



What are the similarities and differences between the recent British and German direct action climate movements? A comparison between Reclaim the Power and Ende Gelände

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Citation for published version (APA):

Swift, A. (2018). *What are the similarities and differences between the recent British and German direct action climate movements? A comparison between Reclaim the Power and Ende Gelände*. [Master's Thesis, University of Keele].

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What are the similarities and differences between the recent British and German direct action climate movements? A comparison between Reclaim the Power and Ende Gelände.

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11.10.2018

Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the MA Degree in Politics and International Relations (Environmental Politics and Climate Change).

Word count: 16,366

Acknowledgements

For Stefan, Waka and all those who have dedicated their lives to fighting for climate justice.

Abstract

Both Reclaim the Power in the UK and Ende Gelände in Germany are climate justice focused grassroots social movement organisations that use direct action against the fossil fuel industry. Despite their similarities I have used a radical ethnographic approach with participant observation and interviews of experienced activists to discern and explain a number of key differences between the two movements. Rejecting a 'political opportunity structures' approach I use 'path constitution,' 'institutionalisation' and 'social reproduction' to look at the internal cultures of the two movements and argue that their differences have manifested as a result of their differing environmental movement legacies.

Abbreviations

EG	Ende Gelände
ENGO	Environmental Non-Governmental Organisation
IL	Interventionist Linke (Interventionist Left)
NVDA	Non-Violent Direct Action
PNR	Preston New Road, Blackpool
RtP	Reclaim the Power
RTS	Reclaim the Streets
SMO	Social Movement Organisation
UNFCC	United Nations Framework Convention of Climate Change

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What are the similarities and differences between the recent British and German direct action climate movements? A comparison between Reclaim the Power and Ende Gelände.

Reclaim the Power in the UK and Ende Gelände in Germany are equivalent network based national organisations that coordinate direct action for climate justice. Although in both countries there are other cases of climate justice based direct action mobilisations organised by smaller collectives Reclaim the Power and Ende Gelände represent the largest, most widespread and most impactful manifestations of such in each country. On the surface it appears that they follow broadly similar principles for action and strategy. They both have a radical critique of the existing framework for mitigating and adapting to climate change within the confines of neoliberal capitalism and call for a transformative restructuring of society in their own countries and beyond on the basis of ecological sustainability and equality. They are both Social Movement Organisations (SMOs) (Lofland,1996) that are ideologically wedded to the notion of direct action as an effective approach to achieve change. And they both are grassroots organisations that organise temporary protest camps in order to facilitate large numbers of people to take direct action against key points of fossil fuel infrastructure. Despite their many similarities they have produced quantitatively and qualitatively different results and with a detailed investigation it is clear there are many differences in the particularities of their approach, tactics and strategy. These organisations will be used as empirical case studies, exploring the question of whether these movements with similar aims have significant differences in tactics and strategy and if so why. The research is based on an ethnographic approach to understanding these two movements built on activist participation in both for three to five years including participant observation and four interviews with key activists in each. With a critical view of 'political opportunity structures,' the theories of 'path constitution' and 'social reproduction' will be used to argue that the differing approaches and ideologies taken by these two organisations are mostly as a result of their differing historical environmental movement traditions and their respective organisational cultures. In particular I

explore the differences between these organisations in terms of relationship to leftist infrastructure, openness to critique and choice of direct action tactics.

With path constitution I will argue that the historic success of the strategies and tactics of mass-participatory open civil disobedience of the German anti-nuclear movement has greatly shaped the formation of the EG climate justice movement in the country. By comparison the historic success of small-affinity group actions in the UK from the '90s onwards has created a situation where that tactic continues to be prominent in the UK climate justice movement through RtP.

Direct action in this context means a collective of people in a social movement exerting political 'pressure on governments or other powerful institutions such as business corporations,' with tactics like strikes, boycotts, civil disobedience or physical obstruction (Carter,2005). Although difficult to define succinctly, climate justice as a concept refers to 'self-determination; material access, use and control of particular resources; innovative livelihood knowledges; and the potential of collective organisation for more socially, economically and ecologically just futures' that creates a range of 'antagonistic demands' including 'leaving fossil fuels in the ground,' (Bond,2012 cited in Routledge *et al*,2018).

Structure

I will begin with brief summaries of the Reclaim the Power an Ende Gelände case studies I will then explore a number of the theoretical devices used to solve this conundrum. I will then elucidate the methodological approach to this research. With an approach that values a historical understanding I will look at their respective radical environmental movement histories followed by their themes relevant to this dissertation. The British historical context and themes will be looked at followed by the German historical context and themes. In my discussion section I will compare the different methods the two movements use when establishing protest camps; the importance in each afforded to ideology, critique and coalition building;

particularities of tactics and finally the relative political opportunity structures available to both. I will then finish with a brief conclusion.

Case Study: Reclaim the Power

In August 2013 the network organisation Reclaim the Power (RtP) organised its first large scale temporary protest camp at the proposed site for hydraulic fracturing in Balcombe, West Sussex with around 2,000 people attending (Reclaim the Power,2018,A). The organising group of this camp had been directly involved with the 'No Dash for Gas' occupation of a gas-fired power station in West Burton in 2012 (Olofsson,2014,p.17). This group in turn had been brought together by the previous Climate Camps of 2006-2010 in the UK that at the time were the largest direct action mobilisation against climate change in Europe. A number of experienced climate activists see RtP as the direct descendant of the Climate Camps (RtP InterviewD) utilising many of the same organisational structures, tactics or 'repertoires of contention' (Feigenbaum *et al*,2016) and activist networks. In the five years since, RtP have organised a number of different protests at various points of fossil fuel infrastructure around the UK. They have predominantly focused on the incipient fracking industry over the years but have also targeted the coal industry and the conventional gas industry. Despite over two thousand attendees at the first RtP action camp in 2013 the organisation has struggled to mobilise similar numbers and national media attention at successive protest camps. And compared to the peak of the Climate Camps there has been a clear reduction in numbers and national media focus (BBC News,2007;Walker,Lewis&Kuchler,2009;BBC News,2009).

Case Study: Ende Gelände

In the past three years an equivalent organisation in Germany 'Ende Gelände' (EG) has emerged organising four large-scale protest events against coal mining infrastructure since 2015. Ende Gelände (meaning 'here and no further' in English) has demanded the immediate end of the brown lignite coal industry in order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (Watts,2017) as a matter of climate justice. It organised its first mass participatory direct action in 2015 wherein 1,300 people occupied a coal mine in the Rhineland for a day

(Jordan,2015). Since then there have been three large-scale mobilisations gaining far greater numbers and media attention than RtP including one in August 2017 that mobilised 6,000 people to take action against coal mining infrastructure in the Rhineland (Flenning,2017). EG was created as a coalition of existing groups in particular the German 'Klimacamps' that had been operating much smaller climate justice protest and educational camps since 2009. These Kilimakamps were in turn created by a number of Germans who had attended the British Climate Camps and been inspired to start their own in Germany.

Similarities Summary

These two organisations share the same genus points of the British Climate Camps of 2006-2010 and operate in broadly similar ways. Ende Gelände and Reclaim the Power are the largest manifestations of the climate justice direct action movements in Germany and the UK working nationally with grassroots democratic principles. They both organise open, widely publicised, mass participatory direct actions targeting key points of fossil fuel infrastructure regularly attached to protest camps. The actions are one-off and exceptional and are often designed in part to attract the attention of mainstream and social media. Both organisations use consensus based decision-making processes, are structured around a set of working groups and the vast majority of activists in each network work voluntarily to execute large actions. Due to these similarities, they can be considered equivalent organisations in the UK and Germany respectively. However in a much shorter time EG has been able to mobilise a far greater number of people for each action and generate far greater national and international media interest that is often favourable. Over the course of the last five years I have become an experienced activist involved in both movements. I have attended all but one of the main RtP action camps including organising for a number of them and have attended every EG action. In experiencing both movements throughout their duration I have seen clear parallels and also discerned quite distinct differences in the subtleties of approach, ideology, culture, tactics and strategy. Using primary research undertaken for this dissertation during the summer of 2018 in the form of participant observation and interviews, I aim to identify key differences between the two organisations and provide an answer to the puzzle; why is it that two seemingly similar social movement

organisations in Western Europe, that share the same genus point, undertake direct action in different ways and produce different results? In undertaking this project it has become clear that many of the existing social movement theories available are not suitable in adequately addressing these differences. Thus along with other theories I will argue that their differing national environmental movement histories have created a level of 'path constitution' for each of the movements in limiting their respective approaches and strategies.

Theoretical Underpinnings

By far the most widely used theoretical approach to studying social movement strategy and tactics is that of Charles Tilly's 'repertoires of contention' and its accompanying focus on 'political opportunity structures,' (POS) (1997;1998). Social movements 'deploy collective interests,' against the governing authority (Tilly,1997,p.56) and in doing so they will often repeat the same strategy and tactics in relation to the political opportunities afforded to them by the state structure (Tilly,2003,p.45). They change on the basis of the political environment created by their national government and the international context (Meyer andStaggenborg,1996). Classic longitudinal studies made by proponents of this approach have focused on the changing nature of the state to explain the changing nature of social movements (Tilly,1978;McAdam,1982;Tarrow,1989). Relevant to this dissertation Kitschelt (1986) and Koopmans and Duyvendak (1995) use POS to explain the differences in the anti-nuclear movement across western European countries. Using very particular categories of open/closed and strong/weak political opportunities structures Kitschelt (1986) compares the dynamics of the anti-nuclear movements in France, Sweden, the US and West Germany. He argues that the different structure of government in each of the countries pushes a movement to use 'assimilative' or 'confrontational' tactics and thus accounts for the difference in strategies employed by their respective anti-nuclear movements (ibid). Koopmans and Duyvendak (1995)

take a similar approach in explaining the differences of the anti-nuclear movements in Germany, France, the Netherlands and Switzerland in the wake of the Chernobyl incident of 1986. Despite these countries all seeing the news of the Chernobyl incident they argue that their movements differed because of the differing political opportunity structures available to them by the state in combination with how the disaster was framed (1995). However POS approaches have numerous shortcomings including affording the social movement actors too little agency in their decision making (Doherty and Hayes, 2018) and understanding the rationale behind their decisions. Actors may make decisions on the basis of political opportunities available but they may be no more important to them than the movement's 'ideas, cultures and traditions' and the meanings actors give to these particular choices of tactics (Doherty and Hayes, 2012, 2014 cited in Doherty and Hayes, 2018, p. 276). Additionally POS determines that the social movement actors correctly perceive the opportunities available to them and rationally decide to act on that basis (de Moor and Wahlström, 2017, p. 4) which often may not happen. It is with this particular theoretical debate in mind that this research will primarily focus on the culture of the two social movements along with their accompanying 'social reproductive' infrastructure. There will be a consideration of the political opportunities available to each of the movements but the primary unit of explanation will be a cultural one as manifested through each of the movement's respective histories.

Path Constitution

Meyer and Schubert outline an analytical approach called 'path constitution' that bridges the gap between 'path dependency' and 'path creation' (2007). 'Path dependency' determines that once successful paths emerge for technological developments they solidify and in doing so limit the options for future evolution (David, 1985; Arthur, 1989). In essence what has gone before will determine what will go after in a way that creates self-reinforcing mechanisms. However this approach affords too little focus on the role of actors in shaping an evolutionary process along with a number of other problematic assumptions (see Meyer and Schubert, 2007). In response Garud and Karnøe (2001, 2003) created the concept of 'path creation' in that actors consciously determine the possible strategic developments on offer. 'On the one end are

emergent completely unplanned processes, and on the opposite end are deliberately and strategically controlled processes,' (Windeler,2003;Sydow *et al.*, 2004 cited in Meyer andSchubert,2007,p.29). Meyer and Schubert's middle way of 'path constitution' offers a third approach that appreciates the evolutionary process through which a path emerges while also understanding the role of singular and collective actors in consciously creating a particular path (2007). Unlike purely emergent processes, actors, to an extent, observe the formation of a new path and strategise on that basis (ibid,p.29). The result may not be what was aimed for but actors will have helped shaped it (ibid). Positive feedback loops exist within this approach as positive results may legitimate historic decisions and processes within the path (ibid,p.30).

Although this approach has been developed specifically to look at developments in technology I understand there to be a clear utility to using it to explain the key differences between RtP and EG. There has been a degree of movement 'lock-in' (Meyer andSchubert,2007,p.21) within the UK in that these tactics are often chosen over mass-participatory actions despite them not being as successful as mass-participatory approaches and them requiring high levels of sacrifice. Despite this the British activists in RtP have been able to innovate with tactics and learned from the practice of EG (Meyer andSchubert,2007,p.21) but only when they are confident in the success of mass-participatory tactics contingent on high levels of mobilisation.

Institutionalisation

Institutionalisation is an approach inspired by institutional theory will also be used that sees the way in which organisations behave as clear determining factors for how paths of decision-making and action are created (Meyer and Rowan,1977;DiMaggio and Powell,1983). 'By incorporating network, cultural, and historical elements, inter-organisational fields provide a fruitful context for tracing and interpreting the nature and process of change in institutional practices,' (Scott,1992,p.333). Looking at the norms and values of organisations is key to understanding how particular paths have manifested appreciating that they are dynamic and are changeable over time (Meyer andSchubert,2007,p.37). The structure of organisations is

very dependent on their history and culture (ibid) which is why this dissertation primarily focuses on the history and culture of the British and German radical environmental movements in explaining their key differences in their most recent iterations.

Social reproduction

The theory developed by Silvia Federici of 'social reproduction' will be used to recognise the importance of work that is done to allow for the continued 'reproduction' of people in society such as cooking food, providing shelter or emotional care (2004). This theory is extended to recognise the ways in which the local radical leftist communities or 'scenes' in Germany are able to collectivise these societal necessities on collaborative and egalitarian lines such as with the provision of squats, social centres, bars and leftist libraries. They are able to provide for the social reproductive needs of individuals in the scene and its accompanying movements and in so doing are able to reproduce the environmental movement. In using this Marxist-Feminist theory I will bring the often 'invisible' work of (re)producing radical leftist infrastructure to the centre of my analysis and argument.

Methodology

This research is focused on the dynamics of two similar protest movements in Germany and the UK. It is necessarily a deeply social form of enquiry trying to understand the reasons why these two movements use different strategies and produce differing results in terms of numbers mobilised, scale, media impact and reactions from the mainstream political elite in each context. In doing so it situates itself within a critical realist paradigm which recognises the value of both quantitative and qualitative research methods in understanding phenomena of the social world (Downward *et al*, 2002). Phenomena exist both in the natural sciences and society regardless of whether we are able to correctly perceive them or not (Danermark *et*

al,2002,p.57). Using a critical realist ontology and epistemology we can identify empirical outcomes that may not always produce empirical results discernible using a strictly positivist approach, especially in the social world (Bhaskar,2007). We then try to provide a plausible rationale to explain why such phenomena have occurred as part of a retroductive research strategy (Blaikie,1993,p.168;Blaike,2010,p.87-89;Olsen,2007).

This approach to research is built upon with the strategy inspired by 'process tracing.' Process tracing is a research method that discerns causal mechanisms for an empirical case-study by analysing how a causal process has played out in reality (Beach,2017). In this case, what has caused the level of differentiation between RtP and EG? In doing so the context for each empirical manifestation is very important in explaining why things have occurred in a particular way (ibid,p.7). They provide, 'relevant aspects of a setting (analytical, temporal, spatial, or institutional) in which a set of initial conditions leads...to an outcome of a defined scope and meaning via a specified causal mechanism or set of causal mechanisms' (Falleti & Lynch,2009,p.1152 cited in Beach,2017,p.10). The process of making underlying norms and tendencies explicit is necessary too in helping to reach an explanation (Beach,2017,p.7). Comparison is also important as it allows us to distinguish what factors might be generalisable to the particular case (Beach,2017,p.2;Denscombe,2017,p.89). With all this in mind the comparative approach of this study along with a focus on the historical tendencies these movements have emerged from becomes a research method that will help provide a plausible 'probabilistic claim' for why and how these seemingly similar movements differ (Beach,2017p.9).

In taking this approach the research was designed as a combination of ethnographic participant observation and semi-structured interview methods. I sat in on an EG Berlin meeting in June 2018 and then over successive days I conducted four interviews with German EG activists. I participated in the RtP 'Block Around the Clock' action camp at Preston New Road in June and conducted four interviews with British RtP activists over the following weeks.

These modes of research were used alongside the conversations, observations and analysis generated from my years of experience participating in the Reclaim the Power action camps since 2013 and helping to organise for some of them. In addition, since 2015 I have regularly attended the four EG protest action camps since 2015 as an 'international participant.' I consider that the precise focus of this research is able to produce some empirical depth and insight into two under-researched and under-theorised protest movements and provide a necessary addition to the study of social movements as a whole.

Ethnographic Participant Observation

Ethnographic participant observation was used in this research. Ethnography is 'understood not just as a set of research methods including qualitative interviews and participant observation but also as a mode of analysis and writing,' (Juris and Khasnabish,2013,p.3) which means the researcher is able 'to capture the subjective mood, feeling, and tone' of events 'contributing descriptive flesh to what might otherwise read as dry, distant, and disengaged analytic accounts.' (ibid). This interdisciplinary approach does not require the researcher to be removed from the activity of the protest actors and cold in observational analysis. Rather, this method sees the value in the position of a reflexive researcher within a social movement and like the other actors, hopeful for its success (Juris and Khasnabish,2013,p.27). My position as researcher and activist meant 'important empirical issues' were able to be uncovered and allowed 'theoretical insights that are simply not accessible through traditional objectivist methods,' (Juris and Khasnabish,2013,p.4). An outside observer would have found it more challenging to uncover key issues and tensions compared to the researcher who has been a part of the British climate movement for some time (Juris and Khasnabish,2013,p. 4;Denscombe,2017,p.83). With this in mind I was able to tailor the focus of the study to particular areas when observing the EG meeting, the RtP camp and in asking questions during interviews.

My critical engagement hopes to deepen the understanding of the similarities and differences between the two protest action camps with the aim of helping movement actors in the UK overcome key movement building obstacles (ibid). In doing so I take what Juris defines as a 'militant' ethnographic approach where 'research is not only politically engaged but also collaborative, thus breaking down the divide between researcher and object,' (2008,p.20). In participating in protests and actions I am able to have a deeper emotional understanding of the activists and the movement they are involved with. As a fellow RtP and EG participant (as opposed to a 'researcher') I was able to generate the 'insider's view' referred to by Juris (ibid).

The personal relationships that I have developed with activists in RtP over years has meant that I had an unprecedented level of access to interview particular individuals (Denscombe,2017,p.92). This is of particular importance within the British direct action environmental movement as there is a recent history of widespread undercover policing by the British police which has caused high levels of concern over security and data gathering (Jones &Wilson,2015). Although there were a number of other academic researchers at the RtP's 'Block Around the Clock' action camp they were all new and unknown to key organisers. I was able to conduct interviews with these people who had refused to participate in interviews with other researchers. I used my trusted position from long-term involvement to interview normally hard-to-access individuals and reassure them about the intention of this research (Arksey &Knight,1999,p.101-103). This is summarised by what one interviewee said when asked if I could interview them; 'for you Alice, yes, because I know and trust you and trust your intentions, but not for anyone else.' Despite this there was still one individual who I have worked alongside for many years with whom I asked for an interview and they declined. They were wary of participating in any interviews with even the most trusted of people. As a blanket rule they would not give any interviews for fear of incriminating themselves or others.

When it came to interviewing the German EG activists despite being unknown to three out of the four beforehand they were willing to be interviewed because of three main factors. Firstly there was a level of

trust generated through a mutual friend and activist I had got to know through my participation in the EG actions since 2015 who acted as a 'gatekeeper,' (Denscombe,2017,p.86). Secondly my own experience of the actions themselves meant that even though we didn't know each other we had a shared experience of a fairly unique and challenging event. And thirdly, these activists were aware that their experiences could help inform the organising strategies of the British movement in a positive way (Arksey & Knight,1999,p.127-128). These insider views as generated by myself and those interviewed would quite simply not have been possible if I had attempted a level of outside researcher positionality (Denscombe,2017,p.7).

Along with an acute awareness of my positionality and its relative strengths for conducting this research it was necessary that I took a research approach that recognised the importance of space and scale in studying social movements (Juris and Khasnabish,2013,p.5). I needed to be 'attuned to the complex place-based meanings, flows, and sensibilities that interact within momentary spaces of encounter,' 'and the wider social movements of which they are part,' (ibid,p.3). It was key to be sensitive to the particular place-based politics brought together from differing localities in the form of a national or international protest camp (ibid). Particularly in the case of the RtP protest camp there were locals, local campaigners, permanent protest camp residents and temporary RtP protest camp participants that I had to be sensitive to.

Details of Fieldwork

After consent from the participants' was given I sat in on a Berlin EG meeting on the 13th of June and observed through whisper translation (EG Participant Observation). At this point two interviews had already been scheduled but a further two needed to be organised. I did a 'shout out' for more interviewees and spoke to a number of people after the meeting about the possibility of doing an interview. The four interviews were conducted with EG organisers in Berlin from the 14th-18th of June 2018. Interviewees were invited on the basis of their involvement in organising past EG actions or their current involvement in the organising network.

I then attended the Reclaim the Power 'Block Around the Clock' action camp from the 26th June-1st of July as a participant observer. The camp aimed to blockade the fracking site at Preston New Road near Blackpool in Lancashire. This site was the focus of action for RtP as it is the proposed fracking site in the UK closest to commencing commercial hydraulic fracturing for shale gas. Indeed in less than a month after the RtP action, fracking at PNR was given the green light by the government the day before the parliamentary summer recess (Cockburn, 2018). One interview with an RtP participant was conducted at the camp and three other interviews were agreed to for afterwards. These interviews were made on the 9th and 25th of July and the 8th of August over Skype.

Semi-structured interviews

Interviews were used to provide in-depth insights into participants various experiences and provide 'privileged information' (Arksey & Knight, 1999, p. 32-36; Denscombe, 2017, p. 203 & 220). They were semi-structured to allow a degree of flexibility in asking questions and to allow for further elaboration by the interviewee (Arksey & Knight, 1999, p. 8-9; Denscombe, 2017, p. 204). One-to-one interviews were able to get close to the individual activists interpretation of the camps and their accounts of the social interaction within them (Arksey & Knight, 1999, p. 32-36; Denscombe, 2017, p. 204; Blaikie, 2010, p. 207).

Scope and limitations

This research does not attempt to be definitive in scope as it is looking at the particularities of two similar social movements to understand the point they have got to now. It uses my experience in combination with the interviews of eight other individuals. This sample cannot be considered representative of either the RtP or EG movements which has mobilised thousands (Denscombe, 2017, p. 54). Rather it hopes to use the detailed experience of myself and others within these movements to ascertain key differences in organising large-scale direct action protests for climate justice in two countries in Western Europe.

Despite the small group of people questioned in detail, broad tendencies within each movement can be drawn out. It is important that a small grouping doesn't equate to the study having a narrow focus, such as only looking at the internal dynamics without understanding the broader political context in which movements operate (Edelman, 2001). As such both the internal dynamics of the movements in each country are looked at along with the way in which their government behaves.

Despite my inability to speak German I was able to have a good whisper translation at the EG Berlin meeting. I was confident this would be possible based on my previous experiences participating in the EG actions. All of those interviewed spoke good English and I made it clear when requesting interviews that they would be conducted in English. However this meant that those who were not confident with their English would not put themselves forward to be interviewed. Also as all the Germans involved in the study were using English as their second language it meant that they may easily use the wrong emphasis or turn of phrase and speak in a way that turns out to be misleading, distorting their intended meaning. It is taken as a given that in this way some meaning was distorted in translation or for those using English as a second language. Although this was the case I consider the beneficial insight this research provides outweighs this problem.

Bias

In taking a radical ethnographic approach which critiques the objective researcher/ subjective activist paradigm the question of bias becomes apparent (Denscombe,2017,p.89-91). This alongside a critical realist theory of knowledge asserts that bias and value assumptions always underpin the work of any research even if it attempts to be 'objective' in the positivist sense of the word (Blaikie,2010,p.50-54). Indeed the 'objectivist illusion' of positivism is rejected (ibid) in favour of the radical ethnographic approach where the status of the researcher is that of a 'reflective partner' (Habermas,1970,1972 cited in Blaike,2010,p.52). This approach is emancipatory in potential being 'informed by concrete utopianism' (Bhaskar *et al*,2010,x) in order to identify the problems within the British climate movement and implicitly offer suggestions to

overcome them. It was important to adhere to ethical standards of ethnographic observation (Denscombe,2017,p.92&p.236-238) and interviewing. For example I made sure I did not ask leading questions in the interviews (Arksey &Knight,1999,p.93-95;Denscombe,2017,p.202-223).

Ethics

As aforementioned the British direct action climate movement has a recent history of undercover policing that gained information on environmental activists through deception and abuse (Jones &Wilson,2015). Understandably this has led to many of the older generation of activists being wary about information being gathered and the ends it is used for (Denscombe,2017,p.338). Thus it was essential that at the beginning of the EG Berlin meeting and the beginning of the RtP action camp I announced myself as a researcher and asked for consent to use my observations to provide the basis of my research (ibid,p.344-346). I made sure everyone was well informed about the aims and motivations for my research beforehand (ibid,p.337-352). For the interviews I gained prior ethical approval from the Ethics Board by outlining the aims of the research, how the data would be used and provided them with the questions I would be asking interviewees (ibid,p.337). All interviewees were asked to read an 'Information Sheet' beforehand which guaranteed anonymity (Appendix1) (Arksey &Knight,1999,p.132). I additionally briefed them about the aims of the research and the secure storage of data generated about them (Arksey &Knight,1999,p.134;Denscombe,2017,p.337-352;Diener &Crandall,1978). I asked them to provide their consent for the interview and the use of any quotes (Appendix1) (Arksey &Knight, 1999,p.129;Denscombe,2017,p.347). I made it clear that even after the interview had been conducted participants could ask for their information not to be used in the study and for their data to be securely destroyed (Denscombe,2017,p.349). I provided a window of time for participants to contact me if they had changed their mind afterwards (ibid,p.348) but none did.

British Direct Action Environmentalism Context and History

This section will give a brief historical description of the rise in British direct action environmentalism from the early '90s, the Climate Camps of 2006-2010 through to the protests organised by Reclaim the Power.

The rise in radical environmental protest from the 1990s was considered to be in response to the increasing professionalisation of ENGOs up to this point such as Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace that were beginning to enjoy a level of 'insider status' in relation to their lobbying of government (Seel, Paterson, & Doherty, 2000, p.1). At the time this form of radical environmentalism was relatively new. It sought to mobilise people to take direct action against ecologically destructive projects on the basis of a deep critique of the existing economic system as a capitalist system built on ecological destruction along with its accompanying strata of societal power relationships (Seel, Paterson, & Doherty, 2000, p.7). Unlike the ENGO form of environmentalism it did not covet a dialogue with the state and capital but instead aimed to build a mass movement to physically stop ecologically destructive infrastructure and transform society (as above). Thus it can be considered to be a revolutionary form of the environmental movement as opposed to the historically more reformist agenda of the ENGOs like Friends of the Earth (Doherty, 1999, p.277). This environmentalism predominantly consisted of the following protest manifestations; protest camps that aimed to stop the expansion of Britain's roads in response to the government's 'Roads for Prosperity' road building programme (Seel, Paterson, & Doherty, 2000, p.9); a protest camp that aimed to stop the creation of a second runway at Manchester airport (ibid, p.20); anti GM protests; quarrying and open-cast mining (ibid, p.9) and 'Reclaim the Streets' parties that in combination with the counter-culture of rave, organised mass parties on urban streets to problematise the increased dominance of the car (ibid, p.12). Many of these protests were organised off the back of the ecological-anarchist network 'Earth First!' which was started in the UK in 1991, influenced by an organisation in the US of the same name that had been operating for the previous decade (Wall, 1999, p.45-46). Although difficult to definitively say, Seel, Paterson,

& Doherty consider this form of radical environmental activism to have influenced the diffusion of these ideas and tactics to other countries in Western Europe. Groups began in the Netherlands and Germany by those who had spent time engaged in this protest activity in the UK (Seel, Paterson, & Doherty, 2000, p.18). Saunders and Price and Schlembach also considered that this rise of radical environmentalism formed the basis of the Climate Camp movement (Saunders and Price, 2009; Schlembach, 2011, p.196) that I shall now cover.

Emergence of Climate Camp

Climate Camp was a direct descendant of the anti-roads protests of the '90s along with being a 'continuation of the earlier 1980s peace camps,' where 'experience knowledge and tactics were handed down,' (Bergman, 2014, p.340). They also emerged as a response to the 'summit-hoping' of the alter-globalisation movement which had a strong environmental and anti-capitalist bent (Schlembach, 2011, p.196-197; McCurdy *et al*, 2013, p.123). It was originally conceived of as the Camp for Climate Action but soon became colloquially known as 'Climate Camp' and aimed to mobilise people to the sites of fossil fuel infrastructure and finance and take direct action against them (Frenzel, 2014). Camps were organised against the following targets; Drax power station (2006), Heathrow Airport (2007), Kingsnorth power station (2008), the City of London (2009), Mainhill Wood in Scotland (2009), Ffos-y-Fran coal mine (2009), Blackheath London (2009) and The Royal Bank of Scotland HQ in Edinburgh 2010 (Frenzel, 2014, p.912).

Impact

At their height Climate Camp were able to mobilise thousands for spectacular mass actions and gain fairly favourable mainstream national media attention (Plows, 2008, p.96). Part of this was down to the novelty of these protest camp actions at the time organising around the concern of climate change. It is difficult to determine how 'successful' the protest action camps were as it comes down to a matter of how success is

defined, the timescale in which it happens and the normative goal of the protest action (Plows,2008,p.92). The plans for the extension of Kingsnorth power station were shelved, in no small part down to the focus of the Climate Camp there in 2008 (Bergman,2014,p.339;Frenzel,2014,p.912). The Climate Camp of 2007 targetted the proposed third runway expansion of Heathrow airport which led to the creation of the 'Grow Heathrow' protest camp 'intentional community' which has been in existence there for eight years (2013,p.232). It is disputed within the literature whether Climate Camp was able to shift the public discourse on climate change or not with Bergman (2014,p.339) arguing it has not and Plows arguing it has (2008). Plows considers it successful in diffusing green issues into broader networks (p.93) which in combination with generally positive media coverage (p.96) helped increase public awareness of issues (p.105). In terms of numbers at the protests she echoes the sentiment of one of her interviewees in that "mobilising enough people to organise the camp was a huge success," (2008,p.96). Plows considers the positive effects Climate Camp had had up to 2008 in building activist counter-culture as a social resource and building activist network capacity and longevity (p.94&p.100). She also considers it to have influenced other movements and allowed for a level of knowledge transfer between generations (Plows,2008).

Climate Camp into Reclaim the Power

As will be covered later the literature on Climate Camp points to ideological tensions being the main reason it was decided to dissolve the organisation in 2011 (Saunders,2012). However in discussion with many Climate Camp organisers over the years I would argue that there were multiple other deciding factors for the organising group. Regardless, the group came to an end in 2011 with the last protest camp happening in 2010 (Schlembach,Lear&Bowman,2012). A number of the organisers decided to form the 'Climate Justice Collective' which also fed into the creation of the 'No Dash For Gas' group of 21 people who shut down West Burton gas-fired power station for eight days in 2012 (Olofsson,2014,p.17). This group then began Reclaim the Power, grouping together new people along with experienced people who were previously involved in Climate Camp to organise the protest camp in Balcombe 2013 (ibid). Originally organised for

West Burton gas-fired power station, the organisers decided to move the location of the camp to Sussex at the proposed site for hydraulic fracturing for gas as they saw it likely exploratory drilling would take place there soon (Reclaim the Power,2018,A).

RtP Protests

Since then RtP have mostly organised their camps against fracking. In 2014 RtP was invited to join 'The Nanas' of Frack Free Lancashire at a site on Preston New Road, Blackpool in 2014 (Reclaim the Power,2018,B). In 2015 affinity groups from the protest camp near Didcot power station targetted 18 different sites related to the fossil fuel industry (Reclaim the Power,2018,C). In 2016, in co-ordination with local activists RtP facilitated the occupation of a coal mine in Wales by 300 activists (Reclaim the Power,2018,D). Last year, in 2017, there was another RtP protest action camp in Blackpool this time lasting for the longer duration of over a month. Throughout July the protest camp facilitated affinity group actions on every day creating what was termed a 'rolling blockade' (Bourke,2017). In June of this year (2018) the latest protest camp was again organised at the Preston New Road (PNR) site in Blackpool. This was where I engaged in the participant observation of RtP for this research. The action consisted of a mass blockade for 54 hours of the entrance of the site taken in shifts by the approximately 300 people at the camp (RtP Participant Observation).

British Environmentalism Themes

Ideology

As mentioned earlier the ideology of the direct action environmentalism of the '90s is considered to have been resolutely radical in its approach. In response to the increasing professionalisation of the environmental movement this rising of radicalism took a systemic view of ecological destruction as caused

by capitalism and hierarchical social relationships (Seel,Paterson,&Doherty,2000,p.7). Much of it was overtly 'eco-anarchist' (Doherty,2002,p.157) and informed by movement activists from the network organisation Earth First (Wall,1999). Part of this ideological approach asserted a notion of 'direct democracy' in its method of organising (Graeber,2002,p.9) where people should not allow for any form of representation but instead promoted a 'Do It Yourself' approach where collectives self-organised direct action against their targets (Wall, 1999,p.159;McCurdy *et al*,2013,p.2&27). This radical ideology carried through to the organising of Climate Camp that was founded on these principles (Bergman,2014,p.341). One of these principles was the desire for a 'mass movement' (Doherty,2002,p.171) and in mobilising large amounts of people to the Climate Camps of 2006-2010 there became a clear ideological tension between the more radical founders with the more liberal environmentalism of many of the new participants (Bergman,2014,p.341) making it an ideologically contested and heterogeneous place (Plows,2008,p.92; Saunders and Price,2009;Schlembach, 2011,p.211). For a lot of people it became a politicising and radicalising moment for individuals who began to explore more radical political ideas for the first time (Bergman,2014,p.342). However Schlembach *et al* consider Climate Camp to have resulted in the 'de-politicisation' of the issue of climate change, that wrongly simplified it to a matter of pure carbon dioxide budgeting in a way that promoted an individualistic eco-austere view of the issue of climate change (Schlembach,2011,p.194; Schlembach,Lear&Bowman,2012;Beuret,2017). In their view it became an oversimplification that looked at climate change as separate from the complex social world that it is part of (Schlembach,Lear&Bowman,2012,p.812).

These seemingly insurmountable ideological tensions are considered to be one of the main factors that led to the ending of Climate Camp in 2011 (Saunders,2012). Despite this Olofsson understands that it's successor RtP was formed on the basis of the same radical ideology of Climate Camp (2014). Although founded on the same principles RtP has successfully navigated this difficult ideological terrain by key organisers retaining this radicalism in their approach but not necessarily being as overt in RtP's public messaging or being as dogmatic as some of the climate camp organisers. RtP has been able to build a level

of counter-power in the convergence of 'global and local and radical and reformist agendas,' (Olofsson,2014,p.30). Similar to Climate Camp there is an implicit understanding among many self-professed eco-anarchists in RtP that change within the system is still a necessary demand to building a movement against climate change despite the overarching aim for a wholesale transformation of society (Schlembach,2011,p.209).

Over decades the British environmental movement has had an uneasy relationship with the rest of the radical left in the UK. Much of the radical left has been dominated by very hierarchically structured so called 'Marxist-Leninist' 'vanguard' parties inspired by the teachings of Trotsky. Informed by an understanding of Marx that attributes the workers as the sole revolutionary agent against capitalism these parties have often valorised militant working struggles like that of the miner's strike in the '80s while minimising an ecological focus (Brown and Spiegel,2017,p.105-106). As predominantly a movement based on ecological-anarchist principles the radical environmental movement in the UK has historically developed a level of mistrust of these more traditional leftist movement organisations (Frenzel,2014,p.905) which has led to tensions with a more class-based politics (Schlembach,2011). Despite this there have been many attempts at collaboration over the years that have not always yielded positive results. One notable example was when Arthur Scargill of the National Union of Miners was invited to the Climate Camp at Kingsnorth coal-fired power station in 2008. He spoke with empathy about the level of police repression many of the activist's faced there but also talked about the virtues of 'clean coal' technology (Saunders and Price,2009,p.119-120). This technology ten years later still does not exist and if possible would only allow for the continuation of a fossil fuel capitalist economy which the activists were against. Examples such as this have led to a mixed approach to collaboration from radical environmentalists over the years. RtP has collaborated well with a number of environmental groupings as evidenced by Olofsson's 2014 ethnographic study into RtP's anti-fracking protest camp at Preston New Road in 2014 and Brown and Spiegel's 2017 comparative ethnography which looked at the 'End Coal Now' camp targetting the Ffoss-y-Fran coal mine in Wales. Both showed a great deal of collaboration with the grassroots local environmental movement organisations in the area and with

national and international ENGOs such as Friends of the Earth and 350.org in order to organise the action camps (Olofsson,2014,Brown and Spiegel,2017). In the case of the anti-fracking camps of Balcombe 2013, Blackpool 2014, 2017 and 2018 RtP has worked very closely with the local community. However despite the highly successful collaboration amongst organisations and actors within the environmental movement this collaboration is not replicated amongst the radical left in the UK. A gulf has widened between the radical left and radical environmentalism in the UK where environmental direct action networks in the UK can often be fairly isolated from potential allies among the broader left. For many ecological-anarchists they tolerate radical leftists participating in their actions but there is no attempt to actively build strategic alliances.

Inheritance of Strategies

Many of the internal and external strategies of RtP have been inherited from the Climate Camps which were in turn inherited from the previous generations of the environmental movement including the overlap with the alter-globalisation movement (Doherty,2002,p.157). Authors describe the decision-making approach of the Climate Camp as one of consensus based decision-making with spokespeople (McCurdy *et al*,2013,p.54-55) from each 'neighbourhood' which grouped participants together in camping areas on the basis of where they lived in the UK (Bergman,2014,p.340;Frenzel,2014,p.910&913). This was intended to 'take into account the diversity of opinions and ideas present' in this heterogeneous grassroots movement (Schlembach,2011,p. 199) and was inspired by the alter-globalisation 'HoriZone' protest camp of 2005, a precursor to the first Climate Camp in 2006 (Saunders,2012,p.831;McCurdy *et al*,2013,p.36;Bergman,2014,p.340). Schlembach describes the Climate Camps as having a 'participatory and self-organised ethos,' (2011,p.198) which McCurdy, Feigenbaum & Frenzel detail as specific infrastructure organising collectives (2013,p.63). In their study of protest camps they describe the various strategies taken by these groups such as the camps' approach to media in aiming to organise their own form of media and the changing relationship the camp had to the mainstream media (2013,p.82-85&p.90). Not only do they consider the internal and external tactics of Climate Camp but they assert the protest camp as a tactic in its own right or a 'repertoire of contention' that has diffused through the radical environmental movement

(Feigenbaum *et al*,2016,p.99). The protest camp as a tactic in its own right brings people to the sites of the movement's targets. In doing so people's 'social reproductive' needs have to be met in a way that is often politicised like the serving of vegan food (McCurdy *et al*,2014,p.35) or partying to counter-cultural music.

In using a very similar form of protest camp tactic RtP has replicated many of the strategies of Climate Camp. One such strategy for the creation of the protest camp is the method by which the site is secured. Much like the Climate Camps before, RtP has squatted many of its protest camps in a way that is in keeping with an ecological-anarchist approach that antagonistically asserts a direct democratic control of space. This method was used to great success by Reclaim the Streets which took streets and created parties in them in the form of raves to assert a democratic will of people to socialise and party in a way that made a political point against the valorisation of the car and its dominance in public space (Doherty,2002,p.167&171).

German Context

This section will give a brief historical description of the rise in German direct action environmentalism as part of the anti-nuclear movement, the institutionalised parliamentary turn the movement took into the Green Party, the emergence of Klimakamp and most recently Ende Gelände as environmental movements *within* the broad radical left in Germany.

Emergence of the anti-nuclear movement

After the war, like many other western liberal democracies, the German government began pursuing nuclear power as an important source of energy. From around 1955 'decisions about nuclear power were made in closed policy communities completely dominated by nuclear interests,' (Rüdiger,2000,p.48). 'A

powerful nuclear infrastructure was established, involving state-funded research centres, a nuclear construction industry and electricity utilities committed to a nuclear future' (Rüdiger,2000,p.49). The birth of the anti-nuclear movement in Germany in the 1970s (Brand,1999,p.39) saw these communities and decisions challenged for the first time (Rüdiger,2000,p.49) 'against an authoritarian government and the arrogant technocrats who were trying to push through a large nuclear plant,' in Wyl where the first anti-nuclear protests emerged (Rucht,1990,p.204;Paul,2018,p.5). It was a struggle for energy democracy just as much as it was a struggle against nuclear power (ibid).

The movement was very closely linked to the peace movement (Brand,1999,p.39; Paul,2018,p.5) that had emerged some years before and used many similar tactics such as mass-participatory demonstrations and direct action (Dyrzek *et al*,2002,p.671). The movement reached a peak in 1983 where together 'environmental, peace, and women's groups carried out over 9,200 protests,' (Balister,1996 cited in Dyrzek *et al*,2002,p.671). After the Chernobyl incident in 1986 protests intensified at the nuclear reprocessing plant in Wackersdorf (Rüdiger,2000,p.51;Brand,1999,p.39;Koopmans *et al*,1995,p.239;Joppke,1990). In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the anti-nuclear movement resisted with 'continuing protest against nuclear waste-related activities' along with actors in the Land governments using 'every legal and administrative means' available to them against the nuclear power industry (Rüdiger,2000,p.51). Opposition in the 1990s focussed 'on disrupting transports of nuclear waste to Goleben and Ahaus,' (Rüdiger,2000,p.52) known as 'Castor transports' (Leach and Haunss,2010,p.81). These demonstrations saw the use of direct action tactics that had first been used in the 1970s (ibid).

Failure of the Green Party – the Electoral turn of the Movement

From 1979 a portion of the anti-nuclear movement took an electoral turn and formed 'Die Grünen' or the Green Party (Dyrzek *et al*,2002;Frankland and Schoonmaker,1992;Markovits and Gorski,1993). They were able to gain seats in local and regional elections until they won enough seats in the national election of 1998 (Dyrzek *et al*,2002) to form a coalition with the SPD in a so called 'red-green' alliance (Paul,2018,p.4).

This electoral success was in no small part down to the rise in public concern over nuclear energy as a result of a major scandal in 1998 that showed nuclear waste transport containers to have a far greater level of radiation than permitted in the nuclear safety standards (Rüdiger,2000,p.52). Once in power the Greens quickly reached an impasse regarding the issue. No immediate shut-down was possible without huge legal cases from the utilities brought against the government resulting in huge financial payouts as a result of an early termination of their contracts (Rüdiger,2000,p.55). To avoid this scenario the government had to work out a compromise with the energy companies to 'impose a limit on the total number of years that a nuclear power station could operate,' (Rüdiger,2000,p.55). This meant that nuclear waste transports could not be stopped and so protests against them continued and 'anti-nuclear activists were particularly disappointed that no specific deadline had been set by which the last nuclear power stations had to be closed down,' (Rüdiger,2000,p.58). The Greens had very quickly excluded the grassroots political community they had tried to represent (Rüdiger,2000,p.49). Thus radical direct action environmentalism continued in Germany partly as a result of the failure of the Green Party to institute swift and far-reaching policies against nuclear power.

Along with the Green Party the movement became far more professionalised with organisations like the German Alliance for Environmental and Nature Conservation (BUND) and Greenpeace (Brand,1999,p.40). The BUND in particular "was instrumental in the large anti-nuclear protests in the 1980s," (Dyrzek *et al*, 2002,p.671).

Energiewende

The energy struggle of the anti-nuclear movement has to a large extent contributed to the German Government's 'Energiewende,' a policy of energy transition towards renewables (Paul,2018,p.1). In this way some of the environmental movement's demands have been incorporated into the state (Dyrzek *et al*,2002). Angela Merkel's Energiewende is considered by some to be 'one of the most ambitious national energy transition initiatives worldwide,' (Moss *et al.*,2014,p.1;Röttgen,2013 cited in Paul,2018,p.4) yet would not have happened had it not been for decades long struggle from the environmental movement

(Paul,2018,p.4). After the 2009 election Merkel even attempted to prolong the operational life span of many nuclear power plants and extend the agreed phase-out plan implemented by the red-green coalition government (Beveridge and Kern,2013;Huss,2014;Schreurs cited in Paul,2018,p.4). However the disaster at the Fukushima nuclear power plant in Japan reignited the public consciousness against nuclear power and pushed the government to finalise a phase-out deadline of 2022 (Beveridge and Kern,2013;Morris and Jungjohann,2016;Röttgen,2013 cited in Pail,2018,p.4). In pursuing it's commitment to an energy transition away from nuclear power the German government considers lignite coal to be a 'bridge fuel' between nuclear and renewables (Paul,2018,p.6) necessitating the recent emergence of resistance against coal on the basis of averting the most severe manifestations of global climate change. The decades old struggle for energy democracy as begun by the anti-nuclear movement has continued into its current iteration as the struggle against coal (Paul,2018,p.7).

Anti-nuclear into Klimakamps

In 2009 a number of activists who had visited the British Climate Camps put on the first 'Kilimakamp.' They had been inspired by these camps and a number decided to create their own in Germany. Along with being a springboard for direct action, much like the British camps they aimed to be a model community for sustainable living and horizontal organising. Like the British camps they provided an array of educational workshops from radical political theory to the science of climate change to how to build compost toilets.

Ende Gelände arose out of the Klimakamps as a coalition of a number of different groups including the Klimakamp group and the Interventionist Left (Interventionist Linke) (IL). IL is a post-autonomist anti-capitalist anti-authoritarian national grouping within Germany that runs numerous different campaigns simultaneously on issues such as climate change, housing, migrant support and healthcare. For years previous to Ende Gelände the ecological working group within IL in Berlin had been working on a referendum to remunicipalise the energy grid (EG Interview D). After the referendum failed, this working

group along with the ecological working groups of IL nationwide began the process of forming the organising group for Ende Gelände (ibid).

The first Ende Gelände happened at the end of August 2015 in the Rhineland around two weeks after the start of the Klimakamp there and at the end of the week long 'Degrowth Summer School.' The Summer School was a radical academic gathering bringing together people from around Europe for a series of educational workshops around the concept of 'Degrowth' an alternative economics based on ecological sustainability. In Interview D of the EG organisers the activist believed there would not have been so many people at the EG action had the Degrowth Summer School not attracted so many people. They believed that the vast majority of people participating in the EG action from the Summer School had had no prior intention to do so. However after a week of educational workshops these people were fired up to take direct action against coal in an action that conveniently happened at the end of their summer school. Out of this camp of 1,600 people 1,300 people went on the EG action targetting the Garzweiler mine in the Rhineland. There were varying levels of participation in the action determined by different 'fingers' or groupings of people. One finger was 'softer' and would avoid going into the mine and any confrontation with the police while a number of other fingers planned to enter into the mine which could necessitate pushing through police lines. Hundreds of people entered into the mine and were 'kettled' by police, remaining there for over twelve hours.

Since 2015 there have been three more EG actions in Germany totalling four so far. All have been mass participatory direct actions grouping together large amounts of people in the 'finger structure' to occupy target coal mines and sometimes associated coal infrastructure like railway tracks that run from the pits and nearby coal-fired power stations. The second EG in Lusatia was in May 2016 to tie into the 350.org coordinated 'Break Free' global wave of civil disobedience around climate justice (Friends of the Earth Europe,2016). A huge increase on the previous year, around 4,000 people attended the camp and occupied the mine, diggers in the mine, train tracks and the power station over a three day period. In combination,

these actions led Vattenfall, the company targeted, to take the serious decision of reducing the power station's running capacity to 80% (Democracy Now!,2016). Last year in 2017 there were two EG actions both in the Rhineland targeting the operations of RWE Energy. The first was in August where around 6,000 people were thought to have participated in actions over three days (Flenning,2017). The second mobilised around 3,000 people to occupy the Hambacher pit on the 5th of November to coincide with the beginning of the twenty-third United Nations Framework Convention of Climate Change (UNFCCC) Conference of the Parties (COP23) summit in Bonn in November 2017.

Currently there is no academic research on EG written in English. Four articles have been written in German that I would have liked translated but the cost of such was prohibitive (Häfner, Schmidtke & Scholl,2016;Bosse,2017;Toewe,2017;Sander,2017).

German Environmentalism Themes

Over decades the grassroots part of the anti-nuclear movement fluctuated (Brand,1999,p.43). In the '70s mass demonstrations developed to include various tactics such as sabotage and blockades (Rucht,1990,p.204). Despite the election of the Greens into government in 1983 localised grassroots demonstrations and direct action did not decline (ibid). In 1985 before Chernobyl 80,000 people attended a demonstration against the plans for the nuclear reprocessing plant in Wackersdorf (Koopmans *et al*,1995,p.239). After the Chernobyl incident the movement was able to bolster support, mobilising tens of thousands of people in mass demonstrations in 1986, 1987 and 1988 (Dyrzek *et al*,2002,p.671;Brand,1999,p.43;Joppke,1990). Ten years later another wave of protest happened including large scale civil disobedience against the Castor transports in 1996, 1997 & 1998 (Brand,1999,p.43;Rüdig,2000,p.52;Dyrzek *et al*,2002,p.671). The movement was able to mobilise such large numbers and clearly saw the utility of doing so.

In the 1970s the radical part of the anti-nuclear movement in Germany was fundamental to the formation of the broader radical leftist movement, specifically the 'Autonomen' (autonomous) movement and its accompanying counter-cultural scene in many German cities (Leach and Haunss,2008,p.8). These 'radicals in the antinuclear movement who did not want to reduce their political agenda to ecological issues were the first to call themselves 'Autonome' (Geronimo,2000, cited in Leach and Haunss,2008,p.8). Not only were a very significant portion of these activists involved with the anti-nuclear movement but many also played 'a significant role in a range of movements and campaigns, from the antifacist, women's and antiwar movements, to the current global justice movement,' (Leach and Haunss,2008,p.8) signifying a high degree of movement crossover. Although the anti-nuclear struggle was a focal point of struggle their all encompassing ideology went beyond the policy goal of stopping nuclear power and was against the state and capitalism and all it's accompanying strata of social oppression (Rucht,1990,p.216).

The Autnomen 'developed their oppositional politics around a militant anti-authoritarian subjectivism and opposition to what they perceived as the dogmatism of both the old and new left,' (Leach and Haunss,2008,p.8). Inspired by Italian 'autonomists' they developed a very specific idea of autonomy that rejects all forms of hierarchical organisation and thus any form of representative politics or co-option by the state (Leach and Haunss,2008,p.8). They are necessarily anti-capitalist and anti-authoritarian, opposed to asymmetrical power relations and committed to 'nonhierarchical organisation and participatory democratic decision making,' (Leach and Haunss,2008,p.9).

In having a radical political ideology that strives for autonomy from the state and capital the Autonomist movement in Germany has over decades formed a vibrant counter-cultural scene formed of collectively created radical leftist infrastructure (Leach and Haunss,2008). These include a diverse array of localised self-run projects including 'bars, cinemas, info shops, book stores, squatted cultural and youth centres, living projects [co-operative housing projects] and media groups,' (Leach and Haunss,2008,p.9). These are run as non-hierarchically as possible and form the material sites for movement meetings and gatherings, affinity

groups, regional delegate meetings, national conferences, finance collectives including 'transmovement collectives that provide cooking, training, legal aid and street-medical services for activists' for a wide array of campaigns (Leach and Haunss,2008,p.18). This broad radical leftist infrastructure accompanied with an advanced social welfare system in Germany has allowed for the possibility of activists attaining a minimum standard of living without needing to have full-time employment so they are able to 'engage full-time in radical politics,' (Leach and Haunss,2008,p.15). This scene provides radical leftist infrastructure along with its associated counter-culture social reproductive provisions creating a porous divide between the movement and the social activities. The 'scene' 'attracts more people than the movement does' with its 'subcultural activities' like "concerts and parties' exposing people to 'the movement's political lifestyle and ideology in a low-pressure context,' (Leach and Haunss,2008,p.16). This is key to movement building practice as people are 'eased into' the movement on the basis of formed social ties and counter-cultural identification. Certainly the anti-nuclear movement was able to help produce and benefit from this radical leftist infrastructure (Rucht,1990,p.209) in a similar way to current radical movements in Germany.

This leftist scene has been established over many years and allowed the Autonomen scene 'to sustain itself over time and/or rebound after periods of inactivity,' (Leach and Haunss,2008,p.19). The movement lacks any central organisation and yet over decades activists have 'written, documented, and preserved the movement's history and ideology through a variety of media, including self-published books,' (Leach and Haunss,2008,p.20). In addition to self-organised documentation the scene has acted as 'a kind of living archive that helps preserve movement identity and cultural practices. Tactical innovations, organisational forms, decision-making practices, strategic lessons, movement history, symbols, frames, theoretical analyses, and movement identities are all preserved and transmitted to subsequent waves of activists,' (Leach and Haunss,2008,p.19). In providing counter-cultural infrastructure the scene has been able to create so-called 'retreat structures' where older activists are able to retire from activism while retaining social bonds with younger movement activists (Leach and Haunss,2008,p.20). This has contributed to the

movement retaining a level of 'movement memory' through inter-generational learning, reducing the occurrence of 'movement amnesia' (Gongaware,2010;Kubal&Becerra2014).

Despite holding a very particular ideology Autonomes and radical leftists have shown the importance of coalition building and co-operation between differing ideologies and strategies within the anti-nuclear movement (Leach and Haunss,2010). Using the case study of the direct action mobilisations against the Castor transports to Gorleben in Wendland, Leach and Haunss describe the way in which tensions between differing ideological factions of the grassroots anti-nuclear movement came to a head in 1997 around the blockades of the transports on the issue of violence, sabotage and property damage in what constitutes 'legitimate' civil disobedience (Leach and Haunss,2010,p.82). Despite an intense conflict in 1997 around these issues, by 2001 in the run-up to another mass-mobilisation around nuclear waste transports to Gorleben the movement was able to coalesce around the notion of a 'diversity of tactics' in organising different groups to target different parts of the waste transport in what was known as a 'section concept,' (Leach and Haunss,2010,p.85). The differing groupings were able to put their frustrations over different tactics aside to effectively build a workable coalition to mobilise thousands to take direct action against the transports (Leach and Haunss,2010,p.94). In summary, as IL said in reaction to the 2001 mass-mobilisation coalition, 'whether peaceful or militant, what's important is resistance,' (Leach and Haunss,2010,p.92).

The temporal aspect of this mass mobilisation is of particular significance too as in 2001 the direct action mobilisation happened in the context of the 'Red-Green' coalition government where the Green Party had been elected as the parliamentary wing of the anti-nuclear movement with a key aim of stopping the nuclear power industry (Rüdig,2000). The radical grassroots side of the anti-nuclear movement continued mass-participatory resistance despite the possibility of anti-nuclear concessions being made in government. It shows the level of ideological commitment to direct action resistance despite the 'political opportunity' afforded by the Greens in entering into government.

Discussion Around Key Differences

Using the insight provided by the interviews, participant observation and my own experience along with the historical context and themes this section will explain a number of key differences between the two movement organisations using an approach informed by path constitution, institutionalisation (Meyer and Schubert,2007) and social reproduction (Federici,2004). I will begin by outlining the problems of using a political opportunity approach and argue for the focus on internal movement culture. In so doing I will briefly look at the political contexts of each national movement.

Political Context/Political Opportunity Structures

Theory around political opportunity structures (POS) can help to an extent with explaining some of the differences between RtP and EG but it is very limited. The Energiewende is the German government's public declaration of a transition policy towards renewable energy (Morton & Müller,2016,p.277). They have worked hard at creating an image of being a champion of investment in renewables to the rest of the world (EG InterviewB) (Paul,2018,p.4). As a result it often comes as a great surprise to people in the UK and elsewhere that Germany has vast lignite coal mines that are used for energy generation especially when compared to the UK which has been slowly dismantling its coal industry and is committed to a coal phase-out by 2025 (Vaughan,2018A). EG Interviewee D saw the British coal phase-out deadline as a key point of political leverage against the continued use of coal in Germany as it illustrated that another western liberal democracy was capable of phasing out coal. Germany's continued reliance on coal can be considered to be an unintended consequence of the success of the anti-nuclear movement (Renn&Marshall,2016). Coal has become increasingly depended on to provide base level electricity generation in its attempt to phase-out nuclear energy and in an important factor in why it looks set to miss its CO2 reduction targets (Morton&Müller,2016,p.279). However the demand of the environmental movement for renewable energy

has been widely accepted by society and the media and pushed the government to commit to the Energiewende (but not to the extent that the use of coal power has been stopped yet). In the pursuit of climate justice the immediate phase-out of coal is the primary demand of EG and is eminently winnable to the activists interviewed (all EG Interviewees). Using political opportunity structures the contradiction in government policy around energy can be seen as a division within government that is exploited by the movement to demand the end of lignite coal mining operations (Tilly and Tarrow,2007). This aim is aided by the broad consensus within German society that a transition to renewables is necessary giving legitimacy to the movement (EG InterviewA;EG InterviewC;EG InterviewD). In addition, the high quantity of supportive media attention the actions have received has greatly helped (EG InterviewA;EG InterviewD;Ende Gelände,2018). Also the German government has seemed to have been particularly sensitive to international media coverage of the protests and the widespread participation of international participants (EG InterviewB). This year the government recently announced the creation of a 'Kohlekommission' (Coal Commission) to begin drawing up plans for a coal phase-out which using POS could be seen as an opening in the political system to the demands of the movement (Wehrmann,2018). However, contrary to what a POS approach would suggest is that the Energiewende came *as a result* of the strength of the historic environmental movement in Germany. The contradiction in government policy the EG activists are able to exploit to push for the end of coal was created by the current environmental movement's forebears.

By comparison the British government is 'all out for shale' (fracked gas) (Watt,2014). Undeterred by any international criticism the Conservative party has pushed through governmental approval of fracking at PNR despite the local government and the local community coming out in strong opposition to fracking (Vaughan,2018C) (RtP InterviewA). The government even uses the rhetoric of CO2 reduction to justify its pursuit of gas as it is a less polluting fossil fuel than coal (Department of Energy & Climate Change,2014). The government is closed off to any demand against fracking and is pursuing it despite a great degree of local and national opposition (Vaughan,2018B). Using a political opportunities approach this could explain the extra-parliamentary approach taken by the anti-fracking movement in the UK in relation to the 'closed'

form of government. However by the same token this would mean that the anti-coal movement (as the current climate justice battleground in Germany) would necessarily use the 'political opportunity' created by the Green Party. The German Green Party is the institutionalised parliamentary form of the historic environmental movement in Germany which has used the proportional representation system in the country to make ecological concessions (Dryzek *et al*,2003). They have a policy goal for a coal phase-out by 2025 so in using a political opportunities approach it would make sense for the environmental movement to pursue an electoral approach to achieve their demands. This cannot account for the vibrant and large extra-parliamentary approach of EG. Indeed the pursuit of extra-parliamentary politics of EG can be seen as a result of the difficulty the Green Party had in determining a nuclear phase-out while in government (Rüdiger,2000) and in instituting other far-reaching ecological policies such as ending coal. Part of the rationale of using an extra-parliamentary approach in Germany comes from a deep-seated ideological culture of grassroots direct democracy in the form of direct action civil disobedience (Leach and Haunss,2008) regardless of the relative political opportunities created by the form of government. As aforementioned RtP's extra-parliamentary approach *could* be considered as a result of the UK's relatively closed government but I consider both to be as a result of the legacy of an ideological tendency that demands a grassroots direct democratic approach in using direct action to make radical demands and force change. An appreciation of the political context of the two social movements is necessary but in solely focusing on the structure of government as required by a POS approach the approach of the two movements or their differences cannot be fully explained. It is for this reason the internal culture of these two movement is the main focus of analysis in this research.

The Importance of Ideology, Theory & Critique/ Coalition Building

EG and RtP differ greatly in their relationship to the broader radical left in their respective countries and how their accompanying ideologies influence these movements' formation. Even though the EG movement is one based on direct action against fossil fuel infrastructure like that of RtP there is a lot more of a focus on the relationship between theory and practice. The EG organisers operate within the context of the

radical left in Germany, have a far greater relationship with it and benefit from lots of movement crossover as a result (EG InterviewD). Despite having a focus on theory EG is able to exist as a broad coalition made up of many environmental organisations and leftist organisations (EG InterviewD). In comparison RtP as a movement has a dominant focus on actions, not making time for theoretical or ideological discussions and is very separated off from the rest of the radical left in the UK. I consider this to be as a result of the countries' differing leftist and environmental movement cultural historical developments.

EG began as an initiative of several different organisations in Germany including Klimacamp and the Interventionist Left (IL) (EG InterviewD). By its very conception it was founded by organisations that did not necessarily intimately share the same conceptions of theory and ideology. Some came from an anarchist background while others came from an autonomist or post-autonomist politics espoused by IL (EG InterviewD;EG InterviewA). Yet all came together and agreed on the EG initiative and formed a coalition around it which has continued to work as EG. The IL in particular has been very influential in the organising of EG making EG its sole ecological campaign since they helped form EG in 2015. IL has continually influenced the praxis of EG helping EG to articulate a clear anti-capitalist politics, an anti-colonial position around climate justice and promoting an inclusive politics of 'queer-feminism,' (EG InterviewB). The IL as an organisation is a national anti-capitalist organisation in Germany that goes beyond a single-issue focus and campaigns on a broad variety of issues or struggles against capitalism. Working groups are organised thematically, for example focusing on 'anti-racism,' 'healthcare' or 'ecology' and start initiatives on that basis including refugee solidarity, hospital strikes to improve healthcare workers' conditions or in this case EG. They use theory to inform their practice and make decisions about campaigns on that basis. As a broad and national anti-capitalist organisation in the case of EG they are able to mobilise activists that normally campaign on different things to attend EG actions. As a linked-up organisation on the left it also means that they are able to tap into the rich bed of leftist social reproductive resources (Federici,2004) available for protests such as collective kitchens that cater for large amounts of people in a protest scenario or leftist collectives that make t-shirts for movements. Many of these initiatives exist as the current formation of the

vibrant history of leftist and environmental activism in Germany greatly influenced by the anti-nuclear movement.

RtP by comparison is an organisation founded as a collection of individuals as opposed to organisations. RtP was created by a number of individuals involved with No Dash for Gas (RtP InterviewD;RtP InterviewB), a collective that came together as a result of Climate Camp and organised a week long occupation of West Burton's gas fired power station (Olofsson,2014,p.17). Although there are many RtP activists that are involved with other environmental organisations (eg. Friends of the Earth, 350.org and Greenpeace) it is not instituted as a coalition organisation that works with the rest of the radical left in the UK. Over the years RtP has worked in coalition with environmental organisations like Frack Free Lancashire or United Valleys Action Group (RtP InterviewB;RtP InterviewC;RtP InterviewD) but like much of the environmental movement in the UK they are fairly separate from the broader radical left. Unlike EG RtP struggles to gain political saliency among the left in the UK and cannot necessarily tap into their resources or mobilise activists from those groupings. It appears this has been the case for quite some time in the UK with the environmental movement quite separate to the rest of the left (Doherty,1999,p.279). RtP has over the years somewhat cemented a dominant focus on action without taking the time to necessarily focus on theory and how it's linked with thinking about long-term strategy. Only one of the RtP activists interviewed self-identified as an eco-anarchist (RtP Interview A) and it is a position certainly not held by the majority of organisers or participants, yet the latent ideology of RtP is one of eco-anarchism, "certainly the camps are run under anarchist principles broadly but that is not to say we are strictly speaking, anarchists. I'm certainly not," (RtP Interview B). This remains as a legacy from the traditions of the Climate Camps, the anti-GMO movement, the road protests and RTS (Frenzel,2014,p.905).

Another subtle difference in ideology is the encouraged open culture of critique among the organisers and participants in EG compared to RtP. This can only be asserted in my experience of year-on-year involvement as a participant in both movements. This culture of critique has been particularly helpful in producing an

evolutionary reflexivity into EG in effectively responding to problems of the camps. This is evident with regards to the evolutionary provision of social reproduction (Federici,2004). The first year of EG in 2015 many people came down with a gastroenteritis infection after the camp. Had this happened during the camp it could have jeopardised the whole action. As a result, the following year, the organisers instituted strict hygiene measures to reduce the chance of an infection spreading through the camp. There were no serious instances of widespread infection that year and hygiene was greatly increased. This example is indicative of a broader year-on-year evolution of social reproductive provisions based on a well thought out critique each time. Although this is an example of critique and reflexivity on a broad scale, there are subtler manifestations of this open culture of critique. In August 2017 the cohort of British people at the EG camp were engaged in a 'sock wrestling' tournament which drew in a considerable crowd of people in the camp unaccustomed to this game. The following morning in the plenary a critique was launched of the sock wrestling for glorifying combat voiced by the facilitator who did not share in the sentiment of the criticism. Those who were criticising the game were clearly in a minoritarian position and yet it was very important as part of their decision-making procedure that their concerns were raised. By comparison in my experience of the organising culture of RtP dissenting voices are not given the same kind of platform for critique or valued to the same extent as in EG. There appears to be a culture in EG and in the German radical left as a whole to positively encourage critique, value its importance but still aim to work together well (EG InterviewD). I believe this is down to the theoretical influence of leftist organisations. Often in the organising of RtP the focus is given primarily to unity in practical planning as opposed to allowing time and space for more ideological or broad critiques of the action or the movement. Dissenting voices although often present in the consensus decision-making process of RtP are not encouraged. These dissenting voices can often be consigned to 'back-rooms' to preserve a level of polite cultural etiquette. As a result I consider that EG as a movement has been much more open to critique than RtP, allowing it to grow in robustness and reflexivity in refining its fairly fixed tactic of mass-participatory occupation of coal mines. I attribute both to a process of path constitution and institutionalisation (Meyer and Schubert,2007) where the importance of open critique is related to their solidified historical movement cultures.

Relation to the Broader Radical Left and its Associated Infrastructure

EG as a grassroots environmental social movement organisation in Germany is not so distinct from the rest of the radical left; indeed radical environmentalism is a key constituent of the broader radical left as a result of the great influence of the anti-nuclear movement and considered interventions by organisations like the IL (EG InterviewD). It is able to tap into a wealth of resources contained within the radical leftist social reproductive infrastructure (Federici,2004) that has been built and maintained by ideologically committed activists over decades (Leach and Haunss,2008). In addition EG interviewees detailed particular NGOs that have fronted large sums of money for EG (EG InterviewA;EG InterviewD). Organisers of social reproductive infrastructure are able to call on specific organised collectives that are set up for large scale protest camps providing food to thousands of people or providing water (EG InterviewA). The movement is able to use autonomous radical leftist venues to host meetings, hold solidarity fundraising parties and disseminate information. This leftist countercultural 'scene' is able to retain older former activists who have since dropped out of the movement (EG InterviewC) but who are active within the radical leftist social infrastructure in the form of so called 'retreat structures' like radical housing projects etc (Leach and Haunss,2008,p.20). This means a level of inter-generational learning is able to happen from the anti-nuclear movement to the current climate justice movement to reduce 'movement amnesia,' (Gongaware,2010;Kubal&Becerra2014).

Comparatively the UK has very small leftist 'scene' or culture and the environmental movement is relatively siloed off from the rest of the radical left. There is little in the way of radical leftist infrastructure or its associated resources in terms of money, people, buildings or collectives. Although there are many attempts at growing the movement RtP organisers recognise their inability to generate very large numbers at protests (RtP InterviewD) so opt for more affinity-group based actions where the quantity of people is not necessarily as important as the level of commitment they have. In opting more for this strategy in combination with it coming from a historical legacy that advocates it, it can sometimes create a 'self-

fulfilling' prophecy in choosing affinity-group actions over mass-participatory actions because organisers believe they will never generate large numbers to take that form of direct action (RtP InterviewD).

In a similar but opposite way the ambitiousness of the EG project has seen increasingly large amounts of people attend actions as they hear from word-of-mouth about the relative 'safety in numbers' and see the spectacular images of large numbers of people occupying vast coal mines (all EG Interviews). Because so many people are seen to participate in it it prompts more people to get involved. EG has been able to provide the necessary infrastructure for these large numbers (EG InterviewB) by utilising the resources of the broader radical in which they are part. Comparatively RtP is not confident at mobilising large numbers nor does it have the associated infrastructure to comfortably provide for them (RtP InterviewD).

Difference in the Method of Establishing the Protest Camp

In both using the protest camp form to facilitate large-scale actions EG and RtP have differed greatly in terms of seeking permission from the land owner of the camp and consequently its location. I argue this is predominantly down to the two movements' differing cultural conceptions of what constitutes 'legitimate' direct action as inherited from their respective environmental movement histories. Year-on-year the organisers of EG have always sought the express permission of the landowners of their camps as they consider it an important moral imperative to make their actions as legitimate as possible to the wider public (EG InterviewA;EG InterviewD). This has required careful negotiation with farmers to agree to their land temporarily being the site of a protest camp (EG InterviewA). Often the organisers have found common ground with these farmers who are affected by the health problems associated with the coal dust and do not want the mines to expand and destroy nearby villages and farmland. However for the EG protest camp in the Rhineland in August 2017 the organisers failed to gain permission from a landowner close enough to any of the coal mines in the area (EG InterviewA). This was as a result of the negative association some of the media made with the EG organisers and the organisers of the Hamburg G20 protests that happened earlier that year in combination with police suggesting to farmers that there would be destructive violence

as a result (EG InterviewA). In requiring permission from the landowner beforehand, the camp ended up at a location significantly far away from the nearest coal mine. This required the organisation of transport for activists to be taken to the target mines which was easily blocked by police. Previously all the camps had been a walkable distance from the target mines and as a result the success of the action suffered.

Comparatively RtP has been much more versatile in its approach to attempting to gain permission for its protest camps over the years. I understand this as a legacy of the Climate Camps and prior to that the road protests that often 'squatting' sites along with the Reclaim the Streets movement which involved large groups of people seizing areas for partying as a form of protest (Wall,1999,p.63). The following RtP camps took place on squatted land; Balcombe (2013), Blackpool (2014), Didcot (2015) and Ffos-y-fran, (2016), with Balcombe, Blackpool & Didcot on private farming land and Ffos-y-fran on public local council land (RtP InterviewB). Two RtP camps in 2017 and the one I attended in June 2018 for this research, at Preston New Road near Blackpool, happened with the permission of the land owners who have supported the anti-fracking campaign for years (RtP InterviewB). This method of squatting land for the protest camp is enacted by a large group of activists doing a 'site take' and secretly all descending on the area for the camp at once and quickly building marquees and securing the site. Once the camp becomes established some activists go and try to develop positive relationships with the landowners by articulating the camp's aims and confirming that it will be temporary and that they will leave the site in as good a condition as possible. This is very much a strategy of seeking forgiveness after the fact rather than permission before. This method of seizing an area of land comes from an ideological belief in the democratic use of an area and in opposition to the capitalist promotion of private property directly inherited from the aforementioned movements in the UK.

Despite this successful tactic of squatting being frequently used in the UK the German EG activists have never used it. A number spoken to believed that it would have the potential to delegitimise their camps and actions and provide the police and opponents with grounds to attack the camp itself (EG InterviewA; EG

InterviewB). EG Interviewee A explained that they believed if they did not seek permission a lot of energy from activists would be required to keep the camp secure instead of focusing on the action or other important tasks, “you have to put a lot of effort into defending that ground rather than actually going into the pit and I think then the whole confrontation becomes more about democracy and the right to assembly.” In August 2016 the camp was attacked by a group of local fascists requiring participants and local anti-fascists to defend the camp (EG InterviewB). EG Interviewee A interviewed believed this threat would only be heightened if they did not have permission for the camp and give possible fascist attackers legitimacy. This position on the use of the protest camp repertoire is not flexible and unlikely to change despite the effectiveness of the August 2017 action being greatly reduced by the distance necessary to travel to the mine by participants. I understand this to be a direct result of the influence of the anti-nuclear movement which often advocated a high degree of ‘legitimacy’ such as through organising completely ‘accountable’ actions with participants encouraged to provide identification and adhere to as many laws and regulations as possible apart from during the very action itself.

In this way a level of historic path constitution and institutionalisation has fixed the possible strategies for securing the protest camp in each movement (Meyer and Schubert,2007). EG have not changed this strategy inherited from the anti-nuclear movement despite it being hugely detrimental to their August 2017 action. However RtP have solidified a strategy where they expect to have to squat the site for the protest camp on many occasions as inherited from Climate Camp and much of the direct action environmentalism of the ‘90s in Britain. In collaboration with the local anti-fracking communities at PNR they have been open to working with landowners sympathetic to their protests.

Strategy and Tactics

RtP and EG both use direct action and civil disobedience to target points of fossil fuel infrastructure in their actions (all interviewees). However the strategies used by each movement has differed greatly, with RtP using a much more diverse and innovative range of strategies against varying targets (all RtP interviewees).

EG has created mass-participatory actions where year-on-year large numbers of people attempt to enter into very large coal mines (all EG interviewees). They use a 'finger' structure where large groupings of people try different routes to get into the mine to increase the chances of success of at least one or some of the fingers entering the mine. Once in, people have stayed in the mines for different levels of time determined by the police's actions or how long people are prepared to stay. In addition to targetting the mine activists have occupied diggers in the mine, the train tracks that take coal from the pit and in 2016 the coal-fired power station nearby the mine. The period of time over which the actions have happened has varied between one and three days. The first and most recent EG actions aimed for an occupation of the mine for a day and the second and third EG actions lasted for about three days each. The aim of these actions are open and widely disseminated. All-in-all the overall strategy has remained the same; to use large amounts of people to occupy coal mines and their accompanying infrastructure.

By comparison RtP has had a much more changeable strategy with varying targets over their five years of actions. Although they too have aimed for large numbers of people at their protest events they have had a very different relationship to the tactic of a mass-participatory direct action. At the anti-fracking protest camp in Balcombe 2013 over a thousand people marched to the entrance of the proposed site and attempted to blockade it. There were a number of accompanying secretive affinity groups that 'locked-on' to 'arm tubes'¹ and sat in front of the gate. The march was intended to be a 'softer' part while those in affinity groups 'locked on' were intended to be the 'spikey' part of the protest (terms used by RtP IntervieweeC). There were also numerous simultaneous affinity group actions with small groups of people targetting other areas of the fracking industry such as a group that hung a banner outside of Cuadrilla's head office in Lichfield, Staffordshire while another group superglued themselves onto the doors of the PR company Bell Pottinger that worked for Cuadrilla (Birmingham Live,2013). This method of using a simultaneous strategy of a mass demonstration along with disruptive affinity-group actions was repeated the following year in Blackpool 2014 where there was a well-attended 'fluffy' 'child-friendly' 'non-

1 Activists use carabiner clips around their wrists to 'lock' their hands to the inside of constructed plastic, metal or concrete tubes that are used as blockades or onto or around objects.

arrestable' demonstration along the Blackpool seafront at the same time as numerous small affinity-group actions targeted sites connected to the fracking industry. At the Didcot action camp in 2015 there was no demonstration but twenty different affinity group actions against different fossil fuel targets which individually and collectively achieved very little mainstream and social media coverage or broader impact. The following year in Ffoss-y-Fran there was a complete change of tactic as the multiple small affinity group actions were scrapped in favour of an open, mass-participatory direct action. Heavily influenced by the first EG in 2015 RtP mobilised around 300 people to occupy the coal mine there. This marked the first time since the last Climate Camp of 2010 that an open mass-participatory direct action had been facilitated within the environmental movement in the UK. The Climate Camps of 2006-2010 had organised many different mass-participatory direct actions where large amounts of people worked together against one key part of fossil fuel infrastructure. Often a small group of people made up the 'action working group' who planned an overall strategy and disseminated it to different affinity and working groups (RtP Interview B,C&D). However if this core group was infiltrated, as was the case with the undercover police officer Mark Kennedy (Evans and Lewis, 2013, p.268-285), then the whole plan could be scuppered. I understand the reliance on affinity group actions in the first three years of RtP was as a result of the fall-out of the infiltration by Mark Kennedy in combination with the historical success of this kind of strategy in a way that constituted a path made by the direct action environmentalism in the UK from the '90s. In the first three years organisers were experienced in using affinity groups in direct action but were wary of undercover police infiltration so did not organise large mass-participatory actions. In only using affinity groups with different targets as the form of direct action it meant that should infiltration occur, only one action and target would suffer as opposed to the success of a large mass-participatory action being put at risk.

In the proceeding two years after the mass-participatory action in the Ffoss-y-Fran mine in Wales RtP has again used different strategies disrupting the fracking operations at PNR (all RtP interviewees). In 2017 RtP expanded the already existing social reproductive infrastructure at the permanent protest camp there to

create a temporarily enlarged protest camp for the month of July to facilitate a 'rolling blockade' of the gate entrance. Every day during the month an affinity-group action targetted the fracking site or elements of Cuadrilla's supply chain (RtP InterviewB). This included people locking themselves to each other in front of the site and four men climbing on top of four lorries attempting to access the site, where they remained for three days stopping the lorries from moving for that duration (Perraudin,2018). This rolling blockade allowed for a prolonged period of disruption of the operations of Cuadrilla at PNR as opposed to containing disruptive action to a day. Despite being openly advertised, on the most part it was difficult for new participants to take action as most of the affinity-groups were closed to newcomers and relied on tight-knit experienced activists from specific geographic areas.

The latest RtP action camp 'Block Around the Clock' was at PNR, where I conducted participant observation. It had been widely publicised beforehand that the aim was to peacefully blockade the gate for 48 hours. This action was open to anyone that came to the camp and was encouraged as the only direct action. The blockade exceeded it's target and blocked the gate for 54 hours and didn't use individual affinity-group direct actions (RtP Participant Observation Notes).

Both movements aim for large numbers at their action camps to create as much disruption to their targets as possible. Although they aim to facilitate as many people as possible taking direct action RtP's strategy and targets have changed a great deal over the years often favouring small affinity group direct actions but also using mass-participatory actions on a number of occasions (RtP Interview A). I understand there to be a culture within the movement, as inherited historically, to value tactical creativity to reduce the ability of the police to correctly predict their tactics (RtP Interview D) (Doherty and Hayes,2018p.278). However with EG the broad strategy has remained fairly static in a way that adheres to a level of path constitution and institutionalisation within the movement (Meyer and Schubert,2007). The majority of the actions have been successful so it creates a positive feedback mechanism, reinforcing this strategy. Although EG is a self-defined climate justice social movement organisation they have only focused on lignite coal in their three

years of operation. Every year the target has been the coal mines and the strategy has been to get as many people occupying the mines and accompanying infrastructure to cause the maximum amount of economic damage possible (all EG interviewees). EG could have used small affinity groups to have still shut down the mine and cause the same amount of damage with far fewer people but they would have faced much harsher police repression and legal implications. Part of the effectiveness of EG strategy is that there are so many people prepared to enter the mine that there is a degree of 'safety in numbers,' (EG InterviewB). Often the activists outnumber the police, making arrest and processing of protestors very difficult. The police have attempted to do so, for instance at the first EG in 2015 and against some of the fingers occupying the train tracks and the power station in 2016. Often the police have been too overwhelmed that they have contained or 'kettled' protestors and then released them individually after taking a photograph (EG Interview C). At points the police have been fairly 'hands-off' and allowed the large fingers of people to enter into the mine without intervening (EG InterviewB;EG InterviewC). At other times they have attempted to block protestors from entering the mine by forming police lines (EG InterviewB) and have subsequently been overwhelmed by protestors peacefully but forcefully pushing through or running through gaps, although the police have successfully formed blockades stopping protestors entering (EG InterviewC).

In using a fairly unchanging strategy aimed at the same target every year activists have to a certain extent come to expect a particular strategy, one entailing being a member of a very large group of people prepared to enter the pit. This has allowed a high degree of movement-building when communicating expectations regarding the action, levels of police repression and legal implications to interested people. It has become a 'gateway' into direct action for many participants in Germany who may not be prepared to undertake direct action in a small affinity-group for fear of arrest. This has allowed a level of 'radicalisation' to occur for people to experience the effectiveness of direct action in combination with the radical politics underpinning it and the protest camp with minimal repercussions. This mass-participatory trespass strategy is one that was a mainstay of the direct action of the anti-nuclear movement in Germany considered to be this movement's predecessor. Through the leftist counter-cultural infrastructure older activists of the radical left

in Germany who organised anti-nuclear actions have been able to successfully transmit their experiential knowledge to the younger generations of radical environmentalists in Germany organising for EG (EG InterviewC) and retain a level of 'movement memory,' (Gongaware,2010;Kubal&Becerra2014).

By comparison RtP has used much more varied forms of strategy and tactics (all RtP Interviews) which have often required a higher level of personal sacrifice for a smaller number of people through the policing and legal implications of affinity-group actions. For example three of the men who occupied the top of trucks aiming to enter the fracking site at PNR have recently been given prison sentences (Perraudin,2018). This has had an effect on the expectations of participants who have not known what to expect from the RtP actions as the strategy, targets, police response and legal repercussions have varied wildly. Much like the historical tendency of mass-participatory actions of the anti-nuclear movement has informed a similar strategy for the EG actions, so too has the history of small-affinity group actions with high personal sacrifice of the radical environmental movement in the UK (Doherty,1999,p.284). In this way I consider the difference in strategies taken by these two direct action climate justice movements to be as a result of the 'path constitution' and institutionalisation set out by their respective national historical tendencies, limiting the available options to ones that have happened before (Meyer and Schubert,2007).

Conclusion

On the surface there are a number of similarities between the environmental social movement organisations Reclaim the Power in the UK and Ende Gelände in Germany. From the outside they appear to work in the same way. However in using a radical ethnographic approach that appreciates my experience as a committed activist within both movements alongside participant observation and interviews with eight experienced activists I have been able to discern and explain a number of key differences between the two movements. They include: the importance of a particular ideological approach and its role for critical

reflexivity and coalition building; the relation to the broader radical left and its associated infrastructure; the difference in the method for establishing the protest camp and their differing strategy and tactics with large participatory mass actions and the use of small affinity-group actions. In doing so I have rejected the dominant 'political opportunity structures' explanation in favour of the theories of 'path constitution,' 'institutionalisation' and 'social reproduction' to look at the internal cultures of the two movements and explain how these differences have manifested as a result of their differing environmental movement legacies. These historical traditions have formed particular ideological approaches and associated radical leftist social reproductive infrastructural resources that have greatly affected the numbers mobilised for their spectacular direct action protests and their particular choice of strategy and tactics. I hope the insight this research provides will illustrate the need to move beyond political opportunity structures and recognise the importance of alternative theories that focus on internal movement cultures when comparing and explaining differences between national social movement organisations.

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INFORMATION SHEET

Study Title: 'What are the similarities and differences between the recent German and British direct action climate movements? A comparison between Ende Gelände and Reclaim the Power.'

Invitation

You are being invited to consider taking part in the research study 'What are the similarities and differences between the recent German and British direct action climate movements? A comparison between Ende Gelände and Reclaim the Power.'

This project is being undertaken by Alice Swift for her Master's Degree in Environmental Politics and Climate Change.

Before you decide whether or not you wish to take part, it is important for you to understand why this research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read this information carefully and discuss it with friends and relatives if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is unclear or if you would like more information.

Aims of the Research

This research aims to gain a picture on the similarities and differences between Ende Gelände and Reclaim the Power including histories, context, ideology, strategies & tactics and organisational methods.

Why have I been invited?

You have been chosen as a participant or organiser in Ende Gelände and/or Reclaim the Power actions and protest camps. Others participants and organisers have also been asked.

Do I have to take part?

You are free to decide whether you wish to take part or not. If you do decide to take part you will be interviewed anonymously. You are free to withdraw from the interview at any time and without giving reasons and your data will not be used. If you have second thoughts about participating after the interview your data will be deleted and not used in the dissertation. Should this be the case please let Alice Swift know by the 25th of July 2018. If you decide after this date it will not be possible to take it out of the dissertation.

What will happen if I take part?

Alice Swift will arrange with you via email a suitable time and location of your choice for the interview. The interview will be around an hour but you are welcome to make it shorter or longer should you wish.

The Ende Gelände interviews will happen from the 13th-19th of June.

The Reclaim the Power interviews will happen from the 1st of June – July the 12th.

What are the benefits of taking part?

A vegan treat and immense gratitude from the researcher. You will be helping to provide insight into a very underresearched movement. It is hoped the findings from this research will be able to help identify elements within the German and British direct action climate movements that will help inform building the trans-European climate movement.

What are the risks (if any) of taking part?

There is a slight risk of identifiability even though names will not be used in the research. This may be the case if you personally have been in the media with the movement. Every effort will be taken to insure you will not be identified in the research.

How will information about me be used?

The data collected will inform the basis of a Masters dissertation. The data collected may be retained for use in future research studies.

Who will have access to information about me?

You will have full anonymity. The data collected will be used by Alice Swift. The supervisor Professor Brian Doherty may ask to see the raw interview data but full anonymity will be retained.

Who is funding and organising the research?

This research is being undertaken by a Masters student at Keele University and is therefore self-funded.

What if there is a problem?

If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, you may wish to speak to the researcher(s) who will do their best to answer your questions. You should contact Alice Swift on w7e77@students.keele.ac.uk. Alternatively, if you do not wish to contact the researcher(s) you may contact **Professor Brian Doherty at b.j.a.doherty@keele.ac.uk**

If you remain unhappy about the research and/or wish to raise a complaint about any aspect of the way that you have been approached or treated during the course of the study please write to Nicola Leighton who is the University's contact for complaints regarding research at the following address:-

Nicola Leighton
Research Governance Officer
Directorate of Engagement and Partnerships
IC2 Building
Keele University
ST5 5NH
E-mail: [n.leighton@ keele.ac.uk](mailto:n.leighton@keele.ac.uk)
Tel: 01782 733306



Keele University

CONSENT FORM

Title of Project: 'What are the similarities and differences between the recent German and British direct action climate movements? A comparison between Ende Gelände and Reclaim the Power.

Name and contact details of Principal Investigator: Alice Swift, 54 Elenora Street, Stoke-on-Trent, ST4 1QD
w7e77@students.keele.ac.uk 07846199448

Please initial box if you agree with the statement

1. I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet dated
for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time.
If this is the case please I will let Alice Swift know by the 25th of July 2018. If I decide after this date
it will not be possible to take it out of the dissertation.

3. I agree to take part in this study.

Name of participant Date Signature

Researcher Date Signature



CONSENT FORM (for use of quotes)

Title of Project: 'What are the similarities and differences between the recent German and British direct action climate movements? A comparison between Ende Gelände and Reclaim the Power.

Name and contact details of Principal Investigator: Alice Swift, 54 Elenora Street, Stoke-on-Trent, ST4 1QD
w7e77@students.keele.ac.uk 07846199448

**Please initial box if you
agree with the statement**

1. I agree for my quotes to be used

If I change my mind I will let Alice Swift know by the 25th of July 2018. If I decide after this date it will not be possible to take quotes out of the dissertation.

2. I do not agree for my quotes to be used

Name of participant

Date

Signature

Researcher

Date

Signature

Notes from EG Berlin Plenum 13.06.18 19:00-22:00

An open meeting with lots of new people.

Around 31 people with a couple of people coming in later. Good gender balance. All white. Mostly young between the ages of 25-35. A couple of older people that seemed more experienced.

There was an event on previous from 18:00-19:00 about the Czech climate camp. A number of people that had been at that then came to this meeting including a young man from the Swedish young socialists group.

There was an explanation of what they had done in the last couple of weeks.

An update on action points.

There will be a talk about the topics.

Icebreaker exercise: we had to find a partner and share our name and what you are looking forward to this summer. Then we had to speak to another couple and introduce each other.

There were introductions.

I did a shout out asking for consent to observe the meeting. Everyone gave their active consent.

There was feedback about a protest against the AFD march that happened recently. EG organised a finger on the counter-demo in their white suits. They got the finger to where they wanted to but could not stop the AFD march. There were so many police they had to keep to the route. It was not easy to block.

There had been two action trainings beforehand. One had been one week before and another had been the day before.

Yesterday there had been a debrief of the action.

Some of the EG groups want more action against the fascists.

There had been two mobilisation events for the Czech climate camp Limity Jsme including one this evening. People had thought it would be hard to sell tickets because it clashes with the large left-organised festival 'Fusion.' However most of the 40 tickets had been sold and there was more demand. There were no more buses available from the company but they were considering organising some more.

2 people from the group went to the Climate Camp in Austria. It had run from Thursday the 7th-Sun the 10th and they estimated there were about 400 people. They had enjoyed a workshop on the 'Imperial Lifestyle.' There had been workshops on mobilisation/ agriculture/ capitalism. They felt like the camp had been too short.

The aim of the Austrian camp was to convince people of system change in relation to climate change -for those that didn't already think that. There were plans made to protest against an airport expansion. It was not going to be a mass action but smaller affinity-group actions.

Some EG people had done a rekie of an 'industrial site' in Berlin for a possible future action.

J – Recently in Germany there has been the development of a 'Kohle Commission' tasked with providing a roadmap towards the eventual phasing out of coal. They haven't made a decision yet but it looks likely that they will make a decision which is problematic.

He wanted to talk about it as it was an important topic.

A group called 'Phase 5' were proposing a workshop on movement building. People consented.

A call-out was made to see if anyone wanted to go to the Climate Camp in Poland soon. No-one said they wanted to go.

IL had wanted to mobilise for Poland.

For everyone who is going to the Czech climate camp they are planning to have a meeting beforehand.

Someone asked about the finger structure for actions.

People asked if they wanted to organise buses to Code Rood. It seemed like they would as they had made an important decision earlier in the year to support and mobilise for Code Rood.

People asked whether EG Berlin should organise a solidarity action.

People were considering transport to Code Rood. Either from Berlin or the Klimacamp in the Rhineland or even a train from Prague.

Their regular solidarity cocktails fundraising evening was next week and they had no speakers. They were trying to work our speakers.

I did another shout-out regarding organising interviews.

The working groups we were going to divide into consisted of:

Lausitz solidarity

The group going to the Czech climate camp

The group planning a demonstration outside the Kohl Commission meeting next week.

The group connecting with the Hambacher Forest including sending a delegate.

Social media working group – they wanted to post more on social media

For the Lausitz solidarity for people who were arrested in EG Lausitz 2016 and were facing criminal prosecutions.

Someone was going to make a 'legal' demonstration

They would sleep at a housing project the night before

They were planning to do a 'Red Line' action outside Vatenfall's offices.

As many people wanted to attend more than one working group it was agreed that there would be space for two stages of working group time:

1. Czech cc, Lausitz & Hambi
2. Soli evening, Czech & ?

I went to the Hambi WG.

This was about the mobilisation for the next EG in October in the Hambacher Forest

It was considered to be quite hard to mobilise people for a one day action

They wanted to mobilise people for other actions/demos during the cutting season.

It was proposed to do a solidarity demo in Berlin afterwards.

It was considered to be quite difficult for small groups to stop the cutting by themselves.

There was the proposal to do affinity group actions made by the people in each of the local EG groups throughout the cutting season of October-March.

It is a difficult time when they try and evict the people in the wood. They want to mobilise so they are unable to even start the cutting.

They want to organise a 'Skills for Hambi' skillshare.

They need to think about what EG wants to feed into the Hambi meeting soon.

They need to consider how best EG can support the Hambi occupiers best during the cutting season.

- At a later date they will need to discuss a period of time EG Berlin can support Hambi
- They need to plan for each EG group across Germany to support Hambi at different periods
- P to support by making different fingers or actions
- P to support during different periods of time
- areas to focus on during Hambi including the possibility of focussing on other regions
- To consider the task of political education

- An affinity group system can be exclusionary to those without a group
- P to spread the organisation of EG into November

2. *I joined the Coal Commission Group* (and didn't have a translator)

Lausitz Feedback

It would be a small demo mostly outside the court, possibly with some inside the court

They asked if they could borrow IL's megaphone

They would all be dressed in EG white suits

They discussed travel arrangements

Kohle Demo Feedback

Someone from EG would speak

Idea to make a big coal powerplant

10 people

Different tasks

Distribute flyers

Do a banner drop

Asked people for help

Hambi Feedback

Demo and solidarity actions to keep police busy

Solidarity action calendar

Aim to always have one EG activist from one of the local groups

Hambi Skillshare

Decisions made here will be reported back to the Hambi meeting

Bar event happening every month feedback

Someone will speak about repression

They needed a lot of help organising

They wanted the whole group to take responsibility for it as it was a whole group initiative

Shout out for volunteers for the next meeting

After the meeting I spoke to a young man about the recent creation of the Kohl Commission and how they may announce a coal phase-out. He was concerned about this as he considered it might kill the movement against coal.

Participant Observation Notes from Reclaim the Power's Block Around the Clock Mass Action Protest Camp 26th June - 1st of July 2018

Monday 25th June

I met [REDACTED] at the train station in Hebden Bridge at 20:00 and gave him lots of my stuff to take with him in the car to lighten my load for the cycle ride tomorrow.

I got the train to Manchester and arrived around 21:00 and eventually met up with [REDACTED]

Tuesday 26th of June

We woke early and prepared for our ride to the anti-fracking site at Preston New Road. I met up with [REDACTED] [REDACTED] who were having breakfast in a cafe nearby. They were still waiting for [REDACTED] breakfast which didn't come. We left late and arrived at around 10:45, 45mins after the meet-up time at 10:00.

We met some of the other cyclists, bought water and gave much of our luggage to the woman who was driving the van.

We cycled to a pub off the canal tow path after Eccles and had a rest. It was very very hot.

We rode along some beautiful traffic-free cycle paths through woods and fields.

I had a puncture at around 13:00 which I fixed quickly.

We stopped for lunch late at around 16:00. I was very hungry and needed to eat. We were only half-way through the ride.

We rode to a pub near Preston and arrived around 19:00. We had larger-shandies with ice.

We eventually arrived at the camp at around 21:15 to a large party of people greeting us. We had a number of victory photos taken. I was really pleased to have arrived. There were lots of people that I knew who I greeted so it took me ages to get to the camp.

I just managed to set up my tent before it was dark.

I had a cold shower in a horse box. I then had some dinner. The camp was bustling with people who had arrived that day. All the operational tents/marquees had already been set up including the welcome tent, the legal tent, the media tent, well-being tent and a large marquee for plenaries and workshops. I went to bed around 01:00.

Wednesday the 27th of June

09:00 Morning plenary. Jobs that needed to be done were discussed. The atmosphere seemed excited.

I stayed in the shade in the bit with trees at the entrance of the camp. It was a really really hot day.

I had a chat with [REDACTED]

12:00 Lunch.

14:00 [REDACTED] held a workshop called "Fracking have we won yet?" in the main marquee. There were lots of people there. Around 25. [REDACTED] began by asking for name, preferred pro-noun, where people were from and their feelings around the action in a 'go-round'. We went round the circle but more people arrived so [REDACTED] repeated the introduction including asking for people's pro-nouns and restating that it was important and not to make jokes out of it as, "what you consider to be trivial can be really important for someone else. It got to a man who introduced himself as someone from the Green party. He did not include his pro-noun and [REDACTED] asked what it was, he replied with "guess." [REDACTED] said that we shouldn't guess and he should tell us his pronoun and he said "too bad." [REDACTED] spoke saying that it was not nice to "shit on other people" by being rude about being asked for his gender pronoun. The atmosphere in the tent was tense as people reacted to this public conflict. I saw it represented the differing attitudes towards issues of gender between older and younger generations of activists.

[REDACTED] held a temperature check to see people's differing levels of knowledge on fracking. There were quite a few people who knew different elements.

[REDACTED] started by explaining what the process of fracking entailed.

Others contributed with information about Kirby Mispertern and Tinker Lane fracking sites with anti-fracking protest camps.

[REDACTED] described a report on fracking called 'How many wells?'. It detailed how in order for fracked gas to make a significant contribution to the energy mix in the UK there would need to be about 6,000 wells amounting to about 1 well to be built per minute. The Preston New Road site was the first that would begin fracking but Cuadrilla were already one year behind their schedule due to the resistance around their exploratory drilling.

That afternoon I spent a lot of time talking to activists who I hadn't seen in a while.

[REDACTED] both did kitchen shifts and were signed up to go to the gate in the morning at 05:30.

18:00 Dinner – cooking led by [REDACTED] Pasta

20:00 Hype session. In the main marquee there was a 'hype' session to welcome people who had arrived and to get people excited about participating in the blockade. We started by introducing ourselves to people we didn't know. [REDACTED] led a very energetic session talking about what the plan for the blockade will be. [REDACTED] from GBC led a session on the legal issues surrounding the blockade including the five main points:

1. No comment
2. No personal details
3. No duty solicitor
4. No caution
5. Under what power?

I had some melted chocolate from [REDACTED] Later that evening I sat and talked to [REDACTED]

I was asked to help with putting a paper mache phoenix atop a bike. Four of us including [REDACTED] lifted the phoenix on top of a bike and strapped it on with old bike inner tubes. Amazingly despite how large and heavy the phoenix was we managed to fix it onto the bike with stability. We were all impressed. The tyres needed pumping so we pumped them up and I lowered the brake levers which were placed too high on the handlebars.

Bed around 00:30.

Thursday the 28th of June

09:00 There were very few people, only around 14 as most had gone to the gate in the early morning. As I hadn't volunteered the previous day I volunteered for a Welcome Tent shift 11:00-15:00 and then a first aid

shift at the gate from 15:00-18:00. At 18:00 I would need to return to the camp to help run a workshop about Drax.

11:00-14:00 Welcome tent shift. I spent the time at the Welcome Tent greeting people who arrived and giving them instructions about where to camp, what time mealtimes were, the time of the morning plenary, giving them a programme, suggesting a donation for the cost of running the camp and encouraging them to sign up for a shift blockading the gate. They were also invited to take a free sample of some Lush soap as Lush was a main donor of money for the camp. I also sold the RtP t-shirts to raise funds.

During this time I greeted the party from the Pont Valley who were involved with resisting against the creation of a new coal mine in the region by Bank's Group along with many others that I recognised and some that I did not.

I was on shift with Annon who is a man who regularly comes to RtP organised camps and wears fabric over his face and ski goggles so that his identity is not known. When I was younger and went to my first couple of RtP camps he used to unnerve me but I had spent a bit of time with him at the Pont Valley Camp and had some good conversations with him. We had some good conversations during my shift at the Welcome Tent. I was also on shift with a man called [REDACTED] who I'd spoken to the day before and found very eccentric and not a particularly good listener. The tent was very hot and he was wearing a woolly jumper over the top of a long-sleeved shirt. I gently suggested a number of times that he might want to take his jumper off as it was very hot. He replied saying he liked it and kept it on. Over the couple of hours in the tent he gradually became hotter and hotter and complained of feeling dizzy. I fetched him some more water. I also encouraged him to eat a banana for the natural salts and drink more water. After some persuasion he eventually took his jumper off. He was not feeling well at all so I took him into the shade by the trees near the entrance of the camp and encouraged him to take his shirt off and dab himself with water using his handkerchief. I stayed with him for about 30 mins until he started to feel better and left him in the company of some people who were also in the shade. At this point I was already late for my first aid shift at the gate but it was because I was already dealing with a first aid incident! I collected my things and an umbrella for shade against the fierce sun and walked down to the gate. On my way I saw [REDACTED] who had returned from their early morning gate shift. They were both very very tired. [REDACTED] was going to have a nap in the shade and [REDACTED] was going to do a kitchen shift for dinner.

15:00-17:00 First aid at gate. The heat was sweltering at around 29 degrees. I was amazed at all the people who were at the gate and had been there for hours including some since the early morning. There had already been many workshops at the gate. There seemed to be around 70 people there. Many people were sheltering from the sun under yellow umbrellas or in the shade by the hedgerow on the verge opposite the gate. Most people were sat on the side of the road near the gate allowing one line of traffic to pass through on the other side of the road. A distinction had been made between the two sides of road with traffic bollards and tape. There was a relatively low police presence with two Police Liaison Officers (PLOs) roaming around in their light blue tabards. There were two police vans either side of the gate with more officers sitting in the vehicles. There was also a police car to the left-hand side facing the gate. It was very very hot and I walked around chatting to people making sure they had had enough water. Music was being played on a bike powered sound system and I danced. Soon enough I needed to head back to the camp to help deliver the workshop on Drax that I had committed to do.

17:00-18:00 Drax workshop. I arrived at the yurt in the campsite five minutes late for the workshop on Drax. Liz was very prepared with lots of notes and facts about Drax. She began the workshop straight away by talking about many of the details of Drax power station with it being the largest power station in the country, historically powered by coal and now increasingly biomass and gas. During the workshop we talked about the impact of Drax and the company's current proposal to transfer another turbine to gas and the consultations stages necessary. We talked about where the next focus of RtP would be considering the imminent threat of commercial fracking and the recent parliamentary vote to build a third runway at Heathrow airport. It was agreed to postpone plans for an October action against Drax until the spring of 2019.

18:20-19:40 I conducted an interview with [REDACTED] in the campsite. We had to move several times to avoid a water fight and children shouting. They seemed happy to do the interview.

20:00 Dinner – curry and rice

I was intending to go to the bike powered film screening of the Bently Effect at the gate but ended up getting into some really interesting conversations and missing it.

As I went to bed I could hear in the distance the sound of music coming from the gate.

Friday 29th June

09:00 plenary lots and lots of people were there especially in comparison to the previous day. The jobs that required people to volunteer for were announced and the slots were very quickly filled as people readily put themselves forward for the tasks. Far more people volunteered for the jobs than were required. I put myself forward for another Welcome Tent shift as the previous day I had felt helpful and was able to stay in the shade.

14:00-17:00 Welcome Tent shift. I did another Welcome Tent shift again with Annon and a man from Bristol who I was getting to know. There weren't many new people arriving but I welcomed those who did. I had a number of people come to me with first aid issues such as sore eyes and a man who had some really bad horsefly bites that were very swollen.

After my shift I headed down to the gate and had dinner with people. The band Seize the Day then played and were great. I hugged [REDACTED] who had been one of the Arctic 30 who had been imprisoned in Russia a couple of years ago due to a Greenpeace action. I cried. There were a number of other bands and lots of music was played. The party went on till the small hours. I left around 02:00 and went to bed around 03:00.

Saturday 30th June

09:00 I woke up in the heat of my tent but then went over to sleep in some shade. [REDACTED] came over to speak to me and we chatted for a while about her future plans that might involve moving to Birmingham.

11:30 I headed to the gate to meet all the people leaving the gate at the end of the blockade. It had been successfully blockaded for 54 hours exceeding the 48 hour target. In that time no vehicles went in or out of the site but it could be seen that people were still working on the site. There was a very jovial atmosphere as everyone paraded back to the site. A couple of my friends wheeled the piano back.

14:00 We got ready to cycle down to the march and demo in Blackpool. We talked about what chants to sing and what songs Nick should play on his minirig. They included:

“What do we want?

Climate Justice!

When do we want it?

Now!”

“Bicycletta, bicycletta, you make me feel much better.

Bicycletta, bicycletta, you make me feel so good.”

There was about 15 of us on bikes. A man at the front knew the way and navigated till we arrived at the sea front in Blackpool.

It was incredibly hot. I hid in the shade and spoke to an international protester from the Pont Valley protest camp about their conviction.

There were many hundreds of us, around 400. We marched along the sea front and chanted.

After about an hour we arrived at a grassy bank where a number of people gave speeches including [REDACTED], a woman from Friends of the Earth, an organiser from RtP and another local campaigner. After the speeches ended at around 17:00 many of us made our way down to the beach and went swimming. Afterwards we got chips, lager and ice cream. Me, [REDACTED] stayed till fairly late chatting. We then started to cycle back around 19:00. We got quite lost trying to navigate back. We were concerned all the food at the camp would be gone so we went into a Tesco to get some dinner. When we eventually arrived back at the camp around 21:30 there was plenty of food left including cake that had been saved for us.

I had a detailed conversation about cake with the Veggies volunteers.

It was dark so I went to get some more layers.

The music had to be turned off due to noise complaints. People were singing. Some of the people who live on site were frustrated so we kept quiet. We decided to take the party to outside the gate and join 'Rig Watch' as there had been no noise complaints when there had been three evenings of partying by the gate. Rig Watch is the 24/7 monitoring of the movements of people working on the rig and vehicles that come and go. The protesters on duty were pleased to see us.

We were concerned about the reaction on the police but it was fine. There were two police on duty.

Sunday 1st of July

I slept in till late in the shade. At 12:00 I joined in the large meeting about what next for RtP. I was asked by [REDACTED] to contribute re the Drax proposal but I don't feel I did it justice and rambled. People from the Pont Valley protest camp talked about their plan for a mass action camp in early September.

Local campaigners talked about what they consider will happen with fracking at PNR over the coming months and the status of fracking in the UK more generally. They strongly encouraged people to spend time at the protest camp and taking action against fracking in the future.

The people from Pont Valley left a bit disappointed that we RtP hadn't decided to explicitly support their mass action camp.

I packed down my tent and said lots of goodbyes to people that were leaving. Me, [REDACTED] cycled to the nearest train station around 16:00 and missed a train to Manchester by a couple of minutes.

We waited and got a train to Manchester together with our bikes. We said goodbyes at the train station and they left for Birmingham and I left for Hebden Bridge. I arrived into Hebden Bridge around 19:00. I was tired and very smelly but I felt very happy to have taken part in the action camp. I was especially pleased that I had managed to bring three friends from Birmingham to their first RtP camp.

Participant Observation lessons:

I didn't take adequate notes during the camp and finished writing this three days after the camp had finished. I forgot a number of conversations and specifically what I was doing at certain times.

The action camp was very intense and I returned home very tired. It took me a couple of days to recover

including lots of sleep and rest.

EG Interview A Transcript 14/06/2018

[00:00:01] S: I'm interviewing you as someone I know who has been involved with climate related direct action in Germany specifically EG. Is that right?

A: Yes that is yes.

S: Ok. Great. And how would you describe your involvement with EG?

A: I participated in the action as a participant in 2015. And then I was very impressed by it and thought I wanted to be part of it and then I basically joined the structures probably in the second half of that year or early 2016 and I sort of started going quite regularly to the EG meeting in Berlin. And then in terms of sort of the wider network in Germany I became part of a sort of sub-group, a working group that is called action logistics which takes care of basically as it says, part of the infrastructure of the action like whatever these overalls that they wear also vehicles we might need, the straw bags, or you know stuff like that. And then I did that for the action in 2016 in Lausitz, Lausatia. And I did it again for the action last August in Rhineland and since then I think my involvement has been a bit sort of lets say looser, I mean I still go to the meetings in Berlin. And I also sometimes go to the German wide meetings but I'm not part of a sort of defined working group this time. And sometimes something I also do run parallel which is partially related I do the skills for action network of action trainers. Then we obviously do some trainings for EG sometimes. So that's also something yeah I do.

[00:02:01] S: Great. Ok. Super so you've been an organiser for a couple of years then?

A: Yeah, probably.

S: Nice. And you've already answered my question what EG protests have you been a part of?

A: So yeah I think I did that. *Laughs*

S: *Laughs* Fantastic. How would you describe your experiences of them?

[00:02:21] A: I mean I think it's a bit different when you go as a participant than when you are an action organiser but I think there were, I mean I think they were very inspiring in each case because I think its a very empowering feeling doing that and I think EG as a network really rocks because I think it really works well I mean there are a lot of really passionate people. It feels very good, quite, sort of capable people around and I think we're just doing a lot of things right that you know other networks don't get right so I'm actually quite you know, quite, quite happy with that. And currently I'm not contributing so much because I have a lot of other stuff to do that I you know, but I would want to again.

[00:03:08] S: Great. Nice. So how do you think your experience has differed between being a participant in 2015 to then being an organiser?

A: Well I mean I think its an entirely different perspective I mean if you go as a participant obviously there is the, how should I say, you know, the rush of the action, and you go into the pit and then you have maybe a

confrontation with the police then you are worried about whether you might be detained and stuff but basically you are mainly with your small affinity group etc etc and you don't know how the sort of the larger things that happen behind the scenes. And I think that organising it is a completely different experience and I think its more stressful, much more stressful because you know you are there for a longer period of time. I mean you obviously arrive before, you stay longer and I think there's a sort of sense of responsibility to the whole thing needing to succeed and you know and to taking good care of the participants. It's quite tiring but it's also immensely rewarding and interesting and just yeah and I mean for the like for the few times that I was an organiser I actually didn't take part of the action I really stayed in the camp all the time which is also a bit frustrating because you know the people go and they come and you know you can just watch the videos after.

[00:04:24] S: Yeah.

A: And I mean you are aware obviously that you sort of have contributed to making that happening but its a very different, very different setting altogether.

[00:04:36] S: Great. And why did you decide to get involved with EG? I think you may have answered that a little bit earlier on but yeah, how would you say you made that decision to get involved?

A: Well I mean I guess I'm sort of involved in or doing environmental stuff anyway through my work so I think I had an awareness of climate change and what it does but then I think probably what attracted me most to EG was not so much the fact that it was about climate change but that it was about civil disobedience. And sort of I think bridging very well the sort of the gap that sometimes exists between you know between a sort of very reformist way of doing policies where you just whatever write petitions and organise completely legal demonstrations which I think is often not enough the sort of left radical autonomist politics which is very militant but I think which is not accessible to many people or tends to be you know more small very sort of yeah in a way elitist or very closed circle of people and EG was doing it very well to combine to say we are radical we break the law, we really want to achieve something, and we know this takes real action but also doing that in a way that people can participate in that then you know explaining our actions to the press and sort of that I think attracted me very much because I wanted to be a part of that. And also learning knew stuff because I think what I had been doing before was I mean I sort of had part of direct actions myself as a participant but I don't think I have ever organised them actually so I think it was also a thing of ok I just, I like that I want to learn how it works.

[00:06:21] S: Yeah, yeah. Great. Super. And you've already answered this question as well. Have you organised any of these protests? So am I right in thinking it was 2016 Lusatia?

A: Yeah

S: And then last year?

A: In August

S: In August in the Rhineland?

A: Yeah.

[00:06:40] S: Yeah, cool. And how would you describe the political landscape of Germany in relation to climate change? So I guess the question I'm asking, I'm gonna then ask the question how has the German government reacted to the EG movement? How would you place EG within the political landscape in Germany and how do you think it, how do you think the government has reacted? Does that make sense?

S. Yeah, it makes sense. Yeah it's just a sort of quite broad question. I mean I think it's sort of in terms of economic structure I mean I think Germany is obviously quite a, I mean it has a you know large GDP it's a powerful a sort of economy. And I think part of what it does is actually quite activities that are quite harmful to the climate for example the car the entire car manufacturing industry. And I think that these are also sort of deeply entrenched in German culture. I think with regards to Coal Mining in particular I think that's a topic that I feel hasn't received a lot of public awareness actually until a few years ago I mean we have always sort of a lovely success story of the German energy transition and I mean it's true I mean something has happened there which is also which is good but I think that part hasn't been really getting a lot of attention and I think that is sort of where Ende Gelände came in I mean obviously not only us also NGOs working on the topic and I think probably did help to to raise awareness to the extent that this is now I mean sort of the coal phase out has now become part of sort of official German politics that we have this coal commission which I think Ende Gelände views quite critically but at least we can see that that the topic has been getting increasing public and political attention and

[00:08:44] S: Very recent by the sounds of it.

A: Yeah quite recently I mean I think it's been a development over the past few years and then obviously it's always very difficult you know to pinpoint exactly this is what Ende Gelände achieved but I think basically what we tend to do at Ende Gelände is compare our story a bit too the story of the nuclear phase out where that has also been a very active social movement for years and years and years and then in the end finally there was an agreement a nuclear phase out but maybe not exactly the one we would have liked but you know Germany is going to phase out its nuclear energy and I think Germany is also going to eventually phase out coal maybe not as fast as we would like to see etc etc not you know giving the corporations more profit on the way than we would hope for but I think we did contribute to that even though we weren't the only factor contributing because I think coal is not as profitable any more so there are also issues with the whole setup and what the energy transition did to coal and prioritising renewable energy so I think it's also an economic underlying issue so we sort of can't take all of the credit for that but I tend to think that it's been contributing there.

S: Yeah

[00:10:00] Is that what you more or less wanted to, what you were getting at?

S: Yeah, yeah, pretty much. And in terms of the public consciousness regarding coal and climate change do you think Ende Gelände's influenced that at all? In terms of your everyday person in Germany?

[00:10:19] I mean I think that's really difficult to say because I haven't looked at any surveys or something I mean I think generally there is an awareness of climate change in Germany and also of Environmental matters and I think it's one of the issues I mean I haven't really looked at it but there is sort of I think an annual survey perhaps by the federal Agency for the environment which is sort of about environmental awareness of Germans and I don't know how they break that down but it generally shows that there is a relatively I mean that sort of there is a large percentage of Germans say well environmental matters are

important and I don't know whether they say anything specifically about climate change I mean I think that what can be said is that we have made it into mainstream media I mean I think you know even sort of the central Evening News I mean I remember when there was in the last November when there was the cop as well and I think there was one instance where like (mzgep ze??) who was then the minister of the environment you know gave his speech about how Germany is doing very well on climate change and then right after this was the action and the pictures of the Ende Gelände action which basically undermined that narrative of well yes you know we are sort of at the forefront of combating climate change because someone was saying ok well you know we have this coal issue here so I think to that extent probably we we have done well but I couldn't really say you know that's the average person on they you know have sort of, I just don't know that.

[00:11:51] Cool. And what would you say the aims of Ende Gelände have been? That's again quite broad.

[00:12:00] I mean I think our sort of core purpose or core definition of who we are is sort of we are a network engaging in mass civil disobedience actions against lignite coal mining. So I think the immediate objective is two contributing to stopping lignite coal mining in Germany. But I think there is also a strand in Ende Gelände which is very interested in building movements and saying this is also part of what we are doing while we are at it and I mean there have always been discussions for a long time at least whether we should also be doing something else I mean whether we should broaden our Focus to look at whatever airplanes or to look at cars or to look at agriculture or to look at it's been a constant Debate and I think for the time being we have decided our focus will still be on coal lignite coal mining but that it's fine if for example local groups decide to be a bit broader in their activities so that might change over time but since the lignite coal mining hasn't yet stopped I think that's for the time being what we are focusing on.

[00:13:18] What have the targets been for the Ende Gelände actions over the years?

A: I mean like the physical targets? I mean it's always been lignite coal mines. Once in the east, Lusatia, Lausitz, three times so far in the West in the Rhineland so yeah we have very specific areas. And this autumn we are going to the Hambacher Forest so this is about protecting the forest that is being cut down because of the extension of the pit basically. but it's always been a very specific symbolic place that is very immediately linked to to the topic at hand and I think that has helped and it's also I think more difficult to do for other some other topics maybe.

S: Yeah, for sure. And has it just been the coal mines or have there been other elements like is it the actual physical coal mine or have there been other kind of infrastructural targets?

[00:14:26] A: I mean the sort of coal mines and the surrounding infrastructure so there are obviously power plants close to the coal mines and we've sort of being blocking railways leading to that we've generally been blocking like transportation ways but I think there has always been one part of the action leading directly to the Gruber to the pit and blocking the diggers.

[00:14:52] S: I guess you've already covered this briefly but what has the strategy been for those targets Ende Gelände? in terms of what you aim to achieve with those targets with people?

A: Well I mean I think it's really sort of blocking them specifically and just stopping the work for a day or two and saying ok this is going to save some CO2 emissions. I think it's been to raise awareness sort of using that as a vehicle for you know public outrage and sort of reaching the larger public and then also pressuring politicians maybe. And then I think it's also been giving people that kind of experience I think you know

saying well this is a civil disobedience action be part of that you know maybe take home an empowering experience and then do that again.

[00:15:47] S: Yeah, great. and do you think any of them aims or targets or strategies of Ende Gelände have changed over time, over the years?

A: I wouldn't say that they have fundamentally changed I think they are always under negotiation because I think we have sort of people who feel more strongly about you know building the movement and people who feel more strongly about yeah you know we need to reach the public we need to reach politicians so I think it's always a yeah sort of something we talk about but I don't think they have fundamentally changed.

[00:16:23] S: And how would you describe again this is like another big question how would you describe the ideological tendencies of Ende Gelände?

A; let me just add one point about the first question I think one thing that maybe is new this year is that we have made a deliberate decision we would support actions in other countries so I think that's the first time I mean we've always done it informally but I think this is the first year we have said we are going to support an action in the Netherlands and we are going to support an action in czechia and we will help you know mobilise for that so maybe this is something that has been added because we have been getting so much support from other countries and but we also feel I think we sort of have an experience or maturity where we can also give back and maybe skillshare and you know help with you know that is something that has become stronger over the years that's the only thing that I can think about it.

Ok now the ideology tell me a bit more about what you mean by ideology?

[17:19] S: so in terms of like I guess you can divide it into organisers or participants how would you are there any dominant political ideas or ways of viewing politics or the world?

A: So you are asking whether we are all Marxists or we are...?

S: I don't know, like are there any clear tendencies that you can see at all?

A: Yeah I mean I guess it's a mixture of backgrounds I mean I think that probably most of the people that are a part of that wouldn't have thought of would be more of what we would probably call the I mean definitely sort of mostly people that are sort of part of let's say the extra Parliamentary left scene so not people that would usually think about achieving political change mainly by voting or you know by becoming a Party member even though some of the sort of youth organisations of parties have also supported us in some ways. I think that's one thing to say then I think generally we are also part of the leftist movement that isn't sort of let's say Orthodox or rigid in their ideological thinking a sort of very strict sort of narrow Marxist blah blah blah vision of the world and I think there is sort of a network of people that comes together for a specific action and purpose and would all acknowledge that we can do that well we may disagree on some larger ideological matters. And I think in terms of sort of ideologies represented I think some people tend to have a more stronger let's say maybe anarchist or you know autonomous focus very much from you know the grassroots and let's not co-operate with the state and blah blah blah and so I think some tend to be more into yeah but we also need to co-operate with mainstream organisations and we need to influence official politics etc etc. I think there is a strong sort of relatively strong feminist strand in all of that you know there was this last year in August there was the feminist group of people the queer finger. Yeah so that emerged and sort of reflecting our own practices in terms of gender and other forms of inequalities I think that's very much part of what we do so I think that's there as well. And I'm not quite

sure whether each and every one of the organisers would actually have a response to what is your ideology I think it's pretty much ok we wanna do something about climate change and let's do that.

[00:20:00] S: Would you say that there is a sense of anticapitalism within Ende Gelände?

A: Yeah I think so. I mean I think we've always been making that link between capitalism and coal mining.

[00:25:00] S: Cool. Excellent. oh actually yeah just going back to that question I'm aware that Ende Gelände is a big network and organises with people of different groups do you think that any of the different ideologies have caused any problems or have you been able to put them aside to pull off the camps?

A: Well I think within Ende Gelände as I said you know there are sort of slightly different views on where the strategy should be and I think the people who have a very strong like sort of anarchist, autonomist view they tend to say let's you know focus more on building the movement and people who maybe have more of a view of like ok we also need to go to mainstream political institutions might be more like yeah but it's really important to do press work and you know stuff like that so I think in that sense maybe. But I think not in the sense of clashing, I mean I can't sort of you know I mean we have had some heated debates but I can't sort of place them along lines of well this is this ideology and this is this ideology and they will clash with that I think it was different I think different conflict lines. I think sort of maybe part of ideological thinking is you know the extent to which you let's say to what extent you think hierarchies are a problem, informal hierarchies, I mean we have no formal ones but I think some people are more sensitive about you know some people becoming a very central role as individuals in that. Whereas I think other ones are more like let's say pragmatic in that regard and say well ok you know whatever works and if that person is willing to put in a lot of work that's fine. And I think that might be partially motivated by you know how you view that decision making should happen inside the movement and maybe that's an ideological thing. Sorry, can you repeat the question again?

[00:22:40] S: Yeah no I think you've answered that really well it's about whether different ideologies have caused any conflict or you've been able to work together well?

[00:22:49] A: I mean I think maybe one thing that is sort of more where it's clashed is with external like other external actors in the climate movement I mean I think especially with the people with in the Hambacher Forest who have this very strong grassroots also rather radical attitude in terms of how they would interact with the police. I think in the beginning there were some issues because they sort of viewed us with I don't know what, a very hierarchical centralised organisation that give people a ready-made action where they didn't actually take any action itself. There was a bit of a tension between those people who say let's go for small group actions where people need to organise themselves as themselves. And Ende Gelände saying we want something accessible and everyone is capable of getting together a small group and then going with five people into the pit. So I think there was an underlying tension that was also ideological I think. And then what we did in response to that was in August last year we did have this area concept where we had these days of actions and the Ende Gelände part was part of these days of actions but we also said in the same period of time actions could take part like small groups actions or a legal demonstration to deal with a variety of action forms and ideological backgrounds behind that. And that was an attempt to come to terms with it and I think also our relationships for example with the people in the Hambacher Forest have improved and we're going there for this autumn's action. Zucker Im Tank is another example a network of people who are more into you know small things.

[00:25:01] S: Cool thank you. How would you describe your political outlook?

A: On what?

S: I guess..

A: *Laughs*

S: *Laughs* I guess the issue of climate change and coal in Germany. how would you fit yourself into that in terms of how you've described EG? How do you fit into that?

[00:25:26] I mean I guess I think we will be seeing a coal phase out in Germany I think I'm relatively optimistic in that regard. I think we'll still have issues to tackle in regards to climate change that are much harder and I think that the whole transport issue, the car industry and transport these are things that will be much much harder to deal with because they are so invested in people's personal lifestyles, so I mean I'm not very optimistic that Germany will be zero emissions or very a climate friendly country in the near future but there would be some tough battles. Then obviously we have the emergence or well increasingly strong right wing movement now with the AFD that we are not having the most pro-environmentalist positions and then there's also something we need to deal with as a left movement as people sort of start to focus on that, so there's a question of how that plays out. I think for the time being I'm moderately optimistic that it's a sort of temporary thing given the way they act people will at some stage see that they are just idiots and they will disappear again but one never knows but maybe that's a good point on one of your previous questions I mean I think this is also something that we have recently started dealing with, this the right wing and actually I mean we went out last month, there was this big demonstration of the AFD this right wing party here in Berlin and we people in EG organised one of the blockading fingers and I think that's a new development that we have a group dealing with those rightist people and we are organising basically anti-fascist actions because it's linked so maybe that's also a new thing. Just because it became stronger and more evident because they then won federal seats in Parliament in last year's elections so it's something we have to deal with.

[00:27:43] S: Cool. How would you describe the legal issues of EG? Has this shaped the style of action or the strategy that EG has taken?

[00:28:00] A: I would tend to think that we.... I think we are aware of the legal framework conditions for our action and we are aware of the fact that we might face repression as a result of doing an action that might break the law or breaks the law and so I think one reaction is obviously that we try to provide good anti-repression structures. This is obviously part of the efforts that we need to make and that is also basically taking, well if you want taking away part of our resources that we have to deal with that as well. Otherwise I think that the kind of laws that we would normally be breaking I mean they are criminal laws in terms of trespassing maybe a number of other ones but I think we usually do expect that if people get charged and indicted for that it will be with relatively minor sentences simply because of the character of the law and also because of the type of thing we do. And as you certainly know we have this action consensus which I think is not primarily the way it is because of the legal issues but because we think it makes sense to do an action that way in terms of getting people to support it in terms of the public outreach and also in terms of the principles we hold as a movement. But still I think because we say we do not attack anyone we do not we are not aiming at destroying infrastructure I think that that also keeps the legal risks at bay in a certain sense because I think they are the ones that really get you in prison for a number of years it's more like

rioting or more serious things basically than we would ever normally do in an action. And then I mean a third thing is the whole thing of you know what actually how we actually deal with police laws and how police tries to stop our action. I mean there is also something we have been dealing with in the wake of the G20 summit in Hamburg we are now also seeing some attempts to make police laws maybe to make police laws more repressive so this is to an extent also a topic we have taken up by supporting campaigns who are against these new police laws so maybe there is also a sort of a bit of a new topic which is only emerged in the last one or two years to that extent but I think we are we are aware we are one of the movements that actually can say something about that also because we cannot be easily delegitimized in the media to the same extent that someone who goes all dressed in black and throws a stone because you know no way we are a very friendly bunch so I think this is sort of why have also taken on that that topic. And I think we are also I mean at least some people are working also on you know now sort of having some of the police actions reviewed in court I mean I know for example that one of the person who was our main police contact for last August's Action I mean we had a lot of issues there with actually having police control thread in front of the camp which prevented people coming to legally registered assemblies and legally registered assemblies in Germany are basically under constitutional protection because we have...

[00:32:08] S: That was the legal demonstration that they caused talk about?

[00:32:11] A: Yep because we have an article in what we call our (Gund Gazettze??) but it's basically because the constitution which says legal assemblies are protected by the constitution so they have sort of a, they are well considered a protected public good and it's not so easy for the police actually to prevent people from doing these or reaching them and so we were quite you know we were trying to yeah use that and say well the police you can't just do that because we have sort of a constitutionally guaranteed right to these assemblies and then still in many instances they prevented us from going there or they you know put obstacles on the way by saying people you need to have yourselves searched and I think some of that is now being actually someone is fighting a complaint from our side saying this was not ok and we want a quote to say taht this is not ok so in this sense we are not only defending ourselves but we are also trying to question the legitimacy or legality of the action of the police and I think this is also partially happening in individual criminal trials because some of the paragraphs that are in the law they are written in a way that they would lead the court to also take a decision on the legality of the police actions if that makes sense? Not all of them but some and then obviously that gives us an inroad to say well no what the police did was blatantly not legal so we couldn't you know be expected to obey them I mean very roughly speaking. So I think this whole thing of what the law is and you know how it restricts civil disobedience is part and parcel of what we do. And I think we have an attitude of working with that actively and I think that partially comes also from the way that some people understand civil disobedience I think for some of us and that's maybe also partially a response to your question on ideological differences I think some people come very strongly from a classical non-violent movement and I think there traditionally in Germany civil disobedience is something like I'll break the law I'll announce it publicly I will show my face, I will take the repression afterwards I will use the repression again to politicise the issue. And others are coming more from this more radical autonomist thing where I will try to do everything to avoid you know to be recognised I will try to avoid repression and so there are also different ways of doing that where you know many people, some people at least within EG handled their trials are coming from this idea of ok a trial is part of the political actions and we will use that again for our political goals, for our political strategies so yeah it's actually an interesting question with the ideologies the more I think about it the more aspects I come up with yeah. And maybe another one on this ideology questions, sorry it must be messy to type up.

[00:35:24] S: It's fine

A: I think sort of another sort of a point where there might be ideological differences is the way that you deal with police and I mean I think we have this action consensus and everyone agrees to keeping it for the EG action but I think the way where people originally come from is different from people from a very strongly non-violent thing to actually well I don't mind setting a police car on fire and I would do that in other contexts so it's so that also sometimes I think I'm not quite sure whether it creates out right frictions as we have this action consensus but I think sometimes it's that it's there at least in the action because you can feel that people react very differently to police and you know some get very upset and shout slogans at the police and others are more like no the police is not our enemy and let's calm down here and I think that's also in relation to other movements for example the Hambacher Forest which also has a history of you no more strongly using Sabotage and stuff like that which we don't do as EG.

[00:36:30] S: yep and where would you say the influence of the non violence has come from in terms of the movement?

A: Well I think we are partially the heirs of the anti nuclear movement in Germany and that has had this very strong tradition of that as well. So yeah I think that's partially the same people.

[00:36:51] S: Cool thank you. What extent has there been international mobilisation for EG?

A: I think you might even be better equipped *laughs* to answer this question but I would say quite strongly you know I have always seen I think from the first actions that I went into myself I have seen a lot of international people. We've consistently translated stuff etc etc. And I think that sort of at our Germany wide meetings there are usually a few internationals around but not too many but we have a dedicated working group on international matters which I think has actually I mean Jonas would know more but as far as I understand they have actually sort of assigned responsibilities for most of the countries of Europe in trying to reach out to them. And I think partially probably as a result of that we have been seeing a lot of international people attending obviously more from some countries than from others also reflecting how the movements are there. And I think we might have been a bit lucky in the first action because in para before the EG action there was this Degrowth Summer School of the climate camp and it was pretty much international English speaking blah blah blah and I think a few of the participants of the Degrowth Summer School would have not have just gone to EG because it's more of an academic thing blah blah blah thing then joined the action and I think that helped. But otherwise I think EG is something that radiates Europe-wide definitely and I think it's also starting to be connected with the movements in other parts of the world even though that's more difficult to do but they have also been invited ok from other countries to speak there or whatever as I said before it's something that we have taken on as a focus to help build movements in other countries I think especially in Eastern Europe where climate movements are relatively weak still.

S: I'm just going to pause this and then record again to be certain.

Part B of Interview A (separate recording)

[00:00:05] S: Excellent. So what resources do you think the movement has had in access to money and people?

A: Resources? I think we are relatively well positioned in terms of resources. I think we've managed to obtain resources from some of the more critical NGOs who are supportive of EG and I think that's partially down to the kind of action we do I mean if we'd have gone and said you know we are going to set the

power plant on fire we'd have not gotten that so I think it's partially part of that story. I think also the partially national NGOs partially international NGO like 350.org which I think in addition to providing money have actually also done quite a bit of skill sharing and training for us so that was very helpful for example in terms of media work. Then I think what has helped is people who have been around for long in social movements for example partially been in the anti nuclear movement have joined EG so I think we have just had a wealth of experiences and simply knowledge of how to do things and we've also been partially using their material in terms of whatever they have, radios or mobile phones or stuff that's something we've borrowed from basically.

[00:01:32] S: So even the same material things?

A: Yeah yeah. There is also some port structures in Germany who are actually there for providing material to movements and some do this and some do that officially and some do that more unofficially. For example some of the student councils at universities have material and they have provided it, they shouldn't be providing it but they do. *Laughs*. There is a network called (zugar bild???) and that's actually a network that is dedicated only to supporting sort of non violent direct actions so they have material they have a certain knowledge they sometimes have people to support actions etc etc and that's also a lot of people from the anti nuclear movement but not only and there are other structures for example provide you know translation equipment or whatever compost toilets you know so we've always been able to draw on some things that are already there and it's maybe a matter of gathering things together and then I think we're probably also in a relatively good position by now to just raise money of our own and we say please donate to EG I don't know exactly where we stand but my feeling is that we are not, I mean we don't have a huge financial problem even though of course we still try to do things low budget without consuming a lot of resources. Yeah.

[00:03:09] S: Great. You mentioned 350 in terms of giving financial resources but also skill shares what have some of the other NGOs been? Can you name any of them at all?

A: I mean the point is that I'm not quite sure how much they wish to be named. So these things shouldn't, I can't tell you.

S:That's fine.

A: I mean I can tell you but that should not be written in your work as such.

S: Yeah.

A: [REDACTED] has partially been providing informally material and transporters definitely for the Lausitz action so they actually have at least two large cars three large cars and helping with that. There's [REDACTED] [REDACTED] have actually being in the action have provided material but I think also know how. There is I mean I think some people that have positions within NGOs they have dedicated part of their time it would be the case for example for the [REDACTED]. That would have been the case for the [REDACTED] Then I think, who else? I mean I think there have been some people linked to [REDACTED]. I don't know what to what extent they have actually provided money. Who else? I think [REDACTED] provided informally money at some stage. Possibly the [REDACTED] but possibly not I mean the problem is that for I mean we definitely got money from some foundations but mostly not officially because obviously most of the not-for-profit official institutions they can't fund an action that breaks the law so that's been more funding the climate camps and then the climate camps then happen to

be sort of be the base from which we do an action but obviously not officially blah blah blah. So you know it's a bit of a thing that you have to be creative with. We've also got I think money from some unlikely sources for example this company [REDACTED] they have a fund for this so they have been consistently actually providing money. And I think also you know at some stage if I'm not mistaken the association where the renewable energy companies are, they gave some money to EG so some odd stuff but yeah I think.

[00:05:52] S: I'll make sure I don't include those details of any of the names.

A: Yeah yeah I mean if you write critical NGOs whatever maybe some whatever sustainably minded companies.

S: Yeah, for sure. How would you describe the composition of the activists of the camps in terms of age ethnicity and background more a kind of demographic question?

A: Very white but as I think as tends to be the case for the left in Germany unless we deal with anti racist refugees struggles which is more mixed. And I think that also became a bit of a topic and I think in last August there was also a meeting for people of colour in the climate camp who wanted to talk about that. I think in terms of age I think the majority of the activists are younger I think it's typically reflective of social movements in Germany but not exclusively I mean I think overall we have quite an age range especially among the organisers. I mean if I go to a meeting I am now 41 and I feel there is, the majority of the people are younger but not all of them are for example the action logistics working group that I was part of had an age range of i think at the beginning of the 20s until maybe 60 or something and a lot of people in between and people in their 30s 40s it wasn't just an exclusively young thing and I think more of the experienced activists are providing a wealth of knowledge and expertise and maybe also should I say robustness in the action having been in a number of these actions you tend to get less excited and panicky, people then have a certain experience and can organise a group when things get rough and things like that so.

[00:07:55] S: Cool, so the organisers you think there's been more older people as organisers then perhaps necessarily as participants?

S: Yeah I would guess the age difference sort of the age average I think among the organisers would be slightly higher than among the participants I would tend to assume but I think we've never thought of statistically looked at that but I mean I think it's still probably more people in there from maybe the mid twenties upwards than you know people at the beginning of their twenties but it's still more people that you know study or whatever still don't have a family and stuff so I think it gets a bit thinner towards you know there's less people in their 40s or 50s 60s but they are still there.

[00:08:39] S: Super. How would you describe the way needs are met at the camps in terms of food, water, toilets and care and have there been any issues with these provisions at all over the years?

A: Well I think usually the camps, in the beginning I should say the camp organisation and the EG actions they are so far have been mostly apart from each other I mean November last November was a bit different and I think this year it's also going to be a bit different but for the first two actions we have been using the camp infrastructure provided by different groups so we haven't done that ourselves. And yes there's obviously always an attempt to provide a basic infrastructure in terms of there will be showers and toilets there will be a group that we usually invite to cook for us so it's not and we don't do that ourselves I think it's been Rampenplan a couple of times and then obviously people are camping and are asked to participate

in organising all of that like helping to clean toilets or helping to chop vegetables and helping to protect the camp at night etc etc. In terms of issues I think that there are always issues. I mean you know whatever in one instance there was a really bad wave of people getting sick with stomach blah blah blah which was quite terrible.

S: I was one of them.

A: Yeah so you know you may recall that unfavourably *laughs*.

S: *Laughs*.

A: Even though I think that was not during the EG yeah. I mean in a way there are issues or I think last year like in August we had a huge issue with water supplies in the beginning because I think we weren't allowed to you know to put a running pipes somehow. In I think Lusatia we had an issue because we hadn't quite expected so many people to come and the kitchen didn't know and then it was very hard to get the food and the gas so I think it's always a different issue so there are always issues but I think so far we have managed to keep people well fed to keep the toilets running and obviously some people getting infectious diseases which wasn't good.

[00:11:03] S: Would you say that ways of dealing with those issues have developed over the years and got better or have you developed ways to solve those issues over the years?

A: I'm not quite sure whether I see a development here but I think that's also the case because obviously such camps have run have existed before EG so this is not exactly something new and I think we are sort of drawing there on sort of collective knowledge that has developed over many years as well as infrastructure or sources of the material. I think every time a different issue emerges and then you deal with it but I'm not quite sure whether we've gotten like that but it's been pretty stable I mean basically running ok. I mean I think one issue and I think that's been become more difficult for EG is actually to find areas where we camp especially in Rhineland I mean I haven't been involved in those efforts but to the extent I understand it's actually also the case that the police is very active actually in trying to prevent us from getting those by approaching individual farmers and actually telling them no don't do that etc and by following people when they go to the areas. So that's actually a bit of a, in my view a bit of a scandal and I would actually have to like to see that go public and do something against it I know a number of people who are involved in that said no actually they don't want to do that because they think the local population doesn't want to do it so I think that's an issue but it's not sort of an issue of us getting better or worse than anything but it's just the framework of conditions and the forces working against us.

S: And I'm right in thinking that you always seek permission for the land that you're on by the farmer is that right?

A: So far we have I mean so far we have been always on private grounds which meant sort of doing basically a contract with the farmer and probably paying some money I'm not sure but I think we have. I think we haven't managed mostly to obtain public grounds even though possibly I don't know possibly the one in Lusatia was a public ground but I don't know. Mostly we have actually been on private grounds and we have so far done that legally but since it's getting more difficult to obtain such spaces I think there have been lately discussions of what would we do if we didn't get that and we then just squat somewhere but obviously that also comes at a price because then you have to sort of put a lot of effort in defending that

ground rather than actually going to the pit and I think then the whole confrontation becomes more about let's say democracy and the right to assembly and you know the right to do political activism and police repression. So I think there is an issue here but it's something that if we don't find anything for October that's a decision we'll have to take.

[00:14:20] S: Ok. Great. What kind of decision making process is used for EG?

A: I'm aware we are consensus based. And this means that we have a specific form of doing consensus I don't know how you do it at Reclaim the Power but it's a very sort of let's say well defined procedure where you sort of first well say there is an issue we need to discuss. And then sort of a group of people discusses that and proposals are made with ways we could deal with that Either a proposal for decision or a position that we want to adopt and then we ask people who agrees who has not so grave concerns who has grave concerns who has a veto, who abstains and who wishes to stand aside and then decides people sort of say they will not be part of that but they would allow the others to go ahead with that but the veto says no I don't agree with you going ahead with that and then on the vetoes and the stand asides and grave concerns we usually hear what people have to say if there is a veto it means we can't go ahead we have to sort of reconsider the whole thing and come up with different proposals if it's sort of stand aside or grave concerns we could go ahead but I think if there is a number of people saying no this is not fine and I have grave concerns then we should try to reconsider and that would then usually consist in forming a small group of people who have strong opinions on that and asking them to come up with a new proposal and then going through the whole motion again so I think this is so the standard procedure that we use during the year and also sort of for the let's say fundamental topics. Then on top of that we obviously have local groups like the one in Berlin which pretty much do most of their decisions themselves and are only understanding that they would be within the action consensus of EG always and also understanding that with certain major things for example if we said in Berlin we want now to do a major operation against let's say road traffic then we would have to get agreement from the larger process so there are some ground rules on that. And then also sort of the individual working groups like the working group that does press work or that does whatever. I mean I think they have a large autonomy in organising their own work and I think they do that very differently and I think there is an understanding that if they have the feeling that there is something that is tricky or too fundamental for the group to decide they would take that to the larger process and I can see groups doing that I mean this May we had a meeting where we discussed the press concept the finance concept and you know some people would come at some stage this is fundamentally how we want to do this there are some parameters we need to hear your view on and if you're fine with that then we'll work with that. And then I think where it gets more tricky is sort of the action itself because then things get often at times to hectic to do a very clear consensus procedure and I think what we tend to do in the action is first of all say also there's a great autonomy of the people in the action so the individual fingers you know hold their meetings then it's like how long do we want to be here how long whatever do we want to deal with the police etc etc. And we also try still to maintain some formal decision making process where like the different working groups of EG come together once a day and say is there anything we need to decide on and but I think there is a degree of messiness because everyone takes some decisions and then someone else is not happy with that and you know basically everyone is running around trying to talk to other people and it's getting very tricky and at some level I'm not sure we have a good model for that but I don't know if anyone else has but I think that's the nature of the situation. Obviously other institutions they deal with similarly messy situations like police or the military even just humanitarian organisations that deal with interventions in disaster relief I think they deal with that by having a very clear hierarchical structure because I think you know that's the kind of situation but obviously that's not an option for us so we're just looking at a degree of messiness. *laughs*.

[00:18:46] S: Yeah, sure. Great. Do you know if EG has worked with any environmental or leftist groups if so which I guess he's mentioned to the ones in terms of resources in terms of coalition which ones would you say?

A: We've always tried to get I think but not always but at least I know that but for the others I simply don't to get organisations to support a kind of solidarity statement with EG. And we do have a call for action which I think is not normally supported by other organisations which is again due to the nature of EG because sort of legal not for profit organisation simply can't sign such statements without undermining their not for profit status but we usually sort of try to get them to sign a statement not to say we call for this action but say I don't know what exactly it was but something like you know we think that's actually a good action and we ask the police to let it happen and stuff like that so there's definitely sort of an attempt to reach out to organisations. And then as I said before I mean some of the people that are part of EG actually work for these organization's so there is an informal obviously decision at these or maybe a formal one at these organizations would let people do that to a certain extent in their working time. And so I think we are very well connected with some of the people it's a very blurry saying where people might work in their paid job might be at an organisation where at the weekend they might be sitting at an EG meeting so it's not a very tough situation.

00:20:43] S: And what about less formal leftist organisations do you work with many as EG?

A: Well I mean I think there is definitely a strong, I mean EG is not only just a network of individuals it is also a network of organisations. And I think there are definitely a number of people quite a number of people within EG that are also involved with the interventionist left. And then we have I think the other big organisation is the one in Rheinland (auskercaut??) which is also a network of activists there and I think that quite a number of them are also involved in EG and then I think there are relatively loose links between Skills for Action the network of trainers and EG in the sense of many people are part of both organisations and Skills for Action do a lot of trainings for EG and vice versa I think a lot of people from EG have been trained by Skills for Action to do these trainings which is my case and then from then on have also become Skills for Action members so there is a really close link there. I think probably these are sort of larger overlaps that I can see I think a lot of people that are or maybe not a lot of them but some people are involved with EG also have a different background I mean some might be linked to the Degrowth movement or (attack) or I mean my other organisation is like an international list network actually that I have worked with for long so that's different some organised in a feminist queer context people bring all kinds of somehow with their political youths movements of like (Solid) which is the one of the left party Die Linke and some with the Green young, the Green Youth organisation.

[00:23:00] S: Great. That's all of my questions I appreciate that that was a lot to answer and I've asked a lot of questions.

A: No but it's always nice you know it makes one think about the things we do and I'd certainly like to read your work if that's ok, if that's possible in the end?

S: Yeah absolutely yeah it will be in English I'm afraid.

A: *Laughs* yeah that's fine I can manage. I'm quite interested in terms of how you do things over there.

EG Interview B Transcript 15/06/2018

[00:00:01] Great. I'm interviewing you as someone I know who has been involved with climate related direct action in Germany specifically EG. Is this right?

[00:00:14] B: That's correct. Great.

[00:00:16] S: And this is fully anonymous so I'm not going to ask your name or any specific details about yourself.

[00:00:23] B: Ok, alright.

[00:00:24] S: Ok. cool. How would you describe your involvement with EG?

[00:00:28] B: Ok I was a participant twice in EG actions. the first time was 2016 in the Lausitz. That was my first time actually at all being involved in a direct action I'd say and then last year in November during the climate summit in Bonn I was also taking part in the action. Right. And since last autumn I'd say I'm also involved in the local EG group and we did some smaller actions but also contributing to the nationwide process usually there's a plenary every second week or so and some smaller meetings and other actions.

[00:01:29] S: Great. I guess you've already answered this but what EG protests have you been a part of? I guess you've already said.

[00:01:38] B: Concerning the two mass actions the one in 2016 and the one last autumn and the smaller actions have been for example demonstrations. There's been a solidarity action for La ZAD in France. And yeah that's about it for direct action.

[00:02:05] What was the solidarity action for La ZAD?

[00:02:07] So when the La ZAD in France was evicted there was a process in the plenary that we said we want to show our solidarity and there was a call for solidarity from La ZAD. And at the same time it was clear there was going to be a big demonstration for like, against housing policies or against housing development in Berlin in general so we knew there would be a lot of people. And then we went to the demonstration with a banner just showing that the right to a good life and the right to housing are all connected and so also La ZAD has a right to stay there so we had a banner. And afterwards or on the demonstration during demonstration we tried to get some people to come with us because at the demonstration we met just in front of the embassy, the French Embassy, which is also next to the Brandenburger Tor to also make a photo, a solidarity photo but it wasn't, like it wasn't an official gathering not an official demonstration so the police came in heavily at us just after 30 seconds because they were a few other demonstrations going on at the same time and lots of the people there looked I think a lot like typical leftist extremists maybe. And so it was surprisingly tense even just after a minute or so we had to leave. But we took a photo so we could send it to La ZAD.

[00:03:54] Great. Amazing. [End of part 1 of recording]

[00:00:02] Great. So we'll carry on. How would you describe your experiences of the EG protests? So I guess Lausitz, the one in November last year, and then you've already said about the solidarity one so how would you describe your experiences of them?

[00:00:21] Ok so I'll start with the Lausitz one because that one definitely had the biggest impact on me because as I said it was my first kind of direct action and it was really inspiring actually because I wasn't, I was only loosely involved in any climate political movement or group or whatever. But I went there with a friend and just to experience first the camp, the climate camp where we were guests was really interesting

just to see how such a big group of people can organise themselves democratically. Everyone is heard with the delegate structure and so on that was quite new to me and I was really surprised about it but also enthusiastic actually. And then it was also overwhelming the possibility of actually having police contact, it was also a little bit frightening so there was a lot of adrenaline in me and also the atmosphere with all of the other participants was quite excited I'd say and it was really a good experience because we had some police contact but not too much and we could really experience a lot of the great atmosphere during the actions even walking into the pit was early in the morning there was lots of songs when we left the camp there was a whole crowd cheering us and we were all a little bit tense and when we started singing it was a really good group atmosphere. And it was pretty obvious early on that we were quite successful because **the police didn't have a good strategy or they couldn't really stop us so there was a very very good** atmosphere. We had only small police contact that was a little bit frightening there was some pepper spray involved and so on but it wasn't, because there was so such a good support structure there were people bringing us food that was an Out of Action tent at the camp. There was such a good structure that I felt I was being taken care of so that was a really good experience and the best experience of the whole weekend was that on Sunday we went on the railways to block a train, a coal train and it was, there was a shocking moment when we suddenly realised we messed up we didn't see the police coming and then we were kettled so there was lots of police around us and it was like the end of the action we would have gone anyways just we were actually planning to go home and then in the last second we were stuck in a police kettle we were also a little bit worried because we had the bus going home the same evening and we wouldn't know if we would make it in time and so on and we had important stuff going on at home in the week so we were like oh f*** this wasn't supposed to happen just at the last second. But then the police put us in cars and so on we expected to go to the geizer the police station where they could identify us and so on but then on the way to that police station the bus we were in suddenly stopped and they just left us without any identification or any registration and they just left us out in front of the camp so we could just go home basically and just go to the camp which was such a relief and also a really good experience with hugging strange people who were in the same situation. So that for me was really the start of being involved in the action in the whole climate justice movement it was such an inspiring moment.

[00:04:30] Great. Amazing. I'm feeling quite emotional myself. *Laughs*. Super and how about the one last year how would you describe your experience of that?

[00:04:42] Yeah so in the meantime I was involved in the city I lived previously. I was involved a little bit more in like more radical social movements or political contexts so the situation didn't seem as exciting or as frightening beforehand still there was some excitement before. But I knew somehow what would happen not exactly but I had a rough idea of what was going to happen. But it was also a good experience to know that ok maybe this time I am able to do a little bit more than just the very low key things, like at the first action I always tried to go with the big crowd I always with my partner we were always trying to make sure not to be at the front or at the end of the finger. So this time we were I felt more of confident of doing more stuff and it was also a very very good atmosphere again. We just went there for one day so we basically arrived Friday evening and went on the action on Saturday and left again, no Sunday, I don't remember just but the same day we went we took a bus to Berlin it was very very dense the whole experience but it was really good and it was also a little bit interesting because I mobilised some people to come to the action as well and all of them were really inexperienced so I actually met them at a workshop where I talked with them about the climate justice like preparations seminar for voluntary services and so on and had a climate justice unit with them so we talked about it a lot and there was such an inspiring exchange with me and them that actually some of them said they would really like to come to the EG actions as well. Which was really really cool I really loved it at they came but it put a lot of pressure on me because suddenly I was in the situation of being somehow a little bit responsible for them and that was frightening a little bit, that was a little bit frightening but, again there was such a good support structure because there's a camp there's action trainings they tell you what to bring to the actions what not to bring there's legal advice so it was really good for me to just tell them ok if you want to come to the action please do that stuff just listen to what people tell you, organise yourselves in affinity groups and so on. So all of them I think had a great experience I spoke with them afterwards they were in a different finger at the end because there was one finger which was more for like people who didn't want to have very strong who wanted to do low key stuff

basically and they all joined that finger. But it was really good for them to see as well and that's what they told me so again it was a really good experience yeah I remember still a lot from all EG actions it's really impressive what kind of structure EG build and also what kind of images they produce even being in this surreal strange pit it's crazy to see loads of people in white suits and also looking at the pictures afterwards it gives me a really good feeling to just see people standing up for themselves it's really inspiring photos and very good media work I'd say.

[00:08:46] S: Amazing. Great. Perfect. I guess so you've covered this a little bit but why did you decide to get involved with EG initially?

[00:09:00] B: I actually don't really remember why I went to the first action in 2016. I think I had contact with people who were already in more radical social movements and it always seemed a little bit it was intriguing to me to take part as well there was a squatting movement in Munster, that's the city where I lived before there was a local camp against, or for refugees who were threatened with eviction from a local school so there was a protest camp and that was all really cool but I didn't really feel self confident enough but then there was mobilisation in Munster for EG and then there was again an action training so it was the right point for me to start my involvement in a more radical climate justice movement and my decision to be involved in the local Berlin group is mainly due to the inspiring moments during the actions cause I feel there is a lot of power a lot of strength a lot of energy in this movement and then the same time it's not as heavily [pause]. I think compared to anti fascist movements or anti fascist groups for example or other leftist movements there is usually a lot of codes there's a lot of ways how to behave they are not explicit rules but there is an implicit behaviour that I felt was supposed to be there like there was some rules I felt I had to do when I wanted to be part of a more, some other leftist movements such as anti-fascist movements or leftist anarchist even some of those movements felt a little bit less open to me and I really like that EG in my opinion puts a lot of effort into being very open to everyone that has its disadvantages as well but it's very good usually at grassroots organising everyone is being heard and you can easily come in and just fulfill a task if you want to so that's what I really liked about it.

[00:11:40] S: Great and have you organised for any of these protests? So again you've covered this a little bit and if so which?

[00:11:46] B: So for the two mass actions I wasn't involved and even now I'm not involved in the organisation of the mass actions this year because there's so much other stuff going on. I'm also organising the climate camp this year which is somehow connected to EG but the EG actions won't happen this year in the climate camp. But in the local group there is usually lots of tasks so for example next week there is this process this court event that one activist from 2016 is being accused of some crimes so we go to this court together and we try to organise a protest we have a small demonstration and all this needs to be planned we need to make banners we need to have a concept of how to get there all this takes a lot of organising and communication and then there is the La ZAD action which I already talked about there's always a need for mobilisation for the mass actions so that's something the local groups do a lot and just distributing flyers hanging up posters stuff like that. [Pause] And there is always small stuff as well for example we also have a monthly event we need to find people who speak there and we need to organise the event itself or just taking the minutes during an action and sending it to someone. Yeah there hasn't been a big thing I have been involved in but lots of small things.

[00:13:45] S: Yeah, it's a lot. Great so this is quite a broad question, how would you describe the political landscape of Germany in relation to climate change so talking about the government but also the wider population?

[00:14:05] B: That's an interesting question but also a difficult one. Well usually Germany has this reputation for being a very green country because they publicly announced the energy transition I think it was successful over the past years to build some kind of reputation for renewable energies and so on but a lot of it is just PR it's just media work they did well and the energy transition in my opinion lacks behind a lot. There is still a very powerful industry, there is a powerful union as well in the energy sector especially

coal so lignite is the main thing at EG we fight against but there is also other stuff coming up like the gas thing might be something EG will turn too soon after we have finished coal.

[00:15:11] S: Yeah. *Laughs*

[00:15:11] B: *Laughs* And usually like when I talk to people I find it easier to tell them about climate justice and the goals and people usually I think have lots of understanding and can understand what we do just by saying ok we need to end coal now. That's something most people understand at least people I have contact with. Whereas other political aims I stand for especially when it comes to anti racism or feminism are a little bit more difficult to communicate I think so I think there is a lot of leverage there because that is something we can really work on I see a big potential in the climate justice movement because the climate topic is something many people can understand but if you combine the climate topic with anti-racism and feminism and other discrimination forms and so on and you have climate justice maybe or in my utopia is that all those movements work together somehow and people understand all of them. Right. That's a very general response but yeah.

[00:16:52] S: No That's great that's really good thank you. How would you say the German government has reacted to EG if at all?

[00:16:59] B: I must say I haven't really followed the reactions a lot like especially I think the national government I don't know of any public statement actually I know there has been lots of responses from local politicians in the Rhineland and also especially in Lausitz about EG and especially the conservative ones were trying to delegitimise it.

[00:17:38] S: Yeah.

[00:17:39] B: Delegitimise it. and supporting the tradition of coal and so on. And just portraying it as pure violence and chaos I'd say that was their reactions. There have been also local politicians, green ones and leftist ones who support it. The actions somehow not very open because I think they have been afraid of reactions against them as well. Yeah so there has been responses from local politicians. And I know that the Secret Service, is that the word the (fasasunshutz??) has EG on its list.

[00:18:34] S: Ah, ok.

[00:18:35] B: We also appear on their report because well mobilising 4000 people isn't a small thing. *Laughs.*

[00:18:44] S: *Laughs*

[00:18:44] B: So we're not surprised they know of us and yeah. But I don't know of any direct response of the national government to EG.

[00:19:00] S: Ok. Great. Do you feel like the recent news about the coal commission, is that any way related?

[00:19:12] B: Again I must say I haven't really followed the news very well about the coal commission so I can somehow portray what other people I deal with have told me like people in the same kind of context and I think the public, not the public, the perceptions in the climate justice movement is that its is a threat to the movement because they are somehow helping, somehow on the one hand it might serve our political aims because there is now talk of an end of coal it's clear to everyone now that coal and lignite mining has to end and it's been a surprise that some of even the more radical activists or even local activists have been called to take part in the coal commission. that was a surprise. But that could also be a strategy to delegitimise a more radical climate justice movement because then they are able to say well look we included radical activists as well so your voices are being heard, why are you still doing mass civil

disobedience actions? So that might be a threat to us. And there's also I have just heard it very recently there might be the situation that some of those NGOs and more radical activists might urge the government to establish a moratorium, not to cut down the Hambacher Forest which would be just for our action in October a very very bad situation because then it would be very difficult for us to mobilise people there if they, if the coal commission is able to convince the government to not cut down the trees for this one season which would be quite not good for the EG actions, right. In general I heard that lots of coal representatives from the industry are on this coal commission so they have the majority so I have heard, but again I haven't really followed the news.

[00:21:51] S: Yeah. Sure. That's great. What have the aims of EG been? I guess it's quite clear but if you can articulate what the aims of EG have been?

[00:22:08] B: Yeah. I'd say there are different levels. So on a very broad level it's climate justice and this means more than climate or environmental protection or fighting against climate change it's rather a positive vision of climate justice which is not very well articulated because it doesn't have to be for EG. I think that's the very very general aim and the more specific aims are to build a powerful movement to shut down coal power plants and to just bring the German government to phase out from fossil fuels especially coal. And with the actions I think the aim is it's clear to most of us I think that the actions themselves when we shut down a power plant for a day or when we squat diggers for a few hours or days probably it doesn't really help stopping the industry or the company's from doing what they do. It's rather I think a big aim to influence the public opinion to bring it into the debate about what's happening in Germany. So that's why I think EG put so much effort and good media work, on producing good images, having people from all over the world so during the UN climate summit there have been the Pacific Climate Warriors in Germany and then accompanying the actions with their words because that produces a very very good narrative, and good pictures which are able to influence the public opinion and which also are able to mobilise people who are somehow friendly with the climate movement but haven't been involved in it yet.

[00:24:17] S: Great. Super. And I guess you've already said what the targets have been for the actual actions, really haven't you?

[00:24:32] B: I think I have I wouldn't no anything else.

[00:24:32] S: Yeah. And what have the strategies for EG been? So you have talked about the aims, what strategies have they employed for targeting coal mines?

[00:24:47] B: I must say that probably not the best person to speak to about the strategies and how they have been developed in the EG. [Pause]. Apart from what I have already told I don't know I couldn't say anything else actually.

[00:25:11] S: That's fine. No worries. Have any of the aims targets strategies change over time? I guess that relates to what you have just said.

[00:25:26] B: Yeah right. I wouldn't know.

[00:25:27] S: No worries. This is quite a broad question as well. What are the ideological tendencies of EG? So I know that you've talked a little bit about climate justice and perhaps what you see as other movements and your utopian vision but how would you describe the ideological tendencies of EG?

[00:25:53] B: Yeah. So I think there are very different currents in the EG group or network. So historically lots of people from the old environmental movement are involved in it so I see that also in other related groups such as the climate camp when we organise it. There are also quite a lot of older people involved who I feel sometimes have different understandings of grassroots organising. And then there is sometimes a little bit of a clash of cultures I'd say of cultures of political activism.

[00:26:43] S: Like what?

[00:26:44] B: Like for example in a plenary discussion following a speakers list very strictly. I felt or I perceived it's to be difficult apparently for some older activists to strictly follow a speakers list. Too for example to try to limit oneself while speaking and taking care of the whole group and also male dominance is a thing I often felt. I often have the feeling that male dominance is something that hasn't been critically reflected in the older climate movement which is now part of, or some people of the older climate movement are in the newer climate justice movement and at EG as well I think. It's a melting pot probably. There's also an anarchist current I'd say. It's not openly articulated but I do think that there are lots of anarchist ideas. Just I think with direct action is somehow related to an anarchist current and the idea of all the criticism of hierarchies and all that is part of the EG group now. And there is also a very big group of people who haven't been politicised that much yet I think. But because EG is such an open network and open groups they are really able to mobilise I think people who are not very much involved just as me for example. Who haven't been involved in other contexts that much earlier. Right, and there are also I think some I don't really know the English word for it, Linkes Autonoma.

[00:28:58] S: Oh, autonomous leftists?

[00:29:02] B: I think that's also a small current in the EG movement but I have the feeling that it's there as well. But again it's not openly articulated so it's hard to really know but sometimes the different or not so different, it depends ideologies do come out in discussions for example and in just how to write a text so how do we portray the for example Vattenfeld energy company, are we completely anti and use words as, ok this is a crime or it's criminalised so how much energy do we want to put in also deconstructing state structures for example. So in saying this was a crime, it's not really clear that we don't think it should be a crime, you know what I mean, sometimes it's a little bit exhausting to have long discussions about it but it shows that there are different understandings sometimes. And also there is usually I think a consensus that climate justice has to be an anti- capitalist concept but often that's not very clear to everyone I'd say. [Pause]. Yeah.

[00:30:44] S: Yeah. that's great. This leads on to this question as well do you know if EG has worked with any environmental or leftist groups? And if so, which?

[00:30:59] B: Mmhmm. Since I'm not really involved in the nationwide organising I don't really know many names I do know some. But the thing is that lots of groups especially when they are established in NGOs are very careful with openly associating themselves with EG. But there are also environmental NGOs such as Robin Wood, I think who are openly supportive of EG. And Robin Wood is somehow the leftist part of Greenpeace which split themselves from Greenpeace a few years back. And so I think lots of people in the EG movement are not only part of EG but also part of, other group. And then there is (Auskercault) which is an important leftist but also climate justice group which helped established EG. Then there are the people from the Hambacher Forest where there are also lots of people who are involved in both contexts even though it's a separate group which works together with EG a lot which you can see at the upcoming action this autumn. Interestingly in the Laustiz in 2016 there was a Nazi attack on the camp so there have been apparently 50 or 100, lots of different rumours there, Nazis trying to, that were trying to attack the camp and then the camp structure. And I don't know how much EG was involved in organising in deciding that, but the camp structure and EG probably, decided to call upon local anti-fascist structures to help protect the camp. Which was an interesting situation but I think there is this connection and this working together.

[00:33:02] S: **Mmhmm. Great. Super. Do you know of any other leftist groups at all that are involved in EG?**

(At this point in transcribing I was made aware I could use notes instead)

The Interventionste Linke of course. That's been a big part. The youth group of the leftist party in Germany has been involved in mobilising.

How would you describe your political outlook?

I try to avoid a clear label because I'm always not sure what they're supposed to mean and I'm always a bit afraid of putting a label on myself. I totally believe in the concept of climate justice as a concept that is anti-capitalistic, that is sensitive to concepts such as racism, feminism, classism, ableism, the queer movement and so on. That's a very plausible concept that we can work on and use. I would probably call myself radical leftist although I don't understand being radical as being violent. It's my understanding that we need a very very strong change in our society, a radical one, that's why.

What have the legal issues of EG been? How have they shaped the form or action/ strategy?

It's a big topic. It's especially a topic where there different ideological currents become visible. How do we want to communicate with the police beforehand? That's a big question as I understand it. The consequences are harsh. There are bad consequences for activists who have been identified by the police. Who have climbed over the wall in the Lausitz which was not part of the action consensus. There were some severe confrontations with police. There have been minor incidents where there were confrontations between police and activists. I have this feeling from somewhere inside of me that there is an understanding from the police as well. I feel that they don't come down as heavily as they could. There have been a few police contact in the Lausitz where state officials come from villages nearby which are related to being evicted by the coal mines. Climate change is an issue that concerns every one of us. I do think there is some kind of understanding.

There's been a very successful strategy of activists not bringing their passports to identify individuals. That was a very smart and successful strategy. That really shows the power of mass actions. When lots of people come together its impossible for the police to identify every one of them.

* We discuss the decision to not take passports in the first 2015 action.*

Why do you think there was a tradition for activist to take ID previously?

That's hard to say. For one, I think there's been a development. In 2015 there were big discussions about whether to bring a passport or not. There were discussions about it in 2016. I have the perception that it's got less and less and now there is a clear strategy not to bring a passport. Reasons why people might have done it, and this shows that some of the activists in EG are not as radical as people might think, to see civil disobedience that is openly announced, I take full responsibility for what I do even if there are legal consequences, for my actions I will deal with them and I shall be open about who I am and what I believe in. I think that one idea for why people did that. I'm not sure about the legal consequences but there is an additional fine if you don't bring ID so it was also a question of taking a risk in to bring it or not to bring it ID.

Related to the previous question. The anti-AFD demonstrations I was involved in organising as well. I think that's been a crucial moment for EG. It was the first time EG was perceived as a big powerful movement or structure not only in the fight against the coal industry but also the right wing movement in Germany. It was a crucial moment when we walked through the streets the action itself was completely nonsense. It was unrealistic we could actually block the AFD demonstration from the actual path because there was so many police our structure wasn't that experienced with the blocking in the city infrastructure. There's been lots of positive feedback from bystanders who already knew who we were because we were wearing the white suits. It was good to see that EG is not something that only focuses on coal, it's a very broad set of goals.

How have these protests been policed?

I wasn't part of the 2015 actions but I heard there the police was quite strong. There was lots of police and they were actively trying to block activists from entering the coal pit. In the Lausitz I felt as if the strategy was as if we can't really avoid people entering the pits so we do whatever is the minimum necessary that the law requires us to do so that there isn't any debate afterwards. But I felt as if they were doing the minimum. I felt that was less policed than 2015. In last Autumn it was quite easy to get into the coal pit. Their strategy was somehow to kettle the digger so it was impossible to get on the digger. It was rather easy

to get inside the pit. I think because there was so much public attention on the climate summit and the whole situation worldwide that they tried not to produce very violent pictures of clashes and confrontations. To keep the public attention low and not to have the same situation as the Hamburg G20 summit where the whole situation got so much attention because there were clashes. So I think they let us go in to keep the attention low.

When the police started to kettle us in the pit in autumn for some reason they brought in horses. There was one incident where one activists got trampled. They were really lucky not to get hurt. It's hard to say it's all strongly policed or not. Somewhere in the middle. I couldn't really compare to other direct actions.

What extent has there been international mobilisation for EG?

I don't know what the specific actions have been to mobilise people outside of Germany. I just perceived it to be a very successful mobilisation because there have been lots of people from everywhere. Lots of people from France, the UK, the Netherlands. Especially in the Lausitz, from Sweden because it was against Vattenfall. (A Swedish company). I think it's also because there is a stronger communication between climate justice organisations. There are conferences, there's a network. This year it's on everyone agenda there are different climate camps all over Europe. There is no longer only a focus on what's happening in Germany but what's happening all over Europe. I don't really know what methods they used to mobilise but there were people from all over Europe.

How do you think that has impacted the actions?

For the photos, for the images we created, I don't really know if people realised how international the actions were. I just know that for the all the participants of the actions, for me a surprise and great to see there is a European movement behind it. There is an exchange. When people take part in actions in other countries and go home to their own countries they bring back their experiences I think there is some kind of synergy and an exchange happening that can help all of us and a bigger sense of community. That's something I felt definitely. If we think about the images we produce then the Pacific Climate Warriors come to mind because they didn't take part in the actions themselves but EG and 350 the organisation that also coordinated actions there that not only Europeans or Germans would speak for the action because its a global issue. It's a very international understanding of climate justice and that if it's a global issue we need different people speaking for the movement.

What resources do you think the movement has had access to in terms of access to money and people?

Since I don't think that's something EG doesn't want to make public I don't really know. I know that there's been contact with different organisations and from the start there has been contact with 350 this organisation in the US. They helped establish EG but I don't know to what extent.

How would you describe the composition of the activists/organisers of the camps? How would you describe it in terms of age, ethnicity, background?

There is difference between what it would like to be and what it is. Most of the activists would like it to be a very very diverse movement. In terms of age there's still a potential to do better. But compared to other movements I do think there is already quite a good mixture of people from all age ranges. Of course the dominant one is mid-twenties to around the thirties who are the majority of course but I think that's something you can see in most of the political movements. I think the gender balance is quite ok. There's also been a queer block so the topic is on most people's agenda. In terms of ethnicity or race, it is definitely been a white dominated movement. I think that is a whole problem of the climate justice movement in Germany. To really know it's a problem it is a problem to do with most social movements in Germany but also something to do with civil disobedience. People of colour are much more targets of police repression. It's hard to really change that. Of course there are things we could do to make I more diverse and inclusive network.

Were your needs always met at the camps in terms of food, water, toilets, care? Were there any issues with these provisions or lack of them?

Generally its awesome. I find it impressive that people are able to build up a camp infrastructure from nothing to something where so much is available to people with food, with compost toilets, with the action tent, legal advice, action plenaries, with workshops, with action trainings. There's been a very very good infrastructure I think was crucial to the success of EG and to the mobilisation. There have been issues but I think that was extremely difficult in Lausitz because they didn't expect 4,500 people. They expected 2,000 people. So there was the moment when you come back from an action super-hungry and there's been nothing but a few leaves of raw salad. *Laughs* It was a little bit rough but everyone understood it was part of a very solidaridistic atmosphere.

What kind of decision making process is used?

It's definitely what I said in the beginning a strong emphasis on grassroots organising. There is usually a structure in EG especially when it comes to the action planning that is hierarchical because it needs to be. It's not in everyone's interest that the police know beforehand what ways we go in to the pit and what strategies we have. So there are hierarchies and there is especially a big hierarchy around knowledge and stuff like that. There is also a very strong emphasis on trying to make sure everyone is included so there's the system with the affinity group and each affinity group can send a delegate and then you can make decisions in the delegate plenary and you can come back to the affinity groups and so on. So this structure is I think really well worked out. It's also challenging. Decisions take a lot of time. For new people especially these decisions are new, they are frustrating sometimes but I'm a big fan of it because I think in the long term it's more effective to have this kind of organising and to create a sense of responsibility in everyone. For example I was really surprised in the Lausitz to experience for the first time this 'mike check' thing because it was a surprisingly easy way to make announcements in a big group. Someone would say something and everyone who heard it would repeat it. And in the end everyone could hear it. It's such a small thing but for me an example of how even in big groups you can all effectively and democratically.

Notes from EG Interview C

I'm interviewing you as someone I know who has been involved with climate related direct action in Germany specifically EG. Is this right?

Yes

How would you describe your involvement with EG?

Participating in the actions, mobilising for it, and lately supporting the legal team. Tries to support people legally during and after the action.

What EG protests have you been part of?

1st 2015 Rhineland, then 2016 Lausitz, then August, then November. All big ones.

What were your experiences of them?

Really impressive feelings when you finally get into the pit, when it's all working in this huge group. Gave him a good feeling. A lot of adrenaline being in there and being captured by the police. You are sure you will be captured by the police. More relaxed than other actions that happen in cities. More relaxed than Blockupy in Frankfurt 2017. It's in an open space and you can see what's happening.

Do you think your experience differed between being a participant and an organiser?

Yeah. Last year first time not going into the action. Doing legal work for those that were. Hard being there and people coming back from the action being enthusiastic. And doing call centre things, didn't get adrenaline or success feeling. Setting it up and seeing everything work out. There were enough people to do the things that needed to be done. Good feeling.

Why did you decide to get involved with EG?

Flatmates who told him to go in 2015. Knew there was a group meeting in Berlin. Three years before he was looking to get involved with something. One season just EG Berlin meetings. Afterwards joined IL. Gave him a feeling of belonging joined to a group where he could discuss things with them. When I came as one person I felt a bit useless. Having more information and a better overview of what was happening.

Have you organised for any of these protests? If so, which?

The one in August 2017 and November.

How would you describe the political landscape of Germany in relation to climate change?

There's a majority that think coal should be stopped, and stopped fast. A big awareness about climate change. The big parties all agree that there is an issue and there should be something done. They would agree if you asked them and they would say before elections but then in the end then their main interest is the German economy. The local areas have their money in coal. They are all part of it and it seems difficult to get out.

How has the German government reacted to this movements?

Federal government didn't react a lot. The local ones reacted on different levels. Brandenburg a left government, a complicated situation, support a lot of the miners because they are workers. The social

democrats support the miners and try and keep the mine going. They were in coalition with the left-wing party. They tried to stop the coal but they didn't put up a strong fight. Maybe they are not doing anything.

EG pushes the NGOs to be more radical as they have coal as a topic. Pushed the landscape towards more radical actions. EG puts the immediate stop of coal on the agenda. That other actors don't.

What have the aims of EG been?

To stop it immediately. To steer the discussion. No-one thinks the action would really stop it. People care about how the press reacts afterwards. In this case really positive. A well prepared press-team. Consensus that it's important.

What have the targets been?

They go where the coal is mined and where it's burned. They always try to block the infrastructure where it's most efficient. The first actions were to go where the diggers are and then they have to stop and then they realised there are also huge coal stocks so blocking a digger for one day wouldn't have any effect so they targeted the rails where the coal is transported.

What have the strategies of EG been?

A mass of people. To get to the strategic points without big interaction with the police. Mostly trying to surprise which isn't really possible or to be as many as possible. Staying as long as possible. Not taking any IDs. To do this in a mass.

Have any of the aims, targets and strategies changed over time?

The IDs, something that took some time for people to accept that this is a good strategy because it's not really done in any political field in Germany also. The first time I was sceptical and took my ID. The next time there was a big mass who were doing it. In 2016 the legal team took all the IDs and stored them which is risky. Now they tell people not to take them. People didn't have the knowledge to know what this means.

What are the ideological tendencies of EG?

Quite broad. Lots of people who are anti-capitalist thinkers. It's one part of the big question. Some people who are more eco-friendly and aren't sceptical of the big system. Who think technological inventions could save us. But they are more in a minority. There are discussions all the time about broadening the context. Quite surprised at how they write their texts when there is a difference of opinion. Last time there were huge discussions in relation to the COP. Whether it should be ignored, or reacted to. EG took the decision to do EG 2015 before the COP.

How would you describe your political outlook?

There is a big problem in capitalist society. I'm really disappointed by all the conservative thinking Germans who think they have a job and a right to have this money because their parents worked hard. Ignoring exploitation. This is the thing that makes him most angry. Not that optimistic when it comes to climate change. Once they finish coal which looks likely there are many other questions like cars, Germans love their cars.

What have the legal issues of EG been? How have they shaped the form or action/ strategy?

Expect to be controlled by the police. Clear people participating in EG are doing something illegal. A huge risk that people have to pay a lot of money. 2016 – there may be a lot of money involved. Two courts. Heavy issues and civil court. Big companies try and get you in the civil court to bankrupt protestors.

EG is most afraid of this. The companies send people letters to ask them to sign saying they won't participate in EG again. If you don't sign it you may be liable for a lot of money. If you go on EG and you've signed it and they catch you then you will definitely be liable for a lot of money. A normal court wouldn't be interested in the charges. And it wouldn't appear on a background check so the companies are trying to get people with huge fines.

These issues have not changed the way EG operates yet. Until now there haven't been people who have had to pay. It's been pretty much the same.

How have these protests been policed?

2015 surprised by the amount of people and how motivated they were. The police still tried to stop people from going into the pit with everything they could including being brutal and collaborating with the pit security. A helicopter came down which was dangerous.

2016 very different police strategy – they let people do what they wanted. We went into the pit, slept there one night and came out without having contact with the police at all. Which was surprising. Tactic of letting EG do something for one day and not having the bad press afterwards from the brutality. Were surprised at how long people were on the railways and that people went into the power station.

Different governments in both cases. Depends on who's in the government.

2017 sceptical and afraid because of the shitstorm after G20 against leftists. People were being really pro-police. The government was more conservative. They expected the policing to be rough but it wasn't. It was always a bit of a surprise what the police does.

What extent has there been international mobilisation for EG?

Always a lot of internationals coming. Some people organise buses from across Europe. People are very motivated. EG tried to be a lot more present in other people's actions. I don't know how this will turn out. People are well-connected.

A lot of people were really happy that lots of people outside Germany wanted to come and thought it was cool. It's very motivating. Most of the internationals who came were very motivated and better organised than the Germans. In 2015 I was in the pink finger and internationals were in the green finger. Everyone was so amazed by the green finger pushing the police line.

Maybe a cultural difference? In Germany you can get fucked if you harm a police officer. Maybe people were more motivated.

What resources do you think the movement has had access to in terms of access to money and people?

One of the biggest resources is that they have a camp that is not organised by people from EG. People from EG participate. The whole camp infrastructure is really advanced. They always get money because they do a summer school. Normally supported by the NGOs so the camp has good finance. Most important for EG.

A lot of people working through the whole year and people working full-time on it. People from the legal team get emails from people who get letters. They always reply to all the emails. They go with people to the court and help prepare things for them. People working professionally.

How would you describe the composition of the activists/organisers of the camps? How would you describe it in terms of age, ethnicity, background, gender?

Nearly no non-white people who come. Rather mixed gender-wise. People are quite young, a lot. Similar for the people organising as the people who come. There are some old people but not that many.

Really experienced people who come from the anti-nuclear protest.

Were your needs always met at the camps in terms of food, water, toilets, care? Were there any issues with these provisions or lack of them?

2016 not enough food. They didn't expect so many people. Hygiene problems with the toilets. Compared to festivals, it's always much cleaner and nicer. Not enough food is really horrible but it's not gonna happen again.

What kind of decision making process is used?

25:07 Local groups in cities and they meet at least once a month. In the big meetings in Germany decisions are always taken on Sunday after Friday and Saturday. Topics get discussed on Saturday. Consensus is sought on Sunday. A lot of decisions have to be made quickly so lots are made outside the big meetings. Regular conference calls.

Sub-groups organise sub-things and they are quite independent but they inform the larger group of their decisions.

There are some people who seem to be quite important in the network. People who are super-involved in everything. They have a different weight in the meetings.

Super-democratic. Maybe too democratic. Questioning everything that has been discussed over and over again by new people joining the group.

Do you know if EG has worked with any environmental/leftists groups? If so which?

I am in IL and there are lots of people from IL that participate. The climate group in IL mainly does EG. Some other big groups more in the Rhineland. There is Auskercalt (??!!) and Geginstum doing a lot of things. The youth organisation from the Green Party – a lot of people from them participate as individuals in meetings but don't participate as a group.

Most of the environmentalist groups in Germany are involved in some way.

Do you know what traditions/histories of EG has come from?

I wasn't there when they planned the first big action but a lot of ideas and structures come from the anti-nuclear movement.

The forms of protest are pretty similar – being a mass of people blocking something and being quite accessible who don't have previous experience but being radical at the same time which is something that happened in the anti-nuclear movement a lot. The anti-nuclear movement was operating in a community where they were against it. This is a bit different to EG because people working in the mines, we have some issues with them which weren't the case with the anti-nuclear protests.

The people living in the Hambacher Forest at the beginning of EG there wasn't a great deal of collaboration but there is a lot more now.

In 2015 there were some big discussions and EG decided not to go into the Hambacher pit. They are much more vulnerable and have a lot of problems with police. They are sceptical about what EG brings to their situation as it only happens for a short period of time. The press coverage could make things difficult for the forest occupiers. Concern from the forest occupiers that people from EG are not radical enough in only coming for one day and disappearing again just to make one big photo and being big in the press. There are always some kind of tensions with these kind of actions.

Notes from EG Interview D

I'm interviewing you as someone I know who has been involved with climate related direct action in Germany specifically EG. Is this right?

Yes.

How would you describe your involvement with EG?

Part of IL, one of the groups who's been in the coalition since the beginning. Personally I was involved in the climate movement prior to EG and part of the processes that led up to the first action conference. From there part of the national process and the Berlin groups.

What EG protests have you been part of?

All of the actions that took place. 2015, 2016 and the two big actions in 2017. Several smaller actions.

What were your experiences of them?

For me personally previously with climate action you had to come up with strategies of how to make an action successful with a small number of people. In mobilising for the radical climate movement it meant you couldn't mobilise for the radical left. Because climate wasn't the focus and there was a cultural reason so you had to work with a small number of people. That's changed with EG a lot. It has been encouraging for a lot of people to get involved and have the ability to step out for sometime. It's also a bit overwhelming taking part sometimes. There are a lot of rules in the process. Feeling responsible for others can be draining. I've been involved a lot with action trainings. That can be a pleasant experience because you get a lot of positive feedback from them. You get to see a lot of new people be really empowered by preparing for an action and coming out of the action feeling stronger. Also had some bad experience of people coming out but that was much in a minority in comparison to people having positive experiences.

Illness in camps hasn't been good.

It has been good to see people get involved with politics and be radicalised in the process of thinking about the root causes. That is my strategic goal and is very nice to see.

Why did you decide to get involved with EG?

For a long time we weren't focused on coal. There was a division between people focusing on coal and other groups had more of a strategy of organising within the cities they are in and trying to connect social issues with climate issues. For example in Berlin we were involved with a campaign for the re-communalisation of the energy distribution for a long time. Had some campaigns on free public transportation. At the time of the formation of EG it was clear the public debate was moving more and more towards coal and there would be a strategic chance of the government in trying to present themselves as climate protectors at the same time as failing their climate goals. You could know that four or five years ago. There was a strategic opportunity. The climate camp prior to EG had around 700 people. There was a big focus on local groups and building up the movement from below and had around 300 people at the regional camps and less participating in the action. EG was an opportunity to go beyond that and form coalitions with groups that were not part of the radical left.

The strategic opportunity was the main motivation for setting up EG. I was involved in the climate working group of IL since 2008. Because of a strategic intervention regarding the radical left not being involved that much talking or acting on issues of climate politics and I wanted to change that.

On the question of climate politics you can fairly quickly come to radical questions about how society works and how capitalism works with people who are not radical.

Have you organised for any of these protests? If so, which?

All of them.

How would you describe the political landscape of Germany in relation to climate change?

There is a strong NGO landscape that is orientated around movements with experience from the anti-nuclear movement. The big NGOs that are the most influential are more left than the UK, the BUND for example which is part of Friends of the Earth on the international level. Orgs like WWF don't have any influence or large membership in Germany. There is a strong Green Party that is not radical and not very progressive on ecological issues anymore which grew from the environmental movement. It put environmental topics on the government agenda. They are orientating more and more to the middle, getting more and more right wing. Being neoliberal on social issues and finding coalitions with the conservative party in local governments where they start to be protective of the car industry. There is a broad civil landscape that is dealing with climate change but there is a big gap. A gap where even the conservatives would try to present as those who would want to protect the climate. Although they don't act in that way especially with the car industry.

Public opinion is very much in favour of phasing out of coal and demanding more concrete steps on climate change. This led to problems with building up movements as people felt very powerless while the government would take over all the arguments while the government would try and show themselves in a positive light on climate issues using all the arguments the NGOs would use like 'act now.' These slogans would be integrated into government. Non-radical activists would. Young people would see the difference between the government rhetoric on climate change and the reality and feel there is no way out. A sense of hopelessness especially in the build up towards Copenhagen 2009. Even though they were very critical of the UNFCCC process the main outcome for people was frustration in what they see is right that the governments don't take climate change seriously. 14:25

This is why bringing the field of mobilisation away from political decisions to sites of production presented the possibility to pressure the political debate but more giving people the feeling that they can do something for themselves. To interrupt the places where the CO2 emissions are produced is a motivating story about climate change. The situation is so bad if you think about it it can be very frustrating to see the world going to shit although theoretically everyone is talking about it.

In the anti-nuclear movement there was a strong split between the autonomous left/militants and non-violent groups on the other hand. Argument about strategy and ways to mobilise, working in broad coalitions. The most important coalition from the post-autonomist left is the IL. They are able to work with NGOs and the green party on a fairly normal level, face-to-face on a movement level. Focused on building up coalitions that are very broad that can reach out to the NGOs and party members while also trying to overcome the split between militant/ non-violent. Moving away from militant strategies that can ritualise some forms of rioting that were not helping the movements. Focus on civil disobedience and action training. Action consensus used for mass militancy. They mean that people can feel as safe as possible while taking action. Militant people can say that's my action and non-violent people can say that's my action. They can stick to non-ideological conceptions of violence. EG doesn't do destruction of property or sabotage, not for a moral reason but to enable the participants of the mass action to feel safe. They are happy for people to do those things just not part of the EG mass action. It is a strategic decision not a moral decision. If they have to destroy things like fences to get to the things they need to get to to block with their bodies then they will.

How has the German government reacted to EG?

I wouldn't say that the government has reacted to EG. They have reacted to the general pressure the German government has been under and EG is part of that general political debate. A few years ago no-one talked about the stop of coal but now they are talking about a phase-out. EG demands the immediate stop

of coal and that demand changed the public discourse around the issue. The Green Party recently voted to demand a coal phase-out by 2030 which is more radical than some of the more progressive NGOs which I see as a result of the political pressure. The Potsdam Institute for Climate Research put forward the demand for an immediate stop of coal. EG built up the pressure.

There has been no strategic reaction from the government with people in EG deciding not to provide their identity to police. It's more about how the police react on a political level in political debate on the policing of protests. EG has maintained a high level of legitimacy for the actions and mostly positive news coverage so their hasn't been a very repressive police strategy.

What have the aims of EG been?

To build up a strong climate movement to change capitalist structures. To change the method of production in general. Immediately to stop all coal. More or less there is an anti-capitalist consensus. That doesn't mean everyone in EG or the groups involved are strictly anti-capitalist. The growth model of capitalism is not compatible with ecological sustainability and so other forms of production and economic systems have to be sought.

28:00

We should not delegate protection of the climate to politicians because that is not what they are doing. They are strongly linked to the whole fossil fuel industry. They have a lot of power that is not coming through votes. Even if you have politicians that are on board they are limited by what they can do but EG is not anywhere near as limited.

What are their targets?

To stop diggers in the mines. The railway tracks for transporting the coal.

What have the strategies of EG been?

To get a lot of people there to block these targets. Human blockades. The main issue is police are there to stop people getting there. There are a lot of experienced riot police which use pepper spray and batons. And are highly protected.

EG organised large fingers to move together in big groups and then split up and spread out. Being determined to pass through the gaps that appear in the police line. Affinity groups are important to have a level of trust and take care of each other. And to try and increase the democracy of the finger. Though there are working groups that plan a strategy to get to the area without the input of everyone because it's important the police don't know the plan. We try and decide everything we can with delegates in action plenaries with spokes from the affinity groups.

Action trainings to encourage people to take part in civil disobedience that aren't sure.

Using the climate camps as a base to showcase different forms of living but also to have communication about what we want and what our culture is, what our political analysis is etc.

33:23

Creating strong pictures. Having large groups of people stopping the diggers can produce much better pictures than if it was a small group.

Have any of the aims, targets and strategies changed over time?

The strategies haven't changed much over time.

In Lusatia there was a lot of discussion with local groups who didn't share the demands of an immediate stop of coal in being too radical. This year we didn't change the goal but we didn't say it out so loud. As respect to the local structures.

EG communicate and work a bit like professional NGOs too with the media. They do a lot of important media work. What is communicated in the mainstream media is not that dissimilar to what the NGOs say. The anti-capitalist element is covered a bit in the media but not that much, but it's not a big problem, in that you communicate different things to different people. Inside the movement we have a strong communication that you have to see the big picture with capitalist society. In the general public the main intention is to disrupt the picture of Germany being on a good path with regards to climate change.

What are the ideological tendencies of EG?

There is a broad shared experience. 90% share the idea that we can trust and work together with different parts of the movement. We don't always have to fight against the power of NGOs. Shared belief in militant actions. This comes more from experience than ideology. There are people from an anarchist background, people from a radical left communist background, not so many but a few. There are people from post-autonomist groups who are more influenced by the socialist tradition. People who are from more moderate ideological traditions but who are very open to think about the big picture and work in a coalition that is more radical but not as an identity. More from an understanding that as a group it's necessary to think about these questions. A lot of people who don't define themselves so much by ideology. A lot of people in the middleground of NGOs take part in the action even if they don't do it for work or their organisation is not taking part, do it as a personal thing to do. The youth organisation of the Green Party and the Left Party support the action and have supported it for some time. A lot of the NGOs support it. Not in the way of a public call out because it's illegal but in support in terms of financial resources, staff and mobilising for legal actions.

In EG there is a difference of opinion based on your attitude towards the general public. Issues over integrating into the terms of the public discourse. That influences the strategy of the media work like using real names or not. Normally they don't clash that much but in some situations they can. Sometimes they mix up the anarchist traditions of the individual with the green party strategies of how we live on the camp to show alternative energy while others focus more on the strategic element of the mass action to change the public opinion.

42:26

How would you describe your political outlook?

From one the IL, one of the post-autonomist groups. I would describe myself as coming from the undogmatic radical left, coming from a communist, socialist tradition but not of the hierarchical/dogmatic kind. I personally see it as no different whether you call it anarchism, socialism or communism, that's not important for me.

What have the legal issues of EG been? How have they shaped the form or action/ strategy?

Breaking the law by entering into private property is not that much of a big deal. It is still illegal though and would make a difference to people if they want to become doctors or teachers for example. Most people in EG haven't been prosecuted for that, even people who have given their identity. Breaking into property would most often result in a fine that is not that high and could be covered by the movement through solidarity work. The problem is that RWE used the civil courts to force people to sign agreements to say they have to pay 20,000 euros or more if they enter the property of RWE again which is a risk. That's why the strategy of not giving over your identity straight away as a mass tactic has been quite successful. Police using violence against people has been a big issue. It's mainly fit young people that take part in the action which could be considered a problem. The style of action can limit who can take part. On the whole we haven't faced that much repression. The police will use violence regardless of the political situation. Not many people have been prosecuted for EG. That is as a result of the mass participation and the political debate.

The anti-repression organisations up until recently would always advise to bring ID.

How have these protests been policed?

Whenever the police have been violent they have had a bad press. They have not been able to delegitimise the movement so much. I think that has led to the repression being less violent than the first year.

What extent has there been international mobilisation for EG?

The climate movement has been connected on the European level from the start. We have learnt a lot from the UK Climate Camps to realise that and start off climate camps here.

Copenhagen 2009 was a very trans-European mobilisation. Organisations that we still use like the Climate Justice Action Network come from that time. And have more or less been a working network in the past years. The movement in Germany has been pretty stable in comparison to other countries where they have lasted for a couple of years and fizzled out.

The success of EG has often been by accident. There has been a very big international participation, much bigger than was expected.

The first action was quite international.

The support of 350.org has been helpful in trans-european mobilisation.

The Degrowth Summer School had a lot of international participants.

Lots of French people from an anti-nuclear camp came over to EG which was not that far away.

If you have a lot of internationals participating, and the use of translation equipment from the Degrowth Summer school international activists could feel welcome, participate in the action but also take over the responsibility in the action. That was important in the first one with bringing back international activists to the subsequent ones.

EG became one of the successful climate struggles in Europe. If you are successful then people want to come which can snowball.

2015 300-400 international activists out of 1,300 in the action is quite a lot. Many of the internationals were more experienced than the average German participant. The international finger faced most of the police repression the first year and was very strong in that situation.

Our strategy is focussed on the German context but for that it is very helpful to have the internationals knowledgeable about the action. On the foreign policy level the government is keen to appear progressive on the climate issue and for a lot of people it is very surprising that they are not so this put up pressure.

It is interesting that EG has been able to do this outside of the political conferences arena.

What resources do you think the movement has had access to in terms of access to money and people?

The main resource is experience. As a radical part of the climate movement we started out pretty late and pretty small. We accessed support in the Climate Justice Action movement.

When we started EG we got a lot of money from NGOs but now we have even more.

For the first two years 350.org were giving money to get activists from Europe to EG. Which made it a lot easier for people to come from other countries.

We have the whole experience of camps and camp infrastructure including collectives that can come to events and support them like cooking collectives.

There is a lot of infrastructure and knowledge. Not everything that is needed has to be organised by those who are part of the protest.

Lots of action knowledge of civil disobedience from the G8 2007. EG has been able to pass on that knowledge.

How would you describe the composition of the activists/organisers of the camps? How would you describe it in terms of age, ethnicity, background?

EG is very young, white and middle class which is not that different to most of the radical left campaigns in Germany. We're notable to mobilise in the Turkish/Kurdish/larger migrant community although they have connections. That is similar between organisers and participants. In the beginning there were more older and experienced organisers and younger participants. However there is not such a big difference now. Some of the older people have taken a step back recently.

Were your needs always met at the camps in terms of food, water, toilets, care? Were there any issues with these provisions or lack of them?

There are always issues when the camp is growing.

With regards to food there was a big issue in Lausitz. There were many more people there than expected. And there were issues with the food collective who refused to integrate other food collectives who were willing to help out because of ideological issues.

Water etc there has not been much of a problem. The main issue has been about where the camp is located and where water can be taken from because the camp is often organised on private lands. **The land is not squatted like in the UK. There are very particular needs for the camp.**

Experience has come from the anti-globalisation camps and other particular camps.

With food there are food collectives that can cook for 10,000 people.

Compromises have to be made for example it may not be feasible to build enough compost toilets. In which case there may have to be chemical toilets that aren't particularly liked. For us it's not important to have all of the energy for the camp to come from renewable energy, we would just use a flatline extension. Some people with experience have been able to start up new collectives. It is useful that equipment is stored for different protests and protest camps to use when necessary. We have a lot of that in Germany and in neighbouring countries.

What kind of decision making process is used?

A lot of people would say consensus which is true but it differs from situation to situation. Strictly consensus decision making process at the national meetings and works quite well. In the first year there were many controversies. Consensus can be very frustrating if there is a lot of mistrust. But on the whole it has worked quite well so far.

Some decisions are made in the plenary.

A lot of working groups have the autonomy to make their own decisions but some decisions are taken to the whole group.

There is a coordination committee of the different structures.

There is a lot of trust involved.

Within the action there is a complicated decision making structure that is quite influenced by what the decision is. Many decisions are made before the action.

There is a press team.

There is an action team which is the only group inaccessible to newcomers. It is a secret working group because they could be prosecuted. They take on a lot of responsibility for many elements of the action.

They can defer some decisions to the wider group. Most of the decisions are taken in these groups. There is often pressure that builds and conflict over some decisions. For example the strategy like targets, timing, how people are dispersed.

It completely depends on each working group.

I would say in general it's more pragmatic.

What environmental/leftists groups does EG work with?

Inside the coalition there was **Kempect and 350** that were important. Others from the youth organisation of the BUND. Aside from 350 a lot of the NGOs are not really visible and don't want to be. They don't want to be associated with illegal action. They have been part of the coalition and we have had to make some compromises to get them onboard. For the action continuing they weren't so important anymore, not as a matter of conflict but because they decided to focus on other things. We don't think they need to be there at the moment.

There are groups that have traditionally been involved with the left and the climate movement particularly the IL and their climate working groups in various cities.

Auskercald – a network that was originally started from radical leftist/anarchist and youth organisation of the BUND in the Rhineland that has become a group in its own right. The youth organisation of the left party are involved but not so involved with the decisions but take over responsibility during the action. The youth organisation of the Green party, again, does not influence the decisions at all. They are good at mobilising people every year.

People in those organisations cover around 30% of the organisers, maybe a bit more because there are many in the IL that work in EG. Also **Auskercald is big and gegenstrole.** And some autonomous groups that are not visible as groups but come from the anti-nuclear movement bringing in some of their experience and some of their positions. The majority of people involved are not from these groups but from their climate group they are involved with. EG is very open to people to get involved on a local level. There are about 30 local groups with the majority set up in the past year.

What traditions/histories of EG has come from?

UK Climate Camp. Then from a debate in 2008 after the G8 about how to continue as left movements. An attempt to break with some ideas of the radical left like 'Everything for Everyone' where we have limits on resources and to take that to the wider left debate.

The climate movement mobilised many people to go to Copenhagen in 2009 without a very successful outcome. Afterwards many groups broke down.

There was a discussion where many local groups set up without much wider national networking. Out of those the climate camps started in the Rhineland and Lusatia and strongly influenced EG and other groups.

What are your criticisms of EG?

No criticisms. Its very very amazing that it has overcome many of the problems that other organisations have faced in building large protest camps in Germany. They have overcome the difficulty in passing down knowledge from more experienced organisers to less experienced organisers.

EG is very successful in building a strong coalition.

EG is successful at being everyone's darling but still being radical and confrontational.

There are problems.

Problem one is that we found one strategy that works and it will not work forever. When we started it it has been able to be the same for a while.

When the government decide a strategy for the phase-out for coal the same strategy may not work anymore. We are trying to work on that in the local groups to find new conflicts to crystallise the movement.

Another problem is that EG is limited in the way it can work. For other leftist mass mobilisations some people can be relied on to come to protests. Whereas with the environmentalists they don't always see the need to get involved with protests. Much of the radical left won't go to environmental protests think what you do is important but don't get involved. Which can limit the numbers quite a bit. It has been successful

in getting new people on board. It could get a lot broader. We need to get a lot of people involved that aren't young and fit. I want to get EG to be more like the anti-nuclear movement mobilisations in the Rhineland where they did different actions.

Having the action around one date means most people come there for the civil disobedience.

There is a problem of EG building more and more strategies to do an action that may need to be unlearned at some point. It can remove a degree of individual autonomy when everything about the action is handed over to activists.

Some of the large amounts of energy that EG has generated may need to be transferred to other struggles, new escalation points beyond coal.

RtP Interview A Notes (Interview made at Block Around the Clock 28th June 2018)

How would you describe your involvement with RtP?

Varied. Affinity group actions under the name of RtP but not so much involved in the wider network or organising structure. Being part of the media team, filming actions, trying to get press coverage. Being a body on actions and demos. Doing RtP social media aswell.

How would you describe your involvement with EG?

A bit looser. Taking part in the mass actions as a film-maker.

What RtP protests have you been part of?

Break the Chain. 1st thing was 'Stay Grounded,' and anti-heathrow expansion protest. The canaries in Ffos-y-Fran were done as part of RtP which was a more closed secretive affinity group action. Shown up to anti-fracking protests, but less organising.

What were your experience of them?

Broadly speaking quite empowering as it was the first group I'd got involved with when I got involved with direct action. Learnt a lot about how the movement works and the breadth of the movement. In terms of actions as 'spikey' or 'fluffy' and the myriad of press work. Learning about the organisational structure and how things are done non-hierarchically.

What EG protests have you been part of?

The mass action in 2017. In November 2017 centred around the COP23.

What were your experiences of them?

Both times I was documenting things on camera. There were quite different outcomes of the different actions that I followed. In the summer group I followed weren't successful at shutting down our target. In November we were successful. In the summer there was a lot more police to stop people succeeding. The actions were spread over 3-4 days. So it felt there was more of a police operation to stop things happen rather just controlling things when people are already trespassing. On both occasions there was a fair bit of police violence. Being with a camera myself the risk is a lot lower for being targetting with police brutality. In the summer people were kettled then removed with quite a lot of physical force. Saw police getting unnecessarily violent protecting property. They were empowering experiences because of the sheer number of people but thought it wasn't necessarily the most efficient kind of action. Thousands of people shutting down infrastructure which a small group of people could shut down covertly with less organising but with much less risk of police repression. Wasn't around many people who were arrested. People were escorted out of the coal infrastructure on buses and their photos were taken without being arrested because of the sheer number of people.

Why did you decide to get involved with RtP?

Wanting to get involved with climate direct action as opposed to specifically getting involved with RtP per se as they are one of the larger and most active networks.

Heard about the action at Heathrow and wanted to get to know more people taking direct action. The more things you go to the more you get into the group through social circles but also through the responsibility of organising things.

Re direct action – what choice do we have if we want to avoid climate breakdown which is already happening? The system is part of that problem as it's caused by capitalist, imperialist, abstractionist society so trying to ask for change within that framework doesn't solve that problem. That change is limited within a society that is built around these foundational problems. We have to take things into our own hands. Stop asking for things to change and just do it. Direct action isn't just about protesting or shutting things down it's about self-organising, doing things autonomously when we see that the way we're doing things now is wrong. We need to live in a way that is less impactful on the planet and exploitative. Taking direct action on fossil fuel infrastructure is just one part of that. For me it's the cornerstone for making the change. As great as living a low-impact lifestyle is, most people aren't going to do that but a relatively small number of people can have a great impact on stopping the source of emissions.

Why did you decide to get involved with EG?

The images of EG are really enticing. It looks really fun to be there. The scale of the infrastructure that's targeted with the biggest diggers in the world. It looks like something that needs so many people to challenge it. I wanted to get involved and wanted more experience of direct action and the importance of international solidarity. The impacts of climate change are global. We will feel the impact of emissions from the RWE plant just as much as we will feel the emissions from power plants in this country. If we are living for a world without borders, post the nation state, it doesn't seem strange to go and help out in another country.

The comradeship of people from the direct action community in the UK all going over together. Being involved with organising a bike ride to go there is definitely one of those things that cement relationships within the movement. These movements wouldn't go very far if we didn't hang out with each other. It's important to deal with the social side of it, with fun.

How would you describe the political landscape of the UK in relation to climate change? Governments and the public as well?

Reckless. The government has literal contempt for future generations on this planet. But as all governments behave, it's more about spin rather than actual policies or doing the right thing. It is frustrating that environmental policy seems to be more about taxing plastic bags than making fundamental changes to stop mass extinction. **The Tory government come out with long-term environmental plans but then under the radar push fracking.** They are the epitome of crony capitalism which confirms that we need to overhaul the system rather than settle for incremental changes within a completely rotten system which can only have rotten outcomes.

Generally speaking politics in the UK totally misses the point. We never look at the fundamental causes of problems, we only look at the symptoms. Regardless of what government we have it will never tackle the problems of hierarchy and elitism society. The domination of an establishment of central government takes away power from people and importantly it takes away a sense of responsibility in believing people can make changes in their own lives. Every fundamental change has to come from a higher power in Westminster which is not at all representative of people in this country.

Environmental policies of government are completely in denial. It encourages change at a consumer or individual level rather than tackling the problems of industry. It doesn't matter how many people are being taxed on plastic bags, if we're still making plastic bags then that's a problem.

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How would you describe the political landscape of Germany in relation to climate change?

Much the same. In denial. There's a revolving door between politics and big business as there is in the UK. This is very much highlighted with RWE who have very much been the target of the EG movement. Germany is a lot more innovative with renewable energy. Climate change isn't about more renewable energy it is about taking away fossil fuels. Renewable energy still within the context of extractivism and capitalism is still a disaster. You still have to extract the resources to build wind turbines which use fossil fuels. The

energy from those wind turbines then goes towards building tanks or bombs. That's just ridiculous. Germany is the world leader of green washing. Everyone sees them as the world leaders of tackling climate change. They have the dirty secret of the coal industry which is set to go into the mid-point of this century which takes us way past the survival point for climate change. It's an example of how important image and spin is to governments instead of doing the right thing. Germany put forward the image of doing the right thing but they're not looking after their own people. Perhaps that is not so important to them and no what they are there to do. In general along with Germany there is the rise of the far right. It is a symptom of wider problems. The corporate media push those lies. People are scapegoated so the real criminals rip us off, taking us to climate breakdown get off scot-free.

Maybe I should talk about Brexit? Subconsciously I don't want to talk about it. Each country is quenching the thirst for nationalism. Brexit is a huge distraction from what's going on. Whether we're in the EU or not it's not going to stop the mass extinction. That will be one of the main things we'll look back on and think why were we pissing around over Brexit? Why were people worrying about immigration in Europe when we've got much bigger problems to contend with. It's sickening how people behave towards immigrants without realising we're all being oppressed by the same forces. We're being divided by our oppressor so that we oppress each other.

I feel if there was as much anger towards the corporate elite as there is towards immigrants or even people putting their anger towards the far-right there would be a lot more fuel to the anti-capitalism. Not that we should have any solidarity with the far-right, if only we could get to the point where people never adopt those views so they focus on the real problem.

How have these two governments reacted to these two movements?

Quite differently. In the UK movements like RtP and the wider anti-fracking movement in general, it's a bit more insidious. We're hit with injunctions or legislation to make it easier for fracking companies to get a foothold. Whereas my experience in Germany there's been more repression from the police and more violence and more arrests and harsher penalties. There are people from the G20 riots who are still in prison. Lots of raids. They're both quite terrible in different ways.

What have the aims of RtP been? What are their targets?

In general terms it is about climate justice. In recent years it's honed in more against fracking, in particular the PNR front-line. The aim is to have a post-capitalist world built on renewable energy and fighting every oppression together as all oppressions are linked. As a climate network the aim is to liberate all beings from oppression. Anti-sexism, anti-racism, anti-facism, economic justice. Those are very broad aims. At the movement the focus is on stopping fracking in this country. Even so there are lots of smaller aims within that. Building a movement around climate justice, each affinity group has an aim in itself. If those aims are to cause economic damage or to slow down the industry then it all adds up. RtP has a good place in the movement in bringing new people in, skilling people up, linking people up with like-minded people and being in solidarity with frontline communities.

What have the aims of EG been? What are their targets?

Still broadly speaking climate justice and avoiding collapse basically. To me EG is a bit more overtly anti-capitalist. Perhaps that's more in it's messaging. Perhaps there isn't that much difference in the views of people organising or taking part. The primary aim is to stop RWE because they are one of the biggest energy companies in Germany with some of the most destructive practices, the biggest polluter in Europe. Who else would you go for? It's also very much about movement building and empowering people to take direct action because there is very much a safety in numbers ethos with EG that thousands of people can shut down a mine and there's a good chance you won't get arrested. You won't get beaten up by the police. It radicalises and empowers people to take further action. More recently the EG movement there is the aim to link up more with the Hambacher Forest occupation. I know the next EG action in October is to stop the deforestation of the forest for the expansion of RWE's Hambach mine.

These actions aren't to ask for these things to be shut down just for a day or to create a media spectacle but is to cause economic damage so that it's not viable to dig up and burn coal. Though I'm not sure that can be done with that style of huge mass actions there would need to be a much more significant amount of people to make it sustainable.

What have the strategies of RtP been?

Quite a bit of variety. Broadly speaking NVDA. But that can incorporate mass actions where you can shut down or block fossil fuel infrastructure just by having a critical mass of people getting in the way. Whether that's occupying a coal mine or blocking the entrance to a fracking site. Then there's also affinity group actions where a much smaller number of people can have the same impact but through slightly more radical means using specific tactics like lock-ons or tripods. A small number of people can have a much more sustained impact. RtP were able to do sustained actions for a month at PNR rather than a large group of people causing disruption for a few days. The legal implications are much more severe in this case. It's important to highlight the non-violent aspect which seems to include property and people though I don't think violence against property can always be considered violence. What that property might be doing directly or indirectly to the earth, like a fracking rig or a digger digging up coal. People disabling infrastructure like that through sabotage, I wouldn't necessarily call that violence. It's basically a form of self-defence. That's not a tactic in RtP because that would create a more negative portrayal in the media. There's much harsher legal penalties too. People could risk going to prison for smashing up a digger as opposed to a fine for locking themselves to it.

There are definitely limitations with NVDA. Looking at history when significant changes take place in society there is often a violent movement and a non-violent movement. Perhaps that will happen with the environmental movement.

What have the strategies of EG been?

The strategy is always focussed on mass direct action. Always the same tactic of a critical mass of people blocking infrastructure to make it economically unviable to run that kind of business. To stop the coal being dug out and to stop the coal going to the power stations, to stop the coal being burnt in the power stations. It's more of a media spectacle with EG with thousands of people blocking infrastructure. With these strategies there are the behind the scenes strategies that practice low-impact living, non-hierarchical, anti-oppressive organising.

With EG linking up with the Hambacher Forest more. Perhaps there is a slight change of tactics. More sustained actions as opposed to a one-off action.

Do the two movements differ in terms of aims and strategies?

Definitely. RtP has a focus on mass direct action *and* affinity group direct action. It's a lot more diverse with much more sustained results, with more legal implications. With EG there is more focus on the imagery. Maybe that's more of a symptom of the targets, like the huge coal mines, with huge diggers, it looks really symbolic when there is a huge line of people all dressed in white overalls blockading it. It's a much stronger image than people dancing at the side of the road at a fracking rig! People know what the side of the road looks like but not everyone is familiar with these images of these huge coal mines and huge diggers and even less familiar with people occupying them.

What are their similarities?

It's a very similar group of people. Quite privileged. More of a symptom of the climate movement in general. Very similar modes of organising. Consensus decision-making, non-hierarchical. People embody the same values; anti-capitalism, climate justice or how people work with each other and stand in solidarity with each other. Get the impression that there are more younger people in EG and that there is a bigger age range in RtP but maybe that's because I'm more involved with RtP. EG mobilises a lot more people, a hell of a lot more people to be honest. To think this is one of the most important events in the direct action

environmental calendar EG gets a lot of people from outside and inside Germany. Thousands of people. It's hard to explain why. There's just as much action and opportunity to get people involved in the UK. It's less far-reaching, it's a lot more of the same people.

Have either of them changed over time?

I haven't been involved in either group for long enough to know how they've changed. With RtP there's been more of a focus on affinity actions not just targetting specific infrastructure but also supply chains. The net for RtP has widened over time.

With EG it's always focussed on mass direct action. More solidarity has developed with the Hambacher Forest and more support for more controversial forms of activism like the Hambacher Forest for instance sabotaging pieces of machinery which has a huge impact compared to people occupying things for 12 hours. That can generate negative messages in the media that can be difficult to deal with. There's a lot of rhetoric about the people in the Hambacher Forest being 'eco-terrorists' so for EG trying to mobilise quite liberal people probably with politics surround non-violent direct action that can be quite a turn-off for people. But the reality is that it's one struggle, one fight so perhaps the diversity of tactics is becoming more cemented. There should be space for people that want to take part in empowering mass direct actions and set a digger on fire because both complement each other in the end. As long as we stand together and show the real problems rather than argue with each other about tactics as long as they're not hurting people or hurting comrades.

How have the particular protest camps differed? What are their similarities?

The only RtP camps I have been to have been at PNR. There is the ongoing proximity to the resistance. The camps here people have been living in 24/7 for years now. So it feels like we're here to support and complement that resistance. It has its controversies here at times but compared to the relationship EG has with the Hambacher Forest there isn't quite that level of community support. It's a real David and Goliath battle but for Hambacher it's like Goliath's army vs David's little finger. The communities are really really suppressed by RWE. They have been forced to sell their houses to RWE then these villages are literally wiped of the map. RWE and coal mining in the Rhineland is so entrenched within the history and economy. The culture of this area is that people are less willing to fight. Unlike PNR it's not a new controversial oppressive force like Cuadrilla that isn't welcome. Mining has been around in the Rhineland since before living memory.

The EG camps are far bigger. They're in conjunction with Climate Camp (Klimakamp) that as there weeks before. It's a huge logistical operation that is really well organised providing a temporary village of 5,000. It is all voluntaristic and about community and mutual aid. Those are the same principles that the RtP camps are based upon and most other environmental camps.

How would you describe the ideological tendencies of RtP?

A spectrum that covers quite liberal/left-wing politics to more ecological-anarchism/anti-capitalism. Which are quite different but still share some similar values like equality in society, non-hierarchical organising, public ownership, anti-corporatism. Even though left-wing politics and anarchist politics have some huge differences that divide is less than the far-right and the left.

What are the ideological tendencies of EG?

Much the same.

How would you describe your political outlook?

I identify as an anarchist. I don't believe that we should be governed by rulers, or a state. It's my fundamental belief that a lot of our problems come from hierarchy and domination. A tiny number of people can have such power and impact over vast swathes of the population and the world itself, the

planet. It's that fundamental way of organising that has created all these problems rather than just having the wrong kind of people in power. It's power itself that has created these crises. I lean towards anarcho-primitivism in that to really have a world without climate change and crises of inequality and resource shortages we need to massively localise things and return to the common way of humans to live together in small communities where people live off the land and you have a connection and a more tangible reliance on nature that results in respect and care for nature that we don't have right now. And that's fundamentally how humans have survived for most of our existence, through social relation, through depending on members of your community and co-operating with each other. The state formation and capitalism is pretty brief thing in the human timeline so far. It is a new deviation which we're socialised into thinking that it must be the way. What I like to think about is if you get 100 people together and this community represents a whole state, a state would have one person in charge, 2 or 3 cronies which help them run things and a small ruling class around that which would control all access to property, food, water, all resources and swathes of people would be working for them in order to get access to those. If you get a hundred people together on an island or a farm the natural human thing to do is not to appoint or let someone become leader and do everything they say. It strikes me that our politics should reflect our instinctive way of interacting with each other.

What are the different legal issues between these two movements? How have they shaped the form or action/ strategy?

Legal consequences are often avoided with EG. People aren't doing actions where they're guaranteed to get arrested. In these mass actions when people do get arrested they don't give their identity because they know the police can't detain and find the identity of 5,000 people. Perhaps in the German legal system there are less repercussions for not giving your identity. In the UK it has more severe consequences. Within RtP it's more of a given that people will get arrested. People are more accepting that they will get arrested, will get charged and maybe they can try and plead not guilty and get off but that we will get a conviction, we will get fined, they will know our details but it's worth it. But with EG there's more of a strategic avoidance that people can keep doing these actions unaccountably. There are only a certain amount of times people are prepared to get arrested in the UK before the consequences pile up. With the EG mass actions people are able to keep coming back for more. Those opportunities are far less.

How have these protests been policed?

In Germany it's typical to see riot police. There's much more force and violence to control things. They use pepper spray, batons, horses. Whereas in the UK it tends to be a bit softer, the police accept that these things are going to happen and they have to get the specialist removal teams to cut protestors out of lock-ons. It's a lot more measured. There is a definitely a different strategy. The police in the UK seem to care more about their image whereas in Germany it tends to be more of a given that the police are there, they will be violent, that's what they do. Police in the UK seem to do more intelligence gathering by trying to come across as very friendly. They tend to compromise the protests by using legislation as opposed to violence. In my recent experience the police won't drag people away but use some legislation which I think came from the troubles in Northern Ireland in removing people from an area to avoid physical conflict with people when bombs and weapons were being used. In that sense it's a bit more draconian. It's about the law.

In Germany it seems to be a viscous cycle between protestors using violence, not in EG but in the Hambacher Forest as in the police will use violence and the protestors will use stones next time they come. They always seem to be prepared for a situation like that.

What extent has there been international mobilisation for the two protests?

A lot more international mobilisation for EG. I don't feel like much of that is conscious. With RtP there is not so much mobilisation. People in Europe know about RtP but don't seem so inclined to come. Maybe it's because the actions are different in that it doesn't involve thousands of people gathered in once place going

for it together. It's probably less easy to mobilise for that kind of thing. I don't really feel like it's been tried that much to be honest. Maybe it's easier to mobilise internationals when there isn't a sea in the way.

What resources have the two movements had available to them in terms of money and human resources?

Funding comes from a variety of different organisations. I've not heard of things not been able to happen because there has been no money. Everything is done cheaply. RtP have fewer resources. Everyone is crew. Everyone chips in to get work done and everyone seems happy to do that. That's what we want society to be like. In terms of human resources in terms of numbers the question is why is there such a tiny number of people doing this in the grand scheme of things? Even if it was 1% of the UK population decided to take DA, that's what 600,000 people? The whole country would be crippled easily! A big barrier is that people are working, people live in capitalism, in order to meet our needs for money, we have to sell our time for money. It's difficult to meet our needs without money, even though most of our needs are abundant within nature. If people didn't have to work the movement would come on leaps and bounds really. It doesn't take that many people to go and live in an occupation and oppose new projects. If everyone involved could be doing that there'd be occupations everywhere, constant actions, constant presence and being able to take DA not just in terms of protesting but DA in terms of growing our own vegetable, stuff like that. It's much the same for both movements.

How would you describe the composition of the activists/organisers of the camps? How would you describe it in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, background?

Very white. Quite middle class. Privileged. The gender dynamics are fairly evenly distributed. The spaces are really tolerant spaces of people that don't identify with binary genders. I like to think these places are safe spaces for people that would otherwise be oppressed in wider society. There's still quite a big gap in mobilising working class people or harnessing the swathes of discontent among working class people where their struggle hasn't quite connected with the environmental destruction, the struggle against climate change, against capitalism even though they are caused by the same intrinsic things. It is the same with race, people of colour who are oppressed because of their ethnicity, it boils down to very similar causes to how nature is exploited but those two struggles aren't practically linked in quite the same way, yet!

Is that the same for both EG and RtP?

I'd say so. Climate change is quite an abstract thing. We're not deeply affected by it yet whereas other parts of the world are but we're not being oppressed because of our religion or our class or our race but I think about these abstract things in other parts of the world that are a lot less tangible.

Were your needs always met at the camps in terms of food, water, toilets, care? Were there any issues with these provisions of these?

Oh with EG the chocolate spread would always run out really quickly. So the answer is no. Yeah, I'd say so. That's from quite a privileged position. As a cis white dude I'm less likely to be marginalised because of who I am. If I wasn't in that position then perhaps my needs wouldn't be met. It's hard for me to truly answer that from a wider perspective. I'm also privileged in having good experiences of things like this. I've never been beaten up by the police or had a really bad experience at a protest so I haven't had to experience the support structures directly like that. From what I hear, they're quite alright.

What kind of decision making process is used?

Non-hierarchical consensus decision making I guess. Which is the theory but I guess you have to be at the table to be part of those decisions. There is a spectrum of people's involvement. Core people are going to be more involved with decision making. There's always the need to address the hierarchies that form out of that which isn't always necessarily given the attention that it deserves. I can't really comment on EG

because I haven't been involved with organising for EG. I imagine it's likely to be the same, it's got that kind of politics, non-hierarchical structure, but it has to be checked or hierarchies will form.

Do you know if RtP/ EG has worked with any environmental/leftists groups? If so which?

There's loose involvement. Other environmental groups will share things on social media. I feel like EG has done some organising with 350 and maybe RtP as well. Before I was involved there were the 'Break Free' actions organised by 350 with all these grassroots movements working with them. I don't really know what the relationship was.

Do you know what traditions/histories these movements have come from?

I feel like they come from the first time people were living on some land and the people with bows and arrows and spears. I feel like there is a really rich tradition of people resisting privatisation of the commons. Not that I know that much about it. Much more in Germany than in the UK. Throughout history there's this constant, movements mirror each other, there's a battle with the powerful exploiting the not so powerful in society. A lot of that has been centred on access to land and people being forced into the capitalist system by not having access to land. It's almost as if anti-capitalism has been there since before capitalism. But then in more modern times I guess in terms of the DA side of things now it has come out of Earth First! in the US in the '80s, the road protests in the UK in the '90s really brought this kind of NVDA into accessible protests. I guess I have to mention Greenpeace and stuff, Greenpeace were the first group that brought environmental action into the mainstream. Through quite different tactics, they have a hierarchy. Normal people doing that media stunt. I feel like we owe a lot to the suffragette movement as well. That's the epitome of people breaking the law because the law is wrong. Just following a code of morality to ensure true justice is served. They did super radical things like burn stuff down.

And how about in Germany?

I don't know so much stuff about movements in Germany but I know there's been a big anti-nuclear movement for a long time so I think the environmental movement has a debt to that movement. I guess EG is spawned out of the Climate Camp in the UK. This idea of people coming together to take action. That's been taken and expanded in Germany.

RtP Interview B Notes (Interview conducted on Skype 9th July 2018)

How would you describe your involvement with RtP?

I've been organising with them for quite a few number of years. I've been helping with a number of camps and held a number of actions. I've been coordinating for a fair few of those. Doing a range of stuff from logistics and the practical stuff of the camp to organising programmes and help with actions. I've been involved with many of the meetings we've held prior to that where we organise our thoughts and putting together the tools we have to come to decisions, help facilitate meetings, debrief. As almost as much as I could do with the organisation since about, probably heavily involved for about three years and prior to that attended one or two events. But primarily got involved heavily 2015.

Did you organise for the Didcot camp?

No I didn't organise for that. But I was helping out a bit. I couldn't actually attend in the end.

What RtP protests have you been part of?

I attended Balcombe (2013) as a punter as you might say. Didn't attend Lancashire (2014). I didn't attend Didcot either but everything since then. End Coal Now, Stay Grounded, The Rolling Resistance and Block Around the Clock.

What were your experiences of them?

They differ greatly depending on which one. I will go through them chronologically. When I first arrived and was new to the whole direct action thing I didn't find it that welcoming. Speaking to people about that since. There was a reason to that. There had been a last minute change. It was the first time RtP had done anything. It was previously No Dash for Gas that had done an action on a large gas-fired power station with a large affinity group. It was the first time since Climate Camp anything like this has happened and it was along very similar lines. It was very busy and quite hot which brought a lot of challenges to organise. And being brand new at the time there was suspicion around undercovers and a bit of reticence of you. That was my first experience. And then after getting a little bit involved with Didcot I knew a fair few of the people involved so at least that point I wasn't trusted but a known entity. Following that there was the trail of the Heathrow 13 and I attended stuff around that and helped where I could. There was a lot of crossover between RtP and that. And that led me to the thoughts around how we organise for End Coal Now. And that was brilliant I thought. There was a lot of momentum behind it, everyone was really involved, each working group had people who were competent and really thoughtful and respected despite being new. People were as friendly and as supportive as anyone might hope for with anything really. From the camp itself it only got better really despite it being very very cold. Everyone got together and supported each other to do that. We got together an affinity group, created close bonds, I'm still good friends with the people there. So from that it really spurred me to to do more. To be honest if that hadn't gone quite so well who knows if I'd still be involved, it's hard to say but because it was such a positive experience and the people were so welcoming I continued involvement. It's very good democratically but it's inevitable that people who do things make decisions, everyone's welcome to do things. If you're actively articulating in a working group, understandably you have to make decisions on the ground in difficult circumstances you can't necessarily consult an entire network and go through a laborious consensus decision making process while that happens. If you put yourself forward you partly make those decisions. Initially from my earlier involvement it seemed there was an invisible hierarchy but the more I got involved the more I didn't think that was the case in that if you were happy to step up and say you were happy to help coordinate something you will become part of that so it's not based on a clique, it's based on participation. Which of course in itself can be exclusionary because some people haven't got the time to put to it if you have significant caring responsibilities or multiple jobs and so on but that's hard to avoid and not done on the basis of a personality type or other usual means of discrimination say on the basis of gender or sexuality or race or whatever that might be.

And from then Stay Grounded which I didn't really want to get involved with. I've never been involved with airport protests but I was roped in to provide a bit of coordination with that and I didn't enjoy the experience at all. It was a bit shambolic to be blunt and lots of people moved in different directions. There was a nightmare meeting I had to facilitate which was three hours with groups of people who fundamentally didn't agree. And there was no tool to try and break that deadlock with some people just blocking decisions so in the end we had multiple actions on the same day which just about worked. That was a less than positive experience because so many people with little experience took on responsibilities that they weren't necessarily capable of filling. And that's not a slight on them, it's just that they didn't quite know what they were signing up to when they put themselves forward. I was peripherally involved with that and got more involved when we got nearer to the date and things were a bit of a nightmare. Oddly enough, in terms of coverage, that was as good as we ever got. Using the analogy of the swan above the surface, there's a lot of kicking and struggling going on but it looked very elegant and positive above the surface.

Then there was the rolling resistance. It was kind of a different one because it was over a month there was a relatively small group of people ensuring there were different things on different days, an action team. I don't know who was on that. I was part of an affinity group that tried to do an action on the first day, or rather the second day after the locals did it. That was a difficult experience in terms of physical violence and not being able to fulfil what we'd practised. I wasn't too bothered about it. I just shrugged my shoulders and said that's the way things are. I didn't feel like I needed to check in with the welfare team. I didn't require the same level of support. I trust the support work was done well but I wasn't very involved myself. I was then involved with a second action which actually did work later on that week with local support which was very positive.

And that brings on the most recent action Block Around the Clock which I was more heavily involved in. I took a role that was not very familiar with, logistics. I chose to do that, I thought it would be good, rather than me always making decisions, to actually do support stuff, in a sense be told what to do to be contributing. It was nice to be useful in that way without having to tell other people what to do. But it was quite a lot of work, as it always is. Logistics in terms of going to Blackpool beforehand, sorting out supplies for the camp. So I've done a range of experiences there and they've differed depending on the people involved and/or how well organised it was.

Have you organised for any of these protests? If so, which? You've pretty much answered that really.

Yeah, pretty solidly.

Why did you decide to get involved with RtP?

Initially I'd been involved in more conventional campaigning in terms of my local Friends of the Earth group and first getting involved with that; I attended the Birmingham volunteer centre to find out what was happening in the area. There was a handful of charities I'd picked to contribute towards. One was to do with environmental stuff and the other was to do with homelessness. It just so happened the Birmingham Friends of the Earth was the first one to come up. I met with Phil. He seemed really cool. He was at the time the manager of the building and from there got involved with the more traditional end of campaigning, petitions, lobbying councillors, doing little stunts which are very very safe are never going to get you into any kind of issue but as a result aren't going to get you any coverage or interest from people. From that I got more and more involved. There was someone in that group who later got involved in RtP called K who you may know, from Wales. She gave a talk in Birmingham on how one might help with the forthcoming camp in Balcombe. I wasn't yet in a position to help organise because I'd never really been to a direct action camp before I just turned up with my young Friend's of the Earth hat on with a number of other people from Birmingham. It was that first experience of it. Initially I found it jarring and a bit confrontational and aggressive because I'd never done anything like that before it seemed very different and not the norm. But as a result of that I saw the coverage of it and the sense of community from most of the people there. A few years went by and nothing much in the UK was happening in the UK which I thought necessarily warranted

direct action in my then mode of thinking, I wasn't aware of many of the struggles that were going on. But it seemed like fracking wasn't really happening. There was slow progress but it just seemed like an ongoing thing that might happen but didn't and then eventually it came to a. One thing I've missed out is I attended the Paris COP with RtP and that was something that really changed my mind. It was a really positive experience. I attended the COPs before with young FoE as a badge wearing delegate member and it felt like we were entirely window dressing as the civil society there. None of the decisions that were made with our views at all, it was purely an intergovernmental exercise with a handful of business feeding in, which was a rubber stamping exercise that we gave an air of authority to. So going with RtP felt a bit more direct, a bit more important given the nature of the COP, it was the most significant since Copenhagen and something needed to be done. And the traditional approach with which I'd been involved with for so long wasn't bearing any fruit at all. Not only in terms of outcome because direct action finds it very difficult to get that as well but it wasn't garnering any publicity either or any focus on it. Although an important thing to do, it needs to be another tool in the toolbox and direct action is that and RtP was the most credible and well-organised and one that achieved its results in a way which meant the others such as EF! And others such as Rising Up! And others haven't really done. So that's partly why I got involved with RtP. And then there's also the social element where I get on really well with the people, many of whom have a similar background to me in some respects, the traditional been to university, some professionals there you can engage with. A combination of those things.

How would you describe the political landscape of the UK in relation to climate change? Government but also the wider population.

I'm going to segment those into three strands. One is government itself, an arena of politics say government and parliament, the next would be society in the NGO world and the next would be society as a whole. With government it's pretty obvious it's not really a priority particularly with Brexit, and ongoing issues there. That's the overwhelming paradigm is being interpreted by and at the moment climate change is right at the back of the line. The economy is much more significant, the impact it would have on jobs, those are really paramount in the Brexit negotiations and productivity and anything that isn't that is not, there's a handful of issues really. The economy taken as a whole, GDP, productivity, wages and employment rate number one. And then linked with that is international trade and trade deals and how we relate to the EU in a post Brexit landscape and a range of other things. Climate changes really fits somewhere below that and it's really been pushed off, it's never been at the top of the agenda but it's not even in the middle anymore, it's not really an issue people talk about so much it's like, oh didn't Paris deal with that? Oh we're still building renewables here and there. And when it comes to decisions like unconventional gas extraction, building new coal mines, if there's any opportunity to pursue a new energy source it looks like the government will take it. There's been positive steps around coal with Savid Javid as home secretary but it's really been piecemeal. No real joined up thinking there.

In terms of wider civil society there's not been much focus ENGOS are a much smaller part of a larger patchwork and they don't really get coverage. If you're in the bubble of green NGOs you think FoE, Greenpeace, 350 are these enormously powerful institutions which get great coverage and are enormously influential with government. But if you sit in a more disinterested way you realise they are one amongst many NGOs which don't really get much of a look in when it comes to government policy on the environment, never mind with other issues. It seems like Brexit and other short-term issues are taking preference.

In terms of the wider population I just don't think people care that much. I think there's two kinds of care, I think there's the common stated preference and revealed preference. People often state that they're opposed to fracking and they don't like fossil fuels, they support renewables, they're concerned about climate change but their revealed preference be it when they vote for political parties, not campaign, buy products that are produced in the most environmentally unsustainable ways it is revealed with their preferences that they don't really care about these things at all. Like putting your head above the parapet. The average member of the public does not engage and that is true of this as well, unfortunately as well I should say.

How has the British government reacted to RtP?

On the whole the British government doesn't care. It's got so many other issues to think about and I think if we think the British government are going to do things then I think we're barking up the wrong bush. I think very few environmental direct action movements have achieved that. Perhaps around the margins like unconventional gas extraction which we've focused on for some time there is a thought that if they do try and push it forward there will be a large number of actions that will disrupt and at least for local government will cause a whole range of issues there. For me I think we're more directed at the companies involved than the government itself. Government, as someone who has worked in policy for some time has many many things to deal with and we are but one miniscule cog in a much bigger patchwork of stakeholders and I doubt we're on the radar at all. I'm sure in terms of police they gather data on us to mitigate what we do as and when we organise actions but I other than that I don't think they have much to say at all.

What have the aims of RtP been?

Again there's two things there. Our stated aim which is to link struggles which are social economic and environmental together and to be an intersectional movement which challenges those. I don't think in reality we do. I think we'd like to think we do but I'm not sure we do. In essence I think what we are is an organisation which through a handful of big actions a year, maybe one or two and draws attention to issues which may have been overlooked otherwise and which we can really draw a spotlight towards and provide support for locals and demonstrate how they might put in place systems to oppose this stuff. I think that's really what we do and most recently it been around unconventional gas extraction. And when we look at it's origin as well when we look at Balcombe the next protest camp was at the current fracking site in Blackpool. The only one that hasn't been about that is End Coal Now but that was a discrete action that was times well to coincide with a Welsh Assembly election. But on the whole rather than what we want to be and what we are is an anti-fossil fuel big action network. And I've not really got a problem with that. I think it a useful part of a much bigger movement.

What have the targets been for RtP actions?

22:43

Perhaps it's useful to say why. Balcombe was as I understand from those involved a very last minute change but it made total sense because it was it was the main focus of environmental activism in the UK. It got enormous coverage from the national media partly because of where it's placed and it made total sense to focus on that. It was the first in the UK. I think Balcombe at the time was conventional oil drilling but people still though of it as fracking but's been around new fossil fuel infrastructure at every camp I've been involved in. Balcombe, Lancashire, Didcot wasn't ostensibly about Didcot power station but a somewhat incoherent linked series of actions looking at the fossil fuel industry's connections, on the one side PR, the sites themselves and the MPs involved in it themselves were targets. Stay Grounded was an anomaly was different in that it was against airports and was a different mode of action. End Coal Now, The Rolling Resistance and Block Around the Clock which were both in Lancashire. The overarching theme is to be against fossil fuel infrastructure. And an attempt to do so in coordination with locals.

What have the strategies of RtP been?

To do big 1-2 day direct actions to raise the profile of these issues and to garner loads of media attention and to energise a new group of activists to get involved. RtP is trying to train new activists to get involved and we get the big media shot around End Coal Now, a great photo and it goes viral but then a secondary effect to train new local groups to do their own affinity group actions. There is an overarching strategy to have local groups but we don't have a grand plan made from strategy planning days etc. It's more about this is an issue let's do something about it. Of course there is some planning in advance, maybe over six months

of so coming together at gatherings to decide that. But there is that reactive element where we can change our minds which on balance is quite useful.

Have any of the aims, targets and strategies changed over time?

Yes. The early actions were focused on one thing and then would move on. There's been no real contact with Balcombe or Didcot afterwards. The tendency has been to do one big action and then move on. But with PNR, because it's the first, there has been longer-term relationships with locals and groups there and so many people in RtP have been working with those people there to pull of strategies themselves like with the United Resistance where all the local groups work together under a shared aim. RtP have brought people together. I think that's where the strategy has changed where instead of moving on let's build those connection and make a real tangible change and make it as difficult as possible to get the first bits of fracking off the ground and make it evident to investors and companies that people aren't going away from this, it's going to be a constant slog to get this though. So that's one of the changes I've noticed recently.

Have any of the strategies changed over time?

There is no detailed long-term strategy. There is an overarching goal to support the resistance against fracking. Locals are seen as key decision makers in the process. They attend the gatherings in Blackpool and they are part of working groups. That's one thing that's changed in terms of strategy. We do need to look at our long-term strategy.

What are the ideological tendencies of RtP?

You could ask ten people and they'd give you eleven different answers. **We work under anarchist principles**, we have no leaders, working groups come in and out of existence there's no hierarchy. There's coordination groups anyone can join and they have shifted significantly over time. It doesn't mean you have to come with a fully-fledged anarchist ideology, we're not gonna quiz you on Emma Goldman or Baukunin. It's fairly open frankly in that regard. Most of the people are of the left. There are people who are socialist, communist, even social democrat with localist leanings. I'm not quite sure how to define myself. To be honest I'm less concerned with how people define themselves and more concerned with what they do. **Certainly the camps are run under anarchist principles broadly but that is not to say we are strictly speaking, anarchists. I'm certainly not.** I'm sort of a leftie but with a really strong devolution, letting local people make decisions themselves kind of edge to it. We have these things on our website as principles but do we refer to them at all when we're making decisions and when we're setting up camp? Of course we don't like no other organisation does. For me that was why I thought the process was a bit daft in spending hours drafting them only to never use them again. I think there are broadly anarchist principles with a deep pragmatism of let's get on and do stuff, and do actions. But we're not exclusionary to people if they have a slightly different kind of politics. Of course if you're a true blue member of UKIP I think you're not going to be particularly welcome. If you're going to be discriminatory in any way, that would be deeply problematic if you held views like that but I've never seen anyone anyway been asked to leave a meeting. We're fairly open in that regard.

How would you describe your political outlook?

This will get a bit more political philosophy based. I have a great sympathy with communitarianism so that's people like Micheal Sandel among others. A number of the issues they can fall down on is they can be a bit exclusionary and they can fall down on immigration and not be particularly welcoming of people. So kind of that smooshed with a really deep believe in devolution and actually giving communities the dignity to make decisions to make decisions about their own lives. A deep democracy in that sense. With a kind of green edge but not a deep ecological one, I wouldn't go that far. Political ideologies are useful in so far as they are useful, that's some kind of tautology but I don't believe in a strict adherence to one set of principles. As and when something works, adopt it and co-opt it. I have great sympathy with the cooperative movement and the idea of mutualism people are participants in an organisation and putting in work to drive it forward. I'm

not a strictly speaking anarchist, I think there's a role of government, particularly local government and we should allow decision making to the lowest appropriate level. Of course there needs to be co-operation on matters that affect us all from designing an electricity network or creating a defence policy it's understandable you don't want necessarily each individual county council deciding on having an army. Anarchist decision making works really well on a micro scale but when you blow it up to a full confederacy it runs into enormous problems and I've even seen that in small organisations as well. So I'm a communitarian subsidiary devolver with a little bit of a green anarchist tendency as well. And if you have a more convoluted contradictory answer I'd be interested to know!

What are the different legal issues of RtP? How have they shaped the form or action/ strategy?

That's really interesting given what's happened recently (referring to the PNR injunction). With groups in the '90s and Climate Camp there's been a tendency where some groups have had to be a bit more secretive than others. For certain coordination crew you don't want to be advertising who they are at every occasion. There's lots of groups where you can be incredibly open. So long as you're open from the start then that's not a problem. Some groups that hack communications have to be secretive as well. Of course we are planning actions that break the law but in a fairly minor way. Always non-violent of course. I think the most severe sentence was given at the rolling resistance or say Didcot like aggravated trespass which is a very minor criminal offence under law. I certainly wouldn't support anything that would resort to violence. That's important in our ideology, we're entirely non-violent as well so if that can be shoehorned in some way that would be very useful and accurate for that matter. There's also the question of injunctions as and when they arrive which create much more difficulty because of course talking about breaking an injunction is breaking an injunction itself and the less you know the better because then you are potentially not liable for prosecution under an injunction but that has been a tactic which has started to be used a bit more and something that we will have to consider more and more. But I'd say on the whole unless it's the actions themselves, though a lot of us have criminal convictions now or bail conditions like being a certain distance away from a site or companies premises, but as of yet no-one's been served a custodial sentence who's done any of these actions and I wouldn't want them to either unless they thought it was absolutely necessary. That's how we've dealt with the law. Of course there's organisations like Green and Black Cross and a number sympathetic solicitors. And everyone has their own view as to whether to plead guilty or not guilty which is a personal choice and of course people have different reasons for pursuing that as well.

Do you think those legal issues have shaped the form of strategy?

Sometimes. I'm trying to think of an example of something that stopped us doing something we might otherwise have done for legal reasons. Not being in the actions team for the most recent action I'm a little bit uncertain as to what thoughts were there but my suspicion is that it was given a lot of thought and some people may have stepped forward to take on board the consequences of that. Bearing in mind breaking the injunction is not a criminal offence it is a civil offence and can only be enforced by the company in question. Has it shaped people's involvement? I think it has because of the people involved with the civil service or teachers, if they were to get an advanced DBS check they may think twice about getting a criminal record. So it could have done. I've never seen when deciding actions that we've gone down a different path because of the legal consequences because on the whole they're not that severe. So on the whole I don't think it's been a massive influence.

How have the protests been policed?

It differs enormously. In Balcombe it was fairly heavy handed. There were people linking arms, pressure point manipulation and so on and that's occurred at other actions as well. I'd say from End Coal Now onwards they seem to have taken a very different approach which is almost facilitating what we're doing so long as we announce it in advance so long as it's a mass action and look for folks who are taking the piss a bit and target them. But certainly for Block Around the Clock and End Coal Now they just allowed us to do it and realised that was a much easier avenue to go down. They did have a lot of teams ready to go on both occasions if there was something a little bit cheeky but it wasn't needed on those occasions. Rolling

Resistance action was very different in that it was a daily series of actions and in that it was more security guards that were violent and security guards and police were a lot less severe. And in many instances were more involved with trying to cut people out. I didn't see as many overreaches from police as I did with private security. Policing has differed depending on the action taken but the tendency has been if it's a big action, most recently, engage more in discussion with PLOs and then if we do something a bit more spiky arrest and do what police do but on the whole violence has been a lot less common than it is in other places.

What extent has there been international mobilisation for RtP?

On a micro level there has been. I know in Lancashire someone was brought over from the states who focuses on these issues of fracking in Pennsylvania I believe. There one or two internationals at the Rolling Resistance, a couple of First Nations people from Canada. And maybe a handful of other European activists. There certainly was for Block Around the Clock. A couple of Portuguese people came. On the whole though there has not been a tendency to mobilise international groups of people to come, even though we welcome them of course. At workshops there have been a couple say from EG or Code Rood or whatever it might be. I think the feeling's more we find it quite a challenge to get people from the UK to attend and from local areas and that's probably where our effort's best spent. For me if it's local issue it gives it a degree of legitimacy to have folks from around the area as well. The effort of international mobilisation hasn't been a priority.

What resources do you think the RtP has had access to in terms of access to money and people?

There are grants from Lush and other organisations we apply for as and when and we also do our own little fundraisers. There's not some enormous pot of money we have somewhere that we use ad hoc. Something I'm keen to do is make our finances more professional. We certainly don't have an accountant or anything but making sure we have enough money to do what we want to do and not get to a situation where we scabble round. I think our finances are ok at the moment and we try and spend money as frugally as possible. In terms of people we don't have anyone who would want paid obviously, everyone has other jobs, careers and we have quite a few people who are in NGOs so they have access to information that way and everyone helps to feed in some of them are organisers with connections with locals. But in terms of people the people who come are the right people we advertise our events out in the open.

How would you describe the composition of the activists/organisers of the camps? How would you describe it in terms of age, ethnicity, background?

With ethnicity it's predominantly white and that's true of the majority of the environmental movement in the UK. I don't think RtP is the exception there. There are lots of issues there but I'm not certain RtP can resolve them. Because it involves taking direct action it's understandable why people who are a little bit more privileged would want to do that. From the point of privilege maybe it's the people who are a bit more privileged who should take those roles because the additional advantage of support and a whole host of other reasons.

In terms of age it differs a reasonable amount. There are people who are students involved and people who are retired as well. At the most recent camp there were people in the action and coordination teams who were retired. People in their 40s as well and plenty of people in their 30s and 20s. The overarching tendency is to have people in their mid to late twenties to about 40 is the overarching age bracket I'd say. And again there is a whole range of reasons why that might be. The environmental movement in the UK has tended to be a bit older, certainly on the whole in FoE and Greenpeace, the organisations that were set in the '70s. That's partly why as people who were young in the '70s are now older. Whereas as RtP's relatively new, it's a bit exciting, some of the actions do require physical capabilities, it's understandable why it might be younger people and they don't have the responsibilities that some other people with kids or mortgages and so on. We obviously encourage people who have children or other responsibilities to get involved, it's just the natural tendency that they may not want to even with the support that RtP can offer.

In terms of class background it's overwhelmingly middle class and there's a whole range of reasons for that, be that the whole environmental movement has tended to be that. Because we are not that proactive with recruitment, in that we host events and we invite lots of people to come along it's the people who are already a bit involved with environmentalism, it's rare that someone says "I don't know that much about climate change but I'm looking to get involved," it's often people that have been a FoE member or worked at an NGO or been to P&P (People & Planet) who try to get involved. My background in society as a whole but compared to a lot of people in RtP I'm closer to working class which is quite interesting and shows a lot of the work we still have to do in that regard.

There is one issue that I think we do quite well, and maybe I'm saying this because I'm a bloke and I don't notice the discrepancies, there is good psychological evidence to say that say if you have 65 men and 35 women in a room that men think it's an equal number so I'm woefully aware of that. But in terms of "leadership positions," no that's probably the wrong definition, in terms of coordination roles say, people who've been leading action groups and so on. It's been very good with the gender balance. It's not an issue I've seen since I've been involved. Part of the reason why I've seen it as such a vibrant and positive movement is that it certainly the early days it was very led by women and that has made it quite positive and very different to a lot of environmental movements I was previously involved in particularly the mainstream NGOs. And also I think it's fairly accessible in terms of LGBTQ as well, there's certainly a lot of people from that community that are engaged. And it could be again my lack of awareness because I'm a hetro bloke but I haven't seen to many issues in that regard. They could be under the surface and I'm just missing. If we were to give ourselves any kind of kudos in terms of gender and sexuality, they'd be two of the more positive areas I'd think.

Were your needs always met at the camps in terms of food, water, toilets, care? Were there any issues with these provisions or lack of them?

For the most recent one I'd say no because I was in charge of all of that stuff! What I would say at previous camps, at End Coal Now there were issues with water because it really was in the middle of nowhere. It was very cold but it was still pretty good. And knowing what it's like from the other side the enormous work, cost and people hours that go into that sort of stuff it really is a miracle we do as much as we do and I think its a real testament that we do. But I think on the whole logistics of those things in RtP have been uniformly excellent. I can't recall anyone having a big issue or concerns there. I think we've done it pretty darn well. I think at times there've been issues with childcare, we could have put more on more but the issue for that again is that finding volunteers for that is incredibly difficult and it does require a lot of checking around. At coal camp we had a children's tent and people looking after that but it does require a lot of work and security issues. That's one of the things we could do a bit better. But I think on the whole we're getting better and doing pretty well at it.

What kind of decision making process is used?

I think there's a range of them. I think the formal decision making process we have to decide the kind of action we'll have, where it will be is the standard consensus decision making. Proposal, block, stand-aside, active consensus and all the rest of it which is useful for lots of things we do. I have other issues with that decision making process and I think often people go through the forms of it rather than looking at the spirit it's intended to do. It takes enormous amounts of time. For some things I think we're just better off, especially when we need to make a decision quickly, rather than having to go through that whole process, I should clarify this is not prior to a camp when we're organising something, this is a kind of split second we've got to make a decision. Sometimes the spokes have gone away and had to make decisions fairly quickly and we can't go through with all this process we just have to decide "is everyone ok with that?" and maybe there are some stand-asides but we just have to press on and do something. As mentioned a lot of the decision making goes on, and I think this is really important, people are given some autonomy, dignity and respect, you're in a working group, you've got a remit, if you stay within that remit you guys can make your own decisions not everything needs to be bought to the group whether or not we choose portaloos or compost toilets for example or whether or not the action team put together a certain kind of costume

rather than another or what kind of lock-on we want to have. We need to trust people to make those decisions. When it comes to the big decisions this is where it has been used. Those are kind of the different decision making tools we use.

Over time, how have the camps changed?

Partly but exclusively due to the geography. It's never been an active decision to change the way we organise the camp. They are all very based on the action. Balcombe was modelled like climate camp. End Coal Now we were in the middle of nowhere, we couldn't plug stuff in, we had a wind turbine up and some solar panels we had to make do with that. It was on the side of a hill things were a bit more sloopy. We had a lot of space so we were a bit more freer with what we did with that. When it came to the most recent camps we've done, the Rolling Resistance and Block Around the Clock because it was inside Maple Farm there was a lot of looking into other sites we might use in addition **to that and it came back quite dry because** there are lots of farms nearby with very strong political views around fracking one way or another. They don't necessarily want a bunch of activists descending on their field. We had to shape it entirely around that. We had to have a curfew unlike End Coal Now. It's been entirely shaped by the geography rather than lets try and change the nature of camps.

Have RtP always sought permission from the landowner to have the camp?

No. No. **Laughs.** I know at Balcombe they just got on the field and eventually they just got on with it. For End Coal Now numerous bits of land were discussed with people who lived in Myther (Tydvill) and how close it was to the mine, is it used for anything? In this case it was owned by the council. As and when it's an ally certainly for the Rolling Resistance and Block Around the Clock in Lancashire we did ask permission because of course John has been very supportive of the movement and we wanted to bring him on board and it's an active hub 24/7 365 days a year. As and when we've needed to we haven't asked permission.

-Do you know if RtP has worked with any environmental/leftists groups? If so which? Any groups involved in decision process?

Yes. DPAC (Disabled People Against the Cuts), local groups, Frack Free Lancashire, Flyde Action Group, UVAG (United Valleys Action Group), The anti-fracking group in Balcombe. We try and work with local groups as much as possible. Bigger NGOs, 350 helped with media for End Coal Now, Coal Action Network, Earth First! Lots of other groups have spoken at our workshops but I'm not sure whether that qualifies as working with. **Plane Stupid. Fuel Poverty Action.**

Are those all environmental groups?

DPAC, Fuel Poverty Action and UVAG are not just environmental. UVAG do a range of issues with open cast coal and an incinerator. PCS have spoken at a range of events. They have a good environmental record.

Have any of the groups mentioned been involved with the decision making process of RtP?

Different kinds of decision making process. UVAG helped shaped the camp (End Coal Now) we liaised with the enormously. They took an advisory role. We ran everything we did by them. Similar to frack free groups, they attend our meetings. End Coal Now people are involved with RtP. If they're part of an affinity group and they join then that's great. Many of the local groups are happy for us to get on with things.

What traditions/histories RtP has come from?

Climate Camp. Direct action movement of the Road Protests. The anti-GM movement. Reclaim the Streets. It's that direct action, environmental, leftie, anti-G8 stuff, people involved with that. There's a slight Quaker twinge to some people looking at the spiritual traditions. I'm agnostic. Spiritual people, like Buddhists and green spirituality. There's a combination of all those things.

Have you attended any of the EG protests?

I was with you for one of them!

What was your experience of it?

There was a range of things. Getting there a bit later than everyone else. Not being from Germany as is obvious. It felt like we were just arriving at something. Told what was happening and just got on board with it. It's made me realise something about that decision making process we peruse. As soon as you get that big it kind of falls by the wayside. There's a handful of people who've made some decisions a long time ago and you just go with them. It was great fun, it ran well, the finger structure, no camping because of the weather. People clustered with people they already knew. It felt like activism by numbers. You march and power through and then once you get through you have no idea what you're doing! Let's have a long and not well thought out consensus decision making process. That where consensus decision making is bananas. When we ran in, we got there quite early. We could have gone much further in the mine. There was a paralysis. We were stuck in a large circle and it got smaller and smaller. I linked arms in a chain and within minutes was snatched away. A lot of that could have been avoided. What was the aim? We didn't have equipment to lock-on. I enjoyed it and I thought it was good but it made me realise there were some deficiencies.

They've done it a lot, the same thing. It feels like it Climate Camp in that when you've got this style of action and you mobilise lots of people for one day it's useful but it's limited in that the Rolling Resistance was mobilising lots of affinity groups to do individual actions. It depends on your goal. If it's to stop coal mining it doesn't work because it's just one day. If it's to gain attention and media attention it may do but it may not because it's been done many times before. It makes me think maybe try a new idea. A new target, a new approach. It was good. Would I go again? I'd have to think about it if it was the same model.

The power structures were very opaque. I had no idea who was in charge or coordinating certain things or how they were decided. There was no mention of that in the introductions. I guess because it's so large you can't possibly determine that or make that clear.

What comparisons would you draw between EG and RtP?

EG was inspired by the Climate Camps which was the forebear of RtP. It's much larger, Germany has had many more environmental activists for a much longer time. It's FoE is bigger. It's Green Party has been in power, it's so significant it's had foreign ministers among other things. It's a developed green movement. CDU peruses green policies far in advance of the British Labour Party in terms of the transition to renewables. There is an underlying green twinge to life that isn't present in British politics. It mobilises internationally because of where it is in Europe. It's superficially similar. There's has been one issue for the whole time which makes it easier for infrastructure. The action doesn't have to change. A lot lot larger. A finger structure. There is consensus decision making, I think they work very differently. It's non-violent in that you push past police but you don't punch them. The police behave very differently to the UK. RtP have looked at different targets creating lots of opportunities. In terms of numbers in RtP for End Coal Now I'm not sure it would have got any more media attention if it had been 3,000 not 300 because we closed the mine down for a day anyway. That large number is really hard to provide infrastructure for. I think there's lot to learn from each other. Until I have an understanding of EG and RtP's goals I don't know. They have spokes in a similar way. A similar organisation structure in terms of working groups. I'm not sure where the money comes from for them so that would be interesting to know. They would need a larger amount of money. They're both very white and middle class, it looks that way.

RtP Interview C Notes 25th July

How would you describe your involvement with RtP?

Involved for a couple of years. First involvement going to EG with RtP. Tried to get involved from there. Tried various working groups with mixed experiences.

I had just moved to London to get involved with climate activism. I moved into a house who was going to EG. So I decided to go. Didn't know what it was but knew I wanted to get involved with that kind of movement. It's an empowering experience to be part of an action. Didn't have a particularly positive experience with the RtP crew at EG but knew they did great things so was willing to find a way of being useful.

What RtP protests have you been part of?

Break the Chain 2017 was the first thing I got involved in. I did media work and planned an action in my region which was quite fluffy. It was a great way to be part of the action planning process. We were gonna do something spiky but that fell through. I was glad it was fluffy it was good to see the process happen and see the roles. After Break the Chain I took on roles for the Rolling Resistance. Since then more central organising. Progressed through various stages. Regional action planning groups was a good way to skill up. National planning I feel more under-skilled and it affects my confidence.

What were your experience of them?

Very varied. Mainly that they were fun and creative and there were many ways to get involved. I've found that I've made myself do tasks that I'm not good at because they needed to be done but I've realised you should do what you're good at. They're the times I've really enjoyed it, when I did creative things. I've done social media work and press stuff offsite.

Why did you decide to get involved with RtP?

I'd been involved with some political movements but I get sick of groups and meetings and people that just talk and don't do things. I find it much more empowering and fulfilling to get stuck into planning things that hit the industries where it hurts. Even if it's really exhausting it seems more worthwhile than regular campaigning.

Have you organised for any of these protests? If so, which?

Break the Chain, Rolling Resistance, Jig at The Rig, Block Around the Clock. Part of media, regional action planning, action group for a big mobilisation, I'm now in the support and recovery working group. Very varied experiences. I saw media as a creative thing. I saw the media working group as always really stretched. I always found it very stressful. Constant computer based work. Group chats. I wasn't able to do that much and found that frustrating. While on site I did some social media work that was good. I don't enjoy or have much capacity for lots of computer based jobs. It stressed me out a lot but it was hard to take a step back, but since then I've done action and recently support and recovery. Getting more involved with facilitation. Focusing on what I enjoy.

How would you describe the political landscape of the UK in relation to climate change?

We're very good at not accepting any responsibility. From a young age it was the realisation that climate change is not going to affect us here in quite the same way as people in the rest of the world, and that's the thing that makes me fight it. People are just distracted here and the government distract people and make people think it's not urgent. That's why I like RtP, it's fun and accessible through the way we run events.

How has the British government reacted to this movement?

I think they definitely have. We're one of the main organisations that's got national media attention on it. Our movement stopped the UK from talking about fracking publicly so much.

What have the aims of RtP been?

At one of my first gatherings in Lancaster a couple of years ago it was about our aims. It was a terrible but also fantastic start. We're focussing on energy and climate change and link up all the other aspects. In our narratives in the media we're trying to talk about economic and social injustices around climate change. Always targetting the fossil fuel industries with a broad intersectional approach.

What have the targets been for RtP?

Since I've been involved we've solely been targetting the fracking industry. Mostly around the site at PNR. I think targetting the supply chain has been great. It makes it harder to ignore. We did an action an hour out of London at Centrica and got some great media coverage. The PR companies.

What have the strategies of RtP been?

A big portion is economic damage. Our media strategy is a core part of our work. Getting the word out so people change their minds. Explaining how it's linked up with other industries. After Break the Chain five supply companies dropped out. The more you do that the more expensive it is for the company. Sub-strategies come down to economic damage.

Have any of the aims, targets and strategies changed over time?

Yeah. When we first did Break the Chain it was a very different style of action for RtP. Before it had been about **squatting a bit of land and doing an action from there.** I was a newbie and it was new for everyone else. There was a lot of uncertainty. Communications were hard. Working on a regional level made it easier for me to get involved at that point. We're trying to assess what has had the best impact. Target small supply chains and **mass mobilisation camps because they're really important for the movement. Trying to think about what we can create together.**

What are the ideological tendencies of RtP?

Mixed. It's very hard to pin down because RtP is such a fluid thing. **It's a flat structured organisation, it's non-hierarchical and that's a very strong value for us. But we organise securely so that creates interesting dynamics.**

How would you describe your political outlook?

I don't put myself in any boxes. **Somewhere between anarchist and socialist.** The state of the world and climate change has had a massive impact on my mental health so I try not to think about it, I try to focus on doing things instead. I wouldn't really label myself in anyway. I like being part of communities that also care and are trying to create a better future while trying to stop all the terrible things that are happening now.

What are the different legal issues of this movement? How have they shaped the form or action/strategy?

Yeah, definitely. I think that's why the regional way of organising is very good. It's much harder for the law to work out what you're doing. There is a security culture in RtP and people have different views about that. If you're doing a big camp that makes you an easier target for the law. But that what's makes us so powerful as well. With Block Around the Clock **blocking the site for 54 hours,** that only happened because we were so strong willed. In the end we didn't have as many people as we wanted to block it in the way we wanted but because of our reputation the police let us get on with it. Using the law to your benefit.

How have these protests been policed?

Pretty shockingly. I feel like I've got rose tinted glasses on after Block Around the Clock where there were only blue-bibbed police. At the Rolling Resistance it was really horrendous. I was there for a few weeks. I was involved with the first RtP action and we got completely battered by security and police. We never expected that much brutality on the first action. We hadn't prepared for it. From then on they ramped it up. It made it a really scary environment and scares people off. That's the reason they do it. It worked in their favour. As long as there's enough of us it's hard to stop the majority. It's really empowering when it's successful. It has a big impact on mental well-being. Even when they're not kicking off, just being around them is an intimidating experience. That level of authority that they push on you is really demoralising. That's why I'm glad we're doing support and recovery stuff. You're aware all the different police forces are working together. At Block Around the Clock there was someone there from the Met Police and was on a tour with a local policeman who was telling him who had been organising. It is a concern. It's very demoralising. Looking at history it's not worth getting scared off by it. There will always be more of us than them.

What extent has there been international mobilisation for RtP?

As far as I've been involved. Nothing really. In the last six months we had an exchange of activists. We're aware that's something we should be doing. The events we organise could and should be attended by people from all over Europe. That would definitely make it a lot stronger joining the movement. We need a global movement. We have been good at regional organising.

What resources do you think the RtP has had access to in terms of access to money and people?

We are quite good at getting grants from different sources which finance all of our big mobilisations. Raising money for fines are more done on a regional fundraising basis. I think we get a comfortable amount from grants. I know we got £10,000 from Lush recently. In terms of people, for a lot of reasons a lot of our organisers have gone off to different things. A lot of the queer organisers recently have gone off to do things. At most events we have a healthy amount of new people coming in. Something we miss is getting new people and keeping new people. I think that is because we mostly organise remotely which is hard because you have to have quite a high level of confidence. In terms of kit, there are people who are not necessarily within the movement but are good at sourcing things we need. For big camps having members from the autonomous tat collective is good. It's usually individuals in the movement who know others that can help. A lot of it is personal connections. A lot of the main organisers work for NGOs. Some people are able to do paid work for RtP and steer campaigns within the NGOs they're part of.

How would you describe the composition of the activists/organisers of the camps? How would you describe it in terms of age, ethnicity, background?

Very white. Very middle class. Definitely within the organisers. Within activists it's a bit more mixed in terms of class. It's easier for the well-educated people to take on the organising roles. Lots are able to jobs that help them within the movement. The main organisers, late 20s/late 30s but it spread quite a lot. Quite a few middle aged and older people. That's a massive asset to have the different age groups. A few students. From what I hear there used to be more queer people organising and a queer caucus although in a lot of ways I find it a healthy place to be as a queer. Overall among the organisers we're very London based. With it's pros and cons. It's helpful to have people nearby but it does mean it's very cliquy. And certain tasks like media is always London based people. That's where the people who work for the NGOs live.

Were your needs always met at the camps in terms of food, water, toilets, care? Were there any issues with these provisions or lack of them?

Definitely been looked after. I always feel like I can rock up to an RtP event and know I'm gonna get fed and have somewhere to sleep. Once you've been involved you can trust the organisation. In terms of other needs I have always been looked after emotionally but I think that's based on strong friendships and affinity's with people. A lot of the social occasions at gatherings is about spending money which I find hard because I don't have much money. There are usually funds for travel but you have to chase it down with people. And have the courage to speak up and say you're struggling in that respect.

What kind of decision making process is used?

Consensus. Mostly enjoyed the way RtP has used consensus. We're non-hierarchical on the whole and that's usually functional but there's always some level of hierarchy based on time and investment. There are times when other people's voices are heard much more than others which is very frustrating. We don't give enough space for asking questions and for new people to work things out. People aren't willing to give enough time to making new people feel included. In the beginning my involvement in RtP was very stressful. I'm very aware I am friend with the ones running the show. But fresh in my mind is how scary and intimidating I found it all. I put effort into talking to new people but in those high stress events you need to have people you have affinity with, who understand you. You want to make things easy for yourself when you are having a strong emotional response. In big meetings we always discuss these things to make things more accessible but putting them into practice is hard. It's because it's such a fluid organisations, people come and go, it's hard to take discussions from specific events into the wider movement. There's not a single place where someone who feels like a part of RtP comes together. We have online organising. I only go to gatherings I don't look at Basecamp. I know people who look at Basecamp and don't come to gatherings. So I think that is a big reason for why we don't take steps forward in that way.

Over time, how have the camps changed?

Do you know if RtP has worked with any environmental/leftists groups? If so which? Any groups involved in decision process?

We do in a lot of different capacities. For example the next RtP gathering is going to be at Earth First! That's because there's a big crossover of people who are active in those two groups. I see that as an interesting decision to bring us all together. It's difficult because RtP is such a diverse set of people, I've heard completely opposite responses to it. A lot of people are really excited and are planning to go to the whole camp. Then I've heard from more privileged people in RtP, probably the NGO workers being like why are we doing that? They're not organising in as much of an impactful way, what's the point of doing that? That's what makes it difficult to organise with different groups, there's always different opinions of said groups. We work with Frack Off, we work with FoE groups, Fossil Free groups, it's different in each region as well. That's something we're very aware we need to do more of. I've been to discussions about that, but again they seem to be good discussions and then never actually go very far.

You've named all environmental groups. Are there any leftist groups at all?

No, not that I can think of.

Do you know what traditions/histories RtP has come from?

I'm aware it's come from the Climate Camp movement, with a lot of the key organisers from that. There's a lot of similarities like having the mass camps, having the programmes that come from that. I wasn't part of that so I'm not particularly aware of the similarities or how it's evolved since then. I think that's all I'm aware of. I guess in general direct action. I was originally aware of RtP doing aviation stuff so people from Grow Heathrow and people from the Occupy movement to have occupations and camps and mass mobilisations in that kind of way.

Do you have any critiques of RtP at all?

Yeah, **laughs**. It's not very outward facing in a lot of ways. We can quite easily spend a lot of time, resources and energy on some amazing events but it is the same faces you expect turning up. Sometimes our media strategy is really good at getting the message out to new people but I think it's not always the focus to bring new people on board.

The way of organising being done quite remotely. That's very difficult for lots of people. As we talk the talk about joining the social and the economic and all these different issues we should be going out and not just linking up with environmental groups but supporting queer struggles, migrant struggles, supporting the working classes. Really that's where we're going to have a massive impact. We need to accept our privileges. You have to be very privileged to fight for climate justice because for migrants of course they're not going to get involved with this movement because for them the immediate thing is being deported. There's a lot of talk about bringing different organisations in but really we should be going to support other people. We don't really do much of that.

In the way we do meetings and gathering we speed through things far too much.

We're constantly trying out new strategies which I can see why, it's amazing using our brains and our resources and capacities in an exciting way but at the same time it makes it quite hard to build on what we're doing and make things more impactful and get more people on board. There's definitely pros and cons to that.

A lot of it comes down to the social circles of people and not being too friendly to new people in the way of skilling people up. We're very good at mobilising and getting new people to events but we're not very good at supporting people to find roles that they'd enjoy. There's definitely a big gap there. Me saying that the media team is always really low on capacity we should be running loads of trainings to get people excited and involved in that working group. A lot of the key organisers are good at taking on far too much and not actually asking for help. And not finding the ways to provide support for people asking for help. The fact that every gathering and new event that we have there are 20/30 fresh faces who have never come to an RtP thing and they're all coming because they have energy and capacity to get involved with our movement. So rarely do people end up in organising roles and even when they do it's very difficult for people to feel confident in them for a very long time.

What was your experience of EG?

I went to EG in 2016 in May. Me and my partner at the time and a friend I'd just moved in with decided to go and there was a partner of another friend. We got the bus with RtP. There were two minibuses. There were about 30 of us from the UK who went together. That was really exciting. I'd been to COP21 and done some fluffy things but it was my first time really taking some direct action myself. Even though we got the bus with RtP people I didn't really feel like very well included into that group because they were a very tight knit group of friends and I guess from their perspective they just saw me and my partner and my friend and just thought 'oh they're friends.' A lot of people didn't make that much effort to involve us which was a bit sad because we definitely wanted that but felt too shy. But at the same time we were in a finger with RtP. Whilst at EG I was in a finger that occupied a train tracks and we were all at one point of the train tracks and we were all making a big decision using consensus and a lot of our finger decided they were going to change plans and go and run into the power station. Most of the RtP group decided they were going to go and do that but me and my partner and friend, it was our first time taking action and we were so not up for that we stuck with the original part of our finger and occupied another part of the rail tracks. We could see the power station from there. We were there for a few hours. The police came to evict us, and then at that exact time when the police were moving forward to evict us they all just left because that was the moment when everyone ran into the power station. So we actually ended up staying there the whole night. We had hot food delivered to us which was amazing. Most people got sleeping bags and blankets but we fell asleep before that happened and no-one put any one us! So we woke up in the morning crying we were so cold and we just looked at around and everyone else was cosy in sleeping bags and we thought 'did no-one think to put one on us? That is mean!' Yeah, it was really sad. It was an amazing event. I found it an amazing experience and nothing like I'd experienced through RtP actions. As soon as I left for the actions it didn't

feel like it was me taking the action anymore, I was a cell in this massive organism, I was a resource for the movement, I was part of this massive thing, I wasn't making decisions as an individual, I was making decisions for the group, for the action. And again that's a really interesting thing, and yeah it has effects on you physically and your mental wellbeing but I found that really empowering and something I wasn't expecting to experience but definitely just like get really stuck into it, and yes, this is amazing and powerful.

Did you have anything else you wanted to add?

Also at EG I remember feeling very hungry for a lot of it. I felt like it had an incredible impact, incredible as an experience to see infrastructure like that and exploring it cause it was huge. And the impact it had and the media, that felt incredibly powerful. But as an experience it did not feel anyway near as fulfilling as other things. I really did not have enough food for the whole thing. I wasn't supplied with blankets when I was supplied with blankets on a train track in the freezing cold. I didn't feel like there was much for me to get involved in. Maybe because it was my first thing and me being quite shy with that but at the same time it didn't feel like there was much programme to be getting involved in learning about things in the same way as RtP does, and I think that's something we do really well which is cool.

RtP Interview D Notes 8th August 2018

How would you describe your involvement with RtP?

I've been involved in different levels of organising since it began. I was more of a participant in the early years taking on organising roles as and when during events. I have been more involved with the organising in later years.

What RtP protests have you been part of?

I think I've been to most of them. Yeah. I can't think of any significant ones that I've missed.

Are you talking about the large mobilisations as opposed to the smaller actions?

Yes. As national things RtP has organised as opposed to individuals from RtP doing something.

What were your experience of them?

Overriding impression, there's never as many people as you'd like to have but you could say that about anything. There's always been enough people to do something good. We've always had functional numbers so that's the only thing that matters really. They've all been different which I think is a real strength of RtP. They've all pushed boundaries in some way. My experience of being on them has always been very positive. The collective, communal, chipping in, direct democracy vibe has always felt very strong and been a really important and enjoyable part of the experience.

You said that they've all been different. How have they been different?

Different targets, different formats, different layouts. Coal, or fracking, or airports. The targets have always been different. The tactics have often been slightly different, whether it's a mass action, or decentralised actions, it change regularly relatively often. Tactics for establishing those have also changed.

Why did you decide to get involved with RtP?

From the initial No Dash For Gas action it was a resurgence of the environmental direct action movement that had gone quite since the ending of Climate Camp. Having been engaged in Climate Camp it was an obvious progression. Caring a lot about the issues that RtP works on and the methodologies that it uses it was an obvious home.

For you in particular who'd experienced Climate Camp?

Yeah. For someone who cares about environmental issues, has been involved in direct action and agrees with as a tactic and having been involved with Climate Camp.

Have you organised for any of these protests? If so, which?

I was most involved in the coal camp (End Coal Now) and the Rolling Resistance were my two main ones.

How would you describe the political landscape of the UK in relation to climate change?

07:33 We have had a pause on any progressive legislation. And actually have been seeing increasingly regressive legislation since the Tories came to power in 2010. There is some level of awareness across the population but I know that it's lower than some other European countries and it felt like we had a fairly established environmental movement but that was mostly based on conservation like RSPB and that lot. So

don't have at this moment a particularly strong climate movement and it's seen as separate and not integrated into broader climate justice struggles I don't think.

How has the British government reacted to RtP?

I think it's hard to isolate RtP as a single actor. I don't think the government responds to RtP specifically but it clearly is responding to the anti-fracking movement, RtP has played some role in that movement. I think in particular the government is responding to local opposition against planning rather than mass direct action stuff. The government is reacting to that with permitted development trying to make it impossible for people to engage in the disruption to the fracking industry.

We've done some stuff on coal and we have seen some movement on coal but that's not solely down to RtP, it's a broad movement and down to common sense and reducing emissions around coal.

What have the aims of RtP been?

Broadly disrupting the fossil fuel industry. Building a grassroots climate movement and acting in solidarity with local affected communities.

What are the targets been?

Mostly fracking. Also coal. Also Heathrow. And the support structures that exist around those industries, the PR companies, the supply chain, that sort of stuff.

What have the strategies of RtP been?

Mostly one-off events and mobilisation moments and actions. The tactics within those strategies have involved blockading or decentralised actions.

Have any of the aims, targets and strategies changed over time?

I think the broad strategies have remained the same. I think it's the tactics that have changed. The aims have remained the same but the targets and the tactics have changed. We're not doing community organising or digital mobilising. The specific tactics within our quite set strategy have changed. One off mobilisation type things.

Why do you think the tactics have changed?

I think because one of the key values is it's sense of innovation and creativity. That's a principle value that organisers hold dear they will always be looking to innovate to do things and not be predictable. I think it's because that core is quite ingrained keeping it interesting for organisers. Having music, having different things to do, making it difficult for the industry to know what's going to happen next. The tactics have had to change with the targets changing. An interesting challenge that RtP has had in targetting the fracking industry is that the fracking industry doesn't exist yet so how do you target an industry that doesn't yet exist in a physical form that mass direct action mobilisation often lends itself to. There's been a need to constantly innovate and change because that's the nature of the target we're targetting. Unlike EG mobilisations there's not a clear physical space that would make sense necessarily.

What are the ideological tendencies of RtP?

Oooo. In what sense?

The people that are involved, organisers or participants could you identify any ideological tendencies within RtP?

Distinguishing between RtP as an identity and its participants, I see the ideology of RtP around participation, people power, movement building and demanding change as opposed to asking nicely. There isn't a strong ideological push. The organisers of RtP their ideologies are almost exclusively far left or left but they will often engage in other forms of politics as well. Their ideologies aren't exclusively tied to the ideology of RtP but that's not necessarily true. Leftie, movement buildy, climate justicey, yeah.

How would you describe your political outlook?

Left. I'm definitely not an anarchist. I believe the state has an important function in the redistribution of resources. Participation is a key element. The redistribution of power is a key tenant as I see of my political ideology and driving force and the redistribution of power and I suppose resources. Yeah.

What are the different legal issues of this movement? How have they shaped the form or action/strategy?

Yes they have influenced the strategy quite a lot and it's like fear of injunctions has made us act in particular ways and fear of arrest. The affordability of arrests has changed the way we do our tactics and what things we do. Those are two main things that shape what we do and the way we do things. I guess it's not a legal implication but undercover policing had a huge implication for organisers creating a lot of fear. People worrying about implicated. Which has huge ramifications for security culture and how the organisation itself is structured.

In what ways?

There's the tangibles and the intangibles. It's created a much more cautious and fearful approach and it means that certain action groups are private or closed. We pay more attention to which bit of information are shared where.

How have these protests been policed?

Laughs Very variably. With the exception of the Rolling Resistance and Balcombe we haven't really had a huge interface with the police. We've had the luxury that climate camp didn't in actually being left relatively alone by the police with the exception of those two. That was around specifically the action sections rather than the illegal camp. Those are the two occasions where the police presence has been heavy and very noticeable. But otherwise partly because of the tactics that have been used they haven't had a huge presence.

How do you think the tactics in those actions led to more police?

In Balcombe it was the sheer numbers and a real novelty and fever-pitch moment. Balcombe was a real epicentre and battleground and key flashpoint moment. That's why there was such a huge police presence there because of the scale of the resistance, there were thousands of people at a set site. With the Rolling Resistance it was the numbers of people and the level of disruption it was causing and the fact there was a set physical site they could physically be at and knew where to be. Partly about location, partly about disruption, partly about numbers.

Why do you think the numbers have fluctuated so much over the years?

I think it's about how effectively we doing our organising, doing our mobilising. I think it depends on how compelling the action is and how we're selling it. How good the infrastructure is for getting people there. Have we put on buses? Slightly factors like that and most of our networks are in the south, lots of the actions we've done recently have been in the north. It's factors like that. I don't think it's that people care less about direct action. Largely its logistical stuff.

What extent has there been international mobilisation for RtP?

I guess we've had a few international folks come. There were a few folks at the Welsh coal camp but it's not really something we've ever prioritised as a thing. We don't have network infrastructure to be able to do that. International participation is driven by those internationals that come rather than RtP. Probably because our resources often feel so stretched for national mobilisation, we've never got our act together to include international mobilising as part of that. That's partly because our time frames, the time frames you need to use if you are internationally mobilising are much longer. The European camps that mobilise internationally set their dates a year in advance. RtP for whatever reason doesn't do that. We don't set ourselves up well to do that kind of mobilising.

What resources do you think the RtP has had access to in terms of access to money and people?

We have a core set of organisers and people who have been involved in various ways who are relatively skilled and committed and on it. We have a good reputation for being organised within climatey movements. That's an important resource that we have. Our human resources and our skilled organisers not our network or ability to mobilise large numbers, we just don't have that. In terms of money we have always been able to access small grants that have been able to cover the cost of actions. Not large amounts of cash.

How would you describe the composition of the activists/organisers of the camps? How would you describe it in terms of gender, age, ethnicity, background?

Almost exclusively white. Mostly young. Mostly but not exclusively middle-class. Urban rather than rural, organisers definitely, I don't know about participants. Mostly southern.

How has it been organising with the Lancashire Nanas who are mostly women, lots of older women and mainly working class?

We have a specific way of organising in RtP that has developed partly our suiting our demographic. It means very engaged folk who can use the internet well and can come to meetings and that is very different way of organising that other groups use particularly the Nanas and groups with other demographics. As the relationships have got stronger with individuals between the two movements our collaboration has got better but we definitely don't share a process, we act in solidarity and we coordinate but we don't collaborate in a full sense in that our decision-making process happens in separate places and that's partly as a result of different organising structures of those that work and those that don't with different people. That's partly about demographics and geography.

Were your needs always met at the camps in terms of food, water, toilets, care? Were there any issues with these provisions or lack of them?

No. But we've never had numbers arrive much bigger than we were expecting so I don't know how you would deal with that situation. But so far no.

What kind of decision making process is used in RtP?

Formally consensus based decision-making for the big plans. Then individual working groups are relatively autonomous and empowered to make decisions that they need to make in order to do their work.

Do you know if RtP has worked with any environmental/leftists groups? If so which? Any groups involved in decision process?

We work with the front-line communities that we work with on a particular action. And that includes other groups we've worked with on particular actions. We've worked with Fuel Poverty Action on a couple of

things and we've had partners that we've loosely supported to do stuff. Because so much energy goes into maintaining the internal culture and cohesion for key decision-making processes we don't have official collaboration or space to think about that but hold many informal relationships with different NGOs and groups in the movement like UKYCC (UK Youth Climate Coalition), 350, Friends of the Earth, Earth First! We have maintained those relationships with others in the environmental movement through connections of organisers rather than having a formal working together with other groups.

And any other groups that aren't specifically environmental?

In the past I think we've worked better with groups that aren't environmental. At the moment I don't think we have particularly strong connections. We have some connections with unions but not that I can think of no.

Where do you see has RtP has come from within the broader history of the environmental movement?

It's come from Climate Camp. Lots of the key people at the beginning who set the culture had been involved in the Climate Camp movement and borrowed lots of the culture and decision-making structures and working group structures. With the difference from the outset that we want to be more intersectional. Have a specific social and economic justice named in our mission. The feeling at the time it was formed that the broader politics had shifted and were different. Lots of political energy was going into lots of other social justice movements. It was the combining of those two forces.

What would your criticisms of RtP be?

I've got lots of those. I don't know how much of criticism it is but our main problems are that we don't put enough thought into processes and structures and ongoing participation of people. You're either very in, in which case you're almost locked-in because of the people that you know and the processes that you understand and get swooped into but we don't have a very good way of keeping people engaged or bringing. If you're in the room you're going to be engaged in that process well but if you're not in the room when that particular decision gets made we don't have the processes or structures to have more people getting involved in those kinds of things which means you get progressively smaller rather than bigger. Because we have a national structure rather than a more autonomous regional structure the base building and important number recruitment that happens ultimately at a local level, we don't have that. Which means it's hard to mobilise big. That's my main criticism. Things like national gatherings are not fit for purpose and some of the things we have inherited are unhealthy. We have an aversion to leaders because we have an aversion to hierarchy and there is a difference between leadership and hierarchy. It can be unhelpful.

We don't give ourselves enough time to organise things.

What was your experience of EG?

I thought EG was great. I had a good time. I definitely felt like a tourist but that was fine for me. I was happy with that. I thought the vibe was definitely different. The noticeable things were that, one of the things was the level of community. I think it's partly a scale thing. If you're at RtP the idea is that everyone is crew, you're encouraged to take on tasks. That's part of the dynamic as well as understanding that's how you engage people in the process a bit more. That kind of community building is much harder when you have thousands of people not hundreds of people. I don't even know how you would do that. I think the other difference was the level of hype. RtP puts a lot of emphasis on hype, fun and parties as a really important part of movement building and that was a very different vibe at the EG I went to. The bar ran dry and we were like, what?! I thought it was great. It was very very impressive and amazingly organised. As an outsider, apart from the lack of food extremely extremely seamlessly organised.

I was at the 2016 one in Lausitz.

There's visible differences with the outputs.

