion at this point as new social movements such as the Green's are firmly based in the popular mass culture of their times. Milner contends that a major characteristic of new social movements is that they vocally reject class-based approaches to social problems. He writes "Moreover, they have often imagined themselves to provide a radical alternative to proletarian materialism: whereas the old social movement had deliberately pursued the collective self-interests of the working class, the new movements more commonly claimed to pursue quasi-altruistic solutions to more generally 'human' problems" (1999: 164-165). Furthermore, Milner asserts that the fact that these new social movements tend to contain high concentrations of formally qualified intellectuals has had a qualitative effect on their approach to class issues. As he explains, "This preponderance of the intellectually trained within their ranks is almost certainly what has enabled and perhaps even required the new social movements to construct their collective identities in increasingly overt opposition to class-based identity" (ibid: 166). Indeed, it is in this very tendency to eschew class narratives that Milner finds clear evidence of the class-based nature of new social

movements. In making this point he states that the "class character of the movements is at its most readily apparent in their developing preference for individualist and consumerist as opposed to structural solutions" (ibid).

It is my intention to use the above discussion to contextualise the Greens as intellectuals operating in an intellectual community informed by various structures of feeling. The theoretical constructs I have discussed above are not an attempt to 'define' the Greens, rather, I have presented these ideas as a way of bringing into focus the Greens as intellectuals. They are not easily encompassed by one or another notion of the intellectual because they are complex human beings living equally complex lives. They are, however, a group of people that did, at times, fit quite squarely into the above categories. This is especially true for the concept of intellectual communities built around structures of feeling. The Party's membership came from many different walks of life and many different philosophical starting points. They were not all just waiting for something to come along to inspire them into action. They were, for the most part, active in their own right either before the founding of the Irish Green Party or before their involvement in it.

2.2.1 *Eileen*

I met Eileen at the national office in Fownes Street during the election campaign. At that time she was the Green Party candidate for the constituency of Dublin South West and had been with the Party since 1993. She was also very active on the national council and was involved with the Party policy committee on education. I had many opportunities to speak to Eileen as I spent quite a lot of time observing her election campaign. Her local branch consisted of only four people and I was interested in the effect this would have on her bid to become elected. Eileen was then in her early forties and lived in Tallaght with her husband Kris and their five-year-old child Dennis. Eileen graduated from Trinity College in the early seventies, and then went to Germany where she undertook further studies and taught English at university level

for a number of years. It was there that she met her husband and later married. It was also during this sojourn in Germany that she was first introduced to Green politics and thinking, although she herself was not exactly sure where or when her conversion came about. While some members recalled a moment in time linked to the reading of a book or an article, a television show, an event, or a conversation that put them 'on the road to Damascus', in Eileen's case she simply said that it happened "when I lived in Europe ... that's where I would have originally got my Green ideals from".

While many in the Party espoused recycling, water and energy conservation, and ethical consumerism, Eileen and her family took this philosophical stance seriously and tried, where ever possible, to 'live' Green as well as to 'think' Green. There was no television in the house, nothing was used unnecessarily, and nothing was bought that could not be either recycled or put to some further use after its initial purpose had been fulfilled. As well as being environmentally conscious, Eileen's strong opinions on social justice and the plight of the people that lived in her constituency were also a major factor in her decision to join an official political party such as the Greens. Tallaght was a suburb built on the south western outskirts of Dublin. It was originally a well-to-do farming area but large tracts of land had been given over to council tenancies in the sixties. The government of the day decided to remove many of Dublin's poorer families from the slums of the inner city and house them in newly constructed high rise flats in Tallaght. This had substantially increased the population in the area and changed the demographics of Tallaght permanently. By the time of my fieldwork the majority of Tallaght's inhabitants were dependent on welfare subsidies and generational unemployment was a fact of life. For these people the much-touted 'Celtic Tiger' economy was more myth than miracle as it had passed them by without altering their living conditions significantly in any way. People in Tallaght wanted employment, a living wage, and a decent education for their children. Issues such as ecological sustainability and ethical investment were not what usually informed political debate in Tallaght amongst this embattled working class.

Coming from a well-educated, upper-middle class background, Eileen felt that she could offer people in her constituency an alternative to the mainstream candidates and choice between the way things had always been and the way things could be. She envisaged that, through the Green Party, she could help people achieve both environmental consciousness and greater access to employment through better education and the promotion of the skills already possessed by those in the constituency. As to why she felt that the Green Party offered more to those at the lower end of the socio-economic scale in Irish society as opposed to the mainstream parties or the other smaller parties, Eileen explained that she saw social injustice as a symptom of the general malaise that was impacting upon the environment. In this Eileen was genuinely representative of the Party because she felt that there was an interconnectedness between the social and ecological problems of the modern era and that one could not be solved without addressing the other. As she recalled:

I suppose I had a profound sense of disillusionment with the other parties and seeing that they're only paying sort of lip service to Green ideals. It's only window dressing. And, you know, the Green Party is the only one that has the answers in dealing with things like, you know, for example emissions in trucks or in the case of waste management, water management, and so on. The others will tell you their doing good – something like Helmut Kohl's government in Germany. They've a huge big environmental program but in many cases it's all just window dressing. It's addressing the symptoms, sort of, but it's not addressing the causes. I saw that as being a problem. I also think in education, for example, the Green ideals are much more relevant but they haven't gained wider acceptance.

Eileen felt with certainty that the acceptable political mores of the time were inadequate to the task of identifying and modifying the social and economic practices that would exacerbate these problems in the future. When she mentioned the 'lip service' of current European governments, she was giving voice to the widespread opinion amongst the Greens that the destructive processes then in place would continue unless power could be taken away from these institutions and redirected in a more sustainable way. In short, Eileen felt that time was running out fast.

Like many others in the Party, she was pessimistic about the ability of the current mainstream political parties to recognise the social and ecological problems that Ireland was faced with. She was concerned that governments were not open to the message that the Greens were trying to get across – namely, that economic and industrial expansion could not continue at the level it was currently proceeding without ultimately creating drastic consequences. However, closely linked to this rather negative analysis of the socio-cultural and political forces at work in Ireland, and the rest of Western Europe, was an obvious optimism about the potential for change. For all that Eileen believed that her society had taken a wrong turn down the path of industrialisation and technological dependence, her involvement in the political process can be taken as a clear indication that she did not think the situation hopeless. Indeed, with all of the messages of doom, destruction, and short-sightedness that seemed, at times, to dominate much of the Party's environmental discourse, it was often easy to forget that committed activists must necessarily be optimistic and positive to some extent. Eileen's positive attitude towards her activism was by no means exceptional in the broader context of the Party. The Greens as a whole truly felt that they had the power to change the system, to become a popularly elected government in their own right. After all, if this were not the case, it would be extremely difficult to justify the organisation's existence as a political party. They would be in the untenable position of soliciting support for a lost cause. In relation to the role the Party would play in Irish politics, should this faith prove to be well founded, Eileen's ideas for the future again reflected those of many of her fellow Greens. Ultimately her vision of the future of Irish society was based on three key terms – decentralisation, education, and opportunity.

2.2.1a Decentralisation

Eileen saw decentralisation as a key component of an ecologically sound system of government. This emphasis on decentralisation was predicated on the belief that, given free reign and a moderate amount of real power, local communities would be more than able to

govern their own affairs using common sense and local knowledge. Eileen also felt that with the advent of smaller, more independent forms of local government the Greens would be able to get their message across to the public more easily as it would reduce the relevance of the nationally focused mainstream parties to the voting public. This strategy within the Party was referred to as 'devolving power to the lowest possible level' and would redress the current situation in which she felt that the institution of the local council had become "a kind of talking shop – they talk and talk and talk and vote and vote but really they don't have any power".

After the election of 1997 was over, I asked Eileen if the concept of 'small is beautiful' could work in a centralised social arena such as Ireland. She replied:

We've [already] taken a step down the Green road of Decentralisation with the splitting up of Dublin County Council into three. So you have Fingal to the North, you have Dunleary and Rathdowne on the east, and you've South Dublin County Council and that's a start. Obviously, well one was hoping to be elected and one isn't elected, but to push for that form of decentralisation is very much in the Green policies. As we say, decentralisation just doesn't mean moving a government off to Castlebar, it means real decentralisation with decision making at local levels – revenue raising capacity, etc, etc. And I think it is important. I mean [take] the Dail for example, it has one hundred and sixty six deputies. It doesn't need one hundred and sixty-six deputies. It'd probably get by quite well with sixty-six. At the same time we need to enhance the local councils, increase their membership, give them a real salary to encourage them to do a good job and to allow greater decision making power. I mean Germany has that sort of system, Switzerland has it, Austria has it.

Thus, Eileen saw decentralisation as a progressive policy empowering greater numbers of people than Ireland's Westminster based system. She firmly believed in the Party's call for the devolution of power to local and regional forums by restructuring the established institutional structures that govern Irish society.

Decentralisation was a crucial factor of the Party's overall philosophy and, as such, was a cornerstone of their policy direction. For instance, the Green Party manifesto states that:

In Ireland too few people are making significant decisions that affect the lives of far too many other people. For a democracy to exist, there must be a sense of ownership of the decision making process, not just participation in irregular elections, but popular active involvement in decision making structures. We believe in

decentralisation, not shifting a government office from one part of the country to another, but empowering people to make decisions about local issues. Real decentralisation means the surrender of power and devolving revenue raising power to local government. (Green Party Manifesto 1997: 15)

Given this emphasis on decentralisation, the Party proposed to create a three tier institutional structure composed of local, district and regional levels. Each of these levels of government would have real decision making power but the crucial tier would be that of local government. Local governments would be given far more autonomy than they had previously enjoyed and would be, for the first time, able to raise revenue in their own right. In the view of the Greens, this would give local governments the power to determine their own direction and to introduce solutions to the problems of governance that were specifically suited to their respective local conditions. Other Green proposals included a strengthening of the Freedom of Information Act and the restriction of confidentiality laws, longer sitting time for the Dail, and limiting government officials to one public office within government at any single time. The Greens were campaigning for a transformation in Irish electoral politics that would give priority to local politics and independent representatives over the established national party system and its partisan tendencies. The driving force behind this policy was the underlying belief within the organisation that their society could be changed dramatically through the implementation of a more vigorous form of democracy which would give citizens a direct and meaningful opportunity to be involved in the decisions that effected their local and regional communities.

2.2.1b Education

Eileen's emphasis on education expresses its significance in the Green's discourse. Indeed, education is a vital element in the Party's emerging ideology and, hence, it is not surprising to find that the opening line of the Party's education policy reads as follows:

The Green revolution is not a political revolution with educational implications. It is an educational revolution with political implications. (Green Party/Education Policy: Adopted 1991)

More specifically, the first paragraph defines the Party's conviction in the importance of education and delineates the Greens' vital role as educators. It states that:

The Green Revolution is at heart an educational revolution. It is about putting new things on the world's agenda. It is not restricted to text books, but then neither is education. If we are to save the world, not just politicians and captains of industry must be convinced, but millions of ordinary people must be brought to change the way we live. It is a remarkable project. And its lifeblood is knowledge. (Ibid: 1)

Clearly, the Greens perceived themselves as revolutionaries striving to build a new civilisation and, whether or not their notion of what is revolutionary matches socio-political textbook definitions, they saw their aims as revolutionary. More importantly, they state that their revolution will be one in which education is the main agent of social, economic and cultural change. This means that their revolution is to be achieved largely by the dissemination of a particular kind of environmental discourse. This discourse is, in turn, based on a way of knowing particular to the environmental movement, for knowledge and knowing play a key role in Green Party thinking. As intellectuals, they thought of themselves as the holders of a certain kind of knowledge and as having a duty to spread this knowledge as far and as wide as possible. For them, this particular form of knowledge held basic truths about human beings and environmental sustainability that would be self-evident to many if only the Greens could gain the public stage often enough. Furthermore, they were, for the most part, an intellectual community not interested in acquiring political power for its own sake but were concerned to bring about positive change. They were, in a very real way, teachers rather than politicians. If we now turn briefly to the education policy, a description of the structure of feeling which informs the Party as an intellectual community and the other peripheral structures of feeling which it shares degrees of commonality start to emerge.

One of the main themes that runs through the education policy is the offering of alternatives to the accepted mainstream practices of teaching. This is of importance because, while the Greens wish to make many of the current education methods defunct, they are concerned to

make the transition from one system to the other as non-threatening as possible. This, would foreseeably involve large-scale, yet gentle, change over a number of years. The following statement, taken from the then current education policy, gives us some idea of the implications for social and cultural change contained within the Green philosophy of education. The policy states that:

As it stands, our education system is the product of our industrial society. Schools are organised and run along factory lines. The structures, the timetable, the scale, the principles of organisation of our educational system, are left-overs from a rapidly passing age. A respect for human individuality and values, meaningful organisation of our time, flexibility and variety of vision are hall-marks of the most advanced and forward-seeing economies in every sphere. Education should be in [the] forefront of these developments. (Green Party/Comhaontas Glas Education Policy 1991: 2)

Closely linked to this ambitious structural change is the creation of more choice within the education system through a broadening of individual freedoms. For instance, the policy also declares that:

We need to restore the decision making power over learning to those involved; to the learner, the teacher, the school, the community (See Green Policies on Decentralisation and Local Government). The system needs flexibility and local responsibility in the management of learning, to allow people to make their own use of a wide variety of teaching and learning styles and techniques. (ibid: 3)

As we can see, the Greens place a great deal of emphasis on the rights of the individual to a wide range of choice and the notion that, if given this range of choice, most individuals will take responsibility for their own education as they will perceive it to be a personal investment as opposed to a means to an employment opportunity. In other words, this is an aesthetic of learning for learning's sake. In order to free people from their present level of financial commitment and enable them to take advantage of this new education system, the Greens also propose the provision of a Guaranteed Basic Income (GBI) which would be a universal measure designed to replace social welfare. The GBI would not be means-tested and would be available, at the same level of funding, for all Irish citizens. According to the policy:

This will free parents and young people from financial pressures which often limit their commitment to learning, both inside and outside of academic structures. Our present economic circumstances make this difficult for many parents. A central policy of the Greens is the provision of an individual basic income. (ibid: 2)

This was also consistent with Eileen's personal opinion on standard educational assessment methods. As she told me:

I think they have to take away the emphasis on this exam-based culture. At the moment we're very oriented towards the idea of exams and if someone gets there they have to go on. They have to do a B.A., they have to do an M.A., and so on ... they'll end up maybe doing a Doctorate. If you don't do that somehow you're not a success and the Green thing is to get away from that.

This plainly indicates a major commitment to the ethic of a rich personal freedom and self-education. On this level, the Greens can be thought of as not merely intellectual educators but as potential facilitators of education on a large scale. As we shall see in the latter part of this work, the Greens believed in the common sense of their world-view to such an extent that they felt that many people could not help but be persuaded by it if only they could be exposed to it sufficiently. For them, being Green was about equity and variety. They use terms such as freedom, respect, and choice throughout their education policy in a discourse featuring the central notion of the empowerment of the individual at the cost of the current structures of centralised power. In addition to this, they were also interested in reigning in the ethic of competition, which they saw as having a negative effect on society at large. Again, as expressed in the policy:

The principles of human sharing and cooperation are profoundly undermined by the competitive, exam-oriented structures of our educational system, which seek to compare and select rather than to facilitate and encourage, and are major sources of aggression in society. It is more important for the process of education that a learner be given the means for creative discovery, and be excited by the amount of progress that they are making, than that they should achieve any particular goal. (ibid)

Eileen felt that it was not so much what was being taught but the how it was being taught that was the problem with the Irish educational system. There was too much emphasis being placed on standardised qualifications and levels of achievement and this created an atmosphere in which the specific skills and talents of people were being overlooked in the job market. As a consequence, perfectly apt people were being overlooked when applying for employment because the educational system failed to give them official recognition for their particular strengths.

2.2.1c Opportunity

The other major concern Eileen had for the future of the Party was to distance itself as an organisation from any public association with traditional leftist politics. Her conceptualisation of Green politics included the free market system as an integral part of a free and democratic society. Certainly the market needed to be constrained in order to safeguard both the natural environment and the welfare of the citizens, but the market itself was not the cause of the problem. For Eileen it was how the market was used to justify greed that was at the heart of the issue. As she stated,

People are terribly greedy. We still have terrible poverty and in fact the gap between rich and poor is increasing all the time. People don't see that because there is a large middle class who have become slightly more affluent of late and they're so greedy they don't wish to give that up.

With regards to the Party's stance on the profit incentive of the market, Eileen explained that,

Profit itself is good. People say - I remember Mary Harney saying that the Greens are socialist, you know. I don't think they are because, as far as I know, Socialists or Communists are against the idea of profit - it's all [for] the community. I mean my own perception of Green values doesn't say that. I believe that if someone has entrepreneurial skills and puts in the time, they have a right to make a profit providing that profit is not accrued at cost to either the environment or to society. That sort of profit is wrong and should be discouraged. But when you have, let's say, someone working with calligraphy who puts in a huge amount of hours and goes out and markets the stuff. They deserve to make money and to have their effort rewarded in some sort of physical sense that they can see.

In essence what Eileen was concerned about was finding a way to regulate the market in order to make it more compatible with the ideals of a sustainable, humane society. That she was deeply troubled by the notion that people might link Green politics to the more radical elements of the left in European politics was plainly evident. The reasons behind this, however, are worthy of further analysis.

When considering attitudes towards leftist politics in Ireland one cannot discard the role of the Catholic Church in the formulation of public opinion. The population of the Republic of

Ireland is noted for having the highest percentage of practising Catholics of any nation in the world. Additionally, the Church has been the single most constant institution in Ireland over the last fifteen hundred years. Neither can we ignore the close cooperation between the state and the Church in the formulation of Ireland's constitution in the mid to late nineteen twenties. This reached its apex in the nineteen fifties when, Eamon DeValera's reliance upon the leading clergy in Ireland for policy direction in civil matters saw much of the Catholic church's doctrine enshrined in law by the state. This resulted in a widespread popular aversion to socialist philosophy and politics as the majority of Irish citizens adopted the Church's stance towards socialist thought during the cold war period. As such, it was a significant factor in the underdevelopment of the labour movement in Ireland during the post-independence period (refs) and continues to colour the attitudes of the majority of the voting public regardless of religious denomination.

In light of this, Eileen's attitude toward the 'taint' of socialism within the Party was not surprising. Socialism was not only 'wrong' on moral and spiritual grounds, it seemed to Eileen that the aim of socialism was to achieve a kind of artificial equality in which individuals were not allow to differ from the general community in any way upon pain of death. Like many in the Party she equated socialist thought with the political and social realities of the U.S.S.R and was convinced that, although it was a nice idea, socialism could not work in the 'real' world. She also employed on occasion the concepts of freedom, individuality, and incentive as justifications for her position against something she saw as being totalitarian and, ultimately, stagnant. In short, Eileen and many in her generation had what we might call an 'Animal Farm' view of socialism. To her it represented repression, subordination and secularisation on an unthinkable level.

Thus, Eileen insisted that a Green society would not stifle opportunity but would encourage new ways of thinking in the market place designed to promote a form of consumption that would be sustainable and ethical. There was no detailed plan of how exactly this would be

achieved if and when the Greens gained the necessary political power but I got the impression from her and the other Green's that this would become clearer as the Party evolved over space and time. The important thing at that moment was that the Greens believed it was possible and that they would, through their political struggle, be the catalyst for this level of change in Irish society. Finally, we can see from Eileen's account, and the discussion of the Greens' viewpoints on decentralisation and education, that there was a clear and unswerving valuing of a rich autonomous subjectivity based upon a wholly new kind of cooperation and sharing of decision making power.

2.2.2 Joe

I first met Joe about a week after I arrived in Dublin at the 'Eco-Fair'. This was an event organised by the Dublin South branch of the Party to raise local awareness about Green lifestyles and politics in their local constituency. He was running a stall which promoted vegetarianism by offering free samples of various vegetarian dishes and was also handing out pamphlets on vegetarian cooking and animal rights to anybody who was interested. I spoke to him briefly and he invited me to come along to the local branch meetings of the Dublin South group. I didn't know it then but Joe was to become one of my most constant sources of information during my stay in the field.

Joe represented a significant proportion of the active membership of the Party: not so much in his journey of becoming Green but in that he did not find that journey remarkable. When researching this section of my work I realised that, although I possibly spent more time with Joe than any other member of the Party, I never managed to get a clear description from him as to why he joined the Party. What I did manage to garner about this subject through the many interactions I had with him was that he had attended the University College of Dublin (UCD) where he had completed a degree in English Literature. During his time at UCD he had become aware of, and interested in, issues concerning animal rights. Subsequently, he

became an activist in the campaign for animal rights in Ireland. He was also a strict vegetarian and was involved in running an organic food co-operative in Dublin. During the period of my research Joe was employed as a tour guide in Dublin and was also writing a guidebook to Dublin for tourists. He was the Green Party candidate for the constituency of Dublin South, the Party spokesperson for the environment, and the Party's overall director of policy development.

Many members were similarly vague when questioned about their initial motivation for joining the Party. At times I found it frustrating and put it down to a possible annoyance, on the part of the informant, at being asked questions of such a personal nature by myself. At other times I thought it more likely that the participants, despite my protestations otherwise, failed to believe that their personal journeys and thoughts could be relevant to a thesis written by someone from half way across the world. Joe presented me with a simple chronology of what he had done before joining the Party. He had attended university in Dublin, became a campaigner for animal rights, became involved in the Dublin Food Co-op, and finally, joined the Green Party. Furthermore, he presented this in such a way to give me the impression that he, personally, found it to be unremarkable and nothing more than a natural progression in a direction that he was always going to make.

We can surmise that university life gave Joe the opportunity to either come into contact with issues of animal rights for the first time or expand upon an already established interest that had not found its full expression. This led him into the sphere of activism as his views on the subject became more defined and a personal course of action crystallised. Involvement in this sort of activism would have certainly led to exposure to many other ideological and political stances that overlapped issues concerning animal rights. Indeed, Joe told me that his vegetarian lifestyle was grounded in his belief that human beings should respect the rights of all animals, and that it was not necessary for us to breed and slaughter millions of animals a year simply to gain sustenance. As a practising vegetarian, Joe became very interested in

debates about food and the increasing concern about the wide spread use of pesticides and chemical fertilisers in modern agriculture. It was at this point that he became involved with the Dublin Food Co-op which, as a non-profit organisation, supplied affordable organic vegetables and other food-stuffs to a growing network of citizens similarly concerned about the quality of food produced by chemically dependent mainstream agricultural practices. I was told by Fintan, another Green Party member who was also a member of the Dublin Food Co-op, that the Co-op was always a strong supporter of the Irish Green Party and that there was a significant pattern of dual membership within the two groups. It must have been a short step for Joe, who was already a committed activist in many of the areas that were fundamental to the Green Party platform, to join the Party and continue his activism under its umbrella.

What I failed to see at the time was that this all felt so 'normal' to Joe that he had ceased thinking about it as exceptional. Added to this, Joe's pedigree of social and environmental activism was representative of many of his fellow Green Party members. Being Green for Joe meant being an environmentalist first and foremost. This is not to say that he was not as concerned with issues of social justice as other members of the Party but rather that he felt that the needs of the environment were, ultimately, much more pressing than anything else. If we recall, in the initial stage of this thesis, I offered O'Riordan's definition of environmentalism as "a philosophy of human conduct" (O'Riordan 1981: xi cited in Milton 1993: 1) as an analytical platform from which to proceed. Similarly, Milton's definition of environmentalism as "a quest for a viable future, pursued through the implementation of culturally defined responsibilities" (1993: 2) was also noted. While these definitions are helpful, there was much division within the Party about what constituted a culturally defined responsibility and how those identified as such should be prioritised within the philosophy of human conduct that informed the Party's culturally centred vision of environmentalism.

What interested me about Joe's views was that, through them, I had the opportunity to examine the anthropocentric/ecocentric polemic that occurred within the Party. Joe

understood environmentalism to be a philosophy in which human activity did not dominate and impact on the natural world but was brought 'closer' to it. This view was informed by a non-violent ethic in which human beings did not have the right to use environmental resources in any way they saw fit. For him, human beings had an absolute responsibility to create a culture in which their social structures were geared towards enhancing the viability of natural systems wherever possible and to minimise unavoidable impacts where no other option was available. Thus, vegetarianism and animal rights were high priorities on his program of culturally defined responsibilities that needed to be implemented for an environmentally sustainable society to emerge.

One way of understanding how culturally defined responsibilities are identified by social actors such as Joe is offered by Eder. He asserts that there are three main 'framing devices' which are useful in understanding perceptions of environmentalism in their culturally specific manifestations. The first of these is "Man's moral responsibility towards nature" (Eder 1996: 171), the second is "Empirical objectivity ... linked to the mechanistic conception of nature that has caused scientific progress in modern societies" (ibid), while the third is "The aesthetic of the relationship of man with nature ... closely tied to the way modern societies perceive nature as a relevant context of their reproduction" (ibid). By way of definition, Eder states:

The cognitive framing devices can be seen as organizing principles of a modern discourse. Within the discourse on nature these cognitive framing devices conceptualise the 'problem of nature' and give it cognitive consistency and coherence. The first framing device generates a form of moral responsibility of man towards nature. The second organizes the empirical observation of nature and the scientific mode by which it is 'objectified'. The third refers to the qualities inherent in humankind's expressive relationship with nature. (ibid)

Importantly, cognitive framing devices are internalised by the groups of social actors employing them in ways that are consistent with their own cultural milieu. In other words, they are the culturally specific adaptations of framing devices. As Eder notes:

Environmentalism is based on a cultural form within which moral, factual, and aesthetic framing devices provide the cognitive basis for framing the relationship of

man with nature. These moral, empirical, and aesthetic framing devices in environmentalism are the elements that are used in ecological communication by environmentalists to create a specific image of themselves. This process is called *symbolic packaging*. (ibid: 176)

While this is simply one among many ways of understanding how people come to perceive themselves as environmentalists, or as being Green, it does identify a number of important culturally variable factors that were pertinent to the experience of Irish Greens such as Joe. Indeed, the Irish Green's perception of themselves and the way in which they wanted to be perceived by the public was the cause of some tension within the Party. Working with Joe was beneficial in understanding this issue because he was quite vocal about the need for the Party to portray itself as an organisation whose first priority was the environment. This would sometimes put him into conflict with other Party members who felt that their best chance of a greater political acceptance of Green values within the voting public was to move away from the image of the Green's as a one-issue organisation.

An example of how this tension surfaced within the membership of the Party happened before the election campaign when there was much discussion about how the Party should present itself to the public. Many members were concerned that the public might perceive them as 'tree-huggers' and 'new-agers'. They were quite anxious to get away from this image as they thought that it would hinder their attempts to put themselves across as a serious political party. When I spoke to Joe about this, he recognised that there was a danger of the Party not being taken seriously by voters but was concerned that the more conservative elements within the membership might be 'throwing the baby out with the bath water'. He felt that the Party had reacted by focussing too much upon areas other than the environment in an attempt to show the public that they were serious players on the Irish political scene.

When discussing this, Joe said that he felt that the Party should concentrate much more on the creation of its environmental policies so it could have a more cohesive ecological platform to present to the public. I asked him about the probability of this happening and he replied:

But, like, a lot of people will feel they won't want to do that because they won't want the Party to revert back to an environmental image. My own view is that that is a fundamental mistake because, you know, everything is connected and, in a sense you know, if we're not kind of leading on that issue well then we might as well just change the name of the Party and call us, you know, the Socialist Workers Party or what ever it is that we're gonna do. Oh yeah, and the public would be also confused if we went into government and didn't focus on environmental issues. For instance if we got the ministry for children, which would be wonderful, but the public would be utterly confused by that.

Joe was particularly concerned that the Party's ambition of electoral success would draw it away from its founding principles and leave it open to manipulation by mainstream parties hoping to secure power for themselves by offering the Greens a place in a coalition government. During 1997 there was much speculation amongst the membership about what to do if coalition became a possibility and it became a focal point of debate as the election drew closer. After the election I spoke to him regarding how the other members of the Dublin South branch felt he was perceived by the public. He told me that, while most of the members were happy with the campaign, there were those who felt that he was not taken seriously enough because he 'dressed like a Green'. When I asked him if he thought that this was indicative of a move by the more conservative members in the Party to depart from its more radical environmental foundations, he replied:

This is it you see. Cathal, at the meeting the other night, we were talking canvassing and he says, 'Yeah but you have to get out of these wool jumpers'. This is what you get as well you know, like Cathal does great work but his perception is that the Party has to get professional and slick and he said that I should have worn a tie, that it was the wrong image. Like I was really depressed when he said that, I was really disappointed. It was like kind of 'lets conform', you know. I know what he was saying, he was saying you have to mimic what people like. And actually, because of my involvement in animal rights over the years, I've always been conscious of the fact that when doing any kind of television interview its actually important to look quite neat and almost 'mirror image' society. Then they do a double think on it because I'm not fitting into what they expect me to fit into - which is a new-ager or something. But having said that I think it's depressing that - and there would be a lot people in the Party that would have Cathal's view - I think it's depressing that we have to leave that kind of image behind us. I think that's one of the more unfortunate results of having electoral success - becoming more and more a political party in terms of winning seats. Is there something inevitable about, when you win a seat, that you do get swallowed up by the political establishment, that your policies become slightly diluted - [that] your radicalism becomes a little diluted? Does that happen?

I raise this point because, for Joe, being Green was all about being 'radical'. He believed that focussing upon environmental sustainability, and creating a philosophy which aimed to structure societies in accordance with the boundaries set by their respective ecological limitations, was a radical approach to modern politics. In his eyes, the Party also had a responsibility to be seen as radical through both its presentation of itself to the public and the media, and also in its actions. However, during my time in the field I noted that public demonstrations and campaigns by the Party were not all that common. There was a demonstration about air pollution at the Dan O'Connell monument and a local campaign to introduce light rail in Sligo City, and as mentioned above, Joe had been instrumental in running a dual campaign about vegetarianism in conjunction with both the local Dublin South Greens and the Dublin Food Co-op, but the Party as a whole had not organised a single demonstration while I was in Ireland.

I asked Joe about this as I knew he had been involved in quite a number of campaigns for animal rights in the past. I knew also, from the many conversations I had with Joe on this subject, that he felt that the Party should be more active than it was in this area. In addressing this issue, he said:

I think a certain amount of people see that as something that was part of our development in the past, and we've matured. And now we're a 'real' political party and now we're working in the parliament. You know, [as if] getting out onto the street is kinda like what environmental groups do is kinda prank stuff, or whatever - I get that impression. There's less of a willingness to do that because certainly when I joined the Party first, and for the first four or five years, I used to organise quite a lot of demo's and we used to get quite a lot of people out. And I would say that if I started to organise demo's again I'd have a lot of difficulty getting people out. I might be wrong but it depends on what it [the reason] would be. But the other thing is that they do take a lot of work. The last one I did was blocking a dump in north Co. Dublin a year and a half ago with Brendan and we got good publicity over it actually, and I think it was very good for Brendan, but I wish I had've done it over in Dublin South because I got all of the waste action groups over in his constituency out. And we were on the main news and all that. We got all over the papers, it was a good thing to do but it took an awful lot of work.

Here we can see that Joe thought that the Party had come to a crossroads, although he did acknowledge that demonstrations were a lot of work. It could either cleave more firmly to its

founding identity, as a Party intent upon bringing about social and ecological change in its own right through its own devices, or move towards the mainstream of Irish politics and present itself as an ecologically concerned potential member of any future coalition government. Again, Joe linked this to the more conservative membership in the Party. He felt that, as the Party came to be perceived as more and more conservative by the public, so to did it attract a new kind of member that was more inclined to be moderate rather than radical. On this subject, Joe felt that:

I don't think we're getting many new members. I don't think we're getting many members at all who would have a real desire to change society. I think we're getting a more conservative kind of member and we've very few members now who are kind of like pushing the Party, saying like 'Why aren't we doing this and why aren't we doing that' - in a sense what some people used to do. A lot of the more radical people have gone and that was either through disillusionment or because the Party tried to get rid of them. See in a lot of cases there was genuine reason for the Party trying to get rid of them because they were just causing a lot of trouble but I think, at the end of the day, when you look at the Party and you see so many people who used to be members outside the Party now who were genuine activists, that says something very bad about the Party. That we weren't able to hold on to them, that we were too conservative.

He also added that this could well impact upon the effectiveness of the Party if it were ever in a situation where it was in a coalition partnership. The compromises it would have to make to appear acceptable to its partners might very well hinder its ability to live up to its expectations as far as policy implementation was concerned. As he told me:

I've a deep suspicion about that in terms of our ability to maintain our own identity or even get those policies implemented because we're just small. We're small fish in that very, very powerful and very manipulative ocean of the main political parties and their long-term strategy isn't to subsume us but it's certainly to dilute us. To bring us into the political system and to get rid of our radical nature which can cause them problems because they know that the one thing they have no control of in an election campaign is the protest vote. And if they take our radicalism away from us well then we're not gonna get very far.

Here we can see that Joe's thoughts on the differences between the kinds of activists the Party was attracting, as it became more established within the Irish political milieu, lends a certain credence to the way in which Holub discusses the passage of intellectual communities from an organic stage through to a traditionalist one (1992: 151-184). In other words, as the Party has become more acceptable to the public, it has begun to attract members with different

expectations and priorities to those responsible for its foundation. Additionally, it would seem that Joe was of the opinion that many of the more long-term members of the Party had become less radical in their approach and now frowned upon the kinds of protest activities that were once popular and legitimate Party strategies.

The point Joe makes above is that the Party had become less radical as it evolved. This is of interest as it is similar to Baker's (1990)⁶ discussion of the enduring split between those environmental activists willing to participate in the established political process and those who felt that participation would involve too much compromise to effect real change. In this light, Joe's concern for the future viability of the Party as an alternative to the mainstream parties could either be a further elaboration of this old division, which started with the initial anti-nuclear protests in Ireland in the late 1960s and early 1970s, or it could be a new division created between those members of the Party impatient to put Green policy into effect and those who had misgivings about accepting any offer of power sharing until a strong enough support base was established. I submit that this division was certainly informed by nostalgia for more direct action among those members who were personally committed to the strategy of political protest, however, there was definitely a feeling within the Party's leadership that the more conventional political approach taken by the Party in the better part of the previous decade had started to win lasting public acceptance. They felt that they were about to emerge from the political wilderness and were anxious not to lose what they had fought so hard to gain. Joe found this uncomfortable for, as an environmentalist, he had always thought of himself more of an activist than a politician in the formal sense. Nonetheless, Joe, and people like him, managed to create sufficient space within the confines of the Party for more radical approaches to political action and, indeed, theirs was an accepted voice of opinion. Part of why he felt this conflict so keenly was that his role as Party candidate for Dublin South added a personal dimension to the dilemma which this thesis will discuss in detail in the section

⁶ For discussion see chapter 1.3.

dealing with the election. For now, however, we can see that Joe's experience of being Green was, like many others, a complex matter.

2.2.3 Neave

My first contact with Neave was at a Party conference held in Wicklow for the Party's candidates in the election of 1997. Neave described herself as a "Green Mother" and by the way those present at the conference reacted to her, it was obvious that Neave was a significant person within the Party's power structure but also, as I was to find out, quite an elusive one. My subsequent efforts to catch up with Neave in a more informal setting were hampered by the workload she had as one of the two Green MEPs (Member of the European Parliament) and her other commitments to the Party and the election campaign. What I did know at that stage was that she was quite a controversial figure in the Party and was not averse to conflict. Neave was forty-eight at that time, divorced from her husband and living in Wicklow with her elderly mother whom she was looking after. Apart from her work with the European Parliament, she was also the secretary of the Wicklow Greens of which she was one of the founding members. However, she was not a regular face at the meetings of the National Council or the various policy committees because her duties as an MEP dictated that she spent a great deal of time in Brussels where the Parliament convened.

Neave grew up with politics playing a major part in her family life. Both of her parents were committed socialists and active in the civil rights movement both in Northern Ireland and against apartheid in South Africa. She suspected that this upbringing, although a prime factor in her eventual journey towards political activism, was not a common experience within the Party. Her opinion was that "I think that's a little different from my impression of many Greens who grew up in very non-political households with no involvement in political issues such as the ones that I've described". One would expect that from this kind of background a

career in politics would have been an early choice for Neave but this was not the case. As

Neave explained:

So, I did grow up in a political household however I did not want to become involved in formal politics. And I would see that as very much as part of my development as a Green. I wasn't attracted to any of the overt ways of political expression that my parents have engaged in. I don't think that there was anything rational about that. I just felt as though that wasn't where it was at.

Neave describes the break up of her parents' marriage and her subsequent move to London with her mother as one of the most formative experiences in her life both on a personal and a political level. At that time, in her early teens, she was "really conscious of being taken away from a world which, at some levels, had an engagement with the natural world and taken into a technocratic industrial society". This feeling of being disconnected from nature was so keenly felt by Neave at that time that it drove her to attempt to "get back in touch with the rhythms of nature" by living in a commune in her late teens and learning to sail. Although her parents did not hinder her actions, she did attract criticism from at least some friends of the family. She related that:

I did things which, not my parents, but various politically involved friends of theirs would have described as escapist. And I did have a long conversation with a very intellectual Marxist friend of my mother's who was quite horrified at what I was doing. I was living in a commune, growing organic vegetables, etc, and he thought that was absolutely outrageous who'd had my kind of education. They should be out there saving the world. I know I was sympathetic to all that but I wasn't engaged by that. I was engaged with this other process which became Green. It was completely organic, it was just what I was doing that I enjoyed, and it was living in communes, sailing.

This period in her life was for Neave one of growth and transition. She felt it was crucial in relation to the path that her life later took and one that she draws upon constantly in order to give meaning to her career. With regard to all political activists, the path from philosophical support to active involvement is a deeply personal one. It can involve anything from a single incident or moment of insight which produces a gestalt change of perception, to a gradual alignment or realignment, to a political direction through years of life experience. In Neave's case, her decision to join the Green Party was formed by her initial attempts to 'find' herself

and to position herself mentally and physically in relation to her socio-cultural and socio-ecological surroundings. As she explained:

I was really driven, in a sense, to engage and for me it was through sailing. I really engaged with wind and water. Sometimes it was freezing cold and sometimes I didn't know what the hell I was doing, but I was very engaged with the natural rhythms of life and of the elements. For me this is a fundamental resource of the work that I do now, which is very far from that. It's taken me to a place which I would have never foreseen. I don't like working in Brussels. It's a horrific environment for any human being. I do it because I also feel that I must and I also have this resource of what I built up over nearly ten years of living an outdoor life – of living on a boat, of living without electricity.

Neave's first experience with a formal protest campaign came in 1973 when the Irish government, as the newest member of the European Common Market, was called upon by Brussels to build a nuclear power plant⁷. This would allow Ireland to conform to the Common Market's policy demanding that every member nation move towards partial, and ultimately total, dependence upon nuclear power. As detailed in chapter 1.3, there was firm opposition from the public and a well organised protest movement determined to stop the construction of the power plant sprang into being. The Irish people had already experienced the dangers of nuclear power when an accident occurred at the Sellafield nuclear power plant on the West Coast of England in the nineteen fifties releasing large amounts of radio-active pollution into the atmosphere. The prevailing winds enabled clouds of radioactive pollution to cross the Irish Sea and settle over County Wicklow. This was the first large-scale environmental disaster to strike modern Ireland, and many of the subsequent instances of cancer and birth defects have been attributed to it. No compensation was offered by the British government of the day and none has been offered by any administration since.

In light of this it is not hard to imagine the furore that surrounded the Irish government's plans to conform to European energy policy and construct a nuclear power plant of their own. As Neave recalled:

Suddenly our government wanted to put a nuclear power plant into Carnsore, and this was about ten miles from where I was living. I was living on the banks of the river

⁷ For discussion see chapter 1.3.

Berril near Newroth and Carnsore is just south of Wexford, so it was close. And I got involved in the protests about that, not at any organisational level, but I was so completely outraged. I didn't realise at the time that it was the EU who'd said 'Here's the money, what you absolutely need most is a nuclear power plant'.

However, the movement itself was not one in which the Irish people became antagonistic towards the citizens of other European nations. It was directed against the power of those presiding in Brussels to determine the way in which Ireland would deal with its energy problems in the future. Indeed, the campaign became, for a time, a focal point of protest against the concept of nuclear power all over Western Europe and helped to polarise attitudes towards it throughout the Union. Hence, according to Neave:

It was Petra Kelly who was one of the co-founders of what was then the European Greens, consisting mostly of the German Greens, who came over here to help us in that struggle. She was very closely allied with the trade unions. That alliance of the environmentalists, the anti-nuclear people, and the unions was extremely powerful and resulted in the Irish government backing off. So that was my beginning.

Neave later moved to Dublin where she studied psychology and 'natural medicine and healing' for a number of years. These studies made her increasingly aware of the high levels of pollution that people were being subjected to in the course of their everyday lives and the harmful consequences that this was having in the community. It was this growing concern about the harmful effects of pollution caused by modern industrial production and technology that strengthened her resolve to continue the involvement with environmental politics that had begun with the anti-nuclear campaign. As Neave recalled:

The two things that were really drawing me were the health effects of pollution and knowing how important it was that people felt good, that they had clean water, the ability to go into a clean sea. And I was very interested in natural plants and the access of people to natural forms of healing. Still, I would say that I'm very concerned about people being able to access these forms of natural healing without them being forbidden to be sold for one reason or another. That and the anti-nuclear fight. To me they're all aspects of trying to protect life from some kind of dreadful blight or insanity.

Indeed, this was a theme that surfaced again and again during the course of my research in Ireland. There was a feeling among the Greens that somehow everything was getting out of hand and needed to be brought under control before disaster struck. They perceived that the

forces behind the European Union and the rest of the capitalist economy had become impersonal and driven by greed rather than any logic concerned with meeting human needs. Neave's comments about the possibility of "some kind of dreadful blight or insanity" approaching the world from just beyond the horizon was mirrored in many conversations that I had with her colleagues within the Party. From probationary members to the Party's founders there was a definite anxiety as to where this dynamic would take the world and a feeling that groups like the Irish Green's were charged with the responsibility to bring the problem back into human proportions. This concern was enshrined in the Greens' policies on decentralisation and their attempts to theorise a way in which the power now held in largely centralised institutions could be diffused or devolved to the lowest possible level. As mentioned in the section dealing with Eileen, many in the Party felt that Green Parties had a responsibility to protect what was left of the natural environment while bringing about the kind of democratic, economic, and technological reforms that would enable the situation to be reversed in time.

Neave made the progression from campaigning on health issues and trying to promote forms of natural healing to becoming a formal member of the Green Party after the elections of 1989 in which the Party gained its first seat in the Dail. She recounted that:

I didn't realise there was a Green Party in Ireland then but there was, and I straight away knew that I would, of course, join it – which I did. I formed with my husband a group here in Wicklow and we started campaigning on the question of clean water. See, there was a sewage problem here. I suppose at that time I felt that the Greens were an amorphous mass of people like myself, enthusiasts. Not terribly political people. People from all walks of life and all political backgrounds who had somehow come together with a kind of natural enthusiasm.

Neave described being Green as being part of a large and complex 'tapestry'. This was crucial to her rationale for being Green because she felt that taking an ecological perspective in politics meant more than presenting arguments about the importance of the environment within the political institutions of the day. In her opinion, an ecological perspective meant that one should look at all issues, be they pertaining to energy use, unemployment, conservation or

community, as if they were all interconnected. In other words, to look at social and environmental phenomena as if they were part of one greater system. She argued that this inclusive philosophy was at the very heart of the Green movement and had been from its inception. As she put it

I think the Greens, as they emerged, emerged out of the Environmental and Conservation movements. The Feminist movement [as well]. There was also a very clear commitment by women and a leadership of women in the Greens. Again, it's somewhat incoherent but its present. It's overtly part of our policy as well as civil rights and human rights.

When I questioned her further on this point she added that:

There is, I think, an understanding by people in the Greens that it is all part of a tapestry. That animal rights is right in terms of day and I might be involved in gender issues but we are all Green. So there is a kind of field effect, although people are involved in what might be superficial to a certain kind of mind. To us they're not different things because we take an ecological view of it.

This 'field effect' mentioned by Neave can be seen as another way of describing the different structures of feeling that inform the Greens as an intellectual community. For her, Green politics was a new kind of politics that was not doctrinal in the way that socialist and capitalist political movements were. Whether members were more concerned about fluoridation of water supplies, air pollution, gender issues or agricultural practices, they were still within the Green sphere of thinking as long as they recognised that all of these things were interconnected. As she said:

I think the Greens are a different phenomenon. It's a different organisation than other political organisations. One of my Italian colleagues said the Greens are like an Afghan tribe and there's a lot of truth in what he said because there's a certain incoherence in it but a great strength.

Even so, this perspective did not make Neave immune to being frustrated at times with what she called the level of 'incoherence' within the Party and its decision making structures. Indeed, one of the most common criticisms by members of the Party was that the individualistic nature of the Party and its need for a high level of consensus made it extremely hard to act decisively, particularly in circumstances where swift action was called for. As Neave observed:

The way I experience it, I sometimes get quite annoyed at the lack of structure in the organisation. I know that we're trying to create different kinds of structures and I've thought about these structures quite a lot – tried to engage with them. I also think that the Greens are too conflict [driven]. They're all strong individuals, very individualistic, and yet they have this alienated hankering for some kind of communal group life – but it fails to grow somehow.

Neave also felt that being an Irish Green was qualitatively different from being a Green from other countries. Through her involvement with Greens from many other countries in the institutions of the European Parliament, she had observed that the native cultures of those within the movement internationally had an impact upon how they experienced their 'Greenness'. As she explained it:

The European Greens are a lot more structured and have developed quite a sophisticated practice of what their structures are. I still don't think they're nearly tight enough but certainly there's a process going on which I can see us in Ireland as more at the beginning of. There's a culture of the English-speaking world, if I can put it like that, and there's the political culture of the rest of Europe where they tend to have more of a political philosophy. Whereas, in the English-speaking world the politics, particularly Green politics, are more carried by the NGOs.

Ireland is in-between. We have a political culture so therefore the Greens have taken a political form in Ireland, which they are unable to do in England or America. They can't be 'of' the political process. It's not the way the English-speaking world works. The English-speaking world divides politics and the rest of the things that we do. Whereas any European intellectual would immediately tell you who owns what and how things are resourced, it is always put into culture, but in the English-speaking world we're not so used to thinking like that.

Importantly, while she identifies Irish society as being part of 'the English speaking world', Neave also clearly identifies Irish culture as being something 'other' and the Green Party as retaining its own political individuality on a cultural level. Thus, a sense of 'Irishness' comes to the fore in the way that the Irish Greens have created themselves as a political party with a formalised structure yet they have still retained characteristics that are more usually associated with the English and American Greens. More specifically, Neave felt that the Irish Greens, because of their cultural background, were struggling with the same 'incoherence' that had dogged the American and English Green Parties, albeit to a lesser degree. She equated incoherence with decentralisation in such a way as to present it as a double-edged sword with which the movement, as a whole, was grappling with. As she put it:

In that sense they [the non-English speaking European Greens] are more coherent about their policies and their organisations, and we are somewhere in-between. I find the English Greens very incoherent and I think the American Greens are also very incoherent, even more so than ourselves. They're very decentralised and this is one of their strengths of course, but it also a great weakness, particularly with a global economy. Which is what we are faced with dealing with because the environmental destruction isn't just something that's happened to a rain forest here or a sea there. It is a global assault. It's economic.

Hence, in Neave's opinion, the level of decentralisation within the American and English Green organisations was not effective in getting the Green message across even though decentralisation was, and remains, one of the most central aspects of Green philosophy. The very nature of the economic and political institutions that the Greens were dealing with on both the domestic and international levels meant that their organisational structure had to be focussed enough to make an impact. Indeed, it was not only the nature of these institutions that she felt the Greens had to overcome but also the philosophy behind them. Neave linked the centralised nature of modern political institutions to the reality of the global capitalist economy and a utilitarian ethic. According to her:

It's a very utilitarian approach. I mean France is absolutely Cartesian, for example. It's very interesting to listen to, in the European Parliament, the debate on technology and have this really Cartesian view put forward as 'correct'. Whereas I would feel that we have really moved on or should be, after four centuries, going somewhere else.

Furthermore, she placed the Green movement, as a whole, in direct opposition to this kind of approach and made it clear that she felt that this opposition was a defining one for Green activists. As she explained:

It's absolutely clear that this utilitarian view of life, that everything is a resource and everything is to be exploited, is seen by people as normal. I think the Greens do not see that as normal. We are children from the heart of this kind of society and we're saying 'Wait a minute, if everybody and everything is to be exploited, what kind of a world are we making'.

2.2.4 Tim

Tim was a senior Librarian at Trinity College Dublin and was in his late forties. He was the Party's candidate for the constituency of Dublin South East, where he lived with his partner, as well as a policy convenor on foreign affairs and the Northern Ireland peace process. He had been a member of the Party since 1984 and, having written and published a short book on his theoretical rationale for becoming a member of the Party, was widely regarded as a 'thinker' within the Party. During his period of involvement with the Party he had also held various other positions of responsibility including being a member of the Co-ordinating Committee and the National Council.

Tim's tale of becoming Green involves a process of conversion from one way of understanding the world to another that hinged upon a change in perception regarding social and ecological issues. He had been a long time member of the Socialist Labour Party when it dissolved in 1982 due to internal factionalism and ideological differences. As Tim recounted, "that was a sort of full stop which, I suppose, left me free to do a bit more reading and thinking". During this period of reflection, Tim became interested in ecological philosophy and it was this investigation which led to a sea change in his thinking. In Tim's words:

I date my conversion, if you like, to 1984 when I read one of Bahro's books⁸. I mean it wasn't the first thing I read but it was one where he talked about contradictions. I don't know if you can know just by reading it how crucial it was to me, the idea that the contradiction was between the environment and the industrial system. That's the major contradiction in modern society. That was a major turning point in my own thoughts and when something happens like that it takes time for the rest of your ideas to come to fit with it.

Like, if I could give a parallel example from an earlier existence, the particular passage in Marx that made me call myself a Marxist in 1966 – it was actually Engels', *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*, where he points out the difference between state capitalism and socialism. And yet I wasn't a member of anything that could be called a socialist organisation until '71. So it took years to be clear as to how things were actually sorting themselves out. Perhaps I'm just a slow thinker (laughs), but if I adopt a new point of view it needs to relate to other things before I know how to act on it.

⁸ Although Tim couldn't remember which of Rudolph Bahro's works he read first, he has referred to *The Alternative in Eastern Europe* (1978), *Socialism and Survival* (1982) and *From Red to Green* (1984) as main sources in his pamphlet.

Tim felt that the environment under socialism was something that got "added on" to what was basically a political theory of change dependent upon the consciousness of the working class and its struggle against capitalism. This tension between the working class and the capitalist was, for him, a dynamic that was no longer a vital one. As he put it, "I don't see that the dynamic of the class struggle is going to produce anything more than the occasional outburst or temporary victory so it doesn't seem to me to be a way in which the transformation of a whole society is going to occur".

In his pamphlet, *Colours in the Rainbow: Ecology, Socialism and Ireland*, Tim describes the socialism that came out of the nineteenth century as a "wages struggle" (Goodwillie 1988:4). A struggle in which the working class was engaged in an attempt to redistribute wealth by gaining a greater share of the profits made by the capitalists. Tim came to believe that this dynamic was inadequate as a basis for revolution because, in modern times, it had not served to further the cause of socialism. Accordingly, he stated that,

But nowadays, wage rises lead rather to improvement in productivity with, on occasions, rationalisation and redundancies. Pressure on profits is continual, but wage rises do not lead to the progressive impoverishment of the capitalists. Employers and unions are locked into a symbiotic relationship where each depends on the other. The industrial system needs a constant incentive to improve productivity, as the forces of productivity are often distorted or act only in a long-term way. If you look at the way in which, after the death of Franco, Spanish capitalism managed to welcome the return of free trade unions in place of the sterility of a decaying fascism, you can see how little of a threat to capitalism the wages struggle is (Ibid:4-5).

Underlying all of this is Tim's belief that capitalism, in itself, is not the fundamental cause of the degradation of the world's environmental systems. In relation to socialism's overt aim to make the market system redundant, he felt that this was not achievable in the foreseeable future. While talking about the Party's approach to capitalism and the market system, Tim remarked,

I think we can't look far enough ahead to work out how we can do without the market mechanism. I mean there's a lot of things wrong with the market. The only problem is

that when you try to control the market you end up creating a bureaucratic method instead, which is no better.

Thus, as stated earlier, Tim came to believe that the real cause of the current environmental and social crises was the industrial system that had evolved during the rise of capitalism after the dissolution of the old European feudal systems. However, the distinction between capitalism and industrial processes was never made clear by Tim either in his book or in the conversations that I had with him during my time in Ireland. He pointed to pollution levels and the rampant misuse of the world's natural resources as the main indicator of the culpability of the industrial system. An example of this appears in the introduction of his pamphlet under the heading of *The Environmental Crisis*:

Food is polluted with pesticides and chemicals. Rivers and lakes are polluted with slurry and fertilisers. The air is polluted with the emissions of motor vehicles and of factories and power stations: the Moneypoint power station is now proceeding to add to the damage.

The process becomes threatening where it starts to affect resources. The forests of Europe are a resource which is threatened by acid rain. The seas are a resource for the fisheries industry. The air is a resource necessary for life itself, and yet the depletion of the ozone layer by chlorofluorocarbons contained in aerosols and packaging threatens to cause increased cancer as well as decreased crop yield (ibid: 1).

Here Tim is focussed on what he sees as environmental realities rather than on problems of wealth inequality or alienation. As we shall see, Tim's ideals of social justice and equality were re-established in an ecological framework once he became convinced that these long held ideological goals could not be achieved through the growth of collective consciousness among the working class in opposition to the processes of industrialisation. Underlying Tim's criticism of industrialisation, socialism and capitalism, is a question of motives. He contended that both capitalist and socialist societies were dependent upon exponential economic growth in order to maintain their short-term viability (ibid: 14-15). Whether in capitalist societies, where the emphasis is on the individual for his/her own advancement, or in socialist societies, where it is the responsibility of the state to see that the whole society advances uniformly, Tim perceived that the main engine behind this advancement was 'the profit motive'. This

was a phrase much used by the Irish Greens at the time of my research and, as Tim explained, was central to Green ideas on economic and social reform.

The Greens believed that the motive of profit led to economies that encouraged ever increasing levels of consumption in order to maintain economic growth. This, in turn, led to both the vastly irresponsible usage of the world's resources and the unequal distribution of consumables produced by this process (ibid: 13-14). It was the contradiction between production driven by consumption and the ever decreasing ability of the world's environmental systems to satisfy rising levels of consumption that led Tim to question his previous position as a socialist. In Tim's words:

But the continuance of the system is now threatened by ecological breakdown. So we are faced with a broader contradiction - that between the industrial system, both forces and relations of production, and what Rudolf Bahro calls 'the natural conditions of human existence', minerals, air, water, climate, fertility, and human resources. The contradiction between the system and the natural conditions does not mean that there is no longer a contradiction between forces and relations of production, it simply means that this contradiction is overshadowed (ibid: 13).

Hence Tim's main focus became sustainability rather than social equality as he felt that the latter could be achieved only after the realisation of the former. For him, the condition and continued viability of the environment was now a paramount value, for extinction was a far greater concern than oppression. Tim did not discount his previous stance on social justice, but he now believed that the first step towards social justice was ensuring the well being of the environment. When I asked Tim about this, he said "I feel that if you put the environment at the ground level in some way, you can relate other things to that and create a cohesive Green philosophy".

In his pamphlet, Tim identifies the emergence of new social movements such as feminism, gay rights, and the anti-nuclear and environmental movements as examples of the different ways in which people have expressed their dissatisfaction with the trajectories of modern western societies. Moreover, he makes reference to the ways in which traditional socialism

was changed as it tried to incorporate these ideas into its broader theoretical framework (ibid: 12). He questions whether this broader form of socialism, which he has identified as ecosocialism, is significantly different enough from the older socialist thesis to provide a basis from which to address the current ecological crisis. He writes:

But the [socialist] theory assumes the indefinite continuance of the industrial system of which forces of production and relations of production are [a] part. The raw materials come in from a place external to the system, by-products such as pollution go out to a place external to the system, and they do not enter the argument. (ibid)

Tim's conversion from Red to Green was triggered by a personal realisation that the socialist project did not offer an alternative that contained answers to the environmental crisis created by industrialisation. There is a sense that what Tim refers to as 'the industrial system' has promoted a discontinuity between human needs and human wants. A sense that, in a consumption based society, wants – such as mobile phones, computer games, and disposable nappies – rapidly become newly discovered needs which we do not recall how we ever got along without. It is this discontinuity which has, according to Tim, created the conditions that are the present reality of the Third world countries. For him, these symptoms of exponential growth are disturbing. He explains:

This presents a problem. The average American uses twenty times as much energy as the average Asian. If the world population is stabilised at 11 or 12 billion – and it looks as if anything substantially less can be achieved only through famine or nuclear war – to raise this population even to British living standards would require twelve times the present level of industrial production. There is no way in which the world can provide the resources for everybody to live at the level of the most industrialised countries (ibid: 14).

So, how did Tim believe that using the environment as the foundation for political thought would help alleviate these glaring inequalities? When I asked him about this he replied:

I think that the idea of nature is important. [The idea] that there is a relationship between human nature and the natural world that isn't oft clearly expressed. I have found it a helpful concept to ask yourself 'what is human nature?', given that 97 percent of the history of the human species was lived in a hunter gatherer society. If there is any such thing as human nature then that's where it is. I think that there are concepts within that, you know, like altruism. There are still concepts there as to the

way in which things [happened] like the subordination of women, the territorial division of the Earth and so forth. These are historical events which you can, at any rate, think yourself back to the time before they happened and say 'Okay, a lot of what appears to be human nature is actually the result of these changes and is not fundamental'. I find that's helpful in terms of thinking about sexual equality [and] in terms of co-operative structures, in terms of group dynamics. Like, for example, there have been people who've studied that and come up with ideas, you know, like a hunter gatherer band consist of thirty to fifty people, which might be twenty to thirty adults, which is about as big a group that you can get that doesn't impact radically upon the environment.

When I put it to Tim, during this same conversation, that this may be seen as impractical simply because it regresses too far back to be relevant to modern societies, he replied:

We can learn something about ourselves [when learning] about human nature. We can't copy it because we don't live by hunting and gathering and so forth. So we can't copy it as such, but we can see where it's reflected in our present arrangements and see where the difficulties are coming from. I think it's a help when you think in terms of the urban rural divide or the work leisure divide. These societies don't have such divides and part of our problems come from the fact that we do. You know, our lifestyles are sort of divided up like that.

Tim reiterated these points in his pamphlet by proposing that human interaction with the environment be tailored to that of other animals as much as is possible. He summed this up by writing, "In the same way as the lion's attack on the antelope is justified by its need for food, so all our interferences with nature have to be justified by our necessities" (ibid: 16).

As Tim came to Green politics ultimately through his involvement with socialism and passion about social justice, I had a sense that being Green was, for him, a continuance of that political struggle in many ways. Indeed, what was crucial for Tim about his involvement with the Party was just that – being involved. He mentioned on a few occasions that the Party's progress had been impeded by a lack of committed activists within its ranks. For him, it was not enough to profess to being Green or to vote Green. In order to get the Green message through, the Party needed more people who were willing to actively engage the public on behalf of the Green Party and its founding principles. For instance, when I asked why many Party policies remained undeveloped fifteen years after the Party was formed, Tim replied that, "People are wearing too many hats ... the activists are doing too many jobs". He

believed that the Party was extremely under-resourced and that those within the Party who were committed to being active had already taken on more than they could feasibly handle.

Regarding this problem, Tim remarked:

If we had a bigger base of activists it would be so much easier to implement it [Party policy]. At the moment it's very difficult to hold people responsible when you know that if they haven't done something it's probably because they were doing something else just as valuable to the Party.

Significantly, Tim was sure that the only way to overcome this problem was to convince people of the centrality of the environment in their everyday lives. If people could be shown that the state of the environment was important and did impact upon their everyday lives and their children's future, then the Party would have no problem gaining the numbers of activists it needed to function at its full potential. In his opinion, in order for the Party to evolve it first needed to educate the people about the importance of the environment. Thus, he saw that performing an educational role was also an important aspect of being Green.

Tim believed that the Party was succeeding in its role as educator even while it remained on the margins of Irish political life. Unfortunately, the mainstream parties had tactically exploited the Party's successes in this area. As he explained,

We have a problem in that we've been successful enough to make the other parties think that they have to say something about the environment and that's removed from us one of our selling points – that we were the only people talking about the environment. We now have to get across that the environment is a central thing in politics, and that's a more difficult thing to get across.

Tim also felt that being an Irish Green meant struggling against the highly romanticised prevalent attitudes towards the environment in Irish national culture and society. This meant struggling to dispel some of the traditional myths that idealise the simplicity of living and working on the land and attitudes of nostalgia regarding the virtues of a strongly catholic society that is a culturally dominant view of Ireland's past. When I asked Tim if he thought that the Irish environment had impacted significantly on modern Irish socio-cultural institutions, he replied,

We've turned our backs on the sea to such an extent that Ireland being an island doesn't seem to constitute that much. I think the fact that we were an agricultural society until recently has had an impact. I think the Irish language, for example, has had an impact, quite apart from whether or not people actually speak Irish. The way in which Irish has tended to be taught involves using texts from people who lived in Irish speaking areas, [and this] has created a society in which that sort of rural society is the standard taught value and, therefore, it's something that you're supposed to look to. That's sort of a national ideal in some way, this rural society, and that's probably had an impact upon patterns of rural settlement. Like the way in which we have a very large proportion of people living in either very small villages or isolated houses. We have tended not to think in terms of towns or even large villages as having an importance or life of their own, or even an identity which it would be valuable to build upon as a community.

Here we can see that Tim thought that the Irish people identified with the land much more than they did with the sea that surrounds it. They also divided the landscape into rural and urban domains and between these two domains, valued rural communities over urban communities. Tim felt that, on the whole, people believed rural communities to be more representative of their notion of a pure Irish culture than those communities situated in urban centres. Tim pointed out that this nationalist myth about the pristine rural origins of the nation was further perpetuated by the way the Irish language was taught in schools. Many of the chosen narratives expressed in the texts derived from rural communities and so it was these rural values and ideals that were given national significance.

It is important to remember the unusual trajectory followed by the Irish language in modernity. I was often surprised, when listening to Irish speakers conversing, to hear the musical flow of that language broken up by the occasional discordant English noun. When I mentioned this to an Irish speaking friend he explained to me that this was largely because of English colonial rule. Under that rule, any Irish person caught speaking their native language could be jailed or sentenced to transportation so the language had not developed as other European languages had over the last two hundred years. Instead of being able to gradually assimilate new concepts and technological advances as they occurred, the Irish language remained virtually in stasis as long as it remained illegal. When, in the middle to late 1920's, it became the official language of Ireland it was supplemented by English words in the areas

that its capacities had not developed. Thus, it remained a language more adapted to the agricultural ways of past centuries than the modern world of late capitalism. In Tim's eyes this situation hindered realistic discussions of environmental issues.

Tim also felt that the bent towards idealised notions of the rural past marking these Irish texts had also spilled over into the works of many Irish authors who wrote in English.

Unfortunately, this bias towards a rural lifestyle did not mean that the Irish people would be more amenable to the Green message about the environment and sustainability. As Tim pointed out, although much of the Irish literary inheritance sanctifies the Irish countryside and imbues it with cultural and spiritual importance, he could see no link between modern Green philosophy and traditional rural dispositions. In making this point, he told me:

I mean, something like animal rights. I think its quite an important concept [but] I think it has grown out of international links and the general way in which international societies are developing along parallel lines rather than a specifically Irish sort of agricultural background.

Tim's analysis points to the decisive urban origins of and influences in the formation, structure and worldview of the Green Party. Indeed, although the Party had local groups throughout the rural regions of the Republic, these groups were uniformly small and did not generate any significant electoral support. If we recall Strandbu and Krangle's discussion of symbolic fences (2003: 183) we can see that this offers a potential explanation of the failure of the Greens to find support in rural areas in the same way as it helps to partially explain the Green's poor showing among the urban working class. Similarly, Peace's research into the three domains of Inveresk explain that, by and large, rural communities are suspicious of the political agendas of the mainstream parties and are prone to seeing politicians as facilitators in a system that often does not operate the way it should for people with little or no representation (2001: 109-118). For my part, I can not speak with any authority on attitudes towards the Greens in rural areas for, although I travelled extensively throughout Ireland, the majority of my fieldwork was conducted in Dublin. I feel confident in saying, however, that

both Strandbu and Krangle's discussion and Peace's findings shed significant light on the subject.

As for Tim, he did not offer any explanation as to why he thought rural Ireland was out of step with 'international communities' and was as perplexed as anyone else in the Party regarding how this situation could be resolved. He felt that the immediate future of the Party lay in the urban areas of Dublin and, as an ex-socialist, had given more thought to the attitudes of the urban working class than rural bourgeoisie. For him, being Green meant being pro-active within his own area and being focussed on the evolution of the Party. He was concerned with creating a political space in which social justice issues and the environment could be seen as indivisible from one another and could be subsequently dealt with in a holistic manner rather than as distinct phenomena. Although Tim was no longer a committed socialist he still expressed grave reservations about the combination of industrialism and a rampant profit motive, but for him the central contradiction was between economy, society, and culture and the environment.

2.2.5 *Fiona*

I first met Fiona at the Green Party national office in the Temple Bar district in Dublin but I came into contact with her most regularly at meetings of the Dublin South Greens of which she was a member. While not active on the national level, Fiona worked throughout the election campaign and had always been very active on the local level. Fiona was a housewife at the time and was married with two children. She lived with her family in the constituency of Dublin South.

Fiona joined the Green Party in 1989. She had a university education and had worked in a financial institution before marrying and starting a family. By 1989 Fiona was at home looking after her two small children while her husband continued to work. It was during this

period that she became concerned about the ongoing environmental destruction that was then being presented by the media on an almost daily basis. As she related:

I'd two babies at the time and I was sitting at home and obviously watching the news quite a bit. And the Greenhouse effect was a major news item at the time and so was the ozone layer. I was really, really concerned. I was really upset and I just felt I had to do something about it and I thought 'yeah, ok, I'll join the Green Party', and I went along. I wasn't into politics, I'm not a political animal. I just felt I needed to do something constructive to help the way the world was going on an environmental level and I went along to the first meeting.

Fiona told me on another occasion that she had become more and more effected by the graphic images of environmental destruction and the scientific arguments for the existence of the Greenhouse effect and the depletion of the Earth's ozone layer that were being regularly shown on the television. She wanted to be an active part of an organisation that might offer a solution to what she saw as a human problem that threatened the entire Earth. She explained:

So maybe I joined the Green Party because of my concern about the environment and I probably would've been aware of Earthwatch but I don't know whether Earthwatch would've been in existence at that stage or Greenpeace. I wouldn't have been too well up on those but I just knew the Green Party. And then I would've stayed with them, you know, those policies and discussions and everything. You get used to people there and people will come into the group with lots of energy and we get involved in another project, Sellafield or whatever. So it's just stayed with me and then, at the time it was on [the television] every night. If you want to change the only way to bring about change is maybe through politics. I know you can do it lots of other ways but politics is the most correct way. So that was why I joined the Green Party.

By taking a moment to reflect on Fiona's position, I wish to point out that there are aspects of it which are representative of the Greens as a whole. I believe that Fiona was trying to articulate a genuine anxiety about the future and concerning the environment that, although easily felt, is frustratingly hard to describe. On one level it is a reaction to the level of destruction being visited on the environmental systems of the world but, on a deeper level, I submit that she and many of her fellow Greens felt that the natural world was lessened by attempts to treat it simply as a multiplicity of resources. I believe that Fiona felt that this particular form of materialism was robbing nature of its mystique and of its majesty. I further suggest that she was concerned that the natural world was being transformed from a place of wonder to a thing of utility. I realise that, in the broader context of political activism, this may

not appear to be a significant spur to action. When placed against the need for workers to unionise in South America or, closer to home for Fiona, the intensity of the divisions over Northern Ireland between the Nationalist and Loyalist communities within Ireland and the United Kingdom, it could appear to be nothing more than a side issue but it was much more than that for Fiona. If we consider that Fiona and her fellow Greens come from the first generation to grow up with nature documentaries such as those made famous by National Geographic and David Suzuki, we may begin to understand her position as cultural rather than political in origin.

Taking into account the extraordinary growth of the Green movement worldwide under the auspices of such organisations as Greenpeace, Earthwatch and the Sierra Club and the rapidity in which politically active Green parties have been able to mobilise and achieve significant support from within their various national communities, I feel that it would be unreasonable to dismiss the popularisation of the 'environment' through the various forms of modern media as a largely western cultural phenomenon. If this is the case then Eder's theoretical modelling may be enlightening in the context of this discussion. Eder submits that environmentalism may be understood in terms of "cognitive framing devices" (1996: 171-176). He suggests that there are three framing devices which are useful in understanding the discourse of environmentalism in its different manifestations. The first of these is "Man's moral responsibility towards nature", the second is "Empirical objectivity ... linked to the mechanistic conception of nature that has caused scientific progress in modern societies" while the third is "The aesthetic of the relationship of man with nature ... closely tied to the way modern societies perceive nature as a relevant context of their reproduction" (1996: 171).

By way of definition, Eder goes on to state:

The cognitive framing devices can be seen as organizing principles of a modern discourse. Within the discourse on nature these cognitive framing devices conceptualise the 'problem of nature' and give it cognitive consistency and coherence. The first framing device generates a form of moral responsibility of man towards nature. The second organizes the empirical observation of nature and the scientific mode by which it is 'objectified'. The third refers to the qualities inherent in mankind's expressive relationship with nature. (ibid)

Seen in conjunction with Eder's cognitive framing devices, it may well be that Fiona felt a culturally embedded responsibility to protect 'nature' from further destruction at the hands of human activity informed by a scientific 'objectivity' which obscured the deeper, non-material, relationship between human beings and the world in which they belong. It is also possible that these cognitive framing devices, if sufficiently descriptive of reality, have been heavily influenced by technological advances such as television, satellite links and the internet that have and continue to have, a pervasive effect on the direction of cultural change the world over. It could well be that Fiona and her fellow Greens were articulating a reconnection with nature myths, or the creation of new nature myths, that are a consequence of the way in which modern societies have used and assimilated some of the technological advances of the late twentieth century. Unfortunately, that question is far beyond the scope of this thesis and I must be content with simply mentioning some of the possibilities that Eder's cognitive framing devices raised for me in my investigation of 'Green' identities.

Returning to the discussion of Fiona's path towards the Green Party, she confided in me that her first encounter with the Greens at the local branch level was nearly her last. When discussing her motivation for initially joining the Party she felt it was important to mention that she was disappointed that the Party did not discuss what she would term environmental issues. Instead, the meeting was focussed on social and policy issues that were of more immediate concern to the Party at that particular time. As Fiona recalled:

I was sitting there and I was waiting and waiting all night for them to start talking to the environment and it never came up. And then at the very end of the night, when there was 'Any Other Business' and people were asked to say what they wanted I immediately cut in and said, you know, 'I expected much more talk about the environment and much more action and campaigns', you know. As a result of that they asked me what my concern was and I said 'Well, at least you could start with recycling'. And then, did you see that leaflet at the Green office, it's recycling leaflet? Well that's what I started in 1989 because of my concerns. And the people at the meeting, they were very interested and very supportive and there was about two or three other girls who got involved in it with me. We went out and we did pub crawls - pub raising - going into different pubs looking for money and we raised a lot of money for that, but that was the first environmental campaign that we did.

This is important to note because, like Fiona, many active members did not join the Party in order to 'be political'. She joined because she felt a need to 'do something' about the environment. People such as Fiona were important to the life of the Party, because they entered the organisation with a lot of enthusiasm and passion, and for her joining, for instance, was a catalyst for action that culminated in the production of a leaflet about the virtues of recycling. In relation to my experience with the Party, I observed that many new members were beneficial in instigating lively conversation on environmental issues and in bringing fresh perspectives to the Party that often challenged accepted policy.

Regarding what kind of people join the Party, Fiona used the German Greens as an example. She felt that the German Green model contained similarities to that of Ireland and that both had memberships which derived from the same kind of socio-economic group. As she explained:

Yes, but even in Germany they say they're so Green because, at least up to recently before the united Germany thing, economically they were very strong and people suddenly had everything they wanted and they probably saw, well you know, it's not total happiness. I think that when you reach a certain level, you have the good job you want, you have your house, you have your cars, you realise then that there's more. And they have the time then, you know. They've no other problems. They've time to look at the environment and to see the destruction that's happening and to then be concerned about their children and their grandchildren.

It is interesting to observe here Fiona's emphasis on economic development and prosperity stimulating the emergence of the Green movement. She points out that in Germany, the EU, and later in Ireland, continuous and positive economic development created the basis for a prosperous middle class to emerge. Conversely, when asked about why the Party had a dearth of members from below a certain level of affluence, she remarked:

The people living in flats in town or where ever, they've no work, no money. They've got kids and they're concerned about their kids nutrition and food. I mean I wouldn't be concerned about the environment now if my kids were starving or my husband was unemployed. So, in that sense, it's so important to get our social policy right and [introduce] basic income, you know. It's fairness for everybody.

Here we can see that Bordieu's notion of social space (1998: 5) is applicable. Fiona is definite in her appraisal that her involvement in the Irish Green Party as an activist has a direct relationship with the social space she inhabits as a privileged middle class person who has the time and energy to think beyond immediate survival. Furthermore, she contends that it is from this social space that the majority of Green Party members come from. However, it was not only a feeling of responsibility married to a particular place of privilege in society that inspired Fiona to become a Green Party member as opposed to simply being a supporter for, like Tim, it was important for Fiona to be actively involved in the life of the Party.

During my time with the Dublin South Greens she regularly attended meetings and was very active during the election campaign participating in door knocking, strategy planning, and canvassing in general. Also, part of the attraction that the Party held for her was that she enjoyed being part of the group. This seemed to provide an avenue for socialising as well as being a positive outlet for her concerns about the environment and Irish society. The social aspect of being involved in the Party was quite clearly important to many active members and, as is to be expected when people work closely together in a common cause, there were many strong friendships made between the active members of the Party. While this is by no means unusual in political movements all around the world, I believe that there were some aspects of Irish culture that promoted this level of social interaction within the Party. Take, for instance, the setting of most local branch meetings and even many committee meetings on policy and strategy. The majority of these were held in a local Pub where two, or three, long tables would be set aside for the Party's use by the Publican. In some cases, when the group was small enough, the meeting would be convened in an enclosed booth that could seat up to eight people and was called a 'snug'. It is important to note here that the reason for gathering in places such as these was not the consumption of alcohol – of which I saw little at any meeting.

I mention this type of setting because it has significance in Irish culture as a meeting place where all are on equal terms. For the active members of the Party, the Pub was a place for conversation and debate – a place where issues that were important to them could be discussed in a relaxed and convivial atmosphere that separated them from the more pressing concerns of their daily lives. While this topic will be discussed in more detail elsewhere in this thesis, I wish to make the point that Fiona, like many others within the Party, enjoyed the atmosphere of these meetings and the social interaction it brought to them. However, unlike Tim, Fiona did not compare the Green message to other rival theories or ideologies. Being Green to her meant taking a common sense approach to solving problems that were very simple on a fundamental level. Broadly, her approach can be expressed thus: all life on Earth was being harmed by humanity's rapacious need for resources yet humans needed a healthy Earth to survive; therefore, people who can afford to do so have a responsibility to care for the environment so that their children and grandchildren will be able to enjoy it and live within it as they have; finally, caring for the environment means creating societies that would minimise human impact upon the world in general.

For all these reasons Fiona thought that the Green Party was crucial. Being Green meant caring about what kind of a world she would leave her descendants and thus was preferable to engaging in theoretical or ideological arguments. It made common sense to her as did policies built upon these fundamental premises. As she explained:

Well, you know I've read all our policies. I mean I'm in the Greens because I believe in the policies because mentally it makes so much sense. I think we're fine where we are and I think we should keep going in that direction.

It is also important to note that Fiona saw being Green as requiring a major focus on social issues because, for her, the problem was one of human making and, thus, could only be solved by finding social solutions. For example, when I asked Fiona what were the most immediate areas of concern for the Greens in Ireland, she replied:

Transport. Transport would be the main thing and Basic Income would be a very, very big thing. Education – putting more money into primary schools where kids can

get a decent foundation course because, you know, if they don't get it at foundation level it's not too late but it's harder the later it gets. Energy, conservation - see it's all relevant to our way of life. It's all relevant to simple development.

Here, Fiona uses the term 'simple development' to articulate the Green notion of commonsense and connectivity that was previously mentioned by Neave. This is a major platform of the Party and a major theme in the emerging ideology of the Green movement. Taking the eco-system as their model, the Greens perceive that everything, both social and environmental, is connected within a greater system in which the introduction of change on one level can bring about change on another. That is why, when Fiona started to answer my question on what part of Green policy was most important, she quickly came to the conclusion that all of the policy areas were important as they were all linked to each other. More importantly, she thought that environmental problems had their roots in social systems and, as such, had their solutions in them as well.

2.2.6 *Sean*

I first met Sean at a Dublin Regional Council meeting early in 1997. I had seen him before this at the National Council meetings but did not have the opportunity to talk to him on those occasions. Sean was attending the Dublin Regional Council meeting that day in his capacity as a member of the Party's 'drugs' policy committee. I participated in the discussion of the policy and afterwards organised with Sean and Moira, Sean's partner, to meet the next week for an interview and further discussion about the Party's attitude towards drug abuse in Ireland. Subsequently, I talked regularly with Sean and made contacts with the Dublin Central Green group. Sean was thirty years of age and had been active within the Party for eight months. However, while this is where Sean's involvement with my research project starts, it is not the beginning of his personal story nor is it the beginning of his participation in Green politics.

Sean left Ireland in his early twenties to find work overseas. His strong accent marks him as a Dubliner from the north side or, in local terminology, simply a 'Duh'. But, beyond such telltale linguistic evidence of his upbringing, as he talked about 'tings' or ordered a 'point' it became plain that Sean's story was, on a deeper level, much the same story as that of millions of other Irish people over the decades. From Donegal to Cork, emigration has been a defining aspect of the Irish experience for those who go, those who stay, and those who return. Indeed, the experience of emigration has been so much a part of Irish history that it has become a culture shaping force. Regarding the impact of emigration on the people of Ireland, O'Toole writes:

The relative stability of the population figures - currently about 3.6 million - conceals a continuing instability of inflows and outflows. Emigration has been the single biggest fact in the 75 year history of the Irish state. Only half of those born in Ireland in the 1930s, for instance, were still living there 30 years later. The rate of emigration dropped rapidly in the 1960s, but picked up again in the late 1970s and early 1980s, so that the 1996 census showed that nearly 20 per cent of those born in 1970 were by then living in another country. Some of these people went and stayed gone. Some came back, left again, returned again. Some of those who went were themselves the children of emigrants who returned in the 1960s. In 1996, too, three quarters of a million Irish residents paid visits to relatives living abroad: home, for the Irish, is not necessarily where the heart is. (O'Toole, 1997:xiv).

This is something that I encountered many times when interviewing both those active within the Party and those I met throughout my time in Ireland. Emigration is something that has become so commonplace in Irish society that it is a culturally significant practice. As for Sean, he spent three and a half years in London where he worked as a bar manager for much of that time with England's second largest brewing company. It was during this period that he became involved in his first serious protest action. The action centred around the British Telecom tower and was a campaign to re-open it as a tourist attraction and shopping centre after its closure some time earlier. The closure of the tower had had such an adverse effect upon the local economy of the surrounding suburb that many smaller businesses had closed and unemployment had risen sharply.

In essence, the action was aimed at the regeneration of the local economy that had been maintained, to a great extent, by the tower in an area of London that was "falling into decay". Sean and his fellow campaigners wanted to bring the issue to public attention, proposing that the authorities re-open the tower for tourism and shopping. In this way they hoped to turn it into a resource for the renewal of the local economy. As the leader of this campaign, Sean recalled,

The idea behind that was that I would set the ball rollin and hope that somebody in a more powerful situation would come behind me and pick up the ball, you know. But it didn't happen, you know. It was blanked by the politicians and it was blanked by the media although we still had some measure of success, we ran out of money, you know.

Shortly after the campaign, Sean undertook a foundation course in social science in order to gain a better understanding of why the campaign was unsuccessful as well as the forces behind the social inequalities that he had seen on many levels in Irish and English society. It was while completing this course that he came across an article "by a guy called Lukes which was called

The Four Dimensions of Power". To the best of my knowledge, I believe Sean was referring to Lukes (1974) *Power: A Radical Approach* but I cannot be certain. In any case, the article Sean was referring to contained a discussion of the issue of agenda setting and its role in effecting long term social change. Sean found particularly inspirational a part of the discussion dealing with the 'fourth' dimension of power. According to him,

The fourth and final dimension was power in the political arena that is so strong that it can control the agenda, which is what happened to me in that campaign. So take, for example, the issue, say, of legalising cannabis. You can't even get it discussed, you know. You can't even get it into the public forum. Right, it just won't happen. You're not gonna get that discussed in the Dail next week, you know what I mean.

What the article had done was to help Sean make connections between social change and agenda setting. These connections became a significant part of what encouraged him to become part of the party-political process. He felt then that if the agenda could be taken away

from the mainstream politicians and the media and placed in the hands of ordinary citizens then issues important "on the ground, at the grass roots" would actually begin to be addressed. As Sean put it,

So, it was about the idea of tryin to get on the inside. So I actually made a conscious decision, while I was reading that article, to join a political party.

Upon his return to Ireland, Sean did indeed become involved in party politics. As to his choice of party, he recalled,

I had always had a great deal of interest and sympathy with the Greens because, to me, they were a little bit radical and a little bit rebellious so I could identify with them. And a lot of their policies around the environment, and recycling and stuff, I would have agreed with although I wouldn't have been very passionate about. So I got the application from the head office.

Throughout my many meetings with Sean over the course of the year, it was clear that he and others like him were attracted to the Party because the Party created a space within which to become 'active' on the 'issues'. Regarding this opportunity to participate, he once told me,

Oh yeah, yeah, that's the great thing about the Greens. If I'd have joined some other party I wouldn't get a look in. I would not get a look in. I'd be allowed to hand out and things but I'd have zero input. [In other parties] you have to have the connections ... unless your father or your grandfather was in the civil war, you know. Yeah, but in a few short months, because I had the drive and I wanted to get involved, I was able to get involved at a fairly high level fairly quickly. That's what I like about the Greens is the grass roots, you know.

In some ways, being 'Green' for Sean was more about being actively engaged in alternative politics than it was about focussing specifically upon more traditional environmental issues such as climate change and ecology. He was convinced that mainstream politics was not capable of providing an acceptable platform for the kinds of social change that he felt were needed to redress the problems he was most concerned about.

Sean made these thoughts clearer for me when I attended a meeting of his local branch, the Dublin Central Greens. During a discussion about possible election strategies that took place before the election date had been announced, he explained to the meeting,

I just have this concern around the conflict between pragmatism and idealism. Which I've noticed at other meetings as well. Which would be around, sort of – get elected and do what we want – which sounds a bit like New Labour, do you know what I mean? I just have a kind of a crisis of conscience with that coz I understand the need for pragmatism but I also, like, I think back when I joined the Greens last year and it was around the fact like 'I want to get involved in politics, what party?' And for me the Greens shone because of their idealism and the fact that they weren't tainted with the usual greasy politicians. You know what I mean? And I worry about [things like] 'Don't tell your, you know, liberal on drugs, don't tell em just get elected'. I understand the need for it, I just worry about it as well. Do you know what I mean?

The Greens, for Sean, offered a fresh perspective that was not yet compromised by either years in power or political cynicism. In this respect, being a Green meant having ideals and holding on to them even if it meant that political power would not be within their grasp for some time to come. It was about creating a new political force with a new agenda that would not be subsumed by the older mainstream parties. As he said later in that same meeting,

I think that [the] philosophy of 'have to get in' over ten or fifteen years [means] you end up when you get on TV or somethin sayin nothin. You know what I mean mean? Then you're just the same as the rest, you know.

Here we should note that Sean's case is not typical within the Party's membership. While it is easy to place Sean as an intellectual, in the Gramscian sense, within the Party, this is qualified by the fact that Sean's formal education was commenced after he had become a seasoned campaigner on environmental and social issues. With his working class background, his experience seems to run contrary to Strandbu and Krange's (2003: 179) notions of abstraction and production-oriented cultures and symbolic fences. Their theoretical model would make Sean an unlikely Green Party member as he would, according to them, lack the right kind of cultural capital or cultural knowledge to fit in easily with other Greens. Indeed, in their model, Sean would think about the environment in a different way to the majority of the other Greens. He would see it as more of a resource for production than as containing inherent aesthetic significance and he would have had to hurdle almost every symbolic fence mentioned by Strandbu and Krange (*ibid*).

By his own account, Sean should have joined a socialist organisation rather than an environmental one as his main focus had always been issues of social justice rather than environmental sustainability. However, Sean found that the organisations devoted to the older political traditions did not offer the opportunities for personal involvement and activism that the Irish Greens could afford him. This is important to note because it is a key attraction to many who join organisations like the Green Party and there was a significant part of the Party's membership that felt that their inclusion in policy matters had come about much more quickly than it otherwise would have in the mainstream parties. The point being made here is that, while it is obvious that Sean had to hurdle some cultural fences in his quest to become involved significantly within the Party, he was attracted to the Party in a way in which a middle class person may not have been. After experiencing the limitations of the campaign predominantly instigated and actioned by a small group of the working class in London, he saw his involvement with the Greens as an empowering experience in which he could participate in and contribute to the bringing of social change in a group imbued with a significant amount of cultural capital.

Indeed, we can find this kind of phenomenon in Peace's discussions of the campaign against the proposed chemical plant at Killeagh (1997) in East Cork. Peace maintains that the protest movement was successful through its ability to have its discourse perceived as more legitimate than that of its opponents. Furthermore, the residents of the region surrounding Killeagh, in East Cork, were successful in their attempts at discourse legitimisation because they had sufficient cultural capital to prevent their objections from being ignored. They were not crazy-eyed hippies or angry students but, rather, respected members of the community who were able to bring significant public pressure to bear on their adversaries. Hence, perceptions of cultural capital are relational in the same way as cultural capital itself is. In this way, Sean could look at the Irish Greens and see them as being a potential force for great change while others could see them and dismiss them as 'tree-huggers'.

It was also clear that Sean saw the Party as being more open ended in its approach to social justice issues than any other in the Irish political milieu at the time. In fact one of the most attractive aspects of being Green for him was the freedom to link social structures to the environment and provide a new basis for thinking about both. As he stated,

What you need is people with the power of conviction in politics, right, because, I mean one quote I gave was my analysis of the last budget. The last budget was described by the Council of the Religious in Ireland as a victory for greed over need, right. I mean you had 635 million in tax breaks, 2% of corporation tax, 40 million for prisons and 14 million for drugs. Now, of course only people with money vote, only the educated vote, so where I see Green policies comin in is that you need radical people in there who are prepared to make changes.

I think the Green Party is learnin all the time and it has the potential to make serious changes. I mean quite apart from the fact that we're destroyin the environment, we're destroyin the social structure as well, you know. And that's where I see Green policies comin in you know. I mean I think ... packaging, it's a simple thing. There's too much packaging on everything. I mean when I buy something I throw half the fuckin thing in the bin and I'm left with somethin this size instead of this size.

Thus, we could say that Sean associated being Green with being concerned about both people and the environment. In his mind, the negative aspects of the modern state of both the Irish environment and Irish society were the products of a wider systemic problem that was endemic in the first world. He would often talk about what seemed to be a very basic form of alienation and how the divisiveness caused by this phenomenon effected both ecological and social systems at the same time. In his opinion, the social and the environmental were inseparable and addressing problems and imbalances in one necessarily meant addressing them in both.

In order to do this Sean felt a greater sense of responsibility and community was needed. In other words, the whole community needed to be directly responsible for the actions of each individual. The community should be seen as a social entity rather than a conglomeration of discreet social actors. Placing blame upon the individual alone was as ineffective as blaming individual companies for the effects of pollution when the problem is clearly systemic. As he put it:

Now there's a tear in the social fabric. People are puttin walls around estates keepin other people out - the people who have nothin. You know, they don't like the fact that they have nothin and other people have everythin, and it's a war. People don't realise that it's a war. The have nots are preying on the haves.

I used to think that, you know, if a little old lady got beaten up it was terrible, but as far as I'm concerned if your not part of the solution you're part of the problem. If your not actively doin somethin to change it then it's 'I'm alright Jack, fuck you' and you deserve what you get. If someone sticks a syringe up at you then its your fuckin problem because you didn't do anythin about it in the first place.

For Sean, this was a principle to live by and not just something to talk about once a week at meetings. He was deeply concerned about the burgeoning social problems arising from drug use, especially heroin addiction, in Irish society and saw it as one of the most obvious symptoms of the social inequity caused by a system motivated by profit rather than community. Only a moderate period of time in Dublin is needed to appreciate Sean's alarm at the human misery caused by the mass consumption of heroin. In particular it was through his work as a drug/crisis councillor that he had developed a deep personal commitment to the alleviation of this social problem.

Sean was a volunteer at the *Merchants Quay* drug rehabilitation and crisis centre. His interest in this major social problem stemmed from many years of work as a barman in Ireland and England. His main concern was the demonisation of heroin and opiates in Irish society. After all, he had seen many instances of excessive alcohol consumption and its consequences and pointed out that, as bad as this was, alcohol addiction was a thoroughly accepted part of Irish society. He felt that 'substance abuse' was a reality no matter what chemicals were involved. To this end he told me,

Well I can tell you what the biggest problem is. It's the marginalisation of drug users by society. What you have is a society that chooses alcohol and tobacco, right. Two of the most dangerous drugs in terms of health and behavioural consequences, and they choose to marginalise and discriminate against people who choose a different drug, you know, on moral grounds.

As to what these moral grounds were, Sean was less sure, but he expressed the opinion that it had to do with the relatively recent appearance of wide spread heroin abuse in Ireland and the strong reaction to it shown by a broad section of the community. Sean's duties at *Merchants Quay* were directing and overseeing a structured routine for the patients in order to help them overcome their addictions. He also spent time leading group therapy sessions and providing guidance counselling to those that requested it. These activities placed him in a unique position within the Party and gave much weight to his input into the justice committee.

One of the main effects that this kind of work had on Sean was that it led him to believe that the causes of social problems were systemic in nature rather than locally fixed aberrations. This meant for him that they could not be analysed in isolation because they were all symptoms of the same malady. When I asked Sean what he thought about capitalism and modern European economies, he replied:

I'm very interested in the idea of global economics and the fact that a small country like Ireland can't survive in a global market place because they have, like, huge companies now ... they have 5 companies controlling the world food supply, and like the budget on one of these companies would be larger than our entire budget. So, like – simply, the example that was given to me was that if Ford in Germany decided to sell under priced parts to Ford in Britain, it would effect the British economy. It would merely be an internal accounting procedure for Ford but it would effect the British economy. So, I'm all for global trading blocs, but the idea of supply management and demand management?

I mean, one thing that I read which was extremely interesting to me was controlling inflation by having residual levels of unemployment, right. So, I go down the dole office and they say to me 'Have you been looking for a job recently?', and I say 'no', and they say 'Well, we're not givin you any money' and I say 'Well, I'm unemployed because of the government's policy of deliberately having unemployment in order to keep inflation down. That's what they did in England you know – They kept inflation down but unemployment went up by a million you know. So, I have a very healthy disrespect for it.

Obviously Sean was well aware of how the forces of global capitalism effected national economies and how these effects ultimately filtered down to populations and resulted in phenomena such as systemic unemployment and high levels of dysfunction within the most vulnerable sections of those populations. As to how he linked the causes of socio-political problems with those of the environment, Sean was quite adamant that the distinction between

the environmental and the social were artificial in the first place. As he quite bluntly put it to me:

I think there are a couple of things holdin us back. One is the monopoly agri-business and monopoly companies, right, and that's a trend that's continuing. They're buying each other up, and the other is the idea of low wages in other countries forcing us to have a low wage, you know. So I think we can't get away from Henry Ford's idea of - In order to get people to buy his cars he had to create wealth and that worked you know. But I think we have to find some way of reigning in the power of these companies. We mustn't allow their power to continue because they're even ... you know they're fuckin with the food chain, they're pollutin the environment – they have to be stopped. As far as I'm concerned it's fascism, they just use paper instead of jack boots.

2.3 Summary

Before moving on, I will take time here to recap on the six identities discussed above. At this point we can see a picture about Green identity emerging from the narratives presented about becoming and being Green in Ireland. Each of these narratives contain both similarities and differences in relation to the others and are a testament to the complex nature of identity and politics in modern Ireland. In addition, we can see that, while the Irish culture is strong and unique, a discussion of identity and environmental discourse within the Irish Green Party has implications for other western Green parties. I will begin this discussion with a brief summary of each narrative.

Eileen believed that the environmental and social problems impacting upon Ireland stemmed from a global financial and political system that was carcering out of control. She cited increasing waste production, pollution emissions, and poor water resource management as evidence that the European experiment of socio-economic and political union had failed to recognise the seriousness of the environmental situation that they would be faced with should current rates of resource consumption continue or increase. She felt that large, centralised, government structures created and consolidated an impersonal regime that was based upon the logic of finance rather than the creation of opportunities for citizens to actively strive to better their situation. There was a sense that Eileen felt that, like the other European nations, Irish

citizens had lost touch with each other as a society and had become complacent about the effects of their activities upon the environment.

In her opinion, only the Greens had the potential to lead Irish society towards a sustainable and liveable future. As such, the Greens had a responsibility to bring environmental concerns to the fore in public debate and to promote, what she saw as, their three most important platforms – decentralisation, education, and opportunity. Decentralisation would bring about a more democratic society in which people would have a greater input in the decisions that effected their communities. A more flexible and enlightened education system would allow people to find and capitalise on their talents and, thus, escape the cycle of unemployment and welfare benefits. Finally, while Eileen felt that sheer greed was behind much of the unequal distribution of wealth in Irish society, she believed that, in a Green society, people should be given the opportunity to profit financially from their talents as long as their activities were socially responsible and environmentally sustainable.

For Joe, the environment was the first priority. Although he felt that the Party's policies on areas such as economics, welfare and childcare were important to its overall agenda, he viewed these as social aspects of a more important message. His focus was on the state of the environment and the curtailing of social activities to allow for an ecological sustainable society. From his involvement in animal rights activism, his role in the Dublin Food Co-op, to his activism within the Party as both spokesperson for the environment and candidate for Dublin South, Joe was, first and foremost, an environmental campaigner. He was committed to ensuring that the Party maintained its image as an environmentally based political movement and was, at times, worried that the organisation was becoming pre-occupied with issues of social justice to such an extent that it was losing its focus on the environment.

Additionally, Joe was apprehensive about the Party's future as he felt that there was a possibility that the lure of political power may eventually tempt the Party's leadership to

compromise fundamental principles in order to participate in a coalition government. He believed that by linking every aspect of social life ultimately to the environment, the Party was, by nature, radical and could only be effective by continuing to be radical. In other words, Joe felt that being Green meant being involved in a process that aimed to radicalise the way in which society thought about and treated the environment.

Neave saw the Party as part of an international movement that contained within it many different ideological stances. Furthermore, she thought that these ideological stances were sometimes in conflict because the label 'Green' was an umbrella under which a range of activists from different traditions had been brought together. This was, in her opinion, a consequence of the movement as a whole being still in its infancy in relative terms and would eventually be overcome when the various parties that made up the movement matured and evolved decision making processes that were specifically 'Green'. Neave placed great importance on the fact that her Party, like the other Green parties of Europe, was still evolving and struggling with the differing ideological traditions that its members had brought to it. She thought that the future strength of the Party would be derived from a meshing of these different traditions into a framework that emphasised the place of humanity and its social structures and institutions within the environment, and the importance of allowing ecological systems to retain the capacity to reproduce themselves.

In Tim's case, his personal realisation of the overarching importance of the environment led him to abandon the more traditional socialism that he had subscribed to for many years and take up the 'Green' banner. Although he had not significantly changed his moral or philosophical stance on social justice issues, it was his belief that neither the left nor the right had any serious interest in protecting the rights of the environment from the ravages of industrialisation that led him to become Green. He had lost faith in the dynamics of class struggle as outlined by Marx and had come to believe that the only way to bring about a truly just and equal society was to sublimate the needs of humanity to the realities of the natural

world. Accordingly, he believed that social structures needed to be scaled down to more 'human' proportions in order to create communities of individuals that interacted much more along the lines of the traditional village community rather than those of the modern city. Indeed, one of the strengths he saw within the Irish culture was that that tradition was not so far beneath the surface that it could not easily flourish again given a little encouragement, yet he was critical of romanticising this village tradition.

As for Fiona, her commitment to the Party and its aims was borne of anxiety about the degraded state of the environment and a feeling of responsibility towards her children and their children's children to provide them with a healthy future in a healthy environment. She also felt that she had a responsibility to those not as wealthy as she and her family to campaign against the excesses of modern industrial society. She reasoned that environmental concerns, while paramount to her, would not be the first priority of those in Irish society who were battling daily with poverty and the forms of social dysfunction that come with it. She saw herself as part of a burgeoning middle class that had a responsibility to be active on the environmental front on a level that the working class had not the resources for. Importantly, Fiona did not see herself as being radical or even ideologically driven in any way. She saw herself as a normal person who was concerned about an issue that effected the whole of her society. Interestingly, she first became aware of these issues when she herself had become a mother.

Sean was motivated to join the Party by a desire to regain for those in his society the power to control their own destinies as an assembly of communities that were equal and interdependent. From his involvement in the British Telecom Towers campaign to his contributions to the Green Party 'Drugs' policy, Sean was inspired by the notion that many of the social problems he encountered were the product of a reality inflicted upon ordinary people from above. He saw the impoverishment of local economies, structural unemployment, and the sense of powerlessness experienced by the lower socio-economic groups in society,

that is the embattled working classes, as causing problems such as the high rates of alcohol and chemical dependence in his society. These causal factors were, in turn, the social products of an impersonal system geared to harvest profits regardless of the cost in human terms. Sean believed that important decisions were made from outside the sphere of 'the community's' control and imposed upon them by successive governments in collaboration with the multinational corporations on whom they depended on for financial solvency. While professing that ecological matters were not his first concern, he believed that the degradation of the environment and the increasing dysfunction apparent in Irish society were symptoms of the same disease. Both Irish society and the environment that it inhabited would be best served by a political and social system that promoted community over competition and local decision making over global financial imperatives.

Among these six narratives of being Green we can find no evidence of a formalised ideological structure in the vein of, for example, socialist or anarchist philosophy. Indeed, we can see that Neave was right when she described the Greens as mixture of many different ideological and philosophical traditions that have not yet had the time to evolve into a recognisable and cohesive political movement. What we can see is a preoccupation with the concept of 'environment' and its effects upon the socio-cultural realities of the Irish Republic. Whether concerned about the continuing viability of ecological systems or those in the social arena, each narrative shows clearly that the Greens were reacting to events and changes in their social and cultural environment. Nevertheless, there are glimpses of this emergent ideology contained within the above narratives that can tell us much about who these Greens are and how they perceive themselves as being 'Green'.

In the first instance, I believe that it is useful to think about the Green Party in Ireland as a middle class organisation. Even though, as we have seen with Sean, there are some striking exceptions to the rule, the Party's membership is predominantly from the middle echelons of society and, by and large, can be said to display traits similar to Strandbu and Krange's notion

of an aesthetic-oriented culture within its politics. Their stories demonstrate that they are strategic thinkers who value the aesthetics of the environment and inhabit the kind of social space that Bourdieu would not hesitate to call middle class.

In the second instance, the Party, or at least its active members, can be seen to be intellectuals in the Gramscian sense. They are formally educated professionals involved in the production of knowledge concerning both the environment and the social structures which effect their lives. They are producers, creators and purveyors of knowledge who are at once within the dominant culture and trying to bring change upon it. Naturally, their position is complex as they are bounded by many of the same cultural and social mores against which they are struggling. They are trying to convince their peers, who are economically and socially comfortable, that this comfort is a chimera, as it is predicated on a system of environmental and social exploitation that is unsustainable, but which they themselves are deeply involved in. Furthermore, they can not help but be involved in this exploitative system and the contradictions between their lifestyle and their beliefs may well be the force that spurs them into action. Consequently, they have taken on the role of social and cultural educators in attempt to imbue their philosophical positions with an overriding legitimacy in relation to that of the current mainstream. Hence, it can be said with some certainty that the Irish Green Party constitutes an intellectual community and, as such, is informed by several 'structures of feeling'. Obviously an adequate description of these structures of feeling is beyond the scope of this work, as each description would require its own period of fieldwork and comprehensive analysis. In addition, it is not my intention here to define but rather to briefly describe the aspects of these structures of feeling that were identifiable within the Green intellectual community because of their prominence. This is done for the purposes of showing some of the more obvious trends in the emergent ideology of the Irish Green Party.

The first and foremost of these philosophical trends is that of environmentalism. Primarily, this means for the Greens that they are defenders of environment in all of its manifestations.

They are the ones with a vision that includes the environment as an integral part of any future planning and they have purposefully set out to save it from modern human exploitation and cultivate what remains in a sustainable manner. This is most obvious in Joe's narrative when he points out that the Greens have a responsibility to see that all life forms are respected, not just for the sake of human reproduction, but for their value in their own right. This means that environmental issues have social implications. When the Greens talk of the environment they include the social environment within that framework and perceive environmental problems to be ones of structure rather than technology. For them, an environmental approach is one that does not recognise boundaries between the natural and the social. It is a holistic and inclusive approach in which the social and the ecological are linked together in a system of relations and can not be dealt with separately. In this sense they are relational thinkers.

The second influential philosophy informing the Green intellectual community is that of individualism, or alternatively, western liberalism. The Greens were strongly committed to the notion of individual freedom and the right of the individual to exercise choice. They were adamant that power be devolved to the lowest effective level in order to correct what they saw as the depersonalised way in which decisions from above were foisted on the general public. As both Eileen and Tim contended, this devolution of power would involve a decentralisation of government and decision making power from central institutions into the hands of local government and citizenry. This would allow ordinary people to create alternatives in education, economics and employment which would, hopefully, bring about a cultural shift in attitudes from those of the industrial era to those suited to a more flexible, lifestyle driven society. In this, they were advocates of choice on a radical scale.

The third is the new age philosophy of deep ecology. There is a perception among the Party's membership that the concept of nature refers to more than the sum of its physical parts. For instance, both Neave and Fiona talk of having a sense of foreboding in relation to the way in which human beings seem to be progressively distancing themselves from their natural

environment. In particular, Neave's time spent living in a commune and her attempts at connecting with the forces of nature through sailing have allowed her to articulate this deeper sense of spirituality better than most of her peers in the Party. While Neave was more forthright about this spiritual connection with other living things, this perception was not uncommon throughout the Party's membership and may even have its roots in the alternative culture of the late 1960s and the anti-nuclear movement of the early 1970s. Within the Party, at all levels, there was a great value placed upon human individuality and, at the same time, a great value placed upon cooperation.

Finally, it could be said that the Party's intellectual community was influenced by socialistic thought. Their oft-stated goal of addressing social justice issues was quite firmly based upon the assumption that this could not be achieved without a fairer redistribution of wealth. Policies such as the Guaranteed Basic Income and use of state control to curb the excesses of private capital speak loudly of a socialist ethic. However, we should not forget that, while this communitarian approach in common with socialist thought is evident, socialist thought is but one influence on the Party's intellectual life and by no means is it widely acknowledged. For instance, although Sean and Tim found it quite easy to make the connection between the socialist thought and some of the primary aims of the Party, other such as Eileen and Joe were at pains to accentuate the differences between the two approaches. Nevertheless, all expressed profound reservations about the organisation, manifestations and key driving forces of contemporary capitalism.

Thus, at this point we can see the Irish Greens emerging as a middle class organisation with an educated membership that can be considered as an intellectual community. Within this intellectual community, an emergent ideology is growing which is specifically Green, but can be seen to be influenced by individualism, deep ecology and socialistic thought as well as the primary influence, environmentalism. In the following chapters we shall also examine the

influence of Irish culture on the Green experience in Ireland along with the kinds of discourse the Greens use to articulate themselves as a political and social force.

Chapter 3: The Kilmeanagh Landfill Dispute

3.1 The Dump: A Case Study

In this chapter I will present a case study of the fight to stop the upgrading of an existing local dump into a landfill site for toxic waste in Galway. I want to continue the discussion of identity begun in the previous chapters and to explore the ideas important to the Greens as an intellectual community. Primarily, I will concentrate on the discourse used to legitimate the Green position in the context of this dispute and compare the events described below with Peace's analysis of the environmental dispute at Killeagh in East Cork in the late 1980s (Peace 1997). I have taken Neave's comments about the possibility of "some kind of dreadful blight or insanity" threatening the world's future as the point of departure for the following discussion. This comment is an eloquent expression of the concern about the effects of modern industrial society on the environment and provides an insight into the way in which the Greens use language and discourse to achieve their aims. The controversy surrounding the Kilmeanagh landfill and the Green Party's involvement in it enables a closer investigation of their discourse in a conflict where they were compelled to contest with other social actors employing rural legitimacy discourses.

I became aware of this conflict in late January 1997 when I was invited by a friend to travel west to Galway and stay the week. Since Party members in Dublin at that time were still largely inactive after the Christmas holidays I decided to take up this kind offer and unwittingly found myself in the right place at the right time. Not long after arriving in Galway I contacted Eoin, the local Green Party candidate, and asked if I could arrange an interview with him. At the time I was interested in exploring the rural side of the Party as, up until then, I had spent all of my time in Dublin and its surrounding areas. Eoin said that he did not have time for an interview because he was engaged in a campaign to stop the upgrading of a local landfill site into a toxic waste dump. However, if I had a mind to I could come along to the

Galway Council chambers for the hearing. The Council hearing was convened, over two days, to enable all parties concerned to state their respective cases in a more or less open forum. As the scene unfolded it became clear that many of the polemics that confronted the Irish Greens were at the heart of this conflict.

The landfill site was once an old peat deposit that had been mined and then abandoned many years ago. Such sites are common throughout Ireland. Situated on a flood plane, the mined peat deposit at Carrowbrowne was also positioned over one of the largest aquifers in County Galway from which the supply of much of the water consumed for domestic purposes by the City of Galway was taken. Prior to 1972 the site had been flooded for many years but in that year the Galway Corporation had altered the watercourse in a planning program related to Galway City's urban development and, when the flood plain dried, so too did the old peat deposit. As no-one had ever previously laid claim to the land both the Corporation and the local residents were left with a very large pit for which no-one was officially responsible.

Before long the local population had taken to using the site as an unofficial garbage dump. Over time this practice became so entrenched that the Galway Corporation eventually recognised it officially as a landfill site and began to use it accordingly. The conflict at hand arose when the Corporation decided that, due to the increasing pressure placed upon its existing designated toxic waste sites by an upturn in the fortunes of local industry, it would be appropriate to upgrade the site in order to bury industrial grade toxic material. Having decided upon a course of action, they then hired an engineering firm to prepare a report on the suitability of the site and to carry out any construction work required.

Physically the site resembled a medium sized hill made out of all manner of refuse that had compacted into a solid mass over the years. Owing to the different consistency of the landfill to that of the surrounding soil, the water table had risen to incorporate the landfill. This incorporation of the site into the local ground water system, and the heavy year round rainfall,

had combined to produce a considerable leachate problem and an offensive smell, that depending upon the direction of the local winds, rarely failed to disturb one section of the local community or another at any given time. All of this was compounded by the fact that the site rested upon a bedrock of limestone which had not been surveyed since the 1920s, and then, only haphazardly. No one knew how thick it was or if there were any major fissures in it but they did know that directly underneath ran one of Galway's main subterranean waterways. All sides agreed that the leachate was most probably already passing through the limestone barrier into the water system, but estimates on how much of it was getting through and how it could be stopped varied in accordance with respective levels of support for the scheme itself. This point was crucial to the debate as much of the ensuing discussion hinged upon whether or not the site was an appropriate one to have a landfill dump on in the first place, regardless of the proposed upgrade.

The first stages of the project proceeded smoothly. The engineering company produced and submitted the initial report to the Galway Corporation which, after a period of deliberation and consultation with other independent 'experts in the field' brought in by the Corporation, was duly accepted. The Corporation then made their plans public knowledge and announced a six-week period of grace for the citizens of Galway to raise any concerns they might have about the project and its consequences. Like most councils throughout the western world, the county council in Ireland consists of a chairperson and councillors which are split into committees responsible for performing various necessary functions of administration (Roche 1982:73). In this case study I shall use the term 'Corporation' to denote local government institutions in Galway because Corporations in local government "usually function through the agency of Councils" (ibid: 72).

After the period of grace was over the Corporation was forced to call a public meeting, such was the extent of opposition to the proposed upgrading of the site. At the meeting it became clear that there were many elements within the community, including local citizens and even

representatives of the Fisheries Board, who were only too ready to air their grievances at being excluded from the decision making processes up to this point. I was also told by Eoin that there was a strong suspicion among all of those in opposition to the development that even then they had not been given access to all of the facts relevant to the case. Consequently, the Corporation was forced to submit to a hearing presided over by the National Planning Board, An Bord Pleanala, in order to determine how to proceed with this controversial matter.

The hearing was held over two days in the Galway Council chambers and was attended by representatives of all parties involved in the dispute. Physically it was held around a large table in the shape of a horseshoe. I mention this because the actual setting of the hearing did have some bearing on the formality of the proceedings. It was mentioned several times by those opposing the landfill site that they found the atmosphere within the council chambers to be quite intimidating and not at all conducive to a frank discussion of the issues. It was equally obvious, as the hearing wore on, that the formal nature of both the hearing and its physical setting worked in favour of the Corporation and the contractors as this was very familiar ground to them.

The particular arrangement of the participants around the table expressed the power relations between them. At the top of the horseshoe sat the An Bord Pleanala inspector and the independent specialist hired by the Board to provide technical advice on the feasibility of the project and the validity of the objections to it. At the top end of the right leg of the horseshoe, immediately left of the inspector, sat five representatives of the corporation and a hydro-geologist employed by the contracting company to provide scientific support for the continuation of the project. Immediately below them were three representatives from the local Planning Authority and, below them, on the right hand curve of the horseshoe, was Eoin from the Galway branch of the Green Party and myself. On the left hand curve of the Horseshoe sat four representatives of the Residents Association and, next to them on the left hand side of the table were two local activists who were representing a large number of concerned citizens

who did not live in the immediate area of the landfill site. Finally, on the top left of the horseshoe, immediately right of the specialist, were two representatives from the Fisheries Board.

From this it is easy to see why the representatives of the various citizens groups felt intimidated by the formality of the hearing. They were furthest from the head of the table and, thus, had to speak loudest to make themselves heard. Additionally, they were the only ones, with the exception of Eoin and myself, who were not wearing expensive three-piece suits and sporting large folios of mysterious documentation. In fact, one local resident told me during a lull in the proceedings that asking questions in the council chambers felt about as natural to him "as talking in church". This, in the Irish context, should give the reader some idea of the power relationships at play within the room.

3.2 *Day One*

The first day was occupied by a detailed submission by the hydro-geologist outlining the physical conditions of the site and the various measures proposed by the contractors to alleviate the leachate problem that was the main barrier to the upgrading of the site. The hydro-geologist gave evidence that the main problem was that the ground and rain water had a tendency to run off in one direction and, without provision for adequate drainage, this water would pool on one side of the landfill and leach into the regionally important aquifer that existed immediately below the site. In order to combat this, the contracting company proposed to lay subterranean drains around the area to regulate water run off from the site by capturing most of it within this drainage system. The water would then be pumped out at regular intervals and disposed of elsewhere. The submission contained a great deal of technical jargon and hinged around a series of complicated graphs and diagrams. These were aimed at assuring the Corporation, the Local planning Board, and the two representatives of An Bord Pleanala that all necessary precautions would be taken to ensure that the leachate

would be so significantly reduced that there would be no possible danger of an excessive volume of polluted water reaching either the aquifer or the regional water supply. To this end the hydro-geologist stated that he believed that the proposed drainage system would capture a full ninety five percent of the leachate well before it reached the water system.

The submission was presented in a very professional and business-like manner which did not go unnoticed by those presiding over the hearing. The hydro-geologist's authoritative manner and bearing seemed to sway those present, including myself, towards the conclusion that all possible precautions were being taken to ensure public safety and that, if the company were only given enough latitude in which to work then they could turn what was now a pressing environmental problem into a boon for both the community and the Corporation. In short, upgrading the site would transform a local health hazard into an asset for many years to come. Looking around the room I was struck with the impression that those opposed to the site seemed more certain of the outcome than they had at the start of the proceedings. During the afternoon break I talked to the representatives of the Residents Association and they confirmed my suspicions as to their mood by predicting that, even though they felt the site to be patently unsuitable for the present landfill material, let alone upgrading it to allow toxic material, the presentation by the hydro-geologist was "smooth enough" to sway the opinion of the inspector.

Eoin, however, was not quite so pessimistic. Having a degree in industrial engineering, and therefore familiar with much of the terminology employed by the hydro-geologist in relation to ground water and drainage, he was able to evaluate the evidence contained in the submission with a lot more clarity than the citizens groups. He had found a number of omissions and misrepresentations contained in the substance of the report and, during the afternoon break, outlined these to both the citizens groups and the representatives from the Fisheries Board. Additionally, an ex-Green Party member, Naill, who was attending on behalf of concerned citizens in the region, had identified a number of contradictions in the

submission that needed further explanation. This seemed to bolster the flagging spirits of the opposition as a whole and they were able to ask a number of penetrating questions in the final session of the day.

When the final session started, Eoin raised the issue of the water table and asked if the level of the water table shown in the series of diagrams was based on recent scientific surveys or was an estimate based on older data. He also asked whether or not the hydro-geologist had any information as to the existence, or not, of any fissures in the limestone bedrock that separated the leachate from the aquifer. His main concern was that, if the data used by the company was not more recent than the diversion of the river system for the purposes of irrigation in the early 1960s, then the water table may well be higher than the maximum depth needed for the operation of the drainage system. If this was the case then the whole proposal was useless as there was no way of stopping the leachate mixing with the groundwater and, thus, polluting the water system. Eoin was also concerned that, should there be any fissures in the limestone bedrock, the leachate would simply bypass the drainage system and enter directly into the aquifer. Confronted with this, the hydro-geologist was forced to admit that the data used as the foundation for the proposal was based upon a geological survey carried out by the U.C.G.⁹ in the late 1920s. Additionally, he was obliged to state that neither he nor the university had any idea of the state of the limestone bedrock as there was no geological data available on that specific area.

At this point the Residents Association presented their misgivings about the soundness of the project. They were firstly concerned that there was no real data on the depth of the old peat deposit around the perimeter of the landfill site. As they explained, no-one knew if there was still peat in the ground bordering the landfill site but, if there was, the leachate would surely seep through the peat and into the water table. They were also very concerned about the nature of the toxic waste that the corporation planned to allow into the landfill site, pointing

⁹ University College of Galway.

out that some chemicals common in toxic waste did not have to occur in great concentrations for them to pose a serious health risk to the community at large. If the type and grade of waste was not strictly monitored, and they had seen no evidence thus far that it would be, then pollution from the leachate could prove to be a major cause for concern.

In addressing these concerns and queries from the Residents Association, the hydro-geologist's manner changed quite dramatically from the reassuringly efficient demeanour that he had displayed earlier. Indeed, he became quite agitated at times and it was obvious that he viewed the objections to the proposal as based upon amateur science and ignorance rather than any real danger caused by the site. He cited difficult drilling conditions as the main reason why sufficient data on the limestone bedrock was absent from his submission but seemed totally confident that the proposed drainage system would be adequate.

3.3 *Day Two*

The second day of the hearing started with an airing of grievances by the representatives of the Fisheries Board. The chief cause of their concern was that, should the proposed drainage system allowing the site to be upgraded to take toxic waste fail, the fishing industry in the west and the many communities that depended upon it for their survival would be drastically effected. They also noted that, close by the site, there was a large fishery which would be devastated if pollution levels became any more significant than they currently were. As the fishery was quite a profitable one, they could see no valid reason for endangering either its future or the future of the regional fishing industry in general. They also added that, as tourism in the region was one of the mainstays of the local economy, it would be foolhardy to allow any development that could effect it negatively.

At this point the representatives of the Local Planning Authority were invited to state their position on the development for the benefit of the inspector. The representatives responded by

declaring that they were not notified of the particulars of the project and, as such, could take no blame for the inconsistencies that had emerged during the hearing. This was greeted with a good deal of scepticism on the part of the citizens groups as the Corporation was bound by law to inform them of any intended development of this nature. However, the representatives from the local planning board seemed determined to distance themselves, as far as possible, from the hydro-geologist's submission. They also identified the matter as a national issue rather than a local one. In their opinion the objections raised in relation to the upgrading of the landfill site mirrored similar objections to landfill sites all over the Republic. Nobody wanted to live near a dump, but waste was still being produced at an alarming rate and it had to be disposed of somewhere. In their haste to divert any responsibility away from their office they gave the opposition to the project the foundations of an argument that would eventually sway the outcome of the hearing.

The independent specialist then began to cross-examine the hydro-geologist as to the veracity of the information contained in the diagrams. His first concern was that the water table would, in fact, be higher than the planned drainage system. Once again the hydro-geologist stated that he could not give a definite answer on this matter because he had not been able to obtain any recent data on the level of the water table underneath the site. He was, however, willing to compromise by agreeing to construct a further drainage system underneath the proposed one with the aim to lower the water table to the required level if necessary. The specialist's second concern was the lack of sufficient data in the submission about the bottom layer of the landfill. This layer had been described by the hydro-geologist as a "one metre layer of sponge-like material" but nobody seemed to know whether this was part of the old peat deposit or the decomposing remains of the initial refuse that had been dumped at the site. The specialist submitted to the hearing that the toxic leachate may well erode this bottom layer and, thus, change the height, mass, and perimeter of the landfill mound. If this were to occur then all of the calculations presented in the submission would be incorrect. The hydro-geologist countered this by drawing the inspector's attention to the limestone bedrock

immediately beneath the landfill mound. This, he said, would ensure that, even if the one metre layer were subject to erosion, the limestone bedrock would prevent the landfill mound from altering its shape to any significant degree.

Niall then took the floor and questioned the wisdom of the site of the landfill in the first place. He cited the requirements for such a site under European law and showed Kilmeanagh to be inadequate on many counts. In his words the site was "classically unsuited for landfill under European law as it sits upon crustified limestone and unstable soil". The Corporation representatives tried to deflect this criticism by pointing out that the hearing was not about the site selection process but rather the upgrading of the site. To this Niall replied "Is this a suitable site for a landfill?" The response of the Corporation representatives was "Not really". Niall went on to explain that the site was also situated on a flood plane and that he was worried about what would happen should the berm, that was currently the only protection from flooding, overflow. He felt that the whole project was "a sham" and was visibly frustrated that the Corporation did not seem to be taking his objections seriously. He also asked about the measures to be put in place, if any, to extract the gas that is the inevitable by-product of any landfill site. He made the point that pollution caused by gas from the existing landfill had been complained about by local residents as early as the late 1970s. The Corporation replied that gas extraction on any landfill site was, at best, ineffectual and that the problem was simply unavoidable. Niall then questioned the environmental desirability of any landfill site anywhere and maintained that burying waste would not make the problem of waste production disappear. He argued further that garbage takes decades to decompose and therefore the site would have to be maintained for many years after its usefulness had ceased. This, to him, made no sense as it would be a financial burden on the community for years to come and would not have solved the initial problem.

Eoin presented his opinions in the last session of the day and, after Niall's rather emotional submission, decided to approach the subject more as an engineer than as an environmental

activist. Firstly, he questioned the validity of the figures presented in the submission by the hydro-geologist concerning the volume of water passing through the landfill and its interaction with run-off water from rain. He felt positive that the contents of the landfill could not possibly be of a consistent and uniform nature thus, logically, the flow of water through the landfill would not behave in the highly consistent and predictable manner that the hydro-geologist assumed it would. In order to strengthen his claim, Eoin reiterated that nobody actually knew what went into the dump before it became an official landfill site so there was absolutely no way to gauge its consistency. Consequently, he asked if the Corporation had considered what to do about the leachate created by the landfill site in its present capacity. This seemed to surprise the Corporation representatives and they had to admit that they "hadn't looked into it as yet". Eoin proposed that they should consider drilling a series of holes at regular intervals through the landfill down to the bedrock. This would give them an opportunity to pump out the leachate regularly and thoroughly, drastically reducing the amount of pollution that entered into the water system from the site. The Corporation representatives did not seem to accept this alternative as a feasible one but, when questioned by the inspector, appeared to have no salient reason for this opinion.

The hearing concluded at that point, but some discussion between the different activists carried on afterwards outside the Council chambers. After the day's proceedings their mood seemed to have picked up remarkably but they were by no means optimistic about the outcome. There was still quite a good deal of scepticism prevalent within the different groups of activists concerning Board Failte's motives in setting up this hearing and the 'independence' of the independent specialist. However, all parties involved in opposing the upgrading of the landfill site appeared to be happy with the way that the case was presented and that they had done all they could to make the authorities see reason.

3.4 *Epilogue and Analysis*

The result of the hearing was not known for some four weeks after the proceedings. By that time, I was long back in Dublin and concentrating on the Party's preparation for the election campaign that was shortly to begin. I ran into Eoin at a National Council meeting at which he was giving the Party's national forum an account of the events that took place concerning the landfill site. Eoin was quite pleased with himself when he informed me that they had, in fact, "had a win" over the issue and, although the landfill site was still a major concern environmentally, it would not present anything like the kind of threat to the environment that it would have in the future if the Corporation's plans to upgrade it had gone ahead. He was also quite excited over the amount of publicity the Greens had managed to focus upon themselves during that period. The publicity was a boon because it would raise the Greens' profile within the local community and that, Eoin pointed out, would not hurt his chances at the polls.

Clearly there are many similarities between this case study and Peace's study on the Merrell Dow dispute in 1988-89. Both disputes revolved around industrial developments involving toxic material and in both cases the relevant local and national authorities had sided with the developers and tried to override the concerns of the communities involved. What struck me when I initially read Peace's account of the Merrell Dow dispute, published some years after I had first written my case study as a presentation for the Monash School of Political and Social Inquiry, was that Peace's analysis of the way in which discourse operated in the political arena of the formal hearing in Ireland was directly applicable to my research. As noted in Chapter Two, Peace identifies three central aspects of discourse in his analysis. These are, one, that; "discourse becomes an essential resource in the explanation of relationships, the justification of social actions, and the legitimisation of beliefs" (Peace 1997: 8), two, "Discourses are processual rather than pre-ordained" (ibid: 9); and three, "In that the articulation of a major discourse concerns contentious issues within a given political milieu,

so the central premises of each discourse are continually being challenged by others" (ibid). For Peace, these three aspects of discourse combine to create a political arena. Furthermore, he states that a political arena then "becomes the terrain upon which agencies and institutions in conflict mobilise the information, knowledge, expertise, and other cultural resources germane to their interests" (ibid). In this context, discourse is employed to legitimise actions and beliefs, it is temporal and, therefore, evolves over time and it is subject to contestation and competition within whatever political arenas it operates in.

Like the Merrell Dow dispute, the political arena in which the relevant discourse contested was the institution of the An Bord Pleanála hearing which was held in the local Council chambers. As such, just as with the Womanagh Valley Protection Association (WVPA), the various residents groups that gathered to oppose the upgrade found that their discourse was deemed inappropriate within the confines of the hearing. Again, like the Merrell Dow dispute, scientific and technical discourse was the terrain over which the proponents and the opponents of the development fought. Indeed, even the physical settings were similar with the power relationships being physically expressed in the positioning of the participants within the chambers. After reading Peace's analysis, I found that there was a pattern that was followed in each encounter. Both sets of residents' associations were intimidated by the proceedings and the populist discourse they used was disregarded by the authorities. In both instances there were government agencies involved in the proceedings that were initially strongly opposed to the developments but seemed willing to reach a compromise position in what Peace termed "bureaucratically organised bargaining encounters" (1997: 116). However, the one obvious difference between the two case studies was that the landfill dispute was won by the opposition at the hearing while the Merrell Dow dispute was won at the review by the proponents but discontinued later by the parent company, Dow Chemicals.

The reason for this may well be related to Peace's assertion of the processual nature of discourse. In his analysis of the Merrell Dow dispute he uses this concept to describe how the

WVPA evolved a discourse which was inclusive of the disparate groups that were opposed to the development and thus successfully created an opposition movement that was representative of many in the area. Indeed, the discourse in question was so successful that it won great support nationally and was a significant factor in the final outcome. In the case of the landfill site at Killmeanagh, I believe that it was this broader discourse, evolved and disseminated through disputes such as the Merrell Dow dispute, and the one involving Merck, Sharp and Dohme before it, that not only brought the issues into the national consciousness but made authorities such as the IDA and An Bord Pleanala sensitive to the possible political repercussions of environmental disputes.

I believe that environmental discourse and, more importantly, discourse involving the environment, had evolved significantly over the intervening period from the late 1980s to the late 1990s and that this was a major factor in the result at Killmeanagh. Even taking into account that the two disputes involved different kinds of developments of a different scale and nature, the fact remains that the small opposition alliance in Killmeanagh was successful in the first instance whereas the large, and nationally supported opposition front led by the WVPA was not. Furthermore, I believe that this is a more accurate gauge of the success of the Green Party in Ireland than their showing at the polls would seem to suggest.

As a point of clarification, I would like to state here that I do not confuse the Irish Green Party with the environmental movement in Ireland as a whole, but I would argue that they are the public face of it. While it is certainly the case that they did not instigate or lead the opposition to the Merrell Dow or Merck, Sharp and Dohme disputes, my point is that they have played a role in the environmental movement in Ireland that is beyond the capacity of the rest of the movement which is not involved in formal politics. They have kept environmental issues on the national agenda since their inception in 1981 and they have evolved a discourse which, over time, gains more and more political legitimacy. It was this legitimacy, as much as engineering qualifications and obvious fluency with scientific and technical discourse, that

allowed Eoin to present an argument powerful enough to persuade the An Bord Pleanala inspectors to retract their initial support for the upgrading of the landfill.

Chapter 4: The Party at Work

4.1 Organisational Structure

In the following chapters I shall discuss the Party's trajectory through the national elections of 1997. This will provide us with a picture of how the Irish Greens organised and represented themselves during the very political contest for which they were formed. Personally, I found this to be the most exciting period of my fieldwork and was able, through it, to gain a better understanding of the Green's sense of identity, and their emergent ideology, than I had in the previous months of my stay in Ireland. I felt extremely fortunate to be with the Greens at that time as it afforded me a unique opportunity to see, among other things, how they created and used the discourse that they would employ to try to gain the support of their fellow Irish men and women. From an anthropological point of view, the election campaign, from its start in the preceding months to its culmination on election night, contained all of the basic elements of a good ethnography. From culture, identity, ideology and organisation to discourse, politics and history – the reality of the Green Party and its members was revealed in great detail. My only complaint about this period of fieldwork was that its pace was so frantic that I surely missed far more detail than I grasped.

Firstly, I must explain the organisational structure of the Party in order to prepare the reader for the forthcoming discussion of the election. In many ways, the organisational structure of the Greens is an expression of its core values. Furthermore, discussion concerned with it is relevant to notions of identity, and even emergent ideology, within the Party. As the Party's most obvious group expression of identity, it should not be forgotten that the Greens' organisation is a living expression which is, like their discourse, processual in its own right. It is within this organisational structure that the Greens engage in the ongoing processes of self-definition in relation to themselves and the Irish public. The ensuing discussion will also help to illuminate the differences between the Greens in Ireland and the mainstream political

parties born, by and large, out of the republican movement which has dominated much of Ireland's political and social history since the early 1920s. I should note here that the level at which I engaged with the Party as an organisation limited my observations. In the main, interaction with Party members occurred in the context of participation in Party activities. While there were some notable exceptions, most of the members saw me as being related to their roles in the Party rather than the social routines of their daily lives outside of the organisation. Indeed, their association with each other was often seen through such participation.

4.1.1 Local Groups

If we consider the circumstances of a typical local group meeting we can see the contextual nature of the relationship between the Party's members. Once the participant's stepped into the immediate surrounds of the meeting they were stepping out of the more mundane circumstances of their lives and entering a specific arena of thought and action. It is also crucial to understand that, to a large extent, they also consciously perceived this to be the case. They took on roles appropriate to the situation in which they had placed themselves in. They did not shed the beliefs of their everyday lives but rather focussed them on a range of issues that concerned a particular aspect of their social existence. In other words, they imbued this facet of their social lives with profound personal, social, and cultural significance (Goodin 1992: 178, Lash & Urry 1987: 15). They volunteered their time and effort in order to engage with the issues that concern them most but their expression of this concern was not without its own socio-economic context.

Membership was possible on a national basis if a local group was not accessible but, in the vast majority of cases, members and probationary members were assigned a local group through which they could participate in the activities of the Party on the national, regional, and local levels. A rigorous set of constitutional guidelines applied to the membership at the

level of local groups. These groups were the foundation upon which the other, more nationally potent, Party institutions were built and from which members originate. In line with constitutional requirements, local Groups consisted of at least five financial members but numbers varied dramatically with respect to different socio-economic and geographical areas. During the election campaign it became obvious that some groups in constituencies apathetic to the Party consisted of only two or three active members upon whose shoulders fell the responsibility of representing their local candidate and the Party in general throughout the campaign. Conversely, candidates in other areas more receptive to the Greens often found that previously inactive members and supporters swelled their ranks significantly. Although this situation was somewhat artificial when compared with the active membership of non-election years, the average active membership within the various local groups ranged between two and thirteen. In 1997 there were twenty-six local groups spread throughout the Republic of Ireland both in urban and rural locations but, given the urban middle class nature of the Party, it was not surprising to find that great majority of these local groups are situated in urban centres. Indeed, eleven of them were situated in Dublin alone. This is of significance as it underlines the Dublin-centric nature of the Party.

In the main, local groups organised their schedules around regular fortnightly meetings at which Party issues, both local and national, were discussed. These meetings were usually held in the nearest, most central, venue to all members. They were semi-formal occasions held in an atmosphere conducive to frank and lively discussion. Owing to the relatively small numbers of even the largest groups, there was a lack of the angst and animosity usually associated with such political gatherings and they were marked by an open exchange of ideas that would be the envy of many of the Irish Green Party's more established political opponents. Local groups were well equipped to enter into broad ranging discussions of issues of local, regional, national, and international moment with equal authority and fervour despite being quite small. This can be attributed, in the main, to two significant factors in the make-up of groups such as these. The first of these factors is inherent in the size of the groups.

Apart from groups with very few active members, the small scale of local Green groups led to an atmosphere in which members felt relaxed and confident enough to engage in debates about issues without fear of scorn or ridicule. On the few occasions that new members did become openly aggressive and antagonistic towards the views presented by their fellow local Greens, the other members present moved quickly to disarm the situation by reminding the transgressor of the rules of courtesy that govern all Green Party gatherings.

The level of education among the membership in general was also a significant factor in this. As an intellectual community, the Greens were conversant with many of the intellectual trends of their day and were often disposed to argue the merits of these quite energetically. As we have seen in the six individual case studies, each member brought the experiences of their own journey to the Green Party and this imbued these meetings with a theoretical depth that could spring up whenever significant points of contention emerged. Debates encountered at the Green Party local group meetings were, in the main, debates between well-educated and highly motivated people that centred around issues about which they felt passionately. Seen in this context, it is not surprising that the dialogue at these meetings evinced a high level of general knowledge and philosophical scope.

While such close-knit local groups had significant strengths, they were not without their weaknesses. Firstly, the negative aspect of the diminutive size of the majority of local groups led to a level of local autonomy that hindered the solidarity of the national organisation. For instance, it was not uncommon for the aims and consensual platforms of various local groups to be in opposition to the Party's official position. This can be seen in the debate over whether or not the Party would agree to join in a coalition government with any of their political opponents. It became apparent at both the election task force meeting and the Party election conference, both in early February, that many local groups had quite distinct stances upon what the national organisation should do if this became a reality.

During the following weeks, after much discussion and consultation between the local groups and the Party leadership, opinion coalesced into three general positions. The first determined that any formal cooperation with the larger parties would be tantamount to a betrayal of their supporters. They had campaigned consistently on their pledge to bring a new, independent perspective to Irish politics and to remain aloof from the double dealing that has been a feature of politics in the Republic for many years and could not move away from this position. The second general position maintained that the Party should entertain propositions for coalition, but only with the opposition Parties that were at least compatible with the Greens and, even then, not before strict assurances were given that the Greens independence and autonomy would not be compromised in the future. Underlying this more moderate position was, I believe, a balance of ideology and pragmatism that was born out of a necessity to reconcile the Greens desire to be effective in the political arena with their fear of being overwhelmed or duped by the major Parties. The third position held that, for the foreseeable future, the Party was simply too small to attain any measure of effective power in its own right. Thus, any direct involvement in government meant necessarily a coalition or alliance with one or more of their political competitors. While recognising the dangers of this course, with regard to assimilation, they felt that their main objective was to be 'in' government. Those members adhering to this view felt that the Greens could never hope to implement or influence policy in line with ecologically sustainable guidelines without attaining some degree of power. This conflict was not resolved during my time in the field as the expected result of ten to fifteen percent of the national vote was not realised. However, we can see that the same philosophy of local autonomy that fostered a lively and broad ranging engagement with environmental issues also conspired to frustrate the formulation of a cohesive national solidarity with which to present Green Party objectives to the public on a national level.

A further aspect of this struggle between autonomy and solidarity within the Party relates to planning of activities and events leading up to the press conference for the presentation of the Green Party's health policy. It had been decided that the Green Party would launch its health

policy on a certain day during the election campaign and, accordingly, invitations were sent out during the weeks leading up to the event by the press officer. Obviously the choice of this date and the early alert given to the media was done in order to ensure maximum attendance by the media and, thus, maximum exposure to the public. The venue for the policy launch was a conference room in one of the main hotels in Dublin that the Party had rented for the afternoon at a considerable cost taking into account their limited finances. As the time for the start of the launch came and went, the anticipation of those from the Party present turned to dismay as it became clear that only one freelance journalist had arrived. Upon questioning him, it was established that the bulk of the absent journalists had not appeared because the launch had been upstaged by a publicity stunt arranged by Patrick, one of the Party's own candidates.

Consequently, the Party's policy on health received no coverage at all while Patrick appeared in the nightly news and in all the main papers the next day. He had staged a publicity stunt in which he had put an asthma inhaler on the statue of Daniel O'Connell in O'Connell street in protest of the high levels of pollution in the inner city caused by its inefficient public transport system and too many privately owned vehicles. Undoubtedly this was a snubbing of the authority of the Green Party leaders as the timing of the health policy launch was well known within the Party and Patrick, as a fully endorsed Green candidate, would have known about it far earlier than most others in the organisation. Additionally, his own activities concerning the media would have to have been planned in full knowledge of the Election Task Force's (ETF) intentions. Clearly, despite the leadership's struggles to foster democratic process throughout all levels of the Party, there were some tensions.

This sequence of events was set against a backdrop of rivalry between the established leaders and the newly emergent figures in the Green Party leadership which became more apparent as time wore on. As a small political party with a short history, the leaders of the Irish Greens had evolved into a close knit group that had definite feelings of care towards the Party in

general. Indeed, many of them were founding members of the organisation and had invested a great deal of their own identities in the life and progress of the Party. Unfortunately, these feelings of care often made it difficult for newer members to engage in the higher levels of the Party's leadership structure and left them feeling hostile towards the existing leaders for shutting them out of any position of real power in the Party. Therefore, Patrick's decision to proceed with the publicity stunt regardless of the health policy launch was not just a public show of independence from the greater structure of the Party. It was also an opportunity to present himself as a leading figure in the Party to the media, the public within his constituency, and the established Party leadership itself. This is important because it highlights the differing opinions held by Party members regarding access to positions of responsibility within the Party. For instance, Patrick's position differed from Sean's on this matter as the Party, for him, presented opportunities for real input that were not offered in any other political party. Patrick, on the other hand, felt stifled by the Party's leadership and deemed it necessary to make a show of independence. That these two members worked closely with each other during the campaign, with Sean being the secretary of the Dublin Central Greens and Patrick being the candidate for that constituency, speaks eloquently of the complexities of internal politics within the Party at that time.

Another aspect of the Green Party's dependence upon the local group unit becomes apparent when we consider the Party's inability to make inroads into working class dominated areas. As previously discussed, there were many possible contributing factors to this failure of communication but, from the perspective of those trying to organise groups in these areas, the small size of the groups seemed to be self-perpetuating. One of the most common complaints of group secretaries from these communities was that they could not hold on to potential new members past their initial flush of enthusiasm. These potentially active new members soon realised that active participation in a group of such a small size effectively meant an enormous additional workload married to a minimal chance of real success.

Thus, the local group as the fundamental unit of the Irish Green Party had decided and discernible effects upon its organisational structure. The inherent strengths of the local unit were apparent within groups large enough to utilise their potential. These units generated healthy discussions that were broad enough in their scope and deep enough in their analysis to potentially cover all aspects of the Party's trajectory. Additionally, the level of autonomy practised by these units invariably led to the creation of close knit groups capable of acting to further advance the Green cause within their communities without draining the resources of the Party on a national level. Conversely, this same spirit of autonomy caused conflict in relation to the structural aspects of national co-ordination and solidarity. Local groups clashed over the prioritisation of goals and aspirations which led to difficulties when attempting to reach consensus on important national issues and even outright defiance concerning the planned co-ordination of Party related actions.

Additionally, among local groups with exceptionally low membership levels, the local group as a fundamental unit lost its inherent positive qualities and, without proper support from the rest of the organisational structure, became a virtually unworkable proposition from the point of view of effective politics. Nevertheless, there was a mechanism within the constitution that countered these problems. A discussion of this structural institution will help to reveal, not only the way in which these negatives were addressed, but also the regional context in which all local groups were situated.

4.1.2 Regional Groups

Regional groups were conglomerations of local groups banded together under a regional banner and presided over by a council elected from the members of the various local groups involved. Interestingly, the geographical boundaries covered by these regional groups follows, more or less, the boundaries of the five ancient Celtic kingdoms of Connaught, Leinster, Meath, Munster, and Ulster. Without entering into a detailed historical discussion of

ancient Irish politics, it is important to recognise, at least to some extent, the influence that these ancient regional boundaries have on the modern state. Indeed, the Irish national leagues of Gaelic Football and Hurling are still separated into regional categories based upon these ancient regional boundaries and many modern day citizens of Ireland, including the six northern counties under British rule, strongly identify themselves in terms of these distinctions.

Yet, owing to the Party's small membership in relation to the overall population, strict regional definition along the lines of the ancient regional borders was not quite feasible for the structural organisation of the Party at the time of my research. Furthermore, the distribution of the membership was such that two of the five Regional Councils would not have been a workable concern had these definitions been adhered to. Leinster and Meath were under the auspices of the Dublin Regional Council while Connaught and Ulster had amalgamated to form the Connaught-Ulster Federation. While the Munster Regional Council was still largely inactive, it was considered to stand-alone. As structural institutions, Regional Councils were answerable to the National Council as well as the Co-ordinating Committee but, other than that, largely independent of each other in relation to the matters that they addressed and their meeting timetables. They were not part of the official law making structure of the Party and the constitution in operation at the time allowed them no discretionary powers. They were used as a sort of 'think tank' rather than a mechanism for regional policy production. I was informed by one member that the main purpose of Regional Councils was to formulate and endorse resolutions to be proposed at the next session of the National Council meeting.

Each Council's meetings were called according to the needs and wishes of their constituent local groups. Although the original spirit of the constitution was for these Regional Councils to be regular events in the Green calendar, the meeting times were unpredictable and took a great deal of organising to initiate. As I was based in Dublin for the entirety of the research

period, the councils of the regions outside Dublin were, for the most part, beyond my reach owing to either travel considerations or prior commitments. However, I was in attendance at one of only two Dublin Regional councils held during 1997 and, furthermore, was able to follow the progression and content of the other regional councils via information received through word of mouth and email from informants throughout the other regional areas.

Dublin Regional Council meetings were held in a hall situated in the central part of Dublin.

At the meeting that I observed there were approximately 20 people in attendance representing all of the 11 local groups in the region. Presiding over this was a convening council that was chosen from the ranks of those present at the onset of the meeting. The convening council was responsible for the co-ordination of speakers and questions from the floor and directing discussion to address the items on the agenda. The agenda consisted of a number of key speakers who would each present an analysis of an issue that was deemed important to both the Party and the region in the forthcoming general election. It had been determined that after each speaker there would be time for questions from the floor to be put to the forum as a whole in order to generate a broad general discussion pursuant to the issue at hand.

As previously discussed, the institution acted as an intermediate stage between the local groups and the National Council. Even so, it was the least significant institution within the Party structure and was evidently used more as an overall policy discussion group than a decision making body within the Party's structure. There was some evidence that the Connaught/Ulster Federation (CUF) was starting to evolve into a more regionally centred decision making body but even that was still in its formative stages in 1997. The most important function that the regional meetings played at that time was to clarify policy positions for the upcoming election and to create a feeling of solidarity between the respective local groups and candidates.

4.1.3 The Co-ordinating Committee and the National Council

The Co-ordinating Committee played a key role in the Party's organisational structure.

Unfortunately, I was unable to attend its meetings while in the field as they were closed to general members unless specifically invited on urgent business. The main function of the Co-ordinating Committee was to facilitate the weekly administration of the Party on a national level. Tasks performed by the Committee on behalf of the Party included:

- The general operational life of the National Office.
- Reviewing and co-ordinating the various Standing Committees on policy within the Party.
- Reviewing the activities of the various Regional Councils and Local Groups (Dail Constituency Groups).
- Assessing the Party's representation in, and cultivation of, the Irish media.
- Co-ordinating the Party's various fundraising events on a national basis.
- Reviewing the Party's finances and the compilation of draft budget documents for the approval of the N.C.
- Overseeing the content and production of the Party's national newsletter.
- Liaising with the Party's MEPs on a regular basis and keeping the Party informed about events in the European political sphere.

The Co-ordinating Committee met on a weekly basis and, in fulfilling these functions, was the most significant controlling body within the Party on a daily basis. It was from the Committee that the Party's National Secretary was elected annually in order to act as a full-time director of Party activities and oversee the Party's progress. During the election campaign, the Committee was also expected to co-ordinate the allocation of resources and overall election strategy in conjunction with the Election Taskforce Committee.

The most senior decision making body within the Party's structure was the National Council. As the name would suggest, the National Council consisted of delegates from every local group in the Republic and was the ultimate decision making power in the Party. Meetings were held on a monthly basis in Dublin and provided the Party with an opportunity to discuss and decide upon a wide range of issues including constitutional reform, Party finances, legal issues, policy direction, and the formation of new local groups. It was also the forum at which the various ongoing sub-committees that were created to investigate important issues

presented their progress reports and findings to the Party. National Council meetings offered local groups an opportunity to contribute to the national direction of the Party and to introduce pertinent issues for debate within the Party's national membership. They were designed to foster a democratic solidarity to the Party on a national level but this was hampered by the autonomous nature of the local groups. Often debates entered into at National Council meetings would have to be revisited at successive meetings in order for the Party to find consensus on the issues raised. Indeed, many times the consensus was that there would not be agreement on a certain subject in the foreseeable future and that the issue should be shelved until further facts came to light. Although this is not unique to Green political organisations, I would like to reiterate that these meetings, because of their highly democratic nature, made swift action in the real political arena of Irish politics almost impossible. The Party's commitment to decentralisation and autonomy, while a positive force for its overall integrity, acted as a hindrance to political efficacy on a national level. The effect of the Party's structure on the success of the Party will become clearer as we continue with a discussion of the processes of policy formation within the Party.

4.2 *Policy Formation*

An examination of policy formation within the Party reveals the tensions between the Greens' strivings to form a collective identity on the one hand, and the great value they placed upon individuality and personal autonomy on the other. Each person brought to the Party their own personal experiences and the Party's democratic culture fostered recognition of this individual diversity. Yet there was the need to find common ground amongst the members in order to be able to present a united front to the voting public.

From time to time, these different kinds of pressures on the members generated conflicts between them. As we have seen, the Irish Green Party was not a monolithic entity, rather it was a group of people perhaps best described as an intellectual community. Although the

Greens were quite individualistic in personality and conduct, they did feel that they were joined in a single purpose. A further complicating factor was that the Party's emphasis on the importance of local policies meant that each group focussed upon the issues directly affecting their own local communities. In many instances, when forming policy, the members were compelled to navigate a course between their valuing of social justice and their valuing of ecological sustainability. This created such discord that at times consensus seemed impossible.

While a complete analysis of all the Party's wide ranging policies is beyond the scope of this thesis, a discussion of their environmental and 'drugs' policies provides an understanding of the issues the members faced when determining their collective policy directions. A conversation at a Dublin South local group meeting provides a point of departure. During this meeting the group was discussing a strike by local waste collectors in the constituency over pay and conditions. The dispute had not been particularly protracted but garbage and refuse had started to pile up on the roadsides and, at that point, it seemed that no end was in sight.

When asked by the group what he knew about it, Joe reported:

I don't know much about it but it's to do with new technology. With wheelie bins being introduced ... Anyway it's a Union problem, it's not a Green Party problem but as it's involved with the whole waste issue and, like, it's in our constituency, I'm just wondering should we be doing something on it [and] if we should be, what should we be doing. We could use it in the same way that I've been using the water thing in the last couple of days – to issue a statement about the need to conserve water. We can use it to state that this is an opportunity to reduce waste, but is there anything else we can do on it?

Although all present recognised the fact that the workers involved were underpaid and had pursued all other negotiation options with their employer to no avail, the group felt that the issue of wages was secondary to the production of waste in the Dublin South. As Joe said:

I don't think we should get involved in that side of it, I do think that we should issue a statement on the whole waste issue ... Like, here we have this issue and it's pointing to the fact that we are creating so much waste.

Here we see the difference in perceptions of social justice at work in Green thinking. The dispute, for the workers involved, is one stemming from concerns about receiving adequate remuneration for performing a task for their employers and the community. In a situation common to wage based disputes all over the world, the workers were seeking to protect their standard of living from being undermined by the financial imperatives of business which sought to minimise labour costs while maximising profits. For them, this was a dispute concerning the principle of social justice in relation to the fair distribution of wealth within society. They performed labour intensive tasks, that were viewed by the general public as unhygienic, at inconvenient hours and in return they felt that they had a right to receive a wage sufficient enough to provide financial stability for themselves and their families.

In contrast, the Dublin South group focussed upon a different aspect of the dispute for a number of reasons. In the first instance, as the majority of members were employed in well paid, non-labour intensive occupations, they were somewhat removed from the financial realities of the striking workers. Hence, they felt that the matter may have been more appropriately dealt with through further arbitration as opposed to direct action. In the second instance, the Party had passionately opposed the creation of new landfill sites and incineration plants throughout the Republic. They felt that it would be hypocritical to support the workers in their struggle to increase wage levels while openly calling for a course of action that would ultimately reduce employment in that industry. In the third instance, the group saw the dispute as an opportunity to bring to the attention of the public the vast amounts of waste created by Irish society every day. All in all, they were anxious to be seen as a political party that was developing strategies to reduce to a sustainable level the amount of waste. Naturally, the other parties would be seen to be still fixated on hiding the problem.

In their eyes, the central social justice issue lay in the excessive production of waste and in its irresponsible disposal. Just as the workers involved demanded the right to have a living wage for a dirty job, the Dublin South group believed that the community as a whole had an

absolute right to a sustainable environment that was not being seriously damaged by the activities of modern industry. They saw the primary struggle in this case as one involving, not access to equal wealth distribution, but access to a clean and liveable environment for the whole of society in perpetuity. Moreover, rather than categorising their environment as a narrowly conceived economic resource that should be used appropriately, the Greens saw it as a fundamental necessity in danger of being destroyed by over utilisation. Hence, it could be argued that a commitment to, or sense of responsibility for the environment (and by extension humanity) overrode the chance to support a group of workers.

If we recall the case studies presented earlier in this work, it is easy to identify many similar views regarding the primacy given to environmental and ecological matters by Party members when considering broader issues. As the central purpose for the Party's existence, it was no surprise that the membership was united on the need to highlight the ecological realities that were often lost in the debates and discussions consuming Irish politics. However, I was confounded for much of my stay in the field by the Party's lack of comprehensive environmental policies. After thoroughly going over the Party's minimal literature on the subject and receiving no firm replies from the policy convenors that I questioned, I came to the conclusion that the Party was waiting for the start of the election campaign to release its policy. It was not until Fianna Fail released a sixty-page document, entitled *Our Environment, Our Future* (1997), which outlined its environmental policy, that I realised that the Greens simply had nothing to match it.

The most tenable reason for this apparent oversight was supplied by Tim in a post-election interview I conducted with him one afternoon. He felt that the Party had neglected to define its policy stance on the environment simply because most members thought that it was self-evident. In his words:

It's about the worst area in terms of lack of policy and the reason is that we're all agreed about the environment and, therefore, nobody has had to sit down and say 'Can we agree on this or can we agree on that?' Whereas, in something like foreign

affairs or women's rights, or whatever, people might have come to the Party from differing backgrounds and would retain a lot of the views that they picked up in those organisations, or news media, or wherever they get them. Those views have had to be brought together and those are areas that people have thought about.

Thus, it was not that the Greens did not have an environmental policy, other than the two-page article in their manifesto (1997:6-8), but rather that their perspective on the environment was evident in every policy that they produced. Indeed, the Party's overall stance on social justice matters was entwined within its environmental values to such an extent that they were inseparable from one another.

4.2.1 The Question of Drug Abuse: A Case Study

In the same way as Tim described the membership's solidarity in their struggle to protect the environment, everyone agreed that 'drug' abuse was an undesirable facet of Irish national life and that it was the cause of many problems that the Republic was experiencing. Nevertheless, below this level of agreement lay many differing viewpoints. Hence, amongst the Greens, there existed a range of contrasting opinions that individual members had formulated over the years through their participation in other intellectual communities and through the course of their own particular experiences. It was only when the issue of the Party's policy with regard to drug abuse was brought to the fore by a number of policy convenors that the members realised that even agreement on basic concepts would not easily be achieved. Members raised questions such as: what does the Party mean by 'drugs'; are some drugs harmful while others are beneficial; is the Party campaigning against the use of all 'harmful' drugs including 'soft' drugs such as alcohol and tobacco or are they concentrating upon the use of 'hard' drugs such as heroin and ecstasy? Even more important within the context of the election were questions such as should the Party seek to legalise all drugs or should they simply campaign to have their use decriminalised and, if so, would they be seen by the voting public as facing or avoiding the issues?

Although debate over issues in this area of policy had been ongoing within the Party for quite some time before my arrival in Dublin, I have chosen to engage with Sean's narrative of his experiences with the Justice Group from shortly after he joined the Party in July 1996 until just before the end of the election campaign in June 1997. Sean had become involved in this area after a guest speaker from a local drug rehabilitation centre was invited to a meeting of the Dublin Central Greens. As he recalled;

We had discussed, in Dublin Central, the drug issue as it is of primary importance to Dublin Central and we invited Sean Cassin along, from Merchant's Quay to give us an address, and I wrote to him afterwards expressing an interest in doing some voluntary work. I didn't really expect to get a reply and if I did I expected to be maybe making tea, maybe one day a week or one mornin a week. And I'd also wanted to get out of what I was doin, which was bar work, and I'd wanted to get out of it for at least five years. I wasn't livin to my potential. So I ended up joinin Merchant's Quay and workin three days a week - and so this was runnin parallel to the Green Party stuff, you know. It just kinda came together.

Shortly after this, Sean attended his first meeting of the Justice Group. He was surprised to find that, of the fifteen members of the group, only four were in attendance. All the same, this gave him the opportunity to question those who were interested in the Party's policy on drug related issues. Sean found that the Party had no formal 'drugs' policy and had been operating under a brief interim policy which had been formulated by the Health Group. Apparently, previous attempts to fashion a detailed policy in this area had been unsuccessful because of an inability to reach consensus on the more radical aims contained in past draft policy documents. The last detailed proposal that had been put before the National Council had been defeated because the discussion about it had gone on for so long that the meeting had concluded without a decision being made. As Sean explained;

What had transpired was that a very detailed policy was put together and it was left to be presented to Council by a couple of people, who maybe weren't as heavily involved as they might have been, and it was shot down. And the feedback I got was there was now very little chance of getting agreement on a radical drugs policy. On a logical, realistic drugs policy.

The proposal's definition of terms concentrated on separating everyday drug use from, what it called, 'problem drug use'. It was primarily concerned with addressing social and health problems caused by drug addiction and addictive behaviour while upholding the rights of

citizens to engage in certain forms of recreational drug use should they so choose. Thus, although the Party itself did not condone the use of such substances as alcohol and tobacco, the defeated proposal recognised the inevitability of recreational drug use in contemporary societies. Accordingly, the proposal stated that:

Recreational drug use is clearly not a problem but a choice. From a libertarian standpoint protecting the individual's choice to indulge in drugs, be they nicotine, alcohol, hashish or even ecstasy – some of which may or may not be deemed legal and taxable – is not an issue from a health policy perspective; this is clearly a justice issue. (Irish Green Party, Proposed Interim Policy on Drugs 1996:1)

Its aim was to present a policy framework in which to ultimately address the causes of 'problem drug use', while providing addicts and recovering addicts with the help they needed to survive and rehabilitate. In the context of Dublin in 1996, this meant that the policy was trying to grapple with issues related to the ever growing problem of heroin addiction and its consequences for Irish society. It recommended that any future policy in this area be informed by a perspective encompassing "several large constellations of intra-personal and extra-personal forces" (ibid) such as the "biological (nature); intrapersonal (self); interpersonal; (other) and sociocultural (society)" (ibid).

Also included within the defeated proposal was a brief discussion of the foundations of the current government's strategy for dealing with policy in this area. The proposal explained that the Department of Justice operated from the paradigm of 'deterrence', while the Departments of Education and Health operated on one of 'normalisation'. The definition of these two paradigms included in the document stated that:

Strategies of deterrence adopt a moral/legal model and are based on the American 'War on Drugs' model. They result in draconian laws which fail in their primary policy aim, to control the supply of drugs via resourcing and re-enforcing a heavy police presence in peoples everyday lives. Normalisation strategies adopt a sociocultural model and are based on a long term policy of prevention which includes the now buzz words of demand reduction and harm minimisation. The former of these two relates to all drug use with the latter aimed at problem drug users. (ibid: 2)

Those who formulated the proposal were clearly in favour of an approach based upon the 'normalisation' paradigm as it went on to say that "we acknowledge that to take on board a

genuine policy of normalisation we must be open to the reality of the contentious aspects of such an approach – in short de-criminalisation" (ibid).

This was the aspect of the proposal that caused conflict in the Party and upon which it was defeated. Many members of the National Council, and those within the leadership structure of the Party, felt that openly advocating decriminalisation would hand their opposition an opportunity to label the Greens as either irresponsible or 'pro-drugs'. There was an anxiety amongst this section of the membership that the impact of any negative publicity such as this would be reflected in the Party's electoral results and that this should be avoided at all costs. I should note here that there seemed to be very little disagreement in principle on this issue, but rather a reluctance to endorse even an interim policy without an extensive process of consensus seeking first being undertaken. In this, the Party's leadership wanted to err on the side of caution lest its policy direction be misrepresented by its opposition and misunderstood by the public. This conflict within the Party will be further elucidated as the case study continues.

At this point, Sean began to agitate for a resolution to this problem. He felt strongly that the Party should have a policy pertaining to, at least, problem drug use as the issue was a pressing one and was receiving a lot of attention in the media. He was supported in this by his fellow members of the Justice Group and there was a general feeling amongst the active membership, as well as the candidates, that the Party should not go to the polls without some kind of uniform answer to the inevitable questions that would be put to them by the media in relation to this issue. Upon speaking to Brendan, the then convenor of the Justice Group, Sean was informed that policy in this area was probably in the jurisdiction of the Health Group and that a successful policy could not be formulated without their input. Consequently, it was agreed to hold a joint meeting of the Justice and Health groups but, owing to the voluntary nature of the Party's membership, this took three months to organise. When I asked Sean why

this process took so long when most of those in the policy groups did not attend meetings anyway, he replied:

I think partly the idea behind so many people being on the Justice Group, or other groups, is that they're in the information loop. They get the minutes. They know what's going on but the attendance is very poor, you know, and it comes from people being part time politicians or being interested in Green issues but not really being political animals. So people would be in the Greens the way other people might be in Green Peace or something.

At the meeting it was decided that the two groups should set up a subcommittee to prepare an interim policy for the election to be presented to the National Council at its next meeting. This task was delegated to Sean who was asked to produce a one-page document to be scrutinised by the subcommittee. Owing to the complexity of the issues involved, Sean found it impossible to adequately address the subject in one page so he prepared a one-page policy outline accompanied by a three-page brief. As Sean recalled:

So that was re-circulated to the subcommittee and I got some feedback on it, and it was generally agreed with but some people wanted one or two changes. Some people felt that it wasn't very comprehensive. It then transpired that, despite all that work, it would have to go out to the Justice Group and out to its members for feedback before it was presented to Council and it would also have to out to all the groups. That's the process. It has to go out to all the groups for them to review it, you know, and submit amendments at Council if they so wish. So, we couldn't do that in time for the Council so it was presented at the Dublin Regional Council.

The document prepared by Sean was entitled *Proposed Interim Policy on Substance Abuse* and contained seven main policy directives that were informed by the "twin strategies of Harm Reduction and Demand Management" (1996:1). The seven points were:

1. A widespread extension of harm reduction facilities currently available to I.V. drug users.
2. Testing facilities to be made available to determine the presence of toxic substances in Ecstasy tablets before use. More funding to be made available into the long term effects of Ecstasy.
3. Better education for parents, particularly in relation to the physical symptoms which indicate a person is effected by a substance.
4. An increase in the number of drug treatment therapeutic communities based on both medical and client centred models.
5. The Green Party propose that a government task force is set up to consult widely with experts in the field with a view to finding a fresh approach to the drugs problem, including the partial, or total, relaxation of prohibition, and also to consider in a non-partisan manner, the implications of making clean heroin legally available to registered addicts.
6. Social Justice Initiatives.

7. Decriminalisation of cannabis.

Obviously, these seven points were largely informed by Sean's experiences as a volunteer worker at the Merchant Quay counselling and rehabilitation centre where he had gained an intimate knowledge of the problems faced by both community and government agencies attempting to deal with the havoc caused by heroin addiction in Dublin's inner city. As mentioned previously, all points were accompanied by a corresponding statement in the briefing document, however, it is point six that concerns us most here. The brief for this point stated that:

Resources need to be ploughed into social justice initiatives in the long term in order to repair the tear in the social fabric which has led to much of our present problem. Education, housing, counselling facilities and crisis intervention resources are to name just a few. (ibid)

When presented to the Dublin Regional Council in early December 1996, the document was broadly endorsed but those present felt that the issue of social justice initiatives should be expanded upon so that the meaning behind the phrase could be illuminated. Subsequently, it was decided that another member of the Justice Group, Andrea, would write a second draft of the proposal which would be presented at the next Dublin Regional Council meeting in March for further discussion. This second draft was written by Andrea and was circulated to the members of both the Justice and Health groups. It received widespread approval from both groups and was deemed ready for presentation.

The second draft drugs policy entitled *Drugs Policy: Principally an issue of social justice* (1996), while addressing problem drug use through the paradigm of 'normalisation', in keeping with the direction of the first defeated proposal, had a broader scope than its predecessor and included Sean's task oriented directives as well as referring to drug use in general within Irish society. The document's opening paragraph stated that:

The GP/CG¹⁰ sees drug use as a pervasive feature of Irish life. From poitin-making to alcoholism to over prescribing of tranquillisers, we have always had drug makers,

¹⁰ Green Party / Comhaontas Glas.

drug dealers and drug users in our society. The GP/CG is of the opinion that no drug, be it ecstasy, tea, heroin or tobacco, is without harmful side effects. The GP/CG promotes a drug free lifestyle for everyone. However, the current preoccupation with the eradication of certain substances and their users is hugely counterproductive, extremely costly and doomed to failure. (ibid: 1)

Here Irish society was presented as one in which a certain level of drug use has had a long history as a cultural phenomenon. The implication was that it would be more appropriate to openly recognise this reality and strive to control and modify drug use in Irish society than it would be to demonise certain types of drug users and prohibit certain types of drugs.

Additionally, this document expanded upon the approach of the earlier defeated proposal in this area. It stated that:

All drugs should be controlled. Arguably there should be more controls on alcohol. The case for radical measures in relation to nicotine is unanswerable and doctors who endlessly reissue prescriptions for benzodiazepines should be disciplined (ibid).

This indicated a will, within the Justice Group at least, for the state to become actively involved in the overall use of drugs in Irish society and attempt to openly modify this type of cultural and social behaviour. More importantly, in keeping with the title, this draft policy document clearly stated its objection to the then present policy of criminalising certain types of problem drug users, such as heroin and amphetamine addicts, while accepting others, such as alcoholics and tobacco smokers. On this subject, the draft claimed that:

As a direct effect of a policy of prohibition, currently there are no verifiable controls on the drugs which are wreaking havoc among many vulnerable people. This is a prescription for criminalisation, infection and overdose. This policy should be subject to honest scrutiny, open debate and objective research with regard to its effectiveness in terms of public health and justice (ibid).

Andrea's draft presented the view that excessive drug use of all kinds was harmful to both individuals and society but that, while the legal and health ramifications of this type of behaviour were significant, large scale problem drug use and addiction arose from conditions of social inequality and had to be treated accordingly. While the draft was a brief document designed to revitalise discussion within the Party, the Justice Group's identification of

problem drug use as a socially based phenomenon was fundamental to its approach.

Accordingly, the draft explained that:

This is a statement about social inequality and injustice rather than about the nature of either drugs or the people using them. People who are deprived of meaning and a future will turn to substances which dull their pain and give some relief. Of course individuals must be held accountable for their choices. This is not an argument for ignoring personal responsibility but the mitigating factors are significant. The GP/GC sees the so-called 'drug problem' as symptomatic of marginalisation and inequality and its solution requires a much greater emphasis on social policy and attitudinal change rather than on draconian measures. (ibid)

The proposal went on to advocate a number of initiatives intended to address some of the more pressing problems which the Justice Group had identified as priorities. It should be noted here that these priorities must be seen within the greater context of Green Party policy. They were not, in themselves, the Party's only response to social inequality in Irish society, but rather a response to a specific manifestation of these imbalances. As such, they were targeted towards addressing the most immediate problems rather than providing a solution over time. The initiatives mentioned were:

- More support services should be made available for children at risk at primary school level in areas where problem drug use is prevalent.
- At second level a life skills programme integrated with factual drugs and sex education should be part of the curriculum of all schools.
- Targeted education on the long and short term effects of drugs (coupled with ongoing research) and the risks attached to certain methods of administration should be provided.
- A range of widely available, low threshold, physically accessible treatment facilities must be provided including detoxification, maintenance, rehabilitation, counselling and ongoing support services for drug-users (including those in prison) and their families.
- All of the above should be subject to ongoing evaluation and research as to their effectiveness.

The next Dublin Regional Council (DRC) meeting was held on the twenty-second of March 1997 and all present were given a copy of the second draft interim policy for the planned discussion. Unfortunately, before this could be entered into, a debate broke out between some of those in attendance after the issue of the Party's preferred stance on problem drug use was introduced to the meeting by Michael. Michael, responsible for presenting the opening address on this issue, put to the meeting that the problem must be "tackled from the top and

the bottom". By this he meant that legislation, no matter how innovative and radical, would be insufficient unless it was aimed at negating the profit motive that attracted organised crime into the drugs trade and made street level counselling and rehabilitation services available to everyone in need of them. In order to achieve this, he recommended that all prohibited substances be decriminalised and that there should be no prohibition on the sale and cultivation of cannabis. Furthermore, this action should be accompanied by a nationwide crackdown on organised crime, which he saw as being the major beneficiary of the crime instigated by the drugs trade.

Michael's suggestion for the Party to condone the decriminalisation of the sale and cultivation of cannabis was rejected by Paul, the candidate for the seat of Dublin South East, who worried that the Party might be portrayed as being "soft on drugs". He also felt that the policy would prove to be largely ineffective as it would not "stop kids graduating from cannabis to hard drugs". Kathleen, a member from the Dublin South group, countered Paul's objections by stating her belief that problem drug use was not the product of a progression from 'soft' to 'hard' drugs but rather of prolonged and pronounced social inequality within Irish society. While agreeing with Kathleen, Siobhan, candidate for Dublin North East, also objected to Michael's call for decriminalisation. She felt that, while decriminalisation would remove the ability of drug dealers to make profits from the sale of banned substances, it would do nothing to address the inequalities that motivated people to take them in the first instance.

Michael answered these queries by reiterating that the issues involved were quite complex and needed to be dealt with accordingly. He felt that a strategy must be devised by the Party to address each facet of the problem in stages as it was unrealistic to expect the Party to come up with a comprehensive single answer. Hence, he felt that the first thing that should be done was the elimination of the profit motive of the drugs trade through decriminalisation and the placing of cannabis in the same category as alcohol and tobacco. Tim, candidate for Dublin South Central, pointed out that the discussion proved that the Party was far from achieving

consensus concerning how to tackle problem drug use. Sinead, a Green Member of the European Parliament (MEP), was less pessimistic and reminded the meeting that everyone present did agree that the "root causes" of the problem must be tackled if any lasting solution was to be found. Sean suggested that, in order to identify these root causes as well as effective strategies to deal with them, the Party should advocate the creation of a taskforce that "would make decisions on behalf of the country through proper consultation and accept the fact that current policies are not working".

There was overwhelming agreement to this proposal from those present at the meeting and suggestions were made as to the tactics to be employed by the taskforce. Some of these were that the taskforce should:

- Ask the advice of people whose communities were directly effected by problem drug use.
- Explain to the community the history of 'hard' drug use in modern societies over the last thirty to forty years in order to encourage a greater perspective regarding the issues at hand.
- Stop criminalising users and provide drugs for addicts as an interim harm reduction measure.

At this point Joe, candidate for Dublin South, suggested that candidates should be allowed to answer any questions put to them while campaigning in their local constituencies according to their own personal opinion as there was no official policy at that time. He was sure that the issue of problem drug use would come up "on the doorstep" and did not want to lose votes by appearing to avoid the issue. Paul agreed with Joe and added that he was still opposed to the decriminalisation of drugs as he felt that the Party should "attack the whole drug culture including alcohol and tobacco" in its attempt to "advocate a non-toxic lifestyle". The meeting then moved on to the next item on the agenda and the second draft interim policy was left unconsidered.

Two days after the Dublin Regional Council (DRC) meeting, on the twenty-fifth of March, a combined Health and Justice Group's meeting was held in which the drugs policy was firmly

on the agenda. There were nine people in attendance and both Sean and Andrea, the two main authors of the interim policy, were present. Sean initiated the discussion by informing the group of the reservations Michael had about the second draft. When Sean had talked with him after the Council meeting Michael had been critical of the policy because it was "fuzzy, vague, and not addressing the issues". Sean had also been in contact with members of the National Council who requested that the combined groups come up with a one-page briefing that candidates and canvassers could use when campaigning in the absence of a formal policy. Sean added that many members of the DRC had been surprised and annoyed to discover that the Party had not already formalised a detailed policy in this area previously.

Andrea said that she agreed with their frustration but explained to the group:

I find it's a bit hard to know what to do now because a policy was put to Council some time ago and people couldn't live with that because for some it was going far to far and it was kind of shot down. And that's where this is coming from. Saying, well, we're not suggesting anything other than it should be open to debate, rather than demonising users, but maybe we don't know enough to say that drugs should be legalised.

Sean used this to press home the need for a process by experts could be consulted and said that he felt that attitudes within the Party were consolidating around a more radical approach than was previously accepted by both the Party membership and the public in general.

Darragh, a member of the Health group, warned that there was a danger in the Party pushing the Irish government to implement policies more radical in nature than those operating throughout the rest of Europe. He contended that:

One of the dangers is that if you become more radical than the rest of Europe then you become a 'Euro-port'. Especially where you have a bordering state like Northern Ireland right next door to us where, if we become more tolerant of drug use activity and it becomes more obviously available as a result of that, if you lift the lid on drug usage - you're going to allow people to take cannabis at will or whatever - without a counterbalance elsewhere it'll suck in people. You become a Euro-Port unless there's other balances. If you go so far as to decriminalise something, unless you let it out through proper outlets, then you're still leaving it in the hands of the drug barons. So, if you decriminalise it, you're better off going the whole hog and controlling it and taxing it and having different policies for different drugs maybe.

He advocated that all drugs, including alcohol and tobacco, should be classified so that their distribution and usage could be more tightly controlled by the state. Accordingly, this would involve the creation of a number of statutory categories in which every substance could be examined in its own right. While those present agreed with this course of action, they were also worried about what impact such a liberal approach would have on their chances of electoral success once the information became available to the media. Sean put it succinctly when he remarked that "If the Greens come out against alcohol it could be used against us".

It should be reiterated here that this was a reality that had constantly to be considered by those making policy or leadership decisions within the Party. Unlike other environmental organisations such as Greenpeace or Earth Watch, the Party depended upon its ability to sway the opinion of large sections of the general public who were neither actual nor potential members. This effectively meant that the Party had to achieve more than simply generating the desired level of consensus within its own ranks. It was also required, by its very nature as a political organisation, to generate policies that were not so distanced from mainstream public opinion that they were deemed too radical to be taken seriously. Those present at the meeting were fully aware that any policy proposal that they formulated, no matter how theoretically effective, would be useless unless it contained a convincing argument as to why it should be implemented. Thus, as part of their strategy to make public opinion more amenable to their policy direction, they believed it was necessary to highlight the inadequacy of the current government's approach under the existing legislation. If the taskforce achieved that much, they thought, it would have been well worth the effort.

In relation to the more radical aspects of the combined groups approach, and its potential treatment by the media, Darragh thought that the Party might be able to avoid bad publicity and misleading interpretations by employing terminology that was simple, clear and to the point. He was of the opinion that:

It's gonna be very very difficult to deal with it unless, as Sinead says, there's a body of language that can be used that's easily understood by people in the Party and that can't be attacked from outside as being soft, as being pro-user, as being pro-usage rather than having a go at the individual. But there's gotta be some kind of terse terminology put together by the taskforce that deals with this so that it's not allowing one party to take the 'brave' stance of saying 'look, this is what's actually going on in the street, this is what's going on in nightclubs, this is what people are doing and this is the best way of dealing with it in terms of really controlling things'.

Paul took this into account when replied:

What you're sayin Darragh is that the bottom line with the Greens is that we're encouraging people to lead a non-toxic lifestyle. That's important and more so than any other party, in fact, and by saying that we see drugs as being alcohol, tobacco, and the tranquillisers that the doctors are handing out like smarties, you know. I think that by saying that, we're actually making a very strong statement about where we're coming from.

After a brief discussion, it was decided that the group would adopt a strategy of emphasising the importance of addressing all drugs in Irish society and not singling out specific substances, such as heroin and ecstasy, for particular attention. The point was also put by Darragh that any punishment that was to be legally imposed should be equally born by offenders from every section of the community and not just by those most vulnerable and with the least resources to protect themselves. In his words:

I'd go along with that but its gotta also deal with the rich who go to Lilly's Bordello and take cocaine. It never comes up in court, they never go to the police, they never get busted. There's a lot of money swimming around amongst that group. I mean, the people who end up in the hands of the police are the poor sods from poor areas at the bottom end of the scale.

However, this did not mean that Darragh was in favour of harsh punishments for every offence. He went on to explain:

I mean the PD's and Fianna Fail with all their 'zero tolerance' carry on, they're going to say that we're in favour of soft drugs. It's not realistic and zero tolerance isn't going to work. The zero tolerance campaign worked in America where they introduced a whole range of new laws and they kept on clamping down on the minor offences but, if minor offences such as smoking cannabis in Ireland is going to be stamped out, you're gonna have more jails than you have schools.

Sean was quick to agree with this and felt that, regardless of the proposed taskforce and issues pertaining to whether or not the Party should advocate decriminalisation, the Party should

make a concerted effort to point out to the public that any attempt to wage an American style "war on drugs" would be lost before it was begun. As he informed the group:

There was six and a half kilograms of heroin seized in 1995 and there was two hundred and ninety-five people arrested nationwide, one hundred and twenty of those in Dublin, and there's eight thousand intravenous drug users using everyday, and there's probably about twenty thousand people smokin - that's just a guess now. I have no figures to quote that. So, I mean the policies are simply not workin and someone needs to stand up and say that and, whoever does, I think there's a lot of votes out there for that. There's a lot of votes to lose but you've gotta go for your niche markets, you know. And, more importantly it happens to be the truth.

From a candidate's point of view, Paul was wary that even this might be construed the wrong way by the media. While he certainly agreed in principle, he would suffer directly as a result of any miscalculation made by the policy regarding the degree of support for radical action on drug use within the community. Additionally, he was well acquainted with the fickle nature of public opinion and the power of the media from his experiences as Lord Mayor of Dublin. He had been elected to that office on the same tide of popularity that saw the Greens gain their first ever seat in the Dail, but had been similarly defeated by the same fall in popularity that eventually saw the first Green TD fail to regain the seat of Dublin South at the next election. As the candidate for Dublin South East, one of the more conservative constituencies in Dublin, he was against the Party taking what he saw as unnecessary risks so close to a general election. He explained to the group:

But, you see, if you had a situation where a taskforce came back and recommended that, then you're in a far better position because these are people who are in the field, people who deal with the law every day, people who deal with addicts and they would have the expertise. And that, in turn, sets up a discussion with the public and that way you can bring it in. But if you were to put that now in the run up to an election, the first thing that would happen is that they would say that the Greens are encouraging drug use, and that's what they're gonna say. It has to be dealt with and it can't just be put on the back burner year after year after year. You know, if the Greens do end up in a rainbow government, or whatever, it's going to be brought up.

Paul was also aware that the any overtly radical stance by the Party might allow the other parties an opportunity to band together in opposition in order to remove the Greens as a serious competitor for seats in the election. In his opinion:

The problem with the Greens is this, and it's a very tough one you know. It's that whereas people can sling mud at us, we don't get the opportunity to reply. You

probably saw the Sunday *Business Post* where your man had a go at us and we asked for letters to be written on that to get back to them but they wouldn't publish it. So, we have a lot of resources lined up against us, and the interesting thing that he said in that article, and I feel it would happen here again, is that he said that all the parties should close ranks and tear the Greens economic policy to shreds. Now that's just economics. Now, I can imagine that you would have a situation where all the parties would close ranks and say 'right'. Because we're the only ones that queer the pitch for people. If we weren't around, everything would be great for everyone else. They would kind of swap around and maybe lose a few seats here and there and it wouldn't really bother anyone.

By the end of the meeting there was no firm consensus reached on the Party's public stance during the election campaign other than that candidates and canvassers should openly advocate the creation of a taskforce to deal with the issues surrounding drug use in Irish society. It must be noted here that, although it may seem that the policy concerning such a vital issue was left incomplete at this critical juncture through some failure of the organisational structure to deal with social complexities, there were important mitigating factors. We must consider that the Party contained approximately sixty active members and that these members were responsible for the running of a national political organisation with a political mission as broad in scope as any of the major parties they were competing against. Additionally, they were a relatively new political force which simply did not have the resources or expertise built up over considerable periods of time that were available to those parties, such as Fianna Fail and Fine Gael, with their roots in the civil war era. Even with the combined forces of the Health and Justice groups, the Party could only boast nine people in attendance at this crucial policy meeting and one of them was an anthropologist intent upon simply listening rather than contributing. Additionally, these members were not professionals with expertise 'in the field' but rather concerned citizens attempting to make sense of, and find answers to, a social problem that had eluded the best minds and the most powerful political institutions for decades all over the world. At the heart of their approach was an open-minded quest for a genuine solution. This was best summed up by Jane, candidate for Donegal South West, at the end of the meeting when she remarked:

I think it's important to remember that we don't have to have all the answers, we have to ask the right questions. And a taskforce that would ask the right questions would be

very valuable. I mean we'd all struggle to find the truth in the end but we wouldn't have to know all the right answers.

A week and a half later, on the fifth of April, saw the Party's first and only formal presentation of their stance on problem drug use at the Green Party Spring Convention. The convention was held as part of the Party's election campaign and was used as a forum to introduce both its candidates and policy platforms. Not surprisingly, the candidate responsible for delivering a speech on this area of policy was Paul. This speech was entitled *Crime and Drugs* and his opening remarks neatly summed up the Party's approach to these issues:

Friends, Joe is going to speak later on landfill sites and it has been said that dumps are symbols for the modern consumer's throw away society. They symbolise material mismanagement. But I could also be said that our over full prisons also represent our throw away society. They symbolise human mismanagement and, for many decades, all over the western world, crime has been on the increase. While standards of living increase, while consumption increases, while growth increases, so do crime and drug abuse, and quality of life decreases. We will not be entering this election with simplistic, quick fix solutions to the crime and drugs problem. We have too much respect for the electorate to engage in the macho and empty rhetoric that promises a lot and delivers nothing, and my experience is that people are genuinely concerned about the crime problem but they're not going to be conned by clever slogans.

Paul went on to rail against the mainstream parties for either ignoring the problem or advocating the introduction of an American style 'zero tolerance' policy aimed at deterring problem behaviour through the imposition of punitive custodial sentences upon offenders. He saw this as hypocritical because neither the government nor the opposition had mentioned anything about cracking down on tax avoidance or white-collar crime. When outlining the link between problem drug use and crime, Paul stated that:

One of the root problems of our crime is certainly the whole question of drugs. Eighty percent of our crime problem is related to drugs and people in deprived areas don't take drugs primarily for pleasure, they take drugs to avoid pain. Society currently sends out mixed messages on drugs. The drug that causes most problems in Ireland is not heroin but alcohol, and yet it is glamourised through advertising and the government earns millions of pounds through its sale and consumption. Thousands die annually through illnesses caused by nicotine addiction and many more are addicted to tranquillisers. I know this from dealing in my own areas at advice centres. This happens all the time. So many people are actually addicted to tranquillisers. And it isn't easy to persuade young people that drugs are bad for them when they see their parents and society's role models taking drugs, albeit legalised ones.

During the course of his speech Paul outlined much of the policy direction put forward in the draft interim policy formulated by the Health and Justices groups including an emphasis on more stringent controls on alcohol and tobacco, a call for greater resources to be provided by the government for educating the community about the dangers of drug use, and "the setting up of an all-party commission on the drug problem which would include experts in the field and examine the success or failure of the current strategy on drugs". He also stated that the Party was in favour of establishing a "Department of Community" which would be responsible for assisting local communities attempting to deal with social problems at ground level and "Helping to address social exclusion, community breakdown and crime". He ended the speech by drawing parallels between Ireland's social future and the problems faced by present day American society. While recounting his experiences in Baltimore when on vacation, Paul succeeded in appearing both radical and conservative when he stated:

It is the wealthiest country in the world but they brought us to Baltimore and I can tell you it was absolutely shocking. A wasteland, crack addiction, absolutely rampant crime and yet this is in the wealthiest country in the world where you have these walled ghettos, where you have these security men and that, I'm afraid, is the road that we could be heading down. We are, as a party, swimming against the tide on this issue but I hope, for the sake of society, that we are successful.

Notably, Paul omitted any reference to decriminalisation or legalisation. From the contents of the speech it would have been easy for potential voters to arrive at the conclusion that this was not a policy option that the Party had even considered. What Paul had done was to open the door of debate but not so widely as to reveal the wider discussion that surrounded the issues within the Party itself. Unfortunately, discussion within the Party on this subject was brought to a halt by the frenetic activity of the election campaign which overtook the lives of all of the Party's active members in the proceeding weeks. The interim policy was never presented again to the National Council while I was in Ireland as, after the campaign, the Party suspended its operations for a month in order to allow its members to rest and recuperate. When activities resumed they concentrated their energies on the ratification of a new constitution which they believed would enable them to be a more effective organisation in the future. This had the effect of putting all policy development on hold until members

were sure of what ramifications the new constitution would have upon the decision making processes of the Party.

In summary, the difficulties faced by the Greens regarding policy formation are apparent in the above discussion. Their struggle to maintain cohesion was ongoing and, although the pressure induced by the election magnified the conflicts within the organisation, it is clear that the various ideological currents running through the Party's membership had not resolved themselves under a solid front. That is why it is important to restate that the Greens, at least at that moment in time, had not yet articulated an ideological position amongst themselves but were rather in the process of forming an emergent ideology. As with their organisational structure, they were still in the process of 'becoming' Green even after a decade and a half of existence. In the context of the election of 1997, this became a major factor in their performance during the campaign and the overall outcome achieved through it. The question of drug abuse, taken as a case study, indicates the extensive and open form of communication engaged in by the Greens. It also reveals the complex hazards the Greens faced as a minority party striving to educate the public while winning its support.

Chapter 5: The Election

5.1 Initial Difficulties

When first attempting to write these next set of chapters, I intended to give an outline of the events during the election that I had personally attended. My plan was to present a chronological report of the Party's progress through this period starting with the build up before the announcement of the election date by the Rainbow Coalition, then in government, and ending a week after the election results became known in mid June. This was to include nine Local Group meetings, one Regional Council meeting, one National Council meeting, an Election Task Force meeting, a Candidates Conference, a National Party Convention, a Manifesto Committee meeting, two policy meetings, four policy launches, two fundraising events, and door to door canvassing on eight different occasions in three separate constituencies. In describing the progression of these events I hoped to describe the intricacies and the difficulties involved in organising a concerted effort such as this within a political party with so few members and resources. I had also hoped to describe the tactics, methods, and structures used by the Party to achieve this goal while portraying the conflicts and tensions that arose between those actively involved in the campaign. This was a remarkable period for both myself and for the Party membership and I was able to view first hand the Party evolving structurally, philosophically, and politically at an astonishing rate.

To this end I collated my field notes on all of these events and launched into the narrative of the campaign. However, after a few days of writing I encountered a serious ethical dilemma. If I continued I would run the risk of compromising the Irish Greens as a political organisation by revealing flaws and tensions within their organisation that they would most probably rather keep to themselves. Here I am not talking about the differences of opinion

that take place at the level of the local group as these are openly held in public and anyone is welcome to join in the debate. Additionally, I am not concerned about revealing how those in the Party felt about the issues specifically concerned with events of that period as the debate has moved on since 1997 and no one reading this text could gain a tactical advantage from that information. My concern was that I may inadvertently give the political opponents of the Irish Greens ammunition with which to discredit them. After all, the Irish Greens are a political party and that means that any document written about them can quite possibly be used against them in future political tussles by those they are directly contending against. Let me emphasise that I am not alluding to any improprieties or irregularities within the Party, as I observed nothing but the highest levels of honest commitment to a shared cause during my time with the Irish Greens. What I am referring to are the changing attitudes and ideals that can be quite fluid within any evolving political party given the shifting nature of political debate. I would not wish for views and attitudes given by informants in confidence to be used against them at a later date.

For these reasons I had to rethink my original plan and devise an alternative method. One that would allow me to bring the aspects of the narrative pertinent to this work to the fore while not betraying the trust of those informants without whose help this research could not have been conducted. In order to do this I decided to treat the three local group campaigns that I was involved with as discrete narratives. Where these narratives intertwine at the level of policy launches and conventions, I chose to simply describe the event as fully as possible and have left any analysis for my conclusion. In this way I hope to provide the reader with an overview of the election while creating sufficient space within the text to explore the dynamics of the campaign relevant to the research.

5.1.1 *The Other Parties*

Let us first consider the main political parties with which the Greens competed for votes with during the election of 1997. These are Fianna Fail, Fine Gael, the Labour Party, the Progressive Democrats, the Democratic Labour Party, and Sinn Féin. Unlike many other western states, Irish politics has not been dominated by either a class struggle involving disputes between workers and employers or a schism between the mechanism of the state and the power of the church (Garvin 1981:215). Owing to the reality of partition in Ireland in its post-colonial era, the main focus of Irish political life has been the fate of the six counties in Ulster known as Northern Ireland. While a discussion of the history of the Irish Republican movement in the early twentieth century is beyond the scope of this work, it should be noted that the major modern political parties of the Republic have their beginnings in that era.

The modern political parties of Fianna Fail and Fine Gael are the products of this historical schism in the Irish Republican movement. Fianna Fail has its roots as a political party in the anti-treaty movement led by Eamon De Valera. Formed in 1926, it was then a political party which had sprung out of movements such as the I.R.A. and Sinn Féin which saw the acceptance of the treaty of partition, proposed by Westminster and signed by Michael Collins, as a form of capitulation by the pro-treaty movement with Ireland's old colonial masters before full emancipation was reached. On the other hand, Fine Gael has its roots in the older mainstream republican organisations such as the I.R.B. (Garvin 1981:216). It was seen initially as the party which pragmatically accepted the reality of the situation and was willing to renounce the militarisation of Irish politics in order to govern for the good of those in the 26 counties under home rule. Traditionally Fianna Fail and Fine Gael have been seen as occupying the centre left and centre right of the political spectrum respectively. Fianna Fail's association with moderate leftist politics is seen to stem from the subsumation of class politics under the banner of republicanism in the years leading up to the Easter Rebellion of 1916. Indeed, the pervasiveness of this view was attested to by a senior member of the Greens who

went so far as to claim that the leaders of the pre-treaty republican movement formally requested that the embryonic organised labour movement in Ireland make class politics a secondary issue until the military struggle was resolved.

One of the consequences of this policy was that many of the organised labour leaders emerged as Sinn Féin leaders after the signing of the treaty in 1922 and went on to fight with the anti-treaty forces in the Irish Civil War. Hence, when Fianna Fáil emerged from Sinn Féin as a parliamentary republican party under De Valera, it was commonly perceived to have integrated, to an extent, the agenda of the more moderate wing of the organised labour movement. Conversely, and possibly because of their willingness to participate in the parliamentary process under the restrictions of home rule, Fine Gael gained the backing of business interests, both commercial and agricultural, throughout the 26 counties after the war had subsided. While this does not represent a hard and fast rule in pro-treaty Irish politics, Fine Gael had more middle class urban and large landholding rural support at a time when Fianna Fáil's base resided in the poorer rural western counties and the smaller industrial working class of Dublin.

Whatever their past differences, the main cleavages between the two main parties of the modern Republic have not translated into an ideological divide between left and right in the modern era. Indeed, it has been a feature of Irish politics over the last 30 years that many of the more radical elements of both sides of the ideological divide have been forced to form smaller splinter parties in order to present their ideological views to the public. The Progressive Democrats, who are a splinter group from Fianna Fáil, represent the most deeply conservative faction within modern Irish politics. As the newest party represented in the Dáil, the Progressive Democrats have enjoyed a rapid rise to prominence by attracting the far right vote within the Irish political spectrum via a policy platform arguing for a return to the traditional conservative Catholic morality espoused by Fianna Fáil under De Valera's leadership. While attitudes within the Republic have changed in many ways since the 1950s,

the power of the perceived traditional Catholic value system among the Irish electorate was attested to in the results of the 1997 election. The Progressive Democrats emerged from that democratic contest with enough members to enter into coalition with Fianna Fáil as the minor partner in a government cemented by the support of two sympathetic independent candidates.

The Irish Labour Party is the oldest parliamentary party in Ireland and, as the third largest in the modern Irish political milieu, can be seen to be the largest non-'civil war' party in Ireland. Originally founded upon classic class politics, the Labour Party was unable to amass sufficient support to enable it to be seen as a contender for a coalition government partnership by either of the main parties until quite recently. It appears that its disassociation from the nationalist question in the minds of Ireland's voting population served to make it a secondary party as long as the politics of class and of organised labour were themselves of secondary importance to the perceived aims of the Republic. However, in recent times the Labour Party has enjoyed an increase in support that has almost mirrored the upturn in Ireland's economy, which has seen it progress from virtual Third World status in the 1950s to the 'Celtic Tiger' economy of the 1990s. In recent years the Labour Party has shown itself to be a pragmatic force in Irish politics by forming coalition government with first Fianna Fáil and then Fine Gael. While maintaining itself in the role of a moderating force upon both the 'Civil War' parties, the Labour Party leadership have also earned for themselves the title of 'Smoked Salmon Socialists'. This is because of the public's perception that they are less concerned with representing the interests of organised labour as they once were. I encountered much scepticism concerning the Irish Labour Party and its political agenda and there was much speculation that it had, under the leadership of Dick Spring, allowed itself to become seduced by the trappings of power in coalition and had abandoned its more traditional leftist aims.

This move towards the centre of the political spectrum by the Labour Party caused a split within its ranks and led to the founding of a new leftist party called the Democratic Labour Party by a break away group of traditionalists within the Labour Party's leadership. While not

perceiving itself to be strictly incompatible with the Labour Party's centre left platform, the Democratic Labour Party has been seen to act as an independent voice both for the organised labour movement and those concerned about social justice issues in Ireland since its conception. This has been especially true in their role as minor coalition partners in the 'Rainbow Coalition' of 1994 – 1997 although their effectiveness in achieving their goals has been severely hampered by lack of representation in the Dail.

The last and smallest of the political parties that make up the modern Irish political scene in which the Greens contend for power is Sinn Fein. As discussed above, Sinn Fein arose out of the struggle for independence from British rule and was the original pre-treaty political wing of the Irish forces. After De Valera split from Sinn Fein in 1926 the majority of its support base was taken along with him into mainstream democratic politics under Ireland's brief period of self-governance while politically attached to the United Kingdom (otherwise known as 'Home Rule'). Sinn Fein then struggled to survive with its minority support base because of its refusal to occupy the seats it had won in the Dail while the oath of loyalty to the Queen of England remained a mandatory condition of entrance. Its policy of non-participation in the Dail before independence was fully gained and its continuing concentration on the fate of the six counties still under British rule marks it out as the one true remaining 'Civil War' party in the Republic of today. While showing no signs of reaching the level of popularity it enjoyed before, or immediately after, the Civil War, during the election of 1997 Sinn Fein enjoyed a resurgence in popularity at the polls and gained its only seat in the Dail. If, at first glance, this seems unimportant it should be noted that this was achieved in an election that saw the support bases of most minor parties eroded due to a polarisation of the vote between Fianna Fail and Fine Gael.

5.2 The Campaign

There was much speculation about the date of the election from the time the Dail resumed in January of 1997. The Party started the year in earnest believing that an election could be called as early as April but, as the weeks wore on, this estimate was put back first to sometime in May and then as late as the beginning of November. It was a time of uncertainty for the candidates and the leadership of the Party, as no one knew when to start or even how long the campaign would be when it was announced. When the date was finally set for the sixth of June, there were only six weeks for the Party to organise and run its national campaign and for the local candidates and secretaries to get their groups organised into effective and cohesive units.

Nevertheless, a mood of optimism prevailed within the Party because the polls had been predicting that support for the Greens was around four to five percent (*The Irish Times* 4/4/1997) and this would be enough to give them a chance of electing four or five of their candidates. They had polled around two and a half percent consistently for the last two elections and this was only sufficient to elect one candidate each time. If their representation in the Dail increased to four or five, this would be enough to make them a significant force in Irish politics, and furthermore would give them access to a level of funding comparable to the Progressive Democrats and the Democratic Labour Party. Party members hoped that, with increased funding, they would be able to gain additional support within the community and, thus, wield more political influence. Understandably, the Irish Greens faced the elections with a great deal of excitement but also with trepidation about the job ahead of them.

The majority of local group meetings that I attended were in the Dublin South and Dublin Central constituencies and these meetings focussed upon election issues and local strategies. There were no Dublin South West local group meetings as the group was not well attended and had only five official members – three of these had not renewed their membership the

previous year. By necessity the campaign was run by the candidate, Eileen, and her husband, Kris, with the help of various other Green Party members and myself when time was available. This shall, however, be discussed in greater detail at a latter stage of this section.

5.2.1 *The Dublin South Campaign*

The five seat electoral constituency of Dublin South was a firmly middle class area and one in which the benefits of Ireland's 'Celtic Tiger' economy could be plainly seen. A large part of it was covered with neat, well appointed housing estates and much of the remaining area boasted fine old houses of historical significance. There was one council tenancy in the constituency, but it was not large enough to change the overall demographic in any meaningful way. The area also boasted several shopping centres, a large cinema complex, extensive parks and gardens and was close to both the Dublin College University (DCU) and the University College of Dublin (UCD). The incumbent politicians were two representatives from Fianna Fail, one from Fine Gael, one from Labour, and one from the Progressive Democrats. I came to know the constituency quite well during my time in Ireland as I lived there in a rental property with five other students for seven months during my research.

The Dublin South local group was one of the most numerous in the Green Party and had been active on many fronts during its short lifetime of fifteen years. The group had approximately twenty members with a regular attendance of between eight and twelve members for most of the fortnightly general meetings. During the election campaign the attendance was usually between twelve to fifteen members. Also, planning and strategy was often organised over the phone or at planning meetings held at members houses when time constraints made group authorisation impossible. However, since the constitutional and structural aspects of local groups have been discussed in detail earlier in this work¹¹, I will concentrate on the group's campaign rather than its various functions within the Party.

¹¹ For discussion see chapter 4.1a

5.2.1a3/2/1997 – *Election Strategy Meeting*

On the third of February I attended the first election strategy meeting of the Dublin South Greens. It was held at the same place that all the Dublin South Green meetings were held – the Eagle Hotel in Dundrum. The main focus of the meeting was how the candidate, Joe, should present himself to the public and whether or not the traditional method of door to door canvassing was appropriate for the type of campaign Joe wanted to run. The Dublin South constituency was thought to offer the Party a good chance of success because it had elected the Greens' first representative to the Dail in 1988, and was considered to be one of the most progressive constituencies in the Republic. If the media polls were correct then five percent of the national vote would see a Green TD in Dublin South once more. Thus, the local Green campaign in Dublin South was crucial to the Greens national performance.

At that time, Joe was not at all keen to canvass in public places such as shopping centres and at meetings of residential groups. He felt that this was more the domain of mainstream politicians and that the Greens would be seen to be trying to emulate the established parties if they too attempted this approach. His logic was that, if he wanted to be seen as different, he should act differently to the other candidates. He was able to persuade the rest of the group that he was right with regards to canvassing in public places, but the group was firmly resolved that Joe should participate in the door to door canvassing. They had planned to canvass extensively as soon as the election date was announced. Joe also made it clear that he wanted to present himself to the public as "the only caring candidate" and that he did not want to "alienate the man in the street" by appearing to be too radical. Consequently, he wanted to steer away from the more controversial aspects of the Green Party's policy platform, such as transport and economics, and to make it known that he would try to represent all of the people in the constituency, not just those who voted for him.

5.2.1b 17/02/1997 – General Meeting

The next meeting was held on the seventeenth of February, by which time ideas about the issues involved in the campaign had solidified to a greater extent. There was a feeling among the members (and the general public) that the date for the election would be announced in the very near future and that the Party would have to anticipate the expectations of the public with firm policy platforms and sound campaign strategies. Hence, it was decided that the first part of all of Dublin South's group meetings would be given over to discussion of strategies and positions that would enable it to maximise its potential vote. One of my strongest impressions of this meeting was that public opinion had taken on a new importance for the group in the run up to the election. Although consideration of public opinion was always seen as an important part of the Party's strategy, the group had devoted most of its time to internal Party issues such as the new constitution and the creation of the new Party manifesto in the time that I had been attending its meetings. With the exception of a few longer standing members, most of the group found the prospect of having to explain themselves, while convincing the public of the veracity of their ideas, as somewhat daunting. Indeed, none more so than the group's candidate, Joe, who was after all not a career politician but a deeply concerned citizen who was drawn into politics by his convictions. I felt that his hesitation to 'press the flesh', expressed in the previous meeting, was clear evidence of this apprehension.

Returning to matters pertaining to public opinion, the controversial issue of providing halting sites for the Travelling community was raised by Kevin in his report to the group. The Travellers are an ancient community within Ireland that do not settle in one place, rather they continuously journey around stopping only briefly in what they call 'halting sites'. There are many similarities between their lifestyle and that of the Roma of mainland Europe, but they are a distinct cultural group and there is no firm evidence that they have lived anywhere other than within the confines of Ireland throughout the period of recorded history. Like the Roma of Europe, the Travellers are widely feared and mistrusted by the less progressive elements of

Irish society and have been denied social legitimacy because of their travelling. Kevin, as an elected Green Party representative on the local council, reported to the group that he had been trying to pressure the council into honouring its previous pledge to create permanent halting sites for the Travellers within the confines of Dublin. This was so it would no longer be necessary for them to camp along roadsides or on verges. He maintained that halting sites were a way to decrease the friction between the two types of lifestyles while giving a degree of legitimacy to the cultural practices.

Joe recalled that he was recently lobbied to withdraw Party support for the halting sites by the head of a local residents group. Their position was that all of the sites should be dealt with under the existing council planning laws and that the Travellers needs should not be put before those of the existing residents in any area. Joe asked Kevin what the Party position on the halting sites was. Kevin was not clear about the present position but stated that there had been a policy document circulated previously which "basically said that we should support Travellers rights and Travellers Halting Sites". Kevin was strongly in favour of the halting sites going ahead as the Travelling community was one of the poorest in Irish society and had to be recognised as a legitimate part of Irish society with special needs. The discussion was cut short at that point when Liam asked if the group could "avoid getting into the Traveller issue" and move on to the issues stated on the agenda.

Though the issue of the halting sites was not settled during my time in Ireland, the discussion provided me with an insight into the way the Party reacted to public opinion, especially when their policy did not reflect a majority view held by the wider community. As with the policy concerning the use of drugs of addiction, better known within the Party as The 'Drugs' policy, the leadership of the Party opted eventually for a low profile regarding the halting sites and were actively opposed to making it a banner issue during the campaign. They reasoned that if they themselves were unresolved on these issues then the public could not be offended by their stance one way or the other.

The next item, concerning the Party's waste tax scheme, was brought up by Fergus. There was agreement at the meeting that there should be an additional tax or charge for citizens who use the city dumps to dispose of quantities of waste over and above what is allowed for by the council in their normal waste bin allotment. Mark noted that recycling in Ireland was far behind Germany and France and that people were still largely uninformed about the need for separating waste into different categories. Joe pointed out that it takes a long time to change people's attitudes about recycling and Ireland's public was only now coming to terms with the need for waste reduction. At that stage the group had no concrete ideas as to how they were going to convince voters of the validity of this stance, but they were in strong agreement that issues such as this were fundamental to the Green Party platform.

A discussion of the Green employment policy followed. It centred on finding ways of implementing the rather radical approaches to labour and production held by the Party. The Greens' approach to work arose from a position that valued individual freedom as the utmost expression of a 'civilised' society. They classified work as being fulfilling, that is, work engaged in to further enhance the personal development of both the individual and the community, and as unfulfilling, work forced upon citizens by strictly economic imperatives. The Greens saw unfulfilling work as largely unnecessary at the end of the twentieth century because much of the functions that it had historically performed could now be more easily served by harnessing the dramatic technological advances that had emerged over the last fifty or sixty years. Among the many social implications that arose from this line of reasoning, the Greens identified the need for a more equal distribution of wealth as crucial for the efficacy of their work policy. Consequently, they made the notion of a Guaranteed Basic Income (GBI) a cornerstone of their policy on taxation. The GBI would ensure that every Irish citizen received enough money to be able to support themselves without having to engage in unfulfilling work for the sake of survival. The Greens believed that this, in turn, would have the effect of allowing citizens the opportunity to engage in fulfilling work if and when they

had sufficient motivation. In this way people would still be able to benefit from their labours but would not be forced to labour for economic survival.

During the discussion, the canvassing of possible solutions to the problems of implementing these sweeping social reforms raised some interesting challenges for the members of the Dublin South group. Kevin presented job sharing, reducing the working week, and creating more part-time work as realistic first steps in achieving the broader aims of the Party. Mark disagreed and claimed that "cutting back the working week and sharing work was tried in France years ago and it didn't work". Joe also thought that it was impractical but didn't explain the reasons behind his opinion. Instead he asked the group, "In what kind of circumstances can job sharing work?" Mark replied, "It can't work in any circumstances!" I asked the group what they thought was the first step that the Party needed to take in order to implement its employment objectives. Liam thought that GBI would be the key issue. He said "if we got basic income in then unemployment would cease to exist, simple as that. It's gone, no longer a problem". I then asked what the Party would need to do to implement the GBI policy. Liam replied:

Well, that's another question. It's my view that what's needed to get basic income in is that we need to, one - realise that basic income is a worthy goal to achieve, two - we have to look at where the current system doesn't work. Lets take child benefit, upping that quite substantially. For a start, that has to be upped. There has to be some recognition of women in the home. As in, I believe there has to be some sort of payment for women in the home. Basically, there's this question about being revenue neutral, which is a phrase I hear Kathleen using a lot. Which basically means that basic income just means that we shuffle things around but it's not going to cost us any more than the money that's already going around. Now that is, to some extent, true. There's a lot of anomalies there.

For example, at present non-working women students would get nothing, not a penny. So I mean they are going to have to get a sum of money which brings them up to the basic income, and the principle will have to be brought in. Also students are going to have to get some sort of allowance. The grant system is going to have to be restructured. And then we're going to have to work on income tax to bring it into some sort of structure. To phase out the allowances that people get at present. Then the picture is starting to look something like basic income. When it starts looking like basic income, it's a lot easier to convince people to go the whole hog because, at present, we're so far away from basic income that it's just inconceivable. Joe was on a radio interview and somebody threw out the figure of eighty percent tax and under certain circumstances eighty percent would be appropriate if we need it to pay for

basic income. But there's one essential point that nobody ever seems to make and that is that basically of course we can afford basic income but at what level. For example, if we were to give everybody in the country five pounds a week, we could afford that, but if we were to give them eighty pounds a week, we couldn't really. But there is a figure somewhere along the line which equals the total revenue for the community.

Joe replied that if the figure was not above a certain level then it would not be effective in countering unemployment. Liam answered:

It has to be a certain level but there is a level which we can afford. I mean it's a question of how high the tax rate [is] and if we increase the tax rate to bring up the basic income then it's just taking money and giving it back again. So, the point is that if we get basic income then you're scrapping unemployment. Unemployment is being institutionally scrapped. It doesn't matter what level it's at because you're basically saying that there's no such thing as unemployment. The key thing in my view is that you're saying that there is nobody anymore that is going to be classed as unemployed, and that's it.

At this point, Joe commented that this approach was "just semantics for most people because they still won't be working. There'll be three hundred thousand people that will be getting their eighty pounds a week but they still won't be working". To this, Liam replied:

No, I don't think so because the point is this. In this society at large there is a lot of stigma relating to unemployed people and, at present there is this concept that people have to be available for work. A lot of people will be free, in that case, and they won't feel that they have to work. And therefore they will do less work. And therefore the point of job sharing will naturally rise to certain extent. For example, I would reign back on the work I do if there was basic income. If somebody worked very hard now, they could work less.

Joe then brought the perspective of the employer into the debate. He recounted:

Like, for instance, when I was runnin my business, there were a number of employees. There were a couple of key positions and if one of them ... if basic income had been introduced into the business and if one of those people had said 'right, I'm cutting the number of hours I'm coming in here' it would have been total chaos because the business wouldn't have been able to function without that person being there and being able to give it a commitment over summertime of fifty or sixty hours a week. And that job would have been almost impossible to split into two.

Liam agreed that this would be a cause for concern in the case of those working in the service and production industries but the concept was still a sound one for the rest of the Irish economy. Joe, however, was not convinced. He believed that the service industry was most likely the biggest employer of people in the country.

Owing to time constraints, the meeting ended at that point but there was an interesting post-meeting discussion that raised the issue of explaining complex issues such as the GBI and the Green Party work policy to a public that was used to media sound bites and personality politics. As this discussion developed it was clear that Joe did not disagree with Liam in any major philosophical sense. Rather, he saw the issue as a dead one in relation to the election as he thought it would be impossible to explain to the public during the campaign either on the doorstep or via the media. When Fiona agreed and added that explaining the Party's policy on GBI would be not only difficult but also "boring", Joe confessed, "Well that, to be honest, is one reason why I think that basic income shouldn't be something that I talk about in this campaign. I think it should be left for the policy groups to do".

5.2.1c 3/3/1997 – Election Strategy and General Meeting

The next meeting was held on the third of March and started with a discussion about what kind of issues Joe should pursue as the Party's candidate within the electorate. Cathal raised the issue of social welfare and wondered if Joe was interested in getting involved in debates that concerned housing and community centres. Liam was against this as he thought that Joe should present himself first and foremost as an environmental candidate rather than a campaigner for social justice. As he told Joe, "I think you should concentrate on Green issues as opposed to social welfare issues". Joe replied, "Yeah, well I would imagine that I would get a higher percentage of those [the environmental vote] than any of the other parties, but it's something to think about". Liam pointed out that James, the Green TD who had lost his seat in the Dublin South electorate during a previous election, had been extremely vocal on social justice issues but had failed to win the people over for a second term. This caused Joe to recall:

What James did was that he was the TD who spoke most in the Dail but [he] spoke to empty chambers at ten o'clock at night time. He worked incredibly hard in a very narrow area and got no coverage for it. People probably wondered what he was up to.

Brendan [on the other hand] is doing a little bit of everything. You know, trying to keep in touch with a lot of different issues, trying to do national stuff, doing a huge amount of local constituency work but, if it doesn't work for him, if Brendan doesn't get elected and I do, well then I would say that it's a toss of a coin and we'd need a big discussion afterwards. We'd need to decide what we should do because I suppose there is an argument for using it [the issue of social welfare] to push the Green boat out and to raise issues. Obviously the more time you spend on local issues, the less time you're going to have to spend on national issues.

When asked by Liam which issues he would more like to pursue if he was elected, Joe was firmly in favour of concentrating on national rather than local issues. He reasoned that this approach would be far more effecting in "helping to change the trend, helping to change the direction, helping to influence people and trying to use the position as a Green TD to push the boat out in a lot of different policy areas". Liam agreed with Joe's stance on the matter and added that, "As far as social welfare issues go, I don't think TDs are there to do that. I think the people who are there to do that are social welfare people really".

The discussion then shifted to the leaflets that the group was producing for Joe's election campaign. There was a lot of contention within the Party about the form the leaflets should take and, although this appears at first not to be an issue of great note, it does provide us with an insight into the trepidation with which the Party viewed its coming encounter with both the media and the public. It should not be forgotten that the Green Party did not contain 'professional politicians' in the sense that the mainstream parties did and most of the candidates had never run for public office before. Therefore, there was much debate about the way the Party should present its candidates to the public and this could often range from light-hearted commentary to heated encounters between candidates and the Election Task Force (ETF). On this occasion the picture of Joe that appeared on the leaflet caused much hilarity within the group upon seeing it for the first time. The person responsible for the production of the leaflets had somehow cut off a significant part of Joe's hair and this had the effect of making Joe appear as though he had a lopsided head. When I pointed out to him that the photo hadn't done his haircut much justice, those present, including myself, lapsed into an extended period of laughter that wasn't helped when Joe informed us that this was better than

the last one which made him look like a "pointy eared leprechaun". To our further amusement, Joe went on to explain:

You see that was one of the colour photographs that they scanned, you know. Unfortunately you see the background of Kris Park so they had to chop that out. So you're not really looking at my hair there. That bit at the top is actually a tree from Kris Park.

To which Liam replied:

That's really very good. It's very Green.

Discussion then turned to strategy and Joe described to the group how he thought the campaign should start. He planned to start canvassing two mornings a week with Fiona sometime in the near future, and he had also made up a list of potential canvassers from among the local group members and from family and friends. With the addition of anyone else the other members could add to the list, Joe hoped to have "between sixty and eighty potential canvassers on the list". Joe's plan was to organise these supporters on a roster that would see at least ten of them a night canvassing in shifts. Each of these shifts would be led by a group member who would be given the responsibility of assisting them until they were confident enough to canvass on their own. Joe hoped to increase the number of nightly canvassers to between fifteen and twenty during the week prior to the election. This led into a further discussion of how the Party would present its aims to the public through the media. Kevin thought that, while a concept like GBI was an exciting component of the overall Green message, he as a councillor could hardly present it as a practical solution to unemployment given the current state of politics in Ireland. He thought the Party would be much better off concentrating on presenting Green solutions to problems that were realistic in light of Ireland's current situation. As he put it, "I think the Green Party should have leaders with at least enough integrity to present possible solutions to the public". Joe responded to this by saying that, while he recognised the point that Kevin was making, the Party had a responsibility to work to address the long-term environmental and social issues that instigated its creation. As he put it, "if I go for soft solutions like a more efficient type of incinerator for

waste disposal to push the vote out, what have I done in the long term to alleviate air pollution?"

This was to become a recurring theme in discussions at all levels of the organisation for the duration of the election campaign. Indeed, the friction caused by the tension between praxis and ideology is a constant in the reality of any political party but is never more apparent than when a minority party contests a general election. The pitfalls of going too far down either track are readily apparent when one considers that ideological leanings in a democratic arena can not become politically influential unless they have the support of a substantial number of people. Among some of the active membership of the Green Party there was a concern that if the candidates were perceived by the public as being too radical to participate in a coalition government with the established mainstream parties then this would mean that they would be excluded from political power for the foreseeable future. Conversely, there were many other active members that were afraid that the Party would leave itself vulnerable to manipulation by the mainstream parties in a coalition situation if it compromised its foundation principles in order to get elected. The specifics of this ongoing crisis of conscience in the Party will become clearer as this section progresses. It is enough at this point to bear in mind that this was a major undercurrent of tension running through the Party in the time leading up to and during the election campaign.

5.2.1d7/4/1997 – Election Strategy and General Meeting

The next meeting was held on the seventh of April. The first item on the agenda was Joe's upcoming public meetings on vegetarian lifestyles that he was holding to both increase his profile in the community and to introduce people to the concept of vegetarianism. As mentioned previously in the case study concerning Joe, it was his stance on animal rights and vegetarianism that initially brought him to the Party and he confided in me that vegetarianism was, for him, a crucial aspect of a Green lifestyle. Apart from his belief in non-violence

concerning both humans and animals, Joe saw vegetarianism as an opportunity to engage people in contemplating the environmental benefits of consuming organically grown vegetable crops produced by local agriculture. He believed that this was a far better option than continuing to support the sale and consumption of genetically engineered high yield crop varieties pushed onto the market by companies such as Monsanto.

There were to be three meetings and these were to be held at the Fir House, a local community centre in the constituency, on the eighteenth of April, the twenty second of April and the twelfth of May. The group's discussion focussed on publicity for the meeting and several options were raised. Fiona had informed several newspapers and the group hoped that at least one of them would send a reporter to interview Joe about the meetings and their role in his election campaign. Liam had also designed and produced a few hundred posters and it was decided that members of the group would each take a number of posters and put them up in appropriate places in their neighbourhoods. Joe's main concern was that a poor attendance at the meetings would reflect badly on him as a local candidate. Ideally, he was hoping for at least thirty or forty people in the audience at each meeting. This would give the local print media sufficient reason to cover the meetings and consider him a serious contender for a seat in the election.

Talk then turned to the election posters. Joe told the group that he and Fiona, the group's campaign manager, had decided to order three hundred of them as a first batch. The group reviewed the way in which the picture for the poster was chosen from the five photographs that the Party had taken of him by a professional photographer. Those involved had made their preferences but Joe finally settled on the one in which he seemed the most relaxed. I mention this because, at that time, he was far from relaxed about the campaign and his role as Party candidate. Like many others in the Party, he wanted to present himself as a capable and professional option to the voting public but was unsure how to achieve this owing to his lack of experience.

After the logistics of transporting and putting up the posters was discussed, the group speculated on the date that would be chosen by the government for the election. While the media and the main opposition parties such as Fianna Fail and the Progressive Democrats had mentioned dates ranging from late May to early November, the general uncertainty had created a mood of anticipation within the Party. Those active within the group felt that it was imperative that they have their campaign strategies in place as soon as possible to avoid being caught unprepared by an announcement of a date far earlier than they expected. It was clear that Joe at least wanted the group to be on an election footing from that moment until the date was officially announced.

At this point the subject of funds and fund raising was broached and it became clear that the group's campaign would not be sufficient if it relied on the minimal funds that the Party could supply its local groups. Apart from a small donation from a former member, the group's financial resources were extremely limited and suggestions were put to the meeting to alleviate this shortage. The most popular option with the other Dublin groups had been to hold a quiz night at a local pub or community hall and charge an entrance fee. This would provide supporters with a good night out and, more importantly, would provide the group with a platform from which to ask for donations and strengthen its support base. When I mentioned the success that the Dublin Central group had enjoyed from their quiz night, Kevin pointed out that the Dublin Central group had probably spent a lot of time organising the event. He doubted if the Dublin South group could donate as much time to the project as they had. He also pointed out that Fiona, as campaign manager, would most likely be burdened with the greater share of the work and she already had her hands full. The group did toy with the idea briefly but the matter was decided when Fergus pointed out that:

I think that if you're looking at an election that might be called in two weeks time, then there isn't time. You've got to give people two weeks notice at least for these things. If we knew definitely that the election would be called in June, then we'd have time to deal with it. I just don't know about now, with everything so tight.

Obviously constraints of time and money played a crucial part in the way in which the campaign was ultimately run. As we shall see in the following pages, this was a reality for the organisation as a whole and clearly emphasised a major difference between the Irish Green Party and its more established mainstream competitors. Without the financial backing and public support of any significant players in the business sector, the Party would always struggle to gain the recognition it needed to successfully contest a national election. Conversely, with the policies and principles that the Party held dear, it was unlikely that they would find allies in the mainstream business community. As it was, the Party was supplying each local group with four to five hundred pounds and paying for the production of one hundred posters. The campaign would run on a shoestring budget at best.

5.2.1e 21/4/1997 – Election Strategy and General Meeting

The next meeting was held on the twenty first of April and started with an announcement by Joe that the leaflets and posters were now ready and that the group would start distributing them in the coming week. There was still some dissatisfaction among the members about the final poster format but the matter was not pursued as it was now a moot point. What mattered then was the group was now at an appropriate stage of readiness should the election be called earlier than anticipated by the Party's leadership. There followed a discussion about the pros and cons of the Party being part of a coalition government, should they be in a position to hold the balance of power in the Dail after the election. This was, at that time, fast becoming the cause of a great deal of speculation within the party as many of the opinion polls produced by the media were gauging support for the Party among the voting public to be somewhere around five percent. As previously mentioned, this would be enough for them to gain another two or three seats and so make them a force, albeit a small one, in the next Dail of the Irish Republic. While all of the Party's members were happy with this prospect, it posed certain questions about the Party's future that they had not had to consider before. In other words, the

Party was faced with the real possibility of electoral power for the first time since its inception.

5.2. If The Question of Coalition

At this point allow me to briefly outline this issue that was the cause of some tension within the Party in the lead up to the election. I was introduced to the debate surrounding this possibility at the Candidates Convention held in Wicklow in early February. There were two evenly matched groups among the members and candidates present at the convention along with a significant minority that were not yet committed to a course of action. The first group believed that, should the Party find itself in a position to hold the balance of power in the next Dail, they had a duty to both their supporters and the Republic at large to enter into coalition with the other involved parties in order to form a government. They thought that this kind of inclusion at a governing level could only be good for the Party and was, after all, the very thing that they had been working towards all these years. Holding the balance of power would allow them to press their partners for control of the environmental portfolio and to influence the direction of policies in other areas towards a greener approach.

The other side of the debate maintained that entering into any form of coalition with one or more of the mainstream parties would, ultimately, set the Party back ten years. They believed that their coalition partners would use the image of the Green Party to appear more environmentally conscious themselves while, in reality, carrying on in the exact same manner as they had in previous governments. They were also convinced that, as there was no real chance of the Greens being given any position of power within the new Dail, voters would come to perceive the Green Party as just another minority party out to snatch whatever crumbs it was handed down by the mainstream parties. For them there was no point in joining a coalition unless they were in a position to wield real power. There was a great fear among these members that the Party could end up like the Democratic Labour Party (DLP). The DLP

had joined the current coalition government in blaze of publicity but had not been able to get a single one of their bills through the legislature as its coalition partners would not support it. They were widely expected to perform poorly at the polls because many people believed that the party had shown itself to be ineffective in government.

These were the main currents of debate during the Dublin South group meeting and, at first, division between the two main points of view was more or less even. However, discussion seemed to slide more towards rejecting any future offer of participation in a coalition when Joe expressed doubts in the Party's ability to hold its own against the more professional and politically savvy mainstream parties. He stated that there was "no way the Green Party would have the muscle not to get swamped like the DLs"¹². Stewart agreed with Joe and added that he thought the Greens, depending on how many seats they managed to win, would still be able to have bargaining power if they remained in opposition. This would make them, if anything, more relevant to the closely contested debates within the Dail because the government would have a slim majority at best and might be willing to move towards a stance more acceptable to the Greens in order to win their support. Fintan made it clear that any compromise by the Party, whether it was in the form of accepting a place in a coalition government or dealing with a new government from the opposition benches, would be a subversion of the Party's principles. In his view, the Party was "not about compromise", it was about building on any future success in order to be in position to take power in its own right and form a government of its own. This was the only chance Fintan thought the Party had of realising its goals and implementing Green policies.

On the other hand, Liam thought that the Party was not in position to pass up any offer of a coalition partnership. He felt that, if they did, voters would take this to mean that they were not ready for the responsibility of actively working towards the aims that they professed to have. He was concerned that this would lead to the public perception of the Party as a protest

¹² The Democratic Labour Party was most often referred to colloquially as the DL's.

movement rather than a serious player on the Irish political scene. For Liam, the best way forward was to accept the offer of coalition partnership, should it occur, but refuse any offer of a ministerial portfolio. He reasoned that, in this way, the Party would be taking responsibility for the representation of its supporters but would avoid any hint of collusion or compromise with the mainstream parties. The Party would, in effect, be gaining the maximum amount of leverage given its position while remaining, by and large, a free agent.

There was also another reason that Liam, while supporting a possible move into a coalition government, was opposed to Green Party elected representatives in the Dail taking ministerial positions. He was worried that, should the TDs gain too much power in the next Dail, there was a possibility that they would separate from the Party and form their own group. This was a serious consideration among the other members of the group and it serves to highlight the lack of confidence within the Party, at that time, about the strength of its organisational structure and its ability to influence its candidates once they were elected. Indeed, these fears were not wholly unfounded, as the Party had experienced something like this before. When the first Green Party TD, James, was elected in 1988, the Party was overjoyed with its success until he decided that he was the official spokesperson for the Greens by dint of the fact that he was the only one who had been elected to the Dail. After many attempts by the National Council and the Co-ordinating Committee to bring him back under the control of the organisation's decision making processes, it was finally decided that James had to be expelled from the Party owing to his persistent refusal to conform to the Party's structures. Thus, the first Green Party representative ever to be elected to the Dail ended in his only term in office as an independent rather than as a Party member. As James was elected in the constituency of Dublin South, the spectre of the Party once again having to face the situation of dealing with rogue MP's was particularly disturbing to the group.

5.2.1g Campaign Donations

These fears were heightened by the next topic on the meeting's agenda. The Party's two MEPs had decided to contribute a substantial amount of money to the election campaign fund. Sinead and Neave had each donated six thousand pounds to the Party. Problems arose when both Sinead and Neave found out that the Party had used half the money for the production of the new Green Party manifesto and had then split the remaining funds evenly between each of the candidates. Apparently they had handed the money over to the Party for the express purposes of targeting candidates in constituencies that were most likely to win. In an email from Sinead to the Election Task Force (ETF), she had stated that there was no point wasting the money on the campaigns of candidates in constituencies that had proven to be unfriendly to the Green Party message. This did not mean that she and Neave did not fully support the efforts of all Green Party candidates in their quests to win office. Rather, the reality of the situation dictated that those candidates with a real chance of success should be given the best chance at succeeding for the good of the Party as a whole.

The arguments for and against this line of reasoning ran thus. Firstly, the ETF saw nothing wrong with their actions as the money was handed over to the Party for use in the election campaign and that was exactly what it had been used for. The fact that Sinead and Neave had preferences as to how the money should be used had no bearing because the Party's constitution stated that all Party funds were under the direct control of the Co-ordinating Committee and the National Council. As such, those institutional bodies had ultimate control over the disposition of the Party's resources. In the second instance, many members within the Party, especially the candidates not specified by Sinead and Neave, felt that any form of preferential treatment within the Party amounted to a betrayal of the principles upon which the Party was founded. If the Party was truly an egalitarian organisation committed to a fair and democratic decision making process then all campaign donations should be distributed equally between the candidates to ensure that they all had an equal chance of success. In the

third instance, many in the Dublin branches of the Party believed that the best chances of success for the Party lay in the Dublin constituencies. Owing to this, Sinead and Neave were quite right to earmark certain constituency campaigns for extra funding as the money would be wasted in the rural electorates which had historically proven themselves to be staunchly conservative. In any case, it was their money and they had a right to see that it was used in the way that they thought was most effective.

These debates were reflected in the group's discussion that night. While Joe felt that it was inappropriate for him to comment on the matter as he was one of the candidates who had been specified by Sinead, other members of the group were under no such constraint. Joe's position was that, since Sinead was the MEP for Dublin, "she had a perfect right to earmark her donations specifically for the Dublin candidates". This line of reasoning did not impress Cathal. He was of the opinion that all donations should go directly to the Co-ordinating Council "to be dispersed wherever they saw fit". Furthermore, he stated that "all donations to the election campaign should be given in equal amounts to all candidates in order to show no favouritism to any group". This issue was eventually resolved when it was ruled by the National Council that the money was to be distributed evenly among all candidates.

5.2. 1h6/5/1997 – Election Strategy and General Meeting

The last meeting of the Dublin South group that I attended was held on the sixth of May. Discussion initially focused on marshalling enough help from Party members and supporters to effectively canvass the majority of the electorate during the campaign. Cathal raised the point that, if the group was relying only on the support shown so far, the election would be very difficult to win as there were very few people who had made a definite commitment to the campaign outside the group. Joe suggested a more aggressive approach to recruiting canvassers. He felt that a lot of inactive and former members would initially balk at the prospect of giving up their time for the campaign but would eventually agree to help if the

group was persistent. It was decided that there would have to be one member in each ward of the constituency responsible for recruiting and organising canvassers for the campaign. These ward convenors would make all necessary calls and arrangements and then co-ordinate their efforts through Fiona, the campaign manager. Lists of names and numbers would be compiled and central meeting points would be designated within the wards to further help co-ordinate the group's efforts. It seemed at this stage that the greatest problem faced by the Party would be the lack of time available to the active members to participate in the campaign given their other commitments such as work and family.

Concerning technical capabilities, the group decided that Joe would need access to a fax machine and a mobile phone. The National Office in Fownes Street would be used for contributing to the national campaign and Joe expected to have to rely on Lara, the National Press Officer, to keep him informed of pertinent developments on the national stage as well as any combined media efforts devised by the ETF. Obviously, the Party as a whole was trying to develop an effective campaign organisation given the constraints on time and money that they faced. This lack was underlined more and more every day as the campaigns of the major parties got into full swing with billboards, posters, full page newspaper advertisements, and television and radio time.

The next topic to be raised was the Green Party Spring Convention that had been held recently at Malahide. The convention caused much contention within the organisation as it differed in one great respect to the conventions of previous years and campaigns. With the appointment of a National Press Officer, the Party was able to generate more media attention than ever before and this, in turn, made the leadership determined to present the Party as a professional and efficient political organisation. They wanted the Party to be seen to be prepared for the coming elections and ready to step in and take charge of ensuing success from the election, be it an increased presence in the Dail or even ministerial portfolios. This led to a convention that was much more formalised than in previous years with the candidates

seated on a raised stage and members and press placed at tables in the area below them. According to many members that I spoke with after the event, this was upsetting to them because, in previous years, the convention had always been a largely informal event where all members were seated on the same level in order to avoid the appearance of an unequal relationship between ordinary members and those in leadership positions. Consequently, many members felt that they had been shut out of the convention processes. They felt the Party's leadership was more concerned with mimicking mainstream parties for the benefit of the media than concentrating on the purposes for which the convention was annually called.

Joe's comments on the format of the convention summed up the feelings of many of those who were uncomfortable with the Party's new professionalism. He remarked to the group that:

There was no discussion during the day. There was all this kind of Polit Bureau arrangement where like there was people seated at the top speaking to a passive audience the whole day and I was making the point that we shouldn't lose sight of organising things in the most mutual, circular, consensual way. It leads to the trap of being media driven in the way we organise events and of being driven by other political parties and the way they organise events. We're a distinctly different party in the way we organise our policies and we should be a distinctly different party in the way we organise to do our business. I think if we do believe in consensus, and all that kind of stuff, we should really be doing more of our business in that kind of way.

The final point I'll make is that this shouldn't be seen from a negative point of view by the media. I actually think that the media should pick up on that and I think it should be seen as quite a positive thing. A lot of people are just going to see something very briefly on television of an event and they mightn't hear very much about what's going on, but they'll see an image on the television screen. If that image is one of a group of people sitting around in a circle with Brendan sitting in the middle of that group, I think that would be quite effective and wouldn't necessarily lose us any brownie points with the media. I was just concerned that the Party is going down that road and I'll also make a point of saying that I think we managed to get through the day without one minute's silence.

Fiach agreed whole-heartedly with Joe and added that "It was supposed to be consensus decision making but it failed on many fronts". Kathleen felt strongly about the removal of the standard one-minute silence before the start of the meeting and suggested, "It would be worth having a mild row about because we should be making the one minute silence one of our trade marks". Eoin reiterated that "the pity of all this is that a lot of people, especially

newcomers to the Party, are not experiencing the value of consensus decision making and, where this becomes an issue again and again, they're going to be inclined to do away with consensus decision making in general". This led Joe to ask Fergus if decisions were made by reaching consensus during his time on the Co-ordinating Committee. Fergus recalled:

In general they were, yeah. Even to the point where there were a few issues where one person would be totally at odds with everybody else and a decision would not be made until there had been some attempt at reaching consensus. In the end a vote would be taken but it would be after a very long time, it would be the last resort for a vote to be taken. It does operate, but I think ... The one thing I have to say about consensus is that in actual fact we have so much more in common than we have differences. We actually agree on ninety percent of stuff, I think, in reality. So it's actually a very small number of decisions where it's ever a problem, I feel anyway.

Clearly there was conflict within the Party over its future direction as a political organisation. The Co-ordinating Committee and the Election Task Force were anxious for the Party to be seen by the public as disciplined and effective. They were equally anxious to distance the Party from claims by their political opponents that they were 'a bunch of tree huggers' who were not capable of creating realistic and responsible policies for the Republic. Caught up, as they were, in the excitement of the general campaign, the leadership of the Party were more and more inclined to display impatience towards the consensus based decision making processes that were fundamental to the Party's emphasis upon the democratic sharing of power. In non-election years these processes had proved to be a source of cohesion as they had allowed the Party to postpone controversial decisions and engage in lengthy debates aimed at achieving consensus positions. Unfortunately, this also meant that the Party had been able to avoid coming to grips with many of these issues and so found itself unable to match the speed and efficiency with which the major parties directed their campaigns. Subsequently, those in leadership positions felt increasing pressure to simply announce their decisions in order to circumvent the slow process of ground level debate by which consensus was traditionally reached. Conversely, those who were not so empowered felt increasingly marginalised by their elected leaders and were concerned that the Party was in danger of becoming the kind of political organisation that they had joined the Greens to oppose.

The meeting moved on to a report by Fergus on the timing of the general election. There had been much speculation as to the timing of the election and, over the last five weeks, suggested dates had ranged between late April and early November. As Fergus reported, this speculation had not yet been confirmed or denied but the government had announced that they would make their decision public in the next week. He went on to say:

Supposedly it's going to be called next Thursday for the date of June sixth. That's what the general consensus at the moment is. Now, again that can all change ... but I think they really need to have it before the summer, which means basically before the twenty fourth or fifth of June. So they're running out of options at this stage.

With that the meeting ended and it was to be the last meeting of the Dublin South Greens that I attended until after the election was held. As Fergus predicted, the Rainbow Coalition did announce the date of the election the next Thursday and it was the sixth of June. Although I would have liked to have been able to attend further meetings of the group during the campaign, I was also focussing upon occurrences in the National Office. Additionally, I had to maintain my research of the Dublin Central campaign and was interested in following Eileen in her campaign in Dublin South West. Unexpectedly, after concentrating so hard on becoming involved with the life of the Party, I found myself unable to predict where that involvement would lead me. However, I did keep in contact with the group throughout the ensuing four weeks and saw Joe often at the various Party functions associated with the campaign.

The group held only one more meeting before the election and spent much of its time canvassing the public for support. As candidate for the constituency, Joe's time was at a premium and he was constantly moving from one media appointment to another in his capacity as the Green Party spokesperson for the environment. Like the rest of the Party organisation, the Dublin South Greens had little time left at that stage for debating issues of policy and intent. Their time was consumed by getting the Green message out to as many people within their constituency as possible, even if they were divided in their opinion as to what that message was. Fortunately, I was able to canvass with them on a number of

occasions and gained a degree of insight into both the Greens and the voting public of Ireland that I would not have had access to any other way. I intend to discuss my canvassing experiences in the three different constituencies at a later stage in this chapter. For now, I will move on to the Dublin Central Greens and my impressions of their campaign.

5.2.2 The Dublin Central Campaign

The constituency of Dublin Central was situated just north of the Liffey, starting at the Quay and continuing on through to Stonybatter. At its southern boundary it included significant parts of Dublin's central business district and was becoming increasingly popular with the young, upwardly mobile middle class who were the beneficiaries of Ireland's focus on information technology as its future basis for economic prosperity. In its more northerly areas, the constituency contained many council tenancies and traditionally working class neighbourhoods. As the movement of young urban professionals into the constituency was still a new phenomenon, the area was still overwhelmingly working class in 1997. Unemployment within the electorate was high and the problems of drug abuse and crime were of daily concern to residents throughout the constituency. Only ten or so kilometres away from the constituency of Dublin South, the nature of the population and its concerns dictated that the Dublin Central group would have to run a very different campaign if it was to have any impact on the outcome of the elections.

The Dublin Central group, unlike their counterparts in Dublin South, did not feel that they would be better served by avoiding the detail of social justice issues wherever possible and concentrating upon educating the public about their environmental policies. This was largely due to the differences in the demographic composition of the two areas. The urban working class in Ireland at the time were not the beneficiaries of the 'Celtic Tiger' economy and, as such, had different concerns and priorities to their neighbours over the river. Lower levels of education had left them unable to access the expanding number of jobs in data processing and

the information technology sector in general. Whereas Ireland's middle class population had become increasingly prosperous as a consequence of the bid by consecutive governments to woo investment from major multinational corporations away from traditional technological hubs, these developments had seen the urban working class of Ireland further marginalised and disabused by the system.

As previously mentioned, because of its colonial history, the Irish manufacturing industry had historically never been strong owing to the country's overwhelming economic dependence upon its agricultural resources. Despite the moves towards rapid industrialisation through the Irish Development Authority, and the inclusion of the Republic in the European Union, the industrial base in Ireland was still small in comparison with its neighbours. Nevertheless, in 1997, there were still significant numbers of people within Irish cities who had traditionally depended for their livelihoods on the various businesses involved with the industrial sector. As investment was focussed on information technology industries, work in the manufacturing sector decreased. For the constituency of Dublin Central this meant that unemployment was disproportionately high in relation to the more middle class suburbs and was also, in many cases, generational. Both crime and poverty were on the rise and many people were dependent upon government benefits for the little money that they did receive.

Naturally, the greatest concerns for those living in this electorate were issues directly related to their standard of living. They wanted secure employment, decent wages for their labour, a chance to better their current circumstances and a better standard of education for their children. Issues of social justice were, for them, far more pressing than the concerns of environmental movements. Many times, while canvassing for the Dublin Central Green campaign, people informed me that they would vote for any candidate who promised to focus on addressing their needs exclusively. In other words, just as with the people of Inveresk in Peace's ethnography (2001), they seemed more concerned with the efficacy of the individual candidates than with the messages of the political parties that they represented. More so than

the Dublin South group, the Dublin Central Greens were dealing with an electorate that had, in many ways, become quite cynical about the political process. I had a strong impression from my involvement in the campaign that they had no real expectation that their circumstances would change significantly regardless of how the next Dail was constituted. In fact, in many instances the Greens were obliged to convince the residents that it would be worthwhile voting in the first place as many of them had never registered to vote and did not believe that their choice of candidate would have any bearing on the final outcome. These were the circumstances in which the Dublin Central Greens ran their campaign.

The group itself was quite large, although not as large as the Dublin South group. Its active members numbered around twelve and meetings would usually draw between seven and ten people. The active membership represented both the newer urban professional and the older working class aspects of the population. This gave the group an interesting dynamic and led to it being one of the most innovative groups in the Party. Its members were extremely active in various policy development committees and, as we shall see, were sometimes controversial in their suggestions for the Party's future direction. Regarding the campaign, the Dublin Central group proved to be one of the most cohesive and resourceful groups in the Party. They managed to mobilise a large contingent of helpers and supporters and often their meetings during the election period numbered up to thirty people. They organised two very successful fundraisers and orchestrated two publicity events, one of which managed to make the front pages of the local print media and gain the ire of the Co-ordinating Committee, while thoroughly canvassing their constituency.

Sean, the same person who is the subject of one of the six case studies discussed previously in this thesis, introduced me to the group just before the start of the election campaign and kept me informed of the group's progress by giving me the minutes of the meetings I could not attend. Unfortunately, I was also involved in the Dublin South and Dublin South West campaigns as well as working with the Press officer in the National Office. This meant that

my time was restricted and I could only attend three of the group's meetings during that period. I did, however, manage to attend both the fundraising events and canvassed with the group on several occasions. The following is an account of the meetings at which I was present.

5.2.2a 12/03/1997 – Election Strategy and General Meeting

The first meeting that I attended was held on the twelfth of March. It was some weeks before the election date was announced but already the group was preparing for the coming campaign. The meeting was held in Ballinger's Hotel in Stonybattery and was attended by eight members. The group's secretary was Sean and Patrick was the candidate for the coming election in the constituency. The first discussion was about Mathew, Patrick's brother, and his appropriateness for the position as campaign manager. The group was generally very pleased to have Mathew as campaign manager because they felt that he would be able to use the skills that he had acquired as a businessman to promote Patrick and the Greens as a viable alternative to the mainstream parties throughout the constituency. However, Sean was worried that Mathew's wish to keep himself separate from the Party in order to better run the campaign for his brother might result in him abandoning the Party line while campaigning in order to gain more popular support. In an attempt to explain his position he said:

I found him very impressive. He's very task orientated, which I can really relate to, so I've no doubt he's the best person for the job. I think it would be great if we could all get involved to some degree so we can learn for the future. You know, for the next election or whatever so the group can have some experience. Just the way Mathew was talkin ... The way we were talkin about the pragmatic element to getting elected, which I think is right and it's very important, I just have this concern about the conflict between pragmatism and idealism which I have noticed at other meetings as well. It's around the [attitude of] 'get elected and then we can do what we want' which sounds a bit like New Labour¹³, you know what I mean. I just have a kind of crisis of conscience with that because I understand the need for pragmatism but I also ... Like I think back and I joined the Greens last year and it was because of the fact that I wanted to get involved in politics and, for me, the Greens shone in terms of their idealism and the fact that they weren't tainted by the usual politics and the usual greasy politicians. I worry about, you know, 'don't tell them you're liberal on drugs

¹³ Here Sean is referring to the then recent success of Tony Blair and the Labour Party in England.

or you won't get elected'. I can understand the need [for it] but I worry about it as well. Do you know what I mean?

Patrick recognised that this could be an issue and suggested that Sean and the others in the group should work closely with Mathew to ensure that he did not overstep the boundaries of Party policy when speaking or acting on the group's behalf. Donal then asked if Sean was making a general comment about the Party or if he was just referring to their situation in Dublin Central specifically. Sean replied:

It's a general point that came into my head and I just wanted to get of my chest, in relation to the election. I just wanted to see where Patrick was at with that. Which is that you have to be pragmatic to get in but I don't think we should get in if it means selling our integrity. There's a conflict there and it's dangerous if the balance tips too much one way or too much the other way. Does anybody want to say anything about this?

Luke pointed out that nothing could be done if the Party didn't get in. This prompted Sean to qualify his remarks by stating that:

In the long term, that philosophy of 'have to get in' over ten or fifteen years ... You end up, like when you're on TV for instance, saying nothing like all the other politicians and then you're just the same as the rest, you know. So that's just what I think. For me it's like, you know, we're workin on a drugs policy which we hope will be a pragmatic policy but will have some integrity. It will be the right thing to do. We're trying to arrive at a policy which is good for the country, you know what I mean? What if we have to play that down in order to get elected?

He did, after saying this, agree with both Patrick and Moira that often the general public were sometimes suspicious of environmental politics and this could lead to voters misconstruing statements about the Party's objectives. They were also making the point that, if heard out of context, much of the Green policy platform could seem frightening and radical to the general public and would certainly do them no favours at the polling booth. Patrick was very aware of this and went on to say:

Last night I was revising the transport policy and I was sittin down with Ray Ryan from Dublin North and I was tryin to reword it and out it into the same English throughout the whole document. But one thing he said was 'A tax on petrol to rise to one hundred percent of the cost on petrol at the moment, within ten years'. I think if you put that into a transport policy, and put that as a bullet point, I think it's political suicide to frame something in that way. The re-jigging that I put on it was 'A penny per litre clean air tax to be used for supporting public transport and to help relieve

transport related health problems such as respiratory complaints' and so on. To me that sums up the way in which you have to sell policies in different ways.

The problem that Sean presented to the group was that, if the Party managed to gain six or seven seats in the next Dail by appearing to be more conservative than they actually were, they would soon lose those seats in the following election. On the one hand, many of their existing supporters would feel that the Party had 'sold out' by paying more attention to public opinion than to the founding principles of the Party. On the other hand, any new supporters that the Party had managed to woo would not be happy if the Party's representatives in the Dail made moves to act on the more radical aspects of the Party's policy platform once they were in office. Rose considered this and remarked:

It does seem to make more sense alright to go for the longer term [option] but I don't know whether it works like that. Do you know what I mean?

In trying to clarify his position, Sean linked this issue with his experience on the policy committee dealing with the Green Party's position on the Republic's drug problem. He felt that:

We're scared of puttin in a policy because it's too far ahead of its time maybe. But then there's a danger that, you know, the way everybody else is takin on those issues now, that you get left behind. [Then] you're implementing policies after everybody else.

Luke suggested that after the election the Party might put in place a permanent forum to discuss these issues and make sure that their elected representatives did not shy away from the more unconventional, and potentially unpopular, aspects of Green policy. However, it was Patrick that had the final word on the topic when he said:

I think it's all about realism. I mean if we are in there with a few seats, or even if we're in government, three quarters of what we'd like to achieve we wouldn't be able to achieve. It's the Democratic Left scenario to an extent.

From there the discussion moved on to Larry's report on the progress of the Election Task Force. He informed the group that:

The direction that things are taking is to draw up a list of policy topics on the leaflet consistent with the ones that are highlighted in the manifesto. We'll be looking at

things that are sufficiently radical that it would be very difficult for any party to concede our shopping list.

Sean found that very interesting and asked Larry how the ETF would define 'radical'. Larry replied:

Well, it should be different. Where this is coming from is the whole debate about whether we should enter coalition or not. There was a strong feeling at the recent Avondale meeting, where there were nine candidates present, that we shouldn't. The decision was particularly influenced by Brendan's concerns that we would be wiped out in any coalition arrangement due to lack of experience. And then others were saying that it was crazy to put ourselves before the electorate and say that we want to go into opposition. So an intermediate position has emerged, if you like. It's to develop a platform which is full of radically Green demands that would be extremely difficult for another Party to concede. If they did, they'd be giving us so much that we'd have a substantial influence in any government.

After this there was a further discussion of Mathew's role as campaign manager but this quickly turned into a discussion of the group's role within the campaign. There was some trepidation within the group that events during the campaign could become so fluid that there would not be time for them to be consulted on snap decisions that had to be made by Mathew in the interests of the campaign. The group, as a whole, seemed to fear being left out of the decision making process in the flurry of activity that would surely overtake Patrick and Mathew during the campaign. In order to combat this, they eventually decided that it would be prudent to appoint an official go-between to liaise between the group and the manager. It was agreed that this responsibility would be shared between the members of the group. It was also agreed that the campaign should have a 'base' from which to organise its campaign activities. In this way the group would never be far away from the decision making process and would be available to counsel Mathew and Patrick about different aspects of the campaign in relation to Party policy if, and when, the need arose. Nearly all of the members present thought that it would be a good idea but Patrick pointed out that it would substantially increase the cost of the campaign. He did, however, also point out that he thought that his chances of being elected would increase with the renting of a campaign headquarters as it would give him a more public face within the community and ensure that members of the electorate could find him if they needed to.

At that point Sean and Larry started to weigh the merits of nominating members from within the group who could act as a liaison between the group and Mathew and then moving ahead with the campaign instead of waiting for the incumbent government's official announcement of the election campaign. Patrick broke into this conversation by saying:

I think there's a problem here that is symptomatic of the Green Party. Where thinkin about what might happen were something to happen. We know damn well exactly what is going to happen sometime either in the next week, month, or six months and I think it's a crisis of our own decision making capabilities. And I think we have got to cross the bridge between what we'd love to see happen in an ideal world and what we're going to do in the morning. We've spent the last twenty minutes discussing pertinent issues in detail without any real specifics of what a problem issue might be. Without anybody sayin 'I'd like to be up there, involved. I can make a commitment of two, three, or four evenings a week and I'm prepared to represent the Green Party in that. That worries me a bit. I think we've got to push ourselves forward.

This prompted two or three members of the group to put themselves forward for the role and they proceeded to try to pin down exactly who could be available at what times during the period of the campaign. Just as with the Green Party members in the Dublin South Group, the Dublin Central membership were constrained by the amount of time they could devote to campaign activities. When the group nominated Andrea as someone able to fulfil this duty, her reply was indicative of many members asked to play a greater role in Party activities. As a medical practitioner and the mother of two, her time was limited and she was also involved with the policy committee on health issues as well as being an active member in the group. She answered:

Oh, I've a full time job and a couple of children. I mean my work doesn't often lend itself to this kind of thing. Often enough I'm in the middle of a clinic and I could be on the other end of the phone but I might not be able to talk, and that could be very awkward. So, I'd love to do it but really I couldn't cope with it.

Being a small political group with extremely limited resources, it was often the case that those active within the Party were asked to take on more tasks than they could reasonably accomplish, given the other responsibilities and commitments that they had outside of their involvement with the Greens. This meant that progress concerning policy, direction, organisation was often frustratingly slow due to a sheer lack of human resources when

compared to the scope of the goals that the Party wished to achieve. An example of this issue in relation to the coming election campaign arose when Luke advised Patrick to spend as much time as possible meeting the constituents. He remarked, "the more people you actually see and the more people who actually see you, the better. A lot of people like to see the person they're going to vote for, don't they?" To this, Patrick replied:

Well, hopefully they'll get a chance Peter when the campaign comes, you know? At the moment I can't afford the time. Between work and between the commitments I have. I'm givin a paper tomorrow at the transport conference and I was finishing off a report today. I was at a drugs meetin the night before and a city council meetin the night before that. I mean, my time is very limited and I don't have the time to be canvassing at the moment.

It was clear that the Dublin Central group would have to marshal its resources quite carefully in order to mount a successful election campaign.

The meeting turned to a discussion of the group's financial resources and the logistics of running the campaign on a limited budget. Sean pointed out that many of the suggestions made by the members, such as poster and pamphlet drives, fundraising events, publicity photos, and the rental of a campaign headquarters, would only be feasible if the group could find sufficient funds to enable these projects to proceed. As he put it:

I personally don't have the slightest idea of how much it costs to fund half of what Patrick has told me. So, I don't know if anybody else does. Can we sit down as a group and say 'well we need a thousand pounds for this or five hundred pounds for that', you know. I personally don't actually know.

Patrick replied:

Off the top of my head, we'd be spending it on leaflets that will go out in the post ... that's a once off. We'd need twelve hundred quid to get every single voter a A4 leaflet printed on both sides. Photographs, I haven't got photographs done. That will be at least a hundred quid if not a hundred and fifty quid to get good colour and black and white photographs. And design would be a hundred quid or two hundred quid to have somebody put together what the leaflet would look like. I mean ...

Here Moira broke into the conversation and suggested that, as Patrick had a preliminary costing of the groups expected minimal expenditure, he should give the group a copy of it and then the group could discuss it. She wanted to focus more on "what roles we're going to take

on, or what roles we're willing to take on". In answer to this, Patrick posed a number of different options relevant to the campaign. He said:

I think, as a group, we should be trying to tease out whether or not we want a strong poster campaign? Do we want to rent a photocopier and try and get a leaflet up for each ward as we go? Is somebody prepared to spend a couple of hours going around, finding out what the issues are and saying what the Green Party's response is, and rattling off five hundred leaflets that we use that night to go into the area around one place and say 'We want to put a recycling station here, we want to re-open Rathdowne railway, we want to deal with the derelict building on such and such a street'. Do we want to do that kind of a campaign or do we ... Like, it becomes very abstracted during an election campaign these days, particularly this idea of a poster. You just write it up, put it all together and give it to a printer, and everybody's got a leaflet. Then what do you do? You're going around knocking on doors, and how do you work on that? Do we simply say 'Oh, lets get as many people as we can out knocking on loads of doorsteps or do we say we need to have so many people knocking on so many doors each day? And how does that happen? Will there be someone on the phone spendin two hours a day callin up the people who went out the previous night sayin it would great to have you back this evening and could you bring along a friend? That's the level of activity that I see. A fully-fledged campaign. And I think that there's all kinds of decisions there that one might agree with, disagree with, but I would hope that the group would be more than a sounding board that will be responding and saying yea, nay, good, bad, yes, no.

Once again, Patrick was making the point that the group would have to actively involve itself in the campaign if it was to have a greater say in the decision making process. Having been involved in the election process before, Patrick was well aware of the speed at which events could progress when an election campaign was underway. It was also clear that he wanted the group to take as much responsibility upon itself as it could in order to relieve him of the day-to-day decisions of the campaign. What was interesting about this was that it was a real test for the group's ability to make good decisions quickly. The group would have to function independently of the Party and act as an effective political unit in the local arena. This would mean that it may not have the luxury of consensus decision making on every level as the group would be called upon to act and react quickly in order to remain visible against the campaigns of the better funded and more experienced mainstream parties.

This also raised the issue of the group's awareness of the Party's activities and plans on a national basis. When talk turned to a discussion of the Party's national preparations Larry outlined the decisions made in the last ETF meeting. Each policy group would be responsible

for producing policy profiles on their own area of expertise and presenting it to the ETF for integration into the Party's policy platform. Larry showed that he was well aware of this issue when he announced that:

I think we've done a very good night's work tonight in terms of the integration of the group and the candidate but how does the group integrate into the larger anatomy of the scene. It's as if we're indifferent to what happens in the Party nationally.

This was a recurrent theme in the various local Green groups to various extents, but it would prove to be a point of some contention between the Dublin Central group and the ETF. While not wishing to pre-empt the chronology of events that occurred after this meeting, there were repercussions that stemmed from the Dublin Central group's decision to make a non-Party member the manager for their election campaign. This meant that they were to be the only group within the Party whose manager's first campaign priority was to get their candidate elected rather than to further the aims of the organisation. With Mathew largely in control of the day-to-day organisation of Patrick's itinerary, conflict between the ETF and the Dublin Central group was likely, if not inevitable.

The next item on the agenda was a report by Sean on the progress of the 'Drugs' policy discussed earlier in the thesis. Larry as a psychologist, Andrea as a medical doctor, and Sean as a drug abuse counsellor, individually and jointly had a professional interest in trying to formulate a viable policy enabling long term solutions to the problem regardless of their association with the Party. Sean was reporting on the latest draft 'drugs' policy that he, Larry, and Andrea were in the process of presenting to the Party for ratification. At that point the draft had been circulated to the policy committees on health and justice. The feedback from those groups had been so minimal that Sean had no way of gauging the Party's reaction to the policy. Of the twenty-three members on the Justice committee there had only been three replies and only one person from the health committee had offered comment on the document. The two comments that were noted at the meeting involved minor adjustments to the documents such as spelling, punctuation, and use of language. The main topic of the

discussion involved the difficulty Sean was having actually getting the issue listed on the agenda of the National Council and the Co-ordinating Committee before the election campaign started in earnest.

Sean then talked about one of the most controversial aspects of the draft policy which involved making facilities available to recreational drug users for the purposes of testing the strength and purity of the drugs they were using. In his opinion:

In the same way that there was a prohibition of alcohol in the states and it led to bath tub gin and the mafia, prohibition doesn't actually work because anybody can get any drug they want if they try hard enough. Also, the quality of it [the drugs] is very suspect. For example, I was speaking to somebody yesterday who said that, in their opinion, the ecstasy in Dublin was mostly heroin. So, if just for one weekend you could have testing facilities for ecstasy, the kids would stop takin it because they'd realise just what it was.

Patrick contributed to this discussion by trying to determine what the Party's response to this issue should be given that it was indeed one concerning social justice. He commented that:

I wonder, if we're saying that it is a social justice issue, should we go a bit further in stating that massive resources need to be invested in the areas ... of multiple disadvantage in Dublin. And that goes beyond the issue of health, it goes beyond. It goes certainly into the issue of education. It goes into sports facilities, cultural facilities, havin a library where a kid who's in a tough family background can go after school and do their homework.

Sean agreed with this approach and made the group aware of just how little money was being put into this area by the government. As he informed the group:

I'll simplify the figures from the budget just a little bit. I think, just falling off the top of my head, it was six hundred and thirty five million in tax breaks, two percent off corporation tax, forty million for new prison, and [only] fourteen million for a drugs response. It dropped down from six hundred and thirty five million to fourteen million, so the government is clearly stating where its priorities are. It's not with social justice.

At this point Rose remarked:

Well the other thing is that there's not enough money going into processing people. I mean people are out on bail¹⁴, see what I mean. So there needs to be more money in that.

¹⁴ At the time the Irish Justice system was operating so far above its capacity that many people remained out on bail for extended periods before their case could be heard in the courts.

Rose was expressing a concern about the justice system that was shared among many people in the Republic. The courts simply did not have enough resources to cope with the increasing number of cases brought before it as a consequence of Dublin's rising crime rate. The issue was quite topical at that time as the Progressive Democrat's had also waded into the debate by calling for a New York style 'Zero Tolerance' approach to crime in Dublin. In response to Sally's concerns, Sean noted that:

Governor Loneygran, Tim Loneygran of Mountjoy¹⁵, says that 'sanctions do not cure drug addicts'. That the jails are full of people and we have to let them out. We could build ten more jails and they'd just fill them. But all you're doin is creating a cycle. Rehabilitation breaks the cycle and it's cheaper than lockin people up. And there's the whole question of the 'Zero Tolerance' thing comin in now, which has just further marginalised people. I mean there's no millionaires in Mountjoy. People are not there because they were genetically corrupt and they just couldn't stay on the straight and narrow. I think social deprivation has a lot to do with it. So I would agree with you one hundred percent Patrick.

Here, Larry noted that:

It [Sean's approach] dovetails very well with the opening statements of the [Party] manifesto, which are about the gap between those who are affluent and are comfortable in our society and those who are not is continuing to increase to an exceptional degree. I don't know our economics policy very well but I don't know if that kind of angle is in it. We're very weak in the whole area of inequality and justice and discussing poverty and disadvantage in our policies. So I would try to support the idea to elaborate this.

Finally, Patrick made mention to the group of a recent poll in a national business news publication that estimated support for the Greens in Ireland at around nine percent. While he thought this was encouraging, he felt that the group would still have a hard time gaining the thirteen percent of the vote needed to gain a seat in the constituency. This level of difficulty was compounded by the fact that the constituency had been, for many years, a stronghold for Fianna Fail, the largest single political party in the Republic. Patrick's nearest political rival was an incumbent Fianna Fail TD who could rely on one of the most professional and well established party organisations throughout every step of the campaign.

¹⁵ Mountjoy prison was the largest and most overcrowded prison in the Republic at the time of research.

5.2.2b 07/05/1997 – Election Strategy Meeting

As I have mentioned previously, my activities at the main office and involvement in the campaigns of Dublin South and Dublin South West denied me the opportunity to attend the Dublin Central group meetings as often as I had hoped. As a consequence, it was not until the seventh of May that I again was able to be present at a meeting. However, I had kept in touch with the group through both Patrick and Sean and had, by this time, accompanied members of the group on several outings for the purposes of door to door canvassing. By this time, the group had rented a headquarters in the centre of the constituency and had been very active in advertising Patrick's candidacy through press releases, leaflets, and posters throughout the local electorate. The earlier issues they had had to deal with concerning Mathew's nomination had been resolved and the group was now working quite effectively towards their goal. Patrick had taken a month's leave from his work as an architect and was devoting all of his time towards the election campaign. They had also incorporated a large number of non-member supporters into their campaign organisation and were regularly sending out teams of canvassers in an attempt to reach as many people in the electorate as possible.

The meeting opened with Mathew presenting a report of the group's recent canvassing activities. He briefly mentioned the seven different areas that the group's various canvassing teams had covered in the last two weeks and added that he felt that the response from the people in those areas had been quite good as people of all ages had shown a willingness to listen to the Green message. As the election date had not yet been announced at this time, the initial canvassing by the group had been focussed on establishing which issues were of the highest priority in the opinion of the residents. According to Mathew:

What comes clear from the canvass, even in this week's canvassing, is basically the issue ... the main issue out there is drugs. And there's a lot of local issues that have been taken. You know, the walkie talkies and the marches on the houses and things

like that¹⁶. And what's clear about it basically is if you've mentioned Patrick or mentioned that Patrick is on the Fatima and Dolphins taskforce¹⁷, that has a hell of an impact. It gives immediate credibility and, I mean, to give one quote 'What we need is people who are on the taskforce, they wouldn't be on it unless they knew what they were talking about, and we need people to keep the push on the drugs'. My own experience was that there was rarely a house that was 'not' going to give a vote to the Greens. It was more like they weren't going to vote at all. If they were going to vote it would be a Green vote there somewhere and our biggest challenge is to get that [vote] upgraded to a number one.

Apart from confirming that dealing with the problem of drug addiction in the community was as high a priority for many of the residents as it was for the Dublin Central group, Mathew referred to the substantial amount of constituents that had not enrolled to vote in the election. As voting was not compulsory in the Republic, there were many citizens who chose not to participate in the electoral process. Although the reasons behind this growing trend of non-participation were varied it was my experience that, when asked at their doorstep, many replied that they felt that nothing would change for them regardless of which party or coalition was elected. Overwhelmingly, these people were the most disaffected in the community and had become, over time, fatalistic about their chances of gaining a better standard of living through the processes of democracy in the Republic. Many, living in Council tenancies and subject to generational unemployment, felt so alienated from the burgeoning middle class on the south side of the Liffey that they refused to participate in a system they saw as clearly hostile to those without access to wealth. This was of great concern to the group as it appeared that there seemed to be widespread support for them within this section of the community because of Patrick's participation in drug abuse

¹⁶ At that time the local residents of many inner city suburbs had become so alarmed at the growing number of drug related crimes and deaths within their neighbourhoods that they had organised themselves into groups and had created a number of grassroots strategies for dealing with the problem. One these was to patrol areas suspected of being frequented by drug dealers with the aim of finding them and chasing them off. The residents would each be equipped with a two way radio which they would use to contact each other in order to assemble in a large group around the suspected drug dealers and so chase them off. Another such strategy was for residents to gather at a pre-arranged meeting place and march, en masse, to the house or houses of suspected drug dealers in order to send a clear message that they were no longer welcome in the area. These were the initiatives that Mathew was referring to.

¹⁷ The Fatima taskforce was part of an initiative to deal with the problems caused by drug abuse established by CORI – The Council of the Religious in Ireland. The Dolphin taskforce was a similar initiative established by the Dublin council.

taskforces. However, this would come to nothing at the ballot box if these potential Green Party voters were not enrolled.

Aware of this fact, Sean speculated that there was "a huge protest vote out there" with many people being dissatisfied by the conservatism usually shown by the mainstream parties when in government. He hoped that, as well as presenting a new political philosophy to the people of the constituency, a vote for the Green Party would also be seen as an effective way of protesting against the growing socio-economic inequalities within Irish society. In response to this, Mathew replied:

I don't know how big the protest vote is, you know. I think people on the doors were quite honest. I don't think we were led astray by people, but some people were just quite cynical about the whole thing and we were able to say "Well, look if you're cynical why don't you try and get someone new in there and, you know, use your vote". And that worked.

The next item on the agenda was a brief description, by Patrick, of the activities of the Dolphin taskforce. He told the group that the taskforce:

... brings together the local community and the Guardi and the public rep's to sit around the table and work out, practically, what needs to be done in an area. Often issues of housing maintenance or issues of concern are talked about with the Guardi, as to what their presence has been like in the previous month. And it's a good point of contact, for me, to get to know each other. That would have led, for instance, today I was on the phone for twenty minutes to a representative of the South Inner Treatment City Services group. They're trying to get premises so we were discussing where they might get premises. So it's a good gathering point for people involved in the area of drug treatment.

This type of personal involvement was to be typical of Patrick's approach throughout the election campaign. Indeed, among the Green Party there were many members who could boast personal histories of extensive involvement in community projects and citizens initiatives. Apart from Patrick's involvement in the drug taskforces and Joe's role in the Dublin Food Co-op, participation in community organisations among the active membership was extremely high.

After this brief report, the meeting moved on to a discussion of the Dublin Central Greens leaflet that was soon to be distributed to every household in the constituency. The leaflet was, as yet, still in the draft stage and the group was trying to decide what main points about Green Party policy would be most likely to elicit support from local constituents. While these main points were not decided at the meeting, the ensuing discussion did centre on what kind of language would be used to convey the 'Green' message. Mathew outlined his views by telling the group:

Instead of saying 'clever public transport' or 'access to public transport', we should say 'better public transport for easier travel'. Now, that doesn't alienate the car drivers. It makes it easier to travel for everybody. The guy in the car can consider using the bus and vice versa, you know.

Moirá agreed with this and added:

It's got to be very short sentences in simplified language which comes across with the point. I mean I took a load of election leaflets into school today¹⁸ and gave them to a bunch of eighteen and nineteen year olds, they couldn't understand the messages coming out of the leaflets. They switched and they didn't want to read on any further, but very succinct sentences, like, that make sense. Just short points.

The Dublin Central group felt that the right choice of language in the leaflet was crucial for the campaign. The leaflet would reach far more people than the group and its supporters could ever hope to by canvassing from door to door. There was also a feeling within the group that the Party leadership often presented itself as being 'of' the intelligentsia, as opposed to being 'of' the people, by using a mixture of theoretical and scientific jargon when attempting to explain its position on different issues. This is of particular interest as it an unexpectedly critical self-characterisation by Party members of the organisation as an intellectual community. The fact that this was quite a common complaint among the membership suggests that, while many in the Party are eager to assume intellectual duties such as leadership and education, they are reticent to be seen as intellectually aloof by the public. Indeed, many believed that the main obstacle to greater support for the Green Party was not the content of the Party's message but merely the way the message was presented. Members

¹⁸ Moirá was employed as a teacher at a local secondary school.

who shared Moira's concern felt generally that, once Green politics were made accessible to the community, then people could not help but be persuaded by the logic it contained.

Similarly, the last item on the agenda was a discussion of the logistics of an upcoming quiz night at Manton House that the group had organised. Between fifty and sixty people were expected to attend the event and participate in the quiz. Participants would pay a ten-pound entrance fee and then be organised into groups of up to ten for the purposes of competing for first, second, and third place prizes that had been donated by Party members and supporters. Also the group would make available refreshments for those who attended the function that had been donated by local businesses. In this way the group would be able to raise additional funds for their campaign.

5.2.3 *Dublin South West Campaign*

As previously mentioned, the campaign in Dublin South West differed greatly from the other two campaigns discussed owing to the extremely small size of the group. Eileen's decision to run in the election was more informed by her dedication to the ideals of the Party than any sense of personal political ambition. Also, she felt that a Green Party representative in the constituency would be able to represent the interests of the people in the area far more effectively than the incumbent mainstream politicians had in the past. While there were a few smaller urban centres and farming communities within its boundaries, most of the constituency's population resided in the suburb of Tallaght. Eileen believed the constituency's previous and incumbent politicians had not made serious attempts to deal with the entrenched unemployment and poverty that plagued Tallaght's inhabitants because they had been confident that the voting public would continue to vote along civil war party lines as they had done in the past. Some of the reasons behind this voting behaviour can be seen in the unique history of Tallaght's population.

To recap, Dublin South West was an unusual constituency as its demographic nature had been irreversibly changed by government policies in the sixties and seventies supposedly implemented in order to relieve population pressure on Dublin's inner city districts. Before this period, Tallaght was a village in the middle of a farming district on the outskirts of Dublin. Its small population of predominantly farmers and rural workers was quite conservative and the constituency had been a stronghold of Fine Gael since the founding of the Republic. When the gentrification of Dublin's inner city commenced, much of the city's inner suburban poor were removed from the tenements that surrounded areas, such as the famous Four Courts and Temple Bar precincts, and relocated in the new council tenancies that had been built in Tallaght by the planning authorities. The buildings that had been their homes were then demolished in order to utilise the prime real estate upon which they stood for the commercial developments that dominate Dublin's central business district today. Consequently, Tallaght in 1997 was home to a large population of welfare recipients living in Council housing with little or no industry or resources to provide employment.

Positioned on the southern outskirts of Dublin, it was seen by the other residents of Dublin's south side as one of the most undesirable areas in the city. As Eileen explained to me, Tallaght's reputation was such that its residents were often discriminated against when applying for employment because they were perceived as uneducated 'welfare cases'. In my experience, it was common among south side residents to refer to the people of Tallaght as 'knackers' when the topic was raised. Knacker was a derogatory term given to those people from the poorer areas of Dublin both North and South. It has its origins in the large numbers of wild and semi-tamed horses that inhabited the outskirts of Dublin. The local people in these areas would often keep them as pets but the population had been allowed to grow to such proportions that they were often a hazard to traffic¹⁹ and were largely considered a nuisance by the authorities. People from the more wealthy suburbs of Dublin would jest that their

¹⁹ On more than one occasion a car I was travelling in nearly collided with a horse while driving around Tallaght early in the morning. They would appear out of the mist in the middle of an otherwise normal suburban street and seemed totally unfazed by oncoming traffic.

fellow residents were so poor that they sometimes ate the horses, hence the term, Knacker. Such was the constituency in which Eileen ran her campaign for the Green Party.

Obviously, given that Eileen's campaign team consisted of herself, her husband Kris, and a campaign manager called Patricia who had been seconded from another group, Eileen was never considered a serious contender to win one of the five seats available. While she understood this from the onset, it did not stop her from mounting the best campaign that she could with an eye to achieving the impossible and winning a seat in the Dail. Without a local group to support her Eileen organised some of her friends in the Party from other areas of Dublin and the few ex-Green Party members within the constituency to distribute pamphlets and canvass in the sections of the constituency she thought might be more amenable to the Green message. Her main aim throughout the campaign was to make the people aware of the Party and to convince them that a Green TD could be more effective than those of the mainstream parties in addressing the needs of the local community. She felt that her main strength as a candidate lay in the fact that she was one of only two candidates that lived locally and she had an excellent knowledge of local affairs.

Eileen believed that, as a representative of the Green Party, she would be able to present herself to the people as someone devoted to local autonomy and decentralised government. A firm adherent to the Party's policy of devolving power to the smallest functioning political institutions, one of Eileen's main campaign platforms was that she was free of the intrigues of mainstream party politics and devoted to the needs of the local community. In a constituency with very little local industry and no defining environmental 'issue', Eileen stressed the Green Party's policy of decision making at the local level and its much publicised push for a Guaranteed Basic Income as the main benefits that would come from having a Green TD in Dublin South West. Unfortunately, during the duration of the campaign there were no real opportunities for Eileen to express her views other than canvassing on doorsteps and at shopping centres. While she did manage to get one or two letters into the local paper, her

campaign was so under funded that she could barely afford the running fee and had to rely solely on the Party for her leaflets and posters. The real political struggle within the constituency was between Fianna Fail and Fine Gael and, owing to their impressive media blitzes throughout the campaign, Eileen became one of the most low profile candidates in the entire Republic.

What interested me about Eileen's campaign in Dublin South West was that the problems she struggled with were, to greater or lesser extents, indicative of the Party's struggle throughout the Republic. The lack of funds had forced her to campaign almost exclusively on a personal level and had made it impossible for her to obtain any serious or effective media coverage. This meant that, while most people in the electorate were aware of the Party, very few of them had any real idea of what it actually stood for. The lack of human resources meant that Eileen could not effectively make her presence felt within the electorate by canvassing and many parts of the constituency remained uncanvassed when the day of the election came. Patricia remarked to me that the result in Dublin South West could well mirror the Party's fortunes in the rest of the Republic as the 'David and Goliath' battle between Eileen and her mainstream rivals was synonymous with the Party's situation nationally. On the day of the election Eileen could only hope that her campaign had been successful enough for her nomination to progress through the initial stages of the vote count where she might gain the last seat on the strength of preferences.

5.3 *Canvassing*

For each of the three local groups discussed above, canvassing the policies and ideas of the Party in the electorate was of vital concern. I was able to accompany each of the groups on a number of occasions when they canvassed for support within their respective constituencies and found the experience enlightening on a number of levels. Apart from gaining first hand experience of the various localities from which the Party was trying to garner support, I was

interested in seeing how Party members and supporters presented their views to the voting public and how these views were received. Also, listening to conversations held on residential doorsteps between the canvassers and voters gave me an indication of what issues were important to the residents of the different areas canvassed by the Party. This allowed me to gain perspective on the way the Irish Greens were seen in the larger economic and socio-cultural context.

Through my inclusion in these activities I was struck by the importance of local issues in the general electorate. Although the different areas that I went to with the Greens covered a broad spectrum of neighbourhoods in Dublin, from Council tenancies to the homes of bankers, local issues were placed on a par with issues of national significance. People held their TDs responsible for everything that occurred in the constituency, and expected them to become personally involved in all facets of local politics. A fine example of this occurred in Tallaght when residents became angry that the streetlights in their area had stopped working and the neighbourhood had been thrown into darkness every night. The residents had complained to the local council and maintenance teams started work on the necessary repairs. Sometime during that period someone had also complained to one of the local TDs about the situation, and he had made a point of following the repair crews on their journeys through the area. He would wait until the crew had stopped and then tell the local residents that he personally had organised for the council to fix the streetlights. Consequently, when Eileen canvassed the area in the election campaign of 1997 she was often informed by residents that their vote would be going to 'the man who fixed the streetlights'.

On another occasion, in the constituency of Dublin South, residents of an area that contained a lane that was being used by local children as a bicycle route were campaigning to have the lane closed. The lane had been the focus of a long running dispute between neighbours who each claimed that they had title to the land but neither side could prove conclusively that they were entitled to it. The local residents became alarmed when their children started using the

lane as a short cut on their way home from school. As one woman put it, they would "fly out from the lane on their bikes you can't see them until you've almost run them over". After several near misses, the residents became so concerned that, when Joe canvassed the area, they told him that they would vote for anyone who would promise to either close the lane for good or settle the dispute between the feuding neighbours. Once again, this was obviously a matter for the council but the residents felt that they had every right to appeal to a higher authority when local government did not respond fast enough. In responding to this kind of local issue, the Party canvassers in most cases could only sympathise with the residents and re-iterate the Greens commitment to devolving power to the lowest practical level. As the Party had had success previously in the local council elections throughout Dublin, they were able to present themselves as being committed to local government reform. Nevertheless, they had to admit that they were unable to call upon long-standing local power bases such as those enjoyed by the mainstream parties.

Issues of a more national nature that were raised by residents on the 'doorstep' varied throughout the three constituencies. In Dublin South West, the main issues were unemployment and social security. Most of the people canvassed in that constituency were adamant that the area needed some kind of large scale local industry that could provide residents with stable employment and an income sufficient to allow them to escape the cycle of casual work and social welfare. Many people were also extremely concerned that, should the more conservative parties gain power, their current welfare benefits would be reduced to such a degree as to become grossly insufficient. These concerns had arisen because of an election promise by Mary Harney, the leader of the right wing Progressive Democrat Party, to terminate all benefits for under age single mothers who were not living at home with their parents. She had also campaigned vigorously for the government to decrease the overall expenditure by the state on welfare and unemployment benefits of all descriptions and had promised to make this a priority should her party come into power after the election. Many people within the constituency were apprehensive about this prospect as the Progressive

Democrats had recently made common cause with Fianna Fail and were likely to gain power as a coalition government.

In Dublin Central the two main issues were transport and drug abuse. Concerns about the public transport system focussed upon the high volumes of traffic that flowed through the constituency everyday. The residents were willing to support any initiative that would reduce traffic levels in the area and many felt that the best solution would be to expand and upgrade public transport to enable more frequent and convenient access to the city district via trains and busses. There was even a push to introduce light rail throughout the central business district although it was not popular with those living outside the inner suburban areas, and there were serious concerns that Dublin's thousand year old streets were simply not wide enough to accommodate both light rail and motor vehicles together.

With regard to the issue of drug abuse, the Dublin Central constituency was daily inundated by people from all over Dublin looking to either purchase or sell heroin. Local residents were alarmed by the rising level of drug related crime within their area and felt that some areas of their neighbourhood were no longer safe to frequent. This issue was quickly taken up by the mainstream parties who promptly declared that they would, if elected, introduce a policy of zero tolerance, much the same strategy that had been introduced a year earlier in New York. The Greens and the Democratic Socialists had both opted for another solution whereby more methadone clinics and treatment centres would be made available to addicts in the inner city. This approach, they reasoned, would serve to minimise the harm done to the community by addicts desperate to appease their addiction, stabilise their addiction so that further rehabilitation could be attempted, and ease the burden of Ireland's vastly overpopulated prison system.

These proposed initiatives served to split the voting public into two more or less even groups. The hard line approaches of the mainstream parties found much sympathy with a population

already fed up with being abused by addicts and accosted by beggars on a daily basis. Many had given up any hope of a solution to the problem being found and simply wanted it to be removed from their streets. They saw calls for more methadone clinics and treatment centres as a waste of public funds and were convinced that these places would be a blight on the communities which housed them because they would become a beacon for addicts all over the city. Even among people who agreed in principle, there were very few who would welcome the establishment of one of these facilities in their neighbourhood.

In Dublin South, the main issues at the time of the campaign tended to be much more nationally oriented due to the absence of any single pressing local issue with the ability to galvanise public opinion. While people were willing to listen to Green Party policy platforms such as energy conservation, waste recycling, greater support for home education, and halting the practice of adding fluoride to the city's water supply, they seemed sceptical of the Party's ability to manage the economy responsibly should it somehow come to power. One resident summed up the main concern within the community admirably when asked by Joe on his doorstep what he regarded as the most important issue in the election. He replied "I'm worried about what everyone else is worried about around here – taxes". As the main beneficiaries of the much-improved Irish economy, residents of Dublin South were happy enough to vote for the mainstream parties as long as they could feel secure that their standard of living would, at the very least, remain the same. While canvassing with the Dublin South group, I gained the impression that the residents were willing to consider the local Green candidate for second and third preferences but would rather give their first preference to a candidate from one of the more established parties.

Throughout all of these three constituencies, local group members were generally well received by people on their doorsteps and there was a high level of genuine interest shown in the policies and principles of the Party. I was particularly surprised to find that the Party was quite well received in many of the less affluent neighbourhoods that were canvassed. I had

suspected that the Party's environmental stance might be viewed as largely irrelevant by people whose first concern was purported to be employment for themselves and education for their children. However, the Party's platform on social justice, including the Guaranteed Basic Income and support for locally owned small industry, made them relevant to many of the concerns held by those in Dublin's poorer areas. By the end of the campaign, many within the Party were so buoyed by the apparent support for the Greens that they were predicting an unparalleled success at the polling booths.

5.4 Election Day

On the day of the election I took a bus into Tallaght and met with Eileen, Mary, Larry, and Claire (an ex-Party member who lived in the area). We arrived as a group just before the tallying got underway at a local sports centre that was being used as a counting room. Within the counting room the atmosphere was highly charged as representatives from the different parties organised themselves into groups of designated officials who were to oversee the various tasks necessary to facilitate the counting of the votes. Ballot boxes were opened and the ballot papers were smoothed out and put into bundles of one hundred. In order to ensure an even representation of the tally throughout the counting process, all of the bundles were mixed together and then taken out at random to be counted. I was told by one of the officials that this practice was necessary as each neighbourhood had a tendency to vote as a bloc for one party or another. If the bundles were not mixed, the delegates and officials would have no idea of who was likely to prevail until all of the votes had been scrutinised and counted.

Not surprisingly, as the results came in it was clear that many neighbourhoods within the constituency had voted according to their respective socio-economic positions. Ballot boxes from the poorer areas showed a high count for Sinn Fein, the Socialist Party, and the Democratic Left Party. Sinn Fein had campaigned energetically throughout the area well before the election was announced. While they had always been relatively strong within the

constituency, their role in the peace process at that time had given their candidate firm ground upon which to promote the party's policies. The candidate for the Socialist Party was a well-known local activist and had strong support in the various local Council tenancies. He had long been outspoken about the various inequalities suffered by people in his area and was even liked by many that did not adhere to his political stance. As for the Democratic Left, its candidate held a ministry position in the Rainbow Coalition and was accredited with moderating the more conservative policy proposals that had been put forward by Fine Gael over the last three years.

In the more affluent areas of the electorate the vote seemed to be evenly divided between Fianna Fail and the Progressive Democrats, with Fine Gael running a close third. As the major partner in the Rainbow Coalition government, Fine Gael were not receiving the support from the electorate that they had counted on due to the success of the joint Fianna Fail/Progressive Democrat campaign mounted against them in the previous weeks. Unfortunately for Eileen, early results showed that she had only managed to capture three percent of the vote where she had hoped to achieve at least five. While she still held, at that time, some hope of succeeding on second and third preferences, she was disappointed that her reception while canvassing in the constituency had not translated into first preference votes at the polling booths.

Early reports on the radio that day suggested that the rest of the Green Party had fared no better than Eileen. It was becoming apparent that the vote had polarised between the two major political coalitions and this had left the smaller parties, such as the Greens, largely on the margins. The Greens were particularly disappointed, as this was the first time that they had fielded a candidate in each of the twenty-six counties of the Republic. Obviously, many of them were running simply to improve the Party's profile in their areas and had no real expectations of success. However, as the campaign intensified, Party members had become progressively more optimistic. Opinion polls had consistently shown them at four percent in

rural areas and five percent within the Dublin constituencies. If this had proved accurate then the Party would have been likely to win three to four seats within Dublin alone and this had forced the local groups and candidates in marginal seats to take the campaign very seriously indeed. Unfortunately, this was not the case.

Throughout the day Patricia and Eileen were in constant touch with the other candidates and, as the news of the Party's performance in the election filtered in from around the Republic, their mood went from disappointment to disbelief. It became apparent that the Greens had only achieved three percent in the Dublin region and slightly under that in the rural constituencies. When the Party faithful met at Devitt's Hotel later that evening to watch the final round of preference counting, the Party had clearly failed to take three of the five seats in which they felt certain of victory and had only narrowly managed to retain the one seat that they already had in the Dail. There was, however, some cause for optimism as Paul from Dublin South East had won a seat from the Progressive Democrat incumbent in that constituency. The Party would have to wait until a recount was completed before the seat could be officially claimed, but it was only a formality by the end of the night.

As mentioned above, Eileen had only managed to garner three percent of the vote in Dublin South West. She had decided not to attend the watching of the final count that night as the campaign had been a tiring and stressful time for her and all she wanted to do was to go home and sleep for a couple of days. When I talked to her a week later, she had recovered to a great extent and was philosophical about the result of the election. She felt that she had run the best campaign she was able to given the resources at her disposal and the time available.

According to her, it had all been a success anyway as the electorate in the area had been introduced to the Party for the first time. Whoever the local Green candidate was in the next election, he or she would be able to build upon the ground that Eileen had prepared that year and would have a better chance of success because of it.

Patrick, although disappointed at not gaining a seat in the Dail, was happy that he and his group had run an excellent campaign and had done the best that they could. He had proceeded quite well through the first four rounds of counting, but had lost his race in the fifth when he failed to achieve the minimum amount of preference votes needed to see him through to the next round. While his share of primary votes was well above the national average for the Party, it appears that he also polled quite well in the lower preference votes. After he exited the contest, his preferences were crucial to the other candidates for seats in his constituency and he honestly felt that, had he made the next round, he would have succeeded in his bid for a seat in the Dail. His one complaint was that the section of the community that he had appealed to most did not vote at all. Here he was referring to the younger voters and the wide spread support within the constituency that he had received from them. Unfortunately, as mentioned previously, many people between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five had become so disillusioned with the political process within the Republic that they had not even bothered to enrol themselves in the electoral lists. Not surprisingly, he was convinced that this had seriously effected his chances of success as he had always felt that that age group was most likely to be open-minded about the Green agenda.

Joe was the most disappointed of the three but also felt that he and the Dublin South group had done the best they could. With his regular appearances in the Dublin media throughout the campaign, and the level of speculation about his chances in both the media and the constituency, Joe's candidacy had seemed nearly certain of success. Added to this was the volatile nature of his constituency and the fact that they had previously voted in the first Green candidate to have reached the Dail. Unfortunately, the mainstream party candidates in the constituency had managed to brand Joe as an animal rights activist and this had not been received well by the general public. While the Green message was well received throughout the electorate, many within it seemed to remain sceptical of Joe and this was confirmed when he only managed to achieve six percent of the primary vote.

Thus, the day of the election had come and gone and the Greens, although having achieved the most successful election result in their short history as political party, went home disappointed. During the following three months that I stayed in Ireland, the Party engaged in much self-examination about the successes and failures of the campaign. The issues raised by their experiences of the election were analysed openly and honestly in an attempt to build upon the Party's strengths and improve upon its weaknesses. In the meantime, the Party emerged from its sense of depression about the opportunities lost in the campaign and started to realise that it now had twice the level of representation in the Dail than it had ever had in the past. As time went on they began to see themselves not just as a group of concerned citizens fighting an uphill battle against overwhelming odds, but as an emerging force on the Irish political scene with the potential to bring about real social change. By the time that I left Ireland, the Party was already in the throws of renewing itself and had just adopted a new constitution that rationalised its decision making processes, allowing it to become more unified in its approach to policy development and the recruitment of new members.

Conclusion

Throughout the thesis I have based my discussion and analysis on several simple questions concerning the active membership of the Party. The first and most obvious question to be asked is who are the Irish Greens? As a starting point, we may see the Greens as people expressing their concerns about the world in which they live through environmentalism. In this historical context, environmentalism has become the paradigm through which they have been able to give voice to their hopes for, and fears about, the future while creating a framework in which to address the problems they see to be undermining their society. The purpose of this process is to translate the hopes that they hold into feasible ideas for a future direction. Brosius declares that environmentalism is "a rich site of cultural production" (1999: 277), and so we may see the Irish Greens as producers of a new kind of cultural knowledge that strives to go beyond the established models of left and right mainstream politics, models which the Greens assert are deeply rooted in the destructiveness of industrialism and utilitarianism. Instead the Greens propagate a view of the world in which a 'healthy physical environment' is a prerequisite for the overall health of the society which lives within its bounds. The twin notions of a 'healthy' environment and a 'healthy' society are critical to the Greens thinking.

I believe that the best way to understand the Greens in their role as knowledge producers is to perceive them as an intellectual community formed around the concept and values of environmentalism. It is for this reason that I have made the discussion of the place of intellectuals in society, and the various functions they perform within it, a theme running throughout the thesis. The reason for my choice of Holub's Gramscian based discussion of the traditional and organic intellectual was two-fold. Obviously, one of the hazards of introducing a broad category such as that of the intellectual into an ethnographically based dissertation such as this is the sheer scope of the concept. Therefore I searched for a discussion of the

intellectual that best suited the context of my research. I was attracted to Holub's thoughts in this area because, being grounded in Gramsci's theory, her discussion was class based and enabled me to understand the Greens as a middle class movement creating its theory and practice in the context of late capitalism. In addition, it also allowed me to discuss them as a community of individuals, each becoming Green in their own way and with their own relationship with the other intellectual communities that they were in contact with. In this way I have tried to portray them as complex individuals who often played several different roles as intellectuals simultaneously in their private and Party lives.

Thus, I approached the Greens as a group not in isolation but in full participation with the other intellectual communities of the day. As I have explained in Chapter Two, the notion of the intellectual employed in this dissertation is that of the cultural and ideological producer and, as such, the Greens participated in intellectual communities concerned with many different kinds of knowledge production. For example, the focus of these communities ranged from science to holistic medicine and from political theory to the local council. Individual members could be engaged in such varying issues as animal rights, vegetarianism, anti-discrimination legislation, anti-pollution campaigns, campaigns against specific developments and reformation of town planning laws all at the same time. With each of these groups generating their own form of intellectual community with links to others and the many questions of national politics still to be taken into consideration, it would indeed be misleading to consider the Irish Greens as anything other than energetic participants in Ireland's intellectual life.

The Greens notion of what constitutes an environment and society which will ensure the continuance of life in a viable form is complex. Given the material presented in this thesis, I believe that the Greens have not yet themselves reached a consensus on this and perhaps they never will. But it is possible to gain an insight into their thinking by recalling what they do not want in a Green society. At the risk of painting with too broad a brush, the Greens do not

want unthinking industrial development and the attendant problems of pollution and toxicity that come with it. They do not want an ethic of accumulation for the sake of accumulation, which they see as pitting each group within their society against the others and fuelling the excessive competition which undermines communal activity. Finally, while they wish to applaud and reward personal initiative, they do not want a society in which those in need go wanting for the most basic necessities while those who can, spend their wealth in pursuit of an ever increasing array of commodities that they do not need and whose production brings harm to the physical world upon which they depend. They desire a form of production and consumption which will ensure the continuity of life on Earth itself, a form of human existence rich in personal and communal/collective meaning, and a form of political life which is profoundly democratic. Hence they desire a different kind of human economy and a different kind of political culture to that which currently prevails. Some may paint them as impractical utopians but the Greens themselves assert that they are the realists in terms of diagnosis and in terms of solutions to pressing and dangerous dilemmas.

The Greens are in search of a better way to live and a better way to organise Irish society. They wish to transcend the current economic and political arguments and practices, which they see as being dependent on industrial and consumerist explanations of environmental and social problems. They want to introduce a new logic contained within the discourse of environmentalism. For them, this represents a 'common sense' approach in which a sustainable environment must underpin any new direction in social and economic development. In relation to this idea of 'common sense', I have striven to understand it in the way in which it is seen by the Greens themselves. I have tried to convey to the reader the Greens' own sense of urgency and passion about the way they feel the world is heading and the many different ways in which this direction could be changed for the better.

For the Greens, it is only common sense that it is a bad thing to pollute the environment which we depend upon for our present and continued existence. The Green notion of common

sense also firmly links the inability to properly manage environmental affairs with the inability to solve social and economic problems. Therefore, it can not be stated strongly enough that the Greens approach to, and notion of what makes common sense is one that is holistic and systemic. They see the social and the environmental as interlinked in a series of interchanges in which one has a direct bearing on the wellbeing of the other. They have extended the 'eco-system' concept to include social dimensions of human activity. The way they have done this is apparent in their policies ranging from child-care to education, employment to social security and from health to the environment. In this context, 'a healthy environment' means far more than the current state of the physical surrounds. The Greens are profoundly concerned with established social and economic arrangements in Ireland, but their angle of vision is from the vantage point of the environment. It is this which separates them from the established labour movement/working class movement.

The Greens campaign for a balance between the environmental and the social in which people are to be educated to value environmental stability as much as they now value economic growth. They state that they are not opposed to the market economy but Green thinking does imply a different kind of economy. Although much of their energies are spent educating the public about the dangers of seeing the environment as merely a set of resources for the economy, they are equally concerned with educating the public about the importance of community and commonality. This is where, as I see it, the emergent ideology of environmentalism takes on its true significance. To be more specific, I feel that there are central elements of this emergent ideology. The Greens see industrialism as a toxic process and, as such, are concerned to redress its harmful effects. They place great emphasis on expanding and deepening existing democratic processes and they hope to achieve this to some extent by a radical decentralisation of power. They also champion the importance of education and see themselves largely as educators. Hence, education is a primary Party activity and one which they hope to engage in on a national level. In addition, communality and collective purpose are highly valued by the Greens and this is, in turn, informed by their

foundation belief in the importance of environmental stability. Thus, they are strongly opposed to rampant consumerism and unbridled economic growth.

The Greens believe that the threat posed by modern socio-economic structures and industrialism constitute a common danger to all people in all places, whether they realise it or not. That is why much of their literature and their public speeches can be interpreted as an invitation to join an increasingly numerous community of citizens concerned with finding ways to deal with this threat before it is beyond human control. It is also the reason why the Irish Greens had reached only partial agreement on many important issues at the time of my research. The level and frequency of debate within the Party on many issues did not effect its overall integrity because there was consensus on the need to act and the reasons informing this need.

The ability of the Party to maintain its integrity while not smothering internal debate is further aided by the decentralised nature of its organisational structure. At the heart of this structure lie the local groups and it is within these local groups that the essence of the Party can be found. Local group meetings are informal affairs that are, more often than not, held in a corner of a local pub with the hubbub of the other patrons constantly in the background. It is at these meetings that the members of the Irish Greens engage in lively and informed debate about the world in which they live. Questions of science, technology, social theory, national events and local council matters are all raised and argued with equal vigour in this setting. It is in the local group that the basic commitment to the Party is fostered along side a commitment to each other. The efficacy of this institution within the Party was revealed during the election campaign when local groups went out night after night armed with leaflets, good intentions and much determination in the attempt to win over more votes for their cause. Although there was some degree of central planning, especially during the election campaign, each local group worked its own constituency utilising all the resources they could muster.

It is important to note again that the Irish Greens were and are not professional politicians and enjoy none of the advantages of the other older parties that have strong roots in pre-Civil War and Civil War politics. This meant that, especially on the campaign trail, they lacked the tradition and pedigree of their main competitors. In the context of Irish political culture this was more of a disadvantage than it would seem, primarily because traditional family ties to political parties in Ireland run very deep indeed. Thus, regardless of only attracting around three and a half percent of the vote, the electoral success of the local groups in their various constituencies was remarkable. They achieved previously unheard of publicity during the campaign and there was even serious speculation, right up until the eve of the election, that they would gain enough seats throughout the Republic to enter into a coalition with one of the mainstream parties and, so, form a government. Thus, on the one hand a gain of a single seat in the Dail seems a poor reward for the effort taken to mount a national election campaign but, on the other hand, the inclusion of the Green Party as a serious contender in Irish politics is certainly a remarkable achievement. It is one that will bear fruit in years to come.

In this respect, they have proven themselves successful in their role as educators and they have done this through the use of an environmental discourse which, while borrowing much from the general discourse of western environmental movements, is becoming more specific to the Irish context over time. As Peace notes in his 1993 article, the environmental movement in Ireland was moulded to a large extent by the need to counter the policies of the Industrial Development Authority and the tacit approval of these policies by both successive governments of the day and the Irish Planning Board (An Bord Pleanála). Thus the environmental movement in Ireland has developed a discourse which emphasises the need for community and individual choice in opposition to the seductive reassurances of multinational companies engaged in profit making with the full and open support of the government of the day. As we have seen in what I described as 'the Kilmeanagh landfill dispute', the Green Party has shown itself to be the only party with the political will to champion the rights of

local people and the environment against the ethos of industrial progress endemic in the government bureaucracy at all but the lowest levels. That they have been able to do this with some measure of success is a testament of their capacity to understand the discourse of science and technology used by their adversaries and to utilise it within their own discourse in defence of the environment. However, even withstanding the successes of the environmental movement in general and the Green Party in particular, the majority of people in the Republic remain less concerned about environmental advocacy than they are about matters relating to employment, welfare and taxation which they consider are more immediately pressing.

Hence, perceptions were mixed regarding the way in which the Party was seen by the general public. While there were small pockets of strong support in some urban areas, mostly in central and southern Dublin, many who would otherwise have supported them gave their vote to one or another mainstream party as they believed the Greens to be too small a party to effect national political trends. Similarly, Irish politics has such a strong local emphasis that many people were keen to elect the candidate with the most political clout in their constituency. As discussed within the thesis, in a political and cultural climate where politicians are seen primarily in the role of facilitators and intermediaries between the people and the bureaucracy, constituencies electing a member of the Green Party to represent them were likely to be putting themselves at a disadvantage regarding the allocation of government resources to their area. This is particularly true of rural areas in which there was much scepticism about the ability of the Greens to address rural problems. Of the two seats the Greens held after the 1997 elections, none of them were in rural areas and there was no serious threat mounted by any rural local group to the established mainstream parties. Rural Ireland remained, at that time, firmly in the grip of the Civil War parties even though the divisions between them have long since ceased to be ideological. It is, perhaps, no coincidence that the single seat gained in the elections of that year was the most affluent constituency in the Republic. Those who live there have enough political and economic

strength of their own to ensure that their rights are upheld, so perhaps they are willing to take a chance on a candidate from a party dedicated to pursuing environmental issues.

Since my fieldwork was undertaken in 1997, the Irish Green Party has had further success at the polls. In 2002 national elections were once again held and the Green Party gained four seats for a total of six in the Dail. The constituencies they now represent in the Dail are Dublin North, Dublin South East (which were previously held by the Party), Dublin South, Dun Laoghaire, Dublin Mid West and Cork South Central. These electoral gains are no small achievement and attest to the growing popularity of the Green message in Ireland. They also represent a political coming of age for the Irish Green Party as any Party with six seats in the Dail, from a possible one hundred and sixty-six, is a significant force in Irish politics.

I have no first hand knowledge to relate regarding the changes within the Party itself since 1997. However, I do know that the constitution that was still being debated after the elections in 1997 was accepted by the Party later that year and this has had significant effects upon the Party's structure. The Party now has an official Party Leader and Deputy Leader. Also, in addition to the structures discussed in this thesis, the Party has also brought into being Dail Constituency Groups (DCGs) whose function is to meet four times a years to discuss and adopt policy. Clearly, any discussion of the effects of these new Party institutions here would be speculation on my part, but I do feel it is reasonable to say that the Party seems to have restructured itself in a way that is more recognisably in keeping with the mainstream parties of Irish politics. This suggests an interesting direction for further research on the Irish Greens. In addition, an investigation of the Party's trajectory from having a single elected representative from 1989-1997 to holding six seats in 2002 would provide an opportunity to further develop many of the themes discussed in this thesis.

I would be particularly interested to investigate whether or not what I have described as an emergent ideology within the Greens has become more solidified, or recognisable, during the

years after my fieldwork was completed. Also, I submit that a further study of the way in which the discourse of the Irish Greens had evolved from that of the pre-Green environmental movement to that of a significant force in mainstream Irish politics would be of interest to any scholar interested in the study of western Green movements. Lastly, new research on the Irish Greens would be invaluable for a greater understanding of the way in which environmentalists create and maintain identity. In any further research concerning the Irish Greens it may be necessary not only to ask 'who are the Greens?' but also 'what are they becoming'?

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