Analysing Collective Action: Intersections of Power, Government and Resistance

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of PhD by Prior Output at London Metropolitan University.

Author: Rosemary (Rosie) Raphael Meade

Student Number: 17027946

Submitted: August 2018
## Table of Contents

Abstract

Acknowledgements

Dedication

Part 1: Introduction
1.1: Research Questions and Structure of Covering Document
1.2: The Body of Work

Part 2: Core Terms and Concepts
2.1: The State and Civil Society Nexus
2.2: Community Development, Community Arts and Youth Work: Points of Divergence and Overlap
2.3: Social Movements: Issues of Representation and Tactics

Part 3: Theory, Methodology and Methods
3.1: The Body of Work as Praxis
3.2: Extending and Expanding Theory
3.3: Contested Meanings of Critical Research
3.4: Promoting Theory as/through Dialogue
3.5: Methodology: Studying Discourses of Power, Government and Resistance
3.6: Texts and Discourses Analysed

Part 4: The Body of Work in Context: Particularities of Time and Place
4.1: The Celtic Tiger’s Death Rattle
4.2: Civil Society and Collective Action in the Era of Austerity
4.3: Continuing Traditions: Subordinating Culture and Society to the Economy
4.4: Collective Action in the Absence and the Shadow of the State

Abstract

Acknowledgements

Dedication

Part 1: Introduction
1.1: Research Questions and Structure of Covering Document
1.2: The Body of Work

Part 2: Core Terms and Concepts
2.1: The State and Civil Society Nexus
2.2: Community Development, Community Arts and Youth Work: Points of Divergence and Overlap
2.3: Social Movements: Issues of Representation and Tactics

Part 3: Theory, Methodology and Methods
3.1: The Body of Work as Praxis
3.2: Extending and Expanding Theory
3.3: Contested Meanings of Critical Research
3.4: Promoting Theory as/through Dialogue
3.5: Methodology: Studying Discourses of Power, Government and Resistance
3.6: Texts and Discourses Analysed

Part 4: The Body of Work in Context: Particularities of Time and Place
4.1: The Celtic Tiger’s Death Rattle
4.2: Civil Society and Collective Action in the Era of Austerity
4.3: Continuing Traditions: Subordinating Culture and Society to the Economy
4.4: Collective Action in the Absence and the Shadow of the State
Part 5: Key Themes and Original Contribution
5.1: A Situation of Permanent Contingency 47
5.2: Depoliticising Collective Action in Ireland: Consensus and Economic Imperatives 49
5.3: Collective Action and the Meaningfulness of Culture and the Arts 52
5.4: Shifting Grounds of Transgression and the Limits of ‘Responsible’ Collective Action 54
5.5: Governing and Professionalising ‘Standards’ for Collective Action 57
5.6: ‘Austerity State’ and Collective Action: Refining Irish Practices of Neoliberalisation 60
5.7: Resisting Government, Reclaiming Freedom and Solidarity 62

Part 6: Conclusion 66

Part 7: References 72

Part 8: The Outputs 85
8.1: Output #1 86
8.2: Output #2 109
8.3: Output #3 137
8.4: Output #4 158
8.5: Output #5 178
8.6: Output #6 206
8.7: Output #7 228
8.8: Output #8 251
8.9: Output #9 271
8.10: Output #10 297

Part 9: Ethical Considerations 330

Appendix 1: Published and Edited Works by Rosie R. Meade

Appendix 2: Statements Regarding Collaborative Outputs

Appendix 3: Permissions from Publishers

Appendix 4: Declaration: 142.1/142.2 Regulations Phd by Prior Output
Abstract

This research takes the form of ten journal articles and book chapters that were published between June 2008 and February 2018. This body of work encompasses outputs that are focused on community development, community arts, youth work and social movement praxis. These fields of praxis are understood as constituting a vital part of a variegated and differentiated Irish civil society and, while acknowledging their specificities, the body of work situates them together within the contested terrain of collective action. The Covering Document elucidates how, across the ten outputs, collective action is theorised: as the site of and target for complex and dynamic power relationships; as imbricated with various governmental projects through which multiple societal actors seek to mobilise citizens; as a potential site of and resource for resistance to particular expressions of government, ideology and power; and as developing alternative social relationships, organisational forms and modes of communication.

The boundaries between the state and civil society are imprecise and fluid: civil society and state actors seek to induce desired forms of conduct and relationships from each other. This research exposes and critically interrogates associated power dynamics, overlaps, and contestations, and how they in turn shape expectations of collective action. Drawing together findings from youth work, community development, social movement, and community arts praxis, the research illuminates; how and by whom collective action is rationalised and (de)legitimised; the changing role of the state in governing civil society; and the potential for collective action to prefigure alternative forms of relationships and to resist particular forms of government. Therefore, the body of work analyses how the meanings, forms and purposes of collective action are constantly reworked, just as they give expression to important societal struggles.

The Covering Document details the theory, methodology and methods that have underpinned the research. It offers an integrated thematic overview of the ten research outputs, highlighting their coherence, originality, and relevance for a critical analysis of the dynamics of collective action in contemporary Ireland. The research analyses the discourses of collective action as they have been expressed in key policy documents, in newspapers such as the Irish Independent and in the documents of protest of social movement organisations. It highlights and interrogates the political, economic and cultural context for collective action in 21st Century Ireland, paying particular attention to the ways though which the recent regime of
austerity has impacted on civil society, the state and on relations between these spheres. The research is critical in orientation, but it draws upon and articulates diverse critical traditions as it analyses the power dynamics associated with collective action. Gramscian style, cultural materialist and Foucauldian governmentality perspectives are variously adopted and adapted within specific outputs. The Covering Document also outlines how and why the body of work troubles the boundaries between community development, community arts, youth work and social movement research and praxis. It calls for an articulated and dialogical theory and practice that challenge the assumed estrangement of these fields.

As the Covering Document outlines, the research records how state policy now seeks to govern youth work, community development and community arts organisations through an increasingly intrusive and prescriptive set of policy ordinances, self-reporting techniques, and accountability measures. Against that, it also points to the potential for collective action to re-politicise issues otherwise framed as non-political by policy-makers and media, to build and be based upon reflexive forms of solidarity, and to reclaim the arts and tactics of protest.
Acknowledgements

A very big thank you is due to my supervisor, Professor Norman Ginsburg, for his wise counsel, ongoing support, and encouragement over the last year. I have really enjoyed working with you towards the completion of this process. Thanks also to Dr Jane Lewis for your input. I also want to acknowledge my dear colleague and friend, Órla O’Donovan, who has read and provided thoughtful observations on both the Covering Document and many of the outputs as well. Your kindness and endurance (!) are greatly appreciated. Liz Kiely, Mae Shaw, and Niamh McCrea were inspired and inspiring co-authors for three of the outputs: working with you was an absolute delight and I learned a huge amount along the way. Let’s do it all again!

Over the years, I have had rich and hugely affirming writing collaborations with Órla O’Donovan, Fiona Dukelow, Máire Leane, Catherine Forde and Sarah Banks. Sincere thanks to you all. I also want to record my appreciation for all of those involved in the various community organisations, social movements, and activist groups that I have been a member of: your shared spirit of ‘keeping on keeping on’ greatly influenced the content of my research and written work. Brian Stockdale has been very supportive in helping me to assemble the assorted documents for this submission. Fond appreciations too to my UCC colleagues Micheál Ó’hAodáin, Máiread Considine, Phil O’Sullivan, and Lydia Sapouna, and to all my fellow board members at the Community Development Journal. And of course, our late and wonderful friend Frances Hishon, your influence is deep and long-lasting. Heartfelt acknowledgements to all on the Meade/Barrett familial nexus who have given practical and emotional support along way; Nora, JB, Adrian, Ben, Patricia, Hannah, Sheila, Mick and Moira. Finally, there are those whose friendship and love has sustained me over the years and without whom, as the cliché goes, this would not have been possible: Siobhán and Rossi Adair, Fiona Blaney, Clodagh Downey, Norma Nolan, Emmett Flynn and Diarmuid O’Dálaigh. Go raibh maith agaibh go léir!
Dedicated to JJ and Joe: Better ‘Forever’ than ‘Late’…