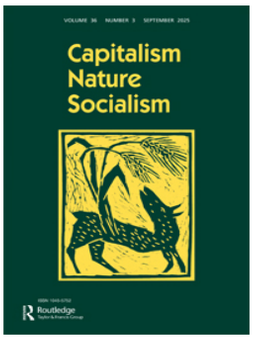

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Resistance to Extractivism in the Sperrins, North of Ireland: Care, Commoning and Post-Extractive Futures

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ABSTRACT

As the extractive frontier expands out into peripheralised parts of Europe, branded as critical for the green transition, communities are resisting. I build on feminist and decolonial scholarship which has conceptually widened extractivism from a physical removal of resources to be understood as a logic, worldview, a way of relating in the world rooted in coloniality. This article contributes to these debates by asking in what ways are communities resisting extractive logics in the Sperrin Mountains? Here in County Tyrone, North of Ireland communities have been resisting gold mining for more than ten years. Drawing on activist, creative and participatory methodologies I detail how the resistance is challenging extractive logics in the Sperrins by transforming relations with the human and more-than-human world. This is characterised in three ways, firstly through building relations within the campaign based on care and commoning, secondly, through relations with the more-than-human and thirdly by building relations with other translocal frontline communities. In this article, I explore the role of care, commoning and social reproduction in producing these counter narratives to extractivism. These practices, I argue, create the post-capitalist and post-extractive relations and point towards ecosocialist and ecofeminist futures.

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KEYWORDS Extractivism; ecofeminism; decolonial

Introduction

This article explores resistance to extractivism in the Sperrin Mountains, North of Ireland[1], through an ecofeminist lens. Learnings are shared from a six-year activist-artist research project with communities who have been resisting plans for a large gold mine, by Dalradian Gold, for over ten

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[1]I use both terms "Northern Ireland" and "the North of Ireland" to refer to the six counties found in the North of the island of Ireland where the Sperrin Mountains are located. In this place, naming is a deeply political act and the inclusion of both names aims to acknowledge the different identities and communities found in this part of the world.

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years. Community resistance started as early as 2014, with the campaign Save our Sperrins established in 2015. Momentum has grown since, making this a strong environmental justice movement on the Island of Ireland with wide-ranging international connections. I draw on feminist and decolonial approaches to understand how communities are resisting the logic of extractivism in the Sperrin Mountains by practicing non-extractive relations based on care, commoning and solidarity.

This mining proposal, which has not yet gained permission, but is currently subject to a public inquiry[2], sits in the context of a global extractive boom for "green transitions". Ireland has been identified as a hotspot in the "European Mining Boom". In Ireland, around 25% of the North and 27% of the South have been concessioned for mineral prospecting licences (Sullivan 2021). This sits in stark contrast to figures in the UK, where only 7.7% of Scotland, 6.4% of Wales and 0.2% of England are covered by licences (Greene 2022). Marginalised rural and Indigenous communities across Europe are impacted, from lithium mining in Portugal (Dunlap and Riquito 2023) to incursions into Sami lands (Lassila 2018), to the hunt for critical minerals throughout Ireland (Cirefice, Mercier, and O'Dochartaigh 2022; Sullivan 2021). Decarbonisation by dispossession (Dunlap 2023; Sovacool et al. 2021) has been coined to explain how already marginalised communities are sacrificed as the extractive frontier expands.

I argue that the resistance movement in the Sperrins challenges extractive logics in three key ways; firstly, through performing alternative relations between those involved in the resistance, secondly, by creating strong relations with the more-than-human world and thirdly, by building translocal relations through international solidarity networks. The resistance movement is weaving together new relations when people come together to protect their land, air and water. In this article, I explore the role of care, commoning and social reproduction in producing these counter narratives to extractivism. These practices, I argue, create the post-capitalist and post-extractive relations and point towards ecosocialist and ecofeminist futures.

Firstly, this article explores ecofeminist theoretical and methodological debates concerning extractivism. Next, I introduce the case study of the Sperrin Mountains, and the political, economic and socio-ecological context that extractive logics operate within. Then, resistance in the Sperrins as commoning and care is explored, with a focus on practices of resistance and social reproduction as well as how this is rebuilding community relations.

[2]This public inquiry has been suspended twice and littered in breaches of national and international law (Strecker et al. 2025).

Ecofeminist Perspectives on Extractivism

Feminist scholarship (Barca 2020; Ekowati et al. 2023) attests that the growing popularity of "extractivism" in research and praxis is important if we want to focus on systemic solutions to our current crises. Feminist political ecologists (herein, FPE) (Barca 2020; Ekowati et al. 2023) and other critical feminist and decolonial scholarship (Gómez-Barris 2017; Yusoff 2018) highlight that extractivism is a specific way of relating to the world. I build on this to argue extractivism as not just the physical extraction of resources but a worldview and about relations of power, as it represents one of the dominant paradigms of neoliberal capitalism.

An ecofeminist perspective locates the roots of the climate crisis in systems of extractivism, which are "deeply entwined with the dynamics of coloniality, imperialistic forms of corporate power and deepening inequalities" (Ekowati et al. 2023, 24). Extractivism is directly related to the notion of "sacrifice zones" (Klein 2014), places that can be destroyed for the sake of so-called progress. Gómez-Barris (2017) has called these areas the "extractive zone", areas that colonial capitalism sees fit to sacrifice. Extractive logics seek to enclose mineral resources, while also enclosing and erasing socio-nature relations and other ways of knowing (Ødegaard, Vindal, and Rivera Andía 2019). I understand extractive logics to be non-reciprocal and as working to destroy, enclose and rupture relations between people and the more-than-human world.

Central to colonialism and extractivism is the practice of enclosure (Federici 2004). Many FPE and critical geographers draw on a Marxist understanding of extractivism that goes back to the idea of primitive accumulation. The enclosing of land and resources from the common into private property was the cornerstone of the transition from feudalism to capitalism and a central pillar of the expansion of European colonialism (Harvey 2003; Marx 1893 [[1992]]). Feminist and autonomist Marxists (Federici 2018; Harvey 2003; Midnight Notes Collective and Friends 1990) have argued that this wasn't a one-off event, but these enclosures continued, with neoliberal extractivism representing one aspect of the "new enclosures" that continue to dispossess today. Extractive capitalism continues to enact violence through the language of "development" and a prioritisation of FDI, and narratives of economic growth (Chaudhary 2021; Federici 2004; 2018; Sultana 2022), which also rings true for the Irish context (McCabe 2013; Slevin 2016).

The global mining industry is working to position itself as a leader in the energy transition, with claims of sustainable mining as central for the switch to renewables. The need to transition to renewable energy is deeply necessary, however, the system that has created the socio-ecological crises rooted in the logic of extractive capitalism cannot be left intact. The proliferations of

green extractivism and green growth solutions legitimised by the climate crisis narrative have been called out by FPE who push for system change that looks at more than carbon emissions (Cirefice and Sullivan 2019; Ekowati et al. 2023; Harcourt et al. 2023; Harcourt, Ingrid, and Nelson 2015). The ecosocialist and ecofeminist critique of green capitalism and green extractivism is of vital importance at a time when narratives of "green transitions" justify the sacrificing of peoples and lands already peripheral to the capitalist economy. Extractive frontiers continue to expand around the world driven by a high global metabolism for resources (Tsing and Lowenhaupt 2003).

Counter-Narratives and Earthcare

Post-extractivism as a burgeoning field relies on the praxis of bringing visions of other worlds and alternatives to extractivism into being (Gudynas 2021). Part of a post-extractive exercise is to challenge extractive logics and create counter-narratives. Focusing on those resisting extractivism and challenging extractivist logics is one way to tell different stories, to challenge the "master narrative" of the Anthropocene and foreground counter-narratives (Barca 2020; Plumwood 1993). Following Gómez-Barris (2017) attempt to decolonise the Anthropocene by documenting life otherwise, the alternatives that exist in the extractive zone that are not destruction or just survival, I feel it is important to document other ways of being and seeing in the Sperrins.

Relationality has been explored to challenge the dualistic thinking of capitalist modernity. Many FPE (Barca 2022; Harcourt et al. 2023; Merchant 1980; Plumwood 1993; Shiva 2016) Indigenous scholars (Kimmerer and Wall 2020; Simpson and Betasamosake 2017; Tallbear 2019; Whyte and Powys 2020) and activists have highlighted that relationships of kinship with each other and the more-than-human in caring communities is the foundation of socio-ecological justice. It is because these relationships are unbalanced and disrupted that we face ecological, social and climatic crises today. Leanne Simpson highlights that, "The alternative to extractivism is deep reciprocity. It's respect, it's relationship, it's responsibility, and it's local" (Simpson and Betasamosake 2017, 75). These alternative visions of non-extractive relation building are central to the theoretical contribution of this article, as I explore the ways resistance challenges extractive logics in the Sperrins.

Ecofeminist approaches have highlighted the role of care in creating different relationships. This includes the different aspects of the concept of care: as a form of commoning, as social reproduction and gendered labour; looking after human and nonhumans; and more-than-human interspecies reciprocity (Barca 2022). Apart from capital circulation, which

constantly expands and occupies new areas, the study of new enclosures contend that social solidarity creates new spheres of communal relations (Tsavdaroglou, Petrakos, and Makrygianni 2017). Commoning is an important practice highlighted by ecofeminists (Clement et al. 2019). These represent the everyday actions of those resisting neoliberal extraction that are building different ways of relating to place and each other. Historically and today women have been on the frontlines of the defence of the commons from enclosure by extractive industries globally. Women commoners are taking action to undermine extractivism and create alternatives to capitalism (Federici 2004; Giacomini 2014; Shiva 2016).

Barca (2020) explains that "Earthcare" (Merchant 1989) is part of social reproduction and care work which allow for the maintenance of everyday life. This expanded sense of care includes the more-than-human world (Fisher and Tronto 1990). For Barca (2020; 2022), Earthcare labour builds on the concept of land/body/territory (*territorio/cuerpo/tierra*) expressed by Indigenous feminists in Latin America. It works to counter the depletion of capitalist modernity by replenishing both human bodies and more-than-human nature (Barca 2022). Barca highlights here the potential for Earthcare struggles, like in the Sperrins, to challenge capitalist systems and point to alternative economies, as well as ways of being, relating and thinking.

An ecofeminist perspective argues that capitalist modernity could not survive without being subsidised by both the domestic care work of feminised bodies and the Earthcare labour of regenerative ecological practices and resistance movements that stand up for the more-than-human world (Barca 2020; 2022; Mellor 1992; Salleh 1997). These practices are not considered "productive" labour by extractive logics, but they are the reproductive labours that sustain life. I use this framework to understand resistance to extractivism in the Sperrins because it points to the non-extractive relations that are created through Earthcare labour, and the revolutionary potential of such resistance.

Non-Extractive Research Practices

This article explores the extractive logics that reduce communities and environments to sacrifice zones, non-sentient resources to be extracted from. In carrying out work of this nature ensuring that the research process itself is not extractive is of paramount importance. Feminist researchers have been pivotal in challenging extractive relationships, focusing on anti-oppressive research practices and bringing an ethic of care to research encounters (Johnson et al. 2020; Junka-Aikio and Cortes-Severino 2017; Luchies 2015; Milan 2014; Tuhiwai Smith 2012).

In the Sperrins, I drew on a diversity of methods and practiced self-reflexivity to be aware of power dynamics. I employed artist-activist engagement

or organising-with, being part of the movement as an activist and active participant. I used creative participatory methods such as photovoice, a form of participatory photography (Cirefice 2022), and counter-mapping (a critical cartography involving participatory mapping) (Cirefice 2022). As well as walking-with (embodied countermapping, spending time to get to know each other and the land) and the complementary method of in-depth interviews. A feminist approach to research within extractive frontiers is increasingly drawing on creative and participatory methods to challenge power imbalances and ways of seeing. Photovoice and countermapping offered opportunities for those resisting extractivism in the Sperrins to represent their places in their own terms, not through the "extractive gaze" (Gómez-Barris 2017) of corporation or State.

Case Study: The Coloniality of Extractive Logics in the Sperrins

The need to recognise colonial legacies and contemporary conditions in Ireland when examining rural resistance movements and how extractive capitalism has developed on the island is key (Beatty and McCabe 2024; Bresnihan and Brodie 2021, 2024; Deckard 2016; McCabe 2013; Mercier and Holly 2020; Mercier 2025). Dwayne Donald defines colonialism as "an extended process of denying relationship whether it be with the places we live, our head and our heart, or people who look different from us" (Donald quoted in Bueno-Hansen and Falcón 2017, 63). In this sense the work of (re)building relations with the land and more-than-humans in the places we live and resist is a deeply decolonial project. The knowledge systems of capitalist modernity reject the webs of relationality that make up our lives, webs that include human and more-than-humans. A decolonial praxis involves re-existence, doing and being otherwise, of collective actions that build different relations to place (do Nascimento 2023) and making visible the webs of relations we exist within (Bueno-Hansen and Falcón 2017).

Ireland is a semi-periphery within a capitalist world system (Beatty and McCabe 2024; Bresnihan and Brodie 2021, 2024; Flaherty 2013). There are specific spatial inequalities across the island, especially across rural-urban divides. These are inherited from colonial divisions, understanding these legacies from an ecological lens is important to see how relations to the more-than-human were reordered for capital accumulation (Bresnihan and Brodie 2024). Rural peripheries within Ireland have become "sacrifice zones" repeatedly through history. The current mining boom across the North and in the Sperrins follows this pattern. The border region is not only a site of colonial and conflict legacies, but also at the forefront of the struggle for environmental justice in Ireland.

The North has its own particular economic structuring; it underwent a "Double Transition" to both peace and neoliberalism (McCabe 2012). This

neoliberal model of development embraced after the peace process, is often held up as a way to conflict transformation across the world (Kelly 2012). Attracting foreign direct investment, often in the form of extractive industries has become the economic policy of the North. The commons, the land, the air, the water are the silent victims of the peace process, as the state has followed a development model that seeks to facilitate developers (Orr 2015).

Within this context both governments in the North and South of Ireland are extremely facilitative to mining capital (Cirefice, Mercier, and O'Dochartaigh 2022; Sullivan 2021). Ireland, North and South have ranked in the top ten for many years, in terms of The Fraser Institute's policy perception index, which measures how attractive a country's policy climate is to the mining industry (Cirefice, Mercier, and O'Dochartaigh 2022). Modern mining emerged in the South of Ireland in the 1960s due to facilitative legislation (McCabe 2013), it emerged later, during the 2000s, in the North as the conflict de-escalated (Sullivan 2021).

In this gold mining project, the wealth will be extracted, to the private equity company[3] who ultimately own the company and the Crown Estates, who own the gold under the ground, receiving 4% royalties. The facilitative regulatory system for transnational mining capital has been noted by a director of the company who is quoted as saying the, "jurisdiction has been very supportive […] I have worked all over the world and I haven't seen this level of engagement (from government)" (Anderson quoted in Monaghan 2016). Legal and academic experts have highlighted the environmental injustice surrounding this application in the Sperrins (Strecker et al. 2025).

The directors involved in the project in the Sperrins have been involved in cases of environmental and social injustice around the globe, in what has been called a "legacy of environmental devastation" (Corporate Watch 2019). In 2015, the CEO of Dalradian Gold, Patrick Anderson, stated in an interview, "I'm not talking about a single mine here, we are working on a mine camp here" (Bloomberg 2015). However, resistance has been fierce with around 47,000 objection letters lodged against this project (Glynn 2024), much higher than any other application in Northern Ireland. The resistance expanded rapidly in 2016 when the company announced plans to use cyanide (this was later removed). The movement has continued to grow and now includes active participants from across Ireland and internationally.

Extractivism is not a metaphor, extractive violence is experienced in bodies and places (Murrey and Mollett 2023); this is exemplified in the Sperrins as the embodied, place specific logics of extractivism are felt in overt and

[3]Orion Mining Finance is based in Delaware but has subsidiaries in key tax havens such as the Cayman Islands (Corporate Watch 2019).

subtle ways. Those resisting in the Sperrins have faced death threats, surveillance, corporate policing, criminalisation, physical assault, harassment, online trolling, emotional stress, community division and more (CAJ 2024; Greene 2023; Ní Bhriain 2019; Rimmer 2019). Globally extractive violence is also gendered (Caretta et al. 2020; Cirefice and Sullivan 2019; Venes, Barca, and Navas 2023) While the extreme violence of sexual assault, murder and disappearance is not common in struggles against extractivism in the Irish context, there are still gendered dimensions of this intimidation. Participants in the Sperrins noted that women's cars were being followed at night in an explicit intimidation tactic.[4] Gendered violence was experienced during another anti-extractive movement, the Shell to Sea campaign, when male police were recorded joking about raping protestors (Slevin 2019).

Resistance has incorporated multiple tactics from public meetings, community celebrations, protests and marches, exhibitions, writing and sending objection letters, legal challenges and direct action. As well as an occupation of the site on Crockanboy Hill called the Greencastle People's Office (GPO). Central to the movement has been translocal solidarity building, this is being done on an all-island basis (see the formation of CAIM – communities against the injustice of mining – in 2021) and on an international scale (Cirefice 2024; Cirefice and Sullivan 2023). The movement has been successful at building international solidarity through activist, NGO and advocacy networks. Within this context, I explore the ways the resistance movement embodies, performs and enacts counternarratives to extractivism and exposes other ways of relating in the "extractive zone". Central to this, is the concept of social reproduction, and the practices of commoning and care (Figure 1).

Resistance in the Sperrins: Commoning and Care

> "*Ar scáth a chéile is ea mairid na daoine*." "People live by mutual assistance" – Irish proverb (O'Dowd 1981: 15).

The GPO occupation on the land the mining company would turn into their waste storage facility became an important focal point for the struggle. It is a physical and embodied protest and occupation to defend this land and halt the enclosure of minerals. It also became a space for building relations between local and national people involved in the campaign, as well as international visitors who came for visits from all over the world (Cirefice 2024; Cirefice and Sullivan 2023). Meetings, events, celebrations and everyday chats over tea were held there. Participants also noted that they began to engage with and notice the more-than-human world in closer ways

[4]In Derry Human Rights and Arts Festival (2020) Save our Sperrins member outlines the human rights abuses faced by members of the resistance, including women"s cars being followed at night.

Figure 1. Tea at the GPO, Quote from Mary during a photovoice session. Photovoice booklet (Cirefice 2022).

through being at the GPO. As well as a play area for children, you can find bird boxes and feeders dotted around the site. During research encounters participants described the GPO as a site of sanctuary, solace, care, craic, focal point, epicentre. This site also offers an embodied experience, to protest, to be together or to take time out and recuperate.

Crockanboy road is a quiet country road that featured heavily in my research project from photovoice and mapping sessions, to interviews, informal conversations and walks along this road with participants and visitors from around the world. In 2021 an abandonment notice appeared along this road without warning, stating the road would be given to the mining company. This road is not insignificant – beyond being an important route used by the community for generations, it is home to the GPO and cuts across the mining company's proposed site. In response to this the community came together and erected declarations of the rights of nature and community.

The more-than-human reciprocity seen in this, and other anti-extractive campaigns across Ireland, hold much promise for building different ways of relating with the living world. There have been successful Rights of Nature moves, language reclamation and a building intimacy with land and place

that have emerged from these relations. The challenge remains that this could be co-opted by eco-fascist and ethno-nationalist rhetoric and is something discussed within the movement regularly. This is an important arena for future research (Figure 2).

Participants also care for the material needs of the road: local people have come together to lend money, machinery and labour to resurface it. Olivia explains it was much more than a material event:

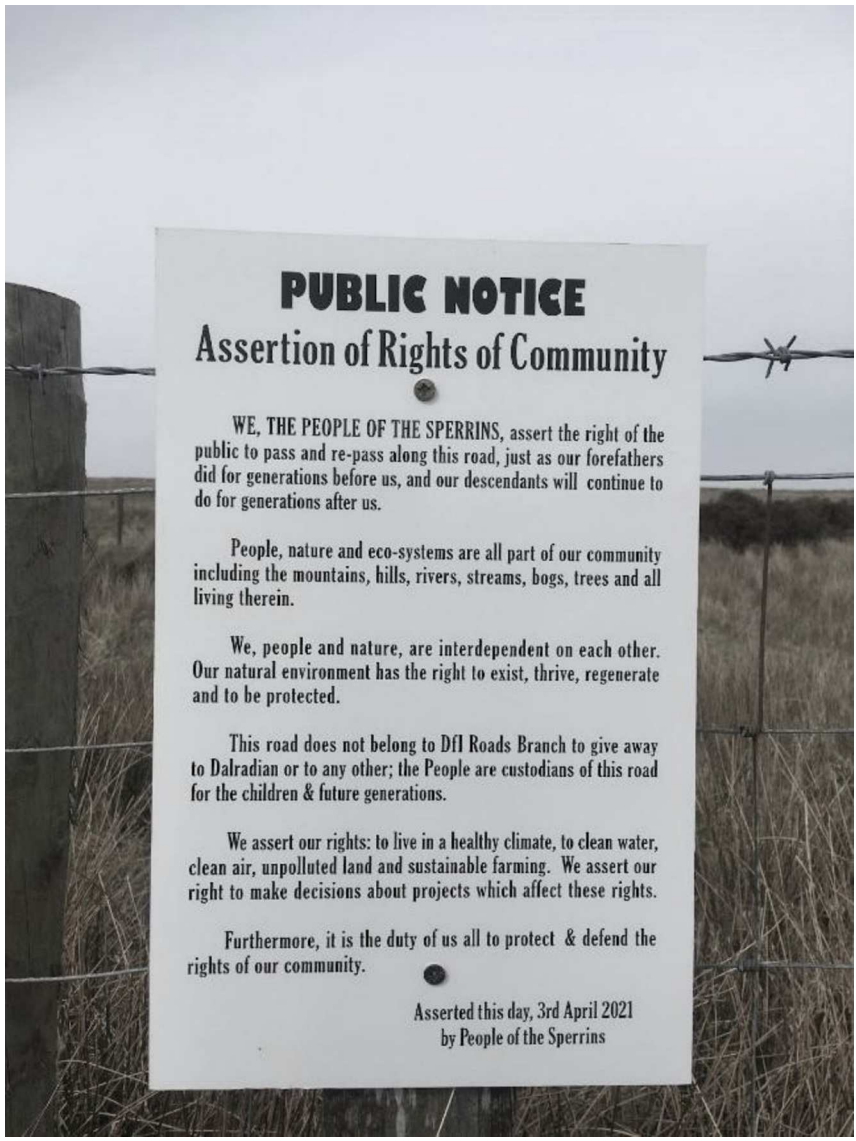

Figure 2. Declaration of the Rights of Community and Nature. Author's own.

> But it wasn't even doing the road, it was that those men bonded […] Apart from the stone for the road, it's bringing people out and that keeps it stronger, and people bond (Olivia, interview).

Meitheal is an Irish word to describe cooperative forms of labour in Ireland, traditionally when neighbours would help each other with agricultural tasks. It is a concept that speaks to cooperation for social needs. As Olivia articulates above, the *Meitheal* of resurfacing Crockanboy road built relations that are much more robust than stones on the road.

Similar sites operated in anti-mining struggles in other contexts. Tsavdaroglou, Petrakos, and Makrygianni (2017) details the occupation in Northern Greece that became the political reference for the struggle against El Dorado Mining Corporation. They note that the occupation became a site for practices of new eco-social relations. I argue the same happened at the GPO. What other modes of living exist alongside extractive capitalism? What other ways of relating to each other, human and nonhuman, exist in the extractive zone? At the GPO, there is a culture of care and commoning as locals and their solidarity visitors do more than just resist. They share cups of tea, celebrations, music, stories, strategy and laughter.

Anne Spice (2018) has highlighted that Indigenous resistance to pipelines in Northern British Columbia demonstrates that critical infrastructure is not the oil and gas pipelines but the networks of relations that allow life to be sustained. The Unist'ot'en Camp is physically stopping the construction of several fossil fuel pipelines through un-ceded Indigenous territory, but this camp is "doing more than blocking pipelines. The work of undoing settler colonial invasion requires blocking, resisting, and suspending the infrastructures of oil and gas and the systemic dominance of capitalism. It also requires attending to and caring for the networks of relations that make Indigenous survival possible" (Spice 2018, 52). Likewise, I argue that the GPO camp and related activities are building critical infrastructures that matter, relations of care, more-than-human kinship and mutual responsibility. The resistance in the Sperrins is doing more than holding back the extractive frontier, it is practicing relationships and ways of being that speak to non-extractive futures. An ecofeminist lens is attuned to these less visible forms of success in movements.

Participants noted how people cared for each other during the COVID pandemic and a culture of knowing and caring for your neighbours has been revived. Experiences and representations of the GPO suggest it is a site of commoning and mutual aid that defies extractive capitalist logics. Therefore, it is representing a site of prefigurative politics. Through the campaign strong bonds and relations were built which will last for a long time. Fujikane (2021) notes the same experience of taking part in a protest camp on the mountain side in Hawaii, where people camped, ate, organised and lived together. In these acts, "[w]e are growing the abundance that capital fears, and it is making possible new social formations and arrangements of life"

(Fujikane 2021, 216). Constructing autonomy in protest camps is a prefigurative praxis, through developing the social worlds that movements want to see in the present (Heinonen 2019). These camps represent the "economies of abundance" that challenge extractive logics (Fujikane 2021, 212).

Barca (2022) highlights that community care takes place in physical spaces, the occupation at the GPO can be understood in this light. Barca argues these spaces represent a commoning where practices of repair, replenishment, adapting and building new relations occur. "Like domestic care, so community care is not a set of unproductive and unskilled practices but emerges from a skilful and careful combination of diverse people's contributions, through the painstaking work of weaving together needs, abilities, and visions" (Barca 2022). Barca argues that these forms of commoning represent the best chance we have of countering the multiple crises we face and developing alternative forms of modernity to the extractive master model (Figure 3).

The active verb of commoning is a re-making of reciprocal relations between humans and the more-than-human (Bresnihan 2019). Thus, commoning challenges the active process of enclosing – which works to disrupt these relations. Commoning is a direct assault to the master system (Barca 2022). As a political principle and praxis, it challenges the dualisms that underpin extractive logics, capitalism, patriarchy and colonialism. Systems that allow inequality to flourish in order to accumulate capital.

Figure 3. Countermap of range of resistance in the Sperrins. Author's Own.

The idea of helping people meet their material needs as part of building a caring movement was articulated by Ella from South Dakota, who has visited the campaign through the Making Relatives Collective three times. This collective of Water Protectors from Ireland and Turtle Island[5] focused on radical kinship and relationality, expressed through the act of Making Relatives with each other and the more-than-human. A Water Protector who had been involved in resistance to the KXL and Dakota Access pipeline projects,[6] Ella was able to share a rich organising experience with us. She reflected on the care within the resistance in the Sperrins:

> I see people really do care about each other over here, and love each other […] You do need to do things like have dinner and do stuff like that and everybody needs that kind of energy to keep going because it is a hard fight, but the love and the jokes and all is what makes it worth it and what keeps people coming back. One thing Camilla said to me […] "you have to feed the people! If they are going to turn up they need to be fed." I've never forgotten that, any time I'm in a group or organising anything, community meeting, there's gotta be food there, that's a good place to start, you are helping people meet their material needs and showing care for community by feeding people. It also makes people feel good and regenerated to be fed and they come back to you then (Ella, interview).

The work of social reproduction is deeply gendered and can place extra burdens on women within the campaign. More traditional gender roles within society the North of Ireland remains a staunchly patriarchal society (Gilmartin 2019), were also reflected within the campaign. Feminist theorists have long spoken of the invisible work of care and social reproduction (Barca 2020; Federici 2004). This invisiblised labour was especially apparent to me when we organised large solidarity visits like the Making Relatives tours. While many men did help a lot with domestic roles, it was predominantly women carrying the weight of care work and social reproduction within the campaign. This included catering for groups, emotional labour, child and elderly care responsibilities, and much more. As Olivia recalls the extra weight carried by women through the campaign;

> I think it is harder on the women, they are trying to run a campaign, they are trying to make dinner, like you go from protesting yesterday, to making dinner, and then you have beds to make because you didn't get them made before. While men just have their job and they come home and then that's their time. Whereas women never stop (Olivia, interview).

[5]Turtle Island is the name our Indigenous visitors and collaborators call North America. I use this term out of respect for decolonial place naming.

[6]KXL (Keystone XL) Pipeline was proposed to carry oil from the Alberta Tar Sands project to the Gulf of Mexico, it was successfully defeated by a resistance movement that lasted more than ten years. The Dakota Access Pipeline was planned to bring oil from the Brakken oil fields in North Dakota to Illonis, it lead to famous resistance at Standing Rock where Indigenous nations from across the Americas united with allies to protect the water and land.

Here Olivia acknowledges the burden of waged labour, domestic labour and the labour of the campaign on women. Landén, Sjöstedt, and Fotaki (2018) note that resistance to mining is ridden with invisible work, which is often done by women. Therefore, there is a need to emphasise inequalities around gender including the invisibility of women's contributions and the silencing of their concerns in anti-mining activism (Figure 4).

Figure 4. The kettle is always on at the GPO. Author's own.

However, it is also important to recognise social reproduction and care work as political resistance and central to the campaign. As Sorcha, a linguist in her 30s, explains, the GPO wouldn't be there without;

> the people who have gone there every day and made it what it is. They have made tea, and again it goes back to the different roles, but the women, I'm sure some men too, but mainly the women, who have sent up buns and sandwiches, and any food left over from the youth club or summer schemes and we would leave it up to the GPO, I don't know what the word is in English, but *dluthphairtiocht* [solidarity], people standing by each other, that's been really amazing! (Sorcha, interview).

Care work and social reproduction have been used by (eco)feminists and feminist political ecologists to explain why many movements against extractivism around the world are led by women. Because of historical factors women are largely responsible for reproductive labour and so are the first to witness and experience the ecological and social violence of extractivism. However, Sempértegui (2021; 2023), highlights that not only is care a rich category to understand why people mobilise, but it is an important tool of resistance. Sempértegui (2023) illustrates that the everyday practices of ceremonies, communal kitchens, and caring for those injured by state violence are how Amazonian women defend their bodies and the land at the same time.

In the Sperrins, it is the life sustaining practices of the communal camp at the GPO, celebration dinners and events that directly challenge extractive logics by sustaining human and more-than-human life within the extractive zone. These practices of reproductive labour that sustain life-worlds that are relational, communal and reciprocal – are central to resistance to extractivism. Although these practices are more often discussed in global south and Indigenous contexts. I apply this to the Irish context, to make an important intervention in these discussions. Feminist thinkers such as Silvia Federici (2011; 2018) have been central in foregrounding these practices having noted:

> The "new enclosures' have also made visible a world of communal properties and relations that many have believed to be extinct or had not been valued until threatened with privatisation. Ironically, the new enclosures have demonstrated that not only the common has not vanished, but also new forms of social cooperation are constantly being produced, including in areas of life where none previously existed (Federici 2011, 1).

The new enclosures of extractivism, detailed above, expose a world of non-extractive relations. Federici's quote demonstrates the transformative potential of challenging the enclosure of extractive logics. Activist researchers have highlighted that resistance can be transformative and a form of environmental governance in and for itself (Gobby et al. 2022). They argue that occupations, blockades and protests in Canada are shifting decision

making around resources, representing a governance approach that is bottom up, land-based and transformative. I argue that these other ways of relating that the resistance in the Sperrins exposes, displays this world of communal relations and the potential for a grassroots bottom-up environmental governance.

Making Relatives does not mean that relationships are conflict free or smooth all the time. There were many moments filled with laughter, joy, inspiration, hope but also frustration, tears, burn out, and strained relationships. This is an inevitable part of being in community and working together, learning how to repair conflict is a vital part of resisting extractive and capitalist relations.

Building Cross-Community Relations

Another way the resistance built non-extractive relations was through overcoming sectarian division within communities. Around the world extractive industries use divisions within post-conflict society to their advantage (Paarlberg-Kvam 2021). This was pointed out by participants and experienced during research encounters in the Sperrins. The company is using legacies of conflict and division to divide and conquer, to make the resistance weaker. Participants noted how they were labelled as Republican Dissidents[7] to dissuade other communities from supporting the resistance. Another participant noted that certain flags were put up or pulled down to sectarianise environmental campaigns across the North. However, sectarian community divisions were also transformed through the resistance movement in the Sperrins, representing another way the resistance movement challenged extractive logics that rely on division:

> Yeah, I think definitely, the protection of our common home has brought us together in a way that no other peace project has (Laura, interview).

The potential for such actions to build a different type of peace on this island were emphasised by participants. Despite some aspects of the resistance relying on Republican messaging (for example the GPO has the same name as the site of resistance in Dublin during the Easter Rising) there were members of all communities welcomed and active in the movement. This is a strong example of what can happen when people come together for their commons, the land, air and water. Participants also noted that this altering of sectarian relations has the power to transform traditional party politics in the North, which is sustained through division. The movement was successful in getting independent candidates elected to local

[7]Republican Dissidents reject the peace process and political institutions set up after the Good Friday Agreement, they seek to continue armed struggle to achieve a united Ireland.

councils. The resistance is creating a new analysis of power: it is working people on the ground against elites, not each other.

> It is that idea that you aren't running on traditional lines that you see a bigger picture and there are a lot more things that unite us than divide us and people are slowly coming to realise that (Dan, photovoice session).

This class analysis is important as it challenges neoliberal peacebuilding which can invisibilise power dynamics. Instead, there is a building working class solidarity through this movement. Below, Declan had elaborated that this movement goes beyond identity politics:

> And that's far beyond, you know, who your personal saviours are, whether you want to speak in English or whether you speak Ulster-Scots or *As Gealiga*, again, there's many languages but it's what you're saying in those languages that matters to me (Declan, interview).

Rather than depending on labels of settler or Irish, these quotes demonstrate a sentiment of affected communities on the ground together against those in power and corporations. Anti-extractivist movements in Ireland are asking deeper questions about the society and economy we want to have on this Island. Questions that go beyond nationalistic debates of Irish unity, as there is no united Ireland on a dead planet (Fearon and Barry 2022).

Linguistically, the Sperrins is a very important area; it is home to the last *Gaeltacht* (Irish speaking area) within the North of Ireland. It is also home to very well-known song and story tellers. The resistance movement in the Sperrins, represents a reclamation (Leonard 2018) of local knowledge, stories, language and culture, as these were celebrated and highlighted at every opportunity. There is a relational ontology embedded in the Irish language which overcomes the nature-culture dualism and speaks to the land as living. Instead of shutting down relations with people of Unionist backgrounds the opposite occurred. A newer, more expansive view of tradition and culture was created. During events, I saw participants from a Protestant/Unionist background expressing the desire to learn Irish and connect to the land and a shared heritage in new ways. Thus representing another way the resistance movement allowed new forms of relating, specific to the North of Ireland, to emerge.

Conclusion

The above encounters highlight how the relationships forged between people within the campaign, the occupation of the GPO, the mutual aid and commoning of the resistance are all steeped in practices of care, constituting what Barca (2020) calls "Earthcare". Participants understood a widening view of kinship and community to include the more-than-human world, and much of the resistance was understood as a way to care for this extended

family. The relations created through this Earthcare struggle centre on reciprocity, care and commoning, relations that challenge the capitalist and extractive logics that seek to enclose and exploit life. By focusing on the newly formed relations that counter extractive logics, I do not want to romanticise this resistance movement, there are many contradictions, tensions and complexities, but to highlight the stories of healing, solidarity and togetherness that exist in post-conflict spaces which are usually depicted as violent, traumatised and divided.

Counter-narratives of the Anthropocene (Barca 2020) invite us to insist on Eve Tuck's open call to move from "damage-centred" research to "desire-based" research (Tuck 2009). Desired based research acknowledges the wisdom and hope of marginalised peoples instead of dwelling on their pain and despair. In this article I aim to move beyond detailing extractivist logics in the Sperrins to explore how resistance movements speak to post-extractivist possibilities by building non-extractive relations in the present.

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